

QUETTA VOICE

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Thousands flee north Gaza in search of refuge after Israel evacuation warning

GAZA: Thousands of Palestinians fled to southern Gaza in search of refuge on Friday after Israel warned them to evacuate before an expected ground offensive against Hamas in retaliation for the deadliest attack in Israel's history.

The Israeli military said its ground forces made raids into Gaza over the past 24 hours. "Over the past 24 hours, IDF (Israeli military) forces carried out localised raids inside the territory of the Gaza Strip to complete the effort to cleanse the area of terrorists and weaponry," an army statement said.

"During these operations, there was also an effort to locate missing persons," it added. In the latest development, a Reuters journalist was killed in south Lebanon, the news agency said in a statement. "We are deeply saddened to learn that our videographer, Issam Abdallah, has been killed," Reuters said, adding that he "was part of a Reuters crew in southern Lebanon." Nearly 1,800 Gazans — including over 580 children — have been killed in waves of missile strikes on the densely populated enclave, the Palestinian health ministry said.

According to Israel, Hamas took an esti-



mated 150 Israeli, foreign and dual-national hostages back to Gaza during its initial attack. Hamas said today that 13 hostages had been killed in Israeli air strikes. It has previously said four hostages died in bombardments, complicating any Israeli ground offensive. This map shows the Gaza Strip prior to the current escalation in October. — OCHA document "Flash Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory" tensions meanwhile rose across the Middle East and be-

yond, with protests in support of the Palestinians, while Israel faced the threat of a separate confrontation with Hezbollah in Lebanon. In the occupied West Bank, at least nine Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire during protests supporting Gaza, taking the toll there to 44 since Saturday, the health ministry said. The Israeli military has warned it would operate "significantly" in Gaza City in the coming days and civilians would only be able to return when another announcement was made. "Civilians of Gaza City, evacuate south for your own safety and the safety of your families and distance yourself from Hamas terrorists who are using you as human shields," the military said in a statement.

"Hamas terrorists are hiding in Gaza City inside tunnels underneath houses and inside buildings populated with innocent Gazan civilians." Hamas, on the other hand, rejected the Israeli order. The US termed it a "hull order".

"Our Palestinian people reject the threat of the occupation (Israeli) leaders and its call for them to leave their homes and flee from them to the south or Egypt," Hamas said in a statement. NEWS DESK

Aid Agencies Urged to Increase Support for Balochistan's Flood Affectees

Manan Mandokhail:

QUETTA: Balochistan, one of the provinces most severely impacted by the catastrophic 2022 floods, took center stage during the discussions. The caretaker Chief Minister of Balochistan presented a stark picture, revealing that the province suffered losses exceeding hundreds of billions of rupees. After the flood disaster, Balochistan was the hardest hit, with an alarming toll of devastation.

The statistics presented at the meeting were alarming:

- Complete destruction of 321,019 houses
 - Partial damage to 96,166 houses
 - 43 bridges swept away
 - 2,280 kilometers of road network destroyed
 - 1,039 educational institutions were completely demolished, while 1,793 were partially affected
 - Widespread damage to irrigation structures leading to crop losses
- Expressing his concerns, the caretaker Chief Minister of Balochistan pointed out that the allocated funds for the province from international rehabilitation aid were insufficient in comparison to the staggering losses. He emphasized the need for an increase in funding, requesting the federal government's support with a 20% grant sharing from the Geneva



funds. Moreover, he urged expedited implementation of the rehabilitation program, which was mutually agreed upon with the government of Balochistan to address the affected sectors.

An officer from Balochistan to be appointed as project director

In response to these appeals, representatives from international financial and aid agencies participated in the meeting, affirming their commitment to appoint one of the recommended officers from Balochistan as the project director. This appointment aims to ensure the swift execution of a million-dollar national project designed for the rehabilitation of flood-ravaged regions.

Federal Minister appreciates CM Domki

Federal Minister Sami Saeed conveyed his special appreciation to Mir Ali Mardaan Khan Domki for his effective presentation of Balochistan's plight in this national meeting of utmost importance. He reaffirmed the government's unwavering determination to enhance and coordinate rehabilitation activities in the affected areas, assuring that Balochistan will not be left to bear the brunt of floods alone.

Collective efforts needed

This critical meeting underscores the urgency and the need for international aid agencies to extend further support to Balochistan to aid in its recovery from the devastating flood disaster. The future of this resilient province depends on the collective efforts and commitments made by all stakeholders to rebuild and revitalize the affected regions.

NA speaker thinks 'understanding' behind Nawaz's return

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf has stated that there may be an "understanding" in place for the return of PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif.

The statement comes a day after interim Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar dismissed the impression that Nawaz's decision to return to Pakistan was a part of any deal with the caretaker government.

In an interview with World Echo News, PM Kakar had said: "The caretaker government has no soft corner for PML-N or any other political party... how can a caretaker government strike such a deal?"

He pointed out that Nawaz left the country as per the court's decision "under the nose of Imran Khan's government, and not the caretaker setup".

However, if Nawaz returns and takes part in politics, he will have to face some legal obstacles, the premier said. "The answers to these legal questions lie in legal remedies."

