

**Four terrorists killed**  
**F.P. Report**  
RAWALPINDI: Security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in general area, Khaisoor, North Waziristan District, on reported presence of terrorists. Own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location as a result of which 4 x terrorists were sent to hell, including a High Value Target, Terrorist ring leader Ibrahim @ Musa, who was highly wanted by the Law Enforcement Agencies.

 @thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

**Khadija challenges detention**  
**F.P. Report**  
LAHORE: PTI supporter Khadija Shah has challenged her 30-day detention in the Lahore High Court on Saturday. In her petition, Shah has named the provincial government, Lahore DC, provincial police chief, and superintendent Kot Lakhpat Jail, among others as respondents. The plea termed the charges filed by law enforcers as "false and baseless".

Vol. XXXIX No. 301 Regd. No. 241 JAMADI-UL-AWWAL 03 1445 -- SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19 2023 PESHAWAR EDITION 12 PAGES PRICE. 30

# 120 dead in fresh Israeli airstrikes on Gaza

GAZA: Gaza authorities have said that "more than 120 people" were martyred Saturday when Israeli forces struck a UN school and a refugee camp in northern Gaza, AFP reported.

The Al Fakhura school — located in Gaza's largest Jabalia refugee camp — was targeted by the Israeli forces as it was being used as "a shelter" for people displaced by the ongoing Israeli offensive which has martyred more than 12,300 Palestinians — including 5,000 children.

Gaza's media office official Ismail al Thawabta has said that the Israeli forces, during their raid on Al Shifa hospital on Friday, disinterred the mass grave at the facility and "took away" more than 100 dead bodies, Al Jazeera reported. Thawabta said that the Israeli military refused to allow the recently deceased victims to be buried inside the hospital, depriving them of a proper funeral.

The Israeli army denies that it ordered patients and medical staff to evacuate al-Shifa Hospital, Al Jazeera reported. "It should be emphasised that at no point did the IDF ask to evacuate patients or medical teams," reads a statement from the military.

Instead, the Israeli army claimed that it "responded to the request of the director of Shifa Hospital" to allow those sheltering in the medical facility and who wished to evacuate to leave through "a secure axis". The army "even suggested that whenever there is a request to coordinate a medical evacuation, we will work to facilitate it and transfer the patients to other hospitals".

According to Al Jazeera, the statement was in "stark contrast to accounts provided to Al Jazeera by the hospital supervisor and two doctors" who had said that they "received a one-hour deadline for evacuation and were forced to leave."

Meanwhile, the emergency supervisor at Al Shifa Hospital, Mohammed Zaquut reiterated that Israeli forces had given staff and patients the order to evacuate this morning within one hour. "I categorically deny these false allegations (that evacuation was requested) ... despite the difficult situation, the medical staff was working and oper-



ating ... we were forced to leave at gunpoint," he said.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people fled on foot Saturday after Israel's army ordered the evacuation of Gaza's main hospital where more than 2,000 patients, medics and displaced people were trapped by the war between Israel and Hamas.

An AFP journalist witnessed the movement, on a road leading south, but health officials in the Hamas-ruled territory said 450 patients unable to be moved remained at Al-Shifa hospital. The facility has become the focus of the war that is entering its seventh week after Hamas's October 7 attacks on southern Israel. Israel has been pressing military operations inside the hospital, searching for the Hamas operations center it says lies under the sprawling complex — a charge Hamas denies.

Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas in response to the October 7 attacks which Israeli officials say killed about 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and saw about 240 people taken hostage. The army's air and ground campaign has since killed 12,000 people, including 5,000 children, according to the Hamas government which has ruled Gaza since 2007.

In Gaza City on Saturday morning, Israeli troops ordered over loudspeakers the evacuation of the Al-

Shifa hospital "in the next hour," an AFP journalist at the scene reported. They called the hospital's director, Mohammed Abu Salmiya, to instruct him to ensure "the evacuation of patients, wounded, the displaced and medical staff, and that they should move on foot toward the seafloor," he told AFP.

Israel has come under mounting pressure to back up its allegations that Hamas is using hospitals as command centers, a charge denied by Hamas, an Islamist movement with an armed wing. Al-Shifa hospital has also rejected the allegation. The United Nations estimated 2,300 patients, staff and displaced Palestinians were sheltering at Al-Shifa before Israeli troops entered the facility on Wednesday. Israel has told Palestinians to move from the north of Gaza for their safety, but deadly air strikes continue to hit central and southern areas of the narrow coastal territory.

"They said the south was safer, so we moved," Azhar Al-Rifi told AFP. But her family was caught in another strike that killed seven relatives, including her five-year-old nephew. Nada Abu Hiy, aged eight, said she suffered the third bombing of the war at the Nuseirat refugee camp on Friday. "There are bombings everywhere," she said. "My grandmother is dead, my mother is dead, my grandfather is dead, my uncle is dead, they



destroyed our house. Our neighbors' house is also destroyed and they are all dead."

Israel has imposed a siege on Gaza, allowing just a trickle of aid in from Egypt but barring most shipments of fuel over concerns Hamas could divert supplies for military purposes. A first consignment of fuel entered Gaza after Israel's war cabinet bowed to pressure from its ally the United States and agreed to allow two diesel tankers a day into the Palestinian territory. "We took that decision to prevent the spread of epidemics," Israel's national security adviser Tzachi Hanegbi said.

A two-day blackout caused by fuel shortages ended after a first delivery arrived from Egypt late Friday, but UN officials continued to plead for a ceasefire, warning no part of Gaza is safe. A senior US official said Washington had exerted huge pressure on Israel for weeks to allow fuel in. The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) said 70 percent of residents have no access to clean water in south Gaza, where raw sewage has begun to flow on the streets.

Under the deal, 140,000 liters (37,000 gallons) of fuel would be allowed in every 48 hours, of which 20,000 liters will be earmarked for generators to restore the phone network, the US official said. A commu-

nications blackout hampered aid deliveries. UNRWA said. Humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths told the UN General Assembly that fuel supplies to the agency so far were "a fraction of what is needed to meet the minimum of our humanitarian responsibilities." The Hamas health ministry said 24 patients had died in 48 hours due to the lack of fuel for generators.

In the latest bloodshed, a strike on a residential building in the southern city of Hamad killed 26 people, the director of the Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis said. "I was asleep and we were surprised by the strike. At least 20 bombs were dropped," Imed Al-Mubasher, 45, told AFP. His wife Sabrin Mussa said: "All of a sudden, the house caught fire. I found myself with gravel in my mouth and I immediately looked for my husband and daughters."

"I saw human remains everywhere," and screamed for help, she said. The Israeli military has yet to respond to a request for comment. Israel has come under scrutiny for targeting hospitals in northern Gaza, but says the facilities are being used by Hamas — a claim rejected by the group and medical staff. The military says it has found rifles, ammunition, explosives and the entrance to a tunnel shaft at the hospital complex, claims that cannot be independently verified. — AFP, Aljazeera

## Thousands rally across Iran, slam Israel and US

TEHRAN (AFP): Thousands of Iranians held rallies across the country against Israel's unrelenting bombardment of Gaza, with a top military commander warning that Israel was heading for a long and bloody war with Palestinian group Hamas.

The demonstrations on Saturday in the capital Tehran and other cities were held in "support of the oppressed children of Gaza" under the slogan "Palestine is not alone", according to local media.

"Palestine stands on the path of a war of attrition ... Israel will face a definitive defeat and end up in the dustbin of history," Commander Hossein Salami from the powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps told the rally in Tehran, which was aired live on state TV. "The battle is not over. The Islamic world will do whatever it has to do. There are still great [unused] capacities left," Salami said, without referring to any possible moves by Iran to join the conflict. "The Zionist regime [Israel] can no longer see peace and security. Muslims will take revenge on behalf of the oppressed people of Gaza, and this revenge has no expiration date."

In Tehran, demonstrators waved Palestinian flags, while others held banners that read, "Down with America" and "Down with Israel", according to the AFP news agency. Others set alight Israeli flags, while some waved the flags of Lebanese Shia group Hezbollah, Iran's ally, which has been engaged in border skirmishes with Israel since October 7. State television also showed some protesters carrying bundled white shrouds symbolising the children killed in Gaza, during the marches held in advance of World Children's Day on Monday. Similar demonstrations took place in other major cities including Shiraz, Kerman and Isfahan.

## Bilawal denounces unfair play for PPP

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a workers' convention in Peshawar said that the PPP's series of workers' conventions began with the Hazara and Mardan divisions, and today we are in Peshawar. Chairman Bilawal said that he is thoroughly enjoying this experience.

He still remembers the historic Foundation Day gathering that was held in Peshawar, which was a resounding success due to the hard work of the PPP workers. He said that he prefers conventions because they give his Jiyalas an opportunity to express themselves.

The Foundation Day of the Pakistan Peoples Party will be held in Quetta, Balochistan, Chairman Bilawal announced. Addressing the Jiyalas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Chairman Bilawal said that the potential present for the Party here is unlike that in any other province. The workers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are loyal, honourable and committed. They have kept the manifesto and ideology of

Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. They still raise the slogan of 'Bhuttoism'. We have to take this slogan to the youngsters of the country and make them understand its gist.

Bhuttoism is a symbol of serving the people, denouncing the elitist mindset and striving for the rights of the people as per our principles and narrative. Bhuttoism is another name for not compromising in the face of adversity, and preferring punishment over. Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was sent to the gallows but did not bow down in front of anyone. Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto too struggled for thirty years for the sake of her ideology and her father's manifesto. This was made possible through the support of her workers, her brothers and sisters of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and those from all over the country. An unarmed woman faced two dictators and accepted martyrdom but did not back down. A puppet who was imposed on us tried to teach our youngsters that taking a U-turn is a leader's trait.

## UK HC calls on Zardari

**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: Former president and PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari met the British high commissioner and deputy high commissioner in Karachi and exchanged views on important matters including boosting bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

Zardari his felicitations to King Charles III on his birthday and also expressed good wishes for David Cameron who has been appointed as UK Foreign Minister.

During the meeting, Zardari demanded Britain to play a conciliatory role in ending the Israeli aggression in Gaza, while the former president and British High Commissioner Jane Marriott also discussed the promotion of bilateral relations.

## Pakistan, China most reliable neighbours, iron brothers: Solangi

MALE (APP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Saturday that China and Pakistan were each other's most reliable good neighbours, good friends, and 'iron brothers'.

This he said during his sidelines meetings with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong and Chinese State Councillor Miss Shen Yiqin here on the occasion of the banquet given by the President of the Maldives, Muhammad Muizzu. He said that Pakistan and China's friendship had been time-tested and steadfast at every opportunity. Important issues related to mutual interests were also discussed in the meetings. Reiteration of commitment to promote bilateral cooperation in various fields of mutual interest between the two countries was also done in the meetings.

**Maldives President Muizzu, Solangi discuss expansion of cooperation in various fields:** Caretaker Federal Minister for

Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Saturday met with the newly-elected President of Maldives Muhammad Muizzu.

In the meeting, important issues of mutual interest including bilateral relations, economic cooperation and appointment of Ambassador of Maldives to Pakistan were discussed. On behalf of Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar, the Government of Pakistan and the people of Pakistan, the information minister congratulated Muhammad Muizzu on his election as President and expressed his best wishes for him. During the meeting, both the leaders reiterated commitment to work together to promote regional cooperation. They also expressed commitment to further strengthen mutual relations between the two countries. The caretaker federal minister of information extended invitation to President Muizzu to visit Pakistan which he accepted. The President of Maldives thanked

Murtaza Solangi for representing the Government of Pakistan at his swing in ceremony. President Muizzu said that Maldives would soon appoint its ambassador to Pakistan. He said that his country was desirous of further strengthening diplomatic relations with Pakistan.

Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi said that Pakistan valued its relationship with Maldives. The two countries are linked by an unbreakable brotherly bond of devotion, he added. He said that bilateral diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Maldives would further be strengthened in future. As a member country of SAARC, he said Pakistan was committed to further strengthen bilateral cooperation with Maldives in all fields. Foreign Minister of Maldives, senior officials of Maldives and High Commissioner of Pakistan Mohammad Fayyaz Gilani and senior officers were also present in the meeting.



**Bahria University**  
Discovering Knowledge  
An Initiative of Pakistan Navy



DISCOVERING OPPORTUNITIES WITH BAHRIA



**Admissions Open Spring 2024**

**BAHRIA UNIVERSITY E-8 CAMPUS, ISLAMABAD**

<b>Bahria School of Engineering &amp; Applied Sciences</b> <b>Computer Science</b> BS (CS) (4 Years) BS (IT) (4 Years) MS (CS) (2 Years) MS (Information Security) (2 Years) MS (Data Science) (2 Years) PhD (Computer Sciences) (3 Years) PhD (Mathematics) (3 Years)	<b>Bahria Humanities &amp; Social Sciences School</b> <b>Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</b> BSS (4 Years) BS (Public Health) (4 Years) BS (English) (4 Years) MS (IR) (2 Years) MS (Applied Anthropology) (2 Years) MS (Government Public Policy) (2 Years) PhD (International Relations) (3 Years) <b>Media Studies</b> BS (Media Studies) (4 Years) BS (TV Broadcasting & Digital Media) (4 Years) MS (Media Studies) (2 Years) PhD (Media Studies) (3 Years) <b>Islamic Studies</b> MS (Islamic Studies) (2 Years) <b>Bahria University Law School</b> LLB (5 Years) LLM (I&ML) (2 Years) PhD (Law) (3 Years) 5% Seats reserved for children of Advocates in LLB Program
<b>Bahria Business School</b> <b>Business Studies</b> BBA (4 Years) MBA (1.5 Years) Evening & Weekend MBA (2 Years) Evening & Weekend	<b>Bahria School of Professional Psychology</b> BS (Psychology) (4 Years) MS (Clinical Psychology) (2 Years) <b>PhD. Admissions for Fall 2024</b> Admissions Deadline: <b>28th March, 2024</b> CBT will be conducted twice on given dates: 1st CBT w.e.f. <b>16th December, 2023</b> 2nd CBT w.e.f. <b>30th March, 2024</b>

Admissions are also open at BUIC H-11, Lahore and Karachi Campuses of Bahria University, Kindly Visit Website: [www.bahria.edu.pk/admissions/](http://www.bahria.edu.pk/admissions/)

www.bahria.edu.pk UAN: 111-111-028 bahriauniversityofficial officialBU school/bahria-university @bahriaofficial E-8 Campus



**THE World Rankings Young 2023**  
GLOBALLY 201-250<sup>th</sup> (208)



**WHY BAHRIA UNIVERSITY?**

90+ Programs	45,000+ Successful Alumni	50+ International Linkages
21,000+ Students Enrolled	PKR 290+ Million Scholarship Grants worth	Bahria faculty members included in Top 2% list of educators in the world by Stanford University

**2% QUOTA** For Disabled & Less Developed areas (Undergraduate and Post Graduate) Sports (Undergraduate)

Merit & Need Based Scholarships are Available

[www.scholarships.bahria.edu.pk](http://www.scholarships.bahria.edu.pk)

**LAST DATE TO APPLY: 14th December, 2023**

CBT: w.e.f 16th December, 2023

**WHERE TO APPLY**

[www.bahria.edu.pk/admissions/](http://www.bahria.edu.pk/admissions/)  
Processing Fee Rs. 3000/-

Phone: 051-9260002, Ext 1421, 1422  
Email: [adm@bahria.edu.pk](mailto:adm@bahria.edu.pk)



Apply to Scan QR Code

PID (I) 3055-D/23





KARACHI: Former Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani addressing a press conference at Bilawal House. —APP Photo

## Ashrafi terms Ulema-COAS meeting fruitful

LAHORE (APP): Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi has termed the recent meeting of Ulema & Mashaikh with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir at GHQ Rawalpindi fruitful and significant in the present time.

Addressing the press conference at Jamia Manzoor-ul-Islamia here on Saturday he said that national and international affairs, Gaza, Afghanistan, Pakistan ties and other issues were discussed during the meeting.

Ashrafi, who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC), said that peace is curtail for any country's development and religious scholars along with law enforcement agencies were working to restore peace in the country. He highlighted the united stance of Ulema &

Mashaikh and religious scholars from across the country, supporting Pakistan's efforts to combat extremism and terrorism.

Ashrafi said that Pakistan's peace is connected with Afghanistan's peace and requested Afghanistan to consider Pakistan's peace as its own.

He said that Ulema & Mashaikh were united under the leadership of COAS General Asim Munir to restore peace in the country and put it on the track to development and prosperity. He said the use of force and armed action by any militia, entity or group other than the state was unacceptable.

He said that out of the last 24 terrorist attacks in Pakistan, 14 were Afghan nationals, adding that Afghan nationals were also involved in the Mianwali Air Base attack but Pakistan still wanted

to make better and healthy relations with Afghanistan. He said that no one should be allowed to undermine the pursuit of peace between the two neighboring countries.

Ashrafi said that Afghan refugees living legally in Pakistan were not being deported, only those who have no legal documents and have been living in Pakistan illegally are being sent back to their country. He added the properties and assets of Afghan brothers who are going back should be priced according to the market value.

He said that Gaza was not an issue of Palestine or Arab nations but entire humanity. He asked the world what was done by the innocent children of Gaza as more than 3,500 children had been murdered in Israeli aggression since October 7. "Israeli brutalities have taken the lives of more than 11,000

people in Palestine and Gaza," he added.

Ashrafi emphasized that the Pakistani government's stance was unequivocal - Palestinians must receive their rightful justice. He commended Pakistan's unique position, being the only Islamic country whose Army Chief had assured complete support for the Palestinian cause. He emphasized the continued commitment of Pakistan to the principles laid out by the Father of the Nation, Q u a i d - e - A z a m Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

He said that during the Jummah prayer break as well as at the end of the meeting, the COAS met with the attending scholars individually and discussed matters of mutual interest with them as well.

Maulana Asadullah Khan, Maulana Aslam Siddiqui and Maulana Mubasher Rahimi were also present.

## Nationwide crackdown; over 3,100 kg narcotics seized, 34 arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has intensified its crackdown against narcotics across the country as the authorities seized 3,143 kilograms of drugs last week, arresting 34 individuals involved in drug trafficking.

The operations were conducted in all provinces, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Sindh, Punjab, and Gilgit Baltistan, to curb the drug trade, PTV news reported on Saturday.

The authorities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Sindh collectively seized 2,644 kilograms of narcotics during the week-long crackdown.

Similarly, Balochistan emerged as a key focus area, contributing significantly to the overall haul with a reported confiscation of 1,740 kilograms of contraband. Notably, among the seized substances in Balochistan were 28 kilograms of methamphetamine and 25 kilograms of heroin, underscoring the diverse nature of the illicit drug trade in the region.

Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also played a crucial role in the operations, contributing 234 kilograms, while Gilgit reported a seizure of 117 kilograms of illegal substances.

The confiscated drugs included a variety of substances, with a total of 2,091 kilograms of cannabis and 240 kilograms of opium intercepted and confiscated throughout the country.

These recent successes add to the momentum of a broader crackdown initiated on September 1, which has seen the nationwide seizure of an astonishing 33,924 kilograms of narcotics.

The operations have also led to the arrest of more than 435 individuals involved in drug trafficking, signalling a significant dent in the illicit drug trade plaguing the country. The government's unwavering commitment to eradicating the narcotics trade reflects a comprehensive strategy to safeguard public health and national security.

## Minister seeks VCs suggestions to improve education

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi said that there is a need to strengthen the country's education system to empower youngsters in the real sense.

He expressed these views in a meeting with vice chancellors of universities at University of the Punjab on Saturday. He said when he took charge of his portfolio there were some challenges in front of him which included quality of education, skills national training, higher education and missing of basic facilities in schools.

He said he felt that an agenda should be evolved so that a general complaint about lack quality in higher education could be sorted out. The minister said that the journey in this regard was started from Karachi and he met vice chancellors of all universities in Sindh and later visited Quetta. He said today he was in University of the Punjab and interacting with VCs

of different universities.

He said the purpose of his visit was to have interaction with VCs and listen to their problems and get feedback to improve higher education in the country.

Madad Ali said that he would visit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and form a comprehensive strategy which would be presented to the Prime Minister and the President so it could help the next government improve the education system.

"It is very unfortunate that in the past governments did not focus on development of public schools," he said and added that 20 million children were out-of-school and there was a dire need to bring them back. The minister said that corruption and misuse of funds were big problems that were hindering the development process.

He said that he had visited Sindh University and the IR chairman there did not even know about the Tamil issue in Sri Lanka so there were many loopholes which needed to be plugged. He said there

was a need to improve performance, funding and PhDs in the education sector. He said that he would prepare recommendations in light of VCs views and added that the country was blessed with immense potential.

Madad Ali Sindhi said that time has come that people should question their elected representatives about their performance. "Political pressure always puts negative impacts on the smooth working of any department," he added.

He said that good governance was direly needed to improve the working of departments. "No doubt, the role of vice chancellors is important in overcoming problems related to the education sector," he added.

University of the Punjab Acting Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Khalid Mahmood and VCs of different universities attended the meeting. Higher Education Commission Dr Mukhtar Ahmed virtually participated in the meeting.

## Motorbike riding without helmet banned

KARACHI (NNI): The city traffic police has announced the imposition of a ban on riding motorbikes without wearing a helmet on Shahr-e-Faisal.

DIG Karachi Traffic Police Iqbal Dara said that starting with the Shahr-e-Faisal, Karachi roads are now the no-go areas for bike drivers not wearing helmets. Those not heeding the warnings will be dealt a legal blow, the DIG said, adding that heavy traffic and bikers won't be allowed to travel on fast lane. Moreover, Dara said that the police have intensified crackdown against under-age drivers in the mega city.

Underage drivers have been arrested en masse by the Lahore traffic police following crackdowns launched on the orders of Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

Lahore traffic police launched crackdowns on underage drivers following Caretaker Punjab CM Mohsin Naqvi's directives after killings of six of a family in a horrific road accident in the Defence area last week. During the crackdowns, 1,632 underage drivers have been arrested in four days and cases were lodged against them. Additionally, show cause notices were served to six sector in charges by the CTO Lahore over ineffective crackdowns.

## Six bandits gunned down

LAHORE (PPI): Six dacoits were shot dead in an alleged encounter with the police in Iqbal Town area of Lahore on Saturday.

According to police, the dacoits entered a house in Iqbal Town in a bid to commit a robbery. The alert family wasted no time in informing the police through emergency call on 15. On seeing the police's quick response, the dacoits panicked and opened fire on the police party.

In the intense ensuing battle, six dacoits were killed. LESCO meter reader stabbed: A LESCO meter reader was seriously injured when he was stabbed in the line of duty in Shahdara Town near Lahore on Saturday.

A footage from closed-circuit TV that one Ali Imran got in argument with meter reader Kashif. He then picked up a knife from a shop and stabbed Kashif.

According to police, the accused injured the Kashif who came to perform his duty. The accused Ali Imran is in the custody of the Shahdara Town Police.

Further investigation and action is being taken against the accused, said the police. Police said that LESCO staff had installed skimming meters to prevent electricity theft.

## PU admission schedule

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab University (PU) Department of Examinations has issued a schedule for submission of admission forms of Associate Degree in Commerce Part-I & Part-II, second annual examination 2023. All late college and private candidates were informed that admission forms would be submitted online only and no admission form would be accepted by hand or by post, said a press release issued here on Saturday. According to the details, the last date for receipt of online admission forms exams with single fee is December 1, 2023.

## Punjab CM reviews progress on Lahore Ring Road project

LAHORE (NNI): Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop 3 Project on Saturday morning and reviewed the progress on the project from Maraka to Bahria Town.

During the visit, the chief minister inspected the ongoing work on the three under-construction towers of the project at different places. The Chief Minister also observed the earth work and stone-laying work.

Syed Mohsin Naqvi directed that the Maraka Interchange should be completed as soon as possible and the construction of the service lane along with the ring road should also be completed within the stipulated period.

He directed the Chairman Lahore Ring Road Authority to visit the project daily. He said the work should be speeded up by employing additional work force and the project should be completed by January in any case. On the occasion, the Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi also chaired a meeting of FWOK which was held at the camp office. FWOK Colonel Ahmed briefed the Chief Minister about the progress of the project.

It was told in the briefing that 42 percent of the work

on the project has been completed, 53 percent of the under construction 6 towers and 63 percent of the work of subways is completed. It was briefed that soil is being poured on the project with 2600 dumpers, soon the number will be increased to 3200 dumpers.

Chief Minister Punjab was given a detailed briefing about the completed works and timeline of the project. The provincial cabinet members were also accompanied him in the visit.

**CM pledges making Lahore, Safari zoos child-friendly**

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday pledged to make both Lahore and Safari zoos child-friendly facilities.

