

### Earthquake hits parts of KP F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Earthquake tremors jolted parts of KP on Tuesday. According to the seismological center, the earthquake tremors were felt in Swat, Mingora, Lower Pir, Upper Dir and adjoining areas. People came out of their houses in fear by reciting Kalma-e-Tayyaba. However, no loss of life or damage to property was reported from any part of KP as per the initial reports.

@thefrontierpost

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### Three cops martyred F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Three policemen were martyred and sixteen were injured as terrorists rammed an explosive-laden car into a police station in Dera Ismail Khan, says in media reports. The terrorists, according to the police, hit a car full of explosives at the main gate of the D I Khan's Daraban police station main gate. As a result, three cops named Havaladar, Riyasat and Sepoy Zulfiqar were martyred.

### Fight against terrorism to continue till its complete eradication: PM F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday vowed to continue the fight against terrorism till its complete elimination from country's soil.

"We will fight back till the menace of terrorism is eliminated from our motherland," he posted on the social media platform, X. The prime minister paid tribute to the valiant security forces for their successful operations in the Darazanda, Daraban, and Kolachi areas of district Dera Ismail Khan in which 27 terrorists were killed.

"The soldiers' dedication, sacrifice, and valour in the face of terror is unparalleled and a beacon of hope for our nation," he said.

He expressed his deepest sympathies with the families of the martyrs. PM Kakar said the government was steadfast in eliminating terrorism and extremism from the country. He said such acts could not deter the resolve of the security forces to fight terrorism. The prime minister directed the best medical treatment to the injured in the terrorist attack.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar will attend the special session of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir's (AJK) legislative assembly to discuss the situation after the verdict of the Indian Supreme Court on Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

This was decided in PM Kakar's meeting with the prime minister of AJK Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq held here at the PM House. PM Kakar said Pakistan rejected the decision of India's top court to uphold the Indian government's illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

He said the J&K dispute, which was pending for the last seven decades, could only be settled in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations and the wishes of the Kashmiri people. He said India had no right to go against international laws and take one-sided actions in the garb of the court decisions.

He pointed out that India on August 5, 2019, illegally revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir aimed at changing the demographics of the valley. The prime minister vowed to continue extending political, diplomatic, and moral support to the people of Kashmir in line with their inalienable right to self-determination.

## 23 soldiers martyred in D I Khan suicide attack

### F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Twenty-five Pakistan Army soldiers were martyred while 27 terrorists were killed in three separate incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dera Ismail Khan, the military's media affairs wing said on Tuesday.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), "heightened activities" were witnessed in the district on the nights of December 11 and 12. In the early hours on Tuesday, a group of six terrorists attacked a security forces' checkpoint in the Daraban general area, it said.

"The attempt to enter the post was effectively thwarted which forced the terrorists to ram an explosive-laden vehicle into the post, followed by a suicide bombing attack. "The resulting blasts led to the collapse of the building, causing multiple casualties; 23 brave soldiers embraced shahadat, while all six terrorists were effectively engaged and sent to hell," the ISPR said.

It added that sanitisation operations were being conducted to eliminate any other terrorists present in the area. "Security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthens our resolve," the ISPR said. Tehreek-i-Jihad Pakistan (TJP), a new group affiliated with the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), claimed responsibility for the attack on the checkpoint.

The TJP spokesman in

his claim said four bombers, belonging to Lakki, Dera Ismail Khan, Swat and Mardan districts, took part in the attack. Pakistan has recently been claiming the involvement of Afghans in terrorist attacks and the statement by the TJP appears to suggest otherwise.

Meanwhile, funeral prayers of twenty three brave soldiers who embraced Shahadat while fighting terrorists' attack in Daraban area today, was offered in Dera Ismail Khan Garrison.

Corps Commander Peshawar along with large number of serving officers, soldiers, civil officials and public attended the funeral. Shuhada will be laid to rest with full military honour in their respective hometowns. Armed Forces of Pakistan stand resolute and committed to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the motherland at all cost.

Meanwhile, the ISPR said 17 terrorists were killed in a separate intelligence-based operation in the Darazinda area of Dera Ismail Khan. It further stated that two soldiers embraced martyrdom while four more terrorists were neutralised in another intelligence-based operation in the Kulachi area. "The killed terrorists were actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against security forces as well as killing of innocent civilians. Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered during the operations," it added.

President Arif Alvi, in a statement, said such cowardly acts could not shake

the resolve of the security personnel. Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilil Abbas Jilani said, "Terrorists and their handlers, wherever they are, will pay for their cowardly attacks".

"Our brave soldiers are ready to make the ultimate sacrifice to blunt the nefarious designs of enemies. Heartfelt condolences with families of victims of today's attack and prayers for martyrs," he said in a post on X. Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfaraz Bugti also condemned the terrorist attack and expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives.

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari extended condolences to the grieving families and called attacks on both civilians and security forces unforgivable. Meanwhile, former president Asif Ali Zardari emphasised the need to eradicate the menace of terrorism. He also prayed for the recovery of the injured.

Former Sindh governor Dr Ishratul Ibad said he was saddened by the heinous attack. "My heartfelt condolences go out to the families of the fallen security men, and I wish for the injured to recover quickly," he said. PPP leader Sherry Rehman and PTI leader Ali Muhammad Khan also condemned the attack. "The losses we suffer only strengthen our implacable resolve to fight such a twisted mindset," she said. The latter said that the "evil plans of the enemies of the state" would always be thwarted.

### SBP maintains interest rate at 22 per cent F.P. Report

KARACHI: In line with market expectations, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) maintained the key interest rate at 22% for the fourth straight Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting as it awaits for the impact of previous hikes to filter through the economy and further tame high retail inflation.

The bank's monetary policy committee said that an increase in gas prices last month could affect the inflation outlook. "The decision does take into account the impact of the recent hike in gas prices ... the Committee viewed that this may have implications for the inflation outlook, albeit in the presence of some offsetting developments," the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said in the statement.

The rate was raised to 22% in an off-cycle meeting in June as a last-gasp attempt to secure a \$3 billion bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as part of a reforms programme aimed at bringing stability to the troubled \$350 billion economy. Pakistan's economy has been beset by high price pressures, with monthly consumer price index-based inflation remaining above 20% since June 2022, and hitting a record high of 38% in May 2023.

The bank and the IMF both say they expect inflation to ease in the current financial year ending in June 2024, but inflation remained at 29.2% in November after energy prices were hiked to meet reform targets. "Barring further sizable increase in administered prices, the MPC continues to expect that headline inflation will decline significantly in the second half of FY24," the bank said.

High borrowing costs have slowed economic growth, which stands at about 2%, but investors say they have already priced in a peak in interest rates and the expected successful completion of the IMF programme has buoyed stock markets and the currency. Ahead of the IMF bailout in July, Pakistan had to commit to a slew of measures demanded by the IMF, including revising its budget, demonstrating promises of foreign funding, and increasing electricity and natural gas prices.

The IMF has released \$1.2 billion in funds. Under a staff-level agreement reached last month, the fund is set to release another \$700 million once approved by its board on January 11. The country's foreign reserves have improved, growing to around \$7 billion – enough to cover 1.4 months' worth of imports and up from \$4.4 billion in July.

## Finally US axe falls on former corrupt Afghan officials

### Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: After years of asking questions by *The Frontier Post* about the corruption by Afghan officials during former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, the US State Department Spokesperson, Matthew Miller finally acknowledged that former Afghan official Mir Rehman Rehmani and his son Ajmal Rehmani have been sanctioned by the US treasury department.

Mr Mir Rehman Rehmani was Speaker of the Afghan House of the People and a well known businessman. There are 44 other entities which have also been sanctioned due to their association with Mr Rehmani.

Miss Nazira Karimi, a senior Afghan journalist while asking the question especially mentioned this scribe for raising this issue for several years. It has been widely reported by several others news media outlets as

well that Afghan officials were involved in transnational crimes, looting the American government.

The sad part of the whole story is that the Afghan officials were taking money from the US to help out other poor Afghans, but instead that money was landing in countries like UAE, UK, US, Canada, Turkey and the off shore companies in Bahamas.

For years, *The Frontier Post* was raising this issue at US State Department and with former Afghan Ambassador to the US, Hamdullah Mohib that the aid mentioned by the US is not reaching the hands of the poor. It is pertinent to mention that top US media outlets have now reported that Hamdullah Mohib himself owns several properties in the US and around the world.

Mohib was among those individuals who flew out of Afghanistan in helicopter with former President Ashraf

Ghani as his National Security Advisor and his cash boy.

It is also important to bring on record that there were several projects even in Kabul where several millions of US tax payers were allocated for a project, but sadly the project did not even exist in first place.

Another reality related to this story is that it is not only Afghan nationals who were involved in this saga of corruption, but Afghan Americans and American contractors and big US defence companies were also minting from that ocean of dollars which was flowing in Afghanistan for twenty years.

An employee of one of the top US defence company in Arlington told this scribe on the condition of anonymity that "at that time we would give contract not to the lowest bidding company but to the highest bidding company."

"We want to express our sincere  
Thanks to all respectable from different  
walks of life for attending the

**Namaz-e-Janaza,  
and  
Rasm-e-Qul  
of  
(Late) Rehmat Shah Afridi**

Your support and encouragement  
mean a lot to us."



**From:  
All Family Members**



Ministry of Religious Affairs & Interfaith Harmony  
Government of Pakistan



**Government Hajj Scheme 2024**

**Attention! Pilgrims of Hajj**

**Application deadline for regular and sponsorship Hajj Scheme is extended till**

**22<sup>nd</sup> December**

- Overseas Pakistanis submit the amount in dollars to designated banks to sponsor themselves or their relatives on a first come first serve basis.
- For the regular Hajj Scheme, applicants of "Hajj Badal" or the pilgrims who have performed the Hajj pilgrimage in the last five years can also apply.
- Single women can depart for Hajj pilgrims with a group of trusted women on an affidavit.
- Interested individuals can contact designated banks with a valid passport, copy of CNIC, and 4 x photographs.
- One must receive the computerized receipt and Hajj application number from banks while processing the Hajj application.

**Basic Facilities**

- Training of Hajj • Vaccination • Round Trip Air Ticket
- Medical Facilities in Saudi Arabia • Shared Accommodation in Madina/Makkah
- Complete Transportation • Facilities of Maktab "D" in Sacred Place • Food
- 5 Liter Zamzam • Takaful Fund

**Long Hajj Package**  
(38 to 42 Days / 8 Days in Madina)

▶ Regular Hajj Scheme	<b>Rs. 1,065,000</b>	<b>Rs. 1,075,000</b>
▶ Sponsorship Hajj Scheme	<b>\$ 3,765</b>	<b>\$ 3,800</b>

**Short Hajj Package**  
(20 to 25 Days / 3-5 Days in Madina)

▶ Regular Hajj Scheme	<b>Rs. 1,140,000</b>	<b>Rs. 1,150,000</b>
▶ Sponsorship Hajj Scheme	<b>\$ 4,015</b>	<b>\$ 4,050</b>

**Optional Facilities**

Additional amount/discount is applicable (If the facility is not available, the amount will be refunded)

Category of Accommodation in Makkah (Separate room subject to availability)	Double Bed	<b>Rs. 180,000</b>	<b>\$ 635</b>
	Triple Bed	<b>Rs. 60,000</b>	<b>\$ 215</b>
In Long Package Discount of 3 to 5 days stay in Madina		<b>(Rs. 35,000)</b>	<b>(\$ 120)</b>
Facility of Maktab Category "C" in Mina/Arafat (For Sponsorship Scheme only subject to availability)			<b>\$ 300</b>

**Government Hajj Package 2024**

Southern Region (Karachi, Quetta, Sukkur)	Northern Region (Other Cities)
<b>Rs. 1,065,000</b>	<b>Rs. 1,075,000</b>
<b>\$ 3,765</b>	<b>\$ 3,800</b>
<b>Rs. 1,140,000</b>	<b>Rs. 1,150,000</b>
<b>\$ 4,015</b>	<b>\$ 4,050</b>

<b>National Bank of Pakistan</b> SWIFT   NBPA PKKA02I IBAN   PK32NBPAA0341004182801898	<b>United Bank Limited</b> SWIFT   UNILPKKA IBAN   PK26UNIL0109000293302713	<b>Habib Bank Limited</b> SWIFT   HABBP KKA XXXX IBAN   PK28HABBB0006027992651199	<b>MCB Bank Limited</b> SWIFT   MUCBPKKA IBAN   PK82MUCB0606991011009603
<b>Bank Islami</b> SWIFT   BKIPPKKA IBAN   PK57BKIP030580077120031	<b>Meezan Bank</b> SWIFT   MEZNP KKA IBAN   PK31MEZN0003050107890040	<b>Allied Bank</b> SWIFT   ABPA PKKA IBAN   PK71ABPA002000998890138	
<b>Soneri Bank</b> SWIFT   SONEPKKA IBAN   PK30SONE0001620010890439	<b>Askari Bank</b> SWIFT   ASCMP KKA IBAN   PK87ASCM0007053150004704	<b>Bank Al-Habib Limited</b> SWIFT   BAHLPKKA IBAN   PK40BAHL5518107999005101	<b>Faisal Bank Limited</b> SWIFT   FAYSP KKA IBAN   PK47FAYS3000303000000145
<b>Habib Metro Bank</b> SWIFT   MPBLPKKAXXX IBAN   PK34MPBL9902173330139425	<b>The Bank of Punjab</b> SWIFT   BPUNPKKAXXX IBAN   PK46BPUN5030010157300011	<b>Bank Alfalah</b> SWIFT   ALFHPPKAXXX IBAN   PK19ALFH5504005001717375	<b>Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited</b> (for regular hajj scheme only)

For further guidance ▶ **051-9216980, 051-9216981, 051-9216982, 051-9205696**

Contact on Hajj Helpline ▶ **mediacellmora** **mora.official** **moraishofficial** **www.hajjinfo.org** | **www.mora.gov.pk**

**WhatsApp HELP LINE**  
**0519201564**





## Minister urges collaborative investment in robust health systems

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information, Minority Affairs, and Social Protection, Muhammad Ahmad Shah, underscored the necessity of investing in the health sector, urging all stakeholders to collaborate and commit to prioritizing investments for the establishment of robust and resilient health systems.

In his address on Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day, observed annually on December 12, he emphasized the imperative components required to fortify health systems: equity, trust, conducive environments, financial investments, and accountability. Highlighting the persistent issues plaguing the health system, he pointed out the lack of accountability, inadequate management of health resources, and imbalanced decision-making powers in healthcare. Stressing the importance of ensuring every individual's right to health, he urged political leaders to make judicious economic, financial, and social choices.

He stressed that a steadfast political commitment from both national and provincial governments, alongside partner organizations, is pivotal in overcoming the existing barriers.

Moreover, he advocated for reinforcing preventive, promotional, and rehabilitative healthcare by placing significant emphasis on Primary Health Care (PHC). He emphasized that no country has succeeded in enhancing its vital health indicators without bolstering its PHC services.

## Those fearing to be held accountable giving proposals to delay polls: Siraj

LAHORE (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sirajul Haq has said that those who fear of being held accountable are forwarding proposals to delay general elections.

Talking to media persons at Mansoorah on Tuesday, he argued that even in democratic countries at war, citizens are not deprived of their voting rights.

Sirajul Haq dismissed justifications for election delays based on security concerns or adverse weather conditions in less than one percent of the country's area, labeling them as mere excuses to deny voters their right to choose leadership. He emphasized that the continuity of democracy is crucial for establishing peace and prosperity and emphasized the constitutional responsibility of the government to ensure public protection and safety. He linked the weak democracy in the country to feudalism, the police and patwar culture, and dynastic politics.

He expressed regret that the dream of transforming Pakistan into a model welfare Islamic state, envisioned by the

Quaid-i-Azam upon independence, remains unrealized even after 76 years. The JI chief attributed the country's problems to the perpetual governments of dictators and so-called political parties, accusing them of causing inflation, unemployment, weakening institutions, and destroying the economy. He criticized these leaders for prioritizing personal interests over public interests.

Highlighting the prolonged rule of parties like PML-N and PPP, and four years government of PTI, he pointed out that the problems faced by the common man persist.

He cited millions of people lacking basic facilities such as education, health, and clean drinking water, with over 25 million children out of school due to poverty.

Siraj held the rulers responsible for the public's plight and urged the people of Pakistan to seize the opportunity for real change and break the status quo on February 8, the election day.

He positioned JI as the best choice for voters seeking positive transformation.

## LDA removes encroachments, seals several illegal properties

LAHORE (APP): On directions of Commissioner Lahore and DG LDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, TEPA and Town Planning Wing LDA on Tuesday conducted a joint operation in the vicinity of Abdul Haq Road and Johar Town in which several properties were sealed, and encroachments were removed.

In a 3-hour long operation, encroachments were removed from various commercial properties around Abdul Haq Road, Johar Town G One Market. Joint teams sealed seven properties for encroaching over parking space on the Abdul Haq Road. Encroachments were removed from several shops established along Abdul Haq Road, Johar Town. Stairs built in the basement of Fazal Din Pharmacy were demolished and sealed.

Cure Pharmacy, the stairs built in the basement were removed, and property was sealed. The store and office built in the parking area in the basement of Meditron were sealed. Forks and Knife was sealed for encroachments in the setback parking area. Encroachments made in the parking area and basement of the famous brand were also removed. Encroachments constructed in the closed basement of Euro Store were removed, cleared the parking area, and sealed the office.

Director Parking and Enforcement TEPA, Director Private Housing Scheme Department, Deputy Director PHS, Deputy Director Town Planning, Enforcement Wing and officers of TEPA, police and heavy machinery participated in the operation.

## CM takes swift action on licence app glitches

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the driving service center in Liberty and the service center linked to Mayo Hospital Emergency here on Tuesday.

During the visit, a multitude of grievances surfaced, primarily concerning the malfunctioning of the learner's licence mobile app and prolonged waiting times. Expressing concern, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi promptly sought an immediate resolution to app download issues. He called the Inspector General (IG) and Chairman of the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB), instructing them to release a video outlining the app's downloading procedure.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi personally observed the app download process on a young man's mobile device, discovering the app's non-functionality. In response, he directed for its immediate restoration. Engaging with citizens at the service center counter, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, in light of a citizen admitting to driving without a licence for eight years, emphasized the importance of obtaining a legal licence before driving a vehicle. He smiled at the citizen's response and highlighted the necessity for all citizens to adhere to this legal requirement. CM Naqvi acknowledged that the number of licences issued in recent days surpassed those issued in a whole year. He encouraged citizens to comply with the licensing process.

Provincial ministers Amir Mir, Dr. Javed Akram, Mansoor Qadir, Azfar Ali Nasir, Secretary Housing,

CCPO, CTO, Commissioner Lahore, Deputy Commissioner Lahore, DGPR, and other relevant officials were present.

**Slaughter of useful female animals banned in Punjab:** Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin

Naqvi has directed the livestock department to impose a ban on slaughtering beneficial female animals across all districts of the province. The meeting chaired by CM Naqvi here on Tuesday, decided to impose an emergency to increase livestock

production and further decided to constitute a committee comprising the livestock minister, ACS, secretary livestock, finance secretary, president All Pakistan Meat Exporters Association, and commissioners of DG Khan and Bahawalpur divisions.


**OFFICE OF THE HOSPITAL DIRECTOR  
MEDICAL TEACHING INSTITUTION (MTI)  
KHYBER TEACHING HOSPITAL PESHAWAR**


### VACCANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Khyber Teaching Hospital, Peshawar is an Autonomous Medical Teaching Institution with a Board of Governors as prescribed by the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under Medical Teaching Institutions Reform Act 2015 and amendments therein; MTI KTH is an equal opportunity employer with no gender bias. Applications are invited from the Candidates for the following post mentioned below in Khyber Teaching Hospital (MTI) Peshawar.

	Nomenclature of Post	Grade	Criteria/Qualification/Experience
1.	<b>ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL OFFICER (EDMO)</b>	G-17	<b>Qualification:</b> MBBS or Equivalent Medical Qualification recognized by PM&DC with Post Graduate fellowship training completed in Medical & Allied, Surgery & Allied and Pediatrics. <b>Experience:</b> Experience in the Accident & emergency department in a reputed public/private hospital will be an added advantage
2.	<b>CLINICAL TECHNOLOGIST (a) Anesthesia (b) Dialysis (c) Mammography (d) Radiology</b>	G-17	<b>Qualification:</b> BS (Hons) / Master Degree or equivalent qualification from HEC recognized university / institution in the relevant technology. <b>Experience:</b> At least 03 Years post qualification clinical experience in the relevant specialty in a reputed public/private Hospital /organization/Medical Institution.
03	<b>CLINICAL TECHNICIAN RADIOLOGY For (Cath Lab, Fluoroscopy)</b>	G-12	<b>Qualification:</b> At least Second Division Secondary School Certificate with science from a recognized board with two years Diploma in the relevant Technology from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty or any other recognized paramedical faculty. <b>Experience:</b> Preference will be given to the candidates having at least 3 years' experience in the relevant field i.e. Cath Lab, Fluoroscopy.

### TERMS & CONDITIONS:

#### How to Apply:

Job Applications must be submitted electronically by using the website link or www.facebook.com/mtikth and download the required data duly signed by the candidate along with complete Job Application Form, Covering Letter, Academic Credentials, Qualification, Experience, Domicile certificates / 02 photographs and CNIC photocopy duly attested with respective original bank deposit slip/bank draft must reach to the undersigned office at 6th floor, Human Resource Department, New A&E Building: MTI-KTH, Peshawar within (15 days) of the publication of this advertisement on a prescribed online Job Application form through registered postal mail or courier service along with original Bank Deposit Slip, must be submitted with below mention payment in favor of Hospital Director MTI KTH, Fund Account No. PK15 KHYB 0121 0030 0311 6602, Bank of Khyber, Branch, Code No. 0121, Peshawar. Processing fee (non-refundable) as per the fee schedule given below.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE	
Description	Payment
Sr.# 01 to 02	Rs.1000
Sr.# 03	Rs.500

- Applications submitted later than the deadline will not be considered.
  - A candidate intending to apply for more than one post shall apply separately for each post
  - If the closing date fixed for the receipt of application falls on an official holiday, the next working day shall be considered as the closing date.
  - No documents will be accepted / changed / replaced once received along with the application.
  - Incomplete applications without processing fee and after due dates will not be entertained and shall stand rejected.
  - Experience Marks for the relevant experience shall be awarded to only those candidates who provide valid documentary evidence for the claimed relevant experience required for the position applied for.
  - Only the relevant experience attained by the candidates after the date of obtaining academic qualification will be counted.
  - Please note who have applied previously should apply again with updated credentials and Job Application.
  - It will be the responsibility of candidate to provide valid equivalency certificate from HEC Pakistan along with the application to justify their academic eligibility for the post to be applied for.
  - Degree in-progress type of academic certificates shall not be considered.
  - Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview. Short listing will be made on the basis written test, if required and as deemed appropriate by the administration of MTI, KTH.
  - In case of selection / appointment, the services of such candidates will be governed under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical & Teaching Institutions Reform Act 2015 and the rules / regulations framed there under, as amended from time to time.
  - All the processes related to selection of appropriate candidates will be done on merit. Any candidate attempting to influence the recruitment and selection processes will render the candidate liable for rejection from the selection process.
  - Candidates already serving with any public or private sector organization or department shall submit their application with valid NOC through proper channel.
  - The following applications will be subject to disqualification and will not be entertained:
    - Incomplete applications i.e. Missing Job Application Form, Missing or irregular experience certificates, Missing Diploma or Degree as per requirement/criteria.
    - He/She was convicted by the Court of Law.
    - Previous history of Dismissal from Service.
    - Attempts to obtain support for his/her candidature by improper means
    - Misbehaves during interview
    - Late submission i.e. applications received after the due date.
    - Application received without processing fees shall not be entertained.
    - Candidates will be disqualified if found of any perjury in documentation/credentials at any stage of the process or employment.
    - Emails or by hand submissions will not be entertained.
    - For a qualification to be valid, a degree is a must, the mere submission of a marks sheet/transcript / DMC/ course completion certificate will lead to applications deemed incomplete and will, therefore, shall be rejected.
    - No TA/DA will be admissible for test/interview.
    - Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted
    - Original documents shall be produce at the time of interview.
    - Only a single envelope shall be use per application. Candidates intending to apply for more than one post shall apply separately for each post. Candidates are further required to mention the title of the position on top of the envelope to avoid any confusion in the future.
    - All the shortlisted candidates shall produce the original documents / credentials at the time of interview.
    - The selected candidates shall furnish an affidavit on judicial stamp paper of appropriate face value to the effect that they shall not claim at / approach to any forum for regularization of their services.
    - The Competent Authority of MTI KTH shall have the undeniable vested right to increase or decrease the number of vacancies.
    - Quota for Minorities and disabled persons shall be followed in accordance with the applicable rules / regulations of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as amended from time to time.
    - Only a limited number of shortlisted candidates will be called for test or interview as the case may be and as deemed appropriate by the administration of the MTI, KTH.
    - Recommendation shall not confer right of appointment unless appointment letter issued by competent authority.
    - Candidate shall comply with all the terms and conditions mentioned above.
- MTI KTH is committed to achieving workforce diversity in terms of gender and culture. We further encourage Individuals from minority groups, indigenous groups, and persons with disabilities to apply.**

INF(P)2991/23

**ADDRESS:**  
HOSPITAL DIRECTOR MEDICAL TEACHING INSTITUTION KHYBER TEACHING HOSPITAL PESHAWAR PHONE# 091-9224400 EXT# 2015,2148

Hospital Director  
MTI, KTH, Peshawar

Medical Director  
MTI, KTH, Peshawar

## Chairman FBR addresses passing out ceremony of Assistant Collectors of 50th STP

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The final passing out ceremony of Assistant Collectors of Customs from 50th Specialized Training Program (STP) was held at Customs Academy of Pakistan (CAP).