Nawaz, who has been in self-imposed exile since 2019, left for London in the middle of his seven-year jail term on medical grounds. In



the four years that transpired, Nawaz was declared a proclaimed offender in the Al Azizia and Avenfield graft cases for his continuous absence from proceedings. Last month, PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif had confirmed that his elder brother was returning to the country on October

21. Subsequently, the PML-N had declared that Nawaz was ready to face "all kinds of circumstances" upon his return from London.

Last week, Nawaz's legal team submitted his medical reports to the Lahore High Court, which said the PML-N supremo had "some residual anginal symptoms". Separately, Shehbaz said the party's legal team had cleared Nawaz's arrival.

In an informal conversation with Dawn.com, the NA speaker said, "Obviously, there must be an understanding which is why he's coming back."

Ashraf also wondered why Nawaz did not return to the country earlier. "Now his health should also stay good," he remarked.

Asked when elections were happening, Ashraf said, "You tell me, are elections happening?" The NA speaker said that the fact that the PPP was talking about a level-playing field held some merit. He said that members of the PML-N were among those inducted into the interim federal and Punjab cabinets. "All of the PML-N's work is continuing," he said. NEWS GESK

REPATRIATION OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

DAYS REMAINING

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ECP Directs CS of Balochistan to Reshuffle Secretaries Excluded from Reshuffling

Mir Salam Jogezi:

QUETTA: In a recent development, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued a directive to the Chief Secretary of Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir, to initiate the reshuffling of provincial secretaries who were previously excluded from the recent bureaucratic reshuffling. This directive was delivered during a meeting between the ECP and CS Balochistan, which took place on Wednesday in Islamabad.

Shakeel Qadir Khan meets ECP officials

The meeting between Shakeel Qadir Khan, the Chief Secretary of Balochistan, and ECP officials revolved around the crucial matter of transfers and postings within the province. The ECP's primary objective is to ensure the transparency and fair-

ness of the electoral process in the country.

Transfer secretaries: ECP

As part of this commitment, the ECP has instructed the Chief Secretary to undertake the reshuffling of provincial secretaries who had remained unaffected by the reshuffling process that occurred after the formation of the caretaker government on August 18th in Balochistan.

Key provincial secretaries were exempted from transfer

This directive follows a significant reshuffling of the bureaucratic structure in Balochistan, which was orchestrated under the guidance of the ECP. Notably, certain key provincial secretaries were ex-



empted from the initial wave of transfers and postings. The ECP has taken note of this and is now urging their inclusion in the reshuffling process to uphold the principles of transparency and fairness in the lead-up to the upcoming elections.

Balochistan's Climate Crisis: Impact, Causes, and Solutions

Chandni Kakar:

Balochistan, a region of unique geological diversity and a long coastline is grappling with severe climate change challenges. This article delves into the causes and consequences of climate change in Balochistan, shedding light on its impact on agriculture, water resources, and the overall ecosystem. Additionally, it explores the global context of climate change, its implications on the region, and potential solutions to mitigate its effects. The Unique Ecosystem of Balochistan is a Balochistan's geological diversity, including rocky mountains and sandy plains, creates a distinct ecosystem. However, these unique features also make it vulnerable to climate change.

Deforestation and Substandard Fuel: Primary Causes Experts attribute large-scale climate change in Balochistan to deforestation, especially the cutting of juniper forests in Zarat, and the use of substandard fuel in winter.

These practices have increased carbon levels in the atmosphere and disrupted rainfall patterns.

Impact on Agriculture: Impact on Agriculture and Water Resources has negatively impacted agriculture, causing fruits and crops to suffer.

Overexploitation of Tubewells and Falling Water Levels: Balochistan faces the challenge of over 50,000 legal and illegal tubewells extracting large quantities of groundwater, leading to a rapid decline in underground water levels, exacerbating the water scarcity.

Migration and Economic Consequences: The scarcity of water and extreme heat have driven people to migrate to urban centers like Quetta in search of employment opportunities. Reduced agricultural income from fruit sales has further strained the region's economy.

Health Implications During Severe Droughts: Past severe droughts in Balochistan, such as the one from 1997 to 2002, resulted in widespread health issues, including diseases like dengue, malaria, TB, malaria, and hepatitis, particularly affecting vulnerable populations, including infants and young children.

Global Climate Change and Balochistan's Rising Temperatures: Provincial Secretary of Environment and Climate Change, Niaz Ahmed, emphasizes that climate change is a global problem. Balochistan is experiencing rising temperatures, with Quetta reaching up to 41 degrees Celsius, highlighting the urgency of addressing climate change.

Multiple Factors and the Way Forward: Climate change is a complex issue with multiple factors contributing to it. Addressing these challenges and implementing effective climate change mitigation strategies are crucial for the region's future.

Balochistan's climate crisis is a result of multiple factors, including infrastructure weaknesses, population growth, poverty, and political instability. Addressing these challenges and implementing effective climate change mitigation strategies are crucial for the region's future.

Conclusion: Balochistan's unique ecosystem and geographical characteristics have made it particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Deforestation, overexploitation of water resources, and rising temperatures are exacerbating the crisis. Recognizing the global nature of climate change and adopting effective mitigation measures are essential for safeguarding Balochistan's environment, agriculture, and overall well-being. The writer is a Balochistan-based journalist and can be contacted @kakarChand97707

Impact on Weather Systems and Melting Glaciers: Climate change has disrupted weather patterns, affecting monsoon rains and westernlies in the region.

