

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Rogue nation

A recent assassination — the latest in a spate of similar killings from Karachi to Kashmir — has turned the spotlight onto what has seemed, for quite a while, to be an organised campaign overseen by a hostile intelligence agency to murder individuals on Pakistani soil.

In the last two months alone, there have been at least four targeted killings that have, either directly or indirectly, been attributed by police to India's foreign intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing.

In each case, armed assailants tracked, targeted and killed individuals associated in various capacities with different religious outfits.

However, after the most recent incident, in which a former activist of the outlawed Jaish-e-Muhammad was killed, along with two others, in a Daska mosque on Wednesday, police and intelligence agencies were quicker to react. Within 24 hours of the incident, they claimed to have busted a network involved in carrying out a vendetta for a 'rogue nation'. Even if the Punjab police chief, who made the announcement of the arrests, desisted from taking names, it did not take much imagination to conclude that it was India his finger was pointing to.

Indian media have reported that the slain man, Mohammad Shahid Latif, was suspected by New Delhi of having facilitated the attack on an Indian Air Force base in Pathankot in 2016.

However, there seems to be little evidence to substantiate this allegation, and no link was ever made public tying Latif to the Pathankot incident.

Indeed, the murders of Latif and the others before him would seem, on the face of it, to be part of an international campaign that also saw the high-profile killing of Sikh nationalist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey, Canada, in June this year. The Canadian government has said it has evidence of Indian involvement in the murder; and now Pakistan is claiming the same.

It would seem as if New Delhi wants anyone whom it suspects has played a role in any one of the nationalist movements active within the territories under its control killed. But India cannot go around murdering people in other countries with impunity. There must be severe consequences imposed on it. It is also pertinent to ask our own authorities how they could let so many individuals be murdered on Pakistani soil before a network apparently being run by an enemy power was finally busted. Pre-empting such attacks is a core task for counter-intelligence officials responsible for the nation's security, and as such, it is their responsibility to ensure that Pakistan's enemies do not use its soil to carry out vendetta killings. Nothing can be more embarrassing for them than the enemy managing to infiltrate the country while they are busy dealing with domestic issues they legally and technically have no business being involved in.

All-Weather Friendship: The Evolving Pak-China Relationship

By A.R Ansari

Pakistan and China's relationship is often referred to as an "all-weather friendship" owing to strong political, economic, and military ties. This friendship has evolved over several decades, based on mutual interests and cooperation in the fields of economic development, military and defense, and infrastructure projects, cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts have also grown, with an increasing number of Pakistani students studying in China and a surge in Chinese expatriates living and working in Pakistan. Despite the strong ties, there have been challenges in the Pakistan-China relationship like concerns about the terms and conditions of Chinese loans and investments under CPEC, owing to Pakistan's growing debt burden and security concerns in the border region.

China has been a staunch ally of Pakistan at international forums, particularly on issues related to Kashmir. China has supported Pakistan's stance on the Kashmir conflict and has shielded Pakistan from diplomatic isolation in the United Nations and other international organizations. China is holding its third Belt and Road forum in Beijing where representatives from over 130 countries are joining to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a massive infrastructure and economic development project initiated by China. It aims to create a network of roads, railways, ports, and other infrastructure that connects China to Europe, Africa, and other parts of Asia. CPEC is a flagship project of the BRI initiative — a collection of infrastructure projects that include the construction of highways, railways, pipelines, and the development of the strategic Gwadar Port. The world has witnessed in 1979, one of the world's highest and most spectacular international road connections

Karakoram Highway as evidence of all-weather friendship, that connects Pakistan and China, making it one of the world's highest and most challenging engineering feats. The Karakoram Highway holds strategic significance, providing China with access to the Arabian Sea via Gwadar, very essential for China's energy and trade interests. The Karakoram Highway stretches for approximately 1,300 kilometers (810 miles) from HasanAbdal near Islamabad to the Chinese city of Kashgar in Xinjiang. The Karakoram highway is subject to harsh weather conditions, especially in the winter, and has faced issues such as landslides and road closures due to natural disasters.

Pakistan's Prime Minister, Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, visit to China sets the stage for a new era for CPEC projects, particularly in the acceleration of the Thakot-Raikot section — a critical segment of the Karakoram Highway, known for its sharp bends and limitations. It is poised for an overhaul, of state-of-the-art tunnels, for reducing travel time and enhancing safety. The road classification will be advanced from Class 4 to Class 2, signaling an upgrade in its quality and the permitted speed limit will be increased, promising swifter and more efficient travel. This development extends beyond mere travel enhancements. It holds the potential to revolutionize cargo transport, making it more efficient and cost-effective. The improved road network will support heavier cargo loads, streamlining the transportation of goods with greater ease and efficiency. The Karakoram Highway looms as a prominent highlight of this historic partnership. It signifies more than just a road; it's a symbol of friendship, cooperation, and a shared vision for a brighter, more interconnected future.

The Highway Research & Training Centre also stands as one of the pivotal projects, prominently taking center stage as the primary highlight of Prime Minister Kakar's visit. A promising Joint Research Program is envisioned with the Government of China from 2023 to 2027, aiming to foster collaboration and innovation in various domains of highway engineering. A formal memorandum of joint research extension will be finalized and entered into during the PM's visit to China. This program aims to foster collaboration and innovation in various domains of highway engineering. This extension is poised to be a cornerstone of the cooperation in the road infrastructure while the National Highway Authority is a vanguard of such cooperation. It is agreed to construct the Highway Research and Training Center spread over 530 acres by a Chinese Contractor/ Consultant under a Chinese Grant of Rs.15 billion. It includes infrastructure, a Test track, and indoor and outdoor lab equipment which will be handed over to NHA for operation after completion and required training. Various research Projects in Reclaimed Asphalt, Bridges and Tunnelling, training and degree courses in China, development of engineering design manuals and standards for Pakistan are some of the key target areas of this project.