Mr. Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana, Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Ms. Zeba Hai Azhar, Member Customs FBR along with Director General Customs Academy of Pakistan Ms. Saima Shahzad and Director Customs Academy Ms. Nawabzadi Aliya Khanji also attended the ceremony.

Addressing the ceremony, the Chairman FBR congratulated the officers on completion of their training and wished them well for their professional careers. The Chairman appreciated the role of Customs



Academy in making officers learn how to maintain harmony and balance in individual and collective capacity for better execution of their professional responsibilities and authority. The Chairman urged the young officers to remember their role as public servants, ensure their accessibility to the people and staff working under their supervision, protect FBR's core values, continue improving their professional competence and

serve the Department with utmost dedication.

Earlier, in her welcome note, Ms. Saima Shahzad, DG Customs Academy explained the key features of the training and its importance in the professional careers of the new officers. While highlighting the burgeoning challenges and diversified role of Pakistan Customs, she advised the young officers to build their careers on pragmatic lines and stay motivated to serve

the country. She also acknowledged the role and cooperation, among others, of Secretariat Training Institute, World Wildlife Fund, Strategic Export Control Division (SEC-DIV), United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC), US Bureau International Narcotics Law Enforcement (INL), US Department of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and US Customs Border Protection (CBP) during the training. She also apprised that during the STP, in addition to Customs, Income Tax, Sales Tax, Excise laws, the officers were also imparted training on host of other topics and subjects including Anti-Money Laundering, Countering Financing for Terrorism, Human Health & Security, Cross Border Movement of Strategic Goods and Illegal Trade in Endangered Species.

## PFA shuts 'murabba' factory over violations

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) on Tuesday stopped the production of a candied fruit (murabba) factory till rectification by imposing an emergency prohibition order (EPO).

A food safety team under the supervision of PFA Director General Muhammad Asim Javed raided a murabba unit on Khairpur Road, Mohlanwal, and caught them red-handed producing unhygienic and substandard candied fruit.

The team discarded 12,000kg of inferior quality candied fruit and 500 liter sugar syrup during the raid, the PFA DG said.

He said that prohibited colours and chemicals were also being used in the process of drenching the fruit in syrup.

## Muhammad Shabbir won the title of 13th CJCSC Open Golf Championship



### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Muhammad Shabbir won the title of 13th CJCSC Open Golf Championship. The closing and prize distribution ceremony of Championship was held at Karachi Golf Club (KGC). Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the occasion as Chief Guest.

While speaking at the ceremony, President Services Sports Control Board, Rear Admiral Abdul Basit commended untiring efforts of KGC staff and organizers for

seamless conduct of championship and congratulated the winners for their remarkable success. He lauded the high standards of game that provided exciting and quality entertainment to the participants. Rear Admiral Abdul Basit also appreciated sponsors in supporting game of golf and conduct of the championship.

The four day long Golf championship held from 09 to 12 Dec 23 organized by Joint Staff HQs in collaboration with Pakistan Navy, has become a quintessential event in golfing

circles. Categories included 72 holes for professionals, 36 holes each for senior & junior professionals, 54 holes for amateurs & ladies and 18 holes for juniors category. Event maintained the legacy of highest prize money golf event nationally wherein; more than 400 enthusiast golfers participated from across the country.

The ceremony was attended by distinguished guests from civil and military organizations including officers, organisers, sponsors, golfers and media fraternity.

## Minister urges for investment in health sector

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Minister for Information, Minority Affairs and Social Protection Muhammad Ahmad Shah has said that the investment in the health system was the need of the hour and urged all stakeholders to join hands and make a commitment to prioritizing investments for building a resilient health system.

In his message on Universal Health Coverage

(UHC) Day, which was commemorated on 12th December every year, he emphasised that to build a strong health system we need equity, trust, healthy environments, investments, and accountability. He underlined that lack of accountability, poor health resource management, and unequal power in healthcare decision-making remain the reasons behind an inadequate health system.

## CORRIGENDUM

Reference to NIT published in daily newspapers vide INF(P) 2698/2023 and subsequently corrigendum issued and published vide INF(P) 2846/23 closing and opening dates are hereby extended and may be read as 29/12/2023 instead of 12/12/2023.

All other terms and conditions will remain same. Same corrigendum has been uploaded on KP-PPRA website.

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# Governor highlights status of women in Islam

## — attends ceremony relating to Christmas

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali here Tuesday highlighted the importance of women in achieving progress and prosperity and said that unlike other religions our women has been given exemplary status in Islam.

He was addressing Women Empowerment Summit as a Chief Guest. The event was organized by Summit Pakistan International Human Rights Organization and attended by federal caretaker minister for Human Rights, Khalil George, Chairman National Commission for Women, Senator Neloofar Bakhtiar, provincial caretaker ministers including

Muhammad Qasim Jan, Justice Retired Irshad Qaisar, Chairman Red Crescent KP, Malik Habib and large number of women.

Addressing the ceremony, KP Governor highlighted the status of women in Islam and said their rights are protected by constitution of the country.

He said that freedom and autonomy of women is evident in the country as they are performing on various important positions in Pakistan.

He said that women of our province are utilizing their capabilities in different fields while ratio of girls in universities is greater than boys and is a proof that girls are enjoying their rights equally and working for development and progress of the country.

Governor urged women to work collectively for country's development abiding by norms and principles of religion and traditions.

He said that priorities have been changed in current scenario and certain elements are trying to change mindset of young generation adding that these attempts can be countered by adhering to our values and traditions. He also distributed shields among women who excelled in their fields.

Later, governor also attended a ceremony relating to Christmas in Governor House as a Chief Guest. The ceremony was also attended by Christian community members from Landikotal, Mardan, Rislapur, Nowshera and Peshawar. A cake cutting ceremony was also held on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, governor said that all the minority communities are enjoying freedom to practice their religion and their rights are protected and enshrined in constitution of the country.

He also praised role of minority communities in progress and development of the country.

**Governor condemns DIK attack**

Governor Khyber, Haji Ghulam Ali on Tuesday condemned the terrorists attack on a police station in district DI Khan and expressed grief over martyrdom of the security personnel in the attack.

In his message, KP Governor expressed sympathies with families of the martyred and prayed to rest departed souls in eternal abode with peace.

He also prayed for early recovery of the injured and said that these acts of cowardice could not demoralize the security forces and police, adding that the entire nation supports the security forces in the war against terrorism.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali distributing awards amongst talented women during a ceremony held at Governor's House.

### Minister condemns DIK attack

PESHAWAR (APP): Minister of Information, Culture, Tourism, Archeology and Museums Feroze Jamal KakaKhel on Tuesday strongly condemned a terrorist attack on a police station in district DI Khan and termed it a desperate attempt by anti-state elements.

Talking to the media here, he said the KP province was facing a law and order situation adding that the provincial government was taking pragmatic steps to maintain peace across the province.

He said that despite the security challenges, the provincial government had doubled the capacity of the Counter Terrorism Department, police and other law enforcement agencies to improve the situation.

The Minister said the task of the caretaker government was to hold fair and transparent elections and the Election Commission was also looking seriously for the general elections in the country.

He said the provincial government was providing a level playing field to all political parties.

## IGP to appear before court in case of police failure: PHC

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim observed that Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to call before court in failure of District Police Officer Swabi to recover minor till 19th December, on Tuesday.

Additional Advocate General Danyal Asad Chakmani, Federal Investigation Agency Legal Officer Abdur Rehman Afridi and Station House Officer Kalu Khan police station Ajab Khan appeared before PHC during the hearing.

The counsel Sana Majeed and Imran advocates argued that Maryam Taj had married with

Abid Iqbal resident of Swabi in 2017 and have a baby boy named Adam Iqbal aged 4 years. They

added that 25 days ago Abid Iqbal had snatched Adam Iqbal from his mother Maryam Taj and shifted to Swabi.

The counsel argued that on previous hearing PHC ordered SHO Kalu Khan for recovery of minor but to no veil. However, SHO Kalu Khan Ajab Khan informed that several raids are conducted along with bailiff for recovery of Adam Iqbal but it was unsuccessful attempts.

In the meantime, the petitioner counsel argued that police isn't interested in recovery of minor because Abid Iqbal had married for second time 3 days ago in Swabi and its evidences are available.

FIA Additional Director Legal Andur Rehman Afridi informed that names of Abid Iqbal and his son Adam Iqbal are placed in stop as they can't able to go aboard.

Chief Justice PHC

Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan observed that it is serious issues as a mother had approached court for recovery of her minor child. He remarked that IGP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa may be called for appearance before court in case of failure of concerned police.

PHC also directed National Database and Registration Authority for blocking Computerized National Identity Card of Abid Iqbal immediately.

However, the counsel argued that the marriage is still intact but Abid Iqbal snatched his son force and didn't allowing petitioner to meet with minor.

PHC's divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim adjourned further hearing till 19th December while directed DPO Swabi for recovery of minor otherwise IGP will appear before court.

### CS denounces incidents in D.I.Khan

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry on Tuesday while strongly denouncing the terrorists' attacks in Dera Ismail Khan, has said the fact could not be denied that our province was playing a frontline role in war against terrorism.

In a statement, he said despite the situation, the province was ready to face the challenges of terrorism.

Chief Secretary KP, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry condemned the terrorism incidents in Dera Ismail Khan in strong words and said such cowardice acts could not deter the resolve of our valiant forces.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister KP Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah talking to a delegation headed by Chairman Mutahida Ulema Board.

## Eradicate of corruption: Speakers call for consistent role of education centers

PESHAWAR (APP): Speakers at a seminar here Tuesday said that corruption was a social and immoral evil and proactive role of educational institutions including academicians and students was imperative to eradicate it completely from the society.

These views were expressed by different speakers including Director, National Accountability Bureau, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mian Muhammad Waqar and Joint Director, Institute of Management Sciences (IMS) Hayatabad Peshawar, Ata-ur-Rehman. The awareness seminar was held at IMS in connection with anti corruption week jointly organized by the NAB-KP and IMS. Besides others, the seminar was attended by a large number of students, academicians, researchers and faculty members.

In his keynote address, Mian Muhammad Waqar, Director NAB KP said that corruption was like a cancer and its eradication was inevitable for sustainable economic growth, supremacy of merit and fostering

prosperity of Pakistan.

In addition to weakening the social fabric of the society, he said corruption leads to poverty, unemployment and undermined merit. He said there were different types of corruption in developing countries including Pakistan and cooperation of all stakeholders including educational institutions and civil society was imperative for its complete eradication vital four our bright future..

Terming corruption as the mother of all evils, Mian Waqar said that misuse of authority, violation of merit and deviation from rules and regulations were also forms of corruption. The Director NAB said that financial irregularity, incorrect use of national resources and favoritism in appointments/admissions in professional colleges and government departments were also corruption.

Mian Waqar said that NAB was making all out efforts to wipe out corruption from the society and today's seminar was aimed to create awareness among students about this immoral

social evil. He said that obtaining halal sustenance was not only a religious obligation, but it is also a source of blessing in wealth and life.

He said the students were the future builders of Pakistan and their role was crucial in creating awareness in society against this menace. Mian Waqar said that he has very sweet memories with IMS being of its student and teacher in the past and expressed the hope that students of this great alma meter would take a lead role in supporting NAB endeavours by disseminating awareness and broadening knowledge of the society both in urban and rural areas imperative to win the fight against corruption.

Joint Director IMS, Ataur Rehman said that no society can make progress unless it eradicates corruption at all levels.

He said countries' progress were linked with supremacy of merit and assured all out support to NAB for organizing such events in future besides creating awareness.

### Police unveil plan to combat crimes

PESHAWAR (APP): Superintendent Police (SP) Osama Amin Cheema of Fakirabad division on Tuesday conducted a crime meeting with police officers to ensure the protection of citizens' lives and property.

Emphasizing zero tolerance for compromises on public safety, a comprehensive strategy was devised, focusing on hotspots and trouble points to eliminate street crimes.

The implemented plan includes information-based search operations, surprise raids, increased police patrols, intensified efforts to combat drug trafficking, and accelerating crackdowns against wanted criminals.

The SP directed the acceleration of the crackdown on narcotics and the prompt resolution of public social issues.

He stressed the importance of raising awareness among the public and finding timely solutions to their problems.

The meeting concluded with the directive to further enhance and expedite efforts to curb criminal activities and maintain law and order in the region.

## All Pakistan PMS Association demands restoration of magistracy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: All Pakistan PMS Officers Co-ordination Committee demanded prior approval from concerned Chief Secretary against legal proceedings especially arrest of administrative officers, on Tuesday.

All the PMS officers across Pakistan deem today's incident of humiliating arrest of the Additional Deputy Commissioner Lahore for not complying to a court decree. The civil servants of executive arms of PMS are the principal reps of state & responsible for establishing writ of the state.

Some instances are not

isolated incidents rather a climax to a continuum of acts which have eroded the quality of civil service in Pakistan — and subsequent deterioration of the public order. The Civil servants have become the proverbial punching bags over the years. Other institutions (politicians, Judiciary and LEA's etc ) will neither let them work nor let them follow the law and attempt to hamstring on one pretext or another.

The accountability watchdogs love to victimise them and it's so easy for them to traumatise hard-working officers though tender an apology after years.

Meanwhile, being vulnerable to every attack, they have nowhere to resort to since their seniors are more interested in saving their postings then get down to bring reforms and order. Not to mention the tremendous stress in the field while being responsible for implementing all the Govt policies and be accountable to everyone for the same.

The association demanded fulfillment of measures like No arrest, not even an FIR or court order against a civil servant be executed without prior approval of the concerned Chief Secretary. Action taken against the perpetrators of

today's incident at Lahore.

District regulatory force at the disposal of district administration. Make all those quarters accountable to the district admins and depts whose regulation comes under our jurisdiction.

Restoration of magistracy for redressal of their grievances.

If these measures are not taken, the PMS officers won't bother to risk our lives and respect for the meagre salary and incentives being granted. The situation is getting bleaker As many of the PMS officers are planning to quit the state service for private sector given the uncertain and humiliating circumstances.

### Suspect in producing fake ID cards arrested

PESHAWAR (INP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Tuesday arrested an accused allegedly involved in producing fake identity cards from the Sadar area of Peshawar.

The FIA officials said that, in exchange for hefty sums, the arrested accused, Nadir Khan, was found involved in making fake identity cards and other official documents.

The FIA officials recovered a large number of fake documents, fake stamp paper and sealed from the possession of the arrested individual.

Last month, the National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA) cancelled more than 18,000 illegal CNICs to combat the illegal issuance of identity cards and cybersecurity issues at centres.

According to a statement, the authority said it has recognised various factors contributing to the issuance of fake CNICs, both external and internal. By recognising the factors, National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA) said it took significant steps to tackle this challenge head-on. Through monitoring and corrective measures, more than 18,000 illegal CNICs were identified and promptly cancelled.

The authority said it was working diligently to rectify the situation by improving coordination with other stakeholders and implementing strict internal scrutiny.

## Govt provides mobile hospitals to remote areas



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has provided facilities of mobile hospitals for the availability of basic health facilities in the needed remote areas of the merged districts.

Ten vehicles were provided to the health department officials in the merged districts for use as mobile hospitals in areas where basic health facilities are not available.

As a result of this facility, minor operations, laboratory examinations, X-ray, dental treatment and maternity needs can be fulfilled.

The said vehicles were donated by the German Development Bank KFW under the Mobile Hospital centralized Programme for Tribal Areas in 2013, but were lying dysfunctional due to required repairs.

Similarly, seventeen

such more vehicles will be repaired and provided to these districts for the purpose of health facilities.

In this regard, a ceremony was held at Civil Secretariat Peshawar on Tuesday wherein the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Newly Merged Districts Affairs, Industries Commerce and Technical Education Dr. Aamer Abdullah, Advisor to Caretaker Chief Minister on Health Dr. Riaz Anwar, Secretary Health Mahmood Aslam Wazir, Special Secretary Health Habibullah, Senior Planning Officer of the Department, District Health Officers of the merged districts and other relevant officials participated.

In the ceremony, the caretaker minister, Advisor to CM advisor and Secretary Health handed over the keys of the said vehicles to the DHOs of

merged districts.

Speaking on the occasion, caretaker minister Dr. Aamer Abdullah said that the said vehicles were national assets which were standing without any use. He said that after their minor repairs, they have been provided for the needs and welfare of the people of the merged districts who will be used for public service in those areas where health facilities are lacking.

He expressed the hope that the authorities of the health department would put these vehicles into use keeping in view the poor conditions of health facilities in the same areas.

Advisor to caretaker CM Dr. Riaz Anwar said that the vehicles provided to the merged districts have facilities required for basic health in the rural areas, which will be a mobile hospital for the local population.

## PESCO notify power suspension

PESHAWAR (APP): PESCO on Tuesday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar University Grid Station on 14th December from 9 a.m. to 3p.m. resultantly, consumers of University Campus, Canal Town, Malakandher, Engineering, Regi, Taj Abad 1, 2, Agriculture, Mera

Achini, HMC, Ring Road, Danish Abad, Gharib Abad, Rahat Abad 1, CMB, Abdara, Achini 1, Hussain Zai, Sufaid Dheri, Old Bara Road, JAF, Academy Town, DHA, Aksari 6 and Commercial Balding feeders will face inconvenience.

It said that power supply will also remain suspended from Peshawar City Grid Station on 14th and 16th December from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly, consumers

of Sikandar Pura, Lala, Hashtnaghari, Chugulpura, Chamkani, Jaghra, Radio Pakistan, Sethi Town, Gulbahar, Zaryab, Pandho Road, City Home, Baghbanan, Umar, Islamabad, Faqir Abad, Shiekh Abad, Molve Je, Nishtar Abad and NHA feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, it said power supply will remain suspended from Kohat Road Grid Station on 14th

December from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly, consumers of PAF Express, Kohat Road, Wazir Abad, Sunehri Masjid, Banamari, Audit Colony, Civil Quarter, Nauthia, Murshid Abad, Abasin, Deh Bahadar, Kohat Road, Amin Colony, Bara, Nodeh Payan, Dora Road, Landi Arbab, Sheikh Muhammad, Pishakhara, Swati Gate, Gul Berg and Scheme Chowk feeders will face inconvenience.



PESHAWAR: PPP KP President Women Wing Senator Robina Khalid addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

### Two fake policemen held

PESHAWAR (APP): In an important action of police station Khan Raziq Shaheed, two imposters posing as policemen were arrested red-handed while threatening citizens.

The accused identified as Muhammad Zeeshan and Farmanullah were dressed in police uniform and demanding money from the citizens while threatening them of dire consequences.

Khan Raziq Shaheed Police recovered fake police cards along with weapons from the accused and shifted them to police station where a case was registered against them.





## In brief

13 suspects arrested  
F.P. Report

KOHAT: The Kohat Lachi Police on Tuesday arrested 13 suspects during search and strike operation in different areas and recovered illegal weapons. The spokesman of district police said that as per the directives of DPO Kohat, the Kohat Lachi Police carried out the search and strike operation and recovered one Kalashnikov, one repeater, three guns, four pistols and dozens of cartridges from the possession of the arrested persons. Cases were registered against the suspects and further investigation was underway.

66 drug peddlers held  
F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The district police of Dera Ismail Khan had taken 66 alleged drug peddlers into custody during the last month of November and recovered 26.88 kg narcotics from their possession. According to a police spokesman, on the direction of District Police Officer Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, several police teams conducted raids at dens during the last month. He narrated that during the raids, the police parties took 66 alleged drug pushers into custody and recovered 26.88 kg narcotics from their possession. The recovered narcotics included 19.479 kilograms hashish, 5.24 kilogram of heroin and 2.171 kilogram of Ice drug. The police registered atleast 64 separate cases against the accused for further legal proceedings and launched an investigation into the cases.

## Two killed in road mishaps

OKARA/ARIFWALA (INP): At least two people were killed and three others injured in separate road accidents here, police said on Tuesday. The first accident took place at Sikandar road of Okara where an over speeding passenger van hit auto-rickshaw. As a result of accident, one person was killed while three others sustained injured. At Pakpattan Road of Arifwala, a reckless driven truck knocked down a motorcycle killing the biker identified as Mazhar Fareed on the spot. The bodies and injured were shifted to different hospital of concerned cities and police after registering separate cases at respective police stations started investigations.

## Youth guns downs mother

HASSAN ABDAL (INP): A youth gunned down his mother over unknown reasons and escaped the scene of crime here on Tuesday, police said. The incident took place in suburban village Islampur of Hassan Abdal where accused Faisal shot dead his mother Tazeem Bibi. The culprit fled the scene after committing the murder. The body was shifted to hospital for post-mortem and police after registering a case into the incident started raids to arrest the accused.

## PTI's former MPA Faisal held

FAISALABAD (INP): Former Member Punjab Assembly (MPA) Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Faisal Khan Niazi was arrested here on Tuesday. According to details, the PTI leader was arrested soon after his arrival to Faisalabad from Sharjah. The airport security stated that Faisal Niazi was taken into custody during immigration over inclusion of his name in passport control list. It is worth mentioning here that Faisal Khan Niazi had been MPA from PP-209 and now he was PTI's candidate for MNA.

## Anti-corruption day observed in Dir

## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The district administration in collaboration with the Youth Affairs, Sports department, Anti Corruption Unit and education department arranged a function to observe the International Anti Corruption Day at Timergara here on Tuesday. The Additional Deputy

Shields and certificates were distributed among the contestant. At the end the participants also held an awareness walk led by ADC Abdul Wali Khan the participants of which passed through various markets of the city. They were carrying banners and placards inscribed with slogans against the menace of corruption.



Commissioner Abdul Wali Khan was chief Guest. The Inspector Anti Corruption Unit Hani fur Rahman, principal GHS Balambat Abdul Saleem, district youth officer Shahzad Tariq, district sports officer Ibrar Ahmad, district officer livestock Dr Akbar Ali, heads of line departments, volunteers of Youth department, teachers, students and media personnel also attended the function.

The ADC said that the government had taken sufficient steps to eliminate the scourge of corruption. He directed the heads of departments to point out the black sheeps involved in corruption. The students offered speeches against corruption and its effect on economy and development.

**Land owners reject auction of sand and gravel on riverbed:** The elders and villagers of Baron, Munjai, Danwa, Rabat, Hajiabad, Kadh and Kotkay villages on Tuesday held a protest demonstration against the district administration for tendering sand and gravel on the riverbed in front of the deputy commissioner office and later outside the Timergara press club. The Pakistan Tehreek Insaf Parliamentarian nominated candidate for PK 15 Brigadier (retired) Saeedullah, retired executive officer Javed Khan, advocate Muhammad Salim, Malik Bakhtawar Jan and others spoke on the occasion.

They rejected the administration's bid to tender sand and gravel on the

riverbed and termed it an illegal interference in public properties. The speakers alleged the administration wanted to deprive them of their properties and resources. They said that they owned ancestral lands on both sides of the Panjkora River and they would not allow the administration to seize their resources.

The speakers said that they had tried to meet the additional deputy commissioner finance Jan Muhammad but he too disappointed them. The elders announced strong resistance if the administration auctioned sand and gravel on the riverbed. They said the government should first complete a survey initiated by the National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK) for demarcation of the riverbed. They warned the contractors not to take part in the bidding process otherwise; they would face consequences.

**Road repair demanded:** The residents and motorists of Samarbagh on Tuesday demanded the district administration and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker government to take notice of the dilapidated condition of the Munda Samarbagh road and initiate measures for its repair. Talking to local journalists they complained that there had been no repair work on the road for the last ten years due to which motorists were reluctant to drive on it. They said that thousands of people including government employees, students and patients travel daily on this road. They said the passengers and the motorists suffered due to the bad condition of the road.

