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Security forces kill 8 Khwarij, two soldiers martyred in KP operations



APP

RAWALPINDI: Security Forces killed eight Khwarij, while two Army jawans, including Captain Muhammad

Zohaibuddin, embraced martyrdom in a gunfight during the past 24 hours in separate operations across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the first operation took place on November 30, 2024, in Baka Khel, Bannu District, following intelligence reports of Khwarij activity in the area.

The security forces targeted the Khwarij location, killing five militants and injuring nine others. Sepoy Iftikhar Hussain, aged 29 from District Jhang, was martyred during the exchange of fire.

In a second operation, conducted in the Shagai area of Khyber District, three

Khwarij were killed and two were captured. During the intense firefight, Captain Muhammad Zohaibuddin, aged 25 from Lahore, who was leading his troops, embraced martyrdom.

These militants were involved in multiple terrorist activities against both security forces and civilians.

Sanitisation operations continued in the region to eliminate any remaining Khwarij, security forces are determined to eradicate terrorism from Pakistan, with these sacrifices further solidifying their resolve.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi praised the security forces for their efforts in fighting terrorism.

Both PM Shehbaz and Naqvi also offered condolences to the family of Captain Zohaibuddin.

The premier said that Captain Zohaibuddin's sacrifice would be remembered in history.



Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar addresses to media persons during press conference, in Islamabad.

Info Minister slams PTI for spreading false propaganda

By Zahid Ahmed Khan

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has said that PTI is spreading fake news and false propaganda to hide its failed attempt of disrupting peace in the Federal Capital, and sabotage the national economy.

Talking to media in Islamabad this evening [Sunday], he said the party is hell-bent to practice politics of corpses to achieve its vested political interests.

He also rejected PTI's claim that officials of Law Enforcement Agencies opened straight firing on the protesters. He said the law enforcers were there to maintain peace and order, and did not have any live ammunition.

The Minister said, on the contrary, there were hardened criminals and trained people-led by PTI leader Murad Saeed amongst protesters. He said they martyred officials of the Pakistan Rangers and the Police. He said it was an illegal protest as the Islamabad High Court had not allowed this. He said

this march on Islamabad inflicted a loss of 192 billion rupees daily on the national economy.

Attaullah Tarar said they are making false propaganda as they have failed to present any video evidence to prove their claim that the Law Enforcement Agencies used live ammunition against the protesters.

The Minister said the protesters opened indiscriminate firing, targeting the officials of the law enforcement agencies as a result of which 192 law enforcers have been injured. He said it is responsibility of the government to establish and maintain writ of the state, and protect lives and properties of the citizens.

He also presented salute to the honorable people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for rejecting the call to create unrest and chaos in the country.

Answering a question, the Minister said identification of miscreants is continuing and the culprits should be given exemplary punishment. He said the Constitution fully elaborates that any protest should be peaceful.

CM Bugti Felicitates Sindhi People on Sindhi Culture Day

APP

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister (CM) Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Sunday expressed good wishes to all Sindhi brothers and sisters on the occasion of Sindhi Culture Day and said that Sindhi culture is a culture of peace, love, tradition and unity.

In his message on the occasion of Sindhi Culture Day,

he stressed the need to officially celebrate the cultural days of all communities at the national level to promote our peaceful co-existence so that they can play their role in the development and prosperity of Pakistan with national spirit.

CM Bugti felicitated Sindhi brothers and

sisters living all over the world on Sindhi Culture Day, saying that culture brings colours of happiness to the lives of people.

The CM said Pakistan is a bouquet of different cultures, and Sindhi culture is also prominent in this bouquet.

Sarfraz Bugti said that Sindhi culture is a culture of peace, love, traditions and unity which is among the oldest cultures in the world.

He said that it is our first responsibility to keep all the cultures of Pakistan alive and to attract the young generation towards knowledge and awareness.

Sarfraz Bugti said that culture is the name of unity, love human respect and being connected to the motherland.

DPM Dar inaugurates Charity Bazaar at Foreign Office

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Sunday inaugurated the Charity Bazaar organized by the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA).

Cultural stalls from various foreign embassies were displayed at the event held at the Foreign Office.

The Bazaar, aimed at supporting underprivileged communities, brought together diplomats and their families, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of different countries.

Speaking at the occasion, the deputy prime minister said that the bazaar provided a great opportunity to the people of Islamabad and Rawalpindi to visit the foreign office and have a glimpse of the rich culture of other countries, through their food and handicrafts, and help in charitable causes being persuaded by PFOWA.

"Today's bazaar is a captivating blend of

diverse cultures and a variety of experiences, fostering harmony and fraternity among different nations," Ishaq Dar added.

He extended his gratitude to the diplomatic community and the residents in Islamabad for their 'active and colorful participation' in today's event.

"Wonderful to see that every country has done a great demonstration of the culture in their country, the food and different other articles which is a unique experience for the visitors." He emphasized that one of the aims of this event was to promote a better understanding of the social, cultural, and economic life of Pakistan. Towards this end, he said PFOWA also arranges various events such as exhibitions, cultural shows, and social meetings. DPM Ishaq Dar noted that the theme of today's event, 'Joining hands, Joining hearts' was very interesting. "It is a beautiful theme and apt under the current challenges which the whole globe is suffering, we saw yesterday, that Malaysia.

PTA decides not to impose ban on VPNs

INP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's telecom regulator has decided not to impose a nationwide ban on virtual private networks (VPNs) on Sunday.

According to details, the government opted against the ban after the Ministry of Law clarified that it does not have the legal authority under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016 to enforce such restrictions.

Earlier, the Ministry of Interior had requested the ban, citing concerns over the use of VPNs by terrorists and access to explicit content.

However, the Ministry of Law highlighted that PECA only permits blocking specific online content and does not allow a blanket ban on VPNs.

It is expected that the Ministry of Interior will withdraw its request.

The telecom regulator had previously asked businesses and freelancers to register their VPNs by November 30.

Following concerns over a potential ban, nearly 27,000 VPNs have been registered, including 7,000 new registrations.