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When Quetta razed to ground within 30 seconds 88 years ago

Editorial:

Quetta, Pakistan's southwestern city was razed to ground within 30 seconds when a powerful earthquake struck 88 years ago. The deadliest earthquake of 1935 still haunts the people. Strong tremors jolted this mountain-ringed city between 2:33 to 3:40 am when people were in their deep sleep on May 31st, 1935. The earthquake was recorded 7.7 on the reactor scale. It was Chitral fault located in the South West of the city that destroyed the city. Chitral and Chaman fault pose a serious threat to Quetta and parts of northern and central Balochistan.

British rulers declared emergency after the deadliest earthquake of 1935. The English colonial rulers declared an emergency in the aftermath of the deadliest earthquake, which claimed more than 30,000 lives. Rescue workers and military personnel were moved from Bombay to Quetta in passenger trains to assist in the rescue efforts. Local tribesmen from neighboring Pishin, Mastung and other areas also rushed towards the city to participate in the rescue operation.

Specific building code was introduced for Quetta The British rulers introduced a specific building code for Quetta in view of the looming danger of earthquakes. For sometime, the building code was implemented in latter and spirit. However, that is no more than the case when it comes to the implementation of the building code in the city.

Over 700 building constructed in violation of building code As per the statistics of the metropolitan corporation Quetta, around 700 buildings have been constructed in the city in violation of building code.

Substandard materials are also being used in construction, which can cause more human losses in the case of any future earthquakes.

Experts have warned there is ticking bomb beneath Quetta and precautionary measures need to be adopted to ensure quality construction and implementation of building code to avoid human losses in the case of any natural calamity.

By Faisal Bari:

RECENTLY, a friend told me that his driver Sadiq quit his job, saying his salary wasn't enough and he wanted to look for a better job. My friend was paying Sadiq Rs40,000 per month. Though his friend appreciates it is hard to make ends meet with a salary of Rs40,000, especially for someone living in an urban area, he felt he could not afford to pay more, so he let Sadiq quit.

Sadiq has three children. He is not educated and has been working as a driver for the last 15 years. He lives in a rented house, which he shares with his brother's family. The rent payable, Rs12,000 per month, is shared equally between the brothers. Each gets one room and shares common spaces like the bathroom, kitchen, veranda and a small courtyard. One of Sadiq's children is very young but the older two go to a nearby school. Between rent, electricity and gas bills, school fees, and food expenditure, Sadiq ends up with

no money towards the end of the month. He has been accumulating a bit of debt every month for the last year or so. He has a higher income in urban and peri-urban Pakistan initially, and now even in many rural areas.

This made the expansion of the public-sector school system, created a potential supply of educated girls who could be recruited as teachers. But there are issues. We know Pakistan's female labour force participation rate is one of the lowest, both regionally and globally. It has been consistently low. We have been educating girls for decades but have not facilitated their entry into the workforce.

Teaching is seen as possibly the only 'acceptable' job for many women by a lot of families. This means that there are many options for female participants, graduate and postgraduate level, they do not have many options for work. A nearby school might be the only option. The low pay is not possible unless they marry or have their first child. We find a high turnover of teachers in the initial years (in the private sector). But after three to four years of service, those who do not opt to leave tend to do so for much longer, making a career out of it. However, the initial pay is high and this does not seem to be because of ability-based sorting. Selection/retention would not be an issue. It seems that other factors (marriage, children, social/career considerations) are more important.

So, we have a strange situation. Low-fee private schools are doing well, but education that is better than or equal to education

in public-sector schools is a lower cost to them; but their cost advantage is mainly due to a fragmented labour market for female participants. They pay far below the minimum wage, as women have a low reservation wage and few labour market options. It is either seen as exploitation or the good use of market forces, the rapid, large growth in private sector in initial years due to an increasing supply of educated females who do not have many options for work. It is difficult to make teaching a career though. Why would you do so if you only work six to eight hours a day for wages that are below the minimum wage? Why would you invest in quality and training and development? If the market does not recognise individual differences in quality and commitment, why would you invest in education that is better than or equal to education

planned population growth. Population is a valuable resource of a country, provided its growth is planned. Unchecked growth has been responsible for many of our economic and social issues. The young segment is considered to be the driving force of a country. But young people are in search of greener pastures overseas, sometimes falling victim to human trafficking. Not too long ago, hundreds of people lost their lives in the open sea when an overloaded boat sank off the Greek coast. Many experts suggest that the government should focus on engaging the youth and controlling the excessive population. The Holy Quran says "Verily! Allah does not change a people's condition unless they change their inner selves" (13:11). The government may guide people about the ideal size of a family and make them realise the importance of smaller families. It should start a fully fledged drive to convince the masses that an unbridled increase in population numbers is not in the interest of the country.

Rapid growth

By Amin Valliani:

MOST developed nations are worried about their dwindling populations, along with the growing number of seniors. They see their future as uncertain. Therefore, they have embarked on the path of solving the problem of their stagnant or dwindling populations by encouraging migration/immigration laws, allowing work on the part of outsiders who do not fulfil their criteria.

