

Marriyum's warrant cancelled
F.P. Report

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Saturday canceled the arrest warrant of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader Marriyum Aurangzeb in a hate speech case. According to the details, the PML-N leader appeared before the ATC in a hate speech case against her in Lahore, after which the court canceled the arrest warrant that was issued to her at the previous hearing.



@thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIX

No. 322

Regd. No. 241

JAMADI-UL-AWWAL 25 1445 -- SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 2023

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addressing the 7th Annual Conference of Association of former inspector generals of police titled 'Navigating the Complexities of State Responsibilities in the Criminal Justice System.'

Rehmat Shah Afridi passes away

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The founder of The Frontier Post and senior journalist, Rehmat Shah Afridi passed away on Saturday. He was 74, according to his son Bilal Afridi.

His funeral prayer will be offer today (Sunday) in Bagh-e-Naran, Hayatabad at 11:00 A.M.

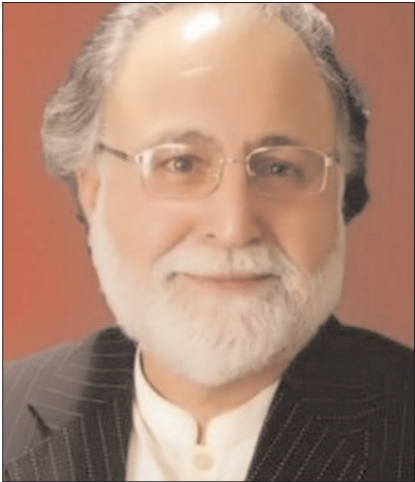
He is survived by four sons. Mahmood Ullah Afridi, Jalil Afridi, Bilal Afridi and Ahmad Shah Afridi.

It is with a heavy heart that we bid farewell to a true pioneer of English journalism in the frontier part of Pakistan, Rehmat Shah Afridi, who departed from our midst just moments ago. A luminary in the field of journalism, Afridi's legacy as the founder Editor-in-Chief of The Frontier Post has left an indelible mark on the landscape of media in the region.

Afridi was not just a journalist; he was a visionary, a mentor, and a trailblazer who paved the way for countless aspiring journalists, myself included, to find their voice and purpose in the world of news reporting. As the architect of The Frontier Post, he created more than a newspaper; he fostered a university of journalism, a place where knowledge was shared, skills were honed, and a commitment to truth and integrity was instilled in every journalist who passed through its doors.

His mentorship was a beacon that guided us through the complex landscape of media, inspiring a generation to uphold the principles he held dear.

Beyond his professional achievements, Afridi was known for his unwavering dedication to the truth and fearless pursuit of justice. He was not one to shy away from challenging the status quo, and his journal-



istic endeavors often played a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and discourse. His courage, resilience, and unyielding commitment to the ideals of journalism will be remembered as a benchmark for generations to come.

As we mourn the loss of Rehmat Shah Afridi, let us also celebrate the rich legacy he leaves behind. The Frontier Post, under his stewardship, remains a testament to his vision and commitment to excellence. His passing is not just a loss for the journalistic community but for the entire region that benefitted from his tireless efforts to bring forth the truth. In the spirit of the journalistic values he championed, let us continue to honor Rehmat Shah Afridi's memory by upholding the principles of integrity, truth, and fearlessness in our pursuit of knowledge and justice. May his soul rest in peace, and may his legacy inspire countless others to follow in his footsteps.

Imran moves LHC against ECP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Former PTI chairman Imran Khan has challenged the Election Commission of Pakistan's contempt proceedings against him and the decision of his jail trial in the Lahore High Court. An application was filed in the Lahore High Court through Salman Akram Raja and Barrister Sameer Khosa on behalf of the former prime minister, in which the Federal Government, the Election Commission and the Superintendent of Adiala Jail have been made parties.

It has been argued in the petition that the Election Commission has started the contempt proceedings against him illegally. The Election Commission is not a court. The Election Commission has decided on a jail trial in this case, which is also illegal. In the petition, it is further stated that the secret trial in the jail is a violation of Article 4 of the Constitution. The Election Commission has fixed December 13 as the date for the contempt proceedings in the jail. The Lahore High Court has been prayed to declare the Election Commission's decision to conduct a jail trial null and void. The petitioner further requested the high court to issue an order for an open, free, and fair trial and stay the contempt proceedings of the ECP through a secret trial until the final decision on the application.

Asad Qaiser arrested again

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser was arrested again on Saturday by the Swabi district police after his release in a case related to ransacking of a medical store on May 9 riots. The judicial magistrate Mardan, Adil Misal granted bail to ex- NA speaker Mr. Asad Qaiser.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader was ordered to submit surety ponds of Rs. 90000 in the court for his release. The Swabi police arrested the PTI leader under-3 MPO. On the occasion, Asad Qaiser's brother Abdul Waheed Khan, his relatives, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) provincial vice president Zahir Shah Toru and large number of party workers were present.

Members of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) legal team including Riaz Khan PaindaKheil and Nadeem Shah whil talking to media-persons told Mr. Asad Qaiser was arrested under 3-MPO by Swabi police. They told that they were going to Peshawar High Court on next Monday to challenge his arrest under 3-MPO. They claimed that they would succeed to get bail for him in the said case. However, it was pertinent to mention here that it was the fifth arrest of ex-NA speaker by police in different cases.

PPP can solve problems faced by country: Bilawal

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: Pakistan Peoples Party chairman and former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Saturday asked voters to elect him the next prime minister if they want the country to progress and develop. He was addressing a party workers' convention as chief guest at the Timergara Rest house ground. The gathering was also addressed by the PPP provincial chief Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha, former MNA Akhunzada Chhattan and PPP local leaders Malik Azmat Khan, Mahmood Zeb Khan, Muhammad Zamin Khan and others. According to political analysts the gathering was not an impressive show of the party.

Bilawal equally criticized Mian Nawaz Sharif and Imran Khan and alleged they both had failed to keep their

promises made with the nation during their governments. The PPP chairman called Mian Nawaz Sharif the prime minister of 'Raiwand' and Imran Khan as the prime minister of 'Zaman Park' and said that they had been tested. "Polarization is on the peak and the politics of hatred and egoism is dividing the nation," he said and asked the people to vote for his party to end that environment.

Appreciating the people of Dir, Mr Bilawal said they had supported his grandfather Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and his mother Shaheed Benazir Bhutto. He said the people of Dir stood shoulder to shoulder with Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto which made it possible for an unarmed woman to face two dictators. "The people made their sister, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, the first

woman prime minister in the history of the Islamic world, and she struggled for democracy and the rights of the people for three decades", he said, adding that when she was martyred, the people elected the PPP again and it triumphed in the 2008 elections, after which the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was able to get its own identity and share. He hoped this time again the people of Dir would support him and his party.

Counting the achievements of his grandfather, ZAB he said that he had given a unanimous constitution to the "constitution-less land", started the atomic programme, restored the real democracy in the country, provided a leadership to the Muslim Ummah, provided the power of vote to poor people, labourers and peasants which they did not have earlier.

ter and development was at its peak. We still pray that the country is steered out of difficulties," said the PML-N supremo.

He said that the country was progressing in all aspects during his tenure, however, the nation has seen a difficult time in the last four years. "There were some elements who halted the country from thriving," he added. The three-time prime minister said that the nation needs to realise that economic destruction started in 2019 and by 2022, every-

thing in the country had collapsed. "If Shehbaz Sharif hadn't taken over, the country would have defaulted."

Recalling his 2013 election campaign, he said that he was asked [by the party leaders] to assure the nation that loadshedding would end in six months, however, he refused to lie. "I said I wouldn't say anything that might damage my reputation. I had said in the election campaign that loadshedding will end within five years as I don't want to cheat the nation," he said.

The Frontier Post

Special Forces exercise ends
F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The two-week-long Multinational Joint Special Forces Exercise Fajar Al Sharq-V Exercise was held at National Counter Terrorism Centre in Pabbi area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to an ISPR statement issued on Saturday, troops from Special Forces of Pakistan, Bahrain, Iraq and Kuwait participated in the exercise.

Police rendered sacrifices for public safety: PM — underlines need for attitudinal change to improve police force image

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Saturday lauded the contributions and sacrifices of the police force in maintaining law and order in the country and stressed upon the need of change in attitude to improve the image of the force.

He was addressing the 7th annual conference of former Inspector Generals of Police (AFIGP) who had served the police force for decades. The annual event was organized by the Association of Former Inspectors General of Police (AFIGP). The prime minister while expressing his deep appreciation for the police force for maintaining internal order, said that it was a sacrosanct duty and no society could afford chaos as anarchy was unacceptable.

He said that the police force was the custodian to protect them from that anarchy and had been serving as the frontline force from sepy to officer to protect the society. While referring to the functioning of the force, the caretaker prime minister suggested that they required deep introspection as to how to further improve the situation and the image of the force.

"Changes can come with change in attitude and not by mere changing the uniform," he opined. Appreciating the sacrifices of police force, the prime minister said that they owed a lot for this force and particularly referred to the sacrifices of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan police besides other provinces. Recollecting the sacrifice of Shaheed Commandant FC and IGP

KP Safwat Ghayur, he said that he had hardly seen an iconic figure like Safwat in the country.

"If he had been alive, he would have been my leader and I would have been his follower," he added. The prime minister observed that two noble professions in the country were mistreated including nursing and police, adding that they needed to rebrand them by providing resources and infusing confidence in them. That brand was more important indicating that self-esteem associated for doing any sort of job was significant, he added. He said the police force cleaned the filth and dirt from society and were the chosen and noble ones as they were protecting their children.

The prime minister said that they needed to address the issues which led to issues of mistreatment of the police force. He narrated the issues faced by two families of martyred police officials who had approached him and regretted that they were not treated in the manner they deserved and also cited Shabana, a police personnel martyred in Swat. The caretaker prime minister also emphasized upon the need to understand the local challenges and discourse over the effective legal framework.

He said about 90,000 people had been killed in the country in the fight against terrorism and highlighted the importance of effective legislation to counter the security issues. The prime minister said that with a state of confusion, you ought to falter and fail and clarity in carrying out any business was important. The prime minister

also suggested strengthening of institutional bondage within the police force and further increasing of welfare programmes for the police force.

Earlier, former IGP Kaleem Imam said that the association was formed in 2015 with 250 members. A total of 7800 personnel laid down their lives for the peace and security of the country. About 15 allied departments of the police force were serving the people, he added. Other speakers said that rapid changes of security posed a challenge for the police force. Terrorism was posing an existential threat which should be countered by utilizing the latest technological gadgets.

PM says govt. continuing its efforts to promote, safeguard human rights: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has said that the Government of Pakistan would continue its efforts to promote and safeguard human rights, both domestically and internationally.

He reiterated Pakistan's unflinching resolve to further advance respect for and protection of the rights and freedoms of all our citizens as enshrined in the Constitution as well as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"Pakistan has consistently demonstrated its commitment to this cause, evident through various initiatives and policies aimed at protecting the dignity and rights of its citizens," the caretaker prime minister said in a message on the occasion of International Human Rights Day being observed on December 10.

US vetoes UN resolution calling for Gaza ceasefire

NEW YORK: The United States has vetoed a United Nations Security Council demand for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in the war between Israel and Palestinian group Hamas in Gaza. Thirteen Security Council members voted in favour of a brief draft resolution, put forward by the United Arab Emirates on Friday, while the United Kingdom abstained.

The vote came after UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres made a rare move on Wednesday to formally warn the 15-member council of a global threat from the two-month-long war. "While the US strongly supports a durable peace in which both Israel and Palestine can live in peace and security, we do not support calls for an immediate ceasefire. This would only plant the seeds for the next war, because Hamas has no desire to see a durable peace, to see a two-state solution," said Robert Wood, deputy US ambassador to the UN.

The US and Israel oppose a ceasefire because they believe it would only benefit Hamas. Washington instead supports pauses in fighting to protect civilians and allow the release of hostages taken by Hamas in a deadly October 7 attack on Israel. A seven-day pause – that saw Hamas release some hostages and an increase in humanitarian aid to Gaza – ended on December 1.

After several failed attempts to take action, the Security Council last month called for pauses in fighting to allow aid access to Gaza, which Guterres on Friday described as a "spiralising humanitarian nightmare". The US favours its own diplomacy, rather than Security Council action, to win the release of more hostages and press Israel to better protect civilians in its assault on Gaza, which it launched after the Hamas attack that Israel says killed 1,200 people. Gaza's Health Ministry says more than 17,480 people have been killed in the Israeli assault.

Erdogan denounces UN 'Israel protection council'

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday denounced the UN Security Council after the United States vetoed a ceasefire resolution for Gaza, describing the international body as the 'Israel protection council' . "Since October 7, the security council has become an Israel protection and defense council," Erdogan said.

The United States on Friday vetoed a Security Council resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire in the intense fighting between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. Washington thus dashed a growing clamour for a halt to fighting that had been led by UN chief Antonio Guterres and Arab nations.

"Is this justice?" asked Erdogan, adding that "the world is bigger than five," a reference to the five veto-wielding nations in the UN Security Council. "Another world is possible, but without America," the Turkish leader said. "The United States stands by Israel with its money and military equipment. Hey, America! How much are you going to pay for that?" he added. "Every day the Declaration of Human Rights is violated in Gaza," he said, as the world this weekend celebrates the 75th anniversary of the declaration. The UN resolution for a cease-fire was submitted more than two months after the start of the war in Gaza triggered by Hamas's bloody attack on Israeli soil on October 7, which, according to the Israeli authorities, killed 1,200 people. Since then Hamas has put the death toll in Gaza at 17,490, mostly women and children. — Arab News

The vote came after Guterres deployed rarely-used Article 99 of the UN Charter to bring to the council's attention "any matter which, in his opinion, may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security". Al Jazeera's diplomatic editor James Bays said that Guterres's invocation of Article 99 of the UN charter was extremely rare.

"He [Guterres] has not done it before. In fact, formally invoking this hasn't happened since 1989," said Bays, adding that it wasn't invoked in Syria, Yemen or Ukraine. Israel has bombarded Gaza from the air, imposed a siege and launched a ground offensive. Vast areas of the territory have been reduced to a wasteland. The UN says about 80 percent of the population has been displaced, facing shortages of food, fuel, water and medicine, along with the threat of disease.

"There is no effective protection of civilians," Guterres told the council earlier on Friday. "The people of Gaza are being told to move like human pinballs – ricocheting between ever-smaller slivers of the south, without any of the basics for survival."

But nowhere in Gaza is safe." In Washington, Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi told reporters earlier on Friday that if the Security Council failed to adopt the resolution, "it is giving Israel a license to continue with its massacre of Palestinians in Gaza".

In Gaza, the Health Ministry reported on Friday that 40 people were killed in Israeli attacks near Gaza City, and "dozens" of others were killed in Jabalia and Khan Younis. The Israeli military told residents of the Jabalia, Shujayea and Zeitoun districts of Gaza City to move west. In the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where Israeli forces shot dead six Palestinians on Friday, the territory's Health Ministry said. — Arab News

Pak disappointed over UNSC's failure to call for ceasefire in Gaza

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has expressed disappointment over the UN Security Council's failure, once again, to call for a ceasefire in Gaza. In a statement, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said this is regardless of the human tragedy of epic proportions taking place there.

She said despite the invocation of Article-99 of the UN Charter by the Secretary-General and his warnings of

humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, the Council has failed to perform its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security. She urged the UN Security Council to act now, end this inhuman war and protect the people of Gaza from an impending genocide.

The spokesperson said the collective punishment endured by the besieged people of Gaza is unprecedented and unacceptable. Continuation of Israel's campaign in occupied Palestine will prolong

human suffering, with massive civilian casualties and forced displacement of millions of people. It could also trigger a wider and more dangerous conflict.

She said a heavy responsibility rests on all who have contributed to the prolongation of uninterrupted bombing of the people of Gaza. The spokesperson reiterated Pakistan's call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire to avert a humanitarian catastrophe. She said Israel must end its barbaric attacks and inhumane siege against Gaza.

Intermediate exam results on Dec 23

LAHORE (INP): Education boards across Punjab, including the Sargodha Board, are gearing up to announce the results of the second annual intermediate examination 2023. The highly anticipated results will be released online on December 23rd, 2023, at 10:00 AM sharp.

The boards are diligently preparing for the result announcement, ensuring smooth and efficient dissemination of information to students and their families. While simple ceremonies may be held, the primary focus remains on releasing the results online for easy access.

This announcement comes after months of anticipation following the completion of the intermediate exams in May 2023. Students have eagerly awaited news of their performance, and the upcoming release date marks a crucial milestone in their academic journey.

With the results being available online, students can access their scores conveniently from anywhere. This online accessibility removes geographic barriers and ensures a fair and transparent process for everyone involved.

Man shoots, injures wife, accused held

KARACHI (INP): A man shot injured his wife over domestic disputes in Baldia Town of the metropolis. Police arrested the accused.

According to details, hearing the gunshots inside a home, the neighbours informed the police.

The police reached the crime scene and found woman lying in pool of blood.

The injured woman was rushed to hospital.

Police arrested the accused Attique and after registering a case into the incident started an investigation.

Iraqi Ambassador Hamid Abbas calls on Punjab CM

LAHORE (NNI): Ambassador of Iraq Hamid Abbas Lafta called on Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi in Lahore on Saturday.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, bilateral relations, promotion of religious tourism and culture were discussed.

On the occasion, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that Pakistan has long-standing brotherly relations with Iraq and the people of Iraq and Pakistan has relations of devotion, love and sincerity.

Mohsin Naqvi said that there is a lot of potential for the development of religious tourism. Punjab has provided favorable environment for investment and in this regard, Investment Facilitation Center has been established in Lahore, said Mohsin Naqvi.

The center will have offices of 20 federal and provincial departments under one roof, Mohsin Naqvi said.

About 106 NOCs for

foreign investors will be issued in two weeks and such centers will be operational in Rawalpindi, Multan, Gujranwala and other major cities within a month. Mohsin Naqvi

We are also doing valuable services for the promotion of religious tourism, said Iraqi Ambassador He said that we want to further strengthen mutual fraternal relations and take advantage of the investment opportunities in Punjab.

Punjab CM announces no traffic challan of citizens holding licence token

LAHORE (NNI): Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a surprise visit to Police Service Center Liberty late night and inspected the traffic licence making system.

During his visit Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi met citizens at the service center and asked them about issues and problems in getting a licence.

Citizens piled up their complaints saying that they have to wait for many hours standing in queues.

Mohsin Naqvi called to Director General (DG) Punjab Information Technology Board on the spot and directed to improve the system and send a team to the service center immediately.

On the occasion the CM announced that there will be no challan on the license token for three days. Mohsin Naqvi assured the citizens regarding the redressal of the complaints for the delay.

The citizens thanked Mohsen Naqvi for his personal interest in solving driving license issues. He said that there should be no delay in getting driving license and the process of making a driving license should be completed as soon as possible.

He warned that unnecessary delay in the process of making licenses will not be tolerated.



LAHORE: Ambassador of Iraq Hamid Abbas Lafta calls on CM Punjab Mohsin Naqvi to discuss bilateral relations.

Governor Balochistan calls on Tessori

KARACHI (PPI) Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori has said that Sindh and Balochistan can benefit from mutual cooperation in various fields for which exchange of delegations was need of the hour.

This he said while talking with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Kakar here today at Governor House. Enhancement in inter provincial cooperation, exchange of delegations specially in health and education sectors and other related matters were discussed in detail on the occasion.

Governor Balochistan while appreciating the public oriented welfare initiatives of Governor Sindh, said that the general public were getting benefit from these unprecedented endeavours.

Sindh governor urges awareness regarding corruption: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori has stressed the need of spreading awareness regarding the menace of corruption which was affecting our every sector of our society.

This he said that while talking with Inspector General Police Sindh Riffat Mukhtar & Director General National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Karachi Javed Akbar Riaz at Governor House here today.

Patron-in-chief of Saylani Welfare Trust Maulana Bashir Farooqi and Deputy Chairman NAB were also present on the occasion. Governor Sindh further said that NAB was doing a brilliant job of recovery of looted public funds.

"There was a need to ensure that corruption is stopped from occurring by holding awareness seminars and workshops for specially officers of those departments where corruption is rampant", he added and said that police and NAB must join hands for this very purpose.

Senator Mandviwala calls on Sindh governor: Senator Saleem Mandviwala called on Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor

House here today. Overall political situation of the country, economic hardships being faced by the economy, role of Senate in legislation of public importance and other related issues were discussed in detail on the occasion.

Governor Sindh said that the current economic situation of the country require attention of all of us specially those who have the capacity to do something in his regard. "Pakistan has given us name, fame and wealth and now it was the time to return anything we can to our beloved country", he added.

While lauding the role of Senate in legislation, Governor Sindh said that upper house of parliament has immensely contributed in public oriented legislation which is benefiting the masses. Senator Saleem Mandviwala visited Bell of Hope, IT marquee, Taqatwar Pakistan ration bags with Governor Sindh and lauded all his public welfare initiatives.

Students injured in road mishap

KARACHI (NNI): A number of children were injured when a school van overturned due to high speed in Deharki area of Ghotki on Saturday morning.

Reportedly, Rescue personnel rushed to the spot and shifted the injured children to a nearby hospital.

Meanwhile, several people were injured when a bus hit a car and a rickshaw in Karachi on Saturday morning. The accident occurred at Peoples Chowrangi in front of Mazar-i-Quaid when an intercity bus rammed into two other vehicles.

42 dengue cases reported

LAHORE (INP): Health officials in Punjab have confirmed 42 new dengue cases across the province, raising concerns about a potential outbreak.

Secretary Health Ali Jan Khan revealed the breakdown of cases, with 26 reported in Lahore, 4 in Gujranwala, 4 in Multan, and 5 in Faisalabad. Additionally, single cases were reported in Pakpattan, Jhelum, and Rawalpindi.

The Health Secretary further stated that 51 dengue patients are currently undergoing treatment in hospitals across Punjab, highlighting the need for vigilance and preventive measures.

Lahore continues to bear the brunt of the dengue resurgence, with 26 fresh cases reported in the city.

This underscores the importance of concentrated efforts in Lahore to control the spread of the mosquito-borne disease. While the number of cases remains lower than previous peaks, the recent surge raises concerns about a potential outbreak, particularly with the favorable weather conditions for mosquito breeding.

