

Two cops injured in blast
F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Two constables were seriously injured in a blast near FC convoy at Tank Hathala Road in Dera Ismail Khan. According to police sources, the incident took place during road swapping near the farmhouse of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amin Farmhouse. Police said that a heavy police contingent reached the spot and cordon off the area and started search operation.



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Constitutional amendment

Govt trying to bring consensus: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Saturday that despite having numbers, the coalition government was making all-out efforts for the creation of a broader consensus on the proposed constitutional package.

Talking to the media outside Parliament House along with the senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Haneef Abbasi, he said the process of consultations for the constitutional package was ongoing and Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto held meetings with Jamiat Ulama-e-Pakistan Amir Fazlur Rahman and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. "We are democratic people, we try to create a consensus among all political stakeholders," he said adding that in democratic societies, efforts were made for consensus building through consultations.

He said that by changing the rules within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the powers of posting and transfer of police officers have been taken over by the Chief Minister from the IG. The minister said that the PTI aimed to obtain political objectives from the police. He alleged that the KP Government wanted to control the people of the province politically.

Tarar said that the people from Punjab were also kept in KP and blame was shifted on the institutions for what they called their disappearance. The KP chief minister invaded the capital and used government resources against the Federation, he said. The minister said the PTI has the habit of blaming others but they did not look into their behaviour.

Attaullah Tarar said that the PTI leadership threatened that the homes and businesses of those members would be set ablaze who would cheat the founder chairman of the PTI. He said the PTI had no problem with those working against the interest of the country, but they want to punish those who ditch Imran Khan. Foremost was the interest of the country, political leaders and political parties come second, he opined. He said if any legislator was attacked, the state would take action and culprits would be given exemplary punishment.

The minister remarked that the PTI

Mengal refuses to become part of amend

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M) Chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal on Saturday refused to become part of the much-touted proposed constitutional amendment by saying that his party won't be a party in the passage of the constitutional amendment, which he claimed, was being "forcefully" pushed through.

Speaking to media after meeting Jamiat-Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman to mull over constitutional amendment, he said that constitution wasn't a secret document and it was right of every citizen and political parties to get to know about any tweaks in the constitution. "The question is who is orchestrating this move of bringing constitutional amendment," he said in a thinly-veiled reference to powers that be.

Ji calls for consultations on amend

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman said on Saturday that the government should hold threadbare consultations on the matter of much-touted constitutional amendment. Holding a press conference in Lahore, the JI Emir said that sale and purchase of votes had become a common practice in the parliament.

"This practice resumes whenever a new amendment is forced to be passed by those who actually orchestrate these moves. The politicians are made figureheads, the Supreme Court must summon those who are behind this amendment," he mentioned.

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, speaking to the media on Saturday, said he has maintained constant engagement with JUI-F chief Maulana Fazal ur Rehman regarding the constitutional amendments.

Bilawal stated that following discussions in Karachi, there is complete agreement between the PPP and JUI on the content of the legislation linked to judicial reforms. During today's meeting with Maulana Fazal ur Rehman, Chairman Bilawal expressed his desire for the JUI chief to present the legislation in Parliament, stressing that the draft is as much JUI's as it is PPP's. The discussion, which initially focused on forming a constitutional court, has concluded with consensus on establishing constitutional benches. The aim is to strengthen Parliament by reversing the 19th Amendment.

Bilawal clarified that the draft aligns with Maulana

Fazal ur Rehman's proposals and addressed misconceptions that the PPP or JUI have compromised their principles. The draft reflects the consensus on judicial reforms and also includes Maulana Fazal ur Rehman's demands as per his manifesto, particularly regarding interest and the Council of Islamic Ideology.

Bilawal also mentioned that the meeting with the PTI's founding leader, previously discussed between PTI and Maulana Fazal ur Rehman, has now taken place. He believes Maulana Fazal ur Rehman will engage with PTI to gather their input, with the expectation that PTI will support the draft since it contains no provisions objectionable to them. He stated that PTI must now demonstrate its commitment to the political process, emphasising that success in politics comes through compromise and consensus.

Bilawal further remarked that neither the PPP nor Maulana Fazal ur Rehman bear responsibility

going forward, having left no stone unturned politically. The onus now is on the PTI. He underscored that the Constitution, passed down by their elders, is why both PPP and Maulana Fazal ur Rehman have worked tirelessly on this legislation. He stressed that it should not be viewed as a government bill, and it would be a political victory for all democratic forces if Maulana Fazal ur Rehman presents the bill, which protects both democracy and the Constitution, and it is passed.

Bilawal said that passing the amendment by consensus would be akin to the triumphs of the 18th Amendment and the 1973 Constitution. However, passing it by majority without consensus would be a setback. He noted that the government has shown great patience. He hoped that the PTI would learn from Maulana Fazal ur Rehman's experience and political acumen. If PTI pursues an alternative path, the responsibility will rest on them, Chairman PPP said.

Govt desires to pass amendment with broad-based consensus: Khawaja Asif

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif said on Saturday that the government desired to pass the 26th Constitutional Amendment with broad-based consensus.

Speaking to the media outside the Parliament, he said, "We have required numbers for the passage of the 26th Constitutional Amendment, but we seek to develop a broader consensus in the National Assembly and the Senate." The minister said that the primary objective of the amendment is to establish the supremacy of Parliament, which guarantees the Constitution of the country. "We want to put an end to the encroachment on Parliament and ensure that the supremacy of this forum, as promised by the Constitution of Pakistan, is upheld," he added. Khawaja Asif further said that all political parties unanimously agreed that the supremacy of Parliament must not be compromised. He said that elected representatives have the authority to legislate for the welfare of the public, and the minority should not impose its decisions on the majority.

Addressing the issue of misinformation, the minister criticized the creation of a false narrative suggesting that members of the Senate and National Assembly had been kidnapped. "They should reveal the names of those allegedly kidnapped, imprisoned, or held hostage," he said. He cited a fabricated incident in Lahore as an example of how such falsehoods are being circulated. Without naming any specific party, the minister remarked that a particular political party consistently developed fake narratives to advance its agenda. In response to a question, Khawaja Asif dismissed claims that some parties were blackmailing the government and said that constitutional amendments always require time to reach an agreement.

was crying hoarse for political face-saving, otherwise, they knew the ruling alliance had secured the numbers needed for the amendment. Replying to media person questions, he said there are other options within the constitution and law but the PML-N leadership and party thought that a consensus should be created on the amendments.

The information minister said the government had an open mind in moving ahead with constitutional amendments. He maintained that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders were nervous about meeting their leader. In terms of judicial reforms, efforts were being made for consensus in the wider national interest, but if that was not possible, other options while remaining within the scope of the constitution and law were available.

To a question, he said that elements behind spreading fake news of rape have been traced. "A woman belonging to Karachi who posted fake news on social media yesterday has been traced", he told the media. He said during recent student protests, students were not tortured. He said that students were brought to the streets through an organized cam-

paign and names of the PTI leaders behind this would be disclosed. He said an FIR has been registered against those who took part in this campaign.

Ruling out any concession to those involved in the £190 million scandal, Toshakhana and cipher cases. The minister said that the £ 190 million case was a mega corruption case in the history of Pakistan. "There is a zero-tolerance policy in this regard, no NRO will be given to a criminal," he added. The minister demanded that May 9 cases should be brought to a logical conclusion as soon as possible by awarding punishment to the culprits.

The minister said the National Assembly session was adjourned for further consultations with Maulana Fazlur Rehman and other political parties to create a broader consensus. He said PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Hamza Shahbaz Sharif were also coming to Islamabad. Replying to a query, he said there has never been any bitterness with any journalist. He said he always had tried to work for the welfare of the media community and was available for freedom of expression 24 hours a day.

JUI-F, PPP agree on amend: Bilawal

F.P. Report

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No decision on amend, PTI tells Fazl

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The PTI leaders, who met with JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman at his residence in Islamabad on Saturday, said they could not take any decision on the proposed 26th constitutional amendments unless they met with the former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan.

Members of the party's delegation told the JUI-F chief that this morning they kept waiting outside the

Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi for hours, but were not allowed inside to meet their leader. PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar, Salman Akram Raja, Asad Qaiser, Ali Zafar and the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) Chairman Hamid Raza were those who met with

Maulana Fazl. As the meeting was in progress, Balochistan National Party (BNP) head Sardar Akhtar Mengal, who had reached Islamabad from Dubai last night, reached the JUI-F

chief's residence. Mengal's meeting with Maulana Fazl in the present context is being termed very important. Political leaders from PPP and PML-N, in their bid to develop a consensus among political parties on the amendments, have been visiting Maulana Fazl's home for the last few days almost every day in order to enlist his support ahead of the passage of these amendments by both Houses of the parliament.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman PPP, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari called on Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif.

PM calls for efforts in raise awareness on breast cancer

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday emphasized the importance of raising awareness and promoting early detection of breast cancer, particularly among women.

Highlighting the global prevalence of breast cancer as the most common form of cancer affecting women, he noted that a significant number of deaths occurred in low and middle-income countries, including Pakistan.

In a message on the occasion of International Day against Breast Cancer, the prime minister acknowledged the challenges the country faced in providing adequate screening and treatment facilities for breast cancer. However, he stressed that these obstacles could be overcome through a strong focus on early diagnosis.

"There is a 98% chance of permanent recovery when breast cancer is detected at an early stage," he remarked, urging women to take proactive steps by performing regular self-examinations. The prime minister noted the positive impact of awareness campaigns in Pakistan, citing an increase in the reporting of early-stage breast cancer cases. He praised the media for its pivotal role in spreading information and urged all stakeholders, particularly media outlets, to strengthen efforts towards a comprehensive and well-coordinated national campaign.

"I call upon all stakeholders, especially the media, to galvanize efforts towards a holistic awareness campaign at the national level," the prime minister said adding "With our collective efforts, we can significantly reduce breast cancer mortality in Pakistan and provide hope for a healthier future for all women."

5 terrorists killed in operations

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security forces conducted a successful intelligence based operation in District Pishin on reported presence of Khwarij. During the operation, five khwarij were apprehended and a large quantity of weapons, ammunition and explosives including 3 x Suicide Vests were seized. Apprehended Khwarij were involved in multiple terrorist attacks and were planning to target security forces as well as innocent civilians.

In an other operation in District Zhob, during a fire exchange with security forces, two khwarij were sent to hell. In ensuing sanitisation of the area, weapons and ammunition were also recovered in large quantity. Security forces of Pakistan remain steadfast in their commitment to eradicate terrorism from the country and protect innocent civilians from this menace.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday commended the officers and soldiers of security forces for successful operation against Fitna al-Khawarij terrorists in districts Pishin and Zhob.

Drone targeted Netanyahu home

JERUSALEM (Reuters): A drone was launched toward Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's home in the northern Israeli town of Caesarea on Saturday, his spokesman said, adding that the premier was not in the vicinity and there were no casualties. Earlier, the Israeli military said that a drone was launched from Lebanon and that it had hit a building. It was not immediately clear what the building was.

Two more drones that crossed into Israeli territory were intercepted, the military said. There were no casualties reported, according to the Israeli ambulance service and police said explosions had been heard in Caesarea, coastal town where Netanyahu has a holiday home. The drone attack was not immediately claimed by the Lebanese Iran-backed group Hezbollah, which has been trading fire with Israel since last October, or any other militant group.

Meanwhile, the world's final glimpse of Hamas' leader was rough and raw, showing him wounded and cornered as he sat in a bombed-out Palestinian home and faced down the Israeli drone filming him, hurling a stick at it. For Israel, the scene was one of victory, showing Yahya Sinwar, the architect of Oct. 7, broken and defeated. But many in the Arab and Muslim world — whether supporters of Hamas or not — saw something different in the grainy footage: a defiant martyr who died fighting to the

end.

Clips from the released drone footage went viral on social media, accompanied by quotes from Sinwar's speeches in which he declared that he would rather die on the battlefield. An oil painting of a masked Sinwar sitting proudly on an armchair was widely shared, apparently inspired by the last image of him alive. "By broadcasting the last minutes of the life of Yahya Sinwar, the occupation made his life longer than the lives of his killers," Osama Gaweesh, an Egyptian media personality and journalist, wrote on social media.

In Gaza, reactions to Sinwar's death were mixed. Some mourned his killing, while others expressed relief and hope that it could bring an end to the devastating war triggered by the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel that he is said to have directed. Across the Arab and Muslim world, and away from the devastation in Gaza, opinions varied. One thing, though, was clear. The footage was hailed by supporters and even some critics as evidence of a man killed in confrontation who at least wasn't hidden in a tunnel surrounded by hostages as Israel has said he was for much of the last year.

Three days after he was killed, Israel's military dropped leaflets in south Gaza, showing another image of Sinwar lying dead on a chair, with his finger cut and blood running down his forehead. "Sinwar destroyed your lives. He hid in a dark hole and was

liquidated while escaping fearfully," the leaflet said. "I don't think there is a Palestinian leader of the first rank who died in a confrontation (like Sinwar), according to what the leaked Israeli version shows," said Sadeq Abu Amer, head of the Palestinian Dialogue Group, an Istanbul-based think tank.

Unlike Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh, who was killed in his hotel room in Iran, or the leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah group Hassan Nasrallah, bombed in an underground bunker by dozens of massive munitions, Sinwar was killed while apparently fighting Israeli forces, more than a year after the war began. Iran, the Shiite powerhouse and a main backer of Hamas, went further. It contrasted Sinwar's death with that of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Tehran's archenemy.

In a statement by Iran's UN Mission, it said Saddam appeared disheveled out of an underground hole, dragged by US forces while "he begged them not to kill him despite being armed."

Sinwar, on the other hand, was killed in the open while "facing the enemy," Iran said. In a strongly worded statement, the Cairo-based Al-Azhar, the highest seat of Sunni Muslim learning in the world, blasted Israel's portrayal of Sinwar as a terrorist. Without naming Sinwar, the statement said that the "martyrs of the resistance" died defending their land and their cause.

Xi calls for troops to boost war preparedness

BEIJING (AFP): Chinese President Xi Jinping called this week for troops to strengthen their preparedness for war, state media reported on Saturday, just days after Beijing staged large-scale military drills around Taiwan.

Xi made his comments while visiting a brigade of the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force on Thursday, according to state-run broadcaster CCTV. Xi said the military should "comprehensively strengthen training and preparation for war, (and) ensure troops have solid combat capabilities", CCTV reported. Soldiers must "enhance their strategic deterrent and combat capability", Xi said.

China, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory, has stepped up its shows of force around the self-ruled island in recent years. On Monday, Beijing had deployed fighter jets, drones, warships and coast guard vessels to encircle Taiwan — its fourth round of large-scale war games around the democratic island in just over two years. China's communist leaders have insisted they will not rule out using force to bring Taiwan under Beijing's control. Xi on Thursday said the Chinese military must "strongly safeguard the country's strategic security and core

interests", according to the CCTV report. The dispute between China and Taiwan dates back to a civil war in which the nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek were defeated by Mao Zedong's communist fighters and fled to the island in 1949. China and Taiwan have been ruled separately since then.

Chinese President Xi Jinping also called on the armed forces to forge a stronger sense of mission, deepen reform and promote innovation, so as to comprehensively enhance strategic capabilities in emerging areas.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks while attending a plenary meeting of the delegation of the People's Liberation Army and the People's Armed Police Force at the second session of the 14th National People's Congress, or China's national legislature.

Xi said strategic capabilities in emerging areas are an important part of national strategies and strategic capabilities, and are of great significance to building a great country and advancing national rejuvenation on all fronts through Chinese modernization. Six lawmakers from the military spoke at the meeting on topics ranging from defense

capabilities in cyberspace and the application of artificial intelligence to the development and utilization of unmanned combat capabilities.

Xi accelerated the development of new quality productive forces has provided rare opportunities for the development of strategic capabilities in emerging areas. He called for enabling new quality productive forces and new quality combat capabilities to effectively integrate with and boost each other. Xi urged efforts to coordinate maritime military preparedness, maritime rights and interests protection and marine economy development.

He called for optimizing aerospace layout to promote China's aerospace system development, and building cyberspace defense system to enhance the ability to safeguard national cybersecurity. Xi noted that it is necessary to step up independent and original innovation, to foster drivers of growth for new quality productive forces and new quality combat capabilities.

He stressed the need to highlight reform in emerging areas as a priority for further comprehensively deepening reform, calling for an innovation ecosystem characterized by self-reliance, openness, integration and vitality.



KARACHI: Governor of KP Faisal Karim Kundi, alongside Sindh Minister for Culture and Tourism Zulfikar Shah, views paintings after inaugurating the 'Sindh Artists Exhibition' at the World Culture Festival.

Governor KP terms Karsaz tragedy dark day

HYDERABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday asserted that the blood of the martyrs would not go in vain, and the sacrifices made by the people for democratic principles would always be remembered.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said this in a memorial gathering held in Hyderabad to commemorate the martyrs of the Karsaz incident.

He described the Karsaz tragedy as a dark day in Pakistan's political history, during which countless innocent lives were lost. Kundi emphasized that the incident strengthened the struggle for democracy and the rights of the people in the country.

He paid tribute to the late Benazir Bhutto, saying that she sacrificed her life for the establishment of peace, the supremacy of democracy, and the realization of prosperity and development for the citizens.

Kundi highlighted the Pakistan Peoples Party as the only political party whose leadership has embraced martyrdom, recalling that their founder, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, was also martyred. He reiterated that Bhutto's successor, Benazir Bhutto, fought for the supremacy of democracy, and that President Asif Ali Zardari's slogan of

"Pakistan Khappay" resonated during tough times. Today, he said, Bhutto's grandson and chairman of the party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, is leading the charge for constitutional governance and democratic stability.

Kundi urged the public to work together for the country's development and prosperity, emphasizing the importance of unity in reinforcing democracy. It's worth mentioning here that the Karsaz bombing attack occurred on October 18, 2007 in Karachi that claimed the lives of at least 180 persons and 500 injuries. Most of the dead were members of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). It was an attack on a motorcade carrying former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

"Sindh Artists Exhibition" inaugurates by Governor KP Faisal Karim Kundi

KARACHI :Under the auspices of the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi, the 24th day of the "World Culture Festival Karachi" featured the inauguration of a 6-day "Sindh Artists Exhibition" at the Ahmed Pervez Art Gallery.

The event was inaugurated by the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, along with Provincial Culture Minister Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah and President Arts Council of

Pakistan Karachi Muhammad Ahmed Shah. Notable artists, including Farrukh Shahab and Masood A. Khan, attended the exhibition.

The "Sindh Artists Exhibition" showcased paintings by 82 artists from across Sindh. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, commenting on the exhibition, expressed his gratitude to Minister Shah for the invitation, stating that the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi and the Sindh Culture Department are doing excellent work in promoting culture.

He noted that culture is a ministry in Sindh that people often do not understand, highlighting its historical significance and stating that culture can never be eradicated. He mentioned that there was peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the past and that it is one of the oldest civilizations in the world.

The exhibition features paintings by numerous artists, including Sm Naqvi, Raheela Abro, Sana Nezam, Maqbool Ahmed, Sohail Hashmi, Salman Farooqi, Bandah Ali, Masood A.Khan, Muhammad Zeeshan, Misbah Pervaiz, Manzoor Mangi, Hafsa Shaikh, Anas Abro, Akram Spaul, Abdul Jabbar Gul, Chitra Preetum, Tanweer Farooqi and other artists are included.

CM seeks sustainable plan for polio eradication

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has called for a sustainable and actionable plan to eliminate polio environmental samples from the province.

Chairing a meeting on polio eradication here on Saturday, she directed the health authorities that a robust vaccination campaign be launched at all entry points into Punjab to achieve the complete elimination of the polio virus.

In the meeting, it was decided to track and register mobile and migrant populations across Punjab to ensure comprehensive vaccination coverage.

The CM also stressed the need for accurate data collection on missing children during vaccination drives, aiming to ensure that no child is overlooked.

Proposals for enhancing the vaccination campaign's effectiveness through a detailed micro-plan were reviewed, with the ultimate goal of making Punjab polio-free.

The CM said "Our commitment is to completely eradicate polio from Punjab, and I am personally monitoring the vaccination efforts. Public cooperation is key to achieving this goal." She stressed the importance of maintaining the cold chain in line with SOPs during the campaign and expressed concern over the rise in virus circulation in the province.

The chief minister also highlighted the need to focus on districts where vaccination efforts have been weaker, calling for immediate attention and reinforcement.

Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and

Khawaja Imran Nazir, Parliamentary Secretary Uzma Kardar, Sania Ashiq, Dr. Adnan Khan, the Chief Secretary, and other senior officials attended the meeting.

CM orders construction of bar rooms, daycare centres for female lawyers: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has ordered for construction of dedicated bar rooms and daycare centres in three tehsils of Punjab to facilitate woman lawyers.

Responding to requests from female lawyers, submitted to the Lahore High Court, she directed the Department of Communications and Works (C&W) to take immediate action to establish these facilities. Construction for women's bar rooms has already begun in the remote areas of Attock, Bahawalnagar, and Lodhran. The C&W Department has developed a standardised print for these bar rooms, ensuring a uniform design across all locations.

The CM said that providing essential workplace facilities for female lawyers is crucial for their professional development. She also hinted at future plans to extend this initiative to other regions, ensuring more widespread access to these vital resources.

Advocate General Punjab Khalid Ishaq confirmed that bar rooms for women lawyers would be established in the tehsils of Jand, Fort Abbas, and Dunyapur. In addition to bar rooms, daycare centers will be built to support working mothers, and a small kitchen will be included in the tehsil bar associations for the convenience of female lawyers.

Abbasi blames PTI for deliberate attempts to destabilize Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, a senior leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and MNA from Rawalpindi, claimed on Saturday that the PTI is orchestrating a conspiracy to create chaos in the country and under-

mine its institutions. Speaking to the media outside the Parliament House, he remarked that the PML-N will not allow the politics of anarchy to take roots in the country.

He added that the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is aware that the end of anarchy will mark the end of his political career. The government is working to build consensus for the constitutional amendment package, and PTI was also given the opportunity to consult their leader. He also mentioned that the founder

of PTI is expected to oppose the constitutional amendment. Additionally, the PML-N leader pointed out that the PTI founder has never spoken out against Israel, and that PTI had not taken part in the All Parties Conference (APC) organized in support of Palestine.

126 new dengue cases confirmed in 24 hours

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Health Department confirmed on Saturday that 122 new dengue cases were recorded across the province in the last 24 hours.

According to the latest data, Rawalpindi reported 109 cases, Lahore and Rahimyar Khan each recorded three and Khanewal reported three cases, while Attock, Mianwali, Jehlum, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Muzaffargarh and Dera Ghazi Khan each reported one case.

Over the past week, 847 new cases of dengue virus infection were identified, bringing the total number of cases in Punjab for the year 2024 to 4,120. The Health Department assured the public that all necessary arrangements to counter the outbreak were in place, with a sufficient stock of medicine available in all public hospitals across the province.

In response to the rising number of cases, the department issued a strong advisory urging the public to maintain clean and dry surroundings to prevent the spread of the dengue virus. Citizens were also encouraged to fully cooperate with health teams actively working to control the outbreak.

For those seeking treatment, information, or wishing to register complaints related to dengue, the Health Department has provided a free helpline at 1033. Officials emphasized the importance of vigilance and proactive measures to contain the spread of the virus across Punjab.

Seven falcon hunters arrested

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Wildlife Department special squad carried out an operation in riverine area of Chenab River in Chinot are arrested seven individuals involved in falcon hunting.

A spokesperson for the department said on Saturday that the squad seized the captured falcon, nets, and other hunting equipment. He said the hunters used to hunt falcons along the banks of Chenab River. The team raided a local camp and successfully detained suspects despite facing resistance during the operation.

A case was being registered against the hunters, including a local landlord, and wildlife protection teams were actively conducting operations across the province on a daily basis to safeguard wildlife.

9 illegal constructions demolished

LAHORE (APP): The Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) has launched a robust operation against unauthorised constructions and illegal buildings throughout the provincial capital. During the move, the Planning Wing demolished four industrial warehouses, along with two commercial markets and three under-construction residential buildings by utilising heavy machinery.

Under the special directive of Deputy Commissioner Syed Musa Raza, the operation focused on the Wahga Zone, specifically targeting ongoing constructions in the Likhodair, Handu, and Mominpura areas. Chief Officer Shahid Abbas Khatia supervised the operation, which was led late at night by Planning Officer Saleem Ahmad.