Contrary to this, Pakistan is facing the rapid population growth. This has been termed a ticking time bomb, having a high birth rate and a declining rate of population growth. Pakistan is ranked 99th out of 121 countries due to the rapid growth of its population. This condition is likely to get worse with unbridled and un-

planned population growth. Population is a valuable resource of a country, provided its growth is planned. Unchecked growth has been responsible for many of our economic and social issues. The young segment is considered to be the driving force of a country. But young people are in search of greener pastures overseas, sometimes falling victim to human trafficking. Not too long ago, hundreds of people lost their lives in the open sea when an overloaded boat sank off the Greek coast. Many experts suggest that the government should focus on engaging the youth and controlling the excessive population. The Holy Quran says "Verily! Allah does not change a people's condition unless they change their inner selves" (13:11). The government may guide people about the ideal size of a family and make them realise the importance of smaller families. It should start a fully fledged drive to convince the masses that an unbridled increase in population numbers is not in the interest of the country.

Deadly culture wars

By Asim Sajjad Akhtar:

IT has been almost 50 years since the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) delivered a speech on the floor of the UN General Assembly imploring the world to end the Israeli occupation and deliver peace to all of the region's people.

It was a different world then. Colonised peoples in Asia and Africa were being admitted into the 'international community' after centuries of enslavement. The same UN which had made his plea also featured emergent Third World countries calling for a New International Economic Order to undo what Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah called economic neo-colonialism. Until the early 1990s, the oppressed peoples of the world were still relatively unified and hopeful. In 1994, South Africa's brutal apartheid regime was tossed into the dustbin of history. Nelson Mandela — once branded a 'terrorist' in the 'civilised world' — made the leader of a new multiracial polity.

But the 1990s also marked the end of 20th-century socialism and the onset of 'culture wars' afflicting almost every part of the world today. Put simply, ideas

of liberation and emancipation have become increasingly limited to the cults of one's own specific identity groups rather than the cause of all oppressed peoples.

The Palestinians are amongst the biggest victims of this rightward shift. Today, they are subjects of an ever more genocidal policy of apartheid, while the narrative of the intellectual and political mainstream is framed almost exclusively around Israeli 'terrorists'. The 'war on terror' is a big reason for why such framing is taking place. The 'war on terror' is a big reason for why such framing is taking place. The 'war on terror' is a big reason for why such framing is taking place.

What we should have learned from the 'war on terror' is that violence perpetrated by the state — it can be Israeli, American, Pakistani, Indian, Russian, Ukrainian, French, Saudi Arabian, Iranian, Turkish or any other contemporary nation-state — cannot solve political conflict. In fact, what has happened due to the deadly culture wars and the relative retreat of the progressive left is the rise of hate-mongering right-wing forces that ostensibly target one another. The prime minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, for instance, has more than once made clear that he defines the continued influence of Islamist groups like Hamas than to give an inch to progressives of any stripe.

made that the so-called war on terror ended in August 2021 when American troops pulled out of Afghanistan, the truth is that war of terror led by contemporary states are endless. The language is always the same: the scourge of terrorism will be eliminated at all costs. The forces of evil will never be allowed to overwhelm us. The rhetoric is whetted by design so as to suppress inconvenient historical truths about state terror. What we should have learned from the 'war on terror' is that violence perpetrated by the state — it can be Israeli, American, Pakistani, Indian, Russian, Ukrainian, French, Saudi Arabian, Iranian, Turkish or any other contemporary nation-state — cannot solve political conflict. In fact, what has happened due to the deadly culture wars and the relative retreat of the progressive left is the rise of hate-mongering right-wing forces that ostensibly target one another. The prime minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, for instance, has more than once made clear that he defines the continued influence of Islamist groups like Hamas than to give an inch to progressives of any stripe.

Afghan refugees & international law

By Ahmer Bilal Soofi:

AFGHAN refugees added fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

A core principle of the convention is non-refoulement, which is mentioned in Article 33 of the convention. Section 1 of Article 33 provides that "No Contracting State shall expel or return ('refouler') a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."

Security in Afghanistan has become quite a complex issue. The UN Security Council has repeatedly issued resolutions to the effect that the situation in Afghanistan is a threat to international peace and security. The UN Security Council has repeatedly issued resolutions to the effect that the situation in Afghanistan is a threat to international peace and security. The UN Security Council has repeatedly issued resolutions to the effect that the situation in Afghanistan is a threat to international peace and security.

However, following the terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001, a number of countries have increasingly sought to rely on the 'national security' exception to limit the broad application of the non-refoulement principle. Reference may also be made to Australia, which has a broader protection specifically made to move around in Pakistan.

Migrant's in its own right is a legal category of persons who cross international borders without legal permission and prevention are regulated by the International Organisation for Migration.