## Citizens stage demo against gas load shedding

QUETTA (PPI): Citizens of Quetta on Tuesday staged a protest demonstration outside the office of Sui Southern Gas Company Limited, Samunqli Road, Quetta against low gas pressure in different areas of Quetta.

According to reports, citizens of Quetta, including women, protested outside the office of Sui Southern Gas Company Limited, Samunqli Road, Quetta, demanding the authorities of Sui Southern Gas Company Limited, Quetta to restore the pressure of gas.

Addressing the protest demonstration, speakers said that gas was being supplied in different areas of

Quetta at very low pressure since the start of winter season, creating thereby hardships for residents of Quetta in that chilly weather.

Demanding the authorities of Sui Southern Gas Company Limited, Quetta to address the issue of low gas pressure, they said that if the issue regarding low gas pressure in different areas of Quetta was not solved, protest would continue.

**Customs seizes foreign goods worth Rs50m:** Collectorate of Customs Balochistan claimed to have seized foreign goods worth Rs50 million in two different operations conducted at Kharkhera and

Winder check posts in Khuzdar area of Balochistan province on Tuesday, said a statement issued by the spokesman for Collectorate of Customs Balochistan.

It said that staff of Customs recovered foreign, including edible items, chocolate, biscuits, cake, toffees, shampoo, face cream, from a Divo passenger coach in an operation conducted in at Kharkhera check post of district Khuzdar. Similarly, foreign cigarettes and Indian gatta were recovered from a passenger bus during checking at Customs Check Post, Winder. Seized goods valued at Rs. 50 million.

## Three children die after fire erupts in flood victims' tent

QAMBER (INP): At least three children died, and four other family members were injured in a devastating fire that broke out in the flood victims' tent in Qamber City, Shahdadt District of Sindh.

The rescue officials reported that the three children aged two months, the other two aged four and seven years – lost their lives after the tent of the flood victim caught fire. The rescue authorities revealed that the family

was sleeping when the tent caught fire from the candle and spread drastically.

However, the rescue officials are busy with initial medical treatment for the injured individuals. Earlier this week, the power van of the Karachi-Lahore passenger train, Karachi Express, caught fire near Lahore's Kahna town on Sunday.

The Pakistan Railways spokesperson confirmed the fire incident. The spokesperson said that the

power van of the Karachi Express train caught fire near Kahna town at 1:35 and fortunately, no casualty was reported. He added that the train staffers detached the power van immediately to stop the spread of the fire to other bogies. Moreover, a team was dispatched to the Lahore railway station. The spokesperson said that the reason behind the blaze could not be ascertained until a thorough investigation into the incident.



FAISALABAD: US Consul General Lahore Ms. Kristin K. Hawkins is distributing certificates among the students of an English Access Scholarship Program for 200 students in Faisalabad managed by the University of Agriculture Faisalabad.



LANDI KOTAL: A part of an outer layer of Shpola Stupa, as sacred site for Budmat followers fell down during reconstruction work. - F.P. photo

Rs15b annual profit from Balakot HHP expected  
F.P. Report

BALAKOT: Chief Executive, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO), Engr Naeem Khan here Tuesday said that ongoing Balakot Hydel Power Project of 300megawatt was a flagship project that would help generate Rs15 billion revenue annually and be completed in seven years besides generating 1400 jobs.

He visited site of the project at Mansehra district that was being constructed with help of Chinese Engineers with financial assistance of Asian Development Bank and Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Accompanied by the team members of Gazoba China and Dolsar Consultant Company of Turkey, Engr Naeem reviewed pace of work on the project and expressed satisfaction over it. He was informed that detailed design work of the project has been completed successfully in the stipulated time and directed expediting work on site of the dam. He planted a sapling of tree at the colony of the project.

Domki deplores attack on police  
F.P. Report

QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki, while condemning the attack of terrorists at Police Station Darabun, Dera Ismail Khan, has said that sacrifices of security forces for restoring peace in the country would not go in vain, said a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Secretariat here on Tuesday.

Paying tributes to the martyred soldiers and conveying condolences to the bereaved family members, he said that such cowardly acts of terrorism could not demoralise security forces, adding, "The whole nation pays tributes to the martyrs who laid down their lives during fight against terrorism". Domki prayed that may Allah grant the martyrs highest rank in jan-nah".

## BISP officer attacked

MUZAFFARGARH (INP): Assistant Compliance Officer (ACO) Qazi Ahmed of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) was attacked by unidentified armed individuals on Tuesday, in Tehsil Alipur, Muzaffargarh district.

The incident occurred when SP Qazi Ahmed was surrounded and assaulted by the attackers. Fortunately, he managed to escape to a nearby educational institution, saving his life. Responding to the incident, Deputy Director and Assistant Director of BISP Muzaffargarh reached the scene immediately. A case has been registered against the unidentified attackers, and efforts are underway to apprehend them.

## Part of Shpola Stupa fell down in Landi Kotal

## F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: A part of Shpola Stupa, a sacred site for the Budmat followers fell down when construction works was in progress here at Zayarai area of subdivision Landi Kotal district Khyber on Tuesday.

An official of the local administration said that workers were busy in the preservation process when some part of the outer layer of the Stupa slid down;

however, no causality was reported. Immediately after an incident, a party of local police rushed to the site and collected evidence for routine documentation.

In 2020, the Directorate of Archeology and Museum, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa started the archeological restoration of the Stupa. The monument is located about 25 kilometers to the north-west from Jamrud is on a high rocky ledge and a reminder of Khushan rule in the

region.

According to some archaeologists this Stupa belongs to the early stages of Buddhism in this region, considered a gateway to the Indus delta. The actual structure of the Stupa was built of limestone blocks with intervening smaller stones and its inner core is filled with rough rubble. The outer layers seem to have a finishing of a coating of stucco which at places is more than an inch in thickness.

## Steps to be taken to introduce modern tech

## F.P. Report

MARDAN: Commissioner Mardan Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai said that all necessary steps will be taken to introduce modern technology in public and private blood transfusion centers established for thalassemia patients in Mardan and Swabi so that blood transfusions for children suffering from this disease are done as per modern procedure and according to medical principles.

He was talking to "Dr." Muniba Zahid and her

father Zahidur Rehman, the six-year-old intelligent girl of Yar Hussain Swabi, who is suffering from thalassemia.

Additional Deputy Commissioner General Saeedullah Jan and Assistant to Commissioner Revenue Abdul Rahman were also present on this occasion. Muniba Zahid is suffering from thalassemia but she is very intelligent and talented. Commissioner Mardan treated Muniba Zahid very kindly and gave the girl a lot of time. Muniba said that she

would become a doctor in the future and treat children suffering from thalassemia.

She said that five of her sisters had lost their lives due to thalassemia. Her father Zahidur Rehman said that his daughter is being given transfusion facility free of cost at Al Khidmat Foundation's Thalassaemia Center Peshawar. He thanked Commissioner Mardan Shaukat Ali Yousafzai for giving time to Muniba. Commissioner Mardan appreciated Muniba's skills and awarded her with a cash prize.

## Workshop on women vote arranged

## F.P. Report

BUNER: The Karwan organization was arranged one day workshop on women voting at press club in Buner. The Karwan chief Sarzamin Khan the RDO Chief Gul Wahid the district elections officer Shahid Ali Khan the BPC G.S Abid addressed. The journalist community the schools principals locals attended the workshop.

The Karwan chief the district elections officer

briefed about 10 percent women mandatory voting in a constituency under elections act 2017. They shared every citizen has the right to cost vote in elections and the elections commissioners were duty bound for making sure arrangements for conducive atmosphere adding as per law no one would dare to make hurdles in way of women from casting their votes against their own free will. They confirmed results of a con-

stituency sans 10 percent women votes would be stopped and women participation would be ensured.

The BPC G.S Abid extended thanks to all of participants for have time in the press club and thanked the Karwan and elections office for the facility and asked journalist community for making it publish in electronic print and social medias as well to inform both males and females of the elections act 2017.

## US CG urges Pakistani students to exploit their potential

## F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Pakistani students should exploit their potential and harness their proficiency in English by seeking mentorship from American instructors through online platforms, said Ms. Kristin K. Hawkins US Consul General in Lahore.

Addressing the opening ceremony of a 2-year Access (English Access Scholarship) Programme managed by the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) here on Tuesday, she said that about 27,000 students had completed the programme while more than 1800 had recently enrolled for it.

She appreciated the inquisitiveness of Pakistani students and said that they could play a role in the global level by learning the English language and life skills. She said the US embassy was offering different programmes for the young generation and in this connection the English Access Scholarship

Programme had been introduced.

She also mentioned online open courses as well as the regional English language office which could be accessed free of cost through the official website and social media pages of the US Consulate. She said that the programmes would give the finishing touch to the educated youth of Pakistan and open the doors for their success at the global and national level.

UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqar Ahmad Khan, in his welcome address, underscored the importance of the English language and mathematics and said that the students having full grip on these subjects could easily make successes in every field of life. He said that UAF had so far arranged three English language courses included 2 English Access Scholarship Programmes arranged with collaboration of the US Consulate. He said that the students aged 13-20 years were being enrolled for

these programmes and for the current programme 200 students had been enrolled.

He said that most of the students belonged to the low socioeconomic class and the programme could harness their capabilities to grow and rise up to the highest level. "We must disseminate information about these programmes so that talented but financially disadvantaged students could avail this opportunity. This programme has been designed to create self-confidence in the students in addition to harnessing their leadership qualities," he added.

Dr Muhammad Anjum Zia Director, Muhammad Umar Farooq Manager UAF English Access Scholarship Programme and others also spoke on the occasion. Later, The US Consul General and the UAF Vice Chancellor distributed certificates among the students who completed their Access Course while students presented tableaux and a magic show in the ceremony.





# Russian presidential hopeful vows to champion peace

MOSCOW (AP): Sometime in the early 2010s, Yekaterina Duntsova's eldest daughter drew a picture of her debating Russian President Vladimir Putin live on prime-time TV. A decade on, the little-known journalist and mom-of-three from a small town in western Russia recalls the drawing as a joke about her civic activism — but says it also carried a “message about the future.”

Duntsova hopes that future might see her forcing Putin into a run-off in Russia's next presidential vote, scheduled for March, despite her political inexperience and analysts' assessments that the Kremlin leader's tight grip on politics has virtually assured him another term as head of state. Speaking to The Associated Press in Moscow, Duntsova, a 40-year-old independent, said her message of peace with Ukraine, freedom for imprisoned critics of the government and a “humane” Russia that heeds its citizens' concerns could give hope to those opposing the Kremlin's military operation in Ukraine, the decades-long centralization of power and the crackdown on dissent.

“Of course, I am afraid,” she said, citing the Kremlin's targeting of opposition activists and protesters. But she insisted it is necessary to “present an alternative” to Putin and his policies. “I’ve spoken with many activists and local lawmakers about the upcoming election, about what’s in store for us. Because there was no obvious candidate ... who would stand for similar values (to ours),” she said.

“At some point, the idea came up ... that it would be interesting if it were a woman (to run against Putin), because that would really be something different. Rigidity and harshness against softness, kindness, peace,” she added. As a journalist-turned-grassroots campaigner and local legislator who also holds a law degree, Duntsova weighs her words carefully to avoid falling afoul of Russian laws that restrict expression around the 21-month-old conflict in Ukraine. Opponents of what the Kremlin insists on calling a “special military operation” now face up to 15 years in prison for “discrediting” or “disseminating false information about” the Russian military.

Despite that, Duntsova insisted she wants the fighting in Ukraine to come

to a swift end and for Moscow and Kyiv to come to the negotiating table. “We want peace,” she said. She declined to talk about what a possible peace agreement might look like, but pointed to Ukrainian authorities' repeated refusal to open negotiations while Putin is in power. “It follows that they're ready to have them with somebody else,” she said.

She added that if elected, her first presidential decree would mandate the release of Russia's “political prisoners,” without giving names — although in earlier statements she spoke of her readiness to free Putin's arch-enemy, the anti-corruption activist Alexei Navalny. Duntsova built her career in Rzhnev, a historic town of around 60,000 people about 230 kilometers (143 miles) west of Moscow. She said her work for a local TV station instilled in her a passion for engaging with people's concerns and gradually pushed her toward civic engagement.

“I came to think that I cannot limit myself to just observing what is happening, I need to participate in it myself,” she said. In 2009, 10 years before she joined the local legislative body, Duntsova gathered nearly 4,000 signatures in support of a grassroots campaign for the reinstatement of direct mayoral elections in Rzhnev, scrapped earlier that year amid the Kremlin's drive to centralize power in Russia. She hopes that experience will come in useful in her presidential bid. Russian electoral law requires all independent candidates to gather 300,000 unique voter signatures and submit the list for review by the Central Electoral Commission to be allowed to run.

Before they can begin, however, they must be endorsed by a group of at least 500 supporters gathered in a single place. Duntsova said her campaign team plans to hold the meeting in Moscow, despite fears it might be broken up by the authorities. She has already been called in for questioning in Rzhnev after announcing her intent to run in the election, with prosecutors asking her to clarify her political views and use of the term “peace.” She said she invoked her constitutional right to remain silent.

Duntsova stresses she does not see herself as an opposition politician, but one motivated by “human, usual, ordi-

nary ethical values.” She spoke of her desire to build a “humane” Russia “that's peaceful, friendly and ready to cooperate with everyone on the principle of respect.” “And first of all, this respect must be extended ... to people who live here,” she added.

She said she would champion issues close to women, including Russian authorities' recent controversial attempts to restrict abortion in the increasingly conservative country. Duntsova readily acknowledged Putin's enduring popularity in Russian society, but asserted that she and her campaign team would fight on to energize voters who are disillusioned with politics. “If there is a run-off, that will already be a victory, (showing) that support for the current head of state is not as substantial as they say ... And of course, my participation in the election will show people that they have a choice, that they don't have to stay home, that they should turn out,” she argued.

She insisted she was not a “spoiler candidate” covertly backed by the Kremlin and fielded to give the vote a semblance of competitiveness, a common occurrence in Putin's Russia. Most Russian opposition figures expect Putin will be declared the winner in March no matter how voters cast their ballots, and say they hope to focus on undermining the widespread public support he enjoys rather than trying to influence the vote's outcome. One group, however, believes there is mileage in putting forward candidates to challenge Putin. A project called Our Headquarters, launched by several activists helping those fleeing Russia to settle abroad, promises to support “democratic candidates with an anti-war position.”

Andrey Davydov, one of the group's project coordinators, has endorsed Duntsova's bid. He told the AP her lack of experience in federal-level politics might prove an advantage but Dmitry Oreshkin, an independent political analyst and professor at the Free University of Riga in Latvia, thinks Duntsova has a slim chance of being officially registered as a candidate and “genuinely become a focal point for anti-Putin sentiment.” Duntsova, for her part, raises the prospect of running again in future elections. “If we're not successful this time, it means we will be six years down the line,” she said.

# Russia demands release of hostages in talks with Palestinians



MOSCOW (Reuters): Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov demanded the release of hostages held in Gaza in telephone calls with Hamas and other Palestinian factions, the Russian foreign ministry said. The statement followed a series of meetings and calls between President Vladimir Putin and Middle East leaders in the past week.

The ministry said Bogdanov's conversations highlighted the military and humanitarian situation in Gaza, where Russia “confirmed its principled position on the need to cease hostilities and urgently resolve all humanitarian problems that have arisen, including the release of hostages.”

The statement did not make clear whether Russia sought the release of all hostages seized by Hamas

during its Oct. 7 rampage into southern Israel or just the release of any Russian nationals among them. The minister spoke to senior figures in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the Palestinian Democratic Union, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and Hamas.

Bogdanov stressed the need to restore Palestinian unity “in the framework of the PLO” and reaffirmed Moscow's support for a Palestinian state to co-exist alongside Israel, the statement said. Russia called for an international monitoring mission to go to Gaza to assess the humanitarian situation. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Moscow strongly condemned the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel, but it was unacceptable for Israel to use that as justification for “the collective punishment

of millions of Palestinian people with indiscriminate shelling.”

Analysts say the Gaza war has proved helpful to Russia by distracting the world's attention from its war in Ukraine and making it harder for Kyiv to compete for Washington's attention and military aid. Putin has also used it as an opportunity to criticise the failings of U.S. diplomacy in the Middle East and raise Russia's own profile as a regional player with ties to all the main actors.

Putin has stepped up his own contacts in the past week, though the aim of his latest diplomatic flurry is not yet clear. He spoke to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, having last week met the leaders of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Iran.

# SK urges Russia to help sanction NK over satellite

SEOUL (Reuters): Russia should help impose new sanctions against North Korea over its recent launch of a spy satellite and enforce existing bans on the isolated country's labour exports, a senior South Korean official said on Tuesday.

South Korea's unification minister Kim Yung-ho, in charge of inter-Korean ties, said last month's satellite launch violated U.N. Security Council resolutions banning North Korea's use of ballistic technology, but Russia has been “extremely passive” in further sanctioning Pyongyang. There are “clear signs” of military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow, and Seoul is also looking into whether Russia has accepted more North Korean workers in defiance of U.N. resolutions, Kim said.

“As a permanent member of the Security Council, Russia has responsibility to faithfully implement its sanctions resolutions,” he told a news conference. South Korea's intelligence agency said last month the North had received Russian aid for the satellite launch, which was its third attempt after two failed tries. Following leader Kim Jong Un's rare trip to Russia in September, North Korea has sent hundreds of construction and other workers to the Russian Far East to earn foreign currency, South Korea's Donga Ilbo newspaper reported on Tuesday, citing unidentified government officials.

Minister Kim also urged China to play a better role in sanctioning North Korea over its weapons development, and complying with international norms not to forcibly repatriate North

Korean defectors. South Korean activists said last week that up to 600 North Koreans have “vanished” after being deported by China in October, in what could be the largest such mass repatriation in years. Kim also said the increasing public appearances and levels of protocol for Kim Ju Ae, the daughter of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, could be aimed at laying groundwork for a future succession.

Since her debut in November 2022, she has appeared in state media 19 times, mostly accompanying her father at military events, he said. “The possibility of her becoming a successor cannot be ruled out,” Kim said. “By putting her on the public stage early, they might be trying to show their resolve for a fourth generation hereditary succession.”

# Turkey queries Somalia over role

ISTANBUL (Reuters): Turkey is seeking an explanation from Somalia after the son of its president, Hassan Sheikh Mahmoud, left the country following a fatal traffic accident involving his use of a diplomatic car, according to a Turkish official. The son, Mohamed Hassan Sheikh Mahmoud, was driving a vehicle belonging to the Somali consulate on Nov. 30, when he hit a motorcycle courier in central Istanbul, seriously injuring him, Turkish media have said.

He was using a car carrying a diplomatic licence plate at the time of the accident, said the Turkish official, who spoke on condition of anonymity as the investigation is still under-

way. “Someone who does not have diplomatic status has no right to use these vehicles,” the official added. “Information was requested about this (from Somalia).”

In the absence of “immunity or diplomatic exceptionality”, it made no difference that the Somali president's son was driving a vehicle with a diplomatic plate, the official said, adding that Turkey's justice ministry was handling the process. Somali officials were not immediately available for comment. The Somali president's son left Turkey on Dec. 2, after his release from police interrogation, while the 38-year-old motorcyclist, Yunus Emre Gocer, remained in

hospital, an Istanbul prosecutor's office said.

But after the latter's death in hospital on Dec. 6, an international arrest warrant was issued for the Somali president's son, the prosecutor's office said. An investigation has been launched into the police officers who performed an initial assessment of the accident, Turkish Justice Minister Yilmaz Tunc said on social media platform X. Media reports of the incident have sparked a public outcry in Turkey, which has good ties with Somalia. “We said we will follow the judicial process, but the suspect walked away,” Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu said in a post on X.

# Poland could cancel contracts signed by outgoing govt

WARSAW (Reuters): Poland's incoming government may invalidate contracts signed by the national Law and Justice (PiS) party after it lost its majority in an Oct. 15 election, the parliament speaker said, casting doubt over some arms deals with South Korea. Warsaw has signed deals to buy billions of dollars worth of arms from South Korea as part of a drive to build up its military

in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

However, the Financial Times reported in November that Seoul was worried that the change of government combined with a lack of funds could jeopardise some deals. Reuters reported that South Korea was gathering local banks to help Poland buy \$22 billion worth of weapons, in an indication that it was working to remove

Poland's financing hurdles.

“Agreements signed by the interim PiS government may be invalidated,” Parliament Speaker Szymon Holownia, whose party is expected to be a member of the incoming coalition government, told private broadcaster Radio Zet. “After Oct. 15, PiS should have limited itself to administering the state and not spending public money.”

# Old foes China and Vietnam agree to build ‘shared future’

HANOI (Reuters): Old foes China and Vietnam, at odds over claims in the South China Sea, declared on Tuesday they want to boost ties and build a community with a “shared future”, just three months after Hanoi upgraded its formal relations with the United States. As Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Hanoi on his first trip as China's leader to Vietnam in six years, the two countries signed 37 cooperation deals in what can be seen as a triumph of Vietnam's “bamboo diplomacy” as both China and the United States vie for influence.

After China's push, Vietnam agreed to “support the initiative of building of a shared future community for human kind”, according to a joint statement shown to reporters. The countries' diplomats had debated the “shared future” phrase for months, following Hanoi's initial reluctance to use it, say officials and diplomats. The Chinese term literally means “common destiny”, but its translation in English and Vietnamese is “common future”, which may be seen as less demanding.

“One declaration, many translations,” said a diplomat based in the Vietnamese capital, commenting on the interpretation of the term. However, the upgrade in diplomatic ties would just be symbolic, said Le Hong Hiep, a specialist in Vietnamese strategic and political issues at Singapore's Iseas—Yusof Ishak Institute. “Vietnam's mistrust of China runs deep, and from the Vietnamese people's viewpoint, there is little to no ‘shared destiny’ between the two countries, as long as China continues to claim most of the South China Sea,” he said.

Despite their existing close ties on the economic front, the neighbours have been at odds over boundaries in the South China Sea and have a millennia-long history of conflict. In a sign of possible de-escalation, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding for joint patrols in the Tonkin Gulf in the South China Sea, according to one of the agreements. Beyond taking ties to a level Beijing may see as being above those with the United States, the

upgraded status came with the signing of 37 cooperation deals, according to reporters who saw the signed documents.

However, that was short of 45 deals initially proposed, according to one Vietnamese official. Deals included a memorandum of understanding on cross-border rail development.

Top officials in both countries had urged a boost to a rail link between the southern Chinese city of Kunming and the northern Vietnamese port of Haiphong, which crosses regions in Vietnam rich in rare earths. China's ambassador to Vietnam Xiong Bo said earlier this week Beijing was ready to offer grants to develop rail connections, though the volume and terms of possible loans are not clear. Boosting transport links would allow Vietnam to export more to China, especially farm products, while Beijing wants to further integrate the country's north with its southern supply chain networks.

Chinese firms have moved some operations to Vietnam quicker this year than before the COVID

pandemic, looking to be closer to Western clients there, to lower risks from U.S.-China trade tension and cut exposure to China's weakened economy. Stronger rail networks would speed import of components from China for assembly in Vietnam, effectively expanding China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Currently the Hanoi metro is Vietnam's only project to have received BRI loans, but it has not been labelled as such in a country where anti-Chinese sentiment is still widespread enough that such moves could be viewed as getting too close to Beijing.

The two countries agreed to jointly promote the “two corridors, one belt” initiative, which is the Vietnamese term for infrastructure projects supported by China. Xi has also urged wider co-operation on security, connectivity, green energy and critical minerals, in a reference to the rare earths, of which China is the world's leading refiner while Vietnam has the second largest estimated reserves after its neighbour. Not all deals have yet been made public.

## Niger junta refuses to free ex-leader

ABUJA (BBC): Niger's military leader has refused to release the country's deposed president in exchange for sanctions being lifted. Ecowas - an alliance of West African countries - made the offer after a summit. It has demanded the release of Mohamed Bazoum several times since he was put under house arrest in late July.

His relatives say they have had no information about him since he tried and failed to escape from detention on 19 October. Ecowas leaders met with the region still in crisis after military takeovers in Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea since 2020, and two attempted coups elsewhere in recent weeks. Ecowas has repeatedly demanded that Niger's junta reinstate civilian rule as soon as possible. The bloc has threatened military intervention and suspended all trade ties to the landlocked country, to no avail.

The alliance once again joined local and international partners in calling for the junta to release Mr Bazoum. It also demanded the junta shorten its planned transition to civilian rule, which currently stands at three years. Ecowas did not say what would be considered an acceptable transition period. Later in the day, Niger military leader Gen Abdourahmane Tchiani told state broadcaster RTN that Mr Bazoum would not be released.

