

Martyred cop laid to rest F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The funeral prayer for Police Constable Fawad Khan, martyred in a terrorist firing incident in Akora Khattak, was solemnly offered at his ancestral village in Nowshera on Friday. The funeral prayer was attended by Superintendent Police Investigation Alamzeb Khan, SDPO Cantt Circle Syed Ismail Shah, along with a large number of people.

 @thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIX

No. 307

Regd. No. 241

JAMADI-UL-AWWAL 09 1445 -- SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25 2023

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

PM stresses realisation of SIFC's envisioned long-term economic dividends



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday, appreciating the efforts of relevant ministries for identifying prospective areas of collaboration under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), directed all stakeholders for efforts to realise the envisioned long-term economic dividends.

He was chairing a special session of the Apex Committee of SIFC held here to foster strategic partnerships with friendly countries. The meeting was attended by Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, ministers and high-level government officials, a PM Office press release said.

The apex committee reviewed the existing level of collaboration and unanimously approved various initiatives to be broached with friendly countries and directed to fast-track implementation of various projects conceived under these initiatives. The Chief of Army Staff assured the unwavering resolve of the Pakistan Army to support economic initiatives being undertaken by the Government of Pakistan.

Pakistan, Kuwait to ink seven MoUs for \$10b investment during PM's upcoming visit: Pakistan and Kuwait will sign seven Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for investment worth \$10 billion in Pakistan through seven projects in multiple fields including environment, mining and food security.

In this regard, the federal cabinet, in its meeting held on Friday approved seven MoUs to be signed during the upcoming visit of Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar to Kuwait. Consequent to the efforts by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), both countries would sign MoUs on multiple projects including the expansion of water reservoirs, mining facilities, conservation of mangrove forests in coastal areas, information technology and food security, a PM Office press release said.

Prime Minister Kakar and the cabinet members appreciated the efforts of the SIFC and the relevant ministries. The prime minister, who chaired the meeting, instructed to ensure cooperation with the provinces for early and fair execution of the projects. The body also endorsed the decisions of the Cabinet Committee for Disposal of Legislative Cases it had taken in its meeting on November 14, as well as

those of the Economic Coordination Committee meeting on November 15, 2023.

PM outlines interim government's key steps as 'legacy of good governance & reformative approach': Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday said with its good governance and reformative approach, the interim government would leave a legacy on the domestic front.

In an interactive session titled 'Breakfast with the Prime Minister' organized by Jang Group of Publications, PM Kakar said the caretaker government had to its credit for tackling tough challenges in areas including economy, privatization, and connectivity. The prime minister spoke about his vision about the prospects for a better Pakistan, terming "skilled human capital as the answer to several challenges".

He said Pakistan, being an important regional member of the Economic Cooperation Organization, boasted a strategic location at the confluence of central and south Asia besides its rich natural resources. The 240 million population with a huge youth bulge under the age of 25 adds value to human capital, he added. He, however, pointed out that it was utmost crucial to provide skill sets to youth through targeted training programmes and warned that non-utilization of their energy could lead to detrimental consequences.

Kakar said one of the priorities of the caretaker government was to focus on a programme, which would train one million nurses in one decade. Also, the government was exploring partnerships with international conglomerates including Siemens, Germany for the development of skills in different areas.

The prime minister said the government was fast-tracking the privatization of State Owned Enterprises and related entities, with Pakistan International Airlines on priority in the list. In this regard, he said, some tangible results were expected to be achieved by mid-January. PM Kakar dismissed the notion that people leaving the country to move abroad was a sign of any failure.

"Brain drain can become a brain asset [in future] and this is a sanguine and positive way to perceive it... Pakistan is a civilization of diversified creative potential which makes it "rich" in a true sense," he said. On attracting foreign investment, he said the Special Investment Facilitation

Council (SIFC) was providing an opportunity for ease of business, adding that the country expected good news in weeks about foreign investment of billions of dollars in areas of agriculture, information technology and mining.

He expressed confidence that SIFC, a platform with representatives from civil and military domains, would ensure the continuity of projects despite the change of governments. He also endorsed the idea of including members of the business community to expand its potential. He said EXIM (Export-Import) Bank was working on providing financial services to Pakistan, which would help the local businessmen and traders to carry out financial transactions abroad.

Highlighting connectivity as a crucial area, he said the Trans-Afghan railway would connect Uzbekistan with Pakistan. Also, the work on the improvement of Quetta-Taftan rail network is underway, he said. The recently launched direct flights with Azerbaijan would reduce travel time and promote trade, he said.

The prime minister favoured reforms in taxation and said his government believed in cutting expenditures and was also working on the forthcoming reforms of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). Wealth creation through taxation is the best tool for a government to use the revenue for establishing schools, hospitals, and road infrastructure, he said.

He said the media in the country was enjoying freedom and was "beyond any sort of control particularly the social media". He, however, stressed the need to formulate regulations after deliberations with stakeholders to cater to the challenges of digital media "without stifling and putting restrictions on it". PM Kakar said the current political scenario was "not a crisis, but a continuation of process in the transitional democracy of Pakistan".

He expressed optimism that with the continuity of the democratic process, the people would gradually start linking parties with their performance and service delivery. PM Kakar emphasized the importance of local government system to address the civic problems faced by the people in remote areas such as south and north Waziristan. "There is a need to shun the urban-oriented governance and adopt a more inclusive approach of bringing the far-flung areas of the country at par with developed cities," he said.

Asad Qaiser sent to jail in May 9 case F.P. Report

MARDAN: A district and sessions court in Mardan on Friday sent the PTI leader to jail on a four-day judicial remand in a case pertaining to violent protests in the country on May 9.

The PTI leader was presented before a district and session court in Mardan. During the hearing, Charsadda police submitted a request seeking Qaiser's five-day physical remand. The court rejected the police's request for the physical remand of former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser and sent the PTI leader to jail.

It also directed police to present Qaiser on Nov 29 (Wednesday) along with the case record. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Asad Qaiser was re-arrested by Charsadda police on Thursday. Police arrested former Speaker of the National Assembly Asad Qaiser in a vandalism case and took him to Charsadda under strict security measures.

Meanwhile, the PTI leader and former Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser on Friday accused former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his party, the Muslim League-N, of oppressing the PTI.

Speaking to reporters after a medical checkup at a hospital, Qaiser said that the environment created for the upcoming elections is not free and fair. He also criticized the opposition for accusing the PTI of being a "selected" party, saying that the opposition itself has become "a selected plus." Qaiser warned that if elections are held in the current environment, they will not be recognized as legitimate. He also said that if Nawaz Sharif wants to be Prime Minister, there is no need for elections and that it would be better to simply issue a notification for him to take office, as was done in the case of Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Regarding the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision on PTI intra-party elections, Qaiser said that the PTI's legal team is examining the matter. It is worth noting that Qaiser was re-arrested by police as soon as he was released from Swabi Jail. He had been arrested earlier on charges of violating the Election Code of Conduct. A court in Swabi had granted bail to Qaiser and ordered his release, but Charsadda police took him into custody as soon as he stepped out of jail.

Bilawal leaves for Dubai

KARACHI (INP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari left for Dubai unexpectedly on Friday without bringing notice of party leadership. According to details, the PPP chairman has left for Dubai through a private airline flight.

It should be mentioned here that the development comes a day after former President Asif Ali Zardari said that his son and Bilawal Bhutto was "not fully trained" in politics and would "take time" getting up to speed.

In an interview with private news channel, Zardari was asked about Bilawal, who during recent days has repeatedly called on the nation to let older politicians "stay at home" and to give someone new a chance in the general elections.

He added that, so far, 300,000 illegal immigrants have been sent back of which 99% are Afghans. Afghans are fleeing Pakistan in a mass exodus after the government's deportation orders of up to 1.7 million illegal migrants. The government had given an ultimatum to the undocumented foreigners, saying they would face arrest and expulsion after November 1.

Speaking about the missing persons in Balochistan, Bugti criticised the court's order to summon Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar and said that "if the court summons the PM on every little matter then it is a not a proper practice." PM Kakar has been summoned by the Islamabad High Court on November 29 to personally appear before it in a case pertaining to the missing Baloch students. The court's orders came after

Hamas frees first batch of hostages under truce

GAZA STRIP: Hamas released the first batch of hostages under a cease-fire deal that began Friday, including 13 Israelis who have been held in the Gaza Strip since the militant group staged a raid on Israel nearly seven weeks ago, according to officials and media reports. Twelve Thai nationals were also released, according to Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin. Dozens of Palestinian prisoners are also expected to be freed by Israel.

The cease-fire between Israel and Hamas began Friday, setting the stage for the exchange and allowing sorely needed aid to start flowing into Gaza. There were no reports of fighting after the truce began. The deal offered some relief for Gaza's 2.3 million people, who have endured weeks of Israeli bombardment and dwindling supplies of basic necessities, as well as for families in Israel worried about loved ones taken captive during Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, which triggered the war.

The truce raised hopes of eventually winding down the conflict, which has flattened vast swaths of Gaza, fueled a surge of violence in the occupied West Bank and stirred fears of a wider conflagration across the Middle East. Israel, however, has said it is determined to resume its massive offensive once the cease-fire ends. Under the deal, Gaza's ruling Hamas group pledged to free at least 50 of the about 240 hostages it and other militants took in the Oct. 7 raid. In exchange, Hamas said Israel would free 150 Palestinian prisoners.

Both sides agreed to release women and children first, in stages starting Friday, and as planned 13 Israelis were released, according to Israeli media, citing security officials. An Israeli official, meanwhile, confirmed that the Thai captives left Gaza and were en route to a hospital in Israel. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because she was not authorized to discuss the releases with the media. Israel said the deal calls for the truce to be extended an extra day for every additional 10 hostages freed.

Early in the day, ambulances were seen arriving at the Hatzorim air base in southern Israel, preparing for the release. Those freed will then be taken to hospitals for assessment and treatment, Israeli officials said. Among the Israeli citizens freed some have a second nationality, according to a Hamas official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the details with the media.

Imam-e-Kaaba calls on COAS

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: His Excellency Sheikh Saleh bin Abdullah bin Muhammad Humaid, Imam-e-Kaaba called on General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at General Headquarters, on Friday.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest were discussed. COAS welcomed the dignitary and highlighted that visit by H.E. Imam-e-Kaaba to Pakistan is a matter of honour for the people of Pakistan. He further mentioned that the Muslims from all across the world have boundless reverence for Harmain Shraifain and profound respect for their custodian.

H.E. Imam-e-Kaaba said Islam is a religion of peace & brotherhood and there is no space for misconstrued interpretations of Islam. The dignitaries condemned the ongoing atrocities in Gaza Conflict and the oppression of the Muslims in IIOJK and expressed solidarity with the people of Palestine and Kashmir.

COAS remarked that, Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have strong strategic relations based on exemplary historic religious and cultural ties and unique reverence of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the hearts of the Pakistanis apart from the



unanimity of views amongst the two brotherly countries. At the end, H.E. Imam-e-Kaaba prayed for the peace, stability and unity of Ummah.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said Saudi Arabia always stood with Pakistan in difficult times and extended support to it in diverse fields. Talking to Imam-e-Kaaba Dr Sheikh Saleh bin Abdullah bin Humaid, the prime minister said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were tied in the strong historical relationship, based on commonalities of religion, values, and traditions. PM Kakar expressed gratitude to Saudi Arabia for providing development assistance to Pakistan in the fields of education and health.

He said that the Saudi government was extending exemplary support to the Pakistani manpower working in the Kingdom. The prime minister highlighted that recently, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and the Crown Prince expressed unconditional support for the Palestinians by convening the emergency

session of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC). PM Kakar, during the meeting, strongly condemned the atrocities committed against Palestinians and the massacre of the children in Gaza. He emphasized the opening of a corridor for uninterrupted supply of humanitarian assistance to the people in Gaza.

On Islamophobia, the prime minister stressed the need to educate the young generation through documentaries on Islamic teachings, history, and culture. He said the translation of these documentaries into different languages and their broadcast across the world, could help project the true essence of Islam.

In this regard, he said, the platform of the Union of OIC news agencies was important in disseminating the correct narrative from an Islamic perspective. The Imam-e-Kaaba termed the ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia as brotherly and exemplary. He lauded the contribution of the Pakistani diaspora in the development and progress of Saudi Arabia.

Afghan embassy in India shuts down citing lack of support, Taliban pressure

NEW DELHI (Reuters): Afghanistan's embassy in New Delhi has closed as diplomats appointed by the Afghan government ousted by the Taliban two years ago failed to secure visa extensions from their Indian hosts, the outgoing ambassador said in a statement on Friday.

India does not recognise the Taliban government which seized power in 2021, and had allowed Ambassador Farid Mamundzay and mission staff to stay in place, issuing visas and handling trade matters. In September, however, the ambassador and senior staff left for Europe and the US to seek asylum, and the embassy said it was

suspending operations.

An embassy statement posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, on Friday said that period in limbo was over, and the embassy was shutting and the keys had been given to the host government. It also said that pressure from both the Indian government and the Taliban had forced the decision. "Unfortunately, despite an eight-week wait, the objectives of visa extension for diplomats and a shift in the Indian government's conduct were not realised," ambassador Mamundzay said in the statement.

"Given the constant pressure from both the Taliban and the Indian government to relinquish control, the

embassy faced a difficult choice," the statement added. Afghan diplomats in India appointed by Ghani's government have reached third countries and there are none remaining in India, the embassy statement said.

"The only individuals present in India are diplomats affiliated with the Taliban, visibly attending their regular online meetings," the statement said. The statement made no mention of the status of the Afghan consulates in other cities, including Mumbai. India's foreign ministry and the Taliban-run Afghan foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

'Common Pakistani can't imagine facilities being provided to Imran'

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti took a jibe at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, calling him the "ladla" of the courts who is availing "unimaginable" facilities in jail.

"The facilities he receives in jail are extraordinary as compared to a common prisoner or any prime minister who was imprisoned before him," Bugti told Independent Urdu in an exclusive interview on Thursday. "A common citizen cannot even imagine the facilities Imran Khan is being provided in jail," he added. Bugti, while recalling Khan's appearance in the Supreme Court following his arrest on May 9, said that Khan was ordered to be taken to the Police Lines in Islamabad in a Mercedes.

The minister said that comments

like "nice, good to see you" by former chief minister Umar Ata Bandial have further strengthened his arguments, stressing that there was a dire need for judicial reforms in Pakistan as "there are issues with the judiciary". When asked about Imran Khan's appearance in the court on November 28 in the cipher case, Bugti said that the government would implement the order.

The deposed prime minister, who was ousted in a vote of no-confidence in April last year, has been indicted in the cipher case after he was booked under the Official Secrets Act 1923. He is currently in Adiala jail.

Bugti also spoke about the legal issues faced by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif, saying that he believes

most of the cases against the former premier are "baseless". "This is the first time in history that someone is disqualified for not taking a salary from his son," he added. Bugti further addressed the complaints of denial of a level-playing field by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), saying that the PML-N is not being favoured in the upcoming elections — slated to take place on February 8 next year.

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has continuously raised objections over not being provided a level-playing field for the general elections. The party has been persistently voicing concerns regarding the absence of equal opportunities to prove itself ahead of the polls. "All the political parties are working just like everyone knows that Zaka Ashraf

Afaq invites to join MQM-P

KARACHI (INP): Former federal minister Farooq Sattar on Friday invited Afaq Ahmed, the chairman of Mohajir Qaumi Movement to join Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P). According to details, MQM-Pakistan leader Farooq Sattar invited the Chairman of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement, Afaq Ahmed to join MQM-P for the sake of betterment of the community.



LDA seals 20 properties

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) on Friday sealed another 20 properties over non-payment of commercialization fee in Qaid-e-Azam Town and Township.

According to a spokesman for the authority, teams conducted operations against defaulters of commercialization fee, which include private schools, food points and shops. The action was taken on the directive of Lahore Commissioner and LDA Director General Muhammad Ali Randhawa. Illegal constructions in Township were also demolished during the operation under the supervision of Operation Director Town Planning VII Ali Abbas. Several notices were issued to the properties but they did not respond.

Sindh Governor meets KPK Governor

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori met Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Governor Haji Ghulam Ali along with a delegation of industrialists at Sindh House in Islamabad.

According to a Governor House communique on Friday, the delegation included former President of the Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry Anjum Nisar and others. The Governors, in the meeting, discussed close cooperation between the two provinces, economic challenges facing the country, problems of industrialists, and other issues of mutual interest.

Minister for starting awareness campaign

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Minister for Livestock Ibrahim Hassan Murad on Friday directed the relevant authorities to start an awareness campaign regarding Halal edible items.

He presided over a meeting of Punjab Halal Development Agency (PHDA) here. Punjab Food Authority Director General Raja Jahangir had been given additional charge of PHDA registrar. Ibrahim Hassan Murad also directed to ensure stoppage of import of non Halal edible products. He emphasized on creating awareness among people of Punjab regarding Halal products and about items which were unhealthy to consume.

PHDA should constitute a Sharia Board comprising 'Muftis', he said and added that certification of Halal products should be started across the province.

The minister said that seven days should be given for certification of Halal products. He further said that PHDA should ensure implementation of Act 2016, adding that field staff and officers should perform their duty in this regard. Ibrahim Hassan Murad said that manufacturers should print Halal logo on their products while survey should be carried out in market to check Halal products. License should be issued to those manufacturers who print Halal logo on their products, he added. He said that no company should print Halal logo without the permission of the agency.

LHC orders closure of cafes in Johar Town by 10pm

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Court High (LHC) on Friday ordered closure of all cafes in Johar Town by 10 pm. However, the court allowed cafes to remain open by 11 pm on weekends, with a warning to seal the cafes in case of violation. Justice Shahid Karim passed the orders while hearing petitions filed by Haroon Farooq and others against ineffective measures to control smog.

During the proceedings, the court addressed Lahore Development Authority's counsel and expressed its concern over on-going construction activities in the city and emphasised the need to take steps for controlling smog. The court inquired from the director general of the Environmental Department about sealed

industrial units. To which, the Judicial Environment and Water Commission's lawyer informed the court that factories were de-sealed under the Environmental Tribunal. The director general submitted that strict action would be taken against any officer involved in illegal activities.

While replying to a court query about action taken so far, he mentioned summoning each officer to determine the de-sealing of factories. At this, the court remarked that if anybody wanted de-sealing of the factory then he should approach the court. The court ruled that no officer could de-seal a factory without referring to the court, warning of contempt of court notices to environmental officers.

Federal Ombudsman reviews implementation of jail reforms

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman, Mr. Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi, said that prison reforms process is continuing according to the Supreme Court directions. Under this program 14 Prisons of the Sindh Province have been provided with biometric system. Appreciating the online meeting of jail inmates with their relatives, Wafaqi Mohtasib said that the facility shall enable the relatives to meet the prisoners when not in a position to travel at time, through computers and mobile phones at home. Wafaqi Mohtasib informed that up till now fifteen implementation reports on jail reforms have been submitted to Supreme Court of Pakistan and the 16th Report will be presented soon.

The Wafaqi Mohtasib directed IG Prison Sindh that work on providing biometric system in all prisons in Sindh and construction work on Thatta jail will be expedited. Referring to the medical facilities for the prisoners, the Wafaqi Mohtasib asked the Jail & Health Authorities to ensure provision of doctors in all prisons. The Wafaqi Mohtasib said

that keeping in view the recommendations of the Reforms Committee, steps should be taken to connect biometric system with NADRA Police, Prosecution and other relevant agencies. The Wafaqi Mohtasib was chairing a high level meeting alongwith the Additional Chief Secretary Home during his visit to Karachi which was attended by I.G. Secretary Health, Senior officers of other relevant departments and Head of Wafaqi Mohtasib Regional Office Karachi.

Earlier in a briefing Wafaqi Mohtasib was informed that with the cooperation of legal aid offices, NGOs and philanthropists the needy and destitute prisoners were being provided with free legal aid and financial assistance to settle their fines. The basic facilities of clean drinking water, wash rooms, sports places, education, health and waiting areas are also being ensured in the prisons, whereas the drug addicts, mentally deranged and those suffering from T.B, Hepatitis and other critical diseases are being kept in separate barracks and are duly attended by doctors. Women, juveniles and transgender prisoners are being kept in separate sections.

“Message of Allama Iqbal, Hopeful Pakistan” held at Bait-ul-Hikmah Auditorium

F.P. Report

KARACHI: One should not fret over the challenges on the path. As per a Chinese proverb, the journey of a thousand miles commences with the initial step. Hence, one should not fear the distance to the destination but persistently advance forward. These views were expressed by Ms. Sadia Rashid, President Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, yesterday in her presidential address at the monthly Hamdard Naunehal Assembly meeting titled: “Message of Allama Iqbal, Hopeful Pakistan” held at Bait-ul-Hikmah Auditorium, Madinat al-Hikmah.

She also said “Allama Iqbal described children as Falcons (Shaheen), embodying a love for soaring to great heights. One day you all will contribute to the greatness of Pakistan, as the future of the nation rests in your hands. Persist in your educational pursuit with determination and dedication to acquire profound knowledge. Illuminate the candles of hope in society by embracing the message of Allama Iqbal, and bring an end to the darkness of despair.”

The chief guest, renowned poet and broadcaster Hidayat Sair speak-



ing on the occasion said Allama Iqbal instilled hope in the Muslims of the sub-continent in the era of slavery, urging them to remain optimistic even during challenging times. Despite the challenges, the Alhamdulillah, the current situation does not warrant complete disappointment and hopelessness.

He also said “As the new generation of the country, it is your responsibility to step forward and assume leadership of the nation. Hence, comprehending the teachings of Allama Iqbal and spread the message of hope to others. Pakistan was created only after the great sacrifices of our elders. It is now your mandate to responsibly hand it over to the next generations. Irrespective of the challenges, Pakistan will remain on the face of the

world map, and, Inshallah, it will rise. You are the falcons as envisioned by Allama Iqbal, destined to fulfill your potential. May Allah grant you success in every endeavor. Ameen!”

Young speakers from different schools, while speaking on the topic said Allama Iqbal's poetry conveys a profound message of enduring hope, relentless struggle, purposeful action, elevated vision, and self-awareness. Hope, the paramount weapon in life's struggles, guides one to success. The realization of Pakistan's development hinges on the practical application of Iqbal's teachings.

Children from different schools presented tableaux and national songs. The meeting was concluded after students of Hamdard Public School and Hamdard Village School recited Dua-i-Said.



LAHORE: Namira Salim, First Pakistani Astronaut being presented a shield by the Institute of Art and Culture (IAC) in the presence of Mr. Baleegh ur Rahman Governor Punjab, H.E. Dr. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al Zaabi, Ambassador of the UAE to Pakistan and Mr. Muhammad Faisal Janjua, Chancellor of IAC.

Minister stresses awareness about family planning in rural areas

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Population Welfare Dr. Jamal Nasir emphasized the necessity of raising awareness about family planning among the rural population and ensuring easy access to necessary facilities.

He addressed the closing session of the 24th annual conference organized by the Population Association of Pakistan as the chief guest on Friday. Dr. Nasir stressed the importance of gaining support from religious scholars to dispel misconceptions about population planning, highlighting a consensus among them regarding the need for appropriate intervals between children to enhance the health of both mother and child.