Chief Officer Khatia urged residents to adhere to legal requirements to safeguard their valuable properties. DC Musa Raza highlighted the importance of the Planning Wing processing citizen map applications promptly, emphasizing that all staff should prioritize public service.

DC reviews cleanliness, anti-encroachment operations

LAHORE (APP): In line with Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's Suthra Punjab initiative, the Lahore district administration continues its rigorous efforts to clean the provincial capital.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Syed Musa Raza Saturday led an early morning inspection across various locations in the Wagah zone and accessed the cleanliness condition and encroachment situation of the area.

During his visit to Jallo Mor, the DC reviewed the cleanliness situation and anti-encroachment efforts. He directed authorities to regularize the makeshift

settlements in the area and held discussions with residents about sanitation issues. Locals voiced concerns about inadequate drainage, prompting the DC to order immediate action from the Assistant Commissioner Wagah and Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) to resolve these issues.

DC Musa Raza emphasized the need for continuous improvement in the LWMC's cleaning operations and instructed them to develop a comprehensive cleaning plan. He also highlighted the importance of maintaining cleanliness standards and enhancing the city's beauty by repair-

ing and upgrading green belts.

He called for strict action against encroachments and urged officials to designate proper parking spaces to avoid traffic disruptions. Ensuring the welfare of citizens and addressing their issues remains the top priority for the district administration, he mentioned.

The DC also met with dengue workers in the field, receiving updates on the status of dengue prevention in the Wagah zone. He urged them to promptly report any findings of dengue larvae or patients to prevent the spread of the virus.



LAHORE: An elderly person is working hard to earn the livelihood of the children in the provincial capital. —APP Photo

Minister highlights efforts to improve govt hospitals

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique emphasized the government's commitment to improve the conditions of government hospitals across the province. Speaking during a surprise visit to the Punjab Institute of Neurosciences (PINS) on Saturday, the minister reassured that efforts were underway to provide easier access and better facilities for patients at government hospitals, including the availability of essential medicines.

The provincial government, he reiterated, remained focused on upgrading healthcare facilities to better serve the public. During his visit, Khawaja Salman Rafique toured various departments of the PINS, inspected the medical facilities, and personally interacted with patients to inquire about their treatment. He also reviewed the sanitation conditions within the hospital, ensuring that cleanliness standards were being maintained.

The minister was accompanied by Principal General Hospital Professor Sardar Fareed Al Zafar, Medical Superintendent General Hospital Dr Farid, Medical Superintendent PINS Dr Umar Ishaq, and other relevant staff during the inspection.

**IN THE COURT OF SYED ZAMARRUD SHAH
JUDGE BANKING COURT-II**
FEDERAL JUDICIAL COMPLEX PHASE-7 HAYATABAD PESHAWAR
Case No: 187/1, Next Date: 26-11-2024, Suit for Recovery of Rs. 10,51,816/-
ZTBL Charsadda Branch **VS** Mst. Firasat Begum,
Notice Versus: Mst. Firasat Begum D/o Fazal ur Rehman R/o Munshyano Kalay Sarkay Tetara Teshil & Distt. Charsadda.
Where is the plaintiff Bank has Instituted a suit for the recovery of **Rs.10,51,816/-** against you under section 10(2) of the Financial institutions (Recovery of Finances) Ordinance 2001. You are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/ publication of the notice in the newspaper filling which an exparte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs.
Banking Court-II Peshawar

**IN THE COURT OF SYED ZAMARRUD SHAH
JUDGE BANKING COURT-II**
FEDERAL JUDICIAL COMPLEX PHASE-7 HAYATABAD PESHAWAR
Case No: 185/1, Next Date: 26-11-2024, Suit for Recovery of Rs. 14,97,476/-
ZTBL Charsadda Branch **VS** Misbah Ali,
Notice Versus: Misbah Ali S/o Said Asghar R/o Munshyano Kalay Namazgy Tehsil & District Charsadda.
Where is the plaintiff Bank has Instituted a suit for the recovery of **Rs.14,97,476/-** against you under section 10(2) of the Financial institutions (Recovery of Finances) Ordinance 2001. You are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/ publication of the notice in the newspaper filling which an exparte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs.
Banking Court-II Peshawar

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پاکستان ایئرپورٹس اتھارٹی

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Senior Intelligence Superintendent (SG-11)	Three (03)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Intermediate or equivalent with at least 2nd DivisionRetired senior NCOs and JCOs or equivalent having minimum 15 years of working experience in Armed / Defence Forces or Intelligence Agencies with at least 05 years experience of intelligence duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">MeritLump Sum Pay Package of Rs.176,030/- per month (Negotiable) with 5% annual increment	Three (03) Years (extendable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Maximum 55 years of age (including all age relaxations)

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- (c) In case a candidate does not upload the above documents with the online application form, his/her application will be rejected.
- (d) All the interested candidates must read the Terms of Reference (TOR) mentioned in this advertisement before applying for the post.

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EMCC established to entertain complaints related to LG by-poll

PESHAWAR (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan has established an Election Monitoring and Control Center (EMCC) for redressal of public complaints related to the second by-election to be held in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on October 20.

A press release issued here by the office of provincial election commission, immediate action would be taken for timely redressal of complaints by trained staff appointed in the centre.

The CEP had established control centers at four levels for registration of public complaints and their

prompt resolution, in which apart from Election Commission Secretariat Islamabad, control rooms would be established at provincial, division and district levels.

The public could contact the staff of the EMCC by sending email on complaints@ecp.gov.pk or by dialing phone No. 051-11327000, fax No. 051-9204404 it said adding that social media and electronic media monitoring facility would also be available at the control center.

EMCC would start work from October 20, the polling day till the results were received.

Polling materials handed over to polling staff for 2nd LG by-poll: The District Election Commissioners in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Saturday handed over polling stuff to polling staff for conduct of second by-elections in 54 village and neighborhood councils of 17 districts of the province.

According to the Spokesman of Provincial Election Commissioner office, the by-election would be held on vacant seats reserved for general, women, laborers, farmers and youth in districts Peshawar, Nowshera, Charsadda, Khyber, Swabi, Kohat, Karak, Lakki

Marwat, DI Khan, Tank, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Kolai Plus, Swat, Shangla, Buner, Dir and Bajaur.

The Spokesman said that the polling for the by-elections would be held at the level of Village Council and Neighborhood Council.

It said that by-elections would be held on 54 seats in neighborhood councils.

A total of 260 polling stations both male and female and 787 polling booths had been set up for 345,604 registered voters.

Security cameras had been installed at all the polling stations to ensure free and fair conduct of the polling.



PESHAWAR: Delegation of journalists led by PPC president Arshad Aziz Malik presenting bouquets to SCCI president Fazal Moqem Khan and vice president Abdul Jalil Jan at Chamber's House.

Role of media vital in highlighting business issues

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan said the role of media is critical in highlighting issues of the business community and downtrodden segments of the society.

The SCCI chief said being the fourth pillar of the state, importance and role of media is highly important.

He eulogized sacrifices and services of journalists by charging professional obligations.

Moqem said journalists have played a crucial role in improvement and reforms of the society, which is exemplary.

He added SCCI gives

due worth to sacrifices and services of the media, which had raised business community issues in and outside the parliament, and struggled with traders by shoulder to shoulder for availing genuine demands and rights, terming them as highly laudable.

Fazal Moqem was speaking to a delegation of journalists led by Peshawar Press Club president Arshad Aziz Malik, held at the chamber house here on Saturday.

Members of the delegation include PPC General Secretary Irfan Musazai, Vice president Tayyab Usman, Finance Secretary Rizwan Sheikh, senior member Farman Lala, senior photojournalist Muhammad Shahzad and others.

SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan was also present in the meeting.

It is worth mentioning here that it is the first time in the history of the chamber that PPC president along with cabinet members visited SCCI and congratulated the newly elected cabinet.

The move of the PPC cabinet was highly appreciated by SCCI and members and praised the efforts and struggle of the media in highlighting business community issues.

Fazal Moqem said media is part and parcel for the business community, adding that the role and importance of media has increased further while keeping in view the prevailing circumstances.

The SCCI chief said the business community is being faced with enormous difficulties owing to current uncertainty and economic instability.

He said business and industry growth has sharply slowed down in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In the prevailing scenario, Moqem stressed the need for the announcement of a fiscal relief package for the business community to revive economic and trade activities and halt the rapid flight of capital and brain drain from K-P.

Earlier, the PPC president Arshad Aziz Malik and cabinet members formally congratulated the newly elected cabinet of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Committee hold meeting at UoP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting of the initiation committee for launching of drug free to Peshawar campaign at University of Peshawar was held by Department of Social Work University of Peshawar.

Dr. Gul Haider and his team from the office of the Commissioner Peshawar Division met at Department of Social Work where Dr. Shakeel Ahmed, Chairman Social Work Department, University of Peshawar, welcomed the participants and showed a strong resolve to make the drug free Peshawar a successful campaign.

The participants resolved to hold the launching ceremony on 24th October 2024 wherein a marathon race,

art competition, debates and panel discussions will be held in mega event at University of Peshawar.

The students volunteer shall be the driving force who will take this campaign to its successful conclusion.

Subsequently, a meeting of all major stakeholders was held at the office of Commissioner Peshawar where the Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Mehsood resolved to provide a peaceful environment to all the students and faculty members on campuses.

Next meeting of all stakeholder was decided to be held on coming Monday wherein Prof. Bacha Munir Bukhari, Director Admin offered to hold the said meeting in University of Peshawar Campus.

Over 34 universities in KP province grappling with financial crisis

PESHAWAR (INP): Over 34 universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are grappling with a financial crisis, facing a collective loss of over Rs 15 billion.

As per details, the financial woes are attributed to a significant disparity between the universities' income and expenditures. While the total expenditure stands at 34 billion rupees, the income is merely 18 billion rupees.

The increase in salaries and pensions has exacerbated the issue, leading to a substantial gap between income and expenses.

The Higher Education Commission has also frozen the annual grant of Rs 9 billion 40 million since 2018. However, the provincial government has released a grant of 1 billion 90 million rupees for the universities in 2023-24.

To address the pension and grant obligations, the universities require Rs 13 billion. Moreover, an additional Rs 8 billion 75 million are needed to settle the pension obligations.

To mitigate the financial challenges, experts suggest establishing endowment funds and digitizing fees and other processes to streamline operations and enhance efficiency.

Musical bands shined in KP despite social media addiction

PESHAWAR (APP): The cultural programs including musical bands and traditional drumsbeating shined in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to marriage season despite social media's addiction, especially by youth.

With the start of wedding season in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the business of drum-beaters, professional singers and musical bands flourished attracting cultural program lovers and area people in substantial numbers.

Almost every weekend, cultural and musical concerts are held at the Hujra of Qasier Khan in village Mohib Banda Nowshera.

These programs are arranged at weddings, birthday parties and other cheerful occasions of the area people.

The local populace gathered at the said Hujra to enjoy live concerts and also learn about each other well beings amid great fun and laughter.

"The doors of my Hujra are opened for cultural programs for the area's people in organizing musical concerts which gets boom despite the mushroom growth of social media and in-house functions," said Qasier Khan, former Nazim.

He said that he can still recall the live music concert of the Pashto Gazal Mestro and pride of performance, Khayal Muha-

mmad, a great musician of Pashto Ustad Rafiq Shinwari and Gulazar Alam, who enthralled spectators with their melodious singing amid impressive Tabla and Rabab by the local musicians till late night.

Carrying the legacy of his father, Haji Sherzada Khan to promote young artists and musicians, Qaiser Khan said the guests from nearby villages came to attend the music programs, especially on weekends in large numbers amid a spirit of friendship and warmth.

"As per my father's will, I had never closed my Hujra doors for anyone since 2000," said Qaiser Khan, whose Hujra remained a centre of warmth and friendship besides cementing bonds of brotherhood and tolerance in the society in the village having a population of about 50,000.

The visitors enjoy cultural programs while sitting in traditional wooden beds, chairs, sofas and Charpays at the said Hujra which was often jam-packed with spectators where they exchanged views on regional and international issues, sports, and culture besides their siblings' success in examinations.

He said the children learn a lot from senior citizens at Hujra, providing a platform for new musicians.

"I started professional singing from this Hujra and performed successfully on live music shows on several TV channels including Khyber TV," said Shahzaib Khan, a local singer.

Admitting decline of music programs at Hujras in the wake of social media's invasion, he said that competition in such a rich culture was imperative for a tolerant and prosperous society.

"The culture of Hujra was as old as the history of KP itself," said Bakhtzada Khan, senior research officer archaeology and museums department KP while talking to APP. "Based on archaeological evidence recovered from Gor Kathri excavations, Hujra existed some 5,000 years ago in our province where Pakhtoons gathered for relaxation and to enjoy local culture dances including the famous Khattak dance."

"Hujra institution had originated alongside the social life of Pakhtuns because hospitality was their long culture where people warmly welcomed guests and culture programs arranged for them."

He said it was hard to imagine a village without a Hujra in a Pakhtuns society in ancient history and this unique culture passed from one generation to another.

The great Pashto poets, Rehman Baba, Khushal

Khan Khattak, Ghani Khan, Ameer Hamza Shinwari and Rehmat Shah Sail also highlighted the significance of the Hujra and Pakhtoons music in their literary works.

Declaring Hujra a multi-purpose cultural institution, he said it was also exclusively used for the development of men and maintained collectively by the villagers and tribes as it ties them together as a community on joyous and sorrowful occasions.

"A Hujra is considered much more than a mere building or a room in a village and served as a seat of learning, a centre for teaching young people about Pakhtun traditions by abiding by 'Pashtunwali' — the code of conduct of Pakhtun society," he said.

Hujra serves as a community centre, social club and alternate dispute resolution centre, wedding hall, literary and traditional music club, and it has long occupied centre-stage in Pakhtun communities for good reason where people shared each other's success and grief.

In Pakistan, internet users had swelled to a record 111 million in January year while about 71.90 million people use social media which equates to 29.5 million of total population of the country.

Similarly, about 188.9 million cellular connections

are active in Pakistan which is equal to 77.8 percent of the 241 million population of Pakistan. Alike, the number of users of Facebook has jumped to a record 44.50 million while 71.70 million population use YouTube, 17.30 million Instagram, 54.38 million TikTok and 30.21 million on Snapchat, affecting traditional games.

Khayal Muhammad, Pashto Ghazal maestro and Pride of Performance said that Hujra is the backbone of Pashtun society and carries a unique distinction in global cultures. He said that Hujra culture also became a victim of social and digital media.

"When I was young, the hujras were jam-packed with people. My priority was staged performance in Hujra compared to other forums," he said, adding with the passage of time, the hujra were converted into houses due to the population bulge and speedy growth of social media.

Famous actor, Javed Babar said that other nations may have guest houses, community centres, gymnasiums, playgrounds and wedding halls but, in Pakhtun culture, all of these activities take place in one Hujra, which is a reflection of Pashtun's rich culture.

He said that it was Hujra where youth was used to learn ethics such as respect

for elders and avoiding idle talk; adding a person well-versed in the norms of the Hujra is called 'Hujra pass.'

Javed Babar said in case a person was a PhD scholar, but unaware of the values of the Hujra, he is deemed as someone who has not mastered the ethics of Pakhtun culture.

The speakers said that indoor games such as table tennis could also be introduced to attract youth. The experts feared that if Pashtuns fail to revive the Hujra and their local music, Pakhtun youth will be left isolated, leading to psychological and mental health issues besides a setback to regional sports, tolerance and empathy.

They underscored the need to revive local Pashto, Hinko music and Hujra culture with the consensus of all stakeholders to bolster peace and mutual coexistence.

The experts urged the KP government to chalk out a plan for the revival of Hujra and local music such as the allocation of rooms for a library, indoor games, a meeting hall and a guest room with an internet facility and essential furniture to facilitate young lots and musicians.

They also urged the provision of soft loans to local musicians, singers and filmmakers which is imperative for a peaceful society.

Quota system in KP universities revives dreams for minority students

Dr. Sumaira Gul

It was my dream to pursue medical education and become a doctor to serve this province, especially my Christian community," reflects Iqbal Masih, a 48-year-old sweeper in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department.

His voice carries a mixture of pride and regret as he speaks of his aspirations-dreams that poverty and systemic discrimination thwarted long ago. "But now, my children will fulfill it," Iqbal Masih shared with hope.

Iqbal's story is not unique. It represents a broader narrative of the Christian minority and other marginalized groups in Pakistan, where socio-economic barriers often dictate life trajectories. Once, this community held prestigious positions in education and administration, but a combination of intolerance and economic hardship has led many to despair.

Today, however, hope

glimmers with the recent announcement of a two percent admission quota for minority students in public sector universities across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Introduced in May 2021, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's initiative aims to rectify historical imbalances that have long hindered minority communities from accessing higher education. This decision comes after decades of advocacy by marginalized groups whose youth have struggled under the weight of poverty and limited opportunities.

Iqbal, who lives in a two-room rented home with his four children, describes the quota as a lifeline. "It was literally very big news for me," he says, emphasizing the importance of this development.

According to the Minorities' Challenges Report 2021, lack of education is a primary obstacle facing minority communities in Peshawar. The prevailing notion that their children

are destined for menial jobs discourages investment in education, perpetuating a cycle of poverty that seems unbreakable.

Iqbal, however, believes in his children's potential. "Our children are very intelligent, and they will prove that they can secure top positions in universities, provided they are given the same opportunities," he asserts.

The government's quota is not merely a statistic; it represents a shift toward inclusivity. Historically, minorities faced significant barriers, even in educational institutions where they were often seen as outsiders. The quota, now extended beyond medical and engineering colleges to all public sector universities, aims to change that.

On January 2, 2024, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission mandated that universities publicly disclose details about the two percent minority quota, marking a significant step toward transparency and accountability.

Sana Ahmad, a senior coordinator at Blue Veins, an organization advocating for minority rights, highlights the importance of this initiative.

"Out of 27 public sector universities, around 16 have displayed the two percent quota for minorities on their websites, and the offer can be availed online," she notes.

The potential impact of this policy is profound. It not only opens doors to higher education but also sends a message of hope and acceptance to a community long marginalized.

The response from the community has been overwhelmingly positive. Romana Masih, a social activist from the Christian community, underscores the significance of providing equal opportunities to all segments of society.

"For social inclusivity, providing equal opportunities is essential," she states. The initial implementation of the quota marks a new

chapter for minorities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, fostering harmony and cooperation among diverse groups.

To maximize awareness, organizations like Blue Veins plan to distribute printed materials in churches, mandirs, and temples, ensuring that every eligible student knows about the quota and how to apply.

"Admissions are starting in the province, and the maximum number of students should benefit," Sana emphasizes, urging the community to seize this opportunity.

Education is a powerful tool for change. For many, it is the key to escaping the cycle of poverty that has constrained their families for generations. The quota not only aims to uplift individual students but also seeks to bridge the socio-economic gap that has historically divided society.

With the rise of educated individuals from minority backgrounds, the potential for change is immense.

Iqbal dreams of a future where his children can break free from the shackles of poverty and fulfill their aspirations. "Poverty is a major hurdle in obtaining education for our people," he explains. "But this quota gives us hope that our children can secure high-level jobs across the country."

As Khyber Pakhtunkhwa takes steps toward inclusivity, it sets a precedent for other regions in Pakistan. The ripple effects of this policy could extend far beyond the educational landscape, fostering a culture of acceptance and equality in society.

Iqbal's resolve mirrors that of many in the community. "It's time for us to reclaim our place in society," he asserts. With the right opportunities, the next generation can rise not just to fulfill their dreams, but to inspire change in their communities. The journey toward equality is far from over, but with initiatives like the two percent quota, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is

taking significant strides in the right direction.

The story of Iqbal Masih is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. As he looks toward a future filled with possibilities for his children, the implementation of the two percent quota in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stands as a beacon of hope.

It signals that change is possible, that dreams can be fulfilled, and that, together, society can begin to heal and grow stronger. The path forward may be long, but with determination and newfound opportunities, a brighter future for minorities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is within reach.

A prominent Sikh rights campaigner and political activist, Radesh Singh Tony, welcomes the long-awaited decision of the government. He says that it will at least benefit the coming generation.

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the non-Muslim population is 0.23%. The

largest community among the minorities is Christian, constituting 0.15% of the total population, followed by Hindus and Ahmadis, each representing only 0.02%. He informed that the population has grown, but minorities still face significant challenges.

Tony highlighted that most of this minority population remains uneducated due to poverty and a lack of educational opportunities. He noted that only a very small percentage of minority children attain higher education because of these barriers.

"The two percent quota is not enough, but at least it provides a ray of hope for our upcoming generation," Tony adds, urging the government to ensure that all universities implement this quota so minority students do not face obstacles during admissions.

(The writer is Head of Department of Political Science at Shaheed Benazir Women University Peshawar)



In brief

Twelve injured in road mishap F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: As many as twelve persons were injured in a road mishap occurred in Haya Seri area of Lower Dir. According to Rescue 1122, twelve persons sustained injuries when a Suzuki van overturned in Haya Seri due to over speeding. Meanwhile, workers of Rescue 1122 rushed to the spot and shifted the injured to nearby hospital. Police has started investigations to the incident. Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner and District Returning Officer (DRO) Arif Khan on Saturday visited polling stations here to review preparations for second local government polls in different village and neighborhood councils here. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Bashir Khan, Election Officer and Assistant Returning Officer also accompanied the DRO and conducted thorough inspection of various polling stations. The by-elections would be held in Hajiabad, Koto and Pettuyar Khan Banda on October 20. On the occasion, the DRO issued instructions for conducting free, fair and transparent elections besides providing foolproof security at all polling stations

Crackdown on electricity theft

MULTAN (INP): To restore the economy and alleviate the power crisis, the government's stringent crackdown on electricity theft is producing significant results. Since the operation began in September 2023, authorities have recovered a staggering PKR 122 billion, 3 crore, and 57 lakhs from electricity thieves across the country. During October alone, officials retrieved over PKR 1 billion, 35 crore, and 3 lakhs from electricity thieves in major cities such as Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Islamabad, Multan, Peshawar, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Quetta, and other regions. In addition, 224 individuals involved in power theft were arrested during this period. Authorities have vowed to continue their operations until the complete eradication of electricity theft, further emphasizing their commitment to stabilizing the power sector and improving the country's economy.

Petition filed in consumer court

HARIPUR (INP): In a significant move addressing public health concerns, a local resident of Haripur on Saturday has approached the Consumer Court to seek legal action against various government departments for their failure to conduct necessary dengue control measures. According to the details, in the wake of Dengue outbreak in the region a citizen of Haripur Waqas Ahmed submitted a formal petition highlighting the alarming rise in mosquito populations in areas such as Malkiar Road and Mohalla Asifabad. In his petition, Waqas Ahmed expressed serious concerns about the potential spread of dengue fever and other mosquito-borne diseases due to the absence of any effective control measures in the region. He pointed out that despite the increasing presence of mosquitoes, neither the Health Department nor any relevant authority has undertaken the essential task of conducting dengue or general mosquito control sprays. The petition identifies several respondents, including the Health Department, Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA), the Deputy Commissioner, and the official in charge of the Dengue Control Program.

KP CM Adviser visits Toru hospital

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Special Adviser to the Chief Minister for Health Ihtisham Ali Advocate visited Toru Type D Hospital along with Provincial Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru, Members of Provincial Assembly Ameer Farzand Khan, Abdul Salam Afridi, and Iftikhar Ali Mashwani.

The purpose of the visit was to review the performance of the hospital and further improve the health facilities in the area. DG Health Muhammad Saleem, District Health Officer Dr. Javed Iqbal and other officers of the health department were also present on this occasion. Senior workers along with local elders also participated in the event. During the visit, the parliamentarians attended a special function organized by the Department of Health, titled Distribution of CMW's Birthing Station.

The purpose of the event was to promote maternal and child health care at the grass-roots level. On this occasion, modern birthing stations were provided to the Community Midwives (CMW) of the area so that they can perform their services more efficiently and ensure safe motherhood in the rural areas. Addressing the event, Advisor for Health Ehtesham Ali Advocate and other parliamentarians appreciated the progress made in the health sector and reiterated the government's commitment to provide quality healthcare to the people.

He said that such projects will not only prove useful for the health of mothers and children but will have positive effects on the health of the entire society. Ihtisham Ali also visited DHQ Hospital Mardan Provincial Food Minister Zahir Shah Toru appeared on this occasion. DG Health Muhammad Saleem Members of Assembly Abdul Salam Afridi, Iftikhar Mashwani, Dr. Javed Iqbal, Professor Dr. Zia ul Islam was also present.

