

ISLAMABAD (NNI): A technical team of International Monetary Fund (IMF) experts has reached Pakistan which will hold consultations on tax reforms and tax policy. According to sources, the IMF delegation will meet with the officials of FBR and the Finance Ministry. The issues related to increasing the tax net and income will be considered during the meeting.



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# Pakistan, UAE sign MoUs worth multi billion dollars: PM

ABU DHABI (APP): Pakistan and United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed several multi-billion dollars Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) in a range of areas here on Monday to boost economic and strategic cooperation between the two countries, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said in a video message.

The prime minister, who is on a two-day visit to the UAE, said with the signing of the MoUs, the bilateral economic and strategic relations had entered into a new era of bilateral cooperation. Congratulating the people of Pakistan and the UAE, he said foundation of friendship with Pakistan that was laid by Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan in the 1970s, had been taken forward by his son Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to a new era. Pakistan's Army Chief General Asim Munir and the federal ministers were present on the occasion while on the other side, all the important ministers of UAE were also present.

He expressed the hope that the MoUs that were signed by the two countries would turn into tangible

projects very soon.

**Pakistan, UAE reaffirm resolve to further strengthen economic, strategic cooperation:** Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates on Monday reaffirmed their resolve to further strengthen economic and strategic cooperation. This reaffirmation was expressed during a meeting between Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and the UAE President, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan here.

Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M) was also present on the occasion.

The two leaders underlined that Pakistan and the UAE had historic and deep-rooted fraternal ties which had stood the test of time.

They also witnessed the signing of Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) between Pakistan and the UAE pertaining to investment cooperation in the sectors of energy, port operations, waste water treatment, food security, logistics, minerals, and banking and financial services.

The MoUs will unlock multi-billion dollars of investment from the United

Arab Emirates into Pakistan and will help realize various initiatives envisioned under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

The prime minister termed the signing of MoUs as a historic event that will usher in a new era of Pak-UAE economic partnership. During the meeting, Prime Minister Kakar expressed profound gratitude for the UAE's firm support to Pakistan in the economic and financial domain. The UAE is home to 1.8 million Pakistanis, contributing to the progress, prosperity and economic development of the two brotherly countries.

Regional and global developments were also discussed during the meeting with particular reference to the deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in occupied Palestine. The prime minister expressed Pakistan's support for a just and durable solution to the Palestinian question anchored in international law and in line with relevant United Nations and OIC resolutions. The prime minister reiterated Pakistan's full support to the UAE's

Presidency for COP 28, underlining its importance as an opportunity for meaningful progress towards effective and result-oriented global actions in key areas to mitigate climate impact including establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund.

**PM to embark on bilateral visit to Kuwait on November 28-29:** Following his visit to the United Arab Emirates, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar will embark on a bilateral visit to the State of Kuwait on November 28-29, 2023.

During the visit, the prime minister will meet Crown Prince of State of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al Jaber Al Sabah, Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmed Nawaf Al Ahmed AL Sabah, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release on Monday. The visit will include the signing of various Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) in the fields of manpower, information technology, mineral exploration and food security, energy and defence. Pakistan and Kuwait enjoy deep-rooted and historical ties spanning over six decades.

## IHC adjourns Nawaz Sharif's appeals in NAB cases till Nov 29

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday adjourned hearing till November 29, in appeals of PML-N's

Leader Muhammad Nawaz Sharif against his convictions in Al-Azizia Steel Mills and Avenfield property references. The court also sought arguments from the lawyers on application of PML-N's leader seeking exemption from attendance.

A two-judge bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the appeals wherein former prime minister Nawaz Sharif appeared before the bench along with his legal team. During the course of proceeding, Nawaz Sharif's lawyer Amjad Pervez gave arguments in the Avenfield reference and said that three facts are before filing of the reference while the rest are after.

The lawyer said that the joint investigation team (JIT) was formed by the apex court and it was given

the authority to investigate. The JIT report containing ten volumes was submitted to the top court and on July 28, his client was disqualified and NAB was directed to file references against Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz, Hussain Nawaz, Hasan Nawaz and Captain retired Safdar.

Amjad Pervaiz said that the NAB had admitted during cross-examination that it had no option other than filing a reference. Nawaz Sharif was acquitted in the flagship reference and NAB's appeal against this verdict is pending before IHC, he said.

He told the court that the former prime minister was announced seven years jail term in Al-Azizia steel mills case while ten years in Avenfield property reference. The NAB had also filed appeals to increase the sentences of his client in Al-Azizia Steel Mills reference, he added. He said that Nawaz Sharif and his daughter were in UK when the references were filed. His client also filed review

petition before the Supreme Court before filing of the cases. After the charges were framed, NAB submitted a preliminary investigation report and later a supplementary report was filed. The NAB presented TV interviews and gave reference of Nawaz Sharif's speech on the assembly floor, he said.

Amjad Pervaiz said that NAB did not present any concrete evidence apart from the statements of the witnesses. The NAB filed references based on the JIT report only, he said.

Justice Mian Gul Hasan Aurangzeb said, did NAB anything using its mind? On which lawyer Amjad Pervaiz said that NAB did nothing except send a call-up notice to Nawaz Sharif. The bureau brought some more evidence on record in the supplementary reference, NAB collected the transcript of Mian Nawaz Sharif's address to the nation and statements of Maryam, Hasan and Hussain Nawaz Sharif, the

Court rejects NAB's plea to extend PTI chief's physical remand in £190m case

ISLAMABAD (APP): Accountability Court has dismissed the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) plea to extend the physical remand of Chairman PTI in Al-Qadir Property Trust and 190-million-pound case.

Judge Muhammad Bashir of the Accountability Court heard the Al-Qadir Property Trust Case on Monday at Adiala Jail. Chairman PTI's wife Bushra Bibi and his sisters Aleema Khan and Uzma Khan appeared alongside their legal team appeared before the court.

A five-member legal team of NAB was also present on the occasion.

The officials from the watchdog agency requested to extend the physical remand of the former premier.

However, the court rejected the plea and sent the PTI chief to Jail on judicial remand.



RAWALPINDI: Lieutenant General Fahd bin Abdullah Al-Mutair, Commander of the Royal Saudi Land Forces (RSLF) called on General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ.

## Saudi Commander, Army Chief discuss matters of defence cooperation

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commander of the Royal Saudi Land Forces (RSLF), Lieutenant General Fahd bin Abdullah Al-Mutair, Monday called on General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) here at GHQ.

During the meeting, they discussed various areas of mutual interest including cooperation in the fields of defence, security, military training as well as regional situation and the ongoing conflict in Middle East, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news

release said.

The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan Army's role in fighting the menace of terrorism and paid tributes to the sacrifices made in bringing peace to the region.

The COAS thanked the dignitary and said that, "Pakistan deeply values its strategic and brotherly ties with the Kingdom of Saudia Arabia."

Earlier on arrival at GHQ, a smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Army presented the guard of honour to the visiting dignitary.

**Saudi RSLF Commander calls on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee:**

Commander of the Royal Saudi Land Forces (RSLF) Lieutenant General Fahad Bin Abdullah Muhammad Al Mutair called on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Sahir Shamshad Mirza here at Joint Staff Headquarters on Monday. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, during the meeting, both sides deliberated upon various areas of mutual interest, bilateral cooperation including defence and security.

## Afghan bomber targets security forces' convoy in Bannu, two civilians martyred

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Two citizens were martyred and ten others including three Army soldiers were injured in a suicide attack on a convoy of security forces in Bannu district.

According to a statement issued by the military's media wing ISPR on Monday, the motorcycle-borne suicide bomber, an Afghan national, tar-

geted the convoy in general area of Bakkakhel in Bannu District on Sunday (November 26).

The bomber was affiliated with Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group and exploded himself near the security forces' convoy. Resultantly, two innocent civilians embraced Shahadat, while seven other civilians and three soldiers got injured.

The security forces later launched a sanitization operation to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area.

According to ISPR statement, the security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave civilians and soldiers further strength our resolve.

## Israel-Hamas truce enters final day with talk of extension

GAZA STRIP (AFP/APP): The truce between Israel and Hamas entered its final 24 hours Monday, with signs the Hamas was willing to extend the pause after it freed more hostages.

Tearful reunions of families and hostages, released in exchange for dozens of Palestinian prisoners, have brought the first relief in the seven-week war.

As the latest group of Israeli women and children walked free late Sunday, attention turned to calls for the truce to be extended before its scheduled end at 7:00 am (0500 GMT) on Tuesday.

"That's our goal, to keep this pause going beyond tomorrow so that we can continue to see more hostages come out and surge more humanitarian relief into those in need in Gaza," US President Joe Biden said Sunday.

He added he would like the fighting to be paused for "as long as prisoners keep coming out."

"I get a sense that all the players in the region are looking for a way to end this so the hostages are all released and... Hamas is completely no longer in control of Gaza."

Hamas has signalled its will-

ingness to extend the truce, with a source telling AFP the group told mediators they were open to prolonging it by "two to four days".

"The resistance believes it is possible to ensure the release of 20 to 40 Israeli prisoners" in that time, the source close to the movement said.

Hamas has released 39 Israeli hostages and Israel has freed 117 Palestinian prisoners in exchange under the terms of the agreement.

A further 19 foreign nationals have also been released from Gaza under separate arrangements.

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## 31 properties sealed on illegal commercial use

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Development Authority (LDA), during its ongoing crackdown against illegal commercial activities and fee defaulters, sealed another 31 properties in the provincial capital, here on Monday.

According to a spokesman of the authority, Commissioner Lahore and Director General LDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, the teams conducted operations on Canal Road, Johar Town, Thokar Niaz Baig, Bhotatian Road and Raiwind Road on non-payment of commercialization fee and illegal commercial use of properties.

These sealed properties include food points, pharmacies, hotels, restaurants, medical labs, banks, cafes, mobile shops, sanitary shops and academies.

## 78 new dengue cases reported in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): As many as 78 new cases of dengue have been confirmed across the province during the last 24 hours, while the provincial capital with 47 cases, said by Secretary Health Ali Jan Khan in a press statement issued, here on Monday.

He said that in the past year, 13,859 confirmed dengue cases reported in 36 districts of Punjab while Lahore reported 6,260 confirmed dengue cases this year, and 2,613 cases were reported in Rawalpindi.

Gujranwala with 14 cases, Rawalpindi 5, Faisalabad 5, Multan 1 and Sheikhupura with 3 new cases during last 24 hours.

"Currently, 68 dengue patients are under treatment in hospitals across Punjab while 38 in the provincial capital", Ali Jan informed.

## PU awards 10 PhD degrees

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab University (PU) awarded PhD degrees to ten scholars in different subjects after approval of their thesis.

According to spokesperson for PU, Asmat Zahra D/o Muhammad Khan was awarded degree in the subject of Urdu, Iqra Khalil D/o Khalil Ahmed in the subject of Sociology, Shahbaz Muhammad S/o Raj Muhammad in the subject of Applied Geology (Geophysics), Amir Ilyas S/o Muhammad Ilyas Bhatti in the subject of Communication Studies, Muhammad Tariq S/o Mansub Ali in the subject of Molecular Biology, Beenish Najam D/o Najamud Din Goreja in the subject of Applied Psychology, Saima Saeed D/o Abdul Ahad Saeed in the subject of Applied Psychology, Javaid Iqbal S/o Bahramand Khan in the subject of Agricultural Sciences, Hania Arif D/o Sheikh Muhammad Arif in the subject of Geo-Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Development and Saliha Afzal D/o Muhammad Afzal in the subject of Botany.

## Working group formed for artificial rain in Lahore

LAHORE (APP): As part of efforts to control smog, the Punjab government has formed a working group comprising representatives of relevant federal, provincial departments and military organizations to execute the project of artificial rain in Lahore.

The decision to establish the working group was made in a meeting held at the Civil Secretariat under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman here on Monday. The meeting reviewed progress on the projects of artificial rain and installation of smog reduction towers in Lahore.

The administrative secretaries of various departments including environment protection, agriculture, finance and officers concerned attended the meeting. Addressing the meeting, Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman said that the Punjab government was taking practical steps to prevent smog, adding that joint efforts were needed to control environmental pollution.

# PML-N and MQM-P complete first round of talks on election, future strategy

KARACHI (NNI): The PML-N has completed the initial phase of talks with the MQM-P and other parties in Sindh for a joint strategy to contest the February 8 elections and run the country's affairs afterwards, as the PPP is set to face a strong resistance in its stronghold.

These ongoing developments are of great significance for not just the politics of Karachi and Sindh but of also entire Pakistan after the PPP – once the disputed countrywide force – has been witnessing a shrinking vote base which is now mostly, if not entirely, concentrated in rural Sindh.

It is reported that the subcommittees formed by the PML-N and the MQM-P to discuss and finalise proposals on different subjects completed their assigned tasks, including the most immediate goal – how to go for seat adjustment in the upcoming polls. In the next stage, the two parties will hold a meeting in Islamabad for giving final shape to the future line of action before the top leadership could give approval to the same.

The PML-N has given the task of coordinating the elections affairs in Sindh to Khawaja Saad Rafique and in Balochistan to Sardar Ayaz Sadiq – the seasoned and loyal party leaders from Lahore.

Nawaz Sharif – the party supreme

and three-time minister who is aiming at the record fourth term in office – has already visited Balochistan, a trip which saw several prominent political personalities joining the PML-N with progress being made on seat adjustment for an electoral understanding with BAP (Balochistan Awami Party). He is expected to visit Karachi soon to formalise the arrangement between the two parties, as the PML-N wants to gain a foothold in Sindh and the MQM-P desires a comeback after internal fissures saw it losing public support.

On Sunday, the MQM-P leaders vowed that they would see how the PPP was going to form the next government in Sindh, promising to deliver a blow to the party in the February 8 elections.

Addressing a rally, MQM-P Convenor Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said they would hold the feudal class accountable and proclaimed that Karachi was to determine who would and how rule Pakistan.

He also warned that they would remove the rulers from power if necessary amendments were not introduced in the constitution – a demand regarding constitutional protection to an ineffective local government system and unhindered flow of funds to these institutions.

## Dialogue workshop on data users and producers collaboration

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) organized a workshop on Monday, fostering a dialogue between data users and producers.

The event, held in Karachi, aimed to address the expanding and diverse user base, enhancing support for informed policy and decision-making.

Dr. Naem Uz Zafar, Chief Statistician of PBS, expressed the bureau's commitment to formulate a comprehensive Data Dissemination Policy. This policy, aligned with the General Statistics Reorganization Act, 2011, is geared towards improving data accessibility across

the nation.

Highlighting the nationwide collaboration with UNFPA, Dr. Naem Uz Zafar emphasized on the joint effort to bridge the gap between data users and producers.

These workshops, he stated, serve as a platform to identify emerging needs and requirements of data users, contributing to a clearer vision for enhanced data accessibility in Pakistan.

Muhammad Sarwar Gondal, PBS Member of Support Services, delved into the framework of the Data Dissemination Policy during the workshop. He detailed digitalization models applicable to population censuses and various surveys, underlining the importance of

effective dissemination and coordination between data producers and users. Gondal stressed that data should not only be accessible but also interpretable and usable.

His presentation included standardized data formats, protocols, and metadata, emphasizing the significance of synergy between data producers and users. This collaboration, he noted, is crucial for positive outcomes in policy and decision-making processes. The workshop concluded with engaging group discussions, developing understanding and collaboration between PBS and UNFPA. The focus remains on improving the quality, accessibility, and utilization of census data in Pakistan.

## IGP directs tightened security measures for anti-polio drive

KARACHI (APP): The Inspector General of Police in Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja, has issued crucial directives to bolster security measures within the province for a week long anti-polio campaign that commenced on Monday.

The IGP ordered that it is imperative that all security protocols for the polio drive are rigorously implemented, particularly at the grassroots level within police stations. Efforts must be made to establish a comprehensive security cover, employing inner and outer cordons to safeguard the polio teams operating in potentially sensitive union councils.

Special responsibilities should be entrusted to police commandos across all

identified sensitive union councils, complemented by the deployment of plainclothes personnel alongside relevant law enforcement units.

A stringent watch through random checks, picketing, and patrolling is essential to vigilantly monitor suspicious activities and ensure the safety of the anti-polio efforts. Effective communication and information-sharing mechanisms must be established across all tiers of security to fortify the anti-polio campaign. District Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs) should oversee the implementation of these security measures and ensure the presence of concerned Station House Officers (SHOs) in their respective areas.

## 33 power pilferers detected in LESCO region

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a total of 33 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) on the 79th day of grand anti-power theft campaign.

The LESCO spokesman told media here Monday that the company has also submitted FIR applications against 28 electricity thieves, out of which 15 FIRs have been registered in respective police stations, while one accused has been arrested.

Grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are being conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division and the LESCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider is supervising these operations. The LESCO chief vowed that the operations would continue without discrimination until the complete end of electricity theft. The electricity pilferers as well as the LESCO officers and employees who facilitate them are also being brought to justice.

On the 79th consecutive

day (Nov. 27) of the anti-power theft campaign, the spokesman added, large commercial consumers were also found involved in electricity theft and all of them were also disconnected and charged with detection units. Among the seized connections 03 were commercial and 30 domestic, and all these connections were disconnected and charged with a total of 39,709 units as detection bill amounting to Rs 2,253,144.

Apprising the media about some major power pilferers, he explained that LESCO charged 15,819 detection units to an electricity pilferer in Shalimar Town area; 15,524 detection units to a customer stealing electricity on Luxmi Chowk Lahore; 10,300 detection units to another power thief on Beadon Road; and 4,950 detection units to a power thief in an area of Sheranwala Gate.

During the 79 days of grand anti-theft campaign, the spokesman mentioned, the LESCO detected pilferage on 30,384 power connections and submitted 30,008 FIR applications against electricity thieves in the relevant police stations

out of which 29,064 FIRs have been registered, while 13,324 accused have so far been arrested by the police. The LESCO has so far charged a total of 52,814,044 detection units worth Rs 2,114,099,607 to all the power pilferers.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

The public and all parties concerned are informed that **Mr. Rizwan Ud Din S/o Akhtar Hayat**, CNIC No.17201-9863219-3 formerly known as Deputy Manager sales (Dealership Network) of M/s. Shabbir Tiles & Ceramics Limited, has been dismissed from his position due to serious misconduct, including fraudulent behavior, effective November 20, 2023.

Please be aware that the individual is not authorized to conduct any business or receive any payments on behalf of Shabbir Tiles & Ceramics Ltd. Any interactions or transactions with him are undertaken at one's own risk and responsibility.



Human Resource Department  
**Shabbir Tiles & Ceramics Limited**  
15th Milestone, National Highway,  
Landhi, Karachi.



KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party Senator Ajiz Dhamra, former Deputy Speaker Shehla Raza and others addressing a press conference.

## ‘Charter of Democracy and Economy’ needed to strengthen democracy in country: Khuhro

KARACHI (APP): The provincial president of Pakistan People's Party Sindh, Senator Nisar Khuhro on Monday said that the PPP had invited all political parties to form a charter of democracy and economy so that democracy in the country could be consolidated. Addressing a press conference here at Bilawal House Media Cell, Senator Khuhro said that all political parties should have to play a role in strengthening weak democratic politics for which there was a dire need for the charter of democracy and the economy.

Nisar Khuhro said in the past only PPP and PML-N had signed the

charter of democracy but now there was a need to sign the charter of democracy and economy by all political stakeholders. He said it was the right of political parties to form alliances and contest elections against each other, but democracy should not be weakened. PPP has kept doors open for dialogue with all political parties while former President Asif Ali Zardari had also formed committees in this regard, Khuhro said and added that if any single party could not have obtained a majority in the general elections, a coalition government would be formed.

Replying to a question about reported differences between Asif Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto, Nisar Khuhro said party leadership is on the same page and all decisions are being taken with consensus.

He said the People's Party's foundation day public meeting will be held in Quetta on November 30 and it would be commenced at about 1 pm.

Khuhro said party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and central leadership will address the public meeting. PPP leaders Waqar Mehdi, Aajiz Dhamra and others were also present on the occasion.

## Ministers attend central event of Baba Guru Nanak's birth anniversary

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Information Minister Amir Mir and Auqaf Minister Barrister Azfar Ali Nasir participated in the central event commemorating the 554th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak, the revered spiritual leader of the Sikh community, held at Gurudwara Janam Asthan Nankana Sahib.

The ministers engaged with thousands of Sikh pilgrims hailing from across the globe, including the UK, Australia, USA, Canada, and India,

said a press release issued here on Monday. Minister Amir Mir meticulously inspected the arrangements at Gurudwara Janamasthan, focusing on cleanliness, security, and overall logistics. Both caretaker ministers actively participated in the Nagarkirtan procession and other festivities. Expressing a warm welcome to pilgrims from around the world at Nankana Sahib, Minister Amir Mir extended congratulations on Baba Guru Nanak Dev's birthday. He emphasized that Pakistan

is a bouquet of diverse religions, where Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, and Parsis bloom as its vibrant flowers. Amir Mir highlighted the beauty of religious diversity in the country and underscored that followers of all faiths enjoy absolute freedom in Pakistan.

"The provision of essential facilities to both local and international pilgrims ranks as the top priority for the Punjab government," he stated. He urged the continuation of Baba Guru Nanak's message of peace, love, har-


## School of Law Building at KU

KARACHI (APP): The 53rd al-Dai al-Mutlaq and the leader of the worldwide Dawoodi Bohras Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin inaugurated the "H. H. Dr Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin Building—School of Law" at the University of Karachi on Monday. The inauguration ceremony was held at the new premises and caretaker Chief Minister Sindh Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar, the Chancellor and the Governor Sindh Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori, ex-CM Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Provincial Secretary Boards and Universities Noor Ahmed Samoo, KU Vice Chancellor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi, the members of the Senate and the Syndicate of the University of Karachi, deans and chairpersons, notable dignitaries, members legal fraternity, and representative of Dawoodi Bohra community were also present on this occasion.