Expressing concern about Pakistan's rapidly growing popula-

tion, the minister cited the alarming implications on poverty, unemployment, and social issues resulting from the imbalance of population and resources. He pointed out the challenges posed by climate change and population growth, noting the adverse effects on agriculture, forests, biodiversity, and food cultivation in the country. Dr. Nasir warned that failure to control population growth would lead to severe impacts on food production, water scarcity, and overall environmental sustainability.

Highlighting the need for collective efforts from all societal stakeholders, the minister emphasized the importance of implementing effective population management policies and programs. He lamented the historical

neglect of population welfare and environmental sectors, asserting that these areas cannot be overlooked when planning future development projects. Dr. Nasir stressed the significance of financial resources, effective planning, and a clear roadmap to achieve population management objectives. He assured that the Population Welfare department would allocate necessary resources to empower people to actively engage in family planning.

The event was also attended by Director General of the Population Welfare department, Punjab, Ms. Saman Rai and addressed by President of the association Dr. Nasira Shah, Rector of FCC University Dr. Jonathan, Minhaj-ul-Haq, Dr. Zahir Gul, and others.

107 connections disconnected in Punjab, KP and Islamabad

F.P. Report

LAHORE: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 107 connections while 266 under billing cases processed ; Rs 4.59 million fine imposed.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 31 connections on illegal use of gas and another 12 on use of compressor and 27 under billing cases have been processed. The team also imposed fine of Rs 2.47 million against under billing cases. In Bahawalpur the company disconnected one connection on illegal use of gas. The regional team in Multan disconnected 2 connections on illegal use of gas. 55 Under billing cases

have been processed. The team imposed fine of Rs 0.06 million against gas pilferers.

In Peshawar and Karak, the company disconnected 41 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal use of gas, 15 under billing cases have been processed and amount of Rs 1.21 million against gas theft and under billing cases. The regional team in Islamabad disconnected 1 connection on illegal use of gas. In Rawalpindi the team disconnected 2 connections on illegal use of gas. The regional team of Mardan processed 30 under billing cases and booked an amount of 0.05 million against Under billing cases.

In Sahiwal, one connection was disconnected on illegal use of gas. In Faisalabad 1 connection was disconnected 10 under billing cases have

been processed and amount of Rs 0.01 million booked against Under billing cases.

The team booked an amount of Rs 0.02 million against gas theft and under billing cases in Sialkot. In Sargodha 106 under billing cases have been processed and also imposed fine of Rs 0.04 million against gas pilferers.

The team of Sheikhupura disconnected 11 connections on illegal use of gas and 23 under billing cases have been processed and amount of Rs 0.39 against Under billing and gas theft cases. In Gujranwala 2 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas and imposed fine of Rs 0.34 million against gas theft cases. The team also lodged one FIR against gas theft. The team of Gujarat disconnected 2 connections on illegal use of gas.

HEC project team discusses measures for teachers capacity building with Secy HED

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Development in Pakistan (HEDP) project team of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Friday met with Secretary Higher Education Department, Balochistan, Zafar Buledi to discuss the way forward in building the professional capacity of teachers and student assessment for implementing the revised

Undergraduate Education Policy (UEP) 2020.

The officials explored opportunities for collaboration in uplifting the standard of higher education in affiliated colleges in Balochistan, ensuring their on-ground support to the HEDP team in reaching out to the far-flung areas of the province to equip teachers with new methodologies and technologies, said a press release issued here.

CORRIGENDUM

The NIT term & condition No.19 published in daily Express dated 16/11/2023 vide No. INF(P) 2790/23 may be read as:

“A complete set of Bidding solicitation documents containing detail description, criteria, specification and drawings can be obtained by an interested Bidder from the office of Directorate General Jabba Dam in both soft and hard form (on payment of actual printing charges) in addition to downloading the same from Irrigation and KPPRA websites”.


Furthermore, it is requested that the address of office may be corrected as “Banglow No.254, Hadi Lane Afzal Abad, Old Bara Road University Town, Peshawar (Phone No 091-5700417, 0345-4586364) Email: jabbadam.khyber@gmail.com”.

**Deputy Director
(Finance/Accounts)**

INF(P) 2862/23



KARACHI: Wafaqi Mohtasib Mr. Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi Presiding over a meeting of jail reforms in Sindh.



PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA)

INVITATION TO BID

Scaled 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 Multi Service Access Transport Solution (Multiplexer) for JIAP Karachi (Testing, Installation /commissioning) HQCAA/1992/224/XXLN	2,500/-	Rs. 2,000,000/-	19-12-2023 1030 Hours	19-12-2023 1100 Hours Log. Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	18-12-2023	F.O.R.
02.	Procurement of Multi Service Access Transport Solution (Multiplexer) for AIAP Lahore (Testing, Installation /commissioning) HQCAA/1992/225/XXLN	1,500/-	Rs. 325,000/-	19-12-2023 1100 Hours	19-12-2023 1130 Hours Log. Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	18-12-2023	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 (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 IT 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, 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 and CAA website 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.

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PID(K)#1540/23



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister for Prisons and Social Welfare Justice (R) Irshad Qaiser offering dua after inaugurating Virtual Interview Room at Central Jail.

Online hearing facility for prisoners launched

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The provincial government has inaugurated an online hearing facility for prisoners at Central Jail Peshawar to modernizing the jail system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Friday. The facility was officially launched by Caretaker Provincial Minister for Prisons and Social Welfare Justice (ret'd) Irshad Qaiser.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Qaiser highlighted the numerous benefits of online hearings for prisoners, including enhanced security measures and reduced transportation expenses. He emphasized that the facility will enable prisoners to appear in court remotely, eliminating the need for physical transfers, which often pose security threats

and incur significant fuel costs.

The online hearing system will primarily serve accused individuals involved in serious cases, allowing them to participate in court proceedings without leaving the jail premises. Bail and release decisions will also be communicated electronically to the jail administration, streamlining the process and ensuring timely updates.

Qaiser further elaborated on the ongoing prison reforms, stating that the government is committed to improving jail infrastructure and providing vocational training opportunities for inmates. He mentioned that renovation work is underway at various jails, with four facilities, including Peshawar Jail, already completed.

In addition to infrastructure improvements, the provincial government is also prioritizing rehabilitation and reintegration programs for prisoners. Inmates are being provided with skills training to enable them to start their own businesses upon release, reducing the likelihood of recidivism.

The introduction of online hearings and the emphasis on prisoner rehabilitation reflect the provincial government's efforts to modernize the jail system and promote a more humane and effective approach to incarceration. By leveraging technology and providing vocational training, the authorities aim to enhance security, reduce costs, and empower inmates to become productive members of society upon their release.

Crackdown on street crimes launched

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a concerted effort to curb street crimes across the district, the Capital City Police Peshawar has initiated a new and effective operational strategy under the supervision of A.S.P Chamkani, Talal Ahmed Shah. Operations were carried out at Chamkani, Shahpur Thana, and other crucial areas, resulting in noteworthy achievements.

During the operations, the police successfully exposed and apprehended individuals involved in street crimes and other serious offenses, dismantling dangerous gangs. Addressing a press conference, ASP Chamkani, Talal Ahmed Shah, highlighted the success of the operations based on confidential information. The arrested individuals, linked to Chamkani, Sardar Garhi, Doran Pur, and various other regions of Peshawar, as well as neighboring Afghanistan, were found in possession of stolen items.

The seized items included 56 valuable mobile phones and 11 motorcycles



reported as stolen from various areas in Peshawar. Furthermore, the apprehended suspects had a substantial amount of cash amounting to two hundred and fifty thousand rupees, along with weapons commonly used in criminal activities.

The operations also targeted individuals involved in counterfeit currency transactions, leading to the arrest of culprits engaged in the circulation of fake currency. A staggering eight hundred thousand rupees in counterfeit currency was seized during these arrests.

The arrested individuals revealed during prelimi-

nary investigations that they were involved in a series of thefts, utilizing weapons to intimidate victims while stealing valuable items, including mobile phones, motorcycles, and cash, across different areas of Peshawar.

The successful crackdown signals a major step towards ensuring public safety and upholding the rule of law in the region. Authorities have reassured the public of their commitment to maintaining a vigilant stance against criminal activities, and further investigations are underway to dismantle any remaining criminal networks.

UET holds on 'earthquake engineering and structural dynamics'

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Swiss Government's visionary "Exploratory Mission to Pakistan in 2023" program has taken a significant leap forward with the joint organization of a groundbreaking workshop between Swiss and Pakistani Universities.

In a strategic move to foster research collaboration, the Earthquake Engineering and Structural Dynamics Laboratory at Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), Switzerland, the Department of Civil Engineering (CED) at the University of Engineering & Technology (UET), Peshawar, Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) and Pakistan Academy of Sciences (PAS) have come together to host a transformative workshop titled "Earthquake Engineering and Structural Dynamics", underscores the commit-

ment to advancing knowledge in seismic research and strengthening infrastructure resilience held on the other day at the esteemed Pakistan Academy of Sciences Auditorium in Islamabad. The workshop serves as a pivotal initiative to connect researchers from Switzerland with prospective partners in Pakistan. The overarching goal is to deepen both personal and institutional ties, fostering a collaborative spirit between academic communities.

Researchers from Lausanne (EPFL), Switzerland, added a global perspective to the workshop by presenting in person. Renowned speakers included Dr. Igor Tomi? EPFL (École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne), Switzerland and Dr. Irshad Ahmad Chairman, Civil Engineering Department, UET Peshawar, Prof. Dr. Amjad Naseer, CED, UET

Peshawar and Prof. Dr. Muhammad Usman, NUST Institute of Civil Engineering (NICE-SCEE).

The workshop, organized by the Civil Department at UET Peshawar in collaboration with EPFL, Switzerland, the Pakistan Science Foundation, the Pakistan Academy of Sciences, and the Pakistan Engineering Council, provided a platform for researchers from different universities in Pakistan to showcase their latest research findings.

This collaborative effort signifies a promising beginning for enduring partnerships between Swiss and Pakistani researchers.

The organizers express gratitude for the support received and are optimistic that this workshop will lead to further collaborative endeavors, enhancing the global landscape of earthquake engineering research.

Prestigious event held in PTV

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the occasion of the 59th anniversary of Pakistan Television, a prestigious event was organized in PTV Peshawar in which senior artists.

Najeebullah Anjum, Naushaba, Baatin Farooqi, Qazi Zubair Ruby Naheed, while retired PTV Producer Masood Ahmed Shah participated.

The duties of comparing were done by Tahir Mahmood and Zakia. The producer of the program is Zeeshan Fazal. This program will be broadcast on November 26 at 9 am on PTV Home.

FSL conducts training

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Directorate of Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) on Friday conducted one-day training for Investigation Officers (IO) and Crime Scene Staff (CSS) about modern investigation techniques in Mardan.

The experts from FSL shared knowledge on various aspects of investigation system with participants including fingerprint analysis, blood-related evidence, weapons, vehicles, and forensic procedures for cases involving minors and sexual assault. The workshop was attended by Superintendent Police (SP) Saddar Circle Mardan Khalid Khan, Circle Investigation DSPs and district-wide investigation staff.

A question-and-answer session focusing discussions on forensic science of drugs was also held in the training. SP Investigation Muhammad Sulaiman Khan expressed hope that enhanced skills and knowledge gained by officers would contribute to more effective case resolution. He extended gratitude to the Director of FSL for facilitating the workshop.

KP-BoIT signs MoU with ADM China

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: During the China Innovation Summit and Digital Economy Tour from November 22-25, 2023, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KP-BoIT) and China's ADM International Trading Company inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to foster strategic collaboration. The focus of the agreement is on jointly establishing Electric Vehicle (EV) charging, assembly, and manufacturing infrastructure in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

This initiative, part of the CAREC-led efforts for cooperation in e-commerce and electronics, aligns with the goals of the Automotive Policy 2021-26. ADM aims to provide cutting-edge EV services by creating a nationwide charging network and establishing assembly and manufacturing facilities for EVs and related products in Pakistan.

The partnership, as described by KP-BoIT Director Mr. Iqbal Sarwar, not only supports the province's Sustainable Development Goals but also presents significant opportunities for EV investors, marking a substantial step towards reducing imports.

Governor for provision of better facilities to students

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali on Friday directed provision of better educational environment and facilities to students studying in the public sector universities.

He was talking to Vice Chancellor Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan who called on him here at the Governor House. The governor said that the federal and provincial governments are spending a lot of money for the promotion of higher education and now it is the responsibility of the universities to pay special attention to research in line with the requirements

of the modern era and bring the public sector universities of the province to national and international rankings.

The Governor said that measures are being taken to solve the problems of the universities. Meanwhile, five-member delegation headed by Malakand Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Muhammad Shoaib also met the Governor at the Governor House. FPCCI Coordinator Sartaj Ahmed was also present on the occasion.

The participants of the delegation informed the governor about the problems faced by the business community, especially the loadshedding of electricity and gas, on which the governor said that all possible

measures are being taken to eliminate the problems of the business community.

He said that the business community is the backbone of the country's economy and the government is taking pragmatic steps to resolve all their problems. He emphasized on the business community pay special attention to increase exports so as to increase the country's foreign exchange. Former Member National Assembly Maulana Faiz ur Rehman also met the Governor along with a four-member delegation and apprised him the problems faced by the people of the area. The Governor assured his full cooperation to solve the problems.

Polio eradication top priority of government. Secretary Health

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Secretary Heath Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Aslam Wazir Friday has said that every campaign is an opportunity to vaccinate all eligible children and stop virus transmission in the region urging parents and caregivers to ensure their children receive the essential two drops of the life-saving vaccine in every campaign.

He reiterated government's resolve to eradicate polio from the region through sustained and collective efforts and the support of parents to help interrupt the transmission of the virus and protect children from life-long crippling.

He said this while inaugurating November round of anti-polio drive in the province here Friday at Police Services Hospitals. EOC Coordinator Abdul Basit, Deputy Coordinator EOC Muhammad Zeeshan Khan, representatives of UNICEF, WHO and health department and other officials were also present on the occasion.

Mahmood Aslam Wazir said that Polio eradication, being a declared national emergency in the country, is the highest priority of the government and the whole government machinery including administrative officers from top to bottom, health department and law enforcement agencies are all working hand in glove to ensure the complete eradication of this menace.

On this occasion, he appealed to the parents to vaccinate all their under five children in this vaccination campaign and stressed upon all segments of society including medical professionals, religious scholars, civil society and the media to extend their full support and cooperation to the



government in the national cause of polio eradication so that the dream of a polio-free Pakistan may come true.

Earlier in the day, a readiness meeting was held in connection with the upcoming campaign at EOC in which final touch was given to all the arrangements made for the November anti polio vaccination drive in the province which is being launched in two phases from November 27 wherein more than 7.4 million children under the age of five will be administered with polio drops.

The meeting was told that during the first phase of the five-days campaign, which will formally commence from November 27, polio drops will be administered to more than 6.61 million children under the age of five in district Bannu and all the districts of Peshawar, Kohat, Mardan, Malakand and Hazara Divisions. For the implementation of

this campaign in the province, as many as 31,392 teams of trained polio workers have been deployed for the campaign including 27,924 mobile teams, 1,958 fixed teams 1,337 transit teams, 173 roaming team while 6,956 area in-charges have also been appointed for the vigilant supervision of the teams. Likewise, he added that in order to ensure foolproof security of the polio teams 53,500 security personnel have been deployed in the target areas, the meeting was informed.

The meeting was further told that during second phase of the campaign, starting from the first week of December in selected districts of Southern KP, polio drops will be administered to 0.71 million children in district Lakki Marwat, Tank, D.I Khan, North Waziristan, South Waziristan Upper and South Waziristan Lower.

KP Minister calls on Imam-e- Kaaba

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce, Technical Education and Newly Merged Districts Affairs, Dr. Aamer Abdullah, called on Imam-e- Kaaba Sheikh Dr. Saleh bin Abdullah bin Humaid in Islamabad, who is on four-day visit to Pakistan and discussed matters of mutual interest with him.

On this occasion, Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, His Excellency, Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmed Al-Malki was also present. During the meeting, the caretaker minister welcomed Imam-e- Kaaba on his arrival to Pakistan on behalf of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and especially the tribal areas, and said that the people here have more respectful feelings for Imam Kaaba due to special association of Holy Harmain Shareefain.

He termed Imam Kaaba's visit to Pakistan as a blessing and thanked him for his arrival while requested him to offer a special prayer for the unity of Muslim Ummah and removal of divisions among them. On this occasion, Imam-e- Kaaba expressed that the main cause of problems and difficulties being faced by the Muslim Ummah, in the world today, is the effects of differences among ourselves, although we are believers of one Allah and our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also taught us to follow unity among ourselves which we need to obey.

He said that Allah almighty has created the tribes separate just only that they know each other while this should not be the basis of nihilism because all Muslims are the Ummah of one Prophet. Imam-e Kaaba on this occasion, thanked the caretaker minister and the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for their respectful sentiments holding for him.



PESHAWAR: Brig (R) Muzaffar Ali Ranjha, Chairman, PMIC's getting sitting visit briefing on PSDP project from NHA officials.

One-day wheat sowing event in University of Agriculture held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: New Development Farm (NDF) of The University of Agriculture Peshawar (UAP) in collaboration with University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) was held a One-day wheat sowing event on titled: "Sowing of climate resilient high yielding wheat lines developed by Washington State University (WSU), USA for the sub-continent" under the chairmanship of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jehan Bakht.

On this occasion, Provincial Minister for Higher Education Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prof. Dr. Muhammad Qasim Jan was the chief guest while US Consul General Peshawar Shante Moore, Senator Nauman Wazir, Vice Chancellor University of Agriculture Faisalabad Prof. Dr. Iqar Ahmad Khan, Air Commodore Amin Khan, Vice Chancellor University of Engineering & Technology Peshawar Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Hussain, Dean and Pro Vice, Chancellors Prof. Dr. Daud Jan, Dean Prof. Dr. Himayat Ullah Khan, Dean Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ayub and Director of New Development Farm Prof. Dr. Muhammad Arif along with faculty members and administrative officers participated.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jehan Bakht welcomed the guests and Registrar Dr. Rizwan Ahmed briefed the participants about the university. Ambassador, Vice President of Washington State University USA Dr. Asif Chaudhry and Climate Resilient Weight Lab Prof. Kulvinder Gill gave online briefing to the participants of the event.

Chief Guest Provincial Minister for

Higher Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prof. Dr. Muhammad Qasim Jan, US Consul General Peshawar Shante Moore, Senator Nauman Wazir and Vice Chancellor University of Agriculture Faisalabad Prof. Dr. Iqar Ahmad Khan paid tribute to the VC Prof. Dr. Jehan Bakht and his team, said that rapid increase in global temperature is affecting agriculture badly, the Wheat Sowing Project will benefit the wheat growing regions, which will help to achieve self-sufficiency in wheat and food security. Increasing temperature is a big issue during certain stages of growth of most wheat plants, so wheat varieties to increase yield per acre of sowing, South Asian countries need to increase wheat productivity through modern agricultural practices.

They said that climate resilient and high yielding wheat cultivation is the best way to increase production to meet the growing demand and climate resilient wheat are more important for the region due to global warming. Winter here is becoming shorter and warmer, which has already posed threats to sustainable wheat production, so priority areas for research and development to increase wheat productivity are investment in hybrid wheat, water use seed efficiency, high temperature tolerance and diseases resistance are required.

Provincial Minister Dr. Muhammad Qasim Jan further said that in order to increase food production, it is very important to make farmers aware of its importance along with experiments on new seeds and in this regard, promote the method of sowing wheat varieties should be given so that seed will not waste, every seed becomes a plant and the yield per acre is increased.



In brief

Pashto dept in UOS inaugurated Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Pakistan Boys Scouts Association National Commissioner Sardar Waqar Shahzad had the honor to accompany VC of Swat university Dr. Hassan Sher to welcome federal minister of culture Jamal Shah and poet Abaseen Yousafzai, in the inauguration ceremony of Pushto Department, Journey of human development from pre history took a great leap with advancement of language. From the first writings on mountain rocks, to leather, paper and now on digital screens every new form of language writing pushed human race into an irreversible great development. At every point of this progress artists and art played a pivotal role to record this progress in all the phases of human history. Education given in mother language is easy to teach, understand, implement and progress in. Sardar Waqar Shahzad expressed great pleasure on the inauguration of Pashto department at swat university, and hope to see more local languages will be taught in the educational institutes from primary till post doctorate levels.

Awareness week observed F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The purpose of the World Antimicrobial Awareness Week to raise awareness of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and encourage best practices to prevent the further emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance. The Al-Farabi Medical Education System Timergara arranged the function to observe the antimicrobial week. The district Orthopedic Surgeon Dr Waqar Alam while addressing the seminar said the World Health Organization celebrated the World Antimicrobial Awareness Week every year from November 18 to 24 and this seminar was part of it. The seminar was also addressed by the ENT Specialist Dr Zafar Ayaz, Dr Ikram, Dr Yusuf Khan and Dr Asad, while students and faculty members of the institution attended the event. The speakers said that it was the collective responsibility of all of them to make the public aware of the increasing resistance to pesticides and its harms, and to deal with this responsibility, such awareness programs and seminars should be organized. "We should know what its harms are and how it can be prevented, then we should spread awareness among people", one of the speakers said, adding that antibiotics should be used with caution. He said the bacteria would develop resistance after a few years if antibiotics were not used cautiously and the medicine would be ineffective against these bacteria. Later an awareness walk was also held, the participants of which were carrying banners and placards.

Nine-year-old girl raped

OKARA (INP): A wicked person raped nine-year-old girl in Gilani Chowk of Basirpur town of Okara and escaped the scene. According to details, the culprit identified as Fiaz alias Kala s/o Nazir Ahmed barged into house of a labourer Riaz while he along his children was outside to earn livelihood. The accused raped 9-year-old daughter of Riaz present all along at home and fled after her condition deteriorated. The rap victim girl was shifted to hospital and police after registering a case against the culprit started raids for his arrest.



CHAKWAL: Chairperson BISP, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib addressing BISP employees at Jamia Masjid Eidgah.

Ex- minister, other key figures join PTI-P

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Pakistan Tahreek Insaf Parliamentary chairman and former foreign minister Perviz Khattak has said that he did not see any change and 'Naya Pakistan' during the last ten years. He was addressing a big public gathering at Talash as chief guest here on Friday.

Both the former chief ministers were warmly received on their arrival to the venue and chanted slogans in their favour. According to political analysts it was a successful power show in the area. The Pakistan Peoples' Party leader and former provincial minister Muzafar Syed advocate along with former caretaker provincial minister Malik Shafiullah, Brigadier (retired) Saeedullah Khan, former district councilors Hakim Khan of JI, Syed Alam Shah of PTI, village council chairmen Shahab Utmami of PPP, Murad Khan of JI, PPP former candidate for national assembly Barrister Aurang zeb Khan, ANP former candidate for national assembly Haji Nazir Khan and several others formally announced to join the PTI-P on the occasion. The event was attended by local elders and workers of different political parties in a large number.

The gathering was also addressed by former chief minister Mahmood Khan, Muzafar Syed advocate, Brigadier (retired) Saeedullah, Haji Nazir Khan, Hakim Khan, Shahab Utmami and others. The speakers expressed full confidence in the leadership of Perviz Khattak and Mahmood Khan and hoped the PTI-P would form the next government in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with public support.

