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CEASEFIRE, finally!

AFTER NEARLY 47,000 DEATHS OVER THE LAST 15 MONTHS...

HOPE FOR PEACE IN GAZA AND A FEELING OF RELIEF ACROSS THE WORLD

THE KILLING OF INNOCENT CITIZENS, DESTRUCTION OF HOMES, HOSPITALS & SCHOOLS WAS GOING ON SINCE OCTOBER 2023. IT WILL TAKE YEARS TO REBUILD.

SHAMS UR REHMAN ALAVI

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As news about the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas spread, there was a visible sense of hope and relief across the world.

Horrified with the constant images of destruction and devastation in Gaza, people felt relieved that the bloodshed would finally end.

The region has gone through terrible times. Innocent citizens—innumerable women and children were killed.

Gaza recorded tens of thousands of deaths, witnessed destruction & devastation—a huge humanitarian crisis that unfolded in our era and in front of our eyes.

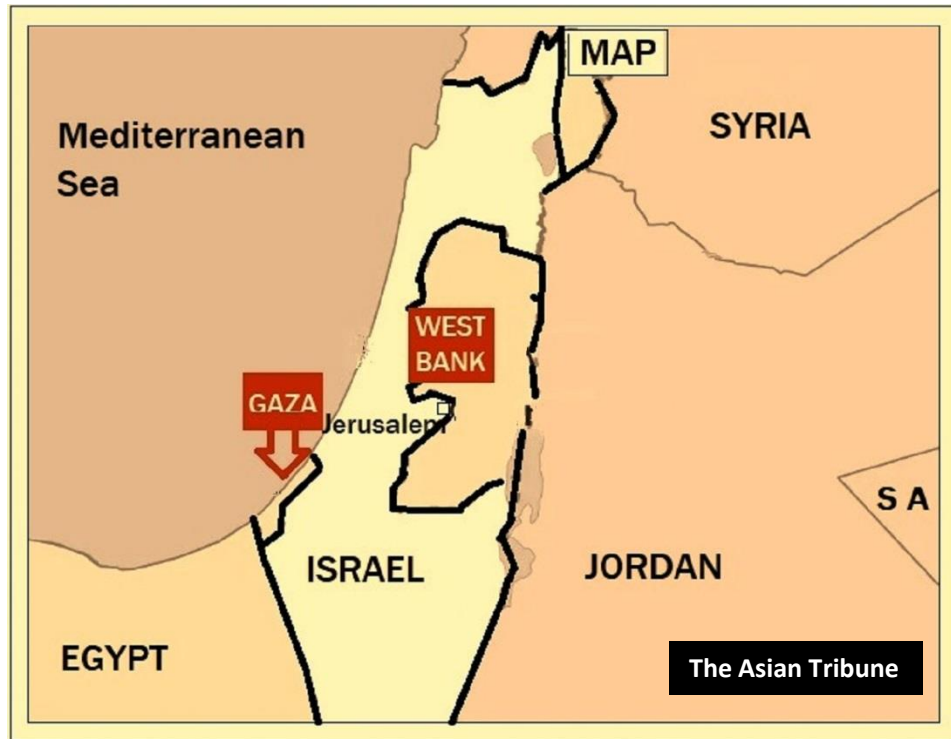
On social media, there was a clear feeling that though the conflict had prolonged so much and it was already too late, but at least, peace may now return to the troubled region.

Of course, it will be a colossal task for people to come out of the trauma that this entire generation in Gaza, has gone through. They have lost their near and dear ones. Entire families were killed in strikes. So many have got permanent injuries.

LESSONS FROM GAZA

None of the major countries including those that have power of oil or are known for their economic strength or strategic location and alliances with West, could do anything more than rhetoric.

There was a clear lack of leadership and failure when it comes to statesmanship. Leaders who earlier roared, were silent and unable to put up any pressure to save lives. Despite their channels of communication, there was no proper effort or coordinated bid to ease the hardships of people in Gaza.



Once the ceasefire comes into effect, the challenging task is to rebuild Gaza, provide the humanitarian relief, ensure food and medicines' supplies, and then a long road towards rebuilding the infrastructure in a place that has been reduced to rubble.