There are four kinds of Afghan nationals in Pakistan: those who are born and raised in Pakistan, those who were registered and have proof of registration, those who were granted the Afghan Citizen Card by the government of Pakistan and those who entered Pakistan in the wake of the Afghan Taliban who are facilitates bilateral arrangement in 2021.

to the protection and status according to refugees under international law. The Afghan government is fully responsible for providing security from persecution under the adopted 1964 monarchy constitution (Article 26, paragraphs 1, 2, 10 & 16, Articles 32, 33, 34, 37). In this regard, reference may be made to a statement by Abdul Hakeem Sharaee, the Taliban's acting minister of justice, in September 2021, wherein Mr. Sharaee categorically stated that the 1964 Afghan constitution would be the guiding document for affairs of state. Once the legal protection of the refugee status is no longer available, increasingly, the person of Afghan nationality will be that of none other than a 'migrant' having no legal justified basis to move around in Pakistan. Migrant's in its own right is a legal category of persons who cross international borders without legal permission and prevention are regulated by the International Organisation for Migration. The said organisation also facilitates bilateral arrangement in 2021.

Protests against privatization of schools, amends in service rules spread across Punjab

LAHORE (INP) Punjab police have intensified crackdown on teachers and government employees amid swelling protests across Punjab against amendments in leave encashment and pension rules, besides privatisation policy of public schools, arresting more than 100 public servants including teachers. In Lahore, the police conducted a crackdown on government employees including teachers protesting outside the Civil Secretariat to press the provincial government for accepting their demands and arrested over 100 people.

In Faisalabad, protesters held a sit-in on police party. The law enforcers resorted to tear-gas shelling. Protests were also held in Gujranwala, Gujrat, Bahawalpur,

Bahawalnagar and Man Channu by teachers. In Hafizabad, students also participated along with teachers to give vent to their anger against arrests of teachers' representatives. After protest demonstrations, police booked 125 students, two headmasters and several teachers for blocking motorway.

In Arifwala, teachers took out rallies in favour of their demands. In this regard, there is no class work in the educational institutions for the last three days. Teachers locked their classrooms in Patokki to show their displeasure and concern over amendments in leave encashment and pension rules. They also demanded that the government to release the teachers' representatives in Gujranwala, Gujrat, teaching staff after lock-

ing the classrooms boycotted the curricular activities. Male and female teachers gathered outside the deputy commissioner office and held protest demonstration. Thousands of male and female teachers from across the district are taking part in the protest.

Teachers representatives have demanded of the government to withdraw amendments in the leave encashment and pension rules (service rules), stop privatisation of government schools and give them the group insurance on retirement.

They threatened to start holding protests on a daily basis if their demands were not met by the government. The Lahore police have conducted a crackdown on government employees including

teachers protesting outside the Civil Secretariat for demands and arrested 91 people. The organisers of the protest had reportedly disappeared overnight, prompting police to begin collecting information from nearby private hotels to trace their location. Police have declared that anyone who comes under their radar will face detention. It's worth noting that some women who were part of the protest were allegedly subjected to police baton charge and subsequently arrested. Sources said police initiated the operation late at night. Police teams from some police stations in Lahore were involved in the operation. Three superintendents of police (SPs) oversaw the operation against the participants.

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi conferring the award of Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) upon the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf at a special investiture ceremony held at Aghwan-e-Sadr.

'Productivity' and 'Sustainability' next 2 hot topics for agriculture: Panel

ISLAMABAD (INP): To mark the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative, a series of events were held on October 12 with the support of KASB KTrade Securities.

This included an agriculture roundtable seminar that brought together experts and practitioners from the industry, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday.

The experts highlighted various subjects such as the Green Pakistan Initiative, Chinese investments in agri-sectors, and the potential of the dairy industry.

The discussion also touched on food security and sustainable agricultural development. Syed Nasir Mahmood, former Inspector General of Forestry at the Ministry of Agriculture, stressed the significance of conserving natural ecosystems and adopting sustainable farming methods.

He pointed out that carbon credits, which allow countries to emit a specified amount of carbon dioxide, hold economic potential.

Mahmood also touched on the vital roles of biodiversity and forest therapy, proposing that preserving nature could not only provide health advantages but also foster a more robust ecosystem.

Furthermore, he called for broad awareness among industries, policy makers, and the general public, emphasizing the alignment of environmental prosperity with financial and economic well-being.

Peter Huang, Commercial Head at LITEC International Agriculture Development Co., Ltd., believes that Chinese companies are expected to bring much-needed capital and technological know-how to the Pakistani farming sector.

He particularly emphasized the chili industry, discussing its plans to improve farming practices and productivity.

"Our goal is to assist Pakistan in exporting high-quality chili with a value of more than \$300 million by 2026."

Huang revealed that currently, he and his company are focusing on providing better seeds, introducing advanced farming practices, and offering necessary training to local farmers.

These efforts are expected to boost the yield and quality of the chili, making them more competitive in the international market. Maj Gen Tahir Aslam, Managing Director and CEO of FonGrow, noted that Pakistan's farming practices are currently inefficient, particularly in terms of water and fertilizer usage.

He emphasized the need to improve the quality of seeds, introduce efficient farming practices, and leverage technology and data to enhance productivity. Furthermore, he underscored the necessity for a comprehensive modernization drive within Pakistan's agricultural landscape.

This extends beyond the realm of mere tractorization to encompass the implementation of technology-driven farming models, akin to those successfully employed in countries like the U.S., Canada, and Australia.

Hafiz Sajjad Hussain, Head Procurement Fauji Foods gave special focus to the dairy sector, where despite a substantial animal population, productivity remains comparatively low.