The PTI-P chief Perviz Khattak said that peace, development and prosperity were slogans of his party. He accused the previous rulers for keeping the nation backward and alleged the rulers did nothing for the people in the last 76 years. Mr Khattak equally condemned the PML-N, PPP and PTI for the mess and said that its leadership had indebted the country with loans. He claimed that they did not believe in mere slogans but believed in serving the masses and making efforts for development. He asked the participants to think before voting for a leader.

"If we are eligible and competent then vote the PTI-P and if not, no one will be forced to vote us", he said, adding that he had got Rs 70 billion KP share in NFC award when he was the chief minister. Mr Khattak said that Murad Saeed, the former federal minister for national highways, was repeatedly asked by him to build a model road in the province but he failed to do so.

He said the Chakdara Chitral road was in dilapidated condition and Murad Saeed was responsible for it. The former foreign minister claimed that it was he who made the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police a model for others. He said that it was he who completed the billion tree Tsunami project and launched the 'sehat card' scheme. "The

Khan [Imran Khan] had nothing to do with it", Perviz Khattak said, alleging the PTI chief was not sincere with the people. He said that he had become 'Pharaoh' and avoided talking to his ministers and MNAs. "Khan was afraid only of me because I don't afraid of anyone", he said amid a big clap from the participants.

About the development of Dir Mr Khattak promised that he would establish an industrial zone near the Koto Hydro Power station and would construct irrigation channels, roads, schools and colleges in the district if came into power. Earlier, former chief minister Mahmood Khan informed the gathering that he had approved Rs 5 billion for land purchase for the Dir motorway but his government was ended eight months ago and the project was halted. He promised to regularize the services of the Community Driven Local Development (CDLD) employees in his next government. The former chief minister claimed that the PTI-P would form next government in the province and it would have a big share in the center too.

The former provincial minister Muzafar Syed said the people of Lower and Upper Dir stood behind Perviz Khattak and expressed his full confidence in his leadership. He said the PTI-P would initiate mega development projects like the construction of Gopalum Irrigation Channel, supply of natural gas to parts of the district, construction of link roads and creating job opportunities. He said the PTI-P would end the politics of hatred and abuse.

NGOs and philanthropists asked to work collectively for orphans and special children: The Helping Hand for Relief and Development (HHRD) on Friday arranged a function for orphan children and best performers at its Talash center. The registered orphan children, their families, social workers and the HHRD management attended the function. The orphan and special children presented songs, speeches and tableaux on the occasion and got applause from the audience.

The function was addressed by the HHRD country head Saleem Mansori, programme officer Muhammad Bilal, Principal Abdul Hameed Nasari, regional officer Ameenullah and others. The speakers appreciated the HHRD for serving the orphans and special children. They said the organization had been assisting and working for uplift of thousands of orphans and special children across the country. They said the organization was running rehabilitation centers for orphans in 56 districts and providing education and financial assistance to them.

They said that it was the collective responsibility of nongovernmental organizations, philanthropists and the state to take care of orphans and special children so that they could become useful citizens. The position holder students were awarded with honorary shields, medals and cash prizes on the occasion.

Training workshop arranged

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A comprehensive one-day training workshop in District Mardan brought together Investigation Officers and Crime Scene Staff, providing valuable insights into modern investigation techniques.

Two experts from the Directorate of Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL)

shared knowledge on various aspects of the investigation system with participants, including fingerprint analysis, blood-related evidence, weapons, vehicles, and forensic procedures for cases involving minors and sexual assault.

The workshop, attended by SP Sadder Circle Mardan Khalid Khan, Circle Investigation DSPs, and district-wide investiga-

tion staff, included a question-and-answer session and focused discussions on the forensic science of drugs. SP Investigation Muhammad Sulaiman Khan expressed optimism that the enhanced skills and knowledge gained by officers would contribute to more effective case resolution. He extended gratitude to the Director of FSL for facilitating the workshop.



HYDERABAD: Ameer of Jamat-e-Islami Karachi Hafiz Naem-ur-Rehman addressing during Gaza march.

Civil or military courts

Hira Zafar

THE civil society across Pakistan had condemned Supreme Court judgement against Military court on media due to multiple security challenges in the country despite its legal impacts. Pakistan facing various challenges on different front in the current geopolitical development globally and its impacts on region particularly.

It is high time for the establishment of Rule of Law to achieve public confidence, overcoming socio-economic hurdles and deterring security challenges. It is found during war against terrorism that proclaimed terrorists had acquitted from charges due to loopholes in the legal and prosecution system.

In the security departments civilian are working on various position and they liable for trial in military court if found in security breach or other anti-state activities. The terrorist organizations will obtain hope from the supreme court's decision because they will acquit from charge due to loopholes in legal system.

Moreover, some retired army personnel were found involved in anti-army/ security establishment activities for their political personal ends. The Supreme Court decision paved courage personnel and their propaganda may cause weakens national interests.

The debate over civil versus military courts may cause confrontation among legal circles but it is evident that Pakistan's ordinary ranked worst in performance across the world while Military's court stand 7th position.

Pro-Kashmir, pro-Palestine rallies held

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): Rallies were held in Muzaffarabad and Hattian Bala areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir to express solidarity with the oppressed peoples of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine.

According to Kashmir Media Service, a rally was organised by the Jammu Kashmir Awami Party (JKAP) at Burhan Chowk in Muzaffarabad. A large number of people participated in the rally led by the JKAP Vice Chairman, Imtiaz Ahmed Butt. The participants were holding banners and placards reading slogans against India and Israel.

Addressing on the occasion, the speakers condemned the atrocities of India and Israel on the Kashmiris and Palestinians. They said that the Kashmiris and Palestinians were fighting against the two usurping forces, India and Israel, and their unprecedented sacrifices would definitely bring positive results. The speakers included Imtiaz Ahmad Butt, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Shaukat Javed Mir, Majid Awan, Riaz Ahmad Awan, Mahfouz Inqilabi, Syed Abdul Samad, Ifthikhar Abbasi, Bilal Farooqi and Sadiq Khan.

Meanwhile, a big rally was organized in Hattian Bala under the auspices of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir. A large number of people participated in it. The participants were carrying the flags of Pakistan, Kashmir and Palestine.

QWP chief vows to protect provincial rights

F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Friday called for introducing constitutional, bureaucratic and judicial reforms to promote democracy and ensure better service delivery.

Addressing a public gathering at Shabqadar tehsil in Charsadda district, he said the people were not getting any relief in the absence of reforms. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf former district member Ilyas Khan announced joining the QWP along with his family members and supporters on the occasion.

Aftab Sherpao maintained that introducing reforms would ensure provincial autonomy and pave the way for national cohesion. He said the people

also felt the need for introducing reforms. He said the people were facing a host of issues and wanted the government to provide them relief particularly in the face of skyrocketing inflation.

The QWP leader said a level playing field should be provided to all the stakeholders and political forces. He said an enabling environment should be created to ensure the holding of the free, fair and transparent elections. He added majority of the political leaders believed that the 2018 general election was rigged but no probe was conducted to fix the responsibility and punish the ones responsible for influencing the polls' outcome.

Aftab Sherpao said the people were grappling with a host of issues, adding that the have-nots were unable

to feed their children due to rising poverty. The QWP leader said the promises made with regard to the merged districts must be honoured. He said the province should be given its due rights as per the constitution. He also asked the political parties to honour the pledges made to the people.

He reiterated the resolve that no effort would be spared to work for the well-being and prosperity of the Pakhtuns. "We will not rest until the Pakhtuns get their due rights," he vowed. Aftab Sherpao said the QWP was striving to get the rights of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa enshrined in the constitution. Commenting on the prevailing political situation, he said that election was the only way to steer the country out of the crises.



CHARSADDA: Chairman of Qaumi Watan Party Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao addressing party workers in Shabqadar.

Pak Army, FC install three hydropower turbines

F.P. Report

BUNER: Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps North, supported by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, have installed three hydropower turbines in the Elum Valley of Buner district, addressing the essential needs of the neglected areas.

These recent installations would prove a milestone in ensuring a consistent power supply to 1500 households in an area that had been without electricity for the past seventy years. Among the installations, a 150-kilowatt hydroelectric turbine now lights up 500 homes in Ellum Kalay and Karapa Kalay. Another 200-kilowatt turbine provides electricity to 500 homes in Jobra Kalay and Sheen Dhand, while a 250-kilowatt turbine in Elum serves 500 homes in Char Kalay.

Overcoming the remote and challenging terrain, the Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps North have achieved successful outcomes, including the installation of turbines, transformers, and transmission line poles.

They navigated difficulties by laying transmission lines in streams and using winching techniques to transfer heavy pipes. The local population has expressed gratitude for these efforts that have brought much-needed electricity to their communities.

PML-N aspirant candidates show unity: The PML-N party tickets aspirant candidates have showed unity among ranks and promised of supporting those awarded party tickets for NA 10 Buner PK 25.26 and 27 by the provincial president Engineer Amir Muqam Khan.

The grand gathering was held at Muslim League House in Elai the residence of district general secretary Haji Shah Bakht Rawan Khan Advocate on Friday.

Those addressed including district president and aspirant candidate Haji Salar Khan general secretary Haji Shah Bskht Rawan Khan Haji Subhanullah Khan Abdur Rehman Farooqi Dr Sultanul mulk Khan Jehanbar Khan Syed Basar Abass Bacha Mian

Naeemuden Bacha and dozen more.

The speakers highlighted importance of winning the candidates in the upcoming general elections so as to strengthen hands of Mian Mohamad Nawaz Sharief in National assembly and the Engineer Amir Muqam Khan in KPK assembly.

The speakers shared all about jey role played by the president Haji Salar Khan and general secretary Haji Shah Bskht Rawan Khan advocate for strengthening the PML N in Buner when its decades long president Haji Sarzamin Khan left the party and joined PTI. They pointed out the services rendered by all of aspirant candidates for promotion if the party as they ensured dragging key figures from others parties and every one among them deserve to be awarded party ticket but realized the fact only one of them would be awarded NA and one each in PK 25.26.27. They agreed upon those awarded party tickets would be supported by every means and vore support and campaign for them.

DPO: Protection of life of masses a duty of police

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: District Police Officer Hafizabad Faissal Gulzar has said that protection of life, property and honour of the people is prime duty of the police and district police will be continued crackdown on anti-social elements till elimination criminals in the district.

He expressed these views while handing over booty worth Rs.9,88,00,000/= to 338 owners in a ceremony held at DPO Office. He said that police had recovered Rs. 25300000/- cahs, 32 tola gold ornaments, five stolen tractors, one dumper, one car, one Trala, 92 motorcycles, one Shahzoor truck, two rickshaws, 29 mobile phones, four cows and 18 buffalo from six notorious dacoits gangs including

Amanir alias Aamir gang, Amanit gang, Muqarab gang, Liaqat gang, Akhtri gang, Ali Hassan gang and 226 accused involved in dacoities, highway robbery, street crimes, cattle lifting and other heinous crimes.

He also said that a big quantity of illegal arms also recovered during special crackdown during two and a half month.

Anti-polio campaign: All arrangements have been finalised to launch five-day anti-polio campaign from 27, November in the district Hafizabad and health department Hafizabad has constituted 998 polio teams to administer drops of polio vaccine to 232000 children upto five year age in the district. This was stated in a meeting held to review preparation being made by the district administration, health and other departments.

Deputy Commissioner Madam Sundas Irshad presided over the meeting. Chief Executive Officer Health Dr. Umer Sharif Rathore, DHO Dr. Faiq Ali Tarar, representative of WHO Dr. Touqeer Ahmad, Ulema, Assistant Commissioner (HR and Coordination) Ishfaq Rasul and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

Addressing the meeting DC Madam Sundas Irshad

said that to save children from this crippling polio disease is our collective obligation and polio team to ensure that no child be left without drops of anti-polio vaccine. She appealed the Ulema to persuade the people through their sermons for cooperating with polio teams to get administer drops of polio vaccine to their children during the campaign so that the country could make polio free.

Old enmity claims life

SARGODHA (INP): A man was gunned down on old enmity here at Mitha Tiwana G-road near Gunyaal farm under jurisdiction of Jouharabad police station, here on Friday.

Police spokesperson said that pioneer of irrigation department namely as Muhammad Akbar had an old enmity with Tahir, Khalid and others on some domestic issues.



GAZA: *Palestinians bring the body of a relative killed in the Israeli bombardment to a morgue in Deir el-Balah.*

What is the mysterious pneumonia outbreak?

BEIJING: As China experiences its first winter without strict COVID-19 restrictions since the outbreak of the pandemic three years ago, a wave of respiratory illnesses is sweeping across the country.

The unusual rise in cases has prompted the World Health Organization (WHO) to prod China for additional information on the outbreak and seek enhanced response measures. Although the cause of this trend is unclear, some health experts are attributing it to a common and temporary aftereffect of lifting lockdown restrictions, even as unanswered questions around the infections and the country of their spread have led others to draw parallels with the early days of the pandemic.

Authorities from China's National Health Commission attributed the rise in cases to the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. Health experts have also agreed that this could be the reason, similar to the "lockdown exit wave" that was witnessed in countries like the United Kingdom. China may be repaying an "immunity debt" after their lengthy lockdown, "which must have drastically reduced the circulation of respiratory bugs and hence decreased immunity to endemic bugs", Francois Belloux, director of University College London's Genetic Institute, said in a statement posted on X.

He added that based on current information, "there is no reason to suspect the emergence of a novel pathogen" and that Mycoplasma pneumoniae, the probable source of most cases and a bacteria that typically affects younger children, is "generally fairly harmless". Chinese authorities listed mycoplasma as one of the circulating pathogens along with respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The WHO has asked China for more infor-

mation on the recent patterns of these microorganisms.

While the presence of a novel pathogen is a possibility until more information is made available, the outbreak could also be due to "an existing but newly mutated pathogen with modified characteristics and severity", said Laith Abu-Raddad, professor of healthcare policy and research at Weill Cornell Medicine in Qatar. "Both scenarios would be of global concern as pathogens will cross national borders sooner or later regardless of preventive measures," he said. At their press conference, Chinese authorities said there is a need to step up disease surveillance and strengthen the capacity of health systems. The WHO and medical staff in China have also advised people in the country to reinforce practices from the COVID-19 pandemic era, such as rigorous handwashing, wearing masks and social distancing.

In Liaoning Province, people have been queueing up at traditional Chinese medicine hospitals while patients at Dalian Children's Hospital have had to wait in line for two hours, according to the ProMED report. Although medical staff are concerned about the spike in infections in people under 18, they are also worried about vulnerable populations such as the elderly and pregnant women. Yu reported outside Beijing Children's Hospital as a steady stream of parents walked hand-in-hand with their children behind her.

Abu Raddad noted that the incidence in children could suggest that older individuals have some immunity to the pathogen that is rampant, possibly RSV, and so a cause for less concern since a new vaccine is available for the virus. Experts have agreed that more definitive information is needed on the illnesses. Pneumonia is an inflammation of air sacs in

the lungs due to bacterial, viral or fungal infection.

Commonly affecting young children and older adults, the infection can be deadly. Deaths due to the illness are highest in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, according to a WHO report in 2022. Symptoms tend to include chest pain, coughing, fever and fatigue. Although the illness takes a toll on one's lungs and body, it can be treated with antibiotics when caused by bacteria. Recovery timelines typically last from a week to a month or more. — Aljazeera

Court grants bail to ex-bank chief

ABUJA: A Nigerian court has freed former central bank Governor Godwin Emefiele, who has been charged with six counts of fraud and corruption, on bail. Emefiele, suspended as head of the central bank in June and arrested by the security services, has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

He was granted bail by Justice Hamza Muazu subject to the provision of a 300 million naira (roughly \$333,000) bond and two sureties with properties in the upscale Maitama district of the country's capital Abuja. "I hereby admit the applicant [Emefiele] to bail subject to his appearance in court," Justice Muazu said in his ruling.

The judge asked Emefiele, 62, to deposit his travel documents with the court and remain in Abuja while the case against him proceeds. The disgraced former bank chief, who made an unprecedented run for the Nigerian presidency last year, was one of the country's most powerful people in the last decade. He was head of the bank for nine years, mostly under President Bola Tinubu's predecessor, Muhammadu Buhari. — Aljazeera

Luxon forges deal to lead new coalition government

WELLINGTON: Three New Zealand political leaders have agreed to form the next coalition government, capping off more than a month of negotiations over their policy agenda and setting the stage for conservative leader Christopher Luxon to become prime minister.

Luxon, who leads the centre-right National Party, announced that his party struck an alliance with the conservative ACT and populist New Zealand First parties, giving them enough seats to govern. Luxon's National Party won 38 percent of the vote in New Zealand's October 14 elections, the largest proportion of any party, while the ACT won 9 percent and New Zealand First 6 percent.

Leaders of the three parties will cement their alliance in a signing ceremony on Friday at Parliament, following their parties' expected ratification of the deal. While Luxon was destined to become the prime minister due to his party's strong election showing, it took six weeks of tough negotiations to agree on a joint policy platform with coalition partners, who campaigned on different policies regarding taxation, race relations and economic management.

"I'm really proud of the negotiations," Luxon said. "When you see the agreements tomorrow, you'll understand how comprehensive they are. We've covered a tremendous amount of material." Luxon said he plans to announce the ministers in his coalition government following Friday's formal sign-off. ACT leader David Seymour and NZ First head Winston Peters are both in the running to be deputy prime minister. New Zealand has had a caretaker government since voters ended the six-year reign of the centre-left Labour government in October's elections. Labour's Chris Hipkins, who replaced Jacinda Ardern as prime minister in January, conceded defeat a few hours after the polls closed. — Aljazeera

Families of female Palestinian prisoners await release

GAZA: At her home in the occupied East Jerusalem town of Sur Baher, Sameera Dwayyat is gripped with anxiety and apprehension. The name of her daughter, Shorouq, who is currently serving the longest sentence of all the female Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, is on the list of prisoners due for release over the next few days in exchange for 50 Israeli captives held in Gaza by Hamas.

"I'm so nervous," Sameera, also known as Imm Ibrahim, told Al Jazeera. "We haven't heard confirmation about the names [to be released] from any official side, and neither the Red Cross nor the Palestinian Prisoners Club have contacted us." After six weeks of fighting, Israel and Hamas have agreed to a four-day truce that will begin. As part of the truce, Israel has agreed to release 150 Palestinian women and children from its prisons, in exchange for Hamas releasing 50 Israeli women and children out of the 237 captives abducted since October 7.

Hundreds of trucks carrying vital humanitarian aid and fuel will also be allowed into Gaza. Shorouq Dwayyat, who is currently serving her ninth year of a 16-year sentence, is one of many prisoners who campaigners say have been unjustly tried and sentenced on unfair or fabricated charges. She was also fined 80,000 shekels (\$21,500). She was just 18 years old when Israeli forces arrested her as she was walking home on October 7, 2015 after they shot her four times, leaving her in critical condition.

She was accused of attempting to stab an Israeli settler with a knife, but her family strongly refutes the charges. "It is impossible for me to believe the Israeli story that my daughter stabbed a settler," Salah Dwayyat, her father, told Al Jazeera at the time. "Shorouq is delicate and cannot harm an animal." Palestinian witnesses said an Israeli settler had tried to pull off her hijab while she was walking past, in a deliberate act of provocation. She pushed back and Israeli forces fired four bullets into her body, leaving her to bleed on the

ground for half an hour before arresting her.

Shorouq was treated at the Ein Karem/Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem, undergoing skin grafts and several operations. She had just started her first semester at Bethlehem University as a geography and history student, after obtaining a 90 percent average in her high school results. "She would be the one to lift my spirits up whenever I would visit her in Damon prison in Haifa," her mother said. "I had no hope that she would be released early, to the point where she had stopped asking me if I thought there was a chance of that."

The fifth child of seven, Shorouq would ask about her siblings, two of whom have married during the years she has spent in prison, and the nieces and nephews that she could not meet. "This year – call it a mother's intuition – I had a feeling she would be free," Sameera said. "I told her during my last visit that I can see her at the front door of our home." "I hope it will be true," she added, her voice catching. "I hope she can come home." In the northern occupied West Bank town of Sila al-Harthiya, Muntaser Jaradat said he cannot wait for his mother, Awatif, to be released from Damon prison in northern Palestine.

The 33-year-old was himself released from the notorious Naqab prison on November 1, but two other brothers remain in other prisons. Awatif Jaradat, 50, was arrested in December 2021 after Israeli forces arrested her youngest son, Ghaith, who was 18 at the time. Another son, Omar, 21 was also arrested – as was Muntaser himself two months later.

Israeli forces had accused Ghaith of carrying out an attack that resulted in the death of an Israeli settler and the injury of two others. He was sentenced to life in prison plus 50 years. "Israel accused my mother of incitement after she spoke to media saying that she was proud of her sons for resisting the occupation," Muntaser said. "They wanted a lengthy sentence for her, nine to 15 years in prison." "They just wanted revenge

on our family," he said.

The mother of nine is known for her strong personality, especially in the face of adversity, her son said. Muntaser said that she acted as a medical chaperone for a fellow prisoner, Fatima Shaheen, who was arrested last April after Israeli forces shot her, resulting in wounds that left her paralysed. Shaheen is also on the list of female prisoners due to be released. Awatif was allowed to accompany Shaheen to Ramleh prison for medical treatment, but was not allowed to stay with her. Instead, she was placed three months in solitary confinement at Ramleh, with no communication with the outside world, before being returned to Damon.

"The past two years have been hard for my family, who had to travel to four different prisons to see me in Naqab, Ghaith in Nafha, Omar in Gilboa and my mother in Damon," Muntaser said. "We have had no word about Omar for two months." He described how Palestinian prisoners had been subject to torture following the Hamas attack on Israeli army outposts and towns outside the Gaza Strip on October 7.

"They would beat us so severely, that the ground would be stained with streaks of blood," he said. "It was like being in Guantanamo Bay or Abu Ghraib prison. They humiliated us and would stomp on us with their boots. They also cut off water and electricity and threw away our belongings." In Bethlehem, Amna Salameh is optimistic about having her youngest daughter Maysoon Mousa back home after almost nine years in prison. Maysoon was arrested in 2015 when she was 22 years old and sentenced to 15 years in prison after being accused of stabbing a soldier. "We're happy to hear the news," she said. "I last saw Maysoon two months ago, but since October 7, we haven't been allowed visits and we heard that the prisoners are being mistreated badly. We hope all the prisoners will be released and the suffering of our people in Gaza will stop." — Aljazeera

What's behind efforts to strip Guatemala's president-elect of his immunity?

GUATEMALA CITY: Blockades were set up around campus. Banners were unfurled. And key buildings at the University of San Carlos (USAC), Guatemala's sole public university, came under student occupation. It was 2022, and the campus was in uproar over the election of a new rector, Walter Mazariegos, to lead the school. Critics, including the United States State Department, had denounced the selection process as "fraudulent". Among those raising their voices in outrage was a member of Guatemala's Congress, little known outside his country at the time.