Both zoos are being renovated and will have new animals including elephants. Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that the zoos were being renovated as their condition had become very bad, adding the Lahore zoo had become very smelly.

It is good news for children that 100 new species of animals are being housed at Lahore Zoo, the CM said, adding that four elephants were coming to

Safari Zoo. "It will be a surprise for the kids that there will be new animals in the zoo," he said.

He said that he had written a letter to the Chinese government for getting pandas for Lahore Zoo. He said he was in touch with the Chinese Consul General for it. "There will be big food courts in the zoo. We will preferably focus on animal welfare which would be according to international standards by not keeping animals in cages.

We also decided to renovate the famous Jinnah Garden," he said, adding that though the zoo was closed, but children would be very happy when it opened.

To a query regarding elephants survival, the CM said that there was a ban on keeping elephants in cages, and obviously, NGOs and international forums of animals would object if elephants were kept in such a condition. "That's why we have decided to keep elephants in Safari zoo," he said.

The chief minister said that elephants would be housed according to international standards in Safari zoo and some of them would also be kept in Lahore zoo for children. A friendly zoo is being under renovation that will be completed in January.

## 47 marriage halls sealed for violations in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): In response to directives from caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, a province-wide crackdown on marriage halls violating regulations regarding one-dish policies and operating late hours is currently in progress.

During the last 24 hours, around 47 marriage halls across different districts were sealed and fined Rs 3.7 million for non-compliance. Additionally, 12 cases were filed against the hall management, leading to the arrest of three individuals.

Specifically in Lahore division, 22 wedding halls faced closure for violating the regulations. FIRs were

lodged against the management of 10 halls, resulting in the apprehension of three individuals. A collective fine of Rs 260,000 was imposed on four halls.

Rawalpindi division witnessed inspections at 95 marriage halls, with fines amounting to Rs 150,000 imposed on five establishments for breaching the Marriage Functions Act.

In Multan division, scrutiny of 98 marriage halls led to fines of Rs 400,000 in four instances of regulation violation. Within Faisalabad division, the management of six marriage halls faced fines totaling Rs 675,000 for flouting the one-dish rule.

Bahawalpur division saw the closure of 21 wedding halls, accompanied by fines amounting to Rs 170,500. In Gujranwala division, two marriage halls were sealed, and another was fined Rs 50,000. DG Khan division witnessed inspections at 1,358 wedding halls, resulting in fines of Rs 315,000 in 13 cases of regulation violation. Two halls were sealed, and cases were registered against two others for violating the one-dish rule.

Additionally, the management of two marriage halls in Sargodha division was fined Rs 100,000 for non-compliance with the one-dish rule.

**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT  
ELECTION COMMISSIONER, KHYBER AT PESHAWAR**  
No. F.2(16)/2023-ElS Vol-II (DEC)

**TENDER NOTICE FOR PURCHASE OF REFRESHMENT AND  
STATIONERY ITEMS**

Sealed Tenders/bids/rates are invited from the reputed registered firms on the basis of Open Competitive Bidding Method of Single Stage (One Envelope Procedure) in terms of Rule 36(a) of Public Procurement Rules 2004 for the supply of stationery items and refreshment/Meals for Polling Staff during their Trainings in connection with upcoming General Elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as per following detail:


S/No	Description/Item	Menu	Quantity
1.	Refreshment for training of Polling Staff	Day-I Biryani + Water Bottle + 02 Teas with Cookies	Detail in Tender document
		Day-II Chicken Karachi + Naan/Roti + Water Bottle + 02 Teas with Cookies	
2.	Stationery for trainings Polling staff	Note Pad Ball Pen, Lead Pencil, Scale, and Sharpener	Detail in Tender document
	Refreshment for Half Orientation Session of Polling Staff	Biryani + Water Bottle	Detail in Tender document
	Stationery for Half Orientation Session of Polling Staff	Note Pad Ball Pen, Lead Pencil, Scale, and Sharpener	Detail in Tender document

**Terms & Conditions:**

- The Tender is on the basis of Open Competitive Bidding Method of Single Stage (One Envelope Procedure) in terms of Rule 36(a) of Public Procurement Rules 2004.
- The bidders should submit a "Certificate" that the company has never been declared blacklisted or defaulter by any department of Government of Pakistan.
- Price should be quoted in Pak Rupees both in words and figures.
- The Price quoted should be firm, final and clearly written/typed out without any ambiguity Rates/bids submitted will be valid for a period of six months.
- The price should include all the government taxes (Including GST if applicable), duties, delivery etc.
- The bidder shall furnish a bid security/earnest money equivalent to 5% of the total value of the bid in the form of bank draft or pay order issued by the schedule bank of Pakistan in favor of DDO, District Election Commissioner Khyber at Peshawar.
- "Tender documents containing detailed terms and conditions can be obtained on written request from the office of District Election Commissioner Khyber at Peshawar latest by 5th December 2023 (Tuesday) till 1100 AM against the prescribed fee of Rs.1,000/- (Rupees One Thousand only) non-refundable, on any working day during office hours.
- All Sealed Tenders, (In separate) for Refreshment and Stationery should be delivered/ dropped in the Tender Box placed in the office of District Election Commissioner Khyber at Peshawar on or before tender's opening date i.e. 5th December, 2023 (Tuesday) at 11:00 AM which will be opened on the same date at 11:30 AM in the presence of Tender Committee and bidders as may be present. Open, e-mailed or faxed bid will not be accepted. Any bid received by the District Election Commissioner Office Khyber at Peshawar after the date and time of tender opening will be returned unopened to the bidder.
- Exact No of participants will be given at the time of work order.
- Training will be conducted in batches in different venues in District Khyber and in its Tehsil level which shall be intimated accordingly.
- The firms/supplier shall provide refreshment/stationery at different venues located across the District Khyber.
- Quantity & Quality of food/refreshment will be checked and suitable penalty will be imposed on substandard quality.
- Payment will be made after completion of trainings and preferably after availability of budget.
- The procuring agency reserves the rights to increase or decrease the No of items being supplied/purchased at any stage as per requirement.
- The District Election Commissioner, Khyber/ Competent Authority reserves the rights to cancel/reject any Tender or all tenders in accordance with Rule-33(1) of PPRA Rules-2004
- This advertisement is also available on the official websites of PPRA ([www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk)) and Election Commission of Pakistan ([www.ecp.gov.pk](http://www.ecp.gov.pk))

**District Election Commissioner Khyber**  
**Camp at Malak Plaza Kohat Road Peshawar**  
**Tel: 091-2322261**

PID(P) 438/23

**PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA)**  
پاکستان کیوی ایوی ایشن اتھارٹی

**INVITATION TO BID**

Sealed bids (in accordance with PPRA Rule No. 36(b) are invited by below mentioned office for the following requirements in Pak Rs.:-

S. No.	Description & Bid No.	Bid Fee (PKR)	Fixed Bid Security (PKR)	Bid Submission Date/Time	Bid Opening Date/Time/Place	Last date for issuance of Bidding Documents	Basis PKR (Price)
01.	Procurement of Digital and Analog Radio Communication Tester for VHF/UHF Transceiver HQCAA/1992/223/XXLN	1,500/-	Rs. 451,300/-	12-12-2023 1030 Hours	12-12-2023 1100 Hours Log. Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	11-12-2023	F.O.R.

Bids may be submitted as per conditions set out in Bidding documents downloadable (free of cost) from the CAA website [www.caapakistan.com.pk](http://www.caapakistan.com.pk) (**visible / downloadable after publication/uploading of Invitation to bid notice**) and obtainable physically from the address given below on **any working days between 0900 Hrs to 1230 Hrs by paying Bid Fee (non-refundable) through deposit slip in Account No. 6-1-2-20614-714-115525 (Title of account "Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority") in Habib Metropolitan Bank Ltd. Star Gate Branch Karachi** and submitting the request letter along with bank deposit slip, proof of Active Taxpayer, GST/NTN certificates of the bidder. **No Bidding Documents would be issued on the Bid opening date.** Bids must be dropped in Bid drop Box placed at under mentioned office by or before due date as per schedule.

**Bids will be opened in the public on the date, time mentioned in I/T form. If it's holiday/off day on the date of opening, the bid will be opened on next working day at the same time and place.**

**Note:** All bidders downloading the bidding document from CAA website shall immediately inform PCAA through Intimation letter (along with proof of active taxpayer list [ATL for sales tax] of FBR) and GST/NTN certificates at the address below OR on email: [sajid.noor@caapakistan.com.pk](mailto:sajid.noor@caapakistan.com.pk), for inclusion in subsequent communication. PCAA will not be responsible for any lack of communication or non-receipt of information/intimation letter by bidders due to ignorance / violation of this instruction.

Time period for performance of contract: Till the satisfactory completion of contract and warranty period.  
PCAA reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids due to cogent reasons which will be communicated to bidders on request. This advertisement is also available on PPRA website [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk) and CAA website [www.caapakistan.com.pk](http://www.caapakistan.com.pk)

**Warning:** Any financial instrument submitted by bidder, if found fake or got dishonored at any stage would result in blacklisting and legal action as per law.

Additional Director, Logistics (ANS),  
Logistics Center (South), HQs Civil Aviation Authority,  
JIAP Karachi Pakistan Tel: 021-9907-2265 Fax: 021-99242675  
[www.caapakistan.com.pk](http://www.caapakistan.com.pk)

PID(K)# 1499/23



# Governor awards degrees, medals among KMC students

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali participated in Khyber Medical College (KMC) Convocation Session 2020-21 as a special guest on Sunday and awarded 215 degrees and 58 gold medals among students.

The Governor also distributed lifetime achievement awards to ex-faculty members. In which Prof. Dr. Azar Rasheed, Dr. Inayat Rehman, Dr. Muhammad Humayun and gave the Distinguished Alumni Award to Prof. Dr. Umar Atiq, the President of the American College of Physicians.

Tabish Ikram clinched 9 gold medals in session 2020 and Faryal Masood won 8 gold medals in session 2021.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Health Advisor Dr. Riaz Anwar, Vice Chancellor Khyber Medical University Prof. Dr. Zia-ul-Haq, Dean Khyber Medical College Prof. Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb, Registrar KMU along with the parents, faculty members and students were also participated in ceremony.

Speaking on this occasion, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali said that the government is spending a huge portion of the country's development funds on the health sector and the education sector.

He said that in terms of profession, doctors have a prestigious position in the society, Allah's grace is upon you that he chose you to serve and treat the sick and suffering humanity of the society.

He further lamented that patience and tolerance has completely disappeared in



the society today, people associated with every field of life, especially the medical field, should maintain patience, tolerance and courtesy in their professional duties.

Health Advisor Dr. Riaz Anwar on this occasion offered collective prayers

said that government is committed to provide all kinds of facilities to people in health sector at their door step.

Health Advisor Dr. Riaz Anwar on this occasion offered collective prayers

on the death of former Federal Minister Gohar Ayub.

He said that the students of this institution have excelled at the national and international level.

The students who graduated from here are patronizing not only the entire province but also the armed forces and many organizations around the world. This institution is also called the mother institution of other medical and

dental colleges which have been established in this province for more than 70 years.

Earlier, Dean KMC during welcome note congratulated all graduated students and their families, he said that KMC with glorious history of almost 70 years, has traditionally attracted the best and the brightest of the next generation.

He said that it remains a leader in medical education and our students continue to do exceptionally well in all academic metrics.

He also thanked Prof. Dr. Omar Taimur Attiq for gracing the convocation as the most distinguished alumnus of KMC as endorsed by our academic council.

He added Khyber Medical College has excellent faculty who are rendering excellent services at national and international

level. Khyber Medical College is the first institution of the province which has made its mark in teaching medicine at the national and rather international level.

This institution has produced more than 10,000 doctors and now 215 students have been awarded degrees.

The students who are toppers in the merit list get admission in this institution, he added.

Along with this, there is 1,300 bedded Khyber Teaching Hospital which has modern facilities, best laboratory, operation theater and other facilities where all the students are taught the latest and best experiences.

The dean also requested the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to grant university status to Khyber Medical College.

## Asma tendered resignation

PESHAWAR (INP): The Central Deputy Information Secretary of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Asma Alamgir, has tendered her resignation, citing internal disagreements within the party as the primary reason for her decision.

In her official statement, Alamgir expressed that her departure stems from differences with both central and provincial party officials, emphasizing that certain elements are contributing to the weakening of the party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Highlighting the enduring commitment of the late Shaheed Benazir Bhutto to the party, Asma Alamgir remarked, "Shaheed Benazir Bhutto has always sacrificed for the party. Some central and provincial officials are not tolerating my position in the party."

She clarified that her allegiance lies with the party itself, as she initially

## Repatriation of foreigners continues

PESHAWAR (APP): The repatriation of illegally staying foreigners from different parts of the country, including KP, continues, the Home and Tribal Affairs Department, KP said.

According to the data of KP Home Department, 2,18,482 people have gone through Torkham.

Likewise, 3263 foreign refugees were returned back to their homeland from Angoor Ada, Department of Home Affairs, said. Similarly, foreigners have been transferred to their homeland from the Khar Lachi border, Home and Tribal Affairs Department said.

A total of 222,164 people have gone to their homeland since September 17, Home and Tribal Affairs Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said.

As many as 305 illegal foreigners were also repatriated through the Torkham border, with a total 3,263 illegally residing Afghans being returned so far and another 2476 illegal Afghans were repatriated from KP.

## Vintage, classic car-rally rolls through Peshawar



**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The much-anticipated Vintage and Classic Car Rally kicked off in Peshawar, showcasing 51 iconic vehicles from the 1930s to the 1970s. The rally commenced on November 12 in Karachi, making its way through Lahore and Islamabad before reaching the historic Balahisar Fort in Peshawar.

Enthusiasts gathered at the fort Balahisar to witness

the magnificent display of vintage cars, expressing gratitude to the Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps North for their support.

The event has become a highlight for car aficionados, drawing attention to the rich history of automobiles. Organizers and participating car owners lauded the reception at Fort Balahisar, emphasizing the significance of showcasing historical vehicles in this iconic setting.

The rally is set to culminate on November 19, 2023, at the Services Club in Peshawar, promising a grand finale for attendees.

The Vintage and Classic Car Rally has become an annual tradition, gaining momentum each year.

This edition features renowned brands such as Mercedes, Ford, Chevrolet, Buick, Mini, and Volkswagen, creating a nostalgic journey through automotive history.

## CVS organizes Biosecurity and Biological Weapons Convention

PESHAWAR (APP): College of Veterinary Sciences (CVS) University of Agriculture Peshawar (UAP) conducted an awareness session about "Biosecurity and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)" in Pathology Laboratories.

Experts from Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar and Health Security Partners (HSP), USA took part in sessions on variety of topics relevant to Biosecurity and BWC.

Organizer of the event, Dr. Farhan Anwar Khan welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of Biosecurity and BWC.

The event was also attended by Vice Chancellor University of Veterinary Sciences Swat and Principal College of Veterinary Sciences UAP, Prof. Dr. Umar Saddique and Prof. Dr. Sarzamin Khan (Ex Dean FAH&VS).

They appreciated efforts to organize the session and discussing important and crucial issues of Biosecurity and awareness about Biological Weapon Convention.

The participants included faculty members, undergraduate and postgraduate students showed great interest and zeal throughout the sessions. The session was unique of its kind as

Bio-warfare has been considered potential threat to the national and international security.

Dr. Hafsa Muhammad, Assistant Professor, PI, KMU shared details of the program with participants. She discussed about Biosecurity, its history, control and selected agents of great concern related to bioweapon or bio warfare.

She highlighted that history of bio warfare initiated in Europe during 1155 by contaminating wells with infected dead bodies of unknown diseases. Use of biological weapons was also witnessed during World War-I and in 2.

She also highlighted the

## CM condoles over demise of Gohar Ayub

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah on Saturday expressed deep sorrow over the demise of former National Assembly Speaker and Federal Minister, Gohar Ayub Khan.

The Chief Minister extended heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the bereaved family.

He prayed for the departed soul's forgiveness and patience for the bereaved family. In this time of sorrow, we stand with the grieving family of the late Gohar Ayub Khan.

## Earthquake tremors felt

PESHAWAR (INP): Earthquake tremors were felt in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's area of Swat and its surroundings on Saturday.

According to the National Seismic Monitoring Centre, the intensity of the quake was recorded at 5.2 on the Richter scale.

After the earthquake in Mingora and its adjoining areas, people got scared and came out of their houses.

According to the seismological centre, the depth of the earthquake was 207 kilometers, while the epicenter was the border region of Pakistan i.e. Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

## Impacts of irregular movements on Pak-Afghan border on terrorism

**Sajid Anwar Wardak**

Recently Pakistan has been strongly concerned about irregular migrations, particularly when it takes the form of migrant smuggling and human trafficking, as well as related criminal activities including money laundering, passport fraud, terrorism, extortion, and corruption. Pakistan has been accommodating 1.4 million registered refugees since 1980s which is 5th most refugee population hosted by a single country in the world. Most of these refugees are settled in the Northwestern city of Peshawar which is roughly 176 miles away from Kabul. These 1.4 million registered refugees are coupled with another 500,000 undocumented foreign migrants who have sought refuge in Pakistan.

If these undocumented people are considered, it would make Pakistan the 3rd country in international ranking for hosting most refugees. Majority of the refugees/asylum seekers in Pakistan belong to Afghanistan. Documented refugees hold a POR (Proof of Registration) Card which happens to be a legal document that entitles them to stay in Pakistan with a freedom of mobility. Bordering area of Afghanistan and Pakistan is inhabited by tribal people who have historically been interacting with each other since ages.

These close ties across the border helped make the refuge easy for the people of southern and eastern Afghanistan. A survey was done by IOM called "Return Intention Survey (RIS) 2018" which found that out of the total of employed Afghan Refugees, 38% were common laborers.

In contrast, 17% were indulged in entrepreneurial ventures with their own businesses. Skilled workers comprised 14% of the total while 8% drove rikshaws/taxis. Another 7% worked as laborers in the agriculture sector.

Repatriation of refugees has been done simultaneously by the Government of Pakistan. Since 2003, the GOP has repatriated approximately 4.3 million Afghan Refugees from Pakistan. At the same time Pakistan, especially KP is facing an increasing number of crimes and terrorism. Terrorist attacks increased by 27% in 2022 compared to 2021, and the lethality increased, as seen by the Peshawar suicide bombing at the Police Lines Mosque.

Because of that assault, Pakistan experienced one of its deadliest months ever in January 2023, with 134 fatalities and 254 injuries reported from at least 44 terrorist-related attacks.

In Peshawar, the cases of

primary measure for control of biosecurity along with challenges posed by biosecurity.

She also shared her knowledge about dual use dimension of biotechnology and explained the positive and negative use of biotechnology and effects of modern technologies and research on human and other aspects of world.

Komal Hashmi, Resource Person KMU highlighted the international frame works applicable to biosecurity. The Geneva protocol 1925 which affirms the biosecurity governance was also explained in detail.

Dr. Tayyab Ur Rehman

killing, theft, extortion, drug abuse, extraction of organs from the bodies of children, missing vehicles, and street snatching are increased strangely. Accordingly, to the reports and investigations of securities agencies in most of these activities, the illegal Afghan migrants, who carry no record were involved. The reports witnessed that around 5 million US dollars were smuggled to Afghanistan every day, and this has continued to drain Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves. If this problem is not addressed and controlled properly now, it can put Peshawar into terrible trouble shortly.

Another research in 2020 by Jahan Mulk concluded that the migration of Afghan refugees into KP has serious effects on Pakistan's internal security as well as social, political, economic, environmental, and ecological difficulties. The refugee population has made the law-and-order situation worse and has raised the crime rate in KP. The analysis makes it quite evident that the immigrants are exclusively to blame for encouraging the Kalashnikov culture, drug trafficking, and other crimes in KP. Due to the influx of Afghan migrants, crime is on the rise throughout Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's 35 districts, not only in Peshawar.

To put a stop to murders, thefts, and kidnappings for ransom, the state must impose restrictions on their freedom of movement; many of them have criminal records. A surprising and tragic accident occurred in Peshawar when Hasan Tariq, a student at Edward College, was attacked by bandits in broad daylight. Afghani was the murderer, according to the police. Hundreds of security persons have been also targeted and killed in Peshawar by the terrorists. This year 3,911 Afghans were connected in various crimes in K-P.

According to the K-P police commander, 75% of the suicide attacks in the province were carried out by Afghan nationals but in most of these attacks and crimes investigations could not move forward much because the attackers slipped away to Afghanistan. These illegal movements are not only limited to terrorism attacks but also a source of illegal transportation of goods across borders. To control these means a direct increase in taxes and can block drug and currency smuggling, street crimes, kidnapping, and robberies. Crimes and terrorism could be minimized, which is a very positive sign to develop peace, stability, and foreign investment. The common citizen can take a breath of comfort.

## Swapping tobacco growing into crops farming vital to overcome food insecurity, health risks, says experts

PESHAWAR (APP): In the wake of prevailing food crisis faced by our country due to damages wreaked by devastating floods of 2022 and impact of Ukraine-Russia war on global food supply chain, it's an utmost need of the hour to find ways for increasing food production through swapping of tobacco growing practices into crops farming.

These views were expressed by experts in health, nutrition, agriculture and environment sectors while talking with APP.

Transforming of tobacco farming into crops cultivation is essentially needed to overcome grave problem of food insecurity faced by 36.9 percent population of the country besides public health risks related to consumption of

the injurious commodity by millions of people, they emphasized.

"The data of 36.9 percent of population facing food insecurity was compiled by National Nutrition Survey in 2018 while the disastrous floods of 2022 has exacerbated the crisis manifold by plunging additional 2.5 million people into extreme hunger, reaching an all-time high of 8.6 million people," observed Waheed Ahmad, Patron in chief of Pakistan Fruits and Vegetable Importers and Exporters Association (PFVA).

After experiencing unprecedented destruction due to devastating flash flooding in 2022 we are now grappling with monumental food crisis as millions of acres of agricultural land

and crops are damaged, triggering food insecurity due to scarcity of basic food items with their prices skyrocketing, added Waheed Ahmad.

Despite being an agrarian country, we are importing a large verities of food items including basic ones like wheat, pulses, chick peas, garlic, ginger etc and if in case we faced any restriction over arranging shipment of food items, the situation will be very deplorable for the nation, Waheed warns.

Due to difficulties in obtaining LCs (Letter of Credits) from banks because of dollar shortage, importers are facing a lot of problems in continuing business as a result of which shortage is increasing along with increase in

prices, depriving a large number of people to purchase daily use items, he continued.

PFVA chief endorsed the proposal of converting tobacco growing into crop farming as a remedy to counter double threat of prevailing food insecurity and health risks.

He also suggested policy makers to capitalize from the theme of World No Tobacco Day for current year 2023 'Grow Food, Not Tobacco'.

It's suitable time for government authorities and policy-makers to frame and implement suitable policies, strategies, carry research and enable market conditions for tobacco farmers for switching them to growing food crops to curb the food crisis, Waheed reiterated.

"Tobacco is grown in all four provinces, but it is predominantly grown in KP where it is a major part of the local agrarian economy," observed Taimoor Khan, General Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Association for Excellence in Agriculture.

In KP tobacco is grown on around 30,000 hectares of land and if half of this farming area is converted into growing of new variety of garlic, NARC G1, the farmers would make a remarkable earning and profits, Taimoor claimed.

Taimoor is pioneer in farming of NARC G1 introduced by National Agricultural Research Council (NARC) in 2018 with the objective of increasing garlic produc-

tion in the country which is paying billions of rupees on import of the product.

Taimoor said the profit from growing NARC G1 garlic is enormous and from seven months struggle, farmers can earn around Rs. One million from utilization of only one acre of land.

Apart from garlic, there are a lot of other varieties of vegetables and seasonal fruits which can provide much benefits for farming community and also help in meeting the problem of food scarcity in the country.

He also rejected the claim that tobacco farming is contributing in strengthening of country's economy by generating revenue to the tune of Rs. 120 billion on annual basis.

The economic cost of

tobacco consumption by causing different diseases among people is estimated around Rs. 615 billion, three times more than revenue generation in shape of taxes, he added.

"By transforming tobacco farming to food production, we can create ripple effects that promotes food security, improves public health, contributes to the overall well-being of our communities and benefit the environment," opined Aftab Alam Khan, an international expert on climate change and CEO of Resilient Future International.

According to research findings, cultivation of tobacco requires heavy use of pesticides and fertilizers which causes soil degradation and affects its fertility,

thus lowering the used land's capacity to grow other crops.

While appreciating the concept as timely approach for overcoming food security in the country, Aftab stresses measures for maintaining intact the economic chain attracting farmers toward growing of tobacco.