Software houses had raised alarms about the potential negative impact on their operations.

CM Gandapur rejects Centre's claims of lawlessness, 'ineffective CTD' in KP

INP

PESHAWAR: After the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government was blamed for misplacing the law-and-order priorities, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur strongly rejected the Centre's claims of his administration's inability to cope with security challenges and empower Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) in the province.

"The law and order situation has improved in our government," said Gandapur addressing a press conference in Peshawar on Sunday in which he responded to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's statement pointing towards the CTD's ineffectiveness to uproot terrorism in the province.

He added that the counterterrorism department was fully functional and carried out "thousands of successful operations" against terrorists.

He further detailed that the provincial government will disburse an additional Rs1 billion to the CTD. Special cells have been prepared for the department to keep the arrested suspects, he added. The KP CM went on to say that his administration was also purchasing 20 bulletproof vehicles besides announcing to hand over funds to the CTD personnel for 300 kits and drones.

He added that the quota for martyred officials has been increased from 5% to 12%, as well as, awarding plots to the heirs of the martyrs.

No weapon was used to disperse miscreants in PTI protest: interior ministry

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Interior has issued the statement on the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protest and action against it.

The statement mentioned that the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on 21 November directed the federal government to take all necessary measures to maintain law and order in the federal capital.

The IHC directed the interior minister to engage with the PTI leadership in this regard. Given the sensitivity of Belarusian President and Chinese high level delegation visit, PTI was initially asked to postpone the protest but on their persistence to continue with the protest, PTI was subsequently offered Sanghani area as

a designated location.

In this regard, out of the ordinary and at odd timings, meetings were also allowed between the PTI leadership and its founder. On the contrary and in spite of the extraordinary concessions extended, PTI violated the court's orders blatantly and instead of holding protest at designated place (Sanghani), unlawfully breached entry towards the Red Zone of Islamabad.

Throughout the protest march from Peshawar to Red Zone Islamabad, violent protestors of PTI aggressively engaged LEAs repeatedly using firearms and all sorts of other weaponry including steel slung shots, stun grenades, tear gas shells and nail studded batons to force their way to Red Zone Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar is visiting at Nepal stall during Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) charity bazaar 2024 at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the Federal Capital.

Agriculture census to boost per acre yield of crops: Ahsan

APP

NAROWAL: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal says agriculture census being conducted by federal government will help increase per acre yield of crops.

Speaking at an event in Narowal today, he said planning in agriculture sector and use of modern technology will materialize greener Pakistan project.

Ahsan Iqbal emphasized the importance of data for policy-making in the agricultural sector.

He highlighted that more than 60 percent of Pakistan's population is directly or indirectly associated with agriculture.

He asked the field force to work diligently and collect accurate data as the agriculture census is a crucial step for Pakistan's development.

Ahsan Iqbal said that agriculture statistics will provide a

better understanding of the challenges being faced by farmers.

He the Prime Minister's vision to modernize agriculture in the next five years is aimed at enhanced productivity.

The Minister stressed the need to adopt modern trends across all sectors.

He highlighted importance of agricultural statistics for a predominantly agrarian country like Pakistan and praised Pakistan Bureau of Statistics for introducing an automated local system.

Ahsan Iqbal said data collected will be instrumental in formulating agricultural policies, identifying areas with potential for increased productivity and providing necessary resources to achieve better yields.

Ahsan Iqbal said digital agricultural census will enhance agricultural produce in line with the growing population.



Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal Speaking at an event in Narowal.

Govt dismisses internet disruptions as users report nationwide outages again

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Users across the country once again reported internet disruptions on Sunday, as the government downplayed the outages, dismissing concerns about the firewall situation as "blown out of proportion."

In recent months, users have experienced sluggish speeds, difficulty downloading media on WhatsApp, and intermittent connectivity issues.

Digital analysts say the government has been testing a "firewall" that monitors some platforms and gives the power to block content, like photos or videos of rallies shared on WhatsApp.

The country started facing internet disruption again last week after the government restricted access to mobile services in light of PTI's final call rally.

According to Downtdetector, an internet outage tracking website, several websites reported outages early today.

The tracking website received 57 reports on the outage of WhatsApp, 86 for TikTok and 161 for Instagram.

Bilawal Lauds Security Forces for Eliminating Eight Terrorists

APP

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has lauded the security forces for eliminating eight terrorists in operations conducted in Bannu and Khyber districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to a press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House on Sunday, he said that the successful operation against terrorists was a source of pride for the nation.

Paying tribute to Captain Muhammad Zohaibuddin and Sepoy Iftikhar Hussain, who embraced martyrdom during the operation, he said, the terrorists responsible for the martyrdom of these brave sons of the nation will face a dreadful end.

Bilawal Bhutto offered prayers for the elevation of ranks of the martyred soldiers and expressed heartfelt condolences to their families, praying for their strength and patience in this time of grief.

GCU campus to be inaugurated in Chiniot this month: Minister

APP

FAISALABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh said that GC University campus will be inaugurated in Chiniot this month to provide quality education to people.

Addressing the 8th convocation of FAST University Chiniot-Faisalabad Campus on Sunday, he said that quality education was prerequisite for progress and prosperity. "Therefore, the government is concentrating on the provision of quality education to materialize the dream of national progress and prosperity," he added.

He said that Pakistan was bestowed with huge resources. "There is immense potential in the country due to which Pakistan remained ahead of India for 40 years in national progress. Now a temporary break occurred in national development but this issue would be resolved very soon," he added.

He said that national unity was imperative for development of the country. "We should end our personal vendetta and prefer to national interests", he added.

He said that Pakistan was passing through a crucial stage as more than 100 million people were living near or below the poverty line. However, the government under dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will overcome this issue by promoting quality education and providing this facility at doorsteps of the masses, he added.

Qaiser Sheikh said that China focused on education and made progress rapidly. "So we should also concentrate to equip our youths with quality education and latest trend of business. There is a lot of potential in our youths and pace of national development could gain momentum if our youths are provided skills and work facilities," he added.