Gen Tchiani did agree to reduce the transition period, but did not say by how much. In response to the general's address, Ecowas said it would maintain its sanctions on Niger. However, it said it would create a committee to work with Niger's junta on establishing a transition roadmap and based on the outcome of those talks, sanctions would gradually be eased.

On 19 October Mr Bazoum, his family, cooks and security tried to escape confinement via helicopter - but they were stopped. Family members say the last time they heard from him was the day before the escape plan. Since the coup, the relatives have spoken out about the “abusive” treatment they have dealt with at the hands of the new military regime.

## Taiwan again reports Chinese carrier group

TAIPEI (Reuters): Taiwan's military sent forces to watch a Chinese naval formation, led by the aircraft carrier Shandong, sailing through the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan's defence ministry said, as Beijing keeps up pressure ahead of elections next month.

The Shandong, commissioned in 2019, last transited the sensitive strait in early November. The latest sailing comes about one month before presidential and parliamentary elections on the island. The ministry said in a statement that the formation sailed south through the strait but kept to the western side of the waterway's median line - the Chinese side of the unofficial barrier between the two.

China says the Taiwan Strait is not an international waterway and that it alone has sovereignty there, which both Taiwan and the United States dispute. Taiwan dispatched “appropriate” forces to keep watch on the formation, the ministry added, without elaborating. “The security and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region are closely related to global development and stability, and are obligations and responsibilities that all parties in the region must share,” the ministry said.

Taiwan's military will “prepare for war without seeking war”, strengthen its self-defence capabilities, and respond to regional threats, it added. China's defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. During the past four years Taiwan has repeatedly complained of stepped-up Chinese military activity nearby, including fighters and drones crossing the strait's median line. Last week, Taiwan reported a rare night mission by China's air force over the strait.

# World War Two: When 600 US planes crashed in Himalayas

LONDON (BBC): Since 2009, Indian and American teams have scoured the mountains in India's north-eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, looking for the wreckage and remains of lost crews of hundreds of planes that crashed here over 80 years ago. Some 600 American transport planes are estimated to have crashed in the remote region, killing at least 1,500 airmen and passengers during a remarkable and often-forgotten 42-month-long World War Two military operation in India. Among the casualties were American and Chinese pilots, radio operators and soldiers.

The operation sustained a vital air transport route from the Indian states of Assam and Bengal to support Chinese forces in Kunming and Chungking

(now called Chongqing). The war between Axis powers (Germany, Italy, Japan) and the Allies (France, Great Britain, the US, the Soviet Union, China) had reached the north-eastern part of British-ruled India. The air corridor became a lifeline following the Japanese advance to India's borders, which effectively closed the land route to China through northern Myanmar (then known as Burma).

The US military operation, initiated in April 1942, successfully transported 650,000 tonnes of war supplies across the route - an achievement that significantly bolstered the Allied victory. Pilots dubbed the perilous flight route “The Hump”, a nod to the treacherous heights of the eastern Himalayas, primarily in today's Arunachal Pradesh,

that they had to navigate.

Over the past 14 years, Indo-American teams comprising mountaineers, students, medics, forensic archaeologists and rescue experts have ploughed through dense tropical jungles and scaled altitudes reaching 15,000ft (4,572m) in Arunachal Pradesh, bordering Myanmar and China. They have included members of the US Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), the US agency that deals with soldiers missing in action. With help from local tribespeople their month-long expeditions have reached crash sites, locating at least 20 planes and the remains of several missing-in-action airmen.

It is a challenging job - a six-day trek, preceded by a two-day road journey, led to

the discovery of a single crash site. One mission was stranded in the mountains for three weeks after it was hit by a freak snowstorm. “From flat alluvial plains to the mountains, it's a challenging terrain. Weather can be an issue and we have usually only the late fall and early winter to work in,” says William Belcher, a forensic anthropologist involved in the expeditions. Discoveries abound: oxygen tanks, machine guns, fuselage sections. Skulls, bones, shoes and watches have been found in the debris and DNA samples taken to identify the dead. A missing airman's initial bracelet, a poignant relic, exchanged hands from a villager who recovered it in the wreckage. Some crash sites have been scavenged by local villagers over the years and the aluminium remains sold as scrap.



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## Biased justice of Indian adjudicators

**PAKISTAN** has categorically rejected the biased judgment announced by the Supreme Court of India on the special status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Addressing a presser in Islamabad on Monday, Caretaker Foreign Minister Jail Abbas Jilani declared that Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognized disputed territory, so India has no right to determine the status of the disputed territory of the forcefully occupied region through domestic actions and legislation. According to him, the judicial endorsement of the Modi regime's unilateral and unlawful actions of August 5, 2019, is a travesty of justice, in denial of historical facts, the UN charter, and the global law.

Historically, the Jammu and Kashmir dispute is not a domestic issue of India, rather it is a globally recognized territorial dispute between Pakistan and Bharat since 1947, when both nations got freedom from British rule. There are multiple resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), that categorically endorsed the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir and ordered warring countries to create a conducive environment for a subsequent free and fair plebiscite in the valley through which the people of Jammu and Kashmir could exercise their right to self-determination under the UN supervision. The Indian leaders accepted the UN resolution at that time and assigned special status to Jammu and Kashmir and a ban was imposed on the sale/purchase of land in disputed territory to avoid demographic change that might affect the outcomes of onward plebiscite in the valley. Historically, those arrangements remained in place throughout the past more than seven decades until the Modi-led BJP regime scrapped Article-370 and Section 35 of the constitution of India on August 5, 2019, to pave the path for complete assimilation of the globally disputed region into mainland India.

Historically, the people of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) rejected that politically motivated move of the Modi regime and staged statewide protest demonstrations against the Indian government which in turn imposed a curfew and shut down all communication channels including the internet to unlimited time in a bid to suppress Kashmiri voices against its illegal occupation and unlawful actions. Meanwhile, human rights organizations and civil society reached the Supreme Court of India to get a reversal of the unlawful actions of Indian rulers. Unfortunately, the recent judgment of the Supreme Court of India is another manifestation of the pliant judiciary under India's ruling dispensation.

In fact, the verdict of India's top court is not based on the principles of justice and non-partisanship, rather it is in contradiction to the global law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as well as global humanitarian law. That verdict is politically motivated and aims to support the political interests of the Indian government instead of protecting the fundamental rights of Indian minorities. Such verdicts of kangaroo courts neither hold any importance nor do they impress the global community; rather such attempts would further expose the nefarious designs of the Modi government and chauvinist Indian adjudicators at the global level. This judgment cannot distract the international community's attention from the gross and systematic human rights violations being perpetrated by the Indian occupying forces in the IIOJK.

Previously, the PTI government displayed utmost slackness at the time of the annulment of Article-370 and Section 35 by the Indian government dating back in August 2019. Although it was a domestic matter of India, yet it was linked to a global territorial dispute between Pakistan and India and was seriously affecting over 14 million Kashmiris living on the other side of the Line of Control (LoC). Now, the Indian Kargro court resolutely backed the Indian government's illegal action in betrayal of global humanitarian norms and regulations and India is rapidly moving to rape up the Kashmir dispute in this guise. The government of Pakistan must take up this issue at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the UNGA as well as at the UN Security Council (UNSC). Pakistan must press the UNSC for its bias, selective approach, and slackness in the implementation of its resolution, so the Kashmir dispute takes rebirth and moves toward its ultimate solution in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

## Driving licence and traffic issues

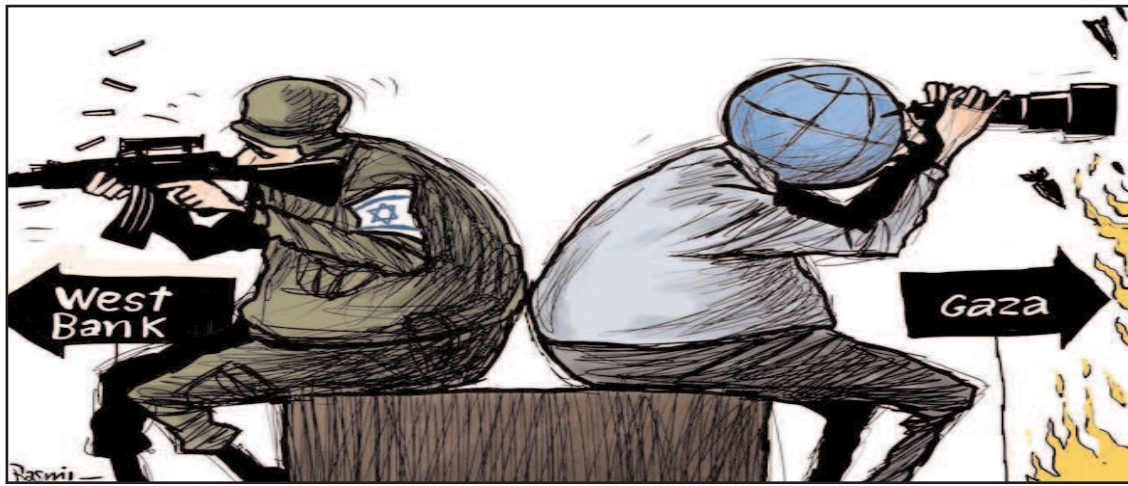
**PUNJAB** Caretaker Chief Minister officially launched the online learning driving license application allowing applicants to effortlessly secure learning driving licenses online from the comfort of their homes. As said, the Punjab government is extending its support to the public by providing facilities for obtaining learning driving licenses at patrolling posts, service centers, and the front desks of police stations.

The Punjab Chief Minister and relevant departments undoubtedly made significant endeavors in making driving learning easy by issuing online driving licenses to citizens, however there are serious glitches attached with the tact of driving including driver fitness, driver training and education, public safety, social and environmental protection along with management of citizenry life in the country. Such important elements have always been overlooked by Pakistani strategists in their quest for comfort, ease and shortcut. Every year, thousands of road accidents occur that lead to loss of precious lives and economic losses that amount to almost 2.5% of the country's GDP. The reason for fatal accidents is often identified as rash driving, overspeeding or technical fault in the vehicles. Unfortunately, as a nation we always choose comforts and shortcuts for ourselves and ignore national interests, public wellbeing and above all the aspect of national building.

As of today, ungoverned traffic and untidy citizenry life are major problems in almost all cities across Pakistan. The traffic has shaped into a grave issue due to shopkeepers' encroachment on footpaths, the influx of cart sellers on the roads, non hedence and no-enforcement of traffic rules and lax monitoring/ regulation of the traffic by the police. Meanwhile, a majority of the traffic lights on crossroads are unserviceable in the twin cities and the public is applying first come first serve rule thus making a dire situation of the traffic in busy areas. So far, Insufficient education, no drivers training and non implementation of traffic/ driving regulations have been primary reasons for bad and risky traffic in most parts of the country. In fact, comprehensive traffic plans, efficient monitoring and regulation, and skilled driving are crucial needs of the modern-day busy life, which our society badly lacks. Proper training, testing and evaluation of drivers enhances road safety by reducing accidents through better handling, anticipation of hazards, and defensive driving techniques. It is high time that our leadership considers these aspects along with bringing ease to the public so our nation emerges as one of the civilized, disciplined and progressed nations instead of an uncivilized and undisciplined crowd.

### Important Notice

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## How int'l law used to cover up Israeli settler-colonialism

Shahd Hammouri

**ON** October 7, Israel announced it was "at war". Following an attack on southern Israeli towns and settlements, the Israeli government declared it was launching a "large-scale operation to defend Israeli civilians". Two days later, its defence minister, Yoav Gallant, announced a full blockade of Gaza, cutting off supplies of electricity, fuel, water and food; "We are fighting human animals," he said.

Since then, more than 17,700 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli bombardment of the Gaza strip, more than a third of them children. More than 1.7 million people have been displaced within the enclave, with civilians having no safe zone to flee to.

Amid this death and destruction, the dominant narrative in Western media and political circles has been that this is "a war", Israel has the "right to defend itself" against "terrorism", and the Palestinian plight is a "humanitarian" issue. This framing of what is going on - backed with language borrowed from international law - completely distorts the reality on the ground. Everything that is happening now in Israel-Palestine is taking place within the context of colonisation, occupation and apartheid, which according to international law, are illegal. Israel is a colonising power and the Palestinians are the colonised indigenous population. Any reference to international law that does not recall these circumstances is a distortion of the story.

The status of Israel as a colonising state was clear in the early days of the United Nations. It is notable that much of the peculiarity of the case of Palestine, and in turn, its susceptibility to misrepresentation and manipulation, is that it was colonised at the moment when mass-colonisation of the Global South was theoretically ending. For example, the representative of the Jewish Agency, Ayele Weizman, one of the main actors in enabling the Zionist project, described what was happening at that time as Jewish "colonisation of Palestine" during the hearings of the UN Special Committee on Palestine in 1947, as the recognition of the state of Israel was being deliberated.

Resolutions issued by the UN General Assembly during the 1950s-1970s tended to couple Palestine with other colonised nations. For example, Resolution 3070 of 1973 declared that the UNGA "Condemns all Governments which do not recognize the right to self-determination and independence of peoples, notably the peoples of Africa still under colonial

domination and the Palestinian people". Similarly, the case of Palestine was also portrayed as a close relative to the case of apartheid South Africa. For example, Resolution 2787 of 1971 said that the General Assembly "confirms the legality of the people's struggle for self-determination and liberation from colonial and foreign domination and alien subjugation, notably in southern Africa and in particular that of the peoples of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and Guinea [Bissau], as well as of the Palestinian people by all available means consistent with the Charter of the United Nations".

Following the 1967 war, Israel's occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights, prompted the UN Security Council Resolution 242, which in its preamble emphasised "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" and called for the "withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict". However, the resolutions' deliberate ambiguity in referring to "territories occupied" in the English version of the text, has been used by Israel to justify its occupation and annexation for over half a century. It also paved the way for Israel to start building settlements - something Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories, defined in her report A/77/356 as "colonising" the West Bank.

The context of colonisation and occupation was brushed to the side with the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, which was presented to the international agreement as a "peace agreement" that put an end to the "Palestinian-Israeli conflict". It, of course, did no such thing. The oppression and dispossession of the Palestinian people at the hands of their Israeli colonisers continued.

Removing the context of colonisation and occupation has facilitated the portrayal of Palestinians as exclusively being one of two categories: "victims" of a humanitarian crisis or "terrorists". On the one hand, framing the plight of the Palestinians as a humanitarian concern covers up its root causes. As multiple UN and rights organisations reports have pointed out, the Israeli occupation and apartheid have devastated the Palestinian economy and pushed Palestinians into poverty. The focus on the humanitarian element perpetuates aid dependency and sidelines demands for accountability and reparations

On the other hand, the narrative that presents Palestinians as "terrorists" obfuscates the reality that the Israeli army's goal has always been the eradication of the "Palestinian problem" by any means possible, including ethnic cleansing, subjugation, and displacement. It also denies the Palestinian people the right to resist, which is outlined in international law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights stresses in its preamble that "it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law". In effect, this means that rebellion against tyranny and oppression when human rights are not protected is acceptable. Similarly, many UN General Assembly resolutions from the 1950s-1970s, the First Protocol of the Geneva Conventions, and the case law of the International Court of Justice, provide evidence for the legitimacy of peoples' struggle by all means at their disposal in the exercise of self-determination.

Of course, as they resist in whichever form, Palestinians are bound by the rules of the conduct of hostilities in international humanitarian law. The denial of the right to resist for the Palestinians goes hand-in-hand with Israel and its allies constantly evoking the Israeli "right to defend itself". But Article 51 of the UN Charter, which legitimises armed aggression in the name of self-defence, cannot be invoked when the threat emanates from within an occupied territory. The International Court of Justice re-affirmed this principle in its advisory opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (2004).

It is important to point out that even though Israel unilaterally withdrew its settlers and settlements from Gaza in 2005, it still exercises effective control over the territory. This reality has been blatantly apparent over the last two months as Israel has resorted to cutting off food, water, medical supplies, electricity and fuel - all essential for the existence of the population of Gaza. According to international humanitarian law, Gaza is occupied by Israel and the latter cannot claim self-defence as a legitimate reason for its aggression against a threat that emanates from within a territory that has effective control over it. In this sense, Israel is perpetrating war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of genocide in Gaza not in the context of "self-defence",

but of occupation. The Israeli army has undertaken the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of explosive weapons, forced displacement of over 1.7 million people in Gaza, the cutting off of fuel, electricity, food, water and medical supplies, amounting to collective punishment.

Unfortunately, these crimes are not an anomaly, but a part of the continued systemic violence inflicted by Israel on the Palestinian people over the past 75 years. In trying to justify the shocking civilian death toll in Gaza, Israel and its supporters have frequently evoked the laws of war, throwing around terms like "voluntary human shields" and "proportionality". Apart from the flawed arguments and lack of evidence that these claims suffer from, they also rely on a set of norms that were codified by colonial powers and are outrageously outdated.

The laws of war were put together during colonial times to regulate the use of force between sovereign states. The colonies were obviously not considered sovereign equals, and the laws were designed to maintain domination over the indigenous peoples, territories and resources. These laws do not account for asymmetry in power between parties to a conflict. They do not respond to the technological changes in warfare. They are not designed to account for economic and political interests shaping war. Over the last 75 years, significant efforts have been made to challenge these shortcomings, but states of the Global North systematically undermined them. This is not surprising given that most contemporary wars happen outside the Global North, and profits coming from the business of war predominantly feed into Global North economies.

It is not in the interest of powerful states to update these laws in a manner that corresponds to the reality on the ground. Instead of updating the laws of war to decolonise them, over the past 20 years, the Global North has imposed a new framework that accommodates its "war on terror". It is, therefore, not surprising that as Israel is exterminating Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, the mainstream international legal reaction has reflected a continuing colonial attitude which disregards distortions and misrepresentations and refuses to call things by their name - settler colonialism, resistance, and the people's right of self-determination. The only way out of the cycles of brutal violence is for the colonial context in Palestine to be fully and unequivocally acknowledged. Israel must end its colonisation, occupation and apartheid in Palestine and engage in reconciliation and reparations.

Aljazeera

## Guilt and principles create dilemma for West

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

**I**N an increasingly interconnected world, the West finds itself torn between its historical guilt complex and its commitment to upholding global principles. Throughout history, the West has defended the rights of peoples and nations and laid down rules to regulate relations and protect human rights. However, when it comes to the Palestinian cause, the West has renounced the very principles and rights it claims to champion. Moreover, Western governments have displayed absolute support for Israel, turning a blind eye to the Israeli army's excesses, which are being labeled, in Western quarters themselves, the worst in history due to their gruesomeness and violation of all international rules, laws, norms and values.

Perhaps this renouncement, contradiction and duality raises questions: Are these positions being taken due to a historic guilt complex toward the Jews, who have tasted persecution and injustice at the hands of Europeans at different points in history? Or is it a clash of civilizations, in which the Europeans are harnessing all their sources of strength to serve their expansionist schemes and ambitions? Or does (political) realism dictate the existence of Israel and ensure its superiority to safeguard the West's clout and ensure the flow of interests?

One possible explanation for the biased support of Israel is rooted in the West's guilt complex. This guilt stems from a historical context where Jews faced persecution and injustice at the hands of the Europeans. Some Western governments have even offered compensation for the suffering inflicted on Jews during the Nazi era. Yet, using guilt to justify the violation of Palestinian rights is counterproductive and morally unjustifiable.

But the guilt complex alone does not provide a sufficient interpretation for this biased Western position. Two wrongs do not make a right. How can you get rid of a historic guilt by creating a bigger historical guilt against the entire Palestinian people - the real landowners - their children, women, land, trees and environmental resources and components? And why do other governments, which do not have historical precedents related to persecuting Jews, insist on embracing the Israeli narrative, siding with it and granting Israel an absolute right to commit injustice and aggression?

What guilt complex could compel the West and its successive governments to suspend international laws and norms, reverse their principles and destroy humanity's accomplishments in the field of protecting and defending rights? Western governments have granted Israel an absolute right to do whatever it wishes despite the fact that it is not self-defense in the general sense, given that Israel is an occupying force.

Another perspective suggests that the West's support for Israel is driven by political realism. By aligning with Israel, Western governments serve their expansionist schemes and ambitions. The fear of being labeled as anti-semitic also plays a significant role in influencing Western governments' stances, given the legal implications such an accusation carries.

Despite growing criticisms of Israel's actions, the country has succeeded in leveraging its vital strategic importance to the West. By presenting itself as a democratic state and playing the victim card, Israel has secured support from Western governments, influential pundits and elites. This further complicates the situation, as the Western media struggles to counter the dominant Israeli narrative and exert influence on global public opinion in favor of the Palestinian cause.

The global order, governed by a balance of power, primarily serves the interests of the powerful. Even democratic values and roles often take a back seat to those in power who prioritize their survival and flow of interests. Israel recognized this early on and invested in creating lobbies, controlling media outlets and influencing election campaigns in major capitals like the US. As a result, unconditional support for Israel's policies persists despite the suffering of the Palestinians.

However, there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon. Support for the Palestinian cause is gaining momentum, paralleled by Israel's increasingly egregious actions. Protests and demonstrations worldwide, as well as actions like stopping ships bound for Israel in rejection of its aggression, suggest a growing opposition to the biased Western stance. The rise of alternative narratives on social media and in the virtual space challenges the decades-old Israeli narrative. At the same time, our media has been unable to cope with and refute the Israeli narrative and reach out to the global public opinion and convince it that the Palestinian cause is a just one.

Furthermore, Western governments are facing widespread criticism for their positions, threatening their political careers and party futures. Opinion polls in the US demonstrate differences within decision-making circles, while leaked cables from American diplomats reveal their protests against the Biden administration's stance on the conflict. Regionally, Arab and Islamic voices of dissatisfaction with the West's positions are growing stronger, with countries severing diplomatic ties with Israel and filing lawsuits against top Israeli officials at the International Criminal Court.

This mounting pressure has succeeded in placing the Palestinian cause on the agendas of governments, making it a matter of interest. It is a crucial step toward reconstructing the global image of the conflict and shaping a new policy that is aligned with principles and international law. If this activism persists, it has the potential to reshape the reality that Israel has imposed for more than seven decades and reaffirm the existence of a rules-based global order.

In conclusion, the West's dilemma lies in navigating its guilt complex and protecting its principles in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While historical guilt and political realism may provide partial explanations for biased Western positions, it is through continued activism and pressure that real change can be achieved. Only then can the West prove its commitment to a just rules-based global order.

## HK's LGBTQ community scores legal victories

Cindy Sui

**S**OMETHING remarkable happened in Hong Kong's decadeslong LGBTQ rights movement in recent months, though it is unclear what it means for the future. Hong Kong's courts issued several rulings in favor of granting LGBTQ rights - including no longer requiring conversion surgery to change their gender on ID cards, allowing same-sex couples to apply for subsidized public housing together, and perhaps the most important by the city's highest court - ordering the government to come up with a framework within two years to recognize same-sex partnerships.

Additionally, the government last month allowed the Gay Games, an international sports event for LGBTQ athletes, to be held in Hong Kong - a first for the city and Asia. "In general, [LGBTQ rights] are progressing. ... It's pointing in the right direction," said Jerome Yau, co-founder of Hong Kong Marriage Equality, a group dedicated to eliminating dis-

crimination against same-sex couples. "The government is now legally obliged to come up with a framework to legally recognize same-sex marriage by October 2025. ... So, something has to happen in two years. That's a very significant decision." While that ruling and other recent developments are seen as achievements, there are worries that government hesitation, possible intervention by Beijing, and Christian opposition - could prevent the city from becoming the next place in Asia, after Taiwan and Nepal, to grant equal rights to same-sex couples, including the right to get married. "We're in a rather complicated situation," Yau said. "We have to tread very carefully."

The government, considered conservative in advancing LGBTQ legislation even before Hong Kong's handover to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, has given no indication of how it would carry out the top court's ruling. The Housing Authority, meanwhile, has appealed to over-

turn the housing rulings issued by lower courts. At the same time, anti-gay religious opponents, including a lawmaker, have protested the games and the legalization of same-sex marriage, alleging they could threaten national security. The controversial national security law passed in 2020 has been used to jail people on charges of secession, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces. Additionally, the annual Hong Kong Pride Parade, which used to attract thousands of participants to march on the city's streets, was not held again this year, despite the end of COVID restrictions. Instead, an indoor exhibition was held. "With all these developments, sometimes you see the government take one step forward and walk two steps backwards. We feel disappointed," said Paul Choi, an LGBTQ rights advocate.

Hong Kong's courts and public opinion may be mov-

ing at a faster pace than the government seems willing to.