Health adviser Ihtisham Khan inaugurated the nursing hostel of DHQ Hospital while talking to the media on this occasion, he said that the reputation of the police will be strengthened with the Provincial Amendment Bill (Police Act) and the people will get direct relief. Later, the opening ceremony was held in the private rooms hall of the hospital, in which the hospital administration and medical students participated. Dr. Javed Iqbal of the hospital thanked the guests for their arrival and gave a briefing to the Health Advisor regarding DHQ Hospital. Mukher Sahat assured to solve the problems and said that our focus is on health and education and efforts will be made to make them better.

Shields were presented to the guests by the hospital administration.

Meanwhile, People's Party Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha stated, unfortunately, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are dealing with an extremely non-serious and non-political Chief Minister. He has completely failed to address, Peace and security, Terrorism, Prolonged inflation, Load shedding, Gas crises, Instead, he utilizes provincial resources for personal rallies and sit-ins, abandoning Pashtun youth to tear gas and baton charges while fleeing from the battlefield himself.

Long hair and beards cannot intimidate anyone; courage requires standing firm in the face of challenges. The People's Party will not remain silent in the face of these circumstances. We will soon launch protests against, Dangerous economic crisis, Financial crisis, in the province, People's Party Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha stated, We will soon call for protests against, Heavy bribery in transfers, Unrest, Terrorism, to hold Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur's administration accountable. Addressing a convention in Sher Garh, organized by People's Youth Organization Mardan Division, Bacha said, the sacrifices of Bhutto family and party workers for the nation, country, and democracy are unforgettable. Despite terrorism and bombings, party workers' morale remains high. Shaheed Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto's sacrifices guide us.

Democratic forces have always hindered democratic governments, from Liaquat Ali Khan to Benazir Bhutto. People's Party has consistently stood against dictators and oppressors, never fleeing or abandoning workers. From 2008-2013, our allied government fought terrorism, with 80,000-90,000 lives lost, including police and security forces. The current government failed to deliver on promises of jobs and housing, perpetuating crisis and unrest. Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur exploits Pashtun youth in Punjab and Islamabad's wars, hiding behind new dramas. We know his tactics: pathetic and non-political excuses. This is his third term; people are forced to live miserable lives. We direct PPP/PYO workers to remain alert; our party will soon call for protests. Convention organizers and participants, including PPP and PYO leaders, praised the successful event. PTI members Bilal Khan, Amjad Khan, Sahibzada, and Hammad Khattak announced their resignation from PTI to join PPP.

Conference in Bagh pays tributes to Kashmiri martyrs

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): A Martyrs' Conference was held in Bagh city of Azad Jammu and Kashmir under the auspices of Jammu and Kashmir Pir Panjal Freedom Movement (PPFM), in which great tributes were paid to the Kashmiri martyrs.

The PPFM vice chairman, Qazi Imran, presided over the conference while All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi was the special guest. Ghulam Muhammad Safi in his address said they will continue the mission of martyrs and will achieve the goal of freedom from India. He urged all the refugees to observe the Black Day on October 27 against the Indian occupation.

Other speakers said their mission is freedom from India, for which they will continue their struggle till complete success. Qazi Imran on the occasion thanked all the speakers and participants and said, "We are the heirs of the martyrs of Jammu and Kashmir and will continue

their struggle till taking it to its logical conclusion.

Hurriyat leaders Chaudhry Shaheen Iqbal, Abdul Majed Mir, Zahid Munir, Muhajireen Ittehad Forum President Khawaja Ayaz Zaheer Jaral, Abu Suhaib, Jahanzeb Mir, Javed Butt, Chaudhry Mukhtar, Chaudhry Nazir Hussain, Chaudhry Rashid, Fayyaz Dar, Chaudhry Zaman, Abdul Ghani Lone, Abdul Rehman Butt, Tanzeel Iqbal, Ahmad Jan Butt, Chaudhry Imtiaz, Imran Chaudhry, Chaudhry Haq Nawaz, Zubair Kashmiri, Talha Butt, Ashfaq Butt, Tariq Lone, Abdul Rasheed Dar and Mushtaq Lone participated in the conference.

Protest demo held: A protest demonstration was held in Muzaffarabad against India's tyranny in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, in which a large number of citizens participated. The protesters shouted slogans against Indian atrocities and strongly condemned the cruel actions of the Hindutva government on August 5, 2019.

The protesters were rais-

ing slogans in favour of freedom and against Indian brutalities. The protesters also carried banners appealing to the United Nations for immediate intervention to resolve the Kashmir dispute. Speakers addressing the protest said the Indian troops had deprived the Kashmiri people of all their basic human rights and civil liberties. They said the people of Jammu and Kashmir want complete freedom from India and demanded of the United Nations to take notice of India's ongoing state terrorism and human rights violations in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The protesters marched from the Old Secretariat to Burhan Wani Shaheed Chowk. Pasban-e-Hurriyat Chairman Uzair Ahmad Ghazali led the protest demonstration, while Hurriyat leaders Mushtaq-ul-Islam, Usman Ali Hashim, Muhammad Shafiq Inqilabi, Muhammad Siddiq Qureshi, Muhammad Altaf Minhas, Alifuddin Dar, Imtiaz Aziz Khan, Syed Khalid Shah and others also attended the protest demonstration.

Contract teachers seek reinstatement

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: The contract teachers, posted in merged tribal districts, demanded of the concerned authorities to reinstate them permanently and pay them their arrears for the last eight months salaries. It is to be stated here that the provincial government has fired contract teachers after expiring their contract in 2024.

Addressing to a press conference held in Landi Kotal press club, district Khyber on Saturday Jameel Khan, tehsil head of the contract teachers union, President Tanzeem-e-Asateza, Pakistan Khyber chapter Sharifullah Afridi, Qasim Usman, Samiullah and others said that the then provincial government hired their services as teachers for a year in 2022 on fixed pay of Rs. 25,000 and renowned it in 2023. But in 2024 almost 3000 teachers (male-female) from across the merged

tribal districts were fired from their jobs without paying them their eight months arrears, which proved an anti-education policy of the government, they added.

The decision of the government not only suffered the adhoc base teachers, they added but also put at stake the future of the students in the government-run schools. Enrollments in the schools and learning skills in the students had increased many fold because of good performance of the adhoc teachers, they remarked.

They urged the concerned authorities to have mercy on the poor students and reinstate them permanently and forthwith pay them their eight months arrears. They regretted that they conveyed their grievances to the parliamentarians but to in avail. The teachers' threatened that if their demands were not fulfilled then the hired teachers from across the ex-trib-

al region would initiate a protest demo in front of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly and the Secretariat.

Farmers urged to sow wheat by Nov 15

BAHAWALPUR (INP): Agriculture Department, Government of Punjab has urged farmers to sow wheat by November 15, 2024 to get benefits from suitable conditions of the weather.

According to a spokesperson, an advisory was issued by the agriculture department for farmers of Bahawalpur region. It said that the suitable weather and conditions for sowing wheat would remain continuous by November 15, therefore wheat should be sowed by 15th of November. They further said that timely sowing of wheat would give record yield of the crop.



HYDERABAD: Chairman Sindh Taraqi Pasand party, Dr. Qadir Magsi addressing a press conference.

Operation in Buner launched F.P. Report

BUNER: A series of large-scale search and strike operations have been launched to maintain the atmosphere of law and order in the district. District Police Officer Shah Hassan himself is leading these operations.

The purpose of the search operation is to identify anti-social and criminal elements in the current security situation and to continue to closely monitor their activities. DPO told.

According to the details, search and strike operations were conducted in the areas within the limits of Daggar Police Station, Pir Baba Police Station jurisdictions Todah China, Sharshmo Tangy, Kalakhela, Barjukanrhe and its suburbs. The DPO personally supervised and led the search operation in which a large number of District Police CTD DSB intelligence officers participated. According to the police spokesman, during the search and strike operations, meetings were also held with local elders to inform the local police immediately if any suspicious/strangers are seen in the area. The local leaders have assured all kinds of cooperation, police spoke persons.

Food Authority conducts operation F.P. Report

DI KHAN: Food Safety and Halal Food Authority's team conducted operations at several places in DI Khan city and checked the quality of food items at various shops.

On the direction of Deputy Director Halal Food Authority Dera Muhammad Asif, the authority's team conducted the operation and checked numerous shops, in the different localities.

The authority's team inspected various food items on the spot and some samples were sent to laboratory for further examination and fines were also imposed on them for using substandard food items.

They also issued improvement notices to the shop owners and warned that action would be taken against violators in line with prescribed laws. On the occasion, the Food Safety Official said that no compromise would be made on the quality of food items and in this regard operations would continue indiscriminately.

SFA inspects milk shops F.P. Report

HYDERABAD: In a city-wide operation to combat milk adulteration, the Sindh Food Authority (SFA) conducted a thorough inspection of milk shops and dairies across Hyderabad today, collecting eight samples for testing. The samples were taken from various locations, including Latifabad, Qasimabad, and Hyderabad City.

As part of this operation, two samples were collected from Latifabad, two from Qasimabad, and two more by the Hyderabad City teams led by Food Safety Officers (FSOs) Ishfa Zahid and Mehwish Usman. Additionally, the SFA vigilance teams collected two further samples from the city.

School students take interest in exhibition

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The students of government high school Rani in the Lower Dir district took keen interest in a science and art exhibition arranged by the school on its own here on Saturday. The students put on display their projects and different models. A large number of students, teachers and area elders evinced deep interest in the projects and appreciated the efforts of GHS Rani to highlight the creativity of students.

Deputy district education officer Fayyaz ud Din was chief guest on the occasion while Dr Attaullah from the University of Malakand, former district councillor Hujaj Khan, prominent lawyer Peshawar High Court Abdul Haq advocate, Naem Rughani and chairman parent teachers' council also spoke on the occasion.

The speakers appreciated the students for exhibiting their hidden capabilities. They said that the projects were impressive as many of them were related to computer science, chemistry, physics and biology. They also lauded the efforts of the school management and termed it a useful exercise.

DDEO Fayyaz ud Din, said that the exhibition of hidden potential of the students was highly encouraging. The official said that co-curricular activities like sports, exhibition and declamation competitions improved the students' learning. He said that those nations were leading the world which had improved science and technology education.

"Our backwardness is



the proof that we are taking our children away from science instead of attracting them to education", he said, adding the teachers and parents should instill in the students a deep love for books and pens to focus on science and instead of spending their valuable time on using mobile phones. The DDEO asked students to pay special attention to their studies. He announced to approve funds for the school's repair, whitewash and paint and ensure supply of furniture. The lawyer Abdul Haq announced Rs 50,000 cash for the school while Dr Attaullah announced Rs 10,000 for the students who displayed their projects.

Funeral prayer in absentia: The workers of Jamaat-i-Islami Lower Dir led by their district chief Maulana Asadullah held a funeral prayer in absentia for the Hamas martyred leader Yahya Al Sinwar at Ahya ul Uloom Belambat here on Saturday. A large number of local people participated. Addressing the gathering, Maulana Asadullah said that the martyrdom of Yahya Sinwar would intensify the Palestinian movement of freedom.

"Only through the spirit of jihad can the Israeli army

be defeated. Yahya Sinwar's sacrifices will not go in vain", he said, adding the movement of Ismail Hania and Yahya Sinwar would lead Palestinians toward success soon. He said Hamas needed support from the Muslims across the globe. The Muslim Ummah should go ahead and support the oppressed Muslims and send them help. The JI also arranged such funeral prayers at Rani, Luqman Banda, Rabat, Malakand, Khadagzai, Talash, Lal Qila and Samarbagh.

Meanwhile the Islami Jamiat Tulba, University of Malakand also arranged a funeral prayer for Yahya Al-Sinwar. The JI former MNA Syed Bakhtiar Maani led the funeral prayer. The JI Adenzai chief Dr Bashir Muhammad, Rahimullah Advocate, IJT provincial information secretary Ruman Ayub and a large number of students participated.

The IJT provincial general secretary Aftab Hussain, while speaking on the occasion said that today was the day of martyrdom and the day of commitment. He said the great mujahid leader was a metaphor of courage and perseverance and a role model for freedom and resistance movements.

KP Info Secretary visits Pakhtunkhwa Radio Mardan

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Provincial Secretary Information, Arshad Khan on Saturday visited Pakhtunkhwa Radio Mardan and inspected its various sections. He was accompanied by Press Registrar, Ansarullah Khilji

and concerned officials. He visited various sections of Pakhtunkhwa Radio and met with staff.

Station Manager Pakhtunkhwa Radio, Sajid Mehmood briefed secretary about working and administrative matters of the station. Secretary appreciated

the standard of programs being aired from the station and said that government would take steps for welfare of artists and writers. He also directed radio staff to highlight steps being taken by government under Chief Minister Awami Agenda program.

Pakistan witnesses 51% more rainfall

F.P. Report

MULTAN: The Met Department has released a detailed report on the 2024 monsoon season, highlighting record-breaking rainfall and temperature fluctuations across the country. From July 1 to August 30, Pakistan witnessed 51% more rainfall than the average, with some regions experiencing an unprecedented deluge and others recording higher-than-usual temperatures.

The 2024 monsoon season brought heavier rains across Pakistan, with Balochistan and Sindh recording the most significant increases. Balochistan received a staggering 111% more rainfall than normal, while Sindh experienced 108% more rainfall. Punjab also saw a 48% increase, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Gilgit-Baltistan recorded smaller increments of 5% and 2% above normal, respectively. However, Azad Jammu and Kashmir saw a 21% decrease in rain-

fall compared to the average.

The normal monsoon rainfall in Pakistan averages around 212mm, but this year's totals far exceeded expectations. Lahore alone recorded 951.1mm of rain throughout the season, with 603mm falling during August. On August 1, Lahore airport experienced 337mm of rainfall in a single day, marking the highest single-day rainfall in the country's history.

The Met Department also noted that Typhoon Asna, a rare storm in the Arabian Sea, added to the season's anomalous weather. Such events, though infrequent, may become more common as climate change continues to influence global weather patterns. In addition to heavy rainfall, the average monsoon temperature was 0.71 degrees Celsius above the norm, making it the fourth-hottest monsoon in the last 64 years. The first record was reported in 2019 when the temperature was recorded

ed at 30.63 degrees Celsius. The highest recorded temperature during the monsoon occurred in Turbat on July 7, where the mercury soared to 49 degrees Celsius. Dalbandin and Naukund also experienced scorching heat, with 48 degrees Celsius recorded on July 4. Conversely, Skardu was the coldest region in the country, with temperatures dipping as low as 7.3 degrees Celsius on September 30. The September average in Skardu stood at 11.1 degrees Celsius, making it the coldest location during the monsoon season.

Meanwhile, Karachi is expected to remain hot and dry over the next 24 hours, with maximum temperatures forecast to reach between 38 and 40 degrees Celsius. The minimum temperature recorded today was 27.5 degrees Celsius, with 70% humidity in the air and light winds blowing from the northeast. In Balochistan, dry weather is also expected to prevail in most areas.



Migrants sent to Albania for processing return to Italy

SHENGJIN (AP): An Italian navy ship on Saturday took back to Italy the first 12 migrants from newly opened asylum processing centers in Albania following a contentious court decision in Rome. The ship arrived in the southern port of Bari on Saturday afternoon and the migrants were taken to the local hosting center for asylum seekers .

The court ruling represents an early stumbling block to a five-year deal between Italy and Albania for Tirana to host 3,000 migrants per month picked up in international waters by the Italian coast guard. They will be vetted for possible asylum in Italy or sent back to their countries. Italian Premier Minister Giorgia Meloni has hailed the deal as a new “model” to handle illegal migration.

The court in Rome rejected the detention of 12 of the migrants, arguing that their countries of origin — Bangladesh and Egypt — were not safe enough for them to be sent back. The Italian navy ship took the

12 from the port of Shengjin, 66 kilometers (40 miles) northwest of Tirana. After arriving there this week, the four other migrants had already been rejected by center staff, two as vulnerable after undergoing health checks and two for being minors.

Under Italian law, each migrant’s detention must be reviewed by special courts. Meloni slammed the judges following the ruling, and said that deeming countries such as Bangladesh and Egypt unsafe means that virtually all migrants would be barred from the Albania program, making it unworkable.

Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi said the government would appeal the ruling.

Speaking to reporters during a trip to Lebanon, Meloni said she would convene a Cabinet meeting Monday to discuss the issue. “We’ll meet to approve some norms that will allow us to overcome this obstacle,” Meloni said. “I believe it’s up to the government and not magistrates to establish which

countries can be considered safe.”

Although Bangladesh and Egypt are not at war or facing any large refugee crises, the judges in Rome said their decision was based on recent international rulings that consider discrimination or persecution in even a part of a country as grounds for such a determination. Italy has agreed to welcome those migrants who are granted asylum, while those whose applications are rejected face deportation directly from Albania.

The controversial agreement to outsource the housing of asylum-seekers to a non-EU member country has been hailed by some countries that, like Italy, are experiencing a high level of migrant arrivals. The agreement was endorsed by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen as an example of “out-of-box thinking” in tackling the issue of migration into the European Union. Human rights organizations considered it as setting a dangerous precedent.

Labour tiptoes nervously towards a China policy

LONDON (BBC): Labour declared after the election that “Britain is back” on the world stage after years of Conservative retreat. But when it comes to China, the government is tiptoeing nervously in the wings. David Lammy’s trip to China is rare – he is only the second foreign secretary to visit in six years.

He held talks in Beijing with his powerful counterpart, Wang Yi, and Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang, before heading to Shanghai to meet British business leaders on Saturday. You might think the Foreign Office would want to make a big thing of it, to emphasise the importance of the diplomatic repair job the foreign secretary is bent on. But instead, the trip is taking place sotto voce.

There is little media access to Mr Lammy. There are no announcements about a new trade agreement, or cooperation on policy. Whitehall sources tell me this in part the fault of Downing Street which, they say, is increasingly gripped by caution after a febrile few weeks. No10 officials want to avoid political rows ahead of the Budget later this month. They do not want Labour and Conservative MPs to unite in accusing the government of putting economic gain ahead of human rights and international law.

There is a strong cross-party caucus in Westminster that is China-sceptic; seven MPs and peers remain officially sanctioned by Beijing as a result. They are already accusing Mr Lammy of backtracking on pre-election promises to push the international courts to declare China’s treatment of the Uighur minority as genocide. Perhaps the chief reason for the low-key nature of Mr Lammy’s visit is that Labour is still working out its policy towards China. It is conducting what it calls a cross-Whitehall “audit” of Britain’s relationship with the country, which is not due to complete until next year. It is then that Chancellor Rachel Reeves, and perhaps even Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, may visit China.

For now, the government has a holding position which it sums up in three words: “challenge, compete, cooperate”. It says it will challenge China on human rights abuses and its support for Russia in Ukraine. It will compete with China over trade. And it will cooperate with China over shared interests, such as global health and climate change. If this sounds familiar, that is because other western powers use similar language. And the previous Conservative government’s policy

was to “protect, align and engage”.

However, both parties have found it difficult to work out where precisely to draw the line. Does “compete” involve banning Chinese electric vehicles from the UK’s automotive market? Does “challenge” mean restricting lucrative Chinese students from attending cash-strapped UK universities? Does “cooperate” involve sharing private medical research to help prevent a future pandemic? The head of MI5, Ken McCallum, spoke only last week of “a threat that manifests at scale” from China, targeting Britain’s information and democracy.

Mr Lammy’s more prosaic aim on this visit is simply to re-establish some kind of working relationship with Beijing. Under the Conservatives, UK-China relations blew hot and cold, between the diplomatic warmth of the so-called “golden era” to the hawkish aggression of more recent Conservative leaders. Last year, then-Prime Minister Rishi Sunak called China the “greatest threat” to Britain’s economy; then-Foreign Secretary James Cleverly visited Beijing calling for re-engagement; his successor Lord Cameron resolutely ignored the country. Mr Lammy says he wants to re-establish what he calls a more consistent and pragmatic relationship.

During his talks with Mr Wang, he said he was “struck by the scope for mutually beneficial cooperation on the climate, on energy and nature, of the science and tech, on trade and investment, on health and development.” He said Beijing and London should “find pragmatic solutions to complex challenges”. China appears up for that. Mr Wang said China-UK relations were “standing at a new starting point” and spoke of “our boosted confidence in bilateral cooperation”.

He even referred by name to Mr Lammy’s foreign policy slogan – “progressive realism” – which Mr Wang said, “has positive significance”. So far, so conciliatory. Of course, Mr Lammy said both countries had “different perspectives” on some issues. In a statement after the talks, the Foreign Office said he raised concerns about China’s military support for Russia in Ukraine, and how that was damaging China’s relationships in Europe. The department also said he raised China’s treatment of the Uighurs in the Xinjiang region, “serious concerns” over the implementation of new national security laws in Hong Kong, and called for the release of the British media tycoon Jimmy Lai, who has been arbitrarily detained there.

Church bell rings after 150 years of silence

LONDON (BBC): After sitting silent for more than 150 years, a Somerset church bell is ringing again - in an Australian wedding chapel. The bell, which dates from about 1550, once rang worshippers to church at Upton village and is now Australia’s oldest ringing church bell. Cherie Reid, who built the wedding chapel at Kantara House in Green Point, New South Wales, said she rescued the bell from disrepair to install it 9,500 miles away from its original home.

“The whole journey [to buy the bell] has just been so wonderful. I do feel a bit of pride about the end result,” Ms Reid said. When the original 14th Century church of St James in Exmoor National Park was replaced in 1870, it was built without a bell tower. Its two ancient bells sat silent until being sold on - one to Australia and one to St Mary Magdalene Church at Sandringham. Ms Reid rings the bell at the end of wedding services at its New South Wales home.

She said it had been difficult to source a bell in Australia. “Most of them are for schools and there’s nothing of the calibre of the one I sourced in the UK,” she said. After finding the bell from Somerset, she had to fly to the UK to pick it up and ended up having to chase it to Cork in Ireland, where it was refurbished. “I was a little concerned because the bell looked huge,” Ms Reid said. It went to Australia by plane in 2016.

“After picking it up, we hid it in the garage so it wouldn’t be stolen,” Ms Reid said. “I only realised recently - who was going to steal it? It was too big.” Eventually, they used a crane to take the roof of the tower off, put the bell in, and put the roof back on. Karina Reid, Cherie Reid’s daughter, said it was “incredible” to hear the bell ringing. “I remember the first time we rang the bell, it was the end of such a process and I truly thought my mum was mad importing a bell from the UK to put in her tower,” she said. “I didn’t really see how important it would be. From the first moment I heard it ringing I knew the chapel would not be what it is without the beautiful bell.”

“We have a piece of England’s history ringing in our chapel.”

Romania scrambles fighter jets

BUCHAREST (AP): Romania raised fighter jets early on Saturday for the second time this week after an unidentified object breached its airspace by the Black Sea, the Ministry of Defense said. The small object was detected over the Black Sea moving toward Romania, a European Union and NATO member, at around 2:30 a.m. the ministry said in a statement.

Romania shares a 650-kilometer (400-mile) border with Ukraine and has previously complained over Russian drones entering its airspace as Moscow attacks Ukrainian targets along the Black Sea and Danube River.



GAZA CITY: A Palestinian man reacting as he searches for casualties stranded under the rubble of a house hit in an Israeli strike.

British national and several Turkish citizens abducted in Kenya

NAIROBI (BBC): A British national has told the BBC that he and several Turkish citizens were abducted in the Kenyan capital Nairobi by masked men, with four of the Turkish citizens still missing. Necdet Seyitoglu, who lived in the UK for 18 years before moving to Kenya two years ago, said he was released after eight hours when he showed his alleged abductors a copy of his British passport.

In a statement, the UK Foreign Office said they were “providing consular support to a British man and his family, following an incident in Kenya”. Kenyan police told the BBC they were investigating a “kidnapping incident” after a motorcycle driver witnessed the abduction. According to the report, two vehicles intercepted and blocked from the front and behind a silver saloon car with two occupants.

“About eight persons armed with weapons emerged from the two vehicles, pulled out the two occupants” and drove off with them, said Kenyan police spokeswoman Resila Onyango. “Later, one Yusuf Kar, a British national of Turkish origin” reported to a nearby police station and identified the kidnapped men as

Hüseyin Yesilsu and Necdet Seyitoglu. Turkish authorities have not yet commented on the incident.