He said government should work over the policy and announce incentives for farming community in a bid to convince them towards switching from their decades old choice of tobacco growing.

"Tobacco control through different measures is need of the hour for ensuring better health of people," commented Dr. Taj Muhammad, Communication Officer Pakistan Chest Society.





## In brief

### One gunned down in Lakki F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: A man was gunned down and his son was injured over a property dispute in Mir Azam Michenkhel village of lakki Marwat district, said police on Saturday. They said that the shooting incident took place in the limits of Dadiwala police station. According to police, Muhammad Qadeer Khan, 54, and his son Fawadullah, 17, were on the way home after offering night prayer when rivals including Saifur Rehman, Younas Khan and Nisar attacked them with assault rifles. Consequently, Qadeer was killed on the spot and his son Fawadullah was injured in the attack. Police said that the body and injured boy were shifted to a local hospital. They said that the attackers fled the crime scene and a case was registered against them under relevant sections of law.

### 41 marriage halls fined

SIALKOT (INP): The district administration continued its crack-down to ensure one dish in wedding ceremonies. A total of 571 inspections were made during the ongoing campaign from November 4 and a fine of Rs2,002,000 was imposed on the owners of 41 marriage halls and marquees for violating the rules. A case was also registered while two accused were arrested. Teams, headed by assistant commissioners in all four tehsils under the supervision of the Sialkot deputy commissioner Captain (Rtd) Shah Mir Iqbal, are checking marriage halls and marquees on a daily basis. According to the data of the district administration, on November 4, eight marriage halls and marquees were found violating one dish policy, on November 5, twelve marriage halls were found to be violating one dish, on November 7, one, on November 9, three, on November 10, five, on November 11, three, on November 12, three, and on November 13, one. Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Captain (Rtd) Shah Mir Iqbal has directed the owners of marriage halls and marquees to ensure strict implementation of the one-dish law and violation would not be tolerated.

### Elderly man killed in clash

BAHAWALNAGAR (INP): An elderly person was killed and another injured as two groups clashed over petty dispute here on Saturday. Police said that members of two groups exchanged hot words over minor issue in Dhudian area of Bahawalnagar. The verbal clash turned violent after which they exchanged blows, fists and attacked each other with batons. An elderly man was killed in the clash while another sustained injured. The suspects fled the scene. The body and injured were shifted to hospital and police after registering a case into the incident started an investigation.

### Honey-making unit busted

G U J R A N W A L A (INP): Food safety teams raided a fake honey-manufacturing unit in Gujranwala and seized 25 kilograms of fake honey, sugar and alum on Saturday. Director General Punjab Food Authority Raja Jahangir Anwar said that glucose, empty bottles, drums and weight machine were also seized during the raid on the factory located at Pindi Bypass Kabaar Market. The DG said that prompt action was taken after receiving a tip-off.



MANSEHRA: KP IGP Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur inaugurating Traffic Police Headquarters.

## Tackling terrorism: KP's struggle for peace

Mehwish Hayat

**TERRORISM** has been a pervasive, unavoidable and destructive force in many regions of the world, and Pakistan is no exception. In particular, the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has confronted its fair share of challenges in looking for peace, harmony and stability. This article explores the complex and ongoing struggle to tackle terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the efforts made by the Provincial Government, Armed Forces and Local Communities to bring about a lasting peace.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, situated in the northwestern part of Pakistan, has been a hotbed of violence and terrorism for many years. Its proximity to the Afghanistan border has made it susceptible to the influence of various terrorist groups. The region has suffered from fanatic belief, sectarian violence, and hostility which has taken a heavy toll on its residents. The circumstances deteriorated in the early 2000s when the U.S. launched war on terror in Afghanistan.

Pakistan Army and law enforcement agencies fully backed by government of Pakistan, has launched multiple operations in KP to combat terrorism. These operations have targeted both local and foreign militant groups, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and al-Qaeda affiliates. The most prominent of these operations include Rah-e-Haq, Rah-e-Raast, Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fasaad.

These efforts have been partially fruitful in wiping out

several terrorist groups, but they have also come with a heavy human and economic cost. The military operations displaced thousands of residents, obliterated infrastructure, and disrupted daily life in the affected areas. Moreover, the peculiarity of "blowback" saw some militants regroup and launch attacks in other parts of the country.

While military operations are pivotal in destroying terrorist networks, maintaining peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa depends more than on just military might. Community engagement and counter-extremism efforts have become central to the strategy. Local communities, civil society organizations, and religious leaders have played a pivotal role in countering extremist ideologies and promoting peace.

Endeavors to restore and reintegrate former militants into mainstream society have been undertaken. Deradicalization centers have been established to provide psychological counseling, education, and vocational training to individuals who renounce violence. These initiatives are pointed at forestalling the radicalization of vulnerable individuals and offering them a path away from extremism.

Education has long been identified as a powerful tool to counter extremist ideologies. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has taken steps to improve its education system by amending the curriculum and introducing subjects that promote tolerance, decisive reasoning, and citizenship education. This is essential for forestalling the radicalization of youth and creating a society that values peace.

The struggle for peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is nowhere near finish; regardless of significant progress, challenges persist. The porous border with Afghanistan despite fencing continues to be a source of concern, permitting militants to cross into Pakistan. Furthermore, poverty and underdevelopment in the region create fertile ground for extremism, making socioeconomic development a crucial component of any counter-terrorism strategy. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's excursion towards peace is intricate and multifaceted. The government must continue to work intimately with local communities, strengthen its law enforcement agencies and intelligence capabilities, and ensure that rehabilitation, restoration and reintegration programs are effective.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's struggle for peace is a testament to the resilience of its people and the commitment of the Pakistani government to eradicate terrorism. While progress has been made, the challenges remain significant. It is imperative that the endeavors to tackle terrorism in this region continue, and the international community plays a supporting role in helping Khyber Pakhtunkhwa find lasting peace and stability. Only through a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach that addresses not only the military aspect but also the social, economic, and educational dimensions can Khyber Pakhtunkhwa truly overcome its history of terrorism and embrace a future of peace and prosperity.

*The Writer is a researcher and a content writer.*

## Dozens join PML-N in Dir F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Dozens of political workers on Saturday announced to join the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz during a function held at Gaddar. The PML-N provincial senior vice president barrister Attaullah Khan welcomed the new entrants and said the party would never leave them alone.

Those who joined the party included Khan Badshah, Azizur Rehman, Ali Haidar, Naseeb Dar, Farhad Ali, Rehman Gul, Sanaullah, Mansoor Ali, Ghulam Haidar, Sultan Khan, Shahab Khan, Raees Khan, Said Rehman, Attaur Rehman, Altaf Hussain, Roshan Ali, Hafizullah, Sabir Rehman, Inayatullah and others. The function was also addressed by the PML-N nominated candidate for PK 16 Barrister Zaidullah, Pervaz Bacha, Daud Khan and others.

**PTI-P leader:** The Pakistan Tahreek Insaf Parliamentarian expected candidate for PK 15 Syed Alam Shah alias Thany Khan on Saturday alleged the PTI workers attacked state installations on May 9 in Dir on the directives of local party lawmakers. Talking to local journalists at Timergara he said that targeting the military installations was tantamount to attack on the state itself. He said the law enforcement agencies should take actions against the former lawmakers involved in instigating workers on riots.

## Gohar Ayub laid to rest

HARIPUR (INP): Funeral prayer of former Speaker National Assembly and foreign minister Gohar Ayub Khan was offered in the Rehana area of district Haripur on Saturday.

A large number of people belonging to all walks of life including social and political leaders attended his Namaz-e-Janaza. Later, father of Omar Ayub was laid to rest in his ancestral graveyard in Haripur. Gohar Ayub Khan died on Friday night in Haripur after a brief illness.

Meanwhile, the Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's caretaker Chief Minister Retired Justice Syed Arshad Hussain Shah in their separate messages expressed deep sorrow over his demise.

## Anti-smog measures, complete lockdown observed in Hafizabad

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: In compliance with directions of the Punjab government regarding anti-smog measures, complete lockdown observed in the district, on Saturday. All business centres, shops Government and private educational institutions and offices remained close till 3 pm. Officers and officials of district administration and police continued patrolling to make lockdown successful.

Officer of different department also inspected educational institutions, markets and shops in Pindi Bhattian, Sukheki Mandi, Jalalpur Bhattian and other towns of the district to ensure implementation on the Punjab government instruction regarding smart lockdown.

Deputy Commissioner Sundas Irshad visited the area situated along-

## Polio a dangerous disease: Dr. Riaz

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Dr Riaz Anwar, Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister has said that polio is a dangerous disease and the whole family suffers when a child is hit by polio virus. Speaking at the uluma conference in Bannu, he said that Pakistan with the help of global partners is fighting the disease and the concerted efforts by all stakeholders would help to eliminate the polio virus completely.

The health department with collaboration of the emergency operation centre had arranged the conference to gain maximum support of religious scholars against the crippling disease. The chief minister' advisor said that people, especially parents should not believe in false propaganda and misconception about the anti-polio vaccine. "The anti-polio vaccine is completely safe for the children's health and

parents should immunise their kids under the age of five in every round", he maintained.

He asked the uluma to come forward and play a proactive role in elimination of polio virus and safeguarding the children from lifelong disability. Bannu divisional commissioner Parwez Sabatkhel said on the occasion that people's belief in misconceptions about anti-polio vaccine was one of the main reasons for prevalence of the disease, causing lifelong paralysis to the children in the southern district. "The entire country, particularly Bannu division will become polio free soon because of awareness among people about the dangerousness of the disease", he claimed.

Provincial secretary health Mahmood Aslam Wazir said that eradication of polio was a common goal therefore the entire world was extending full cooperation to us. He said

that the religious scholars and prayers' leaders should use the mosque platform to raise awareness among people, particularly parents, about the usefulness of the anti-polio vaccine.

District Khateeb Mufti Abdul Ghani and Maulana Zabita Ali Khan underlined the need for integrated efforts to eradicate the crippling disease from Bannu district. "It is unfortunate that the virus could not be eradicated from the region so far", they said, assuring that the religious scholars and clerics will work side by side the divisional and district administrations, health department and other stakeholders to ensure vaccination of all targeted children so as to save them from disability.

Provincial emergency operation centre for polio coordinator Abdul Basit, regional police officer Qasim Ali Khan, Dr Aqeel and officials of partners' organisations were also present.

## PPP manifesto to be unveiled soon: Gillani

MULTAN (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Senator and ex-prime minister, Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, said on Saturday that his party has a comprehensive plan to steer the country out of crisis and to put it on its way to progress and prosperity.

While holding a news conference at Bilawal house here along with President PPP South Punjab Chapter Makhdoom Ahmad Mahmood, Dost Muhammad Khosa and other local leaders, Yousuf Raza Gillani said that law and order, economy, inflation, and unemployment were main issues and PPP has the solution of all these issues.

He informed that the party manifesto regarding upcoming general elections would be unveiled soon. Gillani said that the PPP had rendered matchless sacrifices to strengthen

democracy in the country.

"Political stability leads to economic stability", Gillani added. To a question about whether PPP is part of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani said that we are not part of PDM. However, they were part of the coalition government. He said Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has demanded equal opportunities for all political parties to launch their election campaigns as it was necessary for free, fair and transparent elections.

Gillani said that Pakistan and Afghanistan are twin brothers and prosperous and sovereign Afghanistan was in favour of Pakistan. He said that the Kashmir issue should be resolved as per resolutions of the United Nations and it would help in bringing sta-

bility to the region. He said that 65 percent country's population consisted of youth and PPP Chairman was representing the youth.

Gillani also said that the PPP would contest elections without any seat adjustment. 'politics is a day-to-day affair'. Replying a question about electables, the minister said that the doors of his party were opened. He said that they had conducted a two-day meeting of three divisions of South Punjab regarding election preparations.

He said that PPP workers would fully participate in the PPP Foundation Day which is scheduled in Quetta Balochistan this year. PPP South Punjab president, Makhdoom Ahmad Mahmood said that Pakistan People's Party would give a surprise in the upcoming general elections.

## BISP launches digital training for women

F.P. Report

HARIPUR: Director General Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region Zohra Aslam on Saturday announced the commencement of digital financial training for 160,000 women beneficiaries in the province.

She expressed these views during the three-day concluding session of the digital financial training held at the BISP Haripur office. The Director General BISP KP region said that the pilot phase of this groundbreaking initiative has begun in Haripur, where 275 women initially benefiting from the Benazir Income Support Program will undergo comprehensive training.

The ultimate objective is to extend this financial education to women in other districts of the province following the successful completion of the initial phase, she said. Zohra Aslam highlighted that the training aims to empower women by enhancing their financial management skills, teach-



ing them to save money, create budgets, and achieve financial literacy.

She emphasized the importance of women passing on their acquired knowledge to fellow beneficiaries, fostering a ripple effect of financial empowerment within the community. The training covers a range of topics, including awareness of rights and responsibilities, identification of currency notes, utilization of mobile accounts, savings strategies, investment knowledge, and

awareness about various types of financial fraud.

Assistant Director and Master Trainer Jahanzeb Akhtar provided detailed insights into the fundamental objectives of the training during the session. Assistant Director Saeed Sibad Shah, Focal Person Haripur Rabab Wahab, and other dignitaries were present during the ceremony. In recognition of their dedication and successful completion of the training, Director General Zohra Aslam awarded certificates to the women beneficiaries.

from his office which is a historic and unmatched steps. These views were expressed by the prominent promoter and Chairman BMR International Rana Muhammad Sadique while talking to mediators.

He said that overseas Pakistanis are playing key role to improve national economy because remittances of overseas Pakistanis are more than the whole export of the country. He said that due to corruption and touts in the office of the Protector of Immigration Lahore, difficulties was rising day by day for sending manpower to abroad but now artificial hurdles were removed after cubing corruption and touts from the office by the Incharge Umer Saleem Cheema. He urged the government to take steps for exporting manpower to international market to improve national economy.





## ‘Starvation, disease’ stalk Gaza as fuel shortages block aid



GAZA: Gaza faces the threat of starvation and disease after aid deliveries were halted by a lack of fuel and a communications blackout, humanitarian agencies have warned.

Aid deliveries into the enclave have been suspended again as Israel continues to restrict fuel supplies. The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) said that civilians faced the “immediate possibility of starvation”. The World Health Organization warned that disease is spreading rapidly. The halt in deliveries of humanitarian supplies is deepening the misery of hungry and homeless Palestinians as Israel’s war drags on.

While Israel has been allowing some aid to cross into Gaza via the Rafah border crossing linking the enclave with Egypt, it has allowed barely any fuel through. Aid agencies say this is scuppering the distribution of supplies. Palestinian telecommunications companies Jawwal and Paltel said that their networks went out of service after they ran out of fuel. There have been several communications blackouts in Gaza during the Israeli assault.

Aid agencies stress that the delivery of all aid and medical care depends crucially on fuel supplies. Israel’s war cabinet agreed that it would allow two fuel trucks per day into Gaza “for UN needs,” news wires reported. The fuel is intended to provide “minimal” support for water, sewerage and sanitary systems to prevent pandemics, an official said.

The UN said there would be no cross-border aid operation due to fuel shortages and the communications shutdown. For a second consecutive day, no aid trucks arrived in Gaza due to a lack of fuel for distributing relief. WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain said nearly the entire population was in desperate need of food assistance. “Supplies of food and water are practically non-existent in Gaza

and only a fraction of what is needed is arriving through the borders,” she said in a statement.

“With winter fast approaching, unsafe and overcrowded shelters, and the lack of clean water, civilians are facing the immediate possibility of starvation,” McCain said. “Food production has come to an almost complete halt, markets have collapsed, fishermen cannot access the sea, farmers cannot reach their farms,” Abeer Etefa, a Middle East regional spokesperson for the WFP said. “People are facing the immediate possibility of starvation.” Meanwhile, the World Health Organization said it was very worried about the spread of disease in Gaza, citing more than 70,000 reported cases of acute respiratory infections and at least 44,000 cases of diarrhoea, far more than expected.

With the war about to enter its seventh week, there is no sign of any let-up in Israel’s assault and blockade of Gaza, despite international calls for a ceasefire or at least for humanitarian pauses. Palestinian news agency Wafa reported that at least nine people were killed and others injured in an Israeli strike that hit a group of displaced people near Rafah – the only crossing point for aid. The Israeli military’s chief of staff said Israel was close to destroying Hamas’s military system in the northern Gaza Strip.

The conflict was triggered by a cross-border raid by Hamas fighters on October 7 that killed about 1,200 Israelis, mostly civilians. More than 11,500 Palestinians, at least 4,700 of them children, have now been killed in Israel’s retaliatory military assault on Gaza, according to the enclave’s health ministry. Israel has flattened whole neighbourhoods of Gaza in air and artillery attacks, hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to flee their homes, and the humanitarian situation is catastrophic, aid agencies say. — Aljazeera

## Kenya police: Much-criticised security force to get big pay boost

NAIROBI (BBC): Pay for Kenya’s police and prison officers is set to rise by 40% over three years following proposals in a review of the security sector, President William Ruto has said. The salary increase is intended to boost morale and enhance security.

It was one of the recommendations made by a task force looking in to how to improve policing in the country. Kenyan police have a reputation for brutality and bribery, but there have also been concerns about their welfare. They are poorly paid and some have ended up turning to crime themselves. Several policemen have taken their own lives in recent years and the fact that many struggle with their mental health has been recognised.

In the past there have

been moves to raise their pay but it has not led to a significant change how Kenyans perceive them. The news of the pay rise comes as Kenya grapples with a cost-of-living crisis which has seen the government increase various taxes and charges.

“The review of the terms and conditions of service for our men and women in uniform will enhance their morale and transform our security. It will increase our capacity to protect Kenyans,” President Ruto said. He said the recommendation for a 40% pay rise in three years was “well-considered... we will now await the workings the Salaries and Remuneration Commission to make the necessary adjustments so that we implement the decision”.

The president said he would deal firmly with cor-

ruption, which he recognised was a serious problem in the police service. He added that the salary increase as well as other proposed reforms would deal with the problems identified by the task force - underfunding, deficient leadership, structural and organisational weakness and corruption. The task force, led by former chief justice David Maraga, was set up last December, soon after Mr Ruto became president.

It was asked to investigate and suggest how to improve the working and living conditions of police, prison and the National Youth Service (NYS) officers, as well as other reforms. Among other things, the task force recommended that the minimum age to enter the police force should be increased to 21 from 18 years.

## Russia seeks to outlaw LGBTQ movement as ‘extremist’

MOSCOW: Russian authorities have filed a lawsuit in the Supreme Court to outlaw the LGBTQ “international public movement”, in the latest crackdown against the country’s beleaguered community. The Ministry of Justice said it had “lodged an administrative legal claim” aimed at recognising the LGBTQ movement “as extremist and banning its activity in Russia”.

The move is by far the most drastic step in the decade-long crackdown on LGBTQ rights in Russia unleashed under President Vladimir Putin, who has put “traditional family values” at the cornerstone of his rule. The ministry did not specify whether it was seeking the closure of any specific groups or organisations, or if the designation would apply more broadly to the LGBTQ community, causes and individuals.

In a statement, it also accused the “LGBT movement operating on the territory of the Russian Federation” of “various signs and manifestations of extremism, including incitement to social and religious hatred”. A court hearing is scheduled for November 30, the ministry said.

“Russian authorities are once again forgetting that the LGBTQ+ community are human beings,” said Dilya Gafurova, who heads the Sphere human rights group from exile. Authorities “don’t just want to erase us from the public field: they want to ban us as a social group,” Gafurova added. Moscow’s crackdown against liberal-leaning groups has intensified since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine last year, which has seen the LBGTQ community in the country face increasing curtailment of their rights.

The Kremlin has since ramped up its rhetoric about protecting “traditional values” from what it called the West’s “degrading” influence. Russia has used the “extremist” label against swaths of rights organisations and opposition groups, opening up their members to criminal prosecution. In July, lawmakers banned medical intervention and administrative procedures outlawing gender reassignment.

Lawmaker Pyotr Tolstoy said at the time that the measure was about “erecting a barrier to the penetration of Western anti-family ideology”. Last November, lawmakers also approved a bill banning all forms of LGBTQ “propaganda”, a move with far-reaching consequences for book publishing and film distribution. Russia has for years been an inhospitable environment for anyone whose views differ from the headline interpretation of “traditional values” promoted by the Kremlin and the Orthodox church.

The country passed a notorious ban on so-called “gay propaganda” in 2013. Same-sex marriage was also effectively outlawed in 2020 by a constitutional amendment stipulating marriage is a union between a man and a woman. Out of 49 European countries, the Rainbow Europe organisation ranked Russia third from bottom in terms of tolerance of LGBTQ people. — Aljazeera

## Sudan civil war: Darfur’s Jem rebels join army fight against RSF

DARFUR (BBC): Two rebel groups from Sudan’s Darfur region say they will fight alongside the army in the country’s civil war. This comes after the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) made major gains in Darfur, where it has been accused of ethnic cleansing.

Rebel leader Gibril Ibrahim told BBC Newsday they “want to defend their civilians” from the RSF, which he says has been burying people alive. He said the decision to join forces with the army was not an easy one. The leader of the Justice and Equality Movement (Jem) said it had taken seven months to come to an agreement. The relationship between Jem and the Sudanese army is fraught. Mr Ibrahim’s brother was killed by the army, who was previously the group’s leader.

Jem and the Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM) took up arms in Darfur in 2003, accusing the government of marginalising the region’s black African communities. The government then mobilised Arab

militias against them, leading to what has been described as the 21st Century’s first genocide. These militias have since transformed into the RSF, which has been fighting the army for control of the country since April.

The RSF has taken several key towns in Darfur in recent weeks, including the country’s second biggest city, Nyala. Last week, there were reports they had massacred hundreds of people in the West Darfur capital of El Geneina. The RSF has denied responsibility for the killings, saying they were part of a “tribal conflict”. A joint statement from Jem and the SLM read: “We have announced ending any neutrality and joining the military operations at all frontlines without hesitation.”

Jem and the SLM are not as strong as they used to be, but their entry into the Sudanese civil war is significant. Both Darfuri rebel leaders signed a peace deal in 2020, and have since been closer to the Sudanese military than would once have seemed possible. It is possible

JEM and SLM will see their ranks swell with new recruits - increasing their importance on the Sudanese political scene.

In joining the fray now - after months of professed neutrality - they seek to defend their support base in Darfur, in particular the Zaghawa ethnic group both men come from. They will also have concluded that an RSF victory would be disastrous for them, and Darfur. Mr Ibrahim expressed concern at the RSF’s advances, saying he feared Sudan would end up divided.

There are fears it could declare its own government in the impoverished war-torn western region. The international dimension is significant too. The Zaghawa are present in Chad as well as Sudan, and dominate Chadian politics. Mr Ibrahim and others have accused Chad of supporting the RSF. He will be hoping that he can use his connections - including with Chad’s leader Gen Mahamat Deby - to cut any ties between Chad and the RSF.

## Belarus linked to forcible transfer of Ukrainian children

BELARUS: Belarus has been collaborating with Moscow in the forcible transfer of thousands of Ukrainian children from Russian-occupied Ukraine in a programme “directly overseen” by the country’s President Alexander Lukashenko, according to research from Yale School of Public Health’s Humanitarian Research Lab (HRL).

The report, released, said at least 2,442 children aged between six and 17 years old had been taken to 13 facilities across Belarus since Russia began its full-scale invasion in February 2022 until the end of October this year. “Russia and Belarus are targeting children for removal from Ukraine, coordinating their transport from occupied Ukraine through Russia to Belarus, and subjecting children to re-education, sometimes including military training, sometimes including military training,” the Yale HRL researchers said.

They said Belarus’s authoritarian leader, Alexander Lukashenko, a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, had “jointly directed and co-funded” the deportations with Putin under the Union State initiative that was first agreed back in 1996. “Belarus’s direct involvement in Russia’s forced deportation of children represents a collaboration between Belarus’s authoritarian

leader [Alexander] Lukashenko and Russia’s President Vladimir Putin, with various pro-Russia and pro-regime organisations facilitating the deportation,” they said.

Putin is already the subject of an International Criminal Court arrest warrant over Moscow’s alleged forcible transfer of Ukrainian children from occupied territories, along with the country’s Children’s Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova. Taking children under the age of 18 across a border without the consent of a parent or guardian is illegal under international humanitarian law.

Kyiv, which estimates some 19,000 children have been abducted, has already said it is investigating Belarus’s alleged involvement in the policy. In September, Belarus’s state media published photos of dozens of Ukrainian children arriving in the country from the Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhia regions for a “three-week holiday”. The children were shown getting off a train carrying backpacks and suitcases, mostly looking solemn.