He also announced a cash prize of Rs.100,000 to each boys and girls who won gold medals in the 8th convocation of FAST University Chiniot-Faisalabad Campus. Bashir Jan Muhammad, Chancellor Institute of Business Management/Chairman Westbury Group of Companies (Dalda Foods), said that technical education was imperative for national development in addition to overcoming the issue of poverty.

Donald Trump announces loyalist Kash Patel as choice to lead FBI



By Khawaja Farooq

WASHINGTON: United States President-elect Donald Trump aims to make loyalist Kash Patel the next director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), he said on Saturday, in a move that would mean replacing the key agency's current leader.

Trump announced the former adviser and Pentagon official, who has been critical of the bureau and is known for his controversial views on a so-called government "deep state," as his choice for the post on his Truth Social network.

The FBI's current director, Christopher Wray, was appointed to a 10-year term in 2017, meaning he would either need to

step down or be fired. The FBI under Wray — who Trump appointed — has investigated the incoming president, sparking Trump's ire.

"Kash is a brilliant lawyer, investigator and 'America First' fighter who has spent his career exposing corruption, defending Justice, and protecting the American People," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

A fierce defender of the incoming president, Patel supports the Republican hardliner notion of an anti-Trump "deep state" of allegedly biased government bureaucrats working to stifle Trump from behind the scenes, even having written a book on the subject.

A son of Indian immigrants, Patel served in several high-level posts during Trump's first term including as a national security advisor and as chief of staff to the acting defense secretary.

"Kash did an incredible job during my First Term," Trump said, adding that the nominee would work to "end the growing crime epidemic in America, dismantle the migrant criminal gangs, and stop the evil scourge of human and drug trafficking across the border."

Governor Tessori pledges to protect, promote Sindh cultural, values

INP

KARACHI: Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori on Sunday pledged to protect and promote the cultural values, traditions, and language of the province.

He said, "We pledge today to promote the culture of Sindh province and spread it around the world."

On the occasion of Sindhi Culture Day, he wished a very happy Sindhi Culture Day to the people of the province. He said, "I congratulate the people of the province."

He said that on Sindhi Culture Day, the people of the province wear Sindhi caps and ajrak to express their love for their culture.



ISLAMABAD: Students pose for group photo during the Alumni Evening of Model College for Girls G10/4.

FIA arrests wanted human trafficker at Islamabad Airport

INP

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Immigration on Sunday successfully apprehended a key suspect involved in a human trafficking case at Islamabad Airport on Sunday.

According to an FIA spokesperson, the arrested individual has been identified as Khawar Shehzad, who was allegedly involved in human trafficking and visa fraud. The suspect was detained upon his arrival at Islamabad Airport from Oman, he said. The FIA confirmed that Shehzad's name was on the stop list, and the Anti-Human Trafficking Circle in Lahore had been looking for him. The case against him was registered in 2023, with accusations that he had received large sums of money under the guise of providing visas, only to then flee.

Ex PM Majeed, PPP workers celebrated party's 57th Foundation Day in Mirpur



By Khawaja Farooq

Mirpur: Under the leadership of former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) workers celebrated the party's 57th Foundation Day with renewed enthusiasm and spirit for the "Jiyala" culture. During the event, PPP's young leader Chaudhry Muizz Majeed Chaudhry announced his candidacy for elections from Mirpur city under the PPP platform. The party leadership and workers showcased their strength, with the hall resonating with slogans such as "Jeay Bhutto," "Jeay Benazir Bhutto," "Jeay Asif Ali Zardari," "Jeay Bilawal Bhutto Zardari," "Jeay Faryal Talpur," "Jeay Chaudhry Abdul Majeed," and "Jeay Muizz Majeed."

The workers demonstrated their strong ideological commitment, highlighting the vision of PPP's founder chairman Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari, and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, aiming to revive ideological fervor among party members. In their speeches, workers paid glowing tributes to former Prime Minister

Chaudhry Abdul Majeed and his family for their unwavering loyalty, devotion, and sacrifices for the party. They pledged their ideological support to Muizz Majeed Chaudhry.

The event, presided over by former Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, featured Muizz Majeed Chaudhry as the chief guest. Prominent PPP leaders, including Asif Mir, Raja Iftikhar Ahmed Khan, Chaudhry Basharat Hussain Advocate, Zakaullah Joshi, Mirza Zubair Jarral, Raja Zahoor, Habib Kausar, Mirza Muhammad Riaz, Ameen Siddiqui, Malik Tanveer Subhani, Aslam Gujjar, Adil Shah, Shahid Rathore, Arsalan Gujjar, and Imran Gujjar, addressed the gathering. Leaders from PPP, PSF, PYO, and People's Lawyers Forum also participated.

Former Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed emphasized that the PPP is the party of the poor and the guardian of the nation. He stated that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto sacrificed their lives for the country and its people. He affirmed that President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

remain committed to PPP's ideology. He announced that Muizz Majeed Chaudhry would be the PPP candidate for Constituency LA-3 Mirpur, as decided by the party leadership. He also advised Muizz Majeed that politics is not an easy path but a challenging journey requiring relentless hard work, and Muizz has promised to remain steadfast in serving the people based on Bhutto's ideology.

Young PPP leader Muizz Majeed Chaudhry delivered a passionate speech, stating that Bhutto's ideology is ingrained in his blood. He pledged to continue serving the people without prejudice, remaining dedicated to the party's flag and vision. He said, "Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gave us an ideology and vision through PPP 57 years ago. Nations and societies that forget their ideologies are forgotten by history. The history of PPP is intertwined with the progress and integrity of Pakistan, and the party leadership is working tirelessly toward this goal."

Muizz shared that when he decided to enter politics, he prayed at the Kaaba for the strength to serve the people and remain steadfast in Bhutto's ideology.

Amir Muqam announces compensation for Parachinar 1 victims

INP

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan, and SAFRON, and President of PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam has announced compensation for all victims of recent incidents of violence in Parachinar on behalf of the federal government. He has directed the Kohat Commissioner to prepare a detailed report on the damages, said a press release issued on Sunday.