Mr Seyitoglu, an education consultant, gave additional details of what he said happened during his kidnapping ordeal, some of which differ from the police account. He described a white SUV intercepting his car as he was leaving home for work with a friend at 07:30 local time (04:30 GMT). The pair were blindfolded and handcuffed by four armed men before being driven off to an unknown location, he said.

Repeated requests about what was happening went unanswered, he said. “We asked them, can you show your identification? Where we are going? But we didn’t get any kind of explanation,” the 49-year-old said. “It was the worst experience of my life,” Mr Seyitoglu added. He said he was eventually able to convince his alleged abductors that he was a British citizen by showing them a copy of his passport on this phone.

After taking a photo, the men received a call that sounded like it was an instruction to release him, he said. The masked men, who Mr Seyitoglu said spoke Swahili, then

dropped him off at a place he did not recognise and gave him 1,000 shillings (\$7.50; £6) for transport back home, but refused to return his phone and laptop. During this time, Mr Seyitoglu said his wife reported him missing, and informed the British High Commission. Mr Seyitoglu said six other people he knew - all Turkish citizens - were also abducted in the same manner from different locations in Nairobi.

A local law firm, Mukele & Kakai, said in a statement that it was acting on behalf of four men who were registered refugees and warned airlines against allowing them to be brought on board. “Our clients were abducted in Kenya with the aim of being deported back to Turkey where they are victims of political victimisation,” the lawyers’ letter, seen by the BBC, said. This was echoed by the campaign group Amnesty International, whose Kenya spokesman said he was “deeply concerned by reports that seven asylum seekers from Türkiye have been abducted on Kenyan soil”. The UN’s refugee agency, UNHCR, told the BBC it was “aware of reports and will provide more information once we have it”.

Mozambique rocked by killings of two opposition figures

MAPUTO (AP): Gunmen in two vehicles ambushed the lawyer for Mozambique’s leading opposition politician and a senior opposition official, shooting them dead in their SUV late at night on a main avenue in the capital, their party said Saturday. The brutal burst of violence rocked a country where tensions were already high amid a disputed election.

The killings came as the opposition party the two men were associated with prepared to challenge the results of this month’s presidential election that drew more allegations of vote rigging and clamping down on dissent against the governing party, which has been in power for nearly 50 years. Elvino Dias, a lawyer and advisor to opposition presidential candidate Venancio Mondlane, was killed when gunmen riddled his car with bullets in the port capital of Maputo, the PODEMOS opposition party said.

Paulo Gumbo, the spokesperson for PODEMOS, was also in the car and was killed, the party said in a statement. The killings are “further clear evidence of the lack of justice that we are all subjected to,” PODEMOS said. Police said a woman who was in the car was injured and was being treated in a hospital. Police spokesperson Leonel Muchina said the victims had earlier been at a local bar and were followed from there. Muchina said the

killings might be related to interactions the two men had with other patrons at the bar. The shootings were widely viewed in Mozambique as being politically motivated, however.

PODEMOS is a relatively new opposition party that challenged the 49-year rule of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, or Frelimo, party in the Oct. 9 election. Although Mondlane ran for president as an independent, he was supported by PODEMOS. Mondlane, PODEMOS and other opposition parties have accused Frelimo of electoral fraud and rigging the election.

Frelimo candidate Daniel Chapo holds a clear lead in the presidential race, with Mondlane second, according to preliminary results. The final election results are due next week and Chapo is expected to be announced as the winner to succeed President Filipe Nyusi, who has served the maximum of two terms allowed under the constitution. Dias was seen as a key figure in the legal preparations to challenge the results in the Constitutional Council, Mozambique’s supreme electoral court. Mondlane and PODEMOS had also called for a nationwide strike and protests on Monday.

Adriano Nuvunga, the director of the Centre for Democracy and Development, a Mozambican human rights NGO, wrote on social media that

the killing of Dias was a “political assassination” amid rising tensions. Dias posted on Facebook in April that he had been warned by a friend that he and Mondlane might be in danger because of their criticism of the ruling party. Dias said in the post that both had decided to continue their work because “it was the life option we chose; be on the side of truth and justice.”

Frelimo, which has been in power in the southern African country since independence from Portugal in 1975, has often been accused of rigging elections, which it has consistently denied. Rights groups accused Mozambican authorities of clamping down on dissent in the run-up to the election and have also accused the security forces of using deadly force to break up peaceful protests. Police broke up a post-election march by Mondlane supporters in the central city of Nampula earlier this week. There has been a large police presence on the streets of Maputo for days. While Frelimo has regularly faced accusations of manipulating elections, harassing the opposition and arresting journalists, the assassination of political leaders would be new “and a major escalation of violence,” Marcelo Mosse, editor of the independent online newspaper Carta de Moçambique, wrote in a Saturday morning column.

The ever-shifting alliances that fuelled Kenya’s impeachment drama

NAIROBI (BBC): Losing a deputy just two years after being elected on a joint ticket could be seen as a big blow for a president, but not this time in Kenya. As soon as Rigathi Gachagua was seen to be undermining William Ruto, he moved swiftly to remove his second-in-command.

He had seen for himself how a rift between Kenya’s top two can lead to government dysfunction after he had fallen out with his former boss Uhuru Kenyatta. The unprecedented political changes in Kenya, played out on live television, may have looked orderly and seamless to the outside observer. The process of impeachment has had many following with interest as the two houses of parliament, the courts and finally the executive appeared to carry out their roles following a carefully prescribed legal process.

But to many Kenyans, it has been a rollercoaster that elicited strong views from across the country. There was initially a sense of betrayal and disappointment especially from Gachagua’s home region of Mount Kenya, but this was replaced by a sense of acceptance as the man chosen to replace him, Kithure Kindiki, is from the same region. Mount Kenya played a big role in Ruto’s defeat of former Prime Minister Raila

Odinga in the closely fought 2022 presidential election.

Odinga was running with a powerful former Justice Minister, Martha Karua, who hails from the region, and backed by Kenyatta, the then outgoing president, also from there. But in the event, Ruto, with Gachagua on board, won by a landslide in that part of the country. For context, Kenyan politics is largely driven by regional – some would say ethnic – blocs and Mount Kenya carries about a quarter of the country’s votes.

It is no surprise that three of the five presidents since independence – Jomo Kenyatta, Mwai Kibaki and Uhuru Kenyatta – came from the region. This is why the two front-runners in the last presidential election – Ruto and Odinga - chose running mates from there, as they were both from elsewhere in the country. Upsetting the region could therefore be political suicide for a president in his first term. But Gachagua’s attempts to consolidate his hold on the bloc actually proved to be his undoing.

He was accused by parliament of, among other things, promoting ethnically divisive politics when he was expected to be a national unifier. He coined the phrase “usiguze mlima”, which means “don’t touch the moun-

tain”, fashioning himself as a fierce defender of the Mount Kenya region and a gateway to it. Clips were played during the impeachment proceedings which showed him suggesting that the government would prioritise those areas that had voted for the winning ticket, although Ruto had also made similar statements.

Legislators from other areas passionately condemned such sentiments. Ruto remained silent as his deputy was taken through the impeachment, despite pleas for the president’s intervention, including even asking for forgiveness “if he [Gachagua] had wronged” him. There was a very recent precedent of the chaos caused when a president and his deputy fall out.

During Kenyatta’s second term, Ruto, then deputy president himself, complained of being sidelined and persecuted. The victim card endeared him to many, including in the then president’s own political backyard. But he needed more than sympathy to win the 2022 presidential election - he had to choose his running mate from Mount Kenya. While many expected the president to pick his long-time ally, law professor Kithure Kindiki, Ruto pulled a surprise move when he chose to go for the then one-term member of parliament Rigathi

Gachagua.

Kindiki was already well known in Kenya, having served as deputy speaker before being removed from the post in a purge instigated by Kenyatta against Ruto’s allies. MPs in Ruto’s party voted overwhelmingly for Kindiki, three times they said, when he sought their involvement in picking a running mate. Gachagua came second but was, in the end, Ruto’s choice. The replacement, therefore, does not come as a surprise. That he comes from “the mountain”, albeit one of its smaller ethnic groups, has helped to calm the feelings of anger and betrayal.

Many locals who spoke on television have been calling for acceptance of the president’s choice to avoid dividing the region. This is what it all boils down to – forging ahead with the next elections barely three years away. But it will no doubt still dent the president’s support in Mount Kenya. The success of this process has also relied heavily on Ruto’s new alliance with his bitter enemy from the last election, Odinga, whose MPs and senators voted overwhelmingly to remove Gachagua from office. The National Assembly also picked a close associate of Odinga, senior counsel James Orengo, to head its legal team during the impeachment

trial.

There was a confluence of interests here, no doubt. But it could be a poisoned chalice for Ruto. How long the dalliance lasts is unpredictable. But it is characteristic of Kenya’s ever-changing political landscape. For now, Ruto has appointed four senior members of Odinga’s party to cabinet and is backing him for the influential position of the next African Union commission chairman. The two men have a long political history together as either allies or rivals. In the 2002 presidential election, Ruto backed Kenyatta while Odinga supported Kibaki who went on to win.

Five years later, allegiances shifted with Ruto backing Odinga and Kenyatta rallying behind the incumbent, Kibaki, in the bitterly contested 2007 election that descended into nationwide violence. Ruto and Kenyatta were subsequently indicted by the International Criminal Court for their alleged roles in the fighting while they supported opposing sides. But in the next two elections of 2013 and 2017, they ran on a joint ticket and defeated Odinga. The cases against them at the ICC were eventually dismissed for lack of evidence.

Any alliances are possible in Kenyan politics, no matter how unlikely they may appear to the out-

sider. All the national leaders try to do is keep their regional or ethnic blocs intact to use as bargaining chips when seeking partnerships and a formula to win national elections. Both Ruto and Odinga have long worked towards that, having joined politics in their youth. They both have loyal support bases - as their recent alliance shows with Odinga’s backers shifting fully behind a politician they opposed almost to the last man just two years ago. Gachagua hoped to gain the same stature, but his ambition has for now burned him.

He is challenging his impeachment in court and if successful, it may yet hand him a political lifeline. If not, the law bars him from running for office for at least 10 years. This kind of politics is a long game. At 59, Gachagua is a rather late entrant and his future is unclear. He may well be condemned to political oblivion or he could still return to the arena – as Ruto’s rival or even his ally. Despite what looks like a bitter divorce, with the president moving on swiftly, no-one in Kenya would be surprised to see him shake hands and smile on national television with his estranged former deputy. Kenya’s political scene is an active seismic zone – the tectonic plates are constantly shifting and anything is possible.

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Po end in sight to this genocide

ON Thursday, October 17, Israel killed Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar in the Gaza Strip – the latest “high-value target” in a genocidal war that has dispensed with more than 42,000 Palestinian lives in just over a year and that has now spread to Lebanon. Of course, the elimination of Sinwar hardly spells the end of genocide, as Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu made clear in his post-assassination announcement: “Today we have settled the score. Today evil has been dealt a blow, but our task has still not been completed.” Fortunately for the powers that be in a nation whose very existence is predicated on perpetual slaughter, the Israeli “task” will never be fully completed – at least as long as there are still Palestinians and fellow Arabs committed to resisting Israel’s bloodthirsty efforts.

And yet Sinwar’s killing will make it ever more difficult for Israel to continue to justify its current war on Gaza, not that justification ever really matters to Israel’s primary international backer, the United States of America. Indeed, US complicity in genocide has long entailed assistance in locating Sinwar; back in August, the New York Times reported that the Joe Biden administration had “poured vast resources into trying to find” the Hamas leader, providing “ground-penetrating radar” to Israel while also tasking US spy agencies “with intercepting Mr Sinwar’s communications.”

Like the September Israeli assassination in Beirut of Hezbollah’s iconic secretary general, Hassan Nasrallah, the killing of Sinwar is no doubt symbolic given the man’s track record of evading Israel’s deadly designs. Over the past 12 months, Sinwar remained in the Gaza Strip and continued to lead military operations against Israel, exhibiting quite a bit more bravery than, say, a certain Israeli leader who prefers to jet around the world complaining about insufficient international support for mass killing.

Naturally, Sinwar has been roundly cast in the Western corporate media as a murderous demon bent on the destruction of Israel – since that’s the narrative that enables Israel to go about completing its, um, “task.” Meanwhile, a glance at an excerpt from a 2018 interview with Sinwar reveals that the Hamas leader was rather more intent on building a Palestinian future than on destroying things: “I am not saying I won’t fight anymore... I am saying that I don’t want war anymore. I want the end of the [Israeli] siege [of Gaza]. You walk to the beach at sunset, and you see all these teenagers on the shore chatting and wondering what the world looks like across the sea. What life looks like. It’s breaking. And should break everybody. I want them free.”

Born in a refugee camp in Gaza and imprisoned by Israel for more than two decades for the crime of fighting for Palestinian land that was violently appropriated by Israel, Sinwar was acutely aware of the Israeli-imposed limits to Palestinian “freedom.” Obviously, these limits are now particularly pronounced. Forget walking to the beach in Gaza at sunset to observe Palestinian teenagers wondering what life is like in places that are not under permanent Israeli siege and intermittent maniacal bombardment.

When Israel assassinated Sinwar’s predecessor Ismail Haniyeh in July, Reuters noted that Haniyeh had been “seen by many diplomats as a moderate compared with the more hardline elements” of Hamas. As if we needed any more evidence of Israel’s total lack of interest in peace. As for the United States’ interest in peace, following yesterday’s assassination of Sinwar Biden released an enthusiastic statement patting himself on the back for having “directed [US] Special Operations personnel and our intelligence professionals to work side-by-side with their Israeli counterparts to help locate and track Sinwar and other Hamas leaders hiding in Gaza.”

According to Biden, this was the equivalent of the 2011 assassination of Osama bin Laden – and “a good day for Israel, for the United States, and for the world.” But a day that’s good for genocide isn’t really a good day at all.

End unfair bias

THE COVID-19 pandemic is over, but graduates who attended college during the period are facing its ripple effect in the form of discrimination in the job market. Several graduates complained on social networking sites of unfair treatment during job interviews, with some employers declaring at the very outset that they will not hire those who graduated in 2022, 2023, and 2024, meaning those who were students at the time of the pandemic.

These companies argue that graduates from the pandemic years are generally less qualified. Because most places, including education institutions, were shut down during the pandemic, there were no regular classes and students were taking classes online. As a result it increased the time they spent on smartphones, reducing their focus on studies. The employers further say that the impact of the pandemic years can be seen in the discipline of some of the people they have hired from those years — they often show up late for work or leave early.

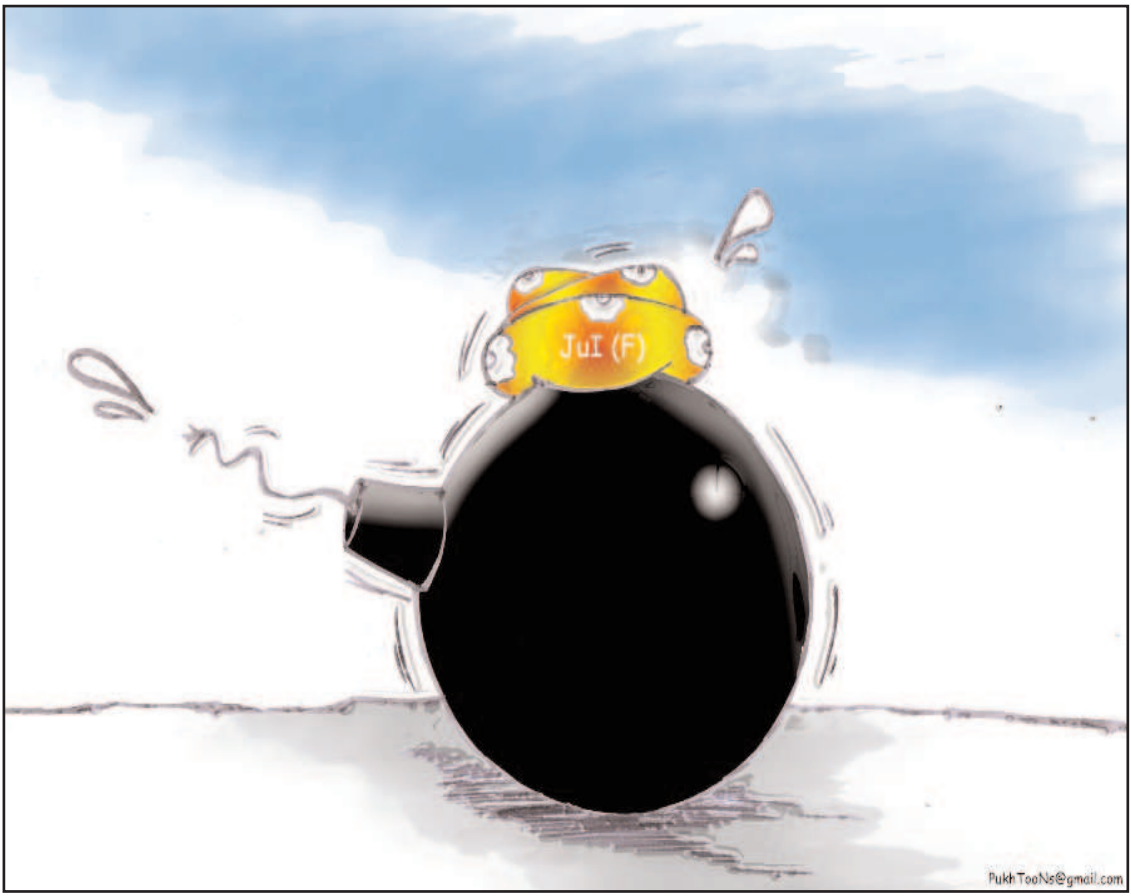
The extended period of remote learning also disrupted their social skills, making them reluctant to socialize at the workplace. Virtual courses also weakened their hands-on and practical knowledge or abilities. Companies, be they small businesses with a dozen employees or large corporations with thousands of employees, have labeled these students as the “pandemic generation”, and chosen to outright reject them.

As many will confirm, the issues these companies are raising are not entirely baseless. Limited learning from online classes, combined with a lack of internship and hands-on experience is indeed responsible for skill gaps in some students. However, labeling them as the “pandemic generation” and using that as a hiring filter is unfair and unjust. Many students rose to challenges posed by the pandemic to repeatedly review online courses, overcome numerous challenges, show resilience and develop stronger adaptability. A blanket hiring ban will lead to companies losing the chance to hire a pool of really talented candidates. Furthermore, companies lack legal grounds to slap the tag of “pandemic generation” on anyone. Refusing to hire graduates from those years on this basis may violate employment promotion laws and also constitutes discrimination against a specific group.

According to the Employment Promotion Law of the People’s Republic of China, workers have the legal right to equal employment and the freedom to choose jobs without facing discrimination on ethnic, racial, gender, or religious grounds. Employers are required to provide equal job opportunities and fair conditions to everyone and are prohibited from engaging in employment discrimination. The pandemic is over, and this kind of discrimination should no longer burden these graduates.

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Justin Trudeau is a nauseating hypocrite

Andrew Mitrovica

YOU know it’s bound to be serious when one politician holds a news conference and orders two other politicians to stand slightly behind him like mannequins while he reads from a prepared statement.

That bit of staged solemnity took place earlier this week at the home of staged solemnity – Ottawa – when Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was flanked by two mute, grim-looking cabinet ministers, Foreign Minister Melanie Joly and Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc. All the choreographed scene was missing was a drum roll or a fanfare commensurate with the affected profundity of the occasion.

The Liberal Party’s former prince is facing a mutiny organised by a host of anxious backbenchers worried about losing their jobs – in light of public opinion polls suggesting that Trudeau’s government is listing so badly that much of the caucus is reportedly grasping for the nearest life jacket or, preferably, a large lifeboat to accommodate them all.

So, in a likely futile attempt to resuscitate his on-life-support political prospects and prove to Canada’s largely white, male cognoscenti that he still has the right stuff to remain prime minister – for the time being, at least – charming, effervescent Trudeau has channeled in tough, resolute Trudeau. In effect, the prime minister declared diplomatic war on India – an emerging superpower and a supposed ally – based on “evidence” gathered by the country’s dysfunctional, scandal-racked police force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

That “evidence,” Trudeau said, allegedly establishes that Indian “agents” have orchestrated a clandestine campaign “that pose[s] a significant threat to public safety.” For its part, the RCMP claims that India’s covert schemes amount to “serious criminal activity in Canada” involving coercion, threats, and the murder of Canadian citizens on Canadian soil.

Aside from a bunch of cops and politicians, no

one has seen so much as a morsel of the “evidence” to assess its strength – but I digress. Trudeau said he asked New Delhi to play nice and help the RCMP out by cooperating with its ongoing probes. New Delhi, unsurprisingly, told Trudeau and company to take a long, lonely hike – to put it charitably.

Cue the diplomatic war. Trudeau kicked out six Indian diplomats posted in Canada, including India’s high commissioner. India, in a predictable retort, ordered six Canadian diplomats to pack their bags and head promptly home. The aforementioned white, male cognoscenti – who cheer on wars of any sort – applauded Trudeau for standing up to state-sanctioned “terrorism” and insisted that India would “pay a heavy price” for doing what the prime minister and the RCMP believe New Delhi’s agents are doing to Canadians in Canada – even though none of them are privy to the shrouded-in-secrecy “evidence.”

As I said, Canada’s white, male cognoscenti just love war – diplomatic or otherwise. But here is the nauseating rub. Trudeau, his cabinet, and the familiar roster of obsequious columnists and on-TV-all-the-time commentators are rank hypocrites. They will, of course, refuse to acknowledge this because they are incapable of introspection, let alone recognising the blaring, prima facie proof of their rank hypocrisy. In defending his decision to expel India’s diplomats, Trudeau said “Canada is a country rooted in the rule of law, and the protection of our citizens is paramount.” Sure it is.

Trudeau’s I’m-going-to-hold-the-bad-guys-who-do-bad-things-to-Canadians-to-account tough-guy strutting is limited, apparently, by geography and which close “ally” is responsible for harming citizens he is charged, as prime minister, with protecting.

Canada’s white, male cognoscenti did not bother to listen carefully to all Trudeau said before reaching for their pom poms. “We will never tolerate the

involvement of a foreign government in threatening and killing Canadian citizens on Canadian soil – a deeply unacceptable violation of Canada’s sovereignty and of international law,” Trudeau said.

Let me paraphrase Trudeau for the hard of hearing. If any country, especially Israel, threatens, coerces or kills Canadians in Lebanon or what remains of the human hellscape known as occupied Gaza, I’m not going to do a damn thing about it. Oh sure, I might have my inconsequential foreign minister write a tweet or two “condemning” the killing by Israel of an elderly Canadian couple as they sought safe haven and approve of her making a short phone call to offer condolences to the surviving family.

Beyond that farcical bit of performative nonsense, my government and I have, in fact, enshrined Israel’s licence to kill Canadians with impunity because our dear beloved friend, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, would never, ever break the rules of war or international law. Despite my tough-guy talk, Foreign Minister Joly and I will indeed “tolerate” the killing of Canadians by a “foreign government” as long as it doesn’t perpetrate its [war] crimes “on Canadian soil.” You see, in our duplicitous view, that doesn’t constitute an “unacceptable violation” of “international law.”

Remember, Israel has the absolute, unquestionable right to defend itself and a few dead Canadians – blown into charred, unrecognisable bits that require DNA testing to confirm their identities – won’t change our myopic minds. Goodness knows, we can’t risk having the usual apologetic suspects inside and outside Parliament accusing my prostrate government of being anti-Semites or siding with “terrorists”. De facto: We won’t be summoning Israel’s ambassador to Canada to Global Affairs HQ for a stiff talking-to or kicking out Israeli diplomats in response to the killing of

three Canadians in Lebanon by its military over the past few weeks. Is that clear, everyone?

If my rendering of the true meaning of Trudeau’s cynical, calibrated remarks offend his soon-to-be-unemployed toadies or any member of Canada’s white, male commentariat, then I urge them to speak with Kamal Tabaja, the eldest son of 74-year-old Hussein and 69-year-old Daad Tabaja, who were incinerated by an Israeli missile fired by an Israeli pilot in late September. That’s a rhetorical request because Trudeau has already forgotten about their killing. And the columnists rushing to pen pieces excoriating India’s alleged crimes have never, and will never, demand that Israel “pay a heavy price” or denounce its documented crimes – whether the victims are a Canadian husband and wife who celebrated their 48th wedding anniversary this past April or the more than 42,000 mostly Palestinian children and women, casualties all of genocide.