Alexei Talai, the head of the charity leading the programme, said Lukashenko had described it as an “important humanitarian project” that needed to continue. Talai was also mentioned as a facilitator in report. The Yale HRL is part of The

Conflict Observatory, which receives funding from the United States.

“These revelations of Belarusian involvement are part of a broader campaign directed by Russia,” the US State Department said in a statement. “Members of Russia’s military and government have deported hundreds of thousands of Ukraine’s civilians to Russia, including children who have been forcibly separated from their families. The United States will continue to pursue accountability for actors involved in abuses connected with Russia’s war against Ukraine.”

Moscow has denied allegations that it is involved in forcible transfers or separating children from their families. The Yale HRL report said the children had been taken from at least 17 cities in Ukraine’s eastern Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhia regions, parts of which are occupied by Russia. They were put on trains to Rostov-on-Don in Russia before being transported to Belarus.

It said more than 2,050 of the children had been taken to the “Dubrava children’s camp” in Minsk, the Belarusian capital. The researchers said it was not clear how many of the children it had documented remained in Belarus. — Aljazeera

## European nations join Myanmar genocide case

BRUSSELS: Five European countries and Canada have teamed up to join the genocide case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that accuses Myanmar of committing genocide against the Rohingya community. Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Britain filed a joint declaration of intervention with the case, lodged by The Gambia in 2019, the United Nations’ highest court said.

The group cited “common interest in the accomplishment of the high purposes” of the 1948 convention on the prevention and punishment of genocide. “We want to make a contribution to clarifying and combating genocide. We are particularly focus on violence against women and children,” Tania von Uskar, Director-General for Germany’s Legal Affairs said in a post on X. The court said that The Maldives has filed a separate declaration accusing Myanmar of genocide.

Under ICJ’s rules, the declarations mean these countries will be able to make legal arguments in the case brought forward in 2019 following international outrage at the treatment of the Muslim-minority Rohingya community. A UN fact-finding mission concluded that a

2017 military campaign by Myanmar that drove 730,000 Rohingya into neighbouring Bangladesh had included “genocidal acts”. Myanmar has denied genocide, rejecting the UN findings as “biased and flawed”. It says its crackdown was aimed at Rohingya rebels who had carried out attacks.

But the ICJ rejected Myanmar’s objections to the genocide proceedings in July last year, paving the way for the case to be heard in full. Bangladesh currently hosts nearly one million Rohingya refugees who live in overcrowded and under-resourced camps. Last month, Myanmar officials met Rohingya refugee families there to discuss their repatriation.

Under a repatriation plan, brokered during a three-way meeting between the two countries and China, Myanmar agreed to accept the return of about 3,000 refugees by December. But many refugees have refused to go back, fearing further persecution. In recent days, escalating tensions in Myanmar have seen nearly 600 Rohingya people fleeing to neighbouring Indonesia.

However, while the people of Aceh in Indonesia have previously welcomed refugees, who are taken

to a temporary camp before they are usually moved to other parts of Indonesia, tensions have been escalating as more and more Rohingya have arrived. About 250 Rohingya refugees were afloat off the coast of Indonesia after attempts to land the previous day were aborted by local residents. It was the third boat to reach Indonesia’s northernmost province. The two others, which arrived in a different location, were allowed to land.

In a statement sent to Al Jazeera, KontraS Aceh, the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence, said that one of the issues was that the government had no comprehensive plan to deal with the refugees, despite a 2016 presidential decree that states that the government will collaborate with institutions such as the United Nations and other international organisations to handle arrivals. “When the government is silent and lets this problem drag on, this kind of rejection happens and it is very troubling,” Azharul Husna, the coordinator of KontraS in Aceh said. KontraS Aceh added that it had urged the Indonesian government to help the refugees and immediately ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention. — Aljazeera

## Indonesia faces new refugee crisis as Rohingya boat pushed back to sea

MEDAN: Indonesia is facing a renewed refugee crisis after the arrival of three boats in as many days with nearly 600 Rohingya people on board. Two of the boats, the first with 146 passengers and the second with 194, were able to land on beaches in Pidie on Aceh’s east coast, with refugees including women and children pictured collapsed on the sand after reportedly spending a month at sea.

A third boat carrying some 249 people was met with resistance from locals in Bireuen who refused to allow it to land and pushed the vessel back out to sea. When the boat tried to land a second time – a little further south at Muara Batu – and refugees staggered onto the beach, they were lined up and escorted back, according to witnesses on the ground. Fishermen at the beach handed some of the refugees packets of food and bottles of water, but the situation continued to escalate late into the evening.

In video footage sent to Al Jazeera by aid workers on the beach, hundreds of refugees then jumped off the boat and swam ashore, staging a sit-in on the sand. Late in the evening,

under the cover of darkness, more footage showed emaciated people, some who could barely walk, being dragged into the sea by residents and forcibly returned to their boat. Refugees on the beach, including children, prayed and cried as they begged to be allowed to remain in Aceh, which lies on the tip of Sumatra island and is Indonesia’s most western province.

The situation appeared more volatile than in previous years, with refugees and residents shouting at each other, and refugees clinging to each other in an effort to avoid being marched into the water. The people of Aceh have previously welcomed refugees, who are taken to a temporary camp before they are usually moved to other parts of Indonesia, but tensions have been escalating in recent years as more and more Rohingya have arrived.

Azharul Husna, the coordinator of the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (KontraS) in Aceh, said that the area had seen about 30 boat arrivals between 2009 and 2023, but the frequency had increased since the February 2021 military coup in Myanmar.

“Previously, we would see one arrival a year, or two arrivals a year, but now we are seeing four or five boats arriving annually,” she said.

Arrivals typically peak from November to February, Husna said, as many refugees try to flee during the monsoon season when winds pick up and carry boats more quickly across the Andaman Sea from Bangladesh, where hundreds of thousands have been living in squalid camps since a 2017 military crackdown in Myanmar. However, the monsoon season also brings heavy rain and storm swells, making sea crossings perilous, especially for people travelling in barely seaworthy boats.

It is rare to see so many arrivals in such a short space of time at the start of what is known as the sailing season, and refugee experts predict more boats could arrive in the coming months, given the difficult conditions in Bangladesh and the worsening crisis in Myanmar. In a statement sent to Al Jazeera, KontraS Aceh said that one of the issues was that the government had no comprehensive plan to deal with the refugees, despite a 2016 presidential decree that states that the

government will collaborate with institutions such as the United Nations and other international organisations to handle arrivals.

Article 9 of the Indonesian presidential decree explicitly states that refugees who are found in an emergency situation at sea should be given emergency aid and allowed to land on Indonesian soil if they are in danger. Indonesia is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the ensuing 1967 Protocol.

“When the government is silent and lets this problem drag on, this kind of rejection happens and it is very troubling,” KontraS Aceh’s Husna said. “When the government just shuts its eyes to what is happening, especially allowing refugees to be returned to the ocean, it clearly demonstrates a lack of empathy and the country’s commitment to upholding human rights is questioned.”

KontraS Aceh said it urged the government to help the refugees and immediately ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention. Meanwhile, Lilianne Fan, the co-founder of the humanitarian organisation, Geutanyoe Foundation, told Al Jazeera that it was “sad to see the refusal for disem-

barkation in Aceh and the harsh treatment of Rohingya refugees by locals who have a tradition of welcoming anyone in need of help”. According to the principle of non-refoulement, countries are forbidden from returning refugees or asylum seekers to a country where they would be in danger of persecution, although Fan told Al Jazeera that this would not apply in this case, as the refugees were not being forced to return to Myanmar.

She added that the pushback from locals in recent years was perhaps understandable, because some people had been prosecuted and imprisoned after being accused of human trafficking after helping refugees on to dry land. “It is not very surprising given that there has been very little support for Acehnese communities and local governments for a proper refugee shelter after many years of taking refugees in with open arms,” she said. “There has also been a feeling that they have been punished for helping, as many have been accused of abetting smuggling networks.”

In a statement, Indonesia’s foreign ministry said that it had no obligation or capacity to accommodate refugees or provide a permanent solution for

their resettlement. “Temporary shelters that have been provided all this time [by Indonesia] were for humanitarian reasons,” Lalu Muhamad Iqbal, a ministry spokesperson, said. “Ironically, many countries that are signatories to the refugee convention have closed their doors and used a push-back approach to refugees.”

Thailand and Malaysia, a popular destination for the Rohingya, have previously pushed back boats of refugees, but neither country is a signatory to the UN refugee convention. In Europe, however, where many countries are signatories, governments are trying to prevent people from crossing the Mediterranean or the English Channel in small boats, while Australia has long maintained a policy of refusing those who arrive by boat the chance to settle in the country.

“In Indonesia’s experience in handling refugees, we have found that Indonesia’s kindness in providing temporary shelter has been exploited by human trafficking networks,” the spokesman added. Aid workers on the ground in Aceh told Al Jazeera that they were still trying to confirm the location and status of the third boat. — Aljazeera



## The Frontier Post

FOUNDER  
Rehmat Shah Afridi  
JALIL AFRIDI  
Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

“USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

# State Bank vision, truth and fallacy

**T**HE State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has recently launched SBP's Vision 2028, in a highly advertised ceremony held at SBP Headquarters Karachi. The SBP's Vision 2028 is a strategic plan for the period 2023-2028, highlighting the central bank's vision, mission and key objectives to be pursued over the next five years. The Bank has developed a strategic plan through a consultative and inclusive process with key stakeholders. Speaking on the occasion, the Governor SBP claimed that SBP Vision 2028 represents its commitment to foster price and financial stability and to contribute to the sustainable economic development of the country. According to him, evolving risks and challenges to the economy and financial stability, including climate change, rapid digital innovations and disruptions, and growing cyber security threats, have also been kept in perspective while developing the plan. According to him, the SBP Vision 2028 revolves around six strategic goals that include reduction in inflation, enhancing effectiveness and stability of the financial system, promoting inclusive, transformation into a Shariah-compliant banking system, and conversion of the SBP into a high-tech, people-centric organization.

Historically, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) serves as the central bank of the country and plays a crucial role in the national economy. The Bank makes an important contribution to shaping the Country's economic outlook through regulating national monetary policy, currency issuance, supervision and monitoring of financial institutions to maintain a stable and sound financial system, foreign exchange management, and financial sector development along with providing financial support to banks or financial institutions facing liquidity crises to maintain stability in the financial system. Over the decades, the State Bank has played a crucial role in ensuring price stability, fostering economic growth, and maintaining financial stability within the country, yet the body failed to introduce stringent economic and fiscal reforms in the South Asian nation that curb financial frauds, cartelization and manipulation of the government policies on the part of private businesses, banking and liquidity sectors. At the same time, the Central Bank failed to assimilate modern technological innovations, in the fields of online trade, credit and blockchain industries, anti-money laundering regimes as well as funds monitoring and tax regulation in its nation.

Over the past years, Pakistan's economic outlook has been long-suffering and volatile because of persistent stress on foreign reserves, depreciation of the Pak-rupee, high inflation, global energy crisis and ceasing political instability in the country. The Country's failure in economic micromanagement, lax control over the domestic market, effervescent local currency and non-persistent economic policies of the successive governments remained major challenges for the financial regulator throughout the past. Presently, the SBP has designed a five-year strategy to upgrade its regulatory mechanisms, by embracing essential legislation, technological innovations, new global financial trends, productivity and competitiveness, financial resilience and modern techniques that have now become vital to compete with the fast-paced global financial market. The Central Bank has initiated a dearly needed reform/ transformation program that is a delayed endeavour, yet late coming is better than never.

## The CSTO's terrorism perspective

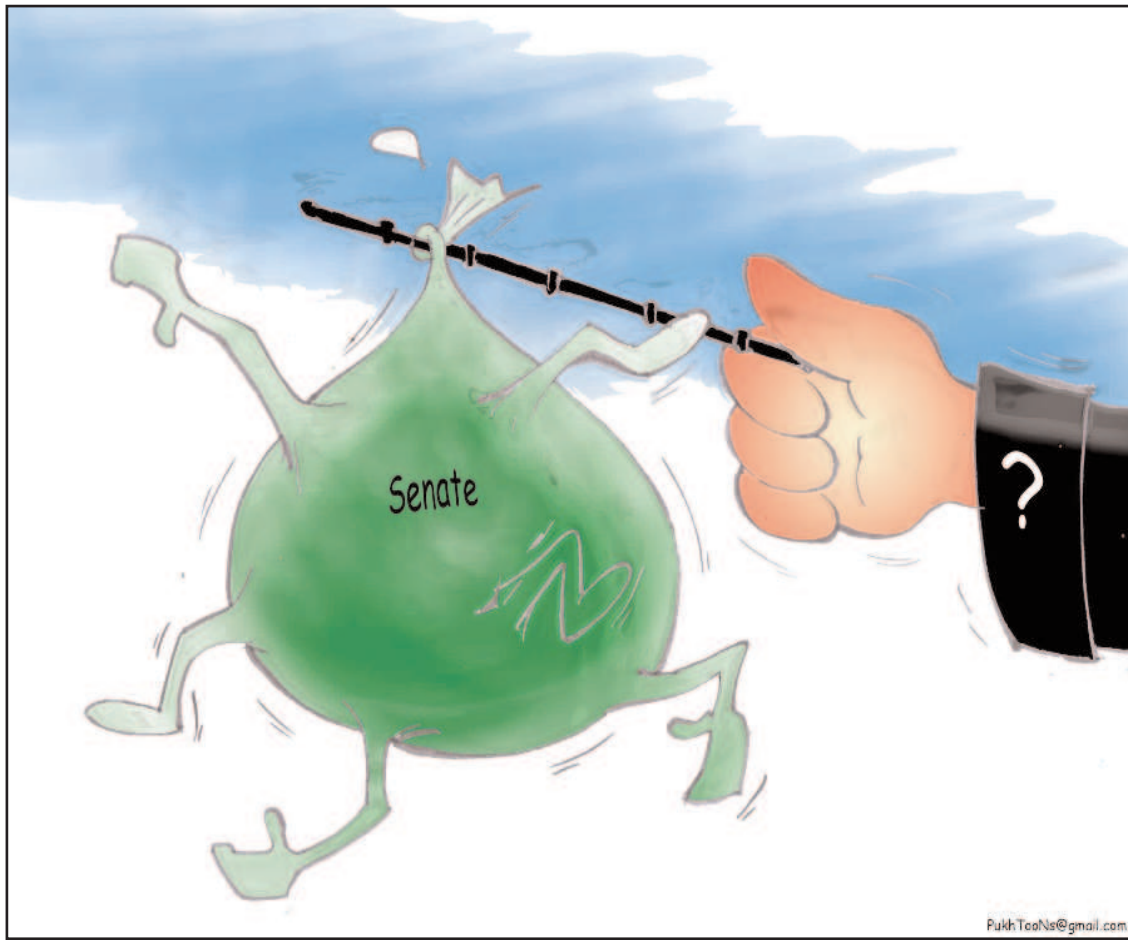
**A** senior Russian military general said that the CSTO perceives Afghanistan's north as a threat to its member states and the military committee of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is voting to curb the threat of terrorism from Afghanistan. According to him, there is no overarching problem regarding military security or military danger coming from the territory of Afghanistan, yet the forum realizes that the current leadership of Afghanistan does not yet fully have the situation in the country under control, including in the northern areas that border CSTO member states. Meanwhile, the Islamic Emirate rejected this claim and declared that northern Afghanistan is one of the safe parts of the country and Afghanistan's soil is not a threat to any country.

After Pakistan's calls for curbing militancy and removing terror safe havens from neighbouring nation, the regional states and global community consistently echoed its concerns regarding the security risks animating out of Afghanistan. Historically, the regional states had already been anxious about the future geostrategic dimensions after the Islamic Emirate refused political inclusiveness and carried forward its jihadist legacy instead of transforming into a nation-state. The global community is of the view that Numerous transnational terrorist groups are amassed in the country and the incumbent Afghan government lacks the capacity/ will either to defeat determined IS-K or push other terrorist groups including the TTP out of their country.

Interestingly, the Afghan interim government currently downplays the risk of terrorism and declares that the entire geography of the country is under the administration of the Islamic Emirate and denies the presence of any transnational terrorist groups on its soil. In fact, the reality can't change through unreal assertions and doubtful claims in this era of hybrid media and technological excellence. Meanwhile, the military strength, Intelligence and Counterterrorism capabilities of the Afghan government are not hidden from the rest of the world. The CSTO's perspective regarding terrorism risk in Northern Afghanistan and the bloc strategy to tackle that threat has serious political, security and economic repercussions for Afghanistan which is facing similar challenges on its borders with Pakistan and Iran. Historically, terrorism is a shared risk and it merits a collective response and teamwork. It is of utmost importance that the regional nations use the SEO platform to effectively tackle this issue, so peace flourishes and good neighbourliness triumphs in the region.

### Important Notice

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



## Apartheid South Africa reached a tipping point, Israel will, too

Suren Pillay

**W** RITING on October 27, the Associated Press's Josef Federman shared some stark observations: "Just three weeks into the deadliest war between Israel and Hamas, it already is clear that the bloodshed has flipped long-standing assumptions in Israel and the region upside down. Israel's military and intelligence services were exposed as incompetent and ill-prepared ... Israelis' sense of personal security was shattered."

Even if many older paradigms have collapsed, as some observers have pointed out, Israel has turned with a vengeance to a familiar one: overwhelming brutal violence. The death toll statistics coming out of Gaza now are unprecedented. The Israeli army's relentless bombing has slain more than 11,000 people, including more than 4,500 children; thousands are also missing, buried under the rubble and likely dead as well.

The number of children killed in Gaza has surpassed the annual number of children killed in conflict globally; the number of civilians killed in Gaza has now exceeded the total death toll in Ukraine since February 2022. These numbers are climbing every day, as the Israeli military continues to indiscriminately bomb civilian buildings, including hospitals and schools. As a Black South African, watching these horrific events unfold, I cannot but reflect on my country's own violent past.

I recall the relentless planning and violence that accompanied the last decades of white South Africa's attempts to make apartheid work. I remember the fears that grew among white South Africans as they put their trust in a sophisticated military capability, a conscription army, a nuclear weapons capacity and steadfast friends in the West, particularly the United States, Britain and France. It was the height of the Cold War and South Africa claimed to be the only democracy in Southern Africa, protecting "civilisation" from the encroaching threats surrounding it. Its military

might and expansive police force were accompanied by a series of policies designed to maintain white minority rule. Each attempt to impose new such policies failed in the face of mass resistance. The more they failed, the more brutal the violence meted out by the military and the police with the encouragement of white politicians and a terrified white electorate.

The "terrorists", as the national liberation movements were referred to, could not be crushed by the mightiest army in Southern Africa. By mid-1985 a significant section of the white electorate and some in the ruling party realised that the problem of Black resistance was not going to go away. Something more drastic was going to be required. The then State President, the hawkish P W Botha, himself a former defence minister, was encouraged by a faction of his party to open parliament that year with a conciliatory speech, to make a grand policy statement that would offer the Black majority a hopeful sign that they would become part of the whites-only democracy that was South Africa. It was called the "crossing of the Rubicon speech". Botha played along but at the last minute balked and defiantly went in the opposite direction, instead giving a speech in which he vowed to intensify the fight against "terrorism", refusing to negotiate with "terrorists" in prison, like Nelson Mandela.

What followed was the extension of the state of emergency in South Africa and the killing of thousands of people resisting apartheid rule, as Botha and his faction turned to more and more violence and repression. Eventually, his own party leaders staged a palace coup and installed F W de Klerk in power. The new president and the faction he represented had realised that the end was nigh, that the decades of repression were not succeeding in making a political and economic system work that excluded the majority and only benefited the white minority. De Klerk and his faction realised that whites were not going to win the war,

even if they had more guns, bombs, tanks and artillery and could probably continue to rule for a long time through sheer force. It was not sustainable because the more repression they deployed, the more resistance they faced and the more white South Africans lived in fear.

The more the violence was flashed across the world's television screens, the harder it became for white South Africa's friends in the West to steadfastly support it. It was a tipping point that led to political negotiations, to talking to "the terrorists" who they saw as their existential enemy. It was a tipping point that created the pathway to a single state with equal citizenship for all, based on residency, not origins, race, religion or ethnicity. Until October 7, Israel also had the confidence that its sophisticated military and intelligence capabilities, its design of urban space and use of walls and barriers to police, control and monitor every aspect of Palestinian life, were going to work to manage its "Palestinian problem" successfully. Israel's powerful allies in the West were even facilitating the making of new friends in Africa, the Gulf and South Asia through military cooperation and the sales of arms and intelligence technologies.

Most Israelis and their political leaders were so confident that this management of their "Palestinian problem" was working that any reference to "peace talks" or even rhetorical acknowledgement of a two-state solution to the outside world became unnecessary, moribund and superfluous. Life could proceed. Rave parties could happen in the desert. The normality that had become normal continued in the abnormality of occupation. Until October 7. Ordinary Israelis may begin to realise that no matter how sophisticated or strong the Israeli army, Mossad, or the apartheid regime appear, the "Palestinian problem" is not going to go away as long as the Palestinians are alive. Just as with white South Africans, fear grows exponentially. And Israel is responding to that fear with

a colossal bombing campaign of annihilation. But as white South Africans learned, violence cannot eradicate the "problem", nor create the life of peace they might long for.

At this point, several questions arise. How far does the notion "the ends can justify the means" extend to make the scale of the killings of civilians acceptable to those who support Israel's right to defend itself? How far will Israelis go before they realise they cannot live with the blood of thousands of children on their hands? Can Israelis and the friends of Israel justify to themselves these actions as expressions of a civilisation that claims to value human life in an equal manner? Do Israelis want to be remembered as the people who attempted to exterminate men, women and children through an act of collective punishment?

Whatever may be left in the ruins and rubble that awaits us after this war on Gaza, Israel's "Palestinian problem" will not have gone away. Ordinary Israelis will surely never sleep again with the confidence that their state can fully protect them. They will do well to learn from white South Africans who, after 300 years of minority rule, realised it was an impossible political project to continue to defend so violently, and still maintain any semblance of a moral high ground.

There is a tipping point when even for the defenders of such a project, the faint question rings louder and louder in the collective conscience: how far is too far? There can be no going back to the promises of security based on what was before. There can be no going forward in peace if it means more and more blood of children and civilians haunting successive generations who will have to take responsibility for the actions unfolding before our eyes today. As a South African who has lived to cross the Rubicon, I hope this catastrophe will force Israelis to see that only a just and inclusive political solution based on equal citizenship for all is going to bring them freedom from fear.

Aljazeera

## Gaza war is taking a shocking toll on journalists

Kerry Boyd Anderson

**T**HE recent eruption of violence in Israel and Gaza has created a huge spike in the number of journalists killed globally, highlighting the dangers that many journalists - and especially those operating in Gaza - face. The Committee to Protect Journalists recently reported that the "Israel-Gaza war has become the deadliest month for journalists covering conflict" since the organization started investigating and recording journalist fatalities in 1992. As of Tuesday, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 42 journalists and media workers had been confirmed killed since the Oct. 7 Hamas attack, including 37 Palestinians, four Israelis and one Lebanese. Other sources suggest that the toll might be even higher.

Since the committee has been tracking the deaths of journalists who were confirmed to be killed due to their work (classified as murdered, killed in crossfire or combat or killed during a dangerous assignment), the deadliest year was 2009, when 76 journalists were killed. The year 2023 might set a new record if the last month's trend continues. The four Israeli journalists and media workers known to have been killed so far died during the Hamas attack on their communities and a music festival. The families of two of them were also killed in the attack.

Similarly, though in greater numbers, many Palestinian journalists have died alongside their families in the last few weeks. Their deaths demonstrate that simply existing in Gaza right now is risky, as many of them died in Israeli airstrikes that also killed their families, friends and colleagues. Some of the Palestinian journalists, as well as the Lebanese journalist, were killed specifically while reporting on the war. Journalists in Gaza play a crucial role in ensuring that Palestinians' voices and experiences are heard outside of the Strip. While many Israeli and foreign journalists reported from inside Israel on the Hamas attack, Egypt and Israel have blocked foreign journalists from entering Gaza - except for a few that are embedded with the Israeli military. The inability of foreign journalists to report on the ground in Gaza makes the work of local Palestinian journalists all the more important.

Yet, journalists in Gaza face immense challenges. As the large number of those killed demonstrates, they face significant risks of death or injury. They also have to cope with internet outages, extreme transportation difficulties and insufficient water and food. They face potential repression from Hamas as well as Israeli efforts to undermine their credibility. They are exhausted and traumatized. While those challenges often exist for journalists in war zones, journalists in Gaza must deal with a less common challenge for journalists

covering wars: their own families and communities are caught up in the conflict that they are covering. Multiple journalists have reported as airstrikes slam into buildings around them, sometimes as they comfort their own children while broadcasting. In addition to finding food, water and rest for themselves, they struggle to meet their family's most basic needs.

