

Rabbani flays Power Cos

ISLAMABAD (INP): PPP Senator Raza Rabbani castigated country's power distribution companies (Discos) for over-charging consumers, saying that action should be initiated against them for the 'criminal activity'. The statement came after Nepra exposed the "most controversial power theft drive" of the power distribution companies (Discos), defrauding consumers of billions of rupees by over-charging them as much as 100 percent.



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Soldier martyred F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: A soldier lost his life in a gun battle with terrorists on Tuesday in South Waziristan district's Sarogha area, the ISPR said. The exchange of fire between the soldiers and terrorists took place, the troops "effectively engaged the terrorists' location". As a result of the firing, the soldier who was martyred was identified as sepoy Ahmed Ali, 26, a resident of Charsadda district.

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PESHAWAR EDITION

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PESHAWAR: Security officials inspecting the spot of explosion.

Three children among six injured in Peshawar blast

Ikram Ullah Khalil

PESHAWAR: As many as six people were injured including four Afghan boys in a bomb blast at Warsak Road near Babu Garhi area of Peshawar, on Tuesday.

According to hospital administration, six injured of the blast were brought to the hospital among which the condition of an Afghan child was stated to be critical.

The administration said the injured child, identified as Ehsan Ullah (11), son of Mujahid, an Afghan national, was in critical condition. A 13-year-old child named Ahmad Jan, resident of Babu Garhi was also an Afghan national while two other Afghans namely Javed Khan (15), son of Mujahid and Zahir Ullah (12), son of Sana Gul, resident of Babu Garh were also among the injured.

Apart from this, two other injured were identified as Yousaf Khan (23), son of Saeed Khan, resident of Babu Garhi and Saad Ahmad (18), son of Ifthikhar, resident of Gul Abad, Charpareza. Chief of Capital City Police Officer (CCPO), Syed Ashfaq Anwar visited site of the blast at Warsak Road and vowed to arrest the culprits soon.

Talking to media persons, he said that investigators were busy in probe of the incident from different angles and geofencing techniques were being applied to arrest the criminals. He said that four children sustained injuries in the blast. The CCPO said police was in high alert position to thwart any eventuality.

Deputy Commissioner Afaq Wazir also visited Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar where he inquired after health of Warsak Road's blast victims. He visited different wards directing the doctors to provide best medical treatment to the victims. At least six people including four children sustained injuries when an improvised explosive device planted under concrete stones at roadside went off this morning on Warsak Road Peshawar. The DC urged people to avoid rush in hospital wards. He said that all available resources should be utilized for treatment of the injured.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar strongly condemned the bomb blast that took place at Warsak Road of Peshawar. The prime minister instructed the authorities concerned to provide the best possible medical facilities to the children who sustained injuries in the incident, and prayed for their early recovery, according to a PM Office statement.

He directed the law enforcement agencies to probe into the incident and reiterated that the nefarious designs of the terrorists to mar the country's peace would never let to succeed. The prime minister reiterated the resolve that the war against terror-

ism would continue till the elimination of the scourge and assured that the perpetrators of the incident would be brought to task as soon as possible.

Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice @ Sayed Arshad Hussain Shah strongly denounced the blast on Warsak Road here and sought an immediate report from police high-ups in this regard. The caretaker CM prayed for early recovery of the children who sustained injuries in the blast. He also issued directives to the hospital administration to provide best possible treatment facilities to the injured children.

Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary condemned the blast on Warsak Road and promptly sought a detailed report from authorities. He directed strict administration, police, and other law enforcement agencies (LEAs) to maintain heightened vigilance in the area.

The Chief Secretary prayed for swift recovery of the injured and instructed hospital administration to provide the best possible medical care to them. The Chief Secretary highlighted the sacrifices rendered by the general public and LEAs in establishing peace and tranquility in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He assured that the sacrifices of the people will not be forgotten and that elements involved in disturbing peace and stability will be taken to task.

Mayor Metropolitan Zubair Ali strongly condemned the blast on Warsak Road in which four children sustained injuries. He added that it was a sad incident that happened on Warsak Road, adding that it was an important road as there were several educational institutions on it and law enforcement agencies frequently use this road for movement. He said the blast was a desperate attempt to create unrest in the society. He emphasized on strengthening the security measures in the area to avert nefarious designs of anti-state elements.

Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has condemned a terrorism. In a condemnation communique, he expressed his grief over the injuries of children in the bomb blast. He demanded of the Federal and provincial governments to take strict action against the criminals involved in the bomb blast. He also prayed for the speedy recovery of the children injured in the blast.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti strongly condemned the explosion near the school on Warsak Road Babu in Peshawar. Expressing deep sorrow and regret over the injuries of innocent children in the blast, he said that no effort should be spared in the treatment of children and other injured.

China says Afghan Taliban must reform

BEIJING (AFP): China said on Tuesday Afghanistan's Taliban government will need to introduce political reforms, improve security and mend relations with its neighbours before receiving full diplomatic recognition.

Beijing does not formally recognise Afghanistan's Taliban rulers, although both countries host each others' ambassadors and have maintained diplomatic engagement. "China has always believed that Afghanistan should not be excluded from the international community," foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said on Tuesday when asked if China would now recognise the Taliban government.

"We hope that Afghanistan will further respond to the expectations of the international community, build an open and inclusive political structure (and) implement moderate and stable domestic and foreign policies," he said.

Wang also said China urged Kabul to "resolutely combat all types of terrorist forces, live in harmony with all countries around the world, especially neighbouring countries, and integrate with the international community at an early date". "As the concerns of all parties receive stronger responses, diplomatic recognition of the Afghan government will naturally follow," he said.

The Taliban government has not been officially recognised by any country since seizing power after the chaotic withdrawal of US troops in August 2021. However, Kabul and Beijing have maintained some ties. Afghanistan's new rulers have promised the country would not be used as a base for militants and, in exchange, China has offered economic support and investment for reconstruction.

China's foreign ministry said in a position paper on Afghanistan released this year that it "respects the independent choices made by the Afghan people, and respects the religious beliefs and national customs".

Tribute paid to Major Akram Shaheed

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Armed Forces of Pakistan, CJsSC & Services Chiefs pay glowing tribute to Major Muhammad Akram Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider on his 52nd Shahadat anniversary on Tuesday.

Displaying valour against all odds, Major Muhammad Akram Shaheed heroically repulsed innumerable attacks by enemy inflicting heavy losses in the battle of Hilli during 1971 War.

Nepra okays over Rs3 per unit hike in electricity price

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) Tuesday approved a Rs3.07 per unit increase in electricity prices, applicable to all power distribution companies.

In a notification, the regulator said: "The [...] adjustment shall be shown separately in the consumers' bills on the basis of units billed to the consumers in the month of October 2023 in the billing month of December 2023."

Nepra has notified the increase on account of variations in fuel charges, the notification mentioned, in a move that will impact millions of the electricity distribution companies' (Discos) inflation-weary consumers. The increase will not be applicable to Karachi-Electric (KE) consumers. Moreover, electric vehicle charging stations (EVCs) and lifeline consumers will also not be impacted by the increase, the notification mentioned.

The power prices are persistently

on the rise in Pakistan as the cash-strapped nation tries to curb its circular debt and meet the conditions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF laid forth several conditions — including a rise in power and gas tariffs — for the South Asian nation to unlock crucial funds that allowed the government to avert a possible default on its debt payments.

The latest hike comes on the heels of startling Nepra findings, wherein it was discovered that KE and other power-providing companies were charging millions of consumers excessively. "Legal proceedings against all Distribution Companies including KEL under NEPRA Fine Regulations, 2021 for violation of the provisions of NEPRA Act, CSM and tariff terms & conditions etc," a statement issued by the power regulator said. The authority took "very serious" notice of the complaints that were reported from all over Pakistan regarding excessive, inflated, and wrong bills charged by the distribution companies to the consumers dur-

ing two months — July and August.

Following the complaints, the power regulator held detailed hearings during which it found that snaps of "meter readings are either invisible or deliberately not taken. Similarly, some cases were reported that monthly meter readings are being taken beyond the billing cycle of 30 days, which resulted in undue/inflated charging of upper slab bills to the less user consumer(s) hence, changing the category from protected to un-protected".

The committee found that 5.7 million Multan Electric Power Company (Mepeco) consumers were charged for more than 30 days of the billing cycle in the month of July followed by Gujranwala Electric Power Company (Gepco) i.e., around 1.2 million in August. Similarly, Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (Fesco) i.e., more than 800,000 in August, Lahore Electric Supply Company (Lesco) around 700,000 in both months, and Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (Hesco) more than 500,000 in the month of July.

Reforms in health sector vital: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday emphasized the introduction of reforms in country's health sector with a view to meet the global requirement of health experts. He chairing a meeting of the task force on reforms in medical education and patients care, said the reforms in the health sector was vital in current situation.

The prime minister also called for improving the standards of medical education in accordance with the contemporary requirements. The participants of the meeting were briefed on the strategy to uplift the health sector at par with international standards. The prime minister said that considering its significance, enhanced attention should be given on uplifting the nursing sector.

The meeting was also briefed on the steps taken for improvement in the health sector in coordination with the health ministry, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan,



Pakistan Medical and Dental Council, Higher Education Commission and medical universities. It was told that a three-prong strategy had been formulated for health sector reforms to enforce the rules and regulations of international standards.

The participants were also apprised of the reforms strategy for the graduate and postgraduate levels in the health sector. Prime Minister Kakar appreciated the performance of the task force working under Special Assistant Dr Amir Bilal for bringing in health sector reforms.

PM lauds services of Bohra community for country's progress: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Kakar lauded the services of the Bohra community for the progress

of the country and said the government and nation valued their positive contribution. The prime minister was talking to the Spiritual leader of the Dawoodi Bohra community, Dr Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin who led an eight-member delegation here at the PM House.

PM Kakar felicitated Dr Saifuddin on being awarded the Nishan-e-Pakistan in recognition to his services for the country. He expressed confidence that the Bohra community would continue to play their role for the progress and development of the country. The delegation appreciated the prime minister's stance presented on climate change at international level and the government's efforts to promote interfaith harmony.

UN says 'not possible' to create 'safe zones' in Gaza

GENEVA (AFP): The United Nations warned Tuesday that it was impossible to create so-called safe zones for civilians to flee to inside the Gaza Strip amid Israel's bombing campaign.

Israel had initially focused its offensive on the north of the territory, but the army has now also dropped leaflets on parts of the south, telling Palestinian civilians there to flee to other areas. "The so-called safe zones... are not scientific, they are not rational, they are not possible, and I think the authorities are aware of this," James Elder, spokesman for the UN children's agency UNICEF, told reporters in Geneva via video-link from Cairo.

His comments came as Israeli troops battled Hamas militants in the southern Gaza Strip after expanding their offensive deeper into the besieged area. Israel said it was at war with Hamas after the militant group's October 7 attacks that killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and which saw around 240 hostages taken, according to Israeli authorities.

In retaliation for the worst attack in its history, Israel has vowed to eradicate Hamas and secure the release of all the hostages held in Gaza. The Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza says the war has killed

nearly 15,900 people in the territory, around 70 percent of them women and children.

As Israel's offensive pushes deeper into Gaza, international aid organizations have warned that civilians in the densely-populated territory are running out of places to flee to. Elder insisted that the safe zones declared by Israel "cannot be safe nor humanitarian when unilaterally declared."

The pretense that there is somewhere safe for people to flee to is "callous," he said. He stressed that in a proper safe zone, "you can guarantee the conditions of food, water, medicine and shelter." Elder, who spent the past week or so in Gaza, stressed that none of that is assured in the areas designated as safe zones.

"These are entirely, entirely absent. You cannot overstate this. These are tiny patches of barren land, or they are street corners, they are sidewalks," he said. "There is no water, no facilities, no shelter from the cold and the rain (and) there's no sanitation."

Elder pointed out that in the overcrowded shelters that most of the displaced in Gaza have flocked to there had been around one toilet for every 400 people. "Now remove those people and put them in... the so called safe places. It's tens of thousands of people

without a single toilet — not one — no clean water, nothing to drink," he said. "Without water, without sanitation, without shelter the so called safe zones risks becoming zones of disease."

GCC leaders, President Erdogan accuse Israel of violations of international law in Gaza, demand end to occupation: Members of the GCC have condemned Israel for committing "clear violations" of international law and reiterated their demand for an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

In a statement issued at the end of the 44th session of the Gulf Cooperation Council on Tuesday, the leaders of the six nations condemned Israel's ongoing military actions in Gaza, "which have led to the forced displacement of the civilian population, and the destruction of civilian facilities and infrastructure, including residential buildings, schools, health facilities, and places of worship."

The statement of declaration went on to say such actions were "in clear violation of international law and international humanitarian law," and they expressed their dissatisfaction with the "blatant Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people".

(Continued on Back Page)

Tobacco smoking not an addiction, but a death pill: Solangi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday said tobacco smoking was not an addiction rather it was a death pill and a threat to human lives at the global level.

Delivering his speech at an event organised to educate children about the harmful impacts of smoking, he said like environmental destruction, smoking was also a threat to human lives. At the outset, he said it was important to ask some important questions regarding the habit of smoking.

"Smoking is a disease that kills one person every six seconds on average", Murtaza Solangi said adding the habit of smoking takes the life of one person among ten. Recounting the devastation caused by smoking, he said 100 million people lost their lives due to smoking in the 20th century and some five million deaths were caused by smoking every year worldwide.

He said it was feared that the number of people killed by smoking would increase from five to eight million per year by 2030 if the habit of smoking continued at this intensity. Appreciating the services of those who have waged war against smoking, he termed them "the anti-smoking heroes".

He said due to business compulsions, tobacco smoking was not mentioned with other harmful substances, but now this tendency should end. An increase in taxes on the tobacco industry was meant to discourage the tendency of smoking in society, especially the young generation, he maintained. He said that like climate change, tobacco had been badly affecting the daily lives of human beings and increasing health sector expenditures. Solangi pledged to keep on supporting the volunteers fighting against smoking.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of Ustad Hussain Bakhsh Gullu. Ustad Gullu, who performed all over the world, left his singing footprints everywhere, Murtaza Solangi maintained.

Finance division releases Rs17.4b to ECP for polls

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Finance Division on Tuesday said it has released Rs17.4 billion to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for the upcoming general elections slated to be held on February 8, 2024.

The amount was in addition to the Rs10bn released in July 2023, the Finance Ministry said, highlighting that the latest disbursement brought the total funds released for polls to Rs27.4bn. "The Finance Division remains committed to provision of funds as and when required by the Election Commission of Pakistan," it added. The development comes a day after the electoral body raised alarm over the delay in the release of the urgently needed amount for the

conduct of polls.

Earlier, sources told Dawn that the ECP had asked for Rs51bn for the elections, but later after a series of meetings settled for Rs47bn, out of which Rs5bn had been released during the previous fiscal year. In the budget passed in June, the government had allocated Rs42bn for the elections. They said the Finance Ministry was repeatedly approached and a written reminder was also sent for an immediate release of funds. However, there was no positive response, compelling the ECP to summon the finance secretary.

Subsequently, the finance secretary had assured the poll watchdog that the funds required by the ECP urgently would be released in a day or two. In a post X (formerly Twitter),

caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi had also ruled out any crisis in meeting the ECP's financial needs.

Last week, the electoral watchdog had rejected what it said were "baseless and misleading" reports about a delay in the upcoming general elections. The statement had come in response to media reports that a request was submitted to the ECP to postpone the general elections, citing security concerns in Balochistan and the recent wave of terrorism. The ECP and President Arif Alvi had agreed earlier this month on Feb 8, 2024, as the date for polls — an announcement that has stirred activity in the camps of major political parties.



IGP commemorates International Day of Volunteers

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja, honored the International Day of Volunteers, a global event annually celebrated on December 5th, by emphasizing its resonance both in Pakistan and worldwide.

He stressed the importance of recognizing the invaluable contributions of humanitarian ambassadors and volunteers, highlighting their crucial role and selfless dedication.

The IGP Sindh paid tribute to the courageous volunteers who served the nation altruistically in urban and rural areas, especially during challenging periods. Focusing on the values of the Sindh Police, IGP Sindh underscored their commitment to being trustworthy members of society, devoted to protecting people's rights, dignity, and property without pursuing personal gain.

Indian Sikh pilgrim family thanks Punjab govt

LAHORE (APP): Indian Sikh pilgrim family, which was swindled in Lahore, met with Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman at the Civil Secretariat here on Tuesday and thanked the Punjab government for the early arrest of the accused and recovery of stolen money and valuables.

The Sikh family praised the professionalism of the Punjab police and said: "The way the Punjab government took care of us is unparalleled." The Chief Secretary, "Sikh pilgrims are our guests and it is our responsibility to provide them with security." He said it would be ensured that such an unpleasant incident does not recur in future. He mentioned that all kinds of facilities are being provided to the Sikh community to perform their religious rituals, adding that accommodation, transport and security are being given to the Sikh pilgrims under a special tourism package.

CM chairs cabinet meeting, approves reforms

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, chairing the 33th provincial cabinet meeting at the Civil Secretariat on Tuesday, addressed crucial matters. The cabinet approved an increase in driving licence fees effective from January 1. Until this date, driving licences will continue to be issued at the existing rates. Starting January 1, the learner fee will surge from Rs 60 to Rs 1000, alongside an increase in LTV, HTV, and PSV licence fees. Residents of the US, Canada, and other countries can obtain a licence online by paying \$100.

During the meeting, the cabinet endorsed a transparent lottery system for allocating government land to landless farmers in Cholistan. A substantial 3,44,000 acres of land will be allocated to landless farmers at subsidized rates.

Additionally, the cabinet approved the transfer policy for MBBS and BDS students in government medical and dental colleges, allowing transfers only from high-grade merit to low-grade institutions. The management of prison hospitals will be entrusted to the health department and a healthcare system for prisoners was also approved. Funds were greenlit to double the number of nursing students, and a management committee for the Institute of Public Health Lahore was established. The cabinet renewed the agreement between the Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department and the Recep Tayyip Erdogan Health Trust for the operation of Regional Blood Centers in Multan and Bahawalpur.

Decisions were made to elevate

Children's Hospital Faisalabad to the status of a medical institute under the Punjab Medical and Health Institutions Act 2003. The establishment of PKLI-2 for South Punjab in Multan Institute of Kidney Diseases was also confirmed.

Furthermore, the cabinet endorsed policy frameworks for the selection of vice-chancellors at the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences in Lahore and Bahawalpur, along with the appointment of prosecutors from the Public Prosecutor Department to the FIA on a deputation basis.

Under the Punjab Special Premises (Preservation) Ordinance 1985, Jinnah Garden was granted special status, and its administrative affairs were entrusted to the Walled City Authority. The historic Umar Mahal of Chiniot was also placed under the management of the Walled City Authority.

The cabinet approved the revision of shooting licences and fees under Punjab Wildlife Rules 1974 and gave the green light to establishing a Pothohar campus of the University of Punjab in Gujjar Khan.

Additionally, an agreement with the National Highways and Motorway Police for the exchange of motor vehicle registration information was endorsed. The decisions of the 10th and 11th meetings of the Cabinet Standing Committee on Legal Affairs and Privatization were confirmed.

The meeting was attended by provincial ministers, advisers, chief secretary, inspector general of police, advocate general of Punjab, senior officials, and secretaries concerned.

Beach cleaning campaign 2023

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Under CSR, and Suzuki Motor Corporation Japan "Clean-up the World Campaign" 'Beach Cleaning Campaign' was carried out on Friday 1st December, 2023 at Seaview Clifton, by Pak Suzuki Motor Co., the purpose was to create awareness about the importance of environment protection and Marine Life conservation among public.

While addressing the media, Mr. Hiroshi Kawamura, MD & CEO of Pak Suzuki said, it is a matter of concern

that increasing environmental pollution in sea and at beaches has become a serious issue that is not only destroying the natural beauty of our beaches but also impacting fatal and adverse effects on the precious marine life & humans & also, negatively impact on tourism & crucial economic activities. Beach cleaning is a critical environmental endeavor that requires collective effort to sustain a clean and healthy environment as a whole.

He further deliver the message to all that "Don't litter, let you beaches cleaner".

Mayor Karachi sets up a committee to look into affairs of Spencer Eye Hospital

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has on public complaints set up a five-member committee consisting of UC chairmen to enquire about the affairs of Spencer Eye Hospital while sending the medical superintendent on forced leave.

The committee shall submit a report within a week regarding the hospital. He gave these instructions on a surprise visit to Spencer Eye Hospital on Tuesday during which he checked the attendance of the doctors and staff of the hospital and inspected the OPD register and other documents. On this occasion, Municipal Commissioner Syed Afzal Zaidi, Mayor Karachi's Representative for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi, People's Party South District President Khalil Haut, UC-13 Chairman, Vice Chairman and other people representatives

were also present.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab inspected the operation theatre and doctor's rooms of Spencer Eye Hospital and also visited the residence of the staff within the hospital premises. He took note of the poor performance of Spencer Eye Hospital management and staff and said that the non-operation of this oldest and most important hospital of Karachi, established on an area of more than one acre, is a cause of concern.

He said that a complete investigation will be conducted regarding the Spencer Eye Hospital and the reasons will be examined due to why satisfactory treatment facilities are not available to eye disease patients in this hospital as in the past, he said, for this purpose a five-member committee consisting of City Council members, UC chairmen

has been established with four members from Pakistan People's Party and one from PTL.

This committee will submit its report within a week after evaluating the performance of this hospital from all aspects and till then the current MS of the hospital will be on forced leave. Mayor Karachi expressed anger over the poor sanitation conditions and the lack of security arrangements.

He said that all the wards of Spencer Eye Hospital should be fully functional, it is important to utilize the facilities available in the hospital for eye operations because a large number of people belonging to the poor and middle class come here for treatment of eye diseases. Spencer Eye Hospital is the oldest and most important eye hospital in Karachi and in the past, this hospital was called the best eye hospital in Asia.

He said that it is the responsibility of the hospital administration to fulfil its duties and to inform about all the needs of the hospital so that they can be fulfilled and provide the citizens with the best and quality facilities in terms of eye disease.

Mayor Karachi said that monitoring committees consisting of public representatives will also be formed to review the performance of other hospitals managed by KMC so that these hospitals can be improved according to the reports and suggestions presented by the respective UC chairmen.

He said that the Municipality of Karachi spends a lot of money on providing medical facilities to the citizens, therefore KMC hospitals should be fully functional, and administrative officers, doctors and staff should realize their responsibilities.



LAHORE: Activists of Civil Society participated in a protest to show solidarity with the people of Palestine and take part in an anti-Israel demonstration at Liberty Chowk.

Minister for incorporating teachings of Khutba e Hajjatul Wida in educational institutions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Syed Jamal Shah has emphasized incorporating the teachings of Khutba e Hajjatul Wida of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in all educational institutions.

He was addressing the inaugural ceremony of an international conference on Sirah, civic sense and tolerance organized with a joint venture of Pak-Saudi Governments by the International Centre of Excellence for Sirah Studies, Islamic Research Institute, IRI of International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) at the Quaid-e-Azam Auditorium, Faisal Masjid Campus. Addressing the opening ceremony of the conference, Minister Syed Jamal Shah said that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) served as the epitome of civic responsibility. He was of the view that

the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) consistently highlighted the significance of treating others with kindness and consideration.

Syed Jamal Shah added that one of the Prophet's (PBUH) well-known sayings encapsulates this spirit.

"The best among you are those who have the best manners and character." He said this timeless wisdom underscores the importance of civic sense in the daily lives of Muslims.

Earlier, the minister inaugurated the International Sirah Exhibition held in connection with the conference. Speakers of national and international repute unveiled timeless wisdom for success in this world and the hereafter highlighting the Sirah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in this 2-day international conference.

During the conference, more than 100 research papers will be presented by

researchers and scholars of international repute. The conference will identify the historical roots of civilized social living, the causes of the lack of good manners in our society, and the reasons for cultural ignorance such as mistrust, misconceptions, conflicts, hatred and the lack of mutual understanding among various segments of Muslim societies, particularly Pakistani society.