## PhD journalists of LPC honoured

LAHORE (APP): In collaboration with Lahore Press Club (LPC) and Punjab Higher Education Commission Dr. Shahid Munir, Punjab University Vice Chancellor Dr. Khalid Mehmood, Lahore Press Club President Azam Chaudhry and Secretary Abdul Majeed Sajid witnessed the ceremony.

Among the members who were awarded honorary shields and certificates for acknowledgement of their professional research work included Dr. Saeed Ahmad Ali (APP), Dr. Waqar Chaudhry, Dr. Barira Bakhtawar, Dr. Tanvir Qasim, Munir and others while speaking on this occasion.



**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER  
SWAT IRRIGATION CIRCLE SAIDU SHARIF**  
Phone # 0946-9240164, E-Mail [swatirrccircle@gmail.com](mailto:swatirrccircle@gmail.com)

**NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING**  
(Single Stage Single Envelope Procedure)

Irrigation Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa intends to invite Electronic Bids on Single Stage Single Envelope Procedure for the following works, from eligible Firms / Contractor having enlistment & renewal for the year 2023-24 and valid PEC license in the relevant category.

S. No	Name of Scheme	E/Cost Rs. In (M)	02% E/M + S/Duty (Rs)	Required Category Code of Specialization
<b>Annual Operation &amp; Maintenance Work Programme in Swat Irrigation Division-II Matta for the year 2023-24</b>				
1	Repair to masonry structures and Silt Clearance of Shamizai Irrigation Scheme from head to tail in reaches	1.00	21250/-	C-6, PK-10 & Above CE-04
2	Repair to masonry structures and removal of debris from Barwai Irrigation Scheme from head to tail in reaches	0.50	11250/-	C-6, PK-10 & Above CE-04
3	Removal of Debris from Jinkihel, Azikhel and Matorizai Irrigation Scheme from head to tail in reaches	1.00	21250/-	C-6, PK-10 & Above CE-04
4	Snow & Silt clearance from Sulathian Road in Tehsil Matta District Swat.	2.00	44000/-	C-6, PK-10 & Above CE-04
5	Snow & Silt clearance from Chatekal Road in Tehsil Matta District Swat.	2.00	44000/-	C-6, PK-10 & Above CE-04
6	Repair to Flood Protection Works/ Emergent Channelization in Jurisdiction of Swat Irrigation Division-II Matta District Swat.	2.00	44000/-	C-6, PK-10 & Above CE-04
7	Provision for removal of Encroachment/Obstructions in Jurisdiction of Swat Irrigation Division-II	0.50	11250/-	C-6, PK-10 & Above CE-04

**Last date & time of submission of bids is 12-12-2023 12.00 hours and will be opened on the same date at 12.30 hours.**

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS:**

- Bid Soliciting Documents containing Instructions to Bidders, Terms & Conditions, advertisement for Notice Inviting Bids and required forms to be filled by the bidders can be downloaded from the official website of Irrigation Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ([www.irrigation.gkp.pk](http://www.irrigation.gkp.pk)).
- The bidders should submit their E-bid as per KPRA Notification No.SRO (14)-Vol/1-24/2021-22, dated 10-05-2022.
- All Bidders are required to have valid Registration with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority established under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act 2018 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Act, XXI of 2013)
- The Competent Authority reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids at any time prior to acceptance of a bid as per Para 47(i) of KPRA Rules 2014 by assigning cogent reason.
- The interested Firms/Contractors may obtain clarification regarding bid solicitation documents during office hours on any working day from the office of Executive Engineer, Swat Irrigation Division-II.
- Venue of Bids opening is office of the **Superintending Engineer, Swat Irrigation Circle Saidu Sharif Swat** however, the Contractors must prepare their CDR's i.e. 2% Earnest Money and Additional E/Money (if any) in the name of **Executive Engineer, Swat Irrigation Division-II Matta** and should ensure its submission with their bids. In case of failure their bids would be rejected and punitive action should be initiated against the defaulter as per KPRA Act / Rules.

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# Hard work imperative for attaining glory in education

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali on Monday said that hard work and professional dedication was imperative to achieve glory in all sectors including education.

Despite payment of about Rs 97 Billion to government schools under head of salaries in the last four months, he said the children did not achieve the desired education results and many failed.

He was addressing students and teachers at University of Chitral. "It was very heartening for me when an M.Phil passed student asked for a Class-IV job," he said, adding every effort including construction of universities and investment in the education sector would be a futile exercise if quality education was not provided to students.

The governor said there was no dearth in talent in our students and we need to focus on their professional education training and career counseling. He questioned the reasons behind 100 percent results of private educational institutions and poor results of public sector schools.

The Governor said funds of educational institutions showing poor results would be stopped. He said funds of universities with no ranking would also be stopped.

Haji Ghulam Ali said the education standard of Govt College Peshawar was very low in Peshawar in the past.

The Governor said when he took over as district Nazim Peshawar, he was surprised after seeing in the newspaper that three students of Government College Peshawar had topped examination in the province and became very pleased.

He said when the students of once flopped Govt College Peshawar can top in the province then why not the students of other public sector education institutions.

The governor said the students were the future of Pakistan and great responsibility rested on their teachers and parents to focus on their studies so that they could effectively shoulder the future responsibilities.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Arshad Hussain Shah with others offering Namaz-e-Janaza of former judge Peshawar High Court Qazi Ihsanullah Qureshi.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel offering fatiha for departed soul of Pir Syed Makhdoom Idris Gilani.

## Malgary Wakeelan to hold convention

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Malgary Wakeelan cabinet congratulated newly elected members in the legal fraternity and discussed various subjects regarding the organizational framework.

The provincial president chaired Ahmad Farooq Khattak while senior vice president Rafiq Momand, vice president Hazara division Sardar Nasir Aslam, vice president Muhammad Ayaz Warsak, deputy general secretary Malak Ishfaq, joint secretary Sajeed Khan Afridi, press secretary Sheikh Fakhar Ayaz and cultural secretary Gul Ahmad were also present in the meeting.

The cabinet directed subordinate organization for collection of biodata of members including phone numbers as well as to forward it to provincial cabinet within 15 days. The participants also decided that current setup at districts and zones will continue its work till conclusion of Malgary Wakeelan constitution.

The participants decided holding of lawyer convention by Malgary Wakeelan Hazara after conclusion of organizational setups in the region.

## Non-performing plots: KP-EZDMC takes notice

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC) has issued notices to the leaseholders/allottees of 45 plots in Nowshera and Mohmand Economic Zones and has directed them to clear outstanding arrears and start construction work on the plots within a period of two others, said an official of the company here on Monday.

In case the leaseholders/allottees failed in clearance of the arrears and starting construction work, their leasehold/allotment rights would be cancelled.

The highest number of such identified 36 leaseholders/allottees have plots in Nowshera Economic Zones while the remaining 19 are in Mohmand Economic Zone. In this connection, notices to the leaseholders/allottees have already been dispatched to concerned leaseholders/allottees as rules, law and policy of the Economic Zones Development Company. However, no suitable response is received from such leaseholders and allottees.

Meanwhile, the company has invited sealed bids from individuals, builders, firms or companies for the lease of commercial plots at

## Minister condoles with family of Idris Gilani

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Public Relations, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, extends condolences to the family members over the demise of Pir Syed Makhdoom Idris Gilani.

Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, extends heartfelt condolences to former Principal Secretary of the Prime Minister Dr. Syed Toqeer Hussain Shah, Adnan Khan, and Syed Asad Ali Shah, on the demise of their father-in-law, Pir Syed Makhdoom Idris Gilani.

In a solemn visit to the residence of Dr. Syed Toqeer Hussain Shah, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, expressed his sympathy and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

The minister offered condolences, accompanied by prayers for strength and patience for the grieving family members.

## Fatima Syed defends M.Phil thesis

Syed Waliullah Shah

PESHAWAR: A Master Philosophy (M. Phil) scholar Fatima Syed defended her thesis in Urdu at Northern University Nowshera.

The topic M. Phil dissertation titled with "Munshi Param Chand ky Muntakhab Afsano mein Pansamanda Tabqay k Masayaal" means "The problems of marginalized segments identified in the chosen fables of Munshi Param Chand".

Chairman Department of Urdu Dr. Syed Tahir Ali Shah supervised Fatima Syed during her research while Dr. Subhan Ullah was external examiner as well as Dr. Syed Munawar Hashmi and Nazir Abid as penal members were present during the defense of thesis.

The scholar dedicated her success to prayers of parents and hard work of teachers as well as encouragement from friends and family.

# Meeting reviews progress on ongoing projects initiated

PESHAWAR (APP): A progress review meeting on release of required funds needed for ongoing development schemes initiated under Accelerated Implementation Programme (AIP) in the newly merged districts of the erstwhile Fata for the period of next four months was held here Caretaker Minister for Tribal Affairs, Dr Aamir Abdullah here on Monday.

The meeting reviewed in details funds required for various ongoing development schemes in Communications and Works (C&W) Irrigation, Agriculture, Livestock Fisheries, Forestry and Environment, Food, Elementary and Secondary and Higher Education, Public Health Engineering (PHE) Sports & Youth Affairs and the Board of Revenue for period from November 2023 to February 2024 in detail.

Besides, Secretary Communications and Works, Idrees Khan Marwat, Secretary Livestock and Fisheries Dr Muhammad Israr, Secretary Food Zarif Al Maani and Special Secretary Home & Tribal Affairs Department Muhammad Zubair, Secretary Environment, Khuda Bakhsh and Director General (DG) Sustainable Development Unit (SDU), Planning and Development Department Adil Saeed Safi, other concerned authorities also attended the meeting.

The caretaker minister directed that all those projects which are near completion, should be completed on priority basis to pass on their benefits to the people. He, on this occasion, also directed the completion of the needed biometric system in connection with a scholarship programme for promotion of literacy in the merged district by the end of next month.

He also directed the inclusion of the release of salaries to the teaching staff of community schools in the merged districts in the priorities.

He urged the initiation of a double shift programme on need basis and holding of sports activities at local levels, saying efforts would be made for the provision of required funds in this regard.

The caretaker minister directed the completion of the first phase of the comprehensive tube-wells scheme at Shalman (Landi Kotal) before January 15 and also sought details of the completed drinking water schemes.

He directed the department to make suitable arrangements to prevent further decline in underground water tables and measures to prevent the wastage of rain water and specially to save the water of big buildings.

The caretaker minister also sought details of the released funds for a scheme of waste disposal in Upper, Lower and Central Tehsils of district Kurram and progress made in relation to the acquisition of land so far in this regard.

He also directed the holding of a meeting of the concerned agencies and departments for selection of suitable site for establishment of District Sports Complex in District North Waziristan Upper and sought progress on the responsibility of demarcation between some merged districts from the Board of Revenue (BoR).

The caretaker minister also directed the Fisheries Department to promote fisheries in the merged districts and start fish production in the reservoirs of the dams in these districts.

# US Ambassador celebrates successful completion of 12-year \$44.6m USAID-funded municipal services program in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): United States Ambassador to Pakistan Donald A. Blome visited the Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP) office in Hayatabad here Monday to celebrate the successful completion of the USAID-funded Municipal Services Program in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), a 12-year, \$44.6 million effort.

"Thanks to the project, today hundreds of thousands of residents of KP have better more reliable access to safe, clean, drinking water, waste management, and improved sanitation," said a press release.

The project's accomplishments include the rehabilitation of 140 clean drinking water facilities serving 448,000 people, replacement of 25,700 meters of old and rusted water mains, ensuring clean, reliable water supply in 21 Union Councils, rehabilitated sewerage and drainage lines, which improve sanitation for 1.7 million people, more efficient solid waste collection and disposal besides improved municipal waste management services, including 575 vehicles and the establishment of a repair and maintenance workshop for waste management equipment.

"We should all be proud of the profound impact the Municipal Services Project has had on the lives of approximately 1.9 million residents in Peshawar's urban areas - improved hygiene conditions, reduced risk of urban flooding, and better environmental protection," Ambassador Blome said. "I'm grateful to the strong partnership between USAID and the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa - notably the Local Government Elections, and Rural Development Department - that made this program possible," he added.

The Municipal Services Project in KP demonstrates the United States' strong and enduring commitment to the Pakistani people to support their welfare and wellbeing, broad-based, sustainable economic development, and a secure and prosperous Pakistan.

Beyond the Municipal Services Project, the United States - through USAID - has partnered with the KP Government to reconstruct critical infrastructure damaged by natural and man-made disasters. USAID also supports initiatives focused on basic healthcare, women's education, and economic opportunities throughout the province.

## Liquor recovered

PESHAWAR (APP): Pahari Pura police on Monday recovered a total of 20,740 bottles of 1,860 liters liquor during the operation.

The police raided on two godown at Dalazak Road Gul Abad area and seized homemade liquor.

During the operation, two culprits associated with the gang, involved in filling imported brand bottles with local liquor for distribution across the country.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister Dr. Aamir Abdullah presiding over a review meeting of ongoing developmental projects.

# PESCO notified power suspension

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Monday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar University Grid Station on 28th November from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Consequently, it said consumers of University Campus, Canal Town, Malakandher, Engineering, Regi, Taj Abad 1,2, Agriculture, Mera Achini, HMC, Ring Road, Danish Abad, Gharib Abad, Rahat Abad 1, CMB, Abdara, Achini 1, Hussain Zai, Safaid Dheri, Old Bara Road, JAF, Academy Town, DHA, Aksari 6 and Commercial Balding feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Kohat Road Grid Station on 29th November from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. resultantly consumers of PAF Express, Sohate Road, Wazir Abad, Nusheri Masjid, Banamari, Audit Colony, Civil Quarter, Nauthia, Murshid Abad, Abasin, Deh Bahadar, Kohat Road, Amin Colony, Bara, Nodeh Payan, Dora Road, Landi Arbab, Sheikh Muhammad, Pishtakhara, Swati Gate, Gul Berg and Scheme Chowk feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Thakot-Pattan Transmission Line on 28th November from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Thakot and Pattan grid connected feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from Haripur-Havelian Transmission Line on 28th November from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. resultantly consumers of 66 KV Havelian and Haripur grid connected feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Mardan Grid Station on 29th November from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. resultantly consumers of Mohabatatabad, Shaikh Maltoon, Express, Industrial, SIDB, Janabadi, Pakistan Chowk, Canal Road, New Charsadda Road, New Manga, Saleem Khan, Gujar Garhi, Town, Muslim Abad, New Saleem Khan, Bacha Khan, MED, Benazir Children Hospital, Muhabatatabad Road, Nissata Road, Sheikh Maltoon, Ahmat Abad, Misri Abad, PRC, Eid Gah, Green Area, New Sheikh Maltoon feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will also remain suspended from Nowshera City Grid Station on 29th November from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. resultantly consumers of Raisalpur Cantt, PAF 1, Bara Bandai 1, Industrial and Pir Sabaq feeders will face inconvenience.

# Efforts underway to promote empowerment and inclusivity



## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Salamti Fellowship's inaugural visit to Khyber but also served as a beacon of guidance for students grappling with mental health challenges amid inadequate regional facilities. Given the region's history of unrest and conflict, there has been a surge in mental health problems, making Salamti Fellowship's mission especially relevant and impactful.

The distinguished panel of speakers included Ms. Faryal Zafar, Mr. Amir Afridi, and Ms. Nazma Nasir. The Career Counselling session, skillfully moderated by Ms. Anna Afridi, featured insights from Ms. Bushra Afridi and Ms. Neelum Afridi. The event, led by Mr. Sajid Afridi, also involved the dedicated efforts of Ms. Huma Akbar, Mr. Hussain Jan, and Ms. Sara Yaqoob.

Crucial to the success of this venture was the steadfast support of the local community and the school administration, particularly Principal Fahad Khan. Recognition is also due to the female school's teaching staff and the active participation of students from non-Muslim communities.

orchestrated a first-of-its-kind event that transcended cultural and religious boundaries. The project boasted participation from various tribes, including Afridi, Shinwari, and Malagori, alongside male and female students from diverse backgrounds. Notably, the team's inclusivity extended to a member from Chitral and non-Muslim students, fostering an environment of unity and understanding.

The event's uniqueness was further emphasized by the presence of Ms. Faryal Zafar, a speaker with special abilities, and the empowering moment when three female team members took the stage to counsel students on career choices. This symbolic act challenged traditional norms in a tribal region known for patriarchal practices and culture. Additionally, the victory of a girls' team in a group activity highlighted the breaking of gender barriers.

Rahat Shinwari, a distinguished journalist from Landikotal, expressed his awe, stating that the event felt akin to a high-class activity in Peshawar's prestigious schools rather than in Landikotal, District Khyber.

This initiative not only





## In brief

### Woman attempts suicide

FAISALABAD (INP): A woman attempted suicide by shooting her injuring her after exchange of hot words with husband at Satiana road of Faisalabad on Monday, police said. According to details, the incident took place in Chak 237 Kundian Warrichan where 45-year-old Mehraj Bibi w/o Ashiq had heated exchange with husband. The enraged woman attempted suicide by shooting her. She was seriously injured due to bullet in her belly. The rescue personnel shifted the wounded woman to civil hospital and police after registering a case into the incident started an investigation.

### 2 killed as bus hits boundary

SHUJABAD (INP): Two people were killed and two others injured when a passenger bus hit boundary of motorway on M5, police said on Monday. According to details, a passenger bus got out of control due to bursting of tyre near Basti Dad Interchange on M5 in Shujabad and hit the boundary. Two people were killed in the accident while two others sustained injured. The deceased and wounded people hailed from Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi. The bodies and injured were shifted to civil hospital, Shujabad.

### One brother shot dead

KHANEWAL (INP): One brother was killed while others sustained injuries in firing of a relative of groom over dispute of jubilant aerial firing during wedding here on Monday. According to details, during a wedding ceremony held in suburbs of Khanewal, three brothers attempted to stop celebratory firing of relatives of groom. The enraged groom's relatives opened straight fire at three brothers killing one of them on the spot and leaving two others injured. The body and injured including Javed Iqbal and Sajid Iqbal were shifted to local hospital.

### Body of abducted found

ARIFWALA (INP): Bullet riddled body of an abducted youth was found farmland here on Monday. According to details, unknown armed men abducted Hafeez from Qaboola area of Arifwala two days earlier. Bullet riddled body of abducted youth Hafeez was found from farmland near Qaboola police station two days later. The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem. Police said that it has registered a case into the incident and was investigating from different angles to trace out and arrest the culprits involved in kidnapping and murder and to unearth the reasons behind the crime.

### 2 motorcycle lifters arrested

FAISALABAD (INP): Mamonkanjan police arrested two vehicle lifters and recovered 16 stolen motorcycles from their possession. Police spokesman said here on Monday that the team on a tip-off conducted raids and succeeded in nabbing two active members of a vehicle lifter gang including Naem Abbas and Shah Behram residents of Chak no. 489-GB. The police recovered 16 stolen motorcycles from them.

### Teen boy electrocuted

FAISALABAD (APP): A teenage boy was electrocuted to death in the area of Millat Town police station. Police said here on Monday that 14-year-old Mohsin r/o Zia-ul-Haq Shaheed Colony was catching a pigeon with a help of iron rod on his rooftop when he accidentally touched the live electricity wires.

# RTA sets fixed fare for transporters

ABBOTTABAD (APP): After a comprehensive meeting with key stakeholders, the Regional Transport Authority (RTA) Monday has fixed fares for Suzuki vehicles operating on local routes.

The decision was reached in consultation with Secretary RTA Hazara division Athar Khan, SSP Traffic Arif Javed, Additional Assistant Commissioner Ali Sher Khan Khalil, representatives from the Suzuki Union, municipal officials, Vice Chairman Hazara Qaumi Mahaz, and journalists.

The fixed fare for Suzuki vehicles on local routes has been established at Rs. 3.5 per kilometer. Secretary RTA emphasized that any deviation from this prescribed fare would not be tolerated, and stringent legal action would be taken against those found over-

charging.

He clarified that while the RTA focuses on determining the fare, the responsibility of enforcement and collection falls under the purview of the traffic police, district administration officers, and the RTA itself.

The Secretary further underscored that Suzuki vehicles operating without a valid route permit would not be allowed, and stringent legal measures, including the revocation of registration, would be taken against violators.

The primary objective is to collectively alleviate public concerns, and measures will be taken to curb the illegal operation of vehicles.

Addressing the issue of unauthorized vehicles, the Secretary stressed the importance of collaborative efforts to address and

resolve these challenges. He emphasized that until there is collective collaboration to tackle these issues, a comprehensive resolution cannot be achieved.

SSP Traffic Arif Javed provided insights into the current situation, noting that there are 1,500 registered vehicles operating within the city and 7,000 operating outside the city. This has led to disruptions in urban life and significant traffic issues, posing a particular challenge for traffic police.

To address the situation, SSP Arif Javed highlighted the establishment of a Traffic Education Unit, educating 15 to 20 drivers daily on ethics and traffic laws. Additionally, SSP Arif Javed shared that in the past 11 months, penalties have been imposed on 38,000 vehicles for charging excess fares.

## Anti-smog operation ordered to speed up

MULTAN (APP): Commissioner Aamir Khattak ordered to speed up anti-smog operations and eliminate air pollution on an emergency basis here Monday.