But now, the dark-horse progressive Bernardo Arevalo has rocketed into the international spotlight as Guatemala's president-elect - and his statements about the protests are at the centre of a new controversy erupting in the country. On November 17, prosecutors filed a request to strip Arevalo and his running mate Karin Herrera of their political immunity for supporting the student protests on social media. Human rights advocates and observers have warned that the request is the latest attempt to derail Arevalo's presidency, as the political establishment reels from his surprise victory in August's election. "It is really a veiled threat to the transition," Luis Mack, a Guatemalan independent political analyst and political science professor at USAC, told Al Jazeera.

"The case has no legal basis. But any excuse can serve to criminalise you and intimidate you." Arevalo, an

anticorruption candidate, has faced a series of legal actions since emerging as a frontrunner in the June 25 general elections. As he advanced to the run-off race, prosecutors sought to suspend his political party, the Seed Movement. Police also raided the party's offices, and his opponents have publicly questioned the vote tally, even filing complaints of fraud. But the latest move against Arevalo heightens the legal jeopardy he and his political party face, leaving him vulnerable to criminal investigation - and potentially prosecution. The request to remove Arevalo's political immunity comes as part of a larger investigation into the occupation at USAC, which lasted over 380 days. It ended in June. Cultural Heritage prosecutor Angel Saul Sanchez has accused participants of aggravated usurpation, destruction of cultural property, illicit association and sedition.

But he cast a wide net as well, using legal means to pursue supporters of the protest movement as well as active participants. Already, the Guatemalan national police have carried out 31 raids as part of the case. Sanchez has also obtained arrest warrants for 27 people, including members of the Seed Movement. When outlining his case in a press conference on November 16, Sanchez alleged that Arevalo and Herrera were part of the protesters' political backing, helping to manage the university takeover from the sidelines. "We clearly establish that there is a timeline in which the university is a

political looting," Sanchez said, projecting images onscreen of Herrera attending a protest and Arevalo speaking on the video platform, TikTok. Their actions, Sanchez warned, could lead to charges of illicit association and influence peddling. But before that happens, Sanchez's request to revoke Arevalo's immunity would have to overcome several hurdles, according to political analyst Marielos Chang. "Right now, the Supreme Court of Justice has to authorise the stripping of his immunity," Chang said. "And after, Congress has to vote." If both steps are successful, a court case against Arevalo can move forward, but Gabriela Carrera, a professor at Rafael Landivar University, said a trial could stretch on for years.

In the meantime, stripping Arevalo's and Herrera's immunity could still disrupt the transition of power. "This would be the consolidation of the current coup," Carrera said. Critics, however, have denounced the whole investigation into the protests as an attempt to suppress free speech and political dissent in Guatemala. The rector whose election sparked the protests is seen as an ally of the ruling conservative party, Vamos. "This, after many years, is the first case of massive criminalisation of protest," Claudia Samayoa, a Guatemalan human rights activist, told Al Jazeera. Guatemala began its transition to democracy in 1985. In the years prior, however, dissent had been censored and suppressed under a series of violent dictatorships. — Aljazeera

What does Israel-Hamas deal mean for US policy?

WASHINGTON: The agreement between Israel and Hamas to pause the fighting in Gaza and release dozens of captives highlights the power of diplomacy and creates an opening to end the violence, advocates in the United States say. But they stress that the truce is not sufficient, with many pledging to continue pressuring the administration of US President Joe Biden to pursue a long-term ceasefire.

"This is an important break in the fighting. It's important that these families are reunified," said Hassan El-Tayyab, legislative director for Middle East policy at the advocacy group Friends Committee on National Legislation. "But it's not enough. We have to continue building momentum to reach a permanent ceasefire, a return of all the hostages, unfettered aid access and a solution for peace for Israelis and Palestinians."

The deal will see Hamas release 50 women and children held in Gaza, and Israel free 150 Palestinian women and children from its prisons. The exchange will be accompanied by a four-day pause in the fighting and an increased delivery of humanitarian aid into the besieged Palestinian territory. The agreement, which was approved by the Israeli government, is expected to go into effect on Friday. It will mark the first stop in the fighting since the war broke out.

Israel has pledged to continue its

military campaign after the pause. But El-Tayyab stressed that "more war" is not the answer, and that there is no military solution to the crisis. "The question is: Will we fall back to where we were for the past six weeks, with indiscriminate bombing and civilians dying and the hostages being held?" he told Al Jazeera. "Or are we going to take a step forward towards more negotiations, an extended truce, to get everybody home and finally resolve some of the underlying issues that are creating the cycles of violence, which include the systemic oppression of Palestinians?"

President Biden welcomed the deal and thanked Qatar and Egypt for helping to broker it. He also applauded Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a statement. "I appreciate the commitment that Prime Minister Netanyahu and his government have made in supporting an extended pause to ensure this deal can be fully carried out and to ensure the provision of additional humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of innocent Palestinian families in Gaza," Biden said. He did not comment on the future of the conflict.

The Biden administration has been calling for "humanitarian pauses" in the war while firmly rejecting demands for a ceasefire, at least until Israel achieves its stated goal of eliminating Hamas. A truce or a pause is a temporary halt of fighting for an agreed-upon period of time — in this case, four days. A ceasefire is an

indefinite end to hostilities that often comes with a negotiated agreement between the warring parties.

Nancy Okail, president of the Center for International Policy, a US-based think tank, called the truce a "step in the right direction". She said the pause could be used to deliver aid to Palestinians in Gaza, push for a lasting ceasefire and ensure the safety of humanitarian workers, medics and journalists. "This would be important not just for the immediate objective of helping secure the release of the hostages but also to save lives and stop the bloodshed," Okail told Al Jazeera.

More than 14,500 people have been killed in Gaza since Israel launched its offensive in response to the October 7 Hamas attack that killed 1,200 Israelis. Hamas also took more than 200 people captive from Israel. Thousands of Palestinians are in Israeli jails, including hundreds of children, many of whom are held in so-called administrative detention without formal charges. The scale of the violence in Gaza has prompted many scholars and United Nations experts to warn of the risk of genocide.

The Israeli army has forcibly displaced most of the population in the north of the territory — more than one million residents — raising concerns about the possible ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, especially if they are not allowed to return to their homes. Okail said the halt in

violence should extend to the West Bank, where more than 200 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces and settlers since October 7.

If the fighting resumes, Okail also explained that she would like to see the US take a firm stance against any war crimes, including the use of collective punishment, civilian hostages and indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas. "The Biden administration should also draw a clear red line around the use of US-supplied arms and make clear that there will be consequences if those weapons are not used in accordance with international law," Okail added.

The White House and Pentagon have repeatedly said that they would not draw any "red lines" to restrict the Israeli operation in Gaza and how American arms are used. Israel receives \$3.8bn in US aid annually. Biden is seeking more than \$14bn in additional assistance for Israel this year. Leading rights groups like Amnesty International, however, have accused Israel of imposing apartheid on Palestinians. But the appeals for Biden to rein in Israeli abuses appear to be going unheard.

Politico reported that the Biden administration is concerned that the pause "would allow journalists broader access to Gaza and the opportunity to further illuminate the devastation there and turn public opinion on Israel". Against that backdrop, El-Tayyab called for independent

observers to assess the carnage of Gaza. "We need to allow the truth to come out. If the truth leads the public to say: This is a war we don't want to be a part of, then we have to let the chips fall where they may," he told Al Jazeera. Rights advocates have also expressed fear that renewed bombing after the truce might target southern Gaza, which has become more densely populated since the start of the war, as families flee bombings and other attacks. But Biden's support for Israel is not expected to waver after the pause.

Juan Cole, professor of history at the University of Michigan, said Biden's green light for the war is one of the main reasons the Israeli campaign "has gone on for this unspeakably long period". "My reading of the Netanyahu government is that they're incorrigible, that nothing would stand in their way if they want to start back up the destruction," Cole told Al Jazeera. "And then President Biden has shown himself to have no backbone whatsoever when trying to stand up to Netanyahu." Cole noted that Netanyahu has been under pressure from the captives' families to accept the deal, despite opposition from his far-right political allies. National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, for instance, called the agreement "immoral".

Despite the push in some right-wing circles for the relentless bombing to continue, Israel does not appear close to destroying Hamas. The

Palestinian group continues to fight Israeli troops in northern Gaza, killing dozens of soldiers since the ground invasion began. Hamas's top political and military leadership remains intact as well.

It's not clear how and if Israel can eliminate Hamas militarily and what would come after the group if it were destroyed. Hamas has controlled Gaza since 2007. That's why many progressive activists in the US are urging a political solution to end the violence — one that goes beyond the current deal. Usamah Andrabi, communications director at Justice Democrats, a progressive group, called for the US to end its unconditional support for the Israeli government that "continues to openly tell us its plans to annihilate and displace the Palestinian people".

Andrabi said the pause is a temporary but necessary reprieve from the "incessant bombing and destruction by the Israeli government", which will allow for the release of captives. "But we cannot let up on our demands for a permanent ceasefire," Andrabi told Al Jazeera. Sandra Tamari, the executive director of Adalah Justice Project, an advocacy group, echoed Andrabi's comments. She said the halt is simply a "pause of genocide". "How can we settle for a pause to that kind of violence? We have to continue to push the US government to call for a complete ceasefire," Tamari told Al Jazeera. — Aljazeera

The Frontier Post

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Palestine cause and military diplomacy

THE 82nd Formation Commanders Conference was recently held at GHQ under the leadership of Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M). The forum took a holistic view of the ongoing counter-terrorism operations across the country and expressed resolved that all terrorists, their facilitators, and abettors, working on the behest of hostile forces against Pakistan will be dealt with full might of the state. While commenting on the ongoing deadly conflict in Gaza and the West Bank, the forum expressed unequivocal diplomatic, moral, and political support to the people of Palestine and reiterated Pakistan's principled stance supporting the two-state solution, based on pre-1967 borders with Al Quds Al Sharif as the capital of Palestine. The top brass of the Pakistan military also held in-depth discussions regarding the ongoing human rights situation in India's Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to continue its unhindered political, diplomatic, and moral support to its Kashmiri brethren until the Kashmir dispute is resolved in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The Kashmir and Palestine disputes are the two major political and territorial issues, that bar the fundamental rights and freedom of several million Muslims in India's illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and Israel's forcefully occupied Palestine. Being a major Muslim nation and an ideological state, the government, the public and Pakistan's military have always had an emotional and religious view/attachment to both issues which seriously affects Muslim Ummah. Pakistan's founding father Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah termed Jammu and Kashmir as the jugular vein of the country while Palestine has historic religious and spiritual importance for the people of Pakistan. The Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and Muslims of the Indo-subcontinent actively opposed the illegal creation of Israel and raised their voice against the Jewish state throughout history. Pakistan has always supported Palestine's cause at the global forums and played a pivotal role during the Arab-Israel wars in 1967 and 1973.

Pakistan Army is the world's 8th largest military and the lone nuclear power in the Islamic world. The world is fully aware of the courage, professionalism, and capabilities of the armed forces of Pakistan, hence friends and foes alike remain curious about the Pakistan Army's response to events and issues concerning its nation as well as the Muslim Ummah around the globe. In the wake of the ongoing Hamas-Israel war and Tel Aviv's blatant aggression against innocent Palestinians, Pakistan's political leadership and foreign office have categorically condemned Israeli atrocities and war crimes against innocent Gazans, trading in suitable terminology in extending all possible diplomatic, Political, and moral support to bereaved people in Palestine.

However, when it comes to Pakistani soldiers, the Pakistan Army fans inside the country and abroad always expect a strong narrative and suitably worded media release from a seven-hundred-thousand-strong military that represents over 240 million Pakistanis. Because of persistent economic and security challenges, no one expects the issuance of a war ultimatum but every Pakistani and Muslim hopes a stern message from Pakistan for the Jewish state for observance of global humanitarian law and the Geneva war convention. Pakistan's military leadership has categorically reiterated Pakistan's support for bereaved Palestinians yet military diplomacy was absent from the scene throughout this period. After all, the Jewish state and its allies must know that the Pakistani nation is fully committed to the Palestine cause and backs its Palestinian brethren at all forums until they succeed in their mission for a free and independent homeland on their soil.

Visegrad group and the next

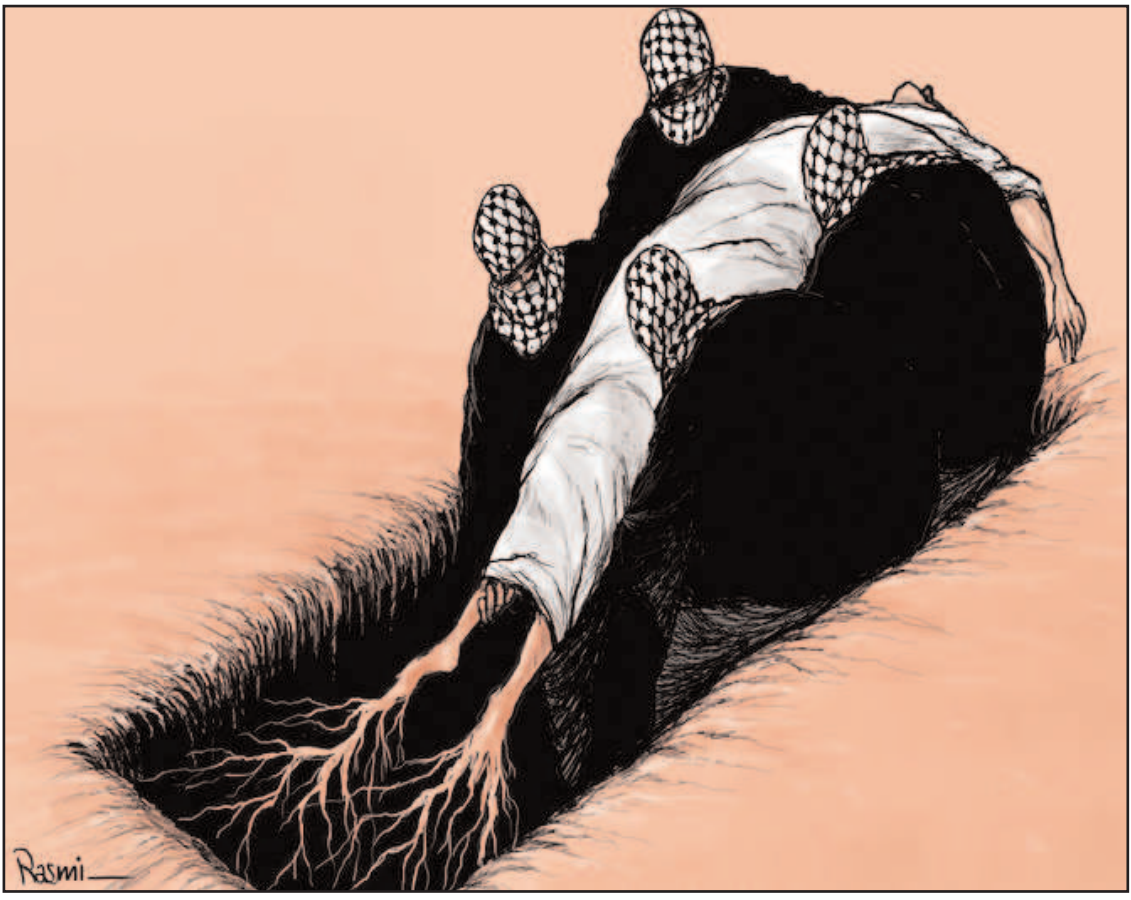
ACCORDING to Western media, the state heads of the four important Central European countries found some common ground on the Ukraine issue despite their governments' diverging views on military support for Kiev's fight against Russian invasion. The Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia, all four post-communist EU states and NATO members form an informal alliance known as the Visegrad Group. According to Czech President Petr Pavel, the Visegrad leaders agreed that Ukraine must succeed but their priorities might be different vis-a-vis their national interests and EU collective policies and decisions.

Historically, the alliance has been led by Putin's long standing ally and Hungary's far-right Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who refused to supply Ukraine with weapons and has threatened to veto EU financial aid packages to Kyiv. Orban accuses Ukraine of violating the rights of an ethnic Hungarian minority in western Ukraine by restricting use of the Hungarian language in schools. At the same time, Budapest's far right leader upholds his loyalty with Russian President Voladimir Putin by tactfully subverting the leaders of important EU countries including against Ukraine, while putting the EU bloc into a troublesome and embarrassing situation.

Interestingly, Hungary, a permanent EU and NATO member state, played a unique role under Mr. Orban during the one and a half year long war in Ukraine. Budapest has not only blocked Western arms supplies from passing through its territory to reach Ukraine but deepened energy ties with Moscow despite EU's strict sanctions on Russian oil and gas sectors. Similarly, the Orban government resolutely opposes Ukraine's addition into the European Union and recently formed a mini group within the European Union to sabotage their collective agenda against Moscow. Historically, there had been concerns among the EU member states regarding the monopoly of a few major nations and Brussels' unnecessary involvement in the global disputes that cost significant financial burden to member nations. Meanwhile, the EU's blind belief in Washington is another point of concern for various EU leaders at this point in time. In fact, the giant of Communism pushed European leaders into an alliance, whose absence is now pushing them toward disassociation. The analysts are mulling over the scenario of whether Hungary's Viktor Orban would play the role of Gorbachev in the case of the European Union or not?

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When Trump says something, believe it

Julian Zelizer

IF the nation learned one thing during Donald Trump's presidency, it's that he does what he says he will do. Which is why recent comments by Trump, the leading nominee in the Republican primary for the 2024 presidential election, once again shattering the norms of political speech, have justifiably raised alarm.

On Veteran's Day, Trump called his enemies "vermin" and spoke of his intention to go after opponents should he regain power. "The threat from outside forces," he said, "is far less sinister, dangerous and grave than the threat from within." In Trump's twisted world, the dangers once posed by caravans of illegal immigrants have been supplanted by his domestic opponents. And when he was president, his fearmongering rhetoric was translated into devastatingly real-world actions; his anti-immigrant posture led to policies like entry bans for many and separations of migrant families at the border while in office.

So it's essential to understand that, besides deploying an autocratic vocabulary to whip up support among those who love him and intimidate those who do not, Trump's words rest on a broader vision for a vast expansion of presidential power. This is not just an imminent threat because of what a Trump presidency would represent, but also because, given the lessons of the history, future presidents could be emboldened by it as well. Trump has been working with the Heritage Foundation to map out a plan for filling key agency positions with loyalists. Part of the goal is to screen tens of thousands of individuals to make sure that they would follow his orders as president.

Trump is also thinking of issuing many pardons to overturn the work completed by the Department of Justice under President Joe Biden prosecuting him, his advisors and his allies. He wants the authority to remove labor protections for the civil service so that he can hire and fire federal workers at will, while dramatically extending his power into the realm of education in particular. Federal prosecutors would be brought in to curb local

crime, and the White House would tighten its grip over the Department of Justice, continuing to shatter the separation that emerged after Watergate. Just in case anyone is missing the President Richard Nixon comparison, Trump would start impounding congressional funds again - refusing to spend money that the House and Senate appropriated - which is exactly what caused Congress to pass major reforms in 1974 centralizing the budget process and constraining the use of impoundments.

Others were overturned, and others proved ineffectual. Following the terrorist attacks on 9/11, President George W. Bush pushed for another vast expansion of executive power on the grounds that it was essential to protect national security. Presidential power has been a bipartisan affair. Democrats have used the authority for their own ends.

As The New York Times reports, Trump and his associates want to "alter the balance of power by increasing the president's authority over every part of the federal government that now operates, by either law or tradition, with any measure of independence from political interference by the White House, according to a review of his campaign proposals and interviews with people close to him." To do so, the Times continued, "Mr. Trump intends to bring independent agencies - like the Federal Communications Commission, which makes and enforces rules for television and internet companies, and the Federal Trade Commission, which enforces various antitrust and other consumer protection rules against businesses - under direct presidential control."

To be sure, the growing authority of the presidency is nothing new. Nor is it a Republican story. Executive power has steadily expanded since the founding of the republic, accelerating greatly the

1930s and 1940s when President Franklin Roosevelt vastly expanded the executive branch. Although liberals had once praised this power as a necessary source of centralization which would allow decisive leadership to address the nation's needs, hope turned to fear when Nixon revealed how that authority could be used for dangerous ends to go after opponents, reward loyal supporters and to conduct illicit and even illegal operations. As the Watergate investigation was getting

instance, President Bill Clinton used executive action to expand the environmental programs of the federal government. Most recently, Biden leaned on executive power to advance a student loan forgiveness program that the courts ultimately overturned. While presidents from both parties have deployed executive power, not all presidents have intentionally mapped out plans to go after their enemies without any legal justification. This is what Trump has in mind and it's downright Nixonian. It's also why he represents a threat to the Oval Office that goes beyond the typical issue of consolidating power.

Trump has shown quite clearly how he is willing to ignore any institutional or normative guardrails that have been in place - from leveraging foreign aid as a way to obtain campaign fodder on an opponent to rejecting the legitimate results of an election. He has continually used his bully pulpit, in rallies and on social media, to target opponents and inflame his army of supporters. The ability to manipulate the power of his position has been made clear, though, as the findings about January 6 revealed. What many initially thought was yet another moment of Trumpian chaos was actually a systematic, carefully orchestrated and quite sweeping plan to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election, according to multiple congressional and legal investigations.

If it had not been for the action of key individuals, from former Vice President Mike Pence to numerous federal judges, the plan could have been successful. The lesson should not be that the system worked, but how close we came to a total disaster and how our democracy depended on people doing the right thing at the right time. Voters should be paying close attention right now. When presidents use presidential power in dangerous ways, not only does this present a dangerous stress test at the moment, but it also means that over time, the expansions of power are rarely cut back. When Trump breaks governing norms, he also establishes dangerous new ones.

Presidential power has been a bipartisan affair. Democrats have used the authority for their own ends. Frustrated with the Republican Congress, for

As war reaches stalemate, support among Russians may fall

Alexander Finiarel

FOR the first time since mobilization was announced in September 2022, all three independent Russian pollsters showed a sharp decline in public support for invading Ukraine. This time, the drop in the level of support for the war is not related to any specific event, and may even indicate a turning point in Russians' attitudes toward the "special military operation."

According to a poll published on Oct. 31 by the Levada Center, the share of Russians who favor continuing the war has fallen 11% since last month to 37% - the lowest figure since mobilization was announced in September 2022. Fifty-six percent of respondents were also in favor of opening negotiations with Ukraine. The Russian Field service corroborated the Levada Center's findings by publishing its own poll results on Nov. 15. Almost half of Russian Field's respondents were in favor of opening negotiations and 39% were in favor of continuing the "special operation." A June poll by the same organization was roughly evenly divided.

In addition, the number of people who believe that Russia is moving in the right direction has fallen by 8% and the number of those who believe that the "special operation" is going unsuccessfully has grown by 4%. Furthermore, the share of those who do not trust official information about the course of the war has for the first time exceeded the percentage of those who trust it. Finally, a Chronicle Group poll conducted in October 2023 reports the lowest level of support for the "special operation" since the fall 2022 mobilization, with 51% of respondents then and now indicating support. Moreover, for the first time, the share of people who would support a decision from President Vladimir Putin to withdraw troops without achieving Russia's strategic objectives fell below those who would oppose it. The percentage of people not ready for a truce also fell from 47% to 32%. The number of people who prioritize spending on the army fell from 37% to 25%.