Speaking at a grand jirga in Kohat, the minister stressed the importance of restoring

peace in Parachinar for the greater good of the country and its people. He expressed condolences on behalf of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the federal government over the tragic incidents, praying for the departed souls and the swift recovery of the injured. Muqam emphasized that the issue transcends politics, urging all stakeholders to unite for a common resolution. "This is not just a provincial issue; it concerns the entire nation," he said and highlighted his efforts to foster unity, including visits to the Chief Minister's House and collaboration with the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Heavy machinery is busy in picked up garbage under the supervision of Anwar Lehri, Deputy Director Sanitation at Mali Bagh Transfer Station in Quetta



India's Jay Shah starts tenure as ICC chairman

SPORTS DESK

India's Jay Shah started his tenure as chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Sunday, replacing New Zealander Greg Barclay, the governing body said in a press release.

The 35-year-old Shah, son of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home minister Amit Shah, is the youngest ever ICC chairman.

Shah, also president of the Asian Cricket Council, was the sole candidate for the role after Barclay decided not to seek a third term.

According to a press release issued by the ICC, the agency announced the start of Shah's term, citing it as a "new chapter of global cricket".

While quoting the powerful Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket, the press release said he was "honoured" to be starting in the role of ICC chair and thanked the directors and member boards for their support and trust.

"This is an exciting time for the sport as we build up to the LA28 Olympic Games and strive to make cricket more inclusive and popular than ever before," the press release quoted Shah as saying.

Shah said that cricket stood at a "critical juncture" in terms of the "coexistence of multiple formats and accelerating the growth of the women's game".

"There is huge potential for the game of cricket globally, with so much opportunity to engage with existing and new fans, while ensuring the best resources and platforms for our cricketers around the world," Shah said.

He thanked Barclay for his "leadership in the role for the past four years and the milestones achieved during that period", adding that he was looking forward to working closely with the team and member countries to "sustainably expand the game's reach and evolution on the global stage."

The appointment comes as Pakistan and India were in a deadlock regarding the venue of the ICC champions trophy scheduled in Pakistan.

The tournament, scheduled to take place in Pakistan from February 19 to March 9, has become embroiled in a dispute,

with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) refusing to send its team to Pakistan, citing political and security concerns, despite assurances from all member boards regarding the security arrangements and the tentative match schedule.

An online meeting convened by the ICC on Friday aimed at resolving the issue and announcing the match schedule lasted just 15 minutes due to the uncompromising stance of both the PCB and the BCCI.

However, according to a Dawn report, both boards have retracted from their earlier stance and have agreed to play their future matches in ICC tournaments on a hybrid model.

Piastri wins Qatar sprint as McLaren widen gap on Ferrari



SPORTS DESK

DOHA: Oscar Piastri was gifted victory by his McLaren team-mate Lando Norris in Saturday's sprint at the Qatar Grand Prix as the British team consolidated their bid for the constructors' title for the first time since 1998 with a 1-2 triumph.

In an example of perfect teamwork, Norris led from pole to flag before slowing to allow Piastri to win by 0.136 seconds ahead of Mercedes' George Russell in third.

The result secured 15 points for McLaren in their bid to resist Ferrari, extending their advantage to 34 points with two Grands Prix remaining.

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz finished fourth ahead of team-mate Charles Leclerc, seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton in the second Mercedes and Haas' Nico Hulkenberg, Max Verstappen, Pierre Gasly of Alpine and Kevin Magnussen in the second Haas.

"It was defence all the way the whole race for me," said Piastri. "I had a good start and then Turn One, but not the pace I needed and then I was struggling, but it was great teamwork and a great McLaren 1-2! Norris said he had disobeyed the team to give Piastri his victory as his pay-back for the Australian's assistance at the Brazilian Grand Prix sprint when he was hoping to keep alive his bid for the drivers' title and Piastri gave him the victory."

"We scored the 1-2 we were aiming for and we have maximum points so I am happy for the team... Perfectly-executed! We did our job. It ended a bit closer than I wanted, but I had this planned since Brazil and

it's what I wanted. The team told me to do it, but I did it the best way I could.

Russell said: "We were very close in T1 a couple of times, but Lando backing up to help Oscar with DRS... It was pretty infuriating to be honest, but I understand why. The race was preceded by much paddock discussion of Hamilton's speed, or apparent lack of it in Friday's qualifying, the Briton claiming he was 'definitely not fast anymore' after being outqualified again by Russell."

As if to prove it, Hamilton made a blistering start by overtaking Leclerc as Norris led from pole, with Piastri passing Russell for second.

Verstappen, struggling with oversteer, dropped to eighth.

By lap 10, Norris was ahead of Piastri by three tenths with Russell nineteenth back in third, ahead of Sainz, Hamilton, Leclerc and Hulkenberg.

Most were in a "DRS train" and preserving their tyres for the final laps.

On lap 13, a masterful move by Leclerc into Turn One saw the Monegasque fight his way past Hamilton, the pair running wheel to wheel before the Ferrari pulled away.

Russell was also busy hunting down Piastri and failed in a bid to pass on lap 14 while Norris reported his front tyres were losing performance yet he clocked a fastest lap to stay on top, hoping to drag his team-mate with him.

Kluivert's makes history with penalty hat-trick, Brentford thrash Leicester

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Justin Kluivert scored the first-ever Premier League hat-trick of penalties as Bournemouth won 4-2 at Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday and Kevin Schade also scored three in Brentford's 4-1 victory over Leicester City.

Nottingham Forest moved into the top six thanks to a 1-0 win over Ipswich Town, while Newcastle United were denied by Daniel Munoz's 94th minute equaliser for Crystal Palace in a 1-1 draw at Selhurst Park.

Kluivert made history at Molineux to curtain Wolves' mini-revival.

The Dutchman opened the scoring, Jorgen Strand Larsen replied for Wolves before Milos Kerkez made it 2-1 for the visitors inside eight minutes.

Kluivert made it 3-1 just 10 minutes later and completed his hat-trick 16 minutes from time after Evanilson also set a record by winning a third penalty.