Addressing a meeting, he said everyone has to fulfil their responsibility to make Multan a pollution-free city.

He said a zero-tolerance policy would be adopted for violation of the order.

Taking notice of complaints of the presence of dengue larvae in parts of the city, the Commissioner directed the staff concerned to improve the anti-dengue campaign.

Talking about the 'artificial kind of inflation' he activated price control magistrates with directing to ensure their presence in markets.

On the occasion, Amair Khattak was informed that about 136 price control magistrates conducted 4691 raids in the past 24 hours.

As many as two FIRs were registered for 212 violations with nine vendors arrested. A total of 251000 fine was imposed on different shopkeepers.

Regarding the inspection of the one-dish serving order at the marriage ceremonies, it was informed that overall 134 inspections were made out of them four

violations were traced against the one-dish order.

An owner of the marriage hall was fined one lac for the said violation, added the briefing.

### 5 days polio drive kicks off in Multan

A five-day anti-polio drive has been started in about 393 Union Councils where 108,29 teams would administer the drops to over 2.5 million children across the division.

As per the statement issued from the Commissioner's Office, about 4380 teams would offer polio drops to over 100,008,9 children to save them from the crippling disease in district Multan.

Furnishing details about the other districts of the division, it's said that as many as 2373 teams would give the drops to 622,516 children in the district Vehari, 2538 teams to 596,792 children in the district Khanewal and 153,18 teams would offer to 374,287 children in district Lodhran in the entire five days.

Commissioner Amir Khattak vowed that making polio-free Pakistan was the responsibility of all of the people.

He warned of taking stern action against the ones who would confront or deny polio drops to their

children.

He asked parents to save their children from life-long crippling disease by cooperating with the teams in letter and spirit.

He said that polio camps were established at general bus-stand among at all major points in the districts.

He said not a single child was reported of polio disease at any part of the division as yet.

### DC launches final polio campaign in district Bahawalnagar

DC Zulfiqar Ahmed Bhawan on Monday has officially launched the last polio campaign of the current year in the district of Bahawalnagar to eradicate polio.

According to the DC office, Deputy Commissioner Zulfiqar Ahmed Bhawan urged all parents to give their infants the polio vaccine and help the government in its mission.

The campaign aims to provide the polio vaccine to 85,468 children with 2786 teams, including 136 fixed, 2562 mobile and 88 transit teams.

On this occasion, the CEO of Health, DHO, other officers of the Health Department and representatives of WHO were also present to support the government's efforts.

## DC pays surprise visit to Hala taluka hospital

HYDERABAD (APP): The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mitari Lal Dino Mangi on Monday paid a surprise visit to Hala taluka hospital and met with patients to take information about the facilities provided to them.

During this visit, patients complained about a shortage of medicines at the hospital.

The DC strictly instructed the hospital staff to provide all possible facilities to the patients, to meet the shortage of medicines and other facilities as soon as possible. He also visited all wards of the hospital and also reviewed the cleanliness of the hospital premises.

Deputy Commissioner Mitari, on this occasion,

directed the Medical Superintendent (MS) to ensure comprehensive care for incoming patients at the hospital and to prevent them from facing any inconvenience. He stated that several patients have lodged complaints regarding the lack of medicines and facilities in the hospital, urging for immediate resolution of these issues.

### Semester Exams commences at SABS University

The semester examinations started at Shaheed Allah Buksh Soomro (SABS) University of Art, Design and Heritages Jamshoro on Monday, November 27, 2023.

Vice-chancellor SABS University Prof. Dr. Arabella Bhutto along with

officials paid visit to examination blocks and reviewed ongoing papers.

According to spokesman, Dr. Bhutto expressed satisfaction on seating arrangements, peaceful environment and facilities provided to students.

The examination will conclude on December 10, 2023.

Meanwhile, in order to watch the progress of 7-day anti Polio Campaign commenced from Monday throughout the District Shaheed Benazirabad, Commissioner Syed Muhammad Sajjad Haider visited Polio Fixed Point at Taluka Hospital sakrand and other sites of the tehsil and inspected the working of fix, mobile and transit Polio teams.



NANKANA SAHIB: Sikh women yatrees performing her religious rituals on occasion of 554th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev.

## New global changes expected

NAROWAL (INP): Former minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader, Ahsan Iqbal has said that new changes at global level are expected of the 4th industrial revolution.

He stated this while addressing an international conference entitled "Economy of Tomorrow" held in Narowal on Monday.

The PML-N leader was of the view that we have to understand the effects of upcoming changes.

He said alignment with the latest technology was the need of the hour.

Ahsan Iqbal said that artificial intelligence will increase the production capacity of goods as per the customized needs.

In India, Twenty-four people were killed by lightning strikes and dozens injured in rain-related incidents in Gujarat State.

Gujarat Agriculture Minister Raghavij Patel said the state was hit by heavy rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms and hailstorms with some places receiving up to 144 mm of rain.

The India Meteorological Department has forecast rainfall to continue in parts of the state.

## Anti-Polio campaign launched

RAHIM YAR KHAN (APP): DC Shakeel Ahmad Bhatti inaugurated the anti-polio campaign in the district of Rahim Yar Khan by administering polio vaccine to children less than five years of age on Monday.

According to DC Office, Deputy Commissioner Shakeel Ahmad Bhatti stressed parents to play an active role in the success of the campaign, as the District Health Authority strives to reach its 100% target of vaccinating more than 11 lakh young children in the district.

He urged the importance of providing facilities to the polio teams and ensuring strict monitoring. The anti-polio campaign will run from November 27 and will help protect children from lifelong disabilities.

The opening ceremony of the polio campaign was held at the Primary Health Center Basti Abdul Karim and was attended by CEO Health Dr. Ghazanfar Shafique, DHO Dr. Liaquat Chauhan, District Manager PHFMC Syed Zeeshan Ahmed and Deputy District Health Officer Dr. Farid Ifukhar, as well as WHO Representative Dr. Umar Farooq.

## Shopkeepers fined

NAROWAL (APP): The district administration imposed a total fine of Rs 1.878 million on 1066 shopkeepers over various violations in the district during the period from November 1 to 25, 2023.

District Officer (DO) Industries Narowal Zeeshan Niaz said on Monday that 20,275 inspections were conducted across the district and found 1066 shopkeepers involved in various violations.

The DO Industries said that Deputy Commissioner Narowal had directed the price magistrates to take all possible measures to ensure the supply of cheaper and quality goods to citizens as per the government rates.

## Sugar mills' directed to ensure designated routes

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Authorities of the district's sugar mills on Monday held a meeting with District Police Officer (DPO) Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani to discuss traffic-related issues in wake of sugarcane crushing season.

According to the police spokesman, they discussed the initiation of the sugarcane crushing season, maintaining traffic flow besides discussions on specific routes in order to avoid traffic issues and ensure timely supply of sugarcane for the mills.

The mills' authorities expressed their full cooperation to obey the directives. The DPO directed the mill authorities to ensure the use of designated routes for tractor-trolleys besides raising awareness about installing lights behind loaded trolleys to prevent accidents, and comply with all legal requirements.

DSPs Kashif Sattar and Anwar Khan Khattak were also present.

### Rescue 1122 tackles 132 emergencies in Dera last week

The district's emergency service- Rescue 1122 provided services in a total of 132 emergencies during the last week under the supervision of District Emergency Officer Awais Babar.

According to the weekly performance report issued

here on Monday, Rescue 1122 tackled different kinds of emergencies over the week including 106 medical, 22 road accidents, one fire eruption, one violence and two others.

It says that the control room received a total of 24492 emergency calls including 5261 for information or drop calls and 19099 fake or irrelevant calls.

He said that Rescue 1122 also provided services in 21 referral-related emergencies in which the patients were shifted from the hospital to another hospital within the district.

The service spokesman says that the rescue 1122 teams are always fully equipped with all necessary equipment and have been efficiently rendering their services during emergencies.

### Two drug dealers held with over 400 g heroin

The district police arrested two drug peddlers on Monday and recovered 400 grams of heroin from their possession, the police said.

According to a police spokesman, the drive against the menace of drugs was successfully continued across the district following the directives of District Police Officer Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani.

During the campaign, he said, a police team of Cantt police station led by SDPO City Circle Muhammad

Adnan along with SHO Gulsher Khan arrested two drug dealers named Rajab Ali son of Khuda Bakhsh and Muhammad Ramzan son of Muhammad Afzal recovering 190 gram and 210 gram from them respectively.

The police also registered separate cases against the arrested accused.

### Food Safety and Halal Food Authority conducts operation

Food Safety and Halal Food Authority's team on Monday conducted operations at several places to ensure safe food items for citizens.

The team comprising Deputy Director Sajjad Ahmed and his staff checked the quality of milk, carried in tankers from Punjab at Bhakkar Bridge.

They collected samples and imposed fines on several owners over adulteration of water.

The Food Safety Team also checked the quality of food items in the famous market of Dera Ismail Khan and directed food outlets' owners to ensure quality stuff.

The authority's team also inspected food items at Paharpur bazaar and provided licenses of the Food authority.

The deputy director told the media that the authority's team would continue operations to ensure healthy food items for people.

## Man dies, three injure as tanker hit bike in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): A man was killed while his two children and an uncle got serious injuries when a speeding oil tanker hit their motorcycle here on Dera-Darya Khan road.

According to a police spokesman, one Tariq Sahi son of Hussain Ahmad Sahi reported Gomal University Police that his 30-year-old brother Ilyas Hussain along with his two children six-year-old Hawal, three-year-old Eman and 51-year-old uncle Mehmood Qadir were coming on a motorcycle from Darya Khan to Dera Ismail Khan when a speedy Tanker bearing number (TLB-988) hit their two-wheeler near Attock Petrol Pump.

As a result, Ilyas Hussain died on the spot and the other three got injured.

The injured were shifted to District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital Dera. The driver of the tanker man- aged to flee from the scene.

The police registered a case against the unknown driver of the tanker.

### Impersonator arrested at Dera

Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Dera Ismail Khan division has arrested a man who was posing as an officer of the agency to blackmail people.

Deputy Director FIA Dera region Abdul Hai Khan Babar, in a press release said that the accused, Inamullah, a resident of district Tank, was caught red-handed from a hotel in front of Topanwala Gate by Inspector Abdullah Khan-led FIA team.

He said that the accused had been arrested after receiving several complaints that a man, introducing himself as an FIA inspector Shahid was coercing and extorting

money from diesel agencies' owners and other people despite the fact that there was no personnel-FIA inspector Shahid posted at the FIA Dera office.

He said the team also recovered service cards of police, FIA and FC, visiting cards, ATM cards, BISP card, driver's license and three mobile sets from his possession and took them into custody.

He said that a case had been registered against the accused and further investigation was underway.

The deputy director also said that an effective crackdown was underway against electricity thieves, foreigners staying illegally and those involved in illegal Hawala-hundi business.

In this regard, he said cases were being registered against the accused and arrests were being made.

## Police launched comprehensive drive

SARGODHA (APP): Sargodha Police launched a comprehensive campaign against underage and unlicensed drivers in the district.

According to a press release issued by DPO office here on Monday, a total of 181 cases were registered while 1149 challans were also issued against underage drivers and 1077 challans issued against those driving without a license during last ten days.

A spokesman for Traffic police said that vehicles and motorcycles were also being impounded over violation in the district.

In addition, some parents were also called on the

spot and given a warning in which they were asked to give a surety bond (affidavit) to not let their underage children drive in the future.

The purpose of the campaign was to discourage underage and inexperienced drivers so that the accidents that occur every day can be reduced, he said.

The District Police Officer Muhammad Faisal Kamran said that parents and teachers should play their key role in eliminating the driving craze among young people.

In the next phase, the police would also file cases against the parents of

underage drivers along with them, DPO added.

**Six profiteers booked:** Six shopkeepers were booked accused of profiteering from various parts of the city here on Monday.

According to official sources, the price control magistrates inspected various points including Sillanwali road, Lahore road, Quench morr, Noori gate and got arrested six shopkeepers including Imran, Safdar, Ramzan, Ejaz, Shabir and Sarfraz for overcharging and imposed hefty fines.

Cases were registered against them.





## Luxon sworn in as new prime minister of New Zealand

WELLINGTON (AFP/APP): Former airline boss Christopher Luxon formally took office as New Zealand's prime minister Monday, vowing to tame inflation and bring down interest rates.

Luxon took over six weeks after his conservative National Party won national elections, ending a six-year Labour Party reign ushered in by Jacinda Ardern.

Luxon, 53, once chief executive of Air New Zealand, was sworn in as head of a new coalition government by New Zealand's governor-general in a ceremony in the capital Wellington.

"It is an honour and an awesome responsibility," Luxon told reporters.

"The number one job is to fix the economy. We have to reduce the cost of living and get inflation under control so we can lower interest rates and make food more affordable."

Luxon said his new government would also focus in its first few months on restoring law and order and improving public services.

"We need to go to work," he said.

The former Labour government had struggled to control the rising cost of living, a global issue blamed in part on pandemic-related supply issues and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The previous prime minister, Labour Party leader Chris Hipkins, took over from Ardern in January. She had unexpectedly resigned, calling an end to her five-year period in office because she no longer had "enough in the tank".

Luxon said his cabinet would meet



over the next two days with a focus on signing off their plans for the first 100 days in office.

National has promised to crack down on crime, ban cellphones in schools and scrap planned fuel tax hikes. "A lot of our focus is on tackling the underlying cause of inflation," Luxon said.

"That means a series of things to make sure we generate savings out of the public service and that government spending is prudent."

Luxon becomes the 42nd prime minister of New Zealand after protracted coalition talks came to an agreement on Friday.

His National party has formed a three-party coalition with the conser-

vative ACT and populist New Zealand First parties to govern in the 123-seat parliament.

In a first for New Zealand, the deputy prime minister role will be shared in two 18-month stints.

New Zealand First leader Winston Peters, 78, was sworn in alongside Luxon as deputy prime minister, but will hand over the role at the end of May 2025.

He will be replaced by ACT leader David Seymour for the remainder of the three-year parliamentary term.

Luxon, a father of two, is a wealthy teetotaler and lover of country music who rose to prominence when he ran the national airline for seven years before entering politics.

## CAIR offers \$10,000 reward for Info on perpetrators of gun attack on 3 Palestinians in US city

WASHINGTON (APP): A prominent Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization has offered a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrator of a shooting Saturday targeting three Palestinian university students in Burlington in the U.S. state of Vermont, amid a surge in anti-Muslim hate across the country.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) also called on state and federal law enforcement authorities in Vermont to investigate a possible bias motive for the shooting.

The 20-year-old students are all receiving medical care, according to a Sunday news release from the Burlington Police Department. "Two are stable, while one has sustained much more serious injuries."

The students were on their way to a family dinner in Burlington, Vermont, for the Thanksgiving holiday when "they were confronted by a white man with a handgun," the news release said.

Their Palestinian alma mater, the Ramallah Friends School, also identified the three students.

"Ramallah Friends School board, administration, staff and community are deeply distressed by the recent

incident involving three of our graduates -- Hisham Awartani, Kinnan Abdel Hamid and Tahseen Ahmed," the school said in a statement.

"While we are relieved to know that they are alive, we remain uncertain about their condition and hold them in the light."

The school said that Awartani was shot in the back and Ahmed was shot in the chest, with Hamid suffering minor injuries. Awartani is an Ivy League student at Brown University, Hamid studies at Haverford University and Ahmed studies at Trinity College.

"My cousin Hisham has been shot in the back while walking with his friends in Burlington for simply wearing kuffiyehs and speaking Arabic," Basil Awartani posted on Twitter. "Dangerous performative rhetoric from U.S. pundits and politicians as well as constant dehumanization of Palestinians has a real-life cost." The Palestinian Foreign Ministry also released a statement condemning the shooting and targeting of its citizens. Due to the unprecedented spike in anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian hate and violence we have witnessed in recent weeks, local, state and national law enforcement author-

ities must investigate a possible bias motive for the shooting of these three young men, CAIR National Executive Director Nihad Awad said in a statement. "We hope our reward will result in information leading to an arrest in this case."

He noted that CAIR recently welcomed arrests in two recent alleged anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian hate crimes in New York.

Awad also cited the murder of a 6-year-old Palestinian-American boy and the wounding of his mother who were targeted by the suspect due to them being Muslim and the ongoing Middle Eastern conflict involving Hamas and the Israelis.

These incidents come as Muslims, Arabs, and Palestinians across the country report a surge in anti-Muslim and anti-Arab hate since the escalation of violence in Palestine and Israel last month. Earlier this month, CAIR released new data indicating a 216 percent surge in complaints, including incidents of bias, reported to its offices since the start of the crisis on October 7th. CAIR said it has received 1,283 complaints over the past month, an "unprecedented" Increase in complaints of Islamophobia, anti-Arab bias

## Indian army digs by hand to free 41 trapped tunnel workers

SILKYARA TUNNEL (AFP/APP): Indian military engineers were preparing to dig by hand Monday to reach 41 workers trapped in a collapsed road tunnel for 16 days, a rescue operation hit by repeated setbacks.

Soldiers plan to use a so-called "rat-hole mining" technique, digging by hand to clear the rocks and rubble over the remaining nine metres (29 feet), with temperatures plummeting in the remote mountain location in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand.

Last week, engineers working to drive a metal pipe horizontally through 57 metres (187 feet) of rock and concrete ran into metal girders and construction vehicles buried in the earth, snapping a giant earth-boring augur machine.

"The broken parts of the auger (drilling) machine stuck inside the tunnel have been removed", senior local civil servant Abhishek Ruhela told AFP on Monday, after a specialised superheated plasma cutter was brought in to clear the metal. "Preparations are being made to start manual drilling work," he added.

"Indian Army engineering battalion personnel, along with other rescue officers, are preparing to do rat-hole mining".

Engineers in the bitterly cold conditions will use

manual drills to clear the route, a tough task in the narrow pipe, just wide enough for a man to crawl through. In a separate effort, vertical drilling has reached more than a quarter of the 89 metres down to the men, a risky route in an area that has already suffered a collapse. A drilling machine was brought up to the forested hill above the tunnel on a specially-constructed track.

"Vertical drilling is going on at a fast pace," with teams having reached 19 metres (63 feet) by late Sunday, said Mahmood Ahmed, a top official in the national roads ministry.

Work is ongoing at "full

speed but with caution", he added. Digging, blasting and drilling have also begun from the far side of the road tunnel, a much longer third route estimated to be around 480 metres.

The 41 construction workers have been trapped in the Silkyara road tunnel since November 12.

Efforts have been painfully slow, complicated by falling debris and repeated breakdowns of drilling machines.

Hopes that the team was on the verge of a breakthrough on Wednesday were dashed, with a government statement warning of the "challenging Himalayan terrain".

## Police arrest 109 climate protesters at Australian coal port

SYDNEY (AFP/APP): More than 100 climate activists have been arrested after staging a floating blockade of Australia's largest coal port, police said Monday, including five children and a 97-year-old reverend. A fleet of kayaks blocked shipping traffic over the weekend at the Port of Newcastle on Australia's east coast, imploring the government to end the country's long reliance on fossil fuel exports. Authorities agreed to let the protest run for 30 hours, but police boats started closing in when the deadline passed and crowds of activists refused to leave the water. Among the 109 people arrested was Uniting Church reverend Alan Stuart, who said he wanted

to stave off climate disasters for his "grandchildren and future generations".

"I am so sorry that they will have to suffer the consequences of our inaction," he said in a statement ahead of his arrest.

"So, I think I must do what I can and to stand up for what I know is right."

Protest group Rising Tide, which organised the blockade, said Stuart, 97, was the "oldest" Australian ever arrested in connection with a climate change demonstration.

"We chose to risk arrest because scientists are warning that to avoid catastrophic climate collapse we must urgently phase out fossil fuels," the group said in a statement.

New South Wales Police

said five juveniles had also been arrested but did not give their ages.

State premier Chris Minns said Australia needed to keep selling coal if it wanted to fund a clean energy revolution.

"We sold Aus\$40 billion (US\$26 billion) worth of coal last year and we need this if we're going to transition our economy to renewable energy," he told local radio station 2GB.

"It is not possible to do it without getting coal royalties as a result of exports."

Australian Greens leader Adam Bandt said nationwide protests would continue to swell if the government did not take the climate crisis seriously.

"People understand, students and older people

understand, that it's coal and gas that are fuelling the climate crisis," he told national broadcaster ABC.

A succession of Australian states have passed strict laws in recent years targeting climate protests, drawing condemnation from civil rights organisations and United Nations investigators.

Climate protester Deanna Coco was jailed for 15 months late last year after blocking traffic on Sydney's famed harbour bridge, although her sentence was later quashed on appeal. Australia has long been one of the world's largest coal producers and a string of new coal mines, oil fields and gas projects are currently in government planning pipelines.

## North Korea sends troops to rebuild border guard posts

SEOUL (AFP/APP): North Korea has sent troops to its southern border to restore guard posts taken down under a 2018 agreement with South Korea, Seoul's military said Monday, after Pyongyang's launch of a spy satellite stoked tensions on the peninsula.

In response to the launch last week, Seoul partially suspended the agreement that was aimed at easing border hostilities,

prompting Pyongyang to scrap the pact entirely and warn it would "never be bound" by the deal again.

A South Korean military official told AFP on Monday that Pyongyang had recently sent armed personnel and equipment to restore the guard posts.

Yonhap news agency reported that North Korean soldiers were "seen rebuilding the guard posts from Friday", according to a military

official, and that all 11 posts withdrawn under the five-year-old deal were expected to be restored.

