

Cop embraced martyrdom  
F.P. Report

JAMRUD: A police soldier embraced Martyrdom when he was targeted with a sniper gun here in Lala Kandow checkpoint, Jamrud district Khyber on Wednesday night. DPO, Saleem Abbas said that the late Mujib-ur-Rehman who was posted at the check post was filling potable water when he was shot wounded. He was taken to HMC, for medical aid however scummed to his injuries.

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Two shot dead in Tirah  
F.P. Report

TIRAH VALLEY: The chief of a local peace committee and his nephew were shot dead by unknown assailants in Tirah valley of Khyber district, police informed on Thursday. Police said the tragic incident occurred in Shin Kamar area of Tirah valley where the vehicle of local peace committee chief was fired at with dozens of bullets by some unknown assailants.

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## Pak Army reaffirms diplomatic, political support to Palestinians

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), presided over the 82nd Formation Commanders Conference at GHQ, which was attended by Corps Commanders, Principal Staff Officers and all Formation Commanders of Pakistan Army.

The forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhadas including officers and men of the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies and Pakistani Citizens. The participants were briefed on professional matters, national security challenges and measures being undertaken to counter traditional and non-traditional security threats.

The forum took holistic view of the ongoing counter terrorism operations and resolved that all terrorists, their facilitators and abettors, working on the behest of hostile forces to destabilise Pakistan will be dealt with full might of the state. COAS expressed satisfaction over operational preparedness and high standards of training and morale maintained by formations to deal with the emerging threat paradigm.

The forum expressed unequivocal diplomatic, moral and political support to the people of Palestine and reiterated Pakistan's principled stance



supporting the two-state solution, based on pre-1967 borders with Al Quds Al Sharif as the capital of Palestine. The participants also expressed concerns over continued repression of Kashmiris in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and condemned the unabated human rights violations by Indian forces. Forum reaffirmed that Pakistan shall continue to support Kashmiris politically, diplomatically and morally. Participants stressed that the only solution to the issue lies in providing the right of self-determination to the people of Kashmir according to relevant UNSC resolution.

The forum resolved to fully support government's initiatives in various domains for sustainable recovery of the economy and curbing illegal activities including smuggling,

hoarding, electricity theft, implementation of One Document Regime, dignified repatriation of illegal foreigners and safeguarding of national database etc.

The forum noted that despite challenges, recent months have witnessed an increasing sense of stability, certainty and optimism across Pakistan and resolved that vested efforts towards engineering of despondency will be defeated through perseverance and continued positive actions, with the support of the people of Pakistan, InshaAllah. The participants affirmed that Pakistan Army will continue defending and serving the nation in every possible way; in our journey towards enduring stability and security. The forum urged the proud people of Pakistan to stay determined and united.

## ECP declares PTI intra-party elections null and void

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has declared Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) intra-party elections null and void and ordered to conduct a re-election within 20 days.

The electoral body announced its reserved verdict on the PTI intra-party elections case on Thursday. In its decision, the ECP said that PTI failed to conduct fair intra-party elections. The party should conduct the re-election within 20 days of the decision and should submit a report to the ECP within seven days after the elections. Despite declaring the intra-party elections null and void, the ECP ruled that PTI is still eligible to obtain an election symbol for the upcoming general elections scheduled to be held on February 8 next year.

PTI leaders have expressed concerns about the ECP's decision. Justice Ali Zafar, a PTI leader, said that the party is "disappointed" with the decision and will appeal it to the Supreme Court. Barrister Ali Zafar, another PTI leader, said that the ECP's decision is "unfair" and that the party will "fight this decision to the end." The ECP's decision is likely to have a significant impact on PTI's internal politics. The party has been grappling with internal divisions in recent months, and this decision could further exacerbate those tensions. The ECP's decision is still under consideration, and it remains to be seen whether the written decision will uphold the verbal order or reverse it.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar giving his remarks during his visit of NEOC.

## PM directs early release of dues to media houses

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday urged the media to play its role for creating public awareness on the outcomes of the government's initiatives like drive against smuggling and power theft and its benefits for the common man.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society, also emphasized the media to highlight the importance of the strategy for economic stability, formulated under the Special Investment Facilitation Council. He said that the media had a key role to play in promoting good governance, besides creating awareness among the masses. Being the fourth pillar of the state, the media's contribution towards society's progress and intellectual development of the people, was of crucial importance, he added. He also assured the delegation of the government's support for the resolution of the issues confronting the newspaper industry.

He instructed the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to ensure the payment of advertisement dues payable to the newspapers by immediately coordinating with all relevant ministries and departments. The delegation comprised APNS President Naz

Afreen, Secretary General Sarmad Ali and Finance Secretary Shahab Zuberi. Caretaker Information and Broadcasting Minister Murtaza Solangi, Federal Information Secretary and relevant senior officers also attended the meeting.

**PM for national-level disaster management strategy with teamwork of NDMA & PDMA:** Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar asked the NDMA to collaborate with provincial disaster management bodies in order to formulate a national-level strategy.

During his visit to the NEOC, he lauded the measures taken by NDMA and NEOC in coping with natural disasters. However, he also stressed steps to enhance the capacity of PDMA's. The prime minister emphasized benefiting from the research of foreign and Pakistani experts on climate change and the ways to reduce its disastrous effects. The prime minister, who is due to participate in the 28th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP-28) in the United Arab Emirates on December 1-2, said Pakistan would update the world about its experiences in the wake of climate change. Chairman (NDMA) Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik briefed the prime minister about the national strategy for disaster management. Federal Ministers Jalil Abbas Jilani and Shahmshad Akhtar attended the meeting.

## Gaza ceasefire to start today

GAZA STRIP: A pause in the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza will start on Friday morning with the first hostages to be released hours later, mediator Qatar said, after nearly seven weeks of fighting. Families of hostages held by Hamas in Gaza and of Palestinians detained by Israel were forced to wait an extra day after the breakthrough four-day truce deal was put on hold.

Qatar, which facilitated the truce deal along with Egypt and the United States, said the pause would begin Friday at 7:00 am (0500 GMT) with the "first batch" of 13 civilian hostages being handed over about nine hours later. The armed wing of Hamas, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, confirmed the ceasefire would start at 7:00 am under the deal that is also intended to provide aid to Gaza's 2.4 million residents struggling to survive with shortages of food, water and fuel.

"The truce applies for four days, starting from Friday morning, accompanied by the cessation of all military actions from the Qassam Brigades and the Palestinian resistance, as well as the Zionist enemy throughout the truce period," it said. The office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said it was in contact with the families of the hostages after receiving "a first list of names" for those due to be released. It did not specify who was on the list.

Instead of a pause, fighting raged on Thursday. Explosions were heard on an AFPTV livecam and heavy grey clouds hovering over the territory's north, much of which has been reduced to rubble. "We've already been on an emotional roller coaster for 47 days. Today is no different," said Eyal Kalderon, a cousin of Ofer Kalderon, who is among those held captive in Gaza. Hamas and other Palestinian gunmen seized about 240 hostages during unprecedented raids into Israel on October 7 which Israel says killed around 1,200 people, most of them civilians. The attack prompted a relentless Israeli campaign of bombing and a ground offensive in Gaza, where the Hamas government

says more than 14,100 people, also mostly non-combatants, have been killed.

Israel's national security adviser Tzachi Hanegbi had earlier indicated the phased release of at least 50 hostages in return for 150 Palestinian prisoners would still go ahead, but not before Friday. On both sides it would free mostly women and people aged 18 and under. The Palestinians are to be freed from three Israeli jails.

Three Americans, including three-year-old Abigail Mor Idan, are among those earmarked to be freed. Governments around the world have welcomed the deal, with some expressing hope it will lead to a lasting end to the war. "This cannot be just a pause before the massacre starts all over again," Riyadh Mansour, Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations, told the Security Council. Israeli officials, however, say the truce will be only temporary.

"We are not ending the war. We will continue until we are victorious," Israel's chief of staff, Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi, told troops he visited in Gaza, according to the army. The release deal came after weeks of talks involving Israel, Palestinian militant groups, Qatar, Egypt and the United States. Israel's aerial bombardment continued overnight on targets in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza, sending red and yellow fireballs and immense columns of black smoke into the air.

Homes shook several kilometres (miles) away in Rafah, AFP journalists said. "I think there are still about 20 people under the rubble," said one Palestinian looking for survivors under a destroyed building east of Khan Yunis. Thousands of children have been killed in Gaza, "the most dangerous place in the world to be a child", said Catherine Russell, executive director of the UN children's fund, UNICEF. Youngsters are among the estimated 1.7 million Gazans who, according to the UN, have had to flee their homes during the fighting. Hospital patients have also been forced to move, the latest being 190 wounded and sick, along

with their companions and medical teams, from Al-Shifa hospital on Wednesday, the Palestinian Red Crescent said. Under pressure to back up its claims that Hamas had a command centre under Al-Shifa, Israel's military on Wednesday escorted journalists to a tunnel shaft which soldiers said was part of a vast Hamas underground military network.

The army led reporters into underground facilities with air-conditioning, a toilet and what looked like a kitchenette. Hamas and medical staff have denied a command centre is under Al-Shifa, Gaza's largest hospital. Israeli forces arrested Al-Shifa's director Mohammad Abu Salmiya and other medical personnel, another doctor told AFP on Thursday.

Since the Israel-Hamas war began, deadly exchanges of fire have gripped Israel's northern border, mainly between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah movement. These clashes have raised fears of a broader conflagration. Hezbollah said Thursday that its chief, Hassan Nasrallah, met with Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian to discuss "the efforts made to end the Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip".

Hezbollah said it fired 48 Katyusha rockets at a northern Israel military base. The Israeli army responded by shelling several locations in the south, Lebanon's National News Agency said. In the Red Sea, the destroyer USS Thomas Hudner "shot down multiple one-way attack drones launched from Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen", United States Central Command said, referring to the Iran-backed rebel group. Displaced Gazans remained sceptical about the Israel-Hamas deal.

Fatima Achour, a Palestinian lawyer in her 40s, burst into tears when she reached Egypt through the Rafah border crossing, becoming one of the few Gazans allowed to leave because she has a foreign passport. "There's no city to go back to... There are no houses. Our lives have ended," she said. "This truce is not for us." — Arab News

## Zardari sees coalition govt in 2024

ISLAMABAD: Former president Asif Ali Zardari believes that no party alone would be able to form the next government after the general elections in 2024, terming his son, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, "inexperienced".

Bilawal has been campaigning across the country and touting his party as the solution to Pakistan's ills, while also asking "old politicians" to sit back and allow the new generation to lead from the front in the elections slated to take place on February 8 next year. Major political parties have started their campaign — either through political campaigns or by bringing in politicians to their ranks — and the PPP seems to be at the forefront right now as it is holding rallies in several cities with Bilawal leading them — and asking people to choose him.

But Zardari, during an exclusive interview with Hamid Mir on Geo News' programme "Capital Talk", said no party would be able to secure a majority of 172 seats in the National Assembly, and alliances would be forged undoubtedly. "What's a chessboard? On this chessboard [the National Assembly], no one can secure

172 seats alone."

With Bilawal launching scathing attacks on the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the PPP's former allies in the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)-led government in the Centre, the Nawaz Sharif-led party has decided not to hit back at the PPP. Zardari said he supports the PML-N's stance to ensure a conducive environment as it is better that everyone respects each other so things can move forward smoothly — as there is a possibility that alliances would be formed in the future.

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, in his election rallies, has asked old politicians (or babay) to sit home, claiming the way they conduct business had harmed the nation. But Zardari told Mir that Bilawal is "inexperienced" and that it would take some time for him to gain that experience. "Bilawal is much more talented than I am, but he isn't experienced."

Bilawal is calling everyone "babay" (old politicians), not just me. The PPP stalwart said the new generation in every house says, "Dad, you don't know anything". The former president said the new generation has its own

mindset and the right to express itself, noting that if he tries to intervene in their affairs, it would just lead to more mess. "If Bilawal says, 'You do politics, I won't', then what can I do? People learn over time in politics. I have made several mistakes myself."

Zardari also mentioned that if they were in business, then Bilawal's narrative would have been the same. "You [Zardari] don't know anything. It's the same in politics," he mentioned. Bilawal, during his rallies, has also mentioned that old politicians took revenge on their rivals when they came into power, specifically targeting the PML-N.

Zardari said during his tenures, there was no political prisoner as he had never resorted to revenge politics. "Every now and then, new allegations were levelled against me, but I never responded to them." "We saved the 'sword' from rotten eggs, but they tried to steal the 'sword'," he said, talking about the party's sword logo. Speaking about the different mindsets of the top PPP leaders, Zardari stated that there are two parties — PPP and Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP). — Geo News

# A TASTE

of things to come

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# CS Sindh reviews arrangements for general elections

**E.P. Report**

KARACHI: An important meeting, chaired by Chief Secretary Sindh, Dr. Muhammad Fakhre Alam, was held at the Sindh Secretariat to discuss preparations for the upcoming general elections in Sindh.

The meeting was attended by Provincial Election Commissioner Sindh, Aljaz Anwar Chohan, Joint Provincial Election Commissioner Ali Asghar Siyal, Secretary Home Muhammad Iqbal Memon, Commissioner Karachi Muhammad Saleem Rajput, Secretary General Administration Muhammad Ali Koso, and Secretary Information Nadeem-ur-Rahman Memon, senior representatives of 5-Corps, Pakistan Rangers and Police along with other relevant officers. All divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners also participated in the meeting.

The meeting reviewed security and other arrangements concerning the

upcoming general elections in Sindh. Addressing the gathering, Chief Secretary Sindh, Dr. Muhammad Fakhre Alam, affirmed the government's commitment to creating a secure environment in line with the directives of the Election Commission for transparent, fair, and secure elections in Sindh. He emphasized ensuring the availability of all facilities at polling stations and installing CCTV cameras as directed by the Election Commission at sensitive polling stations.

Furthermore, he stated that the Sindh government would provide full cooperation to the Election Commission for the successful conduct of the general elections. Dr. Muhammad Fakhre Alam directed the Secretary School Education to ensure the construction of ramps for the convenience of disabled individuals at every polling station.

Providing insights during the meeting, Provincial Election Commissioner Aljaz Anwar Chohan men-

tioned that comprehensive training would be imparted to the polling staff for the general elections. The Election Commission will ensure the training of all polling staff, including district returning officers and returning officers. He highlighted that today's meeting was organized in light of the directives issued in the Election Commission's previous session.

Provincial Election Commissioner Sindh, Aljaz Anwar Chohan, further stated that elections would be held for 61 National Assembly seats and 130 Provincial Assembly seats in Sindh. Around 19,200 polling stations will be set up across the province, and the services of 227,424 government employees will be utilized for the elections throughout the province.

Additionally, police authorities informed that a security plan has been devised, and 145,334 police personnel will perform security duties during the general elections in Sindh.



## PPP has no plan to make alliance with PTI in general polls: Kundi

ISLAMABAD (INP): Secretary Information Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Faisal Karim Kundi said on Thursday that PPP was not going for a political alliance with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in the upcoming general elections, scheduled in the month of February. Addressing a press conference here, Faisal Kundi said that PPP would contest the upcoming general polls according to its manifesto that is given by party chief Bilawal Bhutto.

"All the political forces should respect the mandate of the masses and PPP will contact all the political parties for making Bilawal Bhutto as Prime Minister after the general elections in the country," he added. Highlighting their confidence on the Election Commission of Pakistan

(ECP), Faisal Kundi said that the ECP would take all possible measures to ensure free, fair and transparent elections across the country.

"PPP respect the senior politicians of the country but believe that now youth should be given chance to play their active role in the politics," he said. Faisal Kundi said that Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had addressed the six workers convention in which he briefed about the performance of 16 months of the government.

Secretary Information appreciated the office bearers and party workers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter for conducting a successful 'Workers Convention' of the party chief in the province. He said that the public gathering in Lahore was an eye opener for those comparing

the return of Quid Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif with Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

Faisal Kundi alleged that the narrative of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif 'Vote Ko Izzat Do' (Respect the Vote) ended after his return to Pakistan from London. "No political victimization has been witnessed during the tenure of the PPP government unlike the rulers of Punjab who always remained involved in such victimization when came into power", he added. To a question, Faisal Kundi said that Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and Pakistan Steel Mill (PSM) have been privatized through proper planning however the PPP would not allow anyone to privatize these national assets.

## Traffic police files 5,830 cases against underage drivers

LAHORE (APP): The City Traffic Police, during its ongoing crack-down on underage and un-licensed drivers, registered 5,830 cases in the provincial capital during the last 10 days.

According to a spokesman for the traffic police office, on directives of Chief traffic Officer Mustansar Feroze, policemen are determined to control accidents and protection of young lives and during the crackdown, 3,689 cases were registered against underage drivers, while 2,141 for without licenses besides impounding hundreds of vehicles in various police stations.

Chief Traffic Officer Mustansar Feroze appealed to citizen to ensure obtaining driving license as the city had 30 licence offices, 10 mobile vans, and three centres working 24/7.

He said that cases would be registered against those providing vehicles to underage children, and advised parents to not provide vehicles to their children under any circumstances.

## DSP Bajari, accused of robbery, suspended

KARACHI (NNI): Karachi police department on Thursday suspended Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Umair Tariq Bajari, an accused in robbery of Rs20 million in Orangi Town.

Police department while taking departmental action suspended DSP Bajari who is under arrest and issued a notification in this regard mentioning his involvement in robbery.

However, the suspended DSP can still draw his salary till his suspension is over, the notification said.

Deputy Superintendent Police (DSP) Umair Tariq Bajari and two Shaheen Force officials have been booked for committing the dacoity in Karachi's Orangi Town. A high-level police probe had held the cops "guilty". DSP Bajari, Khurram and Farman along with 20 others were booked in the case under charges of dacoity and kidnapping on the complaint of trader Shakir Khan.

According to FIR, Shakir Khan said he is doing wholesale business of sanitary items in Orangi Town. On November 19, around 20 cops in uniform and civil dress raided his house around 2:20 am. The cops

after taking the family members hostage took away Rs20 million along with about 80 tolas of gold, laptops and mobile phones, he added.

The FIR further stated that the cops after making him and his brother Aamir hostage along with the cash, gold and other valuables left them near Baloch Pull and fled.

Later, SHO Defence police station returned Rs10.3 million, 50 tolas of gold, and 12 mobile phones to them, Shakir Khan said in his complaint. He urged the higher authorities to take stern action against DSP Bajari and other staff.

The probe was ordered after evidence surfaced that an under-training DSP of District South Police had been involved in the robbery in which around 20 million rupees, about 80 tolas of gold jewellery and other valuables were looted from Orangi Town.

After the probe, the Karachi police department removed DSP Bajari from the post for his direct involvement in the dacoity, whereas, Senior Superintendent Police (SSP) South Imran Qureshi was removed from his position for exhibiting negligence.

## CM Naqvi inspects Liberty's Police Service Centre

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday paid a surprise visit to the Police Service Center in Liberty Lahore.

On the occasion, he conducted a thorough inspection of various sections, including the Meesaq center, waiting room, and counters.

Mohsin Naqvi issued directives for an augmentation in staff numbers at the counters and emphasized the need for prompt action on citizens' requests.

He attentively addressed the concerns raised by citizens regarding unnecessary delays in the processing of their applications, asserting that citizens' tasks should be promptly fulfilled.

Furthermore, Chief Minister Naqvi instructed the Chief Traffic Officer to ensure the continuous operation of the police service center, providing services around the clock to cater to the needs of the public.

## 153 more dengue cases reported

LAHORE (APP): Dengue outbreak is still active in Punjab, as 153 new cases were recorded on Thursday.

According to the latest Health Department data, a total of 13,366 confirmed dengue cases have been reported across 36 districts in Punjab this year.

Lahore takes the lead in this unfortunate count with a staggering 6,000 cases, followed closely by Rawalpindi with 2,593, Gujranwala with 1,375, Multan with 1,301 and Faisalabad with 752 cases.

The situation continues, with Lahore reporting an additional 74 new dengue cases, Rawalpindi with 04, Gujranwala with 22, Multan with 16, Faisalabad with 18, Sheikhupura with 07, Narowal with 02, Okara with 02 and Vehari with 02 cases. Meanwhile, Kasur, Sargodha, Muzaffargarh, Sialkot and Khanewal each reported a case of dengue within 24 hours. Currently, 134 dengue patients were undergoing treatment in various hospitals across Punjab, with 88 of them in Lahore district hospitals.

The Secretary of Health Punjab, Ali Jaan Khan, issued a compelling plea to citizens, urging them to maintain clean and dry surroundings as a preventive measure against dengue fever. He also called for cooperation with health department teams that were working tirelessly to combat this outbreak. For those in need of dengue treatment, information, or wishing to register complaints, a free helpline was available through the health department at 1033. Vigilance and proactive measures were crucial to contain the alarming spread of dengue.

## 13,000 electricity thieves arrested

LAHORE (INP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has intensified its anti-electricity theft campaign, arresting over 13,000 suspects in just 76 days. The company has also registered FIRs (First Information Reports) on 27,877 electricity theft cases.

According to a LESCO spokesperson on Thursday, the total number of electricity theft suspects identified so far has reached 29,244. These suspects have been charged with stealing over 5 crore 16 lakh 78 thousand 581 units of electricity, amounting to a monetary loss of Rs. 2 billion 7 crore 7 lakh 20 thousand 552.

In yesterday's operation alone, LESCO imposed fines totaling Rs. 400,000 on illegal connections in Shahdara Town, Jayamasi, Qasim Park, and Stokatali areas. Additionally, 286 illegal connections were disconnected across the region, and 4 lakh 49 thousand 434 units of electricity were charged under the detection bill, amounting to Rs. 2 crore 2 lakh 50 thousand 467.

LESCO's anti-electricity theft campaign has been ongoing for several months, and the company has made significant progress in curbing this illegal activity. The company's efforts have resulted in increased revenue for LESCO and improved power supply for its customers.



MAKKAH: Former Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi receiving King Abdul Aziz Medal from Commander Western Region of Saudi Armed Forces in Makkah Saudi Arabia.

## Schools and colleges to remain closed on Friday

LAHORE (NNI): The Punjab government has shut down schools and colleges in 10 districts of the province in connection with the smog issue.

Announcing the decision on Thursday, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi said all educational institutions including the schools and colleges will remain closed on Friday and Saturday. All the markets will remain closed on Sunday while restaurants will open at 3:00 pm, he added.

Naqvi announced this at a press conference in Lahore following an important meeting on the issue. The decision would apply to Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Multan, Sargodha and Sahiwal divisions. He also announced that air-purifying towers would be installed in Lahore, while 10,000 students would be given electric motorbikes on subsidy.

Artificial rain will be conducted if the clouds are closer to Lahore on November 29, the CM said, adding he was not in favour of closing markets, so they will open at 3pm on Friday and Saturday. All kinds of markets will remain closed on Sunday, while restaurants will also open at 3pm.

The government has also decided to double the spray of water on roads.

On Sunday, The Mall road will be open to only cyclists from morning to 5pm. Naqvi advised everyone to wear a mask when getting out of their houses.