Pakistan-China relationship is poised to continue evolving, adapting to the ever-changing global landscape. With a shared commitment to deepening ties and fostering enduring peace, this friendship remains a cornerstone of stability in a rapidly shifting world. Pakistan and China are not just strategic allies but genuine friends, encouraging a legacy of collaboration that continues to shape the future. The Pakistan-China relationship serves as a compelling case study of how nations can accomplish prosperity and progress through resolute partnership, surpassing borders and generating a conduit to a happier future for all.

DUBAI (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif said on Monday that international investors could greatly benefit from investing in Pakistan's digital banking, FinTech, AgriTech, and telecom infrastructure sectors.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the Global Information Technology Exhibition in Dubai, he said international investors can take advantage of various incentives in Pakistan, including tax concessions and a 100% ownership rights regime.

Running from October 16 to 20, the Dubai Global Exhibition features delegates from 170 countries, representing over 6,000 IT companies.

Dr. Saif said that 85% of Pakistan's population does not have bank accounts and prefers to use cash or alternative means for transactions. This presents an excellent opportunity for offering suitable digital payment solutions.

The minister said Pakistan is an attractive market for payment companies like PayPal due to its potential for generating billions in revenue.

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Beyond 'restraint'



Huma Yusuf

China last week issued a statement on the Israel-Palestine war, calling, noncommittally, for restraint on all sides and an end to hostilities. There was no condemnation of Hamas's atrocities or of Israel's response against Gaza's civilian population. This is the latest example of Chinese non-interference and a manifestation of its Global Civilisation Initiative (GCI), Beijing's latest strategic push that could in the long run have more influence on its allies, including Pakistan, than the much-touted BRI.

China has in the past called for Palestinian statehood, and even in last week's statements evoked the two-state solution as the only way out of the Israel-Palestine quagmire. At the same time, Israel and China have in recent years deepened economic and political ties, with China in 2021-22 replacing the US as Israel's main source of imports. China's role in the diplomatic rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia also had a bearing on Israeli political calculations vis-à-vis Beijing: it had manoeuvred itself into a position to influence Israeli security.

China's forays into the Middle East may have been part of its Global Security Initiative, launched in 2022, in an effort to rebalance the international world order, tipping power away from the US and other Western countries towards China and Russia. But Beijing's choice not to speak out forcefully

against either Hamas or Israel is a reflection of its GCI, introduced in March this year, which privileges state-defined values over those — such as human rights — that have been posited in global governance as universal.

The GCI is a direct critique of Western efforts to implement a world order according to Westernised norms, particularly the absolutism around human rights and democracy. The GCI instead acknowledges "peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom" as "common aspirations" rather than fundamental rights. China argues that these issues and the way they are embedded in states and societies are 'relative', rooted in local history and culture, and cannot be universally mandated. In a dig against the US in particular, which for years tried to impose its values of democracy and human rights — forcefully, if necessary, despite the ironies — the Chinese do not believe in imposing one country's models on another.

Many international observers have understood the GCI as a way for the Chinese government to justify why it won't condemn or attempt to stop bad behaviour, whether that be human rights violations within or beyond its borders or state conduct in conflict scenarios. The idea of relativism offers Beijing a way out: a conceptually and strategically grounded ability to dismiss egregious acts as culturally and contextually rooted, and therefore indigenous and worthy of respect rather than disruption. And so despite the challenges of balancing engagement in the Middle East context, China will try, its GSI and GCI flags waving over its effort.

These initiatives are unlikely to get centre stage at the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation taking place in Beijing. This meeting will laud the achievements of the Belt and Road Initiative, of which CPEC was a major pillar, and which is celebrating its 10th anniversary. The gathering is expected to look ahead to a new era for BRI, which is more green, more inclusive, and more sustainable from a debt perspective for recipients of projects.

But many have described this week's BRI forum as a swan song for a project that never reached its lofty ambitions. A 2021 study conducted by research lab AidData found that 35 per cent of BRI projects have been plagued by controversies such as corruption, excessive debt and labour exploitation. The Global South's call for BRI investment has in recent years been replaced with calls for debt forgiveness, as it transpired that the lending terms were burdensome. Many projects, including numerous SEZs planned as part of CPEC, remain unbuilt, incomplete or underutilised.

The petering out of the initiative would not mean that the era of Chinese influence is waning, however. Beijing's current strategies, including the GCI, may have a more lasting impact on Pakistan's state and society than infrastructure investment ever could. While China itself pursues its balancing act in the Middle East, it can reconcile with a Pakistan that supports Gaza, but does not criticise China's treatment of its Uighur population, or in respect to the plight of its own religious minorities. A new global order that hesitates to challenge states' worst instincts will be equally, if not more, oppressive than the one that came before. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

People welcome relief in POL prices; ask for inflation-ease

ISLAMABAD (APP): People from different walks of life on Monday welcomed the government's decision to substantially reduce petroleum prices, viewing it as a much-needed relief to counter the adverse effects of high inflation on their daily routines.

In the past, they said whenever petroleum prices increased it resulted in a surge in the prices of essential commodities, public transportation fares, and shipping costs, negatively impacting the common man.