As journalists in Gaza visit hospitals and other sites, they are afraid to find loved ones in the rubble or among the dead and injured. They fear that, while they are out doing their work, their families will die at home. For several Palestinian journalists, these fears have become reality. Perhaps the most well-known case was the tragic experience of Al Jazeera bureau chief Wael Al-Dahdouh, who was reporting on air on Oct. 25 when he learned that a strike had hit the building where his family was staying after fleeing northern Gaza. On live TV, Al-Dahdouh learned that his wife, teenage son, young daughter and baby grandson had been killed. Video footage showed him arriving at the site of the strike and then mourning over their bodies at the hospital. Showing his mettle as a dedicated journalist, Al-Dahdouh shared his personal tragedy with the world and continued reporting on the war.

The current war in Gaza has led to a massive spike in journalist deaths, but the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has long been a dangerous assignment. The Committee to Protect Journalists issued a report in May that found that there had been "at least 20 journalist killings by members of the Israel Defense Forces" over the last 22 years, adding that "no one has ever been charged or held responsible for these deaths." Of those, about 10 percent were foreign journalists and the other 90 percent were Palestinian. The extreme danger and difficulty for journalists in Gaza today highlights the wider, ongoing dangers that journalists face in different parts of the world. Syria has been a very deadly place for journalists in recent years. The record high number of journalist deaths in 2009 was largely due to 33 journalists being killed in the Philippines. Countries such as Somalia, Ukraine, Mexico, Iraq, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan have also been especially dangerous places for journalists in recent years. Warfare is a major contributor to journalist fatalities, but gang violence, corruption and government repression also play important roles.

Journalists play a vital role in ensuring that the voices of those suffering from war or oppression are heard, as well as providing information that governments and other leaders might want to stifle. Many journalists bravely confront risks in order to bring information and people's stories to the world. Today, journalists in Gaza need support and encouragement as they do vital work in the most difficult of circumstances.

Arab News

## New Rabin needed if enemies of peace are to be defeated

Khaled Abou Zahr

**A** clip of a French journalist who had covered the First Intifada in Gaza when the peace accords were signed in Washington went viral recently. In the video, he stated that, at the moment Yitzhak Rabin shook hands with Yasser Arafat on the lawn of the White House in September 1993, screams of happiness were heard and that he saw with his own eyes Palestinian kids run toward Israeli soldiers, hug them and celebrate together.

There are a lot of symbols in this moment. It was a time of hope for a better future for Palestinians, Israelis and the entire Middle East. Today, we feel that all these achievements have been lost. Those accords had engines fighting for peace, such as Rabin. It is understandable, on revisiting his biography, why he had the power and capacity to be accepted by both

Israelis and Palestinians.

Rabin's military and political careers were marked by a hawkish position that helped him win the Israeli public's trust, meaning he could make the necessary concessions while not sacrificing security. In the 1992 general election, one of the main issues that swung the vote in favor of Rabin and his party was the will and demand of the Israeli people to pursue peace. On the other hand, many Palestinians knew him as a man of his word who was capable of delivering on his commitments.

In order to achieve peace, Rabin stopped establishing new Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories. And his administration engaged in covert talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization that resulted in the September 1993 Oslo I Accord, in which Israel acknowledged the PLO and committed to granting Palestinians in the West

Bank and the Gaza Strip partial self-rule over time. This landmark moment had its opponents on both sides, with major protests taking place in Israel. With Arafat having recognized Israel's right to exist and renounced terrorism, it was at that time that Hamas became the only significant armed Palestinian group sponsored by the regime in Tehran.

This accord and historical moment, the French journalist states in the viral clip, brought an end to the First Intifada. One must remember that, at that time, the intifada was not militant in nature. Palestinians did not attack innocent civilians. It was Palestinian children with rocks that made the difference. These small rocks proved to be very powerful and they empowered Arafat in his negotiations.

Unfortunately, this was all short-lived and the 1995 assassination of Rabin by an

extremist Israeli proved to be the final nail in the coffin of the Oslo peace process and the Palestinians' progress toward the two-state solution. At the same time, we witnessed the beginning of the rise of Hamas and its violent terrorist attacks. The rise of extremists on both sides had started.

Beyond a last small window of hope under the Clinton administration with the 2000 Camp David Summit between Arafat and then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, peace became a mirage. At that time, Arafat was weakened domestically and Barak was not able to project confidence, despite his military background. The Second Intifada started a few months later after Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

It was with the Second Intifada that Hamas rose in prominence and it eventual-

ly won legislative elections in Gaza in 2006. Since then, between a divided Palestinian leadership and the electoral musical chairs in Israel, no real peace has been possible. As the war in Gaza continues to spill blood and tears, we need courageous leaders on both sides to bring this conflict to an end. A real end. I believe this can only start in Israel. Tel Aviv needs a new Rabin. It needs a new leadership that can effectively protect its citizens, while ending the occupation and empowering the Palestinians toward their own rightful sovereignty.

Benjamin Netanyahu has failed his citizens. He was not able to protect them on Oct. 7. This will bring a dark end to Netanyahu's political and military career. The man who promised he would never compromise on Israel's security saw, on his watch, the worst terrorist attack by Hamas, with an unimaginable and horrific death toll. There needs to be

a new and different approach emanating from Israel - or maybe, in this case, an old one. As we say in France, it is in the old pots that we cook the best soups. Just as Ronald S. Lauder wrote in Arab News last week, we should not give in to the voices of extremism and a two-state solution needs to be put forward now. It is what Arab countries have pushed for since 2002 with the Arab Peace Initiative.

Rabin famously said: "We must fight terrorism as if there is no peace process and work to achieve peace as if there is no terror." In short, he empowered Arafat. He strengthened his peace partner. Rabin made real and difficult concessions so that peace with the Palestinians could become achievable. In turn, he faced his own side's extremists. For now, the enemies of peace seem to be winning. Let us hope this will soon change.



# Cartoons that kill: The art and imagery of genocide

GENOCIDE is not an event; you don't simply wake up one morning and begin exterminating an entire people out of the blue. Genocide is a process; you have to work your way up to it. And like all processes, genocide has its stages - 10 stages in all if we are to refer to the list prepared by Dr Gregory Stanton, founding president and chairman of Genocide Watch, an organisation that does exactly what its name implies.

One of those stages is dehumanisation. This is an important one because committing genocide is not easy; murdering men, women and children in thousands tends to take a toll on the psyche, causing one to perhaps face all kinds of uncomfortable questions, to counter all manners of unwelcome thoughts that intrude into even the most closed of minds like single spies sneaking into a well-guarded fortress. Those who pull the trigger on children, those who drop bombs on schools and hospitals, are after all presumably as humans as the ones they murder. How then, one wonders, do they sleep at night? How do they not see the blood on their hands every waking moment, like Lady Macbeth wandering the halls of the Dunsinane castle? The answer is simple; you live with it by convincing yourself that those being killed are not in fact human, or at the very least not as human as you are. If you do that right and repeatedly, you will successfully convince yourself that murder is not murder; it's pest control. Dehumanisation has to be an ongoing process, running concurrently

with the actual extermination because, you see, it is not just your own public you have to convince, it is also the governments and publics of the countries that are arming, aiding, abetting and, in some cases, cheering you on while you go about your bloody but necessary business. This gets harder to do as eviscerated babies pile up in the courtyards of besieged hospitals, as body bags choke the streets, and as the world livestreams the apocalypse on smartphones.

It's in this context that last week's infamous Washington Post cartoon must be viewed. On November 6, as Israel continued its deliberate and direct targeting of civilians in Gaza in bakeries, hospitals and homes, while clearly announcing its intention to eradicate the Palestinians, The Washington Post published a caricature titled "Human Shields". The caricature depicts a man with bestial features in a dark, striped suit, which has Hamas in bold white letters emblazoned on it. His comically large nose is jutting out from beneath sunken eyes crowned by bushy eyebrows.

He has several children and a typically helpless-looking abaya-clad Arab woman tied to his body. To his left is a Palestinian flag and to his right a partial image of Al-Aqsa and, of course, an oil lamp. Just in case the symbolism was not clear enough. The cartoon ticks many boxes. In his landmark study on dehumanisation, scholar Nick Haslam writes that among the categories of dehumanisation by

Zarrar Khuhro

imagery are depictions of the enemy as a barbarian, a criminal and a harasser of women and children.

The outrage was immediate and effective; having removed the cartoon, the editor of the editorial page, David Shipley, wrote in a note to readers that while he saw the drawing purely as a "caricature" of a "specific Hamas spokesman", the outrage convinced him that he had "missed something profound, and divisive". It's not David's fault, really. Like so many people across the world he's grown up with media and film depictions of hooknosed Arabs as either bumbling sheikhs, bumbling bandits, or else brutal (and bumbling) fanatics. This is a phenomenon author Jack Shaheen wrote about extensively in his book Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People, which was later made into a documentary.

Coming back to cartoons, Arabs are not the only ones to get this treatment - far from it. Nazi Germany was replete with images (they're just a Google search away) which depicted Jews in much the same way: Their eyes are beady and their noses are hooked or bulbous, sometimes both. All precisely calculated to produce revulsion in the viewer, to separate the righteous "us" from the bestial "them". Take a cursory look at anti-Japanese propaganda cartoons in World War II, some drawn by none other than famous children's author Dr Seuss, and you see the same techniques applied. Anti-Irish car-

toons published in the UK and US in the late 19th century also depict Irish immigrants as beasts, and Black Americans - or Black people in general - still find themselves portrayed as apes or monkeys. The purpose is as simple as it is insidious and effective: to tie character to appearance, and then ensure that said appearance is hideous. The Nazis went a step further, of course, and routinely depicted Jews as rats with (barely) human faces scurrying before the cleansing Aryan broom. Proving that the classics never really go out of style, in 2015, the Daily Mail took a page out of Goebbels's playbook by depicting rats scurrying into Europe alongside silhouetted Muslim migrants who are turbaned and carrying AK-47s. The lone visible woman was of course duly veiled and wearing an abaya. But at least the Daily Mail didn't portray the actual migrants as rats, thereby completely dehumanising them.

That honour falls to none other than Michael Ramirez, the two-time Pulitzer Prize winner who drew The Washington Post "Human Shields" cartoon. In 2018, the same year as the Palestinian Great March of Return - when Israeli snipers killed 266 unarmed protesters and crippled tens of thousands more - Mr Ramirez saw it fit to draw a cartoon showing a tide of rats, carrying Palestinian flags and under fire, hurtling off a cliff while blaming Israel for their fate. Clearly, this is also something "profound and divisive" that The Washington Post seems to have somehow missed.

relations. There are other areas rife for progress. Both countries are interested in curbing global warming, for example, and they could uncontroversially work together to stop the flow of Fentanyl and its precursor chemicals from China to the US. Then there's the global economy. The leaders of the world's two biggest economies don't want to see a global recession. The Biden administration has already been working to convince China that it's not looking for a full "decoupling" of the two economies - even if it's trying to "de-risk" the economic relationship, after discovering the danger of becoming overly reliant on Chinese imports.

China's economy is the midst of a sharp slowdown after decades of breakeck expansion. For Xi's predecessors, economic expansion was the paramount goal, one achieved with spectacular success. But for the first time since Mao Zedong, China has a leader willing to sacrifice economic growth for the sake of political and ideological objectives. Still, there's a limit to how much Xi can downplay the need for growth. The tacit social contract between the ruling Chinese Communist Party and the people of China dictates that the regime provides prosperity and, in exchange, the people surrender their political freedoms. Although he seems firmly in power, completely ignoring the economy would be too risky for the Chinese leader. The biggest obstacle to a transformative summit is that, from Xi's perspective, many of the world's problems are America's problems, and thus wins for China. Even so, Biden and Xi are likely to make some progress in an important and necessary meeting.

CNN

# Xi-Biden meeting has significant global impact

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden have concluded their hours-long meeting, touching upon topics such as artificial intelligence, military communication, and control of the flow of fentanyl, springing hope that Sino-US ties can return to the right track.

But we should also wake up to the complexity of bilateral relations. That the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission's 2023 report, released just a day before the meeting, mentioned that "the result of high-level meetings between the United States and China has been merely the promise of further meetings", not to forget some US media's biased reports on China, show that a lot needs to be done to improve bilateral ties.

It is imperative for the two countries to return to the track of managed competition, which is conducive for China, as well as the US. Cooperation on trade will also boost employment and development in the US while China, too, needs a stable external environment as much as ever to stabilize its economy. That the two largest economies have arrived at a consensus on AI and climate change, a new ballast stone apart from trade, is encouraging. In the lasting path to restoring and stabilizing ties, China and the US need to look for more starting points to meet each other halfway.

The Xi-Biden meeting marks a pivotal event, which signifies stabilizing Sino-US relations. The significance of this meeting lies in the shared understanding achieved through the "return to Bali, heading to San Francisco" framework. Particularly, the key lies in the need for the US to align its words with actions and uphold commitments. A notable disparity exists in the consistency of actions between

John Milligan-Whyte

China and the US. While China demonstrates coherence across various domains, the US exhibits discrepancies, notably in areas such as legislation, administration, and the military, especially on the Taiwan question. The root cause of the US' inconsistency lies in different political interest groups exploiting the Taiwan question for their gains.

For the future, the US must strive for internal consistency and coherence across sectors to stabilize Sino-US relations. The ongoing deterioration of this relationship threatens the interests of both nations and can have repercussions globally. Achieving internal consistency and keeping commitments is crucial for the US to restore its image. Just as Beijing repeatedly emphasizes, the Taiwan question is a core interest, and any action that infringes on China's core interests will provoke strong opposition from the Chinese government and people, even jeopardizing Sino-US friendship. The world applauded revitalizing of Sino-US ties, particularly for striving to meet the targets set by the Paris Agreement and trying to realize the dream of a common sustainable future.

The overarching theme of the Sunnyslans Statement on Tuesday - issued after the climate envoys' talks - is cooperation, which signifies the strong will of both countries to work together and to join the global efforts in combating climate change and achieving sustainability transitions. There will be at least five large-scale cooperative carbon capture, utilization and sequestration projects each by 2030, technical working group cooperation to address methane and other non-CO2 GHG emissions, and subnational climate cooperation among states, provinces, and cities tackling emissions from the

power, transportation, buildings and waste sectors. Furthermore, policy dialogues will be carried out to facilitate energy transition, reduce GHG emissions, develop the circular economy, improve resource efficiency, enhance subnational cooperation, and make COP28 a success. Particularly, the China-US Energy Efficiency Forum will be restarted to deepen policy exchanges.

By translating the strong desire for cooperation into tangible collaborative mechanisms and actions such as information exchange, experience sharing, knowledge transfer, and capacity building, China and the US are on the cusp of achieving a shared and sustainable future. The US and China's policymakers cannot successfully protect their own nation's economic growth and national security if one or both superpowers relentlessly create financial, economic, and military confrontations that destroy the other nation's economic growth and national security. After Xi-Biden meeting, both countries' presidents must encourage their nation's policymakers, think tanks, and students to focus on how relations between the two largest economies and military superpowers can begin to get incrementally better instead of catastrophically worse.

The US and China's presidents share the responsibility of enabling current and future US and Chinese policymakers to discover how the over 1.4 billion and 330 million people they represent can peacefully coexist in our fragile shared climate and financial systems. Mutually shared prosperity or mutually shared destruction are the choices confronting US and Chinese policymakers. But 21st century financial and military technology makes superpower conflict unwinable.

The China Daily

# When Biden meets Xi, there's one obstacle he can't overcome

WHEN President Joe Biden meets Chinese leader Xi Jinping in California on Wednesday, it will mark the first time in exactly one year and one day since the heads of the two nuclear-armed rivals have seen each other in person. Much has happened since that day in Bali, Indonesia, last year. The two have a long and urgent list of issues to discuss - including two raging wars, a heating planet and a host of other highly flammable issues.

The notion - Biden's hope - behind the summit is that the two leaders will find a way to manage the competition between their countries in a responsible manner: great powers, coming together as stewards of a dangerous world, working jointly to keep it from spinning out of control. That's the idea, anyway.

In practice, the goal faces an almost insurmountable obstacle, even if more modest ones are worth pursuing and achievable. Biden may want Xi to help bring down the temperature on the world's ongoing wars and help prevent new ones from igniting. But from Xi's perspective, today's open conflicts are damaging to the US-led world order and hence, I believe, helpful to his goal of seeing the US fail as the world's pre-eminent superpower, allowing China to emerge as an alternative. Xi - not unlike Russian President Vladimir Putin - is aiming to restore his country to some historic greatness and power. As China rises on the regional and global stage, Xi wants his autocratic system of government to gain international legitimacy, challenging US primacy. In fact, shortly after taking power more than a decade ago, he secretly ordered a national pushback

against values he described as "Western," including democracy, human rights and a free press.

On his first state visit to the US in 2015, Xi stood alongside then-President Barack Obama and reassured the world that he was committed to "peaceful development" and "cooperative relations with all countries in the world." Just two months later, he was telling his Central Military Commission that "relying on a silver tongue" was not enough and that "ultimately, it comes down to whether you have strength and whether you can use that strength." What followed was an aggressive militarization of disputed areas. It's no coincidence that in the wars between Russia and Ukraine and between Hamas and Israel the positions of Washington and Beijing are on opposite sides. Although China occasionally tries to keep a façade of neutrality, there's little question that it is aligned with Russia. And, when Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, Beijing refused to condemn it, even before Israel launched its counteroffensive. China also maintains strong relations with Iran, whose regime is helping to arm Russia, and remains the principal sponsor of Hamas. That stance, those close ties with the Kremlin and with Hamas's sponsors in Tehran, could give Beijing leverage in bringing an end to these wars, both launched against US allies. China may at some point use that leverage to display its diplomatic power and to portray itself as a peacemaker (a campaign that polls show has failed in the US).

The prospect of splitting Moscow from Beijing, appealing as it may seem, looks out of reach. For now, unless there's an imminent risk of a major expansion of

the conflicts, it's likely that behind Xi's half-smile, he takes some satisfaction in seeing the US backing two countries engaged in combat. That is not to say that Wednesday's meeting is pointless or that it will achieve nothing. The summit is important, and it will produce some results. It's likely that the California summit will restore military-to-military communications, cut off last year by Beijing after then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, sending diplomatic ties into a tailspin and putting an end to crucial communications between military forces.

Given China's increasingly aggressive military moves in disputed areas of the South China Sea, those links are indispensable to prevent an unintentional clash. Biden is expected to bring up areas of contention: China's continuing threats and intimidation of Taiwan, the self-ruled democratic island Xi vows to bring under Beijing's control; Beijing's possible interference in Taiwan's upcoming elections - and America's. White House officials have said Biden will provide "clarity" to Xi, on the US positions regarding Taiwan and Russia's war against Ukraine. Biden is likely to make a strong point about Iran's continuing support for Hamas and other violent proxies across the Middle East and to reaffirm that the US will not tolerate an expansion of the war. Biden has told Iran "don't" escalate the conflict, emphasizing the point by dispatching two aircraft carrier groups to the region.

China is in a good position to drive the point to Tehran. After all, however Beijing feels about the war in Gaza, it's unlikely it wants to see a much wider conflict disrupting shipping lanes and trade

Frida Ghitis

# Sunak turns to Cameron in bid to revive his fortunes

PRIOR to the landmark 2014 Scottish independence referendum, then-UK Prime Minister David Cameron famously commented that, "if you don't like me, I won't be here forever. If you don't like this government, it won't last forever." Almost a decade later, with the Conservatives still in power, Cameron was asked on Monday by the current incumbent of 10 Downing Street, Rishi Sunak, to return to office as foreign secretary.

Sunak's reluctance to give this senior post to any of the Conservative Party's current 350 members of Parliament highlights why a general election is now so badly needed, so that the country can decide its future course some four years after the last ballot. Unfortunately for the nation, the wide-ranging nature of Monday's reshuffle most likely means that Sunak (if he remains prime minister in the months to come) may not call the election until the last possible moment he can. So, an autumn or winter 2024 ballot seems probable.

While Sunak is most likely to fight the next election as prime minister, his reshuffle alienated many right-wing Conservatives. This is largely, but by no means only, because of the sacking of controversial Home Secretary Suella Braverman, a darling of the right, while the more centrist

Cameron returned to government.

Cameron becomes only the second prime minister since the Second World War to later assume another Cabinet post and - following his ennoblement as Lord Cameron - only the third Cabinet minister in recent decades to serve from the House of Lords.

Sunak's decision to bring Cameron into the fold is remarkable because he promised in his big annual conference party speech only last month to be a "change" prime minister. Specifically, he pledged to overhaul "30 years of a political system which incentivizes the easy decision, not the right one."

The decision is also curious given Cameron's criticisms of significant slices of Sunak's agenda. The former prime minister was the cheerleader-in-chief for the Remain campaign in the 2016 Brexit referendum, whereas the present PM voted for the UK to leave the EU.

Moreover, only last month, Cameron slammed Sunak's decision to U-turn on the key HS2 rail project, which will now be curtailed at Birmingham. The project was given the go-ahead under Cameron's premiership in 2012. Cameron said last month that "this will help to fuel the views of those who argue that we can no longer think or act for the long-term as a

country; that we are heading in the wrong direction."

Cameron's accurate critique of Sunak's decision is explained, in large part, by the massive amount of churn within the senior ministerial echelons. On Monday, the Institute for Government think tank said this regular turnover is "very damaging" and meant that ministers focused on "quick wins" rather than long-term policymaking. Since Cameron's last general election victory in 2015, the four so-called great offices of state (prime minister, chancellor of the exchequer, home secretary and foreign secretary) have changed hands 23 times. This includes Cameron, Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and Sunak in the top job.

In terms of the implications of the reshuffle, there is a widespread perception within the ruling Conservatives that Monday's developments point toward a shift back from the populist right. This is alienating MPs who are still loyal to Johnson and Truss, as they perceive this as being a move away from what they see as a post-Brexit realignment. For instance, Andrea Jenkyns, an arch-Johnson loyalist, became the first lawmaker to publicly submit a no-confidence letter in the leadership of Sunak in the wake of the reshuffle. She declared on X: "Enough is enough. I have

Andrew Hammond

submitted my vote of no-confidence letter ... It is time for Sunak to go and replace him with a 'real' Conservative party leader."

So, it is not inconceivable that Sunak may face a Conservative Party leadership challenge, possibly even from Braverman, in the months to come. Truss and Johnson will stoke this right-wing discontent, with the latter saying in recent days that the Conservatives are "drifting to defeat" at the next general election under Sunak, who is a "stooge" prime minister.

Building from these controversies over domestic policy, the outlook for some key elements of UK foreign policy is also more uncertain now that Cameron is foreign secretary. For instance, as prime minister he forged what was called a "golden era" of UK-China relations. However, the Western mood has since turned against Beijing. The current prime minister said the UK's approach to China needs to evolve, as Beijing is "consciously competing for global influence using all the levers of state power." So, as headline-grabbing as Cameron's appointment is, it is unlikely to change the fundamentals of UK politics. The government remains in trouble and Sunak may yet face an internal leadership challenge before the next election, which cannot come soon enough to end this latest moment of Conservative Party psychodrama.



# Pakistan’s trade growth: Traders urged to tap untapped markets

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), led by President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, met with Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Additional Secretary (Asia Pacific) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to discuss ideas for enhancing Pakistan’s trade and exports through a focus on trade diplomacy. Addressing the delegation, Imran Ahmed Siddiqui emphasized that ASEAN, Central Asia, and Africa represent substantial untapped markets for Pakistan. He stressed that the business community should concentrate efforts on these regions to improve the country’s trade and exports. Siddiqui highlighted Pakistan’s production of high-quality pharmaceuticals and other products that could gain a significant market share in these promising markets.