Authorities are urging citizens to take necessary precautions, including using mosquito nets.

Smog a grave issue, extraordinary measures needed: Baligh

LAHORE (INP): Chancellor/Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that smog is a grave issue and has many adverse effects on human health.

He was chairing the meeting of Consortium on Climate Change and Environment here at Governor House Lahore on Saturday. During the meeting, proposals and measures to solve the issue of smog were specially discussed. Chairman Punjab Higher Education Commission, Dr. Shahid Munir, along with vice chancellors and experts from various universities participated in the meeting.

On this occasion, Convenor of the Consortium, former Vice Chancellor of Islamia University Bahawalpur, Professor Dr. Athar Mehboob and Wajid Naseem Jatoti gave a detailed briefing to the Governor of Punjab on the progress of the Consortium.

Speaking on this occasion, Muhammad Balighur

Rehman said that extraordinary measures needed to be taken in extraordinary circumstances. He said that universities should play a role in solving the problem of smog and environmental pollution in the light of the research done on the environment and the experiences of experts.

He asked the Vice chancellors to engage university students in designing social media campaigns to spread awareness among the public about environmental pollution and smog. He emphasized that universities should use their resources to solve problems like smog and take steps to improve the environment.

The Governor Punjab said that work should be started on short-term solutions immediately. He said that final recommendations to various stakeholders, including government departments would be sent from his office within three days to control smog and environmental pollution.

Prof. Dr. Wajid Naseem

Jatoti, Director, International Centre for Climate Change, Food Security and Sustainability (ICCF), Islamia University Bahawalpur was also designated as the Focal Person for Consortium on Climate Change, Environment.

The meeting was attended by Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar, Vice Chancellor Islamia University Bahawalpur, Prof. Dr. Shazia Anjum Islamia

University Bahawalpur, Prof. Dr. Wajid Naseem Jatoti, Prof. Dr. Naseem Ahmed, Vice Chancellor, University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Prof. Dr. Ahsan Waheed Rathore, Vice Chancellor, University of Health Sciences, Prof. Dr. Arifa Tahir, Chairperson, Department of Environmental Sciences, Lahore College for Women University, Prof. Dr. Syed Habib Bukhari, Vice

Chancellor, Kohsar University, Murree, Prof. Dr. M. Sajjad Khan, Vice Chancellor, Cholistan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Bahawalpur; Prof. Dr. Shaghfa Naz, Vice Chancellor, Lahore College for Women University, Dr. Uzair Khan, University of Lahore and Dr. Ali Hussain Kazim, University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore.

SUIT NOTICE

In the Court of Miss Ambareen Navid Judge Banking Court-1 Peshawar Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar Case No: 109/1 of 2023. Date of hearing 18-01-2024 suit for the recovery of Rs. 207,991.63 Bank Alfalah Ltd: Saddar Road branch, Peshawar. Vs: Mst: Syeda Hijab Gillani. Notice Versus:- Mst= Syeda Hijab Gillani wife of Salam Iqbal Awan, R/o House No. 17, Laiba Housing colony, Old Bara Road, University Road, Peshawar. Office Add: Sindh Bank Ltd: Ashraf road Branch Peshawar. where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs.207,991.63 Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtaine leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/ publication of the notice in the newspapers. Failing which an exparty decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs. Issued today on 28-11-2023 under my signature and seal of the Court.

Banking Court,I
Peshawar


PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Pir Dilawar Shah with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Pir Ghaus Ali Shah citizen number 1710181882541 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Pir Dilawar Shah (Father)
2.Rifat (Mother)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice. PID(I) 3512/23

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MEGA CENTER PESHAWAR-SFU



سولہ ناردرن گیس
Sul Northern Gas
NORTH GAS
/SNGPL official

استعمال سمجھداری سے
ذمہ داری سے

سر دیوں کے 4 ماہ گیس استعمال 0.9Hm³ سے زیادہ ہوگا
تو گیس بل کئی گنا بڑھ سکتا ہے

لہذا! ⚠️ روایتی گیس یزکا استعمال ترک کریں
⚡ گیس میٹر کا استعمال ہرگز مت کریں
⚡ بغیر ضرورت چلہا جلتا نہ چھوڑیں
⚡ لیچ سے بچنے کیلئے باقاعدگی سے گیس آلات چیک کریں

Rs.300 /MMBTU

Rs.600 /MMBTU

Rs.1,000 /MMBTU

Rs.1,200 /MMBTU

Rs.1,600 /MMBTU

Rs.3,000 /MMBTU


Rs.3,500 /MMBTU

Rs.4,000 /MMBTU

سلیب 8
سلیب 1

PID(I)1839-D

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA KOHAT-SFU



سولہ ناردرن گیس
Sul Northern Gas
NORTH GAS
/SNGPL official

استعمال سمجھداری سے
ذمہ داری سے

سر دیوں کے 4 ماہ گیس استعمال 0.9Hm³ سے زیادہ ہوگا
تو گیس بل کئی گنا بڑھ سکتا ہے

لہذا! ⚠️ روایتی گیس یزکا استعمال ترک کریں
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سلیب 8
سلیب 1

PID(I)1839-D

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA HARIPUR-SFU



سولہ ناردرن گیس
Sul Northern Gas
NORTH GAS
/SNGPL official

استعمال سمجھداری سے
ذمہ داری سے

سر دیوں کے 4 ماہ گیس استعمال 0.9Hm³ سے زیادہ ہوگا
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سلیب 8
سلیب 1

PID(I)1839-D

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA NOWSHERA-SFU



سولہ ناردرن گیس
Sul Northern Gas
NORTH GAS
/SNGPL official

استعمال سمجھداری سے
ذمہ داری سے

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سلیب 8
سلیب 1

PID(I)1839-D

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA SWABI-SFU



سولہ ناردرن گیس
Sul Northern Gas
NORTH GAS
/SNGPL official

استعمال سمجھداری سے
ذمہ داری سے

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سلیب 8
سلیب 1

PID(I)1839-D

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA SWABI-SFU



سولہ ناردرن گیس
Sul Northern Gas
NORTH GAS
/SNGPL official

استعمال سمجھداری سے
ذمہ داری سے

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سلیب 8
سلیب 1

PID(I)1839-D

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA SWABI-SFU



سولہ ناردرن گیس
Sul Northern Gas
NORTH GAS
/SNGPL official

استعمال سمجھداری سے
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سلیب 8
سلیب 1

PID(I)1839-D

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MANSEHRA-SFU



سولہ ناردرن گیس
Sul Northern Gas
NORTH GAS
/SNGPL official

استعمال سمجھداری سے
ذمہ داری سے

سر دیوں کے 4 ماہ گیس استعمال 0.9Hm³ سے زیادہ ہوگا
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سلیب 8
سلیب 1

PID(I)1839-D

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA RING ROAD-DSFU

Fast track development of merged areas cornerstone of Govt policy, says CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah here Saturday termed the fast track development of newly merged tribal districts as the top most priority of his government.

He said that despite financial issues, the caretaker provincial government is not only committed to bring the newly merged areas at par with other developed parts of the province but also taking practical measures to this effect.

“The government will go all out to complete ongoing developmental projects and other public welfare activities within the stipulated time lines”, he said and added that war against terrorism had badly affected the tribal belt further exacerbating their decades long deprivations; therefore, those people needed special attention for their development and redressal of their deprivations.

He said that a complaint cell would soon be established at Chief Minister’s House with the purpose to monitor the public services delivery as well as to

receive the public complaints about the provincial government’s departments and institutions; immediate action would be taken to redress the public grievances and negligent officials would be held accountable.

Any negligence and inefficiency in the official duty especially in public service delivery will not be tolerated at any cost.

These views, he expressed while addressing the 20th Annual Scholarships and Awards Distribution Ceremony organized by the WANA Welfare Association here at the Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar on Saturday.

He paid rich tribute to welfare activities of the association especially its efforts in promoting education in WANA and other parts of merged districts and said that undoubtedly, serving humanity was a noble deed, and the manner in which WANA Welfare Association has undertaken the welfare of the vulnerable segments of the society at its own expense, was truly admirable.

The Chief Minister said that the provincial government was also fully committed to the wellbeing of the people of merged districts, and was working practically for this purpose. He made it clear that the provincial government was going to launch “Khushal Khyber Pakhtunkhwa” program very soon, under which special attention will be given to the merged districts.

Similarly, under the provincial government’s Human Resource Export Strategy, youth of the province especially of merged areas would be imparted with IT-based courses as per demands of the modern market so as to enable them to have better job opportunities abroad.

Our ultimate goal is to empower the youth economically as well as enable them to play their role as responsible citizen in the national development and prosperity, he remarked.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister expressed his commitment to take pragmatic steps to deal with the situation arising due to lowering of the underground water table in WANA, saying that he would personally visit WANA to review the situation.

He directed the concerned government authorities to immediately start survey in order to determine the water issues in WANA so that practical steps could be initiated without any delay.

On this occasion, the chief minister also appealed to the tribal people and social organizations to play their role in the anti-polio campaign in their respective areas. He regretted that unfortunately, some elements were trying to use polio as a tool against the government. He made it clear that polio eradication was our collective responsibility; we do not want any of our children to be forced to live a disabled life due to anyone’s stubbornness or negligence.

Local religious scholars, maliks, social welfare organizations and all other intellectuals should take polio eradication as a mission, and play their proactive role for this purpose. The Chief Minister, on the occasion, announced Rs. 5 million for the WANA Welfare Association and hoped that the association would continue its public welfare activities in a more better manner.

Earlier, the chief minister distributed prizes and testimonial certificates amongst students who successfully completed their studies in various educational institutions with the financial support of WANA Welfare Association. He congratulated the position holder students and hoped that they would continue to hard working and contribute to the development of the country.

Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Secretary Education Moatasm Billah Shah and President WANA Welfare Association Rahmatullah Wazir also addressed the ceremony.

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PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister KP Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah addressing 20th Annual Scholarships and Awards Distribution Ceremony organized by WANA Welfare Association.

Police initiate action

PESHAWAR (INP): Peshawar police has initiated action over sale of cigarettes, snuff (smokeless tobacco) and other smoking substance to people aged under 18 years.

According to police, sale of cigarettes and other smoking substance is prohibited under Section-8.

It said that a fine of Rs5000 would be imposed on the shopkeepers found involved in sale of cigarettes and snuff to people aged under 18 years for first time. If the shopkeepers were again found engaged in the illegal practice, they would have to face three months imprisonment besides imposition of Rs100,000 fine, it added.

The police said that a pilot project in this connections has been stated in Swat which would be extended to other districts of provinces in next phase.

Increase in incidents of terrorism in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): An increase has been witnessed in the terrorism incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa this year wherein seven areas of province near Pak-Afghan border are targeted by terrorists.

According to statistics of incidents of terrorism this year of Department of Interior and Tribal Affairs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the areas most affected by terrorism include Peshawar, Khyber, Bajaur and Tank while Dera Ismail Khan and North Waziristan and South Waziristan included in the terror-affected areas, the documents of the Home and Tribal areas revealed here Saturday.

A total of 1,050 incidents of terrorism took place in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa this year while 419 incidents of terrorism took place in the arranged districts, 631 incidents in the merged districts, the document revealed.

A total of 61 incidents of terrorism took place in Peshawar this year and the highest 201 incidents of terrorism occurred in North Waziristan besides 169 incidents took place in Khyber, 121 in South Waziristan, 98 in Dera Ismail Khan, 62 in Bajaur and 61 in Tank respectively.

During these terrorism incidents 470 security personnel and civilians have been martyrs in terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa this year including 106 security personnel have martyrs in Peshawar this year with 4 security personnel were killed in Bajaur incident, 28 in Khyber, 36 in North Waziristan and 29 in South Waziristan, the document revealed.

As many as 21 security personnel died in Dera Ismail Khan and 13 in Tank while 73 civilians died the most in Bajaur, North Waziristan 28, South Waziristan 6, Dera Ismail Khan 5, 7 civilians killed in Tank and 2 each civilians were killed in terrorist incidents in Peshawar and Khyber.

There were 1823 incidents of terrorism in the last 3 years wherein 698 security personnel and civilians were killed in the last 3 years.



PESHAWAR: Principal St. John Vianney Boys High School Zeeshan and Minority Members Pervaiz Iqbal presenting a shield to Mayor Haji Zubair Ali.

SCCI, Ejad Labs sign MoU for promotion of IT sector

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Ejad Labs under the Future Fest program.

A press release issued here on Saturday stated that the MoU was signed by SCCI president Fuad Ishaq and Chief Executive Officer of the Ejad Labs Peshawar Arzish Azam, aimed at to jointly conduct research study, along with trainings, workshops and seminar for capability building of freelancers, entrepreneurs and IT experts, besides their

skills promote before the business community.

Former vice president of the SCCI Abidullah Yousafzai and Faiz Rasool, Saddar Gul, Fazal e Wahid, the chamber Secretary General Sajjad Aziz, senior officials of Ejad Labs were present on the occasion.

Fuad Ishaq while talking to management of the Ejad Labs called the memorandum of understanding a milestone for promotion of information technology in the province.

He informed that SCCI has also signed MoUs with public and private sector universities, aimed at promoting entrepreneurship

along with further strengthening industry-academia linkages.

The chamber president hoped that both institutions under the agreement would make joint initiatives for further enhancing skills of freelancers, entrepreneurs and IT experts as per modern lines and promotion of the IT sector in the province.

Later, the SCCI chief Fuad Ishaq visited food chain ‘Cheezious’ in Peshawar as chief guest.

On the occasion, the chamber former executive member Ghulam Bilal Javed, other members and the Cheezious’ food chain high officials, organisers.

88 kg hashish seized

PESHAWAR (INP): The Excise Intelligence Bureau and Excise Police Station Peshawar has recovered 88 kg of high quality hashish worth millions of rupees and arrested two accused.

According to Excise spokesman on Saturday, the action was taken to foil an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of drugs to Punjab, the spokesman said. He said that 88 kilograms of hashish was recovered from a motor vehicle number BC 6800 near M-1, H-Gol Chowk.

Two suspects Muhammad Hussain son of Sher Wali resident of Malik Din Khel in Bara district Khyber and Irfan Allah son of Fazl Mullah, resident of Shaheen Muslim Town Peshawar were arrested on the spot. Further investigation is underway and a case has been registered at Excise Police Station, Peshawar Region.

Weather to be cold, dry in most parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PESHAWAR (APP): The weather will be cold and dry in most of the districts of the province, while the forecast will remain partly cloudy in the upper districts, an official of the Meteorological Department said here Saturday.

There is a possibility of fog in Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, Swabi and Dera Ismail Khan in the morning and night hours, the Met Office Official said.

The current temperature in Peshawar is 4 degrees Celsius recorded while there is a possibility of rainfall of more than 12 degrees Celsius with a humidity ratio in the air of 19 percent recorded, the official of the Meteorological Department said.

The weather in the last 24 hours has been cold and dry in most parts of the country as well, he informed, adding, “Minimum temperature recorded in Kalam -4, Gilgit -3, Quetta and Srinagar recorded -2 degrees Celsius.

Peshawar welcomes UN women’s KoiJawaazNahi 16-Day campaign



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The #KoiJawaazNahi campaign reached Peshawar, bringing its impactful message to the heart of the city marking the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. The event underscored Peshawar’s commitment to championing the cause and raising awareness against gender-based violence. Supported by the Government of Japan, this initiative aims to spotlight the persistent challenge of gender-based violence, fostering collective action for prevention and elimination.

Muhammad Farooq, Additional Secretary Social Welfare Department, in his welcome speech said, “We are pleased to welcome you at this impactful gathering during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. Today, we stand united, declaring loudly and unequivocally that there is #NoExcuse for any form of violence. As we embark on this journey to raise awareness and foster change, let our actions become the catalyst for a world where equality and justice prevail”.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an international civil society-led annual campaign. It commences from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ends on 10 December, Human Rights Day, indicating that violence against women is the most pervasive breach of human rights worldwide.

While addressing the audiences, Nabila Malik, Head of Communications, UN Women Pakistan, stated “Let us embody the spirit of #KoiJawaazNahi - no room for silence, no space for excuses and let us remain steadfast in our commitment to creating a world where every woman and girl can live without the fear of violence. By working together, we can bring a positive change and build a more inclusive and equitable society. I encourage everyone to actively participate, listen, and learn from these 16 Days of Activism”.

Asif Raza, Directorate of Archaeology & Museums, KP said, “It is both a privilege and a call to action to stand before you during this significant event marking the UN Women’s 16 Days of

Activism. Today we rally under the powerful hashtag #KoiJawaazNahi and raise voice against the insidious persistence of gender-based violence.

The #KoiJawaazNahi campaign was launched at Mohenjo-Daro followed by Quetta and now in Peshawar before culminating in Islamabad.

The primary concept behind this initiative involves illuminating historical structures in these cities with orange, accompanied by street theatre performances and an exhibition highlighting the contributions of home-based workers.

Concurrently, the campaign actively promotes and advocates for this year’s theme, “Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women & Girls,” aiming to reach the masses.



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 78th convocation ceremony of the federally chartered FAST-National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Peshawar campus took place on Saturday. A total of 76 graduates were awarded degrees during the ceremony held at the campus premises.

Rector Dr. Aftab Ahmad Marouf presided over the event as the chief guest.

This degree-awarding ceremony marks the 78th convocation for the affiliated FAST-National University Peshawar campus, established in 2001. The chief guest was accompanied by Campus Director Dr. Omar Usman Khan, Board of Governors member Justice (Retd) Mian Ajmal Khan, CEO of Moogle Studio and Alumnus of the Peshawar Campus Mr. Zaheer Mukhtar and Head of Department for Electrical

Engineering & Computer Science.

Dr. Aftab Marouf, Rector of FAST-NUCES, and the Director conferred degrees and medals upon graduates who demonstrated outstanding performances in their respective fields.

The FAST-National University Peshawar campus, a center of excellence in contemporary educational circles in the country, takes pride in pioneering the launch of the first-ever

computer sciences degree in Pakistan.

The enterprising alumni of FAST-NUCES play a vital role in the socio-economic development of the country, rendering their services both domestically and abroad in top-tier corporations such as Microsoft, Red Hat, Yahoo, Google, and others.

Situated in the historical and culturally vibrant city of Peshawar, FAST National University Peshawar Campus has played a leading role in higher education in the country. The institute is committed to generating, disseminating, and preserving knowledge while collaborating with others to address the world’s significant challenges.

FAST-National University Peshawar Campus is dedicated to providing its students with an education that combines rigorous academic study with the excitement of discovery, all within the supportive and intellectually stimulating environment of a diverse campus community.



PESHAWAR: Secretary Industry Zulfiqar Ali Shah visiting gems stone market at Namak Mandi. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza



In brief

Three outlaws arrested F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The police arrested three outlaws, recovered weapons, ammunition and narcotics from their possession. On directions of DPO Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, SHO City police station Arslan Khan Gandapur along with his team launched crackdown against criminals. During operation, three outlaws Muhammad Asad, Daniyal and Arif were arrested besides recovery of two 30 bore pistols, 408 gram heroin, 371 gram crystal meth (Ice) and 3.260 kilogram hashish. Separate cases were registered against the detainees and investigations were kicked off.

Adulterated milk discarded

DERA GHAZI KHAN (INP): More than 2000 litres of adulterated milk was discarded by Punjab Food Authority (PFA) here on Saturday. A spokesperson of PFA said that the food safety team has raided at Gaider bypass and checked the milk carrying vehicle. The adulteration of water, urea and formalin was found in the milk during test through latest Lactoscan machine.

Police launch crackdown

BAHAWALNAGAR (INP): To ensure public safety and combat criminal activities, the District Police Officer (DPO) Naseebullah Khan initiated a crackdown against criminals in Bahawalnagar. Police arrested 651 suspects involved in different crimes. By tracking down the 02 groups, 5 accused were apprehended, and Rs 38 lakhs were found in their possession. In action against illegal weapons, 61 suspects were arrested and 04 rifles, 7 guns/repeaters, 50 pistols, 01 revolver, and 252 rounds/cartridges were recovered from them. In action against drug dealers, 103 drug peddlers were detained, and 10 operational furnaces, 2 kg of heroin, 38 kg of hashish, 2037 litres of vodka, and 206 litres of liquor were recovered from their possession. As a result of the crackdown on advertising offenders, 196 fugitives from the law, 293 offenders in the B category, and 18 in the A category were taken into custody. In the process of prosecuting gamblers, 16 cases were filed and 45 suspects were taken into custody.

Three persons murdered

PATUKI (INP): Three people were reportedly murdered in two separate incidents on Saturday in Patuki. According to police, in the first incident, a man named Ahmad was stabbed to death at Ahmad Chowk in Hajkot Chowk. The alleged attacker, Amin alias Maini, is accused of stabbing Ahmad in the chest and lower leg, causing his death. A case has been registered against Amin and one other suspect. In the second incident, Shakir Ali allegedly murdered his wife, Safia Bibi, in the Old Market Private Housing Scheme. The motive for the murder is believed to be Shakir's desire to obtain funds for drugs. Safia's mother, Jamila Bibi, lodged a complaint with the police, who have arrested Shakir and are searching for three other unidentified suspects. The third incident involved the shooting death of 52-year-old Shahnaz Bibi. The accused, Nadeem, is alleged to have shot Shahnaz after she refused to engage in a quarrel with him. Waqar, Nazir Pasran Rasheed, Rasheed Mayo, and two other unidentified suspects are also named in the case. DSP Circle Patuki, Irfan Akbar Butt, has assured the public that separate investigations are underway for each murder case.



HYDERABAD: PPP leader Sharjeel Inaam Memon talking to media persons at Rawal House.

Laptops distributed among Varsity students

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Secretary Higher Education Department Arshad Khan has asked students of the public sector universities to focus on their studies and skills for coping with the challenges they have to face in the field. He was addressing a laptop distribution function as chief guest held at the University of Malakand (UoM) here. The UoM vice chancellor Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad, chairman IT department Sehatullah and others also spoke on the occasion.

The UoM directorate of IT organized the function for university students under the Prime Minister's Youth Laptop scheme phase-III. The guests distributed laptops among male and female students of the varsity. Earlier the HED secretary Arshad Khan and VC Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad inaugurated the Gul e Dawoodi exhibition at the varsity. The UoM is celebrating its 22nd foundation week during which multiple events have been arranged.