He emphasized the pivotal role of genetic enhancement in boosting productivity, thereby rendering the industry more economically viable and ecologically sound.



ANKARA: Head of World Aging Council and Ibn Sina Institute, Turkiye and Europe Dr Kamal Aydin, presenting appointment letter to President Turkish-Pakistan Women's Wing Forum Shabana Ayez as his media coordinator and representative public relations.

Israel used white phosphorus in Gaza, Lebanon, says Human Rights Watch

NEW YORK (INP): Human Rights Watch (HRW) on Thursday accused Israel of using white phosphorus munitions in its military operations in Gaza and Lebanon, saying the use of such weapons puts civilians at risk of serious and long-term injury. Asked for comment on the allegations, Israel's military said it was "currently not aware of the use of weapons containing white phosphorus in Gaza." It did not provide comment on the rights watchdog's allegations of their use in Lebanon. Israel has been bombarding Gaza in retaliation for

a Hamas rampage in southern Israeli towns that killed at least 1,300 people this week. At least 1,500 Palestinians have been killed. Israel has also traded barbs with Lebanon's Hezbollah group. Human Rights Watch said it verified videos taken in Lebanon on Oct. 10 and Gaza on Oct. 11 showing "multiple arbursts of artillery-fired white phosphorus over the Gaza City port and two rural locations along the Israel-Lebanon border." It provided links to two videos posted on social media that it said show "155mm white phosphorus artil-

lery projectiles being used, apparently as smokescreens, marking, or signaling." Both scenes near the Israel-Lebanon border, it said. The group did not provide links to videos showing their alleged use in Gaza. Palestinian TV channels have broadcast videos in recent days showing thin plumes of white smoke lining the sky over Gaza that they say was caused by such munitions.

Israel's military in 2013 said it was phasing out white phosphorus used during its 2008-2009 offensive in Gaza, which

produced to support this claim. McClain's family told media he had been out buyingiced tea, and often wore the mask to stay warm because he suffered from emphysema.

McClain's death occurred months before the killing of another Black man, George Floyd, in Minneapolis in May 2020, triggered a nationwide reckoning over racism and police brutality.

A third officer who put 23-year-old McClain in the chokehold, Nathan Woodward, is set to go on trial in the coming

days, local media reported. The responding paramedics -- Peter Cichuniec and Jeremy Cooper -- are set for trial in November, the outlet said.

Today's verdict is about accountability, everyone is accountable and equal under the law," said Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser in the wake of the jury's finding Thursday.

Hopefully today's verdict is another step in the healing process for the Aurora community and the state."

US jury convicts white police officer over death of Black man

COLORADO (INP): A US jury on Thursday convicted a white police officer in the 2019 death of a Black man who was put in a chokehold and injected with ketamine during his arrest.

The jury in the western state of Colorado found Aurora police officer Randy Roedema guilty of criminally negligent homicide in the death of Elijah McClain, in a case that sparked public outrage.

Roedema's colleague Jason Rosenblatt was acquitted. McClain died sev-



RAWALPINDI- Menaging Director of SG Egg group Saad Sadiq, and students hold a banner during awareness walk on the eve of World Egg Day, at Arid Agriculture University in Rawalpindi.



AFGHANISTAN: Earthquake victims sit on rubble in Zindajan district of western Herat province.

PUC observes 'Palestine Solidarity Day' across nation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) on Friday observed 'Palestine Solidarity Day' across the nation expressing unity with the oppressed Palestinians and offering special prayers in Friday sermons. The PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashraf, along with other prominent religious leaders, spoke out in support of Palestine.

They highlighted the critical juncture in the Palestinian issue and called on Muslim leaders to play their role immediately.

Addressing the issue of human rights, PUC Chairman Ashraf deplored the silence on the mass killings of the oppressed Palestinians.

He emphasized that for decades, Israel had been subjecting innocent civilians, hospitals, schools, and ambulances to its ruthless ag-

gression. Notably, he said the United States, India, the United Kingdom, and other Western nations remained silent in the face of Israeli brutality, disregarding the principles of human rights. He called for swift action from the Muslim leaders to halt Israel's aggression stressing that at this moment, the entire Muslim world stood with their oppressed Palestinian brothers and sisters.

He appreciated the unwavering efforts and stance of the leadership of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Iran, Kuwait, Egypt, Jordan, and other Muslim-majority countries. He urged the Kingdom to take a leadership role in resolving the Palestinian and Kashmir issues expressing its pivotal position in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). He stated that without the establishment of an independent, sovereign Pal-

estian state, no solution could be achieved, and the support of Saudi Arabia was crucial in this regard. He announced an International Conference of Solidarity with Palestine scheduled to be held in Islamabad on October

18th, 2023, under the umbrella of PUC, where key discussions and plans, would be presented to work towards the recognition of a free and independent Palestinian state by the international community.

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Infrastructure, deregulation and education key to ICT better future in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP) Pakistani ICT entrepreneurs have recently called for infrastructure upgrade, regulation easing and education uplift to fully unleash the potential of Pakistan's ICT industry and sectors closely related to it.

This revelation came from a panel discussion on Pakistan's ICT industry at the Belt and Road (BR) Report Publishing Event held here, according to a report published by China Economic Net (CEN).

