



## Saudi crown prince says Israel bears responsibility for 'crimes' against Palestinians in Gaza

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said Israel bears responsibility for the "crimes committed against Palestinian people," reiterating calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza during his opening remarks at the Arab-Islamic Summit on Saturday. (Details on Page 5)



## Mushaal meets with Chief Advisor to Pope Francis on interfaith harmony

Mushaal meets Chief Advisor to His Excellency Pope Francis of the Vatican. Mushaal Husseini Mullick SAPM Human Rights and Women Empowerment had a comprehensive meeting with Chief Advisor Adel to His Excellency Pope Francis head of the Catholic Church, the bishop of Rome and sovereign of the Vatican City State. They discussed matters of mutual interest including interfaith, working towards co-existence... (Details on Page 3)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

## Arab Islamic Summit

RIYADH: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in a group photo with heads of the States/Government participating in the Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit on Saturday.



Photo: PID

# Arab, Islamic countries should challenge Israel at ICJ: caretaker PM

### Spokesman Report

RIYADH: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Saturday suggested that the Arab and Islamic countries should explore the possibility of initiating proceedings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Israel for its war crimes and crimes against humanity under the Genocide Convention and under the interim measures request. The UN Secretary General could be requested to establish a special commission of inquiry to investigate Israel's war crimes and crimes against humanity since October 7, the prime minister said during his address at the a Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit, which brings

together leaders from the Arab and Islamic world to discuss the current worsening situation in Gaza and the future strategy. The prime minister further said that they should also demand establishing of the international mechanism and call for halt to illegal settlements by Israel. "We call for a political solution for which it is imperative that conditions are created for a dialogue between the Palestinians and Israel to evolve a way forward through the two-state solution," he reiterated. PM Kakar suggests possibility of initiating ICJ proceedings against Israel for its war crimes. The prime minister said that permanent solution to the conflict was in the establish-

ment of a secure, viable, contiguous and sovereign state of Palestine on the basis of pre-June 1967 borders with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its Capital and urged upon the Muslim countries to work towards that end. Gaza urgently needed reprieve and immediate and complete ceasefire, he said, adding Israel must be forced to halt its indiscriminate aerial bombardments and ground invasions in compliance with the international humanitarian and human rights laws, and should ensure immediate lifting of the blockade and rapid and unhindered humanitarian aid supply. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hosted a Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit, which brings together leaders from the

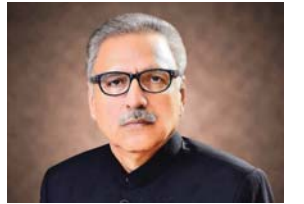
Arab and Islamic world to discuss the current worsening situation in Gaza and the future strategy. The caretaker prime minister stressed that the Israeli occupation forces were in clear violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, and their indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity. He called on the international community to hold Israel accountable for its crimes. Prime Minister Kakar underscored the urgency of bringing an end to Israel's campaign of terror with an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, lifting of the siege of Gaza, and rapid and unhindered humanitarian and relief assistance for the people of Gaza. Israel as an occupying

power must be reminded of its responsibility to create conditions for the urgent delivery of food, water, electricity and medical supplies to Gaza, he stressed. He also underlined that the root cause of the current situation was the perennial settler colonialism and denial of the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people. He reaffirmed Pakistan's solidarity and support for the Palestinian people and for their right to self-determination. The prime minister said that some 70 years back the framers of the UN charter pledged to save the coming generations from the scourge of future wars, but unfortunately, they were witnessing another war in Gaza, 'what is worst, this war is a genocide'.

## President condoles demise of KP CM Azam Khan

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi on Saturday expressed deep sorrow and grief over the demise of Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Azam Khan. The president expressed his condolences to the family of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister.



also prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace and elevation of ranks in paradise. The president said during his meetings with the late Azam Khan, he found him to be a thorough gentleman.

## President Xi to meet Biden, attend APEC Economic Leaders Meeting

### Spokesman Report

BELJING: The invitation of U.S. President Joe Biden, Chinese President Xi Jinping will visit San Francisco from November 14 to 17 to hold a bilateral meeting with Biden and attend the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said. The meeting will be the first face-to-face meeting between the two leaders since their meeting ahead of the Group of 20 summit in Indonesia's Bali last year.



The two heads of state will have in-depth communication on issues of strategic, overarching and fundamental importance in shaping China-U.S. relations and major issues concerning world peace and development, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

"We hope that all parties will remember what brought countries and regions in the Asia-Pacific together in the first place, focus on the region's urgent needs, deepen solidarity and cooperation, deliver on the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 in an all-round and balanced way, and work for positive outcomes at the meeting, to provide new growth impetus for the Asia-Pacific and the wider world and jointly build an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future," said the spokesperson.

## Iran asks Muslim world to designate Israel army 'terrorist organisation'

### Monitoring Desk

RIYADH: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi on Saturday called on Muslim countries to designate Israel's military as a "terrorist organisation", citing its current "brutalities" in the Gaza Strip.



The Iranian president made his remarks while addressing an extraordinary joint Arab-Islamic summit in Riyadh, summoned to underscore demands that fighting in Gaza end before the Israel-Hamas war draws in other countries. The emergency meeting of the Arab League and the OIC comes after Hamas' October 7 attacks that Israeli officials say left about 1,400 people dead. Israel's subsequent aerial and ground attacks have killed

more than 11,000 people, mostly civilians and many of them children, according to the Gaza health ministry. "Islamic governments should designate the army of the occupying and aggressor regime as a terrorist organisation," Ebrahim Raisi told the summit. He hailed Hamas for its fight against Israel and urged Islamic countries to launch sanctions against Israel. "There is no other way but to resist Israel, we kiss the hands of Hamas for its resistance against Israel," Raisi said.

## Preparations for upcoming elections in full swing: PML-N leader

### Bureau Report



LAHORE: Former interior minister Rana Sanaullah stated on Saturday that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has commenced preparations for

the upcoming elections.

During a press conference in Lahore, Sanaullah mentioned that PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif was scheduled to visit other provinces, with his upcoming trip to Balochistan next week.

PML-N's political activities are in full swing in Punjab, while it has also sent a delegation to Sindh for consultations, according to Sanaullah, the president of the PML-N's Punjab chapter.

Sanaullah expressed confidence that upon winning the elections, the PML-N would form governments in the federation and Punjab. He accentuated their commitment to curbing inflation and strengthening the Pakistani rupee against the US dollar, acknowledging the current challenges faced by the common man.

Highlighting past achievements, Sanaullah recalled that under Nawaz Sharif's leadership, the PML-N had successfully navigated the country through multiple crises.

According to the former interior minister, the present challenges in Pakistan, such as inflation, terrorism and energy shortfall, are unparalleled.

Sanaullah also criticised the PTI chief, stating that his failure has had severe consequences for the country. He argued that Pakistan's progress was hindered by the initiation of a project-meant to launch the PTI chief.

During the press conference, several leaders, including Saeed Ahmad, announced their affiliation with the PML-N.

## Solangi urges President to play his constitutional role

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker



Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Saturday said President Dr Arif Alvi should play his constitutional role instead of giving the statements that showed his biasness for a specific political party. Speaking in a Current Affairs programme of a private television channel, he said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was a registered political party with a large number of spokespersons who were using every resource to speak for themselves.

The President should not make such statements that showed his "biasness" towards a certain political party, the minister added.

As regards the letter wrote by the President to Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar about absence of level-playing field, he said how many times President Arif Alvi conveyed his concerns to former PM Imran Khan over the human rights violations during the four-year tenure of the PTI's government. He recalled that the journalists were abducted and attacked, opposition leaders arrested under false cases and media gags were imposed during the PTI's government tenure. The minister said the National Assembly was dissolved illegally for the first time in the history to prevent the no-confidence motion against former prime minister Imran Khan. He said the President had a role of the symbol of federation in the constitutional framework and he should fulfill his responsibilities in accordance with the constitution. According to the constitution, the President was the supreme commander of the armed forces, he said, adding why President Arif Alvi did not take any action when the sensitive installations were attacked on May 9. "How many letters, the President wrote in this regard," Solangi questioned. To a query, he asked PTI leader Omar Ayub to refrain from lecturing him on his constitutional duties.

He said if any party or individual had any complaint regarding level-playing field in the elections, they could reach out to the courts and the Election Commission that were functioning independently in the country. To another query, the minister said the caretaker government would address all the complaints within its jurisdiction and in accordance with the Constitution and law. The Election Commission was responsible for conducting transparent, free, fair, and impartial elections in the country, he remarked.

## PTI cancels Karachi rally after denial of permission

### Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has cancelled its public gathering in Karachi, which was scheduled for tomorrow, after the district administration denied permission.

In a statement, PTI Karachi Chapter said that they had approached relevant authorities, including Sindh chief minister and Commissioner Karachi, for seeking permission to hold public gathering in the metropolis.

However, the PTI said, the district administration rejected the request, lambasting the authorities' attitude towards Imran Khan-led party. "The PTI is being denied level-playing field," the statement added.

The PTI said after the announcement of elections, every political party has the constitutional right to start political activities and electioneering. All the political parties have started their election campaigns but the PTI has not been allowed to do so, it added. The part further stated that they have moved Sindh High Court (SHC) to seek request for arranging public gathering in Karachi.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) notified general elections on February 8, 2024.

The notification said that in light of the Supreme Court's order, the general elections will take place on February 8, 2024.

The notification was issued by the ECP after, the Supreme Court declared February 8, 2024, as the date for holding general elections across the country after the ECP submitted the record of meeting with the president.

## PTI's Yasmin Rashid, others judicial remand extended

### Bureau Report

LAHORE: The anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) extended the judicial remand of three accused, including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Dr. Yasmin Rashid, and others in a case related to on May 09 riots and vandalism. Judge Abhar Gul Khan of ATC conducted the hearing related to the May 09 riots and vandalism, including the arson of Shadman Town police station.

Rasheed, and Dr. Yasmin Rashid for 14 days and ordered to present them on November 25. On October 17, the anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) approved the judicial remand of three accused, including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Dr. Yasmin Rashid, and others in a case related to on May 09 riots and vandalism. Judge Abhar Gul Khan of ATC conducted the hearing related to the May 09 riots and vandalism, including the arson of Shadman Town police station.

# Two cops including SHO martyred while five others in terrorist attack

Adam Khan Wazir

**TANK:** On Saturday around 1 o'clock under the leadership of DSP Rural Tank Chin Shah, SHO police station Shaheed Mureed Akbar Abdul Ali Khan along with other persons in connection with the recovery of the abductee and the arrest of the kidnaper in the Masturat case.