## Civil or Military courts

**Hira Zafar**

The civil society across Pakistan had condemned Supreme Court judgement against Military court on media due to multiple security challenges in the country despite its legal impacts. Pakistan facing various challenges on different front in the current geopolitical development globally and its impacts on region particularly. It is high time for the establishment of Rule of Law to achieve public confidence, overcoming socio-economic

hurdles and deterring security challenges. It is found during war against terrorism that proclaimed terrorists had acquitted from charges due to loopholes in the legal and prosecution system. In the security departments civilian are working on various position and they liable for trial in military court if found in security breach or other anti-state activities. The terrorist organizations will obtain hope from the supreme court's decision because they will acquit from charge due to loopholes in legal

system. Moreover, some retired army personnel were found involved in anti-army/ security establishment activities for their political personal ends. The Supreme Court decision pave courage personnel and their propaganda may cause weakness national interests. The debate over civil versus military courts may cause confrontation among legal circles but it is evident that Pakistan's ordinary ranked worst in performance across the world while Military's court stand 7th position.

## Ashrafi stresses on comprehensive training for Hajj, Umrah pilgrims



ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Pakistani Diaspora in Middle East and Islamic Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi on Thursday stressed on the Hajj Group Organizers (HGOs) to launch an extensive training programme to ensure Hajj and Umrah pilgrims were well-prepared for a smooth and hassle-free religious journey.

Addressing the 'Tazeem Al-Haramain Al-Sharifain Conference' here at a local hotel, he said that this initiative would equip pilgrims with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the sacred rituals while prioritizing their safety and well-being.

Ashrafi who is also the Chairman of Pakistan Ulama Council, said the pilgrims must receive comprehensive spiritual guidance from qualified scholars, covering the significance of each ritual and the historical context of Hajj and Umrah. This would not only deepen their understanding but also foster a sense of connection to the religious roots of the pilgrimage, he added.

He said the pilgrims must be addressed the practical aspects of the pilgrimage, including transportation details, accommoda-

tion guidelines, and essential information about the holy sites. He said it would help ensure that pilgrims were well-informed about the logistics, minimizing confusion and stress during their journey.

He said the HGOs should educate pilgrims on the diverse cultural backgrounds of fellow participants, fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding as it would promote tolerance and harmony, reflecting the inclusive spirit of the pilgrimage.

Ashrafi urged to utilize various platforms, including in-person sessions, webinars, and interactive mobile applications to cater to a diverse audience adding that this multifaceted approach would ensure accessibility and accommodate different learning preferences.

He further emphasized on the incorporation of a feedback mechanism as an integral part of the training programme so that pilgrims were encouraged to provide input on the training modules, allowing authorities to continually improve and tailor the programme to better meet the needs of future participants.

Ashrafi lamented that certain people during Hajj rituals engaged in political discourse and got into trou-

ble as it was against the law of the holy land and as well as against religious ethics.

He said it was a unanimous Fatwa (decree) of the prominent religious scholars that they should not engage in any political activity particularly during Hajj season.

Ashrafi said that the role of Saudi Arabia on the issue of Gaza was exemplary. He said in the BRICS conference, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had demanded to stop the supply of arms to Israel from the world.

He said the entire Islamic world, including Pakistan, were united on the issue of Palestine and unanimously demanding the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. He mentioned that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the people had sent 500 million riyals to the Palestinian people in just two weeks.

Meanwhile, Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki said Pakistan was a very important Islamic country which had a special relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

He said the Saudi government took all possible steps to facilitate Hajj and Umrah pilgrims and would keep on serving under the dynamic leadership of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

He said that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan had ideal relations adding that the Kingdom had always stood firm with Pakistan in every trying time throughout the history. At the end, the guests were also presented with gifts and commemorative shields.

## SHC orders to ban CNICs of SBCA officials

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Thursday ordered to block Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs) of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) for the delay in the anti-encroachment drive in the city.

The orders were passed by SHC Justice Nadeem Akhtar while hearing a plea against commercial activities on residential land in Karachi's Gulzar Hiji.

The SHC judge remarked that SBCA officials are 'involved' in the illegal construction in the metropolitan city and added that despite repetitive orders for action, the SBCA authorities are delaying the action.

During the hearing, the plea of private school owners for de-sealing the sealed schools was rejected. You should have thought before setting up schools in residential buildings, the judge remarked.

The SHC ordered to block of CNICs of SBCA directors and the deputy directors till further orders, for negligence in the anti-encroachment drive. Last month, Special Investigation Unit (SIU) Sindh conducted an operation and apprehended the most wanted extortionist – Zia alias Kala – from Karachi.

According to the details, an extortionist – affiliated with the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) – has been arrested by the Special Investigation Unit of the police from Karachi.

A case of extortion was registered against accused Zia alias Kala in Preedy police station.

## Minister launches LWMC mobile app for fee collection

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Punjab Minister for Information and Local Government Amir Mir has said the ongoing digitalization of administrative institutions is proving instrumental in curbing corruption and enhancing their efficiency.

He was addressing the inaugural workshop for digitalization of Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) and the launch of a mobile application for fee collection here on Thursday. He highlighted the role of digitalization in making the municipal system more transparent. Computerization of workshops, maintenance of complex garbage collection machinery, and fee collection through a mobile application are anticipated to reduce costs and boost revenue.

The provincial minister commended the LWMC for justifying its existence through diligent work. Regardless of festive seasons or adverse weather, the company's staff consistently demonstrated dedication. Amir Mir acknowledged the visible improvement in the city's cleanliness, attributing it to the commitment of the cleaning staff, including the Chief Executive Officer.

Amir Mir underscored the importance of officer motivation for maintaining high staff morale and credited the check and balance process for enhancing institutional efficiency. While inspecting the workshop, the minister directed LWMC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Babar Sahib Din to ensure robustness and availability of equipment.



# Australian HC calls on CM

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation headed by Australian High Commissioner for Pakistan Neil Hawkins called on the Caretaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah here at Chief Minister's House Peshawar on Thursday and discussed with him matters of mutual interests.

Australian High Commissioner congratulated Syed Arshad Hussain Shah on assuming the responsibilities as caretaker Chief Minister of the province and expressed his best wishes for him.

The chief minister also extended his heartfelt felicitations to the High Commissioner on brilliant win of Australian Cricket Team in ICC cricket world cup, 2023.

Talking to the delegates, Chief Minister said that it

was the top most priority of his government to serve the people to the maximum and to promote good governance in all the departments and sectors of the province.

"Steps are being taken to improve public service delivery in the province whereas monitoring mechanism is also being strengthened", Arshad Hussain said, adding that religious minorities are an integral part of our society; and the government is working for the wellbeing and protection of minorities living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Touching upon the repatriation of illegal immigrants to their homelands, the chief minister told that repatriation process was in progress in a smooth way, adding that the provincial government was extending all out support and facilities

to such foreigners voluntarily returning to their homelands.

Syed Arshad Hussain Shah said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government welcomed the cooperation of Australian government in different social sectors of the province and hoped that cooperation between both the governments will continue in the future as well.

The Australian High Commissioner, while talking on the occasion, said that Australia and Pakistan have long-lasting and friendly relations, adding that Australian government wanted to see Pakistan as more stable, developed and a prosperous country. Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry and other relevant officials were also present on the occasion.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah chairing 16th meeting of Provincial Cabinet.

## Garments provided to Thalassaemia patients

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Distribution of winter garments among poor Thalassaemia kids of Hamza Foundation Welfare Thalassaemia Center and Blood Transfusion Services Peshawar by Muhammad Khalid Khan, Quality assurance manager of HF and Dr. Kashmala Shah W.M.O of HF, on Thursday.

The management of HF is very much thankful to the worthy donor and Haji Zahoor Khan for their help and support for the ailing humanity, especially for poor Thalassaemia and Hemophilia patients.

May Allah give them its best reward in both the world for their donation of winter garments. It was our first day, the donation is for more than 200 patients. Inshallah tomorrow we will distribute the remaining jackets.

## Pics, data of criminals released

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Police have released the pictures, videos and data of criminals on the screens installed at BRT stations.

According to Trans Peshawar on Thursday, the data of the suspects wanted in street crimes has been provided to all the BRT stations. The first photo list of more than 200 criminals was complete and posted on BRT stations' screens while more data, pics and videos of the criminals would also be compiled for release soon.

According to the authorities the videos of street criminals were also being released on BRT screens. The aim of the initiative was to provide information regarding these criminals to the general public through fast means. The data of the accused have been obtained from the photographs of CCTV cameras and criminal records.

The BRT authorities said people were filming the pictures and videos of these criminals on their mobile phones and hoped that the step would help police in identification and arrest of these criminals.

## Looter gang arrested

PESHAWAR (INP): A gang that broke into houses in the inner city in the guise of polio workers and robbed them at gunpoint has been caught on Thursday.

The police said that the gang had been operating for some time and had stolen lakhs of rupees in cash, gold ornaments and valuable mobile phones from several houses.

The gang was caught after a special team was formed to investigate the robberies.

The team used CCTV footage, mobile phone data and geo-tagging to track down the suspects. They conducted raids in different areas of Peshawar and eventually arrested the four members of the gang, including a woman.

The arrested suspects have been identified as Naeem son of Masal Khan, Niaz Ali son of Raza Khan, Iqbal son of Maskeen and Masama (I) widow Zain Shah. They are residents of Matni, Qazi Clay, Hasangarhi and Badh Bir.

The police have recovered stolen cash, gold ornaments and mobile phones from the arrested suspects. They have also confessed to several incidents in other districts besides Peshawar. More revelations are expected from the accused during the investigation.

# JUIF flays blasts in Waziristan, Bajaur

PESHAWAR (APP): JUI-F spokesperson Muhammad Aslam Ghori on Thursday strongly condemned the blasts in Waziristan and Bajaur and the loss of precious lives in these attacks.

In a statement issued here, Aslam Ghori said that the whole country and especially KP has become a hotbed of unrest, lawlessness and brutality adding

that these attacks were intensifying as the date of general elections was approaching.

He said that the tribal elder Alam Noor was killed in North Waziristan along with his sons the other day while security forces were also attacked in a landmine blast in South Waziristan and today the JUIF workers were targeted in Bajaur

again.

He said that those who have to protect the public were themselves victims of terrorism, adding that such anti-state elements should be immediately arrested and given severe punishment.

He prayed for eternal peace for the departed souls and early recovery of the injured persons in the terrorists' attack.

# Lifetime Achievement Award awarded to Dr. Azer

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: At the KMC Convocation where 215 Degrees were distributed by Governor Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali to the graduates of KMC session 2020 2. As well as the Academy Council of KMC announced the Lifetime Achievement Award to former students who have made significant contributions to the medical field.

Dr. Inayat Ur Rehman Roghani, Dr. Muhammad Hamayun, and Prof. Dr. Azer Rashid must be incredibly proud. Lifetime achievement awards are a great way to recognize the impact individuals have made throughout their careers.

Prof. Dr. Azer Rashid also received his award from the Governor Khyber Pukhtunkhwa. Prof. Dr. Azer Rashid graduated from Khyber Medical College, Peshawar. After that, he earned a Diploma in Dermatology from London followed by MSC in Dermatology, Ph.D in dermatology, and FRCP from Glasgow. After his return to Pakistan, he joined his alma mater

(Khyber Medical College) as Assistant Professor of Dermatology in 1989.

Prof. Dr. Azer Rashid is a renowned dermatologist with an impressive 4 decades of experience in the field. He currently practices at Rehman Medical Institute (RMI) and is widely recognized for his expertise, extensive knowledge, and unwavering commitment to patient care.

Additionally, he has been awarded the prestigious FRCP (Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians) from Glasgow. His vast knowledge and expertise are evident in the numerous research papers he has authored, which have been published in top-tier national and international journals.

He has held several executive positions at esteemed institutions such as Khyber Teaching Hospital KTH, Khyber Medical College KMC, and Khyber Medical University. As the Chairman of KMC, he played a pivotal role in shaping medical education and policies. Additionally, he served as an Advisor



Dermatology to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission and was a valued member of the Provincial Technical Advisory Committee on AIDS. Prof. Dr. Rashid's leadership and service have had a profound impact on the advancement of medical education and the improvement of patient care in the region.

Prof. Azer is also International Fellow of American Academy of Dermatology (FAAD), Fellow of American College of Physicians (Dermatology) FACP, Fellow of Asian Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (FAADV) and Ex-president of Pakistan Association of Dermatologists

## FIA held two over sale, supply of fake medicines

PESHAWAR (INP): The Anti-Corruption Circle of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Peshawar, arrested two suspects involved in sale and supply of fake medicines in the provincial capital Peshawar on Thursday.

According spokesman of FIA, the accused were involved in the sale of fake and unregistered medicines. The nabbed culprits were identified as Khalilullah and Muhammad Asad, the spokesmen added.

Deputy Director Anti-Corruption Circle Saadullah Khan said that FIA teams were conducting joint operations with the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan against the accused involved in the offense.

All resources were being used to curb the practice and no one would be allowed to play with the lives of innocent people, he said.

## Command, control centres established

PESHAWAR (APP): The Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan on Thursday said that Command and Control Center (CC&C) have been set up and operationalized in 12 districts of the province.

He said that these centres were connected with 2500 CCTV cameras and artificial intelligence and facial recognition systems, adding that with the help of CC&C, more than 800 points including various crowded markets would be monitored round the clock.

He mentioned that some 239 accused had been arrested so far with the help and identification of these state-of-the-art CCTV cameras. He said that around 260 busy points in City, Cantt and Faqirabad and other areas were being monitored at the centres through the CCTV camera.

He said that the Mardan command and control center had been equipped with 134 high resolution quality cameras which were monitoring 144 square kilometers areas in the district.

Similarly, in DI Khan district around 304 CCTV cameras had been installed, 200 in Bannu, 203 in Mansehra, 238 cameras in Swabi, 210 in Haripur, 200 in Abbottabad, 203 in Lower Dir and 62 in Hangu.

The police chief said that work on the establishing command and control room center in other districts of the province was going on rapidly.



PESHAWAR: CEO Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission Dr. Nadeem Akhtar addressing audience.

# KPHCC holds awareness seminar at MTI LRH

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission (KPHCC) organized a comprehensive one-day awareness seminar at the MTI Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar, focusing on Minimum Service Delivery Standards for Health Care Establishments. The event was attended by a distinguished panel of guests, including Brig (Retd) Dr. Muhammad

Ibrar (HD-LRH) and Dr. Hamid Shehzad (MD-LRH).

Dr. Nadeem Akhtar, CEO of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission was the Chief Guest while Dr. Abdul Jalil, (Associate Professor Family Medicine), Dr. Haseeb Ullah Awan, (Director Quality, KTH), Mohsin Ali Turk (Director Legal Affairs KP HCC) and Dr. Uzma Syed (Deputy Director Quality KP HCC)

addressed the participants on various areas of governance of Health Care in the Province.

The participants included a diverse group of medical, allied medical and managerial health care professionals from LRH.

Dr. Nadeem Akhtar, in his role as the CEO of KP HCC, explained the significance of maintaining high-quality healthcare services and highlighted the crucial role of both KP HCC and

service providers in achieving this goal.

Expressing his gratitude, Dr. Muhammad Ibrar and Dr. Hamid Shehzad marked the event helpful in capacity building and enhancement of quality standards of service delivery in Lady Reading Hospital.

They appreciated the initiative of KPHCC for awareness of the stakeholders and assured their support for further similar events.

# 112 illegally staying foreigners held; 235,237 Afghan returned home via KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police arrested 112 illegally staying Afghans in different crackdowns and shifted them to holding centres for repatriation to their own country.

According to a report of the Home Department, these

illegally staying foreigners would be sent back after screening and fulfillment of other legal formalities, adding that the number of those who had been repatriated after the arrest has reached to 993.

As many as 2,668 Afghan

citizens returned to their country via Torkham the other day, it said and added that these included 729 men, 652 women and 1175 children from 560 families.

So far, 231,452 Afghans including 21,562 families have returned via Torkham

and 3,365 from Anguar Adda and 419 via Kharlachi, the report said.

The number of people voluntarily returned through the three routes of the province had increased to 235,237, the Home Department said.

# KPIC and Blue Veins signs MOU

— to aware marginalized community



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission (KPIC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Blue Veins, a non-governmental organization on Thursday with a view to assisting the KPIC by extending cooperation to ensure free flow of information especially amongst the marginalized community i.e. transgender, minorities and women in line with the Right to Information Act, 2013.

Mrs. Farah Hamid Khan, Chief Information Commissioner, KP Information Commission (KPIC) and Qamar Naseem, Director Blue Veins, signed the MOU on behalf of their respective organizations.

Secretary KPIC, Mr. Anees Ur Rehman, Deputy Director Communication, KPIC, Sayed Saadat Jahan, Deputy Registrar KPIC Nazim Shahab Qamar, Deputy Director IT, KPIC Muhammad Tahir and Noor Said, Administrative Officer, KPIC, Zartasha Abid, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, Blue Veins, and Ayub Khan, Liaison Officer, Blue Veins were present on the occasion.

Under the MoU, the KPIC will work together with the Blue Veins to disseminate public awareness messages on right to information through installation of standees, airing of documentaries on RTI, projection of RTI through social media platforms and

arrangement of trainings, seminars, workshops on RTI in the targeted districts of KP i.e. Kurram, Mardan, Peshawar, Haripur, Nowshera, Charsadda, Swabi, Chitral, Dir Lower, D.I.Khan, Khyber and Malakand. Besides this, Special messages through hangers are sponsored by Blue Veins. Moreover, Blue Veins will support the Commission for holding meetings with other partners so as to spread the message of RTI through every nook and corner of the province.

Both parties expect that free flow of information will help ensure transparent and accountable governance, which will lead to empowerment of the people in KP.

# Pesco notifies power shutdown

PESHAWAR (APP): Pesco authorities have notified power shutdown in areas of Peshawar, Kohat, Abbottabad, Mingora due to maintenance Work.

According to Pesco, power supply will remain suspended from Hayatabad grid station on 25 November from 9 AM to 2 PM resultantly consumers Hayatabad 1, 2, 9, 10, 13, 14, IMS feeders will face inconvenience.

Power supply will remain suspended from Sheikh Mohammadi-Kohat Transmission Line Grid Station on 25 November from 9 AM to 3 PM resultantly consumer of Kohat, Ghambat and Lachi grid connected feeder will face inconvenience.

Power Supply will remain suspended from Abbottabad Grid Station on 25 November from 10 AM to 3 PM resultantly consumer Thandiani, Bagnotar, Cant, Dum Toor, Link road feeders will face inconvenience.

Road, DHA, HBK, Scree 6, Commercial Belding Abdul Razaq, feeders will face inconvenience.

Similarly, power supply will remain suspended from RMT Grid Station on 25 and 28 November from 8 am to 2 PM, resultantly consumer of Safdarabad 2, RMT, Badi Zai, Durani Media Colony, Professor Model Town, Sheikh feeder will face inconvenience.

Likewise, power supply will remain suspended from Mangora Grid Station on 25 and 28 November from 8 AM to 2 PM, resultantly consumer Malam Jabba, Express Saidu, Bandai, Mengurah 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Customers of Kabal, Saidu Sharif, Brikot 2, Kabal 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Senior Hospital, Takhtabad, Qamber, Singer, Saidu Baba, Shah Dara, Mangalore, Shein, Charbagh feeders will face inconvenience.



PESHAWAR: Central Spokesman of PTI Moazam But Advocate addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza





## In brief

### Bannu varsity to organize event F.P. Report

BANNU: Bannu University decided to organize an event for awareness and promotion of information technology. For this purpose all the alumni is being invited working in different departments all over the country for sharing their experiences among the students. Former Chief Minister Akram Khan Durrani will be the Chief Guest while as Vice Chancellor Professor Doctor Khair ur Zaman, Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Doctor Sultan Mehmood will also address the audience. While talking to the media persons Dean of IT Professor Doctor Aurangzeb Khan, Director IT Doctor Nasir Gull said that this event is organized for the promotion of I.T in our country specially in our area, as nowadays I.T is the basic need of today's world and without I.T no one can think of development.

### Body of student found from hostel

KHAIRPUR (INP): Body of a student was recovered from room of a private hostel in Gambat area of Khairpur district on Thursday. According to details, body of deceased stated to be student of 3rd semester of BS Nursing program was found dead inside room of a hostel. The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem to know the reasons of death. A day earlier, body of another student was found from hostel of a university near Northern Bypass.

### MDCAT to be held on 26th F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Commissioner Dera Zafarul Islam Khattak has said that four feeders of PESCO Dera Circle would be made load shedding-free within few days as a result of 100 percent recovery. While talking to journalists at his office here on Thursday, the Commissioner said that in the first phase, four feeders including Topanwala, City-I, Town Hall and Saddar would be made load shedding-free after 100 percent recovery from those areas effective operations against Kanda mafia. He said that following the directives of the Federal government, the drive against the power theft and defaulters was continued since September 07, 2023. The PESCO Dera Circle has recovered pending dues of about Rs 800 million during the campaign. Moreover, he informed that the feeders with more than 80 percent losses would be closed during the ongoing campaign. While the feeders with over 80 percent recovery would be made load-shedding-free, he added. He appealed to the citizens to pay their arrears on time so that their areas could also be made load shedding-free. Replying to a question about the upcoming MDCAT test scheduled to be held on November 26 at Gomal Medical College, the Commissioner said the administration has completed foolproof security arrangements for test. During the test, he said, uninterrupted power supply will be ensured in that area. He said that carrying electronic devices would not be allowed in the examination center. The mobile network will also be closed in and around the examination center, he told and mentioned that the papers would be brought to the examination centers under the supervision of the Assistant Commissioner. About the pending salaries of Water and Sanitation Services Company (WSSC) employees, he said the administration was in a contact with the provincial government of KP for the release of funds for the purpose.

# Child kidnapping attempt failed

## F.P. Report

MARDAN: An attempt to kidnap three children in Kattigarhi failed, the accused was arrested, police started investigation, on Thursday.

DSP Naseem Khan and SHO Mudassar Khan of Katlang Police Station while talking to the media representatives said that Ehsanullah son of Abdul Hakeem who is a resident of Matta Swat in Sherdil Chowk, Kattigarhi. And still living here. while filing a report at the Katlang police station, he said that his seven-year-old Ayesha, five-year-old Shahid and four-year-old Sana were tried to be abducted by Attaulah son of Amanullah (Alias) Mirwas on a motorcycle.

However, we came on the screams of the children and they ran away. After the report, the police blocked various intersections in Katlang tehsil and after arresting the accused, the motorcycle used in the incident has also been recovered.

ered. He said that the accused is currently in the custody of the police and investigation is going on.

**Mayor argued UN for resolution of Palestine issue:** Mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayor stated that, according to the United Nations agreements, the state of Israel was established, but Muslim Palestinians are still deprived of their rights and are fighting for the freedom of their state.

Expressing these thoughts during a session of the City Local Council Mardan, Mayor Mardan emphasized that people worldwide, including non-Muslims, are raising their voices for Palestinians more than Muslims. Across the globe, there is condemnation and protest against the oppression and brutality faced by the oppressed Palestinians.

Mayor Mardan urged everyone to unite and raise their voices for the oppressed Palestinians on every platform, emphasizing

that our religion encourages us to speak up for the oppressed and assist them. He also called on the Pakistani government to not only speak out against this injustice in Organization of Islamic Council and the United Nations but also to provide assistance to the oppressed Palestinians in every possible way. The agenda of the meeting is solely dedicated to expressing solidarity with the Palestinians, and there will be no discussion on other agendas during this special session" He added

Later Mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayor led the City Local Council members and the public in a protest rally from the council hall to Bacha Khan Chowk against the rights violations, the creation of a separate state, and the ongoing oppression and brutality against Palestinians. presented a approved condemn resolution for Palestinians to the Commissioner Mardan after the Session.