One photo released by South Korea's military shows four North Korean soldiers rebuilding a wooden guard post in the Demilitarized Zone that separates the two countries. North Korea's accelerated development of its weapons programmes has alarmed Seoul.

South Korea deployed

"surveillance and reconnaissance assets" to the border after the satellite launch, in what its military said was an "essential measure" to defend against North Korea's growing threats.

In response, Pyongyang said it would "deploy more powerful armed forces and new-type military hardware in the region along the Military Demarcation Line" between the two Koreas.

## Nicaragua bars pageant head after Ortega critic wins Miss Universe

SAN JOSÉ (AFP/APP): Nicaraguan authorities have barred the director of the national beauty pageant from re-entering the country after a Nicaraguan woman seen as a symbol of opposition to the government was crowned Miss Universe, media reports and exiled opposition members said. Karen Celebertti and her daughter were detained upon their arrival at the Managua airport -- days after seeing 23-year-old Sheynnis Palacios crowned as the first Miss Universe from Nicaragua -- and placed on a flight to Mexico, the opposition-linked La Prensa newspaper reported.

The government "blocked Karen Celebertti, owner of the Miss Nicaragua franchise, and her daughter from entering the country," the Costa Rica-based Nicaraguan daily said on its web site.

It was unclear on what grounds Celebertti, a Nicaraguan national, was barred entry. The government has made no comment on the matter.

The writer Gioconda Belli, who lives in Spain after being stripped of her Nicaraguan nationality by

the government, contended that Celebertti was blocked at the orders of President Daniel Ortega's wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, despite her success in helping a Nicaraguan win the prestigious contest.

Opposition media also reported that Celebertti's Managua home had been searched Friday and her husband, Martin Arguello, briefly detained.

In a statement to AFP, the Miss Universe Organization called on the Nicaraguan government to "ensure" the safety of those associated with the local affiliates of the pageant.

"We are working to ensure the safety of everyone affiliated with the organization, and we appeal to the Nicaraguan government to ensure their safety as well as they comply with requests," it said.

Since Palacios was crowned Miss Universe on November 18 in San Salvador, she has been widely portrayed as a symbol of opposition to Ortega.

Photos showing her waving the Nicaraguan flag at anti-government protests in 2018 have gone viral, and her victory brought joyful crowds into

Nicaragua's streets in the biggest public displays since such gatherings were banned five years ago.

Murillo on Wednesday blasted the publication of such photos as "malicious (and) terrorist communications that aim to transform a beautiful moment of pride and well-deserved celebration into a destructive coup." The Nicaraguan opposition has portrayed Palacios' victory as a sign of hope. Some in the celebratory crowds waved the blue and white national flag, seen as a symbol of opposition, unlike the partisan red and black flag of the ruling Sandinista Front.

"I'm so happy to see the joy of Nicaraguans and to see them bring out the clandestine blue and white... Thanks to Sheynnis," the writer Belli said on X, the former Twitter.

Opposition sources said that on Tuesday, government officials barred two artists from completing a mural of the new Miss Universe in the northern city of Esteli. Photos of the unfinished fresco have circulated on social media.

"It is impossible to view this inoffensive contest without considering the

political and social reality. She has become a national and emotional symbol who has restored hope. And the government understands this," prize-winning Nicaraguan journalist Alfredo Miranda, who lives in exile in Costa Rica, told AFP. Many exiles even viewed the outfit in which Palacios was crowned -- a flowing white dress with a blue cape resembling images of Nicaragua's patron saint, the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception -- as symbolic amid a government crackdown on the Catholic Church.

"Thank you for bringing joy to our suffering people, thank you for giving us hope," Monsignor Silvio Baez, the auxiliary bishop of Managua, wrote on X. He lives in exile in the United States. A government clampdown on the 2018 protests left more than 350 dead and more than 100,000 in exile. The government has since jailed hundreds of critics. Palacios rose from a modest upbringing in the city of Diriamba, in Carazo department. She, her mother and grandmother started a business selling Nicaraguan sweet fried dough.

DHAKA (AFP/APP): Bangladesh has launched a sweeping and violent crackdown on opposition parties to "eliminate competition" ahead of general elections, including arresting almost 10,000 activists, Human Rights Watch said Monday.

As well as the thousands arrested, many from the key Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), a staggering number also face charges.

According to the BNP, about half of its five million members "face politically motivated prosecution", HRW said.

"The arrests, they are not leaving anyone behind, from senior level to the ground level," one activist told HRW.

Prisons are now at more than double their capacity, the rights group said.

The South Asian nation of around 170 million people holds a general election on January 7, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina eyeing her fourth consecutive term in power.

The BNP and other parties have held mass protests calling on Hasina to quit power and let a neutral government run the polls, demands the government has said are unconstitutional.

al. "Bangladesh authorities are carrying out mass arrests of political opposition in a clear attempt to quash the opposition and eliminate competition ahead of the general elections", HRW said.

New York-based HRW, who called it a "violent autocratic crackdown", said at least 16 people have been killed since protests escalated in October, including two police officers.

More than 5,500 people have been wounded.

There was no immediate response by the government to the HRW report, but authorities say that those arrested should face justice for a range of violent crimes.

The police, who have not said how many people they have arrested, accuse the opposition of torching nearly 290 vehicles, mostly buses, during nationwide strikes and transport blockades since October 29.

Police said at least six people had been killed in the violence.

HRW based its report on multiple witness interviews, as well as analysis of videos and police reports. It said it had found "evidence that security forces are responsible for

using excessive force, mass arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial killings".

Bangladesh is one of the world's largest garment exporters -- accounting for around 85 percent of its \$55 billion in annual exports -- with many global brands purchasing clothes from its factories.

"Diplomatic partners should make clear that the crackdown will jeopardize economic cooperation", HRW said.

Julia Bleckner, senior Asia researcher at Human Rights Watch, said credible elections could not be held under such conditions.

"A free election is impossible when the government stifles free expression and systematically incapacitates the opposition, critics, and activists through arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearance, harassment, and intimidation," Bleckner said.

The BNP on Sunday said at least 16,625 members had been arrested since October.

They include most of its leadership, most notably the BNP's de facto chief Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

"Bangladesh has not

seen such a massive crackdown on the opposition in the country's history," BNP spokesman A.K.M. Wahiduzzaman told AFP. "A blanket of fear has spread all over the country". Prosecutors and lawyers said in the past two weeks at least 526 BNP officials and activists were convicted and sentenced, mostly in absentia, over what the party said were "trumped up" charges.

Wahiduzzaman said that thousands of BNP members were now in hiding.

Party officials said that when the police raided a house looking for them, they had beaten or arrested family members in their place.

"Fearing arrest and torture, they've fled their homes," he said. "Many are living on grain fields under open sky."

A.R. Khan Liton, a BNP student leader in the southern coastal district of Satkhira, said he and other party members were terrified. "Almost every BNP activist I know has fled their homes," Liton told AFP. "They don't spend more than two nights in one place. Some are spending the night in paddy or sugarcane fields."

Spain, the world's biggest producer of olive oil, suffered a very difficult year in 2022 and drought this year has compounded the problem.

In Italy, this year's olive harvest is down by an estimated 80 percent, according to producers.

The EU estimates global olive oil production will fall more than 26 percent in 2022-2023 compared to a year earlier, to just over 2.5 million tonnes.

## Winter isn't coming: climate change hits Greek olive crop

POLYGYROS (AFP/APP): Greece, was still over 15 degrees Celsius (59 degrees Fahrenheit).

"I consider climate change the main challenge this season," noted Nikos Anoixas, a board member of Doepel, the Greek national interprofessional organisation for table olives.

"At this time, temperatures should be 10 degrees Celsius... the year is already lost, and we fear next year will be similar. I don't even want to think what will happen if another such year follows," Anoixas said.

Vangelis Evangelinos has been growing edible olives on his family land in Halkidiki, northern Greece

since he was a child.

At 62, he does not recall adverse weather conditions such as his area has endured this year -- or such a poor crop -- ever before.

"We've never had a year such as this," Evangelinos told AFP, two months after the Thessaly region, to the south, was devastated by massive floods.

"The rainfall is intense and brief," the opposite of what is needed to enrich the soil," he said.

The warm weather has affected some six million trees in the region, according to producers and experts.

"This year the phenomenon of 'fruitlessness' was very intense, but it is an



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## Smog, a man-made calamity

Lahore still retains the position of the most polluted city in the world with its AQI level as high as 500 in some areas in recent days. The provincial administration has enforced a smart lockdown in 10 districts of Punjab including Lahore, Sargodha, Faisalabad and others. All public and private educational institutions will remain closed and online classes will be held. Meanwhile, a schedule has been issued for businesses, markets and restaurants for their operation hours on different days of the week. The Punjab government has decided to provide electric bikes to 10,000 students on subsidy. The Naqvi government also mulls over the prospect of pouring artificial rain and installing smog towers to combat pollution.

Air pollution and smog are environmental issues caused by the release of pollutants into the atmosphere. Certain harmful substances such as particulates of matter, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and volatile organic compounds are added to the fresh air due to human activity and cause adverse effects on human health, ecosystems, and the environment. Smog, on the other hand, is a type of air pollution that is characterized by a mixture of smoke and fog. It often occurs in urban areas with high levels of vehicle emissions and industrial activity. Historically, multiple South Asia countries such as China, India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan are currently at the top of the list of most smog-hit nations. Similarly, Lahore, New Delhi, Hyderabad, and Dhaka are the most polluted cities in the world.

Both air pollution and smog can lead to a range of health problems, including respiratory issues, cardiovascular diseases, and even premature death. They also have detrimental effects on the environment, contributing to climate change, damaging vegetation, and harming wildlife.

There are multiple short and long-term measures to tackle air pollution and smog which includes parliamentary legislation, administrative measures and industrial regulatory policies that could curb rising pollution permanently, through the use of clean energy technologies, reducing emissions from vehicles and industries, and improving air quality standards and regulations. While short-term or instant measures include shutting down schools, and businesses, imposition of smart lockdown, use of artificial rain and water canons, and closure of traffic and trains.

Unfortunately, the Pakistani rulers often forget the public issues once resolved until they reappear next time. So, the formulation of long-term policies, their implementation and monitoring is a time-consuming and lengthy procedure for which they usually lack spare time and extra labour. There is a dire need for stringent measures to be implemented to curb industrial and transport smoke, along with the adoption of specific methods for agricultural and industrial wastes to reduce smoke/ pollution levels in the air which leads to the rise of smog that practically halted the wheel of life and traffic.

Historically, the issue of smog is gradually worsening and expanding from Lahore and Karachi to other mega cities in the country and there is a need for a public-private partnership and core cooperation from the masses, as well as the businesses. Public awareness and cooperation are of utmost importance in dealing with this issue along with mobilizing government machinery to strictly implement relevant protocols, SOPs and regulations. So, this grave issue could be dealt with permanently as soon as possible.

## Is public safety matter?

The caretaker Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Baqir has directed the Sindh Building Control Authority, PDMA, Civil Defence, and deputy commissioners to carry out safety audits of all public and commercial buildings, educational institutions, and government offices and submit their report along with recommendations within a stipulated period. The provincial Chief Executive's order comes after at least 11 people died and 40 others sustained burn injuries after a fire erupted inside the RJ Shopping Mall due to a short circuit a day earlier.

Karachi, the country's economic hub with a population of 20.3 million, is home to a sky touching residential complexes, a network of scattered factories and industrial zones, and high-rise commercial plazas, but the city's firefighting infrastructure, building safety measures, and emergency plans are inadequate to deal with fires emergencies, and other calamities. According to the experts, about 90 per cent of all structures in Karachi whether residential, commercial or industrial lack fire prevention, firefighting systems and emergency evacuation facilities that is grave negligence of the relevant departments and often leads to major casualties and causes embarrassment at the national level.

During the recent incident, the fire erupted on the fourth floor of RJ Shopping Mall and later engulfed the whole plaza, people could not escape and deaths occurred because of no ventilation and the absence of an emergency exit, emergency stairs/ doorways. The FIR of the incident has been registered against the building owner, K-Electric, SBCA and other departments involved in the issuance of NOC and authorization of Construction without the fulfilment of essential criteria. In fact, this was not the first incident of its kind, while a massacre occurs every other day due to no implementation of the law and negligence/ complicity of government institutions. Over the years no improvement/change could ever be brought in the situation, which clearly means that public safety is neither a priority to the leaders, nor it matters for the institutions. So far, it remains an unsolved puzzle who and how the psyche and nature of this nation would change?

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## Wilders' victory shows Europe must stand up to far-right threat

Chris Doyle

What has happened to the Netherlands? This is a country that once ruled the seas, that founded an empire that stretched from the Caribbean to Indonesia and that founded New Amsterdam, which became New York. It was the Netherlands that gave us Rembrandt and Vincent van Gogh and that invented the CD and the DVD. But now it has plumbed the depths of the political ecosystem to favor a man, Geert Wilders, who for a long time has ranked as one of the world's worst Islamophobes and Muslim haters. This is a country known for its extraordinary liberalism in nearly everything; and yet so many voters have chosen a man who wants to ban the Qur'an and mosques.

So, will Wilders, the leader of the Freedom Party, which is known as the PVV, become the next Dutch prime minister at the head of arguably the most far-right government in Europe? In last week's elections, he shocked European politics by getting 37 seats, comfortably ahead of the other parties and more than double the PVV's existing tally of 17. Somehow, Wilders will have to cobble together a coalition of 76 seats to achieve a majority in the 150-seat Dutch parliament. It may take a long time. It was almost a year before a coalition was formed after the last elections in 2021.

To what extent did others act as enablers for Wilder's ascent to possible power? Some blame Dilan Yesilgoz-Zegerius, who leads the conservative-liberal VVD. By stating that she could work with the PVV, she legitimized the party and made it worthwhile voting for them as an avenue to influence government policy. The VVD came third with 24 seats, so it could be a coalition partner. However, beyond the VVD, things look tough for Wilders. He needs at least three other parties to join him to make it over the line. There is a possibility that the PVV might become the junior partner in a coalition.

Dutch politics used to be so dull. It was all about building consensus. Nobody ever seemed to be too controversial. But like all major populists, Wilders embraces controversy. He craves it even. He has that populist charisma and the ability to bring slogans and soundbites into every speech. Should he take up a post in government, he will revolutionize Dutch politics, not just on the EU and immigration, but also by ripping up key climate change pledges.

Being anti-immigration and anti-Muslim is at the core of everything Wilders stands for. His success is further evidence that the Dutch are more concerned about immigration than any other EU nation, as polls indicate. He has even been in legal trouble for his vicious attacks on Moroccan immigrants. The Netherlands, for him, is divided into the indigenous population and those of immigrant stock. He

wants "zero asylum-seekers." During the 2017 election campaign, he labeled some Dutch Moroccans "scum." In 2016, he was convicted of discrimination for claiming that, if he won, there would be "fewer

Wilders is not adored internationally, beyond states with far-right leaders. The UK banned him from entering the country in 2009 due to his extreme views on Islam. Many in Europe will be alarmed. Some will see this as a

**What does this mean for Dutch Muslims? They constitute about 5 percent of the Dutch population. Muslim women wearing headscarves fear discrimination. Wilders pledged to ban women wearing hijabs from entering public buildings. But more than that, he also had in the PVV's manifesto a ban on all Islamic schools, Qur'ans and mosques. Dutch Muslims will have to work with the allies they have. Wilders is not adored internationally, beyond states with far-right leaders. The UK banned him from entering the country in 2009 due to his extreme views on Islam. Many in Europe will be alarmed. Some will see this as a warning to be more anti-immigrant, whereas others will escalate their political attacks on far-right parties. Arab states were rightly quick to condemn Wilders' statement that the Palestinian people should be relocated to Jordan. The Netherlands could now have a challenging relationship with such states, as well as the wider Islamic world. Wilders has adopted some horrifying rhetoric toward Palestinians. He backs illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank. He implies that he would support the forced transfer of millions of Palestinians. Alarming, Wilders seems to have had a Gaza poll bounce. Between Oct. 7 and the elections, support for him rose from 12 percent to 23 percent. The far right in Europe is anxious to ingratiate itself with Israel's leaders. They love this form of crude identity politics. It also plays to the dominant trend of anti-Muslim prejudice.**

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The far right in Europe is anxious to ingratiate itself with Israel's leaders. They love this form of crude identity politics. It also plays to the dominant trend of anti-Muslim prejudice.

Many see this as a sign that Europe is heading into the grip of the far right. This certainly looks like it will please President Vladimir Putin of Russia, who is always happy to see the EU and NATO divided and undermined, as Wilders wants to end military support to Ukraine. Many far-right European politicians, such as Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Marine Le Pen in France and Matteo Salvini in Italy, could not wait to congratulate their fellow Islamophobe. Le Pen might fancy her chances in the next French presidential election in 2027.

Elsewhere, the Freedom Party of Austria is faring well. However, only last month, the Polish elections saw the ejection of the far-right Law and Justice party. In Britain, the current right-wing government looks likely to lose the coming general election. What this perhaps indicates is the dangerous degree of polarization in many democracies — and not just in Europe. In those democracies that depend on the building of consensus, such as the Netherlands, this poses huge challenges for the stability of governments.

Is Wilders going to do a Meloni? The neo-fascist Italian prime minister, while still extreme and hostile to immigrants, is widely viewed as having moderated her tone since coming to power. If Wilders wishes to govern, he has to hold a coalition together. He accepts he may not be able to do everything he would like. He would like a "Nexit" — for the Netherlands to join Britain in leaving the EU. This is unlikely. He also wants to end the free movement of labor, which EU membership does not allow.

Many will hope Wilders cannot form a coalition. This may be the case and he could end up playing the political martyr from the sidelines, proclaiming that he has had victory stolen from him and the people. Yet, even if he does not become prime minister, he has still shaken Dutch and European politics to the core.

European politicians need to wake up to this far right-threat — it is no longer fringe. They must challenge it, not cave into it. This brand of politics is not based on solutions to the continent's challenges, but rather on appealing to base emotions. True leaders need to stand up and be counted. Anti-Muslim parties and politicians should be shunned in just the same way as politicians who espouse anti-Black or antisemitic messages are.

## Gaza is forcing the West to abandon its old illusions

Ramzy Baroud

Shortly after the start of a four-day ceasefire in the war on Gaza on Friday, the prime ministers of Spain and Belgium,

Pedro Sanchez and Alexander De Croo, appeared in a joint press conference at the Rafah crossing.

Sanchez described what was happening as "a disaster," while De Croo called for a "permanent cessation of hostilities" and for an end to the killing of children. Just as significantly, the two European leaders declared that they may decide to recognize the state of Palestine, even if the EU does not.

Coupled with the strong position of Ireland, some in Europe seem to be waking up to the fact that the Israeli occupation is the primary cause of the recent Gaza "hostilities."

Israel was not pleased by this evolving European position. It immediately summoned the ambassadors of both countries and sharply rebuked them, according to reports. This exaggerated response shows that Israel is not willing to give Europe even the narrowest of margins — such as condemning the killing of children or expecting some kind of a peaceful settlement centered on Palestinian sovereignty.

Spain and Belgium's indication that they may decide to recognize Palestine even without EU consensus is indicative of a foreign policy schism within Europe. It turns out that not all European governments have the same tolerance of the genocide in Gaza as, for example, Germany and Britain.

Interestingly, other EU officials are also calling for a Palestinian state, though their intention is neither to ensure Palestinian freedom nor to safeguard Palestinian rights. The bloc's chief diplomat Josep Borrell, for example, argued last week that "the best guarantee for Israel's security is the creation of a Palestinian state." Even David Cameron, the former UK prime minister and now foreign minister, used similar logic. Israel will not have security unless it guarantees "long-term safety, security and stability" for the Palestinian people, Cameron said.

Regardless of the reasoning behind the growing emphasis on a "solution" and rights for the Palestinians, this language was almost entirely absent from the Western political discourse prior to Oct. 7.

The truth is that Palestinians have succeeded, through their resistance and steadfastness, in reasserting Palestine on the global agenda. But how did Palestinians succeed in doing so despite the utter marginalization of their cause before the war?

Firstly, unlike during previous wars, especially those that preceded the so-called Unity Intifada of May 2021, this time around the Palestinians spoke in unison. Without rehearsing or even coordinating, it felt as if the Palestinian message flew seamlessly, when all Palestinians, regardless of their ideological background, placed the focus on the Israeli atrocities without falling into the trap of the typical factional blame game.

Even children who had lost members of their families in Gaza would stand bravely in front of cameras and state that they would never weaken and that nothing would remove them from their homeland. Young and old repeated the same logic and used similar language, even from their hospital beds.

This led Israel to do everything in its power to cut off the 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza from the rest of the world, shutting down the internet, electricity and any form of communication, even among Palestinians themselves.

Yet, somehow, a clear and united Palestinian message continued, amplified countless times by an army of social media activists that impressively helped balance out the mainstream media bias and eventually overpowered the corporate media's control of the war narrative. The Palestinians did this, and more, without powerful lobby groups,

media consultants or a hasbara machine, like that which attempted, to no avail, to sway public opinion in favor of Israel.

Secondly, the factional Palestine suddenly disappeared. For years, factional narratives, which divided Palestinians into conflicting interest groups, thwarted the Palestinian people's attempt to unify behind a single leadership — one capable of conveying, representing and defending Palestinian political aspirations.

All the Fatah-Hamas talks and agreements failed, leaving the people with no alternative but to explore different manifestations of unity that go beyond the interests of politicians. This unity is now on display, compelling everyone, including those affiliated with the Palestinian Authority itself, to adhere to the line of the people. While Gazans fought to free prisoners in the West Bank, West Bankers rose up in defense of Gaza.