Dr. Samina Malik, Rector, IIUI congratulated the efforts of both the Pak-Saudi governments for organizing this significant international conference in the present era as such conferences are vital for youth studying at educational institutions. She said that Sirah is a great source of guidance to learn civic sense in human's lives, she furthered that being teachers at educational institutions, we have a huge responsibility to guide our students.

Minister urges to recognise PWD contributions in society

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Caretaker Minister for Information, Minority Affairs, and Social Protection Muhammad Ahmad Shah on Tuesday urged to recognize contributions of Differently-Able Persons while addressing an event held at the Arts Council. He emphasized that differently-abled individuals were akin to normal human beings, possessing senses and talents. By observing their handicrafts and artworks showcased at the Arts Council, one could truly appreciate the talent and worth of these boys and girls.

He stressed that it was our collective duty to acknowledge the abilities of these children and serve them. He

said that without caring for these persons, we cannot claim to be civilized.

He highlighted Chief Minister Sindh, Justice Retired Maqbool Baqar's commitment to the welfare and development of the common man. The caretaker provincial minister pledged to persuade philanthropists to support these children. Expressing joy at being among these children, Minister Muhammad Ahmad Shah affirmed that the Sindh Government and Arts Council would provide all possible support to encourage these children.

During the event, the caretaker provincial minister visited various stalls praising the creativity displayed in handi-

crafts, paintings, and artworks by differently-abled boys and girls. Students from special children's schools presented melodious tableaux based on national and regional cultures, earning warm appreciation from the audience.

The event was organized by the Provincial Department for the Empowerment of Special Persons with the support of Educational Institutions for Special Persons. Apart from Secretary Taha Farooqui and other senior officers from the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Japanese intellectuals and scholars Hiroji Kataoka and Azmat Ataka also attended the ceremony.


Dr. Umar Saif holds various meetings

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif held a meeting with CEO of Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) Mansoor Ebrahim Al-Mahmoud in Qatar.


They discussed opportunities and mutual collaborations across various sectors during the meeting, said a news release received here on Tuesday. Faisal Al-Thani, QIA CIO of APAC & Africa was also present in the meeting.

Meanwhile, Dr. Umar Saif visited the Qatar Free Zones Authority to explore how Pakistan's IT companies can register in Qatar and use it as a hub for regional business opportunities. During his visit, Dr. Umar Saif met with the CEO of Qatar Free Zones Authority Sheikh Mohammed Al-Thani.

Ambassador of Pakistan to Qatar Muhammad Aejaz was also present in the meeting. Dr. Umar Saif also visited the Qatar Science and Technology Park and met with its management to explore how Pakistani startups can benefit from their incubator and Startup Fund. The two sides agreed to establish a startup exchange program between Ignite and Qatar Science and Technology Park. The Caretaker Federal Minister for IT Dr. Umar Saif also met with the authorities of Qatar National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) to explore a partnership with Pakistan's newly created National Computer Emergency Response Team (NCERT) and to forge a long-term relationship to secure our cyberspace.



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project
Integrated Solid Waste Management



Invitation to Consultative Workshop
on Design Build Operate (DBO) Bidding for Peshawar & Kohat Cities

The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), is embarking on a transformative initiative to enhance waste management services in Peshawar, Kohat and exploring Abbottabad.

We are excited to announce the outsourcing of waste management services, beginning with door-to-door collection for residential areas and container-based collection for commercial areas and bulk waste from the 43 Union Councils (UCs) of Peshawar and the 6 UCs of Kohat. In subsequent phases, we aim to focus on resource recovery of recyclables, RDF, biogas, compost, etc., with separate landfilling of residue for both Peshawar and Kohat.

Key Features of the Proposed Contract:

- Modality: Design, Build, and Operate
- Duration: 8 + 8 years
- Financial Support: Provided by ADB and AIIB

Consultative Workshop Details: To foster collaboration and innovation, the Project Management Unit (PMU) of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project (KPCIP), under the Local Government Elections and Rural Development Department (LGE&RDD), Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (GoKP), invites companies, both national and international, to a day-long consultative session.

Date: December 12, 2023
Venue: Best Western Hotel
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Location: Islamabad

Agenda:

- Deliberation on Proposed Bidding Documents
- Discussion on System Design
- Any other relevant items

Innovations Welcomed: We encourage bidders to bring forward innovative solutions that align with the project's goals. Suggestions regarding technology integration, sustainability practices, and community engagement are particularly sought. The consultation aims to facilitate a dynamic exchange of ideas, paving the way for a comprehensive waste management system.

Registration: Companies interested in participating in the bidding process and attending the consultative session are requested to register in advance. Please contact Mr. Ijaz Afzal, Manager Projects IRCB, via:

- Email: ijazakhan1963@gmail.com
- WhatsApp: +92-300-5420420
- Or you can register online using the link www.kpcip.gov.pk clicking on the "REGISTER NOW" button
- Draft Bidding documents for DBO of ISWM can be downloaded from www.kpcip.gov.pk/downloads-publications/
- The event can be joined virtually by using the online link given on our website and social media platforms. Schedule and agenda will also be uploaded two days prior to the event.

Join us in shaping the future of waste management in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Your expertise and innovative contributions are invaluable to the success of this pioneering initiative. Together, let's build a sustainable and efficient waste management ecosystem for our cities.

Syed Zafar Ali Shah
Project Director
Project Management Unit
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project
Local Government Elections and Rural Development Department
Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

<https://www.facebook.com/kpcip/> <https://twitter.com/KPCIP1>

INF(P): 2945/2023



LAHORE: Caretaker Provincial Minister Barrister Syed Azfar Ali Nasir along with Director General Muhammad Tahir Wattoo visiting the Daisy Exhibition at Jilani Park.



Governor met with orphans

— urged affluent to provide them assistance

PESHAWAR (APP): Orphans and needy girl students of Zamoong Kor Model Institute of Street Children Mathra on Tuesday visit Governor House Peshawar and met with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali.

Children were accompanied by Principal of the institute, Naheed Bilal, Deputy Director, Mian Ziaullah and teachers. Children visited various sections of the building and met with KP Governor. He also distributed gifts among the visiting children.

Governor was informed

that more than 1000 needy and orphan girls are getting education in four model institutes that are situated in Peshawar, Abbottabad, DI Khan and Swat. He was informed that children of these institutes are being provided all the needed help and assistance.

Speaking on the occasion, governor said that helping these children in the best norm of humanity and added that their help is collective responsibility of the society. He also urged affluent to realize plight of needy and provide them assistance to become useful

part of society.

Governor also appreciated teachers of these institutes for their dedication and sincere help towards children. He said that these children deserve the same status and treatment like other children. He said making these children useful part of society is among responsibilities of society and state.

Later governor also met with a delegation of Bannu and Badhbir elders and discussed problems and issues confronted by them. He also assured them his cooperation and help.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah chairing a meeting regarding law and order.

Secretary emphasizes approach for development

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Secretary for Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperative Department, Dr. Mohammad Israr said that government would take all the needed steps to promote fisheries, livestock and dairy development sector in the province.

He said this during a briefing that was attended by Director General of Veterinary and Farms Corps, Major General Shahid Mehmood here on Tuesday. He also highlighted the crucial role of inter-agency cooperation in

advancing livestock development sector.

The Director General praised government efforts, discussed ongoing projects and assured support for enhancing the benefits of initiatives such as the 10 and 5 milking animal's projects. Cooperation under the "Embryo Transfer Program" to improve dairy animal breeds was assured and outstanding performance in livestock dairy development, fisheries, and cooperatives was acknowledged.

Joint efforts between provincial government and

Pakistan Army were emphasized for livestock development. Steps to facilitate landlords and cattle owners, price controls and establishment of a regulatory body were also discussed.

Director General of Veterinary and Farms Corps also visited dairy farms in Charsadda and commended the department's efforts.

The Director General Livestock Extension Dr. Alam Zeb Mohmand and Director General Fisheries Dr. Khuro Kaleem were also present.

Roots Millennium Khyber Campus organized event



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Roots Millennium Khyber Campus hosted an extraordinary event that drew the attention of eager young minds and esteemed universities from around the globe.

The university fair, a remarkable initiative by the campus, witnessed the participation of over 45 universities representing the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Turkey, Malaysia, Canada, and various local institutions.

What made this fair even more remarkable was the diverse range of attendees. While Roots Millennium students took center stage, the fair also welcomed enthusiastic students from prominent educational institutions such as Beaconhouse, Bloomfield Hall, Lahore Grammar School, Edwards College Peshawar, The City School, International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), ILM, Peshawar Model, Pak Turk and Army Public School (APS).

The success of this uni-

versity fair underscores the commitment of the institution to empower students by connecting them with renowned universities, paving the way for their academic and professional success.

The overwhelming turnout and enthusiastic participation from students and universities have set a high bar for future events, further solidifying Roots Millennium Khyber Campus as a beacon of educational excellence and a facilitator of academic growth and exploration.

Power suspension notified

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Tuesday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Jamrud grid station on 6th December from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Tajabad 2 feeders will face inconvenience.

It said that power supply will also remain suspended from Peshawar University Grid Station on 6th December from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Zai, Sufaid Dheri, Old Bara Road, JAF, Academy Town, DHA, Aksari 6 and Commercial Balding feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar City Grid Station on 7th December from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Sikandar Pura, Lala, Hashnaghari, Chugulpura, Chamkani, Jaghra, Radio Pakistan, Sethi Town, Gulbahar, Zaryab, Pandho Road, City Home, Baghbanan, Urmur, Islamabad, Faqir Abad, Shiekh Abad, Molve Je, Nishtar Abad and NHA feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Kohat Road Grid Station on 7th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

resultantly, consumers of PAF Express, Kohat Road, Wazir Abad, Sunehri Masjid, Banamari, Audit Colony, Civil Quarter, Nauthia, Murshid Abad, Abasin, Deh Bahadar, Kohat Road, Amin Colony, Bara, Nodhe Payan, Dora Road, Landi Arbab, Sheikh Muhammadi, Pishtakhara, Swati Gate, Gul Berg and Scheme Chowk feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, power supply will remain suspended from Tarbela Power House on 7th December from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Hussai, Col Sher, Mardan 2, Katlang, Jalala, Jahangira, Haripur, Kholian Bala, Havelian, Hattar 1,2, Economic Zone grid connected feeders will face inconvenience.

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Agricultural University hold seminar

PESHAWAR (APP): The Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences Agricultural University Peshawar marked Global Soil Day with a seminar titled "Soil and Water: A Source of Life" aimed to raise awareness about the critical role of soil and water in sustaining life and promoting environmental well-being.

The event was organized in collaboration with the Directorate General of Soil and Conservation, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht, while addressing the gathering, expressed his joy at commemorating Global Soil Day.

He emphasized the pivotal role of soil in ensuring food security, highlighting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as the first province to formulate a comprehensive food security policy. Dr. Jahan Bakht extended gratitude to the special guest, former Dean Professor (Retd.) Dr. Riaz Khattak, for his valuable presence.

Professor Dr. Riaz Khattak, Deputy Director of Soil and Water Conservation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and District Officer Soil and Water Conservation Department Buner, Dr. Furqan Allah, shed light on the importance of soil during their speeches.

Vice Chancellor Dr. Jahan Bakht underscored the challenges posed by climate change on agricultural lands. He noted a gradual decline in fertility due to reduced rainfall, increased soil erosion from torrential rains, and transformation of land into deserts.

Dr. Bakht urged collective efforts to address these issues and emphasized the need for public awareness.

He further stressed the importance of planting more trees to combat environmental pollution and prevent soil degradation. With approximately 60 to 70 percent of Pakistan's population dependent on agriculture, safeguarding the land requires diligent efforts.

Dr. Bakht called for expert consideration of factors affecting soil health and the formulation of practical measures to mitigate threats to food security.

The Vice Chancellor extended his appreciation to the Chairman of the Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences, Professor Dr. Muhammad Sharif, Professor Dr. Dost Muhammad, Professor Dr. Muhammad Tariq, Dr. Khadim Dawood, Dr. Maria Musarrat, and Deputy Director of Soil and Water Conservation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shaguffa, along with the students for the successful organization of the Global Soil Day seminar.

In the concluding session, participants, under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht, were briefed on the significance of soil and water, followed by a ceremonial cake cutting to celebrate the occasion.

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Cold, partly cloudy weather predicted

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Tuesday predicted that mainly cold and partly cloudy weather is expected in most districts of the province.

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

During the last 24 hours cold and dry weather prevailed over most districts of the province. Rainfall recorded (in mm) during the last 24 hours at different stations of KPK was nil.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of K were Peshawar 24/05, Chitral 17/07, Timergara 21/03, Dir 21/01, Mirkhan 22/00, Kalam 13/03, Dros 16/05, Saidu Sharif 21/03, Pattan 24/16, Mahai Jabba 12/04, Takht Bhai 23/05, Kakul 17/03, Balakot 21/03, Parachinar 17/02, Bannu 24/08, Cherat 15/05, DI Khan City 27/09.

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PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali distributing gifts among orphans students of Model Institute of State Children.

Minister directs swift processing of journalist welfare applications

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister of Information, Culture, and Tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, has instructed the acceleration of the application processing for journalists facing financial difficulties under the Journalist Welfare Endowment Fund Rules. During a meeting of the Journalists Endowment Welfare Fund Committee at the Civil Secretariat, he emphasized the need for comprehensive submissions to the committee to ensure timely assistance for journalists.

The meeting, attended by officials including Secretary Information and Public Relations Syed Jabbar Shah, Director General Information and Public Relations Muhammad Imran Khan, Director Public Relations Liaquat Amin, Press Registrar Ansarullah Khilji and committee members Budget Officer Finance Department Muhammad Ayub, President Press Club Peshawar Arshad Aziz Malik, President Mardan Press Club Bakht Muhammad discussed ongoing work on amend-

ments to the fund rules. Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel urged expediting the amendments, particularly focusing on improving unemployment and pension allowances to better support senior journalists facing financial challenges.

The information minister stressed the importance of regular fund-related meetings to avoid delays in processing financial assistance requests. This marked the second committee meeting chaired by Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, where applications from journalists seeking finan-

cial support were presented and approved based on their completeness.

Addressing the gathering, the information minister acknowledged the challenging circumstances in which journalists carry out their duties, highlighting their crucial role in ensuring transparency in government affairs and communicating government initiatives to the public. He underscored the responsibility to promptly address the financial needs of journalists facing illness or hardship during their professional duties in accordance with the fund rules.

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Two-day conference on women's voices for better world concluded

PESHAWAR (APP): A two-day conference on "Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges: Uniting Women's Voices For a Better World" organized by Shaheed Benazir University Bhutto Women University Peshawar was concluded here at a local hotel.

The conference was organized in collaboration with SRSP, EU, SCHORES and UNHCR, State Bank, HBL, BOK and UBL.

The first and second sessions of day two of this prestigious conference was attended by well known professionals from several sectors of the society. Prof. Dr. Nasir Jamal Khan Vice Chancellor Swabi University, Rakhshanda Naz KP Ombudsperson, Dr. Ayesha Siddiqua, Assistant Professor Quid e Azam University, Matiullah Khan secretary Youth Affairs, Uzma Mukaram Deputy Director Youth Affairs, Dr. Darvesh Political Analyst, Maryam



Iqbal Chairperson handicraft association Pakistan, Sheeza Mohsin marriage and family therapist attended different sessions.

Several sessions comprised of penal talks, project presentations and paper presentations were conducted. The projects were attended and appreciated by Said Mehmood Khyber Board of Investment and technology and Naveed

Durrani from Asian Development Bank.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Safia Ahmad (T.I) is a patron-in-chief of Regional Connectivity Center proudly welcomed the soft opening of this center.

The center was introduced by Dr. Zarmina Baloch Director of RCC and was inaugurated by Naveed Durrani from Asian Development Bank. Establishing this Center in

University involves creating a dedicated space for focusing on enhancing collaboration and connectivity in the region.

The conclusion of the closing event was done with distributing shields and souvenir among the guests and participants. All the organizers, co-organizers and facilitators were appreciated for their overwhelming commitment and support.

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OEC's Korean language Centre generating manpower for Korea

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Technical Education, Industries, Commerce and Newly Merged Districts Affairs, Dr. Aamer Abdullah has termed the provincial government and Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) collaborative effort regarding imparting the skilled force of the province on Korean language training, very important and useful, adding that the manpower of the region could be able to gain more opportunities available in various professional and technical fields in Korea through this project.

He said that as a result of this effort, hundreds of trained and skilled people of the province can get honorable employment in various fields in the Korean market every year.

He expressed these views while visiting the Government Technical and Vocational Centre (GTVC), Gulbahar here on Tuesday, wherein, the minister reviewed technical training processes there and also visited the same language center established inside the technical college.

The caretaker minister on this occasion, also reviewed the various trades classes in the college while taking serious notice of the college accountant's absence without reason during the visit and issued orders to the relevant authorities for his suspension and seeking an explanation.

The provincial minister indicated to consider setting up their own organization or cell at the provincial

level on the pattern of Overseas Employment Corporation for the purpose of finding more opportunities for skilled and professional people of the province in foreign countries and providing them support in the required stages.

He said that the proposed setup will be established under the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA), and will provide assistance in sending skilled graduates from technical training institutions abroad.

Meanwhile, Sohail Khan, coordinator of the Overseas Employment Corporation at the regional office, informed the minister that every year, South Korea requires about 4,000 skilled manpower in various trades from Pakistan, including about 600 people from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that in view of

the need for such skilled workers to have knowledge of the local Korean language, they are taught language courses of two months duration under OEC Centre, which is a preliminary requirement for the skilled manpower required there.

It merits to mention here that the said facility and training program is a joint effort of the federal institution and the provincial department of technical education, in connection with which the provincial institution provides the facility of space for the training center while the training activities are carried out by the federal institution.

During the visit, the caretaker minister made a detailed review of the activities of male and female students under Korean language training.

He termed this initiative

as very useful for eliminating unemployment and benefiting from attractive incentives abroad for the workforce of the province and said that our youth should take advantage of this opportunity.

He predicted his plan to start this kind of overseas employment facilitation at purely on provincial level as well and said that an attempt will be made to establish an institution on the pattern of Overseas Employment Corporation under TEVTA, so that the qualified skilled manpower force of technical training institutions here, can find and secure the best opportunities in overseas job markets.

In this regard, the caretaker minister directed the regional coordinator to provide a concept paper regarding the adoption of the said program in TEVTA.

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PESHAWAR: Chief Traffic Officer Dr. Zahid Ullah presiding over a meeting regarding traffic system.



In brief

Three outlaws held in D I Khan F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Dera police arrested three outlaws including drug peddlers and recovered heroin from their possession in the limits of the City police station here on Tuesday. According to the police spokesman, On the direction of District Police Officer Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, SHO City police station Arslan Khan Gandapur with the police team while taking action against the criminal elements arrested Zubair son of Elahi Bakhsh resident of Garhi Saduzai and recovered 297 grams of heroin from his possession. Similarly, drug peddler Abdul Waris son of Habibullah was arrested and 244 grams of heroin was recovered from his possession. Meanwhile, another accused Muhammad Afaq son of Muhammad Afzal resident of Mohalla Ship Shah, who wanted to local police in a theft case was arrested as per the rules. The police registered separate cases against the arrested criminals and started further investigations.

Premier League concludes F.P. Report

KHAR: The 3rd edition of the Bajaur Cricket Premier League (BPL), one of KP's flagship cricket tournaments, came to an exhilarating close at Sports Complex. Organized by Frontier Corps North, the 45-day extravaganza witnessed fierce competition with 103 matches played among 36 teams. The nail-biting final unfolded between Inzari Eleven and Bajaur Azmari, captivating cricket enthusiasts across the region. Inzari Eleven emerged victorious in a thrilling encounter, showcasing their cricket prowess and securing the coveted BPL Season 3 title. Commandant Bajaur Scouts graced the closing ceremony as the chief guest, adding prestige to the event. The esteemed guest distributed prizes and trophies to recognize the outstanding performances of players, as well as honoring the winner and runner-up teams. BPL Season 3 received widespread acclaim from the public, evident in the massive spectator turnout throughout the tournament. Frontier Corps North remains committed to fostering healthy activities for the youth in the tribal areas of KPK, reinforcing its dedication to community development through sports.

AWKUM honors Prof Dr. Zahoor F.P. Report

MARDAN: The faculty and staff of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan gathered in a heartfelt get-together to honor and acknowledge the exceptional contributions of Prof. Dr. Zahoor ul Haq. The simple yet graceful program was organized to express gratitude for his dedicated service to the university. Dr. Zahoor ul Haq, a distinguished academician, researcher and administrator has played a pivotal role in shaping the academic landscape of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. His unwavering commitment and tireless efforts have left an indelible mark on the institution, influencing both students and colleagues alike. In his address to the faculty, staff, and attendees, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zahoor ul Haq stated that this university has journeyed from challenges to triumphs, and today, we stand as a beacon of excellence in academia. Our global recognition is a testament to the hard work and dedication of every member of the Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan family.



SHANGLA: Teachers holding placards during a protest rally as they demand release of their salaries. - F.P. photo

Admn commits for free, fair election: Shaukat

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Commissioner Mardan Shaukat Ali Yousafzai calls on local political leaders to follow the Election Commission and Provincial Home Department's code of conduct during the election campaign, emphasizing the need for free, fair, and transparent elections. The call was made during a meeting with representatives from various political parties in Mardan and Swabi. Additional Commissioner Naeem Akhtar outlined the SOPs for the election campaign, stressing the importance of obtaining permissions for rallies and avoiding personal attacks in political speeches. The Election Commission's code of conduct, including guidelines for campaign materials, was

also discussed, with a ban on hoardings, flexes, and wall chalking.

Commissioner Yousafzai expressed gratitude for the political leaders' participation and urged cooperation for peaceful elections, emphasizing strict adherence to the election code of conduct. During this event, Regional Election Commissioner Rahmzada provided an overview of the Election Commission's code of conduct. He emphasized that the specified dimensions for posters, pamphlets, and banners set by the Election Commission should be strictly adhered to.

Notably, hoardings, flexes, and wall chalking will be entirely prohibited throughout the election campaign. The Election Commission plans to appoint monitoring officers and committees at

the district, national, and provincial levels to ensure the effective implementation of the election code of conduct.

Various political party leaders raised inquiries about the code of conduct during the meeting, and relevant authorities provided immediate explanations. Commissioner Mardan Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai expressed gratitude to the political leaders from Mardan and Swabi for their participation, assuring full cooperation from the administrative machinery and police force to facilitate peaceful and transparent elections. He urged political leaders to adhere strictly to the Election Commission's code of conduct and collaborate with the administration and police to ensure the elections proceed peacefully.

KP Minister visits Rescue 1122 office

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Provincial Caretaker Minister for Prisons, Social Welfare and Relief, Justice Retired, Irshad Qaisar on Tuesday visited offices of Rescue 1122, Social Welfare Department and Dar-ul-Aman in Mardan and inspected provision of facilities.

She also met with children in Dar-ul-Aman and listened to their problems. He appreciated performance of staff and directed District Social Welfare Officer to resolve problems of children.

Afterwards, she visited Rescue 1122 district office in Mardan where she was given briefing about performance of the department during emergency situations and operational matters of Rescue 1122. She assured cooperation to rescue workers and urged public to avoid fake calls to save time and energies of rescue staff.

FC provides 25 wheelchairs to disable persons

F.P. Report

TIRAH VALLEY: In a heartfelt tribute to the disabled community, Frontier Corps North orchestrated a special day in Tirah and Bagh, Khyber district. The events aimed to raise awareness among locals about the importance of supporting disabled individuals, culminating in the distribution of 25 wheelchairs to those in need.

The ceremonies, attended by a significant number of locals, disabled persons, and officials from Frontier Corps North and the district administration, emphasized the significance of inclusivity and care for the disabled population.

The President of the disabled persons expressed gratitude towards Frontier Corps North and advocated for the establishment of a dedicated health center and health card facility for disabled individuals. "We are thankful to Frontier Corps North for organizing such an important event for disabled persons," remarked the President of the disabled persons. Frontier Corps North reiterated its commitment to providing essential resources to those in need, particularly in the remote areas of KPK.

Prominent educationist retires

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Principal Jan Muhammad on Monday retired from services after serving for more than 37 years in the elementary and secondary education department. A farewell function in this regard was held at the government high school Khungi Timergara.