Siddiqui urged the business community to engage in joint ventures with foreign counterparts and facilitate technology transfer to Pakistan, thereby upgrading the country’s production capacity. He assured full cooperation with the private sector in exploring new markets to enhance the country’s exports. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, in his remarks, underscored the need for Pakistan to prioritize trade diplomacy as a means to boost prosperity and economic growth. He emphasized the crucial role of Pakistani diplomats in foreign countries in identifying new avenues for promoting Pakistani exports. Bakhtawari noted that through effective trade diplomacy, Pakistan could attract more foreign investment and secure advantageous trade agreements with other nations, reducing

dependence on foreign loans. He announced ICCI’s plans to organize a Pakistan-ASEAN Business Forum to explore potential areas for business collaboration with ASEAN countries. He mentioned that ICCI delegations have already visited Indonesia, and another delegation is scheduled to explore opportunities in Thailand. Bakhtawari expressed the ICCI’s commitment to working closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to strengthen the country’s trade diplomacy. Engineer Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President of ICCI, emphasized the importance of close cooperation between Pakistani diplomats in foreign countries and chambers of commerce to promote business and economic interests in the international market. He stressed the need for diplomats to provide full support to Pakistani busi-

ness delegations during their visits to foreign countries. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President and Secretary General of UBG Pakistan, highlighted the global shift from geopolitics to geoeconomics to boost business and investment. He urged Pakistani foreign diplomats to collaborate with the private sector to revolutionize export promotion and bring economic prosperity to the country. Bakhtawari also advocated for direct flights and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with ASEAN countries to enhance Pakistan’s trade and exports. Members of the ICCI delegation, including Maqsood Tabish and Rizwan Cheena, shared additional ideas to promote Pakistan’s trade diplomacy in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## COTTM Expo: Pak’s participation in COTTM to help enhance inflow of tourists

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan’s participation in the China Outbound Travel and Tourism Market (COTTM) Expo will help strengthen the tourism exchange between the two countries and enhance the inflow of Chinese tourists into historic, cultural, and scenic places across Pakistan. Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), along with eight leading private tour operator companies, showcased the country’s rich tourism potential at the three-day exhibition held in Beijing from November 15-17. Regarded as the industry’s most important platform and the only business-to-business event, COTTM focuses purely on the burgeoning outbound market. In a statement, State Minister for Tourism and SAPM on Youth Affairs Wasi Shah said that Pakistan’s participation in this leading tourism market will help strengthen the tourism exchange between

the two countries and help in developing business-to-business linkages between the tour operators of both sides. The friendship of Pakistan with China is stronger than mountains, deeper than oceans, and sweeter than honey, whereas Pakistan welcomes its Chinese friends to invest with open arms in the country. While commending the efforts of exhibitors and tourism companies for promoting Pakistan’s tourism potential, Pakistan Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi, who inaugurated the Pakistan Pavilion at COTTM, noted that Pakistan was bestowed with rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and unique culinary. He encouraged Chinese tourists, academics, and entrepreneurs to visit Pakistan and explore the country. The ambassador said that the tourism exchanges between China and Pakistan held immense

significance for strengthening the bilateral relationship. Ambassador Hashmi hoped that COTTM would serve as an excellent platform for networking between the tourism companies of China and Pakistan, which would contribute toward further enhancing the people-to-people exchange between the two countries. Managing Director (MD) of PTDC Aftab Rana said, “The expo will be greatly helpful to build B2B linkages between the tour operators of both countries, and as a result, tourist traffic between the two countries will further increase.” “China is a very important market for Pakistan to attract inbound tourists, and PTDC has been working with our Pakistan Embassy in Beijing and the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad to create business-to-business linkages in the tourism sector.” “During the past year, we have arranged a number of online meetings and

webinars with them, and the good news is that now China has decided to open inbound group tourism to Pakistan from China,” he added. PTDC Focal Person, Omar, told APP, “We want to explore the world’s largest tourist market and attract more Chinese tourists to visit beautiful sites in our country.” He said, “Efforts are being made to expedite visas and relevant facilities for Chinese tourists.” Chairman, Hunza Travel Service, Hussain Ali Ghulam said, “A large number of Chinese nationals visit Pakistan for business or work purposes every year.” He stressed the need to attract Chinese tourists, as cities like Peshawar and Lahore had lots of attractions for them. He also underlined the role of the media, which could play an important role in highlighting Pakistan’s tourism potential, especially among Chinese tourists.



ISLAMABAD: Customers busy in selecting and purchasing second hand imported warm clothes from roadside vendor.

## Gold rates fall by Rs1,400 Govt needs to take serious measures

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.1,400 and was sold at Rs.215,100 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs.216,500 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.1,200 to Rs.184,414 from Rs.185,614 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.169,046 from Rs170,146, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram Silver remained stagnant at Rs.2,550 and 2,186.21 respectively. T The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$5 to \$2,001 from \$2,006, Association reported.

### Sector maintains expansion

BEIJING (APP): China has maintained its top position in the global shipbuilding market in the first 10 months of 2023, with strong growth in both output and new orders, industry data showed. The country’s shipbuilding output climbed 12 percent year on year to 34.56 million deadweight tonnes (dwt) during the January-October period, accounting for 49.7 percent of the world’s total.

ISLAMABAD (INP): The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) on Saturday stressed the need for taking serious measures, as the rupee still continues to witness volatile trend in the process of trading against dollar and other major currencies, amidst the government securing the external financing requirements for the current fiscal year. Moreover, the sharp increase in the policy rate would result in curbing demand to lower the pressure of imports on the current account, so the weak rupee is a question mark in present circumstances. In a statement issued here, APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood observed that besides increasing exports and controlling imports the government will have to take administrative measures, as a large demand of cash dollars are seen in the market. He argued that this devaluation of the currency was dictated by the IMF through prior actions and it has nothing to do with macroeconomic fundamentals. He said that there was a complete breakdown of economic policymaking, as the country’s fiscal policy had become subservient to monetary and exchange rate policies. Maaz Mahmood 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 the US dollar continued to rise against the rupee, reaching a record high in interbank trade 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. The APBF President urged the government to control volatility of rupee against the US dollar, as the industrial revival and economic growth is not possible without stability of local currency. He said that the massive devaluation of currency fuelled inflationary pressures, adding that two major factors contributed to the price hike. First, the prices of food and commodities as well as fuel prices skyrocketed in the international market, and second, the depreciation of the exchange rate by 30 percent also led to higher inflation, he added. 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. Maaz Mahmood observed that having a clear policy to curb the volatility in exchange market, the central bank should be fully geared to act and monitor the movements more vigilantly and should be ahead of the curve as they have more information than an average market player. And being back in the IMF program amid the falling global commodity prices and full coverage of external financing needs, there is no basis for continuation of the high volatility in exchange rate, he added. SBP has a stated policy to intervene wherever volatility needs to be curbed without changing the direction, which is now essentially market-determined. The policy is being pursued vigorously on the daily movement. However, the volatility on weekly or monthly basis often turns out to be detrimental for businesses. Since the exchange rate is flexible, speculators jump in; they make quick bucks due to currency volatility.

## Sultanate of Oman celebrates 53rd National Day

**Zegham Hussain**  
The Sultanate of Oman celebrated its 53rd glorious National Day on Saturday, 18 November 2023, marking milestone accomplishments made in all aspects of life under the

**Court Notice**  
In the Court of Senior Civil Judge/Guardian Judge/ Aala Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Application No. 49/2. Institution, 16/11/2023. Date of hearing, 225/11/2023. Naser-ullah VS General Public. Notice to General Public. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants (General Public) can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore anyone concerned will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 9 am dated 25/11/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

**Court Notice**  
In the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi Civil Judge I/Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Suit No 482/1. Institution 4/9/2023. Date of hearing, 6/12/2023. Dawar Khan VS Ismail Notice to no 13. Zenab. 14. Zenat d/os of Saidullah Shah residents of Torwarsak tehsel Daggar Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 9 am dated 6/12/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. The Royal speech of His Majesty the Sultan at the opening of the first annual sitting of the 8th term of the Council of Oman constituted a new future approach that strengthens the existing efforts made by various State institutions. The Sultanate of Oman considers that the Council of Oman and its integration with institutions of the State harness the main factors for implementing approaches aimed at achieving accomplishments that benefit citizens. His Majesty the Sultan’s audience to the chairmen of the State Council and Shura Council separately, in December 2022-underscores the fact that partnership in shaping the country’s present and future constitutes a basic pillar of national action in strengthening this integration in a way that serves its future directions and policies aimed at pressing ahead with the comprehensive development march. It also underlines the need to unify efforts and advance the supreme interest of the State, secure the sustainability of development and safeguard the country’s gains and accomplishments. Last month (October 2023), the Sultanate of Oman conducted the Shura Council’s 10th Term Elections during which Omani citizens cast their votes for the first time via “Antakhib” electronic app. The app, which was used for the first time in the elections of municipal councils, boasts high security and confidentiality standards. Its use requires the availability of a smartphone equipped with the NFC feature, a valid ID card and enrolment in the electoral register. The participation rate via this app stood at 65.07 percent, and the voters selected 90 members to the Shura Council.

The Royal interest in the advancement of this homeland and its honourable people was demonstrated through many achievements, most notably the promulgation of the Social Protection Law, which guarantees the implementation of Oman’s vision and policy of adequate insurance coverage for various segments of society. His Majesty the Sultan expressed this attention during his Royal speech at the opening of the first annual sitting of the 8th Term of the Council of Oman, as His Majesty said, “We envisage that the Social Protection System, recently introduced, will be comprehensive, extending its benefits to all segments of society, thereby guaranteeing a dignified life for all”. Among other duties, the Social Protection Fund encompasses a number of programmes, which will be implemented next January 2024. Most of these programmes do not require social research, like endorsing cash benefits for the elderly, children, people with disabilities, orphans and widows. The scheme also includes family income support, social insurance programmes that secure support for the elderly, cases of disability, death, work-related injuries, occupational diseases and job security, in addition to maternity, sick, and unscheduled leaves. The Social Protection Law achieves well-being for the people of Oman in accordance with the provisions of the Basic Law of the State and the goals of Oman Vision 2040 that pertain to social aspects. Since the outset of its blessed renaissance, the Sultanate of Oman has advocated the view that education constitutes the edifice that secures and fortifies nations’ present and future. Therefore, Oman accorded top importance to

education so that it could tap its benefits and reap its fruits. To this effect, Oman proceeded with bolstering education by introducing the latest instruments and methods to expand its scopes. Oman Vision 2040 gives priority to “education, learning, scholarly research, and national capabilities”. Acting within the context of the vision’s first theme titled “Man and Society”, Oman embarked on implementing comprehensive education, sustainable learning and scholarly research that leads to the evolution of a knowledge-based society and competitive national human resources. The Royal philosophy stems from the fact that educational institutions, research, and cultural centres at all levels constitute the foundation of society’s scientific and intellectual advancement, and act as drivers for our technological and industrial progression. The overall approach is to continue empowering the education sector, linking educational curricula to the requirements of economic growth and broadening opportunities for our youth to help them engage in scientific expertise, and immersing themselves in the broad realms of science and knowledge. The youth of Oman are encouraged to utilize their cognitive and intellectual abilities for contesting creative and innovative endeavours, thereby laying a robust groundwork for authentic investment and establishing themselves as leaders in economic growth. This approach was evidenced by the issuance of the School Education Law in May 2023. The law states that “The greatest goal of school education in the Sultanate of Oman is to achieve comprehensive and integrated development of the learner’s personality in

terms of mental, emotional, spiritual and physical aspects.” The law also establishes the advancement of the teaching profession and the necessity of enhancing the status of the teacher. It recognizes the teacher’s effective role in grooming the generations of this nation. This was emphasized by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, when he chaired the Council of Ministers meeting in February 2023. The Council of Ministers approved the allocation of an annual day titled “Omani Teacher’s Day”, which falls on 24 February every year. It is an official holiday for all teachers and related jobs in public and private schools. The Council of Ministers gave directives for the implementation of an advanced vocational and technical education system to enable students in 11th and 12th school grades to choose their preferred educational tracks. The educational system offers a host of professional and technical specializations, including engineering and industrial specializations. The Cabinet also approved new educational channels and curricula prepared to keep pace with the requirements of sustainable development and future skills. The new vocational and technical education system began to be applied in the current school year (2023-2024) in a number of schools. Since Oman has placed the development of national human resources among its priorities, the Council of Ministers approved a programme to consolidate the foreign scholarship programme for the years (2023-2027). The move includes the grooming of graduates who are capable of assuming leadership roles in economic sectors. It comprised the endorsement of 150 schol-

arships in innovative specializations in the best international universities over a period of five years, starting from 2023. The programme, which cost RO 36 million, seeks to empower the academic educational process. His Majesty the Sultan also accorded attention to preserving the national identity and demonstrating pride in the Omani culture. His Majesty the Sultan cautioned against the challenges facing society and their unacceptable impacts on the moral and cultural system. In this context, His Majesty stressed the need to confront these challenges and enhancing society’s ability to address them, notably by invigorating the national identity, inculcating authentic values and principles and promoting the role of the family. In this context, His Majesty the Sultan said, “It is imperative to accord paramount attention to the family, the cornerstone of our society, which acts as a bulwark in safeguarding our progeny from harmful ideologies that are in direct opposition to the tenets of our venerable religion and core values. Such detrimental trends also conflict with our Omani traditions, which are deeply ingrained in our history and national character”. His Majesty the Sultan also urged families to provide extra support to their children and raise them well, bearing in mind the changes posed to their behaviour in terms of negative concepts pervading the world. These include the exploitation of human rights principles and other justifications to impose visions, programmes and behaviours that are not consistent with the prevailing tenets and principles. Regarding the Royal support to youth, His Majesty gave directives to begin procedures for establishing

project to set up an integrated sports city that attracts and hosts tournaments and competitions at the regional and global levels. He also gave directives to study projects for investment in sports labs and extend incentives to investors, deemed partners in sports development. In this context, His Majesty the Sultan stressed the need to advance the sports sector and finalize a sports strategy that is being prepared to ensure furnishing facilities for young people and exploring their skills, right from the early school stages. Oman also accords great importance to the employment of national human resources, training them and honing their skills to enable them to enter the labour market and explore the business environment. This attention reflected in legislations and laws, including the Labour Law, that provides a safe business climate by defining rights and duties and stabilizing the relationship between production parties. While chairing the Council of Ministers in January 2023, His Majesty the Sultan urged the authorities concerned to take necessary measures to establish a proper environment that encourages citizens to take up all types of work. He laid emphasis on the importance of educating young people about global work culture and entrepreneurship. Oman attaches importance to the development of national administrative leaders, both in the public and private sectors. In this context, His Majesty the Sultan presided over the opening of the Royal Academy of Management, which enjoys the honourary patronage of His Majesty the Sultan. Oman also accorded priority to sustainable development in governorates and cities, considered as pillars of

Oman Vision 2040. The approach focuses on the development of local administration, based on decentralization. It resulted in the issuance of the Governorate System and the Municipal Councils Law, aimed to empower the people of Oman in each governorate and enable them to contribute to the nation-building process. His Majesty the Sultan encouraged Omani governorates to demonstrate the capabilities that they possess. He urged them to compete to present the best proposals for development projects that can be implemented in each wilayat. Those projects would be evaluated according to specific terms and conditions, and the first three winning ones receive funding in a bid to enhance the governorates’ economic activities. The governorates of Dhofar, Musandam and South Al Batinah won such competitions during 2023. The Sultanate of Oman also seeks to boost the social and economic prosperity through Oman National Spatial Strategy, which is the prime driver of the development sectors. It targets seven main goals, themed as: “Developing cities and communities that are suitable for living”, “Preserving Omani identity”, “Responding to climate change and the need to adapt to it and alleviate its impacts”, “Promoting growth and economic diversity based on the components of each governorate”, “Sustainable use of resources, the production of power and the management of renewable resources”, “Water and waste management”, “Protection of the environment through control of impacts on environmentally-delicate areas” and “Developing a sustainable transport system and the creation of transport alternatives that include walking and use of bicycles”. (To Be Concluded)





## In brief

## Qasim Ali Khan wins Golf Tournament

LAHORE (PPI): Qasim Ali Khan Saturday won the 5th Chairman WAPDA Amateur Golf Tournament after leading the board with 219 gross, while Hussain Hamid finished second with 227 gross and Khalid Mehmood finished third with 233 gross. The 5-day tournament was held at Royal Palm Golf and Country Club, Lahore under the aegis of WAPDA Sports Board. Former Vice Chief of Army Staff Gen Ahsan Saleem Hayat (Retd) was the chief guest at the concluding ceremony. Chairman WAPDA and Patron-in-Chief WAPDA Sports Board Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd), WAPDA Member (Finance) Naveed Asghar Chaudhry, Member (Water) Javed Latif, President Pakistan Golf Federation, President Punjab Golf Association, veteran golfers and senior officers of WAPDA also attended the ceremony. Chairman WAPDA Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd), in his welcome remarks, underlining the significance of sports, said it is a historic fact that nations and their sports rise and fall together. With this in view, WAPDA has played a pivotal role in the promotion of sports in Pakistan. He reiterated that WAPDA would continue patronising sports and sportspersons in Pakistan. Increase in low cost, green and clean hydel electricity, enhancement of water storage capacity of the country and promotion of sports are three priorities of WAPDA, the Chairman added.

## 7th National Girls' Tchoukball C'ship starts

FAISALABAD (APP): The 7th three-day National Girls' Tchoukball Championship has kicked off under the aegis of Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA), Pakistan Tchoukball Federation and Sports Department at Crescent Sports Complex here on Saturday. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh inaugurated the championship by throwing the ball in the net while Director General FDA/Chief Organizer of Championship Muhammad Asif Chaudhary, Secretary General Pakistan Tchoukball Federation Emanuel Asad, Naib President Divisional Tchoukball Federal Muhammad Iqbal, Divisional Sports Officer Tariq Nazir, Chief Engineer FDA Mehar Ayub and others were also present on the occasion. Teams from across the country would participate in the championship including Gilgit/Baltistan, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Police, Punjab Color, Punjab White and Islamabad. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Nayyar Sheikh said that promotion of games at grassroots level would help establish a healthy society. He said that females were an integral part of society and they would be provided with equal opportunities in spheres of life. FDA Director General Asif Chaudhary and Secretary General Pakistan Tchoukball Federation Emanuel Asad also addressed the function.



AHMEDABAD: Rohit Sharma and Pat Cummins at the pre-final photo shoot at Adalaj Stepwell, Men's ODI World Cup final.

## The last teams standing India takes on Australia in the Cricket WC final

AHMEDEBAD (Agencies): India, a country of 1.4 billion people, will come to a virtual standstill on Sunday when its cricket team led by Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli takes on five-time champion Australia in the Cricket World Cup final.

It will be played at Narendra Modi Stadium, the world's largest cricket venue with a seating capacity of 132,000. It was commissioned in 2015 and built with the purpose of hosting the tournament final eight years later. In the process it will likely set a world cricket attendance record.

From Chennai to Dharamsala and Mumbai to Kolkata, India has played in front of partisan crowds during the six-week tournament. The home side has channeled that weight of expectations and pressure to win nine consecutive games — the only unbeaten team.

Kohli, not surprisingly, has been the focal point for this Indian performance. Now the foremost one-day international batter in history with 50 centuries, he has scored 711 runs in 10 innings at average of 101.57. It is an insurmountable tally, with Sharma (550 runs) and Australia's David Warner (528) well behind.

India's dominance in this World Cup, however, has been underlined by its bowling attack. Mohammed

Shami has been the leader — 23 wickets in only six games. And Shami wasn't in contention for the first four games when India opted for Hardik Pandya and Shardul Thakur/Ravichandran Ashwin.

Pandya's left ankle injury ruled the allrounder out of the tournament and made more room for Shami. Also helping India was Jasprit Bumrah, who took 18 wickets in 10 games, while spinners Ravindra Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav chipped in with 31 wickets between them.

India's bowling has been so impressive that it has yet to chase any total over 273 runs in this tournament and restricted the opposition to sub-100 scores twice and under-200 scores two other times. Among them, Australia was bowled out for 199 in its tournament-opening match at Chennai on Oct. 8.

"The difference is our bowling attack," said opener Shubman Gill. "Our bowlers have either defended the total or restricted the other team to a below-par score."

Going for its sixth title, Australia is the most dominant side in World Cup history. It has lost two finals — to the West Indies in 1975 and to Sri Lanka in 1996. Now in its eighth final, it stands between India's quest for a third title.

The two sides have a

previous knockout history — they have met on two occasions. Australia beat India in the 2015 World Cup semifinal at Sydney, enroute to its fifth title. In 2011, Yuvraj Singh's heroic half-century allowed the eventual championship-winning home side to beat Australia in the quarterfinals at Ahmedabad.

The 2003 final in Johannesburg was the last time the teams met in a championship match. Skipper Ricky Ponting smashed an unbeaten 140 off 121 balls as Australia won by 125 runs, amassing 359-2 before India surrendered meekly with 234-9.

Sharma will once again look to take the attack to Australia captain Pat Cummins and his fellow bowlers. Sharma especially loves short deliveries and has hit the most sixes in this tournament — 28.

Australia lost its first two games — to India and South Africa — and was in 10th and last place in the standings with no points on Oct. 15. Since, Warner, Mitchell Marsh (426 runs in nine games) and Adam Zampa (22 wickets) have been the cornerstones of its revival.

"It's why we play the game, we want to take on the best," Australia fast bowler Mitchell Starc said after his team's semifinal win over South Africa.

## Murray pulls out of GB Davis Cup team with injury

LONDON (Agencies): Andy Murray has withdrawn from Great Britain's team for the Davis Cup Finals because of a shoulder injury. Britain face Serbia - led by 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic - in the quarter-finals on 23 November. "I've picked up a minor shoulder injury which means I won't be able to take part in the Davis Cup," said 36-year-old Murray. "I'm gutted not to be part of the squad but my focus is now on rehab and getting ready for the new season." Dan Evans also recently withdrew from the GB team because of a calf injury. He was replaced by Joe Salisbury, with Cameron Norrie, Jack Draper and Neal Skupski the other members of the squad. Captain Leon Smith has until Monday to confirm a replacement but the line-up is expected to be Draper and Norrie in the singles, with Skupski and Salisbury the doubles team.

# Mohammad Yousuf appointed Pakistan U-19 head coach

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Cricket Board Saturday appointed former Test captain Mohammad Yousuf head coach of the Pakistan U-19 cricket team.

Yousuf's first assignments in the role include the 2023 ACC U19 Asia Cup in the UAE from 8 to 17 December and the 2024 ICC U19 World Cup in Sri Lanka from 13 January to 4 February.

Yousuf, who has previously served as batting coach of the Pakistan Men's Team and at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore, is one of Pakistan's most distinguished batters. He scored 7,530 Test and 9,720 ODI runs in a career spanning from 1998 to 2010 and holds the record for the most Test runs in a calendar year when he amassed 1788 runs in the format in 2006.

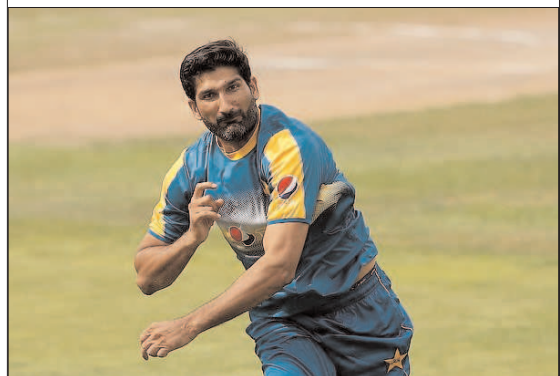
Mohammad Yousuf, acknowledging the honor bestowed on him, said, "I am pleased to join as Pakistan U19 head coach and feel honoured to have been given the opportunity to contribute to Pakistan cricket by PCB Management Committee Chairman Zaka Ashraf."

"I am eagerly looking forward to the upcoming U19 Asia Cup and ICC U19 World Cup tournaments, which are crucial to the players' growth and we will be aiming to do our best in these events."

"Having the privilege of working with the senior men's side, I will bring my coaching experience to the U19 set-up, providing a nurturing environment for the young talents to thrive and make a mark on the international level. "Harnessing the skills of young players is crucial for Pakistan cricket and I am dedicated to fulfilling my responsibility in helping identify, improve and nurture future stars," the former star batsman added.



## Sohail Tanvir to lead junior selection committee



LAHORE (APP): Member of the 2009 T20 World Cup winning squad and former Pakistan cricketer Sohail Tanvir has been appointed as head of the junior selection committee. Sohail made his international debut in 2007 and made two Test, 62 ODI and 57 T20I appearances for Pakistan. He picked up 130 wickets and scored 612 runs across the three formats.

Sohail's first assignment as chairperson of the junior selection committee will be the selection of the Pakistan U19 squad for the 2023 ACC U19 Asia Cup scheduled to be held between 8 and 17 December in UAE. Pakistan U19 will later take part in the ICC U19 World Cup from 13 January to 4 February in Sri Lanka.

Sohail Tanvir said: "I am truly honoured and grateful for the opportunity provided by Chairman PCB Management Committee Mr Zaka Ashraf to serve as head of the junior selection committee. Being appointed chairman of this committee is a huge responsibility and I am looking forward to this exciting challenge."

"I believe in the potential of our young talent and we collaboratively aim to build a pathway for success from the grassroots to the international level."

Our first task will be the selection of the U19 squad for upcoming ACC U19 Asia Cup, as we prepare to build a strong team to compete in the ICC U19 World Cup later next year."