Strand Larsen pulled another goal back for Wolves, but Gary O'Neil's men slip back into the relegation zone.

Brentford continued their stunning home form to thrash the Foxes in front of Leicester's in-coming manager Ruud van Nistelrooy.

Facundo Buonanotte had put the visitors in front in west London.

But Brentford roared back to make it six wins and one draw from seven home league games this season.

Yoane Wissa started the comeback before Schade took centre stage.

The German had only scored two Premier League goals since joining the Bees in 2023 but matched that tally in 24 minutes to put the home side in front before half-time.

Schade then rounded off the scoring to show Van Nistelrooy the scale of the task that awaits him ahead of his first game in charge at home to West Ham United on Tuesday. Chris Wood's emphatically struck penalty was enough to get Forest back to winning ways and leave Ipswich still in the bottom three.

Palace edged out of the relegation zone on goal difference thanks to late drama against Newcastle.

Marc Guehi, who had been the subject of multiple bids from Newcastle during the transfer window, put the Magpies in front early in the second half with an own goal.



However, the England defender redeemed himself as from his cross Munoz powered home a header at the back post. On Friday, Kaoru Mitoma's first-half header for Brighton & Hove Albion was cancelled out by a Flynn Downes strike just before the hour as the Seagulls drew 1-1 at home with bottom side Southampton to move up to second in the table.

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Flying ban reversal

THE European Aviation Safety Agency has finally lifted the ban on flights of the national flag carrier to and from Europe after more than four years. Nevertheless, it will take months and potentially heavy investment in new planes before the airline can resume operations on lucrative European routes. The ban on PIA flights to the UK is yet to be revoked.

Still, celebrations are in order since the EU ban has been lifted after repeated failures of the Civil Aviation Authority since 2020 to address EASA's safety concerns. The European aviation watchdog has apparently "re-established sufficient confidence in the [CAA's] oversight capabilities". The decision to approve the resumption of commercial operations was based on the CAA's "significant efforts". However, EASA clarified that the EU states would continue monitoring through the "prioritisation of ramp inspections of the air carriers certified in Pakistan and their crew to ensure compliance with aviation regulations and standards and identify safety concerns and trends before they become a threat".

Besides causing reputational damage, the ban, which came in the wake of a fatal PIA plane crash in Karachi, followed by a scandal over alleged fake pilot licences sparked by the claims of the then aviation minister, has cost the airline an annual revenue loss of nearly Rs40bn. It was also one of the several reasons for the government's failed attempt to privatise the national carrier a month ago when only one bidder showed up to buy the airline for a paltry Rs10bn for a 60pc stake in the company, against the asking price of Rs85bn. Undoubtedly, the resumption of flights to profitable European routes is being seen as a recovery point for the air carrier and may lead many to call for cancelling plans to sell it off and turn it around by investing in EU operations under a new management.

Similar efforts made by successive governments in the last one decade to resurrect PIA have amply exposed the futility of such exercises. There are many, including the incumbent privatisation minister, who have argued that the last attempt to sell the airline was structured in such a way as to scare away potential investors. Many influential leaders of the ruling PML-N are not in favour of disinvesting the airline. But only the naive can expect the reinstatement of European operations to help restore PIA's profitability.

The reasons that have brought PIA to this pass are many, and deep-rooted.

At best, the new development can only help the government fetch a better response from bidders when the airline is put up for auction again. It is, therefore, advisable that the authorities continue to focus on selling the company rather than investing public money in its fleet to resume its European operations.

By Arbab Imran

The Success of Quetta's Public-Private Waste Management Initiative: A Silent Revolution in the Making

Quetta, the provincial capital of Balochistan, has long struggled with the complex and multifaceted issue of solid waste management. On one hand, the city faces a shortage of resources, while on the other, inefficiencies rooted in bureaucracy, political unions, and external influences have hindered the effective use of the available resources. For years, these challenges have prevented Quetta from addressing the growing piles of garbage that have become an eyesore and a public health concern.

However, in an ambitious move to resolve this issue without requiring additional resources from the government, the provincial authorities have turned to a public-private partnership model. This approach, which was officially announced in March, aimed to tap into the efficiency and agility of the private sector to tackle a problem that the public sector had struggled to manage for years. The assumption was clear: the private sector, unencumbered by the red tape and inefficiencies often found in government-run projects, would bring new life and efficiency to Quetta's waste management system.

The decision was bold. By August, the project was officially inaugurated, and within a few short months, Quetta's solid waste management system was undergoing a massive overhaul. The project's timeline was ambitious—perhaps overly so. The government planned for one area of the city to be fully handed over to the private sector by December. This goal seemed daunting when compared to the struggles of other cities. Lahore, for instance, took four years to implement a similar waste management model, and Peshawar is still working to develop a workable approach.

Despite these hurdles, the team in Quetta, with the support of the Chief Minister's office, moved forward with enthusiasm. The results, as of yesterday, have been nothing short of transformative. The project, which operates under the name Safa Quetta (a public-private partnership), successfully collected

1,500 tonnes of waste in a single day. This is a remarkable achievement—previously, the highest tonnage ever collected in the same area by the Metropolitan Corporation was just 290 tonnes.

The journey to reach this point has been nothing less than a rollercoaster. From protests and legal challenges, including writ petitions against the project, to resistance from various stakeholders, the path was far from smooth. However, against all odds, the initiative has emerged victorious. The success of Safa Quetta has stunned critics and detractors alike, with many now acknowledging the speed and scale of the project's success.

This achievement is not just about numbers. It is a testament to the power of collaboration between the public and private sectors and the transformative potential of innovative solutions. The efficiency and scale at which Safa Quetta has operated demonstrate that, with the right leadership and vision, seemingly insurmountable problems can be solved. The swift progress in waste collection in such a short span is a silent revolution in the making—one that will significantly improve the cleanliness and health of the city.

Looking ahead, Quetta's waste management problems will soon be a thing of the past. In just a few months, the unsightly heaps of garbage that have plagued the city for decades will be cleared, and the solid waste management system will be far more efficient and sustainable. With Safa Quetta leading the way, this model has the potential to resolve waste management issues in Quetta for decades to come.