In certain countries in Middle East, there is a need for introspection that how they lack strength in terms of will, influence and voice on international forums and are unable to wield their clout to resolve issue. It must be remembered that countries in South America and Africa took serious and strong stand on the issue of Gaza and the people of Palestine.

In Israel, there was pressure on Benjamin Netanyahu to save the hostages and bring them back to the country. Even after news of ceasefire came, the attacks continued on Gaza. In the last fifteen months, Gaza has suffered enormously and the bombardment on this small piece of land, and the sufferings of the people had shaken the world.

UN has welcomed the deal. But international community must not be in wait and watch mode. It needs to be prepared to stop any war or humanitarian crisis, at the earliest.

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Delhi's air quality worsens, pollution rises despite the drop in stubble burning

Winter air quality analysis shows that the particulate matter 2.5 levels show a 3.4% increase

The Asian Tribune
www.asiantribune.net

As the new year begins, the assessment of annual trends in the level of particulate matter 2.5, which is termed as PM2.5, has gone up. This is certainly a cause of worry. The annual PM2.5 concentration has increased to 104.7 microgram per cubic metre [$\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$] in 2024—a 3.4 per cent rise from 2023 levels, as per the CSE assessment.

This is also more than twice the national ambient air quality standard of 40 μg per m^3 . The PM2.5 levels have increased after consistent decline and stabilisation between 2018 and 2022. "This is not an annual aberration due to meteorological factors. Consistent rise indicates the impact of growing pollution. Delhi seems to be losing its air quality gains from past action",



Anumita Roychowdhury says. The assessment shows "persistent and consistent rise for a second consecutive year since 2022". Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has released an assessment of annual trends in levels of particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5) in the air of Delhi in 2024 – and the findings are dark. "This can't be seen as an annual aberration due to meteorological factors....

..consistent rise indicates the impact of growing pollution in the region. Delhi seems to be losing its air quality gains from past action. Local and regional sources of pollution including vehicles, industries, open burning of waste, use of solid fuels, construction and dust sources have offset the gains".

Freedom of expression browbeaten on X

Musk's wish to dominate global conversation, intervene in countries' affairs & allowing hate under the cover of free speech, is a cause of concern. Hate speech can't be free speech.

By Asad Mirza
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The seemingly eccentric comments by X's owner Elon Musk, have brought the issue of freedom of expression as well as hate speech to the fore. Not demonizing, targeting or hurting others is also an important aspect in public life. The speech that is bordering on hate can't be responsible free speech and limit of such a free speech can not be dictated by one individual. Musk's comments bewildered people across the world. His latest tirade was against British prime minister as well as King Charles III, whom he advised to shutdown Parliament and call for a new election, regarding handling of criminal investigations in Manchester. "In the UK, serious crimes such as rape require the Crown Prosecution Service's approval for police to charge suspects. Who was head of CPS when rape gangs were allowed to exploit young girls without facing justice? Keir Starmer, 2008 -2013," Musk posted on his social media platform X on New Year.

This leads to a pertinent question. Should a tech company head, by virtue of his ownership of the platform, try to force his own views and go on throttle the voice of people who don't agree with him?

Anti-Indian Hate Posts on X

Racism

Islamophobia

Hatred

X full of hatred?

"The King must step in. We can't have Keir heading the country," he added in the thread. Given the recent salvos by Musk, many social media users questioned the philosophy dominating Musk's social media platform, as it seems to reward those who spread seeds of hate or force one-sided views. It was not the intention of creators of this platform. UK politicians are not alone in being the target of Musk's increasingly eccentric interventions. He has also called Justin Trudeau of Canada, "an insufferable tool" and attacked Ukrain's Zelensky after a Trump-Putin spat. Apart from commenting on the US gov't's Visa policy and other issues, his tweets appear to be targeting entire groups. During the last two years of Musk's ownership of X, people noticed that it has become a sort of a platform, on which users with right-wing or extreme right-wing leanings are getting more liberty to criticize their opponents, in the name of freedom of expression. This leads to another pertinent question that can you by virtue of ownership try to force own views, and throttle the voice of people who do not agree with you? Email: editor@asiantribune.net