The last time all three pollsters showed a decrease in support for the war was during the mobilization period. However, support recovered as soon as it ended and people realized that the war still did not directly affect them. Unlike in September 2022, when Russians were reacting to mobilization, support for the war is falling for no apparent reason. Even though Ukraine's counteroffensive has failed to achieve meaningful results, the Russian army's mounting losses and lack of territorial gains do not increase Russians' confidence in victory.

Moreover, the uncertainty of the period for which the mobilized were taken to war, combined with the authorities' false statements that the mobilized would serve far from the front line and not take part in battles, is increasingly irritating their loved ones - whose share, according to Chronicle's calculations, comprises about 10% of the population. On the mobilization's first anniversary, they started to flood MPs with letters and even tried

to protest. In both cases, these changes are not due to an increase in the number of people calling for peace (which is practically unchanged since February), but rather the decline of those actively calling for war. According to Chronicle, these core supporters have shrunk to 12% of the population, meaning they are now outnumbered by core opponents of the war (18.5%). The same thing happened in the fall of 2022. Russian Field polls first pointed to this trend in the summer of 2023. Back then, loyalists ready to support any of Putin's decisions no matter what grew in number by 8% mainly due to the reduction of people who were willing to support any decision except signing a peace agreement).

As a 1998 study showed, the 18-month milestone is an important turning point when the initiator's chances of victory drop significantly. They analyzed the relationship between a country's political regime, the duration of the war it started and the probability of victory to see how their likelihood of victory fared over time. According to their calculations, if a democratic country starts a war that lasts less than a year, they have a 49% chance of victory. However, if it lasts a year and a half, that probability drops sharply to 19% and continues to fall as the conflict's duration increases. The same trend, although less pronounced, is found among autocracies. In the first year of a war, there is a 32% probability of victory. After a year and a half, these odds drop to 27%, and only fall by 2% after that.

Democracies see a sharper decline in the probability of victory because they are more sensitive to public opinion. Autocrats are less careful in choosing conflicts and more likely to lose them, precisely because fewer people are involved in the decision to go to war. But because a large part of the population cannot influence policy, they care less about public opinion - and are thus more likely to persist for longer. As political scientists Chigdem Sirin and Michael Koch pointed out in their 2015 study of the impact of war losses on the sustainability of dictatorships, autocrats only need to protect the most important political groups from the hardships of war. This is clearly visible in Russian polls, as support for the war correlates with respondents' age and financial status. Despite record low unemployment and reformed social benefits, 44% of respondents in Chronicle polls report a decline in income since February 2023. In the most recent Russian Field poll, the share of people who support the war and a new round of mobilization only outnumber those who do not among high-income earners.

In the absence of a breakthrough, Russia will likely see a further decline in support for the invasion of Ukraine, even if it does not experience a significant defeat on the battlefield. The only question that remains is whether passive discontent with the war will turn into active discontent and whether the anti-war movement will be able to capitalize on it in the run-up to the presidential election.

The Moscow Times

West's development plans face uncertainties

Li Bing

Global South, have been launched by the developed world in an attempt to counter the Belt and Road Initiative.

The developed world has vowed to invest huge amounts to promote these initiatives. For example, the G7 leaders pledged to mobilize \$600 billion by 2027 for the PGII projects, and work out ambitious blueprints to make the initiative a success. Also, at the G20 Summit in New Delhi in September, a group of G20 member states launched the "India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor", with the aim of improving economic connectivity between the Indian subcontinent and Europe via the Middle East.

While the initiatives, including the IMEEC, may sound promising, the reality is different. Western countries have failed to give a clear list of funding sources, with several projects indicating a prefer-

ence for leveraging private investment despite the disinterest of private investors to put money in such projects in developing and less-developed countries because of the slow and low returns and high risks. The West has also been facing serious funding shortage even for domestic infrastructure projects. An American Society of Civil Engineers report says there is \$2.6 trillion infrastructure investment gap while the Joe Biden administration has pledged only \$550 billion for projects under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act plan.

Domestic infrastructure development projects in EU countries, too, are facing funding problems. Additionally, the EU has a 470 billion (\$497.12 billion) shortage a year through to 2030 in its climate fund which could undermine its fight against

climate change, and 65 billion shortage in its digital economy fund, which could derail its digital economy infrastructure development plan.

Firm promises but slow action has become a typical characteristic of the West. The developed economies promising to provide climate financing for developing countries to help the latter adapt to and mitigate climate change is a typical example of such a promise, said Republic of the Congo President Denis Sassou Nguesso at the "New Global Financing Compact Summit" in France in June. Sassou Nguesso said developed countries pledged to provide \$100 billion annually to assist developing countries in addressing climate change, a goal that has remained unfulfilled since its establishment in 2009. Development is at the heart of China's reform and

opening-up. In the 45 years since the launch of reform and opening-up, infrastructure connectivity has played a vital role in fueling China's fast-paced economic growth. In a report "For the Common Values and Dignity of All Humanity: China's Practice of and Contribution to Global Human Rights Governance", published on Sept 19, 2023, China has underscored the role of development, saying it is key to solving almost all problems; it is the foundation for human rights protection and essential to making people happy.

China is ready to share its Belt and Road experience, as well as its overall economic development policy with countries of the Global South so they can take a leaf out of it, if they want to, and apply it to boost their development. Yet China is a big supporter of every country choosing the development model that

best suits it. The Belt and Road Initiative has helped boost development and alleviate poverty in many countries of the Global South. China has helped various developing countries in implementing more than 6,000 livelihood projects, boosting local development, and built agricultural technology demonstration centers in more than 30 countries. It has also nurtured nearly 20 million development talents in more than 160 countries, with special focus on vocational education through initiatives such as the "Lu Ban Workshop", which has trained a large number of skilled workers in over 20 countries.

Perhaps Western countries should take a moment to reflect. In fact, it would be beneficial to both them and the African countries if they redirect their efforts toward cooperation in infrastructure development and develop a win-win relationship with China and the host countries.

Russian propaganda presents fringe views in US as mainstream

Alexey Gorbachev

FROM headlines taken out of context to the framing of fringe figures as representative of wider American views, Russian state-run outlets are cherry-picking US content to back up Kremlin narratives. And it comes with results. Headlines such as "Biden accused of concealing extent of corruption in Ukraine" and "US highlights NATO inability to withstand Russia for extended period" regularly propel state-run stories into the top five spots on Russian search engines, with a potential reach of millions of views.

Americans regularly cited by Russian media include former Fox News commentator Tucker Carlson, Republican Representative James Comer, and members of "The Squad," a group of Democrats who push more leftist ideals in Congress. Extremes of the political spectrum are wrapped into Russian disinformation efforts to both amplify issues and lend an air of legitimacy to anti-Western and anti-Ukrainian narratives, said Nina Jankowicz, vice president of the Centre for Information Resilience and a former disinformation chief under the Biden administration.

"We see Russia identifying individuals on the left or right of the political spectrum who might already be critics of NATO, critics of Ukraine," Jankowicz told VOA. That strategy is employed by Vladimir Soloviev, a Russian TV presenter whose Telegram channel has more than a million subscribers. Soloviev gained notoriety by advocating for the invasion of Ukraine, actively supporting President Vladimir Putin and promoting the idea of nuclear warfare against the West.

To reinforce those views, he regularly references Carlson. A search by VOA for Carlson references on the Telegram account between June 2020 and November 2023 returned more than 230 instances. The number of references spiked following the full-scale invasion. The key narratives of Carlson selected by Soloviev and Russian propaganda channels include the conservative pundit's false claims that Christians in Ukraine are persecuted, that America's white population is oppressed and Tucker's characterization of some US media coverage

of Ukraine as lies.

Other outlets take fringe commentators most Americans are unlikely to have heard and present them as having a wider influence. These are often used to reinforce Russia's narrative of a "declining" West, with state-run media citing figures such as Jackson Hinkle and Jack Posobiec, who are largely unknown in the United States but are favored among the far right and in conspiracy circles on X, formerly Twitter. RIA Novosti, for instance, highlighted Posobiec's mocking comment about Kyiv's

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Similarly, Russian news outlet Lenta.Ru used a headline quoting Hinkle's suggestion that the Ukrainian Armed Forces' counteroffensive be labeled as a suicide mission. And Soloviev frequently references both Americans in his Telegram channel, portraying them as influential bloggers, talk show hosts, or renowned US journalists.

The approach helps Russia create the appearance of more significant support for opinions that - according to analysts who spoke with VOA - are better characterized as fringe views. And it can lead regular Russians to believe the views are more representative of how most Americans think,

Jankowicz said. Outlets such as Breitbart and Fox News on the right and The Grayzone on the left are also used by Russian state media, with stories circulating between the Russian and US organizations, she said.

Jankowicz said that while she was in her role on the US Disinformation Governance Board, American right-wing media outlets falsely characterized the board's role as being to censor Americans. "This was absolutely not true, and within a couple of days after that, we saw [the same

report] on Russian Channel One with the same quotes, the same pictures, the same narratives overarching," Jankowicz said. The disinformation governance board - formed by the US Homeland Security Department to counter misinformation - was disbanded after only a few weeks.

Featuring statements from American figures and media outlets lends a sense of credibility, she said. "Showing these extreme viewpoints also hammers home the ideas about Ukraine or about US foreign policy that the Kremlin wants its audiences to believe," Jankowicz said. Dominik Stecula, an assistant professor of political science at Colorado State University who focuses on political polarization, has seen similar trends. Stecula said the commentator Carlson has repeated Russian propaganda narratives on his TV

show. But Carlson's departure from Fox in April, along with a shift in media attention to other news stories such as the Israeli-Hamas conflict, slightly changed the US media landscape on the right, Stecula said. "Whoever is filling in his shoes hasn't really spent as much time on this topic at all. The general focus on Ukraine dissipated."

Another aspect that unites some far-left and far-right political actors is populism, Stecula said. "They were repeating some of the Russian propaganda about Ukraine, about politicians in Ukraine, like President [Volodymyr] Zelenskyy." The academic said that far-right actors in the US root their narratives primarily in the idea of America-first nationalism, while those on the far left see it "through the lens of American imperialism wielded through the power of NATO." Overall, Carlson, Elon Musk and niche bloggers such as Hinkle and Posobiec have significant influence within their respective ideological echo chambers, Stecula said.

At the same time, members of "The Squad" - US Congresswomen Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Ayanna Pressley and Rashida Tlaib - have substantial influence within the Democratic Party, while not wholly representing the party's mainstream, Stecula said. "They're not just your average social media influencer," Stecula said. "These are people with significant platforms and actual positions of power. Which is why it was disappointing to see some of their behavior during the initial months of the Russian invasion and Ukraine, when they were taking stands aligned with some of right-wing Republicans." What the Russian invasion of Ukraine really highlighted, the academic noted, is that populism and a rejection of the mainstream have significantly united those on America's far left and far right.

Jankowicz said that while a certain percentage of Americans may share the views of some of these people, the reality is that opinion is far more varied. "And so, I think showing these extreme viewpoints also hammers home the ideas about Ukraine or about US foreign policy that the Kremlin wants its audiences to believe," she said.

VOA

Eegional security key to expanding GCC-EU ties

BAHRAIN this week hosted the seventh GCC-EU Business Forum, right after the conclusion of the annual Manama Dialogue. Both stressed the intertwined connections between the energy transition, climate change and energy security. The business forum started in 2016 and has developed into an important annual event that allows the exchange of views between the business communities and officials from the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

A lot has changed since 2016. The GCC's economic growth has been phenomenal, with its gross domestic product rising by about 70 percent since then to reach \$2.3 trillion in 2023, making it the fastest-growing region globally. The GCC also has a sharper focus on diversification, climate change mitigation and renewable energy. The EU too has changed; its GDP has grown to \$18.4 trillion, up 32 percent since 2016, and it has adopted the comprehensive European Green Deal, which aims for carbon neutrality and commits sizable funds to finance multiple policies to reach that objective by 2050. A partnership with the GCC is essential to meet that goal, since this region can produce renewables on a massive, low-cost scale, just as it has traditionally been key to conventional energy. Besides oil and gas, the GCC region is best suited to solar and wind energies and has favorable conditions for green and blue hydrogen production too. This means that the GCC region will remain very much relevant to the energy markets, even if oil becomes less important in the future.

This year has witnessed remarkable growth in investments in the energy transition in GCC countries. For example, Saudi Arabia's NEOM Green Hydrogen Project, one of the world's largest commercially based hydrogen facilities, is expected to produce 600 tons of clean hydrogen daily in 2026 and 1.2 million tons of green ammonia annually. When complete, the project will mitigate the impact of 5 million tons of carbon emissions per year. Meanwhile, Oman this year awarded a \$6.7 billion contract for one of the world's largest green hydrogen plants in Duqm, which is expected to come online in 2028. And Qatar last year started work on a \$1 billion hydrogen plant. Saudi Arabia, a regional pioneer in solar energy for decades, is now building some of the largest solar farms in the world. This year, it started another one in Makkah

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

address global water scarcity, in addition to the joint UAE-EU initiative on the Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge, which aims to triple renewable energy capacity and double energy efficiency and is expected to be announced at COP28. The EU and GCC have also agreed to further engage on a joint agenda to decarbonize energy systems by deepening technical cooperation in this area, including on hydrogen, energy efficiency, the integration of renewables and the development of electricity interconnections, with the ultimate goal of achieving climate neutrality. The Joint Action Program the two sides adopted in 2022 includes important provisions on the modalities of such cooperation.

For GCC-EU cooperation to happen at the required scale, especially for the private sector to invest significantly in energy transition and climate change mitigation projects, more work needs to be done to enhance energy security and regional security as a whole. Energy security involves the security of supplies, protection of production and export infrastructures and safeguarding of international shipping lanes. Regional security covers more, including cybersecurity, fighting terrorism, tackling organized crime and more. In addition to its unspeakable humanitarian toll, Israel's war against Gaza has put energy security in jeopardy, as the war in Ukraine did before. The longer the war goes on, the more harm it is inflicting on energy security. Energy production and transport capacity have been affected, as has international shipping. There is also some evidence of capital flight.

To maintain energy security, greater international cooperation is needed, including through the Combined Maritime Forces umbrella.

Energy security also requires managing the energy transition toward a fully renewable future, so that investment in conventional energy keeps pace with demand. If we fail to do so and renewables are unable to meet the energy needs of consumers, shortages and higher prices will make it difficult to afford energy costs, especially in poor countries and vulnerable communities. The EU has appointed Luigi Di Maio, Italy's former foreign minister, as its representative to the region, with a focus on regional security and political dialogue. The instruments for this heightened engagement are currently being developed and should help the two sides carry out their joint commitments toward regional security and energy security.

How climate change endangers global trade

Hafed Al-Ghwell

AS we approach the beginning of the much-anticipated 28th UN Climate Change Conference, known as COP28, which will be held in Dubai from Nov. 30, we must yet again bring into sharper focus the risks posed by climate change, particularly to international trade. It is no secret that runaway climate change has the potential to disrupt global trade significantly, affecting supply chains both directly and indirectly.

This is no distant threat - it is already happening. Extensive research and forecasts have consistently demonstrated the cascading domino effect on trade precipitated by rising global temperatures. Extreme weather disrupts supply chains, damages transport infrastructure crucial for trade, restricts travel and remodels patterns of comparative advantage. The effects can be especially devastating for regions that are heavily reliant on climate-vulnerable sectors, such as the Maghreb.

We are already seeing a preview of a few of these disruptions elsewhere, as the world's economic machinery - long buoyed by the transnational exchange of goods and services - finds itself in peril. The Panama Canal, a linchpin in maritime commerce that handles about 6 percent of global maritime trade, is beleaguered by falling water levels due to changes in precipitation patterns and droughts. Thousands of miles away, China's Yangtze River, another critical trade artery, confronts similar disruptions. The ripple effects of these events are keenly felt in Asia, Europe and North America, delaying trade flows and pushing the cost of doing business even higher.

The world has so far been slow to respond to these immediate challenges, all but ensuring a slow-onset catastrophe will unfold. It is not just the threat of rising sea levels or receding rivers that are threatening maritime ports, which are the very lifeblood of global trade. For instance, the ports of

Shanghai and Ningbo experience disruptions for five to six days each year on average owing to extreme wind conditions. Adverse weather patterns are no mere isolated events with no connection whatsoever. These are the very systemic impacts experts, scholars and researchers have warned about in recent decades. Today, every dollar of disrupted trade at, for instance, the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports potentially adds up to \$3 in extra costs that are felt through domestic supply chains.

Given the interconnectedness of global trade via these amalgamated value chains, disruptions at key nodes reverberate throughout the world. Extreme weather events and slow-onset impacts, including rising sea levels, pose serious risks to the entire supply chain and transport infrastructure, including ports and crucial shipping hubs. This factor becomes particularly potent for the Maghreb region, an often-dismissed yet still vital piece in the international trade puzzle. Agriculture, manufacturing and tourism - fundamental parts of the subregion's economic fabric - are the most vulnerable to the direct and indirect impacts of a warming planet. Heatwaves degrade land, droughts affect agricultural output and increased temperatures can hamper manufacturing. The consequential shifts or losses in productivity then lead to substantial changes in trading patterns, with countries becoming less competitive or losing their comparative advantage in certain products, impacting exports. In addition, rising sea levels and frequent extreme weather events destroy port infrastructure, disrupting the same seaborne trade routes that bring in vital imports, including basic staples.

Moreover, Algeria and Libya are significant exporters of energy resources, such as natural gas. Thus, any climate change-related disruptions to in-land infrastructure or seaborne transportation

could affect their ability to maintain stable supply chains, impacting their economies and global energy markets. The resulting heightened socioeconomic distress will then fuel more instability as economies shrink and currencies tumble, sending unemployment rates skyrocketing, adding unsustainable pressure to tattered safety nets and leading to desperate publics turning to populist demagogues or even extremism. To the Maghreb, what may be a source of alarm or area of mere scholarly curiosity in some parts of the world constitute an existential, multidimensional threat that even its most resource-endowed countries cannot unilaterally confront. Algeria and Libya aside, for agricultural exporters like Tunisia and Morocco, farmers are already weathering desertification, droughts and intensifying water scarcity. Without intervention, these agricultural sectors will suffer more significant disruptions in output, increasing reliance on staple imports to shore up food security.

The combination of growing aridity, high food and water insecurity, instability, weak regional integration and the cumulative impacts of climate change-related disruptions to global trade creates a perfect storm. As one of the least-integrated regions in the world due to its peculiar geopolitics and restrictive economic policies, even if each Maghreb country was individually well prepared, more is needed to blunt the economic impacts of runaway climate change. Rising temperatures will obstruct regional trade, as limited as it is, and heighten the region's socioeconomic tensions. The future, however, is not shackled to this narrative. Active, evidence-based interventions and robust policies could steer North Africa toward climate resilience and economic prosperity. As noted by the Wilson Center, regional cooperation, shared water management and

inclusive governance are pivotal in mitigating the implications of climate change and developing the resilience needed.

Consider, for instance, the promotion of green economies, addressing the water-energy-food nexus, diversifying income sources and reinforcing social safety nets. By incentivizing sustainable agricultural practices and advancing renewable energy, the Maghreb could address both climatic and economic challenges. Greater emphasis should be placed on climate-smart technologies and practices capable of protecting essential sectors like agriculture, while creating employment opportunities and ensuring regional economic stability. Effective policies that foster regional integration are equally crucial, stressing collaborative efforts and removing barriers hindering intraregional trade. Strong institutional frameworks can materialize these objectives, leveraging the potential of the demographic dividend in the region. To conclude, while it may seem a distant threat, disruptions to global trade due to climate change will add another layer to North Africa's existing vulnerabilities. However, the Maghreb can balance economic growth, intraregional trade and climate stability with effective policy interventions from regional cooperation and sustainable economic models. The clock is ticking, warranting swift, effective actions. The Maghreb need not remain entangled in this climate-economic dilemma, provided the rest of the world realizes its collective resilience is only as strong as its weakest link.

COP28 is the next opportunity for the world to acknowledge, demonstrate its intent and address the pressing issue of climate change and its profound impact on global trade. We must rally together to implement policies and strategies that mitigate these risks, enhance resilience and foster a transition toward a more sustainable, climate-proof global trade system.

Gulf News

Killing of 4,000 Palestinian kids not enough

Sadiq Shaban

A video circulating on social media reveals Stuart Seldowitz, a former US State Department employee and national security official, engaging in harassment and making Islamophobic remarks towards a halal food vendor in Manhattan, New York City. In the footage widely shared on Twitter, Seldowitz is seen calling the Muslim vendor a "terrorist" and verbally abusing him, even making disturbing comments about the killing of Palestinian children.

The vendor is heard requesting Seldowitz to leave and threatening to involve the police. In one

exchange, Seldowitz calmly states, "If we killed 4,000 Palestinian kids, it wasn't enough." Despite being asked to leave multiple times, he persists and continues making derogatory comments about Islam.

In the same clip, Seldowitz makes ominous remarks about harm to the vendor's parents and calls him "ignorant" for not speaking English. The racist and Islamophobic undertone of the video has outraged people on social media with many calling for strict action against Seldowitz. In another video, he harasses the same vendor but is interrupted by a

bystander who tells him to leave, saying "It's not right; you are harassing." The New York Police Department has since acknowledged awareness of the videos, per The New York Times. The incidents unfold against the backdrop of Gaza war and increased hate crimes and Islamophobic incidents in New York City - a place otherwise renowned for its cosmopolitan culture. Stuart Seldowitz, the ex-US State Dept. official who went from working on the Mideast "peace process" to harassing Muslim street vendors and cheering the murder of Palestinian kids,

once wrote a paper called "The Psychology of Diplomatic Conflict Resolution." Seldowitz had a distinguished career with the State Department and served on the National Security Council's South Asia Directorate under President Barack Obama. He later became the foreign affairs chair at New York lobbying firm Gotham Government Relations, according to a 2022 press release. In an interview with Times, he admitted to getting angry with the vendor. Despite multiple instances of Islamophobic language captured on video, Seldowitz denied being Islamophobic.

Natural partners

Gert Grobler

AGRICULTURE represents a significant part of Africa-China friendship and cooperation and is of fundamental importance to both. Chinese involvement in African agriculture has a long history dating back to the late 1950s when China started to provide agricultural support to the continent. China's model of agricultural cooperation in Africa is formed through applying the experiences from China's own agricultural development to the African continent.

Africa is fully aware that China has succeeded in producing one-fourth of the world's grain and feeding one-fifth of the world's population with less than 10 percent of the world's arable land, which is a vital achievement in the pursuit of food and nutrition security not only for China but for the world. Agriculture is a major source of income for most countries in Africa and particularly for the rural population of vast parts of Africa. It accounts for over half of the continent's total employment and more than 32 percent of Africa's gross domestic product. Even though Africa possesses 60 percent of the world's uncultivated and arable land, it has remained a net importer of food. Considering the importance of the agriculture sector to most African countries, Africa is by and large in need of cooperation and technical support, even though it continues to make progress. It is in this context that African governments have consistently viewed agriculture as an important driver of growth, development and jobs on the continent. The African Union adopted its Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme in 2003, a framework which aims to

accelerate coordinated economic and structural transformation by improving agricultural productivity, achieving food security, increasing investment and sharing knowledge.