Arshad Khan said the UoM had achieved a key position among the public

sector universities of the country within a short span of time. He said the UoM had won a reputation among the top universities of the province. He asked the students to play their active role in the development of the country through their knowledge and skills. The official said that students were the real asset of a nation and hoped they would bring the country at par with other nations of the world.

The UoM vice chancellor said that his varsity had got the second position in ranking in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and had also received recognition abroad. The directorate of students' societies and Kamyab Jawan Markaz in collaboration with the department of Pashto also arranged a poet of the campus competition at the convocation hall to mark the foundation week.

The UoM vice chancellor Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad, faculty members, poets and students attended the event. Prominent poets Dr Iqbal Shakir and Prof Zafaryab performed as judges. The top position holders were awarded with prizes on the occasion.

Schools' reconstruction

tion: The Directorate of elementary and secondary education department's Implementation Support Unit (ISU) with the financial support of the Unicef has rehabilitated and reconstructed a total of 15 schools for boys and girls in the flood affected areas of Lower and Upper Dir. The field officer education Jawad Ahmad told local journalists at Timergara here that the ISU also provided first aid equipment to the flood-damaged schools in both the districts.

He said the ISU Director programme Ms Umme Laila Jafari and programme manager Pir Bahadar Ali Shah took keen interest in the implementation of those projects in Dir. He said that 12 schools in Upper Dir and 3 in Lower Dir were reconstructed and made functional.

He said last year flash floods had badly affected those schools. Mr Jawad said that the schools were also provided with drinking water facilities and hand wash. He said that mock exercises were also conducted for students of the flood affected areas in order to raise students' awareness regarding protection of their lives.

Elementary & secondary education dept extends helping hands to special children

F.P. Report

CHITRAL: Directorate of Elementary and Secondary Education Implementation Support Unit proudly celebrated World Disability Day in District Chitral, honoring the accomplishments and resilience of specially-abled children. The event was honored by DC Lower Chitral, Director Programs (ISU), Program Manager (ISU) and officials from the Social Welfare Department. ISU-DoE&SE's commitment to inclusivity and recognizing the achievements of specially-abled children took center stage as it hosted special children alongside those who have achieved remarkable milestones in their lives, together with their parents.

Highlighting the significance of the day, attendees were engaged in various games and activities tailored for children with disabilities, wherein parents enthusiastically participat-

ed, creating an atmosphere of joy, unity, and support. DC Chitral Muhammad Imran Khan addressed the event and expressed heartfelt gratitude to ISU-DOE&SE and UNICEF for their unwavering support. He emphasized the pivotal role played by such celebrations in raising awareness and advocating for the rights and education of specially-abled children. He also announced to hold open katchery for the people with different abilities exclusively to ascertain their issues.

DC pledged continued support for ISU-DOE&SE and UNICEF's educational initiatives in the district, reinforcing the commitment to providing equal opportunities for every child. As a gesture of support and encouragement, ISU-DoE&SE distributed essential items, including school bags, first aid boxes, and stretchers, reinforcing the commitment to the well-being of children. Additionally, prizes

were awarded to the winning children, recognizing their participation and achievements in the event's activities. District Officer, social welfare Nusrat Jabeen elaborated in detail about the activities of her department for the well-being of the especial people in Chitral and said that all out efforts were being made to include them in the mainstream activities. She urged upon the parents of special people to get their children registered with the social welfare for which it has opened a one-window facility while 4600 persons had already registered themselves to avail the facilities and concessions.

On this occasion, the representative of special people, Sanullah Chitrali expressed his gratitude for ISU-DOE&SE, UNICEF and department of social welfare for holding the event and expressed his satisfaction while he also pointed out a number of issues faced by them.



QUETTA: Former MPA Akhtar Hussain Langove addressing a press conference.

Village chairman quits ANP, joins PTI

F.P. Report

BUNER: The Nugram Village Chairman in Khadukhel tehsil Buner district Ali Bacha on Saturday parted way with ANP and formally joined the PTI.

The PTI district chapter general secretary Syed Fakhar Jihan ex candidate PK Afsar Khan ex Candidate PK Kabir Khan insaf lawyer s forum president Advocate Inayatullah advocates M. Ali. Qaisar Khan Inam and Irshad and dozens tigers were present at the office of Advocate Qaisar Khan in Daggar. The new joiner said he was lover of Imran and his brother was wager to join PTI when returned from Dubai but died soon after arrived in Pakistan and he being a brother fulfilled his wish and joined PTI.

The PTI leaders Syed Fakhar Jehan Advocate Inayatullah Afsar Khan And advocate Qaisar Khan welcomed new joiner and assured respect. They complained of discriminatory attitude towards PTI by the district administration and argued other political parties were allowed to hold public rallies while PTI was not allowed and FIR against them were registered and they have to face court proceedings daily. They demanded level playing field like other political parties in Buner.

Four killed, one injured in road mishap

F.P. Report

UPPER DIR: Four persons were killed while one injured when a car went out of the driver's control and plunged into the Panjkora River at Narhand area in the jurisdiction of Gandigar police station in Upper Dir here Saturday, residents and police said.

According to details, the car was part of a wedding party bound for Timergara that met a road accident due to over speeding. As a result the driver Wahid Zaman, Ishiaq Ahmad, Hazrat Ali and Mian Bakhtawar Shah, all residents of Gorkohi Ushera Dar were killed while Bacha Khan was injured. The dead and the injured were shifted to a nearby hospital. The Gandigar police registered a case and started investigations.

Removal of encroachments directed

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kohat Dr. Azmatullah Wazir ordered improvement in the cleanliness situation of Kohat district and the removal of encroachments from the city. The meeting was also attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner General Shehryar Qamar, Assistant Commissioners, Secretary R-T-A Kohat, Traffic Representatives of Police Kohat, T-M-A Kohat and concerned officials.

The meeting was also briefed about measures planned to further improve sanitation situation and comprehensive plan for the elimination of encroachments.

Residents demand action against beggars

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The incompetence of Darul Kafala in Mardan, the rule of professional beggars over the city's commercial centers and posh densely populated areas, beggar gangs from other provinces and districts of the country spreading obscenity under the guise of begging women, while the crimes of professional men are kidnapping and involved in banditry, limited to sleeping in the responsible office of Darul Kafala Mardan Social welfare staff are silent spectators.

According to the details, the crowded commercial centers of Mardan are Bank Road, Bickat Gunj, Gaju Khan Market, Sehra Bazar, Gharib Market, Pakistan Chowk, Sabzi Mandi, Kas

Korona Swabi Road, Parhoti, Chato chowk, Shamsi Road, Malakand Chowk, College Chowk, Shahidano Bazar, Mirafazal Khan Bazar, Eidgah Road, Baghdada, khawaja Gunj, Shaheen Market, Charsada Chowk, Nista Road Bijli Ghar and other important commercial centers and posh congested areas including Mardan.

Thousands of professional beggars of the districts and provinces, in which the majority of them are young children and women, besides a large number of old men and men, have begged in the noses of the citizens by begging from morning till night. It is clear that the

influential contractors of beggars in Mardan earn millions of rupees daily by patronizing these groups, and among these professional beggars, young criminals are involved in the incidents of robbery and mobile phone theft, while young women earn thousands by openly spreading obscenity and nudity.

Despite the complaints of traders and serious people against the thousands of beggars spread in the city, the officials in charge of the Darul Kafala managed by Social Welfare are having fun and the district and police administrations are also avoiding action against the beggars traders has been strongly demanded that concrete measures in Mardan.

Cough breaks as epidemic: In Tehsil Takhtbhai, cold, cough and fever have become an epidemic, six to ten eleven people in every house are suffering from this disease hundreds of patients are coming to every hospital and clinic on a daily basis. Various vague opinions of doctors about this disease have confused the patients and their relatives.

Some doctors say that it is a viral disease some say that it is the fourth wave of Corona and some patients advises that it is bird flu that has been covered up by health department officials and experts. According to the details, cold, cough and fever have become an epidemic in the entire Takhtbhai Tehsil.

Thousands of men, women and children are suffering from cold, cough and fever in the entire Tehsil and hundreds of patients suffering from this epidemic come to private hospitals.

According to estimate, five to ten eleven people are suffering from this disease in every house in every small and big town across the tehsil. Doctors are also giving different and surprising opinions about this disease to the patients. That it is a viral disease, the period is ten days after ten days, these patients will automatically recover when some say that this disease is the fourth wave of corona virus, but its intensity is less due to corona vaccine, but according to most of them, this disease is really bad.

There is flu even if they say that no case of fed flu has been recorded at the official level so far but this disease is the original bird flu, but naturally, its intensity is more in some patients and less in others, on the contrary despite the severity of this disease in the entire region, the responsible officers and experts of the health department are completely silent and in this regard. We have not yet received any negative reaction from them. People are in a state of panic and they are hesitant to take the final steps for the treatment of their patients due to the lack of clear views and instructions from the doctors.

QWP demand free, fair and transparent elections

F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chairman Sikandar Hayat Khan Sherpao on Saturday said that holding free, fair and transparent election was the only way to steer the country out of the prevailing crises.

This he said while addressing a gathering at Tangi tehsil in Charsadda district and called for providing a level-playing field to all political parties. Local leader of Pakistan People's Party and former councilor Liaqat Khan, general councilor Naem Khan and others announced joining the QWP on this occasion. They reposed confidence in the QWP leadership and said they would work to strengthen

the party at the grassroots.

Welcoming the new entrants into the party, Sikandar Sherpao said the QWP would not let them down and would come up to their expectations. He said the QWP would spare no effort to work for the development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the well-being of its residents. He said his party believed in serving the people with any consideration for political affiliations. Criticizing the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf for its bad governance, he said the PTI ruled KP for almost a decade, but left the province in dire financial straits.

QWP provincial chairman said the PTI rulers deceived the Pakhtuns in the name of change and reneged on their pledges.

He said the slogan of change was a ploy to reach the corridors of power. However, he said the PTI leaders stood exposed as they could not serve the people. "The people are now mature. They have realized that the slogan of change was a political gimmick to get power," he remarked.

Sikandar Sherpao said his party would continue to strive for getting the rights of the province. He said the PTI compromised on KP's rights during its rule. He said the people were facing skyrocketing inflation due to the incompetence of the PTI rulers. The QWP leader said though KP produced cheap hydel electricity, its residents were compelled to pay inflated power bills.



HYDERABAD: Students presenting tableau during Shah Latif Mela.

Police rendered sacrifices for protection of people

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: District Police Officer Hafizabad Faissal Gulzar has said that under the people friendly vision of the Inspector General Police Punjab, the district police have been made people friendly and police officers and official rendering sacrifices for protection of life, prosperity and honour of the masses.

While addressing gold medal distributing ceremony among Cops to acknowledge their best performance for eliminating menace of narcotics in different graveyards of the city, he said that district police was commit-

ted to curb drug trafficking in the area and police would not refrain from any sacrifices to make the district drugs free.

He said that special crackdown on drugs dealers would continue till arrest of the last narcotics seller in the district. Addressing on this occasion, SP Investigation Farooq Ahmad Bhutta urged the people to cooperate with police for making the district abode of peace.

This ceremony was arranged by the CEO Muslim University Institute Mehmood Sadiq Dhothar, Shafaqat Hussain Tarrar, Azmat-e-Gulzar Welfare Trust and Chamber of

Commerce and Industries Hafizabad under the supervision of Abdul Jabbar Raza Ansary. Social workers Abdul Hameed Rehmani, Nighat Khan, PET Sajid and other prominent people attended the ceremony. At the end, gold medals were distributed among Incharge Cluster Squid Kafait Ullah and other police officials.

Countrywide movement against black marketing: Central President Kisan Board Pakistan Sardar Zafar Hussain has announced to launch countrywide movement against black marketing and inflated fertilizers from 11, December (Tomorrow).



Can US visa bans deter West Bank violence by Israeli settlers?

GAZA: Just two months after introducing visa-free entry for Israel, the United States is restricting Israeli settlers from travelling to the US if they are known to be engaging in violence against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. The US Department of State announced that it has started implementing visa restrictions on “individuals believed to have been involved in undermining peace, security or stability in the West Bank”. Hours after the announcement, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said at a news conference: “There is, sadly, violence from extremists that we must condemn,” while many American officials have called on Israel to implement stricter measures against such incidents.

Although some consider the visa ban a positive step, others have argued that it falls far short of what the US can actually do to rein in Israeli violence. Observers have also raised concerns over a loophole in the policy that lets American-Israeli dual nationals get off scot-free if they perpetrate violence. The details of the ban have not been made clear, but the first ones were imposed.

Israeli citizens who meet the criteria for the ban and have US visas will be notified of their nullification. Those who do not already have a visa and apply for one will have their application rejected. Although it is not the focus of the policy, Palestinians who are found to have committed violent acts will also face the same repercussions. Blacklisted settlers will also be ineligible for the Electronic System for Travel Authorization, a visa waiver US President Joe Biden introduced for Israelis in September.

The US has said the move is an extension of its continued opposition to settler violence after pushing Israel “to do more to hold accountable extremist settlers who have committed violent attacks against Palestinians in the West Bank”. Since October 7, Biden and other US officials have repeatedly warned Israel to stop settler violence in the region. Such cases usually involve direct harm to Palestinians, including casualties, as well as damage to their properties.

US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said that during last week’s trip to Israel, he made it clear that the US “is ready to take action using our own authorities”, according to a White House press statement. US officials, including Blinken and State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller, said Washington’s measures should not keep Israel from taking its own actions and the US is continuing to engage with Israeli officials on protecting Palestinians from such attacks.

Many of Israel’s far-right politi-



cians, however, have signalled support for settler activities, and accountability of such events is rare and often overseen by the Israeli military. Miller said that although Israel has put some perpetrators in administrative detention, they must also be prosecuted. Israel’s government has also enabled attacks through stepped up access to gun licenses. In July, Ben-Gvir announced that Israeli police would no longer confiscate weapons of Israeli settlers who shoot Palestinians.

Additionally, the expansion of settlements hurts progress towards peace and a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, experts said. In phone calls with world leaders since October 7, Biden and Blinken have reiterated their commitment towards establishing the two-state solution for Israel and Palestine. It is unclear how many people the ban would cover, but since the October 7 Hamas attacks in southern Israel, an average of seven cases a day of settler violence against Palestinians have been reported in the West Bank, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Before October 7, there were an average of three cases a day in 2023. The ban may also apply to immediate family members of settlers who engage in violence. Miller said it would affect “dozens” of settlers and their families although he did not give a more accurate number or identify anyone the ban would target due to confidentiality rules. Israeli settlers who have American passports and do not need US visas will not be affected by the ban. Estimates suggested that at least 200,000 Israeli-American dual nationals live in Israel.

Overall, Israel has more than 700,000 settlers spread across 150 government-authorised settlements and 128 unauthorised outposts around the West Bank and East Jerusalem. In 2015, an Oxford

University professor’s research showed that 60,000 of the Israeli settlers in the West Bank also held US passports. It is unclear how much that number has changed over the past eight years.

Since Israel occupied the West Bank in the 1967 Six-Day War, Israelis have built settlements that most countries deem illegal. Israel rejects such characterisations on the grounds that it has historical ties to the land. The ban has received mixed responses since its implementation, with some considering it a step forward and other describing it as “hollow”.

The policy has been labelled a move towards establishing peace and security in the West Bank during an escalating war in Gaza. The US has been a staunch supporter of Israel’s war on the enclave, but the punitive move points to US policy being at odds with Israeli government measures. “It’s an important signal that the administration is taking this issue more seriously,” Adam Shapiro, director of advocacy for Israel-Palestine at Democracy for the Arab World Now, told Al Jazeera.

He added that behind the scenes, the Biden administration is looking at additional sanctions. The US has been under pressure to take stronger measures against Israel, particularly by calling for a ceasefire. “This action is largely meaningless and symbolic” but an opportunity to push for more concrete action, especially against settler projects in general, Shapiro said.

Several European countries have also been raising the possibility of sanctions on Israeli settlers in recent weeks. The European Union is reviewing a proposal on such sanctions, the Reuters news agency reported. In November, France also said the EU should consider such measures, citing rising attacks in the West Bank and deteriorating “prospects for a two state-solution?”. — Aljazeera

Turkey issues arrest warrant for Somali president’s son

ISTANBUL (BBC): Turkey has issued an international arrest warrant for the son of Somalia’s president, after he allegedly ran over a motorcycle courier, who later died. A police report said Mohammed Hassan Cheikh Mohamud collided with the courier in broad daylight in Istanbul.

Police say he was driving a car which reportedly belonged to the Somali consulate there. Turkey imposed a travel ban on Mr Mohamud but officials believe he has already fled the country. In a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, Istanbul’s mayor Ekrem Imamoglu shared grainy CCTV footage of the 30 November incident. A car can be seen appearing to hit the back of a motorcycle at a junction on a busy multi-lane road.

The motorcyclist, father-of-two Yunus Emre Göçer, 38, was taken to hospital but died from his injuries six days. An initial police report had said that Mr Göçer had been at fault and therefore Mr Mohamud was released, according to Mr Göçer’s lawyer quoted by Turkish media outlets. But a review of the security footage suggested there may have been another explanation.

Mr Mohamud, who is the son of Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, has not commented. An international arrest warrant for Mr Mohamud was issued by the Turkish prosecutor. This was after police had visited his home to find that he had not been there for almost a week, the AFP news agency says, citing local reports. Turkey and Somalia have enjoyed growing diplomatic relations over the past decade, with Turkey providing infrastructure investment, military training and humanitarian aid.

11 killed in Mexico

MEXICO CITY: At least 11 people have been killed in a violent confrontation between suspected gang members and residents of a small farming town in central Mexico, authorities have said.

Eight of those killed in the clash in Texcaltitlan, a town located about 65km from the state capital, were suspected to be tied to criminal activities and three were members of the community, the security ministry in the State of Mexico said in a statement. State police, which did not identify the gang suspected of involvement in the confrontation, said they were working with the National Guard and other authorities to provide more details on the incident.

Local media said gunmen belonging to Familia Michoacana, a drug cartel blamed for the massacre of 20 people in neighbouring Guerrero state last year, had arrived at the village demanding local farmers pay extortion fees. Mexico’s drug cartels are known for extorting money from businesses using threats of violence and the Familia Michoacana drug cartel has been active in the region for years.

Footage posted on social media showed fighting break out among several dozen men, with villagers in cowboy hats armed with hunting rifles chasing suspected gang members amid bursts of gunfire. Other footage showed charred bodies and vehicles on fire. Al Jazeera could not independently verify the footage. — Aljazeera

US, Japan, SK step up efforts to counter NK cyber-threats

SEOUL: The United States, South Korea and Japan have agreed on new efforts to respond to North Korea’s threats in cyberspace, according to national security advisers from the three countries meeting in Seoul.

The allies “launched new trilateral initiatives to counter the threats posed by the DPRK, from its cyber-crime and cryptocurrency money laundering to its reckless space and ballistic missile tests,” White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters on Saturday, referring to North Korea by its official name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. “This will be a new effort with respect to cryptocurrency and money laundering and how we disrupt North Korea’s capacity to gain revenue from the hacking and stealing of cryptocurrency and then laundering it through exchanges,” he said at a joint news conference with his Asian counterparts.

Sullivan said the meeting followed up on commitments made at a trilateral summit hosted by President Joe Biden in August, where leaders pledged to deepen security and economic cooperation. At the time, the three countries

expressed deep concern over what they described as North Korea’s “malicious” cyber-activities in support of its banned weapons programmes.

Cryptocurrency funds stolen by North Korean hackers have been a key source of funding for the country’s weapons programmes, according to the United Nations, with such theft reaching a record last year. Pyongyang has denied allegations of hacking or other cyberattacks. Takeo Akiba, Japan’s national security secretariat secretary general, said that North Korea’s “illicit cyber activities” had emerged as the most recent challenges, calling them “a source of funds” for the isolated state’s nuclear missile development.

The meeting in Seoul came as tensions on the Korean peninsula are at their highest in years, with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un accelerating the expansion of his nuclear and missile programme and flaunting an escalatory nuclear doctrine that authorities the preemptive use of nuclear weapons. The United States and its Asian allies have responded by increasing the visibility of their trilateral partnership

in the region and strengthening their combined military exercises, which Kim condemns as invasion rehearsals.

Washington, Seoul and Tokyo have also expressed concerns about a potential arms alignment between North Korea and Russia. They worry Kim is providing badly needed munitions to help Russian President Vladimir Putin wage war in Ukraine in exchange for Russian technology assistance to upgrade his nuclear-armed military – something both Moscow and Pyongyang have denied.

Cho Tae-yong, South Korea’s national security office director, said on Saturday that the three security advisers reaffirmed North Korea’s obligations under multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions that call for its denuclearisation and ban any weapons trade with other countries, and agreed to strengthen coordination to ensure that is implemented. Akiba said the “unprecedented frequency and patterns” of North Korean ballistic missile launches necessitate a deeper and more effective partnership between Washington, Seoul and Tokyo. — Aljazeera

Prosecutors threaten to annul victory of Arevalo

GUATEMALA CITY: Guatemala’s Supreme Electoral Tribunal has declared the results of this year’s presidential race “unalterable” after public prosecutors openly questioned whether to annul the vote. The prosecutors’ statements sparked a domestic and international firestorm, marking what critics consider the latest — and most directly stated — effort to overturn President-elect Bernardo Arevalo’s election victory.

The Organisation of American States (OAS), a regional election watchdog, went so far as to condemn the statements as “an attempted coup d’etat”. “The actions and statements of prosecutors Rafael Curruchiche and Leonor Morales constitute an alteration of the country’s constitutional order, a breach of the rule of law and a violation of the human rights of the population of their country,” it said in a statement.

“The attempt to annul this year’s general elections constitutes the worst form of democratic breakdown and the consolidation of a political fraud against the will of the people.” The latest chapter in Guatemala’s ongoing election turmoil erupted with a press conference led by Curruchiche, Morales and Angel Pineda Avila, the secretary-general of the Public Ministry.

Prosecutors with the Public Ministry have been accused of undemocratic actions in the past. The United States, for instance, has previously alleged that Curruchiche and Pineda “obstructed investigations into acts of corruption” to further their political aims. The prosecutors reiterated their request that Arevalo be stripped of his political immunity, a step that could open him up to prosecution.

They accused him of improperly gathering sig-

natures for his presidential campaign, as well as mishandling political funds.