I spoke to Tabaja – a Canadian citizen who lives and works in Bahrain. He agreed. Prime Minister Trudeau is a rank hypocrite. “With my parents, they did nothing,” Tabaja said. “They didn’t even bother... to issue a press release. They just sent a tweet.” Tabaja said while it was right for Trudeau to hold India answerable since any “self-respecting” country would immediately take “political and diplomatic action” when Canadian citizens are targeted by a foreign power, his parents’ killing has been “ignored.”

In the wake of Trudeau’s “disgraceful” double standard, Tabaja said he has written – on behalf of his five still grieving brothers and sisters – to the prime minister condemning his blatant failure to hold Israel similarly to account. He’s waiting for a reply. Tabaja also agreed that Trudeau’s tough-guy act stops at the Israeli border and that it was inconceivable that this or any other prim “Oh, yeah,” he said. “They all stop there.” Sadly and shamefully, Kamal Tabaja is right.

NATO should prioritize improving ties with Middle East states

Luke Coffey

FORMER Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte has only been in his new role as the secretary-general of NATO for a few weeks, but already his inbox is full. Russia’s war against Ukraine has been dragging on for almost three years and the geopolitical situation in Europe has been complicated by reports of North Korean soldiers possibly being sent there. There is a lot of uncertainty regarding America’s role in the transatlantic community after the US elections next month. And even after all the rhetoric, promises and proclamations made by European politicians, Europe still does not collectively spend enough on its defense.

However, one issue that cannot be ignored by NATO is the volatility and instability across parts of the Middle East. As is often the case, many of the geopolitical challenges experienced in the Middle East also impact Europe. In recent decades, European countries have been actors in the region in multiple conflicts, ranging from Iraq to Syria and naval security missions in the Gulf.

Under the leadership of Rutte’s predecessor, Jens Stoltenberg, NATO took steps to bolster its engagement in the Middle East. Stoltenberg became the first secretary-general to conduct a bilateral visit to Saudi Arabia. Some hope that this will prove to be the beginning of a process that leads to a deepening of relations between NATO and the Kingdom.

Also under his leadership, NATO reestablished its training mission in Iraq in 2017 and established an office in Kuwait to improve relations with the Gulf. Over the summer, it was announced that NATO was going to open a liaison office in Jordan. This year, the alliance marks the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, which serves as the main platform on which it engages with countries in the Gulf region, including Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE. Finally, Stoltenberg initiated a study on NATO’s engagement with the Global South. The final product included a sizable section on what NATO can do to improve relations with countries in the Middle East.

So, the best thing that the new secretary-general can do is to build on the progress already made and pick up where his predecessor left off. As one of the Netherlands’ longest-serving prime ministers, Rutte unsurprisingly has a lot of experience in the Middle East. He has visited the region numerous times and, during his tenure as PM, Dutch forces contributed to multiple security operations, including counter-Daesh and training missions in Iraq. As Rutte develops his approach to NATO engagement with the Middle East, he should focus on three main issues.

The first issue should be deepening the alliance’s relations with the countries of the Middle East beyond those already participating in the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. There is a NATO Summit planned for Türkiye in 2026. The alliance should lay the groundwork between now and then to deepen relationships with countries in the region and invite more part-

ners to formally join the initiative. At the summit in Türkiye, there should be a N A T O - I s t a n b u l Cooperation Initiative meeting at the heads of state and government level to highlight the importance of this relationship. As part of this effort, Rutte should pay an early visit to the Middle East, including to Saudi Arabia.

Secondly, he needs to work closely with Baghdad to determine what the future NATO-Iraqi security relationship will look like. In addition to the alliance’s training mission in Iraq, relations between the two have been deepening in recent years. Iraqi National Security Adviser Qasim Al-Araji visited NATO in August to discuss improving relations and the ongoing and future NATO training mission in the country. As the US and Iraq continue their negotiations over the future of their bilateral security relationship, it is important that NATO continues to develop relations with Baghdad.

Finally, NATO should find practical ways to work with countries in the Middle East by focusing on issues that have immediate applicability to the current geopolitical situation and are mutually beneficial.

In this sense, there are two issues that should get priority attention. One is improving maritime security in the region. For more than two decades, European countries have worked closely with Gulf states in conducting joint maritime security operations. Sometimes these have been counterterrorism operations off the Horn of Africa, while other missions have focused on maritime security inside the Gulf. With the threat posed by the Houthis to international shipping, it is clear that there is still a need for joint maritime security cooperation between NATO and regional countries.

Secondly, NATO and its partners in the Middle East should focus on improving regional missile defense. Many NATO countries have provided advanced air defense systems to Ukraine that are used against Russian missiles and Iranian drones. Lessons have been learned on how effective these systems are and how to improve them. Meanwhile, Iran and its proxies have been using an array of missiles and drones to attack various targets across the Middle East. It is in everyone’s interest in the region that there is a missile defense architecture that can ensure security. Both NATO and its partners in the Middle East can work closely to make this a reality.

It makes perfect sense that the alliance and Arab countries should deepen relations. Over the past couple of decades, NATO and Arab soldiers have served side by side on the ground in places like Afghanistan and the Balkans, in the air over the skies of Libya and on the seas off the Horn of Africa. With Europe and the Arab world sharing many of the same security concerns, it is natural for the alliance to increase its engagement in the region. Although the largest land war in more than 80 years is taking place in Europe, this is no excuse for NATO to ignore other parts of the globe that also impact the security of the transatlantic community. The Middle East is a great example.

Cultural diplomacy can boost Türkiye-Gulf relations

Sinem Cengiz

achieving progress in this rapprochement.

Both Türkiye and the Gulf countries possess influential tools for fostering cultural dialogue through cultural diplomacy.

For decades, film has served as one of the most influential and accessible mediums of cultural diplomacy, possessing a unique ability to impact the so-called masses. For example, no other form of art has the far-reaching impact and remarkable role that film does, not only in entertaining people but also in shaping identities and wielding cultural influence. This is because films craft images and messages that promote a nation’s values, exerting significant effects on our understanding of foreign relations with other nations.

Film also has the power to change perceptions and attitudes toward political issues and play a vital role in

sustaining relationships between countries, breaking down stereotypes and transcending borders on multiple levels. In the context of Türkiye and the Gulf, collaborative film projects could serve as a powerful tool for promoting cultural influence through soft power.

Several studies have shown that films, music and art have been effectively used as tools to win over the hearts and minds of people in other countries and shape public perception. Although Turkish television series have played a significant role in attracting Arab interest in Türkiye and its culture, I believe joint films can serve even greater purposes by fostering collaborative efforts that bring the mindsets of both nations together in a single project.

Türkiye has established joint film production agreements with multiple coun-

tries, including Iran, Pakistan and EU states such as Germany and France. The goal of these projects has been to elevate the cultural profile of their respective nations and enhance cultural relations through the exchange of cinematic works. In the Middle East, there is a recognized understanding that the soft power generated by Turkish dramas cannot be compared to what can be achieved through political means. In the Türkiye-Gulf context, I believe cultural diplomacy has the potential to contribute much more effectively to foreign policy goals.

Cultural diplomacy has three primary aims: to build lasting cross-cultural relations based on mutual understanding that enables parties to manage uncertainty; to foster market exchanges; and to win hearts and minds. While political authority is often seen as the central actor in

pursuing cultural diplomacy, non-state actors such as the film industry, festivals and art exhibitions can also act as agents of cultural diplomacy, influencing the course of relations between states.

Therefore, initiatives like “Mahmool Makfool” exemplify the potential for cultural diplomacy to reshape perceptions and strengthen ties between Türkiye and the Gulf states. By leveraging the universal language of films, fashion, art and music, Türkiye and the Gulf states can engage their audiences in meaningful narratives that celebrate their shared history and culture and challenge stereotypes. As Türkiye progresses in this new era of partnership with the Gulf states, cultural diplomacy can foster a deeper understanding. Both sides should use every form of this diplomacy, such as media exchanges and art, music and film collaborations.

Events in Gaza, Lebanon may bring Egypt and Iran closer

Dr. Abdel Latif

THE relationship between Egypt and Iran is one of the most complex in the Middle East, largely due to significant political and ideological differences that have persisted for decades. Recently, changing dynamics in the region, especially the ongoing events in Lebanon and Gaza, have brought this relationship back into focus. As regional tensions rise, observers are questioning whether these developments will hasten the normalization process between Cairo and Tehran, two historically influential players in the region.

As a result of Israel's wars on Lebanon and Gaza, the prospect of rapprochement between Egypt and Iran seems closer than ever. Both public and behind-the-scenes communications are ongoing, culminating in Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's visit to Egypt on Thursday as part of his Middle East tour. The discussions focused on ways to de-escalate the situation in Gaza and Lebanon, as well as easing tensions between Iran and Israel.

Through this visit, Iran sought to improve relations with Egypt after years of stagnation. Since the March 2023 Saudi-Iranian agreement to resume relations, communication between Iran and Egypt has increased. Oman has played a mediating role, conveying messages between the two countries to pave the way for the potential resumption of diplomatic ties. Despite the obstacles, there are encouraging signs of diplomatic progress between Cairo and Tehran, particularly given the shared security challenges in the region, such as the situations in Yemen and Gaza.

To understand the prospects for rapprochement or normalization between Cairo and Tehran, it is important to consider the historical context of the crisis. Before the 1979 Iranian Revolution, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, Egypt and Iran enjoyed strong strategic relations. There was close political and military cooperation, with Iran supporting Egypt in facing regional challenges during the era of President Gamal Abdel Nasser. The two nations maintained strong diplomatic relations.

However, the relationship changed dramatically after the overthrow of the shah. Relations entered a phase of continuous tension, largely due to the new Iran regime's opposition to the 1978 Camp David Accords. Egypt also viewed Iran as a backer of extremist Islamist groups that threatened its national security, a belief reinforced by the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981. Iran further strained relations by naming a street in Tehran after Sadat's assassin, Khalid Islambouli.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, relations remained cold, with both countries supporting opposing sides in various regional conflicts. Iran was a key backer of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Palestinian factions, while Egypt, under President Hosni Mubarak, remained a pillar of the Sunni Arab order and maintained close relations with the US.

Despite these tensions, limited communication persisted, with economic and cultural exchanges remaining open to some extent. This laid the groundwork for potential reconciliation if the geopolitical landscape changed.

Egypt and Iran have often found themselves on opposing sides of many issues. For instance, during the Iran-Iraq War, Egypt fully supported Iraq and opposed Iran's ambitions of regional expansion. Egypt also backed the Gulf states threatened by Iran's proxies, particularly Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen.

For Egypt, maintaining stability in Gaza is crucial for its national security. Meanwhile, Iran's support for Palestinian resistance factions, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, through financial and military backing, aligns with its broader anti-Israel narrative. Tactical coordination could serve the interests of both countries. Lebanon's political and economic crisis also casts a shadow over the region.

Hezbollah, an Iranian proxy, wields significant influence in Lebanese politics. While Egypt has traditionally avoided engaging with Hezbollah, the deteriorating situation in Lebanon has raised concerns in Cairo about potential instability spreading across the Arab world. There is growing recognition in Egyptian foreign policy circles that some form of cooperation with Iran may be necessary to prevent Lebanon's collapse, which could have far-reaching regional consequences.

Another factor driving Egypt and Iran toward possible rapprochement is the changing dynamics in the Gulf. Saudi Arabia, Egypt's closest Gulf ally, has begun its own dialogue with Iran. Although relations between Riyadh and Tehran remain strained, these talks indicate a broader trend towards regional

de-escalation. Egypt may see this as an opportunity to explore its own path to normalization without jeopardizing its relationships with Gulf states. If Saudi Arabia and Iran can engage diplomatically, there is room for Egypt to explore rapprochement as well.

However, despite the realistic chances of rapprochement, major hurdles remain. One is the ideological divide. Egypt remains skeptical of the political Islam embraced by Iran, as well as its revolutionary narrative. Additionally, the two countries have conflicting alliances, with Egypt closely tied to the West while Iran remains heavily sanctioned. Iran's support for groups like Hezbollah and Hamas continues to be a point of contention, as Egypt views these groups as destabilizing forces in the region.

Iran's continued backing of armed groups across the region, which Egypt sees as a direct threat to Arab national security, presents a major barrier. Furthermore, Iran's expansionist policies in Yemen and Syria are still key points of disagreement between the two countries. Despite these challenges, the relationship may see at least temporary rapprochement, as the two countries cooperate on shared regional issues like the crises in Lebanon and Gaza. This scenario assumes that the two nations will work to build trust through political and diplomatic dialogue. Whether this rapprochement can help resolve the situations in Gaza and Lebanon remains uncertain. Progress will depend on both parties' ability to overcome these obstacles and engage in effective political dialogue to address regional challenges.

Arab News

History of Caribbean slavery being lost

Laura Trevelyan

to preserve a vital collective record of the past? The slave registers, which tell us what little we know about Cuffee and Fatima, and hundreds of thousands of other enslaved Africans across the Caribbean, should be digitised and made available online for everyone to access.

As Ingrid Thompson, chief archivist in Barbados, says: "These records hold fragments of information about who we are. The legacy of slavery is one of erasure. Every detail contained in these records is another piece in the jigsaw puzzle of human existence on these islands."

The names of the enslaved African people and the plantations they lived on at the time of emancipation in 1834 are of tremendous interest to people trying to trace their family history – whether they live in Britain, the Caribbean, Africa or the United States. For example, records naming the enslaved Africans who were shipped from Barbados to South Carolina could provide vital clues to African Americans trying to research their past. "In the Caribbean, our history is a painful void," says Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, chair of the Reparation Commission for the Caribbean Community (Caricom). Protecting and preserving what we know of this history and making it publicly accessible is a way of easing the pain – it is a measure of reparative justice.

Britain's national archives hold many records from the period of slavery. Yet most of these valuable documents are not digitised, and Caribbean scholars or family genealogists must make the pilgrimage to Kew in London to examine plantation records.

Britain's foreign secretary, David Lammy, noted that he was the first person to hold this office who was a descendant of enslaved Africans, and said this would inform his approach to governing. Could he rally support for a project to digitise all the archival material from the period of slavery held in Britain's archives, and create an online museum that explains their meaning? What a tribute this would be to his Guyanese ancestors and to the entire

Windrush generation, to recognise the importance of the heritage of those who helped build postwar Britain.

And it's not only Britain's government that could champion the creation of an online museum, bringing together all the archives held in the Caribbean and Britain. So, too, could King Charles, whose ancestors sanctioned the slave trade at its inception – through the Royal African Company, which shipped thousands of enslaved Africans to the Caribbean and to North America. In 2022, as Prince of Wales, Charles told Commonwealth leaders how he was seeking to "deepen my own understanding of slavery's enduring impact".

What will King Charles say when he makes the keynote speech at next week's Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Samoa – speaking this time as head of the organisation? As a constitutional monarch, he is constrained by the policies of the government of the day. But a palace source says, "One of the core issues the king is taking a keen interest in is the preservation of historic records, which is so vital to current and future understanding of that part of our shared history."

The king made this keen interest evident when he was filmed looking at the "slave bible" in Lambeth Palace – the edition authorised for use in Caribbean churches in the era of slavery, with the Old Testament references to freedom erased for fear they would encourage a revolt. Perhaps he can similarly give symbolic support for the immediate preservation of vital historical records in the Caribbean – and the donation of money to help make the vision a reality.

Slavery was a long time ago, and no one alive today bears responsibility for this shameful part of our history. But there are painful legacies of slavery which exist to this day – including not knowing who your ancestors were or where they came from. Clues about past lives exist in the Caribbean's historical records. We must preserve and protect these archives, and make them digitally available to all – before the memory of Quacou, Hankey, Cuffee, Fatima, Fanny Ibo and Quamina is lost for ever.

The Guardian

Left unchecked, Lebanon's displacement crisis could tear the country apart

Sami Halabi

LEBANON faces a threat just as destructive as its bombs raining down on its cities: a displacement crisis that risks tearing the country apart from within. Communities are stretched to their limits, and the fractures running through Lebanese society are widening by the day. If this continues unchecked, the implosion could be more devastating than the war itself.

Over a million people fled their homes in the first 72 hours of Israeli bombardments. The exodus was swift and chaotic, leaving families lost and unsure where to turn. It didn't take long for a pattern to emerge – people fled to "safer" areas – but that is where the order ended. Only about 190,000 of the estimated 1.2 million displaced found their way to organised shelters. The majority of people are now out of sight, staying in informal accommodations, renting out homes at hyperinflated prices, squatting in empty homes and high-rises, or crammed into the homes of friends and relatives. This invisible population complicates an already overwhelmed response.

The government has rolled out basic structures within emergency shelters and is starting to designate focal points to manage aid distribution. Ordinary Lebanese have offered their homes and offices, and restaurants are giving out free meals. But solidarity is not nearly enough.

Fear and sectarian distrust are now unravelling Lebanon's fragile social fabric, threatening its stability. Communities in Christian and Druze-majority areas, fearing that hosting displaced families from Hezbollah-linked regions will drag them into the conflict, are increasingly hesitant to open their doors. Recent reports of Israel targeting rental properties housing displaced people have cemented these fears, further discouraging the act of hosting.

This fear is greater than just an individual reaction; it is also driving policy decisions. Some municipalities have already declared it too dangerous to host internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to fears Israel will target them. Indeed, earlier this week, an Israeli attack levelled a three-story building in the northern Christian-majority village of Aitou, killing at least 22 people, among them 12 women and two children. The residence has been recently rented out to a family displaced from the south, and the UN has called for an investigation. This shift in displacement patterns threatens to tear at Lebanon's fragile sectarian balance, and it is the most vulnerable – the displaced themselves – who will pay the highest price.

The government's response has been patchy. An emergency plan provides a barebones framework, but the reality on the ground is desperate. Solutions like prefab shel-

ters and repurposing government-owned buildings, including those under the control of Lebanon's central bank, have been proposed but remain mostly talk. Vested interests, particularly in the banking sector and among politicians, are reluctant to consider any buildings other than schools. They have their sights set on central bank properties (instead of their own assets) to compensate depositors who lost savings in the financial crisis they caused. Such opportunism smacks of blatant disregard for a population already suffering from years of economic hardship, now compounded by the worst conflict since the 1975-1990 Civil War.

Instead of dithering, action must be taken in the short term to expand public shelter capacity and relieve schools using every available resource – prefab shelters, government buildings, cash assistance, whatever can be mobilised. The government's Disaster Risk Management (DRM) unit has made progress in training people to become shelter focal points and manage collective shelters, but the invisible population – the vast majority outside the formal system who cannot take advantage of these shelters – cannot be ignored. If Lebanon's response doesn't account for these people, it will collapse once the state's money or the hospitality they rely on runs out—both of which are rapidly

dwindling.

In the medium term, a government-backed rental scheme with rent controls needs to be implemented to protect both landlords and displaced families. The scheme should aim to move from private property solutions to a public housing solution in the fastest time possible, allowing the government some time to repurpose the state-owned properties, house the displaced and, eventually, return children to school.

If this crisis has made anything clear, Lebanon's long-term housing policy needs a major overhaul. The government must tackle structural problems in the property market by regulating prices and taxing vacant properties, which account for an estimated 20 percent of housing stock. Lebanon cannot afford to let speculation keep driving housing out of reach for those most in need. The displaced – whether Lebanese, Syrian, or any other marginalised group – must have legal protections against forced evictions, and the government must guarantee them access to basic services like water, electricity, and sanitation.

By embedding these principles into an emergency housing strategy, Lebanon can start to address the new fractures in its social fabric. The alternative is to allow fear, suspicion, and market forces to dominate, recreating the very conditions that fuelled Lebanon's descent into civil war decades ago.

Aljazeera

Mutual fear and mistrust denying Palestinians a state

Ross Anderson

IT is an axiom in negotiations that those who are especially good at the job have an ability to place themselves in the shoes of the people with whom they are negotiating: to understand why they think as they think, do what they do, say what they say. This ability gives such negotiators two advantages. First, they know what offers and concessions to make, within their powers, that will sway the opposition. Second, they can identify useful weak points in the other side's case.

A criticism often leveled at Israel is that its political leaders appear to be willfully ignorant of the genuine anger and frustration of the Palestinian people. It is not that they hear it and choose to ignore it: it is that they do not understand it in the first place. Quite why this should be so is difficult to comprehend. Few Palestinian victims of the Nakba remain, but their descendants do, and the trauma of 750,000 people being driven from their homes and land at gunpoint has been passed down through families for more than 75 years. Nor did it end there. Successive generations have endured, at the hands of the Israeli state, systematic repression, subjugation, humiliation and denial of their nationality to an extent suffered by no other people on Earth for such an extended period of time. The catastrophe of 1948, and the oppressive military occupation and land grabs that succeeded it, are a collective trauma that defines the Palestinian identity: how could anyone – especially Jews, with their own long history of persecution – not grasp that?

So, the criticism of Israel is fair:

you would be looking at Benjamin Netanyahu for a long time before "empathy" was the word that sprang to mind. Uncomfortably for many in the Middle East, however, there are also few people in this region who truly comprehend what it means to be Jewish. And that is just as debilitating as Israeli blindness to Palestinian pain.

Some of my best friends are Jewish, mostly in London, where I lived and worked for 20 years. In the British capital, the Jewish community, insofar as such a thing can be said to exist, is varied and diverse. It ranges from the 15,000 or so strictly Orthodox Hasidic Jews strolling the streets of Stamford Hill in North London in their quaintly traditional dress and hairstyles, to the slightly less committed who observe Jewish rituals and holidays but not the whole demanding lifestyle, to the completely secular bordering on atheist who are nevertheless deeply proud of their ethnicity and heritage.

Aside from their Jewishness, obviously, and the fact they are far removed from their fellow Jews in Israel and the Occupied Territories, all these people have one thing in common: they live in permanent, abject fear that something awful is going to happen to them because they are Jews. As with Palestinians and the Nakba, every Jew has been told stories by relatives who survived the Holocaust, or about other less fortunate relatives who did not. These stories do not inspire optimism about the benevolence of the human race. I have one friend in particular whose grandmother lived through the horrors of Auschwitz

and achieved a healthy old age. But until the day she died, she kept a fully packed suitcase under her bed in case there was a knock on the door in the middle of the night and she had to flee before it all kicked off again.

The same friend believes that the chant of "From the river to the sea" heard at pro-Palestinian marches is an open threat to murder every Jew, beginning in Israel and then everywhere else. There is no point in telling him that this is not true, and that his fear is irrational; no point in telling him that he is safer in London than he currently would be in the country created, ironically, as a safe refuge for Jews; no point because the rational part of him already knows these things — but the irrational part, the visceral genetic memory, does not.

There are two significant differences between the Jewish experience and the Palestinian one. The first is the baseless nature of Jewish fear: Jews in Europe and America are not about to be murdered in their beds, the Holocaust will not happen again, and there is no realistic "existential threat to the state of Israel" — however much Netanyahu bangs on about it. Palestinian fear, on the other hand, is very much grounded in fact: you need only look at the daily death toll in Gaza and the organized violence of settlers in the West Bank to understand why. The other difference is that, while Palestinians were in no way responsible for the slaughter of European Jews in the 1930s and 1940s, the state of Israel is wholly responsible for the murder of countless

AI has potential to revolutionize education

Mohamed Ally

THE world is in the midst of the "Fourth Industrial Revolution" and may soon enter the "Fifth Industrial Revolution". At the same time, the rapid development of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence has been impacting education at all levels, from primary and secondary to higher education.

Countries around the world are trying to find ways to more flexibly use AI in education, so as to impart education to students in remote areas and teach people the skills needed to build successful careers in the 21st century.

China has become a leader in the application of AI in education and training by developing smart learning systems and intensifying research on AI. China is also working with other countries to advance the use of AI in education globally. The fourth United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4) is to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". In this context, organizations such as UNESCO are exploring ways to use AI to realize the SDG4.

AI can be used to meet individual learners' needs and provide one-to-one tutoring for students, as well as to facilitate lifelong learning. To achieve the SDG4, online classes using AI can be organized to teach students in different parts of the world, translate the course content into students' preferred language, and allow the students to interact with the tutor. This is important for students who live in remote areas, scores of kilometers away from the nearest school.

