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U. N. climate summit ends in Baku with urgent need for actionable solutions

The 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference concluded in the capital of Azerbaijan on Friday with climate activists, world leaders and investors reflecting on climate change's global impacts and the urgent need for actionable solutions.

This year's event emphasized financing mechanisms, particularly to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable nations, and especially the developing countries most affected by climate change.

COP29 — the 29th Conference of the Parties under the United Nations climate organization UNFCCC — ran from Nov. 11 to 22 and brought together policymakers, researchers, and environmentalists from 200 countries.

A dominant theme was energy transition, as fossil fuel emissions remain the biggest driver of global warming.

The UN reports that burning coal, oil, and gas accounts for more than 75 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions and roughly 90 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions.

Policymakers argued that reducing reliance on traditional fuels and adopting modern energy solutions could significantly shrink the global carbon footprint and bring the world closer to net-zero targets.

The University of Exeter's Global Carbon Budget recently projected total CO2 emissions to rise from 40.6 billion metric tons in 2023 to 41.6 billion in 2024.

Sharing his perspective on the COP29 negotiations and the change he hopes to see, climate activist Philip McMaster, known on social media as SustainaClaus, told Arab News he is campaigning for a healthier environment for children.

"The message of SustainaClaus is 'Make childhood great again.' Why? Because we all had a childhood before," he said on the sidelines of the conference. "It was either great or not, but it was a very important period of time, and that is what these negotiations should be about: how we make the world a better place for the next generations."

Ukraine accounts for 35 percent of Europe's biodiversity, including 70,000 plant and animal species, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature. Among its endangered animals are the sandy blind mole-rat, the Russian desman, and the saker falcon.

The country's ongoing conflict with Russia has caused significant damage to that biodiversity, according to Lermak.

"I hope that the negotiations held here bring great solutions, something that will help us to move forward," she said. "I hope it is not just conversations, not just talking, but real action after this."

Shaping A Peaceful Future: Education can end the Cycle of Violence

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping a peaceful future by breaking the cycle of violence. Throughout history, societies have faced conflicts and violence, often stemming from ignorance, prejudice and lack of understanding. Education has the power to transform mindsets, promote tolerance and empathy contributing to a more harmonious and peaceful world. Today education provides individuals with knowledge, critical thinking skills and values that promote non-violence. In modern days, education creates a ripple effect that transcends generations and cultures. Nowadays the world is plagued by conflicts, wars and injustices. The role of education in fostering peace can't be underestimated. Education equips individuals with tools to understand complex issues and embrace diversity.

When people are educated about different cultures, religions and perspectives it fosters mutual respect and understanding that reduce the likelihood of conflicts. An example of this is schools that incorporate peace education programs have shown to decrease violence among students and promote conflict resolution skills. Basic aim of education is to cultivate problem solving skills that are essential in resolving disputes. Teaching individuals how to evaluate peaceful solutions that promotes a culture of dialogue and negotiations. In an increasingly interconnected world, the role of education in shaping a peaceful

future cannot be overstated. Education serves as a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of violence that plagues many societies. Fostering critical thinking, empathy, and conflict resolution skills, educational institutions can cultivate individuals who are more likely to engage in constructive dialogue rather than resorting to aggression.

An increasingly globalized world, educational institutions are uniquely positioned to bridge cultural divides. Through curricula that emphasize multicultural perspectives, students gain insights into the values, traditions, and histories of various communities. This exposure cultivates empathy and appreciation for differences, which are essential components of social harmony. Collaborative learning environments encourage interaction among students from varied backgrounds.

Group projects and discussions enable individuals to share their experiences and viewpoints, breaking down stereotypes and prejudices. Such interactions not only enhance interpersonal skills but also reinforce the notion that diversity enriches society as a whole. Education is instrumental in building social cohesion by encouraging understanding and respect among diverse cultural groups. By prioritizing inclusivity in educational settings, we can foster a more harmonious society where differences are celebrated rather than feared.

The act of sharing personal narratives within a group setting encourages empathy among members. When individuals listen to each other's stories, they begin to recognize the common humanity that transcends superficial differences. This process not only

dismantles stereotypes but also cultivates an atmosphere of respect and inclusion. As students confront biases through open dialogue, they develop critical thinking skills essential for navigating a pluralistic society. Group projects and discussions are indispensable tools in promoting diversity awareness and combating prejudice. By facilitating interaction among varied voices, these collaborative efforts contribute significantly to personal growth and societal change.