But they went a step further, raising the prospect of the presidential election being overturned as the result of their findings. “Today is a historic day for democratic institutions,” Pineda said in the press conference, defending his colleagues’ work as “impartial” and denying any intent to interfere in the election results.

But the backlash to the press conference was swift. Blanca Alfaro, the head of the Supreme Election Tribunal, a government body charged with maintaining election integrity, quickly responded with a news conference of her own, refuting the possibility that a new election could be held. “I would like to ratify, in my role as magistrate and in a personal capacity, that the results are valid, official and unalterable,” she said.

She also affirmed that Arevalo and his vice president, Karin Herrera, would take office as planned. “At this moment, there is no way that the Supreme Electoral Tribunal is going to repeat the elections.” Prosecutors have previously targeted the Supreme Election Tribunal itself, ordering raids on its offices after the elections that resulted in sealed ballot boxes being opened. Guatemala has long struggled to rein in official corruption. For instance, a United Nations-backed body called the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) found itself abruptly shuttered in 2021, after then-President Jimmy Morales accused it of illegal acts.

Morales himself has since come under investigation for corrupt activities. This year’s presidential race has likewise been

marred by questions of election integrity. Three prominent candidates were disqualified before the first round of voting, including the then-frontrunner. Arevalo, meanwhile, was a dark horse, running on a progressive anticorruption platform with the Seed Movement party. But he soared into the spotlight with a surprise second-place finish in the June general elections, securing one of two spots in the run-off race.

That’s when the trouble for him and his party started. Within days, a Guatemala court agreed to suspend the results of the vote, pending a review. After the results were upheld, the Seed Movement itself faced suspension, after prosecutors alleged it had improperly gathered signatures to register as a political party. The efforts to suspend the Seed Movement persisted even after Arevalo notched a landslide victory in the run-off. He secured over 60 percent of the vote, trouncing former Vice President Sandra Torres, a conservative candidate.

But prosecutors have continued to investigate Arevalo, prompting election observers to question whether they plan to scuttle his victory through anti-democratic means. In November, for instance, the Public Ministry filed a request to strip Arevalo of his political immunity over his participation in a student-led protest movement, citing his social media posts at the time. Protests, however, have broken out across the country to uphold the election results, many of which have been led by Indigenous leaders. Arevalo is scheduled to be sworn into office on January 14, succeeding outgoing conservative President Alejandro Giammattei. — Aljazeera

‘Alarming’: Palestinians accuse ICC prosecutor of bias after Israel visit

WEST BANK: On December 2, Eman Nafii was one of dozens of Palestinians invited to meet Prosecutor Karim Khan of the International Criminal Court in the occupied West Bank. As the wife of the longest-serving Palestinian prisoner in Israel, Nafi wanted to speak to Khan about her husband and the Israeli occupation.

But Khan spent most of the meeting talking, before his team gave Nafi and other Palestinian victims just 10 minutes to share their stories. “People got angry. They told him, ‘You are coming to listen to us for 10 minutes? How are we going to tell you about our stories in 10 minutes,’” Nafi told Al Jazeera. “One of the women (with us) was from Gaza. She lost 30 members of her family in the (ongoing war). She shouted, ‘How can we explain this in 10 minutes.’”

While Khan ended up listening to the victims for about an hour, Palestinians fear that he is applying a double standard by solely focusing his efforts on Hamas and ignoring the grave crimes Israel is accused of having perpetrated over two months of a deadly war. Many were disappointed that Khan accepted an Israeli invitation to visit Israeli communities and areas that Hamas attacked on October 7, while declining an offer from Palestinians to visit the hundreds of illegal Israeli settlements, checkpoints and refugee camps in the occupied West Bank.

During his three-day visit, Israel also did not allow Khan to enter Gaza, where Israel has killed more than 17,000 people and displaced most of the besieged enclave’s 2.3 million inhabitants from their homes since October 7. Most of those killed have been women and children, while thousands of young men are now being rounded up, many of them stripped and taken to undisclosed locations. Legal experts have warned that Israel’s atrocities in Gaza may soon amount to genocide. Despite the mounting evidence and ongoing atrocities, Khan has shown little interest in seriously probing Israel, according to Palestinian officials, victims and legal scholars. “Khan became enthusiastic to start this investigation [in the occupied territories] after October 7. That’s alarming,” said Omar Awadallah, who oversees UN human rights organisations as part of the Palestinian Authority, the political body governing the West Bank. “[The Palestinian Authority] gave

him retroactive jurisdiction from 2014. [Khan] cannot say that he didn’t see crimes being committed [in the occupied territories] from 2014 until October 7,” Awadallah told Al Jazeera. On January 2, 2015, the state of Palestine became a signatory to the Rome Statute, giving the ICC jurisdiction to investigate atrocities such as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

The move was perceived as a victory for Palestinian and Israeli human rights groups, which were fed up with the Israeli judicial system for not punishing Israeli officials, settlers and soldiers who were committing crimes in the occupied territories such as land theft and extrajudicial killings. According to Yesh Din, an Israeli human rights organisation that opposes illegal settlements in the West Bank, Palestinians harmed by Israeli soldiers have a less than one percent chance of obtaining justice if they file a complaint in Israel.

While the ICC offers an alternative to Israeli courts, no arrest warrants have been issued against Israeli officials or soldiers for committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza and the West Bank, according to a legal expert from Al Mezan, a Palestinian human rights organisation that advocates for justice in Gaza. “We have submitted plenty of legal analysis and evidence to the office of the prosecutor even before Khan was elected,” the expert, who asked for anonymity due to a fear of reprisal from Israeli authorities, told Al Jazeera. “We believe that [Khan’s] office has enough evidence to issue warrants for Israeli political and military leaders by now.”

After returning from his three-day visit to Israel and the West Bank, Khan released a statement that made little mention of the mounting evidence implicating Israel in committing crimes against humanity such as that of apartheid in the West Bank and war crimes in the West Bank and Gaza. Khan merely said that his visit was not “investigative in nature” and called on Israel to respect the legal principles of “distinction, precaution and proportionality” in its ongoing bombing campaign and ground offensive in Gaza.

Khan had a different tone when addressing Hamas’s October 7 attacks, calling them “serious international crimes that shock the conscience of humanity”. Khan’s statement angered the Palestinian vic-

tims that he met briefly in Ramallah.

“What made us really unhappy was what he wrote after the visit,” said Nafi. “He is not supposed to draw an equivalence between the victim and their killers. We wanted him to tell the Israelis to stop what they are doing to detainees and to [stop] what they’re doing to Gaza.” Al Jazeera submitted written questions to Khan’s office which raised Palestinian criticisms of his visit to the West Bank and his statement. His office responded by emailing Al Jazeera several of Khan’s previous statements, without answering any of the questions.

In September 2021, Khan said that he would deprioritise crimes committed by American forces in Afghanistan and focus his probe on the atrocities that the Taliban and the Islamic State in Khurasan Province, ISKP (ISIS-K) carried out. Critics believe that Khan was acquiescing to political pressure from the United States – a state that is not a party to the Rome Statute – which sanctioned Khan’s predecessor for daring to open a case against American troops in Afghanistan.

But Khan justified his decision by claiming that the court had limited resources and that the Taliban and Islamic State committed more serious crimes. Palestinians now fear that Khan could cite a similar justification to investigate Hamas, but not Israel. “We have yet to see that any prosecutor has taken the question of Palestine seriously, which shows that the whole system of international law has been torn into pieces,” said Diana Buttu, a Palestinian legal scholar.

Buttu added that the ICC has effectively become a court that acts in the political interest of powerful Western states, rather than in accordance with strict legal principles. She cited Khan’s decision to indict Russian President Vladimir Putin on accounts of war crimes committed during Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. “The ICC has become a very political court that managed to issue indictments against Putin,” she told Al Jazeera. “But eight weeks into what is presumably the worst man-made disaster [in Gaza] and the prosecutor has remained silent and only comes [to visit] at the request of Israel.” Nafi agreed and added that Khan can’t claim to be ignorant or unaware of Israel’s atrocities against Palestinians. “How many people does he want to see killed until he speaks up,” she told Al Jazeera. “I want him to be brave enough, to say the truth and to say it in public.” — Aljazeera

South Korea defense chief threatens strikes on ‘heart and head’ of North Korea if provoked

SEOUL (AP): South Korea’s defense minister threatened massive retaliatory missile strikes on “the heart and head” of North Korea in the event of provocation, as the rivals escalate their rhetoric over their respective spy satellite launches in recent days.

The unusually fiery South Korean warning came as the top security advisers from South Korea, the US and Japan gathered in Seoul for talks on North Korea’s evolving nuclear threat and other issues. During a visit to the army’s missile strategic command, South Korean Defense Minister Shin Wonsik ordered command officers to maintain a readiness to fire precision-guided and powerful missiles at any time, according to his ministry.

Shin said the main role of the command is “lethally striking the heart and head of the enemy, though the types of its provocations can

vary,” a ministry statement said. Animosities between the two Koreas deepened after North Korea launched its first military reconnaissance satellite into space on Nov. 21 in violation of UN bans. South Korea, the US and Japan strongly condemned the launch, viewing it as an attempt by the North to improve its missile technology as well as establish a space-based surveillance system.

South Korea announced plans to resume front-line aerial surveillance in response. North Korea quickly retaliated by restoring border guard posts, according to Seoul officials. Both steps would breach a 2018 inter-Korean deal on easing front-line military tensions. Last week, when South Korea also launched its first military spy satellite from California’s Vandenberg Space Force Base, North Korea slammed the US for alleged double standards

and warned of a possible grave danger to global peace.

In a statement, Jo Chol Su, a senior North Korean Foreign Ministry official, said the North would make all available efforts to protect its national interests in the face of threats by hostile forces. The national security advisers from South Korea, the US and Japan are to hold their first trilateral meeting in six months in Seoul on Saturday.

Ahead of the three-way meeting, South Korean national security adviser Cho Tae-yong and his Japanese counterpart, Takeo Akiba, met together and reaffirmed a need to strengthen their cooperation with the US to cope with provocations by North Korea. Cho and US national security adviser Jake Sullivan also met and affirmed that Seoul and Washington remain open to diplomacy with North Korea, according to South Korea’s presidential office.

The Frontier Post

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Citizenry rights merits diligent handling

CARETAKER Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar once again reaffirmed the government's resolve to ensure equal rights for minority communities and called for enforcing meritocracy and social opportunities for their uplift and mainstreaming. During an interaction with the students of Aga Khan University the Premier noted that the people of Pakistan enjoyed freedom of expression, and considering the country's political history, any particular incident could not be associated with the government of that particular term. On rights and the status of Gilgit Baltistan, the Premier said that the GB was and would remain part of Pakistan. The political procedure should move forward and the matter of rights should be tackled peacefully without any resentment.

The issue of freedom of expression and minorities' rights is a global phenomenon that exists in all nations and all parts of the globe in one or another way. The civic rights of the citizens including minorities had been comprehensively covered by Islam and vigorously protected by the Muslim rulers in the Riasaat-e-Madina and afterwards. Similarly, those divine values were endorsed by the comity of civilized nations under the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. However, the issues of human and minority rights still exist undressed in all parts of the world including the United States, the UK, Europe, Asia, and Africa. As of now, hate crimes and anti-migrant racism are on the rise in Western nations while the UK's authorities are currently considering the annulment of Great Britain's domestic human rights laws along with an exit from the European Convention on Human Rights to tackle the issue of illegal migration, economic and security challenges in their country.

The constitution of Pakistan categorically covers all citizenry and the fundamental rights of its citizens without any discrimination of religion, caste, colour, or creed, while the state of Pakistan has always endeavoured wholeheartedly to protect civil liberties and the basic rights of its populace throughout the past. However, there had been a sense of insecurity and deprivation among the religious and ethnic minorities including Sindhis, Baloch, FATA, and residents of Gilgit Baltistan, the less developed/neglected regions. Historically, that resentment had been categorically exploited by the anti-state elements and foreign pawns to their advantage, while the sloganeering about Sindhu Dash and Lar-o-Bar Afghans is the outcome of that subversion and propaganda. On the other hand, the racial and ethnic politics of regional leaders promoted religious and ethnic polarization and deepened the sense of inequality, discrimination, and exclusion among the masses in those particular regions.

In fact, human rights and civil liberties are sensitive issues that often bisect security concerns and overlap state laws complicating the work of law enforcers and creating hurdles for judges and prosecutors in almost all nations across the globe. All nations offer a degree of freedom of expression, the right to peaceful assembly, and lawful protest but no country permits any person or a group to abuse the writ of the state or spread chaos and anarchy in any garb. Realistically, nations always grow and societies strengthen through impartial justice, non-discrimination, fairness, and transparency, which are undeniable needs of each citizen, political, religious, and ethnic group in the society. Fundamental rights are a serious issue that merits careful handling by policymakers to address genuine issues of the public by providing equal economic and financial resources and development opportunities in less developed regions. Efforts should be made to create diverse national perspectives by combating intolerance, fostering unity, and promoting pluralism to foil foreign conspiracies against the country.

Palestinians' right to life

AN OIC contact group comprising foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, and Turkey is on a global voyage to carry out shuttle diplomacy to achieve an immediate cease-fire in the Gaza war as soon as possible. The penta-states' top diplomats reached Washington to make a plea for an early ceasefire but remained unsuccessful. The UAE has also tabled a draft resolution at the UN Security Council demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. The draft resolution also calls for the protection of Palestinian and Israeli civilian populations and demands the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, as well as humanitarian access. However, the United States blatantly trashed the UAE's sponsored resolution and termed it planting the seeds for the next war.

Unfortunately, weeks-long hostility, over 170,000 deaths, scores of injuries, ruination of the whole Gaza enclave, and displacement of over 2.3 million Palestinians failed to satisfy the rage and revenge of the Jewish state and its determined Western ally. So far, the toll of 14 Muslim dead for one Jew killed on the October 7 attack could not please the so-called survivors of the Nazis' holocaust. Hence, refusing a ceasefire is like issuing a license to continue killing unarmed innocent civilians in the West Bank and Gaza. Historically, the impotence and failure of the United Nations and its executive arm the UN Security Council (UNSC) became more evident, whereas the US's bias against Arabs was exposed to the world.

Currently, the global community and Muslim nations demand a permanent solution to the Palestine dispute under the globally accepted UN Security Council's resolutions that call for a two-state solution by creating an independent and fully autonomous Palestinian state with pre-1967 borders. However, Israel and the United States intend to maintain the status quo along with the elimination of Hamas, which is the only hurdle in the implementation of a nefarious agenda for the greater Israel. In fact, Israel's unending atrocities against Palestinians led to Hamas's surgical strikes into Israel, while the ongoing genocide will further fuel radicalization in Arab youths. No peace is possible until and unless Israel and its allies give Palestinians the right to a peaceful life, events such as October 7 will not be stopped in the future.

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Volodymyr Zelenskyy: The forgotten man

Andrew Mitrovica

Volodymyr Zelenskyy is a forgotten man fighting a forgotten war. The Ukrainian president's shooting star has lost much of its altitude and gleam as Russia's grinding invasion approaches the two-year mark. An old war has turned into a plodding stalemate. The ballyhooed Ukrainian "offensive" has stalled. The promised "breakthrough" remains stubbornly elusive - if possible at all. The lethal, tit-for-tat exchanges have sadly become routine. Stoicism has replaced outrage. However it may be defined, "victory" is far beyond strategic or even conceivable reach.

The world, it seems, is tired of Ukraine. Worse, it is bored. So, the columnists who once praised Zelenskyy's courage and Ukraine's resistance in saccharine-laced homilies have largely forsaken both. Gone too are the invitations to address US Congress or parliaments, where, clad in his trademark green pullover, Zelenskyy was feted as an impish, unorthodox warrior and liberator.

The mass demonstrations of solidarity with Ukraine's "brave" and "just" fight disappeared many months ago. Ukraine is no longer urgent, sympathetic "news". Lately, the only "news" that Zelenskyy and Ukraine are inviting is mostly bad - courtesy, in part, of unflattering leaks from a skittish White House. "Leaked US strategy on Ukraine sees corruption as the real threat," the prickly headline on Politico's popular online portal read. The story's lead sentence was equally damning and a blatant sign that America's - and, perhaps more particularly, US President Joe Biden's - steadfast affection for plucky Ukraine is beginning to wane.

"Biden administration officials are far more worried about corruption in Ukraine than they publicly admit," Politico warned. The blunt, existential consequence of the brewing discontent among "Biden administration officials"? "... that corruption could cause Western allies to abandon Ukraine's fight against Russia's invasion, and that Kyiv cannot put

off the anti-graft effort." That's trouble, big trouble, for Zelenskyy. He knows, I suspect, that time and circumstances are not his allies. Soon, very soon, his fair-weather friends in Europe and Washington, preoccupied, as always, with the present, will lose interest in the quickly receding past. Their "iron-clad will" is slowly, but surely, being displaced by resignation. When the "will" evaporates, inevitably so does the money.

And Zelenskyy needs a

That, by any measure, is not a confident or reassuring look. "I want to be clear: without congressional action, by the end of the year we will run out of resources to procure more weapons and equipment for Ukraine and to provide equipment from US military stocks," the director of the Office of Management and Budget at the White House wrote.

lot of money to keep a patient Vladimir Putin and his imperial plans at bay. Untold billions have already been spent. The prospect that Congress and the European Union will continue acting as Ukraine's flush piggy bank is dimming. The pan-continental coffers are closing - fast. So much so, that one frantic "Biden administration official" was reduced, in effect, to begging for cash. That, by any measure, is not a confident or reassuring look. "I want to be clear: without congressional action, by the end of the year we will run out of resources to procure more weapons and equipment for Ukraine and to provide equipment from US military stocks," the director of the Office of Management and Budget at the White House wrote. "There is no magical pot of funding available to meet this moment. We are out of money - and nearly out of time."

The panic-tinged gambit has failed, to date, to move reluctant European and North American lawmakers wary of bankrolling a war that is stuck in winter's mud. A slog. A dead end.

revealed the fraudulence and gaping hypocrisy of Biden and sycophantic company who oppose Russia's "aggression" but champion Israel's wanton inhumanity and cruelty.

Their defence of international law is a convenient sham. Their defence of human rights conventions is a convenient sham. Their defence of so-called "territorial integrity" is a convenient sham. Their defence of the supposed sacrosanct principle of "responsibility to protect" is a convenient sham. Their defence of rules governing how "wars" are prosecuted and the weapons barred from use against civilians is a convenient sham. Their malleable reading of what constitutes a "war crime" is a nauseating sham. Finally, their opportunistic reading of what constitutes "genocide" is a repugnant sham. Despite the predictable effort from the predictable quarters to "distinguish" the horrors in Ukraine from the horrors in Gaza and the West Bank, it is not working. Millions of citizens whom Biden et al claim to represent have made that plain in the streets and have vowed to make it plain in the ballot box: the horrors by all must end.

Ceasefire now. Unless and until that happens, Zelenskyy is confronting what he may fear most: apathy and obscurity. That pervasive indifference is the product of the myopia and miscalculations of "statesmen" who failed to consider or anticipate the visceral, sweeping reaction to their wholesale rush to defend Israel unconditionally. They were convinced that with the help of the ever reliable keyboard cavalry who populate the establishment press, their infuriating duplicity could be buried behind stale, condescending bromides.

They were wrong. Ukraine's fate has, as a result, vanished from much of the world's consciousness seized, as it is, by the awful fate of Palestinians - abandoned by the same craven powers who, in due and deliberate course, will abandon Ukrainians. Volodymyr Zelenskyy knows that too.

Aljazeera

Why the world is watching the fate of EU-Latin America talks

Andrew Hammond

IN Oscar Wilde's masterful play "The Importance of Being Earnest," which was first performed in 1895, Lady Bracknell famously says that "to lose one parent ... may be regarded as a misfortune, to lose both looks like carelessness."

Fast forward more than a century and, in a very different context, this same sentiment is today being felt in much of Brussels amid the potential failure of the EU's trade negotiations with Mercosur (Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay). The possible collapse of these discussions comes swiftly on the heels of the failure of the bloc's trade talks with Australia.

Speculation had grown that an EU-Mercosur deal could be concluded this week. However, that prospect seems to have been extinguished after comments from incoming Argentine President Javier Milei, an anarcho-capitalist political maverick who will take office on Sunday, and French President Emmanuel Macron.

The signals from Argentina are mixed, as incoming Foreign Minister Diana Mondino said this week that the new administration wanted to see a conclusion to the deal "soon." However, Macron then used Milei's earlier comments to come out with his own criticisms. This is key because the deal, if it is finalized, may have to be concluded as an agreement covering the competences of both the EU and the 27 member states, which would allow France to issue a veto. While the potential failure of the Australian and Mercosur talks would not be catastrophic for the EU, they would both be serious setbacks in several respects. Firstly, EU trade negotiations will be put on the political back burner in 2024, with European Parliament elections due in June.

Secondly, the failures may slow Europe's "de-risking" process with China. The EU increasingly needs trade and investment deals with reliable political partners following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the bloc's desire to reduce its reliance on China for raw materials.

For example, the Australian deal offered the possibility of giving Europe greater access to huge deposits of raw materials such as rare-earth metals and energies like green hydrogen. The collapse of the pact, mainly because of disagreements over agricultural issues, disappointed many across Europe. German Finance Minister Christian Lindner said that if the EU "can't make progress even with Australia, a liberal democracy firmly rooted in the Western world, that is concerning."

However, the potential collapse of the Mercosur deal is, in some ways, even more alarming for many in Brussels.

The pact, which has been under discussion for more than 20 years, would create an integrated market of about 780 million consumers and remove an estimated 4 billion (\$4.35 billion) of import tariffs on European products. It would also be a win for Brussels, as it would pull

the two regions closer geopolitically amid a broader international competition for influence. This has seen Beijing and Moscow try to strengthen diplomatic ties with resource-rich countries in Latin America.

Both sides had identified a possible window of opportunity in the coming days to finally get the deal over the line. In part, this was because Spain - a big supporter of the pact - holds the presidency of the Council of the EU, which rotates every six months, while Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva had been pushing for an agreement before his nation's chairing of Mercosur ends this week. However, final stage talks ran into difficulties when, firstly, the transition team of Milei said that he wanted to look more closely at the details. This Argentine gambit then gave Macron a political opening to come out strongly against the deal. The French president's chief concern is over agricultural issues, with farming lobbies politically very powerful in France. The big fear in Paris is that a Mercosur deal would see a surge in Latin American agricultural exports to France in particular and the EU in general.