The school staff and students presented gifts to the retiring school's head. The district education officer male Mahboob Ilahi, additional assistant commissioner Tariq Khan, principal government high school Balambat Abdul Salim Khan, and district traffic incharge Khan Nazar Khan and area elders were also in attendance.

Free and fair polls to overcome issues: Aimal Wali

F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: The provincial president of Awami National Party (ANP) Aimal Wali Khan said that the only solution to all the problems is to hold transparent and timely general elections.

Central Spokesperson and candidate of the party from Constituency NA-7, Senator Zahid Khan, District President Haji Bahadur, general secretary Malak Muhammad Zaib Khan, Senior Vice President Malik Sajjad Khan addressed the workers' convention held in connection with the general elections in Rabat area of Dir Payin. General secretary

and candidate for provincial assembly Malik Muhammad Zaib, senior leader of Muhammad Ayub Khan and other leaders also spoke.

ANP president said that the current war on Pakhtun lands is not about infidelity and Islam but about distribution of resources. As part of a conspiracy, Nawala is being taken from the mouth of Pakhtun children, Pakhtuns are Muslims and patriotic Pakistanis, but despite these fatwas of treason are being imposed on us. Aimal Wali Khan said that terrorism and suicide attacks are ongoing in the country. The silence of the scholars is meaningful.

He said that the only

solution to the problems lies in the fair distribution of resources.

He said that the federation was strengthened by giving provincial autonomy through the Eighteenth Amendment. Will divide the unity. Aimal Wali Khan clarified that RTS failed to impose ladle in 2018 general elections.

It will not be acceptable in any case. He said that Awami National Party completed mega development projects in the past without public mandate which is a bright chapter of history. He said that Awami National Party will have a clear majority in the general elections.

Report on state of women's shelters launched



F.P. Report

QUETTA: The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) and UN Women, on launched "More than Shelters, Needs Assessment of Dar ul Amans & Shelters in Pakistan" - a comprehensive report on the state of women's shelters, Dar ul Amans, in Pakistan.

The report is based on extensive on-site research, comprehensive inspections, and in-depth interviews with residents of the shelters. It focuses on identifying gaps in policies, implementation, and budgets, providing actionable recommendations for strengthening these essential services.

The launch event was organized as part of the activities to commemorate '16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence' aligning with the 2023 theme 'Invest to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls.' The report launch was aimed at initiating a collective effort towards enhancing the quality and effectiveness of women's shelters and was attended by representatives of governmental bodies, civil society, women's groups, and the international community.

In-depth interviews with residents of Dar-ul-Amans revealed, that the largest group (70 percent) comprised girls and young women aged 14-30 years and most of the residents were illiterate and married with 92 percent married before they reached 20 years of age. Almost all had faced multiple forms of violence including physical, psychological, sexual, and financial abuse.

Speaking on this occasion, Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George said that women's

Physical inspections of Dar-ul-Amans across all provinces revealed that the external environment of these shelters was not found to be satisfactory whereas the condition of interior spaces was also generally inadequate, and there were no visitors' rooms, separate counselling rooms, or libraries in certain shelters. Internet facilities and Psychologists were not available at all shelters.

In addition to that, there was no systematic complaint-handling mechanism or rehabilitation program in the shelters, and vocational training was widely felt to be outdated. These facilities were generally not fully equipped to meet the needs of residents' children. Besides that, the positions of medical officer, psychologist, assistant, and computer operator were vacant in four shelters.

The report makes numerous legislative and policy recommendations. It suggests revised SOPs for all shelters, based on the specific provincial context/requirements and strong monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of provincial domestic violence laws. The report also calls for a review and increase in budgetary allocations for these facilities and inclusive and women-friendly shelter infrastructure. It also stresses assuring a homely atmosphere and accessibility for violence survivors. It suggests a dedicated helpline at the provincial level and a complaint-handling mechanism in place for the support to survivors.

Speaking on this occasion, Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George said that women's

shelters are an essential component of a comprehensive response to violence against women. "The NCHR report on Dar ul Amans has revealed some very urgent issues. The availability and accessibility of women's shelters is an urgent matter," he added while stressing collaborative efforts to address these issues.

Chairperson NCHR Rabiya Javeri Agha said that Dar ul Amans provide essential aspects of protection, services, and resources that enable women and their children to recover from the violence, rebuild self-esteem, and take steps to regain a self-determined and independent life. "However, in Pakistan, the conditions of these facilities leave much to be desired, as the first-hand experiences of survivors obtained through this study indicate," she said.

Country Representative for UN Women in Pakistan Sharameela Rassool highlighted the role of UN Women in strengthening essential services for survivors specially shelters and said, "This report not only sheds light on the challenges but also presents a roadmap for tangible improvements. UN Women is poised to drive positive change, advocating for the rights and well-being of women in shelters and contributing to a society where every woman can seek refuge, rebuild her life, and flourish." She expressed hope that the report would serve as a valuable resource in advocating for meaningful reforms and a robust system that prioritizes the safety and well-being of survivors within shelters.

Two killed as landslide hits vehicle on KKH in Kohistan

KOHIKISTAN (INP): Two people were killed when a landslide hit a vehicle on Karakurram Highway here on Tuesday, rescue sources said.

According to details, a big land mass fell over a

loader mazda vehicle in jurisdiction of Lotar police station in Kohistan. As a result of accident, two people were critically injured and succumbed to their wounds before could be

shifted to hospital. Long queues of vehicles were witnessed on KKH due to blockage of road. The road was later cleared for traffic after removing the landslide.



QUETTA: Caretaker Balochistan Minister Amjad Rasheed addressing a press conference.

Laptops among KKKU Karak students distributed

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak (KKKU) proudly hosted a ceremony on Tuesday to mark the distribution of laptops under the Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme 2023. The event, held under the auspices of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Islamabad, was graced by the presence of the HEC Focal Person of PM Laptop Scheme in Peshawar Region, Muhammad Suleman, who is also the Assistant Director at HEC.

Muhammad Suleman, the chief guest of the laptop distribution ceremony, shared valuable insights into the program's history. He highlighted that the laptop distribution initiative commenced in 2013, with an impressive 500,000 laptops distributed among tal-

ented students until 2019. In this latest phase, HEC has committed to distributing 100,000 laptops among the talented students of public sector universities across Pakistan.

Specifically, 141 talented students from Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, will be among the recipients in this phase.

Muhammad Suleman extended his best wishes to the selected students for their achievement in being chosen as laptop recipients. He emphasized the importance of utilizing these laptops for academic research and urged the students to become responsible citizens and future leaders of the nation.

Muhammad Rahim, Chief Focal Person of PM Laptop Scheme 2023 and Deputy Registrar Academics at Khushal

Khan Khattak University, Karak, assured attendees that extreme care had been taken in finalizing the merit list for the award of laptops to the university students. He encouraged the students to leverage these technological tools for academic pursuits that contribute to their growth and development.

The ceremony witnessed the presence of various dignitaries, including all Heads of Academic Sections, Treasurer Hafiz Ismail Khan, Director QEC Muhammad Shahi Din, Focal Persons of laptop scheme from all academic departments, and a large number of students eager to receive their laptops. The distribution ceremony concluded on a high note as laptops were presented to the selected students by the Chief Guest, Muhammad Suleman.

Inflated fertilizers to reduce wheat cultivation

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Vice-President Kisan Board Pakistan Amanullah Chatha said that artificial shortage and inflated prices of fertilizers would cause decline in wheat production and negative impacts would be effected national economy which was already on ventilator. He said that Urea fertilizer was being sold at the price of Rs. 5000/= per bag in black market instead of official price of Rs. 3750/= per bag.

This he said while addressing a press conference and added that district administration seemed helpless against fertilizer mafia and dealers were engaged in proffering and hoarding of fertilizers. He urged the district administration and Chief Minister of the Punjab to take effective and result-oriented measures for providing fertilizers to farmers at official prices.

If the district administration could not to ensure provision of fertilizers to farmers at fixed prices than farmers would compel to take streets in protest demonstration by 11, December, he added. District president Kisan Board Hafizabad Shoukat Ali Phularwan, Rai Hafeez Ullah, Malik Ghulam Ghous and Muhammad Qasim were

also present on this occasion.

Encroachments made traffic mess: Shopkeepers and vendors occupied 110 feet wide Lahore-Sargodha Road in Sukheke Mandi town which caused traffic mess on the road for hours as a result of which, not only passing of vehicles but passing of pedestrian particularly for women, female students and old people also has difficult.

According to residents of the locality including Nadim Arif and Munir Ahmad, some shopkeepers are receiving rent from vendors for standing them in front of their shops on the road. Which caused traffic mess on the road for hours while officers of Municipal Committee, traffic police and district administration are overlooking this difficulty of the people mysteriously.

They demanded the Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Sundas Irshad, Commissioner Gujranwala Naveed Haider Sherazi and the Chief Minister of the Punjab Mohsin Naqvi to take action against encroachers under the vision of Mohsin Speed for providing relief to travelers passing through Lahore-Sargodha Road in Sukheke Mandi town as well as pedestrians.

Police fails to arrest harassers: Two people

assaulted a leady health worker in village Kot Nawar near Hafizabad. Accused tore her clothes and tortured her while she was engaged in administering drops of polio vaccine to children. Police have registered a case against accused.

135 POs held in November

F.P. Report

BANNU: Police issued monthly report of stated that several operations conducted against the criminals Bannu during November.

According to details, during different operations in the month of November 135 proclaimed offenders were arrested, 41 Ak47, 2 hand grenades, 10 rifles, 53 guns, 05 kalakovs, 394 pistols, 15185 cartridges, 22582kilogram weeds, 0.565kilogram heroine, 6.493kilogram ice and 3 bottles of liquor were recovered. While talking to media persons DIG Qasim Ali Khan appreciated the efforts of police officials especially Dpo Ifitikhar Shah, and gave the message of reward and punishment as per their performances in its department.



Floods, nine killed as India braces for Cyclone Michaung



BHUBANESHWAR (Reuters): Heavy rains submerged roads in southern India on Tuesday, where at least nine people, including a child, were killed in the flooding and the havoc hours before a severe cyclone was due to make landfall. Cyclone Michaung is expected to hit the coast of Andhra Pradesh state around 11 a.m. local time (0530 GMT), the weather office said, gusting in with winds of up to 110 kph (70 mph). Parts of the state are expected to be pelted with more than 200 mm (8 inches) of rain over the next 24

hours, the weather office said, and at least 8,000 people have been evacuated. A 4-year-old boy died in Tirupati district after a wall fell. C. Nagaraju, executive director of the state's disaster management authority said, while eight people were killed in neighbouring Tamil Nadu state, officials said. In Tamil Nadu's capital Chennai, a major electronics and manufacturing hub, floodwaters swept away cars and submerged a runway, triggering the shutdown of one of India's busiest airports until Tuesday morning. The rains have stopped

and water has receded at Chennai airport, and the airfield was operational from 9 a.m. local time, a spokesperson for the federal civil aviation ministry said. The rains and winds also snapped power lines and uprooted trees, officials said, and more than 140 trains and 40 flights were cancelled in Andhra Pradesh. Taiwan's Foxconn and Pegatron halted Apple iPhone production at their facilities near Chennai due to heavy rains, sources familiar with the matter said. In December 2015, floods in Tamil Nadu killed at least 290 people and caused widespread damage.

Niger's junta revokes key security pacts with EU

ABUJA (AP): Niger's junta scrapped two key military agreements that the West African nation signed with the European Union to help fight the violence in Africa's Sahel region as the country's army leaders and a senior Russian defense official discussed military cooperation. Before the coup that deposed the country's president, Mohamed Bazoum, Niger had been the West and Europe's last major security partner in the Sahel, the vast region south of the Sahara Desert that Islamic extremist groups have turned into the global terror hot spot. In a memo, Niger's foreign affairs ministry said the government has decided to "withdraw the privileges and immunities granted" under the EU Military Partnership Mission in Niger that was launched in February and consequently "has no legal obligation" related to that partnership. It also dismissed the EU Civilian Capacity-Building Mission established in

2012 to strengthen Niger's internal security sector, effectively revoking its approval for the missions. The developments are the latest in growing political tensions between Niger and the EU since the July coup. In a rare visit, a Russian delegation led by Russia's Deputy Minister of Defense Lounous-Bek Evkourov met with Niger's junta leader, Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani, and Minister of State for National Defense Salifou Mody. The two sides held more meetings to discuss military and defense issues. "At the center of the discussions is the strengthening of cooperation between the two countries in the field of defense," Niger's defense ministry said in a statement, hinting at formal political ties with Moscow, which has no embassy or military personnel in the country. Most of Niger's foreign economic and security allies have sanctioned the country, including France, which had 1,500

troops operating in Niger. All of them have been asked to leave. Analysts say that although regional and international sanctions to force the junta to reverse its coup have squeezed the country, they have also emboldened the military government as it consolidates its hold on power and seeks new partnerships. Russia has been active in parts of Africa through its private mercenary Wagner Group, from the Central African Republic, where the mercenary forces have helped provide security services to the government, to Mali, where they are partnering with the army in battling armed rebels and where the Evkourov-led delegation also visited. The Wagner group was one of the first sources of help that the military leaders in Niger reached out to for support as they faced a possible military intervention from West Africa's regional bloc of ECOWAS in a bid to reverse the coup.

Thousands gather in NZ to protest against govt

WELLINGTON: Thousands of protesters have taken to the streets in New Zealand to express opposition to the new government's policies towards Indigenous people. Protesters gathered in front of the parliament and on motorways on Tuesday after the minor Te Pati Maori party called for nationwide demonstrations against the newly elected right-leaning government. The protests coincided with the opening session of New Zealand's 54th parliament, following elections in October that ended six years of governance by the centre-left Labour Party. In a breach of protocol, Te Pati Maori, which holds six seats in parliament, swore oaths of allegiance to the upcoming generation and

the Treaty of Waitangi, a colonial-era founding document between the British and the Maori people, before pledging allegiance to King Charles. The new National Party-led coalition has pledged to review positive discrimination policies, change the names of some departments from the Maori language to English and strip legislation of references to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. "This is not a protest, this is an activation," Te Pati Maori co-leader Rawiri Waititi told protesters in Wellington. "Make our voices heard, let our voices fly and be proud to be who we are today." New Zealand police said two people involved in the demonstrations had been arrested and there had been disruption to

traffic in a number of cities, including the largest city Auckland. National Party leader Christopher Luxon, who is in coalition with the libertarian ACT New Zealand and populist New Zealand First, described the protesters' criticism of the government as "pretty unfair". "The reality is we've been in government for a week," he told reports. "We are going to get things done for Maori and non-Maori." David Seymour, the leader of ACT New Zealand, accused Te Pati Maori of being more interested in "divisive theatrics" than providing solutions for Indigenous people. "New Zealanders elected a government that will treat people equally, regardless of their race," Seymour said in a post on X.

Death toll from mining tragedy in SA rises to 13

JOHANNESBURG (AP): The death toll from a mining tragedy last week in South Africa that involved an elevator has risen to 13 people after a worker died at a hospital, the mine operator said. Impala Platinum said that the worker died from injuries sustained when the elevator plummeted around 200 meters (650 feet) down the shaft of a platinum mine while carrying workers to the surface after their shift on Nov. 27. Eleven workers died that day, while the latest victim was the second mineworker to die at a hospital.

The mine operator said that 50 workers remained hospitalized, with eight of them in critical care. Impala Platinum and the South African government announced an investigation into what mine officials called a highly unusual tragedy. The industrial elevator was carrying 86 workers to the surface when it suddenly dropped back down into the shaft, which is a kilometer (about a 1/2-mile) deep. The mine in the northern city of Rustenburg was the world's biggest platinum producer last year. South Africa is by far the world's biggest platinum-producing country. Impala Platinum said it would hold a day of remembrance on Wednesday, when it would release the names of the workers who died.

Argentina's govt rejects agreement

BUENOS AIRES (AP): Argentina's outgoing government said it won't support the signing of a long-delayed trade deal between the European Union and the South American bloc Mercosur during a summit this week in Brazil even though the incoming Argentine government has expressed support for the deal. Foreign Minister Santiago Cafiero said the agreement as currently written would restrict Argentinian exports. "It is a bad agreement that has a negative impact on manufacturing and agricultural exports," Cafiero said in an interview with a local radio station, excerpts of which were later released by the Argentine Foreign Ministry. Argentina's position goes against that of neighbor Brazil, which holds the presidency of Mercosur, and Spain, which holds the presidency of the EU. Both have expressed a desire to move forward with the trade treaty during the summit in Rio de Janeiro. The Argentine opposition may be short-lived, though. The incoming administration of Argentina's President-elect Javier Milei has already made clear it supports the agreement. Milei takes office. "We have no objections; it is frankly desirable that it goes through," incoming Foreign Minister Diana Mondino said at a conference for the Industrial Organization of Argentina, a manufacturing trade group. "Much better to have it than not to have it."

Mondino said she realized there are objections to the agreement from certain sectors but expressed hope that Fernández would push to sign the agreement this week. Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who met with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Berlin, expressed hope that there could still be a breakthrough on the deal this week. "I'm not giving up," Lula said. A basic agreement between the sides was reached in 2019 that was supposed to be the first step in sealing the agreement.

Telecommunications, internet down in Gaza as Israeli strikes intensify

GAZA: Telecommunication services have been cut off in the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian telecoms company Paltel has said, as Israel intensifies its assault on the besieged territory. "We regret to announce the complete cessation of the telecommunications and Internet services with the Gaza strip, as the main paths that were previously reconnected were disconnected again," Paltel said in a statement. Cybersecurity watchdog NetBlocks confirmed that the "near-total internet blackout" would be "experienced as a total loss of communications by most residents". The announcement came amid intense air strikes across Gaza as Israel expanded its assault on the besieged territory that began on October 7 after Hamas fighters from Gaza carried out an attack on southern Israel, killing 1,200 people, according to Israeli officials. At least 15,899 people have been killed in the Israeli offensive, according to Palestinian authorities, and more than 75 percent of Gaza's 2.3 million residents have been displaced. The official Palestinian news agency WAFA said at least 50 people were killed in an Israeli air strike that hit two schools sheltering displaced people in the Daraj neighbourhood of Gaza City, in northern Gaza. WAFA reported that ambulances were struggling to reach the sites of the strikes to evac-

uate the victims due to the intensity of artillery shelling. Al Jazeera was not able to independently verify the report. Israel's military called for more evacuations in southern Gaza as it widened its offensive. Israel ordered Palestinians to leave parts of southern Gaza's main city, Khan Younis, but residents said that areas which they had been told to go to were also coming under fire. Israeli troops and tanks also pressed the ground campaign in the south of the enclave after having largely gained control of the now-devastated north. "We are beginning to expand the ground manoeuvre to other parts of the Strip, with one goal - to topple the Hamas terrorist group," Brigadier-General Hisham Ibrahim told Army Radio. Israel's military posted a map on social media platform X with around a quarter of Khan Younis marked off as territory that must be evacuated at once. The arrows pointed south and west towards the Mediterranean coast and towards Rafah, a major town near the Egyptian border. Al Jazeera's Tareq Abu Azzoum, reporting from the Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, said the area around the facility was under "relentless, uninterrupted bombing and artillery shelling". "We haven't heard such bombardment in the vicinity of the hospital before," he said. "The south

of the Gaza Strip has also been under relentless air strikes. The fact is that there is no safe place inside the Gaza Strip," Abu Azzoum noted. The director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), Thomas White, said there were no safe places for people seeking to flee the bombardment. "People are pleading for advice on where to find safety. We have nothing to tell them," he said on X. Bombing at one site in Rafah overnight had torn a crater the size of a basketball court out of the earth, Reuters reported. Israel's closest ally, the United States, has called on it to do more to safeguard civilians in the southern part of Gaza than in last month's campaign in the north. Washington said it was asking Israel to let more fuel into the Gaza Strip. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appealed to Israel to "avoid further action that would exacerbate the already catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and to spare civilians from more suffering", UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said. "The Secretary-General reiterates the need for unimpeded and sustained humanitarian aid flow to meet the needs of the people throughout the Strip," Dujarric said. "For people ordered to evacuate, there is nowhere safe to go and very little to survive on." — Aljazeera

Crunch time for EU-Mercosur deal at Rio summit

BRUSSELS (AFP): The fate of a long-awaited but controversial Europe-South America trade deal hangs in the balance this week when Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva hosts a summit of the Mercosur regional bloc. The presidents of the Mercosur countries -- Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay -- will gather in Rio de Janeiro, with the clock ticking down on promises from both sides to finalize a trade deal between the bloc and the European Union by the end of the year. The meeting was originally supposed to seal a final version of the deal, which has been more than two decades in the making and would create the world's biggest free trade zone. But last-minute bickering has erupted in recent days, with public criticism of the proposed deal from France and Argentina. French President Emmanuel Macron, who met Lula on the sidelines of the COP28 UN climate talks in Dubai, voiced his opposition to the deal,

sharply criticizing supposed environmental shortfalls. Agricultural powerhouse Brazil, the world's top exporter of beef and soy, notably faces accusations of tearing down the Amazon rainforest to make way for farming. That chilled ties with Europe under far-right ex-president Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022), who presided over a surge in deforestation. It is an image Lula is fighting. Since he took office for a third term in January, his government has halved deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon from last year. But Macron said the EU-Mercosur deal is "completely contradictory" with the anti-deforestation drive. "It's a patchwork deal (that)... doesn't take biodiversity or the climate into account," he said. Outgoing Argentine President Alberto Fernandez meanwhile said "current conditions" were not right to approve the deal as it stands. Fernandez is due to hand power on December 10 to self-described "anarcho-capitalist" Javier Milei, who criticized the accord

during his presidential campaign and threatened to pull out of Mercosur. A Brazilian foreign ministry source told AFP the Argentine presidential transition means Mercosur will likely be reluctant to make any big decisions on the accord at the Rio meeting. "But the new Argentine government has indicated its keen interest in closing" the deal, the official added, denying reports the South American bloc was pulling out of the negotiations. Lula accused France of "protectionism" after Macron's criticism. "Let's be clear on one thing," he said. "Don't say this is Brazil's fault, don't say it's South America's fault... If we don't reach a deal, it will be clear whose fault it is." But he backed off talk of a possible breakdown in negotiations after meeting with Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Germany, which firmly backs the deal, seen as key for its industrial sector. "I'm not giving up," Lula said. The contours of the deal were agreed in 2019, but a final version still needs to be ratified.

Tension has erupted on several issues, most recently a series of environmental protection demands issued by the EU. Mercosur, which is the world's fifth biggest economy as a bloc but has struggled in recent years to coordinate policy, rejected the EU's "green protectionism." It fired back with demands of its own, such as an environmental fund for developing countries. Both sides say negotiators have made big advances in recent weeks. But time may be running out. Paraguayan President Santiago Pena, whose country takes over the rotating Mercosur presidency from Brazil in January, has said he will seek trade talks with other regions if there is no EU deal by then. "The deal is dead, but nobody has the courage to say it," Bruno Binetti, an international relations specialist at the London School of Economics, told AFP. Seeking to show progress in other areas, Mercosur is due to sign another trade deal in Rio -- with Singapore.