Also, teachers can use AI to prepare study materials for students and help

them complete a certain course. AI can help teachers, too, to customize resources for learners so they can perform better. Researchers at the Beijing Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education and Beijing Foreign Studies University developed and implemented an automatic resource generation mechanism called "Learning Cell Model" to customize study materials and other resources for learners.

Studies show the Learning Cell Model can generate resources according to individual learners' needs and improve students' performance without increasing their cognitive burden. An important area of research is the possible use of AI to facilitate language learning. Researchers from the Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education and the Beijing Normal University explored how an "automatic resource generation system" can help in teaching Chinese as a second language in schools.

The researchers developed a model to use AI to ensure the resources meet learners' needs, with studies showing the use of the teaching-learning model improved students' performance and their perception faculty. Students who were taught lessons using the model more actively participated in the course.

In addition to teaching languages, AI can also be used to help students of all ages and from different countries to learn about different cultures. Researchers from Beijing Foreign Studies University, Athabasca University (Canada) and some Saudi Arabian universities have been exploring ways to use AI to help students from different coun-

tries learn from each other and know about each other's cultures while sitting in the comfort of their homes.

AI applications should be designed in a way that they benefit learners and educators, for which policies for learners, teachers and other staff in educational institutions should be in place. For example, there should be policies on factors such as data privacy and security, copyright, academic integrity, transparency and environmental concerns. A recent report by experts from Athabasca University and the Commonwealth of Learning identified 14 AI policies that staff at different levels of higher education institutions need to follow.

However, some educational institutions are reluctant to allow students to use AI because they think AI will not benefit them or it is not ethical to allow students to use AI. But AI is here to stay, and educational institutions must accept AI as another beneficiary tool. As we move toward the "Fifth Industrial Revolution", AI may develop the ability to think independently and become as creative as humans, and GenAI may become even more intelligent and capable of completing intellectual tasks like humans.

With the advancement of machine learning, AI systems may start developing original ideas that can be applied in complicated situations and contexts. AI has the potential to revolutionize education if designed and applied properly. The challenge for higher educational institutions is how to keep up with the rapid development of AI, particularly when it comes to devising suitable policies to impart education to the future generations.

The China Daily



Petroleum Minister calls for collective action against tobacco use

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Petroleum Musadik Masood Malik has underscored the need for collective action against tobacco use.

He expressed these words in his address at a seminar titled 'Sustainable Tobacco Control Policies: A Way to Healthier Pakistan' organized by the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) at a local hotel the other day.

The event aimed at bringing together government officials, public health advocates, civil society members, anti-tobacco activists, and youth leaders to address the growing

tobacco epidemic in Pakistan and advocate for comprehensive policy reforms.

Musadik Malik stated, "Smoking is causing overall harm rather than any benefit. The fight against smoking will not be easy, but it is crucial. The real fight against smoking is a fight against the mafia."

Highlighting the severe health implications, he added, "Smoking has the deepest connection with cancer, and there is hardly any disease that isn't linked to it. Every year, 150,000 to 200,000 people die from smoking. Why can't we see the faces of our people in those numbers?"

Former caretaker minis-

ter of information and broadcasting Murtaza Solangi also spoke on the occasion. He emphasized the need to take tobacco as a national issue.

"First of all, we have to see it as an issue; this is not even yet seen as an issue," he remarked.

He called for a unified approach, stating, "We have to create an ecosystem where media and everything around us reflects an anti-tobacco stance."

Dr. Khalil Ahmad, Program Manager at SPARC, while addressing a seminar, emphasized the deadly toll of tobacco use in Pakistan, explaining, "Tobacco use is costing

166,000 lives each year, which equates to almost 450 deaths per day."

He urged the government to take critical steps to curb tobacco consumption, particularly among the youth.

Dr. Mati ur Rehman from the Health Services Academy, Muhammad Sabir, an economist from the Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC), Khalida Ahmad, a board member of SPARC, Senator Sana Jamali, Nisar Ahmad Cheema, a parliamentarian, and prominent anti-tobacco activists, among others, were also in attendance and spoke on the occasion.



LAHORE: Chief Projects Officer NADRA Rehman Qamar and Chief Digital Officer Bank of Punjab Nofel Daud signing an agreement at a ceremony.

NADRA sign e-Payment Gateway agreement with BOP F.P. Report

LAHORE: The National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA) has taken a significant step towards enhancing its Service Delivery by signing an e-Payment Gateway and Acquiring Agreement with the Bank of Punjab (BOP).

National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA) has taken a significant step towards enhancing its Service Delivery by signing an e-Payment Gateway and Acquiring Agreement with the Bank of Punjab (BOP).

Zafar Masud, President & CEO, BOP emphasized that the initiative aligns with the vision of advancing digital banking services by providing secure and innovative payment solutions for the nation.

The agreement was signed by Rehman Qamar, Chief Projects Officer, NADRA and Nofel Daud, Chief Digital Officer, BOP at a ceremony by key officials from both organizations.

Gold prices up by Rs900 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs900 and was sold at Rs281,800 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs280,900 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs772 to Rs241,598 from Rs240,826 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs221,465 from Rs220,758, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver increased by Rs50 to Rs3,150 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs42.87 to Rs2,700.62.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$9 to \$2,721 from \$2,612, the Association reported.

AT&T ratifies agreement with CWA

NEW YORK (Reuters): Telecom operator AT&T (T.N), opens new tab on Friday ratified agreements with the Communications Workers of America in the Southeast and West, which covers about 23,000 employees across eleven states.

The union said workers in the West will receive wage increases of at least 15% over the course of the new four-year collective bargaining agreement while those in the Southeast will get over 19% hikes during the new five-year agreement.

In August, over 17,000 employees at the company — including technicians and customer service representatives, and others who install, maintain and support AT&T's residential and business wireline telecommunications network — went on strike in August to protest unfair labor practices.

Wire technicians and utility operations professionals from the Southeast will receive an additional 3% wage boost under the Infrastructure bill, the union said in a statement.

Pakistan embassy in Brussels holds informative session

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of Pakistan in Brussels, in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) and the Directorate General Trade (DG Trade) of the European Commission organized an informative session on the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D) which is a set of new obligations related to human rights and climate change on European economic operators and businesses in non-EU Countries who are a

part of their supply chains. The Session was attended by a large number of business associations and relevant individuals in Pakistan.

Gabriele Lo Monaco from DG Trade gave a comprehensive presentation highlighting the different contours of the regulations.

He highlighted the various obligations under CS3D, the rationale behind them and the enforcement mechanism, according to a press release issued here on Saturday. The presentation

was followed by an interactive Q&A session which gave further clarity to the participants.

Omar Hameed, Economic Minister at the Pakistan Embassy in Brussels thanked the European Commission for facilitating the interaction and emphasized Pakistani business entities to ensure their preparedness industries and adapt to the new regulations as compliance will be a key determinant of our continued access to European markets.

Industrial output declines by 0.19% in first two months of FY25

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) in the country witnessed a negative growth of 0.19 percent during the first two months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The provisional quantum indices of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) for August 2024 with the base year 2015-16 have been developed based on the latest data supplied by the source agencies.

The main contributors towards overall negative

growth of 0.19% are food (0.32), tobacco (0.39%), textile (0.63%) garments (2.15%), petroleum products (0.51%), automobiles (0.39%), pharmaceuticals (-0.10%), cement (-1.02%), iron & steel products (-0.71%), electrical equipment (-0.63%) and furniture (-1.85%).

The production in July-August 2024-25 as compared to July-August 2023-24 has increased in food, tobacco, textile, wearing apparel, coke & petroleum products, chemicals, automobiles, other transport equipment, and other manufacturing (foot-

ball) while it decreased in pharmaceuticals, rubber products, non-metallic mineral products, machinery, and equipment beverages, iron & steel products, electrical equipment, and furniture.

On a year-on-year basis, LSM witnessed a decrease of 2.65% during August 2024 compared to the industrial output of August 2023, according to PBS data.

However, on a month-on-month (MoM) basis, LSM output increased by 4.68 percent when compared to the production of July 2024.

Western Digital owes \$315.7 million

CALIFORNIA (Reuters): Data storage provider Western Digital (WDC.O), opens new tab must pay \$315.7 million in damages for violating a patent owner's rights in data security technology, a jury in California federal court said on Friday.

The jury determined that several Western Digital self-encrypting hard drive products infringe a SPEX Technologies patent covering data encryption innovations, a SPEX attorney said in an email.

San Jose, California-

based SPEX sued Western Digital in 2016. SPEX said it bought the patent at issue from Spyrus, a cryptography company that developed the technology for encrypting sensitive communications.

Spyrus co-founder Sue Pontius said she was grateful to the jury for the verdict. SPEX's lead attorney, Marc Fenster, said the verdict was "a vindication of Sue Pontius and her perseverance."

A Western Digital spokesperson said the company disagrees with the

verdict and plans to challenge it in post-trial motions and an appeal if necessary.

The lawsuit said Western Digital data storage devices including its Ultrastar, My Book and My Passport products infringed the patent. Western Digital denied the allegations.

In July, a different jury in the same Santa Ana, California, court said Western Digital owed more than \$262 million to another company for infringing patents related to increasing hard drive storage capacity.

SWCCI, NBP organizes awareness session

SARGODHA (APP): The National Bank of Pakistan and Sargodha Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SWCCI) Saturday jointly organised an awareness session on 'NBP Women Financing'.

In the awareness session, the women belonging to every field of life and students attended the work-

shop in which they were imparted awareness regarding National Bank of 'Pakistan Women Financing Scheme' so that women that are willing to start their own business could get loan with five percent markup and tenure of the loan would be fine years.

GS SWCCI Sargodha Saira Rehan said that this

awareness session would definitely benefit the women want to establish their business and students who have the skill and want to explore their abilities in industrial sector.

The Sargodha Women of Chamber of Commerce and Industry is striving hard, and providing platform to the women to encourage

them for doing their own business to make them self-dependent, he added.

Regional Executive Liabilities NBP Regional Office Sargodha Muhammad Tanveer Awan and Regional Commercial Business Small and Medium Enterprises Ahamd Raza imparted awareness regarding laon to the participants.

PPL, BME Management Committee meeting held

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The 49th Annual Management Committee meeting of Bolan Mining Enterprises (BME) was held in Quetta and attended by the joint venture (JV) partners, Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) and the Government of Balochistan (GoB).

MD & CEO PPL Imran Abbasy along with senior PPL officials participated in the meeting, while the Government of Balochistan was represented by the Secretary Mines & Minerals Development Department Saidal Khan Luni, Additional Secretary Industries and CEO of Balochistan Mineral Resources Limited.

The discussions focused on enhancing operational



efficiency and fostering sustainable growth for BME. The JV partners explored strategies to optimize resource extraction, improve infrastructure and

promote the sustainable development of BME's mining projects. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to maximizing the potential of BME,

improving operational efficiency and contributing to the socioeconomic development of the region through responsible mining practices.

Markets mixed as investors weigh earnings and China GDP

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Global stock markets went different directions as investors weighed better-than-expected Chinese economic growth data, a eurozone interest-rate cut and strong US corporate earnings.

In New York, all three major indices on Wall Street finished higher Friday, as a strong string of earnings results helped drive the Dow and the S&P 500 to new all-time highs.

"Earnings was a big positive part of the story today," Edward Jones senior investment strategist Angelo Kourkafas told AFP. "Technology stocks are the ones leading the gains and helping the S&P reach its sixth consecutive weekly gain." Netflix's earnings results and posi-

tive reports on Apple's iPhone sales in China were both "helping lift the tech space," he continued, adding that there had also been some positive economic news from China to buoy investors.

Shares in the streaming giant closed up 11.1 percent after it announced it had gained 5.1 million additional paying subscribers in the last quarter. That beat analysts' expectations of a gain of 3.85 million, according to a consensus figure established by FactSet. Paris and Frankfurt advanced following the European Central Bank's decision on Thursday to cut rates for the third time this year as inflation returns to normal levels.

But London's FTSE 100 fell, weighed down by the

pound gaining in reaction to official data showing a surprisingly large rise in UK retail sales last month.

Hong Kong and Shanghai moved higher on hopes the Chinese government could reignite the struggling economy, with tech giants and beaten-down developers among the best performers.

China's economy expanded by a slightly better-than-forecast annual rate of 4.6 percent in the third quarter, official data revealed on Friday. But it nevertheless marked the slowest pace of growth since the start of 2023.

Separate data showed that Chinese retail sales and industrial output rose more than expected in September. "The raft of

data... provided an opportunity to show that the economy was on the right path," said Joshua Mahoney, chief market analyst at Scope Markets.

China's central bank launched a new bid to boost markets and hinted at a further rate cut in coming months as it aims to hit its annual growth target of five percent this year.

State media reported that top banks had cut rates on yuan deposits on Friday for the second time this year to boost lending.

"The latest supports are very welcome," said Harry Murphy Cruise, an economist at Moody's Analytics, adding that the move was likely to "propel" the economy to its target for the year.



Aaqib Javed bids farewell to Lahore Qalandars

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Former fast-bowler Aaqib Javed announced on Saturday to conclude his tenure as Director of Cricket Operations, Lahore Qalandars.

Aaqib Javed has already been assigned important position in Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). Aaqib Javed performed his duties as head coach and director of cricket operations of Lahore Qalandar for eight years.

During this period, Lahore Qalandar played three finals of Pakistan Super League (PSL) in which they won two finals consecutively from 2020-2023.

The management of Lahore Qalandars lauded services rendered by Aaqib Javed during his tenure with the team. Aaqib Javed played vital role to bring Lahore Qalandars at victory stand.

He also introduced Players Development Programme of Lahore Qalandars. Aaqib Javed said that he spent unforgettable time with Lahore Qalandars which is filled with memorable movements and successes. He said that Players Development Programme of Lahore Qalandars was very close to his heart as he himself watch young players to become national hero through this programme.

He said that performing his responsibilities inside and outside the ground with Lahore Qalandar was a memorable period of his life.

NZ beat Great Britain to win America's Cup

BARCELONA (Agencies): New Zealand retained the America's Cup by beating Great Britain in the 37th edition of the event.

Ben Ainslie's Ineos Britannia team were 6-2 behind going into Saturday's racing and needed to win race nine to stay in the best-of-13 series in Barcelona.

However, despite some pressure from the British boat, Emirates Team New Zealand secured victory by 37 seconds to take an unsailable 7-2 lead. New Zealand, who won the competition in 2017 and 2021, have become the first team to lift the Auld Mug on three consecutive occasions since the USA (1987-1992).

Great Britain, who have never won the trophy in the competition's 173-year history, were appearing in their first final since 1964.

"Firstly, I've got to say a huge well done to Team New Zealand," said British captain Ainslie. "What an amazing campaign and team. In my view, they are the best team ever in the America's Cup. "To our team, I just can't say enough thanks to everyone for all the effort they've put in over the years to get us this far. "We had our moments in the finals but, at the end of the day, the better team won."

He added: "This isn't going to be the end of the journey for us. We set out 10 years ago to win the America's Cup [and] we're getting closer each time."

"The trick is to keep going and get it home next time."

McCullum plays down England spin concerns as Pindi decider looms

RAWALPINDI (Monitoring Desk): Brendon McCullum denied that his England side have been found out on spinning pitches, as Pakistan's captain Shan Masood confirmed he is hoping for another turner in the series decider in Rawalpindi.

Pakistan radically overhauled their strategy between the first and second Tests in Multan, making four changes to their side including the addition of three spinners, and deciding to use the same pitch for a second week in a row. The play paid off handsomely, with Sajid Khan and Noman Ali sharing 20 wickets to set up a series-leveling 152-run win.

England scored 657 in 101 overs in their most recent Test in Rawalpindi two years ago and the venue has generally been more conducive to seam bowlers than spinners since it returned to hosting Tests in 2019. But the PCB's groundstaff have already started work on the surface ahead of Thursday's decider, and Masood has requested a "drier" pitch.

"I would," Masood said, when asked directly if he would like to see the ball turn in the third Test. "I don't know if I've seen it turn in Rawalpindi. That's another issue. You want a side that can win anywhere... We want to get 20 wickets wherever we play, and we want to back that up

with the bat. "I don't think there's an autumn in Pakistan. There's a summer that transitions into a winter, so we're still hoping that the sun can play its part and the wicket can be on the drier side... The groundsmen are already there. They're working on a Test-match pitch and we'll try to create a good Test wicket where both teams can pick up 20 wickets."

Masood spoke ahead of the first Test about his desire for Pakistan to play on pitches which brought their seamers into play, but the decision to rest Shaheen Shah Afridi and Naseem Shah from the final two Tests suggests a green-top is unlikely. McCullum, England's coach, predicted that the surface will be "the antithesis of the green seamer" for the decider.

"I actually don't mind," McCullum said. "That's one of the great aspects of playing cricket all around the world, right? You're challenged in different conditions and home teams should have home benefit. I like that about the game. We said right at the outset that we'll try to adapt to whatever conditions we come up against."

"We were very realistic about how difficult this challenge would be and that there could be some extreme conditions confronting us at some stage. Winning the first Test probably

hastened that process, but we have no complaints so far. We were outplayed in this game. We'll see what Rawalpindi's got to offer and we'll try and adapt accordingly."

Masood said that Pakistan's challenge is to learn how to take 20 wickets at each of their home venues. "I don't think we can go to a strategy where we go, 'Oh, we have to have a spinning wicket everywhere,'" he said. "You have to know the characteristics of your ground and your soil to be a good Test team... It's not an overnight process."

McCullum, however, is anticipating "a little bit more rough" in Rawalpindi that England encountered two years ago, and said that Rehan Ahmed could "potentially" come into the mix for selection if that proves to be the case. "We'll have a look around it, come up with our tactics and see what's going to be required to give ourselves the best chance of nabbing the series win."

England's 152-run defeat in the second Test in Multan was their fifth loss out of seven on the subcontinent this year, after their 4-1 loss in India. With spinners playing a significant role in all five of those Tests, McCullum was asked whether he felt as though his side had been found out on turning pitches.



MANCHESTER: West Ham United's Jarrod Bowen in action with Tottenham Hotspur's Micky van de Ven during their Premier League match at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Man Utd ease pressure on Ten Hag, Spurs run riot

LONDON (AFP): Manchester United eased the pressure on beleaguered boss Erik ten Hag as they fought back to beat Brentford 2-1, while Tottenham got back on track with a 4-1 rout of West Ham on Saturday.

Ten Hag had defiantly slammed "fairy tales and lies" about his United future on Friday as the Dutchman insisted he was not in danger of the sack.

But the 54-year-old is widely believed to be fighting to save his job after presiding over United's worst start to a top-flight season since 1989-90.

Ten Hag was surely teetering on the brink of being dismissed after Brentford pounced to take the lead in first-half stoppage time when Ethan Pinnock met a corner with a powerful header.

The goal sparked a furious reaction from Ten Hag, who was booked for protesting about Matthijs de Ligt's enforced absence to have treatment on a bloody head wound.

But Alejandro Garnacho started United's revival in the 47th minute as the Argentinian met Marcus Rashford's angled pass with a superb volley into the top corner.

And Rasmus Hojlund bagged the decisive second goal in the 62nd minute, taking Bruno Fernandes' clever flick and clipping a composed finish over Brentford goalkeeper Mark Flekken.

United's first win in six games in all competitions was only their third victory in eight Premier League matches this term.

They sit 10th in the table ahead of

an intriguing week, featuring a Europa League trip to Jose Mourinho's Fenerbahce and a visit to West Ham.

Tottenham scored three goals in eight second-half minutes against the Hammers to ease the pain of their recent collapse in a 3-2 loss at Brighton.

Mohammed Kudus' opener for West Ham was cancelled out before the break by Dejan Kulusevski.

Tottenham ran riot after the interval thanks to Yves Bissouma's strike, an own goal from West Ham goalkeeper Alphonse Areola and a fourth from Son Heung-min.

It was a third win in four league games for Ange Postecoglou's men, heaping pressure on new West Ham coach Julen Lopetegui after his side's spluttering start to the season.

"Second half was outstanding from the lads -- good energy, good goals, good football," Postecoglou said.

Leicester's great escape

Brighton moved up to fifth place with a 1-0 victory at Newcastle on a day of mixed emotions for Danny Welbeck, who scored the 35th-minute winner but was later stretched off with a back injury that left him needing an oxygen mask.

Leicester staged a stirring fight-back to snatch a dramatic 3-2 victory at winless Southampton. Cameron Archer struck in the eighth minute before Joe Aribo's 28th-minute goal increased the lead for the bottom-of-the-table hosts.

But Leicester's Facundo Buonanotte bundled home in the 64th minute before Ryan Fraser was sent

off for conceding a penalty with a foul on Jamie Vardy.

Vardy stroked in the 74th-minute leveller from the spot and Jordan Ayew drilled into the bottom corner in the eighth minute of stoppage-time.

Fourth-placed Aston Villa extended their unbeaten run to nine matches in all competitions with a 3-1 win at Fulham.

Raul Jimenez netted in the fifth minute, but Villa's Morgan Rogers equalised four minutes later.

Andreas Pereira had a penalty saved by Villa 'keeper Emiliano Martinez before the interval.

Ollie Watkins' 59th-minute header completed the comeback and Fulham's Joachim Andersen was sent off for a professional foul on the Villa striker five minutes later.

Issa Diop's 69th-minute own-goal sealed the win, although Villa had Jaden Philogene sent off for two yellow cards in three minutes.

Everton clinched their first away win in 16 games in all competitions with a 2-0 victory against Ipswich.

Iliman Ndiaye fired into the top corner in the 17th minute and Michael Keane doubled Everton's lead in the 40th minute to leave fourth-bottom Ipswich without a win in eight league games.

Third-placed Arsenal will go top of the table if they win at Bournemouth in Saturday's final match.

On Sunday, Liverpool, currently in pole position, host sixth-placed Chelsea, while champions Manchester City travel to Wolves.

Mohammad Amir comes out in support of Babar Azam

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's left-arm pacer Mohammad Amir threw his weight behind under-fire Babar Azam after Pakistan's long-awaited Test victory at home.

A fierce spin attack on Friday, powered Pakistan to their first victory at home in Test cricket since their win against South Africa back in February 2021 when they thumped England by 152 runs in the second Test of the three-match series.

Ahead of the aforementioned fixture, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) made four surprising changes, including dropping their star batter Babar Azam, who has not crossed the fifty-run barrier in the format since December 2022.

Consistent domestic performer Kamran Ghulam, who came in as Babar's replacement, smashed a well-crafted century on debut, pivotal in guiding Pakistan to a formidable total in the first innings.

Ghulam's century made things worse for Babar as social media trolls targetted the latter, claiming that the national team eventually won at home after he was dropped. This did not sit well with experienced pacer Mohammad Amir, who despite being a vocal critic of Babar Azam in the past, supported the star batter amid social media trolling.

"Please stop with these petty talks that Babar wasn't in the team, that is why we won. We won because of better strategy and took advantage of playing on home ground," wrote Amir on X, formerly Twitter.

He then went on to urge fans to discuss a player's performance instead of getting "personal". "Please don't get personal with your players. Criticize their performance, but avoid personal remarks," he added.

PCB 'postpones' first-class Quaid-e-Azam Trophy

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has postponed the upcoming first-class Quaid-e-Azam Trophy, originally scheduled to start on October 20, according to sources.

The country's premier domestic cricket tournament faces uncertainty, with final details for the current season yet to be decided.

Sources within the PCB revealed that the board's domestic department is awaiting approval from

chairman Mohsin Naqvi on several key matters, including the new dates for the tournament.

The board is expected to announce the revised schedule soon.

This is not the first disruption to PCB's domestic calendar.

Earlier, the Under-19 domestic tournament was also suspended after just one day of play.

Sources say the domestic department has also instructed departmental teams to prepare for the

Presidents Trophy, a back-up tournament, should the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy experience further delays.

"As a contingency, departments have been asked to be prepared," said a source.

The Presidents Trophy is a first-class tournament for departmental teams which is currently slated to begin on January 6.

If delays in Quaid-e-Azam Trophy continue, the insiders suggest that the cricket board can prioritise the Presidents Trophy.

NZ need 107 for first win in India since 1988



BENGALURU (Agencies): New Zealand need 107 runs on the final day to beat India in the first Test in Bengaluru.

The Kiwis bowled India out for 462 on day four before bad light stopped play four balls into their chase.

Sarfraz Khan hit 150 and Rishabh Pant 99 for India as they look to pull off one of the most famous victories in cricket after being dismissed for just 46 in their first innings.