# All Pakistan Inter-University Women Squash begins

PESHAWAR (APP): All Pakistan Inter-University Women Squash Championship under the aegis of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar got under way here at Qamar Zaman Squash Complex on Saturday.

Vice Chancellor Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Professor Dr. Safia Ahmad, legendary Qamar Zaman formally inaugurated. Deputy Director Sports and Organizing Secretary of the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (SBBWU) Mariyyah Samin Jan, squash coaches Tahir Iqbal, Chief Referee Munawar Zaman, Administrator Peshawar Sports Complex Syed Jaffar Shah and representatives of the Higher Education Commissioner were also present.

Welcoming the guests, Mariyyah Samin, a former national athlete, thanked In-charge Pakistan Sports Board Coaching Center Peshawar Accountant

Muhammad Usman and Superintendent Suleman Khan for extending all cooperation by providing accommodation to all the 15 participating teams wherein more than 110 women players part of the Championship.

Mariyyah Samin Jan said SBBWU is an active unit of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and before that the Directorate Sports of the University organized All Pakistan Inter-University Volleyball, Football, Wushu, and Badminton Championships.

It would be the third consecutive time that the University is holding All-Pakistan Women Squash Championship here in Peshawar wherein more than 110 players are participating.

The Championship, she said, would continue till November 20. Mariyyah Samin said that the All-Pakistan Men Athletic Championship and Women Squash

Championship are actually part of the Mini-Sports Gala awarded to both University of Peshawar and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University on the same dates.

"We are very thankful to the Chairman HEC and Director General Sports HEC for reposing confidence in our University for hosting the prestigious Championships for women and men athletes," Mariyyah Samin said. She said head coach Salma Faiz is looking after all teams as far as accommodations and other facilities are concerned.

She said the teams including PMAS Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi, Punjab University, Lahore College for Women University, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Bahawalpur, LUMS Lahore, Iqra University Peshawar, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan,

Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad, GCU Lahore, University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences Lahore (UVAS), University of Lahore and SBBWU are taking part.

In the opening matches BZU beat the University of Management Science and Technology, Aried beat UVAS by 2-0, Lahore College for Women University beat ARIED by 2-0, Iqra University beat Govt College University Lahore, Iqra University beat University of Central Punjab, Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad beat Punjab University by 2-0.

Speaking on this occasion, Qamar Zaman appreciated SBBWU for holding such a big event in which a total of 15 University teams taking part. He said now women are gaining roots and women of Pakistan are good at national and international level. He said schools, colleges, Universities are the better sources of talent hunts.



KARACHI: MD SNGPL Amer Tufail and President Sports Cell Imtiaz Mehmood handing over trophy to Lahore Distribution, winners of Annual Sports Gala event.

# Peshawar and Karachi Whites set their eyes on Pakistan Cup 2023-24 title

ISLAMABAD (PPI) Peshawar and Karachi Whites will face off in the final of the Pakistan Cup 2023-24, to be played on 19 November at Pindi Stadium in Rawalpindi. The toss will take place at 0900 PKT and the first ball will be bowled at 0930 PKT. The game will be broadcast on PTV Network and live-streamed on ARY ZAP for Pakistan audiences while it will be streamed on PCB's YouTube channel in overseas territories.

Ahead of the semi-finals, Peshawar reigned supreme at the standings table with 11 points while Karachi Whites and Multan, both with 9 points each, were second and third respectively owing to difference in NRR. FATA with 8 points was the fourth

team on the table.

Sahibzada Farhan-led Peshawar secured a berth in the final after they defeated FATA by 44 runs in the first semi-final, on the back of half-centuries by the skipper and Adil Amin. The latter is also the leading run-scorer for the team, getting 279 in seven innings, including four fifties. Abbas Afridi, 23-year-old pacer, has bagged 12 wickets in six matches and is the most successful bowler for his side.

Karachi Whites defeated Multan by 43 runs (DLS) in the second semi-final to join Peshawar in the final. Saim Ayub, the 21-year-old left-handed opening batter, has scored the most runs in the tournament. He has amassed 386 runs in seven innings, including a century

and a half-century. His fellow left-handed opener Shan Masood, with 372 from seven innings, is just behind Saim. The 34-year-old also has a century and a half-century.

Experienced pacer Sohail Khan is Karachi Whites' highest wicket-taker with 10 wickets in six matches. He bowled a triple wicket maiden at a crucial juncture during Karachi Whites' semi-final victory over Multan. Left-arm spinner Danish Aziz is squarely behind, accounting for nine in seven matches.

Sarfraz Ahmed, captain of Karachi Whites, while speaking to PCB Digital said: "Our team has played some good cricket in the tournament. All the boys have fulfilled their roles. I

am really hopeful that we will continue that and perform well in the final."

"Peshawar is a really good team and are a balanced side. The two top teams of the Pakistan Cup are competing in the final so I think the competition will be fierce and people will get to watch some good cricket. May the best team win."

Peshawar captain Sahibzada Farhan said: "We had two days of rest before the final so the boys have been training well and we have had a practice session too so we are well-prepared. We have a lot of young boys in the team and now that senior players like Iftikhar Ahmed have joined, our team is well-balanced."



"We trust our boys and back ourselves to do well in the final. Both the teams, whoever does better playing the final are good on the day will win."





## In brief

### IRSA releases 89,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 89,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 46,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1508.41 feet and was 108.41 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 24,200 cusecs and 42,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1187.05 feet, which was 137.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,800 cusecs and 32,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 52,100, 46,100, 45,600 and 10,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 7,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### PIMS HVAC plant project to be completed soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): The work on the installation of a new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) plant in the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) is in progress. According to spokesperson to Executive Director PIMS Dr. Mubashar Mushtaq Dahi, the full responsibility for the installation of the plant is with Pak PWD. He added that when ED PIMS Prof. Dr. Imran Sikander took charge of the post 20% of the work was done. He said that the management of PIMS hospital has no practical role in the project, and that the Pak PWD is responsible in this regard to complete the project. He expressed the hope that the said project will be completed soon. "The role of the hospital administration is only to supervise the completion of the said project," he added.

### Police arrest bike lifter

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested a bike lifter and recovered eight stolen motorcycles from his possession, said a Police spokesman. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, Race Course Police Station managed to net a bike lifter namely Amir and recovered eight stolen motorcycles and other items from his possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Potohar Muhammad Waqas Khan said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars. He said that on the directives of City Police Officer, Rawalpindi, the operation against the bike and car lifters had been accelerated. The spokesman further informed that Jatli and Rattaamral police rounded up two proclaimed offenders namely Liaquat Ali and Arshad Ali wanted in two cases registered in Jatli and Rattaamral police stations.

### Pervaiz death anniversary being observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 15th death anniversary of famous film director Pervaiz Malik was being observed on Saturday. Seasoned film director Pervaiz Malik died of cardiac arrest in Islamabad on this day in 2008, said a news release issued here. Born in 1937 in Karachi, Pervez Malik cultivated a certain type of cinema in Pakistan that has never been replicated.

## NA Speaker expresses condolence to Omer Ayub on demise of his father

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Speaker National Assembly (NA) Raja Pervaiz Ashraf expressed his profound grief and sympathies to Secretary General (SG) of PTI Omer Ayub on the passing of his father, former Foreign Minister and Speaker NA Gohar Ayub.

The speaker NA said in a condolence message, "The nation is in mourning following the passing of veteran politician and former Foreign Minister and Speaker of the NA Gohar Ayub."

Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said, "Gohar Ayub, who passed away peacefully after a brief illness, leaves behind a legacy of service, compassion, and positive thinking." News of Ayub's demise was met with an outpouring of condolences from political leaders, friends, and family.

Speaker of the NA Raja Pervez Ashraf expressed deep sorrow and grief, recalling Ayub's tactful nature and positive outlook. "The speaker said, he was a very tactful politician

and possessed positive thinking," Ashraf said in a statement. "He was a very kind, loving, and generous man," he added.

"Pervaiz Ashraf said, Gohar Ayub as a politician was a pillar of strength and a man of great integrity". "He will be deeply missed by all who knew him."

Speaker NA Raja said, "Gohar Ayub's passing marks the end of an era in Pakistani politics." "His contributions to the nation will not be forgotten," he added.

## ANF arrests 9, recovers 438 kg drugs in 12 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) has arrested nine accused and recovered over 438 kg of various kinds of drugs during 12 operations conducted across the country, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday.

He informed that a foreigner (Tanzanian national) who came from Dubai by flight number FZ-391 was arrested at Faisalabad International Airport as ANF recovered 60 cocaine-filled capsules from his possession.

Almost 600 grams of hashish was recovered from an accused arrested from a passenger bus on

Balkasar Motorway Chakwal.

Around 12 kg of hashish and 600 grams of opium were recovered from a motorcycle rider near Shalimar Town Lahore.

350 ecstasy tablets were recovered from two suspects arrested near Misrial Road Rawalpindi.

756 grams of opium was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Lalak Jan Stadium, Gilgit while an accused was also arrested during the operation.

6 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of two motorcycle riders netted near Industrial Road Peshawar.

2.4 kg hashish was

recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up in Hayatabad, Peshawar.

10 kg of hashish was recovered during two operations conducted in Zakhakhel, Khyber area.

289 kg morphine hidden for smuggling in an uninhabited area of Kuchlak was recovered while 66 kg heroin hidden in a hilly area of Mastung was seized.

In another operation conducted in Panjgur, 50 kg of hashish concealed for smuggling was recovered.

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

## DC drives proactive change in magisterial performance

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a pivotal review meeting chaired by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Irfan Nawaz Memon, the performance of magistrates came under intense scrutiny as administrative heads convened to address critical civic concerns.

The gathering, marked by the presence of Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Mohammad Abdullah Mahmood, Assistant Commissioners (ACs), Magistrates, and key stakeholders, unfolded as a platform for both evaluation and strategic directives, ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said while talking to APP on Saturday.

The magistrates, in a transparent and candid exchange, presented a comprehensive overview of their performance to Deputy Commissioner (DC) Irfan Nawaz Memon. This insight laid the foundation for a collective evaluation of their efforts in tackling diverse challenges faced by the cap-

ital, he added.

In a move indicative of proactive governance, DC Memon issued a set of impactful instructions to the magistrates. Top on the agenda were measures to combat professional beggars, curb price escalation, address encroachments, and dismantle illegal constructions. This strategic approach reflects the administration's commitment to fostering an environment that ensures the well-being and prosperity of Islamabad's residents.

A noteworthy emphasis was placed on eradicating the proliferation of illegal LPG and petrol filling stations, signaling a resolute crackdown on rogue establishments. With a keen eye on public health, the directive to intensify efforts in the context of anti-dengue initiatives showcases a holistic approach toward community well-being.

The DC Memon underscored the need for magistrates to elevate their performance standards. This

mandate, in the wake of emerging challenges, serves as a call to action for magistrates to enhance their efficiency and responsiveness in the execution of their duties.

The call for stringent action against illegal practices, especially in the realm of public safety and health, resonates with the administration's commitment to upholding the rule of law. The directive to address issues related to illegal LPG and petrol filling stations aligns with the broader vision of creating a safe and regulated urban landscape.

The review meeting, under the leadership of DC Memon, not only scrutinized the current performance landscape but also set forth a robust agenda for change. The outlined directives reflect a strategic commitment to addressing immediate civic concerns while fortifying the groundwork for a more resilient and responsive administrative framework.

## NDRMF to launch special web portal, partner 28 activities at COP-28

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF), Bilal Anwar, announced on Saturday that the Fund will host over two dozen activities at the global climate summit COP-28 in Dubai. Additionally, a special web portal will be launched to live telecast the events and share updates for media reporting and information dissemination to the public.

Anwar chaired his first media face-off with environmental journalists to brief them on the Fund's transition from a disaster risk reduction financing facility to a proactive multi-stakeholder institution. He discussed the Fund's recent preparations for participation in COP-28, scheduled to take place in Dubai, UAE, from November 30 to December 11, 2023.

Highlighting the significance of the COP forum as an international platform, Anwar emphasized that negotiations held at COP have global legal implications for climate preservation. The Fund has issued a special newsletter and developed a dedicated website to centralize information related

to the country's delegation activities, ensuring a continuous flow of information, public engagement, and inclusivity.

NDRMF is collaborating with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination to organize over 20 activities covering topics such as climate finance, governance, rapid urbanization's impact on the environment in Pakistan's major urban centers, and food security.

Anwar revealed that the Fund is developing a two-way information-sharing strategy related to COP events and the country's delegation engagements. He emphasized the need for media reporting to align with local context and guide stakeholders during the analytical part of the COP negotiations.

Samia, Manager Finance at NDRMF, informed journalists that the Fund has always promoted a proactive approach to disaster management and risk reduction. The Fund's objective is to provide funds for disaster resilience initiatives, with approximately \$38 million disbursed for this purpose. Project interven-

tions related to disaster resilience have received around \$250 million in funding.

Muhammad Fawad Hayat, Head of Climate Change, Climate Finance, and Carbon Markets, explained that the Fund initially focused on flood protection and retrofitting disaster-vulnerable buildings. However, it has repurposed its objectives to include promoting carbon markets, saffron and olives' harvesting, and strengthening the fiscal space of the country. Hayat noted that the Fund's enhanced audit systems have increased donors' confidence.

Anwar addressed media queries, stating that the Fund, in its six-year journey, has achieved a professional level and is now focusing on disaster and climate risk modeling due to the prevailing knowledge gap in the country. He revealed that the Fund, in collaboration with the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), has established the first-ever data center for sharing quality information on climate and disaster risk modeling and assessment.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of Motorcyclists crossing the bridge at Srinagar Highway in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

### Search operation conducted against illegal foreigners

ISLAMABAD (NNI): According to the details, the Islamabad Capital Police Counter

Terrorism Department (CTD) conducted a search and combing operation against illegal foreigners at Shams Colony police station jurisdiction, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the search and combing operations are being conducted in different areas of the city, to ensure the safety and security of the Islamabad citizens.

Following these directives, a search and combing operation was conducted in different areas of Bhara Kahu police stations jurisdiction by CTD, QRF and local police teams under the supervision of SP CTD.

During the search and combing operation 32 houses and 63 individuals were thoroughly checked, while 07 illegal foreigners were shifted to the police station for further verification purposes. ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan said that the purpose of the search and combing operations was to heighten the security in the Federal Capital.

All zonal officers were directed to continue these operations in their respective areas. Citizens are also requested to cooperate with police during the checking.

### 10 absconders held

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police have arrested 10 absconders and proclaimed offenders involved in heinous crime during the last 24 hours, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, special tasks were assigned to all seniors' police officials to ensure the arrest of proclaimed offenders and absconders involved in heinous crimes. During the crackdown, the Islamabad Capital Police teams have arrested 10 absconders and proclaimed offenders involved in heinous crime during the 24 hours.

ICCPPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan said that the Islamabad Capital Police is taking all possible steps to eradicate the crime from the city and those involved in heinous crimes and illegal activities will be dealt with iron hands.

## Govt starts crackdown against medicines' profiteers

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the direction of caretaker federal Minister for Health D Nadeem Jan, the crackdown on medicines profiteers is going on across the country.

According to the spokesperson of the minister, major action was taken against those selling more than the approved price during the operation in Lahore.

Heparin injection, TB, epilepsy, cancer and life-saving drugs were being sold in the black, said the spokesperson. According to

the details, these medicines were being sold at a higher price than the approved price. Tegrelar epilepsy medicine was being sold at Rs 1300 to 1400 rupees instead of 260 rupees per box.

Heparin injection was selling at Rs 1500 to 3000 instead of Rs 975 while Rivotril was being sold at Rs 700 to Rs 800 instead of Rs 267 per box. A box of Rivotril 2mg was being sold for Rs 800 to Rs 1000 instead of Rs 400.

Similarly, a box of Zenax

0.5mg was being sold at Rs 1400 instead of 278 while Zenax 1mg box was selling at Rs 4000 instead of Rs 502. The Ultrawest box was being sold at Rs 6500 instead of Rs 3418. Dr. Nadeem Jan said that he has initiated action against the involved elements under DRAP Act. He said that heavy fines and punishments will be given against profiteers as per the DRAP Act. He said that the task force of DRAP will take full action against the profiteers.

## Campaign for registration of house servants and tenants data in full swing

ISLAMABAD (NNI): According to details, fol-

lowing the special orders of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police "Knock the Door" campaign for the registration of employees and tenants is in full swing, a public relations officer said.

He said that, during this campaign various teams of Islamabad Capital Police are going to the streets and door-to-door to ensure the registration of tenants and domestic workers as well as

to inquire about the problems faced by the citizens.

In this regard, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Islamabad has registered a data of 176 house servants of 461 houses from Bara Kahu Police Station jurisdiction.

The purpose of this campaign is to avoid any untoward incident by maintaining law and order in the federal capital adding that the registration of tenants and domestic workers could not only keep a close watch on miscreants but also prevent the elements

involved in any kind of suspicious activity.

He said citizens are also requested that they can ask for the identity of a person if someone dressed in civil clothes comes to their house in order to collect the data.

Unregistered employees and tenants could be involved in serious incidents like theft and robbery by impersonating as a common citizen and Islamabad Capital Police is trying to provide a safe environment to the citizens of the federal capital by using all its resources.

## MIH arranges breast cancer awareness program

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Maroof International Hospital (MIH) in collaboration with the National Press Club (NPC) organized a breast cancer awareness program here on Saturday.

Addressing the event, speakers urged women to regularly conduct self-examination and self-diagnosis for the early detection of breast cancer.

Haroon Naseer the CEO of Maroof Int'l Hospital appreciated the efforts and interest of the First Lady, who is leading the breast cancer awareness campaign in the country.

He also vowed her resolve to continue organizing such awareness activities for breast cancer awareness for the masses. He added the awareness campaigns have

contributed to an increase in reported cases of breast cancer patients and decreased death rate.

He expressed satisfaction with the continued support of the breast cancer awareness program through screening facilities at Maroof Int'l hospital.

Addressing the seminar Dr. Mir Waheed, Medical Director MIH said that worldwide, female breast cancer has surpassed lung cancer as the most commonly diagnosed cancer.

An estimated 2,261,419 new cases of breast cancer were diagnosed in women across the world in 2020.

The prevalence of breast cancer is the highest in Asian countries like India and Pakistan. He said that it had

been reported that approximately 178,388 new breast cancer cases were registered in Pakistan in 2020. At some stage of life, one in nine Pakistani women had become the patient of breast cancer, Dr. Waheed added. During the panel discussion Associate Prof. Dr. Saira Mehmood said, in Asia, Pakistan has the highest rate of breast cancer.

She said young women also present at advanced stage of breast cancer, which has a negative effect on prognosis. Dr. Yasser Rehman, Medical Oncologist, Dr. Nabia Tariq HOD OBS and Gynae, Dr. Aishah Amin HOD Radiology and Ms. Zubair Psychologist and Psychotherapist of MIH.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor displays plastic containers to attract customers at his roadside setup. —APP Photo



Kabul residents complained

KABUL (Ariana News): As winter is approaching, Kabul residents express concerns and complain about rising in fuel prices, especially coal and firewood. Kabul residents said that economic problems, lack of work and high fuel prices have caused them to not be able to provide the fuel they need for winter. Some fuel sellers however believe that the reason for the increase in the price of fuel is the increase in rent and tax.

Contract signed

KABUL (TOLONews): A contract for the 500 KV Sheberghan-Dashte Alwan electricity transmission project was signed between the Islamic Emirate and a private company. Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) said that the value of this project is \$36 million dollars and its work will be completed in the next two years. The office of the Deputy PM for economic affairs at the signing ceremony of the contract asked the contractor to make serious efforts to complete the project.

Agreement reached over goods: Delegation

KABUL (TOLONews): One and a half months have passed since Pakistan imposed restrictions on Afghan transit goods in Karachi, and hundreds of merchant containers are stopped at Karachi port. The spokesman of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce said that a delegation of the Islamic Emirate in a meeting with Pakistan officials reached an agreement on the transfer of Afghan transit goods in the port of Karachi. "The Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Pakistan were present at this meeting. It was agreed

that the transit goods of Afghan businessmen stopped at the port of Karachi should be released," said Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad. The Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce said that currently only containers stuck in Karachi port will be allowed to move. "But in the future, it will be discussed again what the new situation and conditions will be. For now, the problems of these containers have been solved. If it continues like this, I think Afghans will not use this way," said Khanjan Alokzai, head of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce. Meanwhile, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

of Pakistan said that meetings of the officials of the country with a delegation from the current government of Afghanistan have also addressed facilitating the trade and transit sectors. "In the meeting, discussions about investment in the private and public sector, transit, trade at crossings, and preventing obstacles in the trade sector were discussed," said Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch. Earlier, the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce said that the recent restrictions imposed on the country's transit goods at the port of Karachi have caused a loss of more than twenty million dollars to the country's merchants.

2,000 women work in MOI

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Interior (MoI) said that nearly two thousand employees of the ministry are women. These women are working in the Ministry of Interior's several departments, including the General Directorate of Passports, the Directorate of Public Services, and at checkpoints, according to Ministry spokesperson Abdul Mateen Qani. "The presence of women in the ranks of the police, especially in the service offices of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, and in the security and in checkpoints are necessary. Currently, 1995 women are working in the service offices of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, including the General Directorate of Passports, the Directorate of Public Services, and checkpoints," the spokesperson noted. "More attention should be paid to the presence of women, so that better services are provided to the people of Afghanistan," said a military analyst. Women who work in various departments of the Ministry of Interior said that they have earned achievements in the security sector. "Women are working in the detective, criminal, and other fields. We are working here from 8 a.m. until the next morning at 8 a.m. We are working 24/7," said Medina, an employee of the Ministry of Interior. "We want to get rid of the misery and also help our country," said Angela, another employee of the Ministry of Interior. Shakila, who is working at one of the checkpoints in Kabul, said that it has been more than two years since she has been working as an employee of the Ministry of Interior. "Here we are working in the physical inspection of women, in the women's issues and also we are working outdoors, arresting people. They [police] cannot enter houses without us," Shakila, an employee of the ministry said. "Such opportunities should be provided to other women too, because it helps the society get better and the economic problems of women be resolved," Saieda, another employee said.

Ministry investigating entry of Taliban official

KABUL (Khaama Press): The German Foreign Ministry has condemned the presence and speech of Abdulbari Omar, a Taliban official, at an Islamic centre in the city of Cologne. The Ministry has announced that it is investigating how he entered Germany. The ministry emphasized that Germany does not recognize the Taliban as an official administration and has not issued a visa to this Taliban figure. Abdulbari Omar, the head of the Taliban's Food and Drug Administration, delivered a speech on Thursday at an Islamic centre in Cologne, Germany, for a group of Afghans in the city. Abdulbari Omar, in his speech defending the Taliban government, said that people should focus on the "achievements of the Taliban" regardless of media reports. He has also shared video footage of his speech on his social media page. Following the presence and speech of this Taliban official, a significant number of Afghan citizens in Germany expressed their reactions and called for an investigation into this matter. "Returns of hundreds of thousands of Afghans from Pakistan, most without jobs or homes and just before winter, set to deepen Afghanistan's already-severe humanitarian crisis," UNHCR said. Meanwhile, the organization said, "The mass arrivals couldn't have happened at a worse time." The sudden surge in returnees from Pakistan, a country that has hosted Afghan refugees for decades, comes at a time when Afghanistan is grappling with severe challenges. The country faces a fragile economy, political



Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban spokesperson, wrote on his social media page that Abdulbari Omar spoke about "security, reconstruction, and prosperity" in the country and invited them to use their resources for its prosperity. The German Foreign Ministry, in a statement on Friday, stated that they do not recognize the Taliban as an official entity, and they had not been informed about this Taliban official's visit to Germany. The statement further emphasized that as long as the Taliban openly violate human rights, especially the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, Germany will not normalize its relations with the Taliban regime. Meanwhile, the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs, where Mr. Omar spoke at one of its buildings in Cologne, stated in a declaration that their trust had been "misused." They mentioned that an Afghan association had requested to hold religious rituals, but the event turned into a political conference with a speaker they considered "unknown."

The board of this Islamic union deemed the speech a violation of their contract and an "invasion," expressing shock and distancing themselves unequivocally from the content of the speech. The Islamic Union firmly rejects any form of association, even moral, with the Taliban.