# KP Governor urges students to focus on studies

## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali on Thursday asked the university's graduates to utilize their knowledge and energies for welfare of the nation and development of the country. Addressing the 7th convocation at the University of Malakand (UoM) as chief guest here the Governor said that Pakistan needed educated and skillful youths who could play an important role in its development and prosperity. Besides students and faculty, former VC Prof Dr Gul Zaman, SP investigation Lower Dir Zahoor Ahmad, pro vice chancellor Dr Attaur Rehman, UoM controller of examination Muhammad Shahid, registrar Hidayatullah and Dr Arab Zaman were also in attendance.

Earlier the UoM vice chancellor Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad welcomed the guest and thanked him for attending the varsity's convocation. The VC briefed the guest about the progress of his university and claimed it had earned a good name not only on national but also on international level within a few years. He said that male and female students from far off areas in Malakand division sought admission at the UoM that was an honour for him.

The KP Governor distributed gold medals, shields and degrees among the students. A total of 510 students were awarded degrees and medals on the occasion. The Governor said that during the current years he had distributed degrees among 11000 students which was a good sign. He asked the graduates to wholeheartedly serve the nation and the country after completion of their studies. He



also congratulated the parents of those students who got gold medals and distinctive positions. He said the graduated students had to work hard to brighten the country name. The VC awarded shields to the Governor and other guests at the end.

The UoM administration closed the varsity and its constituent units including Women sub campus at Batkhela and the University Public School and College on Nov, 23 and 24 during the Governor's visit and post-convocation holiday.

Later the Governor visited the Center for Computational Materials Science and examined the fastest super computer. He lauded the efforts of Dr Iftikhar for his role in the establishment of the center. The Governor urged the students to take benefits from the super computer and utilize its information for software development. He also planted a tree on the varsity premises and urged the UoM management to plant more trees for a clean and green Pakistan.

# Women's health awareness stressed for healthy society



Saqib Mushtaq

BAHAWALPUR: Directorate of Women Health Care Center and Maternity Home the Islamia University of Bahawalpur with the support of Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics along with other organizations arranged a seminar to raise awareness about women's health issues.

Dr. Ehtesham Anwar attended the event and inaugurated the Women Healthcare Center and Maternity Home. Prof. Dr. Shazia Anjum Dean Faculty of Chemical and Biological Sciences, Prof. Dr. Rubina Bhatti Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Dr. Iqbal Chairman IBBB, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Saleem Chairman Department of Psychology, Dr. Sheikh Safina Siddique Director Women Healthcare Center and Maternity Home, Dr. Samina Ejaz Additional Director, Dr. Maryam

Iftikhar In-charge Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics, Dr. Amna Noor, Dr. Zarmina and Dr.

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Azhar Khan, Dr. Nazir Azhar Consultant Gynecologist specially attended. Dr. Sheikh Safina Siddique, Director Women Healthcare Center and Maternity Home and Dr. Maryam Iftikhar, In-charge Department of Human Nutrition Dietetics inspected the nutrition stalls set up by the students of Human Nutrition and Dietetics Department. Additional Director Dr. Samina Ejaz gave informative presentations in the scientific session, Dr. Muhammad Ishaq, Dr. Sheikh Safina Siddique, Dr. Gul Rana Ahmed, Dr. Zainab Malik and Dr. Maryam Iftikhar gave special lectures.

Antimicrobial resistance week was celebrated under the aegis of Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences the Islamia

University of Bahawalpur. An awareness walk was organized in connection with this World AMR Awareness Week which lasted from November 18 to 24. This initiative was the result of an understanding and collaboration between the Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, National Institute of Health Islamabad, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and The Fleming Fund (UK).

The main theme of the event was Anti-Microbial Resistance Together i.e. achieving resistance and protection against microbial pathogens through collaboration. Dean Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences Prof. Dr. Muhammad Khalid Mansoor presided over the walk, along with chairpersons, faculty members and students of various departments of the Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences.

# FC hold talent hunt drive in Tirah valley

## F.P. Report

TIRAH: In line with the KP literacy campaign "Ilm Da Tolo Da Para," Frontier Corps North conducted a Transformative Talent Hunt Drive at the Govt Middle Higher Secondary School in Paindi Cheena, on Thursday.

This initiative aimed to enhance the literacy rate and educational standards in Tirah & Bazzar Zakha Khel. In collaboration with NGO VAS Students Welfare Organisation, the Sports Gala cum Talent Hunt Drive witnessed the enthusiastic

participation of over 400 students from ten different schools. The event featured a dynamic array of Curricular, Co-Curricular, and Extra Curricular activities, including Talent Hunt Exams, Quiz Tests, Declamation Contests, Motivational Lectures, and various sports competitions like Tug of War, Sack Race, Spoon Race, Shot Putt, Ball in Bucket, and Hanging Apples.

To open doors to promising futures for Khyber district students, Frontier Corps North, in coordination with TEVTA, KPK

Govt, and NLC, secured 10 vacancies for 6-month vocational training programs. These programs cover Land and Road Survey, Auto CAD courses at ATIN NLC Dina, and a Short Computer Course, including web designing, software, and freelancing in Peshawar.

Each student will receive free boarding & lodging and a monthly stipend of Rs. 5000 during the training period. Following the training, students will undergo a 2-month field training, and efforts will be made to secure job placements through TEVTA.

# Police arrests two alleged bank robbers

## F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Police apprehended two suspects allegedly involved in the Bank of Punjab robbery that occurred on August 15. The swift and strategic operation resulted in the arrest of Akbar Ali and Shahzeb, residents of Babaji Kali, Nowshera Kalan, on Thursday.

According to details, three armed and masked robbers enter the Bank of Punjab by demolishing a wall. The watchman was overpowered, tied with a rope, and robbed of his mobile phone, a bank mobile, and a pistol. The assailants also attempted to breach the bank locker.

DPO Nazir Khan formed a dedicated team, including DSP City Adnan Azam Khan, SHO Prang Fazal Dayan Khan, and other investigation officers, supervised by SP Investigation Charsadda Sanobar Khan. The team used modern investigation techniques, worked tirelessly to trace the accused and recover the stolen property.

The diligent efforts of the police bore fruit as Akbar Ali and Shahzeb were arrested. The weapons and tools used in the robbery, the stolen pistol, and the two mobile phones were successfully recovered. Both suspects confessed to their involvement in the crime, providing crucial information that is expected to unravel further details of the incident. This successful operation showcases the dedication and professionalism of the Charsadda police force in ensuring the safety and security of the community.

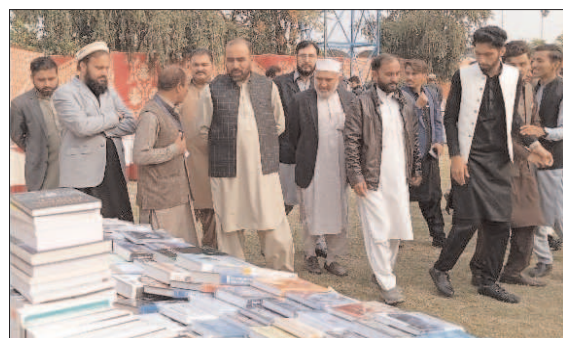
# KKKU kicks of two days book exhibition

## F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak (KKKUK) has opened its doors to a captivating two-day book exhibition on Thursday. The event, organized with the collaboration of the National Book Foundation and Allied Book Company and Progressive International Agencies Private Limited showcased an extensive collection of literary treasures, attracting students and intellectuals alike.

The book exhibition, held on the university premises, featured stalls from renowned literary institutions such as the National Book Foundation, Progressive International Agencies Private Limited and Allied Book Company, presenting a diverse collection of books covering various genres and subjects. Visitors were treated to an immersive experience as they explored the rich fabrics of knowledge and culture displayed within the exciting stalls.

The collaboration between Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak the National Book Foundation, Progressive International Agencies



Private Limited and Allied Book Company highlights a shared commitment to promoting literacy, fostering a love for reading, and cultivating an intellectual community within the university and the broader society.

Inaugurating the exhibition, Registrar of Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak Dr. Rafi Ullah Khan expressed enthusiasm about the event, stating, "We are delighted to host this two-day book exhibition, which serves as a testament to our dedication to fostering a culture of learning and intellectual exploration. He added that such initiatives play a crucial role in creating an environment where knowledge is celebrated and shared. Chief Librarian Dr Muhammad Hussain Afridi

also played due role in holding the exhibition. The exhibition not only provided an opportunity for students and faculty to discover new books and resources but also served as a platform for fostering a deeper connection between the academic community and the literary world.

Representatives from the National Book Foundation, Progressive International Agencies Private Limited and Allied Book Company were present to engage with visitors, offer insights into the showcased publications and guide the visitors. The event received overwhelming support from the university community, with attendees expressing their appreciation for the initiative and its contribution to promoting a culture of reading and learning.

# Tribal Malak along with 2 sons laid to rest

## F.P. Report

WANA: The presidential awarded tribal Malak Aslam Noor Wazir along with two minor sons laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard in Leva Kanda area of South Waziristan, on Thursday.

It is worthy to mention

that Malak Aslam Noor Wazir along with his sons were killed in planted IED bomb last day. Moreover, the deceased elder brother Malak Khadin had fought against foreign terrorists from 2004-2007 while latterly embraced martyrdom along with his son in ter-

rorist attack.

Deputy Commissioner South Waziristan Nasir Khan, Commander Scouts Brigadier Awais Shamim, District Police Officer Farman Ullah along with tribal elders and people from every walk of life participated in the funeral prayers.

# PSDE Conference concludes, papers on diverse topics presented

MULTAN (INP): The 37th annual general meeting (AGM) and Conference of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE) on "Breaking the Aid-Debt Chains" hosted by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), in collaboration with Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan concluded on Thursday.

Researchers from different parts of country presented several papers on diverse topics during the parallel technical session of the final day of the Conference. The topics of the papers included the lifetime cost of public sector employees, PSDP, public financial management, remittances, debt threat, and gender, among others.

The special lecture on "Fiscal Management for the Revival of the Economy" was delivered by Faisal Rashid of the Oxford Policy Management. Faisal Rashid began his lecture by saying that the current period is the most challenging period for Pakistan's economy. He said that Pakistan has developed a major debt reliance to finance its high fiscal deficit as revenues continue to remain inadequate compared to the ever-increasing expenditures. The tax-GDP ratio

remains low, while leakages in the energy sector have increased circular debt to unsustainable levels. Further, the pension schemes continue becoming unaffordable for the federal government, while the federal government continues to overburden itself by undertaking development projects of even the devolved subjects.

In this scenario, it is important to think of the possible options that Pakistan has to solve these problems. In the short to medium term, there is no doubt that Pakistan needs to turn towards the IMF for support. A typical IMF program requires countries to focus on reducing fiscal deficits, and employ tight monetary policy, while in recent years the IMF has pressed Pakistan to reform its state-owned enterprises' governance and energy sectors on a priority basis.

Faisal Rashid said that in the medium to long term, Pakistan needs to develop an economic reform plan. There must be a focus on increasing revenue through additional untapped sectors, while the energy sector needs immediate reformation too. DISCOs must be privatized, while efforts must be made to minimize transmission and dis-

tribution losses. The SOEs are the white elephants that need immediate reform efforts as well to have a meaningful impact in the long term.

He also said that pensions are also a major issue faced by Pakistan. The present value of future pensions stands at PKR 10 trillion today and is going to balloon unless immediate redressal is not performed. It is essential to reduce the pension beneficiaries stemming from a single employee. Government must look to rationalise grants and subsidies which are majorly untargeted as of now. The development expenditure decision-making requires overhaul as well. The PFM Act 2019 must be implemented in full spirit, while post-completion monitoring & evaluation of the projects must be mandatory.

A panel, arranged by UNICEF, was on "Improving the Quality of Public Spending." The session was moderated by Shaaf Najib, PIDE, while the panelists include Dr Manzoor Ahmed, trade specialist, Asim Bashir Khan, development economist, Talat Anwar, BZU, and Ahmed Waqar Qasim, PIDE.

Shaaf Najib introduced the topic by asking whether it is the revenues to be blamed for debt or

the expenditures. He said that the data shows that debt servicing accounts for the largest chunk of government expenditures. There are three major federal government liabilities. The government is giving subsidies without having the fiscal space for it. The government footprint on the economy is very large and there is a great deal of sludge in the system. The private sector gets crowded out.

Ahmed Waqar Qasim said that when 87% of loanable funds in the system end up getting diverted to the government, that leaves only 13% available to lend to the private sector. The impact can be looked at from the perspective of banks, private businesses, and the government. For banks, loans end up being given to big, established businesses rather than smaller firms due to high competition for limited resources. There ends up being less financial deepening in the economy also. Private businesses have to take recourse to private, informal borrowing and must sacrifice growth and expansion plans. The government prefers to focus on international trade rather than developing and promoting domestic commerce.

Manzoor Ahmad said that the

government ends up skewing the playing field and promoting inefficiencies in the economy. PEPPA rules are outdated and promote inefficiencies and waste. Audit objections are made on frivolous activities, but not on the feasibility and efficacy of staffing, and performance evaluations. Resource allocation and policy focus are determined by which lobby is stronger.

Asim Bashir said that development in Pakistan is debt-based, and the government is not concerned with performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of service delivery. Talat Anwar said that if the interest rate is brought down, the debt situation will improve from its currently unsustainable levels.

Regarding improving service delivery, Asim Bashir said that it is a demand-side problem as well as a supply constant which results in budget allocations that are not appropriate to our needs and also go against conventional wisdom. Delivery can be improved if decision-making can be rationalized. Manzoor Ahmad suggested bringing in automation and simplifying regulatory and agency oversight, actively promoting trade with neighbours and allowing the private sector to

work should be enough to create a favourable environment for greater trade.

From the floor, Shahid Kardar asked how the role of the government can be rethought, what functions it should perform, and what functions it should not perform. The VC PIDE suggested rethinking whether the government needs to keep spending on education and health. He further lamented why building more roads, flyovers, and infrastructure for the privileged few is not questioned by academia and other circles.

There also was a special invited lecture on the program, delivered by Abid Aman Burki, Professor Emeritus at LUMS. The title of his talk was "Aid Effectiveness Revisited in the Context of Pakistan." The Conference concluded with a special session titled "Youth Voice" and a vote of thanks. The co-hosts of PSDE's 37th Annual Conference, organized by PIDE, include the World Bank Group, UNICEF, RASTA, the Bank of Punjab, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, Saudi Pak Agricultural and Industrial Investment Company, and BZU School of Economics.





## Indigenous Brazilians gain political power

BRASILIA (AFP): Indigenous lawmaker Celia Xakriaba made history when she was elected to Brazil's Congress. But she says she sometimes gets called "Indian," and asked if she is in the legislature selling hand-crafts, showing how deep prejudice still runs. It has been an empowering year for native peoples in Brazilian government, where a record five Indigenous lawmakers gained seats in the lower chamber and President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva created a new Indigenous peoples' ministry.

Indigenous-rights activists say the gains are long overdue for groups that have endured a tortured history of abuses since colonial times, and whose defense of their ancestral lands -- including in the crucial Amazon rainforest -- plays a vital role in fighting deforestation and climate change. But Xakriaba, 34, says Indigenous Brazilians still face "constant racism," including in the conservative-majority legislature, dominated by allies of far-right ex-president Jair Bolsonaro. "We're used to facing bullets and genocide on our land... But even here (in Congress), people often try to silence us," Xakriaba told AFP, wearing traditional face paint and a blue-and-white feather headdress.

She says she has been subjected to degrading remarks, while some colleagues in the 513-member Chamber of Deputies have targeted her with "intimidating" comments. It has not stopped the young lawmaker, who hails from the southeastern state of Minas Gerais, from doing what she came to Brasilia to do: defend

diversity, Indigenous lands and the environment -- even if that means clashing with the powerful agribusiness lobby. "We're here to 'reforest' Congress," she said. Indigenous leaders in Brazil have won international recognition for their fight for the environment, including icons such as chief Raoni Metuktire, who rose to fame in the 1980s campaigning against deforestation with the English singer Sting. But until recently, Indigenous Brazilians were largely excluded from political power. That is changing, with five Indigenous candidates elected to the lower house in the country's October 2022 elections -- though none won office in the 81-member Senate. Lula, who took office in January, named respected Indigenous leader Sonia Guajajara to head a newly created ministry defending the interests of Brazil's 1.7 million Indigenous people -- about 0.8 percent of the country's population of 203 million. Joenia Wapichana, a former lawmaker and Brazil's first Indigenous woman lawyer, was named to head FUNAI, the federal agency for the country's 305 Indigenous groups. "Historically, Indigenous peoples were against participating in government," Guajajara told AFP. But that changed under Bolsonaro's "anti-Indigenous" administration (2019-2022), she said. "We reached a point where we realized it was important to have a voice, to prioritize Indigenous issues, the environment, our culture and our way of life." Lula tasked Guajajara with relaunching the establishment of new Indigenous

reservations -- which Bolsonaro had blocked, vowing not to allow "one more centimeter" of protected lands. Lula has created eight new reservations, protecting them from encroachment by farming, cattle ranching and illegal mining. But newfound political power has not been a panacea for centuries of abuse. "Big results" are lacking so far, said Dinamam Tuxa, coordinator of the Brazilian Indigenous Peoples' Association (APIB).

But he praised the "combative" approach of lawmakers like Xakriaba. The Indigenous political fight took center stage in September, when Congress passed a law restricting native peoples' rights to their ancestral lands if they were not present there in 1988, when Brazil's current constitution was adopted. Xakriaba said Indigenous lawmakers were able to slow the bill's passage, even if they could not stop it. "There aren't many of us, but we're having an impact," she said. Lula vetoed most of the bill -- though Congress may still override him. Potentially setting up a complex legal battle, the Supreme Court has separately ruled the policy unconstitutional, on the grounds that many native peoples were forced from their land. Indigenous movements are now preparing for Brazil's local elections next year, striking alliances with progressive parties and pressuring the courts to require electoral funding and media access for native candidates. That is just the beginning, said Tuxa. "We want Indigenous ministers, Supreme Court justices... even an Indigenous president," he said.

## 4 US, Canada border crossings closed

NEW YORK: Four border crossings have been closed between the United States and Canada after a vehicle exploded at a checkpoint on the US side of a bridge connecting the two countries at Niagara Falls, in New York state, authorities said. Two people inside the vehicle were killed in the explosion that took place on the US side of the Rainbow Bridge that goes across the Niagara River, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press news agency.

Three other bridges between western New York and Ontario were quickly closed as a precaution, and the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport began security checks on all cars and told passengers to expect additional screenings, according to AP. The Buffalo, New York, field office of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation said it was coordinating with all law enforcement agencies and described the situation as "fluid", in a post on X. No further information was immediately available on the cause of the explosion. Photos and video taken by bystanders and posted on social media showed thick smoke and a security booth that had been singed by flames. Videos showed the fire was in a US Customs and Border Protection area just east of the main vehicle checkpoint.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was briefed and the White House said that it was closely monitoring the situation. "This is obviously a very serious situation in Niagara Falls," Trudeau said in Parliament. "We are taking this extraordinary seriously," Ivan Vitalli, a Ukrainian visiting Niagara Falls, told The Niagara Gazette newspaper that he and a friend were near the bridge when they "heard something smash". "We saw fire and big, black smoke," he was quoted as saying. —Aljazeera

## Finland to close border crossings

SALLA: Finland has announced it will close all but one of its border crossings with Russia after a rise in the arrivals of refugees and migrants whom the government claims Moscow is intentionally pushing to the country's frontiers. Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo said that as of the end of Friday, only its northernmost border crossing with Russia, Rajajooseppi, will remain open.

Finland had already shut four of its eastern border checkpoints last week and is set to close three of the four remaining crossing points. "Rajajooseppi is the northernmost [border crossing], and it requires a real effort to get there," Orpo said at a press conference. More than 600 asylum seekers have entered Finland via Russia in November, compared with only a few dozen in September and October. They were mostly from countries such as Yemen, Afghanistan, Kenya, Morocco, Pakistan, Somalia and Syria, according to border officials. Most were young men in their 20s, but some were families with children, border guard data and photos from news outlets showed. Officials also said Finnish border guards and soldiers have begun erecting barriers, including concrete obstacles topped with barbed wire, at some of the crossing points. After the recent closures, arrivals shifted north along the country's 1,340km (832-mile) border to Vartiuss and Salla, two border stations that still accepted asylum applications, Finland said. "Undoubtedly Russia is instrumentalising migrants" as part of its "hybrid warfare" against Finland, Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen said. Moscow has denied it is funneling desperate migrants and refugees to the Finnish border. Finland joined NATO in April after decades of military non-alignment and pragmatic friendly relations with Moscow. Its border with Russia serves as the European Union's external border and makes up NATO's northeastern flank. Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Maria Zakharova said that Russian authorities are ready to work together with Finnish officials to reach an agreement on the border issue. —Aljazeera



GAZA: A truck carrying medical supplies arrives at the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis.

## Blue whales: Ocean giants return to 'safe' tropical haven

LONDON (BBC): Blue whales - the largest known animals on Earth - are making their home in a part of the Indian Ocean where they were wiped out by whaling decades ago. Researchers and filmmakers in the Seychelles captured footage of the whales in 2020 and 2021. It features in the Imax film Return of the Giants. But a year of underwater audio recording revealed the animals spend months in the region.

This means they could be breeding there, scientists say. The researchers involved in the mission described their discovery as a "conservation win" after the Soviet whaling fleet decimated the population in the 1960s. Lead researcher Dr Kate Stafford told BBC News: "It turns out if you stop killing animals on mass scales and you give them a chance to rebound, they can recover." Commercial whaling has had a lasting impact. Blue whale numbers are still a tiny proportion of what they were and the species is listed as endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

More than 300,000 were killed in the southern hemisphere alone - chased down by modern, fast whaling ships. "This is the largest animal to ever exist on the planet," Dr Stafford said, adding: "We want to know where they are coming back and knowing there's a population around the Seychelles is incredibly exciting." The discovery, published in the Journal of Endangered Species Research, was the result of fixing a

"sound trap" to the seabed close to the tiny island nation. Fitted with underwater microphones, batteries and recording devices, the trap was left in place for a year, recording 15 minutes of every hour, every day. During the team's month-long expedition, Dr Stafford also spent a few hours each day dangling a hydrophone [underwater microphone] into the water.

Chris Watson, the wildlife sound recordist on the trip, told BBC News: "We heard remarkable things - the tapping of sperm whales thousands of feet down and dolphins echolocating and communicating but sadly no blue whales." However, after scientists retrieved their sound trap, painstaking analysis of the recording revealed blue whales were there and communicating when the researchers were not. The mammals' signature, very low frequency song could be heard primarily during March and April. "This means the Seychelles could be really important for blue whales," said Dr Stafford, explaining: "They sing during the breeding season and we think it's probably the males who are singing, based on what we know about other whales. "So there's also potential that the Seychelles is a breeding area or a nursery area."

The scientists were even able to pick out which acoustic population the blue whales in the area belong to. Dr Stafford said: "You can tell them apart by the sounds they make. In the Seychelles we heard one acoustic population - the one generally associated with the northern Indian Ocean." The song or fundamental frequency

of the blue whale is so deep and such a low frequency that it is beyond the range of human hearing. But Mr Watson, who has managed to record blue whales in the Sea of Cortez, said we can hear what are called its harmonics - higher frequency sounds that "ring out" when a blue whale sings, explaining: "It's this really low, deep, consistent pulse. "When I recorded blue whales in Mexico, that was what was resonating in my headphones." Dr Stafford added: "It's the loudest sustained sound in the animal kingdom. [Their call lasts] 15 to 20 seconds at about 188 decibels, which is the equivalent of a jet engine in air."