On this regarding they had gone to Malazai, a village in the suburbs of Tank, in the limits of the police station, Kari Shah Noor.

On their return, unknown terrorists ambushed them and started firing indiscriminately, on which the police party also fired back.

The firing continued for about 30 minutes as a result of which SHO Police Station Shaheed Mureed Akbar Abdul Ali Khan, Head Constable Muhammad Alam and Constable Wahab Gul Elite Force were martyred.

While DSP Rural Chin Shah, Constable Ashfaq, Wifaq Hidayat, Ikram and Riaz of District Police Tank were injured.

As soon as the incident was reported, a heavy police force including the QRF force immediately reached the spot and surrounded the area and started a search operation.

On this occasion the police party the injured policeman's were shifted to Civil Hospital Tank for treatment.

Where SHO Police Station Shaheed Mureed Akbar Abdul Ali Khan Head Constable Muhammad Alam and Constable Wahab Gul Elite Force martyred themselves while succumbing to their injuries.

On the other hand, Regional Police Officer Dera Ismail Khan Nasir Mehmood Satti said that the police and security forces have started operations against the terrorist elements and are crushing their nefarious intentions.

He said, these cowardly attacks are being carried out to demoralize the police but the cowardly attacks of the terrorists cannot demoralize the police.

He said that the morale of the entire police force is high and we are fighting against them, Inshallah soon the terrorist elements will be brought to justice.

## Rescue 1122 conducted Ist aid training for students of MNPHS & College Wana



Adam Khan Wazir

**WANA:** Under the direction of Director General Rescue 1122 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr. Khateer Ahmed, the training wing of Rescue 1122 South Waziristan conducted first aid training on Saturday day at Musa Nika Public High School (MNPHS) and College Wana under the supervision of District Emergency Officer Engineer Waqas Alam.

During the first aid training, the instructor of the training wing gave a detailed and practical explanation to the students and school staff about throat irritation, snake bite, electrocution, knife injury and fire fighting during the sessions.

During the training, the rescue team also taught the students the simple methods of rescue, and explained them in different ways.

At the end of the training, the staff and students of the school thanked District Emergency Officer Engineer Waqas Alam and his team for providing the best training.

On this occasion all participants appreciated their efforts, but expressed hope that they will continue to conduct this type of training in the future.

## Pakistan Psychiatrists Society holds three-day conference on mental health

Qayoom Sarohi

**HYDERABAD:** Psychologist has emphasized to look at mental diseases under physical diseases and said that every fifth person in Pakistan is suffering from mental diseases, mental poverty is more than financial poverty in rural areas.

People suffering from diseases are treated like animals, they do not get treatment, there should be UC level psychiatrist clinics in rural areas to treat the mental diseases of the underprivileged, The Pakistan Psychiatrists Society (PPS) is holding a three-day national conference on Mental Health, Challenges and Opportunities in Rural Areas in Changing Situation in Sukkur, which will continue till tomorrow, in which UK, Canada, 11 foreign psychologists from different countries also participated and presented their papers, On the first and second day of the conference, various sessions were held on mental health in rural areas, its causes, challenges and solutions. For the first time in the history of Sukkur, the organizer Dr. Hareesh Makhija was appreciated for organizing such a large conference on the topic of mental health in rural areas, Speaking at the conference, Dr. Madawat Hussain Rana said that every fifth person in Pakistan is suffering from mental illness and there is no psychiatrist in the villages.

Mental patients are chained, but such conferences will send the message to the people that mental diseases are also physical diseases like, Dr. Abdul Hameed Memon, Dr. Darya Khan Laghari, Dr. Ghulam Rasool, Prof. Saeed Farooq, Prof. Dr. Motiram, Prof. Dr. Inayat Awan and other doctors said that mental patients need compassion and love along with treatment, Instead of leaving, reach the doctors and get treatment, he added that such a big conference in a city like Sukkur is auspicious.

## CTD Operation in Punjab

### Five Arrested From Banded Organizations TTP and LEJ terrorists of banned outfits

Asim Tanveer

**MULTAN:** The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in the Punjab province has foiled a major terror plot by arresting 5 suspected terrorists linked with a banned outfit during operations in different areas of Punjab. According to the spokesman, the CTD Punjab conducted 179 intelligence based operations in different districts of the province to effectively deal with any untoward incident of terrorism, in which 179 suspected persons were interrogated and 5 alleged terrorists were arrested with weapons, explosives and other prohibited materials.

Among the arrested terrorists are Muhammad Khalid, Muhammad Madni, Salman Saeed, Muhammad Naeem and Akmal, he said and added that they belong to the banned organizations Tehreek-e-Talban Pakistan and Lashkar Jhangvi. He said that the arrest of these terrorists was carried out during intelligence-based operations in Sahiwal, Pakpattan, Bahawalpur and Rawalpindi. He said that the 565 grams of explosives, 2 hand grenades, 2 IED bumb, 5 detonators, 13 feet of safety fuse wire, 3.5 feet, Prima cards, 5 pamphlets of banned organizations, 36 stickers and 5520 rupees in cash have been recovered from the possession of the terrorists. The spokesman said that the terrorists had planned to sabotage across the province and wanted to target important installations. The police have registered 5 cases against the terrorists and shifted them to an unknown location, he added.

## Protest

**HYDERABAD:** Workers of Jeay Sindh Students Federation hold a protest rally in the favor of their demands, in City.



Photo: Online

## Three-day workshop concluded in collaboration with HEC at Gomal varsity, Dera

Adam Khan Wazir

**DERA ISMAIL KHAN:** A three-day workshop on "Modern Teaching Strategies" in collaboration between Gomal University and Higher Education Commission Islamabad concluded on Saturday.

Gomal University Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Shakib Ullah was the chief guest of the closing ceremony.

The organizer of the workshop was Dr. Barkat Ali, Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy.

The workshop was highlighted by renowned international guest speaker Prof. Dr. Wasif Gilani Gulf



Medical University online, while the national guest speaker Dr. Muhammad Waqas, University of Veterinary Sciences Lahore, Dr. Abid Hussain University of Poonch Rawalkot, Azad Kashmir, Dr. Anadn Jameel, Islamia University Bahawalpur also gave a presentation on the teaching process keeping in mind the

modern requirements of the present time in the light of their experiences explained in detail.

Addressing the workshop, Vice Chancellor Gomal University Professor Dr. Shakib Ullah said, on the one hand, teachers get a chance to learn a lot by conducting such workshops and on the other hand the quality of

education in the institution is further improved because when we joined the university as teachers.

At that time, our senior teachers used to teach us how to give lectures in the morning and then they used to come and check in the classes and these things lead to improvement in the quality of education.

## Two killed, 9 injured on road in Pindigheb

Raza Naqvi

**ATTACK:** 11 nov Two persons were killed while nine others injured, three of them women in two different incidents in the limits of Pindigheb Police station on Saturday, Police sources said.

In the first incident, a Rawalpindi bound passenger van coming from Kohat turned turtle and rammed into side tree after one of its tyre burst on Kohat road near Rangli resultantly driver of the fatal van was died on the spot while six other passengers among them three women were injured. Rescue 1122 shifted the injured and dead to tehsil headquarters hospital. Separately, a teenage boy was killed and his two teenage friends were injured, both of them critical when a speedy passenger van over a bridge near village Ikhlas in the limits of the same Police station.

## Second three-day journalism training workshop held

Anwar Chohan

**KHARAIN:** The 2nd three-day journalism training workshop under the auspices of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) was held in the hall of District Konis, Gujarat, in which a large number of journalists participated in addition to male and female students.

The workshop was supervised by Acting Secretary General PFUJ Mohammad Ismail Waraich.

Gujarat University Vice Chancellor Dr. Mushahid Anwar, Dr. Ayaz Nasir, Dr. Muhammad Yusuf, Dr. Shahbaz and other experts gave lectures while at the end of the program, former Federal Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain addressed the participants online on Zoom and distributed certificates for outstanding performance.

Man remains a student all his life, so the process of learning and teaching continues, so we came to Lahore along with our journalist friends Muhammad Kamran and

Muhammad Usman to participate in the training workshop. Had breakfast at Chowk, later reached Davis Road through Shimla Hill, attended the 7th Annual All Pakistan Training Workshop at Pak Heritage Hotel. An annual workshop was organized in which eminent journalists, writers, visionary speakers, poets, playwrights and scholars from all over the country participated and gave useful lectures related to their fields. Medal while all the members participating in the workshop will be given certificate

This year, around 130 books were received for the Apova Book Award. The committee carefully selected all the books. The number of book awards was fixed at 30, but on the recommendation of the committee, the number was increased to 50. Apart from the books written in Urdu, books written in English and other regional languages were also included in the book award, and special awards were given to

their writers.

All Pakistan Writers Welfare Association (APOVA) has been conducting successful training workshops for the past seven years. The aim of these workshops is to bring together the experienced and novices of different genres of literature on one platform to provide guidance to new and talented people in the field of literature. The organization and success of all these training workshops in a long period of seven years is a testament to the hard work and experience of this organization.

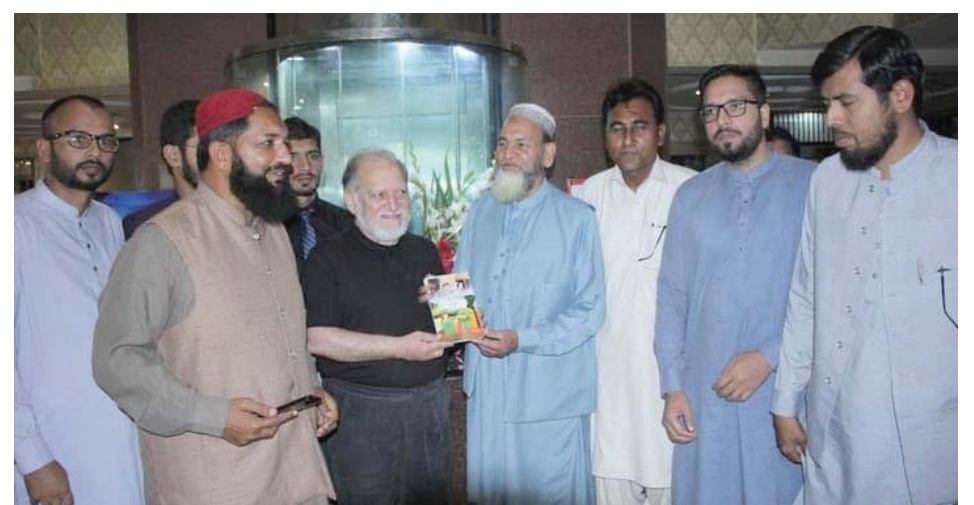
Apova's Patron-in-Chief Zubair Ahmed Ansari, President Mr. MM Ali, Senior Vice President Hafiz Muhammad Zahid and other team members for organizing the 7th successful workshop cannot be praised enough. I got an opportunity to learn and understand a lot by listening to their conversation. Due to lack of time, I could not benefit from the conversation of the personalities from far away, especially the drama writ-

er Ms. Saima Akram Chaudhry, who came from Karachi, did not listen in detail. After a long time, I got to listen to the poetry of prominent poet Nadeem Bhabha, Professor Nasir Bashir Asad Bukhari, Muhammad Shoaib Mirza Malik Yaqoob Awan, Asad Naqvi Nadeem Nazam Shehzad Nir Atbarak Abarak Tariq Baloch Sahrai Khalid Abbas Dar Haseeb Pasha Naveed Chaudhry Rashid Mahmood and other personalities. The famous character Kamali (Ifthikhar Af) of the famous drama Parizaad, who is the scriptwriter of the drama serial Nagan, heard their conversation.