UK announces rise in salary threshold for foreign workers' visas

LONDON: The British government has announced a package of measures to cut net migration to the United Kingdom, including plans to raise the minimum salary required for foreign workers to be eligible for a work visa. The measure aims at raising the minimum salary migrants to the UK must earn in a job by a third after record net migration in 2022 piled pressure on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to act. High levels of legal migration have for more than a decade dominated Britain's political landscape, and Sunak has promised to gain more control after lawmakers in his Conservative Party criticised his record ahead of an election expected next year. Successive Conservative-led governments have promised to cut migration - once target-

ing a net figure of less than 100,000. Interior Minister James Cleverly said the government would raise the minimum salary threshold for foreign skilled workers to 38,700 pounds (\$48,800), from its current level of 26,200 pounds (\$33,000), reform the list of jobs where exceptions are made due to shortages, and toughen rules on whether workers can bring their families. "Migration to this country is far too high and needs to come down, and today we are taking more robust action than any other government before," Cleverly told lawmakers. "This package of measures will take place from next spring." The measures could lead to new disputes with business owners who have struggled to hire workers in recent years given Britain's persistently tight labour market and the end of free movement from

the European Union following Britain's departure from the bloc. Annual net migration to the UK hit a record of 745,000 last year and has stayed at high levels since, data showed last month. "This package plus our reduction in student dependents will mean around 300,000 fewer people will come in future years than have come to the UK last year," Cleverly said. The leaders of the Brexit referendum campaign argued that leaving the EU would give Britain greater control of its borders, and many who voted to leave cited high migration and the pressure they believed it put on public services as factors in their decision. But in recent years, Britain has opened visa schemes for people in Ukraine and former colony Hong Kong, while companies in sectors such as engineering, construction and catering have called on

the government to allow them to hire international staff to offset labour shortages. The data showed overall immigration in 2022 at about 1.16 million, offset by emigration of 557,000. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in May that 925,000 of those arriving in 2022 were non-EU nationals, 151,000 came from the EU and 88,000 were British citizens. It estimated that in 2022 under the special visa schemes, there were 114,000 long-term arrivals from Ukraine and 52,000 from Hong Kong. Net migration to Britain in 2015, the year before the Brexit referendum, was 329,000. Sunak has also pledged to crack down on irregular migration after tens of thousands of people arrived on small boats across the English Channel from continental Europe in recent years. — Aljazeera

Indigenous advocacy leads to largest dam removal project in US history

WASHINGTON: Every fall, Barry McCovey, a member of the Yurok Tribe and director of tribal fisheries, takes his four children salmon fishing on the Klamath River, the second largest river in California. A strong salmon run normally nets his family 30 or 40 fish. It's a supply big enough to last them all year: They freeze, smoke and can the salmon to serve either on its own or on sandwiches and crackers. But this year, the predicted salmon run was the second lowest since detailed records began in 1978, and the fall fishing season was cancelled. The river's salmon population has declined due to myriad factors, but the biggest culprit is believed to be a

series of dams built along the river from 1918 to 1962, cutting off fish migration routes. Now, after decades of Indigenous advocacy, four of the structures are being demolished as part of the largest dam removal project in United States history. In November, crews finished removing the first of the four dams as part of a push to restore 644 kilometres (400 miles) of fish habitat. "Dam removal is the largest single step that we can take to restore the Klamath River ecosystem," McCovey told Al Jazeera. "We're going to see benefits to the ecosystem and then, in turn, to the fishery for decades and decades to come." The decades-long fight for dam removal began with a devastating fish kill. For

thousands of years, the Klamath River has been a cornerstone of Yurok culture, providing its people with a bounty of chinook salmon, coho salmon and steelhead trout. But starting in the 20th century, the dams interrupted the river's flow, pooling the water into reservoirs for use in hydroelectric power and farm irrigation. Reservoirs, however, can cause the water to stagnate, warm and lose oxygen, according to McCovey. Those conditions, in turn, degrade the water quality and increase the spread of parasites that kill fish. That threat ballooned into a crisis in 2002. Drought had racked the region, and farmers were pushing for more water for crops like potatoes and alfalfa. Some even wore ribbons and

pins, denouncing the water restrictions as a form of "rural genocide", threatening farmers' livelihoods. Facing pressure, the US Bureau of Reclamation diverted more water from the dams to agriculture. But that decision left river levels low. Soon, adult salmon were washing up dead, their gills brown with dead tissue and spotted from parasitic infections. Critics estimate as many as 70,000 salmon perished as diseases spread through the population. It was a turning point. The 2002 fish kill prompted tribes like the Yurok to spring into action to protect the river ecosystem and their way of life. Four years later, in 2006, the licence for the hydroelectric dams expired. That cre-

ated an opportunity, according to Mark Bransom, CEO of the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC), a non-profit founded to oversee the dam removals. Standards for protecting fisheries had increased since the initial license was issued, and the utility company responsible for the dams faced a choice. It could either upgrade the dams at an economic loss or enter into a settlement agreement that would allow it to operate the dams until they could be demolished. "A big driver was the economics - knowing that they would have to modify these facilities to bring them up to modern environmental standards," Bransom explained. "And the economics just didn't pencil out." The util-

ity company chose the settlement. In 2016, the KRRC was created to work with the state governments of California and Oregon to demolish the dams. Final approval for the deal came in 2022, in what Bransom remembers as a "watershed moment". Regulators at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) voted unanimously to tear down the dams, citing the benefit to the environment as well as to Indigenous tribes. "A number of years back, I don't think the commission necessarily spent a lot of time thinking about the impact of our decisions on tribes," FERC chairman Richard Glick said in a public meeting to announce the decision. — Aljazeera

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FOUNDER
Rehmat Shah Afridi
JALIL AFRIDI
Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

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

Excessive billing
of consumers

THE National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has recently decided to initiate legal action against K-Electric (KE) and other power-providing companies after it was found that they were charging millions of consumers excessively. According to the details, legal proceedings against all Distribution Companies including KEL under NEPRA Fine Regulations, 2021 for violation of the provisions of the NEPRA Act, CSM, and tariff terms & conditions, etc, would be initiated for serious misconduct of charging excessive, inflated and wrong bills by the distribution companies to the consumers in July and August this year. A formal inquiry into the matter revealed that 5.7 million MEPCO's consumers were charged for more than 30 days of the billing cycle in July followed by GEPCO, i.e., around 1.2 million in August. Similarly, FESCO charged wrongly more than 800,000 consumers, LESCO served penalties to around 700,000 households in both months, and HESCO hit nearly 500,000 consumers in July. This resulted in the change of slab from lower to higher, change of status from protected to un-protected, and change of status from life-line to non-life line for thousands of consumers.

Overbilling by electricity and natural gas providers has been a longstanding issue in the country. It's often attributed to meter reading errors, technical faults, or billing inaccuracies while the reports suggest that Power generating and power distributing giants are habitual of slapping their institutional damages including line losses and nonpayment of electricity bills in certain areas including FATA and Balochistan on consumers in settle areas to sheld off their budget deficit. Although, minor shortcomings and discrepancies are settled by the concerned departments after necessary verification/review of usage, and meter readings. However, there was a countrywide excessive billings of electricity and gas during the second half of the current year that prompted a wide-ranging public uproar, while countrywide strikes were observed by the traders and common public in protest to mismanagement and poor service delivery of the energy giants and gas providing firms. A large number of consumers approached consumer courts and higher judiciary to highlight the grave misconduct of the government departments whose top executives and lower staff have turned public service into a lucrative business and shamed this nation into a Tartarus land for the common citizens.

Historically, the public institutions and their service delivery is entirely an untransparent, and opaque system, that operates with complete impunity and deals in a regressive manner with the consumers/ public. Each public and private institution including the Police, Judiciary, Healthcare, electricity, gas, and water-providing firms, and cellphone, and internet providers have been shaped into anti-public monsters and weighed a self-motivated price hike campaign against the masses. In fact, our governance system and institutions could not groom themselves after freedom from British rule and still, our institutions operate in a colonial-era style when the public was being treated as slaves and third-rate citizens.

After all, the recent inquiry has confirmed the long-held public grievances and malfunctioning of the government departments, that not only became hubs of corruption but failed in achieving their primary goal, i.e. service to the public. The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), has rightly initiated legal proceedings against the power distributing companies while there is a dire need for monitoring/evaluation of the power generation system, where IPPs are receiving undue profit from the country in the garb of capacity payments and Fuel Price Adjustment (FPA) that has no example in any other nation in the world. Public representatives and regulatory bodies must protect peoples' rights and provide them with some relief otherwise untidy governance has turned this nation into an abyss.

Fraud property business,
delayed housing schemes

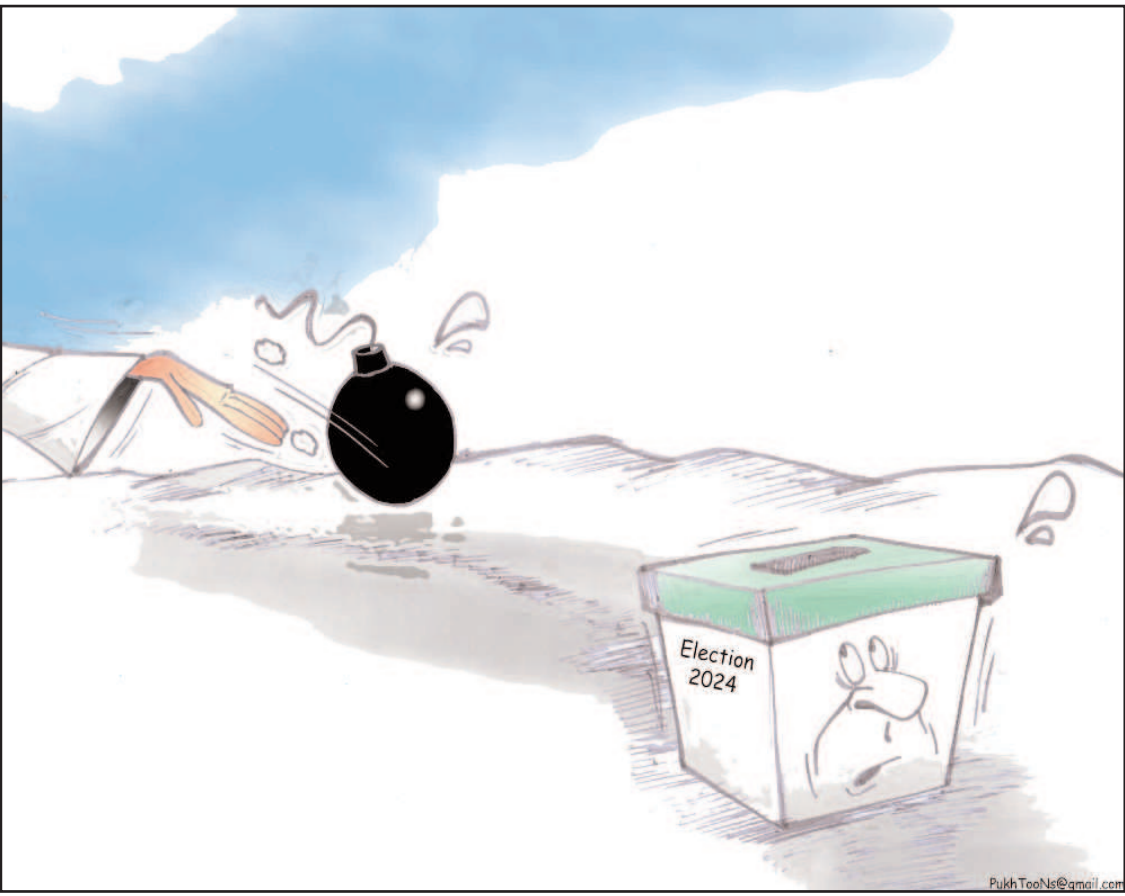
RECENTLY, the NAB authorities handed over cheques worth Rs 600 million to 450 affectees of the Arain City scandal, a house society scam that fraudulently stole the hard earned money of hundreds of middle class families in the past. According to the details, the NAB recovered millions of rupees funds through a plea bargain with the management of Arain City, Fateh Jang, Rawalpindi.

Historically, the property development and housing societies construction have been the most ungoverned, least regulated and heavily untaxed businesses, while those professions are the most corrupt and poisonous enterprises in Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The housing societies have shaped into an uncontrollable monster which is not only rapidly swallowing precious cultivated land but fearlessly eating up valuable assets of the public through illegal, fraudulent, and non-transparent schemes, in Twin cities and other parts of the country. The malevolent and corruptions stories of property Tycoons are regularly being covered by the media but cruelties and handedness those infamous housing giants regularly inflict on common cities rarely comes into limelight at the national level. Just as a single example, recently Bahria Town Rawalpindi slapped several hundreds of thousands rupees on account of development charges on allottees of Extension Phase-8 while the same amount is being charged from Bahria Town Phase-8 Orchard, a delayed project that was promised by the society to hand over customers by 2015/2016 but still customers are waiting for possession. Similarly, the allottees of the famous Saqlain Mushtaq Heights, a project launched by famous Pakistani cricketer Saqlain Mustaq in 2014 are still awaiting possession of their flats but the former cricketer and his partner both disappeared from the scene. In fact, there are countless stories of misdeclaration, fraud and non fulfillment of undertaking by the property Tycoons, and builders but no government institutions including NAB, FIA or Police and judiciary as well, is able to kneel those culprits who have stolen away precious money of the poor masses.

Unfortunately, the NAB failed in prosecuting the criminals and recovered money taken away through plea bargain with the crooks and now NAB authorities are beating drums of their half-success or partial failure. Enough is Enough, the government must take strict notice of this fraudulent business and layout a time bound transparent SOPs for completion/ handing over the projects, plots or flats etc. along with bringing property sector under strict monitory and taxation network, so the fraudsters and notorious crooks neither sale barren land to poor masses in the garb of housing societies nor they filled bags with money through fake and flimsy residential projects in the future.

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Fact or fiction? Israeli maps and
AI do not save Palestinian lives

Marc Owen Jones

ON December 2, the Israeli army's Arabic-language spokesperson Avichay Adraee posted a map of Gaza, broken up into a grid of numbered blocks with instructions that Palestinians living in certain areas evacuate to Rafah. Leaflets containing a QR code linking to the map on the Israeli army's website were also dropped over Gaza.

This move came as Israeli fighter jets bombarded the south of the Strip - previously designated as a "safe zone" - killing hundreds of Palestinians in 24 hours. The Israeli army proudly announced that it had hit "400 targets". Meanwhile, media reports revealed that the Israeli army's ability to intensify what it calls "precision" air strikes has been boosted by an artificial intelligence (AI) tool that generates "targets".

The maps, the leaflets, the tweets, the claims of "precision" military technology, all feed into the narrative that Israel's "most moral army" is taking care to protect civilians in Gaza. But all these are no more than a propaganda ploy to cover up what really is happening on the ground - an AI-assisted genocide. Over the past two months of brutal war, Israel has constantly resorted to the use of "evacuation" maps and warnings issued on social media, calling on Palestinians to flee certain areas of Gaza. Yet the mounting death toll - nearly 16,000 people and thousands more missing and likely dead - offers no evidence that Israel is in fact concerned about the well-being of Palestinian civilians.

What it is concerned is about the growing condemnations abroad of what legal experts are calling genocide and increasing pressure from the United States. Just a few days ago, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned Israel it has weeks, and not months, to finish its campaign in Gaza. His boss, President Joe Biden, is acutely aware of the growing domestic discontent with how he is handling the war, which could cost him votes in next year's presidential election. This "evacuation messaging" the Israeli army has been undertaking is more directed at Western audiences, seeking to assuage their fears about the civilian

death toll, than the Palestinians in Gaza. The fact that it is delivered mostly on social media platforms indicates the intended audience is not the people in the Strip. The Israeli army has not only cut off electricity to Gaza but also targeted and damaged its already temperamental mobile network, thus leaving most of the people there with almost no access to the internet.

The leaflets that were dropped over the weekend are also not worth the paper

The average size of each of the 620 blocks on the map is 0.58 square kilometres, which means approximately 3,700 residents per block. Asking dozens of blocks equating to tens of thousands of people to move is hardly "precision". It is mass displacement masquerading as parsimonious precaution.

they were printed on. The QR code on them is of use only if there is a working phone with a charged battery and internet access. Discrepancies of different maps being shared by Israeli officials have also resulted in additional confusion. Areas marked for targeting in orange did not even correspond with the numbers of blocks officials were telling people to evacuate from. Consequently, the overall impact of the maps has been to create "fear, panic and confusion", as Melanie Ward, CEO of Medical Aid for Palestinians, explained in a tweet.

Furthermore, the detailed mapping and dissection of Gaza are designed to create the illusion of precision and precaution, but the evacuation orders behind them demonstrate the opposite. Gaza is 360 square kilometres and has a population of 2.3 million. The average size of each of the 620 blocks on the map is 0.58 square kilometres, which means approximately 3,700 residents per block. Asking dozens of blocks equating to tens of thousands of people to move is hardly "precision". It is mass displacement masquerading as parsimonious precaution. Apart from using digital

maps and QR codes to try and prove to its allies that its army is not reckless, Israel is also boasting about its "precision" military technologies.

Among them is an AI weapons system called "Habsora" ("The Gospel") which can quickly and automatically identify targets, much faster than older methods. If in previous bombing campaigns, the Israeli army would manually select 50 targets per day, today the new system provides 100. According to

leaders that are killed are inevitably replaced, hundreds more Palestinians will be murdered as the AI system generates more new targets. Since Hamas cannot be defeated militarily, the only logical outcome of this will be the perpetual murder or removal of everyone in Gaza. Another disturbing element of AI is that it reproduces biases it has been trained on. Historically, Israel has shown little regard for civilian life in its bombing. One has to wonder to what extent the secretive AI has learned to associate any Palestinian with "Hamas terrorist" based on past Israeli army behaviour.

This might explain why it is able to generate so many new "targets" for bombing. Israel likes to boast about its morality and high-tech, precision strike capabilities, ironically as a means of defending itself against claims of indiscriminately attacking civilians and allegations of war crimes.

This characterisation of the Israeli army's technological sophistication is also used by the US to help justify its support for Israel. Blinken, for example, has stated that "Israel has ... one of the most sophisticated militaries in the world. It is capable of neutralising the threat posed by Hamas while minimising harm to innocent men, women and children." But the more the US and Israel promote the narrative of its technological prowess, the more it gives an element of legal jeopardy. As international law professor Michael Schmitt argues, "the greater the precision capabilities of an attacker, the more compelling the characterisation of an attack striking civilians or civilian objects as reckless". In other words, a high-tech army has more of an obligation to try and "prove" that they are not being reckless.

The more Israel and the US boast of Israel's technical prowess, the more people question why so many civilians are being killed. The only answer is that Israel has precision weapons, but is still targeting people indiscriminately. Thus, sophisticated technology, rather than serving its ostensible purpose of precision and precaution, is instead weaponised as a tool of mass killing and destruction. In other words, what we are seeing in Gaza is an AI-assisted genocide.

Of course, as Hamas

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Aljazeera

Gaza war creates
'to be or not to be'
moment for Palestinians

Baria Alamuddin

THE all-too-brief ceasefire is already a dim and distant memory and the systematic killing of civilians in Gaza has resumed. Hence, this is the moment to question: Where does this all end and what are the long-term implications for Palestinians and Israelis?

Israel has already signalled that the carnage is destined to move south, where it previously dispatched Gaza's entire population. "If (Palestinian civilians) stay in Khan Younis or Rafah, a similar fate awaits to what happened in Gaza City," one Israel Defense Forces spokesman gruesomely stated. The baffling checkerboard maps of Gaza's tiny 363 sq. km territory that Israel has distributed assume that 2 million people will endlessly scamper from one square to another, while warplanes bomb everything around them. QR code warnings would be a terrible idea even if everybody had not long since lost electricity and internet access. About 80 percent of the population has already been displaced, and we are just getting started.

Israeli politicians make no secret of their desire to see Palestinians permanently excluded from Gaza. The stated objective of bottling the entire population in a tiny quartile adjacent to the Egypt border resembles a textbook example of population transfer - for those not killed in the bombing first. If not, why have Israel's Western allies not extracted public assurances that this is not the case?

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken insincerely urged Israel "to take every possible measure to avoid civilian harm" and, in a stunning rebuke, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin warned that Israel's failure to protect civilians would "drive (Palestinians) into the arms of the enemy" and "replace a tactical victory with a strategic defeat." Yet, despite the war on Gaza rapidly outstripping the number of child fatalities from all other global wars combined, President Joe Biden refuses to exert actual pressure on Israel - even as his support craters among crucial young and multiethnic demographics ahead of next year's elections. One of the reasons for Israel's occasional hesitations is its complete absence of a strategy for the day after the conflict ends. We have seen how such strategic failures played out in Iraq. Indeed, many commentators compare Israel's acts of vengeance with the irrational manner in which the US lashed out after 9/11.

Israel is gripped by existential fear, in a manner the country has not experienced for decades. It is not just vast regions to the north and south, but Tel Aviv also lies within easy reach of both Hamas and Hezbollah's rockets. While the Oct. 7 attacks unleashed an overwhelming hunger for vengeance, wiser heads recognize that they must find an amicable modus vivendi with neighbors if Israelis are ever to enjoy safety and peace. The crisis has fueled debates hardly heard in decades, with progressive voices blaming Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the extreme right for marching Israel into catastrophe; while also floating proposals for how the peace process could be

revived from the dead, including mooting the idea of a Canada-style federal system. More enlightened Israelis are highly disconcerted at how Israel's global standing has plunged due to the Gaza atrocities. And not just among the world's Muslim communities - young people throughout the Western world have been particularly galvanized by this human tragedy, along with demographics that normally pay scant attention to foreign affairs. In this transformed political climate, for how much longer can Israel take unqualified Western support for granted?

Since 1948, it has been de facto Israeli policy to render life in Gaza unlivable through all possible means, toward the goal of depopulating the Strip. The complete destruction of more than 60 percent of buildings in northern Gaza so far and the blocking of food and essential supplies into the region serve the same ethnic cleansing agenda. In a belated US recognition of this scenario, Vice President Kamala Harris, after meeting Arab leaders, last week warned that "under no circumstances will the United States permit the forced relocation of Palestinians" or "the redrawing of the borders of Gaza." We will believe this when we see it. If Israel were to get away with wholesale population transfer in Gaza, it would confer momentum upon Zionist extremists who for years have been calling for the elimination of the West Bank's Palestinian population, including Jerusalem. Arab states - including those that made peace with Israel - should explore every means at their disposal to render such moves diplomatically inconceivable.

Many commentators argue that the hatred aroused by the post-Oct. 7 events make a return to negotiations and a two-state solution impossible. They have a point. But I would conversely argue that these events render reanimated peace efforts an absolute necessity. Failing to pursue peace is the coward's way out, because it surrenders the agenda to militants and extremists on both sides for pursuing their unilateral and exterminatory visions. The Palestinian nation consequently stands at an existential moment, or "to be or not to be." Either it successfully struggles for its continued existence as a nation upon its historic lands - or it vanishes from the pages of history.

Israel can continue killing tens of thousands of Gaza civilians with relative impunity. Yet such actions merely perpetuate the conflict, while making it impossible for Israel to coexist with its neighbors, leaving it in a precarious position both internally and externally. Real strength is manifested through displaying moral leadership and showing mercy. Violence stems from weakness, ignorance and fear. Instead of demonstrating moral strength in this crisis, a wounded and befuddled Israel lashed out, murdering women, children and babies. Shocked world publics are watching and judging; with long-term political fallout for Israel's resilience and global standing next time it searches for allies in a time of crisis.

Arab News

What I owe to Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

Traci Lovitt

ON the day of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's swearing-in at the Supreme Court, many girls and women, including 12-year-old me, started thinking for the first time about legal careers. One couldn't help but wonder: If she could succeed in the legal field, why can't I? Justice O'Connor received no offers for an attorney position in private practice after graduating in the top 10% of her Stanford Law School class. Through merit, government service and grit, she nonetheless became a formidable force in Arizona and ultimately, in her words, the "FWOTSC" (First Woman On The Supreme Court).

On that day in 1981, Justice O'Connor proved that women could succeed at the highest levels of the

legal profession. She gave generations of women hope. And today we benefit from the spark of optimism she ignited. As the first, and a wildly successful first at that, Justice O'Connor paved the way for Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's elevation over a decade later and the elevation of the four women who sit on the US Supreme Court today. Justice O'Connor is also why so many women are now leaders in the legal profession - the women leaders in their 50s and 60s today were the girls and young women of 1981.

With Justice O'Connor's death, the United States has lost a legend. Her legacy is that of the first female US Supreme Court Justice - the ultimate ceiling smasher. She opened doors and changed the legal profession forever and for the better. To those who knew her personally, Justice

O'Connor was even more. She was a rare combination of brilliance, wit, kindness and civility, tinged with a confident toughness that came from growing up on a cattle ranch. She was deeply committed to her country, the court and her family, including her extended clerk family. She will be sorely missed and should always be honored.