The success of this project is a lesson for other cities facing similar challenges. It shows that with the right blend of innovation, private sector efficiency, and strong political will, seemingly impossible tasks can be achieved. What began as a risky experiment has now turned into a shining example of how public-private partnerships can successfully tackle complex urban issues. It is clear that Quetta, under this partnership, is well on its way to becoming a cleaner, healthier city for its residents.

By Naseer Memon

Water deficit

RATHER than augmenting water productivity, our planners are obsessed with building new reservoirs and expanding irrigated areas. The reason? More structures mean more money. Barring the wet monsoon years, the Indus basin frequently endures water scarcity. For the last 25 years, the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) has declared water shortages every year and has not allocated water shares as enshrined in the 1991 Water Apportionment Accord.

Sindh has thus questioned the water availability certificate for the Cholistan irrigation scheme issued by Irsa early this year. In its summary to the Council of Common Interests, Sindh argued that Irsa's own water accounts (1999-2023) reveal that Punjab and Sindh have experienced annual water shortages of 13.7 per cent and 19.4pc respectively.

The water availability data presented by Punjab before Irsa was misleading. It left out the amount of water committed for some existing and future needs thus creating an impression of surplus water availability. It also failed to mention several current and future possible reductions. These reductions relate to the eastern river flows (2.98 MAF), India's use of the western rivers (2 MAF), the possible use by Afghanistan of the Kabul river (0.5 MAF), the overestimation of water supplies in the water accord (a shortfall of 21.5 MAF), Bhasha dam storage (6.4 MAF), Mohmand dam (0.88 MAF), Nai Gaj dam (0.16 MAF), Kurram Tangi dam (0.9 MAF), flood canals including the Kachhi, Raine, Greater Thal, Jalalpur and the Pat Feeder extension (3.34 MAF), the Chashma Right Bank canal (1.19 MAF), the

minimum outflow to the sea (8.6 MAF) and the LBOD reclamation supplies (2.2 MAF).

Put together, these requirements mean 50.65 MAF water every year. This amount dwarfs the purported surplus flow by a wide margin. From 1999 to 2023, the average annual flow below Kotri Barrage remained 14 MAF. Altogether, there is a colossal annual deficit of 36.63 MAF water in the Indus basin.

A sprawling irrigation web for corporate farming is impractical.

Various reports indicate a bleak picture of future river flows due to the impact of climate change. The chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority recently shared worrying data at a moot. He revealed that the country's snow cover has decreased by 23.3pc in recent years.

He said that the glaciers are melting at an alarming rate of 3pc every year, resulting in the loss of 16pc of the glacial mass over the past five years. He warned that while the melting glaciers might result in temporary water surpluses, the long-term implications were dire.

With the cryosphere touching a precarious tipping point, planning a sprawling irrigation web for corporate farming is an impractical venture. The Greater Cholistan scheme entails the building of three dams on the Chenab river. These include the Chiniot dam, the Mid Ranjha dam and the Shah Jiwana dam, which will collectively store 3.5 MAF of water.

The scheme also entails the construction of two barrages — the Bahawal Nagar and Hasilpur barrages on the Sutlej river. Additionally, the scheme involves the 195 kilometre-long Chiniot-Hasilpur link canal with a capacity of 15,000 cusecs and two feeder canals with a capacity of 8,500 and 5,500

cusecs. The Greater Cholistan scheme is designed to irrigate a command area of over 6m acres. If we add the 1.2m acres to be irrigated through the Smaller Cholistan scheme, the ambitious proposition would require even larger quantities of water.

Overall, the scope of corporate agriculture is not confined to Cholistan. In August, during a session of the National Assembly, the minister for food security, Rana Tanveer Hussain, revealed that, under the Green Pakistan Initiative, 4.8m acres of barren land had been earmarked across the country for corporate farming.

Since corporate agriculture projects are being designed to produce grain for international trade, a reliable commodity supply is essential. This translates to the need for reliable water supplies to sustain corporate farming. According to a media report last month,

Pakistan is seeking up to \$6 billion in investment from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Bahrain over the next three to five years for corporate farming, with the aim of cultivating 1.5m acres of previously unfarmed land and mechanising the existing 50m acres of agricultural land across the country.

Cultivating such an enormous land mass would require a massive irrigation network. Such an extensive infrastructure and investment of several billion dollars cannot be left at the mercy of erratic flood flows. An uninterrupted water supply is possible only through perennial rivers and canals. Punjab's own share of water is already committed for existing canals. Therefore, it makes sense when Sindh, the lower riparian expresses concern at the development of new command areas.

DAILY MIRROR

Israel's ever-increasing war fanaticism can lead to a major world war in the world: Samina Zehri

APP

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Human Rights, Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri has expressed solidarity with the Palestinian brothers and sisters and said that Pakistan has legitimately fought for the freedom and right of self-determination of the Palestinian people, full support will continue and the international community should take decisive action to immediately stop Israel's atrocities in Palestine and for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said that an independent state is the fundamental right of the Palestinians and to achieve this right, Muslim countries should raise their voice for the establishment of an independent state of Palestine and cruelty has increased to an alarming extent in recent times, but every eye is crying tears of blood at the indifference of the international community.

She expressed hope that the United Nations and other organizations will play their full role in curbing the recent ongoing Israeli aggression in the

Middle East and protecting the rights of Palestinians and finding a lasting solution to the problem.

She added that Pakistan has always supported Palestinian brothers unconditionally and this struggle will continue until the establishment of an independent Palestine state.

She said that a comprehensive plan of action should be drawn up to achieve the intention so that this long-standing problem can be resolved and Palestinian Muslims can live in peace and tranquility in a free and independent state.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said that since October 7, 2023, Israel has massacred 43,000 innocent Palestinian men, women and children by committing the most heinous atrocities in history in Gaza and the West Bank, but the criminal negligence of the international community is condemnable. She further said that Israeli aggression in Palestine is a clear violation of human rights and international law.