At the event, a group of four panelists elaborated on the vital role of enhanced infrastructure, a healthy dose of regulation, and education in ICT in powering e-commerce, smartphones and music industry.

Kamran Pervaiz, director of corporate affairs of Daraz.pk, a Pakistani e-commerce giant, said while 2% of the Pakistani retail sector has gone online, this lags far behind India and China, which reaches 50% and 53% respectively.

"We need common infrastructure... and the Internet to enable e-commerce," Kamran noted, adding that infrastructure

upgrade is more needed in rural areas.

This view was echoed by Sufian Ahmad Ch, head of marketing of Xiaomi Pak. "The technology is not accessible for everyone, even more than 50% of the population doesn't have access to 4G or doesn't have smartphones."

Syed Muhammad Naqi, CEO of DCode, a Pakistani smartphone brand born after Pakistan Telecommunication Authority's 2020 policy to promote local manufacturing of mobile devices in Pakistan.

Syed noted that despite its relative advantage in software process, Pakistan is plagued by a lack of hardware and infrastructure. Once by the infrastructure is ready, "we can do the next level of CKD (complete knock down), SKD (semi knock down) and all the other things."

Excessive regulation poses another challenge. "Over-regulation can kill sometimes," claimed Yahya Farid Khwaja, CEO of Freerid Music, a leading music company in Pakistan.

He shared that Pakistani mu-

sic artists have a 30% market share in the Indian music industry, but their revenues go to the Indian government rather than Pakistan due to unnecessary regulation.

"In order to compete (in the global stage), and in order to improve our infrastructure, we need to be regulated a little bit rather than more regulated," echoed Syed.

A lack of technical education also hurts. Commenting on the development of the hardware sector in ICT industry, Syed said that "We're lacking hardware engineers... Your information technology cannot move forward without the support of the hardware engineers."

Organised by the KASB K Trade Securities to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the Belt and Road (BR) Report Publishing Event also witnessed participation from Fawad Hasan Fawad, federal minister for Privatisation of Pakistan, and Hassan Daud Butt, former CPEC Head.



ISLAMABAD: Shahid Ashraf Tarar, Caretaker Minister For Maritime calls on Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters.

Speeding trailer runs over fence of Jam Sadiq Bridge in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): The traffic flow at Karachi's Jam Sadiq Bridge is affected as a speeding container crashed into the bridge's wall late at night on Friday, traffic police said.

According to details, the incident occurred around 2 am when the speeding trailer ran over the fence of the bridge and stuck on it. The police said the incident reportedly occurred as the driver of the vehicle fell asleep. Due to the accident, traffic flow is badly af-

fected at Jam Sadiq Bridge.

The traffic police have called on heavy machinery to remove the container from the bridge. The officials said the vehicle's fitness would be checked and if it is proven that the driver fell asleep, strict action would be taken against him.

Jam Sadiq Bridge is named after former Sindh chief minister Jam Sadiq Ali. The bridge was constructed in 1991 and was inaugurated by the then

provincial minister for housing and town planning Dr Ishratul Ebad.

In 2022, then Sindh chief minister Syed Murad Ali Shah approved the construction of the Korangi Crossing Bridge and Hub Canal rehabilitation projects.

Murad also greenlighted the Jam Sadiq Bridge project and directed the Planning and Development Department to prepare a scheme to overhaul it.

Pakistan's Rupee continues 30-day winning streak against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Rupee has continued its winning streak against the US Dollar in interbank trading and reached Rs277.78 with an uptick by 78 paisas on Friday.

The American currency has been continuously losing ground against the local unit and it has now been the 30th straight day.

The USD into PKR interbank rates reached Rs277.78 on Friday.

The KSE-100 index continued its positive trend on the 10th consecutive day and reached 48953 with an increase of 180 points.

The US dollar saw another dip against the Pakistani rupee as it started Thursday's trading session in the interbank market. The day opened with the American currency further shedding 91 paisas in the interbank market to settle at

Rs278.60. In the open market also, the dollar lost Re1 to settle at Rs278. The greenback saw this dip in value in exchange for the Pakistani rupee, following the weeks-long trend of the currency's depreciation in both the interbank and open markets.

In the last five weeks, the US currency has depreciated by Rs52 in the open market and Rs28.42 in interbank trade. On Wednesday, the mighty dollar dropped to a record low against the rupee as it fell below the Rs280 mark for the first time in three months.

At the start of the trading session on Wednesday morning, the US dollar fell by 86 paisas in the interbank market and reached the value of Rs279.65. At the time of closing of the day's trading, the American currency lost Re1 and closed at Rs279.51.

SNGLP staffers busy in laying Sui gas pipeline at Jaranwala Road.

ISLAMABAD (INP): Sui North-Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGLP) has said that the gas supply will be temporarily suspended in various sectors of Islamabad on October 14 due to replacement of a gas pipeline.

According to the announcement, the work is scheduled to commence at 8 a.m. in sector F-8 of Islamabad, where a 6-inch gas pipeline will be connected to a 10-inch gas line.

The project is expected to be completed on the same day, between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. However, as a result of this maintenance activity, gas supply will be affected in several sectors, including F-5, F-6, F-7, F-8, G-5, G-6, G-7, and G-8.