However, multiple other leaders across the bloc, including European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, are still pushing hard for the deal. Both of these leaders have traveled to Latin America in the last year to lobby for it. Von der Leyen and Scholz have pledged that the Mercosur deal will be concluded by the end of the year. Scholz, for instance, said that "the negotiations have already lasted long enough." The vast Latin America region, home to half a billion people, has the world's largest reserves of arable land, producing an estimated 15 percent of global food and 45 percent of net international agri-food trade. It also has huge resource reserves, including critical minerals and the largest share of renewables in the world. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell even said in recent months that this emerging market has the potential to become the "new Gulf," given its critical mineral assets such as lithium.

If the EU-Mercosur trade talks do collapse this month, the world will be watching, as this would send out a signal that the constraints on trade liberalization are growing again. This may significantly undermine the creaking rules-based trading system, with the World Trade Organization at its heart, which may face a new wave of protectionism from the US if Donald Trump wins a second term as president next year. For now, however, all eyes are on whether there may still be a chance to get the EU-Mercosur deal over the line in the coming days, cementing the deepening of ties between the two powers. The fear in Brussels is that if an agreement is not concluded this month, the best-case scenario may be that talks resume in 2025, in what could be a much-changed political landscape.

Arab News

Can Mansour Abbas convince Palestinian factions to lay down their arms?

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

MANSOUR Abbas, the chairman of the United Arab List in the Israeli Knesset, who is referred to as a pragmatic Islamist, last week called for the various Palestinian factions to lay down their arms and join the political struggle. He said that what we are facing is a political problem that needs a political solution.

Abbas is totally right, in principle. The question is, if the Palestinians were to lay down their arms, would Israel accept giving the Palestinians their state? It is pertinent to point out that the Palestine Liberation Organization gave up armed struggle for the Oslo Accords in 1993. But did that further their cause in any meaningful way? Abbas did not spell out what this political struggle might look like. How can the political struggle exist when Palestinians have no political representation? The entire problem is that there are 5.35 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza who are

stateless - they do not have a country and do not have proper passports. Israel is refusing to give them nationality as part of a one-state solution because the country would lose its Jewish majority. At the same time, Israel does not want to give the Palestinians a state because this would mean giving up on "Judea and Samaria."

This dilemma is driving a political stalemate and pushing every government to avoid tackling the issue in order not to face a backlash. Politicians saw what happened to Yitzhak Rabin when he tried to make a compromise in order to secure a peaceful settlement to the problem. No one wants to face the same fate. The main hurdle that prevents the finding of a settlement with the Palestinians is the medieval mentality that drives Israeli politics. The concept of the Israeli state is linked to the sacred, to some commandment by God. This type of mentality drove the Crusades as well as the Arab conquests. This was adequate 1,000 years

ago but it is not today. Today, modern states are defined by international law, not by a biblical claim. The problem is the mentality whereby many Israelis view themselves as the chosen people, to whom God promised the land between the sea and the river. This mentality existed before the emergence of the Iranian threat and before the creation of Hezbollah or Hamas. Several statesmen have spelled it out, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

However, what Israel calls Judea and Samaria is the West Bank, which is an integral part of Palestine under international law. This ideology is preventing the Israeli leaders from making any concessions that would allow a two-state solution and peace. Instead, they resort to repressing the Palestinians and, as a result, they suffer a backlash every now and then. This will continue in perpetuity until this ideology is relinquished. Today, Israelis

have to choose between ideology and security. Unfortunately, they have been under the impression that they can have both. They can coerce the Palestinians by maintaining the occupation, subjugating them day in, day out and facing no consequences because of American and Western complicity. We cannot blame the Israelis for adopting an ideology; everyone does so to differing degrees. Ideologies are broad ideas that influence our worldview. Even the most pragmatic people are influenced by ideology. They have it in the back of their mind even if they do not realize it. However, when people have to choose between ideology and survival, they choose survival - this is why people prioritize security over ideology.

Israel will not relinquish its ideology unless it has to; unless it feels it needs to make this choice. Israel needs to be coerced to make this choice because it always thinks it can sup-

press Palestinians and get away with it. Here, the US should give Israel tough love and compel it to choose between ideology and international acceptance. Hence, what Abbas said is valid only if the international community supports him - i.e., if the international community commits to pressuring Israel to accept the two-state solution. Nevertheless, Israel is a sovereign state. International pressure should be coupled with a change in public opinion. So, Abbas needs to work domestically. But how can he convince the Israeli ideologues? He needs to create a peace camp.

Abbas has already taken a step that earned him the respect of many Israelis: he reached out to the families of the hostages, which is something Netanyahu has been reluctant to do. Can Abbas now build on the momentum? Can he lead parts of Israeli society to engage in some introspection driven by the hostages' ordeal? Can he push them to ask themselves the very basic question: Why did this

happen? Why are they resorting to "terror" against us? Is occupation sustainable? Will occupation guarantee the security of our children? However, in this endeavor, Abbas definitely needs the protection and support of the international community, otherwise he will be subjected to many false allegations by the racist government of Netanyahu and its members in the Knesset. For Abbas to convince Palestinian factions to lay down their arms and lead a peaceful struggle, he needs to show them it works. Decades ago, the PLO took exactly the path Abbas suggested, giving up armed struggle in favor of political negotiations, only for it to backfire. The PLO could not fulfill the Palestinian dream of statehood. Palestinians are very skeptical; they have been fooled several times before. Therefore, the international community should put all its weight behind Abbas and help him create the conditions conducive to a two-state solution and Palestinian statehood.

Israel-Palestine war multiplies Arab suspicions of the West

Mohamed Chebaro

WHILE giving me a lift to Amman from the airport where I arrived last week, my taxi driver told me: "Look at McDonald's outlets and Starbucks cafes. They are empty." This is the least people could do to express their sympathy and solidarity with the Palestinians under Israeli attack in Gaza and against a biased West, he told me.

A few hours earlier, before boarding my flight from London to the Middle East, another taxi driver, a British Asian, explained to me how he, his wife and his young family had been unable to fathom the violence seen on our screens daily. He said that the world was numb to Arab and Muslim suffering. The situation for the Palestinian civilians in Gaza continues to worsen by the minute. They have suffered two months of intensive Israeli bombardment, with more than 15,000 killed and thousands more injured as Israel attempts to eradicate the militant group Hamas. Arab and Muslim publics have been glued to their television and smartphone screens, watching in disbelief as the bloodshed unravels. As Palestinian women and children are slaughtered, the international community stands watching, unable even to extend aid or agree any new truce that could be the first step toward ending the onslaught.

In the face of such systematic and deliberate killing of innocent civilians, available to view by everyone across the world, one fallout from this Israeli war on Gaza is a multiplying of Arab suspicions of the West, due to what is seen as its continued and unhindered support for Israel's actions. All this has, in a short space of time, been translated into a sense of popular anger at what is seen as a biased West and its double stan-

dards regarding Palestinians' suffering due to the relentless and disproportionate bombardment by the Israeli army. Since Israel declared war on Hamas after the militant group's Oct. 7 attacks that killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and which saw about 240 hostages taken back to Gaza, the language used in the West to describe the war has been closely scrutinized. In the minds of many Arabs - both on the street as well as among experts - the West risks further inflaming an already volatile

borhoods, leveling them to the ground and leaving innocent civilians, a majority of whom are anti-Hamas, with nowhere to go. Others, including academics and experts from across the region, have talked about the Global South losing its trust in the Western media and its ethos, which has for a long time seen it lecturing the rest of the world on media impartiality and objectivity. The dominant impression felt by many during this conflict is that the Western media's approach has bordered on

The people I met described this as all-out war and an invasion of Gazan neighborhoods, leveling them to the ground and leaving innocent civilians, a majority of whom are anti-Hamas, with nowhere to go.

situation and producing a heightened anti-Western sentiment that could take decades to heal.

During my recent stay in the Middle East, many people I met expressed their disillusionment at the West's stance. Many of them had been educated in the US and Europe and are among the moderates in the region. In these discussions, they evoked the dangers and impact of the use of certain names and phrases, such as referring to an Israel-Hamas war instead of Israel-Palestine. There was also anger about the Western media's narrative that describes what Hamas did on Oct 7 as "attacks," while what Israel is doing through its armed forces' actions are mere "strikes" or "retaliatory action." The people I met described this as all-out war and an invasion of Gazan neigh-

"dehumanizing" the Palestinians.

They claimed that Western politicians and media have failed to stay balanced. In the first few weeks, they frequently agreed with the narrative presented by Israelis, while often cross-examining the Palestinian or pro-Palestinian side of the story, where and when it was allowed to be presented. Some have even understood the West's behavior to be a justification for the killing to continue and maybe represents a green light for a plan to transfer the Palestinians from Gaza toward Egypt and from the West Bank toward Jordan. In my media career, I have witnessed and reported on numerous conflicts and instances of violence, along with their aftermath, in many regions of the world, including the Middle East. Yet never before have I seen

the divide reaching the scale it has reached today. The narrative deployed to report on and analyze the Middle East's forever conflict risks increasing the misunderstanding and misinformation, rendering any work to promote peace and understanding - which is the evident next stage after the guns fall silent - hopeless.

Apart from the generic condemnation of the continued violence by the UN secretary-general and various UN agencies, in addition to certain nations from both the Global South and Global North, efforts aimed at stopping the war have been timid from most state actors. This includes those that have often aligned themselves and their interests closer to those of the Palestinians and their right to self-determination and a state that lives in peace alongside Israel. This sense of the West allowing the conflict to continue to spiral out of control and indirectly sanctioning more killing and destruction not only threatens to expand the war in the volatile Middle East, it risks creating more recruits for extremist groups on all sides. These groups have long been preying on the weak and the desperate to bolster their numbers on the back of such devastating civilian suffering.

My taxi driver did not want to boycott more than McDonald's and Starbucks at this stage, so he is holding on to his American smartphone, particularly as he uses it as a tool to help earn his living. But my conversation with him gave me a sense of the desperation being felt by the man on the street, which could slowly translate into a lack of tolerance for any talk of peace and coexistence. For decades, such approach has insisted to both the Israelis and the Palestinians that they must work for peace, as it will be the only route to secure their future.

As Bosniaks, we have a duty to speak up for Gaza

Nadina Ronc

THE sound of gunfire echoes throughout the city. Explosions light up the night sky as bombs destroy homes, schools, marketplaces and any signs of life in them. Overwhelmed and under attack, health workers in a few, barely functioning hospitals struggle to help the injured, mostly children. Nowhere is safe - starvation, thirst and death are everywhere.

No, this is not the siege of Sarajevo, some three decades ago. This is Gaza, now. Though one can be excused for mistaking one for the other. Today, Palestinians in the besieged enclave are facing a catastrophe that is in many ways identical to the one my people, Bosnian Muslims, had to endure in the 1990s. Israel claims its war is against Hamas, and not the civilian population of Gaza. It says it is merely "defending itself", and not aiming to displace hundreds of thousands of people and acquire more Palestinian land. Yet the reality on the ground does not match these claims. Israel's relentless offensive is not only targeting Hamas. Its siege and bombs are killing civilians in their thousands, eradicating entire bloodlines, displacing many more, and - by the admission of some of Israel's leaders themselves - aiming to erase all traces of Palestinian life and heritage from Gaza. This is not self-defence, this is not disproportionate retribution, this is genocide.

In 2001, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) judged that what happened in Srebrenica in 1995 - the targeted killing of more than 8,000 Bosniak men and boys as well as the mass displacement of tens of thousands of other Bosniak civilians - was genocide. Announcing the ruling at the Hague, Presiding Judge Theodor Meron stated that "By seeking to eliminate a part of the Bosnian Muslims, the Bosnian Serb forces committed genocide." Is this not exactly what Israel is trying to do in Gaza? What can explain the targeting of highly populated residential areas, hospitals and United Nations schools sheltering displaced civilians with allegedly surgical air strikes other than a desire to "eliminate" at least a part of the population living there? There is no doubt that crimes were committed by Hamas in southern Israel on October 7. Hundreds of Israeli civilians were killed, maimed or taken hostage,

which cannot in any way be justified. But the genocide Israel embarked on in response to these crimes, or its decades-old repression and dispossession of Palestinians that led to the emergence of Hamas in the first place, cannot be justified, either.

As a survivor of the Bosnian war, whose relatives were put in concentration camps, I cannot stay silent as Israel commits a genocide. Failing to condemn what Israel is doing to the people of Gaza would mean that I learned nothing from what has been done to my people. Bosnians have experienced first hand the horrific consequences of the international community remaining silent in the face of blatant war crimes and crimes against humanity. Indeed, we know what happens when the world decides to sit back and watch the gradual destruction of a people in silence. I believe this is why there is now a sea of Palestinian flags fluttering in the wind during protests in Sarajevo. Ordinary Bosnians are standing with the people of Gaza and saying no to genocide because they know this is the right thing to do.

And yet, not all Bosnians seem to feel this way. In response to the criticism of his deafening silence on Israel's ongoing assault on Gaza, Emir Suljagic, the director of Srebrenica Memorial Centre, said, "This is not our battle." In a November 26 interview with the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, Suljagic detailed how the Hamas attack on October 7 reminded him of the early days of the Bosnia war, and condemned the Palestinian armed group. He went on to defend his refusal to comment on Israel's consequent war on Gaza, saying he will not sacrifice his organisation's work "at the altar of whatever Hamas's agenda is".

I find this stance utterly perplexing, and deeply disappointing. If this is not "our battle", then why say anything? If it is not to condemn war crimes on both sides, why speak at all? If commenting on international conflicts risks damaging the work of the memorial centre, why does it appear to be OK to publicly support Ukrainian resistance against Russia's invasion? Some tie Suljagic's seemingly unconditional support for Israel to his long-term collaboration with the World Jewish Congress (WJC) and other pro-Israel

groups, as part of his work for the memorial centre. Yet by failing to speak up against this war on Palestinian civilians, for whatever reason, Suljagic is failing to do his duty. Indeed, by turning a blind eye to the ongoing bloodshed in Gaza, Suljagic is betraying the lessons learned from the Srebrenica genocide. And by trying to draw a false equivalence between Hamas and those responsible for the Srebrenica genocide he is undermining the gravity of the crimes committed against Bosnians.

In a now-deleted tweet from November 21, Suljagic claimed that there was "no difference" between Hamas and the Chetniks - the Yugoslav royalist and Serbian nationalist guerrilla force which committed some of the worst atrocities during the Bosnia war. Chetniks put Bosniaks in concentration camps. They looted and besieged Bosnian towns. They tortured, starved, abused, raped and killed civilians in their thousands. They bombed hospitals, killing doctors and patients. They attacked libraries and town halls shielding the displaced. The mass graves Chetniks created and filled with Bosniaks during those dark years are still being unearthed across the country today. They did all this because they wanted to exterminate Bosnian Muslims. They committed genocide. And Suljagic, as a survivor of genocide, knows this very well. Hamas's crimes against Israeli civilians on October 7, however horrific, were in no way comparable. There is only one party in this conflict which has ever committed crimes against civilians that are as systemic and widespread as those committed by Chetniks against Bosniaks in the 1990s, and that is Israel.

We must support the Palestinian people and their struggle for liberation. Silence and abstention are not options, especially for those of us who are unfortunate to have experienced war, genocide and oppression. Now that we are on the other side, now that we are not the ones under siege and facing bombardment, we have a duty to speak up for those who are - even if it means upsetting allies and friends. In the words of Martin Luther King, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Four Republican presidential candidates face off in fiery debate

Carolyn Presutti

FOUR Republican candidates sparred for two hours Wednesday -- at times attacking and yelling over each other -- in the fourth and final presidential debate of the year. Republican frontrunner Donald Trump was absent, as he has been for the three previous debates.

That did not stop former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie from criticizing the former president and accusing the others of being too afraid to do so. Trump, despite facing 91 felony counts and a civil lawsuit, remains substantially ahead of his rivals, according to opinion polls. Two months after Hamas terrorists attacked Israel, the Republican candidates agreed Israel should be allowed to conduct its own war against the group without interference from the United States.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis asserted "This administration is trying to hobble Israel from being able to defend itself," calling out Hamas for wanting "a second Holocaust." The governor also suggested cutting off oil revenue to Iran, saying they "send it to Hamas... to Hezbollah, and they foment jihad throughout the Middle East."

Former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley said Russian President Vladimir Putin is thrilled that America has redirected its attention from Ukraine to Israel, saying "There is a reason that Taiwanese want to help Ukrainians because they know if Ukraine wins, China won't invade Taiwan." She made the same comparison with Ukrainians who want to help the Israelis, "because they know that if Iran wins, Russia wins ... but what wins all of that is a strong America, not a weak America. And that's what [President] Joe Biden has given us." Christie, asked in

the NewsNation debate if he would send in US troops to free the American hostages held by Hamas and other militants, said, "You're damn right I would send the American army in there to get them out safely."

On fentanyl entering the US through the southern border, entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy said he would have had a different conversation with China's leader than President Biden and would "tell Xi Jinping you will not only not buy land in this country or donate to universities," but also say, "US businesses won't expand into the Chinese market" until China stops manufacturing fentanyl for the Mexican cartels. DeSantis said he wants cartels categorized as "foreign terrorist organizations" and added the he will build a wall at the border to discourage entry, but unlike former President Trump, would get Mexico to pay for it. Haley would "end all normal trade relationships with China," pointing to the country as the source of the drug. A Messenger/Harris poll indicates that among Republican voters former President Donald Trump leads his competitors with support from 68% of those surveyed, followed by DeSantis at 9% and Haley at 7%. Ramaswamy garnered 4%, while Christie and former Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, who qualified to participate only in the first of the four debates but officially remains in the race, were at 1% or less.

The candidates attempted Wednesday to distinguish themselves from the former president, should he not run or not be able to run due to his court cases. Kaiwan Shroff, political commentator and press secretary for Dream for America, says the candidates missed the chance to "attack the real frontrunner in the race. Only

Chris Christie did so." Christie had called Trump an "angry, bitter man who wants to be back as president because he wants to enact retribution on anyone who has disagreed with him."

Shroff warned that "Haley and DeSantis showed they were too cowardly to make the case against Trump in this final debate of the year and they will pay the price." Ramaswamy took a swipe at the former and current presidents as well as his on-stage rivals, saying "It is going to take a leader from the outside with fresh legs from the next generation to unite this country." The first voting on the 2024 presidential campaign calendar is the Iowa Republican caucus on January 15. Analysts say Ramaswamy could be the most vulnerable candidate at this point, especially after some sharp personal barbs at his rivals Wednesday night evoked boos from the audience.

"I think he has hit the apex of his candidacy," said Andra Gillespie with the Department of Political Science at Georgia's Emory University. Gillespie called Ramaswamy a "novelty" given his lack of elective experience. "It just becomes a question of how long can he sustain this candidacy?" Meantime, Christie has said he will stay in the race. Gillespie expects him to compete through the New Hampshire primary on January 23 "or until he runs out of money." Saturday, DeSantis completed his tour of all 99 counties in Iowa, courting voters in the Midwest state ahead of the caucuses. The latest poll averages posted by the website 538 Wednesday show Trump leading in Iowa by 45.9% to DeSantis's 19.7%, Haley's 17.5% Ramaswamy's 4.8% and Christie's 3.9%.

VOA

Nuclear power deserves a place in the clean energy mix

Khaled Abou Zahr

NEW technologies and their adoption have become more than just a business or an economic decision. They now have political and geopolitical importance too. This is very clear when we dig into the energy sector. We notice that the debate is not centered on facts and the simple equation of energy output versus emissions or negative impact in a time of greater environmental focus. It is measured by political gains and geopolitical agendas. There is a lot of hypocrisy and manipulation, to say the least.

In the political debate, the nuclear option has been sabotaged by elitist environmental thinking. They say that it is a dirty energy source despite the fact it does not emit carbon dioxide. In reality, it is one of the cleanest sources and should be a foundation of the energy mix, on top of which renewable energies can be added. This is why it was a good omen to see a special meeting on nuclear energy taking place this week during the UN's COP28 climate summit in the UAE. The resulting commitment by the US and 21 other nations to triple nuclear energy capacity by 2050 is a significant step toward achieving carbon emissions reduction targets. This pledge, supported by countries like France, the UAE, Ghana, South Korea, the UK and Canada, underscores the crucial role nuclear power must play in meeting national climate pledges and the targets set by the 2015 Paris Agreement. More importantly, it highlights the fact that nuclear energy should stand as one of the key pillars of the energy mix.

For decades, there have been attacks on nuclear energy by pro-

gressive and green parties. They are mainly based on two points: cost and security. The reality is that reducing the lifespan of nuclear plants without linking it to their actual capacity explodes the cost. Amortizing a plant over 30 years instead of 70, which is possible with the replacement of key components and some developments, makes a huge difference. Regarding security, the focus is mainly on nuclear waste and general operations. Here too, the risks have been greatly exaggerated. Despite historical incidents such as Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, advancements in technology and stricter regulations have made nuclear power safer than ever. Those who attack the nuclear power industry also avoid answering a simple question: how clean is the renewable energy supply chain from production to use and disposal? According to the US-based Solar Energy Industries Association, the turnover speed of solar panels is surpassing initial projections. And, with the current exorbitant costs associated with recycling, there is a genuine risk that all discarded panels, as well as similarly challenging-to-recycle wind turbines, may end up in landfills. So, basically, all energy sources have a waste issue. But the solution for nuclear waste is far better managed.

The same questions on carbon neutrality apply to the production and transport of renewable materials. This is also something that impacts electric batteries, from their manufacturing to their disposal. Environmental pundits focus on attacking and trying to

cancel other sources of energy instead of answering these simple questions. Questions also arise on the geopolitical level, as the US and China are flitting between competition and confrontation. There are a growing number of voices in the US that state that solar and wind energy are reinforcing China within the great power competition. This is because, in 2022, China accounted for 77.8 percent of global photovoltaic module production. The country with the second-largest share was Vietnam, which accounted for just 6.4 percent. With the supply chain being centralized in China, this raises questions regarding energy dependency. This is also why many are stating that the fact the World Bank does not finance nuclear power projects puts China at an advantage, as it does finance solar and other renewable energy projects.