Now, with the government's ample reduction of Rs40 per liter in petrol prices and Rs15 in high-speed diesel, people expect this to have a trickle-down effect on the

prices of everyday items, goods transport, and public transportation fares. Khurram Shahzad, a government employee who commutes daily from Qasim Market Rawalpindi to Islamabad, expressed his concern that public transporters had not lowered their fares despite a significant reduction in petroleum prices.

They had increased fares by almost 300 percent over the past six months, which he said should be revised and brought down.

He urged the Regional Transport Authority to revise and regulate the public transport fares to align them with the reduced petroleum prices.

He also called for the display of revised fare

charts in public transport vehicles to provide maximum relief to the common commuters between the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

The business community also commended the government's decision to reduce petroleum prices, considering it a positive step in combating inflation and providing much-needed relief to the common man throughout the country.

They attributed the positive indicators to the government's zero-tolerance policy against the illicit trade and smuggling of essential commodities and the dollar mafia. These measures led to the strengthening of the local currency against the



HYDERABAD: A large number of motorcyclists at petrol pump after the government reduce the petrol prices.

Investment in digital banking, FinTech, AgriTech beneficial for global investors: Dr. Umar

DUBAI (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif said on Monday that international investors could greatly benefit from investing in Pakistan's digital banking, FinTech, AgriTech, and telecom infrastructure sectors.

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PSX holds Gong ceremony to announce building of In-House manufacturing facility

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) held a gong ceremony to announce the building of an in-house manufacturing facility for the Panadol portfolio by Haleon Pakistan Limited, a world-leading Consumer Healthcare Company and a listed company on the Pakistan Stock Exchange.

The gong ceremony was attended by British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, as the Chief Guest, said a press release on Monday.

The team from the British High Commission and Haleon Pakistan Limited were received at the Stock Exchange by the MD & CEO PSX, Farrukh H. Khan and Board

member(s) PSX along with the Exchange's senior management. The gong was struck by the Chief Guest, Jane Marriott, and the CEO of Haleon Pakistan Limited, Farhan M. Haroon, in the presence of MD and CEO PSX, Farrukh Khan, Board member(s) PSX, the team from the British High Commission and senior management of both Haleon Pakistan and PSX.

Speaking on the occasion, the MD & CEO PSX, Farrukh Khan stated, "I warmly welcome the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, her team, the CEO of Haleon Pakistan, Farhan Haroon, and the Haleon Pakistan management team, to PSX."



MULTAN: A labourer busy in spreading rice for drying purpose in the field.

PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 237 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with a bullish trend on Monday and gained 237.88 points, a positive change of 0.48 per cent, closing at 49,731.35 points against 49,493.47 points the previous day.

A total of 467,383,787 shares valuing Rs 14,119 billion were traded during the day as compared to 556,389,862 shares valuing Rs 15,450 billion the previous day.

As many as 359 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 218 of them recorded gains

and 129 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 12 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 98,168,338 shares at Rs 3.15 per share, PTCL with 22,603,000 shares at Rs 6.95 per share and Pak Int. Bulk with 22,073,500 shares at Rs 4.59 per share. Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 102.00 per share price, closing at Rs 7,300.00, whereas the runner-up was Philip Morris Pak with a Rs 40.50 rise in its per share price to Rs 580.50.



PESHAWAR: Members of Car Showrooms Association Ring Road are holding protest demonstration against high handedness of influential police officials, held at Peshawar press club.

Irfan Iqbal Sheikh says Business community lauds Army Chief's role in economic stabilization

Independent Report KARACHI: Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, said that the business community of Pakistan appreciates the effective, timely and crucial role played by the Army Chief in swiftly reducing economic uncertainty; bringing back stability and fostering positive sentiment in the country. Controlling speculative trading of dollar and putting a stop on its smuggling are

the most effective and meaningful steps in the right direction by COAS, he added.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh recalled that dollar was trading at 336 on 4th September in the open market and today it has come down to 276. In an export-dependent economy like Pakistan, currency depreciation is the mother of all evils as it fuels inflation, increases cost of production.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): The movements of ships was reported at the port where five ships namely, MSC Gina, Maersk Chesapeake, Hafnia Prestige, Jal Kalpavriksh and Horin Trader carrying Containers, Gas oil, Coal and Chemicals, berthed at Container Terminal, Oil Terminal, Bulk Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile four more ships, Onyx-1, Gambella, Xin An Ping and Al-Zubarah scheduled to load/offload Cement, Containers, LNG and Coal also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during last 24 hours.

A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a containership, Maersk Chesapeake left the port on today morning, while two more ships, MSC Gina and Livarden are expected to sail on today afternoon. Cargo volume of 116,892 tonnes, comprising 79,628 tonnes imports cargo and 37,264 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,324 Containers (134 TEUs Imports and 2,192 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

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CM Punjab orders reduction in commodity prices and transport fare following petrol price cut

Independent Report
LAHORE: Acting upon the special directives of Punjab's Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, a decision has been made to promptly pass on the benefits of significant reduction in petroleum prices directly to the people of Punjab.

In a pivotal meeting convened at the Chief Minister's Office and presided over by Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, a deadline of 48 hours was set for implementing price reductions. Additionally, the task of reducing transport fares by 10%

was assigned, aligning them proportionally with the special directives of Punjab's Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, a decision has been made to promptly pass on the benefits of significant reduction in petroleum prices directly to the people of Punjab.