Over the past decade, the rapidly growing Africa-China agricultural cooperation has increasingly focused on enhanced cooperation between Africa's own Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and its goals, and the Forum on China and Africa Cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative, which increasingly outline concrete measures aimed at the continued implementation of the CAADP. However, there still remains scope for agricultural cooperation to improve and enable African agriculture to concretely contribute to achieving national and continental goals inter alia the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Over the past 10 years, China has entered into 200 cooperation agreements with 152 countries and more than 30 international organizations under the framework of the BRI. Africa faces a huge infrastructure funding deficit, and 52 countries and the African Union Commission have committed to the initiative as signatories. Underpinned by the goals of policy coordination, connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people relations, the BRI has seen over 3,000 development projects including ports, highways, railways, power plants, 4G and 5G wireless networks, bridges, and airports, all of which contribute significantly to the promotion and the modernization of industrial and agricultural sectors in Africa and some devel-

oping countries. The signing of the Cooperation Plan between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the African Union on Jointly Promoting the Construction of the Belt and Road in December 2020 provided momentum for future expanded Belt and Road cooperation. This constructive agreement among others defines the scope and content of key BRI cooperation projects in the fields such as infrastructure, connectivity, communication, facilitating unimpeded trade, enhanced people-to-people exchanges, access to funding and mapping out future timetables.

The cooperation in agriculture is beneficial for both Africa and China. With China moving and leading the way in agricultural modernization through significant investment in scientific research and technology, it presents a huge opportunity for the AU to tap into and propel Africa's agricultural production, agro-industry and agri-food value chain transformation. What is also of growing significance is that Africa is increasingly prioritizing the need to embark on more interconnected agricultural trade in the wake of the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Africa attaches great importance to its mutually beneficial agricultural cooperation with China which has rapidly grown, establishing a solid foundation for future practical cooperation. This cooperation proves once again that China has followed the right direction in advancing BRI cooperation with the continent and that BRI partners in Africa continue to show firm commitment to participating in and embarking on high-quality Belt and Road projects for mutual benefits.

The China Daily



Weekly inflation goes slightly down by 0.06 pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a slight decrease of 0.06 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on November 23, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 307.12 points as compared to 309.09 points during the past week, according to the PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 41.13 percent. The weekly

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

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, decreased by 0.18 percent and went down to 307.81 points from last week's 308.35 points.

The SPI for consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 decreased by 0.14 percent, 0.10 percent, 0.08 percent and 0.02 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 18 (35.29%) items increased, 12 (23.53%) items decreased and 21 (41.18%)

items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW) included tomatoes (5.78%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (1.36%), cooking oil 5 litre (1.31%), banana (0.91%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (0.82%), eggs (0.33%), sugar (0.20%) and tea packet (0.17%).

The items that recorded an increase in their average prices on a week-on-week (wow) basis, included garlic (4.61%), onion (2.42%), chicken (1.81%), potatoes (1.69%), pulse masoor (1.01%), lpg (0.76%), firewood (0.59%), wheat flour (0.54%), match box (0.52%), pulse moong (0.52%) and bread plain

(0.47%).

On a Year-on-Year (YoY) basis, the items that witnessed decrease in prices included onions (36.18%), tomatoes (18.10%), mustard oil (4.06%) and vegetable ghee 1 kg (2.85%).

The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on YoY basis included, gas charges for q1 (1108.59%), cigarettes (94.20%), wheat flour (88.18%), chilies powder (81.74%), rice basmati broken (76.57%), garlic (71.03%), rice irri-6/9 (62.28%), gents sponge chappal (58.05%), gents sandal (53.37%), tea lipton (53.00%), gur (50.80%) and potatoes (47.90%).

OGDCL and GIK Institute forge strategic partnership in advance education and research

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) and Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology (GIK) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance education and research in the fields of engineering, sciences, emerging technologies, and beyond. The MoU was officially signed by Ahmed Hayat Lak, Managing Director/CEO of OGDCL, and Prof. Dr. Fazal Ahmad Khalid, Rector of GIK.

With this collaboration, OGDCL aims to explore and pioneer advancements in alternate energy, green energy, artificial intelligence, renewable energy, and research and development (R&D) initiatives. As a testament to OGDCL's commitment to decarbonization, the first



pilot project under this MoU will be design and development of a hydrogen prototype for producing green energy.

OGDCL, as Pakistan's largest Exploration and Production Company in the upstream sector, is poised to expand its horizons and enhance its human resource expertise through advanced, customized, and diversified programs.

The GIK Institute, known for its commit-

ment to providing high-quality education and fostering research in various disciplines, is enthusiastic about playing an inspiring role in this partnership. The collaboration encompasses joint research and development, sharing of techniques, and technological advancements in areas of mutual interest. This strategic collaboration aims to meet challenges and achieve goals for continued success and

sustainability.

Under the MoU, both institutions will collaborate to identify the best alternate energy sources for OGDCL's Green Energy Projects, with a specific focus on hydrogen. GIK will support OGDCL on predictive measurement techniques using artificial intelligence. The collaboration extends to joint training activities, facility exchange, academic and information exchange, conferences, seminars, and the undertaking of joint research and start-up projects.

The MoU underscores a shared dedication to excellence, innovation, and sustainability, positioning both OGDCL and GIK at the forefront of transformative advancements in education and research. Both OGDCL and GIK are poised to leverage their collective expertise and resources to make meaningful contributions to the fields of energy, technology, and beyond.

Real estate giants Graana.com & Agency21 vie for the top spot

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Amidst Pakistan's evolving real estate landscape, two industry powerhouses, Graana.com and Agency21, continue their remarkable trajectory in the market, competing fiercely for dominance.

With the market witnessing a steady ascent, Graana.com commands the largest share in primary project sales in Pakistan, while Agency21 leads in secondary sales. In a seemingly tranquil market, the relentless efforts of these two are redefining industry norms and shattering expectations, significantly contributing to the market's upward momentum.

Reflecting its stronghold and influence, Graana.com has boldly unveiled the largest real estate office in the region. Not to be outdone, Agency21 is blazing trails with its 30th office nationwide and 13th in the region, strategically positioned to challenge Graana.com. Shafiq Akbar, Chairman of IMARAT Group, graced both the cer-

emonies. Commenting on the occasion, he said, "This grand opening marks a pivotal moment in our journey. We're committed to setting new benchmarks and delivering unparalleled service to our esteemed clientele."

Situated along the GT road surrounding Bahria and DHA Islamabad, the strategic proximity of these two offices in the uncontested hub of Pakistan's real estate industry further cements their place as the market leaders. The competition between Graana.com and Agency21 epitomizes innovation and customer-centric approaches. Their relentless rivalry drives them to push boundaries, ensuring the market thrives despite prevailing sentiments, ultimately benefiting the people of the region. "This momentous occasion marks a significant step forward for Agency 21," commented Sharjeel Ehmer, Group Director Agency 21. "Our expansion is not just a testament to our success but also underscores our commitment to setting new standards and



delivering unmatched real estate solutions."

Commenting on Graana's landmark achievement, Farhan Javed, Group Director Graana.com stated, "Our new office stands as a hallmark to our unwavering resolve, and dedication to our clients. The largest real estate office in the region is a significant milestone that marks a new chapter in our journey, one where we continue to set new standards in the real estate sector."

It's clear that none of them are settling for second place. Both Graana.com and Agency21 reaffirm their commitment to delivering

excellence, underscoring their relentless pursuit of setting new industry standards and ensuring unparalleled customer satisfaction. Graana.com, Pakistan's foremost Online Real Estate Marketplace, continues to redefine the nation's real estate sector. Their groundbreaking initiatives and customer-centric approach position them at the forefront of the industry.

Agency21 International, Pakistan's leading real estate agency, maintains its commitment to delivering unmatched services to its clientele, contributing significantly to Pakistan's real estate landscape.



RIYADH: Mr. Rehmat Ali Hasnie, President & CEO, NBP attended the UnionPay International Regional Member Council Meeting in Riyadh, KSA.



LAHORE: A large number of People selecting and purchasing second hand warm clothes and different winter stuff from the vendors at Landa Bazar.

Motorbikes, three-wheelers sale drops 10%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The sale of motorbikes and three-wheelers in the country witnessed a decrease of 10.1 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to sales of the corresponding months of the last year.

During July-October, as many as 370,966 motorbikes and three-wheelers were sold against the sale of 412,825 units in July-October (2022-23), according to the Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA).

The sale of Honda motorcycles dipped by 6 percent from 345,381 units to 322,260 units whereas the sale of Suzuki motorcycles witnessed a decrease of 63 percent from 13,532 units to 4,995 units during the months under review. Similarly, the sale of Yamaha motorbikes also went down from 4,856 units to 3,237 units while the sale of Road Prince motorbikes witnessed a sharp decline of 52 percent from 12,194 units to 5,851 units.

Edible oil imports reduces 33.08 % in four months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Imports of edible oil including soybean and palm into the country during the first four months of the current financial year decreased by 33.08 percent and 31.45 percent respectively as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-October, 2023 about 86,335 metric tons of soya bean oil valued at \$74.766 million were imported as compared to the imports of 77,905 metric tons costing \$111.732 million of the same period last year, according to the data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

During the period under review, over 1.016

million tons of palm oil valued at 964.292 million were imported as compared to the imports of 948.457 metric tons costing \$1.406 billion in the same period of last year, it added.

On month on month basis, the import of soya bean oil into the country reduced by 49.49 percent in October 2023 as about 16,510 metric tons of the above-mentioned commodity were imported as against the imports of 20,959 metric tons worth \$33.987 million.

The import of palm oil into the country during the month under review also went down by 24.04 percent as 222,577 metric tons of palm oil costing \$205.718 million as compared to the imports of

187,033 metric tons valuing \$270.873 million of the same period last year.

Meanwhile, the local production of vegetable ghee increased by 29.73 percent and cooking oil grew by 2.19 percent in the first-three months of the current financial year.

Over 366,848 metric tons of vegetable ghee were locally manufactured during the period from July-September, 2023 as compared to the production of 119,393 metric tons of the same period of last year.

The local output of cooking oil was recorded at 154,889 metric tons during the period under review as against the production of 119,393 metric tons of the same month of last year.

Redefining comfort: Hotel One by Pearl-Continental debuts in Karachi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: In an exciting move to bring premium hospitality within everyone's reach, Hashoo Group's renowned select-service brand, Hotel One by Pearl-Continental, has teamed up with Karachi's esteemed Hotel Galaxy. Together, they proudly introduce the newly rebranded Hotel One, offering an elevated and budget-friendly hospitality experience in Pakistan's bustling business hub, Karachi.

The partnership was solidified through the signing of an agreement by senior executives from both organizations, followed by the official soft launch of the rebranded hotel.

Haseeb A. Gardezi, Chief Operating Officer, Hospitality & Education Division, Hashoo Group, shared his enthusiasm, stat-

ing, "We constantly seek like-minded partners who share our vision of providing high-quality and accessible hospitality services throughout Pakistan. Our collaboration with Hotel Galaxy marks a significant stride towards the future of the hospitality industry in the country."

Ahmed Iqbal Saeed, Vice President Operations at Hotel One by Pearl-Continental, echoed the sentiment, saying, "We are thrilled to work hand in hand with Hotel Galaxy to elevate the standard of affordable comfort for our guests in Karachi and set new benchmarks for hospitality services in Pakistan's busiest city."

Saleem Akhtar, Chief Executive, Hotel Galaxy Pvt. Ltd., expressed his anticipation, "We are excited to join forces with Hotel One by Pearl-Continental to transform

Hotel Galaxy into a beacon of excellence in Karachi's hospitality sector. Our commitment is to deliver nothing less than top-tier service to our valued guests."

Asif Raza, Vice President Business Development, stated, "Over the next two years, we are excited to open 14 new Hotel One properties across Pakistan. This expansion underscores our Group's strong commitment to and ongoing contribution in the country's hospitality sector."

Established in 2003, Hotel Galaxy stands as one of Karachi's leading modern hotels, strategically located in the heart of the city at Shahrah-e-Faisal, just a few kilometers away from one of the country's largest airports. The hotel is renowned for its unwavering dedication to offering high-

quality and affordable services.

Hashoo Group is Pakistan's premium conglomerate with a diversified business portfolio spanning both national and international markets. The Group owns and operates the Pearl-Continental Hotels & Resorts, PC Legacy & Hotel One brands in Pakistan and has business interests encompassing the information technology, investment, travel & tourism, and real-estate sectors.

Hotel One by Pearl-Continental, the distinguished select-service hotel chain under the Hashoo Group umbrella, has been a trailblazer in the budget-friendly, limited-service hotel industry since 2006. It has consistently delivered value, convenience, and reliability to guests across Pakistan.

Assessing Pakistan's Economic Plan Challenges and opportunities for a sustainable future

F.P. Report

KARACHI: the Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a seminar titled "Assessing Pakistan's Economic Plan: Challenges and Opportunities for a Sustainable Future." The event brought together a distinguished panel of experts, comprising eminent personalities with extensive experience in the public, private, development, and corporate sectors, and offered valuable insights and recommendations for shaping the sustainable economic future of Pakistan.

Dr Hafiz A Pasha, a renowned economist, discussed Pakistan's economic plan during his keynote address. He emphasised on progressive and aggressive resource mobilisation. Moreover, he proposed equitable reforms for equitable growth to create opportunities for the 18 million idle youth in Pakistan to reduce the debt-to-revenue ratio. He suggested providing relief to poor population through direct taxation of specific sectors like property, agriculture, retail stores, etc.

Prof Dr Mumtaz Anwar Chaudhry, Dean of the Faculty of Business at Punjab University, pointed out that Pakistan lacks a long-term economic policy because policymaking is more party-centric or individual-centric and less state-centric. Furthermore, he underlined the crucial need to include industrialists, researchers,



and academics in policymaking.

Dr Abiha Zahra, an Assistant Professor at ITU and author of a book on public sector reform, highlighted crucial reforms needed for economic resilience in Pakistan.

Mr Nadir Salar Qureshi, Engro Corporation's CIO suggested that privatisation is an effective way to manage State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) without burdening the government. He mentioned the success stories of other countries and apprised that Pakistan can also get similar results by privatising the power production, industrial, oil and gas sectors. He added that Privatising SDC and SNGPL could bring in an estimated \$500 million in revenue for Pakistan.

Ms Maheen Rahman, CEO of InfraZamin, emphasized the impor-

tance of debt sustainability in shaping Pakistan's future economy. To manage unsustainable debt, she suggested solutions such as taxation, investment-led growth, foreign direct investment, and people development. Ms. Maheen suggested that by focusing on small-scale enterprises, Pakistan can effectively reduce its debt-to-GDP ratio.

In his concluding remarks, President CASS Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd) articulated, "There is no denying that the path to economic recovery is fraught with substantial challenges. However, within these challenges, there are unparalleled prospects for profound transformation." He further added, "A strong sense of political commitment and ownership must underpin this endeavor."



In brief

BISE Lahore wins championship

MULTAN (APP): Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education (BISE) Lahore won the All Pakistan Inter Boards Girls Netball Championship. The host BISE Multan was the runner up while Faisalabad got the third position and Bannu stood at fourth position. At the end of the championship played at the Multan Board campus ground, Chairman BISE, Hafiz Muhammad Qasim and Secretary Khurram Shahzad Aslam Qureshi distributed the prizes. Organizing Secretary and Sports Incharge Multan Board Malik Nisar gave a briefing about the competitions and said that the league-based championship continued for two days. He informed that Lahore won three matches whereas runner-up Multan won two and third position holder Faisalabad won one match. In the final ceremony, Peshawar Quetta and Bannu Boards Director Sports Manzoor Shah, Muhammad Bakhsh and Syed Latif Shah also participated in the ceremony.

Complaint filed against Marsh

NEW DELHI (Agencies): A first information report (FIR) has been filed against Australian cricketer Mitchell Marsh for putting his feet on the World Cup 2023 trophy. The FIR was filed by RTI activist Pandit Keshav in India's Uttar Pradesh. Keshav has also sent a copy of the FIR to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking a ban on Marsh from participating in cricketing activities in the country. The FIR comes after Indian fast bowler Mohammed Shami complained about Marsh's gesture. Shami said he was hurt by Marsh's gesture and that it did not make him happy. Marsh hasn't reacted to the controversy and returned to Australia after winning the title. Not the first time this is not the first time that some sort of legal complaint has been filed against a cricketer of a visiting team in India in light of the recently concluded World Cup 2023. In October, an Indian lawyer filed a complaint to the International Cricket Council (ICC) against Pakistan's wicket-keeper batter Mohammad Rizwan for offering prayer on the ground and voicing support for Gaza. In his complaint, Vineet Jindal — the same lawyer who filed a complaint against Pakistan presenter Zainab Abbas over her "anti-Hindu" statements — urged the top cricketing body to take strict action against Rizwan. Jindal's complaint was referring to two separate instances, the first one being Rizwan offering prayer in a World Cup 2023 match against the Netherlands.

Gautam backs Rohit Sharma

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Former Indian opening batter Gautam Gambhir has backed Rohit Sharma to lead Team India in the T20 World Cup 2024, co-hosted by the United States of America and West Indies in June next year. Rohit Sharma led India during the recently concluded ICC World Cup 2023, where he scored 597 runs at an average of 54.27 and ended as the second-leading run-scorer only behind fellow-batter Virat Kohli. Virat Kohli scored 765 runs during the mega-event, setting the record for most runs in a single edition of the World Cup, a record previously held by Indian batting maestro Sachin Tendulkar.

Imad Wasim retires from international cricket

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan allrounder Imad Wasim has retired from international cricket with immediate effect. Imad, who announced his retirement with a post on social media, played 55 ODIs and 66 T20Is for Pakistan as a left-arm spinner and lower-order batter. He last represented Pakistan in April this year in a T20I against New Zealand in Rawalpindi.

"In recent days I have been doing a lot of thinking about my international career and I have come to the conclusion that now is the right time for me to announce my retirement from international cricket," Imad wrote on X. "I would like to thank the PCB for all their support over the years - it has truly been an honour to represent Pakistan."

"Each of my 121 appearances across the ODI and T20I formats was a dream come true. It's an exciting time for Pakistan cricket going forwards with new coaches and leadership incoming. I wish all involved every success and I look forward to watching the team excel."

"Thank you to the Pakistan fans for always



supporting me with such passion. A final thank you to my family and friends who have been so important in helping me achieve at the highest level. I now look forward to focussing on the next stage of my playing career away from the international stage."

Imad, now 34, was part of Pakistan's Under-19 World Cup-winning side in 2006 and went on to lead Pakistan in the next edition, in 2008. He had to wait till 2015 for a Pakistan

debut, in a T20I against Zimbabwe in Lahore.

This was when international cricket returned to Pakistan six years after the attack on the Sri Lankan team in Lahore. He represented Pakistan in the T20 World Cup that followed, in 2016. In 2019, he captained Pakistan, in two ODIs against Australia in Dubai, when regular captain Shoaib Malik was out with an injury.

In all, he took 44 wickets and scored 986 runs in

ODIs. In T20Is, he took 65 wickets and scored 486 runs. His best performance with the ball, incidentally, is identical in both formats - 5 for 14.

Imad is currently in Karachi Kings' roster for the PSL, and recently played in the Hundred, the CPL and the LPL as well. He has also been a regular in the English county circuit. In fact, born in Swansea in Wales, he played his early cricket in the UK.

Nida Dar-led Pakistan women team leaves for New Zealand

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Nida Dar-led Pakistan women's team embarks on their journey to New Zealand in the wee hours of Friday. The 17-member squad flew from Karachi to New Zealand via Dubai.

The team will feature in a series of three T20Is and three ODIs. The three ODIs are part of the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25. To acclimatise to the conditions, the women's side will feature in two warm-up matches before the start of the T20I series.

The 50-over match will be played against NZXI at Bert Sutcliffe Oval in Lincoln on 28 November, while the T20 match against them will be played at the same venue on 30 November. Both matches will be live-streamed on New Zealand YouTube channel and first ball will be bowled at 11am local time.

The three-match T20I series will be played on 3, 5

and 9 December in Dunedin and Queenstown, while the ODI series matches will take place from 12 to 18 December in Queenstown and Christchurch.

Before departing for New Zealand, the Pakistan women's team under the coaching staff led by Mauhtashim Rashid, featured in a four-day training camp in Karachi, where the players took part in net sessions, match scenarios and also played a one-day practice game.

At the conclusion of the camp, Nida Dar while addressing the media said, "We have some very talented young players in the squad for the series against New Zealand, including the comeback of Fatima Sana and Shawaal Zulfiqar. Umm-e-Hani is also a young bright prospect, we are working and building the right combination and also working on increasing the pool of players."

"The players have performed well in the South Africa series at home, and our two players Nashra Sundhu and Sadia Iqbal are among the top 10 in the ICC T20I bowlers' rankings. I have full trust in the capabilities of these players, and I believe they will make a strong comeback in the series against New Zealand."

"We are striving for squad depth by ensuring a combination of eight to 10 fast bowlers and batters. This will provide us with a strong pool for two quality T20 teams, including U19 and Emerging teams."

Pakistan squad: Nida Dar (captain), Aliya Riaz, Bismah Maroof, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Ghulam Fatima, Muneeba Ali (wk), Najaha Alvi (wk), Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Parvaiz, Omaira Sohail, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Shawaal Zulfiqar, Sidra Amin, Umm-e-Hani and Waheeda Akhtar.

PU wins All Pakistan Inter-University Women Athletics Championship

LAHORE, (APP): The women athletes of Punjab University have won the three-day 45th All-Pakistan Inter-University Women Athletics Championship 2023-24 Iqbal Trophy by showing excellent performance in various track and field events.

The competitions were organized in collaboration with the Higher education Commission of Pakistan and Punjab University at the Punjab Stadium in which players from 26 universities from the country participated.

The second position in the championship was secured by Lahore College for Women University, the third position by Superior University and the fourth position by Government College for Women

Faisalabad, while Sunina Mansoor of Punjab University was declared the best athlete of the championship.

The closing ceremony was attended by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Khalid Mehmood, Director Sports Dr. Zafar Iqbal Butt, HEC's representative Khadim Ali Khan, team managers, coaches and a large number of women athletes. Speaking at the event, Vice Chancellor Dr. Khalid Mehmood said that sports provide good health and good mind to the youth.

He said, "We are proud that the female students of different universities have demonstrated their excellent skills in the competition and proved that they can achieve success in every field." He expressed hope that the

women athletes participating in the competitions will play an active role in enlightening the name of Pakistan. On this occasion, he also announced a special cash prize for the best athlete Sunina Musawar.

While thanking the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, he said that such activities will continue in the future so that sports women can get a chance to showcase their skills. He congratulated the Director Sports Dr. Zafar Iqbal Butt and his team for the successful organization of the games.

Dr. Zafar Iqbal Butt said that the Punjab University Sports Department is playing an active role in promoting sports and would continue to organize such competitions regularly.

Leclerc tops Norris in crash-hit second practice



ABU DHABI (AFP): Charles Leclerc topped the times for Ferrari ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris on Friday in a crash-hit second practice session for this weekend's season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

World champion Max Verstappen was unable to improve on third as he wound up 0.173 seconds adrift of the Monegasque driver who outpaced Norris by only 0.043 seconds.