She said that Pakistan strongly demands the international community to take decisive action to immediately stop the atrocities of Israel in Palestine; otherwise Israel's increasing war fanaticism may lead to a major world war in the

world. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said that attacks on civilians, hospitals, schools and infrastructure should be stopped; attacks on aid convoys for Palestinians are intolerable. Israel has wreaked havoc in Gaza and Lebanon on the basis of impunity to hold Israel accountable for these serious war crimes and brutal human rights violations.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said that we demand an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza. Muslims around the world are with their Palestinian brothers and sisters and according to the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the General Assembly, the issue is resolved.

We want a just and lasting solution for Palestine. She said that sustainable peace in the Middle East lies only in the establishment of an independent state of Palestine based on the pre-1967 borders and with its capital in Bait-ul-Maqdas.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri also demanded from the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) to stop the brutality of Israel and raise their voice for the helpless Palestinian citizens and play a real and effective role for the long-standing Palestinian issue.



QUETTA: President National Party former chief minister Dr Abdul Malik addressing during a ceremony hosted by member Central Committee National Party Ramzan Hazara.

Efforts Afoot to Make Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Gyne Hospital Loralai: Amin Mandokhail

APP

QUETTA: Director General Health Services Balochistan Dr Amin Mandokhail said that the Health Department would make the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Gyne Hospital Loralai a model hospital for the treatment of women.

The meeting held under the chairmanship of Director General Health Services Balochistan Dr Amin Mandokhail, was informed that the plan of the establishment of Nutrition Stabilization and EPI Static Center at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Gyne Hospital Loralai would be executed soon.

A meeting was held with the support of Maternal and Newborn Child Health Program (MNCH) regarding the functioning of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Gyne Hospital Loralai under the chairmanship of Director General Health Services Balochistan Dr Amin Mandokhail.

Amin said that the operationalization of the Gyne Hospital Loralai will significantly reduce the number of maternity cases while the hospital will also provide uninterrupted medical facilities to women.

The Director General Health also said that with the rapid increase in the population ratio, the burden on the health centers has also been increased many times and along with this, Primary health care hospitals are also being focused on in a phased manner.

In this way, by strengthening healthcare at the primary level, the burden on the tertiary care hospitals will be significantly reduced, while Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Gyne Hospital Loralai will be the best treatment center in the area.

PIA plans to resume flights to UK, other European destinations soon

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) said on Sunday it will resume flights to Europe, including several UK destinations, soon as the EU aviation regulator has lifted the ban on Pakistan's national flag carrier.

In June 2020, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) suspended PIA's authorization to operate in the EU over concerns about the ability of the Pakistani authorities and its Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to ensure compliance with international aviation standards.

PIA spokesman Abdullah Hafeez Khan was quoted as saying by the media, "PIA plans to approach the UK's Department for Transport (DfT) for UK route resumption, as EASA clearance is a prerequisite for their decision."

EASA and UK authorities suspended permission for PIA to operate in the region after Pakistan began investigating

the validity of pilots' licences following a deadly plane crash that killed 97 people.

Khan said the airline expects to resume flights to Europe, starting with Paris, within the next three to four weeks.

Once PIA gets approval for UK flights, Khan said London, Manchester, and Birmingham would be the most sought-after destinations.

PIA and the government, which is aiming to sell a 60 percent stake in the carrier, had urged EASA to lift the ban, even provisionally. The ban cost the airline Rs40 billion (\$144 million) annually in revenue.

Khan said the company has sufficient cash flow to add new routes. Decisions on leasing new aircraft will be made after the government finalizes privatization discussions, he said.

"With Europe now, and upcoming UK routes, we anticipate increased revenue potential and hence a rise in PIA's value during the privatization process," Khan said.

Israeli strikes kill 15 in Gaza, Cairo holds fresh talks with Hamas

MONITORING DESK

CAIRO: Israeli military strikes killed at least 15 Palestinians in Gaza on Sunday, medics said, as Israeli forces kept up bombardments across the enclave and blew up houses on its northern edge.

In the central Gaza camp of Nuseirat, an Israeli airstrike killed six people in a house, and another attack killed three in a home in Gaza City, medics said.

Two children were killed when a missile hit a tent encampment in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, while four other people were killed in an airstrike in Rafah, near the border with Egypt, medics told Reuters.

Residents said the military blew up clusters of houses in the northern Gaza areas of Jabalia, Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun, where Israeli forces have operated since October this year.

Palestinians say Israel's operations on the northern edge of the enclave are part of a plan to clear people out through forced evacuations and bombardments to create a buffer zone — an allegation the army denies.

The military says it has killed hundreds of Hamas militants there as it fights to stop the faction regrouping almost 14 months since the war in Gaza started.

Hamas's armed wing says it has killed many Israeli forces in anti-tank rocket and mortar fire attacks, and in ambushes with explosive devices since the new operation started.

Two Palestinian detainees from Gaza have died in Israeli custody, prisoner advocacy groups said on Sunday, bringing the number of detainees reported killed since the start of the war to 47.

They named the two men as Mohammad Idris and Muath Rayyan, both in their 30s.

The Israel Prison Service said the cases were not under its jurisdiction and there was no immediate comment from the military which runs detention camps.

Israel has denied accusations from Palestinian and international human rights organizations that detainees have been mistreated and tortured in its jails and detention camps.

Kurram death toll reaches 130 as fighting continues despite ceasefire: official

INP

KURRAM: The total number of people killed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram district has reached 130, while 186 are injured as clashes between tribes continued for the eleventh day despite a ceasefire having been imposed in Lower Kurram, according to a local official.

Kurram has been a flashpoint for tribal tensions for decades. They spilled over into a fresh wave of attacks last month when clashes between two groups left dozens dead.

Speaking to Dawn.com, District Health Officer (DHO) Dr Qaisar Abbas said "The total number of people killed is 130, while 186 are injured."

The DHO also added that there was a lack of medical facilities to treat the injured.

According to the police and hospital sources, the firing between the tribes in Kurram district continues for the eleventh day. Seven more people had lost their lives in clashes on Friday, according to officials.