Due to her years of failing health and ultimate withdrawal from public life, Justice O'Connor has not been part of our national dialogue for years, and her accomplishments may not be well known to today's younger generations. The reality is that, in 1981, the legal profession was not welcoming to women and, according to USCourts.gov, only 7.3% of federal judges were women. But that year,

Justice O'Connor was nominated and confirmed as the first female associate justice on US Supreme Court.

The hope Justice O'Connor sparked in me as a child actually caught fire. After graduating from law school, I had the honor of serving as her law clerk and getting to know her as a person, not just a public figure. To me, she has a second legacy as a truly kind and caring person.

On a personal level, Justice O'Connor had the swagger and confidence of a rancher, but she was also an incredibly gracious, considerate, high-energy person who applied a human touch to every situation. She showed concern for those around her, especially for her clerks' wellbeing.

For example, on the weekends before oral arguments, the justice would

meet with her clerks to discuss the upcoming cases. That was not uncommon at the court, but how she concluded the meetings was. Justice O'Connor prepared a hot, homemade meal for herself and the clerks - bringing her crockpot to the court to keep it warm - and after the meeting, we would all dine together in chambers. When the term became stressful due to the volume of work, Justice O'Connor would plan field trips to give her clerks a break. We visited museums, flower gardens and sometimes would just walk the National Mall.

Justice O'Connor took credit for my marriage as a result of one of those field trips. At the end of the term, she planned a sea kayaking trip down the Potomac River for her clerks and their partners. Unlike my co-clerks, I was not married or engaged at the time and

was unsure who to invite. Justice O'Connor decided to take matters into her own hands. Scheming with the late Justice Antonin Scalia, she invited Ara Lovitt, who she referred to as "that Scalia clerk who keeps hanging around Chambers," to be my sea kayaking partner. "That Scalia clerk" and I were married only a few years later. And later on, when we had children, Justice O'Connor sent them "SOC Grand Clerk" T-shirts. Her spirit was incomparable.

Justice O'Connor was not only an historical giant but a fundamentally caring person, and her concern for others and the impacts of her decisions marked her time on the court. I mourn her deeply but am forever grateful for the impact she had on our country and for the blessing of knowing her.

CNN

Russia-China alliance would build artificial intelligence for dictators

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin struck a triumphant tone at last week's Artificial Intelligence Journey Conference in Moscow. With artificial intelligence playing a growing role in all parts of life, "humanity is beginning a new chapter of its existence," he declared. Despite Putin's bullish portrayal of Russia as a vanguard of AI innovation, the actual landscape of Russian AI development is grim, largely due to Putin's own policies.

In his speech, Putin acknowledged the challenges facing Russia's AI industry and announced plans to surmount them. Had they been implemented a decade ago - and had the little green men and the Spetsnaz stayed on their own side of the border - Russia may very well have become a leader in the field. Instead, the president seemed to betray a certain recognition of the country's dire position. Before the conference, Putin's statements about artificial intelligence were optimistic but vague, stressing the potential of the technology and the need for Russia to maintain a presence in the field. He warned of the grave consequences of falling behind in the race. Those consequences have become unavoidable thanks to the invasion of Ukraine, which brought about an exodus of tech talent, a budget crunch that strangles investment, sanctions that deny Russia the chips needed for the immense computing requirements of AI and condemned the country to international isolation at a time of global research cooperation.

Putin's four-point plan for addressing these deficiencies called for academies to broaden access to supercomputers, to increase the capacity of those supercomputers by an order of magnitude, to expand classes for applied AI at top universities, and for the state to devote more funding towards AI. He promised to release a more detailed strategy in the coming months. Each part of this plan is necessary. But even all four together are wholly insuffi-

cient. Russia is facing a massive budget deficit. Without the economic capacity of its rivals, Moscow cannot hope to compete with them on financial investment. The Kremlin recently allocated 5.2 billion rubles (\$57,247,000) to AI research in 2024. In 2022, the United States government allocated fifty times as much, which is seven times lower than the amount invested by venture capital firms in the same year. Even if Russia could

Ben Dubow

of behavior, public policy, to which we object," Putin warned. In response, he suggested Russia would use its upcoming presidency of BRICS to investigate these issues in detail. Under the banner of "AI Ethics," Putin is likely to seek the enforcement of standards that ensure AI serves only to reinforce authoritarian rule. Rather than leading this "new chapter" of humanity's existence, Russia will end up lobbying China for consid-

He promised to release a more detailed strategy in the coming months. Each part of this plan is necessary. But even all four together are wholly insufficient. Russia is facing a massive budget deficit. Without the economic capacity of its rivals, Moscow cannot hope to compete with them on financial investment. The Kremlin recently allocated 5.2 billion rubles (\$57,247,000) to AI research in 2024. In 2022, the United States government allocated fifty times as much, which is seven times lower than the amount invested by venture capital firms in the same year. Even if Russia could allocate its resources perfectly, this investment gap means domestic availability of both AI know-how and computer capacity is likely to remain lagging.

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Putin's speech also subtly acknowledged the security implications of the precarious state of Russian AI. Modern Large Language Models (LLMs) like ChatGPT are intended for a Western audience and trained on Western data. "They reflect that part of Western ethics, those norms

eration as a partner. The future is being shaped in labs in Beijing and Hangzhou, not Moscow.

Should Russia convince China of their shared interest in an AI ethics framework that safeguards authoritarians, Moscow may be able to import and train on foundational models that don't undermine the regime. About 40% of all LLMs come from China. Chinese researchers have achieved this despite working under a censorship regime even more restrictive than

Russia's. They were able to strike this balance by following an ethical framework laid out in extensive detail by Beijing's National Security Standardization Technical Committee. These standards tell researchers to test random samples from the body of text used to train their models for unallowable content. They must then reject any training data where over 5% of returned samples are problematic. Researchers are to run tests on thousands of queries containing banned keywords and validate whether the results are permissible. Companies with public chatbots are required to expand moderation teams along with their user base and promptly remove offending answers.

One requirement, where Russia's current models would certainly fail, is that chatbots can only refuse to answer 5% of prompts on sensitive topics. If Russia adopted a similar standard, it could stop citizens from turning to Western alternatives out of frustration. Putin referenced "ethics" seven more times in the speech and called for an update to the National AI Ethics Code. Putin's concern that Western-trained models can pose a threat to his rule is well-founded. By lobbying for next-generation AI that will conform to the Kremlin's will, Russia can reap the rewards of this technology while avoiding the intensive task of building its own.

In the global AI race, in which China is close on the heels of the United States, there is an unfortunate glut of supply of models that can be made to adhere to the standards of authoritarian regimes. In line with Putin and Xi's effort to create a multi-polar global order to counter the West, a BRICS-led AI ethical framework will let dictators deploy the best technology has to offer while maintaining firm control over their country's informational spaces. But like with so much else since the invasion, Russia must give up its leadership ambitions and accept the status of junior partner.

The Moscow Times

Gaza as a global metaphor for reclaiming justice

GAZA as a Metaphor and the Right to be Human", was the title of a paper that I wrote for a conference on International Law and the State of Israel: Legitimacy, Responsibility and Exceptionalism that took place in Cork, Ireland from March 31-April 2, 2017. Due to health issues, I was not able to attend the conference in person and my paper was read by my husband. From what I learnt afterwards, it stirred some emotions and, as expected, I was even accused (not for the first time) of being an anti-Semite and a Holocaust denier by a Christian attendee. I also found out later that the label "jihadist" was used to vilify me in some Israeli websites whose mission is to mark and label as "traitors" Jewish people, and particularly Israeli Jews, critical of Israel.

The accusation of being a Holocaust denier is beyond the grotesque. I was named for Yosefa after my mother's father Yosef, who was murdered in Treblinka, perhaps the most horrific Nazi extermination camp in Poland. My mother was the only survivor of her family. Only today, it occurred to me to look at the text of my paper, written in 2017 and referring mostly to the assault on Gaza in 2014. Going through the text again felt uncanny. A strange feeling of déjà vu with some past horror "show" that is currently being exponentially accelerated, multiplied and intensified in its ferocity, cruelty and velocity. The following is the original text of my 2017 paper: I would like to start by saying that despite the title of my paper I am fully aware that Gaza is not only a metaphor, but also a very harsh reality deliberately created and perpetuated by Israel. But metaphors can provide a useful way of exploring and understanding complex situations. Metaphors can also help to mobilise social and political protests and struggles.

In this paper I argue that Israel's murderous assaults on Gaza over the last few years constitute a formative political moment, "the Gaza moment" which was manifested in a variety of ways including the 2009 students' occupation movement and the growing calls for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel. Gaza as a site of extreme suffering inflicted by the state of Israel on the Palestinian people can be interpreted as a metaphor for a prison, a ghetto, a refugee camp, a space/state of exception in the spirit of Giorgio Agamben's theorisation, an experimental laboratory for exercising total control and surveillance, a ground zone for a futuristic warfare and a showcase for arms trade. The attacks on Gaza introduce an apocalyptic vision of the present and the near present, a cataclysm of disaster capitalism where America's "war on terror" through its proxy Israel can be more accurately described as America's war on the world, a war, which as Mike Davies powerfully demonstrates, is specifically targeted against "the 'feral, failed cities' of the Third World - especially their slum outskirts," where "the distinctive battlespace of the twenty-first century" (according to the Pentagon doctrine) will take place.

Gaza as a metaphor suggests that the "war" between gated Israel and ghettoized Palestine, applies to the current and future fortress globe, produced, perpetrated and perpetuated by the security sector. Gaza as a metaphor introduces the true face of the "clash of civilisations", the battle of the civilised West against the dark and barbarian forces incarnated according to the moral discourse of the "free world" by asylum seekers, refugees, and the poor, the "criminals" and the "terrorists" in the post 9/11 planet. Gaza as a metaphor transcends the local specificity of the so-called Israeli-Palestinian conflict and becomes relevant to a broad matrix of global struggles for justice. Gaza, thus, acts as a mirror reflecting for different dispossessed groups their own local resistance and connects it with other similar acts of resistance in different parts of the globe. The appropriation of Gaza into the protest of the African American people in Ferguson in defiance of police brutality and racism is only one case in point.

Gaza as a metaphor opens a space for reading how the struggles of native Indigenous peoples and oppressed people all over the globe intertwine and how communities and cultures can and should resist their erasure. Gaza as a metaphor enhances Paul Gilroy's critique of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, where, as he argues, "Advocacy on behalf of Indigenous and subjugated

Yosefa Loshitzky

peoples does not ... merit more than token discussion as a factor in shaping how the idea of universal human rights developed and what it could accomplish." Gaza as a metaphor represents, perhaps, the most extreme contemporary attempt to dehumanise a whole group of people turning them, in the perceptive words of Dr Mads Gilbert, the Norwegian doctor who volunteered to help al-Shifa Hospital during the recent attacks, into "untermenschen", the word used by the Nazis to designate what they regarded as undesired sub-humans (Jews, Roma, Blacks, etc) who deserve to be exterminated.

Dr Gilbert's observation was echoed by a Palestinian academic who visited the Yarmouk camp in Syria on a humanitarian mission and who said "I think sometimes that we do not belong to this world, that the Palestinian people are not part of humanity." "IDF should be given the Nobel Peace Prize ... for fighting with unimaginable restraint," said Ron Dermer, the Israeli ambassador to the US at the Christian United for Israel summit in Washington. Dermer's shameless statement attempts, of course, to mask the crimes against humanity committed by Israel in Gaza. Yet, in his plea to the world to stop Israel's criminal attack on Gaza, Dr Gilbert uttered strong words on Israel's abuse of words, in particular its invocation of the notion of "war of defence" to describe its atrocities. His attribution of designed cruelty to the Israeli war machinery, not surprisingly, resulted in Israel's decision to ban this amazing human being from entering the Gaza Strip until his death.

The irony embedded in this ban cannot escape people who know Hebrew and are intimately familiar with Israel's racist culture. Lech le Aza (literally: "go to Gaza" and metaphorically "go to hell") is a common slang expression in Hebrew. Indeed, it is Israel that deliberately created this hell. To use Noam Chomsky's words, Israel consciously employed "calculated sadism". "Deliberate cruelty" an expression used by Talal Asad in his discussion of what he calls "redeeming the human through human rights" is another way to metaphorise Israel's "defence doctrine". The Dahiyah doctrine (increased deterrence) is part of this "deliberate cruelty". As Sara Roy explains in her analysis of the 2008-9 onslaught on Gaza, one of the reasons for the war on Gaza was "to enhance Israel's deterrence capacity, particularly after its defeat in Lebanon in July 2006, and to rehabilitate Israel's image as an effective ally in the American-led war against terror".

Ilan Pappé explains that already in 2004, the Israeli army began building a dummy Arab city in the Negev desert and this phantom city became a dummy Gaza in the winter of 2006, after Hezbollah fought Israel to a draw in the north, so that the IDF could prepare to fight a "better war" against Hamas in the south. As Roy explains this generic city known as Baladiah was built by "the US Army Corps of Engineers and funded largely from US military aid". Perhaps the cruellest metaphor applied to Gaza within the framework of Israel's policy of deliberate cruelty is the view of Gaza as a lab. Since the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the growing hegemony of the US in the Middle East, the new Pentagon doctrine for 21st-century warfare is targeted against the "feral Muslim cities" of the third world and not against conventional armies. Gaza is the experimental laboratory for Israel (and the US) high-tech arms trade industry. It is the ground zone for the futuristic warfare signalling a shift from a war against armies to war against guerilla and popular resistance.

Gaza, as many scholars and analysts demonstrate is a showcase for the Israeli and American arms industry. "We tried it on people in Gaza and it works" is a guarantee for a successful marketing strategy for "battle tested weapons". The Israeli arms industry, as Shir Hever demonstrates, depends on the cycle of attacks every two years. After each attack there is a big showcase. For Israeli arms makers, Shuki Sadeh explains, the Gaza war is a cash cow.

Factories worked around the clock turning out munitions as the army tested their newest systems against a real enemy. "For the defense industries this campaign [Operation Protective Edge] is like drinking a very strong energy drink - it simply gives them tremendous forward momentum," said Barbara Opall-Rome, Israeli bureau chief for the US magazine Defense News. "Combat is

like the highest seal of approval when it comes to the international markets. What has proven itself in battle is much easier to sell." Deliberate cruelty was joined by spontaneous grass roots cruelty expressed by the Israeli public particularly during the 2014 attack. Aggression and extreme racist hostility and cruelty against the Palestinian people was acted out not only on what the Israelis call the "battlefield" (a euphemism for the Gaza strip, the most densely populated stretch of land on the planet), but also on the virtual public sphere, where social media and the web have become a toxic site reigned by triumphal and virulent racism.

Even a random sample of reactions to Operation Protective Edge published online by Yedioth Ahronoth, Israel's most popular newspaper, opens a door into the heart of this dark world of Israeli racism, usually not scrutinised under the Western eye. These online reactions operate as a social text revealing and exposing not only escalating Israeli racism against Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims, but also the contradictions and tensions that are endemic to this special brand of racism. For example, one of the Israelis wrote "Operation Cast Lead, Operation Pillar of Defense, Operation Protective Edge ... how many times can you market the same brand? Is not it time for Operation Extermination? He used the expression "mivtza hisul" that is the Hebrew jargon for final sale, but also for "exterminating terrorists". The dehumanisation of the "enemy", is prevalent in this random, yet very typical, example in which the Palestinians are viewed as the surplus of humanity, a form of "human waste", to use Zigmunt Bauman's imploded language, that needs to be cleansed and expelled from "the land of Israel".

Excluding Gaza and the Palestinians at large from the domain of the "human" operates also in the academic/scholarly/intellectual front. Rosemary Sayigh, eloquently discusses the Nakba's exclusion from the "trauma genre". According to her, Judith Butler's notion of the grievable and ungrievable people explains what are the boundaries of recognition of suffering and identification of suffering between the Muslim peoples and the Christian peoples. Sayigh argues that the trauma theorists/critics never theorise the field in terms of global power asymmetry ... nor do they clarify how suffering in the non-Western world may differ from European modes in its causes, local understanding, forms of expression, etc. Even post-colonial studies, as Bart Moor-Gilbert suggested, were ostensibly slow to register Palestine, ironically (or not) even though the field was decisively shaped by the Palestinian exile Edward Said. For a long time, critical attention to Said within the field focused almost solely on Orientalism, the obvious attraction of which was its "modular" applicability to the much wider range of contexts typically engaged by post-colonial scholars than those on which Said focused primarily - the Middle East, including Palestine/Israel.

In a recent fascinating article on the concept of Palestine, historian Nur Masalha, shows how in the Hebrew Bible the Philistines "were constructed as a typical ideological scapegoat" arguing that "Modern European racism and Biblical constructs and even hatred of the Philistines" has survived in the derogatory connotations of the concept of "a Philistine". These pejorative connotations, I would like to add, are also evident in the canon of Western art, particularly in the Baroque period in paintings such as Rubens' Samson and Delilah. The Jewish French scholar Esther Benbassa explains that the attendance of French politicians in the annual dinners of the Representative Council of Jews of France (CRIF) reinforces the view of Arab Muslims and Black people of the Jews as insiders, "while they remain outsiders".

She argues that because of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Arab Muslims tend to identify with the plight of Palestinians in the occupied Territories "assimilating the injustices which they face in Europe with the victimisation of their 'brothers' under the Israeli occupation". It is not surprising therefore, that Gaza has acquired the status of a global metaphor for injustice or of reclaiming justice. And it is not accidental that the most common chant at the demonstrations against Israeli attacks on Gaza is "What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now! Free Free Palestine!"

There is nowhere safe for children to go in Gaza

Jason Lee

I have spent the last week in Gaza, where I've witnessed a dire situation becoming catastrophic. While visiting a shelter in the south, I met a displaced family desperate to find milk for their young baby, whose mother had died, buried under rubble. I met children who were queuing with hundreds of others for one toilet. I met colleagues working heroically to provide assistance in a shelter where they themselves sought refuge. These stories of untold suffering are sadly the norm in Gaza, where 1.8 million people - almost 80 percent of the population - are now homeless and seeking refuge wherever they can.

The seven-day pause in fighting provided some relief for families, enabling them to look for food, to look for loved ones, to take a break from the relentless bombardments. But this was short-lived. As humanitarians, we worked tirelessly to bring in more trucks, to get critical supplies to the hundreds of

thousands of people still in the north, and to distribute to the children and their families seeking refuge in the shelters. Yet, this was still insufficient to meet the needs of the 2.3 million people who need life-saving assistance.

As the news spread early Friday morning that the pause was over, hopes of a definitive ceasefire turned to despair. Once again ambulances were transporting casualties to the hospital, and already displaced families were ordered to move once again. To move to areas that cannot accommodate them.

To move to areas that do not have adequate infrastructure like water and sanitation, shelter or access to basic services. To move when there are ongoing air strikes, shelling and fighting. And through roads so badly damaged and littered with debris of fallen buildings that travelling with the elderly, sick or people with disabilities is

all but impossible. To move to areas that are not safe. Because the reality is that nowhere is safe in Gaza.

Rather than ensuring the safety and survival of families, Israel's orders to move are just giving them the option to die another way, elsewhere. What I've seen and heard during my time in Gaza confirmed my belief that there is no such thing as a "safe zone" there. It is also against humanitarian international law to forcibly displace a population. A young child might not understand what is happening, but they see the destruction around them. They see when their homes, schools and communities are destroyed. They hear everything that is happening around them, the air strikes, the cries for help. And they feel the terror, the insecurity and the helplessness. Humanitarians are driven to do all that we can to protect the rights and preserve life of all civilians, espe-

cially children. We are guided by humanitarian principles to protect the most vulnerable and protect humanity. The anticipated expansion of military operations in southern cities like Khan Younis would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences for children, compounded by the current restrictions and impediments that prevent us from doing our job.

We cannot stand idly by and watch the horror in Gaza unfold. The international community must uphold international law, the global rules-based order that was designed to prevent the very violations that we are witnessing. There is only one right thing to do: secure a definitive ceasefire to protect all civilians, and unfettered access for humanitarians to deliver assistance to all children in Gaza. The failure for us to do so, would be at the cost of the lives, hopes and futures of all children in the region, condemning them to be trapped in a continuous cycle of violence.

Sinwar and the explosive belt

Ghassan Charbel

IT was Oct. 7. They woke up Benjamin Netanyahu, who found a cup of poison waiting for him. He could not believe it at first glance. They came by land, air and sea. Al-Qassam Brigades fighters are walking free in the settlements. They fire shells and bullets and take hostages into the Gaza tunnels. Yahya Sinwar's trick misled the arrogant security services. It also affected the "invincible army." It soon became clear that Hamas fighters crossing the electronic wall around Gaza was more terrifying than any attack Israel had previously known.

Confrontation is not new. Israel has previously received many blows from Palestinian factions, but it responded with something even harsher. This is not a slap. It is a deep stab. Sinwar's attack shook the settlements and the occupiers. It shook the security and military establishment and subjected the political institution to an unprecedented scandal. Israel plunged into an "existential war," as its senior officials said. The story is bigger than the recovery of the hostages, despite its importance to the Netanyahu government. It is to restore prestige and the ability to deter, while ensuring that another Sinwar does not emerge elsewhere. We are now in December. A river of blood and small coffins ... Successive waves of displaced ... A sea of rubble. A humanitarian truce allowed for the exchange of prisoners and the introduction of aid. The world dreamed that extending the truce would lead to a permanent ceasefire. But the confrontation is more complex than the world thought.

It is a war that is difficult to retreat from. Defeat carries an unbearable price. The price of risking rushing into confrontation is less than that of surrender. In this

type of war, defeat has the taste of suicide. The war must be completed to eliminate Hamas and create a Gaza that does not harbor dangers for Israel. This is what the American president heard, along with his secretary of state and defense secretary. The Israeli government cannot see Hamas going back to ruling Gaza. Removing Hamas from the scene would require breaking its back, which is impossible without causing a new catastrophe. Hamas cannot accept the proposed "next-day" scenarios, as it did not unleash the Al-Aqsa Flood in order to retire after it. After nearly two months, questions continue about what went through the minds of Hamas' Gaza leader Sinwar and Al-Qassam Brigades head Mohammed Deif before the launching of the Al-Aqsa Flood. Did Sinwar consider that the attack would result in the return of a number of hostages, which would allow "the Israeli prisons to be cleansed of Palestinian detainees?"

Did he expect Israel to respond with an incursion similar to previous invasions, followed by a ceasefire and the completion of a swap deal that would strengthen Hamas' standing in both Gaza and the West Bank, establishing it as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people? Did he rule out the possibility that Israel would respond with an indefinite war of killing and destruction? Did he take into account the likelihood that America would move its navy and its president to ensure that Hamas would not win or even have a role in the "next day?" Is it true what some say: that Hamas was surprised by the settlements being completely exposed to its fighters, so it went so far as to inflict unprecedented losses on the Israelis? Many questions arise. Did

Sinwar decide to strike a painful blow at Israel or did he intend to spark a widescale war, regardless of the international calculations and consequences? Did he ignite the war, relying on the belief that a broad and brutal Israeli response would necessarily lead to a regional confrontation?

Did he believe that his partners in the so-called axis of resistance would consider the war their own and rush to engage in it? Did he assume that Iran would ignite the region in the face of the Americans and the world would hurry to extinguish the fire in what is a highly flammable region? Is it true that the timing of the battle was the big secret between Sinwar and Deif and that their allies only knew about the earthquake once it had started? Does Sinwar have the right to put his allies in the face of such a dangerous fait accompli or was he confident that they were already preparing for a "major strike," no matter how late it was? Many more questions arise. Will Sinwar accept the retirement of the Al-Qassam Brigades in exchange for a firm international promise to launch a political process leading to a two-state solution? Does he agree to sit in a Palestinian state that will necessarily recognize the other state or does he actually demand a Palestine from the river to the sea?

Did Sinwar believe that he could tip the international and regional balance and force everyone to deal with Hamas, forgetting that the Palestine Liberation Organization did not become internationally accepted until it reexamined some of its expressions and phrases? The 61-year-old Sinwar has spent 24 years in Israeli prisons. He was liberated by Hamas in 2011 as part of the Shalit deal, which saw Israel release more than 1,000 detainees

in exchange for Hamas' discharge of soldier Gilad Shalit.