This popular unity must continue, so that it will eventually be harnessed in the form of political unity, which will bring all Palestinian groups together under a single leadership. This is the only way to ensure the tremendous Palestinian sacrifices and precious blood that has

**Regardless of the reasoning behind the growing emphasis on a "solution" and rights for the Palestinians, this language was almost entirely absent from the Western political discourse prior to Oct. 7. The truth is that Palestinians have succeeded, through their resistance and steadfastness, in reasserting Palestine on the global agenda. But how did Palestinians succeed in doing so despite the utter marginalization of their cause before the war?**

been spilled in Gaza eventually translate into the freedom that all Palestinians covet.

Thirdly, unity beyond Palestine has also proved critical. Arabs and Muslims have served as the core of Palestinian solidarity throughout the Israeli war on Gaza. They have protested, boycotted, fought and mobilized. Moreover, tens of millions of people, beyond the confines of the Arab and Muslim worlds, have marched in favor of Palestinian rights and priorities.

Indeed, whole new conversations on Palestine are now occupying public spheres around the world. The Global South is once more embracing the struggle for Palestine, while the Global North is challenging governments, big corporations and the mainstream media for justifying, supporting and financing the Israeli genocide.

The Palestinian people now have to lead and direct this momentum of solidarity so that it serves their righteous objectives; those of equality, justice and freedom — all enshrined in international law.

No public space should be left without engagement, no audience should be overlooked or neglected and no stone should be left unturned in the search for the critical mass needed to hold Israel accountable for its crimes.

Western leaders and officials are speaking out now because they understand that the Palestinian cause has become a global one and that the prolonging of Israeli occupation and apartheid will not bode well, either for Tel Aviv or for the West.

It is time for Palestinians to utilize this significant moment. It is time for them to lead the process of their own liberation. In fact, in Gaza, Jenin and elsewhere, this process has already begun.



# Gaza not the only place where the fires of injustice burn

It is easy to think nothing is going on in the world aside from the Gaza slaughter, given the media's justified focus on this tragedy. At the IISS Manama Dialogue this month it was virtually the only subject political leaders and delegates wanted to discuss. However, that shouldn't blind us to the fact that other momentous events are in play around the world that demand our urgent attention.

The xenophobic extreme-right continues its remorseless advance throughout Europe, not least with the shock win in the Dutch elections by Geert Wilders' Freedom Party. Among his anti-immigrant comments, Wilders demonized Moroccan immigrants as "scum" and warned of an "Islamic invasion." He also denounced the Qur'an as a "fascist book," and has called for Palestinians to be forcibly relocated to Jordan.

Under Georgia Meloni, Italy has its farthest-right regime since Mussolini, and like-minded entities constitute core parts of governing coalitions in Finland and Sweden. Far-right parties are surging in popularity in Germany, Austria and Greece, and Marine Le Pen is currently ahead in the French polls. Hungary's Viktor Orban has been a prominent cheerleader and patron for these anti-immigrant authoritarian tendencies. In South America, radical far-right candidate Javier Milei has just been elected president of Argentina.

Poland's nationalist Law and Justice party came top in the last elections, but may be shut out of government by a coalition of centrist parties, while the populist Robert Fico won the Slovak elections in September. The Portuguese far right hopes to capitalize on this momentum in elections this March, although Spain bucked the trend with the right-wing Vox party suffering setbacks in the July vote. With elections probably a year away in

Britain, rabble-rousing populist right tendencies have set the ruling Conservative party on course for abject defeat. And in America, heaven alone knows whether by late 2024 Donald Trump will be on course for the White House, a prison cell — or both.

Wilders' rhetoric about quitting the EU is causing sleepless nights for

Baria Alamuddin

manufacture three bombs. Following the detection of modified centrifuges allowing enrichment to 84 percent, Iran removed accreditation for a number of IAEA inspectors — eliminating transparency at a critical moment.

Vast Iranian proxy militias in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen not only are a

likewise suits China that the US is distracted with Middle Eastern flareups. Some observers raise concerns about whether Beijing could seize the moment for further expansionary activity in the South China Sea, or strengthening its military posture toward Taiwan.

There are also so many other simmering conflicts and crises that receive zero

tions, rendering global momentum to resolve these disputes all but impossible. These divisions likewise neutralize cooperation around massive efforts required to reduce carbon emissions and stop the planet boiling — green policies which the ascendant populist right suicidally opposes.

It shouldn't need saying — but the international community should be capable of grappling with more than one crisis at a time. That the world's diplomatic capabilities are so constrained is largely due to the absence of capable and visionary global leadership. The prevailing domestically focused tenor of Western politics over the past decade left so little bandwidth for planet-wide challenges that Putin sincerely believed he could devour Ukraine in its entirety without suffering adverse consequences.

When civilized nations fail to defend international law, they encourage pariah states and hostile actors to seize the advantage and wreak further mayhem. A vicious circle is thus perpetuated in which injustice breeds injustice.

That 14,500 people have been killed in Gaza, 70 percent of them women and children, with a further 7,000 probably buried under the rubble, speaks volumes about the criminal levels of global lethargy, inaction and inhumanity.

Ukraine and Gaza are wake-up calls. Global leaders must collectively up their game on the international arena. According to numerous metrics, stability, standards of governance and social justice are all in steep decline in any part of the world you care to look.

As Martin Luther King said: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." As chaos besets us on all fronts, only by taking a stand on behalf of the Palestinians, the Ukrainians, Sudanese, Syrians and other oppressed peoples can we expect to enjoy long-term stability and justice ourselves.

sustained global attention: Nagorno-Karabakh, Myanmar, Venezuela, Libya, Syria, Ethiopia, Yemen — not to mention the turmoil in the occupied West Bank. Africa's entire Sahel belt is a calamity of coups, insurgencies and war, with Darfur's population again facing extermination at the hands of Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, and large areas of Somalia, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso are under jihadist control. Meanwhile international pressure on the Taliban over its gender apartheid policies against Afghan women has entirely dissipated.

Superpower rivalry between China, Russia and the West has paralyzed and discredited the UN Security Council, and neutralized international law institu-

symptom of the international community's failure to crack down on glaring manifestations of instability and disorder, but also make it far more likely that the Israel-Gaza conflict will become regionalized. Iran feels further emboldened because of the diplomatic cover it receives from a comparably emboldened and confrontational Kremlin.

Vladimir Putin, meanwhile, can't believe his luck at how the Gaza carnage has played out. Not only has coverage of the Ukraine war evaporated from the media agenda, but America and its allies are diverting critical weapons supplies to Israel — raising the question of whether further territorial gains are possible for an equipment-starved Ukraine, and making it more likely that there will be a peace deal fudge. It

# Turkiye's quest to future-proof its air force

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan last week paid a visit to Germany, and met both President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Gaza was one of the important issues on which they exchanged views.

Both German leaders said in unequivocal words that they blamed Hamas for what is happening now in Gaza. Erdogan's efforts were not sufficient to soften their attitude. He referred to the Holocaust and claimed that Türkiye has no historical "luggage on its shoulders," and, therefore, can act more even-handedly.

Both sides spelt out what they had in mind and felt relieved. However, at the end of the day, Germany is likely to be the winner, because it holds more trump cards. The decision to let Türkiye acquire a state-of-the-art air defense system is one of them.

Questioned by a journalist, Erdogan said that if a country threatens to refuse to supply Türkiye with the type of aircraft it needs, it may turn to others. This hypothesis is both correct and wrong at the same time. If you aim at the best quality air defense system, your choices will be limited.

The difficulty in acquiring the most suitable air defense system for Türkiye began with the US. Tired of the caprices of its NATO allies, Ankara decided in 2019 to buy a Russian-manufactured air defense system, the F-400. As later developments showed, this was a questionable choice, because although the Russian system was efficient, it did not match with the NATO system that the Turkish air force was equipped with.

As a reaction to Türkiye's purchase of the Russian system, the US imposed curbs under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act. CAATSA was originally designed to ban the purchase of defense equipment from Russia, Iran and North Korea. However, it was extended to also cover the NATO ally Türkiye. It now includes a ban on selected US export licenses, asset freezes and visa restrictions for a number of Turkish officials involved in the development and manufacturing defense materials.

Ankara is unlikely to face an imminent external threat in air defense. However, thinking strategically, developing a concept

Yasar Yakis

of air defense, and implementing and concluding it may require decades. If Türkiye fails to take appropriate measures, its options will run out one after the other.

Türkiye is looking for a reliable air defense. Being a member of NATO is a strong guarantee, but Türkiye is regarded by several NATO member countries as a liability rather than an asset. The F-35 fighter aircraft was developed under the overall supervision of the US company Lockheed Martin and designed to meet NATO air defense requirements until the 2070s.

The US expelled Türkiye from the F-35 program, which is regarded as the most advanced air defense system. Ankara was not only a beneficiary of the project, but also an important contributor. Several components of the aircraft were being manufactured in Türkiye under the program. Furthermore, Türkiye had already committed to buying more than 100 fighters and had paid \$1.4 billion. It is now in the process of dissolving one engagement after another.

When Türkiye's dream

was shattered after its expulsion from the F-35 program, it began seeking alternatives. The next-best option was to upgrade the F-16 fighter aircraft that were in the hand of the Turkish air force. Various figures were mentioned about the number of the aircraft to be upgraded, but the latest was 40.

Bob Menendez, chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, did everything to block the plan to upgrade Türkiye's fighter jets, but is now in deep trouble because of allegations that he took bribes from three New Jersey businessmen. We will see whether he continues to spoil Türkiye's interests.

When difficulties arose regarding Türkiye's purchase of US-manufactured aircraft, it turned to European markets. It is now negotiating with a consortium of countries to buy 40 Eurofighter Typhoon jets being manufactured by the UK, Germany, Spain and Italy. During parliamentary debates last week, Turkish Defense Minister Yasar Guler mentioned that contacts were underway for the purchase of these aircraft. Co-producers are the UK and Spain. Germany has not yet spelt out its final

word. These talks coincided with the fluctuating relations between Türkiye and Germany, the Gaza crisis, cross-border operations with Syria, and criticisms voiced by Türkiye against the EU.

Bloomberg claimed that Erdogan would raise with the German chancellor the question of lifting Germany's embargo of selling Eurofighter Typhoons to Türkiye. So far, nothing has been leaked to the media on this subject.

The aircraft was to be manufactured by a consortium of the British company BAE Systems in cooperation with German and Spanish firms, but this time the purchase was made conditional to Türkiye's support for Sweden's accession to NATO. On his way back from Berlin to Türkiye, Erdogan said that the German chancellor avoided any reference to the issue. That is to say he did not make any comment on whether Germany would agree to sell Eurofighter Typhoons to Türkiye. "If they agree to sell them, so much the better. If not, we have so many other options," Erdogan said.

Hopefully, Türkiye will not commit another mistake by making a poor choice.

# 4 key priorities to speed up rebuilding of Syria

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

ernment to learn — that modernization of the economy should be accompanied with fighting financial corruption.

The second priority of the government should be to take steps to enhance its legitimacy inside Syria and abroad.

One effective approach would be to introduce a long-term vision for the country with social, civil, political, and security reforms that encouraged inclusiveness. It should include holding accountable those governmental or non-governmental agencies that violated the rule of law.

For instance, the UN's top court, the International Court of Justice, ordered the Syrian government to take action to prevent torture. The court's president, Joan Donoghue, said the UN panel was ordering the Syrian government to, "take all measures within its power to prevent acts of torture and other cruel,

inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment." Establishing safety nets and social protection mechanisms are critical too. The third key issue for the government to prioritize was addressing the threat of drug trafficking to the Syrian people and the region, a problem that can quickly undermine the social, economic, and political stability of countries and subsequently lead to an increase in similar crimes. The issue can become even more threatening, particularly in nations that have a large youth population such as Syria and other Arab countries. To tackle the threat, the Syrian government must work with other nations to

track down and dismantle groups involved in the production and smuggling of illegal drugs. Such a move could offer Damascus advantages such as stronger economic ties and increased trade with neighboring countries.

Damascus must also get involved in intelligence sharing with other governments as an effective way to address the narcotics threat. Another step would be to disrupt the flow of funds to drug traffickers in Syria. Countries such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia have strong capabilities when it comes to law enforcement, intelligence, and security.

Finally, the fourth important issue for the Syrian government to deal with was to gather international and global support for the rebuilding and reconstruction of the country.

The protracted civil war has caused significant damage to the country's infrastructure and economy. The

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reconstruction cost for Syria has been estimated at almost \$1.2 trillion, meaning that Damascus will need foreign financial assistance.

Actions to reconstruct and rebuild Syria would improve the living standards of the Syrian people, create jobs, enhance stability, and address the widespread poverty throughout the country.

In a nutshell, some of the critical issues that the Syrian government must focus on include introducing economic and political reforms, stopping drug trafficking, and gathering and mobilizing international support for the rebuilding and reconstruction of the country's infrastructure.

# Overwhelming suffering should not stop us from trying to help

Since Oct. 7, more than 14,000 Palestinians in Gaza, more than 200 Palestinians in the West Bank, and around 1,200 Israelis have been killed in the war. These appalling tolls can lead to "psychic numbing" and "compassion fatigue," but behind each statistic is a human story.

The rate of fatalities in Gaza is overwhelming. Statistics for deaths in war, natural disasters and other tragedies often feel overwhelming. For example, more than 300,000 civilians have died in the Syrian civil war, according to the UN. Around 200,000 Iraqi civilians died in the war that began in 2003. Human brains struggle to take in the scope of such large-scale catastrophes. The inability to comprehend

such numbers often leads people to turn away from the suffering.

Psychological research has shown that people react with relative indifference to statistics and are much more likely to respond to an individual story. For example, there was general apathy toward the huge number of Syrian refugees fleeing the civil war, but a 2015 photo of the dead body of a little Syrian child named Aylan lying on a Turkish beach galvanized many people into action, including increased donations to relevant charities. Similarly, many people overlooked discrimination against black Americans for decades, but the videos of George Floyd dying led to a global outcry.

There are several rea-

sons why one individual's suffering can grab more attention and generate more empathy than the suffering of thousands.

People relate more to stories than statistics. Human beings are driven by stories that connect to our emotions and experiences. For example, it is difficult to comprehend what it means for more than 200 Israelis to be hostages in Gaza, but most people can emotionally connect to the suffering of a three-year-old child who was kidnapped after her parents were killed. It is difficult to wrap our minds around the extreme suffering of more than 2 million people in Gaza, but when we see the video of a journalist finding the bodies of his loved ones in rubble or in a hospital,

we can deeply relate to his pain. The photos of premature babies in a Gaza hospital who should be in incubators tugged at the hearts of many people and most especially parents who have had premature babies. Intellectually, people know that Palestinians in the West Bank are enduring increased violence, but it is easier to connect to what it is like for parents to feel unable to protect their terrified children when Israeli settlers attack.

While people relate much more easily to stories than numbers, too many harrowing stories can overwhelm us. Psychology studies, for example, have found that compassion tends to decrease as a per-

Kerry Boyd Anderson

son is exposed to more tragic tales. People start to tune out when deluged with narratives or images of suffering. Problems that seem far too big for us to have any positive impact can quickly lead to feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness. Overwhelming suffering can undermine a sense of efficacy. Human beings naturally feel more capable of helping one person in need compared to thousands of people.

A related reason why large statistics can erode empathy is that people's hearts simply cannot bear it. When confronted with extensive stories of suffering or huge numbers of deaths, people often either drown in grief or build a

mental wall of indifference to protect themselves. This is part of psychological numbing.

One natural — but often far from admirable — coping strategy is to be "groupish," to use a term from Jonathan Haidt's book "The Righteous Mind." People often choose to prioritize the suffering of their own identity group, which could be based on shared religion, nationality, ethnicity or something else. However, this approach can feed into cycles of anger and grievance that fuel more conflict and suffering.

There are more positive ways to respond. First, people can learn about psychological numbing and be aware of its impact in their own lives; such awareness helps people to make more

logical and effective decisions.

Second, we can focus on the people and communities around us. While a negative "groupish" approach focuses on threats to identity groups, a more positive variation looks at how we can support our surrounding communities. This might mean doing more to help our families or other people near us, or it might mean finding and working with like-minded people around us to have an impact farther afield.

Third, pick something and do something. Most people do not have the energy and resources to actively contribute to multiple causes, but that is not a reason to give up. We can choose one or two issues to focus on and remain com-

mitted to those. Then, we can take action. The enormity of problems often discourages people from responding, but multiple small actions can add up to big results. Finding ways to cooperate with others also helps make actions more impactful. For example, one person giving some money to help others might seem minuscule, but many people giving even small amounts adds up quickly.

Finally, remember that the grief and empathy people feel in response to other's pain is a good thing — it hurts, but it connects us to our humanity and can push us to help others and to make positive change. Sometimes, we just need to find ways to channel that empathy in positive directions.





# SCCI chief inaugurates fundraising event

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq and founder of Aziz Jan Institute of Learning and a leading industrialist Senator Mohsin Aziz inaugurated a day-long fun-fair/fundraising event themed: 'KP Cultural Carnival' at SOS Children's Villages Pakistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.

The event aimed at fundraising for 'Kafalat' of orphan children of the SOS Children's Villages Pakistan KP, Peshawar.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by SOS Children's Villages Pakistan, KP Peshawar chairman Justice (retired) Qalandar Ali Khan, Director Kaukab Batool, officials concerned and others.

A total 15 stalls were set up during the day-long fun-fair/fundraising event.

Fuad Ishaq, the SCCI chief and Senator Mohsin Aziz, founder of the Aziz Jan Learning Institute while talking to administration of SOS Children's Villages Pakistan KP, Peshawar on the occasion praised the

efforts of the SOS Children's Villages Pakistan for 'Kafalat' of orphan children.

They urged members of business community and philanthropists to come forward and give generously donations for the SOS Children's Villages Pakistan, KP Peshawar so the funds and all resources would be utilized on 'Kafalat' of orphan children and make them a good citizen of this society so they would be able to play their role in betterment and progress of the country and people.

Fuad Ishaq assured the

administration of SOS Children's Villages Pakistan, KP Peshawar for full support.

He also lauded the administration of the SOS Children's Villages Pakistan KP, Peshawar for arranging funfair/fundraising event.

Earlier, the funfair/fundraising event was formally opened by the SCCI chief Fuad Ishaq and founder of Aziz Jan Learning Institute Senator Mohsin Aziz and they on the occasion visited various stalls that were set up during the event.

# Govt's pledge to increase IT exports to \$10b laudable

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that the government has vowed to increase the productivity of the IT sector and boost exports to ten billion dollars in few years which was laudable.

"The IT sector can play a central role in reducing unemployment and stabilizing the economy, which needs to be given all possible support," he added.

Talking to the business community on Monday, Mian Zahid Hussain said the government announced its strategy to promote the

IT sector which was highly commendable and encouraging.

The Special Investment Council (SIFC) has played a central role in enabling this sector and removing departmental obstacles. It will also pave the way for investment from other countries, he added.

The business leader demanded that it was necessary to activate the Pakistan Software Export Board further and consult with the organizations working in this sector.

According to the official data, IT exports were currently 2 billion 600 million dollars, and the government intends to increase the number of people working in this sector by 200,000, which will increase the exports to 5

billion dollars.

Many freelancing centres will be established nationwide, and IT companies will be allowed to keep dollars, increasing revenue by several billion dollars.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that establishing the Pakistan Startup Fund will help achieve the target of 10 billion dollars by increasing the total volume of IT exports by another billion dollars.

The business leader said this sector suffers from various problems; if they are solved, things can improve rapidly. Those working in the IT sector cannot easily transact with overseas customers.

Moreover, the organization of freelancers should be given the importance it

should be given, and many experts complain that they should be listened to.

The tax system was also very complex; IT companies also have to go through a long process for overseas payments, while in other countries, it was done in seconds. For this reason, many IT experts and companies do not transfer the earned dollars to Pakistan but keep them in foreign banks because it was easy to pay from there.

Mian Zahid said that sixty per cent of the country's population consists of youth who, if provided with proper training, cheap loans and a freelancing platform, can change the fate of Pakistan by earning billions of dollars and end the country's dollar crisis forever.

# Chairman opens NCCConnect developed by NCCPL



## F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Akif Saeed formally inaugurated NCCConnect, a mobile app developed by NCCPL during his recent visit to NCCPL office. NCCPL act as a Central Counterparty and provides clearing, settlement and risk Management services for the Capital market. The Chairman, along with Mr. Mujtaba Ahmed Lodhi, the Commissioner SECP and his team was received by Mr. Humayun Bashir, The

Chairman NCCPL board and Mr. Muhammad Lukman, CEO NCCPL along with a few members of NCCPL board and management. The SECP's team was briefed on significant developments by NCCPL towards digitization and enhanced market accessibility.

The Chairman appreciated NCCPL team on their continuous initiatives aimed at digitizing the capital market landscape of Pakistan.

The SECP chairman was briefed about the benefits of NCCConnect and the features that made it a valuable

tool for both seasoned and novice investors, these unique features are: -

Face ID/Biometric Recognition based sign in  
Pin - b a s e d Authentication  
Self-Sign Up  
CKO Information  
CGT details (Annual Tax Certificate, Gain Loss, Consolidated Summary, Inventory Balance)  
Interactive User Interface

Muhammad Lukman mentioned that NCCConnect has been introduced keeping in view the technological advancement and to gain confidence of the

investors by offering them convenience in accessing their account details and other relevant information in the most convenient manner.