With the cooperation of police forces and elders, most of the clashes have been stopped while the armed tribes have been removed from the fronts with police and armed forces being deployed there.

President grieved over demise of former MNA Syed Ali Hassan Gilani in road accident

INP

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the passing away of former MNA of Pakistan Peoples Party Makhdoom Syed Ali Hassan Gilani in a road accident.

The president extended his condolences to the family members of the late Syed Ali Hassan

Gilani. In a press statement issued by the President House Media Wing, he prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace. He also prayed for the grant of courage to the bereaved family members to bear the loss with equanimity.

The president lauded the services of the late Ali Hassan Gilani to democracy and the Pakistan Peoples Party.

Interfaith dialogue to bring scholars from seven religions on one platform

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: Despite the general perception of religion as a source of division, it holds immense transformative potential to address global challenges and promote unity in a divided world. In this regard, interfaith dialogue and cooperation remain essential for countering polarization. By working toward common goals, religious communities can demonstrate the enduring relevance of faith in tackling issues of inequality and conflict.

Aimed at fostering this understanding, Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) is collaborating with Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU), University of Management & Technology (UMT), Lahore, Gift University, Gujranwala, Islamic Foundation, UK, and The Markfield Institute of Higher Education, UK, in holding an international seminar on 'The Role of Religions in Fostering Peace, Harmony, and Justice' on December 4, 2024.

The event will bring together prominent international and local speakers representing seven major faiths, i.e. Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, and Baha'ism, alongside scholars, religious leaders, policymakers, and civil society representatives.

The seminar is timely as the contemporary global landscape, marked by fast-paced changes in lifestyles, thought patterns, and decision-making criteria, is witnessing a growing skepticism toward religiosity. Since the dawn of the industrial

age and now entering the Fifth Industrial Revolution, the relevance of religion has been overshadowed by modernism, post-modernism, and the dominance of science and technology. In this environment, religion is often viewed as unnecessary or divisive.

However, while societal advancements promise progress, they have also deepened humanity's struggles with justice, peace, and harmony. Rising conflicts rooted in racial, ethnic, and national divisions, as well as the intensifying fight for resources, threaten the social fabric. These challenges underscore the need to recognize and amplify religion's potential as a unifying force.

The seminar aims to counter prevailing narratives by highlighting shared principles of compassion, justice, unity, and peace inherent in all major religions. It will provide a platform for academics, religious leaders, and policymakers to explore how these values, practiced through mutual understanding and respect, can transcend divisions of race, color, caste, and nationality to build a cohesive global society. The seminar will feature a diverse lineup of prominent international and local speakers, including academics, researchers, and religious leaders. Through keynote speeches, panel discussions, and interactive sessions, the event will focus on key topics such as the shared ethical teachings of religions on peace, justice, and harmony, the role of interfaith dialogue in fostering mutual respect.



Jamat-e-Islami (JI) Balochistan Chief, Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman addresses to media persons during press conference, in Quetta

Kundi calls for collective efforts to uplift KP

INP

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said on Sunday that everybody will have to make collective efforts to uplift the province.

Expressing his thoughts, Kundi said: "It was also in the past that every stakeholder approached the Chief Minister House for the sake of maintaining peace in the province."

"Everybody will have to sit together for the betterment of the emerged districts and the entire province," he added. "The All-Parties Conference (APC) will be held on December 5 (Thursday).

Few days, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal said that he feels that the governor's rule should be imposed in KP.

Expressing his thoughts on Samaa TV, Iqbal took a jibe at the embattled party, saying, "They [PTI leaders] cannot even gather 1,000 people if not in power in KP. The people made their way to Islamabad from KP for the sake of money."

"The PTI lawyers are continuously delaying the trials. The PTI founder and his leadership are looking to get the NRO," said Iqbal.

He said, "It is up to the court to grant bail to the PTI founder, not the government."

White House says 'not there yet' on Gaza ceasefire and hostage deal

MONITORING DESK

GAZA: The White House is working on a ceasefire and hostage release deal in Gaza but is "not there yet," the US National Security Advisor told NBC on Sunday, with fighting in the conflict raging on as Arab leaders meet in Cairo to discuss the crisis.

"We are working actively to try to make it happen. We are engaged deeply with the key players in the region, and there is activity even today," said Jake Sullivan, according to a transcript released by the broadcaster.

"There will be further conversations and consultations, and our hope is that we can generate a ceasefire and hostage deal, but we're not there yet," he added. Sullivan's comments came a day after Israel hit Hezbollah targets in Lebanon, days into a fragile ceasefire in its conflict with the Iran-backed group.

Addressing that conflict, Sullivan lauded the ceasefire deal and said the US was working with Lebanon's military to ensure it was implemented "effectively."

"We need to protect it and ensure that it is fully implemented," he told NBC. In an apparent reference to the Israeli strikes, Sullivan said both parties "have the right, consistent with international law, to take action in self-defense if they're facing imminent threats."

Speaking in Jerusalem on Sunday,

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar said there were "indications" progress could be made on a deal securing the release of hostages by Hamas in Gaza.

"There are signs we may see a greater degree of flexibility from Hamas as a result of circumstances that have developed, including the agreement with Lebanon," he said.

"There is a desire to move forward on this. I hope it can progress. We are committed to the return of the hostages — it's a responsibility we must uphold."

Saar asserted, however, that Hamas "cannot be allowed" to continue to rule Gaza.

Hamas seized 251 hostages during its October 7, 2023, attack on Israel, with 97 still being held in Gaza, including 34 who have been confirmed to be dead. The armed group's attack resulted in 1,207 deaths, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

In response, Israel launched a withering military campaign on Gaza, killing at least 44,429 there, most of them civilians, according to figures from the Hamas-run territory's health ministry that the UN considers reliable.

Much of Gaza has been reduced to rubble, with its population dependent on humanitarian aid that the UN on Sunday said it would pause delivery of through the key Kerem Shalom crossing due to security concerns.



QUETTA: People dancing during the Sindhi Cultural Day celebrations during a ceremony hosted by Jamot Cultural Committee.