The action was reduced severely by two red flag interruptions following crashes by Leclerc's teammate Carlos Sainz and Nico Hulkenberg of Haas. Both caused delays, a lengthy one for barrier repairs after Sainz's collision, but both drivers were unhurt.

Valtteri Bottas was fourth for Alfa Romeo, in the marque's last Grand Prix weekend, ahead of Sergio Perez, in the second Red Bull, Mercedes' George Russell and Zhou Guanyu in the second Alfa Romeo. Seven-time

champion Lewis Hamilton was eighth in the second Mercedes ahead of Alpine's Pierre Gasly and Oscar Piastri in the second McLaren. Fernando Alonso was 11th for Aston Martin.

After a bright, sunlit day at the Yas Marina Circuit, the session began shortly before dusk with Hulkenberg leading the pack out of the pit lane, most of the established drivers keen for action after missing the opening session when 10 rookies took their places.

Kevin Magnussen set the early pace for Haas before Russell, who was quickest in the earlier session, went top — and Sainz crashed, smacking into the barriers at Turn Three after having a big snap of oversteer in his Ferrari.

Sainz reported that he had been caught in "dirty air" from another car as the session was red flagged after only nine minutes. The action resumed after a further 27 minutes, a

long enough period for the sun to set and for the floodlights to be required.

For Sainz, it was a reprise of his woe in Las Vegas as his car was returned to the Ferrari garage, but noteworthy too as it came after a field including 10 rookies had run in first practice without mishap. When the session restarted, it was for only 90 seconds as Hulkenberg lost control at Turn One and spun into the barriers.

"Lost it. Exit of Turn One," he told the Haas team as a second red flag brought the action to a halt. The session resumed, again, after a further nine minutes, with the cars battling for space in the pit-lane exit, creating frustration and annoyance.

In one incident, Verstappen was seen almost colliding with Hamilton as he attempted to force his way past him in the narrow tunnel. With 12 minutes remaining, Norris was first to set a lap time. He was soon outpaced by Piastri, Bottas and then Leclerc in 1:24.809, as the drivers familiarised themselves with the conditions.

"The car is jumping like a kangaroo," said Verstappen who was in 11th, two places ahead of Red Bull team-mate Perez, before many drivers including the champion began switching from medium-compound tyres to softs.

On his first 'softs' run, Verstappen rose to third behind Leclerc and Norris, raising hopes of some real competition for Red Bull this weekend as the 26-year-old Dutchman seeks to claim a record-increasing 19th win of the season.

Davis Cup Finals 2023

Novak Djokovic seals Serbia's win over Great Britain

LONDON (Agencies): Novak Djokovic told a group of British fans to "shut up" as they tried to drown out his interview with musical instruments after their team were knocked out of the Davis Cup by Serbia.

Britain lost the quarter-final 2-0 as Cameron Norrie was unable to inflict a rare defeat on the world number one. "You should learn how to show some respect," Djokovic told the fans.

Jack Draper was beaten 7-6 (7-2) 7-6 (8-6) by Miomir Kecmanovic in the opening match of the best-of-three tie. That result meant Norrie had to beat 24-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic for the first time in his career.

But Djokovic showed his class as he cruised to a 6-4 6-4 win and set Serbia up for a semi-final against Italy on Saturday. After an assured and drama-free performance, Djokovic had the spiky exchange prior to his on-court interview, challenging the small number of British fans who act as the team's band.

He had celebrated at the end of the first set by blowing a kiss to a British supporter heckling him and also cupped his ear in their direction at the end of the match. "It's normal that sometimes fans step over the line and in the heat of the moment you react too, and in a way show that you don't allow this kind of behaviour," Djokovic said.

"They can do whatever they want, but I'm going to respond to that. Talk and what happened. I was trying to talk and they were purposely starting to play the drums so that I don't talk and they were trying to annoy me the entire match."

Britain, who last won the Davis Cup in 2015, will not automatically qualify for the 2024 knockout stage after their quarter-final exit in Malaga. Unless they receive a wildcard, Leon Smith's team will have to



negotiate the same path as this year - a qualifying tie early next year, followed by the round-robin stage before the Final Eight.

Andy Murray, who missed the tie through injury, said it was a "tough one" for his team-mates and thanked the British fans - estimated at almost half of those in attendance at the 11,500 capacity arena - for their support.

"Huge thanks to all the fans who made the big effort to travel out there and create a brilliant atmosphere for the players," said Murray, who added the Davis Cup would not be the same without them.

Djokovic takes another step towards another trophy

Despite being in the twilight of his career, 36-year-old Djokovic's powers are showing little sign of diminishing. In another extraordinary season, Djokovic has won the Australian Open, French Open and US Open titles, with his only defeat at a major coming against Spain's Carlos Alcaraz in the Wimbledon final.

On Sunday, he further underlined his superiority by rounding off the tour season with a record seventh title at the ATP Finals in Turin. Now he is

aiming to cap a spectacular year, even by his standards, by adding the Davis Cup to his enviable trophy haul.

Djokovic's supremacy this season - and the gulf between him and most of his rivals - was further emphasised by a dominant performance against Norrie. Norrie has been a fixture inside the world's top 20 for three successive seasons but was short of the quality needed to really damage Djokovic.

Djokovic took two of his 12 break point opportunities, while Norrie was only able to win eight points on the Serb's serve. Serbia will now face Italy after world number four Jannik Sinner inspired them to victory over the Netherlands earlier on Thursday.

Draper edged in decisive moments in opener

Considered one of the rising stars of the ATP Tour, Draper is still a novice in Davis Cup terms.

But the 21-year-old left-hander had been thrust into the pressurised situation of knowing he would probably have to win his singles match if Britain were going to advance - barring Norrie inflicting a first Davis Cup singles defeat in 12 years on Djokovic.

Pistorius granted parole over girlfriend's murder

PRETORIA (Agencies): South Africa's ex-Olympic runner Oscar Pistorius was granted early release from prison on Friday, a decade after he fatally shot his girlfriend, Reevea Steenkamp, in a crime that gripped the world, prison authorities said.

A parole board reviewing whether Pistorius, 37, was fit for social reintegration decided to place him on parole from January 5, the department of correctional services said.

"Mr Pistorius will complete the remainder of the sentence in the system of community corrections and will be subjected to supervision in compliance with parole conditions until his sentence expires".

Earlier Steenkamp's mother told the parole hearing that she did not believe the ex-athlete was rehabilitated for he had not shown true remorse.

"Rehabilitation requires someone to engage honestly, with the full truth of his crime and the consequences thereof. Nobody can claim to have remorse if they're not able to engage fully with the truth," June Steenkamp said in a statement to the board.

But her spokesman told the board she was not opposing parole for Pistorius.

The hearing held at a correctional centre outside Pretoria where he is currently detained, was Pistorius's second shot at parole in less than eight months.

He lost a first bid in March when the board found Pistorius had not completed the minimum detention period required to be let out.

The Constitutional Court last month ruled that was a mistake, paving the way for a new hearing.

Pistorius killed Steenkamp, a model, in the early hours of Valentine's Day 2013, firing four times through the bathroom door of his ultra-



secure Pretoria house.

Known worldwide as the "Blade Runner" for his carbon-fibre prosthetics, he was found guilty of murder and given a 13-year jail sentence in 2017 after a lengthy trial and several appeals.

He had pleaded not guilty and denied killing Steenkamp in a rage, saying he mistook her for a burglar.

But June Steenkamp said she does not believe him.

"I do not believe Oscar's version," she said in her submission to the board that was read to the media outside the detention centre by a family spokesman.

"My dear child screamed for her life loud enough for the neighbours to hear her. I do not know what gave rise to his choice to shoot through a closed door four times at somebody with hollow-point ammunition when I believe he knew it was Reevea."

Nevertheless, she said she forgave the former sprinter "long ago, as I knew most certainly that I would not be able to survive if I had to cling to my anger."

As part of his rehabilitation, Pistorius met Steenkamp's parents last year, in a process authorities said aims to ensure inmates "acknowledge the harm they have caused".

June Steenkamp was not present at the parole hearing on Friday and was being represented by a family spokesman and a lawyer.

Steenkamp's father Barry died in September aged 80.

"I've no doubt that he died of a broken heart," the widow said in her statement.

Family spokesman Rob Matthews said it was going to be very difficult for June Steenkamp to attend the proceedings given what she had recently gone through.

"It's been a real tough road that June has travelled... in March there was a parole hearing and it took all her courage to attend that," he said.

Offenders in South Africa are automatically eligible for parole consideration after serving half of their sentence.

The board, normally made up of correctional services and community members, assesses whether an inmate still poses a danger to society.

This takes into account the seriousness of the offence as well as Pistorius's behaviour behind bars.

Release usually comes with some conditions, such as monitoring from authorities and duty to report to a community correction centre.



In brief

IRSA releases 87,100 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 87,100 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 44,1100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1503.77 feet and was 103.77 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 22,800 cusecs and 42,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1181.70 feet, which was 131.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,200 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 52,700, 43,500, 44,100 and 14,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 6,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

AIOU holds int'l seminar

ISLAMABAD (APP): A one-day international seminar on "Debt, Credit and Islamic Epistemology" was held at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) yesterday. Professor of Islamic Economics and Islamic Finance, Qassim University Qassim, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Prof. Dr. Toseef Aziz was the keynote speaker, while Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Shah Muhyiddin Hashmi presided over the seminar. Prof. Dr. Toseef Aziz emphasized that debt is not only an economic problem but also a serious mental, social, and political issue. He also added that debt is a burden and a disease that does not go away once contracted. Dr. Toseef said the increased rate of debt is often a result of people's desires to change their lifestyles, which leads them to take on debt. Discussing debt from an Islamic perspective, Dr. Toseef stated that in Islam, only Qarz e Hasna is allowed, and it should be used to fulfill basic needs. He quoted a hadith that emphasizes how one who falls into debt often lies and breaks promises. Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Shah Muhiuddin Hashmi, introduced the faculty and highlighted that the AIOU is prioritizing Islamic Finance and recently started a BS program in that field. He also announced that the university is launching a research journal next year.

Five drug dealers nabbed

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested five drug dealers and recovered more than 07 kg of drugs from their possession during the crackdown here on Friday. According to a police spokesman, Rata Amaral police held woman drug dealer Khush Pari and recovered 1.2 kg of drugs from her possession. Similarly, Morgah police nabbed Dilnawaz and recovered 1.2 kg of drugs from his custody. While Sadder Wah police arrested Sajjad Khan and recovered 2.4 kg drugs from his possession. Following the operation, Sadder Barooni police arrested Khizer Hayyat and recovered 1.8 kg of drugs from his possession. Kallar Syedan police arrested Owail Khan and recovered 460 gram of charas from his possession. Police have registered separate cases against the accused and started an investigation.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti welcoming Imam-e-Kaaba Dr. Saleh Bin Abdullah Humaid on arrival at his home.

Overseas minister sings LoI with Saudi conglomerates

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Jawad Sohrab Malik has inked two letters of intent with the Saudi conglomerates FNRCO and MAHARAH in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to secure more employment opportunities for Pakistanis.

The objective is to bolster collaboration and facilitate the recruitment of Pakistani workers and professionals for various large-scale projects in KSA. The signed agreements outline plans to establish training and orientation centers in Pakistan which will cater to the skill development needs aligned with the

demands of the Saudi labor market, a news release said.

Expressing optimism, SAPM Malik underscored that this collaboration marks a significant milestone, paving the way for increased recruitment avenues for skilled workforce from Pakistan.

He emphasized the mutual benefits for both nations, providing the Pakistani workforce with opportunities to contribute to the objectives of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

FNRCO is a prominent Saudi Arabian company which specializes in administrative solutions and project management and has a focus on recruiting highly qualified human resources. Currently engaged in

major projects of KSA, including those in NEOM, FNRCO is positioned as a key player in the Saudi job market.

Meanwhile, Maharah Human Resource Company is the largest human resource solutions provider in Saudi Arabia and offers a comprehensive range of services such as recruitment, staffing, payroll, outsourcing, and training.

With a successful track record, Maharah has collaborated with major entities in Saudi Arabia, including Saudi Aramco, SABIC, and STC. FNRCO's and MAHARAH's partnership with Pakistan signifies a strategic move that will enhance workforce capabilities for the benefit of both nations.

Bugti welcomes Imam Kaaba at his residence

ISLAMABAD (APP): Imam Kaaba Dr Saleh bin Abdullah bin Hameed Friday visited Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti on his special invitation at his residence. Interior Minister organized breakfast in honour of Imam Kaaba.

Interior Minister's warmly welcome to Imam Kaaba and said, "The Imam Kaaba's visit to his home is a blessing for him and his entire family."

He said, "The people of Pakistan love the land of Hijaz immensely and the servants have immense devotion to the Haram Sharif." The minister said, "Pak-Saudi relations encompass shared faith, history and people-to-people ties and Pakistan highly values brotherly relations with Saudi Arabia."

Muslims fully believe in Tawheed, minor differences should not be allowed to lead to hypocrisy, said Imam Kaaba. "There is a need to promote unity among the Ummah," he said. "The main reason for the problems facing the Muslim Ummah is sectarianism and unnecessary differences," Imam Kaaba said. He urged for respect each other's opinions and promote mutual harmony and win each other's hearts and not impose your opinion.

Traffic issues at I-8 Markaz to be addressed on priority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad Muhammad Sarfaraz Virk has assured the trader's community of I-8 Markaz to address traffic-related problems in the area on top priority and to make travel on the roads of Islamabad safer.

In a proactive move towards resolving Islamabad's persistent traffic and parking issues, Chief Traffic Officer Muhammad Sarfaraz Virk responded to a special invitation from Raja Fayyaz Gul, President of the Traders' Welfare Association (TWA). I-8 Markaz and listened to the problems of the traders' community. During the event, the Chief Traffic Officer was joined by DSP I-9, a Beat Inspector, and a gathering of traffic cops deputed at I-8 Markaz. Police officials actively engaged with local traders, listening to their concerns and subsequently issuing instructions and recommendations for immediate resolution.

WPRC providing early response to victims of violence: Mushal Mullik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushal Hussein Mullik, on Friday said the Women Protection and Rehabilitation Centers (WPRC) were providing early and prompt response to the victims of violence at all levels. Mushal Mullik said WPRC working at the Federal, Provincial and District levels, had been providing early response to the victims of violence by extending medical, legal, psychological support and rehabilitation services.

She was addressing the launch of 16-day Awareness Campaign "Activism Against Gender-Based Violence" including a Transit Advertising Campaign, organized by the Ministry of Human Rights. The advertising campaign will kick start by November 25 in collaboration with the Ministry of Railways and with the support of UN Women Pakistan.

Highlighting the importance of the promotion and protection of women rights, the Special Assistant to Prime Minister said that the Ministry of Human Rights was reviewing laws and policies with regard to women protection.

She informed that Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Act, 2020; Enforcement of Women Property Rights Act 2020; The Anti Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act 2021; and the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace (Amendment) Act, 2022 were the significant legislations, aimed at protecting women.

Mushal said the Federal Government had enacted the Legal Aid and Justice

Authority Act, 2020 to provide legal, financial and other forms of assistance to vulnerable groups, including women, in criminal cases.

Human Rights Relief and Revolving Funds have been established in order to provide financial assistance to the victims of human rights violations, she added. She informed the forum that the Ministry of Human Rights had also initiated a National Policy on Ending Violence against Women.

The Special Assistant to Prime Minister stressed the importance of the collection of quantitative and qualitative data on the status of women, building partnerships with key line departments and civil society organizations to facilitate women's access to legal and justice systems.

Mushal said that being a strong advocate of gender equality, she had initiated a 100-day Action Plan to support human rights and women empowerment in the country.

The Special Assistant to Prime Minister further added that she was focused on highlighting human right violations in Indian Occupied Kashmir and Palestine on national and international forums.

Talking about the Transit Advertising Campaign Mushal Hussein Mullik said that the Campaign was a powerful tool to disseminate crucial information on themes such as Zainab Alert, the rights of Transgender Persons, Senior Citizens, and Persons with Disabilities. The campaign would greatly help to connect with diverse audiences, spread awareness and catalyze social and behavioral change.

Three-day learning festival, book fair starts at Pak-China Center

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in collaboration with Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aghai (ITA) and the National Book Foundation, is organizing a Pakistan Learning Festival (PLF) 2023 which includes Conference, Book Fair & the Pakistan Learning Festival with the theme: "Today's Readers, Tomorrow's Learners"

According to the official sources, the event will start from 25th to 27th November 2023 at Pak-China Friendship Center, Islamabad. The sources further briefed that PLF is a significant event that combines a national conference on reading and literacy with a 3-day Book and Foundational Learning Festival. The focus of this year's event is on children, schools, and families, where leading education providers will deliver short 'Lightning Talks' addressing innovative solutions to specific areas of foundational learning. Particularly on the first day (25th November 2023) the renowned educationists will lead insightful discussions on key challenges and advancements in the field of literacy and foundational

learning. In order to make this event more interesting and impactful various activities for the children have been organized on different days. The first day (25th November, 2023) activities include the animated story of the books, Storytelling: Suno Kahani Meri Zubani, Dadi Gulabi Singing & Song writing, Interactive performances, Creating Desi Characters, by Ms. Nigar Nazar, and the Art of bookmaking. Similarly, on second and third day (26th & 27th November, 2023) children along with their families can amuse themselves from the Poems, Screen Plays, Dance and Musical performances and Dramas etc. This comprehensive three day program would provide a learning platform for the youth of the society.

The mega festival also included interactive learning activities and learning solutions and Book fair for children, teacher and parents happening on 25th, 26th and 27th of November 2023. These three days are packed with program for kids curated carefully on promoting foundational learning and reading habits among kids. The first day i.e., 25th November will be kicked off with the

National Reading Conference, "Today's Readers, Tomorrow's Learners for enhancing literacy and reading."

The main highlight of the events is the Pitching Sessions in which different leading education providers will deliver short insightful lightning talks, addressing the innovative solutions specifically for the foundational learning followed by thought provoking panel discussions which will be led by renowned educationists on key challenges and advancements in the field of literacy and foundational learning. The day-long activities will continue along side the book fair by National Book Foundation. The learning festival will be unique blend of learning, awareness, and fun, the program of the learning activities is curated on PLF 16 learning strands which includes climate change, creative writing, storytelling, self-expression and number of other innovative learning solutions and activities for the participants for fostering a reading culture and enhancing foundational literacy skills but also provide an opportunity to engage with renowned educationists in enlightening panel discussions and Book launches.

58 students of Air University visit Senate

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of 58 students from Air University Islamabad, accompanied by faculty members on Friday visited the Parliament House.

The high-ranked officials of the Upper House welcomed the delegation, said a news release issued by the Senate Secretariat. The delegation visited the Senate Museum, where the students were shown a documentary highlighting the history of the Upper House.

The Senate officials briefed the delegation on the functioning, legislative process, and the importance of factions in the Upper House.

The delegation expressed interest in the sculptures and historical images of the country's prominent politicians in the Senate Museum. Later, the delegation observed the proceedings of the Senate.

Police launch special 2-day campaign for safety of motorcyclists

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police have started two-day campaign to ensure safety of motorcycle riders and educate them about traffic rules. Following the directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, this campaign has been launched to ensure safe ride of motorcyclists. This campaign has been partnered with a private company and Chief Traffic Officer Muhammad Sarfaraz Virk would overall supervise it.

During the inaugural phase of the campaign, the education team is disseminating crucial information to citizens, emphasizing road safety and traffic regulations. As part of this effort, motorcycle side mirrors and electric components will undergo thorough checks to ensure secure travel for riders. Following the awareness phase, strict enforcement actions will be taken against riders of motorcycles lacking side mirrors and those using faulty electric components. The second phase will specifically

address motorcycles without glass and those with defective electric equipment. Under Chief Traffic Officer Muhammad Sarfaraz Virk's supervision, specialized squads have been also constituted to oversee the campaign's execution.

City residents are urged to rectify their motorcycle side mirrors and electric components, including signals, front and backlights, within the designated two-day period.

In the subsequent phase of the campaign, legal measures will be enforced against motorcycle riders failing to adhere to the rules, especially those without glass and possessing defective electric components. The primary goal of this special initiative is to provide citizens with maximum protection and awareness concerning road safety and traffic laws, ultimately reducing the occurrence of accidents.

Islamabad Capital Police is taking proactive measures to enhance the city's traffic system and provide improved travel facilities for its residents.



ISLAMABAD: Education Minister Madad Ali Sindhi attended the celebration of UNESCO prize for Girls' and Women's Education 2023 received by Pakistan Alliance for girls education.

Ustad Mahwash retires

KABUL (Agencies): Gulalai Farida, known as Ustad Mahwash, is one of Afghanistan's most beloved musicians, earning titles such as "Ustad" (meaning master) and "Lady of Afghan Music" throughout her illustrious career. After five decades of artistic dedication, she bid farewell to the stage. Two days ago, Ustad Mahwash made a statement during a concert in Virginia, USA, featuring artists from Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

Kidnapped Afghan girl released

KABUL (Agencies): The consulate of the Islamic Emirate in the city of Karachi, Pakistan announced the release of an Afghan immigrant girl who was kidnapped by a Pakistani soldier. Abdul Jabbar Takhari, the consul of the Islamic Emirate in Karachi, Pakistan, said that they have succeeded in arresting this person with the cooperation of the Sindh state government. He emphasized that this act was done personally, not officially.

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

Afghanistan Embassy in India “permanently” closed



KABUL (TOLONews): The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in New Delhi announced in a statement the permanent closing of its diplomatic mission in New Delhi, effective from Nov 23, owing to "persistent challenges from the Indian government."

"The decision follows the embassy's earlier cessation of operations on 30 Sep, 2023, a move made in the hope of the Indian government stance," the statement reads. According to the statement, the diplo-

mat of the "Afghan Republic have handed over the mission solely to the Indian government."

"India has had good relations with various governments in Afghanistan. It does not want to be involved in political and security issues of Afghanistan. But as an industrial country, it cannot get away from the region. When it sent its technical team to Kabul, the Taliban also created pressure to accept their [Taliban's] diplomats and hand over the

charges of the embassy," said Aziz Maarji, a former diplomat.

The Afghan students in India called the closure of the embassy concerning. "In India, many students, traders and Afghan refugees are living, and their first step was to the embassy, where their problems were addressed," said Nazar Gul, a student.

The Islamic Emirate has yet to comment on it but some former Afghan diplomats said the two sides should negotiate to reach a solution as the issue will

affect the Afghans based in India. "The Islamic Emirate and Indian government should take steps to reopen the embassy as soon as possible," said Ahmad Raghi, a former diplomat.

Earlier, the Afghan embassy in New Delhi said that the embassy's activities would be stopped from October 1 of this year due to the lack of support from the Indian government, the failure to meet expectations in providing Afghanistan's interests, and the reduction of employees and resources.

Islamic Emirate leader orders cabinet to address needs of refugees

KABUL (Agencies): Najibullah Haqqani, the acting Minister of Communication and Information Technology, said that the leader of the Islamic Emirate in a cabinet meeting ordered all the ministries to deal with the challenges faced by the immigrants.