From his long stay in prison, he concluded that the war was wide open and that it was nothing less than a war of existence. I realized the depth of this conflict from a story recounted to me by the former head of Hamas' political bureau, Khaled Meshaal, when we were in Damascus, delving into the movement's history since its birth. I asked him how he allowed himself to send a young man on a suicide operation. He was quick to respond: "We consider them martyrdom operations imposed by persistent Israeli injustice." He told me that a young man named Mohammed Fathi Farhat, a 17-year-old, submitted a request to the leadership of the Al-Qassam Brigades to carry out a martyrdom operation. The command rejected his request out of mercy for his family, as his brother had carried out an operation of this kind and his older brother was a wanted man.

After a while, the leadership received a letter from the young man's mother, saying: "I do not allow you to reject his desire for martyrdom and I hope you accept his request." The Hamas leaders agreed and the mother accompanied her son during his preparations. When she heard the news of his departure, she put on her best clothes and began to receive the well-wishers. Her eldest son was also later killed. How cruel is this war? Israel informs its visitors that it cannot retreat. Hamas cannot back down. Did Sinwar carry out a coup against the history of exchanged strikes with Israel? Where will he be on the "next day?" Will Hamas accept a return to the mantle of the Palestinian Authority to avoid a disaster? Did Sinwar succeed in reversing the equation or did he encircle Hamas with an explosive belt and push it into a "martyrdom operation?"



PSX gains 462 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with a bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 462.67 points, a positive change of 0.74 percent, closing at 62,956.03 points against 62,493.05 points the previous trading day.

A total of 765,418,288 shares valuing Rs 30.858 billion were traded during the day as compared to 734,294,598 shares valuing Rs 31.641 billion the last day.

Some 382 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 187 of them recorded gains and 177 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 18 remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Energycico PK with 82,309,654 shares at Rs4.85 per share, Pak Refinery with 53,701,236

shares at Rs 26.98 per share and Fauji Food Ltd with 37,662,460 shares at Rs 9.50 per share.

Hoechst Pak Ltd witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 76.00 per share price, closing at Rs 1,277.00, whereas the runner-up was Pakistan Tobacco Company Ltd with a Rs 52.70 rise in its per share price to Rs 1,146.70.

Premier Sugar Mills witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 31.25 per share closing at Rs 450.00, followed by Millat Tractors Ltd with a Rs 24.93 decline to close at Rs 630.91.

Rupee gains 15 paise against Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday witnessed an appreciation of 15 paise against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs284.37 against the previous day's closing

at Rs284.52.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs283.8 and Rs286.6 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.55 to close at Rs307.55 against the last day's closing of Rs 309.05, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.93; whereas a decrease of Rs1.42 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs358.96 compared to the last closing of Rs360.38.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 03 and 04 paise to close at Rs77.44 and Rs75.81 respectively.

Gold rates decrease by Rs.4,200 to Rs.219,400 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed a decrease of Rs.4,200 on Tuesday and was sold at Rs.219,400 against its sale at Rs 223,600 the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs3,601 to Rs.188,100 from Rs 191,701 whereas that of and 10 gram 22 Karat gold declined to Rs.172,425 from Rs 175,726.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs 20 to close at Rs 2600 and ten-gram silver also decreased by Rs 17.14 to close at Rs 2,229.08 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$37 to \$2,057 from \$2,094, the Association reported.

‘Global Investors Connect’ event organized in London



F.P. Report

LONDON: IMARAT, Agency21, and Graana.com, three of Pakistan's foremost real estate entities, unveiled an unprecedented real estate transaction system tailored exclusively for overseas investors during the prestigious "Global Investors Connect" event in London.

This revolutionary "one-stop solution" marks a historic milestone in the Pakistani real estate sector. The initiative empowers investors to verify property information from the comfort of their homes, ensuring secure transactions through UK-based solicitors—an unprece-

ented offering in Pakistan's real estate.

Shafiq Akbar, Chairman of IMARAT Group, expressed immense pride in this momentous achievement, stating, "Our commitment is unwavering towards facilitating flawless, secure, and transparent property transactions. This is the culmination of seven years of relentless research and dedicated efforts to digitize all of Pakistan's planned real estate records. This transaction system is a game-changer, ensuring unprecedented transparency and eliminating complexities that have hindered investors for too long."

Sharjeel A Ehmer, Group Director of Agency21, underscored the collaborative effort behind this groundbreaking system, stating, "The event in London marks a pivotal moment where the collective expertise of IMARAT, Agency21, and Graana.com converges to offer overseas Pakistanis a transformative solution. Our aim is to simplify the investment journey, eliminate complexities, and ensure transparent and safe transactions for every Pakistani."

Saad Khalid, Chief Commercial Officer of IMARAT Group, emphasized the significance of

this launch, remarking, "The system we've introduced is designed to empower overseas Pakistanis, offering them a comprehensive suite of services, including legal support from local solicitors in the UK, expert property management, personalized advisory services, and insights into tax implications. This move is not just about transactions; it's about fostering trust and providing a seamless experience for investors."

With an impeccable track record servicing over 30,000 clients in Pakistan, marked by zero complaints and losses, IMARAT, Agency21, and Graana.com extend their renowned services to overseas Pakistanis. The initiative promises a secure and seamless property investment experience, elevating investment strategies for the diaspora. With 70 offices across 22 cities and over 2,000 skilled professionals, the alliance aims to redefine overseas Pakistanis' property investment experiences.

IBA to introduce competition law module in training program

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In the meeting held between the delegates of Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) and the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi, it was agreed to integrate a Competition Law Module into its Directors Training Programs (DTP) being carried out under the auspices of IBA.

This addition of Competition Law Module in the DTPs aligns with CCP's advocacy and aims to strengthen the proficiency of corporate leaders in Competition Law. The CCP delegation included Mr. Salman Amin, Member (Office of the Fair Trade, Exemptions and Advocacy), Shahzad Hussain, Director General (Legal, Advocacy and Registrar), and Ahmed Qadir, Director General, Competition Policy, and Research. IBA was represented by Abdul Rahim Suriya, Furqan Tamoor, Senior Manager,

Centre for Executive Education (CEE), IBA, and Ms. Kehkashan Mazhar, Assistant Manager, CEE.

It was also discussed in the meeting that IBA will inform the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) about the addition of the competition law module to their DTP programs.

The Competition Law module will be consisting of two comprehensive sessions. The first session will cover the importance of open competition in all spheres of commercial and economic activities. Whereas the second session will further enlighten corporate leaders on identifying anti-competitive practices, assessing compliance risks, and developing strategies for adherence to competition law. Participants of DTP will also gain insights into emerging challenges on digital platforms and measures that need to be taken.

Including the abovementioned two sessions in

IBA's DTP is likely to ensure that participants promote fair competition in the commercial and economic decisions of their organizations and mitigate risks associated to the prohibitive provisions of the competition law.

Following the meeting, a presentation on competition law was given by DG (Legal, Advocacy)/Registrar of CCP to IBA students of marketing, economics, and business studies departments. The presentation elaborated on the core components of Competition Law, its historical perspective, and its pivotal role in advancing Pakistan's economy in an open competitive environment. This also enhanced awareness of IBA students and faculty on Competition Law and its enabling provisions for the growth of the economy.

Tokyo stocks end lower

TOKYO (APP): Tokyo stocks closed lower as the yen strengthened against the US dollar in the forex market, leading to a sell-off in exporter-related stocks, especially in the automotive sector.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei stock index, the 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average, ended down 200.24 points, or 0.60 percent, from Friday to close the day at 33,231.27.

The broader Topix index, meanwhile, finished 19.87 points, or 0.83 percent, lower at 2,362.65.

Amid speculation about the US Federal Reserve's potential halt to interest rate hikes and a narrowing Japan-US interest rate differential, the yen strengthened to its highest level in approximately three months in the early hours of the Tokyo forex market.



HYDERABAD: A worker busy in roasting gram at his workplace.

SBP injects Rs.454.6b into market

KARACHI (APP): State Bank of Pakistan, Tuesday, injected Rs. 454.6 billion in the market through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah Open Market Operation (OMO) cumulatively.

According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on December 5, 2023 for a tenor of 3 days.

The central bank received 14 quotes amounting to Rs.469.450 billion offered at the rate of return ranging between 22.06 to 22.21 percent.

Of them, the SBP, accepted 9 quotes amounting to Rs.434.6 billion at the return rate of 22.11 %.

Meanwhile, the central bank also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for a tenor of 3 days, in which it received one quote amounting to Rs.20 billion. The SBP accepted the quote at cut-off rate of 22.11%.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Six ships, Double Eagle, Marathopolis, MSC Rania, CM ACGM Nabucco, Al-S Dhafra and Umm Al-Amad scheduled to load/offload Cement, Containers, Coal, LPG and LNG, berthed at Multipurpose Terminal, Container Terminal, Bulk Terminal, Engro Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile five more ships, scheduled to load/offload Rice and Containers also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during last 24 hours.

Nineships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, two container ships, MSC Rania and CMA CGM Nabuccoleft the port on Tuesday morning and two more ships Marathopolis and Horizon-I are expected to sail on today afternoon.

Cargo volume of 142,292 tonnes, comprising 100,244 tonnes imports cargo and 42,048 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 4,601 Containers (2,731 TEUs Imports and 1,870 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

174 connections disconnected

F.P. Report

LAHORE: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 174 connections while 329 under billing cases processed, imposed fine of Rs 6 million.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 19 connections on illegal use of gas while another 9 on use of compressor and 14 under billing cases have been processed. The team also imposed fine of Rs 1 million against gas theft and under billing cases. The Regional team also imposed one FIR against gas pilfers.

The regional team of Rawalpindi disconnected 4 connections on illegal use of gas.

In Multan 3 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas while another 2 on compressor use, 95 under billing cases have

been processed and 0.222 million booked against Under billing and gas theft cases.

The team of Sheikhupura disconnected 21 connections on illegal use of gas while another 1 on use of compressor, 23 under billing cases have been processed and fine of Rs 2.53 million imposed against gas pilfers.

In Sargodha the team disconnected 1 connection on illegal use.

In Peshawar and Karak, the company disconnected 40 connections on account of direct use of gas illegal use of gas and amount of Rs 1.1751 million against gas theft cases. The team also lodged 1 FIR against gas pilfers.

In Mardan the team booked 60 under billing cases and also imposed fine of Rs 0.10 million against gas pilfers.

The team of Bahawalpur booked 49 under billing cases and amount of Rs 0.01 million booked against

under billing cases.

In Sahiwal, two connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas.

In Faisalabad one connection was disconnected on illegal use of gas while another 2 on use of compressor, 9 under billing cases have been processed and amount of Rs 0.03 million booked against gas theft and under billing cases.

In Gujranwala 8 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas and 79 under billing cases have been processed. The team booked an amount of Rs 0.77 million against gas theft and under billing cases and also lodged one FIR against gas theft.

The team of Gujarat disconnected 61 connections on illegal use of gas and Rs 0.20 million have been booked against gas theft cases.

In Sialkot the team booked an amount of Rs 0.01 million against gas theft cases.

ICCI forges strategic partnership with TDC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has signed MoU with The Diabetes Centre (TDC), Islamabad to evolve a strategic partnership between the two organizations in order to address the healthcare issues of the business community.

The MoU was signed by Meesaq Arif, CEO of The

Diabetes Centre, and Abdul Rahman Siddiqui, Healthcare Committee during a ceremony held at ICCI, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Aftab Ahmed Medical Superintendent, Dr. Babar Hameed Awan Deputy Medical Superintendent.

Naveen Keerio, Marketing Team Lear of TDC and others were present in the MoU signing ceremony.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari termed the signing of MoU with TDC a landmark development to foster healthcare collaborations in order to address diabetic issues of the business community and promote a healthy society.



RAWALPINDI: Isphanyar Bhandara at Christmas cake cutting ceremony held at Christian Study Center Rawalpindi with ambassador Cardinal Joseph Coutts, Bishop Samuel Azriyah, Bishop of Lahore Nadeem Kamran and British Deputy High Commissioner.

How tobacco industry seeking ventilator support for its profits in low-and middle-income countries

Dr. Waseem Janjua & Qamar Nasim

Tobacco industry interference has been a persistent challenge in global public health efforts to curb smoking and its associated health risks. In recent times, a concerning trend has emerged wherein the tobacco industry is seeking ventilator support for continuing profits through its electronic products in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). This maneuver raises ethical and public health questions, as it appears to be a strategic move to gain favor while diverting attention from the detrimental effects of electronic tobacco and nicotine products. However, an examination of various facets of tobacco industry interference, and the motives behind seeking this ventilator support, reveals "uninterrupted profits" with potential detrimental conse-

quences for public health.

The rise of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), commonly known as e-cigarettes continue to present new challenges to global tobacco control efforts. The tobacco industry, recognizing the potential for profit in the emerging market of LMICs, has aggressively marketed these products in regions with fewer regulations and weaker public health infrastructures. ENDS are often promoted as safer alternatives to traditional cigarettes (although there is no scientific evidence for that), despite growing evidence suggesting their own set of health risks. In recent years, the tobacco industry has adopted a strategy, presenting itself as a "public health conscious" entity by championing the cause of tobacco harm reduction. Under the guise of mitigating the health risks associated with traditional tobacco products, the industry is active-

ly promoting alternative products such as electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) and heat-not-burn devices.

In face of the growing awareness and many countries banning these electronic products, and others strictly regulating, tobacco industry has sought ventilator support for its electronic products in LMICs. This move raises eyebrows as it appears to be a calculated effort to present the industry as a benevolent force trying to reduce the harmful effects of tobacco use during a global health tobacco epidemic. By aligning themselves with pharmaceutical industry and promoting tobacco harm reduction strategies, the tobacco industry aims to divert attention from the health hazards associated with their products and position themselves as contributors to the better public health.

Tobacco harm reduction is a controversial concept that

advocates for the substitution of traditional tobacco products with purportedly less harmful alternatives. While the idea has gained attention in the realm of public health, the tobacco industry's embrace of harm reduction is viewed with extreme skepticism. The industry's history of deceptive marketing practices and opposition to evidence-based tobacco control measures raises concerns about its true motives.

Low- and middle-income countries, with their challenged regulatory landscapes and often limited resources for robust tobacco control measures, have become prime targets for the tobacco industry's harm reduction agenda. Seizing upon legal loopholes and lax regulations, the industry has aggressively marketed ENDS and other alternative products as safer alternatives to traditional cigarettes. This has created a complex sce-

nario wherein the industry portrays itself as a champion of harm reduction while capitalizing on regulatory gaps to expand its market.

The rapid evolution of new tobacco and nicotine products poses significant challenges for regulators in LMICs. The lack of comprehensive research on the long-term health effects of these products makes it difficult for authorities to establish evidence-based regulations. The tobacco industry exploits this uncertainty to influence policymakers and advocate for the legalization and widespread availability of their products, presenting them as a viable harm reduction strategy. For example, nicotine pouch products were launched in Pakistan without any regulation and the government is completely baffled about its admissibility. The indecisiveness to regulate, ban, or allow these products has left the masses completely confused

about the impact of these pouches.

Research indicates that some alternative products continue to pose serious health risks, and the industry's track record of prioritizing profits over public health necessitates caution. The push for harm reduction could inadvertently lead to increased nicotine addiction, especially among youth, and undermine existing tobacco control efforts. Nicotine (classified as poison in Australia) is the messiah of reducing harm caused by tobacco. When nitrosamines, additives, humectants, flavorings are added to nicotine (these are added in many of the nicotine products) it becomes a potent carcinogen. However, this fact is always masked in promotional gimmicks.

The tobacco industry's promotion of harm reduction introduces an ethical quandary. By positioning itself as a proponent of public health, the industry

attempts to legitimize its presence in the discourse surrounding tobacco control. This strategy may serve as a Trojan horse, allowing the industry to infiltrate public health policymaking and influence regulations in its favor.

The tobacco industry's efforts to promote tobacco harm reduction and advocate for the legalization of alternative products in LMICs should be viewed with a critical lens. Policymakers, public health professionals, and advocates must carefully evaluate the industry's motivations and prioritize evidence-based strategies to protect public health. By remaining vigilant and resisting the industry's deceptive tactics, it is possible to safeguard vulnerable populations from the potential harms associated with the exploitation of harm reduction as a means to further the tobacco industry's agenda.



In brief

Moin appointed team director of QG

KARACHI (Web Desk): The Quetta Gladiators have decided to appoint Pakistan's former captain and Moin Khan as team director. Khan has been serving the team as the head coach since season-1 of the Pakistan Super League and has had prolific achievements under his coaching tenure. The team won the championship in 2019 and were twice runners-up under his guidance. The whole team and management extended their best wishes to the newly appointed team director and believed that the team will dominate in the country's premier cricket league through his skills and wisdom.

Messi says he faced severe criticism

BUENOS AIRES (Agencies): Argentinian success in the last year's tournament cemented Messi's footballing legacy alongside the very finest players in history. Many have already considered the forward to be the greatest in history before the tournament. However, winning the World Cup allowed Messi to unequivocally stand alongside the likes of Pele and Maradona. Messi explained the love he was receiving from Argentinian's now, even a year after the celebrations, was a result of winning the tournament. Messi also told about his sufferings before the tournament: "I had a bad time. My family and the people who love me did too. [The critics] were very unfair to a generation of players and they said a lot of bad things about me. Today 95 percent or 100 percent of Argentines love me and that's a beautiful feeling." On his legacy, Messi said: "I was lucky I achieved everything at club level with Barcelona and also on an individual level. [The World Cup] was the only thing that eluded me. There are very few players who can say that they have achieved everything and thanks to God I am one of them." Messi and Argentina will play in the Copa America next year as they look to defend their title and add yet another trophy to Messi's collection. As for the 2026 World Cup, it remains to be seen if Messi will still be playing for Argentina having admitted he is playing in a lower level league in the MLS.

Sky to show dozens more games

LONDON (Reuters): Sky Sports has won the rights to show nearly a hundred more English Premier League matches from 2025, the league said on Monday, adding that all games except Saturday 3pm kickoffs would be televised in Britain for the first time. Sky Sports will show a minimum of 215 live matches per season between 2025/26-2028/29 and TNT Sports - formerly BT Sport - will show 52 live matches per season during that period. The deals will deliver 6.7 billion pounds (\$8.45 billion) in revenue across the four-year period, the Premier League said in its statement, adding that it was inclusive of a 4% rise in live rights value compared to the previous process. Sky paid 3.6 billion pounds in 2018 for a three-year deal for the rights to screen 128 matches a season, which was renewed amid the turbulence in 2021 without a usual tender process. Premier League Chief Executive Richard Masters said that Sky and TNT - a joint venture by BT (BTL) and Warner Bros Discovery (WBD.O).

Pakistan women create history by winning T20I series against NZ

Shahid Afridi

DUNEDIN: Pakistan Women's Cricket Team has set a new record against New Zealand Women in the second T20 match, securing victory by 10 runs and claiming the series 2-0.

Fatima Sana took 3 wickets, and Aliya Riaz was the player of the match for her outstanding performance. In Dunedin, Aliya Riaz's responsible batting and Fatima Sana's excellent bowling led Pakistan Women to another memorable win against New Zealand Women, dominating the series with an unbeatable 2-0 lead.

Aliya Riaz scored an unbeaten 32 runs, while Fatima Sana took 3 wickets, securing not only a 10-run victory but also Pakistan Women's first-ever win in a T20 International series against New Zealand Women.

Aliya Riaz was awarded the Player of the Match.It's worth noting that in the first match of the series on Sunday, Pakistan Women secured their first T20 International victory against New Zealand Women, thanks to Fatima Sana's superb bowling, claiming seven wickets for just 29 runs.

In response to New Zealand's batting, Pakistan set their highest T20 International score against them, posting 137 runs for a remarkable victory. New Zealand Women, batting second in the second T20, won the toss and scored 137 runs for the loss of 7 wickets in 20 overs. In pursuit of the target, New Zealand Women managed to score 127 runs for the loss of 7 wickets, securing a narrow 10-run victory for Pakistani women.

The start of Pakistan Women's innings was not promising, losing four wickets for 86 runs. The top scorers in the first match were Shoaib Zulfiqar (7), Bismah Maroof (21), and captain Nida Dar (14), but Muneeba Ali played a crucial inning of 35 runs off 28 balls, including six boundaries, and Aliya Riaz contributed an essential 32 not out with four boundaries and one six.

Mollie Penfold took 2 wickets for 17 runs, and Fran Jonas took 2 wickets for 21 runs for New Zealand Women.Sadaf Iqbal and Player of the Match from the first game, Fatima Sana, bowled brilliantly, taking four wickets for just 29 runs, dismissing New Zealand Women's top-order batsmen. Sadaf Iqbal dis-



The Pakistan women's team celebrate a historic series victory.

missed Bryden and Amelia Kerr, while Suzie Bates and captain Sophie Devine were taken by Fatima Sana. In response, New Zealand Women scored 127 runs in the allotted 20 overs.

Nadia Dar dismissed Maddy Green for 18 runs, and after Polymer's dismissal for 28 runs, the chances of Pakistan Women's victory increased.In the last two overs, New Zealand Women needed 33 runs for victory,

and in the final over, they required 18 runs. Fatima Sana bowled out Hana Rowe, who was trying to make 33 runs in the last over. In this crucial last over, the host team managed to score only 7 runs, securing Pakistan's victory. Fatima Sana took 3 wickets for 22 runs. Sadaf Iqbal contributed with 29 runs and dismissed two players.

The second T20 International in Dunedin was also played at the

University of Otago Oval, where Suzie Bates, former captain of New Zealand, was honored to have this grand named after her. Suzie Bates, associated with Otago, has represented New Zealand in a total of 305 international matches, including T20 and One Day Internationals.

The third and final T20 International between both teams will be played on December 9th at Queenstown.

Australian PM hosts Pakistan cricket team at parliament



CANBERRA (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan men's cricket team was invited to Canberra on Tuesday for a ceremony hosted by Australian Prime Minister (PM) Anthony Albanese at the Parliament House in

Canberra.

It is noteworthy that a four-day match between Pakistan and PM's XI will take place in Canberra starting Wednesday, December 6, 2023, followed by the Test series against Australia from

December 14, at the Perth Stadium.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese welcomed both teams and expressed hope that the match between PM's XI and the Pakistan side would be enjoyable. He also

expressed optimism about the upcoming Test series, acknowledging Pakistan as a quality team.

Speaking on the occasion, Pakistan Test captain Shan Masood highlighted the historical significance of the match being played since 1951. He expressed great joy in playing this match against Prime Minister XI, emphasizing that the team is a tough competitor.

The captain affirmed that Pakistan is not only prepared and enthusiastic for this match but is also ready for the challenges of the upcoming Test series against Australia.

PM Youth Talent Hunt table trials for boys, girls begins

PESHAWAR (APP): The Table Tennis trials in connection with the Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt Program got underway here at Islamia College University at the Takbeer indoor hall with more than 150 boys and girls from the Peshawar Region turned up.

The chief guest of the opening ceremony was the Vice Chancellor of Islamia College University Peshawar Prof Dr Gul Majeed Khan, who formally inaugurated the trials. Secretary KP Table Tennis Association Kifayat Ullah Khan Orakzai, table tennis coaches including Amna Khan, Saira Naz, Assistant Director sports Firdous Afridi, Deputy Registrar Shabbir, and Organizing Secretary of the event Ali Hoti, officials, players and a large number of spectators were also present.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Gul Majeed Khan said that they are thankful to the Higher education Commission (HEC) for allotting the boys and girls trials wherein after Peshawar Region, the trials would be held in all four Regions including Swat, Mardan, Hazara, and Bannu in which players from all the districts from across the province will be taking part.

Soon after completing the trial process in all five regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Provincial League would be organized, followed by short-listing boys and girls teams for the national league. He said Islamia College University Peshawar is very grateful for organizing the event and all requirements will be implemented for transparency in the trials.

He said that there is no shortage of talent in table tennis in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and this is the reason that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has given birth to many international table tennis players. It should be clear that the table tennis trials will be held in five regions, starting from Peshawar region, followed by Mardan, Hazara, Swat, and Bannu regions.