Chief Secretary will conduct regular meetings with Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners to assess the progress of price reduction measures.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi issued directives to Price Control Magistrates and Price Control Committees, urging them to actively contribute to providing relief to the public. He emphasized the necessity of a relentless crackdown on hoarders, ensuring that the benefits of the reduced petroleum prices are equitably distributed among the populace.



KARACHI: Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Mehmet Pacaci called on Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamaran Khan Tessori at Governor House.

CM reviews progress of Band Road controlled access corridor project

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi conducted a morning inspection of the ongoing Controlled Access Corridor project on Band Road.

He meticulously assessed the progress of this significant endeavor, spanning from Niazi Chowk to Babu Sabu. He underscored the importance of ensuring smooth traffic flow on the closed road throughout the construction phase. He emphasized that the Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) should personally oversee operations and

recommended deploying additional traffic wardens.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi promptly ordered the relocation of street lights and poles from the closed roads. He further directed that the poles be removed and re-purposed elsewhere. The Chief Minister set forth a clear directive for the timely completion of the controlled access corridor project. He highlighted that this project would grant immediate motorway access from any corner of Lahore.

ANF seizes 108 kg drugs; arrests three

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover 108 kg drugs and arrested three accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that 24.8 kg hashish was recovered from an accused, resident of Kohat arrested on Super Highway Karachi. On the pointation of the accused, a co-accused, resident of Karachi was also arrested. In another operation at Jinnah International Airport, Karachi Courier Office, ANF recovered 180 grams.

Governor asks teachers to protest without skipping classes

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Governor Punjab Engineer Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman has said that all the right demands of teachers should be heard however, teachers must not skip classes for protests which will hurt students' future.

Talking to APP, he said that teachers are founder of our future and the government will solve their grievances.

He urged teachers to work on recruiting more students at school and help in improving Pakistan's literacy rate.

Responding to a question, he said that Pakistan was heading in the right direction and as a result, Pakistan's economy was improving. He said that the

recent decrease in petrol prices, dollar, and gold rates were indicators of better economic conditions.

Governor Punjab said that an international cricket stadium would be constructed in Bahawalpur.

He said that sports activities must be promoted among youth and more grounds must be made available for them.

Engr Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman said that youth must not indulge in negative ventures and refrain from following anti-state propaganda. He said that political parties must teach their followers respect and acceptance of opposite ideologies.



LAHORE: Sikh Yatrees are being welcomed on their arrival at JCP Wagah Border.

ICCBS successfully cultivates organic cotton in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Researchers at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi (UoK) have successfully cultivated multiple generations of cotton in Karachi with low energy costs in a year.

This is the first time Organic Cotton has been grown in Karachi, and this experimental production can be expanded with the support of the federal and

provincial governments in Sindh and Balochistan. ICCBS research team, working under the supervision of Dr. Shahid Mansoor, at the Biotechnology Wing of the HEJ Research Institute of Chemistry was able to grow multiple generations of cotton in Karachi with low energy costs.

In addition, the ICCBS research team has not found any evidence of cotton leaf curl disease or major cotton pests in the product.

NH&MP sets up free eye camp for drivers

HYDERABAD (APP): The National Highway and Motorway Police (NH&MP) set up a free eye camp for the drivers near the Hyderabad toll plaza on the M9 Motorway in Jamshoro district on Monday.

An official informed that during the day-long camp, it surfaced that the drivers of heavy transport vehicles including the public transport vehicles suffered from eye-sight issues and some other ailments of eyes.

Pakistan needs indigenous knowledge-based, local solutions for enhanced climate resilience: Speakers

KARACHI (APP): The Speakers on Monday at a panel discussion on climate action urged the government and departments concerned to join hands for collating and collaborating indigenous knowledge-based solutions for enhanced resilience of the country against adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute convened a panel discussion at the launch of Four thematic Policy Position Papers with members of the academia, civil soci-

ety, journalists and business community.

Opening the panel discussion, Deputy Executive Director, SDPI, Dr. Shafiqat Munir Ahmad briefed the participants on the Four Thematic Policy papers discussing the country's position on climate finance, institutional capacities for climate action, policy frameworks and the Loss and Damage that had been created at the global to provide a platform for reparations to the most impacted countries through climate catastrophes.

Dr Shafiqat Munir said the crisis of climate change

had no boundaries and it impacted all the nations without any distinction.

However, the country was lagging in terms effective implementation of its convincing policy instruments established to cope with the climate disasters.

He underlined that the country had separate ministries of subjects that were equally impacted due to climate change and demanded an intricate and integrated approach.

"We need to align and develop coherence in existing system and ministries to address climate change. The country will also have

to maintain technical climate human resource expert on the subject," he added.

He also pointed out that amid growing vulnerability of the country due to climate change it was needed to revise the national disaster risk reduction (DRR) Policy to set targets and key areas like risk understanding, governance, financing and overall framework for collaboration.

Former VP FPCCI, Member Board of Governors SDPI, Eng MA Jabbar felicitated the institute for successfully compiling the policy papers.

He mentioned that the increase in migration to

wards urban centers was burdening the existing capacities of those cities leading to economic impact driving climate and financial crisis.

Climate change affecting tools in the country, he said were the power generation plants that had the capacity of 41,000 megawatts (MW) whereas India got 413,000 megawatts plant installed yesterday.

He compared the India and Pakistan coal to energy potential and mentioned that Pakistan had \$183 billion coal reserves which was one of the highest in the world.



LARKANA: Students of Government Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Law College are holding protest demonstration against the examination fee being increased by administration of Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur held at Jinnah Bagh in Larkana.