Officials of the Islamic Emirate in Spin Boldak district of Kandahar said that from the October 23, more than 100,000 Afghans who were forcibly deported from Pakistan have returned to the country through the Spin Boldak crossing. "All of us have patience and are working to solve these problems together. Amir al-Momineen also advised all officials to provide ease for your brothers as much as you can," Haqqani told TOLONews.

"In the past month, that is, from October 23, 17,700 families have returned to the country, totaling around 104,000 people," said Abdul Latif Hakimi, head of refugee



registration and information in the Spin Boldak district of Kandahar. A number of expelled Afghans also said the inappropriate behavior of the Pakistani military is against all human principles and said that they have returned to the country empty-handed. They asked the government to

help them.

"I was working in a hotel in Karachi, they detained me, I spent three to four nights in detention and then they deported me," said Ahmad Jan, an expelled refugee from Pakistan.

"They used to come to our houses at night, they informed us a month ago.

They were bothering us a lot and finally we got tired and moved," said Said Jan, an expelled refugee.

From November 1, 2023 onwards, the process of forced deportation of Afghan immigrants from Pakistan has been ongoing, and so far, thousands of families have returned to the country.

Afghan farmers to receive training in Tashkent

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) announced the signing of a memorandum of cooperation with the Tashkent State Agrarian University in Tashkent.

The delegation of the Islamic Emirate, during their visit to Uzbekistan, signed a memorandum of cooperation with Tashkent State Agrarian University to improve the capacity of Afghan farmers.



Mesbahuddin Mustacen, the spokesperson of the ministry, said that on the basis of this memorandum, more than fifty Afghan farmers will be provided with professional training in Uzbekistan.

"They have signed a memorandum that sixty specialists from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock of the Islamic Emirate will go to Uzbekistan for short and long-term training and benefit from their experiences in the field of agriculture," Mustacen said.

At the same time, the Chamber of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock

called the signing of this memorandum important for creating employment and added that memorandums have been signed with Uzbekistan on other sectors as well.

"The fourth memorandum is about drip gardens, like grape gardens, they can cooperate with us. Our agriculture will grow from this and on the other side, this will provide working opportunities for

the farmers of our country, and our income will increase," said Mirwais Haji Zada, deputy of the Chamber of Agriculture and Irrigation.

Meanwhile, some economic analysts believe that increasing relations in the agricultural sector with neighboring countries is beneficial for Afghanistan.

"Cooperation and participation of neighboring countries, especially

Uzbekistan with Afghanistan, can improve food and nutrition security and increase domestic production," said Seyar Quraishi, economic analyst. MAIL had previously said that a delegation headed by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry had gone to Uzbekistan to discuss attracting investment and developing cooperation in the agricultural sector.

Juvenile detention centers providing youth with schooling

KABUL (TOLONews): Officials of the Juvenile Detention Center on the first day of the annual examination, said that they are trying to augment prisons with centers of education and art.

Officials say they have provided education for children and teenagers who have committed various crimes. "Here, we give an exam and give them documents so that they can register in the same class in their previous school, and if they are in 12th grade, they will be given graduation documents so that they can start university," said Nazar Mohammad Naseeri, head of the center.

Abdulrahman and Naweed are two young people who are in the Juvenile Rehabilitation Center and are happy with the educational facilities in this center.

"We studied and were taught, and I have regret, I will not repeat it anymore, I continue my work, I continue my studies," said Naweed. "It had been a while since my father died



and I had borrowed money from everyone. I myself had come from Iran and had no money," said Abdul Rahman.

Currently, more than 280 children who are kept in this center have been provided with education by the center.

Some children and teenagers who are studying in this center said that they

should be given a share in the development of the society after being released from this center.

"It's been 54 days since I have been here in the 12th grade. Our teachers are qualified and teach well," said Farhad, a youth in detention. "We have prepared all the prisons of Afghanistan with a place for education and

art. Under the leadership of the organization of prison affairs, we have prepared education and professional lessons for them in the center of Kabul province. The officials of the center emphasized that youth and children who have been arrested for crimes such as theft, murder and other crimes are kept in the center.

CSTO heads discuss regional issues in council session



KABUL (TOLONews): Heads of states at a session of the member states of the Collective Security Council of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), discussed a range of regional issues, including narcotics and counter-terrorism.

The situation of Afghanistan was also highlighted during the meeting.

Speaking at the session, the president of

Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, said that the continuation of humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan is important. He also said that his country has provided emergency assistance to the victims of recent earthquakes in western Afghanistan.

The President of Kyrgyzstan, Sadyr Japarov, told the session that his country is interested in peace and

stability in Afghanistan. He also stressed the need for inclusive negotiations to solve the current issues in Afghanistan and said that his country supports the continuation of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.

The CSTO's members also in a joint statement expressed their concerns over trafficking of narcotics from Afghanistan.

"Expressing concern about the challenges posed

by trafficking in opiates and methamphetamine from Afghanistan, as well as cocaine, cannabis, synthetic drugs...", the statement reads.

"The interim government of Afghanistan should take practical steps regarding its commitment towards the international community and neighbors regarding the cultivation of narcotics and production of narcotics," said Najib Rahman Shamal, political analyst.

However, the Islamic Emirate's officials have not commented about the statement but earlier said that narcotics production has dropped to zero.

The meeting was attended by the President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Japarov, the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, as well as the CSTO Secretary General Imangali Tasmagambetov, according to the office of the president of Kazakhstan.

Committee to transfer property of Afghans deported from Pakistan formed



KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate's spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said that a committee has been established to facilitate the transfer of property of Afghan refugees being deported by Pakistan. He said that the committee will provide all necessary facilities for the Afghans. This comes as the Afghan refugees, who were deported by Pakistan, complained about mistreatment by the Pakistan military, saying that their property was seized.

"When our refugees return, their properties will be shifted without any damage. Secondly, the Islamic

Emirate appointed a special committee which is dedicated for the refugees who return and invest and do business. It will provide them facilities," Mujahid said. This comes as the deputy head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI), Mohammad Younus Momand, said that the Islamic Emirate should reach an agreement with Pakistan over transferring the properties of Afghan refugees to the country.

"We have had a meeting with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce one and a half months ago. There are good frame-

works. Every trader can come to Afghanistan and there are good facilities for them," Momand said.

The economists said that transferring the property of Afghan refugees will benefit the Afghan economy.

"The Islamic Emirate should form a framework to clarify how the Afghan traders can invest? How can they transfer their property? How they can shift their factories from Pakistan to Afghanistan?" said Mohammad Nabi, political analyst.

This comes as the UN World Food Programme is providing Afghan families who are being forced out of

Pakistan with emergency assistance, the WFP said in a report.

"The situation is particularly dire as the harsh winter is only weeks away and the country is still reeling from devastating earthquakes, a battered economy and a worsening climate crisis," said WFP Afghanistan Country Director Hsiao-Wei Lee as quoted in a report. "We urgently need US\$ 27.5 million to support one million returnees from Pakistan arriving in Afghanistan and (to) help them get through the winter."



ISLAMABAD: KP Caretaker Chief Minister, Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah called on Sheikh Saleh bin Abdullah bin Muhammad Humaid, Imam-e-Kaaba

Pakistan ready to airlift injured Palestinians in Gaza: FM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilil Abbas Jilani Friday said that Pakistan is ready to airlift the injured Palestinians and bring them for treatment, adding this has been conveyed to Jordan and Egypt as well.

The top Pakistani diplomat made the revelation while responding to a calling attention notice in the Senate. The notice had sought the foreign minister's briefing on what efforts Pakistan was doing related to Gaza to end the atrocities against the Palestinian people.

The comments from the minister came as the Israel-Hamas truce came into effect today after more than a month of bombing in Gaza that killed over 14,000 people including children and women. The first pause in the 48-day-old war began at 10am PST, involving a comprehensive ceasefire in north and south Gaza, the release of 13 Israeli women and child hostages by the Hamas later in the

day and aid to flow into the devastated Palestinian enclave.

"We are already in contact with Jordan and Egypt. We have offered them that Pakistan will be happy to treat these injured Palestinians in Pakistan," foreign minister Jilani told the upper house. However, he pointed out that they were encountering some problems and working to resolve them as soon as possible.

"We are also in contact with countries that are in touch with Israel because Israel's permission is also needed," said FM Jilani. He added that the Egyptians had communicated to Islamabad that Israel also scrutinises the injured to make sure that a Hamas member is not being taken away. "We have also offered that Pakistan [wishes to] establish a hospital there," said Jilani. But he again explained that the situation in Gaza was such that there was no possibility for any country to establish a health facility in the besieged strip.

"Indonesia had also established a hospital that has now been destroyed.

This is the situation but we will keep on working," the minister told the senate. On the diplomatic efforts of Islamabad, Foreign Minister Jilani said that Pakistan was among a few countries that have played an active role in putting pressure on Israel. He shared that the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) recent moot in Jeddah was one such example and Pakistan was among eight countries that helped produce the consensus document.

The other diplomatic effort that the top diplomat highlighted was the passage of the United Nations resolution floated by Jordan. "I got calls from 10-15 foreign ministers who appreciated Pakistan for the role it played in developing consensus," said Jilani. The minister was also of the view that the support which Palestinians got in Europe and the US showed that Israel and Western countries' narrative had failed. "I believe the Palestine issue has come on the centre stage because of what happened in the last month," said the minister.

Zardari, Sindh governor discuss current situation

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori met with Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian (PPPP) President Asif Ali Zardari at the Zardari House in Islamabad.

During the meeting, both the leaders exchanged views overall political situation in the country and various matters concerning the province of Sindh, said a press release issued by the party secretariat. Saleem Mandviwalla, Malik Shah, Sarfraz Dhomki and others were also present during the meeting.

On Thursday, Pakistan People's Party co-chairman and former president Asif Ali Zardari claimed that PTI chief Imran Khan offered him 6 ministries during their government. In an interview with a private news channel, Asif Zardari asserted that the government of former prime minister Imran Khan wanted "minus Zardari People Party" and send me out of the country.

Zardari contended that initiating a no-confidence motion against Imran Khan was the correct decision otherwise he would have stayed in power until 2028 through an RO election. The former president further alleged that the PTI chief had isolated Pakistan globally and was an enemy of the country's economy. On November 4, Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that no decision made regarding an electoral alliance between PPP and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) yet.

ATC sends suspects on physical remand

SUKKUR (INP): The anti-Terrorism Court on Tuesday extended the remand of the suspects in senior journalist Jan Mohammad Mahar's murder case. Umeed Ali, Aaqil and Ghulam Sarwar were arrested by the police four days earlier during an operation in the katcha area. The accused were arrested by police for facilitating the killers in Jan Mohammad Mahar case.

After the initial hearing, the ATC handed over the suspects to the police on a four-day physical remand. Senior journalist Jan Mohammad Mahar's murder case, Umeed Ali, Aaqil and Ghulam Sarwar were arrested by the police four days earlier during an operation in the katcha area. The accused were arrested by police for facilitating the killers in Jan Mohammad Mahar case.

Sindh police recently claimed to have arrested three suspects nominated in the murder case of Jan Mohammad Mahar. SSP Irfan Ali Samo told the media that three suspects wanted in the murder case were arrested in an operation in the katcha area. The arrested persons were identified as Sher Muhammad Shaikh, Muhammad Ramzan Shaikh and Bashir Memon. The police officer said that the suspects were handed over to the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD).

DSP sent to jail on judicial remand

KARACHI (PPI): In the Orangi Town robbery case, a court in Karachi sent the prime suspect DSP Umair Tariq Bajari to jail on judicial remand on Friday.

The suspect DSP, along with three police officers named in the FIR was presented before Karachi's city court. After hearing the argument from both sides, the magistrate sent DSP Umair Tariq to jail on judicial remand, while the other three police officers were handed over to the police for a two-day physical remand.

It is pertinent to mention here that an under-training DSP Umair Tariq Bajari and two Shaheen Force officials have been booked in Karachi's Orangi Town dacoity case. The cops were declared guilty in a high-level police probe. DSP Umair Tariq Bajari, Khurram and Farman along with 20 others were booked in the Orangi Town heist case under charges of dacoity and kidnapping on the complaint of Shakir Khan, the affected man.

El-Sisi calls for recognition of Palestinian state

CAIRO: Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi on Friday appeared to discredit the moribund Israel-Palestinian peace process and instead called on the international community to recognize the Palestinian state. During a joint news conference with the prime ministers of Spain and Belgium in Cairo, El-Sisi said reviving the process aimed at ending the Israel-Palestinian conflict "may not be what is required."

"The results of this path faltering for 30 years tells us that we must" adopt a different approach, he said. This would entail "the recognition of the Palestinian state by the international community and bringing it into the United Nations... This would show seriousness," El-Sisi added. He pointed to the high civilian death toll in successive Gaza conflicts, saying the wars erupted because the "political horizons for resolving the Palestinian cause always failed" to fulfil the Palestinians' aspirations.

El-Sisi's remarks come on the first day of a truce between Israel and Hamas, to be accompanied by the release of hostages taken in Israel by Hamas and other Palestinian groups in return for the release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails. The four-day truce deal was concluded with mediation from Qatar, with support from Egypt and the United States, and comes almost seven weeks after the war erupted on October 7. Israel has launched an aerial and ground offensive in the Gaza Strip that has left 14,854 Palestinians dead, among them 6,150 children, according to the Hamas government. It came after militants from Gaza carried out an unprecedented attack on Israeli territory that left around 1,200 people dead, mostly civilians, according to Israeli authorities. Hamas and other Palestinian groups also took around 240 hostages to Gaza on the day of the attack.

Lebanon border calm as Israel-Hamas truce takes effect: Calm returned to Lebanon's southern border Friday as a temporary truce took effect in the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, according to state media, residents and an AFP journalist. Since the Gaza war erupted on October 7, Lebanon's southern border with Israel has witnessed deadly exchanges of fire, primarily involving the

Israeli army and Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, as well as Palestinian militant groups.

Hezbollah has yet to say whether it will comply with the terms of the agreement that was brokered by Qatar with help from Egypt and the United States. "A precarious calm reigned on the southern border, with the humanitarian truce in Gaza coming into effect at 7:00 in the morning (0500 GMT)," Lebanon's official National News Agency reported. The four-day truce in the Gaza Strip will see Hamas exchange 50 hostages seized from Israel during the October 7 attacks for 150 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails.

An AFP journalist in the Marjayoun border region said he had heard exchanges of fire 10 minutes prior to the truce, before the guns fell silent. A resident in the Alma Al-Shaab border region also said the situation was calm and that he could no longer hear Israeli planes or reconnaissance drones flying overhead. On the eve of the truce, Hezbollah had intensified its cross-border attacks on the Israeli army, which in response pounded southern Lebanon.

On Friday, the powerful Iran-backed Shiite group claimed responsibility for 22 attacks on Israeli positions from southern Lebanon, where it lost seven of its fighters during the day. Hezbollah says it has been acting in support of Hamas since the Palestinian Islamist movement's October 7 attacks on Israel, which Israeli officials say killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and saw about 240 people taken hostage. Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas and its retaliatory air and ground offensive in the Gaza Strip has killed nearly 15,000 people, thousands of them children, according to the Hamas government of the Palestinian territory. The cross-border clashes between Israel and Hezbollah have claimed 109 lives in Lebanon, at least 77 of them Hezbollah fighters and 14 civilians, according to an AFP count. Among those killed were three journalists, the son of the head of Hezbollah's parliamentary bloc and an official from Hamas's military wing in Lebanon. On the Israeli side, six soldiers and three civilians have been killed, according to the Israeli authorities. — Arab News

New Zealand gets new govt promising tax cuts

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's National Party has agreed to form a coalition government with two other right-leaning parties, heralding a shift towards lower taxes and less government bureaucracy.

The centre-right National Party on Friday signed an agreement to govern in a coalition with the classically liberal ACT and populist New Zealand First parties nearly six weeks after the country held its general elections. The formal agreement comes after National Party leader Christopher Luxon announced on Thursday that the three parties had agreed to form an alliance.

Under the agreement, Luxon, a former airline executive, will serve as

prime minister from Monday, alongside New Zealand First leader Winston Peters as foreign minister. Peters and the ACT's David Seymour will share the role of deputy prime minister, with the New Zealand First leader handing over the baton halfway through the parliamentary term.

The coalition's manifesto includes pledges to cut personal income taxes, train 500 more police within two years, and rewrite the central bank's mandate to focus solely on keeping inflation low. "Our government will rebuild the economy to ease the cost of living and deliver tax relief to increase the prosperity of all New Zealanders," Luxon said on Friday. "Our government

will restore law and order, and personal responsibility, so that Kiwis are safer in their own communities."

The agreement caps weeks of intense negotiations after New Zealanders voted on October 14 for a change of direction after six years of governance by the centre-left Labour Party. Luxon's National Party won 48 of 123 seats in parliament, compared with Labour's 34. ACT and New Zealand First picked up 11 and eight seats, respectively. Labour's outgoing Prime Minister Chris Hipkins held the top job for just nine months, following Jacinda Ardern's surprise decision to step down at the start of the year. — Aljazeera

Philippines enlists foreign force to stir trouble in South China Sea

BEIJING/MANILA (Reuters): The Philippines has enlisted "foreign forces" to patrol the South China Sea and has been stirring up trouble, China's military said on Thursday, referring to joint patrols this week by Philippine and US forces.

The Chinese military will maintain high vigilance, resolutely defend sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, and resolutely safeguard peace and stability in the South China Sea, China's military said. "The Philippines enlisted forces out of the region to patrol ... stirred up trouble and engaged in hype, undermining regional peace and stability," the southern theatre command of the Chinese military said.

Philippine officials have said their military and the US launched joint patrols on Tuesday in waters near Taiwan, a democratically governed island that China claims as its own, raising the possibility of further tensions with China. Relations have soured between China and the Philippines over the South China Sea under Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr as he pivots towards closer ties with the US, which supports the Southeast Asian nation in its maritime disputes with China.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday China had warned the US and the Philippines in connection with their patrols. "China has made clear its position to the Philippines and the US that the Philippine-US joint patrols must not undermine China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests," spokesperson Mao Ning said.

A Chinese navy ship shadowed

three US and Philippine warships conducting joint patrols on Thursday, the Philippine armed forces chief, Romeo Brawner, told reporters. The incident occurred at around 10:15 a.m. near the platform of a natural gas field 27 nautical miles off Palawan province, Brawner said. "There was no challenge, no dangerous manoeuvres," The Philippines achieved its goal of closely operating with its ally, the United States, and there was no untoward incident, Brawner added. The Philippine foreign ministry and the national security adviser's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

China warns against 'provocation' as Australian warship sails Taiwan Strait: An Australian warship has sailed through the Taiwan Strait, the sensitive and narrow waterway that separates Taiwan from China, provoking a warning from Beijing. Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence did not name the ship in a statement released on Friday but said it entered the strait the previous day and sailed through in a southerly direction. Taiwan's military kept watch throughout, the statement added without giving details.

An Australian official, quoted by the Reuters news agency, confirmed that the Toowoomba frigate had transited the international waters of the Taiwan Strait as part of a regional deployment. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the country's position on the issue has been "consistent and clear". "We urge the parties concerned to refrain from taking provocative actions and causing trouble towards the peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," ministry

spokesperson Mao Ning said in a regular briefing. The sailing came at a difficult time in Australian-Chinese relations even as the two countries seek to get their ties back on track.

Last week, Canberra complained of an incident involving a Chinese warship and the same Australian navy vessel in Japan's exclusive economic zone, in which an Australian military diver was injured. The US navy sends ships through the strait about once a month in what it calls "routine" transits. China also routinely objects to the voyages. Euan Graham, a senior analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, said the Australian navy has regularly transited through the Taiwan Strait but "chooses not to publicise it".

The analyst told Reuters that the Australian navy uses the Taiwan Strait because it is the shortest route between the East China Sea and South China Sea, and he warned against reading too much into the timing of the latest sailing. "It's a befitting coincidence but shouldn't be misinterpreted as Australia going out of its way to make a point to China after the [earlier] incident," he said. "Transits through the Taiwan Strait shouldn't be controversial, just lawfully going from the East China Sea to the South China Sea via the shortest route." Taiwan has complained over the past four years of repeated Chinese military activity around the democratically governed island, especially in the strait. China considers Taiwan a breakaway province. Taiwan, which rejects China's sovereignty claims, is gearing up for presidential and parliamentary elections on January 13.

N Korea celebrates 'new era of a space power' after satellite launch

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has celebrated a "new era of a space power" following the country's launch of its first-ever military spy satellite earlier this week. Pyongyang said it successfully launched the satellite, the Malligyong-1, into orbit late on Tuesday, and within hours claimed Kim was reviewing images of United States military bases in Guam.

The launch was "a full-fledged exercise of the right to self-defence," the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported Kim as saying during a visit to the national space agency. The launch was an "eye-opening event" that would help protect North Korea from the "dangerous and aggressive moves of hostile forces" and heralded "a new era of a space power," he added.

The launch, banned under United Nations sanctions designed to rein in the nuclear-armed country's ballistic missiles programme, has further ratcheted up tension on the peninsula with Seoul partially suspending and Pyongyang completely suspending the 2018 joint military agreement that was supposed to stabilise cross-border relations.

On Friday, Seoul's foreign ministry announced that the foreign ministers of South Korea, Japan and China would hold their first trilateral talks since 2019. The Sunday meeting in the southern port city of Busan will

see Park Jin, Yoko Kamikawa and Wang Yi sit down for discussions against the backdrop of Beijing's growing concerns over Tokyo and Seoul's deepening security ties with Washington, and the latter's concerns about North Korea's continuing military development and its deepening relationship with Russia.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has already warned that military ties between North Korea and Russia were "growing and dangerous" after Kim travelled to Russia in September to meet President Vladimir Putin. Blinken has urged Beijing, Pyongyang's main ally, to call for some restraint. At the summit, the foreign ministers "plan to exchange opinions extensively on the direction of development of trilateral cooperation, regional and international situations," Seoul's foreign ministry said in a statement.

This week's launch was the North's third attempt in six months to put a spy satellite – a priority of Kim's military modernisation programme – into orbit. Its earlier efforts in May and August ended in failure. Images released by North Korean state media on Friday showed Kim, accompanied by his daughter, praising scientists and space programme workers at the National Aerospace Technology Administration (NATA).

Kim was also shown enjoying a reception with NATA workers, top

military and political officials and his family. The attendees, including Kim's family, wore T-shirts emblazoned with NATA's logo and "enthusiastically cheered expressing thanks to the great father who finally ensured the successful launch", KCNA said. — Aljazeera

Hundreds gather in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (Reuters): Several hundred mourners gathered outside a mosque in Istanbul on Friday to lament the death of two Turkish men who militant Islamist group Hamas said were killed earlier this week in Israeli strikes on south Lebanon.

A total of nine people were killed in the strikes on Tuesday, including two journalists, two other civilians and five Hamas members including a senior member of the militant group. Hamas has said the two Turks were in a car carrying five people who were all killed. Lebanese authorities have not commented on the Turks' deaths or the circumstances under which they came to be in Lebanon.

About 400 people, many of them waving green and white Hamas flags, joined funeral prayers for the two Turkish men, Seyfullah Bilal Ozturk and Yakup Erdal, outside the Beyazit Mosque in the heart of Istanbul's historic district.

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