Pakistan junior hockey team capable of beating best sides, Asif Naz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Manager junior hockey team Lt Col (ret'd) Asif Naz Khokhar said on Tuesday that Pakistan players had prepared well for the Junior Hockey World Cup and were capable of beating any best side.

"They have undergone tough training and are in good form. I am optimistic they will put up a good show to emerge victorious," he said in a video message.

The 13th edition of the coveted tournament will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from December 5 to 16.

Pakistan are scheduled to take on the Netherlands in their opening match on Wednesday and Asif believes if the boys play with their full potential

they will pull off a win.

"No doubt, the Dutch are a strong team as they are among the world's top four sides.

But we have also a bunch of highly talented boys, who can surprise any side on their day," he added.

The 12-day event for under-21 players will see 16 teams competing for the trophy.

Defending champions Argentina are in Pool A along with Australia, Malaysia and Chile.

Egypt, France, Germany and South Africa are in Pool B.

Poll C includes Canada, India, South Korea and Spain, while Pakistan, Belgium, Netherlands and New Zealand form a tough Pool D.

Pakistan squad:

Ali Raza (Goalkeeper), Arbaz Ahmad, Sufyan Khan, Ghazanfar, Murtaza Yaqoob, Zikriya Hayat, Arshad Liaqat, Abdul Rehman, Hanan Shahid (Captain), Abuzar, Arbaz Ayaz, Abdul Rafay (Goalkeeper), Abdul Manan, M Ammad, Ahtisham, Basharat Ali, Aqeel Ahmed, Ali Murtaza, Umer Mustafa, and Abdul Qayyum.

The team official include Manager Lt Col (ret'd) Asif Naz Khokhar, Head Coach Roelant Oltmans, Coaches Olympian Shakeel Abbasi, International Muhammad Ali, International Muhammad Asif, Physiotherapist Muhammad Aslam and Video Analyst Nadeem Lodhi.

Pakistan to play ‘aggressive’ cricket on Australia Test tour: skipper

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan will try playing an 'aggressive' cricket in their three-match Test series against Australia, skipper Shan Masood said on Monday.

Pakistan will play the first Test against Australia in Perth on December 14, before the traditional Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

The third Test will be played in Sydney and begin on January 3. Masood, who was recently appointed Pakistan Test captain, said Test cricket

had undergone a significant change over the years.

"We will try playing with a positive mindset, an aggressive mindset," he told reporters in Canberra.

"Wherever an opportunity came to put the other side under pressure, we will try to put pressure as a bowling unit or a bowling unit." Ahead of the Test series, Pakistan will play Prime Minister's XI on December 6 at Manuka Oval.

Masood believed time factor was quite important for his side the games against Australia. "As a bat-

ting unit, you will have to improve the run rate a bit," he said, adding Pakistan pacers will also have to strive to bowl as many players out as they can.

Pakistan Squad: Shan Masood (captain), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Khurram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Mohammad Wasim Jr., Noman Ali, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfaraz Ahmed (wk), Saud Shakeel and Shaheen Shah Afridi.

Pakistan's Mustafa sets Guinness World Record

ISLAMABAD. (APP): Pakistan's Mustafa Alam has set a Guinness World Record of memorizing and accurately recalling 342 randomized binary numbers in one minute.

Mustafa Alam was a student of Futuristic Learning and was trained by Sania Alam. "Mustafa Alam, who memorized and accurately recalled, 342 randomized binary numbers in one minute, in Karachi," she told APP.

This record-breaking achievement surpasses the previous record of 270 binary numbers set in 2015 by a participant from India.

This recent triumph marks the sixth Guinness World Record achieved by students of Futuristic Learning under the mentorship of coach Sania.

The institute was renowned for its excellence in memory training, having previously set world records in various memory disciplines:



Emma Alam - Most random words memorized in 15 minutes (410 words), Most Names and faces memorized in 15 minutes (218 names and faces); Syeda Kisa Zehra - Most historical dates recalled in five minutes (241 dates); Syed Nabeel Hasan Rizvi - Most three-digit flash numbers memorized (40 sets = 120 numbers), The longest number sequence memorized in four seconds (30 Digits).

Sania said Mustafa's achievement in memoriz-

ing 342 binary numbers, which were just 0s and 1s, in one minute was a remarkable display of mental speed and focus.

"This means he was identifying and memorizing over five numbers every second." She said Mustafa used to memory train with her to aid his studies, but it quickly evolved into a deep interest in showcasing the potential of memory training and proving that it can be developed at any age.

Mustafa said, "Memory is not a passive attribute; rather, it is an active skill that can be cultivated like any other skill".

Coach Sania also has her own list of high achievements. She was the 'Brain of the Year' for 2023/2024, awarded by the UK Brain Trust, and has received the Youth Excellence Award from the Prime Minister of Pakistan, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from US President Joe Biden.



In brief

IRSA releases 87,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 87,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 42,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1492.87 feet and was 92.87 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 21,900 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1171.85 feet, which was 121.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,100 cusecs and 28,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 58,400, 43,500, 39,400, and 11,700 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 7,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Two injured in gas cylinder explosion

RAWALPINDI (APP): At least two persons were critically injured when a gas cylinder exploded in a shop located at Babu Lal Hussain Road, Rawalpindi. Rescue 1122 teams were immediately rushed to the scene and immediately shifted the injured to hospital. The injured were identified as 45-year-old Saeed and 38-year-old Hameed. Meanwhile, Rescue 1122 has appealed to the public to use gas appliances carefully to avoid unpleasant accidents. Spokesman said most of the incidents took place because of the gas leakage during the night when people went to bed while leaving the gas accessories on. The spokesman advised the consumers to switch off all the gas heaters and stoves before sleeping so that blasts / financial losses could be avoided.

ANF seizes 25 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover over 25 kg drugs and arrested four accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that 2060 grams Ice drug was recovered from a parcel at a cargo office in Rawalpindi while an accused was also arrested. In third operation, 500 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused netted near Islamia Degree College, Sambrial. 4.8 kg hashish hidden in a vehicle was recovered on Takhta Beg Jamrud Road Peshawar.

CPO pledges to ensure smooth traffic flow

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Khalid Mahmood Hamdani Tuesday reaffirmed the commitment of the police to maintain an uninterrupted flow of traffic on Murree Road. Speaking at a live program on Traffic FM 88.6 at the Traffic Headquarters, Hamdani addressed the persistent issue of traffic congestion and identified encroachments as a major obstacle. He however, said that solid steps were being taken to address the challenge, with a focus on Murree Road, Adiala Road, and Gujjar Khan. The operations were underway to eliminate encroachments and improve traffic flow in the city, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iraq to Pakistan, Hamid Abbas Lafta called on Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at Parliament House.

Climate resilient urban planning Pakistan, Ethiopia discuss city-to-city collaboration

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Ethiopia on Tuesday discussed the prospects of initiating a city-to-city collaboration in order to promote sustainable governance in the global south through climate resilient urban planning. The collaboration came under discussion during a meeting between Ethiopian Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula and CDA Chairman Captain (Retd) Anwarul Haq, said a news release of the Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Pakistan (FDRE)-Islamabad.

Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest including knowledge exchange between the

administrations of both the countries' capital cities — Addis Ababa and Islamabad.

Ambassador Jemal briefed the CDA chairman about the overwhelming response received by the Green Legacy Initiative of Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed from around the world.

He said Ethiopia had planted more than 32 billion seedlings of different trees, fruits and animal feed during the last four years. "Our government's target is to plant over 50 billion plants by the end of 2025," he added.

The ambassador also appreciated the services rendered by the CDA in beautifying Capital City

Islamabad. "The clean and green environment ensured by the CDA in Islamabad is very impressive and we look forward to have a strong collaboration between the administrations of Islamabad and Addis Ababa," he said.

CDA Chairman Captain (Retd) Anwarul Haq agreed to the proposal and said exchange of knowledge and skill between the two countries would eventually promote sustainable governance and development in the global south.

He said the Islamabad administration was making all-out efforts to ensure clean and green environment in the well-planned city of Pakistan.

Ghulam Ali turns 83

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 83rd birthday of Ghazal maestro Ustad Ghulam Ali was observed on Tuesday. Born on December 5, 1940, Ghulam Ali is a Pakistan-based ghazal singer who belongs to Patiala Gharana. Ghulam Ali is considered as one of the greatest ghazal singers of his era. A disciple of Bade Ghulam Ali Khan he was also trained by Bade Ghulam Ali's younger brothers — Barkat Ali Khan and Mubarak Ali Khan.

His style and variations in singing Ghazals are unique, as he blends Hindustani classical music with ghazals, unlike any other ghazal singers. He is very popular not only in the sub-continent but also among South Asian diaspora in the US, the UK and the Middle Eastern countries. His famous ghazals among others include Chupke Chupke Raat Din, Kal Chaudhvin Ki Raat Thi, Hungama Hai Kyon Barha, Chamakte Chand Ko, Kiya Hai Pyar Jise, May Nazar Se Pee Raha Hoon, Mastana Peeye, Yeh Dil Yeh Pagal Dil Mera, Apni Dhun Mein Rehta Hoon and "Ham Ko Kiske Gham Ne Maara".

Furthermore, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training presented its progress on the compliance report by the Chairman of the Higher Education Commission and Pakistani chairs abroad, emphasizing their active

Senate Body on education passes 'Student Union Bill' 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training yesterday unanimously passed the Private Members' Bill titled "The Islamabad Capital Territory Student Unions Bill, 2023," introduced by Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi.

The committee meeting held here under the Chairmanship of Senator Irfan-ul-Haq Siddiqui, who while commenting the 'Student Union Bill' said that instead of grouping based on ethnicity, provinces, or other considerations, healthy activities must be encouraged in the educational institutions for which the student union is a good platform.

The chairman of the committee while addressing the distinctions between TTS (Tenure Track System) BPS (Basic Pay Scale) mentioning the absence of a service structure for the technologists and their promotion policy suggested that if these aspects do not align and protests persist, the conflict will persist. Thereby, merging the two might resolve the discord.

While discussing the Disposal of Public Petition regarding the placement of PhDs, the Committee members engaged in a comprehensive discussion about the IPFP agreement and laws conflicting with the proceedings and disengagement of PhD scholars from the University of Swabi. Committee members expressed concerns about the exclusion of employees who have served for five years without any replacement. A volunteer from one of the concerned universities also pleaded his case, stating that, in the situation, all the PhD scholars recruited under IPFP Program were terminated following a court proceeding. The chairman of the committee emphasized the need to address this matter. The Chairman of the Higher Education Commission may come up with a viable solution in consultation with all stakeholders and report the solution to the Committee.

Additionally, the committee expressed concerns about the delay in the Private Members Bill and the Protection of Family Life and Wedlock Bill 2023. The committee highlighted the issue that, despite being passed by both Houses and approved, the Protection of Family Life and Wedlock Bill is not traceable and is misplaced. The committee unanimously decided to report the case to the Senate Standing Committee on Parliamentary Affairs as per the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate 2012.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training presented its progress on the compliance report by the Chairman of the Higher Education Commission and Pakistani chairs abroad, emphasizing their active

engagement with the matter. The Committee Chairman directed keeping regular reporting on the progress of Pakistani Chairs Abroad to the Committee.

Similarly, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training presented its efforts regarding the recommendations of the Committee held on 9th October 2023. The Ministry stated that it has regularized the services of 137 teachers in Federal Directorate of Education, as notified by the ex-Capital Administration and Development Division, while 71 notifications are under process. The Committee also highlighted the non-payment of salaries to the reinstated teachers and directed that the Ministry may come up with a detailed report regarding payments of salaries to the reinstated teachers.

Senator Prof. Dr. Mehr Taj Roghani expressed concerns about the absence of a service structure for technologists and requested a prompt solution. The Chairman of the Higher Education Commission applauded the role of Senator Ruksana Zuberi and Chairman Engineering Council and stated that the Pakistan Engineering Council has agreed in principle to have no objection over awarding equal status to the technologists as per the Sydney Accord. Regarding the re-examination of the law students of Bahauddin Zakariya University, the Vice Chancellor of the university stated that they have conducted a re-examination of all students from 2015 to 2017, while the case of students from 2018 to 2021 is subjudice in the Supreme Court, which will also be re-examined. The members of the Ministry of Education and Professional Training also mentioned that the report from HEC on the re-examination of Law Students at Bahauddin Zakariya University has been resubmitted.

Likewise, concerning the HEC report on the recognition and attestation of degrees, the Chairman of the Committee endorsed the recommendation of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training regarding a special session of the Higher Education Commission for reviewing the issues of degrees attestation of students of different universities on a case-by-case basis, granting a one-time dispensation. The Committee directed the Higher Education Commission to take legal action against all unlawful institutes/universities operating across the country.

The committee was attended by Senator Prof. Dr. Mehr Taj Roghani, Senator Falak Naz, Senator Engr. Ruksana Zuberi, Senator Fawzia Arshad, Senator Maulvi Faiz Muhammad, Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi, Ministry of Law and Justice officers and Ministry for Federal Education and Professional Training officers.

QAU announces HEC Need-Based Scholarship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad has announced Need Based Scholarships through the Higher Education Commission (HEC) for Semester Fall 2023.

According to the official sources, the applications are invited from the students who enrolled in BS & BS (Lateral Entry) regular degree programs.

The students who enrolled on Self Finance/Self Support/Evening/Weekend are not eligible for the award of scholarship. As per eligibility criteria, the scholarship shall be awarded only to the poor and most deserving students at undergraduate level. The authenticity of the information provided by the students shall be verified by cross checking of the data provided through physical verification, the official sources informed.

It is stated that scholarship will be cancelled at any stage if the student is

punished because of his/her involvement in violation of the university rules, damage to university property, misbehavior with staff or colleagues or any other disciplinary proceedings. Meanwhile, any false information or discrepancy will lead to disqualification, recovery of entire received amount, and disciplinary proceedings. Incomplete forms will not be accepted.

The QAU will review the application forms and only shortlisted applicants will be called for the interview by the Institutional Scholarship Award Committee (ISAC).

Application received after the due date will not be entertained, the sources said, adding that limited seats are available.

The scholarship award, and its continuity is subject to approval, availability of funds, and release of grant by the Higher Education Commission (HEC).

Islamabad police record data of over 8,40,000 people through hotel eye' software

ISLAMABAD (APP): Over 8,40,000 people's data have been meticulously recorded through the 'Hotel Eye' software, a testament to the effectiveness of Safe City Islamabad in preventing crime, a police spokesperson said.

The fully operational "Hotel Eye" software has been seamlessly integrated across all police stations in Islamabad, enabling the identification and registration of indi-

viduals staying in hotels, guest houses, or shelter homes.

In the past 24 hours alone, 5,326 citizens' data has been entered, contributing to a cumulative total of 8,40,857 citizens entered throughout the ongoing year. This data gathering initiative has already yielded significant results, with information on 111 suspects forwarded to the concerned police stations for legal proceed-

ings, proving instrumental in identifying criminal elements involved in heinous and other crimes.

Islamabad Capital City Police Officer Dr. Akbar Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan has said that employing modern technology and leveraging all available resources is greatly helpful in maintaining law and order. He said that safety to the lives and property of the citizens would be ensured by using all means.

Shehla advises all 'political party' to focus economic issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly & PPP Senior leader Shehla Raza Tuesday said all 'political parties' should focus on economic issues instead of doing inside room politics ahead of the election 2024 and claimed that his party was ready to play on every kind of pitch.

Talking to a Private news channel, she said that the PPP only political party in the country that was reaching out to all provinces during its election campaign, adding, that the PPP will be influenced by all the provinces including Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

She said the next general elections hopefully be free, fair and transparent as a

powerful Election Commission was freely working in the country, her party will win the coming general elections with a thumping majority.

Shehla Raza added that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari through his hard work and competency has not only won the hearts of the nation rather leaders of the international community are also acknowledging his leadership capabilities.

PPP government had always worked for poor people and downtrodden segments of the society, she noted.

Replying to a query, she said PPP is not just a party but a movement inspired by its founding chairman Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and chairperson Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

Action against illegal commercial use of residential buildings in G-13, G-14 soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) is soon going to start action against unauthorized commercial use of residential buildings in Sectors G-13 and G-14 of the federal capital. "In this regard, the authority has already issued notices to the owners of illegal and unauthorized use of residential properties for commercial purposes in the sectors," sources in the FGEHA told APP.

As per the Islamabad Capital Territory Building Control Regulation 2020, they said that the FGEHA has decided to take legal

action against property owners involved in unlawful or unauthorized commercial use of residential buildings in the sectors. The sources said that the authority has issued formal show-cause notices and warnings to them to immediately cease non-conforming use of residential buildings.

Moreover, they said the authority has cautioned the property owners that failure to comply the orders would result in a fine of Rs. 500,000 in addition to sealing such properties.

They informed that as many as 80 residential buildings in these sectors have been identified as in unautho-

rized and illegal commercial use, including various offices, schools, guest houses, beauty parlors, hostels, property offices, furniture showrooms, and others.

"The authority had initially issued notices in March 2023 regarding illegal commercial use of residential buildings. However, another warning has now been issued, emphasizing the immediate halt of commercial use in residential areas," they added.

The sources said that the authority is set to initiate definitive actions against violators to ensure compliance with regulations.

Minister advises Indian govt to collaborate with Pakistan to deal with smog issue

ISLAMABAD (APP): Provincial Environment Minister Bilal Afzal Tuesday advised Indian government to collaborate with Pakistan to deal seriously with the continuously toxic smog issue and urged media to plat vital role throughout year to aware public of vehicles that emit a lot of smoke on the roads.

Talking to a Private news channel, he said that the Punjab government was fully committed to holding awareness sessions for citizens to embrace healthy lifestyles and contribute to the movement to make Lahore cleaner, breathable, and environmentally friendly.

The minister also asked political parties participating in upcoming elections to include the smog issue in their manifesto, adding, awareness sessions should also be launched in the edu-

cational institutions and train children to call helpline in case they find smoke from the chimneys.

He emphasized that the crop burning in both the Punjab (Pakistani and Indian) was potentially contributing to smog in the cities on both sides, and the problem would only be resolved if the two sides sit together to resolve issue collectively with long-term policies to save future generations.

Both India and Pakistan should acknowledge the essential nature of addressing the challenge of crop residue burning, he added. The minister further explained that the recent smog in Punjab had mostly affected patients with asthma and respiratory issues, adding, before the rainfall, when smog concentration was high, people also had throat and lung infections, severe coughing and eye irritation.



ISLAMABAD: A view of construction work of Margalla Road underway during development work in Federal Capital.

Aid shipment handed to ARCS

KABUL (BNA): The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) has announced the delivery of the second batch of aid from Qatar to the earthquake-affected individuals in Herat province. According to a statement from Afghan Red Crescent Society's office, the aid, including hygiene kits, 1,643 food packages, 3,450 blankets, 20 tons of dates, and 250 tents, was handed over to Afghan Red Crescent officials at the Khwaja Abdullah Ansari Herat International Airport.

Minister visits camp

KABUL (BNA): Khalil- ur-Rahman Haqqani, Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation visited the ongoing process of repatriation in Umrah Camp in Torkham region and listened to the complaints and demands of returnee families. According to a statement released by the Ministry, Khalil -ur-Rahman Haqqani listened to the problems and demands raised by the returnees and assured of providing financial assistance to some of them.

IEA welcomes World Bank report released

KABUL (Ariana News): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan on Tuesday commented on the World Bank's report on the country's economic situation saying it "acknowledges and appreciates the accurate portrayal of facts presented in the report."

The report was issued on August 31 and highlighted positive developments in Afghanistan.

According to a statement issued by the office of the deputy prime minister for economic affairs, the IEA said it believes that positive

engagement from the international community, lifting of sanctions, and releasing frozen assets would facilitate comprehensive economic development, as well as progress in other areas.

The IEA called upon international organizations "to transparently share Afghanistan's developments, allowing the world to comprehend the actual situation in the country and the strides being made. "Furthermore, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan requests the World Bank not only to disseminate fac-

tual information about Afghanistan but also to resume and complete the projects that were previously funded but remained unfinished," statement read.

The World Bank report on Afghanistan's economic situation, stated that the inflation rate had decreased, domestic food production had risen, and the value of the afghani against foreign currencies had strengthened.

The report also noted improved export and import sector which gave national revenue a boost.

Despite no formalized constitution, law exists

KABUL (TOLOnews): Although the national constitution is not yet in place, the Islamic Emirate's spokesman stressed that Afghanistan currently holds a "law, and that the government is going towards increased legality."

Zabiullah Mujahid, despite stressing the importance of law in the country, said that the constitution is a small part of legality.

"It is not like our country lacks a law. Law exists and also enforcement. The Sharia laws are being enforced all over the country. Of course, a small part which is the constitution, which explains the formation and types of the government-- that is under-way," Mujahid said. This comes as legal analysts said that the formal confirmation of the constitution is the basic responsibility of the Islamic Emirate.

"The first responsibility is to have the law and enforcement of law. They should specify their responsibilities and authorities within the circle of law. I ask them, based on which law do your intelligence departments do the punishing?" said Abdul Shokor Dadras, a legal analyst.

"The constitution... is part of the national rule and it is defined in principles," said Mohammad Asif Faqiri, a legal analyst.

The Islamic Emirate came to power on August 15, 2021, since then Afghanistan has yet to have a constitution.

Uplift projects requested in Juwand and Badghis



KABUL (BNA): Some scholars and Mujahideen from the Juwand district in Badghis province met with Abdul Salam Hanafi, the Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs, and asked for the implementation of infrastructure projects in their district.

According to a statement from the Deputy Prime Minister's office, the participants of the meeting described Juwand as one of the most deprived and remote areas of Afghanistan.

They urged the Islamic Emirate officials to pay

more attention to the establishment of health clinics, schools, road repairs, and telecommunication networks in their district.

They also informed the Deputy Prime Minister about the social, economic, and local governance situation in Badghis

province.

Abdul Salam Hanafi, in response to the proposals, said that the leadership of the Islamic Emirate is committed to solving the problems of the people of Juwand district, using the available resources to ease their difficulties.

Nakamura's unfinished work to be resumed



JALALABAD CITY (TOLOnews): Four years after the killing of Tetsu Nakamura, a Japanese aid worker who lived for years in eastern Afghanistan and coordinated major water projects that benefitted thousands, the residents of Nangarhar said they still remember and appreciate his services and they asked the interim government to resume the work of his half-finished projects.

Faridullah Atif, who worked with Nakamura for three years, said that he was a unique role model in doing effective work and always tried to help the people.

"In his humanity, he had a special love for the Afghans, and his favorite

topic was talking about the Kunar River, he did not talk much, but he worked a lot," said Faridullah.

Some residents of Nangarhar Province said that the use of the Kunar River was Nakamura's greatest wish, and he had completed several projects in this regard.

"I urge the current government to provide the opportunity for people like-minded to Nakamura, or his family members, to provide the means to complete Dr. Nakamura's half-finished projects," said Shahidullah Hakak, a social activist.

"The Marwarid canal and its workers in Khewa and Kama districts are used by thousands of Afghans,"

said Shahid Mahmood Miakhil, a Nangarhar resident.

The local officials of Nangarhar said that they are trying to complete his half-finished projects by next year.

"We hope and expect that these projects will be completed in 2024," said Qureshi Badlon, an official of the Department of Information and Culture in Nangarhar.

Tetsu Nakamura, who was also an honorary citizen of Afghanistan due to his services, was assassinated four years ago today on December 4, in the fourth district of Jalalabad city, when he was on his way to Khiva district to evaluate a project.

Wheat yield increased by 13 per cent

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock reported that this year, 4.3 million tons of wheat were produced in the country, which is a thirteen percent increase compared to the previous year.

Musbahuddin Mustaeen, spokesman for the ministry, said a large amount of wheat produced was obtained from Helmand, Kandahar, Herat, and Kunduz provinces. "This year, 2.2 million hectares of wheat land were cultivated in the country..." said Musbahuddin Mustaeen.

Some farmers believe that to increase the amount of agricultural products in the country, the Islamic Emirate must support them.

"The problems of the farmers were lack of water and the second one was the increase in the price of chemical fertilizers, and people could not apply enough chemical fertilizers to their fields," said a farmer.