International News

Gaza aid stuck as Egypt says Israel not cooperating

Monitoring Desk
ISMAILIA: Egypt said on Monday that Israel was not cooperating with the delivery of aid into Gaza and evacuations of foreign passport holders via the only entry it does not wholly control, leaving hundreds of tonnes of supplies stuck.

Cairo says the Rafah crossing, a potentially vital opening for desperately needed supplies into the besieged Palestinian enclave, is not officially closed but is inoperable due to Israeli air strikes on the Gaza side.

"There is an urgent need to alleviate the suffering of Palestinian civilians

in Gaza," Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry told reporters, adding that talks with Israel had not been fruitful.

"Until now the Israeli government has not taken a position on opening the Rafah crossing from the Gaza side to allow the entrance of assistance and exit of citizens of third countries."

More than 2 million Gazans have been under siege since Israel launched an intense bombardment and blockade in retaliation for an assault by the Hamas Islamist militants.

Two Egyptian security sources had told Reuters a ceasefire in

southern Gaza to last several hours had been agreed for Monday morning to facilitate aid and evacuations at Rafah.

However, Israel denied that.

"There is currently no truce and humanitarian aid in Gaza in exchange for getting foreigners out," a statement from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said.

Hamas official Izzat El-Reshiq told Reuters the same.

On the ground at Rafah, one source said that there had been no bombardments on Monday and that the Egyptian side of the crossing was ready.



A view of trucks carrying humanitarian aid for Palestinians, as they wait for the re-opening of the Rafah border crossing to enter Gaza, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in the city of Al-Arish, Sinai peninsula, Egypt.

Iran says Hamas is ready to release hostages if airstrikes stop

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Iran's Foreign Ministry said Monday that Hamas potentially was ready to release the nearly 200 hostages it is holding if Israel stops its campaign of airstrikes on the Gaza Strip. The militant group hasn't acknowledged making such an offer.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani spoke at a news conference in Tehran. Iran's theocracy is a main sponsor of Hamas in its fight against Israel, Tehran's regional arch-enemy.

Hamas officials "stated that they are ready to take necessary measures to release the citizens and civilians held by resistant groups, but their point was that such measures require preparations that are impossible under daily bombardment by the Zionists against various parts of Gaza," Kanaani said.

Hamas has said it will trade the captives for thousands of Palestinians held by Israel in the kind of lopsided exchange deals that have been reached in the past.



Palestinians recover a body from under the rubble of a building destroyed in an Israeli airstrike in Khan Yunis in the southern of Gaza Strip.

Russia's Putin speaks to Iran, Israel, Palestinians, Syria and Egypt

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin entered the fevered diplomatic fray of the Middle East on Monday, speaking to five of the major players including Iran and leading Arab powers in an attempt to secure a ceasefire in the war between Israel and Hamas.

Russia, which has relationships with Iran, Hamas, major Arab powers as well as with the Palestinians and with Israel, has repeatedly said the United States and the West have ignored the need for an independent Palestinian state within 1967 borders.

Putin spoke to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi

and to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad by telephone, the Kremlin said. He also plans to speak to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, it said.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told Putin that the situation was escalating, that Israeli army actions were "indiscriminate" and that the risk was that Israel would begin a ground operation against Gaza.

"The threat is high that this whole conflict gets out of control," Ryabkov told Putin at a meeting also attended by Russia's spy

chiefs and military leaders. He said that the United States was ultimately responsible for the crisis due to its failed policy in the Middle East and that Washington was blocking a Russian resolution in the UN Security Council.

Putin, who says the West is seeking to cleave Russia apart by supporting Ukraine, says the current violence in the Middle East shows just how far U.S. policy in the region has failed.

Putin will meet Xi Jinping in China this week in a bid to deepen a partnership forged between the United States' two biggest strategic competitors.

France's Macron holds security meeting amid heightened alert after deadly school stabbing

Monitoring Desk
ARRAS: French President Emmanuel Macron held a special security meeting on Monday amid heightened alert against feared terror threats, as a high school where a teacher was fatally stabbed in an attack last week has been evacuated over a bomb threat. Several hundreds of students and teachers went back into the high school in the northern town of Arras after what appeared to be a false alert. All French schools held a moment of silence on Monday afternoon in homage to the teacher who was killed in Friday's attack by a former student suspected of Islamic radicalization. The homage also paid

tribute to another teacher, Samuel Paty, killed exactly three years ago near his Paris area school. He was beheaded by a radicalized Chechen later killed by police. Macron cut short travel plans abroad to hold a security meeting at midday with the prime minister and other key government members as well as top military and counterterrorism officials. He initially planned to attend a summit on the Western Balkans in Tirana, Albania. Speaking at the end of the meeting, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said that 102 people have been arrested in relation with antisemitic acts.



Hlas-Social Democracy party chairman Peter Pellegrini, Smer-Social Democracy party chairman Robert Fico and Slovak National Party chairman Andrej Danko sign a coalition agreement to form a new government in Bratislava, Slovakia.

No, Rafael's 'Iron Beam' laser didn't blow up missiles over Israel

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Videos circulating on social media purporting to show a high-energy laser weapon destroying missiles during the Israel-Hamas war are actually altered clips derived from a military simulation video game. Cropped, low-resolution footage depicting swarms of overhead projectiles being intercepted in front of a tower are sourced from Arma 3, a photorealistic game billed as a "massive military sandbox" by its publisher, Bohemia Interactive.