The debate on nuclear energy also sinks deep into domestic politics. France, which has been a pioneer of nuclear power, is a good example. Henri Proglio, the former CEO of EDF, discussed a few months ago France's loss of energy independence in a think tank seminar. He highlighted historical efforts to achieve energy independence, blaming recent challenges on a shift in public opinion and European regulations favoring competition. He highlighted the historical success of the French nuclear industry, symbolized by it becoming an electricity exporter with competitive prices. Proglio also advocated for extending the lifespan of existing nuclear plants,

considering them a base for energy production, and raised doubts about the viability and cost-effectiveness of offshore wind projects. Yet the bombshell he dropped was that he accused Germany of sabotaging French energy independence via the EU because it presented an industrial threat. He rightly criticized the challenges posed by the shift to renewables, particularly citing the German Energiewende and the substantial investments in wind energy. He stated that Berlin was concerned because its electricity relied heavily on coal and especially lignite, which is particularly bad for the environment. Germany has invested 600 billion (\$646 billion) of the total 1 trillion invested in renewables by European countries, according to Proglio. This hefty investment led to the near-bankruptcy of major power companies E.ON and RWE, which were only saved by the federal government.

The reality is that it is simply impossible and unrealistic to shift to 100 percent renewable energies tomorrow, with Germany serving as a good example. This would simply mean the collapse of the global economy and security. Even the advocates of this solution know this is the case. It is now clear their real goal lies elsewhere. This is why there is an urgent need to actively push nuclear power's place in the energy mix. Yet, after years of global bashing, the ability to turn this industry around is still hampered by a lack of funds, expertise and viable partnerships. Maybe the pledge made at COP28 will support the finding of a solution and promote collaboration instead of the petty settling of accounts.

UNICEF faces major challenges 77 years on

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

THE 77th anniversary of the founding of UNICEF will be marked next week. While the organization has made significant and remarkable progress since its establishment, more work has to be done in order to prevent violence against children and to fully protect the rights, safety, well-being and health of children around the world.

UNICEF has come a long way. The UN General Assembly established the UN International Children's Emergency Fund on Dec. 11, 1946, in order to provide relief, food, clothing and support to children living in countries, particularly European nations, that were devastated by the Second World War. In 1953, it became a permanent agency of the UN and the organization's name was subsequently changed to the UN Children's Fund, although it retained the original acronym. Nearly two decades after its establishment, UNICEF's role shifted from solely providing food and relief to children to also advocating for children's rights and education. UNICEF also played a key role in the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was later adopted by the UNGA. Three critical pillars of the convention are protecting children from any type of discrimination, prioritizing the best interests of the child and ensuring the rights of children to life, development and survival.

The significance of this convention is that it expands children's

rights, as it includes a wide range of rights, ranging from social, cultural, educational, political and civil rights to economic rights. Children's rights also include having access to essentials such as food, shelter, healthcare, education and clean water, as well as safety from any form of exploitation and protection from physical and emotional harm. Children must also be able to express their opinions and be treated with respect for their perspectives and views. The agency has accomplished much in the years since its establishment. UNICEF has saved many lives and supported communities in more than 190 countries and territories. Its projects in water, sanitation and hygiene have reduced preventable childhood diseases and death. Its campaigns to eradicate yaws, leprosy and trachoma were very effective. Tens of thousands of maternal and child welfare centers in many countries receive UNICEF supplies and technical training. It was even awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1965 for the "promotion of brotherhood among nations."

UNICEF has provided aid for mothers and children during conflicts, played a role in decreasing infant and child death rates, increased life expectancy in developing countries and raised the percentage of children going to school and receiving education. It was at the forefront of fighting the Zika virus in 2016 and it helped nearly 1.5 million children in

Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe who were left without homes, schools and food due to Cyclone Idai in 2019. UNICEF has become one of the largest social welfare organizations in the world. It provides immunization and disease prevention programs, offers emergency relief in the wake of natural disasters, promotes education and children's rights and improves childhood and maternal nutrition, as well as sanitation.

Nevertheless, one of the shortcomings of the agency is that it has often failed to protect children during times of war, partially due to the fact that it does not have any enforcement power to mandate compliance with rules, laws and rights. And children are the ones that bear much of the brunt of war. In other words, in spite of UNICEF's work and in spite of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, millions of children still face violence. For example, UNICEF this week acknowledged: "The escalation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip is having a catastrophic impact on children and families. Children are dying at an alarming rate - more than 5,000 have reportedly been killed and thousands more injured. Well over 1.7 million people in the Gaza Strip have been displaced - half of them children. They do not have enough access to water, food, fuel and medicine. Their homes have been destroyed; their families torn apart."

UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell added on the

resumption of fighting in Gaza after last week's temporary ceasefire: "The Gaza Strip is once again the most dangerous place in the world to be a child. After seven days of respite from horrific violence, fighting has resumed. More children will surely die as a result." In another conflict-affected country, Sudan, children are also bearing the brunt of a war that has been going on for more than seven months. Millions of children are being exposed to violence, abuse and exploitation, while more than 1,200 children under the age of five have died in nine camps in the country because of a deadly combination of measles and malnutrition.

Another tragedy is that the recruitment of children as soldiers has been seen in Sudan. "The recruitment of children by armed groups for any form of exploitation - including in combat roles - is a gross violation of human rights, a serious crime and a violation of international humanitarian law," said Siobhan Mullally, the UN special rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children. In conclusion, UNICEF has evolved from being a relief agency to advocating for children's rights and education. Its humanitarian efforts have helped millions of children and their families around the world. But millions of children still face violence and their rights are violated on a daily basis. Since the agency lacks enforcement power to mandate compliance, it is often unable to protect children in times of war, such as in the Gaza Strip today.



LAHORE: A vendor selling fruits at his roadside setup.

BMP makes best use of FPCCI platform to resolve trade matters

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's presidential candidate for 2024 election Muhammad Ali Sheikh has observed that the Businessmen Panel (BMP) has been playing its best use of the platform of the FPCCI for the resolution of the trade and industry issues, and for getting maximum incentives and facilities to boost the industrial growth and exports of the country under the leadership of Mian Anjum Nisar. The BMP's nominee for the FPCCI's presidential slot Muhammad Ali Sheikh stated that despite difficult situation during the last two years, the industry sustained and the exports witnessed significant increase. This could be possible due to continued efforts and pursuance by BMP leadership that the government, during previous years, came up with the bailout financial packages for the industry and businesses to absorb the shocks of pandemic. Besides these packages, he added, BMP struggled to get the power tariff for the industry rationalized, the key policy rate was reduced

though the SBP has again increasing it but the Businessmen Panel would continue to pursue the central bank to relax it. He said that huge financial package for the housing and construction sector was prominent among the government relief lobbied by the BMP leadership in last couple of years, he said. Mian Anjum Nisar said that after Muhammad Ali Sheikh's election as president of FPCCI, he would make the best and the most effective use of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry for promoting trade and industry, and local and foreign investment. Strongly believing in team work, he would ensure maximum participation of the business leaders representing different chambers and associations of the country for economic prosperity and development of the country, along with welfare of the business community. The candidate for President from BMP was fully confident and expressed that the BMP would sweep the upcoming Federation's election with record highest number of votes which would be the history in federation adding that all genuine and sincere

voters had assured Mian Anjum Nisar and other BMP leaders of extending their full support to the BMP penal. Mian Anjum Nisar said that the BMP would continue to push the government to initiate long-term economic planning for the betterment of business community of Pakistan and assured that the business community has ability to change the fate of Pakistan and transform it into a prosperous country. Ali Sheikh said that the country is passing through critical times and a true business leadership at every tier could help pull the country out of these economic issues. They said that the government would be asked to rationalize the energy prices in the larger interests of the manufacturing sector and the trading community. They said that they are fully satisfied with the performance of the BMP. A large number of Chambers of various cities, trade groups and industrial associations from across the country have so far announced their support for the Businessmen Panel (BMP) for the upcoming FPCCI elections 2024. The presidential candi-

date observed that the leadership has visited various cities of all provinces across the country and winning their full support for all candidates of the Businessmen Panel. Muhammad Ali Sheikh expressed his full confidence of his group's victory, as they have received overwhelming support from all chambers and other Trade Bodies from across the country. The BMP chairman Mian Anjum Nisar has nominated Ali Sheikh to contest presidential slot because he is a well-experienced business leader, rendering excellent services for the promotion of trade and industries on various business platforms, including GCCI as its senior vice president, which is one of the major chambers of the country. He declared the names of other candidates, who are contesting the elections of the apex trade body on platform of the BMP. Muhammad Ali Sheikh observed that his group, for the last three years of victory, has been very actively engaged with the federal as well as the provincial governments in formulation of the policies on trade and industry including the annual budgets making.

Commerce Minister leaves for China with trade team

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce and Industry Dr. Gohar Ejaz on Saturday left for China with a high-profiled trade delegation as part of the 'Vision Pakistan USD 100 billion'. This is the first visit by any Commerce Minister to the Chinese Silicon Valley and Suzhou City, said a press release issued here. The visit is a follow-up to the visit of the Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar in October this year. The sectors covered in the delegation's visit include Agricultural, Electric Vehicles, Marble, Cement, Fertiliser, Fruit and Vegetable, Home Appliances, Glass, Chemicals and Textiles. This multi-segmental delegation representing the business sector of Pakistan will hold meetings with their counterparts in China for trade and investment and formation of joint ventures. On the sidelines of the Official visit, B2B meetings have been arranged for the members of the delegation. In Beijing, the meetings are scheduled to be held with the officials of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, various product

associations and China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export. He will also meet with the CEO of the COFCO Group, a state-owned food processing holding company and China's largest food processor, manufacturer and trader and Asia's leading agribusinesses group. A delegation from the Weifang Steel Group will also call on the minister. The company specializes in agritech, food processing, fertilizers and edible oil. The delegation will also visit Zhongguancun which is a major technology hub near Beijing and is also known as the China's Silicon Valley. The minister is set to meet the management of Chengdu Century Intending Investment Management (CENTINCO) which is a comprehensive industrial investment management corporation. CENTINCO has shown interest in development of an Export Processing Zone

in Gwadar. The federal minister will also attend a Business Networking Dinner which is likely to be attended by more than a hundred Chinese enterprises. This will be followed by his online participation in the Min-Ministerial of WTO on special invitation of the UAE Commerce Minister. In a first, the delegation will also visit Suzhou City, which is situated close to Shanghai in Jiangsu province, and is a leading commercial and industrial hub of East China. This visit is a first by any Commerce Minister of Pakistan and any delegation from Pakistan. Mr. Ejaz will be received by Government Officials. This is a part of Ministry of Commerce's strategy to engage at provincial level with major Chinese manufacturing hubs. Suzhou has a GDP of more than US\$ 300 billion. The imports of the city are US\$ 153 billion while

exports are US\$ 230 billion. It has several enterprises which are looking to relocate to other countries. Apart from the meetings, the delegation would visit the Changshu Garments Town at Suzhou. Mr. Ejaz would also take part in the unveiling of the Changshu 'One Belt and One Road' Centre. Speaking to media before leaving, Minister Ejaz highlighted the importance of private sector collaboration as the next step in strengthening the Pak-China relationship. "SMEs are the key to Pakistan's prosperity and progress" said Dr. Ejaz. The commerce minister will also brief the Chinese investors about the crucial role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in streamlining their investments. "Pakistan is focusing on sectors such as agriculture, mining, new energy, and IT under the framework of the SIFC" said Dr. Ejaz.

Gold rates decline by Rs3,000

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.3,000 and was sold at Rs.215,600 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs.218,600 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.2,572 to Rs.184,842 from Rs.187,414 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.169,439 from Rs.171,786, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained stagnant at Rs.2,600 and 2,229.08 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$26 to \$2,024 from \$2,050, the Association reported.

Economy stuck in low growth trapped: APBF

ISLAMABAD (INP): All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has said that the economy is stuck in low growth trap with poor human development outcome and increasing poverty, as economic conditions leave Pakistan highly vulnerable to climate shocks with insufficient public resources to finance development and that international experience suggests that domestic debt re-profiling did not always work unless associated with sharp and sustained structural reforms identified over four decades ago but remain pending to this day. Referring to a report, APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood observed that business community has long been urging the government to reform the power sector, since decades ago when circular debt was in millions of rupees which today was a whopping 2.5 trillion rupees, to reform the tax

structure that continues to rely heavily on indirect taxes whose incidence on the poor was greater than on the rich, a major contributory factor in poverty levels reaching a high of 40 percent today, to continuing the policy of steadily raising the budgeted current expenditure, thereby shrinking the available fiscal space annually and, last but not least, warning the government of an impending water scarcity decades ago that went unheeded resulting in the country's current status of a water-stressed country. Maaz Mahmood advised the government to look at the bigger picture while cautioning domestic stakeholders that creation of a new institution that envisages billions of dollars of investment inflows backed by pledges may not provide a quick fix of the economy. This was not to undermine the concerted ongoing efforts to make

Pakistan an attractive destination for foreign investment but to emphasize the fact that basic economic theory dictates that foreign investment would flow into those countries where the economy was strong, growth was projected to rise and key macroeconomic fundamentals, including foreign exchange reserves, were more than sufficient to forestall the possibility of inability to meet the import bill, which include basic inputs/essentials for industry as well as the householder. The APBF President said that structural reforms are therefore the way forward and until and unless the administration supplements its crackdown with these reforms that are minutely identified in reports but continue gathering dust in all relevant ministries, the situation is unlikely to lead to sustainable long-term improvement.

Dollar gain after strong jobs data

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Wall Street stocks finished the week on a positive note Friday following solid labor and consumer data, while the dollar pushed higher. The US economy added 199,000 jobs in November, while the jobless rate ticked down to 3.7 percent from 3.9 percent, according to Department of Labor figures, better than analyst expectations. "So far, that soft-landing is reinforced by this report," said Angelo Kourkafas, investment strategist at Edward Jones. "The labor market remains strong but it's slightly easing." All three major indices advanced, with the broad-based S&P 500 winning 0.4 percent. "All in all, this report should make you less anxious about a recession," said Callie Cox at eToro. "The job market is still in a good place, and wage growth is still coming down. That's what the Fed wants to see." US equities initially

wavered after the data boosted Treasury yields amid expectations that the strong labor figures could delay the Federal Reserve from cutting interest rates. But Kourkafas cited robust consumer confidence data also released Friday as a positive catalyst, noting that the report from the University of Michigan showed improving sentiment about inflation. The dollar advanced against the euro and other major currencies following the upbeat data. Elsewhere, European equities advanced, with Frankfurt's DAX again striking new record trading and closing highs. But equities in Tokyo suffered another drop, with the Nikkei 225 falling 1.7 percent. The index experienced a similar decline on Thursday following a surge in the yen. Oil prices jumped more than two percent, finally advancing after six straight down days in a move analysts attributed to a technical bounce.

Group of representatives meet minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): A group of representatives from leading investment banks, funds and institutional investors here on Saturday called on Caretaker Minister for Privatization Fawad Hasan Fawad and discussed matters related to investment possibilities in the country. The group was organized by Trans-National Research Corporation and included representatives from Fidelity Investments, Morgan Stanley Investment Management, Barings and William Blair Investment Management. The minister briefed the group on the vision of the present government on investment and privatization of State Owned Enterprises as well as the working of the Privatization Commission and the current agenda of privatization. The process and expectations for the privatization of PIACL, Roosevelt Hotel, FWBL and HBFC were discussed. The minister responded to all the queries of the representatives regarding the current privatisation agenda and process.

Court Notice

In the Court of Kiran Noor Judge Family Court Tehsil Matta Swat. Case # 122/FC Institution Year 2023. Next Hearing date 18/12/2023. Subject: - Bibi Maryem etc VS Muhammad Haroon. Notice to:- defendant #01. Muhammad Haroon s/o Sherin Bacha r/o sharoisr Banda Tehsil Matta District Swat (presently abroad). In above mentioned case the respondent can't be served in the ordinary way, it is therefore proclaimed that if said respondents will not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:30 am dated 18/12/2023. Ex-parte proceeding will be held against the mentioned respondents under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Kiran Noor Judge Family Court Tehsil Matta Swat. Case # 149/FC Institution Year 2023. Next Hearing date 18/12/2023. Subject: - Spooqmai VS Salman. Notice to defendant No. 1. Salman s/o Abdul Jalal r/o Sambat Cham Near Grammar School Boys Section Tehsil Matta District Swat (presently). In above mentioned case the respondent can't be served in the ordinary way, it is therefore proclaimed that if said respondents will not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:30 am dated 18/12/2023. Ex-parte proceeding will be held against the mentioned respondents under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Kiran Noor Judge Family Court Tehsil Matta Swat. Case # 200/FC Institution Year 2023. Next Hearing date 11/12/2023. Subject: - Naila VS Zia Ullah. Notice to defendant Zia Ullah s/o Syed Ali r/o Asharay Cham Tehsil Matta District Swat (presently abroad). In above mentioned case the respondent can't be served in the ordinary way, it is therefore proclaimed that if said respondents will not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:30 am dated 11/12/2023. Ex-parte proceeding will be held against the mentioned respondents under my hand and seal of this Court.

IoBM holds 26th Convocation

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Institute of Business Management (IoBM), Karachi, held its 26th Convocation at its campus on Saturday. 1,446 graduates from more than 40 disciplines including Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. were conferred degrees at the ceremony this year that was attended by senior representatives from IoBM, graduating students, their parents, and faculty. The welcome address was given by the Chancellor of IoBM, Mr. Bashir Janmohammad while the keynote address was delivered by Mr. Rizwan Ahmed Sheikh, CEO, Saudi Pak Industrial and Agricultural Investment Company who is an IoBM alumnus from the first-ever batch to graduate from the varsity. Mr. Talib S. Karim, President IoBM, presented a progress report on behalf of the varsity at the event. Guiding the graduates with his extensive knowledge and experience, Mr. Bashir Janmohammad stressed the need for intellectual minds to trust in their country and dedicate their efforts toward contributing to the betterment of the nation. The students who were part of the graduating batch this year received their degrees in a diverse range of disciplines that encompass commerce, finance, data sciences, and entrepreneurship along with numerous others. 22 gold medals were also awarded to the highest achievers within their respective programs. Among the graduates, 872 were awarded Bachelor's, 527 received Master's,



and 33 students got their MS/M.Phil. degrees. 47 students received merit certificates while 14 individuals were also conferred with PhD degrees at the ceremony. Presenting a progress report for the institution, the President of IoBM, Mr. Talib S. Karim highlighted how his father's passion project has turned into one of the leading educational entities in the country. He noted: "Of the many achievements of IoBM, the Shahjehan Syed Karim Incubation Centre (SSKIC) established in November 2020, requires a notable mention. The center has made good progress and incubated 20

Tech-enabled startups over the last two years and received more than PKR 6 million in external funding from HEC and the Private Sector." He also highlighted IoBM's robust endowment fund, the emphasis that the institution lays on research through the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) as well as the focus beyond academics and on extracurricular activities. In her speech, the Valedictorian for the year, Dinah Kamal Hamidi reminisced on the memories and learning she had accumulated over the years. She reminded her batchmates how, from asking them-

selves what they wanted to be when they grew up, to this day, "all grown up", a new journey awaited them. She stressed not to forget "how exceptional we are! And just what all we are capable of!" The Keynote Speaker, Rizwan Ahmed Sheikh lauded the graduates, imparting key learnings for them by saying: "I will leave you with my secret to success in life that is summarized by four acronyms, D, C, B, and A. These stand for Dream, Create, Believe, and Achieve. Stick to the principles of discipline, consistency, and hard work as these are the elements that will lead you to fulfill your biggest ambitions.

China's CPI down 0.5% in November

BEIJING (APP): China's consumer price index (CPI), a main gauge of inflation, edged down 0.5 percent year on year in November, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data showed Saturday. NBS statistician Dong Lijuan attributed the fall to factors such as the decrease in prices of food and energy in the year.

The year-on-year CPI reading for November narrowed by 0.3 percentage points compared to October as energy prices became a main drag. Energy price decrease contributed 0.19 percentage points to the CPI decline in the month, Dong said. Food prices were down 4.2 percent year on year, with the pace of decrease rising by 0.2 percentage points, pork prices went down 31.8 percent year on year, while prices for eggs, edible oil, beef, mutton, as well as poultry and aquatic products, fell by between 1.1 percent and 10.5 percent, the data showed. However, the core CPI,

deducting food and energy prices, went up 0.6 percent year on year last month as the pace of increase stayed unchanged compared with October, maintaining a moderate increase, Dong said. The data showed that non-food prices went up 0.4 percent year on year last month, of which prices of services edged up by 1 percent, while prices for clothing rose 1.4 percent. On a monthly basis, the CPI also dipped 0.5 percent in November from the pre-

vious month, the data showed. During the month, food prices went down 0.9 percent while non-food prices fell 0.4 percent, the data showed. Dong said that the month-on-month decrease was mainly due to the impact of warmer weather, sufficient supply of agricultural products, falling international oil prices, and a seasonal decline in consumer demand for travel and other services. The average CPI from January to November

increased 0.3 percent year on year, the NBS data showed. Saturday's data also showed that the country's producer price index (PPI), which measures costs for goods at the factory gate, went down 3 percent year on year in November. On a monthly basis, the November PPI fell 0.3 percent, affected by factors such as the fall in international oil prices and weak market demand for some industrial products, Dong said.