Sound travels much faster and further in water, enabling blue whales to communicate over distances of hundreds and even thousands of miles. Conservation scientists are keen to understand exactly how important the Seychelles is for blue whales. An area around the islands has been formally protected in a unique "debt for nature" swap, where the country had almost £16.8m (\$22m) of its national debt written off in exchange for doing more to protect its oceans. About 400,000 square kilometres (154,000 square miles) of its seas are now protected. One major concern is protecting important areas for blue whales from noise pollution, which travels equally efficiently through the water. "There's not a tremendous amount of ship traffic in the Seychelles so perhaps we could think of it as a nice, quiet, safe place for blue whales," said Dr Stafford.

## WHO asks China for more details on unexplained pneumonia outbreak

GENEVA: The World Health Organization (WHO) has asked Beijing for more information on an outbreak of mysterious pneumonia in northern China that appears mostly to be affecting children. The WHO made "an official request for detailed information on an increase in respiratory illnesses and reported clusters of pneumonia in children," the United Nations health agency said in a statement.

China has been experiencing an increase in cases of influenza-like illnesses compared with the same period in the previous three years when strict measures were in force as part of its zero-COVID strategy. That policy was abruptly abandoned in December 2022. The WHO noted that the China's National Health Commission told a press conference earlier this month that there had been an increase in the incidence of respiratory diseases, attributing them to the lifting of COVID-19 measures and the spread not only of

COVID-19 but pathogens such as influenza, mycoplasma pneumoniae (a common bacterial infection which typically affects younger children), and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

Earlier this week, ProMED, an online medical community that raised questions in late 2019 about an unknown illness circulating in Wuhan that later became COVID-19, noted a growing number of media reports of clusters of undiagnosed pneumonia among children in northern China. FTV News, a Taiwanese media outlet, reported that children's hospitals in Beijing, Liaoning and other places in the north were "overwhelmed with sick children" and parents were questioning whether the authorities were "covering up an epidemic". ProMED said more definitive information on the "concerning illness" was needed.

Noting that it was unclear whether the outbreak in northern China and the overall increase in respi-

ratory infections previously reported by Chinese authorities were linked, the WHO said it had asked Beijing for more detailed information on the situation. "WHO requested additional epidemiologic and clinical information, as well as laboratory results from these reported clusters among children, through the International Health Regulations mechanism," the statement said. "We have also requested further information about recent trends in the circulation of known pathogens including influenza, SARS-CoV-2, RSV and mycoplasma pneumoniae, and the current burden on health care systems. WHO is also in contact with clinicians and scientists through our existing technical partnerships and networks in China." Writing on social media platform X, Dr Krutika Kuppalli, who is part of the WHO's emergency programme, noted the illness "could be anything" and that many countries had outbreaks of respiratory ill-

ness after lifting lockdowns. "We need more information about symptoms, epidemiology and what has been tested," she added. The WHO urged people in China to take steps to reduce their risk of contracting a respiratory infection including updating vaccinations, maintaining a distance from other people, wearing masks when necessary and staying at home when sick. Testing was also important, it said. The first cases of what turned out to be COVID-19 were reported as unexplained pneumonia in late 2019 with the first death from the disease in January 2020 the same month that China shared publicly the genetic sequence of COVID-19.

"Deeply concerned" by the rapid spread and severity of the virus as well as by "the alarming levels of inaction", the WHO declared a pandemic in March 2020. A WHO team finally visited Wuhan to investigate the outbreak in early 2021, but the origins of the virus remain unclear. —Aljazeera

## 4 EU states disagree on military aid for Ukraine

PRAGUE (AP): The presidents of four Central European countries found some common ground on Ukraine despite their governments' diverging views on military support for its fight against Russia's invasion. The Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia, all four post-communist European Union and NATO members, form an informal collective known as the Visegrad Group.

At their annual meeting, the host, Czech President Petr Pavel, noted the leaders didn't have sharply different opinions on the war, saying that "we've all agreed that it is in our imminent interest that Ukraine succeeds." "We've agreed that we have to support Ukraine with all kinds

of help," Pavel added. Polish President Duda echoed that: "Ukraine needs help and we should provide it." The Czech Republic and Poland have been have been staunch supporters of Ukraine, opening their borders for refugees and donating arms, though Polish-Ukrainian relations soured in September over Ukrainian grain entering and affecting Poland's market. But Hungary's government of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has refused to supply Ukraine with weapons and has threatened to veto EU financial aid packages to Kyiv. It also accuses Ukraine of violating the rights of an ethnic Hungarian minority in western Ukraine by

restricting use of the Hungarian language in schools. Hungary's President Katalin Novák said in Prague that the rights of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine are not negotiable. But she added that "we have a common position that Russia must not win this war." The new government of Slovakia, led by Prime Minister Robert Fico, has ended military aid for Ukraine. The government said it was still ready to provide humanitarian and other aid. "Our aid to Ukraine is important and makes sense because it is above all in our interest, our interest in the stability and peace in the region," said Slovak President Zuzana Ľaputová, a staunch supporter of Ukraine.



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# Hamas-Israel truce

ISRAEL and Hamas have agreed on a four-day temporary pause in the war that will enable the release of about 50 people who have been held captive in Gaza since the Hamas fighters stormed southern Israel on October 7, in exchange for 150 Palestinians held in Israeli jails. According to the details, the Israeli cabinet backed the Qatar-mediated deal that commenced in the early hours of Wednesday morning. Meanwhile, the Israeli government has announced a one-day extension in fighting for every release of an additional 10 Israeli captives held by Hamas. The Hamas authorities also confirmed the deal and urged the Israeli government to stop all military actions in Gaza and that hundreds of trucks carrying humanitarian, medical, and fuel aid would be allowed into the territory.

The long-awaited and hard-earned Hamas-Israel truce finally envisioned into a reality as the weeks-long hostility, ruthless bombardment, and shelling flattened vast swaths of Gaza which is home to about 2.3 million people. The latest wave of violence killed at least 14000 Palestinians, wounding thousands of others, forcing nearly 1.7 million people out of their homes prompting the worst humanitarian crisis in Palestinian territory. On the other hand, the recent conflict killed about 1200 Israelis creating the worst hostage crisis in history. Meanwhile, Hamas's strategic surgical strike fundamentally destroyed Israel's narrative of an invincible nation and pushed the Palestine intifada movement to the next stage while sensitizing the world as well as Israel about the urgency of a peaceful and just resolution of the Palestine dispute. That is the only solution to the Middle East problem as well as the sole recipe for lasting peace in the region.

The temporary pause in the ongoing conflict is of great importance as the Gaza Strip has now turned into a major warzone and millions of Palestinians not only face serious risk to their safety and security in the wake of brutal Israeli aerial bombing and ground offensive while no availability of food, fuel, water as well as medical supplies had caused utmost problems for common civilians. After the truce becomes effective, hopefully, humanitarian aid will flow into Gaza unrestrictedly without any condition, that the voluntary evacuation of the masses, patients, and injured must be permitted to leave the conflict zone. The global community including major nations that facilitated the historic deal including Qatar, Egypt and the United States must work to manifest this temporary pause into a long-lasting peace deal, the release of all Israeli hostages and freedom of all Palestinian prisoners along with paving the way for the logical conclusion of the decades-long Palestine dispute.

Historically, unjust occupation, simmering conflict, and unceasing oppression of weak communities could never guarantee a peaceful and prosperous future for any nation. It is not possible that Israel kept occupation of Palestinian territory, enslaved over 3 million Palestinians, or forcefully pushed them out of their land and the Jewish nation built a safe, secure, and prosperous state over Arab land. The world has witnessed and the Israelis themselves experienced that peace is not possible without the implementation of the two-state solution and the creation of a separate and viable Palestinian state. It is a movement of decision and sagacity for the Netanyahu regime to barter peace and safety for his nation in reward for an autonomous Palestine otherwise the events of October 7 would be repeated again and again. At the same time, the global community must seize this opportunity if it desires permanent peace in the Middle East region, the two-state solution is the only viable path to reach that destination. Hence, the conduct of Israeli leadership and their Western allies would determine the possibility of permanent peace and political landscapes of the Middle East in the future.

# Religious ritual, and Hajj business

THE Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs has recently informed the nation about a significant reduction of Rs. 0.1 million in government Hajj expenses without compromising facilities being provided to the Hujjaj during this holy journey to Makkah and Madina. According to the interim ruler, each male pilgrim will receive a 30kg suitcase, and every female pilgrim will be given scarves (Abaya) featuring the national flag, a first-time incentive being extended by the Ministry of Religious Affairs for unknown reasons. The government has introduced a 20-day short Hajj package, striving to make Hajj more financially accessible to poor masses.

Hajj is the fifth and most important element of Islam, which is a compulsory religious obligation for wealthy and affluent Muslims. The poor and people with meager income have been awarded waivers from Hajj and Humra. However, every Muslim man and woman always has an undying quest to perform hajj/umrah and visit Islamic holy sites in Hijaz-e-Muqaddas once in life. The poor masses save money throughout their life to perform this important religious ritual but the anti-public policies of the rulers, business cartels and religious tourism industries at home and abroad made it almost impossible for the poor masses to visit holy Muslim sites.

Realistically, performing Hajj was the most difficult religious ritual throughout history because of the involvement of money, together with a long, difficult and risky journey to Makkah from across the world including the Indo-Subcontinent. However, the recent wave of inflation, coupled with global energy crisis and war in Ukraine raised the prices of fuel, airlines fares, boarding and lodging expenses which seriously affected the Pakistani Hajjaj, as the Hajj expenses rose from a few hundred thousands to over one million in the past years. The incumbent interim leaders are endeavoring hard to make Hajj less burdensome for the common people, even then it is unaffordable for the common man. Currently, Hajj fee and air fares are the biggest heads in Hajj expenditures. If the government works out to move Pakistani Hajjaj through land routes via ECO nations or through ships it would significantly reduce the Hajj expenses. The Frontier Post has fulfilled its traditional role of lucifer (light bearer), while the leaders' legacy would be evident after the Hajj season ends.

## Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



# Watching the watchdogs: America’s reckoning with Israeli media manipulation

Rami G Khouri

ON November 8, the Israeli media monitoring group "Honest Reporting" published a report suggesting six Gaza-based freelance photographers who have been covering Israel's war on Gaza for four leading international media organisations may have had advance notice of Hamas's October 7 attack on southern Israel.

Israel's reaction to the suggestion was swift and brutal. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office accused the journalists named in the report of being "accomplices in crimes against humanity". Danny Danon, a senior member of Netanyahu's Likud party and a former Israeli ambassador to the United Nations, wrote on X that the photojournalists should be "eliminated". "We will hunt them down together with the terrorists," he wrote. The discourse on whether the Palestinian photojournalists and those who published their work had prior knowledge of the Hamas attack occupied media airways for a few days. But the controversy soon came to an abrupt end when all four media companies in question - CNN, Reuters, The Associated Press and The New York Times - firmly rejected insinuations that they or the photographers they work with had any advance knowledge of the attack. They called Honest Reporting's story "irresponsible" and said, "It jeopardised the safety of all media working in Israel or the Palestinian territories."

Honest Reporting Executive Director Gil Hoffman said he was "so relieved" to have found the four companies' statements on the issue "adequate". He added that his organisation never "accused" the media companies of having advance knowledge of the attack but had only "raised questions".

Why is this debacle worth remembering today? Because the incident had all the hallmarks of standard Israeli propaganda: using the real trauma and tragedy of a horrific attack to portray a conspiracy of collusion between Western media organisations and

Israel's enemies. Propaganda campaigns or single salvos already dominate Palestinian-Israeli confrontations. Since its founding in 1948, Israel has developed effective propaganda and information manipulation techniques that give it an edge in getting the Western media to reflect its side of the story. So it's important to note when things in this realm start to change. This tale about whether Gaza photo-

have to do better when reporting on race and ethnicity, especially in cases of violent incidents involving the police or military. Since 2020, we see the parallels between Black Lives Matter and Gaza very clearly."

In recent years, there have been many occasions when Israel was caught bending the truth or outright lying to hide from the world its crimes against Palestinians and violations

**One national newspaper reporter privately told me that journalists in the United States are increasingly sceptical of narratives pushed by security forces whether in the US, Israel or any other country because of how the Black Lives Matter movement has raised awareness of social justice issues and exposed police hypocrisy and lies.**

journalists had advance knowledge of Hamas's attack was the latest addition to a rapidly expanding list of recent Israeli propaganda efforts that have failed - mainly because Palestinians, Arabs, and most international observers of the conflict and the region now routinely investigate any serious Israeli accusation, and often expose it as a lie.

Consequently, American media, including organisations that traditionally presented Israeli views and allegations as fact without due diligence, now assess Israel's media statements and narratives more carefully, especially when they are about military actions that kill Palestinian civilians. One national newspaper reporter privately told me that journalists in the United States are increasingly sceptical of narratives pushed by security forces whether in the US, Israel or any other country because of how the Black Lives Matter movement has raised awareness of social justice issues and exposed police hypocrisy and lies. "A soul-searching kind of change is going on," the journalist said, "because we

of international law. After Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was shot and killed during an Israeli raid in the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank in May 2022, for example, Israel claimed she was "hit by indiscriminate Palestinian gunfire" in an exchange of fire with Palestinian gunmen. Yet, in a matter of days, several independent investigations confirmed that she was killed in a targeted attack by an Israeli sniper. More recently, in early November, an Israeli air strike on an ambulance convoy in the besieged Gaza Strip killed 15 Palestinians. Israel said it was targeting "Hamas positions" but failed to convince the international community.

On November 11, the official Arabic account run by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs posted a video of a nurse, apparently agitated, talking about Hamas overrunning the al-Shifa Hospital and taking supplies meant for patients. It was clearly a fake and was deleted by Israeli authorities without explanation after significant public backlash. Last week, the

Israeli military released a video of a room in Gaza's al-Rantisi Children's Hospital that it claimed included a duty roster in Arabic of Hamas militants guarding Israeli captives there - which in fact was just a handwritten calendar with the days of the week. These are just a few recent examples of Israeli officials obfuscating the truth or outright lying to try to hide their criminal activity from global media audiences (and probably also from the International Criminal Court). These repeated and easily exposed lies have sharply raised American journalists' scepticism of official Israeli statements. These days, even the most Israel-friendly media organisations are reluctant to publish Israeli claims as fact without seeing hard evidence.

Even journalists who tend to identify with Israeli views are more careful now when they deal with Israeli military statements, especially in cases of deaths and injuries, another television journalist told me. This change in approach can easily be seen in the US media's relatively careful handling of Israeli claims that Palestinian hospitals in Gaza shelter Hamas military bases or command centres. Israeli views continue to dominate American mainstream media, but as a result of this trend, the Israelis are increasingly being pushed to provide evidence for claims that the media once disseminated with no questions asked. Palestinian views also appear in the media more often, partly reflecting a critical structural change in society:

Young Americans are much more even-handed between Israel and Palestine and more actively challenge US and Israeli government actions that they feel are excessively militaristic, unwarranted or unjust. Another journalist with domestic and global reporting experience summed it up to me like this: "We're feeling unprecedented generational and societal changes simultaneously in contexts of racial and social justice. This is a reckoning for the journalism industry."

Aljazeera

# Tatmadaw’s grip on power in Myanmar slips

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

IN recent months, Myanmar has been thrust into the international spotlight once again, not for its rich cultural heritage or economic potential, but for the escalating clashes that are pushing the country to the brink of fragmentation. The Tatmadaw, Myanmar's military junta, once the unchallenged force dictating the nation's destiny, is now grappling with the consequences of its own oppressive rule. The result: a nation on the verge of disintegration and a humanitarian crisis of staggering proportions.

The catalyst for this unraveling can be traced back to the Tatmadaw's February 2021 coup, which ousted the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. This power grab ignited widespread protests, with citizens demanding a return to democracy. The military responded with brutal force, leading to a cycle of violence that shows no signs of abating. The clashes between the Tatmadaw and various ethnic armed groups have not only intensified but have also prompted a surge in the number of refugees fleeing the country.

One of the primary contributors to Myanmar's descent into chaos has been the Tatmadaw's inability to control the situation on the ground. The military's brutal crackdown on dissent has not quelled opposition; instead, it has fueled a resistance that spans ethnic, religious and regional lines. As the Tatmadaw loses control over vast territories, ethnic armed groups have seized the opportunity to assert their autonomy, further fragmenting an already diverse and complex nation.

The exodus of refugees from Myanmar adds another layer to the unfolding tragedy. The UN estimates that more than 1 million people have fled the country, seeking safety in neighboring nations. This mass displacement not only underscores the severity of the humanitarian crisis but also poses a significant threat to regional stability. Myanmar's neighbors, such as Thailand, Bangladesh and India, are grappling with the influx of refugees, adding strain to their own resources and stability. The Tatmadaw's erosion of control has also exposed the fragile unity of Myanmar itself. The country comprises a mosaic of ethnic groups, each with its own identity, aspirations and historical grievances. The military's brutal tactics have only intensified long-standing ethnic tensions, pushing some regions toward seeking independence or greater autonomy. The dream of a unified Myanmar, once held together by a delicate balance of power, now seems increasingly distant.

However, international analysts must understand that the recent descent into civil war in Myanmar did not happen overnight. Rather, it is the culmination of a series of events and one pivotal chapter is often overlooked - the international indifference to the military's genocide of the Rohingya. The Rohingya crisis was a stark warning, a red flag that went unheeded, laying the foundations for the military coup that followed and the ensuing civil war that now threatens to

tear the nation apart. In 2017, the world watched in horror as the Tatmadaw launched a brutal campaign against the Rohingya Muslim minority. Villages were burned, thousands were killed and hundreds of thousands were displaced, leading to one of the most egregious human rights violations of our time. The international community's response was, however, tepid at best. Condemnations were issued but meaningful action was lacking.

The failure to hold the Tatmadaw accountable for its crimes against the Rohingya sent a dangerous message. The junta, led by Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, learned that it could act with impunity on the international stage without facing meaningful consequences. The lack of robust action from the global community allowed the Tatmadaw to continue its grip on power and emboldened it to take even more drastic steps. Fast forward to February 2021 and the Tatmadaw staged its coup. The international community, having failed to respond effectively to the Rohingya crisis, found itself ill-equipped to prevent the military's power grab. The indifference shown during the Rohingya genocide had set the stage for a brazen power play by the Tatmadaw.

The subsequent crackdown on pro-democracy activists and the violent suppression of dissent only fueled the flames of resistance. The lack of robust international action in response to the Rohingya crisis had created an environment where the Tatmadaw believed it could act without consequences. The world's indifference was a green light for further repression. As the junta attempted to consolidate its power, clashes erupted across the country. The Rohingya crisis had laid the groundwork for a deeply divided and unstable nation and the coup only exacerbated existing fault lines. The resistance against the Tatmadaw is not just about the return to democracy, it is a collective outcry against the impunity granted to a military responsible for heinous crimes.

The international community must not turn a blind eye to Myanmar's plight. Sanctions and condemnations alone are insufficient. A coordinated effort is needed to address the root causes of the conflict, facilitate dialogue and provide humanitarian aid to those affected. The focus should be on creating a pathway for the restoration of democratic governance, addressing ethnic grievances and fostering national reconciliation. The unraveling of Myanmar serves as a stark reminder that autocratic rule and military oppression breed instability. The international community must not only support those fleeing the violence but also work collectively to find a sustainable and inclusive solution to the crisis. The Tatmadaw's grip on power is slipping and, as it does so, the international community must seize the opportunity to help Myanmar chart a new course toward peace, democracy and unity. Failure to act now risks not only the disintegration of Myanmar but also the destabilization of the entire region.

Arab News

# Hateful rhetoric will remain a threat to hopes of peace

Mohamed Chebaro

COULD the Hamas-Israel conflict finally center a new phase as a result of Wednesday's deal to release 50 civilian hostages held by Hamas in return for 150 Palestinian prisoners detained by Israel during a four-day truce brokered by Qatar, Egypt and the US?

One would hope this agreement will pave the way for reason to triumph over the flood of hate that has been pouring out ever since Hamas gunmen killed about 1,200 Israelis, mostly civilians, during cross-border raids on Oct. 7 - the deadliest attack on Israel in its 75-year history. In retaliation, Israel launched a relentless bombing campaign and ground offensive in Gaza, the enclave ruled by Hamas, killing more than 14,000 people, many thousands of them children.

Such deals are usually riddled with uncertainties, especially in the case of Hamas and Israel. The cross-border

attack and subsequent retaliation have added a new dimension to this existential conflict, namely the hateful rhetoric, extreme name-calling and inciteful references leveled against each other since Oct. 7. This has not previously been seen or heard of, at least publicly. References by Israeli officials, journalists and influencers have crossed a Rubicon that threatens to make impossible any future climbdown that would allow the two peoples to coexist. "We are fighting human animals," said Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. "We are fighting Nazis," said Naftali Bennett, the former prime minister. Current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu drew on the Bible to remind of ancient threats to the "Israelites," when they faced calls to exterminate "men, women and infants."

Hamas' narrative and rhetoric has been no better, as for years it has called for Israel to be wiped out and to "throw Israelis into the sea," even

justifying its violence, though this never reflected the mindset of all Palestinians. The fear is that, this time around, inflammatory rhetoric will take root and become mainstream. If that were to happen, it would need several generations to weed it out of hearts and minds and to pave the way for any possible peace settlement, which is the only way for Israel to ensure security for its citizens and for the Palestinians to have their right to a state and peaceful coexistence. The inflammatory language could normalize the discussion of ideas that would have been off limits before Oct. 7. It risks becoming the new normal and further tearing apart peoples that have been condemned by geography to always live alongside each other. On one side, a right-wing and increasingly ultra-religious Israel talks of erasing the people of Gaza, the nuclear annihilation of the

Strip and even ethnic cleansing. This is met with an equally hateful narrative from Hamas that celebrates the barbaric acts its militants carried out last month.

In times of crisis, experts often claim that people on both sides of a conflict feel the need to see matters in clear black and white, either "with us or against us" or "good guys versus bad guys." This is because the masses often do not have the luxury of seeing things in all their multilayered complexities. Hence, leaders tend to up the tempo in order to rally the people and prepare them to make sacrifices. This often leads to dehumanizing the "other" - in Israel's case, that is the people of Gaza, along with the further mistreatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and even Palestinian citizens of Israel, who could face mistreatment in the long run. Language is, unfortunately, a double-edged

sword: it could help to relieve and contain the anger today, but become an obstacle tomorrow. And while the international community continues to try to grapple with ways of ending the conflict, starting with the hostage exchange and humanitarian truce, many have been hard at work discussing ideas about the day after a ceasefire. They have raised the possibility of forming a multinational force, rehabilitating the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah and enabling it to govern Gaza, tabling a plan for a UN-type protectorate in Gaza, or simply re-imagining a formula for a new two-state solution.

While the actual war and the accompanying war of words, propaganda, fake news and manipulated or doctored "realities" continue to be waged on all actual and virtual fronts, major fears remain about the possibility of the conflict further inflaming the volatile situation in the West Bank and dragging

in other actors in the Middle East. The best way to ensure Israel's security is through the establishment of a Palestinian state, as EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said this week. My fear remains that legitimizing hateful rhetoric will be a major obstacle that makes turning the wheels back in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict nearly impossible. It will likely require a reeducation that might yield fruit for future generations, but only if done properly.