A group setting serves as a powerful catalyst for fostering empathy among its members. It provides individuals with an opportunity to articulate their experiences, participants engage in a process that transcends mere storytelling; it becomes an avenue for emotional connection and understanding. This communal exchange allows members to confront their biases and preconceptions, as they are exposed to diverse perspectives that challenge their own lived experiences.

However, while the benefits of sharing personal narratives are significant, there are potential drawbacks that merit consideration. For instance, the vulnerability inherent in such sharing may lead to discomfort or anxiety among participants who fear judgment or misinterpretation of their stories. Furthermore, if not facilitated effectively, the exercise can inadvertently reinforce existing power dynamics within the group, privileging certain voices over others. Therefore, it is crucial for facilitators to create a safe and inclusive environment where all narratives can be shared and valued equally. In an era marred by conflicts, wars, and injustices, the role of education in fostering peace cannot be underesti-

mated. Education serves as a powerful tool for social transformation, enabling individuals to cultivate critical thinking skills and develop empathy towards others. By imparting knowledge about diverse cultures and historical contexts, educational institutions can promote understanding and tolerance among students from various backgrounds.

Education equips individuals with the ability to engage in constructive dialogue rather than resorting to violence. Programs that emphasize conflict resolution and negotiation skills prepare students to address disputes peacefully. Additionally, education can empower marginalized communities by providing them with the knowledge necessary to advocate for their rights, thereby contributing to social justice and equity. Education serves as a fundamental tool for promoting understanding, tolerance, and empathy among individuals from diverse backgrounds. By equipping learners with critical thinking skills and ethical reasoning, education empowers them to engage constructively in societal discourse rather than resorting to violence.

Educational institutions have the potential to act as platforms for dialogue and reconciliation. Programs that emphasize conflict resolution and multicultural understanding can help dismantle prejudices that often fuel animosity between different groups. Nurturing a culture of peace within these institutions, we can cultivate future leaders who prioritize diplomacy over warfare.

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

PTI's Agitation and the State's Leniency: A Test of National Stability

The recent political tensions between Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the government have plunged the nation into a precarious situation. PTI Chairman Imran Khan's final call for protests from jail has ignited an extraordinary wave of enthusiasm across the country.

Despite hunger, thirst, and injuries, the people have resolved to march toward D-Chowk. While PTI's protests have disrupted public life and questioned the state's authority, the state's approach has largely remained measured and restrained, showcasing its commitment to maintaining peace amidst chaos.

Despite the provocations by PTI supporters—marching toward Islamabad in large numbers, disrupting daily life, and clashing with law enforcement—the state has displayed remarkable patience. Law enforcement agencies have suffered casualties, with four Rangers and two police officers killed and over 112 injured. Yet, the government has refrained from launching a full-scale crackdown or resorting to excessive force.

This leniency reflects a government focused on preserving order while avoiding actions that could escalate tensions further. In the past, such situations have often led to harsh crackdowns, but this time, the state's approach reflects a mature and democratic response.

Furthermore, PTI's leadership has chosen a path that undermines the sanctity of state institutions. From inciting their supporters to defy state authority to using provincial resources for political gains, PTI's actions raise questions about their commitment to democracy and the rule of law. The misuse of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's government machinery for a political march is

particularly troubling and risks inviting Governor's Rule in the province.

PTI's aggressive stance and the chaos it has created have not only destabilized the internal situation but also tarnished Pakistan's image internationally. With foreign dignitaries currently visiting the country, the protests send a negative message about Pakistan's ability to ensure stability and hospitality.

This unprecedented scenario has drawn the attention of the world, particularly Pakistan's adversaries. Indian media and some Indian journalists have openly encouraged Pakistanis to persist in their protests, claiming that if the nation stands firm for 70 hours, the state will surrender. Indian media has further exploited the situation, portraying Pakistan as a fragile state on the verge of collapse. Such narratives are damaging to Pakistan's global standing and embolden its adversaries. PTI's inability to consider these broader implications reflects a lack of responsibility in its actions. Such remarks also raise critical questions about external motivations behind internal unrest.