And he is also the author of the book "Chakar Chhole". The people who benefited from the company of Baba Ashfaq Ahmed are very humble and simple people.

You visited the annual function of Apova and delivered a lecture in a unique style as usual and distributed awards to the participants or popularized John.

He is a well-known Pakistani columnist, poet, intellectual,



dramatist, and author of several books

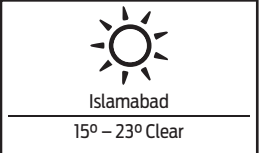
Oriya Maqbool Sahib participated in the seventh annual training workshop of All Pakistan Writers Welfare Association and lectured the participants on the best unique topic, shared his experiences, motivated new writers and award-

ed awards with his own hands to the new writers nominated by the organization. 7th Annual Training Workshop Pak Heritage Hotel Lahore

Mr. Nadeem Bhabha participated in the seventh annual training workshop of All Pakistan Writers Welfare Association. A poetry session was held under

his chairmanship.

In the end, you were awarded an award by the organizers for your excellent speech, Rakum Al-Haruf was given a medal for good performance by the distinguished poet Athak Abarak, and we returned with many memories. Blessed with quadruple growth.



## SERVICES

## Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:10 am
Zohr	11:52 am
Asr	3:30 pm
Maghrib	5:08 pm
Isha	6:33 pm

## EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
& Rescue Services	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

## ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance	115
PIA Flight Info	114
PIA Cargo	9280979
Railway Inquiry	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

## HOSPITALS

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7

## IRSA releases 106,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 106,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 63,800 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1514.08 feet and was 114.08 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 31,600 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1192.60 feet, which was 142.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 12,800 cusecs and 37,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 71,400, 46,800, 33,700 and 7,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 5,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

# Mushaal meets with Chief Advisor to Pope Francis on interfaith harmony

PPA

RIYADH: Mushaal Meets Chief Advisor to His Excellency Pope Francis of the Vatican. Mushaal Hussein Mullick SAPM Human Rights and Women Empowerment had a comprehensive meeting with Chief Advisor Adel to His Excellency Pope Francis head of the Catholic Church, the bishop of Rome and sovereign of the Vatican City State. They discussed matters of mutual interest including Interfaith, working towards co-existence, eliminating the possibility of discord, violent or non violent. Both the dignitaries agreed that the teachings of all religions are based on peace, love and harmony and a true follower of any religion can never think of provoking hatred against other faiths. They reaffirmed their commitment that through broader dialogue and effective communication, each



side will be able to understand the other dispassionately and curb those prejudices that give rise to hatred and conflict in religion. The Chief Advisor to His Excellency Pope Francis Head of the Vatican invited Mushaal to

visit the Vatican City and send the message of peace and interfaith harmony to the world as a muslim woman of the 21st century.

Mushaal said that it is a need of the time to develop

and identify mystical interpretations around the true moderate and tolerant message of Islam to the world and become an enabler towards meaningful Interfaith dialogues. The guiding idea is not to tamper with the basic tenets of Islam or any faith but to present them in a form wrapped with the message of love, tolerance and moderation, as the Sufis did in order to avoid a clash of civilization and resolve global conflicts. Both agreed that Religious leaders, as spiritual guides and moral authorities, have a profound influence on their followers. Their collective voice can be utilised as a powerful force for peaceful settlement of issues concerning humanity especially the crisis of Palestine Israel conflict and the Kashmiri conflict as human lives are priceless regardless of caste colour, creed, religion and nationality.

## Appreciation

ISLAMABAD: Chairman NUST Board of Governors, General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) conferred Gold Medal and Bachelor's Degree in Psychology to Huzaifa Usmani.



## SAQE's Annual National Convention

# Youth and Academia Join Hands to Launch the Charter of Education

PNP

ISLAMABAD: With the highest number of out-of-school children in the world, Pakistan can no longer neglect the education emergency. On the occasion of the 14th Annual Convention held by the Pakistan Coalition for Education, an initiative of the Society for Access to Quality Education (SAQE), civil society organizations, youth groups and senior members of the academia came together to launch the "Charter of Education."

"With an estimated 25 to 28 million children currently out of school in Pakistan, we, as a nation no longer have the luxury to treat education with indifference and neglect that consequent governments have meted out in the past," said Zehra Arshad, the Executive Director of SAQE and the National Coordinator of PCE. "The political parties must come together to ensure a strong consensus on a common agenda for access to equitable education for all across Pakistan."

The "Charter of Education" developed under the slogan of "Vote for Safe Education," urged the political parties to develop



op a joint Charter of Education at their ends on the same lines as they had developed the Charter of Democracy. Such a Charter should uphold the promise and enactment of Article 25-A and SDG-4 agenda for equitable education for all children. "The three key issues plaguing Pakistan's education system right now include a colossal high number of out-of-school children, an underutilized youth bulge and alarmingly high learning poverty," pointed out Dr. Muhammad Jehangir Khan, Associate Professor at PIDE.

The political parties should also provide tangible pledges in their manifestos with short, medium and long-term plans to improve the access and

quality of education, especially for traditionally marginalized groups such as girls, children with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities and transgender students. "Owing to limited opportunities, bullying and harassment, the literacy rate among transgender people in Pakistan is merely 19%," shared Nayab Ali, a transgender rights activist and the Executive Director of Transgender Rights Consultants Pakistan. Adding to this, Itefaq Khaliq Khan, Senior Program Manager at Sightsavers shared, "More than 90% of all children living with disabilities in Pakistan have no access to education."

The participants also called for immediate measures to divert sufficient dis-

ter aid towards education as well as providing conditional cash transfers to the affected households to facilitate the education of their children.

The Charter also demanded a revision of the curriculum to emphasize critical thinking, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and 21st-century skills and to promote a culture of lifelong learning, non-violence, diversity and tolerance.

"Post-pandemic learning poverty stands at 75% in Pakistan," shared Izzah Farrukh, Senior Education Specialist at the World Bank.

Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Shahid Soroya, Director General, the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) shared "The government fully acknowledges the need to make reliable education-related data available. This is why, PIE has recently launched a publicly accessible data portal that will allow not just the government but also civil society organizations, donors and researchers to review Pakistan's progress against all key education indicators including the status of out-of-school children."

## PANAH organized a health mela at National Press Club Islamabad.

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Secretary General of Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH), Sanahullah Ghumman, while talking to the media, said that PANAH considers journalists as its strongest ally. We also realize that these people neglect their health a lot due to their busy schedule. Keeping this in mind, a health mela is being organized for journalists and their families on Sunday 12th November 2023 in collaboration with PANAH and National Press Club. This health MELA will continue from 11.00 am to 03.30 pm at National Press Club, F-6/1 Islamabad. A team of more than 35 specialist doctors under the leadership of President PANAH Major General (R) Masood ur Rahman Kayani will examine the patients free of cost. Apart from this, many necessary tests including echo, ultrasound, ECG and many blood tests will be done free of cost and free medicine will also be given. On this occasion, physical exercise methods will be demonstrated and guidance will also be given regarding healthy diet.

## Subsidized electricity tariff should be provided to Karachi-based SMEs: President FBATI

PPA

KARACHI: President Federal B Area Trade and Industry Syed Raza Hussain said the government should provide a subsidized electricity tariff to Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) of the commercial capital Karachi to revive economic activity at an accelerated pace.

Speaking in a meeting with a delegation of K-Electric officials, President FBATI said the government should treat the traders of Karachi at par with the rest of the country by facilitating them with the subsidized cost of electric units, mainly to SMEs.

He added the government had allocated subsidized quotas for the export-oriented sectors in different cities of the country besides Karachi, depriving businessmen of their right to equal treatment, which cost them severe losses.

President FBATI also emphasized that the government should resolve the long-awaited matter of industrialists of Karachi, passing on the benefit of incremental units' consumption of electricity to consumers.

Industries in Karachi neither received subsidy on account of the incremental unit consumption of electricity last year nor this year but this particular relief has been provided to industrialists in different cities of the country, he remarked.

He mentioned that industries and utility companies, mainly electricity distribution and generation companies, should foster relationships to ensure uninterrupted power supplies to industrial zones, including the area under FBATI.

Fawad Gillani, Chief Distribution Officer at K-Electric, said the power utility is transforming its system into a customer-centric organization with a proper mechanism to address the company's issues, mainly the industrial customers, to resolve their issues on a priority basis.

He further mentioned that K-Electric is working proactively to provide new connections to industrial customers through a one-window system requirement to submit limited documentation for legal compliance.

Masoor Alvi, Chairman Sub-Committee on utilities- FBATI, said the industrial activity in Karachi witnessed a slight sustainability in the past two months, which is a good omen for the economy, but uncertainty remains prevailing.

## AIOU strives for education of out-of-school: VC, AIOU



PNP

ISLAMABAD: "Allama Iqbal Open University is providing educational opportunities to the remotest areas of the country, especially the most backward areas of Balochistan, we are on a mission to bring every out of school child of Balochistan into the educational network," said Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood in his message on the 1st inaugural session of the Model Study Center in Dalbandin.

It is pertinent to mention here that former Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain inaugurated this center online in the main campus Islamabad on August 2, 2023 and a ceremony was held yesterday to make it functional formally. This ceremony was presided over by Director General Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqeer Ahmad Khan, while former Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Ejaz Khan Sanjrani was the chief guest of the event. Students, tutors, social personalities and academicians participated in the event.