A survey conducted by three universities earlier this year found that 60% of Hong Kongers said they supported same-sex marriage, up from 50% in 2017 and 38% in 2013. At the same time, the percentage of Hong Kong residents who said they were unaccepting of gay men and lesbians dropped significantly - from 32% in 2013, to 13% this year, according to the survey. The study's researchers attributed the change in attitude to favorable court rulings, more jurisdictions around the world legalizing same-sex marriage and increasing representation of lesbians and gay men in the media. This includes the recently held Hong Kong Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, the longest running of its kind in Asia. Now, many are waiting to see if the government will keep pace. There are concerns it will drag its feet or allow only separate and

partial rights. Same-sex couples who got married abroad, including simply on Zoom calls with US states that allow remote marriage registration, already qualify for dependent visas, civil-servant spousal benefits, and joint tax filing. But LGBTQ community members said they want equal rights, arguing the city's mini-constitution, the Basic Law, promises all Hong Kong residents "shall be equal before the law." They said creating a separate status for them will not grant them the same rights heterosexual couples enjoy. "Think about it, as a citizen, I'm born and grew up here and want to get married. Why do I have to travel somewhere else to get married?" asked Choi, who recently married his partner in Melbourne, Australia.

They have had to create a will and prepare power of attorney documents, although they still don't know if they can visit each other in a hospital as family members or make medical decisions for

each other if needed. There are also fears that a tightening of restrictions on LGBTQ groups in mainland China in recent years could spread to Hong Kong, especially given lingering government worries about a return of the widespread and sometimes violent pro-democracy protests seen here in 2019. "There's no one threatening us, but the biggest problem we're facing right now is that when we want to hold events [like the pride parade], we have people telling us maybe it's not a great idea," said Alan Hau, deacon of the LGBTQ-inclusive Blessed Ministry Community Church. Yau sounded hopeful, though, pointing out that another gay pride event, Pink Dot, has received permission to be held in a popular gathering spot. "We still have space to do things, which unfortunately is a whole different situation across the border. We should treasure this space," Yau said. "Things are happening. ... It's just that things are not moving at a faster pace. Let's see how things will go in the next two years."



# Sunak’s Rwanda plan might just work, if his restive backbenchers let it

FOR years, Robert Jenrick has been Rishi Sunak's closest friend in Parliament. As ministers under Theresa May, they'd compare notes and came to share an analysis of what needed to be done. Oliver Dowden later joined them and when these three amigos endorsed Boris Johnson, in a joint newspaper article, it was quite a moment. Sunak ended up Prime Minister and Dowden his deputy. But Jenrick never made it past immigration minister, serving under a volatile home secretary. Many assumed that if she self-detoned, he'd take her place.

Instead, when the day came, David Cameron was lured back and James Cleverly got the job instead. Jenrick's disappointment turned to dismay when the Supreme Court struck down the Rwanda deportation policy. It was just as he had warned. Why, he had asked, were there such loopholes in the original legislation? Isn't this the very carelessness he and Sunak once used to deplore? But he wanted to go further than the Prime Minister would allow and, this week, he resigned - joining Suella Braverman in the increasingly mutinous back benches.

Talk is already turning to a leadership challenge. The idea of enstooling a sixth Tory PM since 2010 - as many as Labour has had in its history - is obvious madness. An extra row would be needed outside the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday to accommodate them all, forming an annual reminder of Tory regicide. But such a rebellion may well happen if enough MPs think they need to define themselves against Sunak to

save their seat. He'd survive any challenge, but another serving of Tory psychodrama would do nothing to improve the party's election chances.

Another act of protest would be to rebel against the new Rwanda Bill when it comes to a vote next week. Perhaps table a reasoned amendment to amplify what Jenrick originally wanted: no one should be able to use the Human Rights Act to appeal against deportation. This would be pointless, says Sunak: Rwanda has said it would kill the deal rather than accept people who cannot appeal to Strasbourg. Come off it, say the rebels: is Rwanda now posing as the great upholder of civil liberty? Pay them! Then they'll play ball. The PM's reply came yesterday: trust me, they won't.

A great many Conservatives stopped trusting Sunak some time ago, if they ever did. The Prime Minister didn't help matters by starting this year by laying out five tests he wanted to be judged by. Grow the economy (the forecast is a flatline), cut debt (it's rising from £2.2trillion to £3trillion), "stop the boats" (see Rwanda), cut NHS waiting lists (they've risen all year) and halve inflation, which was forecast to happen anyway. "We're either delivering for you, or we're not," Sunak said at the time. The polls put Labour on course for a landslide victory, with Conservatives facing a choice between recoverable defeat and near-annihilation. Sunak still sees a narrow path to victory, but believes that it runs through Kigali.

This is his new pitch to his party, begging them to step back

Fraser Nelson

from what would be an unrecoverable civil war. His Rwanda deal will work, he says, and needs to be passed quickly - it's the best chance of stopping the boats. To think that there is a better deal to be had, he says, is delusional. On this, he is probably right. As implausible as it may seem to British ears, Rwanda regards itself as the Singapore of Africa: tough on law and order but liberal, low-tax and welcoming to investment and business. Paul Kagame, its president, was all up for attending the recent Artificial Intelligence summit at Bletchley Park to position Rwanda as a tech hub. He envisages doing good business saving Europe from its refugee mess, processing people not just for the UK but from all around. The Germans, Danes, Austrians and Italians are all talking about Sunak-style deportations, at least to decide the applications.

So Rwanda wants to pose as Europe's safe and reliable African partner, a place where law and order can be upheld in refugee processing as well as a place for the world to do business. This is why Kagame was so stung by the Supreme Court ruling, which deemed Rwanda so dodgy that refugees sent there could plausibly be bundled off somewhere dangerous. Sunak is now asking Parliament to pass a Bill decreeing Rwanda safe and reliable, which very much plays to Kagame's broader strategy. But if Parliament were to go in the direction many Tory rebels want - and say that anyone sent to Rwanda needs to be stripped of all protection under the Human Rights Act - there would be no deal. No one in Europe would

follow Sunak's path as the legal battle would just be too much. So the Prime Minister is quite right to say that pulling out of all Human Rights Act clauses (rather than disapplying specific ones such as the right to family life, as the current legislation does) would kill the deal.

So Sunak's new Rwanda deal isn't just a plan for stopping the boats. It's the only plan. Even a sceptic like Jonathan Sumption, a former Supreme Court judge, now thinks that it might get past the courts. The Prime Minister was wrong to draw comfort in saying arrivals are surging in Italy but dropping in Britain. There is always a time lag and the people traffickers will get their victims from Lampedusa to Calais soon enough. This doesn't leave much time to get a solution in place, or for any parliamentary shenanigans. To try to depose him, or to humiliate him by rebelling against a signature policy, would be an act of collective suicide by the Conservatives. It would be self-defeating, facile, self-indulgent and the biggest Christmas gift that Starmer could hope for. But it could very well still happen.

This is, all round, a humiliation. Boris Johnson got Rwanda wrong first time, Sunak got it wrong a second time, and Jenrick is quite right to say that even his third-time-lucky plan could fail. We'll only know when the first appeal is made and the courts decide. But Kagame has ruled out anything tougher and British courts have ruled out anything weaker. What Sunak proposes is a very long shot, but it really is the only one that the Tories have left.

The Telegraph

# 7 reasons a second Trump term would be dangerous

FORMER President Donald Trump is setting off many alarms. He made headlines by telling Fox News host Sean Hannity Tuesday night that if reelected, he would only be a dictator on "day one" of his presidency in retribution against his political enemies. There have been numerous reports on his plans to stack the executive branch in his favor through appointing loyalists and expanding his power to hire and fire federal government workers.

While Trump has always deployed this kind of language, and often his goal in doing so is to generate media attention rather than to outline serious policy objectives, there is reason to worry about an extraordinary assertion of presidential power that might very well take place in a second Trump term. There are significant reasons that the second time around would be different. And why Trump, who feels few restraints to begin with, would be even more unbound. Why would the second term be more dangerous than the first?

Like all second term presidents, Trump would feel less constrained by having to worry about reelection. The virtue of being a lame duck is that there is much less pressure to avoid actions that might undercut the possibility of winning the support of future voters.

Some presidents try to use this freedom to advance controversial initiatives that would be in the best interest of the nation and the world, as President Ronald Reagan undertook in 1987 when he signed a major arms agreement (the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty) with the Soviet Union. But presidents can also use the lame duck period in dangerous ways, abandoning the guardrails on deploying power. This could certainly be the case with Trump who seems to have retribution rather than policymaking on his mind. Trump is also in the unique position of having survived two impeachments while in office. The major mechanism that Congress has to prevent a president from abusing their power is not something likely to concern him. He has seen how partisanship is sufficient to insulate himself from the possibility of being removed by the Senate.

Trump also had a taste of how he could capitalize on being impeached by claiming to supporters that partisan opponents were out to get him and that he was a victim of the establishment.

During his first term, Trump at least brought in figures from the world of Washington as well as the military to serve in his cabinet. Figures such as Secretary of Defense James Mattis and White House chief of staff Reince Priebus at least exposed him to some voices who understood when his ideas were going too far. Mattis served from 2017 until 2019 when Trump refused to listen to his warnings about removing troops from Syria. By 2020 Mattis was calling Trump a genuine threat to the Constitution. Priebus, a former member of Congress and head of the RNC, served as chief of staff for the first six months of Trump's term, until he was kicked out. A second term would be very different. As McKay Coppins wrote in The Atlantic, all indications are that this time around he would only staff his White House with the true loyalists.

Julian Zelizer

Knowing that, as former Republican Rep. Liz Cheney reminds us in her new book, Republicans saved him before and would do so again, the impeachment power of the legislative branch would not create any fears as he considered how to exercise presidential power. If he was in office, that would mean that Trump has also survived, politically, the legal process again. Whether or not he is convicted in any of the four ongoing cases against him remains to be seen (he denies any wrongdoing). But should he be in office come 2025, it will mean that the legal process did not have the ability to change voting behavior and in certain respects made him stronger. Whereas President Richard Nixon needed President Gerald Ford to pardon him, Trump would have so much confidence that he would not even feel the need to worry about that sort of protection either.

Notwithstanding the endless discussion about the Republicans who don't like Trump, most in the GOP have continued to stand by him. Republicans on Capitol Hill have remained relatively steady in their support of the former president even if there has been some slippage. Those who are not standing with him, such as Cheney, have found themselves on the outside or out of a job. In the electorate, the polls continue to show that regardless of what happens he remains far and above the most popular figure in the party. Trump knows all of this and will assume that if he gets in trouble the party will back him.

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Figures such as Stephen Miller and Richard Grenell, former close aides in the first Trump administration, would push him toward even further extremes.

Trump now has experience. As chaotic as his term was, he would now have a much better sense of where it is possible to run roughshod over conventions and processes. He has tested the waters and will now have an easier time knowing what to expect when jumping back in. Indeed, we have even seen in his approach to the 2024 primaries and convention a much more deliberate approach in thinking about how to set up conditions so to subvert his challengers. As with any second term president, he will be much more adroit at using the levers of power, legitimate and otherwise, to pursue his goals and to solidify his strength.

Perhaps the biggest factor of all is that Trump is out for revenge. He is angry at the opposition he has continued to face and the prosecutions that have been conducted under the Justice Department. Trump, who has always been a person seeking to oust those who harm him or disagree with him, will now be able to do so using the long arms of government. For those who don't believe that this is a serious threat, they should remember the long history of presidents, from President Woodrow Wilson during WWI to President Richard Nixon, who used the government to intimidate, crack down on and even imprison their opponents. When Trump says things like, "we will root out the communists, Marxists, fascists and the radical left thugs that live like vermin within the confines of our country, that lie and steal and cheat on elections," Americans should take the threat seriously.

There is little doubt that a second term Trump would be extraordinarily dangerous to the Republic. He would give the Imperial Presidency new meaning, displaying the kind of force that the historian Arthur Schlesinger could never have imagined when he coined the term writing in 1973 in the shadow of Nixon. It will be incumbent on Republicans running against Trump in the primaries to make certain that voters understand the risk of staying on the existing path. It will be incumbent on Biden and the Democrats to make very clear to the electorate what the stakes are in the choice that they will make in November 2024.

CNN

## World needs to come up with key climate roadmap at COP28

THE high-profile COP28 climate summit opened in Dubai on Thursday, although key leaders like US President Joe Biden and China's Xi Jinping will not be attending. One of the other world powers that will help fill this vacuum is Europe, which sees the Middle Eastern event as critical for meeting the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement. EU leaders, including European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Charles Michel, will be out in force at the big event.

This reflects the fact that Europe has a huge stake in the summit. Firstly, the EU has become one of the big three players in climate negotiations, partly through the power of example, as the bloc has slashed its greenhouse gas emissions by about a third compared to 1990. Secondly, the EU has been an early and influential mover on green innovation, including developing the world's first carbon market in 2005. One of the key announcements that it is expected to make at COP28 is a new international "Critical Raw Materials Club," following the finalization of the EU Critical Raw Materials Act.

Thirdly, Europe is feeling the effects of existing climate trends. The continent has warmed more than twice as much as the rest of the world over the past three decades and has experienced the greatest temperature increase of any continent, according to the World Meteorological Organization. From 1991 to

2021, Europe warmed at an average of 0.5 degrees Celsius per decade, the organization reported, while the global average was 0.2 C. One reason Europe is warming so fast is that a significant part of the continent is sub-Arctic and Arctic, Earth's fastest-warming region. It is also experiencing changes in so-called climate feedbacks. For example, fewer clouds over Europe during summers means more sunlight and heat.

While Europe has long been a leader on tackling climate change, many had speculated that its ambition might be tempered by the twin shocks it has suffered since 2020: Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of these has been huge, elevating the urgency of the EU's energy security. This has seen a big effort put into the striking of about 120 energy deals with other powers, mainly in the Middle East. These agreements have mainly focused on new gas and liquefied natural gas supplies as a transitional source in the movement toward clean energies.

Given this new investment in gas, Europe's decarbonization pathway will be complicated in the coming years. However, the EU has nonetheless doubled down on its hugely ambitious European Green Deal and is still cutting its emissions overall. The EU's "State of the Energy Union Report 2023" highlights how the REPowerEU plan and emergency legislative measures have also helped to promote renewable

Andrew Hammond

energies. Moreover, EU-wide greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to have fallen by about 3 percent last year.

At COP28, the EU is encouraging all parties to agree on global energy goals to deliver on three objectives. Firstly, tackling the unabated use of fossil fuels globally by making sure that consumption peaks before 2030 and phasing out subsidies that do not help achieve a just transition. Secondly, moving toward a fully or predominantly decarbonized global power system in the 2030s, leaving no room for new coal power. Finally, tripling global installed renewable energy capacity by 2030 and doubling the rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030. Europe is encouraging such lofty ambitions because of the current challenges facing climate diplomacy. This includes the dark geopolitical context following the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

There are also the strains between the Global North and Global South on climate issues. This has shifted mindsets, at least temporarily, in much of the world, making it more difficult to envision a repeat of the kind of broad international agreement that was sealed at the Paris summit in 2015. And this is despite the warnings from the UN in a major report in September that the world is way off track in its efforts to tackle climate change. This study asserted that the planet remains headed for a temperature rise of up to 2.6 C and must take urgent action.

## Russia-China alliance would build artificial intelligence for dictators

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin struck a triumphant tone at last week's Artificial Intelligence Journey Conference in Moscow. With artificial intelligence playing a growing role in all parts of life, "humanity is beginning a new chapter of its existence," he declared. Despite Putin's bullish portrayal of Russia as a vanguard of AI innovation, the actual landscape of Russian AI development is grim, largely due to Putin's own policies.

In his speech, Putin acknowledged the challenges facing Russia's AI industry and announced plans to surmount them. Had they been implemented a decade ago - and had the little green men and the Spetsnaz stayed on their own side of the border - Russia may very well have become a leader in the field. Instead, the president seemed to betray a certain recognition of the country's dire position.

Before the conference, Putin's statements about artificial intelligence were optimistic but vague, stressing the potential of the technology and the need for Russia to maintain a presence in the field. He warned of the grave consequences of falling behind in the race. Those consequences have become unavoidable thanks to the invasion of Ukraine, which brought about an exodus of tech talent, a budget crunch that strangles investment, sanctions that deny Russia the chips needed for the immense computing requirements of AI and condemned the country to international isolation

at a time of global research cooperation. Putin's four-point plan for addressing these deficiencies called for academies to broaden access to supercomputers, to increase the capacity of those supercomputers by an order of magnitude, to expand classes for applied AI at top universities, and for the state to devote more funding towards AI. He promised to release a more detailed strategy in the coming months.

Each part of this plan is necessary. But even all four together are wholly insufficient. Russia is facing a massive budget deficit. Without the economic capacity of its rivals, Moscow cannot hope to compete with them on financial investment. The Kremlin recently allocated 5.2 billion rubles (\$57,247,000) to AI research in 2024. In 2022, the United States government allocated fifty times as much, which is seven times lower than the amount invested by venture capital firms in the same year. Even if Russia could allocate its resources perfectly, this investment gap means domestic availability of both AI know-how and computer capacity is likely to remain lagging.

Putin's speech also subtly acknowledged the security implications of the precarious state of Russian AI. Modern Large Language Models (LLMs) like ChatGPT are intended for a Western audience and trained on Western data. "They reflect that part of Western ethics, those norms of behavior, public policy,

to which we object," Putin warned. In response, he suggested Russia would use its upcoming presidency of BRICS to investigate these issues in detail. Under the banner of "AI Ethics," Putin is likely to seek the enforcement of standards that ensure AI serves only to reinforce authoritarian rule. Rather than leading this "new chapter" of humanity's existence, Russia will end up lobbying China for consideration as a partner. The future is being shaped in labs in Beijing and Hangzhou, not Moscow.

Should Russia convince China of their shared interest in an AI ethics framework that safeguards authoritarians, Moscow may be able to import and train on foundational models that don't undermine the regime. About 40% of all LLMs come from China. Chinese researchers have achieved this despite working under a censorship regime even more restrictive than Russia's. They were able to strike this balance by following an ethical framework laid out in extensive detail by Beijing's National Information Security Standardization Technical Committee. These standards tell researchers to test random samples from the body of text used to train their models for unlawful content. They must then reject any training data where over 5% of returned samples are problematic. Researchers are to run tests on thousands of queries containing banned keywords and

validate whether the results are permissible. Companies with public chatbots are required to expand moderation teams along with their user base and promptly remove offending answers.

One requirement, where Russia's current models would certainly fail, is that chatbots can only refuse to answer 5% of prompts on sensitive topics. If Russia adopted a similar standard, it could stop citizens from turning to Western alternatives out of frustration. Putin referenced "ethics" seven more times in the speech and called for an update to the National AI Ethics Code. Putin's concern that Western-trained models can pose a threat to his rule is well-founded. By lobbying for next-generation AI that will conform to the Kremlin's will, Russia can reap the rewards of this technology while avoiding the intensive task of building its own.

In the global AI race, in which China is close on the heels of the United States, there is an unfortunate glut of supply of models that can be made to adhere to the standards of authoritarian regimes. In line with Putin and Xi's effort to create a multi-polar global order to counter the West, a BRICS-led AI ethical framework will let dictators deploy the best technology has to offer while maintaining firm control over their country's information spaces. But like with so much else since the invasion, Russia must give up its leadership ambitions and accept the status of junior partner.

The Moscow Times

## Special space plane puts China ahead of competitors

CHINA'S ambitious and secretive space plane program is of great interest in terms of possibly filling a gap in low Earth orbit operations. China is using the development of its orbital test vehicle to outpace competitors in a specific strategic space. Given the current economic issues Beijing is facing, proceeding with the space plane appears to be a top priority.

The Chinese space plane is called Tengyun (cloud rider). Another name used is Chongfu Shiyong Shiyang Hangtian Qi. It is an experimental, reusable unmanned spacecraft and is in the early stages of its program, but it has much potential. Since the US thinks that China will surpass it in terms of space capacity by 2040, understanding this type of approach to space and its economy is important.

China is developing the Tengyun so that it can fly from runway to orbit and return to Earth at hypersonic speeds. The craft can be used up to 20 times. The hypersonic space plane boosts China to the forefront of the aerospace industry, eclipsing the capabilities of other competing systems. The China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation is recruiting the best talent and using the best technology in the country's aerospace field to support Tengyun. China is keeping the orbital test vehicle a closely guarded secret. There have been only three known missions. In 2016, China constructed an enormous 5 km runway at the site later known as the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in the Gobi Desert. Tengyun took off on Sept. 4, 2020, under unusually heavy secrecy compared with other recent Chinese space missions, which have been quite public, broadcast on television or the internet. On Sept.

Dr. Theodore Karasik

6, China announced that the spacecraft had returned to a "scheduled landing site." The two-day flight added a tremendous amount of momentum to the program. The China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation called the space plane flight a "complete success," saying it "marks an important breakthrough" in China's research into reusable spacecraft technology.

The second trip was much longer in duration: the Tengyun launched on Aug. 4, 2022, and returned on May 8 this year. That was some 276 days in orbit for the unmanned craft. The orbital test vehicle reportedly conducted materials exposure and thermal control coating tests, as well as possibly assessing candidate radiation-shielding materials. It is unknown if any other country exploring space has this type of capability. Longevity of flight appears to be a unique attribute for this type of space plane. The US has two X-37B vehicles and their first flights measured more than 200 days. One flight, launched in May 2020, saw the X-37B set new records for duration, as it stayed in orbit for more than 900 days. The shorter duration of the Chinese space plane's flights may indicate that it has a special role in testing hypersonic technologies or other activities related to a high-velocity atmospheric reentry besides robotics. On one of the flights, China released and recaptured an object, which is raising some questions about space plane testing.

Clearly, the Tengyun is a fully functioning and unique space plane that is possibly able to make robotic repairs or deploy smaller spacecraft for space-based defense systems over a multiyear period.

This may be quite problematic given the international community's current arms control and space law requirements. We have to remember that China in 2019 became the first country to land on the far side of the moon, so Beijing's space ambition is significant for the future space economy and security. Being able to place payloads from a reusable space plane is advantageous and cost-effective. In addition, some argue that the Tengyun is in competition with America's Boeing X-37B space plane, which debuted in 2010. Like the X-37B, the Chinese space plane appears to have a specialized engine system and is relatively small. But the Tengyun seems to be more dynamic in its capabilities and potential. The trend lines for the two programs are thought to put the Chinese ahead of its competitor, if the Tengyun data is correct and sustainable.

If the space plane is part of the establishment of China's first co-orbital anti-satellite platform - a type of kinetic physical space weapon - then there will be arms control and other international legal problems. Such weapons require a projectile or other orbiting object to disrupt targeted satellites. Co-orbital anti-satellite platforms require the ability to adjust their orbits so they can move close to targeted satellites. They can disrupt, damage or destroy satellites through various means. China is known to have conducted such tests before examining debris fields. Overall, China is making great strides in its Tengyun space plane program. Beijing's space plane is a low Earth orbit-based platform that has longevity and great capabilities across a range of domains, including both the peaceful use of space and a number of negative possibilities.





## Pakistan Stock Exchange: First Ijarah Sukuk auction results in resounding success

ISLAMABAD (APP): The first primary market auction of the government of Pakistan one-year Ijarah Sukukat at Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) has resulted in a resounding success, the exchange said in a statement received here Tuesday.

This is for the first time in Pakistan's history that an auction of a Government Debt Security (GDS) took place through the state-of-the-art, fully automated and efficient system of the exchange with settlement and custodial services being provided by the other members of the capital market ecosystem, namely the NCCPL and CDC, it said.

"It is a remarkable addition to the product suite offered by PSX," the state-

ment added.

The auction which took place on December 8, 2023, via the Exchange, heralds a new beginning for raising the GDS.

Against the target of the Rs 30 billion Sukuk, bids accepted amounted to Rs 36.068 billion whereas the total bids received amounted to Rs 481.307 billion.

As many as 172 investors participated in the bidding process with 132 being the successful number of bidders, resulting in a diversified investor base for the government. The subscription amount totaled Rs30.191 billion with a cut off rental rate being 19.5199% and a price of Rs 83.7055.

Speaking about the auction, the (Caretaker) Fed-

eral Minister for Finance, Revenue & Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamsad Akhtar said it was a remarkable achievement which was in the back burner for a long time.

"We have now succeeded in implementing the Government Debt Securities issue through the Stock Exchange with the first primary market auction of this GoP Ijarah Sukuk held on December 8, 2023," she said.

She said, this would substantially benefit the government by diversifying the investor base, as well as providing new investment opportunities to investors.

The Chairman SECP, Akif Saeed said that government securities were an important tool for the

development of the capital market and that the launch of GDS at PSX was just the beginning. He urged PSX, brokers, insurance companies, and asset managers to concentrate their efforts on marketing in order to attract new investors to the capital market.