SECP's Chairman, Mr. Akif Saeed was informed about the digital on-boarding mechanism that has expanded geographical spread of investors across Pakistan and now around 60% of accounts are being opened by investors residing in cities other than large cities i.e. Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad. Further, it was highlighted that now more than 70% of the accounts are being opened through digital process.

SECP chairman acknowledged NCCPL's efforts to enhance transparency and accessibility of information for capital market investors, emphasizing their critical role in empowering investors to swiftly monitor their activities and take necessary corrective measures.

Additionally, such actions facilitate investors in maintaining up-to-date records, aiding them in making informed investment decisions and ensuring compliance with statutory requirements.

# Markets drop as US inflation comes into view

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Markets dipped in Asia and Europe on Monday as investors look ahead to the release this week of key US inflation data that could provide a guide for the Federal Reserve's plans for interest rates going into the new year.

With Wall Street seeing little action at the back of last week owing to the Thanksgiving break, traders had few catalysts to drive action, though analysts were upbeat about the end of the year.

The retreat in equities comes after a recent run-up across world markets fuelled by bets the US central bank has finished lifting interest rates as inflation comes down and the jobs market comes off the boil.

The main focus this week is the release Thursday of the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index, the Fed's preferred gauge of inflation.

"These numbers will be closely scrutinised for insights into inflation trends and their potential implications for monetary policy decisions," said SPI Asset Management's Stephen Innes.

"While the current back-drop does not signify 'mission accomplished' in terms of addressing inflation, policymakers must now focus on planning for the next phase of the economic battle." After a tepid half-day of business Friday in New York, Asia drifted lower.

Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tokyo, Sydney, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei, Mumbai, Bangkok and Wellington were all in the red.

London and Frankfurt fell at the open, and Paris was flat. Still, observers were upbeat about the outlook, with the latest weakness blamed on traders taking a breather after a strong month.

Tony Sycamore, at IG Group, said early December could see some

selling as investors "rebuild energy and (look) to set up for the end-of-year fireworks".

Others said a drop in Wall Street's VIX "fear gauge" -- a measure of equity volatility -- to its lowest since January 2020 suggested investors were getting their mojo back.

Eyes are also on developments at OPEC after the group and its allies delayed a meeting aimed at agreeing production quotas, with some African countries said to be balking at Saudi Arabian calls for more cuts.

The group is thought to be close to reaching an agreement that could see the Saudis and Russia extend output reductions into the new year.

Crude prices have fallen in recent weeks as demand is seen coming down owing to slowing economies, particularly China's, and the Middle East conflict appears to not have expanded to include other countries in the region.

# Rupee shed 27 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Monday witnessed 27 paise devaluation against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 285.64 against the previous day's closing at Rs285.37.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 285.2 and Rs 2888 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs 1.41 to close at Rs312.72 against the last day's closing of Rs311.31, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen gained one paise to close at Rs1.91; whereas an increase of Rs2.06 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs360.25 as compared to the last closing of Rs358.19. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 07 and 08 paise to close at Rs77.77 and Rs76.16 respectively.



SIALKOT: DPO Mohammad Hasan Iqbal along with Vice President Chamber of Commerce Amir Majeed Sheikh and Nasir Salim Mirza giving cash evasion to police staff on recovery of robbery.

## Gas theft crackdown continued

### F.P. Report

LAHORE: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 69 connections while 173 under billing cases processed and imposed fine Rs 2.53 million.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 8 connections on illegal use of gas while another 9 on use of compressor.

In Bahawalpur the company disconnected one connection on use of compressor.

The regional team in Multan disconnected 2 connections on illegal use of gas and another 3 on compressor use, 68 under billing cases have been processed. The team imposed fine of Rs 0.11 million against gas pilfers.

In Peshawar and Karak, the company disconnected 32 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal use of gas.15 under billing cases have been processed and amount of Rs 0.09 million against gas theft and under billing cases.

The regional team in Islamabad disconnected 1 connection on illegal use of gas. The regional team of Mardan processed 60 under billing cases.

In Sahiwal, one connection was disconnected on illegal use of gas.

In Faisalabad region 10 under billing cases have been processed. The team of Sheikhupura 11 connections on illegal use of gas disconnected and 20 under billing cases have been processed and amount of Rs 2.33 million booked against under billing and gas theft cases.

The team of Gujarat disconnected one connection on illegal use of gas.

# PSX gains 725 points to close at 59,811

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 724.99 points, a positive change of 1.23 percent, closing at 59,811.34 points against 59,086.35 points the previous trading day.

A total of 657,580,760 shares valuing Rs 20.272 billion were traded during the day as compared to 658,424,782 shares valuing Rs 22.015 billion the last day.

Some 391 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 245 of them recorded gains and 121 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 25 remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Kohinoor

Spinning with 109,392,000 shares at Rs4.00 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 43,313,979 shares at Rs 1.52 per share and Yousuf Weaving with 22,758,500 shares at Rs 4.24 per share.

Hoechst Pak Ltd witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 88.11 per share price, closing at Rs 1,263.00, whereas the runner-up was Ismail Ind with a Rs 75.12 rise in its per share price to Rs 1,076.72.

Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 117.50 per share closing at Rs 8,450.00, followed by Rafhan Maize with a Rs 91.97 decline to close at Rs 10,390.38.

**Gold rates up by Rs 1,100 to Rs 217,600 per tola:** The per tola price of

24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,100 and was sold at Rs 217,600 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs 216,500 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 943 to Rs 186,557 from Rs185,614 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 170,010146 from Rs 170,146, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola increased by Rs.70 and was sold at Rs.2,620 whereas that of ten gram Silver went up by Rs.60 to2,246.21 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$8 to \$2,030 from \$2,022, the Association reported.

# ICCI declares supportive industrial policy vital

ISLAMABAD (INP): President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari welcomed the constitution of an Industry Advisory Council led by Dr. Gohar Ejaz, Federal Minister for Commerce to formulate the country's industrial policy and stressed that the new industrial policy should be supportive of the SMEs.

In a statement issued on Monday, Ahsan Bakhtawari said that SMEs were the backbone of our economy as besides promoting the economic activities and exports, they play a vital role in job creation, poverty reduction, and innovation. Therefore,

it was very important that the new industrial policy should focus on supporting the SMEs so that these businesses could play a more effective role in reviving the economy.

He said that the new industrial policy should ensure easier access to finance for SMEs for expansion and growth and help in their capacity building.

He said that the new industrial policy should offer good incentives for SMEs to adopt modern technologies and digital solutions in order to improve their productivity and competitiveness.

The ICCI President said that market access is a major issue for SMEs in

Pakistan and the new industrial policy should envisage measures to connect SMEs with domestic and international markets, simplify export procedures for these businesses and provide SMEs support in meeting the quality and compliance standards.

He said that the new industrial policy should focus on simplification of regulatory requirements for SMEs and provide them a single-window solution for various approvals and permits. He said that the reliable and affordable energy supply to SMEs is the key for their smooth growth and stressed that the new industrial policy should address this major issue.

## Haier and Imbaco furnishers collaborations:

# IMARAT builders mall continues to elevate shopping experience

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: IMARAT Builders Mall, the epitome of construction and interior shopping in the twin cities, proudly announces two significant collaborations that promise to redefine home living and interior spaces for its esteemed customers. In an exciting development, Pakistan's biggest builders' mall has inked strategic agreements with renowned brands Haier and Imbaco Furnishers, enriching its diverse portfolio of offerings. Located on GT Road Islamabad, IBM is ideally located to cater to residents of twin cities, especially those residing in the surrounding DHA.

**Haier: Elevating Homes with Cutting-Edge Appliances**

IMARAT Builders Mall is thrilled to welcome Haier, a global leader in home appliances, to its distinguished roster of partners. The collaboration with Haier marks a monumental step in providing customers with access to a comprehensive range of cutting-edge home appliances. The product line, featuring refrigerators, air conditioners, washing machines, microwaves, ovens, and Small Domestic Appliances (SDA), aligns perfectly with IMARAT Builders Mall's commitment to delivering top-notch



solutions for modern living. Shafiq Akbar, Chairman of IMARAT Group, expressed his enthusiasm about the collaboration, stating, "We are delighted to join hands with Haier, a brand synonymous with innovation and quality. This partnership allows us to enhance the shopping experience for our customers by offering state-of-the-art home appliances that cater to their evolving needs."

As IMARAT Builders Mall continues to evolve as the preferred destination for all construction and home-related needs, the addition of Haier to its portfolio underscores its dedication to providing a one-stop solution for customers seeking excellence in home living.

**Imbaco Furnishers: Transforming Spaces with**

**Exceptional Furniture**

In another remarkable collaboration, IMARAT Builders Mall is proud to announce its partnership with Imbaco Furnishers, a trusted local name in furniture industry. Imbaco Furnishers specializes in offering a wide array of furniture, including pieces for offices, homes, interiors, and fabrics. This collaboration aims to provide customers with diverse choices and high-quality solutions for creating personalized and aesthetically pleasing living and working spaces.

Farhan Javed, Group Director, shared his thoughts on the collaboration, saying, "Our association with Imbaco Furnishers reflects our commitment to curate a comprehensive collection for our

customers. Imbaco's expertise in providing quality furniture aligns seamlessly with our vision of making IMARAT Builders Mall the ultimate destination for all interior needs."

With these new collaborations, IMARAT Builders Mall continues to solidify its position as a hub for innovation and excellence in construction, home living, and interior solutions. The partnerships with Haier and Imbaco Furnishers promise to elevate the mall's offerings, providing customers with unparalleled choices and exceptional quality for their homes and workspaces. The IMARAT Group looks forward to the positive impact these collaborations will have on enhancing the overall shopping experience for its valued patrons.





## In brief

## PJF to arrange training trip

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Judo Federation (PJF) will send a group of 10 to 12 talented athletes to three Central Asia countries for a training programme, commencing in May 2024. "We are in talks with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan's national judo bodies for the training of our judokas in their countries," Masood Ahmed, the vice president of PJF told APP on Monday. Masood, who returned to the country last week after attending the Asian Cadet and Junior Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan said the three-month training programme would help polish Pakistan judokas skills, preparing them for future international assignments. "These countries have excellent training facilities and top-level coaching staff. I'm sure the training there will help hone our judokas' skills according to the demand of the current times," he said. According to Masood, the out-of-country training trip will expose the judokas to a new culture. "Alongside the training, they will also feature in various events, taking place in those countries almost at the same time (the period of their training). "The opportunities of playing overseas with some of the world's best athletes will help make them better," he added. He said the federation wanted to create a long-term pathway for talented cadets, and junior and senior judokas.

## 'Bangladesh is a tough place to play Tests'

WELLINGTON (Agencies): New Zealand's captain Tim Southee said on Monday he was looking forward to his side's Test series against Bangladesh, saying he hoped the Kiwis spinners would outwit their "strong" opponents. "The guys have a great desire for Test cricket," Tim Southee said ahead of the opening match of the two-Test series in Bangladesh's north-eastern city Sylhet on Tuesday. "They say it is the pinnacle of the game. Whenever we play Test cricket, it is always special. We love and prioritise Test cricket," he added. New Zealand won the title of the opening World Test Championship in 2021 but finished sixth in the next cycle, which ended in 2023 with Australia beating India in the final. The Kiwis have not won a Test in Bangladesh since their three-wicket win in Chittagong in 2008. Their next three Tests, including both matches in a 2013 series, ended in a draw. "The start of the new cycle is exciting," Tim Southee added. "It is a tough place to play Tests. Bangladesh are strong in these conditions." Tim Southee said he hoped his spinners would tip the balance in their favour. "It is foreign conditions compared to New Zealand — pace plays a big role in New Zealand, spin historically plays a big role in this part of the world," Tim Southee said. "Our spinners have done some great things in Tests. We are looking forward to them showcasing their skills." The visitors named a spin-heavy squad for the upcoming series, with Mitchell Santner and Ajaz Patel joining Ish Sodhi along with two spin all-rounders, Glenn Phillips and Rachin Ravindra. Earlier this year, New Zealand ended their 15-year wait to win a series in Bangladesh, beating the home side 2-0 in the three-match one-day international series in September before they travelled to India for the ODI World Cup.

## PCB set to delay Haris Rauf's NOC for BBL

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Haris Rauf's involvement at the BBL is set to hit a snag, with the Pakistan Cricket Board expected to delay the No-Objection Certificate he requires to participate in the league.

ESPNcricinfo understands Rauf's NOC is almost certain to be delayed until at least December 11, four days after the BBL begins. There is no confirmation that it will be issued immediately after. Mohammad Hafeez is scheduled to hold a press conference in Lahore ahead of the Pakistan team's departure to Australia, and it is understood light on Rauf's situation will also be shed.

The official reason for the delay is that the National T20 Cup in Pakistan runs until December 10, a tournament the PCB expects Rauf to participate in its entirety. Last week, Pakistan's newly appointed chief selector Wahab Riaz announced that Rauf had declined to take part in Pakistan's Test series in Australia in December-January.

Wahab did not make any attempt to hide his displeasure at Rauf's decision, though each party disputes the specif-



ic version of events that led up to that point. But in his role as chief selector, Wahab has significant influence in which players are issued NOCs - and when - with no guarantee yet of this standoff being resolved amicably.

Rauf's absence from the BBL is also likely to ruffle feathers with the league, and particularly with Melbourne Stars, who signed the Pakistan fast bowler as a marquee player. It was initially assumed Rauf would only be unavailable from the BBL for the duration of Pakistan's five-match T20 series in New Zealand in mid-January, but further

delays will throw a spanner in the works of that league, too.

That is especially true since Rauf's availability has been heavily used as a marketing tool for the BBL this year, as the league - and Cricket Australia in general - looks to target their domestic South Asian audience in a concerted marketing strategy. The Melbourne Stars introduced what they called "House of Rauf" Membership on sale for the first three games at the MCG this year, as well as Haris Rauf Bay, a specifically dedicated seating zone.

If Rauf's NOC situation drags on, it may raise concerns with Pakistan's centrally contracted players in general. Protracted contract negotiations between the PCB and the players hit a snag partially because of disagreements between each party about how many foreign leagues the players would be permitted to play each year. It is understood they settled on two, though participation in any league remained subject to the PCB issuing an NOC.

The BBL runs from December 7, 2023 to January 24 next year.

## Pakistan No. 2 Shoaib and Saqib reach KP Tennis final

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan No. 2 devis cupper Shoaib Khan and SNGPL's Saqib Umar qualified for the men's singles final of DIG Amanullah Memorial Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Open Tennis Championship.

In first semifinal Saqib Umar of SNGPL beat Inam Gul of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by 6-4 and 6-3. Muhammad Uzair defeated Shayan Afridi by 7, 6, 6, 1. In the second semi-final, Hamza Roman defeated Shah Sawar by 7, 5, 6, 3 and qualified for the final.

In under-10 categories, Muhammad Faizan reached the final beating Hasan by 6-1, 6-2. Provincial Tennis Association General Secretary Omar Ayaz Khalil, coaches, Nauman Khan, Zakirullah, Shehryar, Shah Hussain and Shahid were present.

## Moeen Ali confident of claiming AD T10 title

ISLAMABAD (APP): England's star all-rounder and captain of Morrisville Samp Army Moeen Ali is confident of winning the Abu Dhabi (AD) T10 title, getting underway from Tuesday at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi.

A total of eight outifts will feature in the prestigious event. "We had missed out on the last occasion. We came agonizingly close to winning the title but missed it by a whisker. We are confident of putting up a better performance this time around to emerge victorious," Moeen said in a statement.

"We have a very strong squad. There are hard-hitting batsmen, ferocious pacers and wily spinners. It is the well-balanced squad. I think we stand a great chance of winning the title," added the England all-rounder, who came out of retirement earlier this year to play in the Ashes against Australia.

Abu Dhabi T10 is one of its kind tournament in the world. It is shortest-format league of cricket, which is sanctioned by ICC, affiliated with Emirates Cricket Board and organised under the patronage of Abu Dhabi Cricket Council. Defending champions Deccan Gladiators and New York Strikers, will get the ball rolling in the opening game of the tournament. Apart from the two teams, Northern Warriors, Morrisville Samp Army, Delhi Bulls, Team Abu Dhabi, Bengal Tigers and Chennai Braves are also part of the T10 cricket tournament.

The 12-day tournament will conclude on December 9. After the completion of the primarily round, the final top-four teams will qualify for the play-offs. Qualifier 1 will see top two teams locking horns on December 8, whereas the third and fourth team will play the eliminator match.

The winner of the eliminator will play the loser of Qualifier 1 for a place in the final while the winner of the Qualifier 1 will directly move to the final showdown. Samp Army who had finished on the second spot in the 2022 edition of the tournament will start their campaign against Northern Warriors in the second match of the opening day.

Samp Army owner Ritesh Patel said they are into expansion mode. "We are expanding our franchise. We are already having teams in US and Zimbabwe version of T10 tournaments. We are exploring more opportunities to spread our wings," he explained. Moeen believes some changes will take place in the England squad after their dismal performance at the 2023 ODI World Cup.

England crashed out of the World Cup before the knock-out stages. They came into the showpiece event as the firm favourites but failed to live up to the expectations. "It was very disappointing performance by us. We failed to deliver in every aspect of the game. We did not play to our potential. I hope there will be some big changes in the England team," said Moeen. England got their campaign off to a disastrous start against 2019 runners-up New Zealand. They failed to get over the bad start and kept on slumping to new lows as they were beaten by even Afghanistan.

## Ibrahim Mohib won the Aitchison National Squash Championship



F.P. Report

Hussain (Echisan).

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Army's Ibrahim Mohib once again achieved great success and won the champion trophy of Aitchison National Squash Championship.

Under-13, 17 and 19 category competitions were held in the Achison National Squash Championship played at Achison College Lahore, in which 120 players from all over the country participated fully. Reached the final, while in the final he faced Ibrahim Zeib of PAF, in the final Ibrahim Mohib defeated 3-1.

In the first set, Ibrahim Mohib won, in the second set his opponent had the advantage, after which Ibrahim Mohib was successful in the third and fourth sets. Their score was 11-7, 7-11, 12-10, 11-8. The minutes lasted for 40 minutes. In the U-13 final, Sohail Adnan defeated Punjab's Syed Muhammad

Nadeem won the trophy by defeating Kaleemullah of Punjab by 3-0. On the occasion of the final, Aitchison College Lahore Principal Michael A. Thomas and Prima Malik MD Hamish Khan gave trophies and cash prizes to the players who took prominent positions.

While talking to the media, Ibrahim Mohib expressed his determination that his efforts are continuing to move forward in squash, God willing, he will give Pakistan a positive identity in the world like his grandfather World Champion Mohibullah Khan and Jan Sher Khan.

He thanked Director Pakistan Army Sports, Secretary Army Squash Major Salman and MD PSO Syed Mohammad Taha for their cooperation and Army Squash Coach Asif Khan and Coach Adil Khan who worked hard with him.

## Pakistan teq ball team leaves for world championship in Thailand

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan's teq ball team has left for Thailand to participate in the World Teq Ball Championship to be held from November 29 to December 4, 2023. Jalaluddin to lead the team as captain, other players included Hidayat-ur-Rehman and Shal Akbar reserve one.

Akhtar Rasool as manager and Abu Bakkar is accompanying team as coach. Teq ball game founder in Pakistan Mian Absar Ali, and Teq ball federation executive member from Sindh Nawaz Gazdar also accompanying the team.

Pakistan team will play in singles and doubles events, more than one hundred countries from all over



the world would compete in the championship, an official of Pakistan Teq ball federation said.

He said it was first time that an Asian country is hosting the world event.

Meanwhile, Senior Vice President Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Teq ball Association, Zia Ul Haq, has lauded the squad and said that soon after the world championship, Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa teq ball championship will organize provincial championship.

Rahat Mian, Chairman of Pakistan Tagball Federation said that Pakistan Tagball Federation will soon launch training camps and coaching courses across the country.

Teqball was declared as fastest growing sports of the World four years back, and still considered the fastest growing sports at World level. Pakistan Teqball Federation and Teqball circles in Pakistan adopted same pattern and worked hard to develop and promote the game all over the country, which yielding results in all province, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## Pakistan women's team preparing for New Zealand challenge

CHRISTCHURCH (PPI): Pakistan women's team have arrived in Christchurch, New Zealand and held their first training session at Bert Sutcliffe Oval in Lincoln University in Christchurch today. The 17-member squad captained by Nida Dar, underwent a three-hour training session supervised by the coaching staff led by interim head coach Mauhashim Rashid, PCB said on Monday.

Pakistan women's team will feature in a three-match T20I series as well as three ODIs against New Zealand from 3 to 18 December. The ODIs are part of the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25, where the touring side has played 15 matches and earned 14 points.

The series matches will be played in Dunedin, Queenstown and Christchurch. Before the commencement of the white-ball series, the Pakistan women's team will feature in two practice games against New Zealand XI. The 50-over match against New Zealand XI will take place tomorrow at Bert Sutcliffe Oval, while the T20 match against the same side will be staged on Thursday at the same venue.

Both matches will be live-streamed on New Zealand YouTube channel and the first ball will be bowled at 11am local time. The 17-member contingent includes 27-year-old Umm-e-Hani, who made her ODI debut against Ireland in Lahore in November 2022. She also represented the team in T20I this year against South Africa. In her short career, the off-spinner has bagged 11 wickets from 13 international matches. Umm-e-Hani is traveling to New Zealand for the first time and is eager to perform well for the team.