Multiple prominent accounts on X, formerly Twitter, shared videos over the weekend incorrectly claiming they showed the real-world application of Iron Beam, developed by Israeli company Rafael Advanced Defense Systems.

Czech Republic-based Bohemia Interactive on Oct. 10 warned that its game — set in a futuristic, fictional conflict, and easily modded and recorded by players — was being used to peddle misinformation.

Moscow does not violate UN sanctions against North Korea - Russian diplomat

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Moscow does not violate United Nations sanctions against North Korea, but is categorically against new restrictive measures on Pyongyang, a high-ranking Russian diplomat told the RIA state news agency in remarks published on Sunday.

"Russia, as a responsible member of the world community, strictly adheres to its international obligations towards Pyongyang through the UN Security

Council," Russian Ambassador at Large Oleg Burmistrov told RIA in an interview.

"At the same time, we are categorically against the introduction of new restrictive measures."

The White House on Friday said North Korea recently provided Russia with a shipment of weapons, calling it a troubling development and raising concerns about the expanded military relationship between the two countries.

Raisi says Iran backs Palestinians but 'resistance' groups decide independently

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Supporting the Palestinians is Iran's foreign policy priority but the "resistance" groups make their own independent decisions, President Ebrahim Raisi told his Russian counterpart in a phone call on Monday, Iranian state media reported. They quoted Raisi as also telling Russia's Vladimir Putin: "There is a possibility of the conflict between Israel and Palestinians expanding to other fronts."

China calls for ceasefire in Israel, suggests mediation at meeting with Russia

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's foreign minister on Monday called for a ceasefire to halt the bloodshed in Israel, suggesting at a meeting with his Russian counterpart that major world powers should work to avoid a humanitarian disaster. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov discussed the conflict between Israel and Hamas with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing ahead of a visit by President Vladimir Putin to China.

Security Council must take action, and the major powers should play an active role," Wang told Lavrov, according to a Chinese transcript of the meeting. "It is imperative that a ceasefire be put in place, that the two sides be brought back to the negotiating table, and that an emergency humanitarian channel be established to prevent a further humanitarian disaster." Russia and China, both permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

Govt plans to include health, hygiene in curricula: Dr Nadeem

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan on Monday said that the government had planned to include health, hygiene, and nutrition in the curricula to create awareness among people from the childhood.

He was addressing a women convention on 'Family Planning and Population', which was organized by the Population Programme Wing (PPW) of the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination.

The minister said that the main objective of the convention was to raise the awareness and knowledge of women, particularly the rural women on population issues and family planning.

He said that the population of Pakistan was growing at an alarmingly high growth rate, with addition of around 6.1 million new individuals every year. "This is more than the

size of the total population of countries like Singapore, Denmark and Norway," he added. "It means every year we are adding the population more than the Denmark's population in Pakistan."

He said, "When population is growing we need to increase the resources. If we cannot rapidly increase our resources, we should focus on stabilization and management of our population at the family, community and country level and it is a huge pressure on our resources and economy."

He suggested to integrate the health, population and nutrition at the federal and provincial levels which would synergize and complement each other. He quoted the example of Iran where family is taken as a unit.

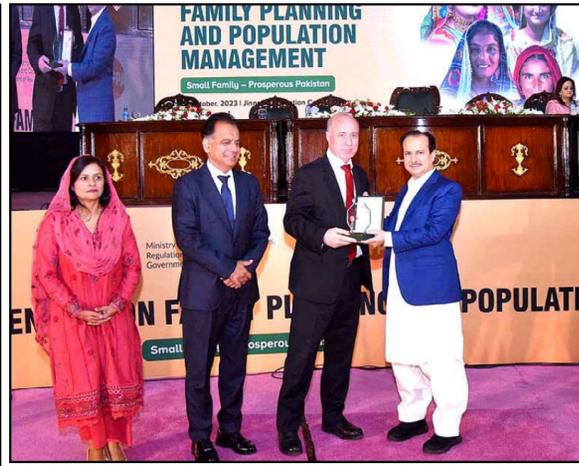
He said that health as well as the family planning were the fundamental hu-

man rights. "There is a direct link between female status and development. Women can contribute in the development through literate, educated, well aware and empowered females."

He said that at the policy level, the number of lady health workers would be increased to 150,000. "We will integrate polio workers and volunteers, which are our asset into LHWs (lady health workers) to address the uncovered areas."

He said that the government would ensure due respect and dignity for the hospital staff, nurses, midwives, doctors and community workers.

He suggested that there should be a dashboard at the district, provincial and federal levels showing real time information on health, population and family planning to indicate as to where we are going.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Health Minister Dr. Nadeem Jan presenting a shield to UNFPA Country Director Dr. Luay Shabaneh at All Pakistan Women Convention on Family Planning and Population Management.

HEC explores opportunities for students, faculty in WBAF Financial Inclusion Programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan held here Monday a meeting with Executive Chairman World Business Angel Forum (WBAF), Mr. Babarys Altuntas to explore opportunities for students and faculty under the WBAF Financial Inclusion Programme.

Chaired by Chairman HEC Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, the meeting was attended by Vice Chancellors/Pro-Vice Chancellors of leading public sector universities including MNS University of Agriculture Multan, National Textile University Faisalabad, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, National University of Modern Languages Islamabad, Institute of Management Sciences Peshawar, University of Agriculture Faisalabad, DOW University of Health Sciences Karachi, National University of Science & Technology Islamabad.