Dr. Malik Tauqir said that regional network is being extended to include out-of-school children in educational network as per the vision of VC AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood. He said that this study center in Dalbandin will provide education facilities to the people of the area at their doorsteps, children from Iran and Afghanistan will also benefit from this center. Ejaz Khan Sanjrani praised the efforts of Allama Iqbal Open University for the promotion of education and announced that he will provide free land to the AIOU in Dalbandin for the construction of a model study center. The study center has been activated in a school, the construction of its building will be started after getting land from Ejaz Khan Sanjrani.

## Regional Cooperation:

# The Key to Unlocking Pakistan's Potential

Pakistan has always been detached from the culture of productivity. And this is one of the main reasons why Pakistan has not got benefits from the global economic arena. In today's globalized world, states are extremely interconnected and interdependent with each other. Those that have the ability to participate effectively with their neighbours are able to increase trade, investment and connectivity, leading to greater economic growth and prosperity for all countries involved. And help to strengthen good relations

with each other.

The European union is a valuable model of the benefits of regional cooperation. By integrating trade policies and regulations, promotion investments in key industries, making special economic zones for the region and developing joint economic development policies, The European union has developed a single market that has pulled millions of people out

Analysis



Danish Raza

of poverty and made Europe one of the most flourishing region in the world.

More over, China is an example that is collecting the rewards of regional cooperation. Through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China is consistently investing in infrastructure projects that connect it to its neighbours and beyond. This is supporting to increase trade and investment, and is

also producing new jobs and opportunities for people within the region.

There are some many ways in which regional collaboration can benefit Pakistan, regional collaboration can lead to increased trade between Pakistan and its neighbours even with Central Asia. This can be achieved by relaxing barriers and tariffs on trade, and by enhancing trade infrastructure by developing special economic zones to attract Foreign Direct investments. Creating a more attractive investment environment can be a reason for increase in trade, promoting joint ventures between Pakistani and

MNC's can also be catalyst for increased investments in Pakistan.

Furthermore, Regional cooperation can also help Pakistan to increase tourism in the country, we have remarkable places like Northern areas of Pakistan which can be a way of generating revenues by hosting tourist around the world. However, Pakistan should thoroughly focus on the enhancement of security in the country for Foreign investments, regional cooperation is itself a medium of security, it can help to address common security threats such as terrorism, narcotics trafficking and

transnational crimes.

In Conclusion, regional cooperation is significant for Pakistan's economic prosperity and sovereignty. Pakistan needs to work with its neighbour and beyond to improve trade infrastructure, reduce trade obstacles, promote investment in important sectors, and improve connectivity by doing so, Pakistan can place itself as an important trade and Transit hub, and can also extract many benefit that comes with regional collaboration.

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# Pension reform, shift from defined benefit model to defined contributory model

✉ **Syeda Noor Ul Ain Amjad**

The exponential increase in the pension and its burden on the budget is a central concern for the country. IMF has also been demanding to bring in reforms in different sectors to reduce the fiscal deficit. 541.9 billion rupees, which is how much the federal government of Pakistan alone has spent on pensions as of the year 2022.

The underlying Civil service pension of Pakistan was adopted from the British Pension Act 1871. The same was adopted by India after independence but was revised in 2004 when the country introduced contributory schemes. Pakistan also went through some amendments, but the scheme remained to be classified as Pay-As-You-Go where the burden is all on the government.

In addition to the Pension Act of 1871 other acts are also in place like Pension-gratuity Scheme (1954), the Provisions of Civil Servant Act, 1973, and the Liberalized Pension Rule and Ancillary Instructions, 1977.

As the country is struggling with a fiscal deficit now is the time to reduce

the burden on the federal government through some reforms. Based on the recommendations of "Pay and Pension Commission 2020" (POP 2020) the finance division has initiated reforms in the pension scheme. Eight major changes are under consideration. Starting from the calculation of gross pension, it is stated that the Pension will no longer be granted based on the last pay drawn out than the average pay of the last three years will be calculated for gross pension.

This is something already in practice by the Armed Forces. Secondly, those employees interested in early retirement will have to pay a penalty of 3% for each year in between their desired retirement year and the actual retirement year. The step is taken to ensure the sustainability of the employees in service. The yearly increment imposed on pension will be based on the gross or net pension not on the last drawn pension because the exponential increase was causing severe damage to the government's treasury.

The amount of money entitled to the third tier of the family will be limited to ten years (with the exception of a lifetime for any special child and 20 years for children of shuhada). This does not include the widows. It is only for the

third tier i.e., unmarried, widowed, or divorced daughter. Re-employed individuals will now have to forgo either their pay or pension. They will not be entertained by both.

The government will no longer facilitate the individual with dual pensions. The commutation formula has been changed from 35-65% to 25-75%. The Ministry of Defense has however demanded some waivers for armed personnel because of the short-term services of soldiers and exceptions for the shuhadas.

Lastly, there will be a shift from a defined benefit model to a defined contributory model. This is the most important of all. The basic difference between the two is that in a defined benefit one gets an already estimated specified amount after retirement.

While in the defined contribution both employee and the government contribute to the employee's retirement account collectively.

The advantage of this scheme is that the employee will contribute some amount from his salary to the government, and the government will add on and invest. In the end, the employee will get much more than its contribu-

tion. So, it will be a win-win situation for both. But usually, the employee does not show consistency, which is a setback for the whole scheme. Consequently, a threshold is to be fixed if sustainability is the demand. There are pros and cons to both ways, therefore, there is a need to weigh the comparative advantage of both schemes.

Developing countries like the United States have shifted to a contributory model years ago. The US introduced a contributory scheme called the "401k Scheme" for employees. In the '90s, 78% of companies in the United States did away with the conventional pension plan and went on to the 401k plan. In the last three decades, it has been proven as a wealth-building tool for Americans as compared to pensions. It has not only helped the government get off the burden financially, but it has increased the employees' productivity too.

Here it is important to appreciate the KPK government that has already introduced a contributory pension scheme. The burden of pension is not solely on the federal government. The provincial government should also take such steps to bring reform and efficiency to the system.

## TB fight recovering from COVID-19 setback

Tuberculosis (TB) response is bouncing back from disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but more effort is needed to end the disease, the World Health Organization (WHO), a Geneva-based UN agency has said. The finding comes in the latest WHO Global Tuberculosis Report which reveals that 7.5 million people were diagnosed with TB in 2022 the highest figure ever since the UN agency began global monitoring in 1995.

TB is an infectious disease that mainly affects the lungs. It is caused by a type of bacteria and spreads through the air when infected people cough, sneeze or spit. TB is both preventable and curable. The rise in TB diagnosis was attributed to good recovery in access to, and provision of, health services in many countries, according to the report, which features data from 192 nations. India, Indonesia and the Philippines – which together accounted for over 60 per cent of the global reduction in new diagnoses in 2020 and 2021 – all recovered to beyond 2019 levels last year.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO Director-General, recalled that TB had plagued previous generations for millennia. People suffered and died from the disease without knowing what it was, the cause, or how to stop it. Today, we have knowledge and tools they could only have dreamed of, he said. We have political commitment, and we have an opportunity that no generation in the history of humanity has had: the opportunity to write the final chapter in the story of TB. Globally, an estimated 10.6 million people fell ill with TB in 2022, up from 10.3 million the previous year.

The majority were in the WHO Regions of Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Western Pacific, which together accounted for nearly 90 per cent. Smaller proportions were reported in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Americas, and Europe. The total number of TB-related deaths, including those among people with HIV, stood at 1.3 million in 2022, down from 1.4 million the year before.

However, COVID-19 disruptions resulted in nearly half a million more deaths from TB during the period from 2020-2022, and the disease continues to be the leading killer among people with HIV. Meanwhile, multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) remains a public health crisis. Last year, an estimated 410,000 people developed it or another type that is resistant to the antibiotic rifampicin (MDR/RR-TB), but only two in five accessed treatment. Although there is some progress in the development of new TB diagnostics, drugs and vaccines this is constrained by the overall level of investment in these areas, said WHO.

Global efforts to combat TB have saved over 75 million lives since the year 2000, but action must be stepped up, the agency said, as it remained the world's second leading infectious killer in 2022, behind COVID-19. Despite the significant recovery in 2022, progress was insufficient to meet global targets set in 2018, with pandemic-related disruptions and ongoing conflicts being major contributing factors. For example, the net decrease in TB-related deaths from 2015 to 2022 was 19 per cent, or far short of the goal of a 75 per cent reduction by 2025.

At a meeting held during the High-Level Week of the UN General Assembly in September, the international community reinforced the 2018 commitments and targets and set new ones for the period through 2027. The new targets include reaching 90 per cent of people in need of TB prevention and care services, using a WHO-recommended rapid test as the first method of diagnosis, providing all patients with a health and social benefits package, ensuring the availability of at least one new safe and effective TB vaccine, and closing funding gaps. The report emphasized that ending the global TB epidemic requires translating these commitments into real action.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)

## Myths Surrounding Pak Army's Recruitment and Promotion System - II

The significance of military professionalism, technological competence, and ethical standards cannot be emphasized enough. As the world undergoes transformations, a nation's military capabilities must evolve in tandem, making a professional military an indispensable asset that serves as the shield and sword of a nation, guaranteeing its safety, security, and prosperity. The Pakistan Army exemplifies fully professional armed forces, a source of pride for Pakistan, dedicated to serving the country on all fronts.

In any nation's armed forces, the recruitment and promotion of its personnel play a pivotal role in determining the strength, effectiveness, and overall capabilities of its military. While several factors come into play when choosing and advancing individuals within the armed services, one principle takes precedence: merit. Merit-based recruitment and promotion ensure that every individual, regardless of their background, has an equal opportunity to serve and advance within the military. Discrimination based on factors like race, gender, religion, or socioeconomic status is minimized, if not entirely eradicated, fostering a more inclusive and diverse armed forces. This diversity often translates to a more versatile and adaptable military, capable of addressing a broad spectrum of challenges. At the heart of meritocracy lies the principle of selecting and promoting individuals based on their competence and skill. This ensures that only the most qualified and capable individuals ascend the ranks. In a profession where the stakes are as high as they are in the military, having the most skilled and proficient personnel is non-negotiable.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Merit-based selection and promotion processes help ensure that those in leadership positions are well-prepared to make critical decisions and lead effectively.