After the training session, she talked to PCB Digital, saying, "It was a good first session today and the players are trying to adapt to the conditions that are different to those back home. "The practice matches before the series are very important for us as they will help us better adapt to the conditions here and we can go into the series better prepared. "I have worked hard with the coaches on improving my skills as an all-round cricketer. I will try to play the role required in the team and adjust according to the situation of the match."

**Pakistan squad:** Nida Dar (captain), Aliya Riaz, Bismah Maroof, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Ghulam Fatima, Muneeba Ali (wk), Najjha Alvi (wk), Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Parvaiz, Omaira Sohail, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Shawaal Zulfiqar, Sidra Amin, Umm-e-Hani and Waheeda Akhtar

Series schedule: 28 Nov – 50-over warm-up match v NZXI, Bert Sutcliffe Oval, Lincoln University (11am local time)

30 Nov – T20 warm-up match v NZXI, Bert Sutcliffe Oval, Lincoln University (11am local time)

3 Dec – 1st T20I, Dunedin (1pm local time)

5 Dec – 2nd T20I, Dunedin (1pm local time)

9 Dec – 3rd T20I, Queenstown (1pm local time)

12 Dec – 1st ODI, Queenstown (11am local time) (ICC Women's Championship)

15 Dec – 2nd ODI, Christchurch (2pm local time) (ICC Women's Championship)

18 Dec – 3rd ODI, Christchurch (2pm local time) (ICC Women's Championship)

## Garnacho stunner helps Man Utd quell Everton fury

LIVERPOOL (AFP): Manchester United rubbed salt into Everton's wounds as Alejandro Garnacho's stunning overhead kick helped the Red Devils to a 3-0 win that left the Toffees rooted in the Premier League relegation zone.

Everton's first match since receiving a 10-point deduction for breaches of financial rules was met with a furious response at Goodison Park as the home support held up thousands of placards labelling the Premier League "corrupt".

But the match was only three minutes old when Garnacho produced a sublime piece of skill that will go down as one of the great Premier League goals.

The 19-year-old Argentine sprang to meet Diogo Dalot's hanging cross flush on the volley and fire into Jordan Pickford's top left-hand corner. "I cannot believe it. To be honest I just turned around and thought 'oh my God'," said Garnacho.

That moment of magic was out of keeping with another patchy United performance, but Marcus Rashford's penalty and Anthony Martial's strike ensured Erik ten Hag's men



have now won five of their last six league games.

"It was a fantastic goal. (The) season is still many games to play but probably already the goal of the season," said Ten Hag. "We knew beforehand it was going to be difficult but we enjoy those challenges."

United climb up to sixth in the table and within six points of leaders Arsenal despite a troubled season.

The visitors had to cope with a febrile atmosphere as the Everton support took out their frustrations on the authorities for being handed the most severe sporting sanction in Premier League history. After two seasons battling relegation, Sean Dyche's men looked to have pulled clear of trouble

thanks to a fine recent run of form. But they are now off the bottom of the table only on goal difference and five points adrift of safety.

Everton were left to rue a series of missed chances after Garnacho stunned the raucous home support early on. Dominic Calvert-Lewin twice failed to make the most of excellent headed chances.

Mainoo shines Teenager Kobbie Mainoo shone on his first Premier League start for United and only a goalline clearance from the midfielder denied Dwight McNeil an equaliser after Andre Onana parried Calvert-Lewin's initial effort. Abdoulaye Doucoure then slotted another glorious opportunity wide as Everton

failed to press home their dominance before the break.

And the feeling among the home support that the world is against them was not helped when VAR intervened early in the second period to award United a controversial penalty.

Referee John Brooks had initially booked Martial for diving as he went down in the box under a challenge from Ashley Young.

The contact appeared minimal for VAR to get involved, but Brooks overturned his decision after viewing a replay.

"The VAR thing this year, it's been all over the place. It's the simplest thing but it seems to be mayhem all the time," said Dyche. "You're 2-0 down all of a sudden from a nothing moment, one you think has gone for you."

Bruno Fernandes handed responsibility from the spot to Rashford and the England international took the chance to smash home his first club goal since September 3.

"Marcus needed a bit of confidence, he needed his goal," said Fernandes. "He is an excellent penalty taker. I was sure he could score that penalty and Marcus did it perfectly."

## Shiffrin wins slalom for 90th WC victory



KILLINGTON (AP): Mikaela Shiffrin has extended her record of World Cup wins to 90.

And she has done so in style. The American two-time Olympic champion dominated a slalom Sunday, pleasing the home crowd by posting the fastest time in both runs on the Superstar course and beating her Slovakian rival Petra Vlhova by 0.33 seconds.

"It's amazing to do this, especially here, with the home crowd," said Shiffrin, who is from Colorado but can almost consider Killington a hometown race because she honed her skills nearby at the Burke Mountain Academy as a teenager. "It's just such a good vibe and there's a little extra intensity because we want this to be good for you guys to watch. I hope it was a good show," she addressed the spectators in a course-side interview.

Shiffrin was put to the test by a frenetic second run from Vlhova, the Olympic champion who led the race by more than a second with only the American left in the start gate. Shiffrin lost half of her first-run lead of 0.28 seconds at the first split, but she gradually gained time on Vlhova again. After crossing the finish, Shiffrin briefly bent forward before getting up and showing the crowd a few fist pumps.

"It feels really good. It's amazing to race in front of this crowd no matter what. Being in a position to win is something different, that's really spectacular," she said.

Shiffrin collected her 90 wins from 254 starts on the World Cup since her 2011 debut on the circuit two days before her 16th birthday. She won her first race at a slalom in Sweden in December 2012 and set the record for most World Cup wins across genders when passing Swedish great Ingemar Stenmark's mark of 86 in a race at the same resort in Sweden last March.

Sunday's result marked her 55th win in slalom; no other skier, male or female, has ever won more than 46 races in a single discipline. Vlhova had won the first slalom of the season in Finland two weeks ago and held a clear lead over Shiffrin in the second race the next day, but then she straddled a gate and handed victory to the American. On Sunday, however, Vlhova made Shiffrin work hard for the win.

"I'm satisfied with my second run," Vlhova said. "But first run, I didn't go well. I lost in the first run, but the second run was a good show. Mikaela, she was stronger than me." Shiffrin has won six of the seven slaloms at the annual World Cup weekend on the East Coast, with her streak interrupted last year, when she led after the first run but finished fifth as Wendy Holdener and Anna Swenn Larsson shared the victory. Before her second run Sunday, Shiffrin recalled what happened last year.

"This kind of moments, you can call it a disappointment ... those are the things that stick with me more than winning actually does. So, I always feel more doubt in myself than confidence, because of races like here last year. That's something that really fuels me," she said. Holdener finished third this time, trailing Shiffrin by 1.37 seconds. Lena Duerr of Germany dropped from second to fourth.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 90,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 90,000 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 43,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1500.94 feet and was 100.94 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 22,400 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1179.05 feet, which was 129.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 5,600 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 46,000, 43,500, 39,900 and 17,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 7,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### 4 more diagnosed with dengue virus

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as four more dengue cases were reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 2,668 in the district. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood, Monday said that, among the new cases, two of each case had arrived from Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi and Potohar town urban area. He added that presently 22 patients were admitted to district hospitals of which 12 were confirmed cases while 2,654 were discharged after treatment. The health officer added that though dengue cases were decreasing sharply with changing weather, there was a need to remain vigilant as mosquito was taking place indoors due to favourable environment.

### DG PHA visits city parks

RAWALPINDI (APP): Director General (DG), Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi, Ahmad Hassan Ranjha here on Monday visited different city parks and reviewed the ongoing beautification work. The DG directed the authorities concerned to complete the beautification work as soon as possible. Ahmed Hassan Ranjha also inspected cleanliness arrangements and instructed the officials concerned to provide all basic facilities in the parks. He informed that the authority was utilizing all available resources to make the city clean and green and uplift the parks. The authorities concerned had been directed to complete ongoing renovation and beautification work of all the parks within the shortest possible time frame, he said adding, that efforts were also being made to repair faulty lights, swings and walking tracks besides improving the security of the parks. The PHA officers had also been instructed to utilize all available resources to ensure the provision of the best recreational facilities to the public in all the parks of the town, he added. The PHA was planting maximum saplings and enhancing greenery, particularly in parks and green belts of the city, he added. During the visit, the officers concerned of PHA were also present.



RAWALPINDI: Lieutenant General Fahad Bin Abdullah Muhammad Al Mutair, Commander of the Royal Saudi Land Forces called on General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee.

## Govt to launch national program on hepatitis, diabetes

ISLAMABAD (APP): The inter-ministerial meeting chaired by caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Monday decided to launch National Diabetes, Hepatitis and National Health Support Programs. The meeting was attended by all provincial ministers and their representatives. It took major decisions with consequences taking up ten point major reform agenda for the transformation of the health sector in the country.

It was decided to launch National Diabetes Program costing Rs. 6.8 billion in view of the high prevalence of this non-communicable diseases in the country. The program will have a major impact on arresting the high incidence of the disease in Pakistan.

Free screening and diagnosis facilities will be provided to the patients under this landmark initiative.

It was also agreed to launch National Hepatitis Program at the cost of Rs. 34.5 billion under which free screening, diagnoses and treatment facilities will be provided across the country.

To strengthen primary health care it was decided

to launch National Health Support Program at the cost of Rs. 430 million.

Around 500 BHU will be refurbished and will be made functional across the country.

The provincial governments will bear the recurrent cost including the appointment of human resource.

To decrease neonatal morbidity and mortality newborn strategy was endorsed, which will be implemented throughout the country.

It will ensure the supplies and availability of medicines at the primary health care level.

National Behaviour Change Strategy will be introduced to equip the population with the necessary knowledge to practice health behaviours.

Consonant with this responsibility Federal Ministry of Health has been striving to provide suitable platforms to ensure harmonization of various areas in health and population, particularly those which require a coordinated national approach and face common critical challenges.

The role of this forum is to provide national leadership, coordination and align roles and

responsibilities of all stakeholders on national priorities and international commitments and also generate consensus on actions to address bottlenecks in implementation related to policy and strategic issues.

This forum also provides an excellent opportunity to undertake joint performance reviews and enhance mutual accountability.

Some important areas were discussed in the meeting namely co-financing hepatitis and diabetes project, updated on NHSP CMU for GF ATM at the provincial level, refurbishment of BHUs across the country, National New-born survival strategy and National Behaviour Change Strategy etc.

All the provincial ministers welcomed the initiatives and appreciated the ministry's effort of coordination in the health and population sector.

They said that there is no difference of opinion in any of the areas. "We need to work together for the people for better health outcomes.

We look up to the Federal Government for stewardship and technical support and better donor coordination."

## 10 illegal arm holders arrested during raid

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested 10 illegal arm holders and liquor suppliers besides recovering arms, ammunition from their possession during crackdown here on Monday. According to police spokesman, Pirwadhai police held Dilwar and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his possession. Similarly, Waris Khan police nabbed Samar and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his custody and 01 pistol 30 bore was recovered from Muhammad Wasim.

While, New Town police arrested Kashan and recovered 32 bore revolver and 01 pistol 30 bore was recovered from Wasim.

Following operation, Naseerabad police recovered 01 pistol 9mm from Farooq, Taxila police arrested Muneeb and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his possession.

Sadiqabad police held Akram and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his custody and 08 liters of liquor was recovered from Pervez. Rata Amaral Police recovered 30 liters of liquor from Shahzad.

Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress.

Divisional SPs appreciated the performance of police teams said that the crackdown will be continued against liquor suppliers and illegal arms holders.

## 11 held for decanting LPG

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested 11 persons for illegally decanting the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in cylinders.

A police spokesperson said Police have also confiscated LPG cylinders and refilling gadgets from their possession and registered separate cases against the accused. Sadiqabad police conducted a raid and arrested those who were identified as Imran, Shafiq, Mohammad Ismail and Mumtaz Khan.

Similarly, Waris Khan police carried out the operation and held those who were identified as Asad, Waqas and Rahim.

While taking action, Bani police nabbed two accused Zhair and Khair Muhammad and recovered illegally refilled gas cylinders and equipment from their possession.

## No wheat shortage; ample stocks in country: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Information, Murtaza Solangi on Monday said Pakistan currently had ample wheat stocks and concrete measures would be initiated to address any flour shortage due to supply chain problems.

Responding to a motion under Rule 218 by Senator Sania Nishtar, focused on addressing gaps in the wheat supply chain that may lead to flour shortage, the minister stated that currently there was no wheat shortage in the country.

Senator Nishtar had pointed out the specific lacuna in wheat policy, citing the conversion of green bags to white bags at the retail level. She also hinted at the smuggling as a factor, contributing to wheat shortages in addition to creation of systematic artificial shortages and hoarding.

The minister emphasized that there was an adequate stock of wheat in the country as public wheat stock included 39,24,367 metric tons in Punjab, 8,17,394 metric tons in Sindh, 2,15,082 metric tons in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 89,354 metric tons in Balochistan. Pakistan Agricultural Storage & Services Corporation Ltd (PASSCO) accounted for 17,18,177 metric tons, he added. Private wheat stock comprises 3,37,270 metric tons in Punjab, 93,165

metric tons in Sindh, 14,918 metric tons in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 4,157 metric tons in Balochistan.

The Minister for Parliamentary Affairs said that Pakistan had over seven million (7,213,884) metric tons of wheat, with an additional imported stock of 10,33,845 metric tons, ensuring there was no shortage. He said the support price for provinces differed, being Rs 4600 in Punjab and Rs 4700 in Sindh.

During discussions on the motion, Senator Dilawar Khan said that Pakistan should export wheat rather than its import and called for concessions to the agriculture sector. Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidri highlighted Balochistan's agricultural challenges, emphasizing the lack of canal systems. He expressed concern about the removal of subsidies for poor farmers on electricity. Senators Dr. Zargha Suhrawardy Taimur and Rukhsana Zuberi stressed the need for a concrete solution to address the issue.

The minister acknowledged the collective wisdom of the Senate which ultimately provided guidance to the government. He said that discussions on the topic would be tabled before the Cabinet and Prime Minister for positive consideration.

## Pakistan, UAE show keenness to enhance strategic cooperation, strong bilateral ties: Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the UAE, Faisal Niaz Tirmizi Monday welcomed the Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar's visit to United Arab Emirates (UAE) said that both nations were keen to enhance their strategic cooperation and economic, commercial and development integration to shape a better future.

"A number of MoUs are expected to be signed during the visit of the Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar to United Arab Emirates particularly in the field of energy, banking sector, civil aviation and others", he said while talking to PTV news channel.

The two sides were also highlighting the abundant economic potential and distinguished opportunities

that could be generated through strengthening of the strategic partnership between the two countries and increasing joint investments, stressing the importance of highlighting promising sectors to investors in both countries, he mentioned, Energy, Aviation, ports, food security, and banking sectors would be the focus areas of PM's visit in which the two countries would review the progress in bilateral relations after they ink a landmark trade agreements, he added. "Pakistan warmly welcomes this brotherly gesture and has a keen interest to welcome significant investments from the Emirati brothers," he added. The bilateral trade between the two countries was \$10 billion and it had a great potential to be

increased, he said, adding, over 1.8 million Pakistanis were serving in the UAE.

The United Arab Emirates still needed more skilled workers in different sectors, the ambassador highlighted. However, we would be looking at more opportunities for Pakistanis in this regard, he added.

The Prime Minister would be leading the Pakistani delegation at the COP-28 summit, he said, adding, it was a timely summit for countries like Pakistan in terms of climate change. Pakistan had played a leading role in all international discussions with regard to the environment, he noted.

Replying a query, the ambassador said we needed consistency in the economic policies whichever government came in power.

## HEC calls for applications from private sector institutions to recognise their BICs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has called for application for recognition of Business Incubation Centers (BICs) aims to facilitate young and budding entrepreneurs through administrative, consulting, and networking services with provision of in-expensive startup spaces. According to HEC official sources, the applications are invited from higher education institutions (private sector) to recognise their BICs.

As per details, the institution should have an operational BIC in line with the minimum requirements as per HEC BIC Policy 2021. They also have an HEC-recognised/funded BIC under the consortia model.

Furthermore, the institu-

tions must have proven and tangible research commercialization and entrepreneurial ecosystem.

It is worth mention here that recognition of BICs does not involve any funding and financial commitment from the commission.

The official sources added that HEC encouraged development of innovative companies, startups, and spin-offs to stimulate and support economic growth through rigorous incubation process.

The BICs are active players for creation of new jobs, and revival of innovative communities.

The commission is offering two routes for interested universities to establish their BICs.

The proposals for estab-

lishment of BIC at Public Sector HEIs are invited through Call for proposals.

The public sector HEIs having HEC recognized and fully functional ORIC interested in establishment of Business Incubation Center can apply of establishment of BIC.

The private sector universities which have established the incubation facility through their own resources, and are not part of the HEC led entrepreneurial initiatives and programs can apply for recognition of their BIC to HEC.

The recognition of BIC is open for application submissions throughout the year. For further details, the HEC asked the candidates to visit useful resources section or write to us at [bic@hec.gov.pk](mailto:bic@hec.gov.pk).

## Edu minister honors 30 students with NEF awards

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindh on Monday honoured 30 exceptional students with National Education Foundation (NEF) merit-based awards.

Emphasizing the critical role of quality and skill-based education in navigating the country through financial challenges, the minister underscored the importance of well-prepared educators in shaping a brighter future for children.

Addressing the award distribution ceremony as the chief guest, Minister Sindh commended the outstanding achievements of 30 students, each of whom was presented with a Merit Award of Rs 100,000.

The event drew the participation of heads of departments from the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, parents, students (children of Federal

Government teachers), and members of the media fraternity.

Minister Madad Ali Sindh reiterated that education is the fundamental right of every child and a cornerstone for national progress.

In the contemporary era, no nation can thrive without a commitment to quality education. Human Resource Development, central to government policy, relies on education as a fundamental force in shaping human social capital. He expressed confidence that the initiatives of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training will elevate the state of education in the country, fostering holistic development and economic growth. Commending the National Education Foundation for its commendable efforts in providing free basic and skill-based education to the Khawajasara Community, Minister Sindh also praised the

foundation and the Ministry for their impactful awareness and enrollment campaigns for out-of-school children (OOSC) in the ICT region.

During the ceremony, Managing Director Ms. Tahira S. Shaikh shared that the National Education Foundation has awarded scholarships to over 6000 children of Federal Government teachers (ICT) since 1998. The Merit Award is bestowed upon children of F.G. Teachers who have secured a minimum of 80% marks in their intermediate examinations and gained fresh admission into any degree program in public sector Medical and Engineering institutions or any public university recognized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) on a merit basis.

Ms. Shaikh highlighted that this award serves as recognition for students who excel academically, securing admissions through fierce competition and merit.

## ANF recovers 420 kg drugs in seven operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country managed to recover over 420 kg of drugs and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that in an operation, ANF recovered 800 grams of Ice drug from a parcel booked for Bahrain at a courier office in Rawalpindi.

100 intoxicated tablets (ecstasy) were recovered from an accused netted from Bhara Khau in Islamabad.

In the third operation, 24 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Sher Shah Toll Plaza, Multan while an accused was arrested.

25.2 kg of hashish was recovered

from a vehicle stopped on Super Highway Karachi.

An accused was also sent behind the bars. 15.6 kg hashish was recovered from secret cavities of a vehicle near PDA Motorway Peshawar. ANF also netted an accused.

75 kg Ice drug was recovered from an abandoned vehicle in the Bonstan area of Panjgur. In the seventh operation, 279.2 kg of hashish was recovered from a house near the Habib Zai area of Qila Abdullah.

The recovered drugs were stored for smuggling. Separate cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.



**Afghan women journalists**  
KABUL (Agencies): A survey by the Afghanistan Women's Journalist Association (AWJA) revealed that female journalists in Afghanistan deal with multiple challenges, including limited access to information. The AWJA's findings reveal that female journalists grapple with multiple issues, including job insecurity, financial constraints, and other significant restrictions that hinder their ability to work effectively.

**2,000 Afghan migrants return home**  
KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation has reported the return of over 2,000 Afghan migrants to Afghanistan under the Taliban administration's supervision, following the ongoing trend of Afghan migrants returning from neighbouring countries. On Monday, the ministry, in a statement on its social media X, reported that approximately 2,067 Afghan migrants had returned to the country today.

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

# Herat security dialogue to discuss Afghan situation held in Dushanbe



KABUL (Agencies): More than 150 high profile people including opposition figures of the Islamic Emirate, analysts and envoys of many countries and international organizations attended the 11th Herat Security Dialogue, where they exchanged views on the situation of Afghanistan. The participants discussed the political and security situation of Afghanistan as well as the

status of women and provision of humanitarian assistance to the country. Some of the participants criticized the double standard policy of the international community towards Afghanistan. "The international community is facing three lacks: lack of clarity, lack of vision and lack of consensus. Right now, we are hearing different. Some countries in the

region call Afghanistan a black hole, some call it white hole, some call it an opportunity," said Rahmatullah Nabil, former chief of the Afghanistan National Directorate of Security. "In our report, we pointed out that the lack of a coordinated international and regional strategy is vital to address Afghanistan, neighbors—the policy neighbors, first, because we have

seen Central Asia states, (their) different positions. On Afghanistan," said Esther Zubairi, head of the UN analytical team on al-Qaeda/Taliban, Spain. The participants also talked about "gender apartheid" against women in Afghanistan. They called for practical steps to be taken to address the situation of women. "The special rapporteur of the UN is presenting reports that puts salts on our wounds," said Shukria Barakzai, a former member of the parliament. "It is the women of Afghanistan who are resisting the Taliban occupation in real terms right now within Afghanistan and outside; so we have to acknowledge it because they are not just fighting for their rights, they are fighting for the rights of women in the region and women beyond," said Bushra Gohar, former member of the National Assembly of Pakistan. This is the second time that Dushanbe is hosting the Herat Security Dialogue. The Islamic Emirate has not yet made any comment regarding this summit.