That pair guided India into the lead with just three second-innings wickets down but the hosts lost 7-54 with the second new ball to

set New Zealand 107 to win. Seamers Matt Henry and Will O'Rourke took 3-102 and 3-92 respectively, having shared nine wickets in the first innings.

New Zealand are looking for their first Test win in India since 1988.

"I wouldn't say it's an easy wicket here. Obviously, we've got a world-class team going up against us," said O'Rourke.

"We've got to be confident going out there tomorrow and hopefully for the crowd's sake the rain stays away and we get the chance to have a crack at the total."

Sarfraz said: "It is not an

easy wicket and I feel the game has not slipped out of our hands. If we can take out two or three quick wickets then they will suffer the same fate."

Pant's 99 came after he suffered a knee injury on day two and remained off the field on the third day.

It was the same knee he injured in a serious car crash in December 2022, keeping him out for more than a year.

After the first day was washed out, India's first innings 46 on day two was the third-lowest total in their Test history and lowest at home.

Aadam Syed clinches victory at Bahrain Golf C'ship

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Aadam Syed of Rawalpindi Golf Club secured an impressive victory at the Bahrain Amateur Open Golf Championship, finishing on top with a score of -13 after three rounds and 54 holes.

His total of 203 strokes (68, 67, 68) placed him ahead of his nearest competitor, Jay Mullane, who concluded the tournament at -9 (207).

The championship featured a competitive field, with Issa Abou El Ela in third place at -8 (208). Aadam's consistent performance throughout the tournament showcased his emerging talent in the sport.

Recently graduated with a master's degree in sports sciences from the



University of Tampa, USA, Aadam has ambitions of turning professional.

He earned his professional playing card for the 2025 season at the Professional Qualifying School in Pakistan and also secured a card for the Clutch Tour in the UK for the same year.

Aadam will kick off his

professional career at the upcoming Garrison Open Golf Championship in Lahore, scheduled for October 30 to November 3, 2024. He is set to arrive in Lahore on October 21, 2024, for his debut event.

His victory at the Bahrain Amateur Open not only adds to his accolades but also grants him a spot in the DP World Tour and an invitation to the King Hamad Trophy. The success reflects the growing strength of Pakistan's golfing community and serves as an inspiration for aspiring golfers in the country.

The Pakistan Golf Federation (PGF) congratulated Aadam on his achievement, expressing hopes for his continued success in professional golf.

Sri Lanka aim to cement spin dominance in WI ODIs

PALLEKELE (Agencies): Sri Lanka are fine-tuning their spin attack as they look to extend their winning streak at home in a three-match ODI series against the West Indies, skipper Charith Asalanka said on Saturday. The island nation has won 10 of their 13 bilateral series this year, including eight from nine at home.

Spinners have been Sri Lanka's trump card, helping them end a 27-year drought against top-ranked India in a July ODI series. "Spin is our bread and butter and we're going to play to our strengths," Asalanka told reporters ahead of Sunday's opener.

"We're looking at three spin options. We've got leg-spinners Wanindu Hasaranga and Jeffrey Vandersay, plus Dunith Wellalage... A couple of our batters can roll their arm over for some spin as well." All three ODIs are being played on the slow surface in Pallekele and spin is expected to play the same role it did in Sri Lanka's 2-1 T20 series win earlier in the tour. "The spinners were exceptional there and I'm confident they'll be a handful again here," Asalanka said. Both teams are smarting from their failure to qualify for the Champions Trophy to be held in Pakistan next February. Both will be laser-focused on climbing the rankings to steer clear of the elimination zone.

"We've got to make sure we're playing good cricket and keeping ourselves in the top half so we don't find ourselves scram-

bling to qualify again," said West Indies skipper Shai Hope. Hope, who doubles as wicketkeeper, acknowledged that spin would be a major factor but said his side was up for the challenge.

"We'll take what the pitch offers, and while it's good to have a plan, you've got to play what's in front of you," he said. All eyes will be on prodigious West Indian talent Jewel Andrew of Antigua, who will become the team's youngest debutant aged 17 years and 318 days. "He's a really exciting prospect for us, no doubt about it," Hope said. "I've no doubt that if he gets the chance, he'll grab it with both hands."

The final two matches of the series will be held on Wednesday and Saturday.

Squads West Indies: Shai Hope (capt, wk), Alzarri Joseph, Jewel Andrew, Alick Athanaze, Keacy Carty, Roston Chase, Matthew Forde, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Evlin Lewis, Gudakesh Motie, Sherfane Rutherford, Jayden Seales, Romario Shepherd, Hayden Walsh Jr.

Sri Lanka squad: Charith Asalanka (capt), Avishka Fernando, Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Mendis (wk), Kamindu Mendis, Janith Liyanage, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Nishan Madushka, Dunith Wellalage, Wanindu Hasaranga, Maheesh Theekshana, Jeffrey Vandersay, Chamindu Wickramasinghe, Asitha Fernando, Dilshan Madushanka, Mohamed Shiraz.



In brief

IRSA releases 96,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 96,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 70,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1535.64 feet and was 137.64 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 36,700 cusecs and 37,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1199.05 feet, which was 149.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,300 cusecs and 32,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 25,700, 50,600, 55,700 and 21,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 14,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 5,900 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

ICT bans sale of tinted glass papers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The district administration of the federal capital has intensified the crack-down against vehicles with tinted glasses and banned the purchase and sale of black mirrored paper, non-model number plates, flashers and HID lights. According to a notification issued by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) East, Mahin Baloch on Saturday, buying and selling papers with black glasses, and fancy number plates is illegal in the city, the use of black glasses has been banned since March 31, 2013. It added that the Ministry of Interior has not issued any NOCs (No Objection Certificates) allowing exemptions for any vehicles from this ban. The administration has emphasized that strict legal action will be taken against individuals found violating these regulations. This initiative aims to improve safety and security in the city by curbing illegal vehicle modifications. The district administration urged the citizens to cooperate and contribute that will help make the city safer for everyone, the notification added.

10 criminals held

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Police apprehended 10 criminals who were allegedly involved in different anti-social activities, including drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons from different areas of the federal capital. The police teams also recovered drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession. In this regard, the Islamabad Police Ramna, Tarnol, Sihala, Humak and Bhara Kahu police station teams took legal action against the accused involved in drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons and arrested six accused. Meanwhile, the police teams also recovered 1245 gram heroin, 530 gram hashish, 10 liquor bottles and two pistols along with ammunition from their possession. Moreover, four absconders were also arrested from various areas of the city during the last 24 hours. DIG Islamabad said that the Islamabad Police is actively working to ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property in the federal capital, emphasizing that no elements will be allowed to disrupt citizens' peace. The Public Relations Officer (PRO) while talking to APP said that the protection of the lives, property and dignity of citizens is the Islamabad Police's top priority. The police said that the citizens are urged to report any suspicious activities to the relevant police station.

Naqvi praises security forces for successful operations against "Fitna al Khawarij" Terror

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has commended Pakistan's security forces for their successful counter-terrorism operations against the notorious group "Fitna al Khawarij" in the regions of Pishin and Zhob.

These operations resulted in the elimination of two high-profile terrorists and the capture of five others, a critical step towards restoring peace in these areas.

In a statement, Minister Naqvi praised the professionalism and bravery of the security forces, crediting them with once again thwarting the nefarious plans of "Fitna al Khawarij."

He emphasized the significance of these operations in dismantling the network of terrorists, who have long posed a threat to national security.

"Once again, the brave security forces have thwarted the nefarious plans of the terrorists of 'Fitna al Khawarij' through successful operations," Naqvi said, recognizing the dedication and skill demonstrated by the forces during the challenging mission.

He added that these victories are a testament to the unwavering commitment of the security personnel in

safeguarding the nation from those who seek to destabilize it.

The Minister specifically lauded the courage of the soldiers involved in the operations, stating, "We salute the brave soldiers of the security forces who conducted successful operations against the terrorists of 'Fitna al Khawarij'."

He referred to these soldiers as the "nation's heroes," underscoring the admiration and respect they have earned from the public and government alike.

Naqvi further stressed the solidarity between the Pakistani people and their armed forces, stating, "The nation stands shoulder to shoulder with the security forces." This sentiment reflects the broad-based support across the country for the military's efforts to counter terrorism and ensure peace in regions that have long been plagued by insurgency and violence.

The Interior Minister also highlighted the collective determination to completely eradicate terrorist groups like "Fitna al Khawarij" from the country. "The nation is determined to completely eliminate the terrorists of 'Fitna al Khawarij,'"

he remarked, reinforcing the government's resolve to continue its fight against extremism.

Naqvi expressed his confidence in the capabilities of Pakistan's security forces, noting that the country takes pride in the professional expertise and tactical abilities of its soldiers.

"The nation is proud of the professional skills of the brave soldiers of the security forces," he said.

In his concluding remarks, Naqvi emphasized the need for unity and cooperation between the military and the public in the ongoing war against terror.

He affirmed that with the support of the nation, Pakistan will continue to pursue and neutralize terrorists and their facilitators.

"We will, with the support of the nation, eradicate the terrorists and their facilitators," Naqvi declared, reiterating the government's commitment to securing the future of Pakistan.

The successful operations in Pishin and Zhob mark another significant blow to the "Fitna al Khawarij" network and bring the nation one step closer to peace and stability in its conflict-affected regions.



ISLAMABAD: Laborers hard at work painting a flyover bridge, adding a fresh touch to the Federal Capital infrastructure. —APP Photo

Talat advocates constitutional reforms to strengthen parliamentary

ISLAMABAD (APP): PML-N Senator Talat Chaudhry here on Saturday outside of the Parliament House said that the main purpose of constitutional amendments was to make the Parliament more powerful for the interest of the public and it was the vision of both dynamic leaders Ex premier Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and former Prime Minister Shaheed Benazir Bhutto.

Talking to the media persons, he said that all these constitutional

amendments were the desire of all political parties but unluckily due to the vested interest of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) opposing these amendments and not taking into the part of the country's development.

Talat underlined that in the past Parliament was powerless and failed to protect the sitting prime ministers and some institutions were hanged and disqualified the sitting prime ministers all these things were on the record, but after this 26th amendment, these things

could not be repeated.

Senator Talat also appreciated the role of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto for developing a consensus among all political parties for the sake of the country.

To a question, Talat said that Nawaz Sharif was ready to sacrifice everything for the development of the country but unfortunately, PTI was doing politics for its vested interest and not for the country.

He said that Imran

Khan has been receiving special treatment including separate kitchen facilities and opportunities to hold political meetings.

Imran Khan was 'history's VIP prisoner' who enjoyed all facilities but attempted to disrupt the SCO conference and CPEC project, he said adding that PTI's actions are a threat to Pakistan's economic stability and national security.

He reiterated the government's commitment to protecting Pakistan's respect and dignity.

Integrated efforts urged to combat poverty, climate change nexus

ISLAMABAD (APP): Executive Director Devcom-Pakistan Munir Ahmed on Saturday said that climate change intensifies posed a significant threat to natural resources, disproportionately affecting poor populations and contributing to a cycle of increasing poverty.

Speaking as guest speaker at the Islamabad Crescent Lions Club monthly meeting here Saturday, he said that the depletion of vital natural resources such as water, soil, and biodiversity, droughts, floods, and changing weather patterns disrupt agricultural production, which is often the primary livelihood for impoverished communities. This resource depletion means less food, reduced income, and greater insecurity for those who rely on these resources for survival, said a press release.

Munir Ahmed said, "Poor communities typically have limited economic diversification. When climate change negatively impacts sectors like agriculture, fishing or forestry, these populations face immediate economic challenges.

Loss of income can lead to heightened poverty levels, as families struggle to meet basic needs like food, shelter, and healthcare.

Pakistan's poverty index has climbed up in recent years mainly because of two factors, political instability and climate change." There is no repair to the losses of the devastating floods despite international commitments, he added.

"With agricultural productivity declining due to erratic weather and resource scarcity, food prices can skyrocket, making it harder for low-income families to access nutritious food. Food insecurity can lead to malnutrition and related health problems, further trapping families in poverty. Meanwhile, climate change has exacerbated health issues, particularly in poor communities lacking adequate healthcare access. Rising temperatures and changing ecosystems can lead to the spread of diseases, respiratory issues from pollution, and increased mental health challenges. Poor health can diminish work capacity and economic stability, perpetuating the

cycle of poverty," he said.

The ICLC founder Sibtain Raza said that poor communities often lack the resources, technology, and infrastructure needed to adapt to changing climate conditions. Without financial support or access to innovative practices, these populations are left vulnerable, unable to implement measures that could help them cope with environmental changes. ICLC is trying to develop a group of social philanthropists to use their resources to empower the poor and marginalized. Free meals shall only go to the doorsteps of the most deserving, not to everyone.

Dr. Imran Iqbal, the host of the meeting, said as climate change exacerbates poverty and resource scarcity, it can lead to social unrest and conflict over dwindling resources. This instability further hinders development efforts and can perpetuate cycles of violence and displacement. We need combined efforts to combat the effects of climate change and poverty that create a complex and worsening scenario for vulnerable populations.

ANF recovers over 14 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover over 14 kg drugs worth Rs 47 million and arrested five suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday. He informed that in an operation, 320 grams of hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused arrested near a university in Haripur.

7 kg of ice was recovered from an area near a university in Quetta and an accused was arrested.

The arrested accused confessed to selling drugs to the students of educational institutions.

The spokesman further informed that 750 grams ice was recovered from a Jeddah-bound passenger arrested at Multan Airport.

3 kg hashish and 1 kg ice were recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near M-1 Islamabad.

2.4 kg of hashish was recovered from an accused held in Dera Ismail Khan.

Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

Ayaz calls for coordinated efforts to combat breast cancer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Saturday called for coordinated efforts at both government and community levels to combat breast cancer.

In his message on the occasion of World Breast Cancer Day, the Speaker assured that the National Assembly would continue to support policies and awareness campaigns focused on prevention and treatment.

Sardar Ayaz highlighted the serious threat of breast cancer posed to women's health both in Pakistan and

globally and pointed out that in developing countries, it was the leading cause of death among women.

The Speaker underscored the necessity of early diagnosis and adequate medical facilities for effectively managing breast cancer.

He stressed the importance of raising public awareness about the disease, emphasizing that education is crucial.

Sardar Ayaz encouraged preventive measures to help control the spread of this life-threatening illness and stressed that women should regularly undergo

medical check-ups to safeguard their health.

The Speaker also acknowledged the essential role of media in raising awareness about breast cancer, adding that print, electronic and social media can play a significant part in saving lives by sharing vital information on this health issue.

He urged relevant agencies to improve access to better treatment options for breast cancer and concluded by emphasizing that collective national efforts are crucial for enhancing public health and well-being.

Pakistan emerges as leading Global Tech Hub: Shaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Saturday Pakistan's emergence as a global technology hub was solidified as the country was named "Tech Destination of the Year" at GITEX.

The minister in her congratulatory message extended congratulations to all the participants, delegates and companies who represented Pakistan at GITEX Global 2024 held in Dubai.

She said, "Your dedication and hard work have made this event a huge success for Pakistan, showcasing the remarkable potential of our IT industry on the global stage."

Shaza Fatima said Pakistan's growing influence as a global technology hub was firmly established as Pakistan was named Tech Destination of the Year at GITEX.

"Our remarkable participation, with over 200 companies, startups, and industry experts, reflects Pakistan's unwavering commitment and the immense potential of our IT industry," she said.

"I also want to congratulate all the Pakistani companies that signed MoUs and established key partnerships with international tech leaders. These collaborations mark an important step forward for our IT industry, opening doors to new markets, and creating

opportunities for innovation", she maintained.

The minister said the success of GITEX will not only fuel the growth of Pakistan's IT industry but also contribute significantly to our nation's economy. The government remains fully committed to supporting the IT industry, fostering innovation, and ensuring that the momentum gained at GITEX continues to fuel both technological and economic progress, she added.

"I am proud of what we have achieved together, and I am confident that the success at GITEX will translate into long-term benefits for Pakistan's technology sector in the days to come" she added.

IG Islamabad orders effective security measures

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi presided over multiple important meetings to ensure effective security measures for protecting lives and property of citizens in the federal capital on Saturday at Central Police Office Islamabad.

The meetings were attended by DIG Headquarters Dr Syed Mustafa Tanveer, DIG Law and Order Shaker Hussain Dawar and other senior police officers. During these meetings, the IG Islamabad reviewed the overall security situation, and the measures taken for the protection of citizens' lives, and property, a public

relations officer talking to APP said.

The IGP emphasized that providing a safe environment and serving the public with dedication is the primary duty of the police. All officers must carry out their responsibilities with a spirit of service, ensuring the safety of citizens' lives, and property, he directed.

The IG Islamabad chaired an important meeting with district officers to make the federal capital a crime-free city. He reviewed the overall crime situation in Islamabad and the measures being taken to combat criminal activities.

He directed the police officers to arrest the

accused involved in crimes such as robbery, murder, street crime, and other cases within the specified time frame and to gather evidence in ongoing investigations.

IG Islamabad also gave specific instructions to all zonal officers, circle officers, and SHOs to carry out effective operations at crime hotspots and ensure crime prevention within a given time frame. He reiterated that protecting the lives, property, and dignity of citizens is the top priority of Islamabad Police.

All police officers must ensure effective patrolling in the city and take measures to eliminate criminal elements.

PTV's advanced tech ensures flawless broadcast

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Television (PTV) on Saturday announced its successful live coverage of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit, which was held in Islamabad on October 15 and 16 here.

This significant achievement highlights the dedication and seamless collaboration of the entire organization. The coverage was made possible through the deployment of cutting-edge equipment at Nur Khan Airbase, Islamabad International Airport, Jinnah Convention Centre and all key routes, supported by DSNB units, FPUs, fibre optic connectivity, and HD cameras to ensure a top-quality broadcast, a news release said.

In preparation for the summit, PTV World was upgraded from SD to HD, allowing foreign media outlets and other TV broadcasters of the world to access high-quality signals, further enhancing Pakistan's global image.

A live feed was provided to foreign media at the Pakistan-China Friendship Centre (PCFC), and the broadcast featured multi-lingual feeds to accommodate international audiences. Additionally, sign language interpretation was included in the broadcast of the leaders' addresses and major events, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all viewers.

Alongside the live television broadcast, extensive coverage was provided on PTV's social media plat-

forms, offering a wide-reaching and engaging online presence. Real-time updates and highlights of the summit were shared across PTV's digital platforms, expanding the audience reach and enhancing overall engagement.

Importantly, this comprehensive coverage was successfully executed using available resources, with no additional expenses incurred. The in-depth analysis, reporting, and social media engagement during the summit reflect our strong commitment to excellence in broadcasting. The success of the SCO 2024 coverage underscores the professionalism and dedication of PTV in elevating the nation's profile on the global stage.

Police crackdown continue against unfit PSVs, 987 vehicles impounded

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have impounded 987 unfit Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) during an ongoing crackdown that has been initiated for more than 54 days, following the orders of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani, informed police spokesman.

He said that during this period, challans were issued to 8149 vehicle owners and drivers, and fines exceeding Rs 8.8 million were imposed on violators.

The operation focuses on ensuring PSVs are fit for the roads, along with checking route permits and driver licenses.

A total of 691 drivers were fined for not having valid licenses, and 27 licenses were cancelled due to negligence. Additionally, 52 cases were registered against drivers and vehicle owners.

The police emphasized that the action was being taken to guarantee safe travel for the public. Police teams are also monitoring travel times to prevent reckless driving.

The spokesman warned that strict action would be taken against those who endanger the lives of citizens, including PSV owners and bus terminal managers found to be negligent.

A special squad from the City Traffic Police has been stationed at bus terminals to ensure compliance with safety standards.

10m Afghan aid announced

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Afghanistan has announced a 10 million donation from Germany to support Afghanistan. OCHA stated that this funding will be allocated to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund for 2024. OCHA expressed gratitude to Germany through a post on X, highlighting that Germany's continuous support is helping to save lives in Afghanistan.

1,400 families return home

KABUL (Amu TV): At least 1,400 Afghan families returned to Afghanistan from Iran and Pakistan over the past week, according to figures by Taliban-run refugees ministry. The movement comes amid increased deportations of Afghan migrants by the two neighboring countries. According to figures provided by the ministry and reported by Taliban-run Bakhtar News, 1,073 families crossed back from Iran, while another 327 families returned from Pakistan.

Incomplete vehicle repainting bars drivers from operating: Police

KABUL (TOLONews): Khial Mohammad Ghawar, the Chief of Kabul Traffic Police, said that no driver is allowed to operate on the roads before completing the vehicle repainting process. Ghawar said that drivers who violate this rule will face legal consequences.

If their cars are partially painted, or if they've removed parts like lights or other accessories, they should avoid using the roads." Some drivers have expressed concerns that the repainting process is time-consuming and are urging officials to expedite the procedure.

Ajmal, a driver, said, "Those who haven't fully repainted their cars and have only applied primer are forced to drive in the city, but if an accident happens, they will face many challenges." Another driver, Sayed Afzal, said, "Our expectation from the Traffic Department is to ensure the remaining cars, which are still yellow, are fully repainted. Some cars are driving without plates, and others are in poor condition."

Jobs created for women with handicrafts workshop



FAIZABAD (TOLONews): A woman in Faizabad, the capital of Badakhshan province, has created employment opportunities for about 50 other women by establishing a handicrafts workshop. Rahela Aslami says she started this workshop with the goal of supporting and empowering women.

According to her, carpet weaving, tailoring, tablecloth weaving, traditional embroidery, and decorative stitching are among the crafts the women work on in this workshop. Rahela Aslami said: "Fifty people work here; 10

Samaruddin Rahmani, manager of Enterprise Affairs of the Department of Industry and Commerce in Badakhshan, said: "Institutions are cooperating in this regard. Widows and women in need have found work. This is a good industry, and the Department of Industry and Commerce supports such sectors." Additionally, 2.4 million Afghans are grappling with severe hunger, highlighting the ongoing food insecurity in the country.

Bamyan journalists voice economic concerns

BAMYAN (TOLONews): Several journalists and private media officials in the provinces of Bamyan and Daikundi have expressed concerns over the poor economic situation and the lack of timely access to information. They are urging the interim government and media support organizations to address these challenges.

Hamidullah Arefi, a manager of a private media outlet, said: "Our request to Bamyan's local authorities and the Islamic Emirate is to pay more attention to the media and not remove the media from their focus." Abdul Wasel Sakhi Zada, a journalist, said: "We journalists call on the government and media support organizations to focus on journalism and provide access to information."

Mujtaba Faheem, a journalist from Daikundi, said: "When we want to conduct interviews or prepare reports from the public, video work is restricted, and we are not allowed to produce visual reports." Meanwhile, the head of Bamyan's Department of Information and Culture pledged that issues related to journalists will be addressed in accordance with Islamic Sharia. Saffullah Raed, head of Bamyan's Department of Information and Culture, said: "All media in Bamyan, whether private or government, have a good relationship with us. We assure them that no issues will arise, and Bamyan is a peaceful province where problems will be resolved."

Minister of Industry leaves for Kazakhstan



KABUL (Ariana News): Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce Nooruddin Azizi left for Kazakhstan's Almaty, leading a delegation of public and private sector representatives. The Ministry of Industry and Commerce said in a statement that the purpose

of the delegation's trip is to hold an exhibition of Afghan products in Kazakhstan, participate in a business forum, and meet with Kazakh officials. More than 250 people, including the Deputy Minister of Mines and Petroleum, the head of

Investment Facilitation of the Directorate of Administrative Affairs, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the office of economic deputy of the prime minister, Da Afghanistan Bank and members of the private sector, are accompanying Azizi on the visit.

IEA calls Sinwar 'hero'

KABUL (Ariana News): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) condoned the death of Yahya Ibrahim Hassan al-Sinwar, the leader of the Hamas movement, in combat in Gaza by Israeli forces.

In a statement released by the spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, it is stated that "martyrdom in the path of Allah represents the highest aspiration for every Muslim, particularly for a combatant Mujahid." "We extend our deepest condolences to the Islamic Movement of Hamas, to all mujahideen, and especially to the oppressed and courageous Palestinian fighters, on the martyrdom of our heroic mujahid brother, Yahya Sinwar," the statement said.

IEA told Israel that "the martyrdom of mujahideen leaders will only serve to intensify and fortify the resistance and Jihadist struggle against the enemy."

It called on Muslims worldwide to "stand in solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine, to support their cause, and to fulfill the divine duty incumbent upon all of us in this regard."

Israeli forces killed Sinwar on Wednesday.