Merit-based recruitment and promotion cultivate a sense of equity and transparency within the ranks. When soldiers witness their peers advancing due to their skills and achievements, it motivates them to excel and continuously strive for improvement. This fosters a culture of healthy competition and a shared dedication to the mission, ultimately boosting morale and unit cohesion. Meritocracy within the military establishes a system of accountability. Soldiers understand that their performance directly influences their career progression. This accountability ensures that individuals remain committed to their responsibilities and strive for excellence, knowing that their performance is consistently assessed and rewarded based on merit. A merit-based system encourages the introduction of fresh ideas, innovation, and adaptability. Individuals who have demonstrated outstanding skills and leadership in their roles are more likely to be identified and promoted. Consequently, these individuals bring their knowledge and expertise to positions of greater influence, contributing to the military's capacity to adapt to evolving threats and integrate new technologies.

In a society where the military is regarded as the guardian of the nation's interests, public trust is paramount. A merit-based approach to recruitment and promotion reinforces public confidence by demonstrating that the military is dedicated to excellence, free from favoritism or nepotism. This trust is crucial for sustaining civilian oversight and garnering support for the

armed forces.

There is speculation among certain groups that becoming an army officer in Pakistan is a straightforward process, often involving individuals who are either the offspring of army officers or who secure commissions through influential connections. It is also assumed that these officers primarily enjoy a life of luxury. However, the reality starkly contradicts these misconceptions. In the Pakistan Army, officers are commissioned through rigorous and transparent criteria that apply uniformly to all candidates.

As per the eligibility criteria for joining the Pakistan Army as a Commissioned Officer through the Long Course, candidates must be male citizens of Pakistan (for combat roles), although dual Pakistani citizens are eligible to apply, with the requirement that they must surrender their second nationality before joining PMA Kakul if selected. Candidates must fall within the age range of 17-22 years, with minor variations where applicable. Educational qualifications encompass a minimum of 12 years of education or a bachelor's degree, with a prerequisite of achieving a 60% score. Candidates hailing from FATA, certain areas of Balochistan, and rural Sindh may apply with marks ranging from 45% to 55%, and age relaxation also applies to underdeveloped regions. Additionally, candidates must meet height and weight requirements based on BMI, and they must clear the initial test to be eligible for the ISSB (Inter Services Selection Board) process. The ISSB evaluation includes academic, psychometric, intelligence, physical, and medical tests, along with a comprehensive interview. The training period at PMA spans two years, during which formal education leading to a bachelor's degree is also provided. Successful graduates are commissioned as Second Lieutenants in the Pakistan Army.

To be continued

## Unlocking Pakistan's Potential: A Recipe to Eradicate Food Insecurity

Hassan Zaman H2-L

Food insecurity in Pakistan, a nation blessed with fertile lands and abundant agricultural resources, is a jarring paradox that raises vital ethical and moral questions. Food, besides being a necessity, is a basic human right. Yet, Pakistan, a country brimming with culture and history, millions of people still grapple with the harsh truth of food insecurity. This crisis goes beyond mere economic and logistical issues, however; it is an insurmountable roadblock to the nation's progress, compounded by poverty, income inequality, and a broken food distribution system. Pakistan boasts fertile lands, diverse climates, and abundant resources. But food insecurity remains a pressing issue. Poverty and income inequality are the prime suspects in this culinary mystery. It's the bitter truth: a prosperous nation can't thrive when its people can't put food on their tables. Since the lockdown back in 2020 the country has been struggling massively in regards to its economic output, or setting a stable currency for its own people to use. Oil prices, and gas prices are not the only things that have gone up. As of 2023 the inflation rate in Pakistan is set to be a jarring 31%.

The talk around the town is that this seemingly existential crisis for all of Pakistan really means "all" of the poor people in the country. With Pakistan facing astonishing income inequality division, and clear sects dividing the general populous it would not be wrong in stating that the issue has highlighted the severe income disparity people in Pakistan face.

Malnutrition, the neon warning sign of food insecurity, is alarmingly high in Pakistan, espe-

cially among children. It's a scarlet letter on our conscience. Food insecurity isn't just about hungry people; it also fans the flames of health disparities. When you can't access nutritious food, you're essentially defenceless against diseases. Malnutrition weakens not only bodies but also our healthcare system. And that is what we see happening to the children of our country. Brain eating amoeba, polio, hepatitis, diseases that could once have been completely neglected are now ravaging the young spirits of our nations, devouring not only their right to eat, but now their right to live.

So, what's the secret ingredient to fix this recipe of woe? It's a basic revamp of our agricultural and food distribution systems. We need policies that give small-scale farmers their due and promote sustainable agriculture. The majority of our folks depend on farming for their bread, quite literally. Fair prices, modern techniques, and better irrigation infrastructure are must-haves. But how do we achieve that under this political cloud of uncertainty? It is by enforcing direct measures through the Pakistan ministry of agriculture.

We must understand that access to food isn't a privilege; it's a right. Issues such as Food waste should also be looked at with concern. Shockingly, in a country struggling with food scarcity, tons of food goes to waste due to subpar storage and transportation. We must tighten our belts and streamline the supply chain, cutting waste and sending surplus grub to those in need.

It's outrageous that, in a nation overflowing with agricultural riches, millions sleep with empty stomachs. Let's tackle the root causes, from poverty to a faulty food supply chain. It's a tough nut to crack, but together, we can turn the tables and ensure no one sleeps hungry in the Jinnah's land of the pure.

Writer is A Level Student in Aitchison College

# Saudi crown prince says Israel bears responsibility for 'crimes' against Palestinians in Gaza

Prince Mohammed bin Salman condemning the international community's silence towards the violations against the Palestinian civilians

**Spokesman Report**

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said Israel bears responsibility for the "crimes committed against Palestinian people," reiterating calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza during his opening remarks at the Arab-Islamic Summit on Saturday.

The Saudi crown prince stressed the Kingdom's "unequivocal" rejection of the continued Israeli aggression in Gaza and the forced displacement of residents.

He pointed to the 'double standards' in applying the international humanitarian law, condemning the international community's silence towards the violations against the Palestinian civilians.

He added: "We are facing a humanitarian catastrophe that testifies to the failure of the UN Security Council and the international community to put an end to the Israeli violations - a matter that demonstrates double standards."

The crown prince reiterated calls for an immediate end to the military aggression in Gaza and the release of hostages to save lives. He called for a coordinated, collective effort among Arab and Islamic states to take effective action to lift the siege and deliver humanitarian and relief aid into Gaza.

"The Kingdom has made tireless efforts since the beginning of the aggression in Gaza and has continued consultations to stop the war."

He stressed that the only solution to achieve stability in the

region is to end the occupation and the establishment of settlements.

"A Palestinian state must be established on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital," said the crown prince.

Saudi Arabia hosted the emergency summit in response to the exceptional circumstances taking place in the Palestinian Gaza Strip as countries felt the need to unify efforts and come out with a unified collective position.

The summit brought together leaders from Arab and Asian nations, who called for an immediate end to the war on Gaza.

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi and Arab leaders including Palestine's President Mahmoud Abbas, Egypt's Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Syria's Bashar al-Assad, and Iraq's Abdul Latif Rashid were among the leaders who attended the summit on Saturday.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and President of Libya's Presidential Council Mohamed Al-Manfi were among the participating leaders.

The summit also saw the attendance of Asian leaders including Presidents of Indonesia Joko Widodo and Kyrgyzstan Sady Japarov.

Speaking during the summit, the Palestinian president said the Palestinians are facing an "unmatched genocidal war," calling on the United States to pressure Israel into halting its offensive on Gaza.

Abbas also called for international protection for the Palestinians in the face of Israeli attacks. He urged the UN Security

Council to practice its responsibilities by stopping the aggression against the Palestinians and delivering aid in Gaza.

"We will not accept military and security solutions in the Gaza Strip," he added.

Iran's Raisi called on Muslim countries to impose oil and goods sanctions on Israel and designate the Israeli army "terrorist group."

He accused Israel of using internationally banned weapons in the Gaza Strip and violating international humanitarian laws.

Raisi called the United States a major partner in Israel's crimes against Gaza with its unconditional backing of the aggression and provision of weapons daily.

He urged Islamic countries to work together to pressure Israel and America to stop the war in Gaza.

"The top priority now is a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip." He added: "We must work to remove Israeli forces from Gaza."

Raisi had earlier said that time had come for action over the conflict rather than talk as he headed to Riyadh.

"Today, the unity of the Islamic countries is very important," he noted.

During his speech at the summit, Qatar's Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani stressed his country's negotiation efforts to release the hostages held in Gaza, saying that the international community has failed to bear its responsibilities.

He questioned "for how long will the international community treat Israel as if it is above international



law?"

"Who would have imagined that hospitals would be openly bombed in the 21st century and that families would be wiped from the civil registry by indiscriminate bombing?"

Al-Thani called for a permanent opening of a humanitarian corridor to bring aid into Gaza.

In his remarks, Jordan's King Abdullah II called for a serious peace process to begin in the Middle East.

He said the war on Gaza was an extension of an occupation that has started more than seven decades ago, stressing that the two-state solution is the only way to bring peace in Palestine.

"The war waged by Israel on Gaza is hideous and has to stop," he said. King Abdullah said Israel's denial of food and medical

supplies into Gaza constitutes as a "war crime."

Meanwhile, the Egyptian President El-Sisi denounced Israel's forced displacement of the Palestinians, calling for an international investigation to be conducted into Israel's violations against the people of Gaza.

He urged for an immediate sustainable ceasefire in Gaza "without restrictions or conditions."

"The policies of collective punishment of the people of Gaza...are unacceptable and cannot be justified by self-defense or any other claims. They must be stopped immediately."

He warned that failure to end the war in Gaza could result in its expansion to the rest of the region.

"The international community must put pressure to stop the

bloodshed and address the roots of the conflict," said El-Sisi.

Saudi Arabia has consistently called for an end to the bloodshed in the occupied territories.

The kingdom was scheduled to host two extraordinary summits, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) summit and the Arab League summit, on Saturday and Sunday. The joint summit will replace the two separate gatherings in light of the Gaza situation, the Saudi Foreign ministry said.

The joint meeting "will be held in response to the exceptional circumstances taking place in the Palestinian Gaza Strip as countries feel the need to unify efforts and come out with a unified collective position," it said.

This week, the Israeli army advanced into Gaza City in the

north of the enclave, resulting in a deluge of civilians flooding to the south, where Israel promised they would be safer.

Gaza's Health Ministry said 11,000 people have been killed since the war began, and 27,000 have been injured. Israel has conducted a massive military operation into the occupied territory after Hamas militants killed 1,200 Israelis living near Gaza on Oct. 7.