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock called for the mechanization of the country's agricultural sector. According to the officials of the chamber, investing in the mechanization of agriculture is a serious need and will make the country self-sufficient. If other canals are created and used, like the Qosh Tepa canal, we can even export wheat production," said Mirwais, deputy of chamber.

DAB vows to standardize banking services in Afghanistan

KABUL (TOLOnews): On the International Day of Banks, Da Afghanistan Bank (Afghanistan's Central Bank) said it is striving to standardize the banking services in the country.

Officials at the bank claim that in the past year they have made efforts to stabilize The afghani against foreign currency in the country.

"Da Afghanistan bank is committed to creating a standard banking system in the country so that they can provide better banking services to the Afghan people," said Hasibullah Nori, spokesperson for the bank.

December 4 marks the International Day of Banks.

The Islamic Emirate on the other hand said the government is trying to provide better banking facilities in the country and that the banking system will turn into Islamic banking in Afghanistan.

"The interest rate has been prevented in Afghanistan's banks and efforts are underway to ease money transfers, and further banking facilities have been ensured in the country. Some sanctions of

the World Bank on Afghanistan's banking system have been lifted," said Zabiullah Mujahid, spokesman for the Islamic Emirate.

In the meantime, economic analysts are of the view that the banking system in Afghanistan has had improvements in the past two decades.

"The banking system is an achievement of the past 20 years, yet we were unable to cover the greatest number of people under the banking system," Seyar Qorishi economist.

"In two decades, we

made Da Afghanistan bank the central bank of the country which means the Afghan people own a strong central bank that was supported by the World Bank," said Sayed Masoud, economist.

Following the power gain of the Islamic Emirate in the 2021, the international community imposed restrictions on Afghanistan's banks which caused serious problems in the economy and the daily lives of Afghans including the inability of Afghan traders to transfer money abroad.

Expulsion of Afghan migrants blatant oppression

KABUL (BNA): The European Union's Charge d'Affaires in Kabul, during a meeting with the Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation Khalil -ur-Rahman Haqqani condemned the forced expulsion of Afghan immigrants from Pakistan as blatant oppression.

A statement released by Refugees and Repatriation Ministry, Khalil-ur-Rahman Haqqani, the Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation expressed the desire to transform temporary returnee camps into long-term residential camps during the meeting with the EU Charge

d'Affaires, Raffaella Iodice.

The EU Charge d'Affaires emphasized their continued support for returnees, criticizing Pakistan's recent decision as blatant oppression.

The EU envoy said that they closely monitor the situation of expelled migrants and aim to amplify their voices globally to garner more assistance for involuntary returnees.

Additionally, the deputy representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugee in Afghanistan commended the management of the migrant crisis by the Islamic Emirate.

Haqqani highlighted that

with the onset of winter, migrants' difficulties intensify, urging on emergency aid while emphasizing the need for long-term solutions such as shelter reconstruction, job creation, and essential support.

He mentioned the challenges of transferring returnees to certain provinces during the winter and expressed the intention to convert temporary camps into long-term residential ones, emphasizing the need for humanitarian assistance.

Furthermore, he stressed the importance of addressing both official border gates and informal routes used by migrants.

UN Chief describes Afghanistan as a 'Forever Emergency'

KABUL (Khaama Press): The UNHCR representative for Afghanistan, Leonard Zulu, describes the situation in Afghanistan as a "forever emergency" exacerbated by a government isolating itself and undermining human rights.

"The emergency that we had in August 2021 did not disappear," he said about the Taliban takeover that left much of the world stunned, as reported by EUobserver.com.

Leonard Zulu, the UNHCR representative for Afghanistan, emphasized that the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan is a "forever emergency" with the potential to recur due to a funding shortfall.

Zulu, whose office is located in Kabul, shared the challenges faced by Afghans and aid agencies during a visit to Brussels on December 4th. He highlighted that last year,

approximately six million people in Afghanistan were on the brink of famine, as reported by EUobserver.

Afghanistan faces multiple challenges, including 29 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and the impact of earthquakes and floods that have devastated communities and displaced populations.

Since November, aid agencies in Afghanistan have had to deal with the deportation of nearly half a million Afghans from Pakistan, where 1.7 million Afghans had sought refuge, some since the Soviet occupation and others following the 2021 Taliban takeover. Many of these forced returnees have never been to Afghanistan and are being asked to reintegrate during the harsh winter months.

Aid agencies are under pressure due to the influx of Afghan returnees from

Pakistan, which peaked at 20,000 daily arrivals but has now reduced to around 3,000 to 4,000.

Moreover, arrivals from Iran are adding to the strain, stretching the resources of humanitarian organizations.

The Taliban have issued

around 50 edicts and restrictions in the past two years, including banning women and girls from education, imposing full-body coverings, limiting access to public spaces, and prohibiting them from working for international aid agencies.

13-year-old enmity comes to an end in Farah

FARAH CITY (Pajhwok): A 13-year-old enmity between two families has come to an end and turned into friendship in Pushtkoh district of western Farah province, thanks to mediation of local officials.

In a statement, the Information and Culture Department said a jirga organized in this regard was attended by the police chief, director of Vice and Virtue, and a number of other local officials and tribal elders.

Abdul Majeed Samim, director of vice and virtue department, told Pajhwok that the enmity between the two tribes spanned over 13 years.

He said that two people had been killed on both sides as a result of the feud.

Samim added they were able to resolve the enmity following many efforts and cooperation of tribal elders.

The hidden dimensions of insecurity in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Taliban administration in Afghanistan considers one of its achievements in the past two years to be a reduction in conflicts and the establishment of overall security. While this claim is not entirely unfounded when it comes to armed confrontations, the question remains whether the security of citizens is truly guaranteed with a decrease in hostilities between opposing groups. Are people now able to continue their lives in complete safety?

Afghanistan has been a battleground for various conflicts and insecurity for at least four decades, with civilians bearing the brunt of these hardships.

With the return of the Taliban group to power on August 15, 2021, the type of war that had plagued Afghanistan for four decades effectively came to an end.

According to Rustam Khadarov, a Tajik expert at the Valdai Club in Russia, the Taliban are now consolidating their power and preparing for long-term governance in Afghanistan.

This expert argues in an article titled "Challenges in Afghanistan: Is the Problem Decreasing?" that a "bad peace" has replaced a "good war" in Afghanistan. However, "bad peace" and "good war" are not clearly explained. It appears that Afghanistan, which had previously suffered from war, has now become a victim of this "bad peace" and its consequences, which cast doubt on the Taliban's claim of providing security.

While it cannot be denied that the war in Afghanistan has come to an end, analyzed data on the level of attacks, armed conflicts, and other forms of hostilities that fall under the definition of war show a significant decrease in engagement in Afghanistan. But has social security, or the "social security" of citizens, been ensured? The answer to this question is evident in the concept of "bad peace" and its consequences currently affecting Afghanistan's people.

"Social security" is a comprehensive sociological concept, and various definitions have been proposed.

The most general definition relies on the "feeling of fear of crime in the social environment," indicating that "social security is nothing but a state of people's peace of mind, free from fear, threats, and anxiety, and the protection of their lives, property, honour, identity, and beliefs from any threat and harm."

With this definition of "social security," it can be said that despite a significant reduction in armed conflicts in Afghanistan, the "social security" of the people has been severely weakened.

Fear, threats, and harm threaten various aspects of their lives in Afghanistan.

In addition to "social security," the sense of security is also considered an important indicator of social well-being in reports by the United Nations.

However, the realities in Afghanistan not only fail to meet the criteria outlined for "social security" but in many cases, violate entirely them. The United Nations Human Rights Council's report on the status of women in Afghanistan is one

example that suggests that "crimes against humanity" may have occurred in Afghanistan.

Experts from this council warn that the current situation in Afghanistan may lead to "sexual harassment," which is considered a "crime against humanity" in the Rome Statute.

Human rights have also been severely undermined in Afghanistan, and reports from the human rights monitoring organization (Rawadari organization) indicate that women have been completely deprived of access to justice in the Taliban's judicial system.

Furthermore, the human rights organization "Afghanistan Witness" has recently announced in its research that the officials of the Taliban administration have flogged more than 400 individuals on charges such as "adultery, homosexuality, and theft" since October of last year, executed at least two individuals, and stoned at least one person.

Another study by the same organization shows that violence and hos-



ilities against women in the Taliban's orders have not been reduced; instead, they have spread significantly in the online space and silence women.

All the evidence of human rights violations and the lack of social security in Afghanistan points to the consequences of "bad peace." As

Rustam Khadarov, a Tajik expert at the Valdai Club in Russia, puts it, "Today, global and regional players in our geopolitical region have chosen 'bad peace with the Taliban' instead of 'good war with the Taliban,' and its consequences have plunged people's lives in Afghanistan into crisis."



GAZA: A Palestinian father holding the dead body of his child after Israeli airstrikes in Rafah.

Fazl casts doubts over holding polls due to security situation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: As the much-awaited general elections draw closer, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam's (JUI-F) Maulana Fazlur Rehman has cast doubts over the staging of polls due to the "unstable" security situation in some parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

"There is no police in Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, and Lakki Marwat. Can the polls be staged in this situation of unrest," the senior politician wondered while addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Tuesday.

In the presser, Fazl said that two provinces — Balochistan and KP — are currently in a state of turmoil and called for the creation of uniform circumstances in the country. Fazl also questioned the possibility of a successful political campaign in these circumstances. He, however, clarified that his remarks don't mean that the party wants deferral of the polls.

As Pakistan is set to stage the general elections next year on February 8, Fazl said that his party is ever ready to contest in the polls. He reiterated his demand for a "peaceful environment" for the polls. The JUI-F chief said that an electoral alliance has been made with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) for seat adjustments in the polls.

Sharing the details of the alliance, Fazl said that committees have been formed. "We will cooperate in KP and PML-N will cooperate in Punjab," he added. He further stated that JUI-F has led a campaign alongside PML-N and it wants to maintain the ties with Nawaz Sharif-led party. Speaking about the intra-party elections of his political rival Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Fazl said that the polls revealed that "it is not a party". "Those who change their loyalties were forcefully included in PTI," he added.

SHC rejects police report on missing persons

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court on Tuesday rejected the police report on the petitions related to the recovery of the missing persons and ordered to speed up the steps for the recovery of the citizens.

A two-member bench headed by Justice Naimatullah Phulpoto heard the petitions related to the recovery of missing persons. Among the petitioners are Asma, Saghir al-Nisa, Muhammad Qadir, Mumtaz Ali, Ghulam Mustafa and others. The family of the missing citizen waived and said that I beg with folded hands to close the case and this spectacle too. Nothing has been known about my brother Furqan, he is being pushed. When we go to the police, they say we don't have it. It has been 9 years since missing Furqan and Nadeem could not be recovered. The police officials submitted a report to the court. The court dismissed the police report as a stereotype.

The court expressed its displeasure over the lack of progress in the recovery of the missing persons. Justice Naimatullah Phulpoto remarked that the police report is traditional. Why does the police do nothing to recover the missing persons? The public prosecutor submitted that 21 JIT and 60 task force meetings have been held. Justice Naimatullah Phulpoto inquired that where is the report of Secretary Interior?

The public prosecutor submitted that the Home Secretary's report has been submitted. The court sought reports from the police authorities including the Home Secretary, Defense Secretary. The court ordered to speed up the steps to recover the missing persons.

Meanwhile, the Sindh High Court (SHC) on Tuesday ordered Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) to end 'illegal' charged parking across the port city. A single bench of SHC Judge Justice Nadeem Akhtar was hearing the case related to 'illegal' charged parking in Karachi.

PHC orders ECP for submission of election schedule

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Abdul Shakoor and Justice Syed Arshad Ali ordered Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for submission of election schedule after announcement, on Tuesday. ECP's lawyer Mohsin Kamran advocate while Ali Azeem Advocate appeared on behalf Naeem Ahmad Khattak advocate, in writ plea seeking general election in Pakistan within 90 days. The writ pleaded that ECP had issued press release on 17th August 2023 while stating that delimitation is initiated across Pakistan and will be concluded in December.

Therefore, holding elections isn't possible within 90 days, the writ stated. Chief Election Commissioner, ECP's members and Secretary Supreme Judicial Council were made respondents in the petition. The polling for assemblies within 90 days after dissolution of the house is a constitutional obligation but election is delayed by playing various tactics and its sabotaging the Constitution of Pakistan, the writ pleaded. ECP must take actions against actors involved in

sabotaging elections which is constitutional obligation, the petition added. PHC was informed that ECP had announced general election on 8th February 2024 but didn't communicated schedule in this regard.

ECP's lawyer Mohsin Kamran Sadiq argued that schedule will be issued 45 days before commencement of polling day. He added that the writ had pleaded to stop delimitation and holding of election but both pleas aren't maintainable at this stage as processes had been concluded. ECP's lawyer added that the polling date is announced, and everyone would be aware about schedule on due date before 45 days from 8th February. However, the counsel for petitioner argued for provision schedule in this regard as a constitutional obligation.

In the meantime, Justice Arshad Ali remarked that everyone is hopeful except applicant's lawyer in this regard. PHC ordered ECP for submission of election schedule after announcement while adjourned further hearing.

PHC orders CS for submission of reply in 'Sehat Card': PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice SM Atique Shah ordered Chief Secretary and Secretary

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for submission of reply regarding closure of 'Sehat Card' by caretaker provincial government.

Former Member Provincial Assembly Fazal Elahi challenged closure of 'Sehat Card' by caretaker provincial government and claimed that the facility was initiated by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government for health facilitation to the residents of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had made legislation for 'Sehat Card' but caretaker government had closed the facility without jurisdiction, the counsel argued. He added that closure of 'Sehat Card' had face poor people unbearable circumstance to obtain health facility.

The caretaker government act is against Article 4, 9, 24A and 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan as sacked free health facility from public, the counsel stated. He argued that health facility is fundamental right of every citizen under the constitution. The counsel argued PHC to direct caretaker for restoration of 'Sehat Card' facility while the court ordered Chief Secretary along with Secretary Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for submission of reply.

CM KP reiterates to equip police with modern arms

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting to review law and order in the province, and deliberate upon the matters related to strengthening of police force in merged districts, was held here on Tuesday with the Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah in the chair.

Besides Caretaker Provincial Ministers Dr. Aamir Abdullah, Barrister Feroz Jamal Shah Kakakhel, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur, Additional Chief Secretary Home Muhammad Abid Majeed and other senior officials attended the meeting. Divisional Commissioners and Regional Police Officers participated in the meeting via video link.

The meeting was briefed in detail on the overall situation of law and order, challenges, measures for maintenance of law and order by the police force and future course of action for stringent security measures.

Addressing the participants, the chief minister said that maintenance of law and order in the province was one of the priority areas of the caretaker government, adding that all required resources would be provided to the police force on a priority basis to achieve the end results. He said that the role of the police force in maintaining law and order and protecting the lives and properties of citizens is praise worthy, however in view of the existing situation, the police force needs to work with more vigilance and coordination so as to achieve the desired results.

The Chief Minister made it clear that the provincial government would go all out to fully equip the police force and morale of police jawans would be kept high at all cost.

The chief minister directed the quarters concerned to come up with a viable plan for strengthening and capacity building of the police force in newly merged districts, adding that the incumbent government would implement that plan in letter and spirit. He also directed the authorities concerned to devise a mechanism for reward and appreciation of police officers and officials having outstanding performance adding that efforts should also be made to improve the existing system of prosecution to ensure punishment of those involved in terrorism and other crimes of serious nature.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi conferring award of Nishan-i-Pakistan upon Dr. Sydna Mufaddal Saifuddin, Head of Dawoodi Bohra community, at a special investiture ceremony, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

PML-Q eyes 'seat adjustment' with PML-N

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) is eyeing 'seat adjustment' with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in the general election 2024.

Sources said the PML-Q is considering seat adjustment with the PML-N on more than two National Assembly and Punjab Assembly seats in Gujrat. It emerged that Chaudhry Shafay Hussain wants to contest the election on both MPA seats from Gujrat. PML-Q chief Chaudhry

Shujaat Hussain is expected to meet former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif to discuss the 'seat adjustment'.

It is to be noted that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's Parliamentary Board has already opposed seat adjustment with the PML-Q. The general elections will be held on February 8, 2024. The date was mutually agreed upon during a meeting between the chief election commissioner and the president of Pakistan on the directions

of the Supreme Court.

On Monday evening, sources claimed that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) have agreed on a seat-to-seat adjustment formula after talks between Nawaz Sharif and Maulana Fazlur Rehman. The agreement was reportedly reached during a crucial meeting between Nawaz Sharif and JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman at the PML-N Secretariat in Lahore's Model Town.

PTI's intra-party elections challenged

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding leader Akbar S. Babar on Tuesday challenged the intra-party elections, citing violations of the Election Act, 2017.

He filed a plea contending that the whole process was a deception and undertaken by depriving members of their voting rights. Babar also submitted evidence, including video footage, to the Election Commission, stating that key election details were not disclosed even when demanded. He further said the party failed to follow legal requirements.

He urged the Election Commission to declare the intra-party elections null and void, and order the polling afresh with a clear direction to enforce election rules. These instructions should be issued to all major political parties, he added. Earlier, the ECP had on Nov 23 ordered the PTI to conduct elections within 20 days.

Arrest warrants of Murad Saeed issued

F.P. Report

LAHORE: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Tuesday issued non-bailable arrest warrants for eight Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders, including former federal ministers Murad Saeed and Azam Swati, in case related to arson, chaos, and anarchy following former prime minister Imran Khan's arrest on May 9.

According to details, ATC Admin Judge Abhar Gul Khan issued warrants citing PTI leaders' involvement in setting ablaze police vehicles at Rahat Bakery Chowk in Lahore on May 9. The arrest warrants were issued against Murad Saeed, Azam Swati, Farrukh Habib, Zubair Khan Niazi, Hafiz Farhat, Wasiq Qayyum, Hamid Raza and Imtiaz Ahmed. The anti-terrorism court issued the arrest warrants on an application moved by the police who told the court that they could not arrest the accused so far. The case was registered against the accused at Lahore's Sarwar Road Police Station. The inquiry officer informed the court that the accused have gone underground fearing arrest, requesting for issuance of their non-bailable arrest warrants.

PTI announces political activities

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Core Committee has announced its commitment to intensify peaceful political activities nationwide, firmly opposing any election rigging by administrative officers.

The committee, in a statement released on Tuesday after its meeting extended congratulations to all officials, including the newly-elected Chairman, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, who secured an unopposed election following the nomination by PTI founder Imran Khan.

The Core Committee affirmed its unwavering support for Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and conveyed good wishes for his tenure.

Pak Navy inducts 5th ATR aircraft

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The induction ceremony of 5th ATR of Pakistan Navy was held at Naval Aviation Base PNS Mehran, Karachi. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the occasion as Chief Guest.

The newly inducted ATR aircraft, acquired from PIA, is equipped with day and night flying capability to undertake ferry, logistics support, Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC), General Evacuation (GENEVAC) and training missions. Pakistan Navy is in the process of acquiring ATR aircrafts from various sources and is modernising them to carryout maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare missions at sea. Being a commercial aircraft it has very low operating cost as compared to tailor made military aircraft. This is the 5th aircraft which has been acquired for the purpose.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief of the Naval Staff highlighted the importance of evolving geo-strategic environment in the Indian Ocean Region and emphasized the need to have a potent naval force in order to counter emerging challenges. He underlined the significance of strong maritime defence for Pakistan and reiterated that induction of modern aircraft will enhance Pakistan Navy's capability of safeguarding our maritime frontiers.

Earlier during his welcome address, Commander Pakistan Fleet Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi highlighted that induction of ATR will ensure sustained operations from western seaboard through regular logistics and personnel movements. Later, Chief of the Naval



Staff handed over ATR documents to Commander Pakistan Fleet. The ceremony was attended by Flag Officers, Ex Aviators of Pakistan Navy and reps of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA).

Maritime Security Workshop held: It is a matter of great satisfaction for me that Pakistan Navy is holding its sixth Maritime Security Workshop at Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore. The Workshop has become an annual signature event of Pakistan Navy since 2017. It is pleasing to know that MARSEW is gaining traction and growing interest in the academic circle and at the institutional level. This is indeed a national need, and the one, which is sync with the demands of rapidly changing global trends.

Understanding oceans and maritime security is central to global geopolitics and economics security of nations. Pakistan cannot remain oblivious to geopolitical shifts in the maritime province of Indian Ocean or the demands of Blue Economy as an essential pillar of country's economy. Pakistan's economic future is strongly tied to sea and a stable maritime security order in the region. Despite seas acknowledged as the common heritage of mankind, contested claims over maritime resources are spawning friction as never witnessed before in human history. New developments

and simmering conflicts on the shores of Indian Ocean necessitate thorough understanding and informed debate to assimilate their wider impact on regional states. Increasing militarization of Indian Ocean and any escalation in crisis could spark a conflict with repercussions for the entire region. This will devour the economic advancement of many countries, perhaps in manner, which is inconceivable.

The significance of blue economy is vital for countries like Pakistan to draw appropriate and sustained economic benefits. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, related to oceans, requires all major stakeholders including Government agencies, policy makers, NGOs, scientists, researchers and local communities to step up their efforts towards conservation and sustainable use of ocean-based resources. Initiatives that help identify avenues of untapped blue potential can provide an impetus to overcome development and sustenance challenges, as well as reinforce national security.

Understanding and recognizing the Oceans, the allied potential therein and what ails the blue world would be the first step. I wish all the MARSEW participants an insightful inter-activity and a pleasant stay at Pakistan Navy War College.

UN says 'not possible'

(Continued from Page 1)

The summit, which was attended by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as the lead member of the Saudi delegation, was in Qatar. The representatives of the six Gulf nations were joined by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan who said there had been \$23bn worth of trade between Türkiye and the GCC countries.

He went on to condemn Israel's continued bombardment of the Gaza Strip, adding: " Netanyahu is committing war crimes against humanity in Gaza." And he said that Netanyahu "is pushing the entire region into danger for the sake of his political future." The meeting of GCC leaders took place in Qatar as Israeli forces launched their long-awaited storm of the main city in the southern Gaza Strip, where hospitals were overrun with scores of Palestinian dead and wounded.

In what appeared to be the biggest ground assault since the truce collapsed last week, residents said Israeli tanks had entered the eastern parts of Khan Younis for the first time, crossing from the Israeli border fence and advancing west. Some took up positions inside the town of Bani Suhaila on Khan Younis' eastern outskirts, while others continued further and were stationed on the edge of a Qatari-funded housing development called Hamad City, residents said.

After days of ordering residents to flee the area, Israeli forces dropped new leaflets on Tuesday with instructions to stay inside shelters during the assault. "In the coming hours, the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) will begin launching an intensive attack on your area of residence to destroy the terrorist organization Hamas," said the leaflets. "Don't move out yet. For your safety, stay in the shelters and the hospitals where you are. Don't get out. Going out is dangerous. You have been warned."

But Israel's bombardment has driven 80 percent of Gaza's 2.3 million residents from their homes, most fleeing south — an area more densely populated than London. And according to Gaza health officials deemed reliable by the United Nations, more than 15,800 people are confirmed dead, with thousands more missing and feared buried under rubble. The declaration went onto to call for the immediate resumption of a humanitarian truce in the Gaza Strip in order to achieve a sustainable ceasefire and the assurance of that all humanitarian aid would reach its intended destinations.

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The summit pledged its ongoing support for the Palestinian people and its continued support to alleviate the suffering of the residents of the Gaza Strip.

The GCC statement also agreed to help rebuild "what the Israeli war machine destroyed in its attacks on the Strip during the past years." The GCC leaders warned that if the war continued there was a danger of the conflict expanding to other regions in the Middle East, something it warned would lead to "dire consequences for the peoples of the region and for international peace and security." And they called on the international community to intervene to establish a ceasefire and protect civilians.

The council reiterated its demand for an end to the occupation of Palestine, and its support for the sovereignty of the Palestinian people over all the occupied territories. It praised Saudi Arabia's continued efforts and its initiative in partnership with the Arab League, the European Union, the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to revive the peace process, in accordance with international law, United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002.

Earlier in his opening remarks, Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani called on the UN Security Council to force Israel to return to the negotiating table over the war in Gaza.