Speaking about the auction MD & CEO PSX, Farrukh H. Khan termed it a landmark achievement, saying the numbers have unveiled the tremendously successful primary market auction which has resulted in generating interest from a large number of investors totaling 172.

The government realized a competitive cut off rental rate of 19.5199 percent and the Sukuk was oversubscribed by 16 times.

## OGDCL announces production revival at KPD field — boosts national energy security



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) on

ing Pakistan's energy landscape. This achievement is a testament to OGDCL's commitment to addressing the decline in gas production and contributing to the nation's socio-economic development.

As part of its production optimization drive, OGDCL has implemented operational modifications and in-house compression arrangements, leading to the successful re-injection of gas from six low-pressure wells at the KPD Field. This initiative has resulted in an impressive enhancement of 16 Million Standard Cubic Feet per Day (MMSCFD) of gas,

150 Barrels Per Day (BPD) of Condensate, and 18 Metric Tons per Day (MTD) of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG). Effective from December 11, 2023, the injected gas is seamlessly integrated into the Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL) network, contributing to the national gas supply infrastructure.

The KPD Field, situated approximately 25 km from Hyderabad in the Sindh province, is a vital asset in OGDCL's portfolio. Currently, the field is producing 1600 BPD of Condensate, 107 MMSCFD of Sale Gas, and 195 MTD of LPG.

Equipped with two trains of Amine Sweetening and Glycol Dehydration units, LPG extraction facilities, and allied utilities, the field is playing a pivotal role in meeting the country's energy demands.

OGDCL's proactive approach to enhancing oil and gas production through a fast-track strategy underscores its dedication to national energy security. The company's relentless efforts align with its mission to foster sustainable development and prosperity for Pakistan.

## FCCI and UKPCCI ink MoU

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) and UK Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (UKPCCI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to give a quantum jump to bilateral trade in addition to attracting maximum foreign direct investment.

FCCI Senior Vice President Dr Sajjad Arshad and UKPCCI Vice President Mian Saad Hassan signed the documents on behalf of their respective organizations.

Addressing the signing ceremony, Mian Saad Hassan of UKPCCI said that they would sensitize Pakistani expatriates settled in the UK to invest in Pakistan and play their role for the uplift of their motherland.

"We will also share business data with the interested Pakistani exporters intending to sneak into the UK market", he said and hoped that the collaboration would yield positive results.

Dr Sajjad Arshad said the FCCI would arrange trade delegations for the UK while UKPCCI would provide networking facilities in addition to arranging B2B meetings between the leading UK importers. The both chambers also agreed to arrange events jointly for the awareness of the business community and promote bilateral trade on a solid and sustained basis.

Later, they also exchanged shields with each other.

Meanwhile, a 60-member delegation of students on Tuesday visited FCCI.

FCCI Senior Vice President Dr Sajjad Arshad said self confidence should be infused in students so that they could speak and ask questions from their teachers without any hesitation, adding that students must be encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities.

Vice President Haji Muhammad Aslam Bhalli said the FCCI played a key role in bridging gap between the government and business community.

## PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 414 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 414.46 points, a positive change of 0.63 percent, closing at 66,426.78 points against 66,012.33 points the previous trading day.

A total of 969,630,378 shares valuing Rs.26.931 billion were traded during the day as compared to 1,215,932,469 shares valuing Rs. 33.423 billion the last day.

Some 385 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 244 of them recorded gains and 127 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 14 remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 98,866,425 shares at Rs.1.78 per share, PTCL with 79,248,000 shares at Rs.11.01 per share and K-Electric Ltd with 66,712,445 shares at Rs.6.05 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.500.00 per

share price, closing at Rs22,100.00, whereas the runner-up was Nestle Pakistan Limited with a Rs 150.00 rise in its per share price to Rs 8,700.00.

Philip Morris Pakistan witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 36.90 per share closing at Rs 548.10, followed by Service Industries Limited with Rs.26.02 decline to close at Rs.649.38.

**Rupee gains 11 paise against Dollar**

Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday gained 11 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs283.78 against the previous day's closing at Rs283.89.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs283.9 and Rs286 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 45 paise to close at Rs 305.81 against the last day's closing of Rs305.36, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen went

up by 02 paise and closed at Rs1.95; whereas an increase of 85 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs356.68 compared to the last closing of Rs355.83.

**Gold rates decline further by Rs.1,800 per tola**

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.1,800 and was sold at Rs.213,600 on Tuesday compared to its sale at Rs.215,400 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.1,543 to Rs.183,128 from Rs.184,671 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.167,867 from Rs.169,282, 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 \$13 to \$2,005 from \$2,018, the Association reported.

## Tractor assembling grew 60.68% in five months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Domestic farm tractor production during the first five months of the current financial year grew by 60.68 per cent as compared to the production of the corresponding period of the last year.

During the period from July-November, 2023 about 20,937 tractors were locally assembled as compared to the assembling of 13,030 tractors of the corresponding period of last year.

Meanwhile, the sales of locally assembled tractors during the period under review grew by 98.19 per cent as compared to the sales of the same period of last year, according to the data of PAMA.

During the period under review, Massey Ferguson produced 13,085 tractors as compared to the production

of 6,417 tractors, which was higher by 103.91 per cent when compared with the assembling of the same period of the last year.

Meanwhile, the sales of the company also remained on an encouraging growth trajectory as it grew by 124.13 per cent and sold about 13,000 tractors as compared to the sale of 5,800 tractors in the same period of last year.

In the first five months of the current financial year, Fiat assembled 7,852 tractors as compared to the production of 6,613 as the output of the company grew by 14.01 per cent.

The wheat crop has been sown across more than 20.62 million acres of land in various crop-growing regions during the current Rabi season in order to

meet staple food requirements as well as to maintain strategic reserves throughout the year.

The crop sowing targets for the current season (2023-24) were fixed at 22.23 million acres as the cultivation targets achieved by 92.77 per cent.

During the period from July to November 2023, the sales of Fiat were recorded at 7,806 tractors as against the sale of 4,698 tractors in the same period of the last year.

The over all increase in the sale and assembling of farm tractors output would further augment the government's overall endeavours for farm mechanization as well as enhancing the output of different major and minor crops to ensure food safety and security in the country.



ISLAMABAD: A labourer carrying sack of onion on his back at Islamabad fruit and vegetable market.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Kyparissia, Marlin Hera and DSI Drammen carrying Container, Mogas and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Oil Terminal and Bulk Cargo Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile four more ships, AgiosPorfyrios, Al-Deebal, MSC Jemima and MSC Munda-VIII carrying Soya Bean Seed, LNG and Containers also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port during last 24 hours.

A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Chem-road Quest, Majestic Noor and Kyparissia are expected to sail on today afternoon.

Cargo volume of 90,861 tonnes, comprising 60,414 tonnes imports cargo and 30,447 tonnes export cargo carried in 1,730 Containers (720 TEUs Imports and 1,010 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 11 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them five ships, New Asoura, MSC Munda-VIII, MSC Jemima, GaschemWarnow and Al-Deebal schedule to load/offload Cement, Containers, Chemicals and LNG are expected to take berths at Multi-Purpose Terminal, Container Terminal, Engro Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on Tuesday, while two more container ships, Wide Alpha and Maersk Seletar are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Wednesday.

## Tokyo's Nikkei closes higher

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo's key stock index closed higher Tuesday but trimmed earlier gains as traders eyed a major government corruption scandal.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index added 0.16 percent, or 51.90 points, to end at 32,843.70, while the broader Topix index slipped 0.23 percent, or 5.39 points, to 2,353.16.

Local media reported that Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is set to fire several top ministers who are under investigation for allegedly failing to report income from political fundraising parties.

Poll ratings for Kishida's government are at their lowest levels since he took office two years ago. And the scandal widened on Tuesday with a faction within the ruling party headed until recently by Kishida reportedly now also implicated.

Investors were also looking ahead to a key US inflation report later in the day and the Federal Reserve's last monetary policy decision of 2023, which is due Wednesday.

The dollar stood at 145.31 yen, against 146.09 yen seen in New York.

The Japanese currency surged last week to a four-and-a-half-month high on comments from Bank of Japan officials including governor Kazuo Ueda that were taken as hints they could end the long-running negative interest rates policy next week. But it fell back Monday on reports that the bank saw no immediate need to tighten monetary policy. Sony Group advanced 0.19% to 13,040 yen, while Nintendo climbed 0.79% to 6,945 yen.

## ‘Sufficient urea stocks available’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary Ministry of Industries and Production Asad Rehman Gilani on Tuesday said the federal government had sufficient urea stocks to fulfill needs of the farming community across the country.

"In November, the government provided 700,000 additional urea bags to Punjab against its demand; 425,000 bags to Sindh and 18000 MT to Balochistan," he said while addressing a news conference along with Minister for Information

and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi, Minister for Interior Sarfarz Ahmed Bugti and Minister for Petroleum Muhammad Ali. Elaborating, he said the government provided 414,000 Metric Ton (MT) urea to Punjab against its demand of 380,000 metric ton; 164,000 MT to Sindh against 142,000 MT demand and 30,500 MT to Balochistan against 21,000 MT.

However, he said 22,600 MT of urea was provided to Khyber Pakhunkhwa

(KPK) against its 24,900 MT demand, he added.

He said in a categorical term that there was no shortage of urea across the country, as the government took timely decision and placed an order to import 220,000 metric ton urea, which would be arriving during last ten days of the current month.

By January-mid, the secretary said 220,000 MT stocks of import urea in addition to the domestic reserves would be available in the country.

## SNGPL crackdown against gas pilferers continued

### F.P. Report

LAHORE: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 124 connections while 349 under billing cases processed and imposed fine of Rs 7.4 million.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 17 connections on illegal use of gas while another 15 on use of compressor and three under billing cases have been processed. The team also imposed fine of Rs 0.56 million against gas theft and under billing cases.

The regional team of Rawalpindi disconnected 2 connections on illegal use of gas. The regional team of Islamabad disconnected 3

connections on illegal use of gas.

In Multan 5 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas, 136 under billing cases have been processed and amount of Rs 0.226 million booked against under billing and gas theft cases.

The team of Sheikhpura disconnected 37 connections on illegal use of gas, 41 under billing cases have been processed and fine of Rs 5.378 million imposed against gas pilfers. In Sargodha 3 connections were disconnected on use of compressor.

In Peshawar and Karak, the company disconnected 36 connections on account of direct use of gas illegal use of gas and amount of Rs 0.6793 million against gas theft cases. The team

also lodged one FIR against gas pilfers.

In Mardan 30 under billing cases have been processed. The team also imposed a fine of Rs 0.05 million against gas pilfers.

The team of Bahawalpur disconnected 1 connection on illegal use of gas, 133 under billing cases have been processed. The team also imposed fine of Rs 0.1321 against gas theft and under billing cases.

In Sahiwal, two connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas while another 1 on use of compressor.

In Faisalabad two connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas, 6 under billing cases have been processed and amount of Rs 0.05 million booked against gas theft cases.

## PCMEA and CTI create awareness

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) and Carpet Training Institute (CTI) have started a comprehensive programme to create awareness among the students of schools, colleges and universities about hand-woven carpet industry and its export to different countries under which visits to PCMEA office and CTI are being arranged for students from government and private educational institutions.

In this regard, students of LEO's Workshop along with their teachers visited the PCMEA office here Tuesday. Former Chairman of the Association Maj. (R) Akhtar Nazir, Senior Member of Carpet Training Institute Saeed Khan, Executive Member Faisal Saeed Khan and Asif Nazir Khan were also present.

Akhtar Nazir welcomed the students and informed them about the history of Pakistan's handmade carpets industry. On this occasion, students were shown

videos of different stages of making carpets by hand.

During a question and answer session, Asif Nazir Khan informed the students in detail about the industry of handmade carpets and answered the questions asked by the teachers and students.

Later, the students were also shown the different stages of making carpets at the CTI, in which they expressed special interest. Souvenirs were also presented to the students on this occasion.

## US stocks extend rally, yen retreats against dollar

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Wall Street stocks rose Monday ahead of a deluge of key economic news, extending a rally while the yen retreated from a recent advance. All three major indices finished the day higher, with the Dow ending at its highest level in nearly two years.

This week's heavy schedule includes the November reading for the consumer price index and retail sales, as well as the Federal Reserve's last monetary policy decision of 2023.

"The market is taking a cautiously optimistic view ahead of some catalysts," said Art Hogan of B Riley Wealth Management.

"You enter a new week, momentum continued to carry through," he added. Earlier, Paris pushed

higher, not far from its record high in April, while the Dax set a new intraday record above 16,800 and a new closing record. London weakened, meanwhile.

The Fed's announcement Wednesday will be followed by interest rate decisions from the European Central Bank and the Bank of England on Thursday.

With all three expected to hold borrowing costs after hiking multiple times to combat high inflation, traders will be looking for clues in the banks' statements on when rate cutting is likely to start as the pace of price rises cool.

"Central bank meetings of the Federal Reserve, European Central Bank and the Bank of England are likely to be crucial in managing expectations

when it comes to the timing and pace of when markets can expect to see rate cuts begin," said Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets UK.

With markets pricing in four US interest rate cuts starting from May, markets could gyrate if the Fed drops a surprise. The yen retreated against the dollar on waning expectations that the Bank of Japan would tighten its ultra-loose monetary policy next week, before paring losses.

While many central banks have hiked interest rates sharply over the past couple of years in a bid to tame soaring prices, the BoJ has refused to shift from its long-term programme of sub-zero rates to kickstart the world's number three economy.



**In brief****Mirpur pitch rated unsatisfactory**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Cricket Council (ICC) has rated the pitch for the second Test of the ICC World Test Championship series between Bangladesh and New Zealand at Shere Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur as "unsatisfactory" under the ICC Pitch and Outfield Monitoring Process. ICC Match Referee, David Boon, submitted his report to the ICC expressing the concerns of the match officials and after consulting with the captains of both teams, said a press release. Following the assessment, the venue has received one demerit point. The report has been forwarded to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), who now have 14 days if they wish to appeal against the sanction. Boon said, "The outfield was very good and held up extremely well with the rain. However, it appeared that the pitch may have been under-prepared, as it was not hard and was covered in grass clippings on day one. From the first session onwards, throughout the remainder of the match, the bounce was inconsistent with numerous balls bursting the surface. Deliveries from spin bowlers often went over the batter's shoulder when playing forward and then occasionally stayed very low."

**Lukaku banned for one match**

MILAN (Agencies): Romelu Lukaku has been given a one-match ban after being sent off late in Roma's dramatic draw with Fiorentina for a tackle on Christian Kouame. Serie A said on Tuesday. Lukaku was shown a straight red card in the 87th minute of Sunday's 1-1 draw in Rome after clattering into Kouame, leaving Roma with nine men after Nicola Zalewski was sent off midway through the second half. Ivory Coast forward Kouame was not seriously injured by the tackle and Lukaku was spared a potential three-match ban for violent conduct. That means that Lukaku will only miss Sunday's trip to high-flying Bologna, who are level on 25 points with fourth-placed Roma and have won their last four home matches. The Belgium striker's absence leaves Roma short-handed in attack as Paulo Dybala picked up the latest in a string of muscular injuries shortly after setting up Lukaku's fifth-minute opener. Dybala's replacement Sarder Azmoun also suffered a thigh injury and will miss the weekend's match and his team's final Europa League group match against Sheriff on Thursday. Escaping sanction completely was Ibrahim Sulemana, who has not been punished by the authorities despite knocking out Kristian Thorstvedt's teeth in Monday's last gasp 2-1 win over Sassuolo. Cagliari moved out of the relegation zone after two stoppage-time goals turned the match around, but Sulemana wasn't even booked after elbowing Thorstvedt in the mouth and leaving the Norway midfielder bleeding from the mouth. Italian media report that Thorstvedt, who finished the match, picked up two teeth from the field and showed them to Sassuolo coach Alessio Dionisi. Maurizio Mariani judged the incident to be an accident and VAR officials did not get involved to sanction Sulemana.

# Pakistan beat Afghanistan to reach U-19 Asia Cup semi-final

DUBAI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan U19 head to the semi-finals of ACC U19 Asia Cup 2023 riding on a three-match winning streak. After beating Nepal U19 and India U19 earlier in the tournament, Pakistan U19 defeated Afghanistan U19 by 83 runs at the ICC Cricket Academy Ground in Dubai.

The Saad Baig-led side posted 303 in the first innings, on the back of half-centuries by Shamyul Hussain, Shahzaib Khan and Riazullah Khan. In turn, Afghanistan U19 were bowled out for 220.

After being invited to bat first, Pakistan opening batters Shamyul and Shahzaib stitched a masterful partnership that yielded 115 runs. Shamyul took charge from the get-go, hitting 75 from 54 and showcasing seven boundaries and five maximums, to put pressure on the opposition.

Afghanistan U19 captain Naseer Khan Maroofkheil trapped Shamyul LBW to break the partnership. He struck again soon after to take Mohammad Tayyab Arif out the same way. At the halfway mark, Pakistan U19 were 154-2 with Shahzaib and Riazullah on the crease. The two batted together to add 76 runs more to the total.

Shahzaib was the next batter to walk back to the pavilion, when he was

caught off Faridoon Dawoodzai's bowling after scoring 79 from 95, including nine fours and a six. In his subsequent over, Dawoodzai also removed Ararat Minhas. Shortly after, right-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed struck on two consecutive deliveries to dismiss Saad and Mohammad Zeeshan.

Azan Awais, who had an unbeaten century in the previous game, joined Riazullah on the crease. He scored 20 from 19, including three boundaries, before he fell to Dawoodzai for the latter's third wicket of the day.

Riazullah was the third Pakistan batter to get a half-century (73, 69b, 5x4s, 2x6s) in the innings, ensuring that the team were in a position to put up a solid total, before he got out to left-arm seamer Bashir Ahmad in the 46th over. He took two more wickets in his next over to bowl out Pakistan for 303 in 48 overs.

Right-arm fast Khubaib Khalil, playing his first game of the tournament, landed an early blow on Afghanistan U19 as he took out Khalid Taniwal in just the fourth over.

His fellow quick, Ubaid Shah, struck on the third ball of his spell to remove Jamshid Zadrin. On the last delivery of the following over, Wafiullah

Tarakhil (32, 34b, 6x4s) fell victim to Khubaib, after hitting four boundaries on the trot. Afghanistan U19 were reduced to 52-3 at the end of the first powerplay.

Ubaid inflicted further damage on the Afghanistan batting when he rattled the stumps to send Sohail Khan back to the pavilion.

Numan Shah was the top-scorer for Afghanistan U19, hitting a fighting half-century (54, 78b, 4x4s, 1x6) to keep his team alive in the game. He eventually fell to Ubaid, who completed a three-wicket haul.

Maroofkheil also chipped in with 26 from 61 including a boundary, before he was caught off Tayyab's bowling. Two subsequent batters, Allah Ghazanfar and Khaleel Ahmed, also fell to Tayyab shortly after.

Shamyul picked up the last wicket as Dawoodzai (32, 41b, 2x4s, 1x6) was caught by Shahzaib to end the Afghanistan U19 batting, awarding Pakistan U19 a victory by 83 runs.

Both semi-finals of the ACC U19 Asia Cup are scheduled to take place at 1030 PKT on 15 December.

Scores in brief:

Pakistan U19 beat Afghanistan U19 by 83 runs Pakistan U19 303 all out, 48 overs (Shahzaib Khan 79, Shamyul Hussain 75, Riazullah Khan 73; Faridoon Dawoodzai 3-49,

Bashir Ahmad 3-51, Naseer Khan Maroofkheil 2-44, Khaleel Ahmed 2-69) Afghanistan U19 220 all out, 48.4 overs (Numan Shah 54, Faridoon Dawoodzai 32, Naseer Khan Maroofkheil 26; Ubaid Shah 3-19, Tayyab Arif 3-51, Khubaib Khalil 2-45, Shamyul Hussain 1-8, Amir Hassan 1-29) Player of the match – Shamyul Hussain (Pakistan U19).

## Puma to end sponsorship of Israel's national football team in 2024

BERLIN (Agencies): Sports brand Puma will stop sponsoring Israel's national football team in 2024, according to a company spokesperson.

The move was planned since last year and is not related to consumer boycott calls against Israel amid the Gaza war, the spokesperson for the German sportsware firm said on Tuesday.

Puma has long faced boycott calls over its brand alliance with the Israel Football Association (IFA), but such calls have intensified during Israel's two-month offensive in Gaza, which has killed more than 18,000 Palestinians.

In a statement emailed to the Reuters news agency, a Puma spokesperson said the company's contracts with several federations, including Serbia and Israel, were due to expire in 2024 and would not be renewed.

The spokesperson said Puma would soon announce deals with several new national teams, as part of its "fewer-bigger-better strategy". An internal Puma memo viewed by the Financial Times, which first reported the news, also confirmed the shake-up.

The memo said Puma would continue to "evaluate all other existing partnerships as well as any other upcoming opportunities to ensure we have a strong roster of national teams", the newspaper reported. Puma first signed its contract with the IFA to provide kit to players in 2018.

Since then, the company has faced boycott calls from activists, who say the IFA also includes teams based in Jewish-only settlements in the occupied West Bank, which are illegal under international law. Global firms supportive of Israel have faced growing boycott calls by the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divest, Sanctions (BDS) movement before and during the Gaza war.



## FIH Hockey Junior World Cup Spain beat Pakistan to move to semifinal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Spain made a strong comeback to hand Pakistan a 4-2 defeat in the quarterfinal of the FIH Hockey Junior World Cup in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Tuesday.

Pakistan's Ghazanfar put up a brilliant show in the 12th minute of the first quarter as he ran from the right, assisting his captain Hannan Shahid to slot it home to make it 1-0, according to information made available here by

Pakistan Hockey Federation.

Pakistan was ahead in the game till the half time, but the tables turned in the third quarter as Spain exhibited renewed energy and passion, scoring four consecutive goals in the 37th, 38th, 41st and 45th minutes of the game.

Spain's tournament top-scorer Pol Cabre-Verdiel levelled the match, while Bozal Aleix scored through a penalty corner to make it a 2-1. Espino

Pablo then netted the third goal to make it 3-1.

Sufyan scored a goal for Pakistan through a penalty corner in the 43rd minute to reduce the lead. But Aleix scored his second goal of the night to make it 4-2.

The semifinal lineup of the event has been completed as Germany, India, France and Spain have qualified. Pakistan will play against Australia on December 14 for the 5th position match.

## 9th Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan C'ships commence

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 9th Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan National Ranking Tennis Championships 2023 commenced at the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) SDA Tennis Complex, Islamabad on Tuesday.

The prestigious tennis event is held annually in memory of the late Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan, mother of the President PTF Senator Salim Saifullah Khan. Anwar Saifullah Khan, former federal minister was the chief guest and Senator Usman Saifullah Khan was the guest of honour at the opening ceremony.

Anwar Saifullah Khan said that the championship was very close to his heart because it was in the loving memory of his late mother, as the event refreshed her memories. He wished all the participants the very best in the event.

The opening ceremony was also attended by Saeed Ahmad Khan, Senior Vice President PTF, Col.Gul Rehman (R) Secretary General PTF and a large number of fans, players, coaches and mediapersons. The event is sponsored by the Saif Group of

Companies.

A large number of players, including all the top players Aqeel Khan, Muhammad Shoaib, Muzammil Murtaza, Muhammad Abid, Barkatullah, Shahzad Khan, Yousaf Khalil, Heera Ashiq, Sarah Ibrahim Khan, Meheq Khokhar and Amna Ali Qayum are participating in the mega event.

As many as 296 entries have been received in six different categories – Men's, Singles, Men's Doubles, Ladies Singles, Boys 18&under Singles, Boys 14&under Singles, and Boys/Girls 12&under Singles.