The World Health Organization said on Friday that Gaza health services were at a breaking point. Hospitals are nearly out of crucial medical supplies and lack of water and electricity are hampering their work. Doctors are treating patients without anesthesia.

Israel has imposed a blockade as part of its campaign limiting the number of humanitarian supplies entering Gaza.

## More than 20,000 people join pro-Palestinian rally in Brussels



**Monitoring Desk**

BRUSSELS: About 21,000 people took part in a pro-Palestinian rally in Brussels on Saturday, police said, many chanting slogans such as "Free Palestine" and demanding a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip as they marched peacefully through the city.

"What is happening right now in Gaza is beyond devastating," one demonstrator said, carrying a poster that read "Ceasefire now!" in Dutch.

Other protesters held up posters that read "Stop the Genocide", "Human Rights for Palestinians" or demanded the arrest of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over what they called war crimes.

"It is important to let our voice be heard, that we cannot accept people being bombed and being murdered," another demonstrator said.

Since the Hamas group's assault in southern Israel on Oct. 7, there has been strong support and sympathy for Israel from Western governments and many citizens. But the Israeli military response has also prompted anger, with protests in cities around the world demanding a ceasefire.

In London, more than 100,000 pro-Palestinian protesters took to the streets on Saturday. In Paris, several thousand demonstrators, including some left-wing lawmakers, marched with Palestinian flags and banners to call for a ceasefire in Gaza.

## Pope dismisses conservative US bishop Strickland



**Reuters**

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis has dismissed Bishop Joseph E. Strickland of Tyler, Texas, one of his fiercest critics among US Catholic conservatives, a Vatican statement said on Saturday.

It is very rare for a Roman Catholic bishop to be relieved of his duties outright. Usually, bishops in trouble with the Vatican are asked to resign before submitting a resignation, which the pope accepts.

Popes make such moves, considered drastic when a bishop refuses a request to resign. Strickland is 65, 10 years shy of the usual retirement age for bishops.

Strickland, a prolific user of social media who had been bishop of the diocese since 2012, tweeted earlier this year that he rejected the pope's "program undermining the Deposit of Faith".

The dismissal followed a Vatican investigation earlier this year into the administration of the Tyler diocese, which Catholic media reports said included a review of his handling of financial affairs.

The dismissal was announced simultaneously by the Vatican and the US Bishops Conference. Neither statement gave a reason. There was no immediate response from Strickland.

## Senior Journalist Ejaz Afzal Sheikh left to Pakistan

**Arif Chaudhary**

LONDON: British Senior Journalist Chairman Press Club of Pakistan Chief Editor Nawaj Jang London Chief Executive Channel 24/7, Ejaz Afzal Sheikh has left for a visit to Pakistan. During his visit, he will visit the press clubs of different cities of Pakistan and meet with senior journalists-various organizations-businessmen-politicians and bureaucrats in Pakistan and the relationship between Britain and Pakistan. He will play his role in improving the country and will also give a lecture on the invitation of various forums regarding the elections to be held in Pakistan in February, in which he will represent the overseas Pakistanis.



## Elon Musk says 'genocide' shouldn't be acceptable to anyone

Elon Musk, renowned billionaire and chairman of Tesla, said genocide should not be acceptable to anyone, when speaking about the hatred that Israel has been fuelling among Palestinians for its relentless attacks in Gaza.

He iterated that the attacks by the occupation forces would instil abomination towards Israel and create more members for Hamas - a Palestinian resistance group.

Musk's comment came while he appeared on the Lex Fridman Podcast on YouTube.

"If you're not going to just outright commit genocide, like against an entire people, which obviously will not be acceptable, really shouldn't be acceptable to anyone. Then you're going to leave basically a lot of people alive who subsequently, you know, hate Israel," he said.

The Middle East Eye, a UK-based news website, shared an extract from Musk's interview for the podcast on X, formerly Twitter, where he spoke about how for every Hamas member being killed, many are being created by Israel.

## Middle East leaders slam Israel at Saudi-hosted summit on Gaza

**Agencies**

The emergency meeting of the Arab League and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) comes after Hamas militants' bloody October 7 attacks that Israeli officials say left about 1,200 people dead, mostly civilians, and 239 taken hostage.

Israel's subsequent aerial and ground offensive has killed more than 11,000 people, also mostly civilians and many of them children, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

Host Saudi Arabia "confirms that it holds the occupation (Israeli) authorities responsible for the crimes committed against the Palestinian people," Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Gulf kingdom's de facto ruler, said at Saturday's summit began.

"We are certain that the only way to guarantee security, peace and stability in the region is to end the occupation, siege and the settlements," he said of Israel's actions in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

Raisi, on his first trip to Saudi Arabia since the two countries mended ties in March, said Islamic countries should designate the Israeli army a "terrorist organisation" for its conduct in Gaza.

Israel says it is out to destroy Hamas and blames the Palestinian armed group for the high death toll, accusing it of using civilians as "human shields" - a charge Hamas denies.

Regional divisions The Arab League and the OIC, a 57-member bloc that includes Iran, were originally meant to meet separately.

Arab diplomats told AFP the decision to merge the meetings came after Arab League delegations had failed to reach an agreement on a final statement.

Some countries, including Algeria and Lebanon, proposed responding to the devastation in Gaza by threatening to disrupt oil supplies to Israel and its allies as well as severing the economic and diplomatic ties that some Arab League nations have with Israel, the diplomats said.

However, at least three countries - including the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, which normalised ties with Israel in 2020 - rejected the proposal, according to the diplomats who spoke on condition of anonymity.

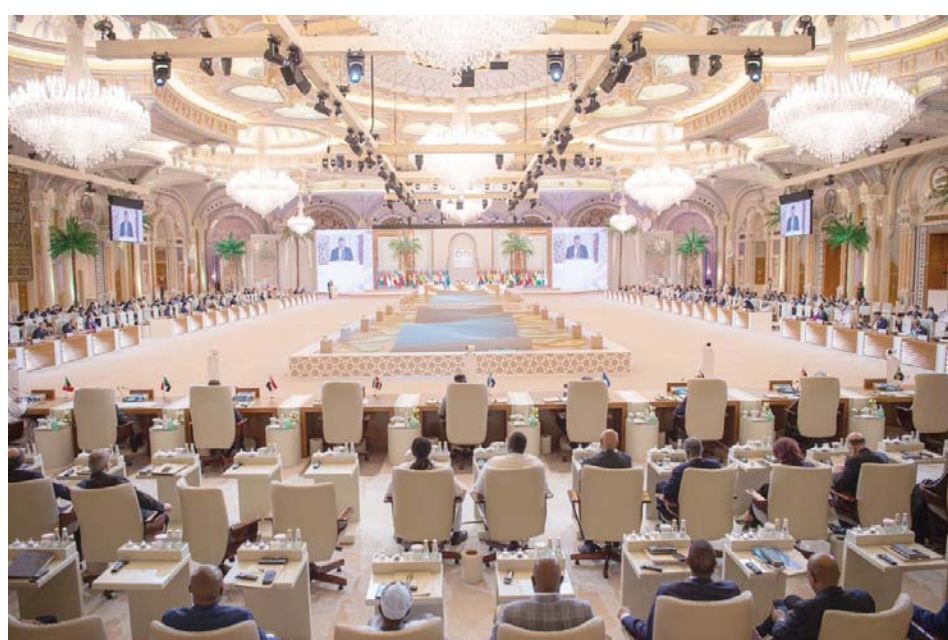
Prior to the meeting, Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad said it did not "expect anything" to come out of it, criticising Arab leaders for the delay.

"We are not placing our hopes on such meetings, for we have seen their results over many years," Mohammad al-Hindi, the group's deputy secretary-general, told a press conference in Beirut.

Israel and its main backer the United States have so far rebuffed demands for a ceasefire, a position that drew heavy criticism on Saturday.

"The US has prevented the ceasefire in Gaza and is expanding the scope of the war," Raisi said before departing from Tehran.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said at the summit that "it is a shame that West-



ern countries, which always talk about human rights and freedoms, remain silent in the face of the ongoing massacres in Palestine."

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas, for his part,

said Washington had "the greatest influence on Israel" and "bears responsibility for the absence of a political solution" to the conflict.

Iran president in Riyadh The roster of attendees on Saturday also included Egyp-

tian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who was welcomed back into the Arab fold this year after an extended rift over his country's civil war.

Raisi is the first Iranian president to visit Saudi Arabia since Mahmoud Ahmadinejad attended an OIC meeting in the kingdom in 2012.

Iran backs Hamas as well as Lebanon's Hezbollah and Yemen's Huthi rebels, placing it at the centre of concerns the war could expand.

Analysts say Saudi Arabia feels vulnerable to potential attacks because of its close ties with Washington and the fact that it was considering normalising ties with Israel before the war broke out.

Kim Ghattas, author of a book on the Iran-Saudi rivalry, said during a panel organised by the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington that "the Saudis are hoping that the fact they didn't normalise yet, and the fact that they have a channel to the Iranians, gives them some protection."

And, she added, "the Iranians are hoping that the fact that they're in touch with the Saudis and maintaining that channel, that it gives them some protection too."

*Call to improve value-added textile exports by adopting diversified marketing*

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: There is a need for giving a boost to the export sector by adopting diversified marketing techniques and extending practical support to the industry.

This was stated by the Pakistan Ready-made Garments Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PRGMEA) North Zone's new chairman Amad Hanif, who had been elected recently for the year 2023-24, pledging to continue with his efforts for the promotion and protection of the apparel sector, calling for enhancing value-added textile exports.

Ahmad Hanif said that it was an honour for him to assume the office of the NZ chairman for the year 2023-24. Addressing a ceremony held here today, the new regional chairman vowed to promote the Association to the new heights, thanking the members for reposing confidence on him to lead the PRGMEA in north zone.

He paid tribute to the outgoing regional chairman Wasim Akhtar Khan, also appreciating the whole body, which had been actively promoting the interests of the value-added textile industry throughout 2022-23.

Ahmad Hanif observed that his top priority would be smooth energy supply at regionally competitive prices to the apparel sector, resolution of tax related issues, and a favourable environment for the promotion of garment industry in Pakistan especially in Punjab.

PRGMEA Central chairman Mubashar Butt, other leadership, including Naseer Malik, Ijaz Khokhar, Sohail A. Sheikh, Sajid Saleem Minhas and Wasim Akhtar Khan congratulated the newly-elected zonal chairman, expressing the hope that he would continue the excellent work in the best interest of the entire value-added textile sector.