CEO IGNITE Mr. Asim Hussain, Director General R&I HEC Hazrat Bilal, Director R&I HEC Ms. Noshaba Awais, and representatives of universities' Business Incubation Centres, also attended the meeting.

The meeting held in continuation of the recent collaboration established between HEC and WBAF, in March 2023 on the sidelines of the 5th Vice Chancellors Forum. WBAF, an international organization, aims to ease access to finance for start-ups for generating jobs in the world economy.

CPEC major milestone in shape of successful projects in several sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi said on Monday that China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was a major milestone in shape of successful projects in Pakistan including road infrastructure, power sector, and industrial zones worth 62 billion dollars.

Delivering his speech at the CPEC Art Exhibition jointly organised by Behria University and China Media Group here he said he was glad to note that relations between Pakistan and China were getting stronger with every passing day.

The minister said that

above all people were the heart and soul of every thing and they were focus of every initiative that the government launched. The minister said it was well established fact that arts and culture had a deeper impact on human lives. He said it was encouraging that in this event not only art pieces were being exhibited but interactive media was also included in this exhibition.

He hoped that new interactive media would attract more young people and make them aware of the importance of Pakistan, China friendship and how this was reflected through the CPEC projects.



ISLAMABAD: Workers of Jamat-e-Islami (Women wing) hold banners and placards during "Free Palestine Rally" in City.

Prominent persons call on Jamal Shah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prominent arts and academia figures here on Monday met with Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah at the Culture Division to discuss cultural preservation and peace, exploring academic partnerships to empower youth creatively, concluding with a friendly gathering.

Conversations also revolved around plans to establish academic connections with periphery universities to empower youth creatively, said a press release issued here.

The meeting included attendees such as film director Sajjad Ahmed, Prof. Dr. Mansoor Ahmed Kundi, who previously served as

the VC of both Gomal University and Bahauddin Zakariya University, Former ED HEC, Islamabad, and Sarfaraz Ali Korojo, who holds the position of Executive Director of Students Advancement Fund Endowment (SAFE) at Shah Abdul Latif University, and is the Founder of the Pak-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) Sukkur Chapter, among others who met with the minister.

In the meeting, they conveyed their best wishes to the minister.

During meeting, they talked about common areas of interest and matters concerning the promotion and preservation of the country's artistic and cultural heritage.

Competent officers should be transferred to Operations division; ICCPO

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan held an important meeting at Central Police Officer, a public relations officer said.

He said that, during the meeting, the ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan assessed the performance of all divisions and issued directives to improve their performance further. Senior police officers from all divisions of Islamabad Capital Police were present at the occasion.

The meeting emphasized the effective use of

the ICT-15 application by all officers and officials, effectively in fulfilling their official duties. Directives were given to strengthen the security of all important government offices and installations.

Special directions were issued to SSP Operations, to improve the standard and effectiveness of Operations division by appointing officers skilled in investigation matters.

Those police officers and officials who have been suspended should not be sent for training courses. Directives were also given to reduce delays in case processing due to SOPs.



ISLAMABAD: Teachers are shouting slogans during protest outside National Press Club as More than 300 teachers working in Federal Capital's schools under wedlock have appealed to President Dr Arif Alvi to sign the much-awaited legislation entitled "Protection of Family Life and Wedlock Bill 2023" which was passed by both Houses of the Parliament, the National Assembly and the Senate of Pakistan.

AC conducts massive crackdown on encroachers, violators of polythene ban

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a massive crackdown on encroachers, beggars, and violators of the polythene ban, the Assistant Commissioner Secretariat Islamabad Aneel Saeed visited different areas of the Secretariat Sub-Division and conducted price checks, inspected the unauthorized use of polythene bags and overall cleanliness, and took action against violators in accordance with the law.

Four encroachers were arrested and transferred to the police station, and their goods were seized. Thirty-six profes-

sional beggars were also arrested from different areas of Islamabad, ICT spokesman said on Monday.

He also issued a warning on the unauthorized use of open spaces, instructions were issued for immediate registration with the (MCI / DMA) under the law.

The Assistant Commissioner also ensured the implementation of dengue SOPs, warning was issued for violating the SOPs. He also inspected the petrol pumps, bakeries, cash and carry for fire fighting arrangements and a warning was issued.



ISLAMABAD: Cultural Counselor of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China and Director China Cultural Center in Pakistan Zhang Heqing wrote Long Live Pak-china Friendship on charts during the celebrations of 74th Anniversary of Founding of the People's Republic of China - Celebrating a Decade of CPEC and BRI at local hotel in Federal Capital.

Italian Embassy hosts immersive digital art exhibition

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Italian Embassy in Pakistan on Monday organized an immersive digital art exhibition, bringing an innovative art form to the Pakistani audience. Speaking on the occasion, Italian Ambassador Andreas Ferrarese expressed his pride in presenting the unique showcase of digital art to the public, highlighting its versatility and wide range of possibilities.

The ambassador acknowledged the artwork of Stefano Fake, one of Italy's celebrated digital artists. He praised Italy's capacity to blend historical heritage with new and creative arts, dispelling the notion that the country was solely associated with its past. Stefano Fake, in his address, delved into the journey of digital art, which he began nearly 30 years ago.

He described his transition from traditional art to digital tools in 1997, culminating in the establishment of his studio in 2001, dedicated to creating immersive

art experiences. Fake underlined that every era had its unique artistic tools, and digital art represented the current period's creative expression. He said, "The purpose of art is, after all, to create original and imaginative forms of aesthetic expression shared with a community through experiences and events."