One can only hope, therefore, that the initial truce and hostage exchange will instigate a reimagining of the peace process. An internationally brokered formula to help impose a cessation of violence, temporarily, is maybe the easy part, however difficult it might seem at the moment. But the damage caused by the inciteful rhetoric in the wake of the Oct. 7 attack is likely to plague both peoples for the foreseeable future.



# A new stage for positive measurable action

**THE recent meeting between US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping, before the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting in San Francisco, provides a strong basis for action by the parties. Against the backdrop of the forum's theme "Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Future for All", the forum brought attention to the crucial power dynamics in the Asia-Pacific region, which represents a substantial 62 percent of global GDP and nearly half of global trade.**

The face-to-face interaction marked the leaders' first meeting in a year, following high-level visits by US officials, including the treasury and commerce secretaries, a senior US Congressional delegation, and the governor of California. These visits were seen as positive steps for alleviating tensions that had escalated during the former Trump administration, marked by the imposition of tariffs on Chinese imports, which the present administration has continued. This has been the lowest point in Sino-US relations since 1979.

During their hours of discussion, Biden and Xi addressed key issues, including cooperation on trade, agriculture, climate change, artificial intelligence, the flow of illegal substances, and agreed to restart direct military-to-military talks. While joint commitments

were not made, both leaders stressed the importance of continued dialogue.

The meeting signifies both countries' willingness to collaborate, building upon a relationship that began 12 years ago when the leaders first met as vice-presidents. President Biden described the discussions as "constructive and productive," underlining the significance of such high-level dialogues. President Xi emphasized the China-US relationship as "the most important bilateral relationship in the world," advocating its nurturing for mutual benefit. He envisioned setting an example for other nations through collaboration on trade, agriculture, climate change, and artificial intelligence.

The productive meeting at Filoli is the beginning of a dialogue at the highest level, boosting confidence in the stability of relations between the two nations and contributing to a reduction of tensions. This stability sends a positive signal to businesses on both sides of the Pacific, ensuring stable business and commerce between the two nations. It's crucial to send the message that immediate, cost-free steps can significantly improve the situation for both countries. US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's suggestion to remove reciprocal tariffs imposed on imports, if implemented, can address a significant trade dispute and contribute to reducing

Edward Lehman

inflation.

The divide between the two nations, however, is not as large as people might have been led to believe by reports in the media. Since 2002, when China joined the World Trade Organization, the two countries have brought less than 40 cases against each other. This is less than 20 percent of all WTO cases. It's a remarkably low number considering the amount of trade carried out between the two countries. Similarly, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, an inter-agency committee of the US government which reviews the national security implications of foreign investments in US companies or operations, which dates back to a 1975 Presidential Executive Order, affects a very narrow category of investment technology companies. The reality is that only a very small fraction of all Chinese investments have been impacted. While trade has decreased between the two countries, this is due in large part to the trade tariffs and the strong headwinds the global economy is facing. The two countries still remain two of the largest trading partners with a significant interdependence in many areas including trade.

China's 24-point policy to attract foreign investment is another noteworthy aspect, aiming to improve investment opportunities for foreign companies and elimi-

nate perceived barriers and restrictions, fostering economic growth and further mutual cooperation between the world's two largest economies. Viewing competition positively has the potential to prompt innovation, fostering economic growth for both nations. The focus should shift toward innovation, cooperation, and healthy competition. Established US giants could draw valuable lessons from the agility and growth of Chinese counterparts like Alibaba, Tencent and Xiaomi.

The recent meeting serves as a significant foundation for future exchanges post-APEC. The business community would welcome immediate steps, including the removal of tariffs and addressing barriers. It would be in the best interest of both nations to take positive steps toward future cooperation in other areas of mutual interest, such as data security, environmental protection, international health cooperation, and regional stability. According to the IMF, the forecast for global growth is estimated to slow down to about 3 percent this year and 2.9 percent next year. Expanding US-China trade can help to influence growth globally. The summit increases optimism for future dialogues, setting the stage for more exchanges, but concrete steps are essential for the benefit of both sides. It's time to translate words into comprehensive and actionable policies that benefit the interest of all parties.

# Israeli failures, US charades and a negotiated truce

Mouin Rabbani

the ferocious Israeli onslaught against the Gaza Strip.

Yet the available reports about the deal suggest otherwise: Israel has committed to releasing three times as many imprisoned women and children as the Palestinians; no Israeli soldiers are included in the exchange; significantly more humanitarian supplies, including fuel, will reach the Gaza Strip; the exchange of captives will be implemented during a continuous four-day truce rather than one in which the slaughter is paused for a brief period each day; and Israeli jets and drones will be prohibited from using the airspace over the Gaza Strip for several hours each day. This is quite close to the deal initially offered by Hamas several weeks ago, and it appears the bulk of its demands have been conceded by Israel and the US. If the adage that negotiations reflect reality on the ground rather than overturning it applies, Hamas - in contrast to the Palestinian population of the Gaza Strip, which has been Israel's main target - seems far from desperate.

Instead, it appears sufficiently confident to stick to its priorities until these are accepted by the US and Israel. Pursuant to the agreement, Hamas has also forced the US and Israel to consent to the supply of large amounts of essential humanitarian supplies to the Gaza Strip. In other words, Hamas has in one fell swoop achieved exponentially more on the humanitarian front than the much-vaunted US diplomacy to secure humanitarian relief for Gaza's Palestinian civilians during the past month.

This confirms that the entire US effort was in essence a circus - a diversionary charade to enable Israel to continue with its mass killings and transform the Gaza Strip into a wasteland and a killing field. It bears repeating that Hamas has forced the US and Israel to allow significant quantities of food, water, medicine and fuel to reach the civilian population of the Gaza Strip. Yet Hamas is the anointed terrorist organisation in this equation while Israel is the light unto nations with the world's most moral army and the US - the world's greatest democracy dedicated to spreading freedom and human rights to the rest of the planet. What happens next is difficult to assess. According to reports, only Israeli and dual nationals

are to be released, presumably to help the Israeli leadership swallow this very bitter pill and to allay Israeli concerns that the release of foreign nationals would be privileged in negotiations with Hamas. Yet by insisting on this formula, Israel has ensured that further negotiations to release foreign citizens would continue, potentially leading to an extension of the truce.

At the same time, it is difficult to believe that the Israeli leadership can accept a temporary truce that metamorphoses into an indefinite one. It is clearly in the Israeli premier's personal and political interest to keep this conflict going while the security establishment is also desperate to wipe away the stain of October 7. Other members of Israel's governing coalition partners see this war as a golden opportunity to unleash the apocalypse and want it to escalate further rather than wind down. Although the Gaza Strip has been substantially destroyed, Hamas has yet to be significantly degraded, and the Israeli army has yet to kill more Hamas commanders than United Nations staff.

If Israel is confident it can once again flout US policy without consequences, it will. This could take the form of sabotaging the truce or resuming hostilities to ensure it is not extended. Farther afield, the Israeli-Lebanese front also seems to be rapidly heating up. So further escalation is likely, but it is also possible that the implementation of this deal could cause Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government to collapse under a combination of public pressure and internal conflicts among leaders who mutually detest and distrust each other.

The US leadership is also a question mark. With respect to the impact of this crisis on US interests in the region and beyond and particularly the question of regional escalation, US President Joe Biden appears not to care, Secretary of State Antony Blinken appears not to know while CIA Director William Burns and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin look mortified. Which faction gains the upper hand remains an open question. The one conclusion that can already be drawn is that the various "day after" scenarios produced by the Washington echo chamber can be safely discarded because they uniformly require the eradication of Hamas and not negotiated agreements with it.

# Americans finally beginning to see through the pro-Israel propaganda

Ray Hanania

**ISRAEL'S government has always enjoyed preferential treatment in the US, despite its many war crimes, its violence and even its killings of American citizens. The Israeli lobby has managed to dominate the US Congress through decades of pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into congressional election campaigns and targeting any voice that not only challenges Israel's propaganda lies, but also those that try to look at Palestinians and Israelis in a balanced way. It has spent millions funding elaborate trips to Israel for politicians and journalists alike.**

The Tel Aviv government's propaganda machine is relentless in squashing anyone who challenges its biased, one-sided and exaggerated portrayal of the Israel-Palestine conflict, in which it is always the innocent victim while anyone who criticizes Israel is a terrorist. People who criticize Israel's government policies are often declared to be antisemitic. Israel has weaponized this term to only narrowly refer to a pernicious hatred of Jews, even though Arabs are Semites themselves. Antisemitism against Arabs is even more frequent in America than it is against Jews but the mainstream news media, which has an affinity-driven bias for Israel, marginalizes antisemitism against Arabs.

The antisemitism weapon has been institutionalized in the US, as it is embedded in laws adopted in nearly 30 states that brand anyone who criticizes Israel as an antisemite and punish them by imposing harsh consequences. In many states, such as Arkansas, anybody invited to address students on the

Israel-Palestine conflict is required to sign a letter pledging that they do not support a "boycott" of Israel. If they refuse to sign because such a demand is a clear violation of the US Constitution's First Amendment, which prohibits the passing of any law that abridges the fundamental right of every American to free speech, they are not paid for speaking or reimbursed for their travel or accommodation.

The anti-boycott pledge is one way in which pro-Israel activists ensure that the average American, who has experienced decades of brainwashing and one-sided propaganda, never sees the truth. What is the truth? That Israel has killed 10 times more civilians during this war than Hamas has. That Israel has killed 400 times more children and babies than Hamas is alleged to have killed on Oct. 7. I say alleged because no independent third-party investigative agency has been allowed to challenge the Israeli government's assertions.

Israel puts out its "facts" and they are then reported without challenge by the mainstream American news media. When Palestinians issue statements, the media couches them with the caveat that the "claims cannot be verified." The Israel-Gaza conflict is not a war. It is a war crime similar to those committed by the US during the Vietnam war, when America's government lied about the threats it faced in order to justify its conduct, including carpet-bombing the Southeast Asian country.

The fact we are less than a year away from presidential and con-

gressional elections has increased the volume of the anti-Arab lies from candidates who hope to win the support of brainwashed American voters. For example, Nikki Haley, who aims to win the Republican nomination for president, openly called on Israel to continue the carnage and to "finish Hamas." "Hamas" frequently appears to be used to describe all Palestinians in Gaza. Haley's rival Ron DeSantis said that not all Palestinians in Gaza are Hamas, but they are "all antisemitic." Other presidential contenders have urged that the US give Israel "whatever it needs" during the war in Gaza - meaning a blank check. The Republican-controlled House of Representatives even voted to give Israel an additional \$14.3 billion on top of the nearly \$4 billion in funding it gets from the US annually.

The Republicans see Gaza as President Joe Biden's political Achilles' heel. Biden's policy on Gaza and the civilian carnage has been muddled by politics and morality. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who is Jewish and whose stepfather was a Holocaust survivor, has acted more like Israel's secretary of state rather than America's. Arab Americans who championed Biden over the anti-Muslim policies of former President Donald Trump are fleeing Biden's reelection bid. Losing Arab Americans' support would have the most impact in states where their vote helped defeat Trump, such as Michigan, where the Arab American community has now openly denounced Biden and vowed not to vote for him.

But while Israeli activists dominate the halls of Congress, they are slowly losing the public relations war. Despite all their expensive strategies, lobbying, campaign donations and name-calling, they cannot stop videos and images of their carnage, of dead civilians, from reaching the American public. Such videos also expose the lies of Israeli military spokespeople, such as when they tried to convince Americans that a calendar written in Arabic and posted on a hospital wall was a schedule for terrorists overseeing the handling of Israeli hostages. And the images of Palestinian children and babies killed or severely injured have shocked the public. While the mainstream American news media only shows videos of Israelis being killed and counters with images of Palestinian buildings being destroyed, social media platforms like TikTok are inundated with more graphic images of Israeli brutality.

Pro-Israel activists have reverted to calling TikTok antisemitic. They have used the same weapon to pressure Elon Musk to censor pro-Palestinian posts on his X platform. TikTok is owned by a Chinese company and, despite calls to shut it down by pro-Israel members of Congress, the platform continues to grow in popularity. Those TikTok videos seem to be having an impact. Recent polling shows that, while Americans support Israel over the Palestinians, which is natural considering the last 75 years of pro-Israel propaganda, they are also becoming increasingly disgusted by the humanitarian crisis Israel's assault is causing for civilians.

# Reckless public spending is pushing the country towards the debt abyss

**LIKE an old-time music hall conjuror, the most important accessories for a Chancellor of the Exchequer are smoke and mirrors. He needs to convince the markets and the country that he not only has the public finances under control, but has so brilliantly managed the economy that he has scope for both tax cuts and higher spending.**

It is all a trick and everybody knows it. But it spoils the illusion to point this out. Magicians who show how they bamboozle us are likely to have a dwindling audience. In the Commons, Jeremy Hunt will make Dynamo look like a rank amateur, his Autumn Statement such a sleight of hand that we will all gasp in astonishment. We are to be told that, because tax revenues are buoyant, he has room for some tax cuts now with more to come next year.

Tax revenues have been pouring in because of higher inflation, wage growth and the fiscal drag caused by freezing allowances. This means that, instead of borrowing £115 billion, as forecast in the March Budget, the Chancellor will have borrowed "only" £98 billion.

This happens to be £21 billion more than in the same period last year; but in the Alice in Wonderland world of modern economics, it is seen as a saving of £17 billion which can now be spent. In fact, things are getting worse. The figures for October published yesterday showed borrowing of £15 billion - £4 billion more than this time last year and largely pushed up by higher inflation-linked benefit payments. There was a time when such an amount borrowed in a whole year, let alone

a single month, would have caused palpitations, but it is now seen as a rounding error.

You might have noticed that, on Monday, Rishi Sunak unveiled five new pledges (despite only one of the existing five having been achieved so far). This hastily arranged press conference disguised as a speech seems to have been triggered by the Conservative Party's woeful polling. Two opinion surveys at the weekend put the Tories on around 20 per cent of the vote, which in a general election is wipe-out territory. Mr Sunak evidently felt it was time to launch Phase Two of his strategy, emphasising the long-term ambitions he has for the country which he outlined at the Manchester conference last month.

Top of the new list is reducing debt, a laudable aim but one that is simply unachievable without cutting borrowing. And to do that he needs to reduce the size of the state dramatically. Yet of his now 10 pledges, not one mentions spending. Mr Sunak is said to be seeking to emulate Mrs Thatcher in cutting taxes, though she did not seriously start on this until well into her premiership. Moreover, her early years were obsessed with controlling spending. Each year there was a battle royal between the Treasury and Whitehall departments to rein in their budgets, overseen by a so-called Star Chamber chaired by an eminent minister such as William Whitelaw to decide where the axe would fall. In the run-up to every Budget, the political narrative was not about tax but spending. Only if the latter could be brought under control could there be scope for

Philip Johnston

cutting the former. This annual blood-letting was ended by Gordon Brown when he entered the Treasury in 1997, riding a tide of economic growth. Labour was committed for two years to match Tory spending plans but after that the spigots were opened. Brown managed to run a budget surplus in 2001, one of just five since 1972. There hasn't been one since.

After the financial crash, George Osborne reinstated tighter spending controls, misconstrued as austerity, but the discipline of annual spending rounds was soon sacrificed to three-year budgets. These helped with planning but did little to stop the upward drift of overall public spending. Now, no one mentions austerity. We have apparently found the magic money tree at last. By 2010, public sector debt amounted to 65 per cent of national income; today it is 100 per cent, partly swelled by the cost of the pandemic, although the trend was clear in any case. According to the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), if nothing changes, on the current spending trajectory, debt will amount to more than 300 per cent of GDP within 50 years. To keep debt from rising above 100 per cent of GDP over the long term would require a permanent increase in taxes and/or a cut in annual spending of 4.4 per cent of GDP, said the OBR. Yet real-terms spending is scheduled to rise further in the next parliament, even if the Tories win, leave aside what Labour might do.

For politicians, 50 years is an impossibly long way away. They fret over what will happen next year or in five years' time at most. They imagine something will always turn

up and, in any case, they won't be around to take responsibility if it doesn't. Yet my grandchildren will only be in their early 50s by the time we reach that OBR milestone - which is not even its worst-case scenario and assumes no major crises. Running deficits that push debt up to 300 per cent of national income is unsustainable. There will be no public services of the sort we have now when today's youngsters reach middle age, let alone their dotage. Furthermore, the real national liability - set out in the Whole of Government Accounts - is more than £5.5 trillion, twice the debt figure usually given. Mr Sunak's commitment to the long term has to be more than a slogan. Politicians need to be recasting the state now, moving more services such as health and social care into insurance-based provision. They need to reduce public spending, which crowds out private investment and holds back productivity, if there is to be any chance of generating the growth to sustain our population half a century from now.

The Chancellor has told Whitehall to find efficiency savings, but we have heard that before, and there is to be a rumoured crack-down on benefit abuse, with recipients required to take jobs when they are offered. With nearly eight million people of working age no longer in the labour market pushing up the welfare bill to stratospheric levels, conditionality is essential. But much more is needed. Mr Hunt will tell MPs today that the economy has "turned the corner" and there is now room for tax cuts. But until he gets a grip on spending, he might as well be wearing a top hat and wielding a magic wand.

The Telegraph

# Dying without borders

Belén Fernández

**ON November 6 in the city of Tapachula in Mexico's Chiapas state, just down the road from the border with Guatemala, a young woman lay face down on the pavement in front of one of the offices of COMAR, the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance. Generally speaking, "refugee assistance" means stymying the northward movement of desperate refugees at the behest of the United States.**

I happened to be passing by the COMAR office on my way to the municipal cemetery of Tapachula, where earlier in the year I had visited a mass grave containing the unidentified remains of refugees who had perished in the city. As the policeman stationed in front of the office was busy staring into space, I stopped to ask bystanders what had befallen the prostrate woman. "She suffers from high blood pressure," was the response from Yessica, a Honduran woman holding a visibly ill infant in her arms as four other children ran in circles around her. Yessica had arrived in Tapachula 10 days earlier after travelling with her kids from the Honduran town of Tela through Guatemala, where, she said, they had been robbed of everything they had. They were now sleeping on the street trying to figure out how to proceed north in the face of "refugee assistance".

In explaining why she had fled Honduras, Yessica cited a motive commonly invoked by refugees from the country: its spectacular levels of violence, which became even more so following the 2009 US-backed coup d'état when homicides and femicides surged. Yessica had another uniquely dreadful reason for needing to get to the US, however, which was that her son was buried there. The son had been living with his father in Kansas City, Missouri, where he had died,

apparently by drowning, in 2022, at the age of 13. If she could not cry at the grave of her son, Yessica told me, she would never be able to come to grips with his death and move forward. As she spoke to me, two of her daughters inspected my bracelets, and the infant in her arms sucked on the barrel of a small grey plastic gun.

The prostrate woman didn't budge, but Yessica had committed to keeping an eye on her for the time being. In addition to helping make Honduras a difficult place to stay alive in, the US was now forcing Yessica to risk her own life and those of her remaining children as she navigated a militarised border regime - all in the hopes of properly grieving her son and moving on with life.

As if death weren't bad enough already, borders can just make it all worse. Shortly before I left for Tapachula from my pseudo-base in the village of Zipolite in the neighbouring state of Oaxaca, the son of a humble electrician in the village died in California at the age of 36. The repatriation of the body was a lengthy bureaucratic nightmare that came with a price tag of \$11,000, the father told me - i.e. more money than some Mexicans earn in three years. When the body finally arrived, traditional candles were prohibited at the wake due to the family's concern about the effects of added heat on a long-dead corpse.

Then, of course, there are the countless folks who die trying to cross borders. The Sonoran Desert on the US-Mexico border has become a graveyard for desperate refugees and migrants as has the hostile stretch of jungle known as the Darién Gap between Colombia and Panama - itself a veritable extension of the US border. In Tapachula, I spoke with a 10-member Venezuelan family who had recently tra-

versed the Darién Gap and reported seeing bodies, including of children and pregnant women. One of the family members commented matter-of-factly: "I can say that we have all stepped on dead people."

Farther afield, the Mediterranean Sea serves as a maritime graveyard for refugees trying to reach a continent whose citizens are largely free to cross borders as they please. As of September, more than 2,500 people had already died or gone missing this year while pursuing the Mediterranean route to Europe. But there is no limit to the ways borders not only cause but also complicate the most human phenomenon of death. When my Lebanese-Palestinian friend's grandmother, a native of the Gaza Strip, passed away a few years ago in Jordan, the family naturally wanted her buried at home in Gaza. According to the state of Israel, my friend said, such an undertaking would have required an Israeli-performed autopsy to determine whether a dead 90-year-old Palestinian constituted a security threat. The family abandoned the plan.

Meanwhile, back in Tapachula, the mass grave of unidentified bodies remains untouched in the far back corner of the municipal cemetery. When I revisited the cemetery after my encounter with Yessica, the graveyard keepers informed me that no new remains had been added to the mass grave - which does not mean that refugees are no longer dying unidentified in Tapachula but rather that they are being interred elsewhere in the city. It is unlikely that the family members of those buried in this desolate patch of earth near the Mexican-Guatemalan border will ever know the fates of their loved ones. Yessica, on the other hand, is determined to attain cross-border closure - or to die trying.





## PIDE hosted 3-day 37th AGM, Conference of PSDE

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 37th AGM and Conference of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE) concluded.

The Conference on “Breaking the Aid-Debt Chains” is being hosted by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), in collaboration with Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, said in a press release here on Thursday.

The final day of the Conference kicked off with the third parallel technical session. In the technical session, several papers on diverse topics were presented by researchers from different parts of the country.

The topics of the papers included the lifetime cost of public sector employees, PSDP, public financial management, remittances, debt threat, and gender, among others.

The special lecture on “Fiscal Management for the Revival of the Economy”

was delivered by Faisal Rashid of Oxford Policy Management.

Faisal Rashid began his lecture by saying that the current period is the most challenging period for Pakistan's economy.

Faisal Rashid said that in the medium to long term, Pakistan needs to develop an economic reform plan. There must be a focus on increasing revenue through additional untapped sectors, while the energy sector needs immediate reformation too.

DISCOs must be privatized, while efforts must be made to minimize transmission and distribution losses. The SOEs are the white elephants that need immediate reform efforts as well to have a meaningful impact in the long term.

A panel, arranged by UNICEF, was on “Improving the Quality of Public Spending.” The session was moderated by Shaaf Najib, PIDE, while the panelists include Dr Manzoor Ahmed, trade spe-

cialist, Asim Bashir Khan, development economist, Talat Anwar, BZU, and Ahmed Waqar Qasim, PIDE.

Shaaf Najib introduced the topic by asking whether it is the revenues to be blamed for debt or the expenditures.

Ahmed Waqar Qasim said that when 87% of loanable funds in the system end up getting diverted to the government, that leaves only 13% available to lend to the private sector.

Manzoor Ahmad said that the government ends up skewing the playing field and promoting inefficiencies in the economy. PEPPRA rules are outdated and promote inefficiencies and waste.

Asim Bashir said that development in Pakistan is debt-based, and the government is not concerned with performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of service delivery.

Talat Anwar said that if the interest rate is brought down, the debt situation

will improve from its currently unsustainable levels.