In brief

Match between Pakistan and PM's XI drawn

CANBERRA (Monitoring Desk): The final day's play of the four-day game between Pakistan and Prime Minister's XI at Manuka Oval was called off due to bad weather. The match finished as a draw, after no ball was bowled on the last day. Prime Minister's XI ended the previous day trailing just runs 24 as Matt Renshaw's unbeaten century (136 not out, 337b, 8x4s, 1x6) took the team to 367-4 in 141 overs. Earlier in the game, Pakistan had declared their innings at 391-9, with Pakistan captain Shan Masood leading the batting display. For his undefeated double century (201 not out, 298b, 14x4s, 1x6), Shan was also adjudged player of the match. Right-arm pacer Jordan Buckingham registered a five-wicket haul in the innings as well. Pakistan play the first Test against Australia starting 14 December in Perth. The first ball is expected to be bowled at 0720 PKT. Scores in brief: Match drawn Pakistan 391-9d, 116.2 overs (Shan Masood 201 not out, Sarfaraz Ahmed 41, Babar Azam 40, Abdullah Shafique 38; Jordan Buckingham 5-80, Mark Steketee 1-58, Nathan McAndrew 1-68, Todd Murphy 1-110) Prime Minister's XI 367-4, 141 overs (Matt Renshaw 136 not out, Cameron Bancroft 53, Marcus Harris 49, Cameron Green 46; Imam-ul-Haq 1-12, Faheem Ashraf 1-57, Khurram Shahzad 1-50, Abrar Ahmed 1-80) Player of the match – Shan Masood (Pakistan)

Kyrgios pulls out of Australian Open

MELBOURNE (AFP): Nick Kyrgios withdrew from the Australian Open on Saturday as he continues to struggle for fitness after a long injury absence, calling the decision "heartbreaking". The Australian showstopper had knee surgery in January and then aborted plans to return at Wimbledon after tearing a ligament in his wrist. He said last month "the stars would need to align" for him to be ready for his home Grand Slam in January, and the one-time world number 13 confirmed on Saturday time had run out. "So, this is a very disappointing time for me, but I won't be able to compete at the 2024 Australian Open," Kyrgios said on the subscription website OnlyFans, which he joined as a content creator last week. "Obviously, heart-breaking. I've had so many amazing memories there, and I just want to really get back to playing at the top of my game and doing it right, and I need a little more time. "Even though I won't be there competing this year at the AO, I still will be around, commentating matches, being around," he added. Last month, Kyrgios said that winning a Grand Slam remained his driving force, having come closest at Wimbledon in 2022 when he lost to Novak Djokovic in the final. The Australian Open runs from January 14-28 at Melbourne Park, with Aryna Sabalenka defending the women's title and Djokovic, the men's. While Kyrgios will be missing, 22-time Grand Slam winner Rafael Nadal -- who has not played since this year's Australian Open due to injury -- is on the entry list. So too is four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka, who gave birth to daughter Shai in July. She has not played since September 2022, having also struggled with her mental health.

Phillips guides nervy NZ win over Bangladesh in second Test

MIRPUR (AFP/APP): Glenn Phillips scored an unbeaten 40 under pressure as New Zealand beat Bangladesh by four wickets in the second Test on Saturday to finish the two-match series level.

Set a chase of 137 in Dhaka, the visitors reached 139-6 an hour into the fourth day's final session with Phillips, who made 87 in the first innings, receiving able support from Mitchell Santner.

Santner capped in on a fine all-round performance with 35 not out after his 3-51 earlier with the ball. Mehidy Hasan Miraz claimed 3-52 and Taijul Islam chipped in with 2-58 before Phillips and Santner, who shared 70 in their unbroken seventh-wicket stand, denied Bangladesh their hopes of a first Test series win over the Black Caps.

"It was a bit of a scrape there, nice to come out on the right side of it," said New Zealand captain Tim Southee. "The guys just trusted their game. On this pitch, you

can still play your way," he added. "At times, Bangladesh showed it as well. It was a matter of time before one had your name on it."

Bangladesh struck early as Shoriful Islam removed Devon Conway for two before the spinners came into action. Mehidy dismissed Henry Nichols for three and Tom Latham for 26 between Taijul's wickets of Kane Williamson (11) and Tom Blundell (two). Mehidy's consistent bowling was rewarded when he forced an edge from Daryl Mitchell (19) at slip.

"The bowlers did a great job," Bangladesh skipper Najmul said. "In the first match, we played really good cricket. This game we had our opportunities, but we couldn't take them."

Earlier, Ajaz Patel took 6-57 for his fourth five-wicket Test haul and Santner complemented with his left-arm spin to help New Zealand bowl out Bangladesh for 144 runs in the

second innings. Resuming on 38-2, Bangladesh began aggressively but managed just 106 runs in 27 overs during the fourth day's extended opening session.

Zakir Hasan was the only batsman to put up a fight, top-scoring with 59 before the Kiwi bowlers wrapped up the innings.

Patel brought Zakir's defiant innings to an end, forcing him to top edge at slip after Santner removed Nayeem Hasan for nine. New Zealand had an eight-run lead in the first innings with Phillips guiding the side to 180 from a precarious 46-5, in reply to Bangladesh's 172.

"That eight runs mattered a lot," Phillips said. "We pride ourselves on fighting for as long as possible. Our spinners bowled incredibly."

Fifteen wickets fell on the opening day before rain washed out the entire second day and the opening session of the third.

Bangladesh won the opening Test in Sylhet by 150 runs.

KP Olympic association honors medal winners



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Former sports minister and president Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Olympic association medals

winner players with cash prizes in a ceremony held on Saturday. KP players won six medals in 6th National Moi Thai Championship.

The was also attended bat ceremony was organized by former world champion Qamar Zaman, General Secretary of Provincial Olympic Association Murtaza Bangash, General Secretary of Taekwondo Federation Murtaza Bangash, General Secretary of Provincial Moi Thai

Association Inayatullah Khan and executive members of Provincial Olympic Association including Arbab Naseer, Aamir Saber Advocate, Amjad Khan, Faqir Mohammad Awan, Umar Ayaz, Tariq Parvez and others. Thai National Championship organ-

ized by the Pakistan Moi Thai Federation was held in Lahore, in which Khyber Pakhtunkhwa athletes won six medals for the province, including three browns, two silvers and one gold.

Kamran Khan won gold in 63 kg, Salman Khan win silver medal in 57 kg and Aziz Khan in 60 kg while Zabiullah 67 and Yasin Khan won brons medal in 71 kg and Muaz in 51 kg. Secretary Inayat said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa team participated ishowed excellent performance.

On this occasion, former Provincial Sports Minister Syed Aqil Shah said that government should provide financial support to these athletes so that in the future they can shine the name of the province.



MIRPUR: The Bangladesh and New Zealand players line up for a group photo after the series finished 1-1.

Fakhar fireworks, Shahab five-fer lead Abbottabad to National T20 Cup final

F.P. Report

KARACHI : Peshawar's 10-match winning streak finally came to an end as they faced a thumping defeat at the hands of Abbottabad in the first semi-final of the AH Group Presents Jazz Super 4G National T20 Cup 2023-24. Yasir Shah-led Abbottabad secured a berth in the final of National T20 Cup for the first time after storming to a seven-wicket victory with 13 balls to spare.

Abbottabad's chase was built around immaculate striking by openers Fakhar Zaman and Sajjad Ali Jnr, both of whom hit a combined 12 sixes. The first-wicket stand yielded 113 runs in quick time, putting the pressure on the Peshawar bowlers.

Sajjad smashed his third fifty on the trot, taking a special liking to Peshawar captain Iftikhar Ahmed's bowling as he deposited him for four maximums in one over. Mohammad Imran ended his stay at the crease after he accumulated 57 in 29 balls with seven sixes and

a solitary four.

Next batter in, Kamran Ghulam, was dismissed cheaply for four but Fakhar continued to unleash lusty blows to motor the chase. The star batter finished with an unbeaten 79 off 46 deliveries, studded with five maximums and eight boundaries.

Abbottabad's winning runs also came off a six that Afaq Ahmed struck Abbas Ali over long-off, emblematic of the team's dominance today. Imran was the only Peshawar bowler who threatened the opposition as he gave away 18 runs in his four overs including one wicket.

Earlier in the day, Abbottabad's decision to bowl first reaped rewards as leading run-getter of the tournament Sahibzada Farhan (15, 10b, 3x4s) was removed early by Aqib Khan. Left-arm pacer Shahab Khan then got the big wickets of Mohammad Haris (16, 21b, 1x4, 1x6) and Iftikhar Ahmed (0, 2b) in his first over to leave Peshawar four down for 75.

Israrullah then launched a brilliant counterattack, smoking

10 fours and three sixes in his 34-ball 73 at a strike rate in excess of 210. However, Israrullah found little support at the other end as no other batter crossed the 20-run mark.

Shahab ran through the Peshawar line-up, bagging five scalps – his second five-fer of the competition. He was duly named player of the match. The second semi-final will take place between Karachi Whites and Rawalpindi at the same venue later today. Toss will be conducted at 1930 PKT while the first ball is set to be bowled at 2000 PKT.

Scores in brief: Abbottabad beat Peshawar by seven wickets

Peshawar 169 all out, 19.2 overs (Israrullah 73; Shahab Khan 5-33, Fayaz Khan 2-33, Aqib Khan 2-41)

Abbottabad 175-3, 17.5 overs (Fakhar Zaman 79 not out, Sajjad Ali Jnr 57, Aitzaz Habib Khan 21; Abbas Ali 1-7, Mohammad Imran 1-18, Iftikhar Ahmed 1-48)

Player of the match – Shahab Khan (Abbottabad).

New Zealand beat Pakistan women by six runs on DLS

QUEENSTOWN (Monitoring Des): New Zealand women beat Pakistan women by six runs on DLS at the John Davies Oval on Saturday in the third T20I to secure a consolation win in three-match series.

After being put into bat, Pakistan managed to score 137 for five in 20 overs, on the back of a 38-ball 43 from Sidra Amin, playing her first match of the series. Sidra struck four fours and knitted a 64-run opening wicket partnership with Muneeba Ali (27, 31b, 2x4s). Captain Nida Dar, playing her 141st T20I and thus becoming the most capped player for Pakistan in women's T20Is, scored 25 off 20 balls, including two fours and a six.

Fatima Sana's unbeaten 17 off 13 balls, with two boundaries, helped the tourists put a respectable score on the board.

For the White Ferns, Amelia Kerr, who was captaining the side in the absence of Sophie Devine due to injury, took three wickets for 11 runs, while Eden Carson bagged two wickets for 20 runs.

In turn, the hosts were 101 for two in 15 overs when rain stopped play, and play couldn't resume due to continuous rain, resulting in the White Ferns

winning the match on DLS by six runs. Player of the match Suzie Bates was the top-scorer for the winning side, returning undefeated on 51 off 42 balls, laced with five fours. Kerr was other notable contributor with the bat, scoring a 31-ball 35, hitting three fours a six.

Right-arm fast Fatima Sana for her six wickets in the series was named player of the series.

Earlier, Pakistan defeated White Ferns by seven wickets and 10 runs in the first two matches of the T20I series in Dunedin to take an unassailable lead. Both sides will now compete in three ODIs, part of ICC Women's Championship, commencing from 12 December.

Scores in brief: New Zealand beat Pakistan by six runs on DLS

Pakistan women 137-5, 20 overs (Sidra Amin 43, Muneeba Ali 27, Nida Dar 25, Fatima Sana 17 not out; Amelia Kerr 3-11, Eden Carson 2-20)

New Zealand women 101-2, 15 overs (Suzie Bates 51 not out, Amelia Kerr 35)

Player of the match – Suzie Bates (New Zealand)

Player of the series – Fatima Sana (Pakistan).

13th CJCSC Open Golf C'ship kicks off at KGC

KARACHI (INP): The 13th Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) Open Golf Championship kicked off at Karachi Golf Club (KGC) and its opening ceremony and media brief was held on Saturday.

Commander Karachi, Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem who graced the occasion as Chief Guest formally inaugurated the championship. During the ceremony, President Services Sports Control Board, Rear Admiral Abdul Basit apprised on significance of the championship scheduled from 09 to 12 Dec 23 and its conduct in various categories.

This year the Golf Championship will be played in professionals, senior professionals, junior professionals, amateurs, seniors, ladies and juniors categories. Such events provide a unique opportunity to showcase Pakistan's positive image to the world as a sports loving nation.

This also helps to generate healthy activities in the society. Regular conduct of this event is the manifestation of PN's commitment towards the promotion of golf at national and international levels.

The opening ceremony was attended by civil & military dignitaries, sponsors, golf players and media representatives.

Dara Football Club beat Hazara by 4-0



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dara FC defeated Hazara FC by 4-0 in the ongoing Peshawar Football League Season 6 at Tahmas Khan Stadium in Peshawar.

Tenth match played in the league played between Dara FC and Hazara FC proved to be an easy match and from

the beginning, Dara FC players started attacking the opponents' goal post. Usman scored the first goal on behalf of Dara FC in the 42nd minute, while the second goal was scored by M. Rizwan in the 46th minute, third goal was scored by Usman in the 66th minute, fourth and last goal was scored by

Wajid in the 69th minute and thus easily won the match.

11th match of the league was played between Popo FC and Shinwari FC, which was tied with one goal each, both teams attacked each other's goal, but both teams could score one goal each. In the 34th minute

of the match, Adeel from Popo FC scored the first goal and gave his team the lead, but in the 69th minute of the match from Shinwari FC, Waseem scored on behalf of his team and equalized the match with one goal each.

Later, until the end of the match, both teams attacked each other's goal, but they failed to score more goals. Former Captain Gohar Zaman was the match commissioner while Anwar Khan, Hayat, Abdul Rehman, Ikram and Zahid performed the duties of the match referee. Regional Sports Officer Zakirullah, Chief Organizer, Chairman Youth Glaim Welfare Organization Gul Haider and other personalities were present on the occasion.

Salah scores 200th Liverpool goal as Reds go top

LONDON (AFP): Mohamed Salah scored his 200th goal for Liverpool before Harvey Elliott's last-gasp winner sealed a dramatic 2-1 victory against Crystal Palace that sent the Reds to the top of the Premier League on Saturday.

Jurgen Klopp's side were in danger of a damaging defeat in the title race after Jean-Philippe Mateta's penalty put Palace ahead in the second half at Selhurst Park.

But Palace's Jordan Ayew was sent off with 15 minutes left and Liverpool took full advantage to erase a previously spluttering performance with a blistering finale.

Salah's 14th goal this term made him the fifth player to score 200 for Liverpool in all competitions after Ian Rush (346), Roger Hunt (285), Gordon Hodgson (241) and Billy Liddell (228).

In his 247th Premier League appearance, the Egypt star also reached 150 goals in the competition, including two scored for Chelsea, putting him in the all-time top-10 list level alongside Michael Owen. Despite Salah's landmark, a point would have been a disappointing result for Liverpool, but young midfielder Elliott came off the bench to seal the points in stoppage time.

Liverpool's third successive league win moved them one point above second-placed Arsenal ahead of the Gunners' trip to third-placed Aston Villa later on Saturday.

With home games against Manchester United and Arsenal looming before Christmas, the Reds have a golden opportunity to cement their title credentials heading into the new year. Klopp had called a television presenter "ignorant" for joking that

the 1230 GMT Saturday kick-off was the German's "favourite" time to play.

The Reds boss has made a habit of complaining about the schedule whenever Liverpool have a match in the early Saturday slot after playing the previous Wednesday.

Liverpool leave it late Initially, it seemed Klopp's dislike for the kick-off time would be renewed as Liverpool struggled to find any rhythm in wet and windy conditions in south London.

Liverpool were fortunate not to fall behind when Jefferson Lerma's close-range effort forced a superb save from Alisson Becker, with the rebound hitting the post before it was hacked off the line by Trent Alexander-Arnold.

Palace were awarded a penalty when Ousmane Edouard was bundled over Virgil van Dijk, but Will Hughes had clearly fouled

Wataru Endo before passing to the forward.

Referee Andy Madley was told to consult the pitchside monitor and overturned his penalty decision.

For the first time in the league this season, Klopp's side failed to muster a single shot on target in a dismal first-half display that ended fittingly with Alexander-Arnold misplacing a simple pass.

Palace deservedly took the lead in the 57th minute as Jarell Quansah's challenge on Mateta was deemed worthy of a penalty after Madley checked the monitor.

To Klopp's bewilderment, VAR only intervened to prompt the decision several moments after the foul. Liverpool were furious but Mateta was unfazed, barely taking a run-up as he dispatched the spot-kick past Alisson with ease.



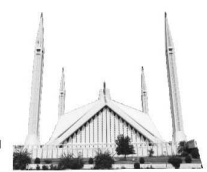
But luck was on Liverpool's side as Palace forward Ayew was dismissed for a soft second booking in the 75th minute and within 60 seconds the visitors were level.

If the sending off had an element of good fortune for Liverpool, there was more to come as Cody

Gakpo's cross was only cleared to Salah, whose shot from 10 yards took a wicked deflection as it flashed past wrong-footed keeper Sam Johnstone.

Liverpool finally had some momentum and their late siege produced a winner in the first minute of stoppage time. Elliott took pos-

session 30 yards from goal and swerved away from his marker before unleashing a superb strike that beat Palace substitute keeper Remi Mathews at his near post. In the final seconds, Alisson had to save from Joachim Andersen to preserve Liverpool's hard-fought success.



In brief

IRSA releases 85,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 85,200 cusecs water from its various rim stations with inflow of 40,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA on Saturday, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1488.50 feet and was 88.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. The water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 21,700 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1168.60 feet, which was 118.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 4,800 cusecs and 26,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 50,700, 43,500, 39,400 and 9,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 6,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Search operation conducted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police conducted search and combing operations in various areas to ensure law and order in the district here on Saturday. According to a police spokesman, the operation was carried out on the direction of City Police Officer (CPO) Khalid Mehmood Hamdani. Search operations were conducted in different areas including Mandara, Chakri, Jatli, Dhamial, Khotra, Gujjar Khan, Kallar Syedan, Rawat, and Chontra. He informed that a heavy police contingent, Elite Force, Special Branch, and Ladies Police carried out the operations. A total of 116 homes, collected data of 13 tenants, 122 shops and 428 individuals were questioned. The spokesman said search operations to net criminals and proclaimed offenders were regularly being conducted under National Action Plan in different areas of the district particularly to ensure law and order.

PTDC announces substantial progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) announced substantial progress in the development of the tourism app by emphasizing its potential to significantly boost both local and foreign tourism in the country. Official told APP that Pakistan has amazing and rich recreational sites and scenic valleys that not only promote tourism across the country but lead to a substantial increase in the generating revenue as well. He highlighted the app's status as Pakistan's largest tourist information platform by providing comprehensive details on archaeological sites and tourist destinations with a single click. He emphasized the app's potential to make information on Pakistan's tourism, history, and cultural heritage easily accessible to people worldwide, anticipating a remarkable surge in domestic and foreign tourists. The official apprised that Information Technological (IT) companies had already given a detailed briefing on the app's features to the Minister of State for Tourism and Special Assistant to Prime Minister Wasi Shah. He said that Wasi Shah expressed confidence that the ongoing efforts, combined with digitalization would revolutionize Pakistani tourism.



ISLAMABAD Chairman Lt. Gen. (R) Nazir Ahmed in a group photo with award recipient NAB Officers on the occasion of "International Anti-Corruption Day" held in NAB Headquarters. —INP Photo

Anti-Corruption Day highlights links to peace

ISLAMABAD (APP): International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD) was celebrated on Saturday to underscore the vital connection between fighting corruption and its impact on peace, security, and development and raise awareness about the consequences of corruption, encouraging ethical choices.

Each year, we observe International Anti-Corruption Day, bringing people together to combat corruption and strive for a society free from corrupt practices.

In 2003, the United Nations adopted the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), marking the initial stride in the battle against corruption.

This treaty witnessed the collaboration of UN member states as they united to combat corruption and uphold the principles of law and

order. The treaty was signed on December 9 and came into effect on December 14.

Corruption, a widespread issue affecting every nation, exerts adverse effects on various facets of society, particularly impacting the most vulnerable individuals, including women. It erodes democratic institutions, diminishes confidence in governance systems, and poses a threat to advancements in all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Corruption not only contributes to conflict but hampers peace processes by undermining the rule of law, exacerbating poverty, enabling the illicit exploitation of resources, and offering financial support for armed conflict.

Meanwhile, NAB conducted a seminar titled "Curbing Corruption

through a Documented Economy" as part of the Anti-corruption week-2023, observed in conjunction with International Anti-Corruption Day. The seminar was held in collaboration with the Legal Aid and Justice Authority (LAJA) recently.

Participants from educational institutions in Rawalpindi, Chakwal, Murree, Attock, Jhelum, and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) were acknowledged in a competition. The accomplished students who excelled in declamation, poster design, painting, skit, and other categories were presented with cash prizes and shields.

NAB also conducted an awareness program against corruption in commemoration of Corruption Day on December 9, 2023, including a walk from NAB headquarters to the National Library.

2227 FIRs registered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi District Police registered over 2227 FIRs against underage drivers during a special campaign so far, said a police spokesman.

He informed that police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani were taking action by the law against underage drivers. The CPO had directed the City Traffic Police officers to take solid steps to control traffic rules violations and underage driving, he said.

The parents were also advised to discourage driving by underage drivers. He said that fatal road accidents occur due to speeding and reckless driving of the drivers particularly underage. The ongoing operation against underage drivers and other traffic rules violators had been accelerated on the instructions of the CPO.

The vehicles and motorcycles of the underage drivers were also being impounded in respective police stations, he said.

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

Will contest election if alive, says Rashid

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Former interior minister and AML leader Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has said that if alive he will contest next general elections.

Talking to the media after court appearance in Rawalpindi on Saturday, Sheikh Rashid said he had nothing to do with the plethora of cases against him.

The anti-terrorism court in Rawalpindi extended the interim of Sheikh Rashid until January 4 next year in the cases relating to May 9 vandalism.

Judge Malik Ijaz Asif heard Sheikh Rashid's bail application.

The public prosecutor pleaded with the court that the investigation of these cases is ongoing, so more time should be given.

However, the court expressed its displeasure over not presenting the record of the cases even today and directed to complete the investigation and submit the record by next date.

The court adjourned the hearing of the case till January 4 next year due to the winter vacation of courts.

Talking to the media, Sheikh Rashid said "I have nothing to do with these cases of May 9 because I was not present there on that date."

Sheikh Rashid said "I was barred from talking to the media whereas I have always respected the institutions."

Sheikh Rashid said "If I remain alive, I will definitely contest the next election."

AC conducts crackdown on price gouging

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a swift operation spearheaded by Assistant Commissioner Pothohar Nahel Hafiz, the ICT officials on Sunday conducted crackdown on rampant price gouging in the city's vegetable markets, arresting 14 individuals and seizing the goods of 25 vendors.

This decisive action came in response to rising prices and follows the directive of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad to ensure fair trade practices and protect consumers, ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said.

The Assistant Commissioner personally visited various areas within the Pothohar subdivision, displaying the official rate list and conducting rigorous price checks. Those found engaging in overcharging were apprehended and transferred to the police station for further investigation. The confiscated goods, valued at a significant amount, have been taken into custody.