While PTI continues to challenge the state's authority, the government has acted like a mother, showing restraint and prioritizing dialogue over confrontation. However, every mother must enforce discipline when her children cross the line. The state's patience should not be mistaken for weakness. It is imperative for the government to take decisive steps to maintain law and order without compromising democratic principles.

According to Islamic jurisprudence and Shariah principles, it is the duty of an Islamic state to crush with firmness any elements that take up arms, raise voices against the state, or declare rebellion. From the era of the Prophet (PBUH)

to the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, from the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties to later periods, Islamic governance has consistently maintained the responsibility of suppressing rebellious factions in accordance with Shariah.

The state of Pakistan is often likened to a mother, offering care and protection to its citizens. However, the events of last night beg the question: Was this a repeat of May 9? Despite the turmoil, the state has yet to file cases or take severe actions against the protestors. This leniency, while commendable, raises concerns that PTI might exploit the state's patience and softness to further its agenda.

The KP government has been accused of misusing its authority and resources to march on the capital. This has led to growing speculation about the imposition of Governor's Rule in the province.

The current situation demands accountability on all fronts. PTI's leadership must be held responsible for actions that disrupt public life, damage state property, and endanger the lives of citizens and law enforcement personnel.

Registering cases against PTI leadership for inciting violence

Ensuring legal action against the misuse of KP government machinery

Reassessing PTI's status as a political entity if it continues to challenge the state unlawfully

The state's leniency has been a testament to its commitment to democracy and peace. However, PTI's aggressive tactics risk pushing the country toward chaos. The government must strike a balance between restraint and authority, ensuring that no political group is allowed to destabilize the nation for personal or political gain.

In these challenging times, the state must remain steadfast in its role as a protector and enforcer of law, ensuring that Pakistan emerges stronger and more united.

'PML-N, Trapped in the Web of Coalition Politics'

The political landscape in Pakistan has been fraught with tensions and uncertainties, particularly concerning the dynamics within the federal coalition government. The media has amplified this turmoil by presenting statements and disputes as breaking news, inadvertently harming the political unity and stability of the country.

Recent controversies revolve around the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leaders' claims regarding the unfulfilled agreements with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN), made before joining the coalition.

This friction is not limited to PPP alone. The Governor of Punjab recently expressed dissatisfaction, stating that there is no proper coordination between him and the Chief Minister. According to him, the Chief Minister has not been cooperating, prompting him to notify his leadership about the PMLN's role in the coalition government. Such statements are not unprecedented; since this government assumed power, similar grievances have emerged repeatedly.

Another internal issue was the controversial decision to replace Nawaz Sharif with Shahbaz Sharif as the Prime Ministerial candidate. This move not only caused divisions within the party but also led to skepticism among the public about the party's unity and vision. The PMLN's recent underperformance in elections has further dented its image, raising questions about its future prospects.

Coalition politics, by its nature, involves compromises and constant negotiations. For PMLN, being the senior partner in the coalition has proven to be a double-edged sword. While it provides the party with a central role in

governance, it also makes it a target for blame when things go awry.

The PPP's recent complaints about unfulfilled agreements appear to be part of a calculated strategy to position itself as an independent and critical voice within the coalition. This tactic allows the PPP to maintain its relevance and appeal to its voter base while distancing itself from the government's failures. Similar strategies have been employed by other coalition partners, including MQM, who use their leverage to extract concessions from the PMLN.

The challenges faced by the PMLN in its coalition government highlight the complexities of Pakistani politics. The party's willingness to endure these difficulties for the sake of state stability reflects a degree of maturity and commitment to democratic principles. However, this strategy comes with risks, including erosion of public trust and weakening of internal unity.

The current tensions with PPP and other coalition partners underscore the need for better coordination and communication within the government. If PMLN wishes to overcome these challenges, it must address the grievances of its allies while simultaneously strengthening its internal structure and public outreach.

Ultimately, whether PMLN is genuinely in trouble or being strategically trapped by its partners remains a matter of perspective. What is certain, however, is that the party is at a crossroads. Its ability to navigate these turbulent waters will determine its future role in Pakistan's political landscape.

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