The new zonal chief expressed the confidence of making full efforts to work selflessly to resolve issues and problems faced by the industry in the best interests of PRGMEA members and in further enhancing and boosting the exports.

*US dollar gains Rs 2.72 against PKR in interbank last week*



**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: The US dollar and other foreign currencies appreciated against Pakistani rupee in the working week ended on Friday, ARY News reported.

The greenback gained Rs 2.72 against Pakistani currency in interbank trading in the week.

USD rate increased in the interbank trading from Rs284.31 to 287.03 rupees this week.

The US currency price increased by Rs3.00 in the open market on the week ended yesterday and closed at Rs288 from 285 rupees.

Other foreign currencies also moved upward as Pakistani rupee on downward trajectory. The euro increased by five rupees in the week to reach Rs302 at the weekend.

The Pound gained 10 rupees in week to reach 356.50 rupees in open market, while Euro gained five rupees and trading at 307 rupees.

*Gold price drops by Rs 2100 per tola*

LAHORE: The price of per tola gold decreased by Rs 2100 in the country on Saturday.

All Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Association (APGJA) sources told APP that the price of 24-karat gold had decreased by Rs 2100 to settle at Rs 211,000 per tola. The association said after a decline of Rs 1,800, 10 grams of 24-karat gold had settled at Rs180,898.

The price of gold in the international market had decreased by \$17 to settle at \$1958 per ounce.

*Bank deposits reached an all-time high*

LAHORE: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said in a statement on Friday that the bank deposits in Pakistan had reached the highest level in its history.

Compared to October 22, an increase of 17.80 per cent i.e. Rs 3986 billion was recorded in bank deposits on October 23.

The SBP said that in October 2023, banking deposits reached a record level of Rs 26000.398 billion.

**Top priority**

# Fixing the economy is the key priority of the government: Kanwar Dilshad

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: Kanwar Muhammad Dilshad, Punjab's Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs said that fixing the economic problems is the top priority of the government and all possible measures are being taken to revive the economy. He said that the business community is the key stakeholder in the economic development of the country and the government is determined to provide them maximum facilitation in business development. He assured that he would play a role in taking up the key issues of the business community at relevant forums for their early redress so that they can promote businesses with ease. He said this while addressing as chief guest at a Business Networking Lunch organized by the former MNA Kanwar Qutbuddin Khan in honor of Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan is a country of very young population and we need to develop a strong economy to give them a better future. He said that the business community has a lot of hopes from the Special



Investment Facilitation Council and we are confident that it would steer the economy out of the current economic crisis. He said that the government is planning to impose a fixed tax on retailers and realtors and emphasized that this should be done in consultation with the

stakeholders to avoid any unnecessary problems to the business sector. He assured that the business community would fully support the government in its endeavors for the revival of the economy.

Former MNA and renowned businessman

Kanwar Qutbuddin Khan said that the real estate sector has the potential to steer the economy out of the current crisis as the growth of over 50 allied industries is linked with this industry. He said that the government should focus on creating a conducive environment for the real estate and construction industry to attract more investment, promote business activities, create new jobs and revive the overall economy.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI said that Pakistan has great potential to increase exports by focusing on new markets including Africa, Central Asia and ASEAN region and stressed that the TDAP should take business delegations from the private sector to explore these markets for exports promotion.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan highlighted the importance of connecting Pakistan through direct air links with potential markets for improving the country's trade and exports. He said that PIA should be privatized and the private sector should be encouraged to launch new airlines that would strengthen Pakistan's direct air links with all major markets and contribute significantly in reviving the economy.

## EFP Advocates Adoption of MNE Declaration by Enterprises

**Commerce Desk**

PESHAWAR: Majyd Aziz, Former President of the Employers Federation of Pakistan (EFP), highlighted the significance of the Multinational Enterprises (MNE) Declaration in his keynote address during a tripartite meeting organized by EFP in Peshawar. He emphasized that the MNE Declaration provides essential guidelines for enterprises, government bodies, workers, and employer organizations regarding training, employment, working conditions, and labor standards.

Majyd Aziz underscored that the MNE Declaration also presents an opportunity to amplify positive social and labor impacts, contributing to the achievement of Decent Work. He urged multinational companies in Pakistan to support employer organizations and facilitate labor unions. Additionally, he advocated for the government's ratification of International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and Harassment and Violence at the Workplace.

Faker Alam, Secretary Labor KP, commended EFP's efforts in raising awareness and promoting the implementation of the Declaration's principles.

Dr. Yousuf Sarwar, Chairman EFP KP, welcoming the participants, stated that the tripartite meeting aimed to create awareness and enhance understanding among



stakeholders regarding how businesses can positively contribute to development and adopt responsible business practices.

Razam Khan, President Pakistan Workers Federation KP, stressed the need for bilateral dialogue, emphasizing that the current economic challenges require joint efforts from workers and employers.

Muhammad Iqbal, President Mutthaida Labor Federation KP, lauded EFP and ILO for organizing the tripartite meeting, emphasizing the importance of the MNE Declaration in achieving decent work rooted in labor standards.

Mr. Ishaq, the immediate past president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce & Industry, emphasized the need for enterprises to adopt the MNE Declaration and comply with international labor standards

for sustainability.

In his concluding remarks, Muhammad Irfan, Director Labor, stressed the importance of social dialogue in developing working relationships between stakeholders.

Irfan informed that the Labor Department is taking measures to protect workers' rights and support enterprises in increasing productivity. He highlighted plans to establish an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) unit to provide guidance, risk assessment, and training to enhance workplace safety and productivity.

Earlier, the meeting featured addresses from Mr. Ashfaq, DG EOBI, Mr. Raziq, Director Social Security, Humayun Nazir, Director EFP, and Syed Nazar Ali, Secretary General EFP.

## Oppressive taxation, high borrowing rate, inflation affect business negatively

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Presidential candidate of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FPCCI) upcoming election for 2024 Muhammad Ali Sheikh has observed that the aggressive economic measures, high borrowing rates, inflation, oppressive taxation and unstable currency have been negatively affecting running businesses.

He said that constant hike in power tariff has pushed the electricity prices higher and added to the already soaring cost of trade and industry. He

asked the government to shut down all expensive oil-based power plants to ensure availability of cheaper energy for consumers. He condemned the government for shifting power distribution companies' inefficiencies' burden to the consumers by jacking up the tariff under the guise of Fuel Charges Adjustment.

He said that high cost of doing business has proved to be dangerous for businesses, as ever-increasing cost of production is the real threat to the economy amidst frequent upward revisions in policy rate and continuous fluctuations in rupee against dollar.

## Ahmad Hanif elected PRGMEA North Zone chairman

**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: The Pakistan Ready-made Garments Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PRGMEA) North Zone's new chairman Amad Hanif, who had been elected recently for the year 2023-24, pledged to continue with his efforts for the promotion and protection of the apparel sector, calling for enhancing value-added textile exports.

Ahmad Hanif said that it was an honour for him to assume the office of the NZ chairman for the year 2023-24. Addressing a ceremony held here today, the new regional chairman called for giving a boost to the export sector by adopting diversified

marketing techniques and extending practical support to the industry. He vowed to promote the Association to the new heights, thanking the members for reposing confidence on him to lead the PRGMEA in north zone.



The new zonal chief expressed the confidence of making full efforts to work selflessly to resolve issues and problems faced by the industry in the best interests of PRGMEA members and in further enhancing and boosting the exports.

## Sweet potatoes

FAISALABAD: A younger vendor is selling sweet potatoes along the road side at Ghulam Muhammad Abad area to earn daily wages for the livelihood of his family.



Photo: Online

**China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**

# Ecosophy and Sustainable Development Goals Unveiled

**Dr. Humera Faraz**

In the realm of major infrastructure projects, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) stands as a monumental endeavor, often subject to critical analysis and scrutiny. A recent study has peeled back the layers of CPEC's narrative, focusing on its Ecosophy and alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Guided by the principles of sustainability and environmental consciousness, the research examined the discourse surrounding CPEC through the lens of Ecosophy—a term that encompasses the evolving philoso-

phy of humanity's interaction with the environment. The CPEC discourse, it seems, embarks on a journey from anthropocentric ideologies, where human development takes precedence, to ecocentric values that prioritize ecological sustainability.

This transition from human-centric to eco-centric ideologies within the CPEC discourse is a testament to the ongoing dialogue between the imperatives of socioeconomic development and the urgency of environmental preservation. As the world grapples with the complex challenges of sustainable development, CPEC serves as a microcosm of the larger global narrative.

At the core of this analysis are the



United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 objectives aimed at addressing the world's most pressing challenges. These goals, which include eliminating poverty, ensuring clean water and sanitation, and promoting responsible consumption and production, served as a benchmark for the research.

The findings reveal a complex interplay of these SDGs within the

CPEC discourse. While socioeconomic aspects received a significant share of attention, there was an undeniable need to enhance the focus on environmental objectives. The study indicates that, while CPEC's positive contributions to socioeconomic development are acknowledged, there is room for a more balanced approach to incorporate environmental sustainability goals.

In the pursuit of a harmonious ecosophy, where humanity's progress aligns seamlessly with ecological preservation, it is essential to strike a balance between these often-competing priorities. The CPEC narrative, through its evolving ideologies and the influence of the Sustainable

Development Goals, offers a compelling reflection of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

As the world continues to grapple with the pressing concerns of sustainable development and environmental stewardship, the CPEC discourse becomes a microcosm of the intricate dance between human progress and ecological well-being. It reminds us that in our pursuit of grand projects, the delicate harmony between humans and the environment should be central to our journey forward.

*The writer works as an Assistant Professor at Air University, Islamabad.*



## Opening ceremony

Group photo of Commander Pakistan Fleet Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi and Chinese Commander Rear Admiral Liang Yang with Pakistan and Chinese Naval officials at the Opening Ceremony of Sea Guardian 2023.



Photo: Online

# Israel bombards Gaza hospitals as death toll tops 1100

## Agencies

Israel faced mounting international pressure, including from its main ally the United States, to do more to protect Palestinian civilians in Gaza as the death toll rose and fighting intensified near and around hospitals.

The number of Palestinians killed during the bombardment of the coastal enclave in the past five weeks raised above 11,000, according to Gaza health officials.

Heavy fighting between Hamas and Israeli forces has raged near Gaza's biggest hospital, Al-Shifa, an AFP correspondent at the scene said, stretching the area's already crippled health system.