This coordinated effort sends a clear message to all vendors and overcharging will not be tolerated. The warnings have also been issued to other violators, encouraging them to comply with the established price regulations. This ongoing operation, conducted on a daily basis, aimed to ensure that residents of Islamabad have access to essential goods at fair and reasonable prices.

The Assistant Commissioner's dedication to upholding consumer rights through swift and decisive action has been met with widespread praise from the community. This operation is expected to deter further price gouging and contribute to a more stable and equitable marketplace for all.

SAPM urges CWAs to boost overseas employment opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD), Jawad Sohrab Malik held a pivotal meeting with the Community Welfare Attaches (CWAs) stationed abroad to strategically enhance job opportunities for Pakistanis on the international stage.

Currently, there are 21 CWAs posted abroad by Government of Pakistan, said a press release issued here Saturday. The primary focus of the meeting was to evaluate and improve the progress of CWAs in identifying and exploring targeted demand

for employment prospects for Pakistani nationals through engagements with foreign employers. This involved the formulation, signing and execution of Letters of Intent (LOIs) and agreements with foreign companies, critical in amplifying the export of Pakistani manpower.

The SAPM emphasized the crucial need for close collaboration between CWAs and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, particularly in sharing information related to employment demands abroad and the necessary skills required for those jobs. This step will facilitate the design of

training programs specifically tailored to the skills demanded by foreign companies, ensuring that Pakistani workers are well-equipped and aligned with global standards.

Jawad Sohrab Malik, while underscoring the significance of this initiative, highlighted its dual impact, not only in enhancing employment opportunities for Pakistanis abroad but also in contributing to the economic growth of the nation.

Furthermore, he stressed the essential role of CWAs in catering to the needs and resolving issues faced by overseas Pakistanis during their stay abroad. This compre-

hensive approach is designed to ensure the well-being and seamless integration of Pakistani expatriates in their respective host countries.

"The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development reiterates its commitment to spearheading initiatives that fortify global employment prospects for Pakistanis. This strategic meeting signifies a significant stride towards realizing this vision and underscores the Ministry's dedication to the welfare and prosperity of overseas Pakistanis," remarked SAPM Jawad Sohrab Malik at the conclusion of the meeting.

12 outlaws arrested; weapon recovered

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 12 outlaws including three professional baggers from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered drugs and weapons from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Aabpara police team arrested an accused namely Abbas Masih involved in illegally refilling gas cylinders. The Karachi Company police team arrested two accused namely Anosh Masih and Shahzad and recovered 227 gram hashish and one iron punch from their possession.

Similarly, the Shams Colony police team arrested an accused namely Muhammad Munir involved in illegally refilling gas cylinders. The Khanna police team arrested an accused namely Abdul Raheem and recovered 120 gram heroin from his possession.

Furthermore, the Lohi Bher police team arrested two accused namely Muhammad Sarfraz, Muhammad Iqbal and Muhammad Shahid and recovered 1,666 gram heroin from his possession. The Bhara Kahu police arrested an accused namely Ali Shah Gulzar and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession.

Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway. During the ongoing crackdown against professional baggers, the Islamabad Capital Police arrested three pro-

fessional baggers and registered cases against them under the beggar act.

ICCPPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan directed the police officials to further intensify the crackdown against the criminal elements. "Safety and security of the citizens is our foremost priority and no laxity will be tolerated in this regard", he maintained.

Eight absconders involved in heinous crime held: Islamabad Capital Police have arrested eight absconders and proclaimed offenders involved in heinous crime during the last 24 hour, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, special tasks were assigned to all senior police officials to ensure the arrest of proclaimed offenders and absconders involved in heinous crimes.

Excise Dept speed up crackdown

ISLAMABAD (APP): Excise and Taxation Department Islamabad has stepped up its crackdown on vehicles with unauthorized modifications, suspending the registration of 225 vehicles in the past eight days.

This ongoing operation, spearheaded by the Director Excise and Taxation Department Bilal Azam and the Islamabad Transport Authority, aimed to ensure compliance with traffic regulations and maintain the city's aesthetic appeal.

The Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, has urged citizens to remove tinted glasses and fancy number plates from their vehicles immediately. The failure to do so will result in further suspension of registration, with restoration only granted once the violations are corrected.

The joint operation has already yielded significant results, with 201 vehicles having their registration reinstated after removing the illegal modifications. This serves as a clear message to all motorists – comply with regulations or face the consequences.

"We are committed to making Islamabad a cleaner and more beautiful city," said DC Memon. "This operation is an integral part of our efforts to uphold the city's decorum and ensure safety on our roads."

The citizens are advised to use only the number plates approved by the Excise and Taxation Department to avoid any inconvenience. With the joint forces actively patrolling the streets, there's no excuse for non-compliance. So, ditch the tinted windows and flashy plates, and embrace a safer and more aesthetically pleasing Islamabad for all.



ISLAMABAD: SAPM Mushaal Hussein Mullick visiting stalls during Islamabad Women Gala Venue: Pak-China Friendship Center. —APP Photo

Open burning of waste harmful to air quality, public health

ISLAMABAD (APP): The experts and speakers at X

space (formerly Twitter) on Saturday said the open burning of municipal, agricultural, and industrial waste in Pakistan posed a severe threat to air quality and public health as hazardous emissions, including particulate matter, dioxins, and Volatile Organic Compounds, contribute to smog, leading to respiratory issues and cardiovascular problems.

Recognizing the urgency, the Institute of Urbanism (IoU) and the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAE) jointly organized an X Space to highlight the impact of open waste burning on smog and its threats to health and the environment.

With 48.5 million tons of annual municipal waste, cities like Islamabad face challenges in sustainable waste management. Inefficient waste collection strategies result in waste accumulation and open burning, especially in areas lacking proper services.

The open burning of waste is a prevalent practice in numerous cities across Pakistan. However, there is a scarcity of documented data pinpointing the areas where this practice poses the most significant issues or the underlying reasons for

burning municipal waste.

A recent survey conducted by IoU in Islamabad and Lahore revealed that a majority of respondents were uninformed about any existing laws against this practice, as well as the environmental or health hazards associated with it, said Ayesha Majid, Senior Program Coordinator at IoU, in her introductory remarks.

Waste burning, a major source of toxic gases and black carbon, occurs in diverse settings, posing health and safety risks. Often hidden and seasonal, it lacks clear regulations and enforcement. The Royal Academy of Engineering addresses this with 19 global projects, focusing on vulnerable groups and promoting improved waste management, citizen reporting, and regulatory enforcement. Dr Mansoor Ali, RAE's Theme Lead, further stated that RAE's programs aim at various levels, including national policies, city frameworks, and grassroots practices, recognizing the link between waste burning and livelihoods, especially for waste pickers.

Once known as the "city of gardens," Lahore has transformed into a "gas chamber." Over the past decade, the city has witnessed a worrisome 75% reduction in greenery, accompanied by a significant 10-degree rise in temperature. 60% of diseases in Lahore are linked to air pollution. The roots of Lahore Bachao Tehreek can be traced back to a case 16 years ago when a Motorway construction project proposed cutting 30,000 trees and converting 23,000 acres of green land into a road near the Lahore canal.

The Supreme Court's historic judgment led to the introduction of the Canal Urban Heritage Path Act, which was passed through Parliament, recognizing the environment as a vital heritage and public trust for the first time. Imrana Tiwana, Environmental Activist, highlights how she started the Lahore Bachao Tehreek, a movement aimed at addressing the escalating issue of smog in Lahore.

Exposure to pollutants from open waste burning, especially during the smog season, poses serious health risks, including respiratory and cardiovascular issues, skin and eye irritation, increased cancer risk, and compromised immune systems. Vulnerabilities vary across demographics, with children, the elderly, and low-income communities facing higher risks.



RAWALPINDI: A painter giving final touches to the truck at Carriage Factory. —APP Photo

PANJSHIR (Ariana News): Panjshir's Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock said bumper walnut harvest recorded this year. Total of 241 metric tons of walnuts were collected from across the province. Last year, 217 metric tons were harvested. Qari Fazlullah Dewobandi, the head of the department, said 212 hectares of land has been used to cultivate the nuts and that Panjshir provides the perfect weather conditions to cultivate walnut trees.

Earlier, the Ministry of Communications and Information set the price of one GB of Internet access to telecommunications networks at 110 afghani. and one minute of phoning at 1 afghani and 85 pol.



GAZA: People pray over the bodies of Palestinians killed in Israeli air strikes, at al-Najjar hospital in Rafah.

Solangi vows to strengthen state media

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Saturday vowed to strengthen the state media by equipping it with the latest technology and digital tools.

The caretaker government has an open media policy and the state media, under the clear instructions of the caretaker set up was free to report independently, he made these remarks during his visit to Associated Press of Pakistan Quetta Bureau.

Murtaza Solangi said that the caretaker government was well cognizant of its constitutional responsibilities to pave the way for the conduct of transparent, peaceful and free elections in the country. However, the issues falling under its constitutional purview could be taken up for the smooth running of the affairs of the country, he added. Reiterating the government's resolve for introducing durable reforms in state institutions, he said that efforts were afoot to revamp the public institutions.

In this connection, he said a concerted strategy has been devised to bring the state media including APP at par with international media organizations. The minister reaffirmed the commitment of enhancing the capacity building of employees of the Information Ministry and its attached departments. With capacity building measures and refresher courses, the overall performance of the employees could be improved, he maintained.

On this occasion, Bureau Chief APP Nazar Muhammad Jamali gave a detailed briefing to the minister on the working of

the premier news agency.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi also said that radio was the main source of news and entertainment to the people in remote areas of Balochistan. The federal government will use all resources to further improve the services of Radio Pakistan in the province, he said during a detailed visit to Radio Pakistan Quetta station.

On this occasion, the minister was given a detailed briefing by Station Director Anisur Rahman regarding Radio Pakistan in Balochistan.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi also said that the Press Information Department (PID) was an important institution and measures were indispensable to develop it on modern lines to ensure fast dissemination of information.

The minister who paid a detailed visit to PID in Quetta was given a detailed briefing by Director PID Abdul Manan Babar regarding the performance and infrastructure of PID. The minister also visited various sections of the PID office and met the employees and inquired about their problems.

The caretaker federal minister also visited the Pakistan Information Center, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Information, in PID Quetta, where the in-charge PIC Arsalan Qureshi informed the minister about the trainings given to journalists on various topics during the last one year. The federal minister expressed his satisfaction on the performance of the institution.

NAB recovers Rs 2.3tr saves \$10b, says Chairman

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Chairman Lt. Gen. (R) Nazir Ahmed, stated that the bureau has recovered an impressive amount of Rs. 2.3 trillion and generated over US \$10 billion in savings for the national exchequer.

Speaking at an event on Saturday at NAB Headquarters in Islamabad, commemorating "International Anti-Corruption Day" with the theme "Documented Economy Curbs Corruption," he emphasized that combating corruption requires collective effort. NAB is dedicated to ensuring that every instance of corruption faces consequences.

Lt. Gen. (R) Nazir Ahmed, emphasized that the eradication of corruption requires collective efforts from all stakeholders, as no single institution can accomplish this task alone. He reaffirmed NAB's commitment to ensuring that every instance of corruption faces consequences. The Chairman asserted that the documentation of the economy will undoubtedly benefit the country and significantly reduce corruption. He reiterated NAB's commitment to fulfilling the obligations outlined in the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

Prominent economist and Director General of NUST Institute of Policy Studies (NIPS) Dr Ashfaq Hasan Khan and Country Representative of United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC) Pakistan Jeremy Milsom, attended the event as guest speakers. Dr Ashfaq Hassan Khan, in his keynote speech, stated that it is the responsibility of every citizen to get registered in the taxation system so that they can get welfare benefits from the State.

Court extends Sh Rashid's bail

RAWALPINDI (INP): An anti-terrorism court in Rawalpindi on Saturday extended till January 4 the interim bails of former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed and Sheikh Rashid Shafique.

Anti-terrorism court Judge Malik Ijaz Asif conducted hearing of cases relating to May 9 events registered against Sheikh Rashid Ahmed and Sheikh Rashid Shafique.

favoured. Firing a fresh salvo at PML-N's arch-rival Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supreme leader Imran Khan, Maryam said that he was behind bars after telling so many lies.

"The one who is paying for his deeds, [I] don't even want to take his name. Not Nawaz Sharif but his [Imran] own deeds have taken him to the place where he is now," the PML-N leader said. Without naming Imran, Maryam said that Nawaz was elected prime minister thrice but no alleged heist or corruption could be proved against him but the former PTI chairman did the biggest theft after becoming the prime minister once. "The one who called Nawaz a thief was caught doing the biggest theft in history. "He got the cabinet's approval for a sealed envelope. He and his wife [Bushra Bibi] acquired lands through the Al Qadir Trust and when he was questioned, he came with a plaster on his foot and a bucket on his head," she added.

Israel bombards Gaza, including evacuation areas for Palestinians

US 'responsible for bloodshed' of Gaza children after UN veto: Abbas

RAMALLAH: Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas said Saturday that the United States was "responsible for the bloodshed" of children in the Gaza Strip after it vetoed a resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire in the Palestinian territory at a special meeting of the UN Security Council.

"The president has described the American position as aggressive and immoral, a flagrant violation of all humanitarian principles and values, and holds the United States responsible for the bloodshed of Palestinian children, women and elderly people in the Gaza Strip," said a statement from Abbas's office. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Friday called for an immediate end to the war in Gaza and an international peace conference to work out a lasting political solution leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state. In an interview with Reuters at his office in Ramallah, Abbas, 87, said the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians in general had reached an alarming stage that requires an international conference and guarantees by world powers. Besides Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza, he said Israeli forces have intensified their attacks everywhere in the occupied West Bank over the past year with settlers escalating violence against Palestinian towns. He reiterated his longstanding position in favor of negotiation rather than armed resistance to end the longstanding occupation. "I am with peaceful resistance. I am for negotiations based on an international peace conference and under international auspices that would lead to a solution that will be protected by world powers to establish a sovereign Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem," he said. — Arab News

idents reported airstrikes and shelling in the north and south, including the city of Rafah near the Egyptian border — one area where the Israeli army had ordered civilians to evacuate to. In a colorful classroom there, knee-high children's tables were strewn with rubble.

"We now live in the Gaza Strip and are governed by the American law of the jungle. America has killed human rights," said Rafah resident Abu Yasser Al-Khatib. "The Palestinian people will not leave and do not want to leave." Israel has been trying to secure the military's hold on northern Gaza despite heavy resistance from Hamas. Tens of thousands of residents are believed to remain despite evacuation orders, six weeks after troops and tanks rolled in.

The Israeli military said Saturday its forces fought and killed Hamas militants and found weapons inside a school in Shijaia in a densely populated neighborhood of Gaza City. It said soldiers discovered a tunnel shaft in the same neighborhood where they found an elevator, and in a separate incident, militants shot at troops from

an UN-run school in the northern town of Beit Hanoun. More than 2,200 Palestinians have been killed since the Dec. 1 collapse of a week-long truce, about two-thirds of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

The truce saw hostages and Palestinian prisoners released, but more than 130 hostages are believed to remain in Gaza. On Saturday, a kibbutz that came under attack on Oct. 7 said 25-year-old hostage Sahar Baruch had died in captivity. His captors said Baruch was killed during a failed rescue mission by Israeli forces Friday. The Israeli military only confirmed that two soldiers were seriously wounded in an attempted hostage rescue and that no hostages were freed. With no further cease-fire in sight and a trickle of humanitarian aid reaching just a few parts of Gaza, residents reported severe food shortages. "I am very hungry," said Mustafa Al-Najjar, sheltering in a UN-run school in the devastated Jabalya refugee camp in the north. "We are living on canned food and biscuits and this is not sufficient." — Arab News

US team arrives to take up Afghan refugees issue

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: An American delegation led by US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Elizabeth Horst has reached Islamabad on a four-day visit. It is the third visit by the American officials in the current month of December.

According to sources, Pakistan will raise issues of proscribed organizations operating from Afghanistan, their safe havens and terrorist lists with US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Horst during her visit which will conclude on December

12. The US official will meet caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani during her visit.

During her meetings with the Pakistani officials, Ms Horst will hold talks on improving Pak-US ties and promoting mutual cooperation. She will exchange views on situation in Afghanistan, Afghan refugees and regional security. Pakistan has evicted thousands of Afghan nationals staying illegally in the country. As per reports, 25,000 Afghan nationals waiting for the completion of their resettlement process in America are also residing in Pakistan.

These Afghan nationals used to work for the American military or government, international organizations and aid agencies, as well as media and human rights groups. They escaped the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021 to Pakistan and are waiting to be processed to relocate to the US. The sources said that US Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West left for Doha late last night. West met with Foreign Minister Jilani and Pakistan's Special Representative on Afghanistan Asif Durrani.

ECP rejects calls to postpone polls

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has concluded a consultation on the requests to postpone the upcoming general elections, firmly rejecting the proposals. Officials from the commission emphasised that concrete reasons supporting the postponement were not adequately presented.

According to election commission officials, the cold weather argument lacks merit, as there seems to be no conclusive evidence of extreme conditions affecting most parts of the country. Furthermore, the security situation has been deemed satisfactory, alleviating concerns in that regard. The ECP remains steadfast in its readiness to conduct the elections as scheduled on February 8, dismissing the notion that justifying a delay based on cold weather is appropriate.

Many of the petitions filed with the Election Commission of Pakistan requesting a postponement have cited both the cold weather and security concerns as reasons. This decision underscores the election commission's commitment to ensuring the electoral process proceeds as planned, considering factors such as weather and security within reasonable bounds.

Pak Navy celebrates Hangor Day

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy marked Hangor Day 2023 to celebrate reminiscent of the unmatched courage and unwavering commitment of the PNS submarine during the 1971 war. On the occasion of "Hangor Day", the Pakistan Navy released a special documentary to celebrate the day.

Every year, December 9 is celebrated in the Pakistan Navy as Hangor Day to commemorate the historic event of the sinking of the Indian Navy Frigate Khukri and severely damaging another Indian Navy Ship Kirpan by the Pakistan Navy submarine Hangor in the 1971 war.

On the night of 21/22 November 1971 when the Indian army crossed the international border in East Pakistan, now known as Bangladesh, HANGOR sailed with a full wartime load of torpedoes and was deployed off Bombay by 26 November.

Court extends interim bails of Umar and Imran's sisters

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court in Lahore has extended the interim bail of former federal minister Asad Umar in six cases till January 9 but rejected his interim bail in another case related to an attack on Askari Tower. The court also extended interim bails of former PTI chairman Imran Khan's two sisters in different terrorism cases till January 9.

The court summoned the lawyers of the accused for final arguments on their bail applications on January 9. ATC Judge Muhammad Arshad Javed on Saturday heard the interim bail applications of Asad Umar and the sisters of former chairman PTI - Aleema Khan and Uzma Khan. Lawyer Rana Mudassar Umar appeared on behalf of the accused. At the outset of the hearing, an application was filed in the court seeking Asad's exemption from the court appearance. The court reserved its judgement on his exemption plea.

However, the court extended Asad Umar's interim bail in six other cases till January 9. But it rejected his interim bail in the Askari Tower attack case. The former PTI leader has submitted his interim bails

in cases including the Jinnah House attack case, the Askari Tower attack case, the torching of the Muslim League office in Model Town, and the burning of a canister at Kalma Chowk. In another case, Imran Khan's sisters Aleema and Uzma Khan appeared in court.

The investigation officer told the court that the investigation of their cases had not been completed yet and sought more time. The women are accused of inciting riots and arson. Aleema and Uzma have submitted their interim bail applications in cases related to an attack on the Jinnah House, the burning of a container at Kalma Chowk, and the torching of the PML-N office in Model Town. Lawyer Rana Mudassar Umar took a position in the court that these are merely political cases in which there is no evidence against the petitioner, requesting the court to order the prosecution to submit the records on a future date. The court summoned the lawyers for final arguments on January 9.

ATC extends bail of PTI leaders in May 9 riots: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Saturday extended the bail plea of Pakistan Tehreek-e-

Insaf (PTI) leader Zain Hussain Qureshi, and two sisters of PTI chief in a case related to the May 09 riots.

According to the details, ATC court Judge Arshad Javed in Lahore extended the bail plea of the sisters of the PTI chairman Alima Khan, Uzma Khan, and PTI leader Zain Qureshi till January 09 in the May 09 riots case. Last month, an Anti-terrorism court indicted the charges against PTI leaders Yasmeen Rashid and Ijaz Chaudhry in the May 09 police van arson case.

The court also indicted another PTI leader Rubeneja Jameel in the case, ATC admin judge Abhar Gul Khan heard the case that was registered at Sarwar Road police station of Lahore. All three accused were produced in the court for indictment. They pleaded not guilty and decided to contest charges against them. The court summoned prosecution witnesses for recording their statements in the case and adjourned hearing of the case until December 16. PTI workers staged violent protests across the country on May 09 this year after arrest of the party's chairman and former prime minister in Islamabad High Court in Toshakhana case.

Hitting back at PPP, Maryam prays 'no one gets level playing field like Nawaz did'

F.P. Report

GUJRAT: As political parties begin their election campaigns ahead of the 2024 polls in full swing, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz hit back at Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), saying that she prays no one gets the same level playing field as her father Nawaz Sharif.


"If you want a level playing field like Nawaz Sharif, then you should see what level playing field he has been given [over time]. Do you want this level playing field?" Maryam asked while referring to the PML-N supremo's years in exile and prison.

In her address during the party's youth convention in Gujrat on Saturday, Maryam said that Nawaz was given the chance to contest in an election only once in 22 years, while he lost his wife and mother during his time in jail and abroad. Recalling the October 21 rally

PML-N organised at Minar-e-Pakistan to welcome the three-time prime minister upon his return, Maryam said that she was tearful to see the homecoming of Nawaz, about whom people said, "his politics has ended".

She said that the success of the rally showed that the people had pinned hopes for their future on Nawaz. Regarding the PML-N's legal and political hurdles, Maryam said: "Nawaz's political journey wasn't easy". She said that the former premier spent 11 years in exile and he is still running pillar to post in courts due to "false cases".

"There is no prison in the country where Nawaz Sharif hadn't been jailed but when the nation had the chance to decide, they gave their decision in his favour," she added. Maryam said that doing injustice was easy but ending it is difficult in this country. She said that her father is getting justice at a snail's pace but it is still being said that he is being



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Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar. Managing Editor Jalil Afridi. Phone 0300 9009001