Regarding improving service delivery, Asim Bashir said that it is a demand-side problem as well as a supply constant which results in budget allocations that are not appropriate to our needs and also go against conventional wisdom.

From the floor, Shahid Kardar asked how the role of the government can be rethought, what functions it should perform, and what functions it should not perform.

The VC PIDE suggested rethinking whether the government needs to keep spending on education and health.

The cohosts of PSDE's 37th Annual Conference, organized by PIDE, include the World Bank Group, UNICEF, RASTA, the Bank of Punjab, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, Saudi Pak Agricultural and Industrial Investment Company, and BZU School of Economics.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif talking to media after launching ceremony of IT Export Strategy.

### Rupee shed 14 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Thursday witnessed 14 paise devaluation against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 285.26 against the previous day's closing at Rs 285.12. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 284 and Rs 286.85 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 10 paise to close at Rs 311.22 against the last day's closing of Rs 311.32, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.91; whereas a decrease of 55 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 356.76 as compared to the last closing of Rs 357.31. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 04 paise each to close at Rs 77.67 and Rs 76.05 respectively.

### Gold price decreased

ISLAMABAD (APP): The prices of per tola 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 650 and was sold at Rs 215,850 on Thursday against its sale at Rs 216,500 the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 557 to Rs 185,057 from Rs 185,614 whereas the prices of and 10 gram 22 karat gold decreased to Rs 169,635 from Rs 170,146, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram Silver witnessed no change and was sold at Rs 2,550 and 2,186.21 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$6 to \$2,016 from \$2,022, the Association reported.

### Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where two ships scheduled to load/offload 40,770 tonnes of Cement and 59,170 tonnes Coal, berthed at Multipurpose Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile three more ships, carrying 56,607 tonnes Coal, 58,950 tonnes Wheat and 54,798 tonnes Mogas 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, an oil tanker Al-Soor-II left the port on Thursday morning and another ship VTC Phoenix is expected to sail on today afternoon.

Cargo throughput of 149,937 tonnes, comprising 124,646 tonnes imports cargo and 25,291 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 1,531 Containers (956 TEUs Imports and 575 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 11 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them four ships, Express Athens, New Fairy, Sagar Shakti and Ceilo Di Houston & another ship Canopus scheduled to load/offload Containers Rice, Coal, Gas oil and Chemicals are expected to take berths at QICT, MW-2, PIBT, FOTCO and EVTL on Thursday.

## Issues of industrial uplift discussed

PESHAWAR (APP): KP Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Dr. Aamir Abdullah has called on the Federal Minister for Commerce and Industry and Production, Gohar Ejaz in Islamabad on Thursday and discussed issues of mutual interest especially industrial development and the issue of rehabilitation of some dysfunctional industrial centres of the federal government in the province, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

During the meeting, the provincial minister took up

the issues of the Honey Processing Plant, Swat with the Federal Minister, particularly the financial issues of the plant including its reactivation. The establishment of the plant was a Public Sector Development Programme implemented under the auspices of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority.

On this occasion, the provincial minister also requested the federal government for the revival of the closed Fruit Processing and drying plant to preserve it and the Silk Textile unit at Islampur, Swat and rel-

ease of funds for them to restart manufacturing. Raised the issue of making arrangements for execution.

The provincial minister further requested him that if the federal government could not release funds for the revival of these centres, then handed it over to the provincial government to revive them as soon as possible and make it useful to start production.

It is worth mentioning here that the rehabilitation of these projects could generate employment opportunities for about 20,000 people in the area.

## Kyrgyz-Pakistan IGC playing vital role

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House, Meher Kashif Younis on Thursday said that the Kyrgyz-Pakistan Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) was playing pivotal role in establishing stronger economic foundation and fostering enhanced mutual cooperation between the two countries.

Speaking to a delegation of exporters and importers at trade house, he said the 4th session of the Kyrgyz-Pakistan Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) on Trade-Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation organized in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan recently, was poised to yield a positive impact for promoting bilateral trade between two Muslim brotherly countries, said a press release issued here.

Stressing the significance of the CASA-1000 regional project, Meher Kashif

emphasized the commitment from both sides to its expeditious completion to realize shared goals.

While underlining a remarkable trade surge from \$1.14 million in January 2017 to \$11.23 million, he stressed the need for a robust action plan to address trade barriers, with the joint working group on Trade and Investment playing a key role.

He commended the ongoing talks for the Transit Trade Agreement, citing the year-round accessibility of the Karakoram Highway as a big opportunity for facilitating transit trade and fortifying bilateral economic relations.

Delving into cultural and people-to-people connections, he spotlighted the presence of more than 15,000 Pakistani students pursuing higher education in Kyrgyzstan and the growing influx of tourists

to the country, illustrating a shared affinity for Kyrgyz heritage, culture, and scenic landscapes.

Meher Kashif also acknowledged the importance of the agriculture sector and advocated for collaboration in value addition, food processing, research, and joint ventures.

He emphasized Kyrgyzstan's interest in utilizing the potential of Pakistani seaports of Gwadar and Karachi, given the country's lack of direct access to the open sea.

He said that it would provide the shortest access to Central Asian nations and the Eurasian Economic Union to the open sea.

He praised the efforts and dedication of Ulanbek Totuaev Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan for his untiring pursuits for strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.

## 30th meeting of SECP-SBP body held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 30th meeting of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Coordination Committee was held on Thursday.

Jameel Ahmad, Governor SBP along with senior officials represented the SBP, whereas the SECP team was headed by Chairman Akif Saeed, along with Commissioners and senior officials, according to a press release issued here.

SECP-SBP Coordination

Committee are high-level meetings between the two regulators, providing a platform for collaborating on matters impacting the overall stability and smooth functioning of the financial sector.

These formal meetings supplement the ongoing regular coordination between the two regulators on all matters of mutual interest.

The focus of the meeting was to deliberate on new developments in the financial sector, especially digital financial services, data

sharing, promoting financial inclusion, climate-related financial disclosures, coordination mechanism for the bancassurance business and steps needed for the development of the capital market in Pakistan.

These meetings, previously held on a regular basis, have resumed after a hiatus of four years. While thanking Governor SBP for resuming this important initiative, Akif Saeed stressed the importance of regular contact between officials of the two institutions at all levels.

## ICCI urges to speed up work on TAPI project

ISLAMABAD (APP): Acting President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Faad Waheed Thursday urged that Pakistan and Turkmenistan should speed up the work on the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project that would ensure cheap energy and boost industrialization in the country.

He said this while talking to Mohammad Yaqub Tabani, Honorary Consul of Turkmenistan in Pakistan during his visit to ICCI along with his son

Hatim Tabani, according to a press release issued here.

Faad Waheed said that both the countries should focus on enhancing bilateral trade and economic relations as they have good potential to trade in many items.

He stressed that Pakistan and Turkmenistan should introduce an easy visa policy for businessmen to facilitate the frequent exchange of trade delegations that would help boost two-way trade between the two countries.

The current strict visa policy on both sides is a

major hurdle in promoting business relations between the two countries.

He termed the establishment of air, road and railway connectivity between Pakistan and Central Asian Republics very important to improve Pakistan's trade and exports with these countries.

Speaking on the occasion, Mohammad Yaqub Tabani, Honorary Consul of Turkmenistan to Pakistan said that Turkmenistan was an energy-rich country and can meet the energy needs of Pakistan.

## EFU Life and ABL launches ‘Pension Investment Bundle’



### F.P. Report

KARACHI: ABL Asset Management Company has teamed up with EFU Life, a leading life insurance and family Takaful provider, to launch the innovative “Pension Investment Bundle” for their voluntary pension scheme account holders. This initiative aims to provide individuals with a joint benefit of investment and safety from financial risks related to life by offering financial resilience through a unique protection plan.

ABL Pension Fund aims to provide individuals with

a personalized, funded (based on defined contribution) and flexible pension scheme to empower the client/participants to decide how much to invest, and how to invest it, as well as to continue investing in their pension accounts even if they change jobs. With the upgraded Pension Investment Bundle, investors can now experience complete peace of mind, ensuring the security of their families and investments during times of need. This plan now offers a lump-sum coverage equivalent to the invested amount, guar-

anteeing financial protection to the assured person's family in the event of the assured person's death or accidental permanent total disability.

Commenting on the partnership, Naveed Nasim, CEO ABL Funds, stated “At ABL Funds, we believe in creating value and convenience for our investors. Our commitment lies in safeguarding the best interests of our investors and by offering Insurance/Takaful coverage we will be able to offer immediate financial relief and provide a safety net for the unforeseen challenges

life may bring.” He added, “We see this alliance with EFU Life a long-term and promising solution towards the fulfillment of our investor's financial needs with a peace of mind.”

Mohammed Ali Ahmed, MD & CEO of EFU Life, added, “I am delighted at our collaboration with ABL Funds as we have co-created an innovative financial protection solution for the investors of pension schemes. Over the years, EFU Life has focused on customer segmentation, and through this initiative we continue its commitment to financial excellence, providing tailored solutions to reinforce resilience and promote financial independence, especially during challenging times”.

This partnership between ABL Funds and EFU Life underscores the importance of collaboration in driving positive change as a testament to how two industry leaders can unite for innovation and societal betterment. Both organizations look forward in continuing their collaborative efforts to achieve even greater success in the future.

## Gold imports decrease by 1.1 per cent to \$8.8 million

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of gold decreased by 1.11 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reported.

The gold imports during the July-October (2023-24) were recorded at \$8.883 million as compared to the imports of \$8.983 million during July-October (2022-23), according to PBS data.

In terms of quantity, Pakistan imported 189 kilo-

grams of gold during the period under review as compared to the imports of 156 kilograms last year, showing growth of 21.12%.

On year-on-year basis, the gold imports decreased by 35.62 percent in October as compared to the same month of last year. The gold imports during October 2023 were recorded at \$1.584 compared to imports of \$2.461 million.

In terms of quantity, the gold imports declined by 9.81 percent to 35 kilograms in October 2023 the imports of 32.69 kilogram during October 2023.

Meanwhile, on month-on-month basis, the gold imports during October 2023 decreased by 31.96 percent when compared to the imports of \$2.328 million in September 2023. In terms of quantity, the gold imports declined by 32.69 percent when compared to the imports of 52 kilogram

during September 2023.

It is pertinent to mention here that the country's merchandise trade deficit contracted by 34.70 per cent during the first four months of the current fiscal year compared to the corresponding period of last year.

The Trade deficit from July-October (2023-24) was recorded at \$7.416 billion as against the deficit of \$11.356 billion in July-October (2022-23), showing negative growth of

34.70 per cent.

During the period under review, the exports increased by 0.66 per cent to \$9.617 billion compared to the exports of \$9.554 billion during the corresponding period of last year, according to the latest PBS data.

On the other hand, the imports narrowed by 18.54 per cent and were recorded at \$17,033 billion compared to \$20.910 billion last year.

## US, China, UK top 3 destinations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States (US) remained the top export destination of Pakistani products during the first four months of the current financial year 2023-24, followed by China and the United Kingdom (UK).

Total exports to the US during July-October 2023 were recorded at US \$1861.288 million against the exports of US \$2134.207 million during July-October 2022, showing a decline of 12.78 percent, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

This was followed by China, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US \$952.216 million against the exports of US \$678.386 million last year, showing an increase of 40.36%.

UK was the third top export destination, where Pakistan exported products worth US \$689.453 million during the months under review against the exports of US \$685.666 million, SBP data revealed.

Among other countries, Pakistani exports to UAE

stood at US \$625.493 million against US \$499.033 million last year, showing an increase of 25.34 percent while the exports to Germany were recorded at US \$487.171 million against US \$606.595 million last year, data said.

During July-October, the exports to Holland were recorded at \$447.893 million against \$511.689 million whereas the exports to Italy stood at \$409.389 million against \$401.159 million. Pakistan's exports to Spain were recorded at \$516.514 million against the exports of US \$451.600 million while the exports to Afghanistan were recorded at \$180.686 million against \$179.019 million last year.

The exports to Bangladesh stood at US \$192.193 million against US \$294.499 million. Similarly, the exports to France during the months under review were recorded at US \$172.453 million against US \$209.851 million while the exports to Belgium stood at US \$182.916 million against US \$259.209 million.

### Court Notice

In the Court of Maliha Allauddin Senior Civil Judge Family Court Kohat Suit No. 518/FC, Date of hearing 04-12-2023, Titled:- Nain Tara Vs Muhammad Anwar Mushtaq Notice against:- Muhammad Anwar Mushtaq Son of Mushtaq Muhammad Quam Arayain R/o Bangla No 35 Seyal Baz Road Kohat Cantt presently R/o (in Abroad Naeem Building 16A, 54/1 Street Flat No. 202 Hawer Anz Dira Dubai UAE Barpusht Qaiser Peshawar Restaurant) (Defendant) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a family suit of Dissolution of Marriage on the basis of Khula against you defendant in which date of hearing 04-12-2023 is fixed for your appearance since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/ mode therefore you defendant is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 04-12-2023 otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law order Issued on 15-11-2023, (Court of S C J.F.C Kohat)

### Court Notice

In the court of Kiran Noor Judge Family Court Tehsil Maita Swat. Case # 187/FC institution Year 2023. Next Hearing date 14/12/2023. Mst:- Sarwat Hayat VS Akhtar Hussain. Notice to defendant No. 1. Akhtar Hussain s/o Iqbal Hussain r/o Bara Bandai Presently Dubai Mobile. 00971545120244. In above mentioned case the respondent can't be served in the ordinary way, it is therefore proclaimed that if said respondents will not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:30 am dated 14/12/2023 ex parte proceeding will be held against the mentioned respondents under my hand and seal of this court.





### In brief

#### Semi-finals of Polo Cup tomorrow

LAHORE (APP): The semi-finals of the Patrons 47th Aibak Polo Cup 2023 will be played at the Lahore Polo Club grounds on Friday afternoon as Diamond Paints, Master Paints, FG/Din Polo and Remounts qualified for the semi-final spots. The first semifinal featuring a clash between Diamond Paints and Master Paints at ground No. 1 at 2:00 pm. Following that, the second semifinal will unfold between FG/Din Polo and Remounts at 3:00 pm at the Aibak Polo Ground. The pinnacle of the tournament, the final, is set for Sunday (November 26, 2023). The Lahore Polo Club grounds are poised for an exhilarating display of polo prowess as the teams strive for Aibak Polo Cup glory, says a press release issued here Thursday.

#### Women Athletics C'ship continues

LAHORE (APP): Punjab University in collaboration with Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan organized a three-day 45th All-Pakistan Iqbal Trophy Inter-University Women Athletics Championship 2023-24. Punjab University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Khalid Mahmood, Director Sports Prof Dr Zafar Iqbal Butt, Additional Director Sports Tahira Saleem, women players and officials participated in the inaugural ceremony. In his address, PU VC Dr Khalid Mahmood said that sports are very important for physical and mental health. He said that Punjab University is playing a vital role to promote sports activities along with education. He said that the role of women in every sphere of life, including sports, is commendable for the development and prosperity of Pakistan. He congratulated the organizers for organizing the event. Dr Zafar Iqbal Butt said that athletes from 26 universities across Pakistan are participating in the three-day All-Pakistan Iqbal Trophy Inter-University Women's Athletics Championship. The closing ceremony of the Championship will be held on Friday (today) at 12 noon at Punjab Stadium, Lahore, in which PU VC Dr Khalid Mahmood will be chief guest.

#### 518mn Indian watched cricket World Cup

BENGALURU (Agencies): A record 518 million Indian viewers watched the recently concluded men's cricket World Cup matches on Walt Disney-owned television channels during the 48-day event, the entertainment firm said on Thursday. Disney had bought digital and streaming rights to show the International Cricket Council's tournaments in India from 2024 to 2027 by paying around \$3 billion. Its Hotstar streaming app set a concurrent viewership record of 59 million during the final match of the World Cup, the company said in a statement. The numbers offer some relief for the Burbank-headquartered entertainment giant's India unit, which is exploring options of finding a joint venture partner or selling its business. It has offered free streaming of World Cup cricket on smartphones in India, part of a strategy to boost advertising revenue and offset the impact of a subscriber exodus.



RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Cricket team squad attend a practice session, ahead of their Australia tour to play three-match Test series at the rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. —INP Photo

## National T20 2023-24 to start tomorrow in Karachi

F.P. Report

KARACHI : National T20 2023-24 is set to begin from 24 November and will last until 10 December. 18 teams will partake in the tournament which is scheduled to be played across four venues – National Bank Stadium, UBL Sports Complex, HPC Oval Ground and NBP Sports Complex – in Karachi.

All matches played at National Bank Stadium will be broadcasted on PTV Sports and ARY ZAP in Pakistan, and live-streamed on YouTube in overseas territories. Double-header matches at National Bank Stadium will begin at 1500 PKT and 2000 PKT, with toss conducted at 1430 PKT and 1930 PKT respectively. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has also announced free entry for spectators for all matches being played at National Bank Stadium. The Hanif Mohammad, Javed Miandad and Fazal Mahmood enclosures will be accessible for the spectators.

The 63-match tournament has been structured to open with group stage games, which will be followed by Super Eight matches. A total of 32 group stage matches are set to be played from 24 to 28 November. 18 participating teams have been put

in four groups.

The division of groups is as follows:

Group A: Lahore Whites, Peshawar, Karachi Blues, Larkana and Quetta

Group B: Lahore Blues, Karachi Whites, Islamabad, Hyderabad, and Dera Murad Jamali

Group C: Rawalpindi, Abbottabad, Faisalabad and Bahawalpur

Group D: Multan, Sialkot, FATA and AJK

The first set of fixtures will see Lahore Whites face Larkana and Karachi Blues face Peshawar at NBP Sports Complex in Group A. In Group B, Karachi Whites will play against Islamabad and Hyderabad will feature against DM Jamali at UBL Sports Complex. Rawalpindi will take on Abbottabad and Faisalabad will face Bahawalpur at National Bank Stadium for Group C and lastly, for group D, HPC Oval Ground will stage the Multan-Sialkot clash and FATA-AJK game.

Top two teams from each group will progress to the Super Eight stage, which will be played in a round-robin format from 1 to 8 December. The complete schedule for Super Eight games will be revealed in due course.

Following the Super Eight stage, the top four teams will qualify for the

semi-finals. Both semi-finals are scheduled to be played on 9 December at National Bank Stadium, at 1500 PKT and 2000 PKT respectively.

The final is scheduled to be played at the same venue on 10 December. The toss will take place at 1930 PKT and the first ball will be bowled at 2000 PKT.

The winning team of the tournament will pocket a prize money of PKR 5 million. Meanwhile, the tournament runners-up will be awarded PKR 2.5 million. The player of the tournament will be rewarded with PKR 250,000. The same amount has been allotted to three other awards; best batter, best bowler and best wicket-keeper of the tournament. The player of the final will receive PKR 50,000 while player of the match in each of the Super Eight games and the semi-finals will be given PKR 25,000.

This is the first edition of the tournament played since the PCB 2014 Constitution was reinstated. The previous edition of National T20, which featured six sides, was won by Sindh who clinched their maiden title after defeating defending champions Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by eight wickets. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa lost out on securing a hat-trick of titles after winning both the 2020-21 and 2021-22 editions.

#### HEC selects team for National Junior Athletics Championship F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: HEC team has selected team for the National Junior Athletics Championship starting from December 2 in Attock. Arshad will perform as coach.

Team consisted of Khalid, Waqas Khan, Fahad Khan, Ahmed Saeed, Ahmed Abdullah Babar, Shah Sawar, Muhammad Raza, Samiullah, Noshirwan, Kaleem Akhtar, Muswar Ali Cheema, Muhammad Usman, Moeed Jabbar, Vahadullah, Noman Shahzad, Ghulam Moineuddin, M. Usman bin Asif, Abdul Qadir Khan, Umeer Yaqoob, Zohaib Habib, M Rais Yousif, Faraz Khan, Hamza Zia, Faraz Khan, Salman, Shazal Ahmed, Ali Adnan, Muhammad Hassan, Muhammad Asad and Sajjad Wasim. Selection committee consisted of Peshawar University Bahr Karam, Former Director Sports GC Lahore Khadim Ali Khan, Assistant Director Sports University of Punjab Mudassar Mushtaq and Assistant Director Sports Swabi University Altaf Hussain selected the team.

#### Pakistan squad kicks off training for Australia Tests

RAWALPINDI (Monitoring Desk) : Pakistan's 18-member squad kicked off training for the upcoming three-match Test series against Australia, scheduled to commence on December 14.

According to the details, 18 players including seven additional players Arshad Iqbal, Kashif Ali, Mohammad Nawaz, Shadab Khan, Shah Nawaz Dahani, Usama Mir, and Usman Qadir, partook in the team's first training session.

Earlier Thursday, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) invited three more pacers Sameen Gul, Ali Shafique, and Muhammad Ali to the training camp.

The players participated in several fielding drills and carried out robust batting and bowling sessions.

Pakistan's training camp for the Australia tour will run until November 28.

Opening batter Imam-ul-Haq and all-rounder Faheem Ashraf will miss the entirety of the training camp due to their upcoming wedding festivities.

They are expected to join the squad in Lahore on 30th November, just before the team's departure to Australia. Pakistan's quest for their first Test series victory over Australia in their backyard will commence on Dember 14.

After the conflict erupted when Hamas launched a terrorist attack in Israel, the FA had come under criticism from Jewish leaders for announcing the Wembley Stadium arch would not be illuminated in blue and white. Following an FA review, Telegraph reported on Wednesday how it will now only light the Wembley arch for football and entertainment.

ADELAIDE (AFP): Star Afghanistn leg-spinner Rashid Khan pulled out of Australia's Big Bash League Thursday with a back injury that requires minor surgery, his team said.

The world's top-ranked Twenty20 bowler was due to play for the Adelaide Strikers for a seventh year

## Marlon Samuels banned from cricket for six years

NEW DELHI (AFP): Former West Indies star Marlon Samuels has been banned from all cricket for six years for breaching an anti-corruption code, the sport's world body said on Thursday.

The charges relate to the 42-year-old's stint in a T10 league in the United Arab Emirates in 2019. He has since retired from all cricket.

The former top-order batsman -- who was also banned in 2008 -- was found by an independent tribunal to have made four breaches of the Emirates Cricket Board's Anti-Corruption Code.

"Though he is retired now, Mr Samuels was a participant when the offences were committed," said Alex Marshall, general manager of the International Cricket Council (ICC).

"The ban of six years will act as a strong deter-



rent to any participant who intends to break the rules."

Samuels played a key role in the West Indies' two T20 World Cup triumphs, in 2012 and 2016.

He played 71 Tests, 207 one-day internationals and 67 T20s for the West Indies between 2000 and 2018.

One of the charges was that he failed to disclose "the receipt of any gift, payment, hospitality or other benefit" that "could bring the participant or the

sport of cricket into disrepute", said the ICC.

The ban took effect on November 11.

"Samuels played international cricket for close to two decades, during which he participated in numerous anti-corruption sessions and knew exactly what his obligations were under the anti-corruption codes," said Marshall.

Other offences included failing to disclose "receipt of hospitality with a value of \$750 or more" and failing to cooperate with the investigation.

He scored over 11,000 international runs and also took more than 150 wickets in a career marred by several controversies.

He was banned for two years in 2008 after being caught on tape passing on match-related information to an Indian bookmaker during the West Indies' ODI tour of India in 2007.