"We call on all international and Arab parties to immediately intervene to stop the targeting of hospitals in Gaza," said a spokesman for the Gaza health ministry, Ashraf Al-Qudra.

Aid agency Doctors without Borders said it was "extremely concerned" about the safety of patients and medical staff at Al-Shifa hospital.

"Over the last few hours, the attacks against Al-Shifa hospital have dramatically intensi-

fied," it said in a statement posted online.

French President Emmanuel Macron, in a BBC interview published late on Friday, said Israel must stop bombing Gaza and killing civilians. France, he said, "clearly condemns" the "terrorist" actions of Hamas, but that while recognising Israel's right to protect itself, "we do urge them to stop this bombing" in Gaza.

In response, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said world leaders should be condemning Hamas, and not Israel. "These crimes that Hamas (is) committing today in Gaza will be committed tomorrow in Paris, New York and anywhere in the world," Netanyahu said.

Fighting intensified overnight into Saturday near Gaza City's overcrowded hospitals, which Palestinian officials said were hit by explosions and gunfire.

"Israel is now launching a war on Gaza City hospitals," said Mohammad Abu Selmeiyah, director of Al Shifa hospital.

He said later that at least 25 people were killed in Israeli strikes on Al-Buraq school in Gaza City, where people whose



homes had been destroyed were sheltering.

Gaza officials said missiles landed in a courtyard of Al Shifa, the enclave's biggest hospital, in the early hours of Friday, damaged the Indonesian Hospital and reportedly set fire to the Nasser Rantissi paediatric cancer hospital.

Israel's military said later that a misfired projectile launched by Palestinian fighters in Gaza had hit Shifa.

The hospitals, filled with displaced people as well as patients and medical staff, are in northern Gaza, where Israel says the Hamas are concentrated.

Israeli government spokesperson Eylon Levy said the Hamas headquarters was in Shifa hospital's basement, which meant the facility could

lose its protected status and become a legitimate target.

Israel says Hamas hides weapons in tunnels under hospitals, charges Hamas denies.

World Health Organisation Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that health workers the group was in contact with at Shifa had been forced to leave the hospital in search of safety.

"Many of the thousands sheltering at the hospital are forced to evacuate due to security risks, while many still remain there," Tedros wrote on social media.

Gaza health ministry spokesman Ashraf Al-Qudra said Israel had bombed Shifa hospital buildings five times.

"One Palestinian was killed and several were wounded in the early morning attack," he

said by phone. Videos verified by Reuters showed scenes of panic and people covered in blood.

Israeli tanks have taken up positions around the Nasser Rantissi hospital as well as the Al-Quds hospital, medical staff said earlier.

The Palestinian Red Cross said Israeli forces were shooting at Al-Quds hospital, and there were violent clashes, with one person killed and 28 wounded, most of them children.

Israeli army spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Richard Hecht said at a briefing the army "does not fire on hospitals. If we see Hamas terrorists firing from hospitals we'll do what we need to do. We're aware of the sensitivity (of hospitals), but again, if we see Hamas terrorists, we'll kill them."

Israel's U. N. Ambassador Gilad Erdan said Israel had created a task force to establish hospitals in southern Gaza. On Oct. 12, Israel ordered some 1.1 million people in Gaza to move south ahead of its ground invasion.

Palestinian officials said on Friday that 11,078 Gaza residents had been killed in air and artillery strikes since Oct. 7.

## Pak-China Joint Naval Exercise Sea Guardian-2023 Commences At Karachi

### Bureau Report

KARACHI: Opening Ceremony of Pakistan Navy and PLA (Navy) bilateral exercise Sea Guardian-2023 was held at Pakistan Navy Dockyard, Karachi. Commander Qingdao Naval Base, Rear Admiral Liang Yang graced the occasion as Guest of Honour. Commander Pakistan Fleet, Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi was also present at the occasion.

In his opening remarks, Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi welcomed the officers and personnel of PLA (N) Flotilla, underscoring the close and strategic ties between the two countries in general and Navies in particular. The admiral emphasized on the importance of immaculate & sound planning during the exercise and hoped that this exercise will further enhance strategic cooperation and interoperability between the two navies.

During his speech, Commander Qingdao Naval Base Rear Admiral Liang Yang thanked Pakistan Navy for hosting Exercise Sea Guardian and hoped to have a mutually benefiting

and professionally rewarding experience from the joint exercise.

Earlier, Chinese Flotilla comprising of naval ships, Submarine and Submarine Rescue Ship along with PLA (Navy) Marines Corps Detachment, arrived Karachi to participate in the exercise. During exercise, front-line destroyers/ frigates along with Air and other assets and Marines/ Special Forces from Pakistan Navy and PLA (Navy) will carry out advance level joint drills and naval maneuvers in North Arabian Sea besides professional and social activities during the harbour phase.

The aim of Exercise Sea Guardian-2023 is to share professional experiences on contemporary traditional and non-traditional threats in Indian Ocean Region as well as to enhance bilateral cooperation and interoperability between the two Navies.

The exercise is a reflection of strong bilateral military cooperation between Pakistan Navy and Chinese Navy and will foster greater bilateral cooperation between the two navies. The ceremony was attended by a large number of military officials from both the navies.

## AJK President grieves over demise of acting CM KP Muhammad Azam Khan

### Bureau Report

MIRPUR (AJK): Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has expressed his deep sense of shock and grief over the sad demise of Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan. In his condolence message issued on Saturday, the AJK President extended his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved



family and prayed for the rest of the departed soul in eternal peace, and a grant of fortitude to the bereaved family with courage.

## Minister inaugurates bio-safety, BRM training lab at KMU

### Commerce Desk

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Federal Minister for Health, Dr Nadeem Jan, visited Khyber Medical University (KMU) on Saturday and inaugurated a bio-safety and BRM training lab in its public health reference laboratory. The minister said that the government was upgrading 500 basic health units in two months across the country, including Khyber. This was part of the government's efforts to strengthen

public sector hospitals with the latest equipment to facilitate patients.

The minister said that the up-gradation of 500 basic health units would provide all modern facilities to patients, including X-rays and ultrasound machines, and would also reduce the load on big hospitals. Dr Nadeem Jan praised the services of health workers for the nation. The minister visited different sections of the lab and was briefed by the relevant authorities.

## PM, Kuwaiti Crown Prince express deep concern over alarming situation in Gaza

### Monitoring Desk

RIYADH: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah on Saturday expressed their deep concern over alarming situation in Gaza with staggering death toll and wholesale destruction of civilian infrastructure amidst the ongoing Israeli aggression and siege. They met on the sidelines of the Joint Arab Islam-



Office Media Wing said in a press release. PM, Kuwaiti Crown Prince

express deep concern over alarming situation in Gaza. They underlined the urgency for a ceasefire, end to the siege and provision of much needed humanitarian assistance to the besieged people of Gaza. The prime minister reiterated Pakistan's longstanding principled position on the Palestinian cause for freedom from illegal Israeli occupation. He also highlighted Pakistan's consistent support the two-state solution, in consonance with the relevant UN and OIC Resolutions.

The two leaders also discussed bilateral relations, particularly in the economic and investment fields. The caretaker prime minister briefed the Kuwaiti Crown Prince about the SIFC and invited Kuwait to look at investment opportunities in Pakistan. The crown prince promised to convey this message to the concerned authorities in Kuwait. He also lauded the role of Pakistani diaspora in the development of Kuwait.

## SC takes up plea challenging census results on Nov 13

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has fixed for hearing an appeal challenging the results of the digital census 2023.

A three-member bench, led by Justice Ijaz Ahsan, is set to conduct the hearing on November 13.

The petitioner, Hasan Kamran, initially contested the census results in the Balochistan High Court.

Following the rejection of his plea by the high court, he subsequently filed an appeal with the apex court.

## Jamal Shah visits National Museum, Archeology Library, Urdu Dictionary Board

### Bureau Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Syed Jamal Shah visited the National Museum, National Archeology Library, Pakistan Academy of Letters and Urdu Dictionary Board here on Saturday. Federal Minister was briefed about National Museum and other institutes by officers concerned during his visit.

Jamal Shah visited National Museum, Archeology Library, Urdu Dictionary Board Syed Jamal Shah inspected artifacts, antiquities and archeological objects placed at the National Museum. He also visited National Archeolog-



ical Library and reviewed ancient and historical books. Speaking on the occasion Syed Jamal Shah said regarding expansion of the National

Museum, a meeting will soon be arranged with expert architects to restore the museum in its original shape. He said that the National Museum will be made a world-class museum so that it could attract the attention of international tourists. Meanwhile, the Minister also visited Academy of Letters and Urdu Dictionary Board and inspected different sections of the both organizations. The management of Academy and the Board briefed the Minister about the affairs of the institutes. The Minister also held meeting with Urdu Dictionary Board management. Syed Jamal Shah was briefed about working and issues being faced by the Board.

On the occasion, the Minister assured resolution of all issues of Urdu Dictionary Board.

## Rs. 452.3m fine imposed on 3,670 electricity thieves: FESCO spokesman

### Bureau Report

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has imposed Rs. 452.3 million fine on 3,670 electricity thieves, caught during last 64 days of anti-power-theft campaign in FESCO region.

FESCO Spokesman Tahir Sheikh said here on Saturday that the company launched a vigorous anti-theft drive on special direction of Minister of Energy (Power Division) and during 64 days of this campaign the anti-theft teams of the company caught 3,670 power pilferers from its eight districts.

The company had imposed a total fine of Rs.452.3 million on the pilfer-

ers under the head of detection units of 9.78 million in addition to getting Rs.270 million recovered from them.

FESCO had also got cases registered against 3479 accused whereas the police had arrested 3053 electricity thieves so far, he added.

Giving further details, he said that the FESCO teams continued checking of power pilferage round the clock and caught 24 electricity thieves during last 24 hours who were stealing electricity through various modes including direct supply.

The company had imposed a fine of more than Rs.1.7 million on these electricity thieves in respect of more than 42,000 detection units.

## SC to take up appeal against Musharraf's death sentence on Nov 21

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has issued a written order for the hearing of the appeal against the sentence of the former president, Pervez Musharraf.

In the written order, the court remarked that "it is unfortunate for the appeal to be scheduled for a hearing after three years and eight months for every offender. No one

should suffer the consequences of not taking timely action in court".

The court stated that "despite the chamber's orders, the appeal against objections was not scheduled, and the applicant's request was transferred. No additional attorney general or senior lawyers present in court objected to scheduling the appeal. The registrar's objections against Pervez Musharraf's appeal have been accepted".