**Results: Men's Singles 1st Round:** Hamid Israr bt Zaryab Khan 5-7,7-6(1), 7-6(2); Barkatullah bt M. Huzafa Khan 6-3,6-0;

Ahmed Nael Qureshi bt Huzaima Abdul Rehman 6-0,6-0; Hasheesh Kumar bt Hamza Roman 6-3,6-3; Muzammil Murtaza bt Uzair Khan 6-2,6-1; Mudassir Murtaza bt Syed Nofil Kaleem 6-2,6-1; Yousaf Khalil bt Ahtesham Humayun 6-0,6-2; M.Salar bt Abdul Haider 6-4,6-4; Muhammad Shoaib bt M. Hamza Aasim 6-2,6-3;

Shahzad Khan bt Saqib Hayat 7-6(4),6-4; Muhammad Abid bt Imran Bhatti 6-1,6-0; Abdullah Adnan bt Faizan Fayyaz 6-0,6-2; Sami Zeb Khan bt Ahmed Babar 6-4,6-2; M. Talha Khan bt Abbas Khan 6-1,6-2; Aqeel Khan bt Asad Zaman 6-0,6-2;

**Boys Singles 18&under 1st Round:** Asad Zaman bt Abdul Basit 6-3,7-6(2); Kashan Tariq bt M.Yahya 6-4,6-4; Hamid Israr bt Azan Shahid 6-0,6-0; Mustansir Ali Khan bt Waqas Janas 6-4,7-5,6-2; Ahmed Nael Qureshi bt Inam Qadir 6-0,6-3; Nabeel Ali Qayum bt 6-3,0-6,6-1;M.Salar Khan bt Rayyan Khan 6-4,6-2

**Boys Singles 14&under 1st Round:** Muzammil Bhand bt Saqib Ali 4-1,4-0; M.Shakib bt Majid Ali Bachani 4-0,4-1

**Men's Singles Qualifying Final Round:** Asad bt Danish 6-1; Abbas Khan bt Kashan Tariq 6-3; Abdal Haider bt Rafay 6-4; Huzaima Abdul Rehman w/o Hamid; Waqas Malik bt Azeem Khan 6-3; M. Huzafa Khan bt Roshan; Zaryab Khan bt Ilham Khan Wazir 6-4; Jibrin ul Haq bt Aadil 6-2.

## Sri Lanka revokes sacking of cricket board

COLOMBO (AFP): Sri Lanka's sports minister on Tuesday revoked the sacking of the country's cricket board over allegations of corruption, in an effort to end its suspension by the Int'l Cricket Council.

Harin Fernando's decision paves the way for the ICC to end its sanctions on the board for failing to prevent "government interference" in its administration of the game. It is the latest episode in an affair that also prompted the sacking of Fernando's predecessor, who accused Sri Lanka's president of an assassination attempt.

"I signed a gazette to revoke the decision appointing an interim committee for Sri Lanka Cricket, aiming to lift our ICC suspension," Fernando posted on X, formerly known as Twitter. Fernando said he had also asked the ICC for its "observations" on an audit report into

alleged corruption by the board during the T20 World Cup last year in Australia. There was no immediate comment from the ICC.

Fernando's predecessor Roshan Ranasinghe sacked the elected board in November after accusing office-bearers of gross corruption, a charge they have denied and are challenging in court. The ICC suspended Sri Lanka as a result, saying the board had failed to prevent political interference.

The controversy over corruption in the board, the richest sporting body in the otherwise bankrupt nation, led to Ranasinghe's sacking late last month.

Ranasinghe had been at loggerheads over the running of Sri Lanka Cricket with President Ranil Wickremesinghe, refusing the latter's demands to revoke the sacking of the board.

"If I am assassinated" Ranasinghe told parliament last month that he feared for his life over his work "to clean up the cricket board". "If I am assassinated on the road, the president and his chief of staff will be responsible," he had said.

After the ICC issued its ban in November, Sri Lanka lost the hosting rights for next month's Under-19 World Cup, which has since been shifted to South Africa.

The ICC has rules against political interference and has suspended Sri Lanka before. This time Sri Lanka Cricket's elected members said the suspension cost the country a \$2.4 million ICC grant to develop venues to host the 16-nation tournament.

The ICC ban still allowed Sri Lanka to proceed with bilateral tournaments, with Zimbabwe scheduled to visit Colombo next month for three ODIs and three T20 matches.

## Sidra Amin's century in vain as New Zealand beat Pakistan in first ODI

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sidra Amin's fourth ODI century went in vain as New Zealand women beat Pakistan women by 131 runs in the first ODI at the John Davies Oval in Queenstown on Tuesday.

Chasing a mammoth 366 to win, openers Muneeba Ali and Sidra gave Pakistan a strong start with a 110-run partnership, according to information made available here by Pakistan Cricket Board.

This opening stand surpassed the previous record of 84 runs set by Ayesha Zafar and Nahida Khan against White Ferns in Nelson, New Zealand, in 2016.

Left-handed Muneeba was the first batter to return to the pavilion in the 19th over after scoring a 48-ball 44, hitting five fours. After the departure of Muneeba, Sadaf Shamas (replacing Nida Dar, due to injury) and Bismah Maroof were soon dismissed with 158 runs on the board in the 34th over of the innings. Aliya Riaz (14, 20b, 1x4), stand-in-captain Fatima Sana (11, 10b, 2x4s) were the other batters to register a score in double figures.

Sidra, who is also the leading run-getter in ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 with 852 runs from 16 matches, scored her third century in the ongoing championship. She struck 12 boundaries in her 117-ball 105. The touring

side were bowled out for 234 on the penultimate ball of the match.

For the hosts, Amelia Kerr bagged three wickets for 44, while Lea Tahuhu took two for 45 from seven overs.

Earlier, after being put into bat, White Ferns scored 365 for four in 50 overs. Opening pair of Suzie Bates and Bernadine Beuzidenhout added 165 runs for the first wicket. After the departure of Beuzidenhout (86, 86b, 8x4s), Kerr and Bates knitted an 82-run partnership. During the course of the partnership, right-handed batter Bates brought up her 13th century.

Following Bates' (108, 104, 11x4s) dismissal, captain Sophie Devine and Kerr added a quick-fire 107 runs for the third wicket. On the second ball of the 44th over, Pakistan captain Nida Dar was hit in the face by a shot played by Devine off her own bowling and had to leave the field. She was later ruled out of the match, and Sadaf Shamas was allowed as Nida's replacement by match referee Trudy Anderson.

Kerr (83, 69b, 6x4s) and Devine (70, 36b, 2x4s, 6x6s) were the other notable contributors with the bat.

For Pakistan, Fatima, Nashra Sandhu and Umm-e-Hani bagged a wicket each. Both sides will travel to Christchurch on Wednesday to play the remaining two ODIs of the

series at the Hagley Oval in Christchurch on 15 and 18 December, respectively.

The ODIs are part of the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25.

Scores in brief: New Zealand women beat Pakistan women by 131 runs

New Zealand 365-4, 50 overs (Suzie Bates 108, Bernadine Beuzidenhout 86, Amelia Kerr 83, Sophie Devine 70; Umm-e-Hani 1-57)

Pakistan 234 all out, 49.5 overs (Sidra Amin 105, Muneeba Ali 44; Amelia Kerr 3-44, Lea Tahuhu 2-45)

Player of the match – Suzie Bates (New Zealand) Series schedule: 3 Dec – 1st T20I, Dunedin (Pakistan women beat New Zealand women by seven wickets)

5 Dec – 2nd T20I, Dunedin (Pakistan women beat New Zealand women by 10 runs)

9 Dec – 3rd T20I, Queenstown (New Zealand women beat Pakistan women by six runs on DLS)

12 Dec – 1st ODI, Queenstown (New Zealand women beat Pakistan women by 131 runs)

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

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

## Turkish football club president arrested for punching referee on the field

ANKARA (Agencies): The Turkish Football Federation (TFF) has suspended all leagues and a court has ordered the arrest of Ankaragucu's president Faruk Koca after he punched the referee in the face at the end of his team's Super Lig home match against Rizespor.

The court on Tuesday also remanded in custody two other suspects over the incident at Ankaragucu's home match against Rizespor on Monday evening, at which referee Halil Umut Meler was also later kicked while lying on the pitch.

The TFF said it had suspended all leagues after the "shameful" incident in Ankara.

Justice Minister Yilmaz Tunc said Koca and two others were formally arrested for "injuring a public official" after prosecutors took their statements.

"The investigation is continuing meticulously," he posted on X, formerly Twitter, adding that three other suspects were also subject to judicial monitoring.

Koca entered the field and hit Meler when the final whistle blew after Rizespor scored a 97th-



minute equaliser in the 1-1 draw at Eryaman Stadium, footage from state broadcaster TRT showed.

Ankaragucu fans invaded the pitch after the game and Meler was also kicked when he fell, though it was unclear who his assailants were. Meler eventually made it to the dressing room with the help of the police.

"Turkish football has been punched shamefully tonight. Everyone involved in this incident will pay the price," TFF Chairman Mehmet Buyukeksi said, according to TRT.

"This incident developed due to the wrong decisions and provocative behaviour of the referee. My aim was to react verbally to the referee and spit in his face,"

matches in all leagues have been postponed indefinitely."

The TFF blamed the "despicable attack" on a years-long toxic culture towards referees that it said had been fostered by many players and club officials.

Erdogan said: "I condemn the attack on referee Halil Umut Meler after the MKE Ankaragucu-Caykur Rizespor match played this evening, and I wish him a speedy recovery."

"Sports means peace and brotherhood. Sports are incompatible with violence. We will never allow violence to take place in Turkish sports."

A FIFA referee since 2017, 37-year-old Meler took charge of Lazio's Champions League group game with Celtic on November 28.

Referees in Turkey are often criticised by club managers and presidents for their decisions but are rarely the target of violent attacks.

Ankaragucu are 11th in the standings on 18 points, three places below Rizespor on 22 points after 15 matches.

It is unclear when Super Lig matches will resume.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 84,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 84,700 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 38,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1484.97 feet and was 84.97 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 20,100 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1165.90 feet, which was 115.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 4,800 cusecs and 26,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 60,800, 39,800, 37,600 and 7,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 6,800 cusecs of water were released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Police arrest 3 bike lifters

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested three bike lifters and recovered four stolen motorcycles from their possession, said a Police spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, Sadiqabad Police Station managed to net three bike lifters namely Shehryar, Anis and Mobeen and recovered four stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Rawal said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars. He said that on the directives of City Police Officer, Rawalpindi, the operation against the bike and car lifters had been accelerated.

### Campaign against underage drivers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi District Police have registered 147 FIRs against underage drivers during the last 24 hours, said a police spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that police on the directives of City Police Officer, Rawalpindi were taking action against underage drivers. All possible steps were being taken to improve the traffic situation on the city roads and facilitate the citizens, he added. A total of 2673 FIRs were registered under the campaign launched against underage drivers while 147 cases were registered during the last 24 hours. The CPO had directed the City Traffic Police to take solid steps to control traffic rules violations and underage driving, he said. He said fatal road accidents occur due to speeding and reckless driving of the drivers particularly underage. Underage drivers not only endanger their own lives but the lives of other road users, he said adding that parents should keep a vigilant eye on their children to avert road accidents. 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.



ISLAMABAD: Special Representative to the Prime Minister for Religious Harmony & Islamic Countries and Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi accompanied by the representative of Hajj Operative Association of Pakistan (HOPE) addressing a press conference at Ministry of Interfaith Harmony.

## Govt. committed to ensuring uninterrupted gas supply to fertilizer sectors: Minister

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Caretaker Minister for Petroleum Muhammad Ali on Tuesday said the government was committed to ensuring uninterrupted gas supply to all fertilizer plants throughout the current winter season to maximize fertilizer production. "In the current year, it has been decided that fertilizer plants will operate at full capacity without any closure during the winter months to achieve maximum fertilizer output," he said while addressing a press conference along with Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi and Minister for Interior Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti. He specifically emphasized that Fatima Fertilizer and Agritech, which traditionally closed for three months during winter, would remain operational at full capacity this year. "All plants, including Fatima Fertilizer and

Agritech plants, will be running at full capacity throughout the current winter season," he affirmed, adding the decision to keep operating all the plants at their maximum capacity was aimed to ensure a consistent and sufficient local supply of fertilizer to farmers. Responding to a question, Muhammad Ali said the government had ordered two Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) cargoes for December and one for January to meet domestic gas requirements. However, he acknowledged that the country currently faced insufficient gas production to meet demand, with local gas reserves depleting by approximately 10 percent annually. At the same time, consumption continued escalating with each passing day, he added. The minister also said that the government was actively working to improve the infrastructure

for Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) supply across the country. He mentioned ongoing efforts to revise the LPG policy, with certain proposed changes, and hinted that it would soon be presented to the cabinet for approval. Regarding the exploration sector, he acknowledged that inefficient policies of the past led international companies to leave the country due to non-payment. However, he assured that the government was working to give a boost to the exploration of new hydrocarbon reservoirs and local gas production to meet domestic requirements. Responding to another query about the removal of the Managing Director of Saindak Metals Limited (SML), Minister Muhammad Ali clarified that the decision was made in line with the prevailing laws and service rules of the company, under the instructions of the Islamabad High Court.

## SAPM Malik urges CWAs to boost overseas employment opportunities for Pakistanis

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 the Government of Pakistan, according to a press release issued here. 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 Pakistani 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 eco-

nomie 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 comprehensive approach is designed to ensure the well-being and seamless integration of Pakistani expatriates in their respective host countries. "The Ministry of Overseas Pakistani 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 after the meeting.

## Australia supports workshops on gender-sensitive media reporting

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Australian High Commission, in partnership with the Center for Excellence in Journalism, organised a workshop to raise awareness of violence against women. The event was linked to the 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women and aimed to encourage gender-sensitive reporting among media professionals. Speaking about the workshop today, Australia's High Commissioner to Pakistan His Excellency Neil Hawkins, said that girls and women are increasingly vulnerable to violence, particularly during economic downturns, pandemics, climate change and natural disasters. Promoting women and girls' rights by ensuring victims of violence are portrayed in the media in a compassionate and dignified manner, is morally important and consistent with Pakistan's values. "Australia is also sharing our expertise with Pakistani farmers by improving water management and agriculture, with a particular focus on women. We are working with communities to ensure water, sanitation, and health services are climate-resilient and inclusive of women and

girls," he added. By supporting this workshop, Australia aims to raise awareness about the vulnerability of women and girls to violence, and challenge social and cultural norms that perpetuate violence against women. During the workshop, renowned Pakistani Australian journalist Kamal Siddiqi and other experienced Pakistani journalists shared insights on the transformative role media can play in preventing violence against women and girls. Journalists reporting on women's rights, including news editors from various mainstream media outlets, attended the event. Trainer Kamal Siddiqi emphasised the urgency of addressing gender-based violence in Pakistan. "The country ranks sixth in the world for danger to women, with discrimination stemming from cultural, religious, and traditional practices. To combat this issue, the media must raise awareness and play a crucial role in educating the public." "Such training can not only help journalists understand how to better report on gender-based violence but also develop an alliance where media persons can support each other as well as exchange ideas and information," he added.

## Mushaal Malik urges world forums to stop India over demographic changes in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women's Empowerment Mashaal Hussain Malik on Tuesday urged the international community, including the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and human rights organizations, to address new "demographic changes" in the IIOJK. Indian government must be stopped from any further illegal activity in the occupied territory, she appealed while talking to a private news channel. India was changing the population ratio in the IIOJK and Kashmiris were being robbed of their land to make them financially weak, she added. Mushaal said to occupy the lands of Kashmiris India was issuing millions of domiciles to Indian in Kashmir valley.

Mushaal said India was going to commit the biggest robbery of the century in Kashmir by displacing Kashmiris from their own homes and throwing into the streets. Indian hegemonic policies are posing serious threats to South Asia, she said, adding, that India is repeatedly using negative tactics to gain political mileage because elections are due in India next year, she added. The international community should stop appeasing India and should contain India's fundamentalism and extremism because it will affect the peace and stability of the entire world, she urged. Pakistan is continuing to expose India at international forums to refrain India from state-sponsored terrorism, particularly in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, he added.

### ANF seizes over 320 kg drugs in three operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting three operations across the country managed to recover 320 kg of drugs and arrested three accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that in an operation conducted in Gali Jalal Khak of the Qila Abdullah area and recovered over 271 kg of hashish hidden in a house was recovered. 48 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Motorway Toll Plaza Charsadda while two accused were arrested during the operation. 1.2 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle near Chungi No. 26, Islamabad and an accused was arrested.

## Anti drug awareness campaign on full swing

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police have initiated a special awareness campaign to eradicate use of narcotics from the federal capital and ensure the safety of the youth from the curse of drugs. Police teams have conducted special lectures in various educational institutions to educate students about the harms of drugs and preventive measures. The Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan highlighted that Islamabad Capital Police

has launched a special awareness campaign to rid the federal capital of narcotics and safeguard the young generation from the curse of drugs. During this campaign, the police teams have delivered lectures in various educational institutes about the harms of drugs and preventive measures, emphasizing that drug abuse is detrimental to the health and future of students. Students are urged to protect themselves and contribute to saving their surroundings from the curse of drugs. Parents and teachers

are encouraged to collaborate in preventing youth from falling victim to drugs. The police teams have appealed to the public to immediately inform the police about any drug-related activities in their vicinity. The cooperation of the public is deemed crucial for the successful eradication of this menace. Islamabad Capital Police and Anti-Narcotics Force are jointly working to combat drug trafficking, while special teams have been formed to apprehend drug peddlers in educational institutions.

## Implementation Committee reviews progress on Diamer Basha, Mohmand Dams

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Implementation Committee on Diamer Basha and Mohmand Dams (ICDBMD), constituted by the Supreme Court of Pakistan reviewed progress on both projects in its meeting held here Tuesday at ICDBMD Secretariat. The meeting held with Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA)/ICDBMD Chairman Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd) in the Chair, was also attended by Chief Secretary Gilgit Baltistan, Additional Secretary (Budget) Finance Division and Secretary/ Senior Member Board of Revenue Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) via Zoom, said a press release.

Additional Chief Secretary (Development) KP, Joint Secretary PM Office, ICDBMD Secretary/Joint Secretary Ministry of Water Resources, Representative of Chief (Water) Planning, Development and Reforms Division and other senior officers were present on the occasion. The Chairman WAPDA while addressing the meeting, expressed satisfaction over the progress made by the ICDBMD and its Sub Committees for early implementation of Diamer Basha and Mohmand Dam Projects. The Chairman said that the Dams Committee has been contributing towards the implementation of

both vital projects. He thanked the participants and expressed that the ICDBMD forum can play a pivotal and effective role in overseeing and resolving the issues being faced during the execution of both projects. Member (Finance) WAPDA later briefed the meeting on the financial matters of the two projects. General Manager Land Acquisition & Resettlement, Chief Executive Officer Diamer Basha Dam Company and General Manager Mohmand Dam also made detailed presentations to the participants about the progress and the issues relating to both Projects.

## HEC announces LAW-GAT 2024, for LLB Graduates

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced the schedule of the LAW Graduate Assessment Test (LAW-GAT), which will be held on January 07, 2024. According to official sources, the Law Graduate Assessment Test is compulsory for all LLB graduates who wish to seek Bar Council Registration. Applications for LAW-GAT 2023 can be submitted online at the HEC portal latest by December 25, 2023. The candidates who have passed a Bachelor's degree in Law or equivalent from a university recognized by HEC/PBC can register themselves online through <http://etc.hec.gov.pk>. Applications can be submitted online at the HEC website. The test is compulsory for all LLB graduates before entering the legal profession for practising law. The test will consist of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs). Applicants who have registered

through the HEC online registration process will download their Roll Number Slip through <http://etc.hec.gov.pk> a week before the test date. Email/SMS will be sent to registered applicants regarding the test date time, and venue. Candidates are required to provide a valid email/mobile number while filling out the online application form. A print of the Roll Number Slip and original CNIC will be required to enter the Test Centre. As per eligibility criteria for HEC Law GAT 2024, the persons having passed a Bachelor's degree in Law from a university recognized by HEC and PBC are eligible to apply. Meanwhile, according to the details of HEC-Law GAT Test Centers, it will be conducted in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Sukkur, Abbottabad, Quetta, Multan, Hyderabad, Turbat, Bahawalpur, Peshawar, Muzaffarabad, Faisalabad

and Gilgit. The applicants may select any test Centre from the list available in the application form. The test will only be held at any of the above Centers if a minimum of 250 applicants will select that Centre. Test Centre once selected will not be changed after registration. The candidates are asked to visit the following link: <http://etc.hec.gov.pk> for online registration, in case of any difficulty during online registration, please visit [onlinehelp.hec.gov.pk](http://onlinehelp.hec.gov.pk) or visit HEC Secretariat or HEC Regional Centers for guidance. It is worth mentioning here that A 50% score is required to pass the Law Graduate Assessment Test (Law-GAT). The applicants will have to meet other criteria, if any, as per the Rules and Regulations of PBC. The applicants will have a maximum of three chances to clear the Law-GAT test.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister of State for Tourism and Chairman of PTDC, Wasi Shah, witnessing MoU signing ceremony between Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation and University of Baluchistan, Skardu to Establish Center of Excellence for Mountain Tourism at Skardu at Trail-5 Margalla Hills National Park.



### Earthquake jolts Badakhshan

KABUL (BNA): A relatively strong earthquake occurred around 6:35 a.m on Tuesday, shaking some regions of Badakhshan. Local sources in the Badakhshan province have confirmed the occurrence of earthquake but have not reported any potential casualties or damages so far. Meanwhile, US Geological Survey website has declared the intensity of this earthquake as 4.9 on the Richter scale, and center of it is said to be is the Jurm district of Badakhshan.

### Envoy meets Qatari officials

KABUL (TOLOnews): Thomas West, the US Special Representative for Afghanistan, continued his regional trip by discussing support for refugees and the human rights situation in Afghanistan with Qatari officials. West, on Tuesday, expressed his gratitude for the efforts to support the people of Afghanistan in a meeting with Qatar's Prime Minister, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, as stated in a message published on the social media platform X.

## 350 punishments ordered by Supreme Court in past 2 years

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Supreme Court of the Islamic Emirate said that it has issued punishment orders for nearly 350 people across the country.

The orders were implemented for those people who were sentenced by the Supreme Court to receive Hudud (the penalty laws of Islam), according to the official.

The spokesman of the Supreme Court, Abdul Rahim Rashid, said that the punishment includes whipping and prison time.

"After the Islamic Emirate came to power, the punishment orders were

implemented on nearly 350 criminals" he said.

On Sunday, a person who was accused of committing adultery was hit with 35 lashes in public, the Supreme Court said in a statement.

Some analysts said that these punishments in Islam are being implemented in the Islamic government to reduce the rate of crimes.

"This (punishment) becomes a signal to many other people of the society to not commit crime. Islam has allowed the judge to make such a decision that serves the interest of the Muslims," said Abdul Jamil

Shirani, a political analyst.

On the other hand, analyst Mohamad Asif Faqiri said that the punishment rules are determined based on the values of the ruling government after approval by representatives of the people.

"After it is approved by the representation of the people and Ulema (clerics), the judge orders punishment based on the law," he said.

This comes as the human rights watchdogs have repeatedly voiced their concerns over the violation of human rights in Afghanistan.

### Myanmar world's largest source of opium: UN

KABUL (Ariana News): Myanmar has become the world's largest source of opium, thanks to domestic instability and a decline in cultivation in Afghanistan, the United Nations said in a report on Tuesday.

The 95% decline in opium cultivation in Afghanistan after a drug ban by the Islamic Emirate in 2022 has seen global supply shifted to Myanmar, where political, social and economic instability brought about by a 2021 coup drove many to poppy farming, the UNODC report said.

Myanmar farmers now earn about 75% more from opium poppy farming, as average prices of the flower have reached about \$355 per kilogram and the cultivation area has increased by 18% year on year, from 40,100 to 47,000 hectares, boosting the potential yield to its highest level since 2001, the UNODC said.

"The economic, security and governance disruption that followed the military takeover of February 2021 continue to drive farmers in remote areas towards opium to make a living," UNODC Regional Representative Jeremy Douglas said.

Opium cultivation areas expanded most in Myanmar's border regions in northern Shan State, followed by Chin and Kachin states, as yield expanded by 16% to 22.9 kilograms per hectare because of more sophisticated farming practices, UNODC report said.

The surge in fighting between the Myanmar military and armed ethnic-minority groups will most likely accelerate the expansion of opium cultivation, Douglas said. The Myanmar junta did not respond to a Reuters request for comment.

The expansion of opium cultivation feeds into a growing illicit economy in Myanmar that include high levels of synthetic drug production and trafficking as well as other criminal enterprises from money laundering to online scam centres run by organised crime.

## Diagnosis and treatment of diseases: Medical Council develops national strategy



KABUL (BNA): The Medical Council of Afghanistan (MSA) is developing a national strategy for the diagnosis and treatment of various diseases that will be in line with international standards in the country's health sector.

According to a statement released by the

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Dr. Gul Mohammad Osman, the Chairman of this council, stated in a meeting with Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs, that they working to establish a national solution in the

field of disease diagnosis and treatment that is aligned with globally accepted standards in the country's medical sector.

Dr. Osman continued that the Medical Council is actively working to standardize the country's medical sector, and that regular inspections of hospitals

and health centers have resulted in tremendous improvement.

Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi praised the Medical Council's measures and activities, underlining their dedication to provide improved services to Afghans in all areas, particularly the health sector.