## DIG Amanullah Memorial Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Open Tennis C'ship begins

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: DIG Amanullah Memorial Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Open Tennis Championship started in Qayyum Sports Complex Peshawar. More than two hundred players are taking part in Under-9, Under-13, Under-18, men singles and ddbles.

Former Provincial Minister for Sports and President of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Olympic Association, Syed Aqil Shah and Senior Vice President Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tennis Association, Cardiologist Dr. Professor Farhat Abbas were guests of honor at the inaugural ceremony.

Arslan Nazim, Administrator Peshawar Sports Complex Syed Jafar Shah, Provincial General Secretary Tennis Association Omar Ayaz Khalil, Coaches Ruman Gul, Nauman Khan, Zakirullah, Shehryar, Shah Hussain and Shahid were also present.

Syed Aqil Shah said while talking to media men that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had a lot of talent in lawn tennis, players of this province had made access to the Davis Cup. "Care taker government has turned its back on sports and despite the promise, the government has not awarded medal winners of the National Games".

On the opening day, Ryan Umar defeated Shayan by 6 1 and 6 2 in Under 9, Salar defeated Manahil by 6 2 6 2, Faizan Afridi defeated Anis by 6 1 6 1, Under 14 M Shayan Afridi defeated Ayan Ali by 6 zero and 6 two, Hamza Roman defeated Uzair by 6 1 and 6 two in U-18. General Secretary Tennis Association Omar Ayaz Khalil said that 250 thousand prize money would be distributed among winners.

Hed added that Davis Cupper Aqeel Khan, Shoaib Khan, Barkatullah Sameet Yusuf, Saqib, Aqib, Hamid, Hamza, Shayan, Ryan, Faizan, Salar also playing the championship.



## Stokes pulls out of IPL to manage 'workload'

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Ben Stokes, Chennai Super Kings' England all-rounder, has made himself unavailable for IPL 2024 to manage his workload and fitness. The franchise, in a statement on their website, said they were "supportive of Ben in his decision".

Super Kings, though, have not said if they will release Stokes.

The IPL has set Sunday, November 26, as the deadline for franchises to announce their retentions and releases for the 2024 season. In case they do not release Stokes, Super Kings will have the option of retaining him ahead of the mega auction for IPL 2025. And if they release him by Sunday, Super Kings can utilise the INR 16.25 they had bought him for, in the auction next month.

At the end of the World Cup, Stokes had revealed that he would be undergoing knee surgery, a step he had been delaying for a while. Depending on his

rehab, Stokes and the ECB will determine the timeline of his return.

Stokes, who was Super Kings' most expensive buy ever in the auction ahead of the 2023 IPL season for INR 16.25 crore (US\$ 1.98 million approx. at the time), played just two games through the season, scoring 15 runs and bowling just the one over.

This was partly because of the left-knee injury, which had forced him to start the season as a specialist batter. The injury to the knee is a long-standing one, but had flared up during England's tour of New Zealand in February this year. Stephen Fleming, the Super Kings coach, had said at the time that the team would wait for Stokes to be "100% ready" before asking him to bowl.

More recently, after coming out of ODI retirement to play the World Cup in India, Stokes was one of England's better batters on show even as the team had a horror run in the tournament. Stokes

played six of England's nine games after missing the first three with a hip niggle, but ended as their second-highest run-scorer behind Dawid Malan. Stokes, who didn't bowl at all at the World Cup, scored 304 runs in his six innings including two half-centuries and a century, ending with a scoring sequence of 64 (vs Australia), 108 (vs Netherlands) and 84 (vs Pakistan). He scored at an average of 50.66 and a strike rate of 89.14.

As things stand, Stokes, the England Test captain, is hopeful of touring India for the five-Test series, to run from January 25 to March 11. "I've put a lot of hard work in away from cricket to give myself the best chance of a quicker recovery and, with Christmas and everything coming up, the main thing for me is getting this knee right and being ready and raring to go for that Test series in India," Stokes had said after England's last game at the World Cup.

## Rashid Khan out of Australia's BBL with back injury

ADELAIDE (AFP): Star Afghanistn leg-spinner Rashid Khan pulled out of Australia's Big Bash League Thursday with a back injury that requires minor surgery, his team said.

The world's top-ranked Twenty20 bowler was due to play for the Adelaide Strikers for a seventh year

at the tournament starting next month.

"Rashid is a beloved member of the Strikers and a fan favourite who has been with us for seven years, so he will be extremely missed this summer," club general manager Tim Nielson said in a statement.

"Rashid loves Adelaide and the Strikers, and we know how much he loves playing in the BBL, and we support him as he has treatment for his injury to ensure his long-term involvement in the game."

Khan has played every season with the Strikers since bursting on the

scene as a 19-year-old in 2017, bagging 98 wickets in 69 matches with best figures of 6-17.

His withdrawal is another blow for the BBL after hard-hitting England batter Harry Brook last week opted out of playing for the Melbourne Stars because of workload concerns.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 87,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 87,700 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 44,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1504.57 feet and was 104.57 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 22,800 cusecs and 42,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1182.55 feet, which was 132.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded at 6,200 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 64,900, 44,800, 45,600 and 14,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 7,100 cusecs of water were released at Nowshera and 2,600 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Two booked for possessing fireworks items

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police arrested two accused for possessing fireworks items, said a police spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that Gungmandi police conducted a raid and arrested two accused namely Numan and Husnain for possessing fireworks items. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is under process. SP Rawal Faisal Saleem Khan said that the operation would continue against such law-breakers who endanger the lives of citizens through aerial firing and fireworks. He made it clear that it was the prime duty of the police to protect lives and properties of people.

### Girl gang raped, two accused held

RAWALPINDI (INP): A girl was gang raped by four youth after friendship on tiktok. Police arrested two of the four rapists while raids were being conducted to nab others. According to details, a girl hailing from Lahore visited family of brother residing in Sadiqabad area of Rawalpindi where she entered in friendship with a youth identified as Sardar on tiktok. Sardar called the girl to 6th Road, Murree road from where he took the girl to a house of Amarpura in a private vehicle. The girl told Waris Khan Police that Sardar and three others youth molested her there. "I raise hue and cry after being raped after local residents gathered at the scene but the four youth sent the gathered people back terming it a personal issue," she said adding, "Getting opportunity, I call Rescue 15, and police reached the scene." SHO Waris Khan, Inspector Malik Naseer said that they have arrested key accused Sardar and his cohort Mohsin while raids were being conducted to detained their two other accomplices.

### Police arrest eight gamblers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police arrested eight gamblers and recovered Rs 16,950 stake money, six mobile phones, and other items from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that New Town police conducted a raid and arrested eight gamblers namely Rajab Ali, Zafar Iqbal, Yaseen, Muhammad Nadeem, Muhammad Irshad, Muhammad Zafar, Muhammad Tariq and Zafar Iqbal, who were allegedly involved in betting while playing cards.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti in a meeting with the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq.

## Crackdown on illegally residing foreign nationals intensifies in capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police have launched a robust campaign against foreign nationals unlawfully residing in the federal capital and nabbed 13 persons living without proper authorization.

Police spokesperson said that a joint team from Islamabad Capital Police's Bani Gala, Sabzi Mandi, and Shams Colony Police Stations successfully apprehended 13 individuals found to be residing in the country without proper authorization.

The detained foreign

nationals were currently in the process of deportation, with 13 others handed over to the Islamabad administration for repatriation to their respective countries.

Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan underscored, "These measures are aimed at discouraging the unauthorized establishment of residency by foreign nationals within the federal capital's jurisdiction."

"The presence of illegal foreign nationals in Pakistan is only acceptable

in accordance with national laws and regulations."

Moreover, Dr Khan highlighted the active pursuit of legal actions by Islamabad Capital Police against those individuals

who facilitate illegal residency or employment of foreign nationals.

"Citizens are urged to uphold Pakistani laws and play their part in maintaining security by reporting any suspicious individuals or activities related to undocumented foreign nationals through the 'Pucar-15' helpline," he added.

## ANF recovers 44 kg drugs in 11 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 11 operations across the country managed to recover 44 kg of drugs and arrested eight accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday.

He informed that 2.4 kg of heroin was recovered from a parcel at a courier office located in Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi. The heroin was soaked in six pants, booked for the UK.

230 grams of weed was recovered from a parcel sent from Canada at a courier office in Multan.

The spokesman informed that 1174 grams hidden in a passenger's trolley bag was recovered at Sialkot airport. The

accused was leaving for Bahrain by flight number GF-769.

7.2 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects riding a motorcycle on Shangla Hill Road, Faisalabad.

2.4 kg hashish and 150 grams of Ice drug were recovered from a motorcycle rider intercepted on Lahore Road, Faisalabad.

18 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle stopped on Kahuta Road Islamabad while an accused was also arrested during the operation. The spokesman further informed that 3.5 kg hashish was recovered from a parcel sent from Quetta at Jinnah International Airport.

3 kg of heroin and 700 grams of Ice drug were recovered from a vehicle intercepted on Ring Road Peshawar. A drug smuggler was also arrested.

1 kg Ice drug and a 9 mm pistol were recovered from a vehicle on Jamrud road while the accused was arrested during the operation. 2 kg hashish was recovered from an accused rounded up near Sajjad Restaurant in Sukkur.

2.4 kg hashish was recovered from an abandoned motorcycle near Alien Housing Society in Hub. Separate cases have been registered against all the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigations are under process.

## ICCP holds online Khuli katcheri

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan on Thursday hold an online khuli katcheri to give the residents direct access to the police high ups, a public relations officer said.

He said that the ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan responded to the public queries via phone calls from 03:30pm to 05:30pm.

ICCP Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan listened to the problems of the callers and directed the concerned officers for their immediate solution. Most of the problems that were mentioned were the citizen's personal and were related to police stations. Speaking to the citizens, the ICCPO said that the police were striving hard to redress public issues as early as possible. He said the purpose of such initiatives was aimed at bridging the gap between police and the public.

People from across the city put their proposals before the ICCPO. Most of the issues were related to citizen personal matters, investigation matters, early disposal of cases and others. The Capital Police Chief told the viewers that the federal capital has witnessed a clear reduction of crime incidents due to effective policing measures, hard work of the cops and swift action on "Pucar-15" calls.

Citizens are also requested to cooperate with the Islamabad Capital Police and report any suspicious activity on Pucar-15 helpline.

## CTP issue over 1600 challan tickets to violators

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi in their ongoing operation launched against underage drivers have issued over 1600 challan tickets and imposed fines amounting to Rs 800,000, said Chief Traffic Officer (CTO), Taimoor Khan.

Talking to APP he informed that CTP had also lodged 370 FIRs against the rules violators. He said fatal road accidents occur due to speeding and reckless driving of the drivers particularly underage.

In a recent tragic incident that took place in Lahore, due to the carelessness and negligence of the parents and an underage driver, precious lives were lost. The CTP said that earlier, action by the law was being taken against the underage divers and now on the decision of the Lahore High Court and special orders of Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, the ongoing operation against the rules violators had been accelerated.

"We are taking action against underage drivers for the last five days and over 1600 challan tickets have so far been issued," he said. The main reason for the traffic accidents is the carelessness and negligence of the parents because most of the young drivers leave the house without informing their parents with cars or

motorcycles and indulge in speeding, reckless driving and wheeling which leads to fatal road accidents, he added.

CTP had initiated a drive against underage drivers without any discrimination, he informed. The CTP, Taimoor Khan said underage drivers not only endanger their own lives but also the lives of other road users, adding that parents should keep a vigilant eye on their children to avert road accidents.

He informed that special orders had been issued to all the circle and sector in-charges of Rawalpindi district to take strict action against underage drivers to protect precious lives and avoid fatal road accidents.

The CTO made it clear that leniency would not be tolerated at any cost.

He said that strict action would be taken against those officials, found negligent in performing their duties. The vehicles and motorcycles of the underage drivers were also being impounded in respective police stations, he said.

In addition to issuing fines for underage driving, the CTP was also conducting awareness campaigns in schools and colleges to educate young individuals about the legal age requirements for obtaining a driver's license, he added.

## NA Speaker condoles demise of Shehzad Saeed's father

ISLAMABAD (APP): NA Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf Thursday expressed deep sorrow and grief over the sad demise of Saeed Ahmed, father of Shehzad Saeed, Director Media National Assembly Secretariat.

The speaker, in his condolence message to Shehzad Saeed, said the sudden death of his father was an irreparable loss for him and other family members.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to raise the ranks of the deceased in Jinnah and grant patience to the bereaved family to bear the loss with equanimity.

NA Secretary Tahir Hussain, Special Secretary Syed Shamoon Hashmi, Additional Secretary Chaudhry Mubarak Ali, Additional Secretary Muhammad Mushtaq, Director General Media Zafar Sultan Khan, and other officers and staff members of the NA Secretariat also expressed their grief on the passing away of Shehzad Saeed's father and prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul.

## 481 power pilferers arrested: IESCO Chief

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) Chief Dr Muhammad Amjad on Thursday said that as many as 481 power pilferers have been arrested so far during the ongoing anti-power theft and recovery drive.

He said that some 585 FIRs were registered against the power thieves. Out of a total 481 have been arrested besides imposing a fine of Rs 262 million on 4,640 power thieves across the company's all regions.

The series of operations against electricity thieves continued without discrimination in all IESCO regions including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Attock and Chakwal Circles, under the direct supervision of Chief Engineer Operation Muhammad Aslam Khan, he said. Dr Amjad said IESCO Operation, M&T and Surveillance teams checked the meters of houses and colonies of IESCO officers and staff in all operation circles. He issued clear instructions to the detection teams that no one was above the law and if any IESCO officer or staff was found involved in electricity theft, strict action would be taken against him.

## Interior Minister, AJK PM discuss development in Azad Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Interior Sarfraz Bugti on Thursday visited the Kashmir House where he met Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq.

Both the dignitaries discussed construction work and progress of development projects in Azad Kashmir at length.

The interior minister assured the AJK PM that the Government of Pakistan would provide all possible support to solve the problems of the people of Kashmir and the government.

He said that despite of economic difficulties, full cooperation with the Azad Kashmir government would continue because the

latter "stands with the government and the people of Pakistan".

"Kashmir is our jugular vein and the hearts of the people of Pakistan beat their Kashmiri brethren," he expressed.

Earlier on his arrival at the Kashmir House, Interior Minister Bugti was warmly received by the AJK prime minister.

## Kyrgyz delegation meet Education Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-powered delegation led by the Ambassador of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan Ulanbek Totuiaev called on the Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi in his office on Thursday.

Madad Ali Sindhi welcomed the Kyrgyz delegation and said that the two countries have cultural, linguistic and people-to-people love for each other, said a press release.

The minister discussed the exchange of expertise and knowledge regarding Vocational and Technical Training. He said that the two countries can benefit from the experience of each other. He acknowledged and praised the long-standing cordial relationship between the two countries.

Madad Ali welcomed the exchange of teachers and students to further mutual cooperation. He said that there is significant potential for cooperation between the two countries.

He said that Teacher's Training and quality of education have been given the highest priority since he took office. He said that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan should enhance their bilateral

ties, especially in exchange of technology, education and research. He said that digitalisation of the education sector can address numerous challenges of today and tomorrow.

He highlighted the E-Taleem and Teleschool platforms developed by the Ministry of Education in its bid to develop digital solutions to prevalent problems in the public education sector. Madad said that Pakistan has always collaborated with Muslim countries and looks forward to enhancing bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Kyrgyzstan.

He appreciated the developments in the education sector of Kyrgyzstan and said that through the exchange of expertise, Pakistan can learn from their road to progress. The minister was told that 11,000 Pakistani students are studying in Kyrgyzstan.

Madad said that such exchange will lead to the strengthening of ties and can lead towards a fruitful bilateral relation. The minister said that we should also look towards collaboration on multilateral platforms such as ECO.

The minister was also briefed about the issue of

Pakistani students in Kyrgyzstan. He reiterated his resolve to resolve all such outstanding issues.

He said that the youth of Pakistan is the most important asset for the country and should be facilitated in every manner. Ambassador of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan H.E Ulanbek Totuiaev said that the People of Kyrgyzstan have a deep affiliation with Pakistan. He said that university-to-university cooperation and Technical Institution collaboration are the way forward.

He also briefed the minister about a digital learning platform being used in Kyrgyzstan that has reaped good results. Madad said that both countries should exchange expertise on the development of digital learning platforms, in order to benefit from the experience of each other.

Madad Ali Sindhi praised the current government's efforts in modernising the education system of Pakistan. The Federal Minister thanked the Ambassador and highlighted the cordial and friendly relations between the two countries. The minister said that the two countries have shared history and literature.

## Railways accelerate efforts to retrieve 13,972 acres land

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has accelerated the efforts to retrieve the major portion of around 13,972 acres of land worth billions of rupees found under the illegal occupation of private individuals and different government departments across the country.

"Around 5,809 acres were occupied in Punjab, 1,181 acres are under encroachment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 5,948 acres in Sindh and 1,034 acres land occupied in Balochistan," an official in the Ministry told APP. He said the category of land under illegal occupations included commercial, residential, agricultural and various persons or departments.

Giving details of the land, the official said that around 769 acres were commercial in all the provinces, 3,309 residential, 5,512 acres agricultural and 4382 were under encroachment of various persons or departments.

The official said the

department had also decided to accelerate its ongoing anti-encroachment operation against land grabbers across the country to recoup its land from different individuals, groups, and even business organizations which were using it for residential, commercial and agriculture purposes for decades.

"The joint procedure orders have been issued to all Divisional Superintendents of Pakistan Railways to retrieve the railway land from encroachers," the official added. Accordingly, he said the anti-encroachment operations for retrieval of encroached Railway land all over the Railway network are being initiated by the concerned divisions and notices are issued to encroachers under the Possession Ordinance 1965 for vacation of Railway land/structure within 14 days.

The official said that Pakistan Railway Police, District Administration

and law enforcement agencies are informed of necessary assistance in anti-encroachment operations.

To further control and restrict new encroachments, he said the responsibilities defined for Railway officers within Railway Station premises, Station Master concerned, within/around the colony premises, inspector of works and Railway Police.

"The anti-encroachment schedules, on a three-month basis, are being prepared and sent to all concerned in line with the joint procedure order," he said adding that the operations will be launched with the assistance of Railway Police and district administrations of the relevant provincial governments.

The official said PR owned 167,690 acres of land across the country, of which 90,326-acre was in Punjab, 39,428-acre in Sindh, 28,228-acre in Balochistan, and 9,708-acre in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



ISLAMABAD: A herd of deer at Zoo near Faisal Mosque in Federal Capital. —APP Photo



**Cultural event held**

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Information and Culture held a cultural gathering and an exhibition of Islamic art work in Kabul on the occasion of the International Day of Islamic Art. Emphasizing the commitment to the development of Islamic art in the country, the deputy minister asked the international community to cooperate with the caretaker government for the awareness of the past and contemporary art of Islam.

**2,000 migrants returned**

KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghan Ministry of Migrants' Affairs reported that 2,000 Afghan migrants have returned from Iran voluntarily or forcibly compulsively as part of the ongoing migration process. The ministry reported that a total of 1,957 Afghan migrants have returned from Iran via the Islam Qala border crossing. The Ministry of Migrants' Affairs, citing the head of the Herat border authority, has reported that 24 families, consisting of 91 individuals, were forcibly repatriated.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

## IEA calls for ceasefire in Gaza

KABUL (Pajhwok): Welcoming the pause in fighting in Gaza, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has asked for a permanent ceasefire in the Palestinian city.

Since the beginning of the Gaza war on October 7, more than 13,000 Palestinians have lost their lives so far in attacks by Israeli forces. Reports say 1,500 Israeli people have also been killed.

A statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) welcomed the truce in Gaza and hailed diplomatic efforts by the Qatari government to facilitate the delivery of lifesaving humanitarian aid to Gazans.

While calling for a permanent ceasefire, the ministry said violations of human rights in Gaza by the Zionist regime had caused irreparable damage to the credibility of western governments and organisations posing as of human rights champions.

The issue of Palestine needs a comprehensive solution and the occupation of the Palestinian land must end, the statement added.

The ministry stressed the Palestinians must be given the right to have their own independent government on their historic land like other nations.

Earlier, the Israeli government and Palestinian officials confirmed reaching an agreement on a four-day pause in hostilities and release of hostages.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office wrote on its X handle, 50 Israeli hostages would be released before guns fell silent for four days.

Israeli authorities affirmed their commitment to the safe return of hostages to their homes but threatened the war would continue until all captives were released.

Hamas has also announced that 150 Palestinian would be released by Israel under the agreement and hundreds of trucks loaded with humanitarian aid, medical supplies and fuel would be allowed to enter Gaza.

### Complaints as vendors throng sidewalks and streets

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): A number of Mazar-i-Sharif residents, the capital of northern Balkh province, say vendors have occupied sidewalks, thoroughfares and streets of the city, asking the authorities to provide them an appropriate place.

They say the ubiquitous presence of hawkers on city streets and roads, especially around the Hazrat Ali (RA) Shrine, has caused problems for the people and disturbed the urban order.

Qayumullah, a resident of Mazar-i-Sharif, told Pajhwok Afghan News the number of vendors was increasing day by day, bothering inhabitants and visitors.

He commented: "Footpaths are built for pedestrians, not for vendors to sell their goods on without permission and create problems for people."

Qayumullah urged government officials to allot an alternative place for the vendors.

Bismillah, another inhabitant, said the peddlers sold a variety of goods on both sides of sidewalks, barely leaving any space for pedestrians. He hit out at the Mazar-i-Sharif Municipality for disregarding the issue.

Another citizen, Naseer Ahmad, complained almost all streets around the shrine remained chock-full of peddlers, impeding people's movement.

But vendor Ahmad argued they had to sell goods on roads and streets due to poverty and to earn a living for their families.

"People's economy is weak; they don't have enough money to build shops. That's why they have to sell things on roads and streets to eke out a living."

On the other hand, officials promised they would provide a proper space for peddlers.

Mayor Mohammad Kazim Tariq, meanwhile, said they had presented a plan to participants of an administrative meeting for brining order to the city.

## Union of oil, gas companies organized meeting

KABUL (TOLOnews): A meeting on the development and progress of oil and gas companies was held by the Oil and Gas Union in the capital.

Sayed Mohammad Karim Hashimi, head of the union, said that in order to solve the challenges of oil and gas in the coming winter, they are trying to import oil and gas from the countries of Turkmenistan, Russia, and Iran.

"Every law and every standard and everything that comes into effect in our country, or the regulations that are given to us, apply to all merchants equally in the six ports of Afghanistan," said Hashimi.

Some economists consider the continuous activity of the union to be beneficial to the country's economic progress and the reduction of oil and gas prices.

"The existence of the oil and gas union can be useful when it causes prices to fall," said Abdul Zahur, an economist.

"As you know, the goal of the union is Afghanistan's self-sufficiency in oil and gas production and to prevent famine in the field and for prices not to rise," said Azarakhsh Hafizi, an economist.

Meanwhile, some residents of the capital, criticizing the increase in the price of fuel, especially oil and gas in the winter season, ask the Islamic Emirate to pay serious attention to reducing the price of oil and gas, especially in the winter season.

"We want them to try to reduce the prices because most of our countrymen are not able to buy fuel," said Abdul Musawer, a Kabul resident.

"The price of gas and oil is high, the price of foreign currency is reduced in the country but there is no change in the fuel prices," said Ghulam Sakhi, a Kabul resident.

Meanwhile, some residents of the capital complain about the increase in the price of fuel, especially oil and gas, in the winter season.