Afghan girls call for access to education

KABUL (TOLONews): On International Student Day, female students called for the doors of universities to open for them. They said that education is their fundamental right, and the Islamic Emirate should not prevent it. Madina, 23, who was a third-year sociology student at Kabul University, said that the closing of the doors to education has taken away her dreams. "My dream was to finish my bachelor's degree in sociology and then study for a master's degree in law so that I can defend the rights of Afghan girls," said Madina. Other male and female students are asking the current government to reopen the universities as soon as possible to allow girls to study in the country as well as boys. "Our request to the current government and the international community is to open the gates of universities and schools for female classes so that female students can also



benefit from the blessings of education," said Toba, a student. "Our sisters are half of society, education should be given to them so that we can grow our society and yours," said Sayed Rohullah, a student. On International Student day, the Islamic Emirate did not comment on the reopening of universities for girls, but emphasized that they are trying to create facilities for students in order to teach them as effectively as possible. "In this regard, we are making our final efforts,

from scholarships to education inside the country, raising the level of education and making educational departments specialized. In this regard, things have improved and efforts are still ongoing," said Zabiullah Mujahid, spokesman of the Islamic Emirate. It has been almost a year that the gates of universities have been closed to female students in the country, but the Islamic Emirate has repeatedly emphasized that they will be opened to girls when the conditions are right.

Save the Children warns of disease spread among returning children

KABUL (Khaama Press): Save the Children reports that diseases such as acute respiratory infections and diarrhoea are rapidly increasing among returning migrants from Pakistan. On Friday, the organization expressed concern by releasing a report indicating the rising prevalence of diseases among thousands of returning migrants from Pakistan. According to Save the

Children, in the past month, more than 3,000 cases of acute respiratory infections and 1,200 cases of diarrhoea have been recorded among migrant children returning from Pakistan. The Children's Support Foundation also emphasized that the return of migrants in overcrowded cargo trucks and exposure to dust and makeshift shelters are cited as reasons for respiratory infections

among children. Reports indicate that eighty per cent of the returning individuals from Pakistan are children and women, many of whom are facing challenging conditions without shelter, money, and adequate food. Furthermore, the World Health Organization expressed concerns about the spread of diseases, such as polio, among returning migrants from Pakistan,

stating that \$10 million is needed to provide healthcare services to 700,000 migrants. This sudden influx of migrants has raised concerns about the risk of disease outbreaks, including childhood paralysis, despite the end of Pakistan's deportation deadline for Afghan migrants, with hundreds of thousands having already returned to their home country.

Disabled child traveling to school receives wheelchair

KABUL (TOLONews): After the publication of a TOLONews' report about a twelve-year-old disabled student in Uruzgan, some governmental and non-governmental institutions have helped the child. Mohibullah, a fourth-grade student who is disabled in both legs, propels himself to school with his hands every day. The father of the child said that he did not even have the ability to buy a special vehicle or a wheelchair for his disabled son, who used to walk a kilometer to school every day. "I used to go to school with my hands but now I go with a wheelchair. I want to continue my studies," said Mohibullah. "I would like to express my gratitude to the media that brought our voice -- TOLONews -- and the young people who helped the child, may God bless them," said Noor Mohammad, father of Mohib. Mohibullah's classmates and teachers praise his talent and self-confidence and asked the current government and supporting insti-



tutions to cooperate the treatment of the disabled child. "In the past, when Mohibullah came to school, he came to school with his hands, his clothes were dirty, his knees were visible, and he wore shoes with his hands), those shoes were also sometimes torn and dirty," said Karimullah, a classmate of Mohib.

"If Allah wills, Mohib has a bright future," said Abdul Rashid, a student. The head of the Martyrs and Disabled in Uruzgan said that they have supported the disabled student as much as possible and will try to address his other challenges in the future. "Mohibullah is worried about his wheelchair and

shoes, we plan to help him in the future as well, he is registered with us on the disabled list," said Atiqullah Manzor. According to Mohibullah's family, he was disabled in both legs since he was a child, but due to his great interest in education, accepting the difficulties, he goes to school every day.

Saffron harvest in Herat expected to double this year

KABUL (TOLONews): The Afghanistan National Saffron Union said that the saffron harvest in Herat will double this year. Based on the statistics of the union, nearly forty tons of saffron are expected to be harvested in Herat this year. Meanwhile, the annual Festival of Saffron Flower has been held in Herat. During the saffron harvest season, the annual festival of saffron flowers was held in Herat. The saffron farmers of Herat have displayed their fresh saffron in 40 booths here at the Department of Agriculture in Herat city. According to the country's national saffron union, this year's saffron harvest in Herat has doubled compared to last year. "Considering the unprecedented cultivation that has been done in Herat province this year, we can claim that we will probably break the 40-ton limit," said Bashir Ahmad Rashidi, head of Afghanistan National Saffron Union. "Almost 20,000 people are engaged in saffron cultivation, and the saffron is better this year than last year," said Peer Mohammad Halimi, Herat's director of agriculture and irrigation. While the harvest of saffron in the country has increased, a number of saffron farmers said that the problems in exporting "red gold" abroad are still a serious challenge. "Very little is exported with special packaging and with the name of Afghan companies, for example, we export to India and Turkey, then they sell to international markets under their own name," said Abdulshukor Eisar, a saffron farmer. "Based on the sanctions imposed on Afghanistan, we have problems in transferring money through global banking systems, and we hope to overcome these problems with the

lifting the sanctions," said Mohammad Yousuf Amin, executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment of Herat. More than 80% of saffron cultivation, harvesting and preparation in Herat is done by women and girls. "Restrictions should be reduced and women should be able to participate in exhibitions so that we can market the products we produce," said Ghunchagul Karimi, an exhibitor. Afghan saffron has many customers in the international markets. India, Canada, Saudi Arabia and Spain have been the biggest buyers of saffron in the country this year. In the past year, more than twenty tons of the country's "red gold" worth 21 million dollars have been exported to these countries.



In Uruzgan province, graveyard passes for primary school

TIRINKOT (Pajhwok): The students of a primary school are studying in a cemetery due to lack of a proper building in central Uruzgan province. Mohammadiyah School teachers and students want the government to construct a building for them on priority. The Education Department says the construction of a building for the school was approved at the beginning of this year, but people did not donate land and the project could be not implemented. Ghawsuddin, a teacher, told Pajhwok Afghan News the school was located about 25 kilometres from Tirinkot. More than 3,000 families live in this area, where the school was approved last year. He said more than 400 students, including girls, were currently enrolled in the school. But due to lack of building and place, they were teaching students in a village graveyard. Naveedullah, a student of the second grade, also said they were attending classes under the open sky in the graveyard. "All of us -- boys and girls -- come here in the morning, bring blackboards and mats and take them back home after the end of the classes," he added. Bibi Sidiqa, a third-grader, complained they had to study in the cemetery under the open sky. She asked the Education Department to address the problem at the earliest possible. On the other hand, Education Director Shamsullah Kamran Akhundzada said in the current academic year,

they had asked area residents to donate land for the school, but no one came forward. He said: "An aid agency had promised to cooperate on constructing a building for the school. The project was also approved, but the villagers did not provide suitable land. Thus, the project was not implemented." According to Kamran, area people have now donated land for the school. He promised to construct a building for the school in the next academic year.





PESHAWAR: Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing during workers convention.

## KP CM directs installation of camerasat patwar kahanas

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As an important step to ensure public services delivery in a more efficient and transparent manner in various service delivery outlets of the provincial government, the Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah has directed the concerned authorities for necessary steps on urgent basis to install live cameras (Internet Protocol Cameras) at patwar kahanas, police stations and offices of DCs, ACs, DPOs, DSPs and Tehsildars across the province further directing them the to complete installation of IP cameras at all aforementioned public service outlets/offices by the end of this month.

He also directed the concerned high ups to set up a Centralized Monitoring Cell for the surveillance of those cameras, and to put in place a mechanism for direct access of the chief minister, chief secretary and Inspector General of Police office to those cameras via IP network. He has underlined the need to initiate implementation of this project without any delay and directed the quarter concerned to immediately issue proper directives in written regarding installation of IP cameras at all aforementioned offices.

He was presiding over a meeting of the Board of Revenue held here at Chief Minister's House the other day. Provincial caretaker minister for Information Technology Dr Najeeb Ullah, caretaker minister for finance and revenue Ahmed Rasool Bakhsh, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary



Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah and other relevant officials of the Board of Revenue attended the meeting.

The participants of the meeting reviewed the progress made so far on the digitization of land records project and discussed various matters related to Patwar kahanas and other offices of public service delivery. The Chief Minister directed the quarters concerned to ensure supply of electricity and to install fire extinguishers at Muhafizkhanas across the province. He further directed them to make the complaint redressal mechanism functional in order to timely address the public grievances regarding revenue affairs.

The Chief Minister has expressed great concerns over unnecessary delay in the completion of land records digitization project and directed for pragmatic steps to complete this important project in all respects by the end of this year. "No further delay would be tolerable to this effect" he warned and added that strict action would be taken against the elements found responsible for delaying in this important project.

The Chief Minister said that the poor people were suffering at the hands of the traditional patwar sys-

tem and this abuse of people will not be tolerated anymore. "The officials of Board of Revenue should themselves reviewed the process of providing services to public by visiting the field on regular basis", he directed and added that all the Deputy Commissioners would also have to visit at least one Patwarkhana in their respective districts on daily basis. Similarly, he directed the District Police Officers to ensure visit of at least one police station on daily basis in order to have check and balance on the affairs related to public services.

"It was our collective responsibility to serve the citizens as per their aspirations, for which all the concerned higher officials should spare the time for field visit in order to address the public grievances" he remarked. It was decided in the meeting to form a task force headed by the provincial minister for Information Technology for the timely completion of the land records digitization project. The task force will hold progress review meetings on daily basis and will submit report of the same to the chief minister. It was also decided to hold a weekly review meeting to be chaired by the chief minister with the purpose to take a stock of progress on the project.

## Sana: Seat adjustment part of polls procedure

F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Former interior minister Rana Sanaullah said that seat adjustment among the political parties was part of the election procedure and alternate candidates have been elected in the democratic process where there was space.

He said Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) will get nothing from the supporters of PML-N in Punjab and the party was ready to give a chance to a new candidate in some constituencies of Central Punjab. Talking to media persons in Faisalabad, Rana Sanaullah said that the PML-N was of the view that it would be better to jointly contest elections with MQM in Karachi. He said that the MQM delegation has not met Nawaz Sharif on directions of anyone.

He said that the PPP did nothing good to MQM in Sindh and it would be better for MQM to make an alliance with the PML-N in the general elections as Nawaz Sharif has vote bank in Karachi. Rana Sanaullah said that we haven't single candidate but four to five candidates in the 130 constituencies of Punjab. He said that thousands of applications have been received so far for PML-N ticket.

Those who voted to elected Imran Khan as country's prime minister brought no-confidence motion against him together with the opposition after supporters of the PTI chief backed down, he added. The PML-N leader said that one should not forget the mistakes of past, neither remain under its tensi-

ty but should learn lesson from them. He said that in politics, matters can't be carried ahead without trust and as the democracy will strengthen, the scars of the system would diminish. Rana Sanaullah admitted that Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto extended all out support during the 16-month rule to run the government affairs in better way. He said that he was well aware of the political helplessness of Bilawal and if PPP wants to acquire a seat in Punjab, it would have to adopt anti-PML-N narrative. He said that the Chairman PPP will not be able to acquire 10 votes if it adopt PML-N supportive narrative.

## ECP to rely on NADRA database for elections

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to rely on the National Database and Registration Authority's (NADRA) server infrastructure for the upcoming general elections, it emerged on Saturday.

Sources close to the development revealed that the ECP will utilize NADRA's latter servers for the general elections as the ECP does not have its own server to safeguard the electoral data. Sources indicated that the general election result will be generated and processed through a new Election Management System (EMS), adding that the EMS will operate through a combination of digital and manual methods, providing a comprehensive and resilient approach to result management.

The successful testing of the EMS across all four provinces reflects that the ECP is fully prepared for the upcoming general elections. Drawing on the experiences of offices at both the Regional and District Election Commissioner levels, the Election Commission aims to streamline and enhance the efficiency of result compilation and reporting. Sources stated that the presiding officers (PO) will transmit polling station results to returning officers (RO). These ROs, equipped with a team of four data entry operators each, will prepare the results and submit them to the ECP through both digital and manual channels.

Meanwhile, the sources claimed that the ECP has already conducted training sessions for the appointment of the data entry operators of EMS – which is designed to meet modern requirements.

# President prods students to grasp opportunities

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Saturday said that doors of the modern knowledge were kept ajar with vast opportunities peeping out, giving ample encouragement for the knowhow experts to embark upon new journey of progress and prosperity.

Addressing the 18th Convocation of Riphah International University here at Jinnah Convention Center, the president urged the students to utilize all the modern resources to seek knowledge and serve the country. He said today's world was guided by the latest revolution through the Artificial Intelligence and other related innovations which were contributing to human intellectual enhancement and human resource development.

Sharing his anguish over the 28 million out of school children in the country, he stressed that online and virtual mode of education should be promoted. Referring to prevailing scenario across the globe and particularly in Gaza, he regretted that the vested interests were dominating the world. The world was crying for the equal distribution of wealth, end to exploitation of the poor and widespread destruction, he added. The president regretted that in the older world, the incidents of cruelty and carnage were known to the rest of the humanity after lapse of months, but in this modern era, the imagery from Gaza was being reported instantly, but the hearts of human beings had been hardened.

He urged the students to equip themselves with the modern mode, leading to bright future of the country and expressed the confidence that if the modern means of education were promptly utilized, Pakistan would be able to lead the world in a decade. The president also underscored the significance of research in various fields of life and cited the achievements of

smaller countries like Estonia and Netherlands in agriculture. "Netherlands is 19 percent smaller than Pakistan in size but it is the second largest exporter of food in the world owing to development in agriculture," he added.

"These smaller countries have bigger footprints in the world," he said, adding that research and better decision making were critical for attainment of progress. The president recollected that during Covid-19 pandemic, Pakistan was declared as the 5th most efficient country in the world to handle the deadly disease and that was possible due to joint cooperation and unity among the entire nation. Lauding sacrifices of the parents, he opined that they were taking pains to educate their children and urged the students to repay them after completing their education.

The family structure system in Pakistan moulded by compassion and forgiveness had roots in the religion and culture was its beauty, he added. The president also appreciated the functioning of the university and its contribution in the field of modern education. In his welcome remarks, Vice Chancellor Dr Anis Ahmed said that one of the student of the university Dr Namra Khan was given an award the by Howard University, US in field of research on cancer, besides, its nine scientists were among the top others included in the global list.

He said that Riphah was ranked at 196 by the a recent Asia universities ranking, adding, the Quality Enhancement Cell of the University got the first position in the private sector "W" Category Universities of the Country according to the scorecard formulated by the HEC. The vice chancellor said Riphah was the first university of the country that had been certified under standards and announced by the UK based Lloyd's Register. On the occasion, the president also gave away degrees to PhD students.

## Shehbaz, others acquitted in Ashiana housing case

F.P. Report

LAHORE: An accountability court in Lahore has acquitted former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the Ashiana Iqbal Housing Project reference. Other accused including former director general of Lahore Development Authority Ahad Khan Cheema and interim Minister for Privatization Fawad Hassan Fawad were also exonerated in the reference.

Judge Ali Zulqarnain Awan announced the reserved verdict on Saturday. The other co-accused in the Ashiana reference were: Munir Zia, Imtiaz Haider, Bilal Qadwai, Sajjad Bhatta, and Shahid Mehmood. In his verdict, Judge Ali Zulqarnain Awan said that allegations of corruption against Shehbaz Sharif, Ahad Khan Cheema and others could not be proved. The NAB report had already given a clean chit to all the accused, the judge added.

The court has been told that the decision of the Supreme Court does not stop the trial court from deciding the Ashiana reference. According to the verdict, the accused did not

take any advantage in the Ashiana case. The hearing on the case was held on merit in the accountability court. The court did not find evidence of corruption against the accused, the accused should be acquitted. Shehbaz's lawyer told the court that in the Ashiana Iqbal Project, not a single penny was lost to the national kitty and none of the accused got any financial benefit. He said that two other accused Naem Zia Pirzada and Kamran Kayani were already acquitted in the case.

He said that the Ashiana reference was filed in 2018 and nothing was proved during the last five years. The lawyer said that the reference was made to politically victimize Shehbaz Sharif and Ahmed Cheema. They were sent to jail in bogus reference. Earlier in May this year, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had clerred Shehbaz Sharif, the then prime minister, in the Ashiana Housing scandal.

The Ashiana Housing scandal, which involved allegations of irregularities, had been a highly contentious issue. However, NAB's report had stated that no concrete evidence

of corruption or misuse of authority was found during Bureau's inquiry which led it to give clean chit to Shehbaz Sharif.

The report submitted by NAB officials in court had also emphasized that the accusations against Shehbaz Sharif in the Ashiana Housing scandal could not be substantiated. The inquiry was conducted twice, and no evidence was discovered to support claims of any wrongdoing. The NAB report had further highlighted that Shehbaz Sharif did not derive any personal benefits from the Ashiana Housing project. The evidence presented had indicated that public officeholders did not exploit their positions for personal gain, nor did they cause any financial losses to the government treasury.

Furthermore, the NAB report had also cleared Fawad Hassan Fawad and Kamran Kayani from allegations of accepting bribes for awarding contracts. The NAB report had confirmed that the contract for the Ashiana Housing Scheme was awarded in accordance with the law and anti-corruption laws were strictly followed during the process.

## Climate change causing Pakistan loss of \$2b: IMF

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is among the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Since the year 2000, climate change has been causing Pakistan a loss of \$2 billion every year.

According to a report by the International Monetary Fund on public investment in Pakistan, four million people are affected by climate change every year. It further said that the 2022 flash floods of Pakistan impacted 30 million people and killed 1,700 people. The report also said that 500 people are killed every year due to natural disasters and climate change.

The report expressed fears that by the year 2050, Pakistan's economy may be affected by natural disasters by up to 9%. The IMF has also raised concerns about the affordability of Pakistan's Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), urging a reassessment of the initiative. The total cost to complete projects in the PSDP is reported to be Rs10.7 trillion, over 14 times the allocated budget of Rs727 billion for 2022-23.

The IMF emphasized that the current annual PSDP budget and the addition of new projects would take approximately 14

years to complete existing approved projects. "Notwithstanding intentions to prioritise the completion of ongoing projects, new projects with a total cost Rs. 2.3 trillion were added by government in the last budget. In addition, the separate preparation and oversight of the current budget and the development budget, by Finance Division the Planning Commission respectively, can lead to inconsistent and sub-optimal decision-making," said the IMF in its latest report, titled 'Pakistan: Technical Assistance Report—Public Investment M a n a g e m e n t Assessment—PIMA and Climate PIMA'.

The Fund highlighted the need for reforms to establish a more credible basis for the PSDP budget, as ongoing projects continue to be added at a significant rate. The Planning Commission's funding priority for ongoing projects was also noted by the IMF, emphasizing the necessity for a realistic and sustainable approach. Additionally, the estimated years to completion may be understated, considering factors like unfunded projects, unaccounted flood-related projects, and significant delays leading to cost overruns. The IMF suggested a comparison of project

costs with the realistic funding available in the medium term for better planning.

The report also pointed out the ineffectiveness of debt and deficit ceilings in containing expenditure, with consistent breaches over the years. Public debt has consistently exceeded the 60 percent ceiling since 2012. The lack of a medium-term planning document and the absence of projects in Vision 2025 were highlighted as challenges in influencing budget decisions effectively. The IMF recommended reviving five-year planning in Pakistan, considering the limited fiscal space and the need for growth drivers. A medium-term plan could address gaps in public investment management and incorporate changes in the national and global landscape since Vision 2025. The report emphasized the importance of climate-resilient infrastructure, given Pakistan's exposure to climate risks.

While acknowledging some improvements in public investment management through reforms, the IMF emphasized the incomplete implementation of measures outlined in the Public Financial Management Act 2019 and the 2021 Manual for Development Projects.

## Sindh govt denies filing plea against SC verdict

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The caretaker Sindh government on Saturday denied approaching the Supreme Court against its judgment declaring unconstitutional the trials of civilians in military courts. "The Sindh government has not filed any appeal to the Supreme Court on military trials. The [claims] are baseless," said interim Chief Minister Maqbool Baqar's spokesperson.

On November 16, it was reported that the interim government in Sindh and Shuhada Forum, Balochistan separately requested the Supreme Court to set aside its judgment on the military court trials. Moreover, the provincial advocate general also rejected reports of filing a plea to the top court against its October 23 judgment, declaring the military trial of civilians arrested in connection with the May 9 mayhem null and void.

A day earlier, the caretaker federal and provincial governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan filed intra-court appeals against the judgment that was hailed by the lawyers and civil rights activists. Besides the Centre and provincial governments, the Ministry of Defence also appealed to the top court to revoke its October 23 ruling and restore the sections of the Official Secrets Act that were declared illegal.

On October 23, a five-member bench of the top court declared civilians' trials in military courts null and void as it admitted the petitions challenging the trial of civilians involved in the May 9 riots triggered by the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan in a corruption case. The SC's larger bench headed by Justice Ijazul Ahsan and comprising Justices Munib Akhtar, Yayha Afridi, Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Ayesha A Malik had announced the verdict.

The top court also held that 103 persons and others who may be placed in relation to the events arising from May 9 and 10 could be tried by criminal courts established under the ordinary or special law of the land.

## Nawaz, Blome discuss polls, economy

F.P. Report

LAHORE: General elections and Pakistan's struggling economy came under discussion as the United States's Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome called on Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif in Lahore.

The meeting between the senior politician and American envoy was held at the former's residence in Lahore on Saturday. On Thursday, the British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott also arrived at the PML-N supreme's home, where his daughter and party's Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz was also present.

As the general elections in Pakistan approach, Nawaz — the country's three-time prime minister — is being seen as the most in-demand leader by top diplomats residing in Islamabad. According to a media, about 60 diplomats, including ambassadors

and high commissioners, are looking to interact with him and ascertain his views on sensitive and important international issues and bilateral subjects of their respective interests.

The interest in meeting the PML-N leader came following his return to Pakistan after spending four years of exile just months before the general elections slated to take place on February 8, 2024, with the likelihood that he may again clinch the top executive post. During the meeting with Blome, Nawaz emphasised the significance of Pakistan's relations with the US, particularly recalling his various interactions with the American leaders where both sides had always acknowledged the importance of Pakistan-US ties, according to a PML-N statement.

US Mission Spokesperson Jonathan Lalley, in a statement, said the envoy met also met with representatives of various political parties at a

gathering hosted by former prime minister and PPP leader Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani in Multan. In the course of his engagements with the country's political bigwigs, Ambassador Blome and the politicos discussed the importance of free, fair elections and the right of the Pakistani people to choose their future leaders.

"They also discussed the strengths of the US-Pakistan trade and investment relationship and the development of the US-Pakistan "Green Alliance" framework," the mission's statement read. The senior politician also shared his views on the political and economic situation in Pakistan, particularly in the context of his party's preparations for the upcoming elections. He expressed "confidence" that the people of Pakistan would once again repose their trust in the PML-N to lead the country out of the myriad problems confronting it today.

## PTI flays US envoy meeting with PML-N leader

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a strongly-worded statement, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has vehemently rejected the contents of meeting between the United States Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif.

The party has labeled the encounter as a serious interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan, accusing it of being part of a broader conspiracy to undermine the elected and legitimate democratic government of ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan.

According to a spokesperson of PTI, the contents of the declaration indicate a continuation of a conspiracy aimed at dismantling ex-Premier Imran Khan's government. The party alleged that the meeting with Nawaz Sharif, who has been convicted by the court, exposes a sinister plot against the nation. The spokesperson goes on to claim that the Sharif family, with its roots in

non-political and non-democratic dictatorships, has consistently prioritized personal interests over those of Pakistan, engaging in questionable dealings both domestically and internationally.

The statement accuses Nawaz Sharif of compromising the constitution, democracy, and national interests during his tenures as prime minister. Despite failing to secure a seat in the National Assembly today, Sharif is accused of attempting to manipulate the democratic process to regain power.

The announcement of the meeting with the American Ambassador is seen by PTI as a deviation from diplomatic norms and a violation of basic rules and regulations. The party is calling on the Election Commission of Pakistan to promptly investigate the matter and demand an explanation from the US Embassy and the US administration through the Foreign Office.

Expressing concern over potential consequences, PTI warns that

any secret conspiracy or actions against national security, constitution, democracy, and transparency in elections will not be accepted by the nation. The party asserts that such actions could have serious effects on national harmony, internal security, and national unity.

In a final declaration, PTI emphasizes its unwavering commitment to the supremacy of the constitution, defense of democracy, transparency in elections, and the true freedom of the nation, vowing not to back down from its agenda. It was worth mentioned here that United States Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome, called on Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif at his residence in Lahore on Saturday. The meeting between the two comes a day after the senior politicians met with the British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott with party's Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz also in attendance.