Stefano Fake's early work in this field was initially met with skepticism, often being associated with music or youth-centric events. However, over time, digital art gained recognition and acceptance. His exhibitions now span the globe, from Germany to Colombia, and even recent showcases in Berlin and Shanghai. This transformation reflects the growing appreciation for new media art worldwide.

One of Fake's groundbreaking approaches was to immerse audiences in a digital environment, using video projection to transform spaces and even people.

Umrah draw held at AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Employees Welfare Association (EWA) of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) organised an Umrah draw in the university's auditorium the other day.

Six members from grade 2 to 16 including Irfan Ahmed, Farman Ali, Iram Nazli, Mumtaz Alam, Riassat Hussain and Muhammad Ansar, while 5 members from grade 17 to 21 including Shah Farrukh, Zahida Parveen, Shafique Ahmed, Aftab Ahmed and Naveed Sultana were among the lucky members whose name was balloted and they will perform umrah this year.

The ceremony was presided over by Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, while Registrar, Raja Umar Younis, Chairman, Umrah Committee, Syed Zia Hussain Naqvi, President EWA Yasir Mahmood and other representatives participated in the event. The VC and the Registrar congratulated all the lucky winners.

Dr. Nasir Mahmood advised them to go to Madinah and offer special prayers for the development and prosperity of the country and the university in particular.

Secretary education announces bonus for teachers and head-teachers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary of the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training on Monday hosted head teachers and teachers from seven schools working under Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) here on Monday. On the occasion, the Secretary also announced a one-month bonus salary for the teachers and head-teachers present, as well as a one-time grant of Rs 100,000 for each of the seven schools to be used at the discretion of the head-teacher. As part of the Ministry's STEAM Pakistan program, the head teachers and the program's focal persons were invited to tea to celebrate these schools' commitment to improving the learning experience of their students. "From the establishment of STEAM Clubs, organising Safer sessions, encouraging students to conduct STEAM demonstrations, these schools have shown how we can transform schools just through committed teachers and head teachers."

ITA announces 10% reduction in transport fares

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Transport Authority (ITA), in a bid to provide relief to commuters, on Monday announced 10% reduction in transport fares, both for inter-city and intra-city routes.

The decision was to the effect taken in a meeting held on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon, following the reduction in the price of petroleum products by the government.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary Waseem Ajmal announces bonus for teachers and head-teachers. The Secretary of the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training hosted head teachers and teachers from 7 FDE schools today.

Virtual University organized All Pakistan Integration camp

ISLAMABAD: The Virtual University of Pakistan commenced its highly anticipated Student Integration Camp 2023 in collaboration with the Pakistan Boys Scout Association.

This exciting event was organised at the Headquarter of Pakistan Boys Scouting Association Islamabad. More than 300 students gathered for the event from all provinces of Pakistan including GB and Azad Kashmir for a memorable 5-day experience.

The Student Integration Camp offered a wide array of activities, including camping, hiking, archery, first aid training, and capturing bonfire. This unique camp not only provided students with an opportunity to connect with peers from various backgrounds but also enables them to forge connections that can be invaluable for both professional networking and personal development. To promote healthy lifestyle hiking walk along with visit to Pakistan Monument was organised by VU for their campers.

The closing ceremony of the Student Integration Camp took place at the National Headquarters of PBSA in Islamabad.

The ceremony was graced by the esteemed presence of Mr. Muhammad Junaid Jalil Khan Director General Pakistan Customs, Mr. Sohail Tajik, Deputy Director General Anti Narcotics Force Pakistan, Prof. Dr. Arshad Saleem Bhatti, the Rector of the Virtual University of Pakistan, and Mr. Sarfaraz Qamar Dahi, the Chief Commissioner of PBSA. During the ceremony, Registrar VU Prof. Dr. Mohsin Javed shared his insights about the significance of the student integration camp for VU students.

Prof. Dr. Arshad Saleem Bhatti emphasized the importance of Scouting and its profound impact on our student in recognition of his invaluable support in organizing this remarkable event for our student community, providing all the necessary assistance required for its success.

IRSA releases 99,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 99,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 69,000 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1528.93 feet and was 130.93 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 39,300 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1212.90 feet, which was 162.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.

The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 8,100 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 60,400, 57,900, 50,900 and 20,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 9,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.



ISLAMABAD: Italian Ambassador to Pakistan Andreas Ferrarese and his spouse Albana Ferrarese posing for group photo along with participants after an event by "fake Factory" at local hotel in Federal Capital.

Four high-profile absconders apprehended for serious crimes

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police successfully detained four high-profile absconders involved in serious criminal activities, police said on Monday.

As per the directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, senior police officials were assigned specific tasks to ensure the apprehension of proclaimed offenders and absconders engaged in severe criminal activities.

In adherence to these orders, the police

teams from Karachi Company, Golra, Noon, and Lohi Bher police stations collaborated to apprehend the four high-profile absconders associated with serious crimes.

The ICCPO, emphasized that the police were committed to eliminating crimes from the city, with strict actions planned for those involved in heinous crimes and illegal activities.

Ensuring the safety of citizens and their property remained the top-most priority for the Islamabad Capital Police, he emphasized.



ISLAMABAD: Director General Pakistan Customs, Mr. Muhammad Junaid Jalil Khan and Deputy Director General Anti Narcotics Force Pakistan Mr. Sohail Tajik, honored with souvenirs by Prof. Dr. Arshad Saleem Bhatti, Rector of Virtual University of Pakistan, at the closing ceremony of the VU's student integration camp.