UN provides aid to 15,000 widows

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) announced that 15,000 widows and female head of households in Afghanistan have received aid from the organization this year.

The FAO stated that this assistance included the distribution of chickens, food aid, educational services, and vaccinations.

The organization emphasized that "women are the key to sustainable food security in Afghanistan" and noted that Afghan women's access to food has improved due to these efforts.

However, earlier in September, the World Food Programme (WFP) reported that 3.9 million people in Afghanistan, including 2.8 million children under the age of five, are suffering from acute malnutrition.

Additionally, 2.4 million Afghans are grappling with severe hunger, highlighting the ongoing food insecurity in the country.

The report indicates that at least 23.7 million people in Afghanistan will need urgent assistance this year.

As winter approaches, the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is expected to worsen. Millions of Afghans face the dual challenges of hunger and harsh weather conditions, with many unsure of how they will secure their next meal.

The dire situation underscores the need for continued international support to prevent further suffering, particularly as vulnerable populations, including women and children, bear the brunt of the crisis.

South Korea review Afghan aid

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Korea has said that Seoul strives to ensure the transparent and effective implementation of international organizations' projects conducted with Korea's contribution.

The ministry said in a statement that South Korea's special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Lee Kyung-chul, has held a meeting with representatives of international organizations to review humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.

According to the statement, South Korea provided a total of \$74 million in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan from 2021 to 2023, and the beneficiaries were women, children, refugees and displaced persons.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Korea emphasized that it will continue to provide aid to Afghanistan.

About 12,000 men and 1,000 women detained in country's prisons: Yusuf

KABUL (Ariana News): The Director General of the Office of Prisons Administration, Mohammad Yusuf Mestri, says about 12,000 men and at least 1,000 women, who have been found guilty by the country's courts, are imprisoned in the country's prisons.

In an exclusive interview with Ariana News, Mestri said that among the prisoners 100 foreign citizens are also being held in the country's prisons who have committed various crimes.

Mastri added that around 12,000 suspects are being detained on charges of various crimes and the court's

final verdict has not yet been issued against them.

He stressed that the committee for transferring Afghan prisoners from abroad to the country had been established with representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Justice, Supreme Court and the Office of Prisons Administration.

He stated that as a result of the efforts of this committee, two prisoners from China, three from Kuwait, two from Yemen and another 1.58 prisoners from Iran have been transferred to the country.

This IEA official assured



that there is no torture in Afghan prisons.

He stated the Directorate of Prisons Affairs is committed to allowing UN human rights teams access to Afghan jails, including women's prisons.

He added there are good facilities, especially in religious, modern, vocational and sports education for all prisoners, especially women, and many professional instructors are busy teaching in the prisons.

UN urges probe into Afghan migrant border shooting

KABUL (TOLONews): Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesperson for the UN Secretary General, in response to reports of the shooting of Afghan migrants at the border with Iran, said that the rights of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are protected by international law.

According to Farhan Haq, the United Nations in Afghanistan is concerned about the claims regarding the shooting of Afghan migrants and calls for a transparent investigation into the matter.

The Deputy Spokesperson added, "UNAMA

calls for thorough and transparent investigations into the alleged incident, and reminds all parties that the rights, of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are protected by international law."

At the same time, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that since 2021, 1.6 million people have sought refuge in Iran and Pakistan for their security and protection.

In a report, this UN body said that Afghan citizens have become the largest refugee population in the

world this year.

The UNHCR wrote, "Since 2021, over 1.6 million Afghans have sought safety and protection in Iran and Pakistan, adding a significant additional burden to the two host countries which now host over 8 million Afghans. As Afghans become the largest refugee population globally this year, surpassing Syrian nationals."

The Islamic Emirate has assigned a delegation to investigate this incident, but no details of the delegation's findings have been released yet.

Saleem Paigar, a political analyst, said: "The responsibility of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is not only towards the migrants but towards all the people of Afghanistan. It should create job opportunities for them and work towards gaining international recognition so we can get out of the political, economic, and military siege."

Previously, Iran's Ambassador and Special Representative for Afghanistan, in response to the allegations of shooting of Afghan migrants, said that these claims are untrue.

Taliban crack down on street vendors, stall owners in Kabul

KABUL (Amu TV): Taliban have issued an order instructing all street vendors and stall owners in Kabul to remove their goods, as part of a broader effort to "clean up" the city, according to the Taliban-controlled Kabul municipality.

The municipality claims the move is aimed at restoring order in the capital's streets, but vendors are expressing frustration, saying they have been forcibly removed from their stalls and now face unemployment. Many warn that the Taliban's actions are leaving hundreds without a livelihood.

Street vendors argue that the crackdown will have devastating economic consequences for those who rely on their small businesses for survival.

"We are doing this to

clear the city and organize the streets," said Nematullah Barakzai, a spokesperson for the Kabul municipality under the Taliban administration. "The municipality is systematically removing individuals who are selling goods in areas where they should not be."

One of the affected vendors, Ahmad, who had operated a shoe-repair stall for three years at Kabul's Saderat intersection, said the Taliban closed his business last week. He has since relocated his shoe repair work to another part of the city. Despite the setback, Ahmad remains determined to support his family of four.

"The Taliban took my stall, but I have no choice but to keep working to support my family," Ahmad



said. "Winter is coming, and we can't afford basic necessities. We need firewood, and I can barely make enough to feed my family."

Other vendors echoed Ahmad's concerns, urging the Taliban not to prioritize the city's aesthetics over people's livelihoods.

"The winter is approaching, and there's no work," said Jamil, another street vendor. "Now they've taken away the only place

where I could earn a little to feed my family."

The Taliban's actions come as Afghanistan faces severe economic challenges. According to a recent report from the Global Poverty Index, two-thirds of Afghans are living in poverty, with children making up a significant portion of the impoverished population—three out of every five poor Afghans are under the age of 18.

58.9% of Afghanistan's poor population consists of children

KABUL (TOLONews): The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2024 has reported that 58.9% of the poor population in Afghanistan consists of children.

This 37-page report stated that the number of poor children is nearly five million more than adults.

The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index report said: "From 2015/2016 to 2022/2023 poverty rose by more than 5.2 percentage points, with 5.3 million additional people—1 in 20 Afghans—falling into multidimensional poverty."

"I work as much as I can, and I give 100 to 250

afghani (\$1.5 - \$3.8) to cover household expenses. I buy milk with 20 afghanis from that money," said a child laborer.

This statistical research examined the multidimensional poverty situation in 112 countries with a population totaling 6.3 billion people.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Economy said that efforts are underway to reduce poverty in the country.

According to Abdul Latif Nazari, the Deputy Minister of Economy, programs are being planned to improve access to basic services and create job

opportunities for the poor.

The deputy minister of economy said: "The policy of the Islamic Emirate is to support child laborers. We aim to provide education opportunities for them and implement programs to empower working children so they can serve society and support their families."

Some economic experts in Afghanistan said that the lack of effective economic programs and the mismanagement of domestic resources are fundamental causes of rising poverty in the country.

"To eliminate poverty

and direct aid efforts in a way that truly reduces poverty, we need to drive it through GDP," said Sayed Masood, an expert in economic issues.

According to this report, 1.1 billion people worldwide live in multidimensional poverty, with nearly half a billion of them residing in war-torn and conflict-ridden countries and regions.

Multidimensional poverty refers to individuals' inability to access basic needs of life such as education, healthcare, housing, and nutrition, in addition to a lack of income.

Chinese envoy meets with EU officials to discuss Afghanistan

KABUL (Amu TV): China's special envoy for Afghanistan, the bloc's Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific. Following the meeting, Yue posted on X, that both sides stressed the need for "continuous engagement" and called for increased international attention to Afghanistan's rebuilding efforts.

Niklasson, the EU's special envoy for Afghanistan, and the bloc's Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific. Following the meeting, Yue posted on X, that both sides stressed the need for "continuous engagement" and called for increased international attention to Afghanistan's rebuilding efforts.

The discussions come as Afghanistan remains in turmoil following the Taliban's return to power in 2021. The regime has yet to be recognized by any country, and the international community has urged the Taliban to uphold their commitments to human rights, form an inclusive government, and prevent

Afghanistan from becoming a haven for terrorist groups.

Last week, Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif jointly called on the Taliban to take "visible and verifiable" actions against terrorist organizations operating within Afghanistan.

Indian diplomats in Canada ‘clearly on notice’, says FM Melanie Joly

OTTAWA (Reuters): Days after expelling a group of Indian diplomats in connection with the assassination of a Khalistan leader on Canadian soil, Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly has said that remaining New Delhi envoys were “put on notice”.

Earlier this week, Canada had formally expelled India’s High Commissioner Sanjay Kumar Verma and five other diplomats, ahead of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) revealing new details about the Indian government’s connection to “violent criminal activity” in Canada, mainly targeting pro-Khalistan separatists. Soon after Canadian officials notified India of the expulsion of the six diplomats, New Delhi recalled them, the Canadian sources said.

Addressing a press conference, FM Joly warned more than a dozen Indian diplomats, who are still in the country, to respect Canadian law. “They’re clearly on notice. Six of them have been expelled, including the high commissioner in Ottawa. Others were mainly from Toronto and Vancouver,” confirmed the minister. “Clearly, we won’t tolerate any diplomats that are in contravention of the Vienna Convention.”

Her comments came days after the head of the RCMP accused India’s government, its agents and diplomats of



links to widespread criminal activity in Canada, including “coercion, extortion and killings”, CBC News reported. Sources privy to the matter said that the Canadian police and intelligence have concrete evidence that the six Indian diplomats, including the high commissioner, were involved in the plot to murder Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in June, 2023 – a close ally of Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) founder and General Counsel Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, who has survived several assassinations Indian plots.

The RCMP also said it has evidence that India’s diplomats and consular officials in Canada engaged in clandestine activities, including gathering intelligence for its government. On the other hand, New Delhi denied working with criminals in Canada to target Sikh separatists. Contrary to

the Indian claim, Joly said: “There was definitely a threat and that’s exactly why the RCMP decided to take the extraordinary measure of making public the fact that Canadians were being intimidated, [were] victims of extortion or even [received] death threats because agents and diplomats from India were linked to these criminal actions.”

Responding to a question whether more Indian diplomats could be expelled from Canada, the minister said the government

won’t tolerate any diplomats who contravene the Vienna Convention or put the lives of Canadians at risk. Cameron MacKay — Canada’s most recent high commissioner to India who left the country in August — said it’s a “fiasco on the part of the Indian government” to think that agents of the Indian government could arrange violent crimes across Canada and the US and get away with it. “Some very serious red lines have been crossed and it’s for that reason that Canada has taken the strong diplomatic and law enforcement action that it has up to now,” he added. “The Indian government position up until now has to be to deny and vilify Canada and to distract its domestic audience from the real facts of what’s been happening here. They do that by attacking Canada.”



KAKUL: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Sahir Shamshad giving away awards to distinguished cadets during passing out parade held at Pakistan Military Academy.

PMA Kakul holds passing out parade

E.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Passing out parade of cadets of 150th PMA Long Course, 69th Integrated Course, 24th Lady Cadet Course and 36th Technical Graduate Course was held at Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Kakul today.

Cadets from several friendly countries including Iraq, Jordan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Palestine, Sudan and Yemen were also graduated from Pakistan Military Academy. Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, NI (M) graced the occasion as chief guest and reviewing dignitary of the parade. CJCS reviewed the parade and gave awards to distinguished cadets. The coveted Sword of Honor was awarded to Battalion Senior Under Officer Abdullah Afzal of 150th PMA Long Course. The President’s Gold Medal to Battalion Senior Under Officer Babar Ullah Aman of 150th PMA Long Course.

Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Overseas Gold Medal to Friendly Country Senior Under Officer Kshitij Gurung of 150th PMA Long Course from Nepal. Chief of Army Staff Cane was awarded to Course Junior Under Officer Umar Sheraz of 36th Technical Graduate Course. Commandant’s Canes were awarded to Course Junior Under Officer Suleman of 69th Integrated Course and Course Under Officer Pakeeza Yaqoob of 24th Lady Cadet Course.

Three dead as roof collapses

E.P. Report

MULTAN: Three people were killed and as many others were injured in a roof collapse caused by an explosion of firework material stored in a house in Multan’s Aghapura area, police said on Saturday.

“Three people died while three were injured in an unfortunate incident of a roof collapse caused by an explosion resulting from firework materials stored at a home in Aghapura,” a statement issued by Multan City Police Officer (CPO) Sadiq Ali Dogar said. The injured were shifted to Nishtar Hospital for treatment, the statement added. The deceased were identified as Riaz, Mansha and Safia Bano, it added.

Relief activities were carried out by teams of Multan Police, Rescue 1122, Crime Record Office (CRO), bomb disposal and other authorities at the spot, according to the statement. CPO Dogar and Multan Deputy Commissioner Wasim Hamid Sindhu inspected the relief activities and the site of the incident, the statement said.

Citing the initial investigation, the CPO statement said fireworks used to be manufactured inside the house, which caused the incident. However, further investigations were underway, it added. While directing police officers to participate in the relief activities, CPO Multan expressed sorrow over the incident and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family, the statement noted.

Multan SSP Operations Lieutenant (retired) General Kamran Amir Khan, City SP Hasan Raza Khakhi, Delhi Gate Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Mazhar Haraj, DSP Mamoon Ali and other officers were also present at the incident site.

Inhumane treatment of Imran unacceptable: Saif

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has expressed strong condemnation of the inhumane and unlawful treatment being meted out to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former Prime Minister Imran Khan during his detention.

Barrister Dr. Saif disclosed that Imran Khan has been held in solitary confinement for the past 14 days in a small, isolated cell, where he has been deprived of basic human rights, including access to electricity. Furthermore, he added that Khan has been completely cut off from the outside world, in what appears to be a deliberate attempt to inflict mental and physical duress.

“This kind of treatment is unacceptable by any standard, not only because it targets Imran Khan personally, but because it undermines the mandate given to him by the people of Pakistan,” said Barrister Dr. Saif. He called upon Human Rights Watch and other international human rights bodies to take immediate notice of these viola-

tions and raise the issue at a global level. He urged international organizations to intervene and highlight the human rights violations being carried out against a former Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Barrister Dr. Saif went on to criticize the current government for employing oppressive tactics to preserve its rule. He said, “This illegitimate government is resorting to cruel and tyrannical measures to suppress one of the most popular leaders in Pakistan’s history. We will ensure that every act of injustice is brought to light, and we will not rest until Imran Khan is freed.”

He further revealed that Imran Khan has been intentionally kept uninformed about current events, with no access to communication or updates regarding the country’s political situation—something that Barrister Dr. Saif termed “unacceptable in a democratic nation.”

Barrister Dr. Saif also highlighted concerns over recent constitutional amendments being introduced by the government without transparency. He criticized the government for enacting these amendments without public

scrutiny, calling them an assault on the independence of the judiciary. “The PTI will resist these unconstitutional moves at every level,” he vowed.

He further stated that the current rulers neither represent the will of the people nor respect their mandate, asserting that this government was installed through a foreign-backed conspiracy. “The public is now fully aware that Imran Khan is the only solution to Pakistan’s ongoing crises,” Barrister Dr. Saif remarked.

Reaffirming PTI’s commitment to its leader, Barrister Dr. Saif declared that the party would continue its struggle until Imran Khan’s release is secured and justice is served. “Under Imran Khan’s leadership, PTI remains the last hope for Pakistan. We will not rest until he is freed,” he asserted.

Dr. Saif also warned that politics must remain confined to political institutions, with non-political forces keeping their distance from governance matters. “We stand shoulder to shoulder with our leader Imran Khan, and no amount of repression can destroy a movement that has reached its time,” he concluded.

Naval Chief visits Netherlands

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf called-on Military and Naval Leadership of Netherlands during an official visit to Netherlands. Naval Chief held combined meeting with top Military and Naval Leadership of Netherlands at Ministry of Defence. Professional matters of mutual interest including bilateral defence collaboration were discussed.

The Naval Chief underscored the importance of enhancing interactions between the armed forces of both countries through exercises and training exchange programmes.

The Deputy Chief of Defence, Vice Admiral Boudewijn Boots while acknowledging the significance of strong bilateral military cooperation in diverse realms, stressed on enhancing collaborations in expanded military domains.

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf also visited Royal Netherlands Navy Headquarters and called-on Commander Royal Netherlands Navy, Vice Admiral René Tas. During the meeting matters of defence ties and mutual bilateral naval collaboration and regional maritime security were discussed. The Naval Chief underscored the contribu-

tion of Pakistan Navy towards regional maritime peace and stability through its initiative of Regional Maritime Security Patrols (RMSP) and participation in Combined Maritime Force.

Later on, the Naval Chief visited, DAMEN Shipyard of Royal Netherlands Navy and Zeven De Provinciën Class Frigate. During his visit CNG was given a detailed briefing on ships’ maintenance and construction activities. The visit of Naval Chief will further augment and expand defence ties between the two countries in general and navies in particular.

Gaza authorities accuse Israeli forces of attacking hospital

GAZA CITY (AFP): Health authorities in Gaza said Israeli forces surrounded and shelled the Indonesian Hospital in the territory’s northern town of Beit Lahia at dawn on Saturday. “Israeli tanks have completely surrounded the hospital, cut off electricity and shelled the hospital, targeting the second and third floors with artillery,” said the facility’s director, Marwan Sultan.

“There are serious risks to medical staff and patients.” In a statement, Gaza’s health ministry also said Israel had targeted the upper floors, adding there were “more than 40 patients and wounded in addition to the medical staff” present. “Heavy gunfire” toward the hospital and its courtyard had sparked a “state of great panic” among patients and staff, it added.

Israel launched a new offensive in northern Gaza earlier this month, saying it was targeting Hamas fighters who were regrouping there. Gaza’s civil defense agency said an Israeli strike the night before in nearby Jabalia killed 33 people. The UN humanitarian affairs agency on Friday continued “to sound the alarm about the increasingly dire and dangerous situation that civilians in northern Gaza are facing. Families there are trying to survive in atrocious conditions, under heavy bombardment.

Moreover, the Gaza’s civil defense

agency said Saturday more than 400 Palestinians were killed in the north of the territory over the past two weeks during an ongoing military assault Israel says is aimed at preventing Hamas militants from regrouping. The Israeli military launched a sweeping air and ground assault targeting northern Gaza on October 6. Since then, it has tightened its siege, which has displaced tens of thousands of people.

“We have recovered more than 400 martyrs from the various targeted areas in the northern Gaza Strip, including Jabalia and its camp, Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun, since the start of the military operation by the occupation army” on October 6, Gaza civil defense agency spokesman, Mahmud Bassal, told AFP. “There are dozens of bodies scattered in the streets of Jabalia due to continuous shelling.” The Israeli military press department when contacted by AFP said it was “checking” the reports.

Bassal said the death toll from the Israeli operation up to Friday was 386. “In addition to that we had 33 martyrs from a massacre in Jabalia. So, the total is now more than 400 martyrs in northern Gaza,” he said, referring to an Israeli air strike on Jabalia refugee camp overnight Friday to Saturday. Bassal said the dead included women, children and

the elderly.

“They were all transferred to the northern Gaza Strip hospitals of Kamal Adwan, Al-Awda and Indonesian,” said Bassal. “There are a number of pleas from families being bombed inside Jabalia camp... but it is difficult for our teams to reach the bombed sites,” Bassal said. In several areas, communication and Internet networks have been cut off, making it difficult for rescue teams to reach those in need of help. “This affects the ability of citizens to contact our teams and other medical services,” Bassal added.

On October 6, the Israeli military launched an intense assault on Jabalia, which it later expanded to other areas of north Gaza amid claims that Hamas was regrouping in the area.

So far, it has said “dozens of terrorists” have been killed in the operation, which aid agencies have warned was leading to a fresh humanitarian crisis in the territory. “In the Jabalia area, IDF troops eliminated several terrorists in close-quarters encounters and IAF (air force) strikes,” the military said in a statement on Saturday. The Israeli military has defended the campaign in northern Gaza, saying its forces were targeting “terrorists embedded inside civilian areas,” and accusing Hamas of preventing residents from fleeing.

India ex-official charged in US murder plot arrested

NEW YORK (Reuters): A former Indian government official charged in the United States this week for allegedly directing a foiled murder plot had been arrested in New Delhi in December in an attempted murder case, according to court records and a police officer.

The US Justice Department unsealed the indictment of Vikash Yadav, 39, on Thursday, alleging he led a plot to murder a Sikh separatist in New York. From May 2023, the US indictment alleges, Yadav, described as an Indian government employee at the time, worked with others in India and abroad to direct a plot to kill Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a dual US-Canadian citizen.

Delhi Police had arrested Yadav on Dec 18 in the Indian capital, the police officer told Reuters on condition of anonymity. Yadav and an associate were charged with attempted

murder and other crimes, according to a filing in a Delhi district court.

Yadav’s lawyer, RK Handoo, called the Indian charges “fallacious”, adding there was “an international plot to bring shame on the government of India and my client”. Handoo declined to comment further. He and the police did not respond to questions on Yadav’s whereabouts. The Washington Post, citing American officials, reported on Thursday that Yadav was still in India and that the US was expected to seek his extradition.

Yadav’s arrest was based on a complaint by an Indian businessman, who alleged Yadav and an associate kidnapped him in December, assaulted and robbed him, according to details in a Delhi district court order dated Feb 23. “The accused persons tortured and manhandled the complainant and demanded money in the name of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi,”

said the Feb 23 court order, summarising the complaint. Bishnoi, in jail in India’s Gujarat state, is an organised crime gang leader, according to India’s National Investigation Agency.

Bishnoi’s lawyer says he is contesting more than 40 cases on charges, including murder and extortion, with many trials yet to begin. Indian government agents were separately accused by Canada this week of having links to Bishnoi’s gang and running a campaign to target Indian dissidents in Canada. India’s government denies the allegations. In Yadav’s Delhi case, the court order citing the complaint said: “The accused persons also brought bank chequebook from the cafe of the complainant and got his signature on blank cheques and later on dropped him near his car, threatening to remain silent.”

Pro-Trump group funded by Musk struggles with outreach targets

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The political action committee funded by billionaire Elon Musk to help re-elect former US President Donald Trump is struggling in some swing states to meet doorknocking goals and is investigating claims that some canvassers lied about the number of voters they have contacted, according to people involved in the group’s efforts.

The difficulties, in pivotal battleground states including Wisconsin and Nevada, come as the group, America PAC, races to enlist voters behind the Republican candidate in the final two weeks before the Nov. 5 election. Four people involved in the group’s outreach told Reuters that managers warned canvassers they are missing targets and needed to raise the number of would-be voters they contact.

Alysia McMillan, who canvassed for the PAC in Wisconsin, said field organizers recently told campaigners there they weren’t reaching daily objectives and were on track to miss an ultimate goal of contacting 450,000 voters by Election Day. In one meeting with canvassers, recorded by McMillan and reviewed by

Reuters, a manager warned of the shortfall. “We’re not going to hit 450,000, not with what we’ve got now,” the manager said in the Oct. 8 meeting. It isn’t clear how many knocks the Wisconsin teams have reached so far.

McMillan, who worked for two local contractors hired by America PAC to knock on voter doors, said she is speaking out because she is concerned a shortfall could cost the former president a victory. “If this isn’t looked into in a timely manner, this can result in a waste of time and money and risk President Trump winning the election,” she told Reuters. McMillan said she was fired by one contractor, after a pay dispute, but was hired by another shortly after.

One canvassing manager in Arizona said leaders there had issued similar warnings. Three other people familiar with the outreach told Reuters that Chris Young, a Musk aide and longtime Republican operative, had recently traveled to Nevada to audit whether doorknocking tallies there had been inflated by some of the workers hired by contractors. Another

person briefed on the matter said America PAC was struggling to find sufficient people to conduct audits in other states. A person close to America PAC’s operations said McMillan’s account of a Wisconsin shortfall is inaccurate and that the group will reach its goals. Senior operatives, the person added, routinely visit field offices to check on performance.

Young didn’t respond to a request for comment. America PAC’s ongoing outreach is built around door-to-door efforts to convince “low propensity voters” — those who may support Trump, but could stay home instead of voting — to cast their ballots. The work has focused on battleground states, where any small difference in voter turnout could clinch victory for Trump or Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic candidate, in an election that polls continue to say is too close to call. Musk, ranked by Forbes as the world’s richest person, so far has supplied at least \$75 million to America PAC, according to federal disclosures, making the group a crucial part of Trump’s bid to regain the White House.