The impact extends to prominent areas such as the Red Zone, Secretariat, Supreme Court of Pakistan, Parliament House, Prime Minister's House, Presidency, Blue Area, and other adjoining consumer zones.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar offers فاتحہ and lays floral wreath at the grave of former commandant of FC, Shaheed Sifat Ghayur.

PM Kakar rules out talks with TTP, vows to wipe out anti-state elements

PESHAWAR (INP): Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday ruled out any talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), reaffirming his commitment to wipe out all the anti-state elements from the country, ARY News reported.

Talking to journalists in Peshawar, the caretaker prime minister said that state of Pakistan was powerful enough to fight Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) even for next 100 years.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan and Governor Haji Ghulam Ali accompanied the prime minister.

Asked what were the impediments in talks with TTP, the prime minister said the biggest obstacle was that no one was willing to talk to them. "We don't have any intention to talk with TTP," he said, adding that writ of the state will be established at all costs.

Pakistan has seen an uptick in terror activities, especially in KP and Balochistan, after the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) ended its ceasefire with the government in November.

Rubbishing the notion of any registered Afghan refu-

gees being expelled from Pakistan, the prime minister said only the foreigners living illegally in Pakistan were being ousted.

He said through such measures, Pakistan did not want to undermine its relationship with Afghanistan rather desired to have the ties based on international standards in which the movement of the people would be subject to the visas.

PM Kakar said that the illegal residents had no registration in Pakistan's database, the state was unable to distinguish between those playing a productive role in the society and the criminals. He clarified that the expulsion of illegal residents was not out of any vengeance rather the state wanted to rid the country of those causing social ills as well as the becoming a challenge of terrorism and crimes.

Asked about the fate of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif on his return, the prime minister said the government would act as per the law.

Regarding the general elections, PM Kakar said the caretaker setup would play its role in accordance with the Election Commission of Pakistan's decision of an-

nouncing the final date for polls.

Commenting on the economic situation, the premier said with the depreciation of dollar, the country's loans had been reduced by Rs4000 billion besides impacting the prices of petroleum products, sugar, ghee and other eatables. All this is going to provide relief to the people, but it is not being duly highlighted, he added. To another query, PM Kakar reiterated that all the political parties registered with the Election Commission would be allowed to go into the electoral process and in case of any complaint, the PM Office could be approached.

Earlier, talking to a delegation of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, reiterated that the sacrifices of the soldiers could never be paid in form of salaries instead, the reverence and dignity also promised by Allah Almighty was their due reward.

The prime minister, who was on first visit to Peshawar after assuming the office, assured the business community to address their genuine issues through consultation.

He also lauded his cabinet as "capable and dedicated" people who were serving the country within their mandate.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan in a meeting with Governor Gilgit Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah at his office.

Cold wave likely to hit Pakistan from next week

KARACHI (INP): A cold wave will likely grip Pakistan next week under the impact of fresh rain and snowfall on mountains in parts of the country, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said in latest weather advisory.

"A westerly system is likely to enter upper parts on 13th October (evening/night) and likely to spread upper/central parts on 14th (night)," a weather advisory issued by the Met Office stated.

The PMD forecast intermittent rain with wind/thunderstorm in moderate isolated falls in the upper areas including Chitral, Dir, Swat, Malakand, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra, Kohistan, Abbottabad, Swabi, Khyber, Mohmand, Bajaur, Peshawar, Mardan, Nowshera, Charsadda, Kurram, Kohat, Hangu, Orakzai, Bannu, Karak, Lakki

Marwat, Tank, Waziristan and Dera Ismail Khan from the evening of October 13 till 17. Moderate to isolated heavy

falls are expected in Kashmir's Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur, and Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar areas of Gilgit Baltistan, during the same period.

Areas including Islamabad, Potohar region, Murree, Galiyat, Sialkot, Narawal, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Okara, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin, Hafizabad, Sargodha, Khushab, Noorpurthal, Faisalabad, Toba Tek Singh, Jhang and Kasur expected to witness similar weather conditions from October 13 to 17.

Snowfall over the high mountains of KP, Kashmir and GB and isolated hailstorms in the plains of KP during the forecast period are also expected. Meanwhile in Sindh and Balochistan, areas of Jacobabad, Kashmir, Shikarpur, Sukkur, Ghotki, Khairpur, Sanghar and

Umerkot, and Sherani, Musa Khel, Zhoib, Qilla Saifullah, Loralai, Barkhan, Kohlu, Sibbi, Bolan, Kalat, Harani, Naseerabad, Dera Bugti, Jafarabad, Qila Abdullah, Pishin, Quetta and Ziarat will receive rain with wind and thunderstorm on October 17 and 18. Temperatures are likely to drop significantly.

Moderate to heavy falls may increase water flows in local nullahs/streams and may trigger landslides in the vulnerable areas of Murree, Galiyat, Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra & Abbottabad during the spell.

Heavy rain may generate urban flooding in Rawalpindi and Lahore on October 15 and 16.

The Met Office also advised the farmers to manage their crop activities accordingly, while tourists and travelers were suggested to remain cautious during the forecast period.



GAZA: People stand near a building destroyed by Israeli bombardment in al-Shati refugee camp in Gaza City.