## Booksellers concerned about lack of book markets

KABUL (TOLOnews): Bookstore owners and publishing houses said that they have lost fifty percent of their customers in more than two years.

The officials of these publishing houses and bookstores emphasized that currently the market for their sales has decreased and they are facing economic challenges.

"We have been working in book sales, publishing, and distribution for about 18 years. Currently, the economic situation of the people has the greatest impact on the book sales," said Zaki Ahmadi, head of a publishing house.

"Business used to be very good, now it is not, now it is very diminished. Our economy is very damaged," said Azizullah, a bookseller.

According to the Publishers Union in Kabul, about 180 publishers, 550 bookstores and 150 printing presses are operating in the country, which are currently facing economic challenges.

Abdul Wadood Mukhtarzada, the head of the Publishers Union in Kabul, said that they are working in coordination with the Ministry of Information and Culture to establish a commission to address the problems of publishers and booksellers.

"The Administrative Office created a commission in the Ministry of Information and Culture through the Prime Minister's Office. In support of the publishers, the commission has made efforts to categorize the publisher's problems," said Abdul Wadood Mukhtarzada.

Meanwhile, students said economic problems are one of the factors that weaken the culture of reading and buying books.

"Student interest in book reading culture is not good these days," said Eman Haidari, a student.

Some publishing houses and bookstores have complained about economic problems and the decrease in their sales.



## Meeting of IEA's opponents, foreign diplomats held in Moscow

KABUL (TOLOnews): A meeting under the title of "Afghanistan in the past and future" with the participation of Islamic Emirate opponents and envoys of various countries was held on Thursday in Moscow.

The participants included former officials of the Afghan government and some other Afghan elites—who oppose the Islamic Emirate's government, and envoys from Iran, Russia and some other countries.

They discussed the formation of an inclusive government, the situation of women, and the UN activities in Afghanistan.

"I emphasize that I am not taking sides with any power and military element. We want an Afghanistan with national consensus and stability with having the friendship policy towards the neighbors, region and world and have no enmity with anyone," said Ahmad Masoud, leader of the so called Resistance Front.

The envoy of Iran talked about the Islamic Emirate's fight against Daesh and other groups in Afghanistan.

"The Taliban's fighting against the terrorist groups of Daesh Khorasan and the security cooperation between Afghanistan and the neighbors regarding fighting Daesh has been very valuable, as a result, some leaders of this group have been eliminated," said an envoy from Iran in the meeting.

"Any meeting regarding the situation of Afghanistan could be beneficial. If we want Afghanistan's issue to be solved completely, the Doha agreement could be a framework for it under the monitoring of the UN," said Sayed Muqdam Ameen, political analyst.

The Islamic Emirate's spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said that Kabul was not invited to the meeting, stressing that such meetings will not benefit Afghanistan.

He also urged the neighboring countries to not "create sedition among Afghans."

## World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week marked



KABUL (TOLOnews): The third week of November is World Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Awareness Week.

A number of doctors said that the unprescribed use of drugs, especially antibiotics, can cause death among children.

Some pharmacists complain about the sale of drugs that are not prescribed, especially antibiotics.

The Afghanistan Food and Drug Authority (AFDA) said that they are trying to prevent the citizens of the country from using antibiotics on their own.

Currently there is excessive use of drugs, especially antibiotics, in the country.

Seven-month-old Mohammad was admitted to the Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital in Kabul for four days due to diarrhea, and his mother said that she brought him from Bamiyan to Kabul for treatment and in the first days of his illness, she gave him a dose of antibiotics.

"We took medicine from each of them twice, but it didn't work. I brought my child to Bamiyan, but when it didn't work there either, I brought him to Kabul," said Amana, Mohammad's mother.

Meanwhile, some pharmacists said that the sale and recommendation of over-the-counter drugs and antibiotics has recently increased by pharmacists in some areas.

"Clients come a lot and we don't allow them to self-prescribe. Our advice is to go to a doctor," said Omaid, a pharmacist.

"Pharmacists should not prescribe self-medication and people should not self-medication because it is very harmful," said Abdul Wasim, a pharmacist.

Some doctors said that self-medication, especially with antibiotics, can cause death, especially among children.

"First, the antibiotic is not effective; when it is not effective, the antibiotic lasts a long time and ruins the child's condition. Even this microbe resistance... causes the death of children," said Mohammad Aref Hasan, a doctor.

The AFDA added that they are trying to prevent the use of antibiotics and self-medicating by the citizens of the country by launching awareness programs.

"Indiscriminate use of drugs, whether antibiotics or other drug families, have many side effects that can be fatal in some cases," said Jawid Hazhir, the spokesman of the AFDA.

Based on the statements of the World Health Organization, the indiscriminate use of antibiotics can create resistance in humans and make the treatment of some diseases difficult or impossible in the future and increase the risk of disease spread and death.

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## ‘Girls, boys education necessary for development of Afghanistan’

KABUL (Ariana News): Hamid Karzai, the former president of Afghanistan, has once again emphasized the need to reopen schools and universities for girls in the country.

Karzai said on X late Wednesday that he considers the education of girls and boys necessary for the prosperity and development of Afghanistan.

This he raised with Hassan Kazemi Qomi, Iran's ambassador and special envoy to Afghanistan and Seyed Mehdi Mostafavi, a senior member of Iran's Strategic Foreign Relations Council in a meeting.

Karzai also said national discourse is the only way to establish lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

After the takeover by the Islamic Emirate on August 15, 2021, girls' schools above grade six were closed and in December last year, universities were closed to female students.

Some experts believe that there is no justification for closing schools and that the caretaker government must take serious measures to reopen schools.



More than two years have passed since the closure of girls' schools above and almost one year since the suspension of higher education for female students, and while the academic year of 1402 will end in a few days, there is no news about whether these bans will be lifted in the new academic year.

## Qashqari oil field extracting 400 metric tons per day: Ministry

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP) says Qashqari oil wells in Sar-e-Pul province are pumping out at least 400 metric tons per day.

According to MoMP, oil extraction will start from new wells in the near future in the province, which will significantly increase the amount extracted.

Chamber of Commerce and Investments officials meanwhile say that the country holds a lot of oil and that the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum needs to encourage domestic investment.

"A joint company should be established and everyone should have their share and also a favorable environment for domestic investors in order to invest," said Khanjan Alkozi, a member of ACCI.

Economic experts also believe that Afghanistan is rich in various natural resources, especially in oil, and if proper planning is done to utilize these resources, it can have a deep and positive impact on the economic development of the country.

"I am sure that the amount of oil production and extraction will increase and even we should be able to produce more than 1,000 tons, but the Taliban (Islamic Emirate) must take basic steps in this area and equalize all investment conditions," said an economic analyst.

## Herat earthquake victims seek protection against winter

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): The victims of deadliest and devastating earthquake in western Herat province have said that with the arrival of winter season their daily life had become difficult and witnessed a lot of problems.

They said government and other aid providing organisations provided them with emergency relief but he cold weather in the desert resulted in the sickness of their children and created other problems for them.

Pajhwok reporter visited families who suffered from the lack of livelihood facilities. They said that tents did not have the capacity in which bread should be baked while electric ovens and other heating instruments could not be used inside the tent. There is no other facility outside for cooking.

Abdul Sammad, one of the earthquake victims, said necessary aid was provided to them on the behalf of government and other organisations but the non-availability of gas oven, gas and ajaq made their lives difficult.

The availability of enough coal and gas in the tents make children sick, although health services are currently provided relatively in their areas, but the lack of winter fuel will increase their problems.

Hazrat Ghulam Hazrat, another earthquake victim, said the cold weather and the time spent inside the tents, on the one hand, and

the lack of difficulty in preparing bread, on the other hand, added to their difficulties, and demanded the distribution of liquid gas free of charge among the earthquake victims.

He added that the gas purchased by them only meets their daily needs and that too very little, and they cannot afford to buy gas to heat their tents.

He said that besides government initiative to build houses for them, the government needs to pay attention to them in the area of providing fuel for winter to them.

Some students of Zindajan district complained against the lack of stationary and said currently they had no access to education.

Mawlawi Mohammad Musa Ashari, head of the Natural Disaster Management Department (NDMD), said the Commission form to address the problems faced by earthquake victims had made necessary efforts to address the earthquake victims problems.

He said the Commission first priority is the provision of food, clothes and health services to the earthquake victims, their main demand is the construction of house and efforts were underway to construction concert and up to the standard houses for the victims.

According to the local people, the earthquake has seriously damaged the

economic, health, cultural, historical and social situation in this province, and the aftershocks are still happening.

It is pertinent to that some countries, institutions, relief and rescue organization, national businessmen, sportsmen and the caretaker government of Afghanistan, in addition to food aid, have provided cash aid to the victims of the Herat earthquake, and this process continues.

A 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck Herat province's Zindajan district on October 7 which left 7,000 people killed and injured. The situation worsened by the aftershocks which still happening.





# KP caretaker cabinet approves key initiatives

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker Cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah was held at the Civil Secretariat her on Thursday.

The meeting was attended by caretaker cabinet members, Chief Secretary, and the Additional Chief Secretary Interior, related administrative secretaries, and other pertinent officials. The meeting commenced with the recitation of Fatiha for the late Muhammad Azam Khan, former Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In a significant move, the caretaker cabinet approved the extension of the monthly stipend program for female students in classes VI to XII within the newly merged districts, extending support until the year 2025. The initiative aims at providing scholarships to 32,833, 37,758, and 43,422 female students in the years 2023, 2024, and 2025, respectively,

with a total estimated project cost of 940.5 million rupees.

Furthermore, the cabinet endorsed the proposal to link scholarship disbursement with student performance and examination results, requiring a minimum attendance of 70%. Additionally, approval was granted for allocating 2 kanal of land in Tehsil Jamrud, Khyber District for building offices and residential structures of Federal Government Institutions.

In a move toward social welfare, the cabinet sanctioned the establishment of a welfare fund for prisoners and prison employees, with a focus on skill development.

Under this initiative, 30% of the income generated from products made in jails will be allocated to inmates, enabling them to acquire skills and achieve financial independence upon release.

The fund, established from prisoners' and prison employees' contributions, incurs no cost to the government. The cabinet also greenlit the nomination of

representatives from Peshawar, Mardan, and D. I. Khan districts to represent farmers on the Cane and Sugar Beet Control Board. Similarly, names for the Board of Directors of Water and Sanitation Services Company Peshawar approved.

Additionally, post-facto approval was granted to the Department of Auqaf, Religious Affairs, and the Provincial Disaster Management Authority for emergency aid provided to the victims of the Jaranwala incident in September 2023. The cabinet also honored the memory of officer Uzair Afsar of the Pakistan Army by renaming Government Higher Secondary School Pind Hashim Khan District Haripur to Shaheed Uzair Afsar Government Higher Secondary School.

Acknowledging the evolving administrative landscape, the provincial cabinet approved the creation of District Education Officer positions for both male and female in the newly established district of Lower South Waziristan.

## Court orders to present Imran, Qureshi on Tuesday

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A special court on Thursday ordered to produce Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi before it on November 28 in the cipher case. Judge Abu Alhasnaat Zulqurnain presided over the hearing wrapped up within minutes. Following the Islamabad High Court (IHC) orders, the cipher case hearing took place at the Judicial Complex in G-11 instead of Adiala jail.

Lawyers Ali Bukhari and Khalid Yousaf appeared before the court for the hearing. The judge asked for a copy of the Islamabad High Court's divisional bench, which was provided by the court staff. Later, the court adjourned the hearing and ordered the jail authorities to present the former prime minister and PTI chief and ex-foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi before the court on Tuesday (November 28).

On November 21, the Islamabad High Court ruled that the cipher case's jail trial was illegal.

The court had declared proceedings since August 29 to be illegal, including the indictment. It added that the notification issued by the law ministry on August 29 to allow the jail trial was declared to be "without lawful authority and no legal effect..." The first information report (FIR) was registered on August 15 under the Official Secrets Act. It was registered on the complaint of the Home Secretary.

Former prime minister Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi were nominated in the report, while names of former principal secretary Azam Khan and former planning minister Asad Umar were also mentioned. The FIR stated that the former prime minister and foreign minister distorted the facts of the diplomatic cipher. "A conspiracy was launched to misuse the contents of the cipher to fulfill nefarious purposes", it added. It further stated that the former premier and top diplomat endangered the state interests.

The delegation expressed its determination to continue working with the government in efforts to build a consensus in Pakistan. The delegation included IPRI Director (Advocacy) Siddique Humayun, Hisham, Miss Jawaria, Institute of Strategic Studies Director Khurram Abbas and Naufal, also from Institute of Policy Studies.

## Indian plane makes emergency landing

KARACHI (INP): An Indian passenger plane made an emergency landing at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport on Thursday morning after a woman traveller fell unconscious. Coming from Jeddah, the plane, belonging to India's largest airline IndiGo, touched down at the Karachi Airport at 4:15 am.

Doctors checked the Indian woman passenger and declared her dead. Later, the plane took off for India along with the dead body at 6:15 am. In March 2023, a plane belonging to the same airline had to make an emergency landing at Karachi Airport after a passenger died on board.



ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Ambassador of Russia, Mr. Danila Ganich, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

# Contempt of court: PTI challenges KP caretaker govt in PHC

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) ordered provincial government for submission of reply in Contempt of Court (COC) plea till 29th November for noncompliance with the provision of permission for workers convention to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), on Thursday.

Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Javed, PTI's lawyer Ali Zaman Advocate appeared before PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Shakeel Ahmad during hearing. The counsel argued that PTI's had made request before the administration for holding a Workers Convention in Peshawar today (on Friday) but the Deputy Commissioner had imposed section 144 despite other political parties are arranging gathering but PTI isn't allowed.

Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Javed informed that Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been formulated for election campaign activities during meeting of deputy commissioners

and district police officers chaired by the additional chief secretary's Home. The political parties must made prior requests for election activities and would follow SOPs in this regard, advocate general added.

In the meantime, Justice Ijaz Anwar observed that Deputy Commissioner is imposing Section 144 if one party approaches for political activities while has no problem with other parties because they are busy in election events. He added that equal opportunities must be provided to political parties because its time for elections.

However, PTI's counsel argued that they had submitted applications multiple times while Jammāt-e-Islami (JI) Amir Siraj-ul-Haq had held party gathering yesterday (on Wednesday) in Peshawar. Justice Ijaz Anwar remarked that other parties are holding gathering while ban is imposed on one party and added that PHC wants peaceful and secure elections.

There is report regarding serious threats to several politicians as well as deteriorating law and order situation, AG informed. However, Justice

Ijaz Anwar observed that such reports may not lead to delay in polls and added that government had formulated SOPs for election campaign which must be implemented.

Justice Ijaz Anwar observed that action would be initiated against Deputy Commissioner if any party arranged gathering on roads because it is against the SOPs and prior application for political activity is obligatory. Although, Justice Shakeel Ahmad remarked that parties arrange gathering and conventions but neither block road and streets. He added that political parties communicate their motto to public and then citizens have choice to decide.

PHC's ordered PTI to file application after expiry of Section 144 for convention as well stopped from criticizing state's institutions and policeman to appear before court for harassment of political workers while adjourned hearing till 29th November. Meanwhile, Anti-corruption court Judge Babar Ali Khan granted bail to former Speaker National Assembly in malpractices at Gajju Khan Medical College.

# Govt to facilitate ECP for holding free, fair elections

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Thursday said the caretaker government was committed to conduct free, fair and transparent elections and it would provide all possible facilities to the Election Commission of Pakistan for conducting elections.

He said this during a meeting with the delegation of Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), which was led by its President Major General (ret'd) Raza Muhammad. The current political and economic situation of the country, elimination of fake news and disinformation, upcoming general elections, social media issues, and elections in other coun-

tries of South Asia were discussed in the meeting, a press release said.

The delegation informed the minister about the IPRI's latest research on the political scenario of the country, and appreciated the caretaker government's commitment for conducting free, fair and transparent elections. "Equal opportunities are being provided to all political parties, there will be no discrimination against anyone," Murtaza Solangi said.

He said for improvement of the political environment in the country, development of consensus among all political parties was indispensable. The minister said the world was facing the problems of misinformation, disinformation and fake news, while the latter was the biggest challenge on social media.

All stakeholders would have to play their role in ending fake news, he maintained. The role of media in the upcoming general elections was also discussed in the meeting. Solangi said the media would be provided a conducive environment during the elections. Equal coverage was being given to all political parties on state media, he added.

The delegation expressed its determination to continue working with the government in efforts to build a consensus in Pakistan. The delegation included IPRI Director (Advocacy) Siddique Humayun, Hisham, Miss Jawaria, Institute of Strategic Studies Director Khurram Abbas and Naufal, also from Institute of Policy Studies.

# Have no lust for power, says Nawaz

F.P. Report

MURREE: Supreme leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Nawaz Sharif has said that political gains hold no importance to him and he returned to country for sake of public interests and prosperity. Talking to PML-N workers in Murree, the PML-N supremo said that he had a bond with the people of Murree, which grew stronger over the years.

Nawaz Sharif said that he was ousted from power thrice through illegal means. "This is not the way to run a country. We did not learn

from the past, that's why we're ruined. I have no lust for power. The government that was installed ruined the country," he noted. The PML-N chief said he could not deceive people. "I cannot cheat to get vote; and do nothing after returning to power. No one will be crueler than I if I do so. The government that followed us ruined country."

The three-time former prime minister claimed that he bade adieu to the IMF. "The United States offered us \$5 billion but we tested nuclear device. I was booted out from power for not taking salary from my son that

destroyed a thriving economy and promoted envy, malice, and hypocrisy," Nawaz Sharif said that he ended electricity loadshedding in the country. "We completed development projects by working day and night. We added 11,000 MW power to national grid. The country has huge coal reserves but that resource was not used to generate electricity. We tapped coal energy and produced electricity. We can produce hundreds of megawatt using coal." "The country was ruined. The reason I was expelled was to bring him [PTI] to power.

# Siraj: Muslim rulers acted as silent spectator over Gaza

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Sirajul Haq has asserted that Muslim rulers have played the role of silent spectators in the face of the tragic loss of children's lives in Gaza.

Speaking at a solidarity rally in front of Faisal Mosque Islamabad on Thursday, he emphasized that history would forever remember the passive stance adopted by the governments of the Islamic world in response to Israeli atrocities. The march saw significant participation from children, parents, and teachers.

Sirajul Haq expressed deep concern over media reports indicating that the government had proposed recognizing Israel and endorsing a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. He argued that Pakistani rulers lacked the mandate to issue verdicts on behalf of the people of Palestine and could not disregard Pakistan's national policy regarding the Zionist state, which he deemed as creation of imperialistic forces. Highlighting the historical context, he

remarked that the name Israel was unknown before 1948, saying the Israeli forces had engaged in the genocide of Palestinians and occupying their land since its establishment. He reiterated the stance of the father of the nation, Quaid-i-Azam, who had unequivocally declared Israel an illegal state that Pakistan would never recognize.

The JI leader asserted that the temporary truce represented a victory for the Palestinians, who courageously defended their land despite Israeli forces blocking their water and food supply. He criticized the United Nations for failing in its duty to assist the innocent victims, noting the thousands of Palestinians killed and the transformation of Gaza into a graveyard. Paying tribute to the millions worldwide participating in rallies against the Israeli killing machine, Siraj also commended the entire Ummah for expressing solidarity with the brave people and children of Gaza. He extended gratitude to the children who came out in support, emphasizing that such unwavering passion could not be defeated.

## Moonis's assets, bank accounts seized

ISLAMABAD (INP): Following the court order, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) froze the properties and bank accounts of former federal minister Moonis Elahi – son of PTI President Parvez Elahi – in a money laundering case on Thursday.

According to the details, a total of eight different bank accounts of the former federal minister Moonis Elahi – having more than Rs 480 million – have been frozen in Lahore by the relevant authorities. Moreover, the FIA seized all the property owned by the Moonis Elahi including six in Lahore, five in Kasur, and one property in Rawalpindi.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Special Central Court in Lahore ordered to seizure of all assets and bank accounts of former federal minister Moonis Elahi – son of PTI President Parvez Elahi – in a money laundering case on November 17.

## 4 terrorists killed in Turbat

TURBAT (INP): The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) killed four terrorists from banned organization during a targeted operation in Turbat on Thursday. According to the details, the CTD officials carried out a targeted operation on Pinni Road near Turbat and killed four terrorists affiliated with the banned organization.

The law enforcers recovered a large cache of arms, ammunition, and explosives from the possession of the dead terrorists. The encountered terrorists were involved in attacks on forces and civilians. Earlier in the day, a joint operation of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) along with other law enforcement officials was conducted on a tip-off in the SITE area of Karachi, resulting in the arrest of four terrorists affiliated with the banned organization Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.

The CTD spokesperson revealed that the arrested individuals – Identified as Amin alias Munna, Shah Nawaz alia Saleem Mechanic, Maaz Khan, and Yaseen – had created a secret cell of the banned organization in the Orangi Town area of Karachi.

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

## Hiring of Services For Collection of Contribution and Disbursement of Pension



- Should be a registered Banking company as commercial bank with State Bank of Pakistan.
- An active taxpayers list of FBR and registered with the provincial tax authorities.
- Has submitted bid for complete requirement and with relevant bid security. Non-compliance of the same shall cause rejection of the bid.
- Has not been blacklisted by any of Provincial or Federal Government Department, anywhere in Pakistan.
- Bank/Banking Company must have an established digital footprint in Pakistan
- Bank/Banking Company shall expressly convey its willingness to exchange data by consuming EOBI designed services for both pension disbursement and contribution collection.
- Long term rating of A+ as on June 30, 2023, issued by the State Bank of Pakistan.
- Minimum 600 active branches with 800 ATMs located in all the major districts of Pakistan.
- Agent network in districts where no branches exist.

### AVAILABILITY OF BID DOCUMENTS

Bid documents shall be available from the date of publication of tender notice in the newspapers from the below mentioned address, on production of Rs. 5,000/= Pay Order (non-refundable) drawn on any commercial bank in favor of "EMPLOYEES' OLD-AGE BENEFITS INSTITUTION, HEAD OFFICE, KARACHI". This Tender Notice is also available on the websites of EOBI and PPRA.

### PRE-BID, CLOSING, OPENING, VALIDITY OF BID, & BID SECURITY

Bids prepared in accordance with the instructions in the bidding documents containing Technical and Financial Proposals in separate envelopes, must be reached at the address given below on or before **15.12.2023** at 11:00 am. Pre-Bid meeting will be held on **05.12.2023** at 11:30 am and opening of technical bid is set for **15.12.2023** at 11:30 am in the Board Room of EOBI Head Office, at 8th floor. Representatives of bidders may attend these meetings.

### BID REJECTION

Incomplete, conditional, and/or bids without Bid Security shall be instantly rejected. Bids without proof of eligibility conditions stated above shall also be rejected.

### Director (General Administration Department)

EOBI Head Office, 190/B/1, P.E.C.H.S Block # 2,  
Near Blue Ribbon Bakery, Off Shara-e-Faisal, Karachi, Tel No: 021-99225397

**Employees' Old Age Benefits Institution (EOBI)** invites sealed proposals from local public/private sector banks for provision of Cash Management Services for Collection of Contribution and Disbursement of Pension across Pakistan through customized and professionally designed mechanism for a period of **05 years** and extendable for further **03 years** with mutual consent. Bidding will be conducted under **National Competitive Bidding pursuant to Rule 36(b) of PPR-2004**, for firms having following minimum qualification;