# School-deprived Afghan girls turn to microbusiness

KABUL (Agencies): Following the closing of schools and universities to girls in Afghanistan, those who can afford it have resorted to small investments and microbusinesses. The businesswomen say that they have started businesses so that they can assist their families. Former student of economics Primah, who is also the sole breadwinner of her family, said that after the universities were ordered to close for girls, she opened a cosmetic shop in Kabul. "When I was a university student, my family would support me. When the Islamic Emirate came to power, our universities closed, and we were obliged to stay home. My husband died and I was left to be the only breadwinner of my family," said Primah. "We ask the Islamic Emirate to provide work opportunities for us and open schools and universities for girls and women," said Nabila, a businesswoman. Some business-



women say that sales have decreased compared with last year and they called on the caretaker government to find markets for their products. "We ask the Islamic Emirate to provide work opportunities for those women who are working in the field of handicrafts. We ask the government to hold exhibitions so that we can display our products and initiatives," said Shukria, a

businesswoman. "My husband used to work but now he is unemployed, and I have become the breadwinner. I ask the Islamic Emirate to provide us working opportunities," said Shakera, a businesswoman. The head of the women's chamber of commerce and industry said that over 9,000 businesswomen have been

registered with the chamber and are working in the private sector. "9,126 women have been registered in the women's chamber of commerce and industry who are working all over the country. They have different licenses from the private sector," said Salma Yousufzai, head of the women's chamber of commerce and industry.

# Zabiullah Mujahid: Kabul committed to water rights treaty with Iran



KABUL (TOLOnews): Zabiullah Mujahid, the spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, said that if there is water, the Islamic Emirate is committed to Iran's water rights treaty from the Helmand River. Zabiullah Mujahid said that currently, there is a drought in the country and Afghans are facing the problem of water scarcity. "In general, the Islamic Emirate is committed to the agreement made in the past between Afghanistan and Iran regarding water, and if

there is water and there is no drought, we will try to give them their right to water; now Afghans themselves are facing water problems in the country," said Zabiullah Mujahid. Meanwhile, Iran media reported that for the first time, a joint working group between the two countries has been formed to pursue the issue of water rights. Some analysts emphasized the need to solve the issue of Iran's water rights from the Helmand River and said that Afghanistan

and Iran should have an effective dialogue on the matter so that there is no void in the relations between the two countries. "Afghanistan and Iran should not spoil their relations over the issue of water rights, because some groups abuse the issue, and both sides should be committed to all the conditions of the treaty," said Jawed Momand, a political analyst. We can solve the water rights dispute between Afghanistan and Iran when we pay attention to their dif-

ferences. The conflicting factors are that Iran has not committed to the Water Rights Treaty, and in this regard, it is dealing with Afghanistan in a sly and political manner," said Najeeb Aqa Fahim, a water issues analyst. Previously, the deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs said on his recent trip to Iran that the drought has had a negative impact on the water resources of the region, especially Afghanistan, and that the underground water has decreased significantly.

# Iran and India discuss formation of regional contact group for Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): Iran's special representative for Afghanistan, Hassan Kazemi Qomi, recently held a meeting with J.P. Singh, the joint secretary of India's foreign ministry, to explore the creation of a regional contact group for Afghanistan. During their discussion, Qomi emphasized the group's objective, which is to address political and economic issues with the ultimate goal of fostering stability in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, Iran's Charge d'Affaires in Kabul and its Special Representative for Afghanistan had previously emphasized that the formation of a contact group by Afghanistan's neighbors was one of the topics discussed during the Moscow Format meeting. One of the key topics of conversation was the significant role that Chabahar Port can play in enhancing economic ties between Iran, India, and Afghanistan. In a parallel development, India's Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra, during his visit to



Tehran, engaged in talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Amir Hossein Abdullahian and his political and economic deputies. The discussions between Kwatra and the Iranian delegation covered various aspects, including bilateral relations, connectivity projects, and, notably, the Chabahar Port.

Chabahar Port's strategic significance lies in providing diverse markets, such as Europe, the Middle East, India, and China, thereby bolstering Afghanistan's global trade relationships. These diplomatic efforts highlight the shared interest of Iran and India in supporting Afghanistan's stability

and economic development, with Chabahar Port serving as a pivotal component of this collaboration. The formation of a regional contact group and discussions surrounding Chabahar Port underscore the importance of regional cooperation in shaping Afghanistan's future and strengthening its ties with neighboring countries.

# Road between Badakhshan and China will be completed in 3 months

KABUL (TOLOnews): The acting minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development said that the road work between Badakhshan and China will be completed in the next three months. Mohammad Yonis Akhund, while inaugurating the work of a retaining wall in Kandahar, said that 50 major infrastructure projects are currently underway in the country, including the Qosh Tepa

Canal. "A road has also been started in Badakhshan, which will be connected to China in maybe two months or three months, in the first month of spring. This road was arranged by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development," said Mohammad Yonis Akhund. At the opening ceremony of the 5 km of the wall in the Spin Boldak district of Kandahar, officials said that the destruction of thou-

sands of acres of agricultural land will be prevented. Officials said that the project will cost more than 75 million Afghani and its work will be completed in the next six months. "Until now, I have been busy with this work, and God willing, the technical work is over, and the practical work is about to begin," said Abdul Jabar Hekmat, head of the Rural Rehabilitation and Development department

in Kandahar. "Thousands of acres of land will be saved from the danger of water," said Mohammad Shafiq Achakzai, head of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment of Spin Boldak. The Acting Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development also said that all the projects of the Islamic Emirate are implemented from internal revenue and there is complete transparency in their implementation.

# From Takhar to Kabul: A woman's struggle in search of better life

KABUL (Agencies): Recent political landscape changes have turned Afghanistan into one of the worst places for women, especially for those who are the heads of their households. They experience even deeper restrictions because they have to work and search for ways to have a better life. Friba, a woman who had a difficult life in Takhar due to poverty and unemployment, moved to Kabul to provide a better life for her children. She now sells pens on the streets of Kabul to ensure they have bread for the night. Friba says, "I was very young when I lost my mother, and I got married at a very early age." She not only became a victim of early marriage, but despite her efforts to have a shared life that she dreamt of, her husband fell victim to addiction, affecting their entire life. After her first husband became addicted, he left

home, and Friba, along with her children, waited for his return for a long time, but they never heard from him, and his whereabouts remain unknown. In traditional Afghan society, men are considered the sole breadwinners in the family, and women, except for household chores and raising children, do not engage in other work. Illiteracy among women is also one of the reasons that forces them to depend on men, and if they do not have a husband (widows), they have no option other than marriage to support their lives. Amidst her sobbing, Friba says, "I have lived as a widow all these years and struggled through the days. Due to poverty, I sold one of my children, a daughter, to my cousin in Mazar-e-Sharif for 50,000 Afghani. I used the money from selling this child to meet the expenses of my other children."

She claims to have lived a "double life" to this day. Seven years after her first husband disappeared, in order not to be left alone with the remaining children of her addicted husband, she married another man named "Yaqub," and this marriage also resulted in two more children. Friba's first husband fell victim to drug addiction, and her second husband was killed in the conflicts between the security forces of the previous Afghan government and the Taliban in Kunduz. Despite Friba's efforts to not remain alone, she has been left with solitude as the only companion in her life in Afghanistan, a solitude shaped by war, drug addiction, the Taliban, poverty, and displacement. She claims to have given birth to twins seven times but only five of her fourteen children are still alive. She recalls, "When my first husband became addicted,

I worked in the fields outside the house from morning till late at night. One day, when I returned from work, I found my breast-feeding daughter dead in her cradle. My other son was taken by pneumonia and passed away." Friba is the head of her family, and they have been living in Kabul for about a year. She continues her life in a mud house without essential amenities along with her children. She requests government officials to create job opportunities for working women. Friba says that she has been detained by government forces several times. Her information has been recorded, but she has received no assistance or job opportunities from the authorities. Friba is busy selling pens and stationery at a crossroads in Kabul. She sells pens from 7 in the morning until 7 in the evening to make ends meet.





# Sweden's PM condemns far-right call to tear down mosques

STOCKHOLM (AFP): Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson denounced the leader of the far-right party propping up his government on Monday after he called for some mosques to be torn down. Sweden Democrats (SD) leader Jimmie Akesson called for some mosques to be seized and levelled during a speech at his annual party conference on Saturday.

"We need to start confiscating and tearing down mosques where anti-democratic, anti-Swedish, homophobic, anti-Semitic propaganda or general disinformation is being spread," Akesson said.

Kristersson, whose coalition government does not include SD but relies on its support, condemned the statements as "disrespectful". "I think it is a disrespectful way of expressing oneself, a polarising way of expressing oneself," Kristersson told broadcaster SVT.

"This misrepresents what Sweden stands for internationally," he added.

Akesson's speech sparked anger both in

Sweden and abroad and forced Kristersson to issue a statement on X, formerly Twitter, reiterating Sweden's "constitutional right to freedom of religion".

"In Sweden, we do not demolish places of worship. As a society, we must fight back against violent extremism whatever its grounds — but we will do so within the framework of a democratic state and the rule of law," he said.

Former Social Democrat prime minister Magdalena Andersson called for Kristersson to remove all SD officials working at the cabinet offices in Stockholm. "It worsens the image of Sweden, does not facilitate our Nato application and further increases polarisation in our country. This is not putting Sweden and the Swedish people's safety and security first," Andersson said on X.

Sweden, whose Nato application still needs ratification from Hungary and Muslim-majority Turkey, has seen a slew of incidents spark tensions with countries around the Middle East.

## NAB exonerates Ahad Cheema in assets beyond income case

LAHORE (NNI): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has given a clean chit to Ahad Cheema, Adviser to Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar, in assets beyond sources of income reference. In its report submitted to an Accountability Court (AC) in Lahore on Cheema's acquittal application, the NAB has said that there are no grounds for filing a reference against him since all his assets were proportionate to his income.

It is further written in the report that Cheema's alleged benamidars made assets from their personal income, and that the petitioner had nothing to do with them. Similarly, the report has stated that the bank accounts belonging to Cheema's relatives such as Saadia Mansoor, Mansoor Ahmad, and Nazia Ashraf are not the benami accounts of adviser to the PM.

It goes on to say that when investigation was done in the case again, his total income turned out to be Rs213 million and the expenditures Rs131 million. Furthermore, the report says, Cheema provided complete record of his income and profits to the bureau during reinvestigation, and when that record was checked, it proved to be accurate. The NAB has requested the AC to give its judgement on Cheema's acquittal plea as per law.

## 'No Afghan allowed to support any candidate in next elections'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Interior on Monday cautioned the illegal and legal Afghan migrants to avoid supporting or providing funding to any candidate for political and electoral activities in Pakistan whereas violations would lead to deportation despite the latter's legal status.

According to the Ministry of Interior statement, Afghan nationals residing in Pakistan were cautioned that it was illegal to support or provide funding to any candidate for political and electoral activities in Pakistan. "Any Afghan citizen involved in such activities will be deported regardless of his or her legal status in Pakistan." It said that Pakistani masses were cautioned not to provide employment to illegal aliens or assist such individuals in obtaining employment. "Information about any such illegal alien or the person providing employment to him should be provided to the Ministry of Interior for legal action on the helpline available on the website of the Ministry (UAN 051 111-367-226, HOTLINE 051-9211685)," the Ministry statement added.

## KP CM takes notice

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah has taken strict notice of the alleged killing of a girl on the decision of local jirga in Kohistan, and directed the Additional Chief Secretary Home to take necessary steps for an immediate inquiry into the incident and submit detailed report to this effect.

He also directed the Inspector General of Police to take concrete steps for immediate arrest of all those involved in the incident; and made it clear that no one could be allowed to take the law into one's own hands. Rule of law and justice would be ensured at all costs, he remarked. Syed Arshad Hussain Shah also directed the quarters concerned to ensure all necessary measures in order to provide full protection to the fellow girl of the slain.

## Countrywide anti-polio drive kicks off

ISLAMABAD (APP): A countrywide anti-polio campaign of varied durations to administer drops to children under five years of age started on Monday (today). According to details, thousands of teams have been formed in the drive against the crippling disease with hopes to eliminate the virus this year.

Polio teams will go door-to-door and administer oral polio vaccine drops to children under the age of five, private news channels reported.



ABU DHABI: The Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar meets the President of the United Arab Emirates His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

# Administrative measures stabilized rupee's value: Senate told

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Monday informed the Senate that the value of rupees has stabilized owing to the administrative measures of the incumbent government.

Winding up the discussion on the motion raised by Kamran Murtaza regarding the devaluation of the Pakistani Rupee and shortage of US dollars in the market resulting into high inflation, the minister said that the government controlled the informal channels/hundi business in the country. He expressed the hope that the value of the country's currency would further improve after receiving a second tranche from the IMF after its review. The position of balance of payments was much better than earlier, he said.

The minister said that the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) was also going major restructuring in exchange companies.

Earlier moving the motion, Kamran Murtaza said that the value of the dollar had continuously been increasing against Pakistani rupees which caused inflation.

He called for adopting prudent policies and measures to grow the national economy and controlling the dollar exchange rate.

Mohsin Aziz said that the economy has been deteriorating, adding that low exports and remittance besides smuggling were major causes of the increase in the value of the dollar and inflation.

Danish Kumar lauded the caretaker government for controlling the dol-

lar and bringing back its value to Rs 275 from Rs 340. He also called for supporting the policies of the incumbent government to win the confidence of the business community.

Earlier there were problems with opening LC and now there was no such hurdle to open LC for imparting materials for industries, he added.

Dilawar Khan also appreciated the caretaker government for taking pragmatic steps to control the prices of the dollar. The dollar price was not only controlled but also the Stock Exchange witnessed an upward trend owing to the measures of the government, he added.

Hamayun Mohmand said special focus should be given to enhancing the country's exports. The export-oriented economy of Pakistan was the sole solution to strengthen the rupee, he added. He also called for lowering the interest rate as higher rates curtailed the circulation of money.

Mohammad Ishaq Dar said there was no doubt that the devaluation of the currency was a dangerous thing which also disastrous to the economy. Unfortunately, we have not unlimited resources like other developed world, he added. He said as per his assessment the real effective exchange rate of the dollar should be Rs 244 to Rs 250.

**No substitute of mother's milk for babies: Murtaza Solangi:** Caretaker Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi, stressing the need to create awareness about breastfeeding, on Monday said that there was no substitute of mother's milk for ensuring the overall health of infant babies.

Winding up debate on a motion by

Samina Mumtaz Zehri about the regulation of production and sale of baby formula milk and related products and awareness among young mothers, he said Pakistan Standard and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA), a subsidiary of the Ministry of Science and Technology, monitored the quality and standard of imported milk. He explained that formula milk was rarely produced in the country.

The minister said that Pakistan had to spend \$ 30.5 million on the import of around 15000 tons of formula milk every year. Pakistan ranked fourth in milk production in the world, he added. He said the Senators discussed the important features of the formula milk and added the mother might not be able to breastfeed the baby in the specific situation.

He said in case of mother's death, a baby had to be fed by formula milk so it could not be completely banned.

Earlier moving the motion, Samina Mumtaz Zehri called for promoting minimum six-month breastfeeding to enhance the immune system of babies. She suggested that formula milk should be banned and discouraged in the country.

Some 16 companies were manufacturing formula milk and none was unfortunately a Pakistani company.

She said that formula milk companies always managed doctors and paramedics with monetary benefits, to eventually suggest their products for infant babies. Dr Mehr Taj said the breast milk was totally free which had no substitute in the world. The science has not yet developed any substitute for mother milk, she added.

# Senate passes resolution, asking for addressing concerns in Dasu, Diamer Bhasha Dams regions

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate on Monday passed a resolution expressing deep concern over the present situation emerging in the areas of the Dasu and Diamer Bhasha dams and asked for recruitment in the said projects as per the quota fixed for them.

The resolution was tabled by Muhammad Talha Mahmood.

The resolution further said that the salary of persons working on the said projects should not be less than the minimum wage,

i.e., Rupees thirty-two thousand per month, as fixed by the Government in the budget for the current fiscal year.

It also emphasized that the laborers working on those projects should be paid at least Rs. 1500 per day, following the Government policy.

Additionally, the resolution urged the government to provide compensation to all the affectees of those projects under the "chola package."

It further said that the

Government should take all necessary steps to utilize the amount allocated for the construction of roads, schools, and other facilities in the affected areas in consultation with local elders of Kohistan on a merit basis.

The resolution demanded that necessary funds be released, and that work on the Kandia Valley road should be expedited and completed at the earliest. It also stressed that the amount fixed for welfare works should be utilized for the

welfare of the people in those areas with the consultation of local elders. Moreover, the resolution said that reasonable demands of the people should be accepted and fulfilled so that the work on those projects may be completed amicably without any hurdles.

**Senate unanimously adopts resolution demanding improved security for humanitarian workers:** The Senate on Monday adopted a unanimous resolution demanding that all governments, including the government of Pakistan, enhance measures to provide better security for humanitarian workers. The resolution was tabled by Senator Sania Nishtar.

## 'Bilawal Bhutto is PPP's candidate for premiership'

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Asserting that there was a need to properly comprehend the statement given by former president Asif Ali Zardari in an interview with a private news channel a few days ago, senior Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader and former leader of the opposition in the National Assembly Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah said on Monday that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was the party's candidate for the seat of prime minister.

Taking to the media outside an accountability court in Sukkur, he said that it was the PPP's CEC that took decisions. "I have a question for former prime minister and PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and that is whether he was still giving respect to the right to vote as he had been laying stress on it for the last four years.



F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Two week-long multinational joint counter-terrorism exercise Fajar Al Sharq-V was conducted at National Counter Terrorism Centre, Pabbi with participation of Special Forces contingents from the brotherly coun-

tries, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Monday said.

The ISPR news release said the Exercise Fajar Al Sharq-V is a multinational joint exercise in Counter Terrorism domain among the Special Forces of Pakistan, Bahrain, Iraq and Kuwait. The exercise is

aimed at nurturing joint employment and interoperability besides, harnessing the historic military to military relations among the brotherly countries.

The member countries have displayed zeal and enthusiasm for benefiting from each other's expertise and experience.

# Major administrative reshuffle in KP

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a significant administrative reshuffle, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa interim government announced a series of key appointments and transfers across various departments. Witnessing the changes are Shahid Ullah who was awaiting posting in Establishment Department is appointed as the Secretary Establishment, Matiullah as the Secretary Sports, and Akhtar Saeed Turk as the Secretary Law. Meanwhile, ShahRukh Ali Khan assumes the role of DG Gilyat, and Shabir Khan becomes the DG Kaghan.

Notably, 41 officers have been subjected to transfers, ranging from Deputy Commissioners to Additional Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners.

Among these shifts are Fazal Akbar who was currently serving as Deputy Commissioner Hangu is now appointed as Additional Secretary Local Government and Rural Development Department, Haider Hussain taking charge as DC Hangu, and Wasil Khattak assuming the position of DC Mardan. Additionally, Abdul Nasir becomes the Director General Sports Department, and Shah Saud takes on the role of DC Bannu, while Mujib is appointed as DC Karak. A highly competent officer, Muhammad Imran, previously serving as Additional Deputy Commissioner (Relief), has been appointed to the well-deserved position of Deputy Commissioner in Chitral Lower. His dedication and commitment to public service during the

challenging times of the COVID lockdown have been recognized and rewarded with this significant promotion.

This marks the most extensive administrative overhaul since the inception of the caretaker government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A total of 60-plus officers have been transferred in a single day, with over 15 officers designated as Officers on Special Duty (OSD). The decision to make competent officers OSD raises concerns about the potential impact on effective governance. The move has sparked attention due to the scale of changes and the reassignment of proficient individuals to OSD roles. The ramifications of this significant administrative shuffle are likely to be closely monitored in the days ahead.

# President for improving trade cooperation with Nigeria

ISLAMABAD (NNI): President Dr Arif Alvi has called for further improving trade, economic and cultural cooperation with Nigeria, besides increasing the bilateral trade volume for the mutual benefit of the two countries. The President expressed these views while talking to Pakistan's High Commissioner-designate to Nigeria Sohail Ahmad Khan, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad on Monday.

Talking to the High Commissioner designate, the President said that Nigeria was the largest economy in Africa, and Pakistan should explore opportunities for advancing trade and economic relations with Nigeria.

He stated that economic diplomacy was the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy and Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Nigeria, especially in the field of economy. The President

also asked the newly appointed

High Commissioner to work for promoting cultural linkages and people-to-people contacts to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two countries.

The President congratulated Major General (retd) Sohail Ahmad Khan on his appointment and expressed the hope that he would work to further enhance bilateral ties with Nigeria in all domains of mutual interest.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's High Commissioner-designate to Nigeria, Major General (retd) Sohail Ahmad Khan, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## استعمال سمجھداری سے ذمہ داری سے!

## گیزر کی بروقت مرمت نہ کروانا بل میں لگی گنا اضافے کا سبب بنتا ہے

گیس کے اضافی بل سے بچنے کیلئے یقینی بنائیں

گیزر کے تقریباً 80 فیصد میں کوئی خرابی نہ ہو

گیزر کی چھاپیں رنگ کدوئوں میں

گیزر کے ساتھ ناقص آلات کی تنصیب نہ ہو

PID(U)1700-D