## Nearly 285,000 helped since mass deportation from Pakistan: WFP

KABUL (TOLOnews): The UN World Food Programme said that it has helped 285,000 people, including 1,560 metric tonnes of food materials and \$3.5 million cash.

The spokesman for World Food Programme (WFP), Ziauddin Safi, said that the agency needs another \$23.6 million to help 600,000 refugees deported by Pakistan.

"We are providing organic biscuits and cash for the returnees so that their needs are provided.

We are currently funding this assistance through our programs," he said.

Meanwhile, the people who have been deported voiced concerns about their situation, saying that the current rate of assistance is not sufficient.

They call on the aid organizations to provide them with further assistance.

"We call on the Islamic Emirate to provide us with shelter and land. We are happy that we are receiving assistance at Torkham but

this assistance is not sufficient," said Mohammad Wali, a returnee.

Mohammad Hossein, who has lived in Pakistan for 20 years, was recently deported by Pakistan.

"Pakistan has made life for the refugees difficult. They even didn't allow us to carry our money," he said. This comes as the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) pledged to provide the refugees with more assistance.

"Every family will be provided with 10,000 Afs

by the Islamic Emirate. Also, the IOM (International Organization of Migration) is providing over 10,000 Afs.

The UN refugee agency is providing assistance to them as well," said Abdul Rahman Rashid, Deputy Minister of Refugees and Repatriation.

Earlier, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) warned that Afghans could die in harsh winter conditions if they don't get adequate shelter once they cross the border from Pakistan.

## Religious scholars urged to join fight against AIDS — support vaccination campaigns



KABUL (BNA): The Acting Minister of Public Health, Dr. Qalandar Ebad, met with officials from the Ministries of Hajj and Religious Affairs, and Vice and Virtue as well as other sectors to discuss the strategy for combating AIDS and promoting vaccination campaigns.

He stressed the impor-

tance of the role of religious scholars in raising awareness and supporting the Ministry of Public Health in controlling AIDS and administering vaccines, including COVID-19, polio, and other vaccines.

He also mentioned the achievements of the Ministry of Public Health

and the contribution of the country's scholars in this field.

The officials from the relevant ministries expressed their willingness to cooperate and to mobilize the honorable scholars to join the fight against deadly diseases through mosques, seminars, and other facilities.

## Minister warns against low-quality goods



KABUL (BNA): The Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, Nooruddin Azizi, met with major suppliers of raw materials and other stakeholders today to discuss the market situation and the impact of the Afghan currency appreciation on the prices of essential goods.

According to a statement from the ministry, Azizi exchanged views with offi-

cials of chambers of commerce and shopkeepers, heads of various trade unions in Kabul, importers of essential materials, and officials of transportation companies.

He also received information on the prices of raw materials and essential goods in different sectors.

Azizi said that the ministry does not interfere in the market but tries to ensure

fair competition among suppliers and consumers.

He added that the ministry closely monitors the market and does not tolerate any violations, such as selling low-quality goods or creating artificial scarcity to increase prices.

He warned that the Islamic Emirate would take action against anyone who harms the people by such practices.

## Several girls graduate from sewing and leatherworking course in Kabul

KABUL (Khaama Press): Despite the restrictions imposed by the Taliban administration on women, two organizations celebrated the graduation of 30 girls from vocational training programs in sewing and leatherworking in the western part of Kabul.

On Monday, the "Arvin and redevelopment of Society" training centres celebrated the graduation of 30 women, previously deprived of school and university education, in sewing and leatherworking. The event was notably attended by many women and girls, highlighting their achievements in these fields.

The extensive participation of women and girls in this ceremony was particularly striking, especially during a time when the Islamic Emirate is making efforts to marginalize women and concerns over the eroding agency of women have significantly intensified.

Officials from these

institutions state that despite the lack of job opportunities for girls and women in the country, they are training them in handicrafts to help them achieve self-sufficiency and financial independence.

Shirin Arvin, head of the Arvin Training Center, said: "This is the sixteenth batch of girls we have graduated in handicrafts training. Today, another 30 girls who have been trained in sewing and leatherworking have completed their courses."

Hajira Mohammadi, one of the trainees in sewing and leatherworking, says she turned to sewing training after educational courses were banned. She is now able to work in this field.

Having completed grade twelve, she encourages other girls to learn English and pursue their education abroad.

Zaher Sultani, a teacher and founder of the Zuhur Training Center, emphasized the importance and necessity of educational



institutions in the country at the girls' graduation ceremony. He described the deprivation of girls from education as an irreparable blow to society.

Mr. Sultani also urged girls deprived of education to fill the educational gap by using available tech-

nologies and social networks to acquire education and knowledge.

According to a report by Khaama Press, more than dozens of women entrepreneurs are active in the handicrafts and women's clothing sales sectors in western Kabul, creating job

opportunities for hundreds of other women.

Meanwhile, an English language training institute in western Kabul is preparing girls for scholarships to study abroad. Currently, more than 500 girls are being taught English at this center.

## Afghanistan excluded from COP28 as climate impacts hit home

KABUL (Ariana News): Humanitarian concerns have been raised over Afghanistan being left out of United Nations climate negotiations for a third year in a row, as the country grapples with worsening drought and floods, Reuters reported.

Dozens of people were killed in Afghanistan, one of the world's most vulnerable countries to climate change, after heavy rains triggered flash floods that swept across drought-stricken land earlier this year.

But the country is absent from the COP28 climate summit in Dubai, having been left out of such UN talks since the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) took over Kabul in 2021.

No foreign government has formally recognised Islamic Emirate leadership, and it does not have a seat at the UN General Assembly.

Foreign officials have cited the IEA's restrictions on women as the reason for current isolationist policies, particularly its barring of girls and women from high school and universities, read the report.

However, some have questioned the country's continued exclusion. Humanitarian and international officials told Reuters they made efforts this year to allow Afghan representatives to be able to attend, coinciding with broader talks among foreign governments and multilateral institutions on how to deal

with the Islamic Emirate.

Though ultimately unsuccessful, "there's hope that maybe next year you might see engagement with Afghanistan in some capacity again," said Qiyamud Din Ikram of the nonprofit Refugees International on the sidelines of the COP28 summit.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)'s COP Bureau, which is responsible for accrediting parties to the annual summits, decided at a November 2022 meeting to defer a decision on future Afghanistan representation.

The Islamic Emirate administration has called its COP28 exclusion "regrettable". "Efforts were made to have the representatives

of Afghanistan participate in the 28th UN Climate Change Conference...but no positive response was received," said Rouhullah Amin, head of climate adaptation at the country's National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA).

A senior UN source said UN and other international officials had made efforts in recent months to get NEPA officials and other Afghan representatives present at COP28, Reuters reported.

The UNFCCC did not respond to a request for comment on Afghanistan's lack of participation at COP28.

struggles with drought.

Women make up many of the 20 million Afghans facing severe food insecurity, exacerbated by declining food aid as governments slash Afghanistan's humanitarian funding.

Some nonprofits have said isolationist policies can further hurt women, read the report.

Payvand Seyedali, Afghanistan's country director for nonprofit Women for Women International, said: "We don't have the luxury of not engaging with the de facto authorities in Afghanistan."

The Islamic Emirate say they respect women's rights in line with their interpretation of Islamic law.

Others said Afghan women feel disengagement

is appropriate until the Islamic Emirate rolls back restrictions.

"Every time they see the Taliban [IEA] being welcomed in foreign capitals, it sends a message that their (women's) rights do not matter to the rest of the world," said Heather Barr of Human Rights Watch.

The IEA's takeover of government institutions has also meant that Afghanistan is unable to access key UN climate funds, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Reuters reported.

GCF spokesperson Stephanie Speck said the fund no longer had a recognized focal point in Afghanistan following the COP Bureau's 2022 decision.

The GCF had approved nearly \$18 million for a

sustainable energy project in Afghanistan before the IEA's takeover. That project has now been "put on hold to allow for a full review of current and emerging risks", Speck said.

Other proposals that the previous Afghan government had been working on sought more than \$750 million, including for projects to improve irrigation and deploy rooftop solar panels in Kabul. They, too, have been postponed, according to a NEPA document seen by Reuters.

Some have questioned the isolationist approach to the Islamic Emirate. A report on Islamic Emirate engagement, commissioned by the UN Security Council, concluded last month that "the status quo

of international engagement is not working".

It recommended expanding international cooperation on climate adaptation and response.

"Conversations with the Taliban [IEA] on climate change adaptation could potentially be a confidence building measure," said Paul Klouman Bekken, Norway's charge d'affaires for Afghanistan who regularly meets IEA officials in Kabul.

Roza Otunbayeva, who heads the UN mission in Afghanistan, called the situation "unsustainable".

"It is time to think creatively, to ensure that in one year's time we are not approaching COP29 with yet another statement on Afghanistan's absence."



# Nawaz acquitted in Al-Azizia reference

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Tuesday overturned the conviction of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif in the Al-Azizia reference, in a major boost for the senior politician's bid to become the next prime minister of the country.

The veteran politician who arrived back home from four years of self-imposed exile in London in October, is eyeing to become the prime minister for a fourth time, according to his party. To qualify to stand in elections scheduled for February 8, 2024, he needs a lifelong ban on holding any public office to be removed.

Sharif was convicted in 2018 on corruption charges in the case for failure to justify the source of the funds provided to set up Al-Azizia Steel Mills and Hill Metal Establishment (HME) in Saudi Arabia. The high court announced the verdict it reserved after the completion of arguments from both defence and prosecution lawyers.

"It is unfortunate that if a former prime minister is facing such sham cases, then [we can't imagine] what is happening to a common man," senior lawyer Irfan Qadir told media, calling upon the judges who convicted Nawaz to apologise to the nation. He mentioned that it was the Supreme Court that had instructed the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to file references against Nawaz in light of the controversial Panama verdict.

It is worth mentioning that despite the case being pending since 2017, the NAB prosecutor failed to provide any evidence against the PML-N supremo for having assets beyond means, noting that the reference was filed based on directions from the JIT — formed on the SC's direction. An accountability court on December 24, 2018, sentenced the former prime minister to seven years in jail and imposed a fine of 2.5 million pounds in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills reference.

Nawaz had submitted an appeal against the decision of the accountability court, requesting the court to annul the imprisonment and fine awarded along with the conviction. It may be noted that Nawaz has also been acquitted in the Avenfield Apartments reference, after the high court last month accepted his appeal on the conviction in the case.

A two-member divisional bench — comprising IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb — heard Nawaz's appeal against his conviction in the Al-Azizia reference and NAB's plea seeking an extension of imprisonment awarded to the politician in the case, clubbing both the petitions together.

Nawaz, accompanied by his lawyers appeared before the court. During the hearing, when asked whether NAB had proved that the former prime minister's children were dependent on him, Wajid Zia, the prosecution's primary witness, acknowledged that there was no evidence in this regard. The court inquired on what basis was the burden of proof shifted on Nawaz.

At this, the former prime minister's legal counsel Advocate Amjad Pervez

apprised the bench that the trial court relied on the three miscellaneous applications along with Nawaz's speech in the National Assembly and his son Hussain Nawaz's TV interview. The lawyer contended that the evidence from one case cannot be used in another, especially when both cases vary in nature.

He further underscored that it was the prosecution's responsibility to assess the value of [Nawaz's] income and assets and that the former prime minister was "dependent" on his sons. "It was to be proved by the prosecution that benami assets were established [by Nawaz]." "If [the prosecution] has not provided any evidence [in this regard], then the said case doesn't fall in the category of 'assets beyond means'," the lawyer noted adding, "There is no such case where the accused was sentenced on accounts of lack of clear and logical proof regarding the ownership [of the assets]."

Responding to Pervez's arguments, the NAB prosecutor apprised the court that the references were filed in the accountability court on the directions of the Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) which also constituted a joint investigation team (JIT) to probe the references. The NAB official further maintained that the anti-graft body investigated the issue of benami assets following the SC decision.

He informed the court that charges against Nawaz were framed under the allegations of corrupt practices. He said that the decision of the accountability court of Al-Azizia reference is "biased". Justice Hassan remarked that NAB can give the arguments on merit and have the conviction upheld.

Meanwhile, Justice Farooq directed the NAB prosecutor to state the facts and then link them with the case in his arguments based on merit. The court, however, turned down NAB's request to remand the case back to the trial court once again and approved Nawaz's appeal against the conviction. Hussain, who is the elder son of the former prime minister, claimed that he had received a sum of \$5.4 million from his grandfather to establish the steel conglomerate in Saudi Arabia. The payment was made by a Qatari royal on the request of Nawaz. Thereafter, scrap machinery was transported from their Ahli Steel Mills in Dubai to Jeddah to establish Al-Azizia in 2001.

Meanwhile, the JIT constituted to investigate the graft allegations insisted that the real owner of the mills was Nawaz, and it was being operated by his son on his behalf. At that time, Hussain was 29-years-old. The JIT also held that Nawaz received 97% profit as 'gifts' from Hill Metals Establishment, another company established by Hussain in 2005, in Saudi Arabia. Nawaz transferred 77% of the said amount to his daughter, Maryam Nawaz Sharif. Here as well, the NAB claimed that since Nawaz received a large profit from Hussain's companies, he is the real owner and not his son. However, during the proceedings, the NAB could not substantiate its claim through documentary evidence and instead placed the burden of proof on the accused.

## Pakistan joins Marrakesh Treaty

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday became the signatory to the Marrakesh Treaty aimed at providing access to published work for visually impaired persons. President Dr Arif Alvi inked the instrument of accession to the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) administered Marrakesh Treaty, at a special ceremony held here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The Marrakesh Treaty aims to help the visually impaired or otherwise print-disabled people have access to books and literary works in accessible formats. Signed in Morocco on June 27, 2013, and joined by a large number of countries in the world, the Treaty enables the reproduction of published materials into accessible formats, such as braille, large print, and audio editions.

By acceding to the Treaty, Pakistan has become able to provide its estimated 10 million visually impaired persons easy access to published work. The facility otherwise has been restricted due to the Copyright Ordinance of 1962 which does not provide necessary provisions for compulsory printing and reproduction of braille and audio versions. President Alvi termed the accession to the Marrakesh Treaty a "great moment of pride" and said Pakistan had embarked upon a new pathway to empower its visually impaired people.

He said the Marrakesh Treaty would act as an equalizer of opportunity to provide visually challenged persons equitable access. "The Treaty will create an environment of learning and equal opportunity for educating the neglected class of the society," he said. He said it was the responsibility of the State to accommodate its differently-abled citizens by providing them equal opportunities in all fields of life, particularly education and employment.

The president said access to published work would open new vistas of opportunities for visually impaired persons and dispel the impression that disability should be a hurdle in personal empowerment. The positive flow-on effects, he said, include improved access to education and employment, and also better well-being of the visually impaired persons.

## Media access to Imran restricted

ISLAMABAD (INP): Media access to former Prime Minister Imran Khan was restricted through the installation of a glass wall in the Adiala Jail courtroom during the hearing of the cipher case on Tuesday. Presiding over the proceedings, Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain ensured that Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi were kept at a distance from the media.

During the previous hearing, Imran Khan engaged with journalists, addressing numerous questions. However, in today's session, PTI Chief Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi were not formally indicted in the cipher case. The court decided to extend the hearing until December 13. Three applications were submitted by the legal representatives of Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi during today's proceedings.

Barrister Salman Safdar, the legal counsel for the PTI chief, expressed to the media that formal charges against Imran Khan have not been presented yet. He highlighted that individuals were brought in for the cipher case hearing today, and media representatives were permitted within a certain proximity.

Despite the denial of access to an open trial, some media members were seated 50 feet away from the judge. Barrister Safdar firmly rejected this form of open trial and emphasized that they have filed an application for an open trial.

Furthermore, he raised concerns about the haste in conducting the cipher trial, stating that the entire process should have awaited the decision of the Divisional Bench of Islamabad High Court. Barrister Safdar criticized the proceedings for being rushed, noting that the petition related to Imran Khan in the High Court has not yet been heard.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Ch. Anwaar-ul Haq called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

# KP CM directs steps to control air pollution

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah has directed the quarters concerned to take resulted-oriented steps in order to control the air pollution in the province specially in Peshawar, and made it clear that we should not to be content only with temporary arrangements for the purpose but there is dire need to have all time solution to this issue.

He directed them to come up with an appropriate and realistic way forward to effectively resolve the issues regarding emissions from vehicles, factories and other sources causing air and environmental pollution, further directing to ensure cleanliness on regular basis throughout the city. "Officials of PDA, WSSP, Transport and Environment should make regular field visits and assess the overall activities regarding cleanliness, solid waste management and vehicles emission control", he directed and said that, he personally will pay surprise visits to the sites in order to take stock of the ground realities to this effect; strict action would be taken against the officials responsible for poor performance.

These directives, he issued while chairing a meeting regarding air/environmental pollution in the province. Additional Chief Secretary Syed Intiaz Hussain Shah, administrative secretaries of concerned departments and other relevant authorities attended the meeting. The participants made threadbare discussion on the air quality reports of Peshawar, major sources causing air pollution, proposed measures regarding improvement of air quality and other related matters. The progress report of Environmental Protection Agency was also presented in the meeting.

Briefing about the overall sources of pollution in Peshawar, it was informed that analysis showed that emissions from the transport sector made up 58.5% of overall pollution whereas, other contributors included; Road Side Dust with 17.7%, Domestic burning 11.7%, Industry 6.6%, Waste burning 4.10% and Commercial burning 1.4%. The authorities told that,

detailed appraisal/performance assessment of vehicle emission control have been carried out and shared with transport department adding that action was also under process accordingly.

They further informed that work is also in progress on conversion of traditional Brick Kilns into Zig zag technology; so far two models zigzag brick kiln have been constructed. A scheme for this purpose was reflected in the ADP of current fiscal year, under the first phase, a total of ten brick Kilns would be converted to Zig zag technology. TEVTA has also been asked to start special training classes for the specific sector of brick kiln for the purpose. It was informed in the meeting that, so far, 256 brick Kilns have been monitored, out of which 224 were issued EPOs and 32 were blown out through fire brigade with the help of district administration.

Similarly, a total of 39 steel mills have been monitored and EPO issued. With regard to the hospital waste management, a total of 69 hospitals were monitored and orders issued for proper incineration of the hospital waste. Besides the Hospital Waste Management Rules 2023 were being finalized and will be placed shortly before the provincial cabinet for approval. The authorities maintained that monitoring of marbles factories located at warsak road was being regularly carried out. A total of 126 units have been sealed and power supply disconnected in the last month.

Addressing the participants of the meeting, the Chief Minister said that it is utmost necessary to control the air pollution at the current level as we cannot afford any negligence in this regard. He regretted that it is not enough to suppress the dust for some time by sprinkling water, but it is necessary to ensure its complete elimination adding that latest machinery available within the department should be utilized for this purpose. Syed Arshad Hussain Shah further said that along with other measures for environmental protection, a strong and an effective awareness campaign against pollution is also necessary. Each and every one has to play their part to protect the air from pollution, he concluded.

# SC judge raises questions over ZAB presidential reference

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Justice Mansoor Ali Shah of the Supreme Court on Tuesday raised questions over a 12-year-old presidential reference seeking to review the death sentence awarded to Pakistan People Party (PPP) founder and former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

During a hearing of the reference by a larger bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, the SC judge sought assistance in determining the questions of law, observing that the court had already dismissed the appeal against its verdict which had also achieved the finality. "The Supreme Court can't hear another appeal on the matter. How can we rehear the matter that had been closed?"

The nine-member larger apex court bench also includes Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Aminud Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, and Justice Musarrat Hilali. Former president Asif Ali Zardari, on April 2, 2011, approached the apex court through a presidential reference under Article 186 of the Constitution to seek its opinion on revisiting the trial of the PPP founder.

Previously, an 11-member larger bench of the apex court, headed by former chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, had conducted five hearings on the presidential reference — whose last hearing was held on November 11, 2012. Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan represented the federal government in the reference, while Farooq H Naek appeared on behalf of the PPP chief who has applied to become a party in the matter.

Advocate Ahmed Raza Kasuri, the man who had lodged the first information report (FIR) against the former prime minister, also appeared before the bench and requested the CJP to hear his arguments in the case as well. "Every legal heir has the right to be heard," the CJP responded to his request.

The court proceedings of the reference were broadcast live on the official website and the YouTube channel of the Supreme Court. The decision to fix the instant case was made under Section 2(1) of the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023, by a three-member committee comprising CJP Isa, Justice Masood and Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan.

Following the initial hearing of the case, the top court also appointed nine more amici curiae (friends of court) — Justice (ret'd) Manzoor Malik, Advocate Khawaja Haris, PPP Senator Raza Rabbani, Advocate Khalid Javed, Barrister Salahuddin Ahmed, Advocate Faisal Siddiqi, Zahid Ibrahim and Yasir Qureshi and Barrister Salman Safdar — to assist it in criminal and constitutional aspects of the case. The SC said legal experts Makhdom Ali Khan and Ali Ahmed Kurd had already been appointed as amici curiae.

The top court in its order also directed Geo News to submit a record of late PM Bhutto's interview and video clips. The apex court asked the amici curiae to explain what kind of opinion is required from the court in the presidential reference and discuss its maintainability. The SC adjourned the hearing of the case till January 2024 and announced holding a day-to-day hearing on the reference from next month. "No adjournment will be granted when the hearing starts in January," the top court order stated. At the outset of the hearing, the CJP dispelled the speculations over the constitution of the larger bench hearing the reference. He said none of the members part of the current bench hearing the reference were judges when the presidential reference was filed, and neither of them had ever heard the matter at any stage.

"You may even wonder over the constitution of this bench," the CJP said adding that the bench was formed by the judges' committee in line with the Practice and Procedure law. "[...] let's not speculate on everything. This chief justice has relinquished powers, and now the matter is decided by the committee. one senior member did not want to be part of this bench," he added.

PPP leaders including Asif Zardari, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and Sherry Rehman have also arrived at the top court to attend the hearing. Speaking to the media outside the SC, Rehman said an important day for the PPP has finally come after many years.

"Qazi Faez Isa has fixed this case for hearing, better late than never," she added. The PPP chairman Monday moved the Supreme Court of Pakistan seeking a live broadcast of the reference. Bilawal, in his civil miscellaneous application, had urged the court to allow the live telecast of the hearing "so that the whole of Pakistan could hear it". The PPP chairman had also voiced his expectation from the chief justice to "rectify constitutional mistakes".

"The whole nation knows Quaid-e-Awaam was innocent [...]. The nation has to be informed who were the facilitators behind [Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's] murder," Bilawal said during a political gathering in Kohat district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on Sunday. "We hope that justice would be done with the history," he added.

# UN General Assembly set to demand Gaza truce

UNITED NATIONS: The UN General Assembly appeared set to demand on Tuesday an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in the two-month long conflict between Israel and Hamas after the United States vetoed such a move in the Security Council.

No country has a veto power in the 193-member General Assembly, which is due to vote on a draft resolution that mirrors the language of one that was blocked by the United States in the 15-member Security Council last week. General Assembly resolutions are not binding but carry political weight and reflect global views on the war in the Gaza Strip, as health authorities in the Hamas-run Palestinian enclave say the death toll from Israel's offensive had passed 18,000.

The assembly vote comes a day after 12 Security Council envoys visited the Egyptian side of the Rafah border crossing, the only place where limited humanitarian aid and fuel deliveries have crossed into Gaza. The United States did not send a representative on the trip. "With each step, the US looks more isolated from the mainstream of UN opinion," said Richard Gowan, UN director at the International Crisis Group.

The United States and Israel oppose a cease-fire 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 Palestinian militants in a deadly Oct. 7 attack on Israel. In October the General Assembly called for "an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities" in a resolution adopted with 121 votes in favor, 14 against — including the US — and 44 abstentions.

Some diplomats and observers predict the vote on Tuesday will garner greater support. A two-thirds majority is needed. "The dynamics are different to those in October. The length and intensity of Israel's operations in Gaza have left many UN members convinced that a cease-fire is essential," Gowan said. Israel has bombarded Gaza from the air, imposed a siege and launched a ground offensive in retaliation for an Oct. 7 attack by Hamas that Israel says killed 1,200 people and saw 240 people taken hostage.

In October, Canada put forward an amendment to reject and condemn the Hamas attacks on Oct. 7, but it failed to get the two-thirds majority needed. Diplomats said the United States plans to put forward a similar amendment on Tuesday. The draft General Assembly resolution to be voted on Tuesday also demands the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and that the warring parties comply with international law, specifically with regard to the protection of civilians.

Most of the 2.3 million people in Gaza have been driven from their homes and the United Nations has given dire warnings about the humanitarian situation in the coastal enclave, saying that hundreds of thousands of people are starving. Four Palestinians were killed on Tuesday in a drone strike during an Israeli raid on the occupied West Bank city of Jenin and its refugee camp, the Palestinian health ministry and the Palestinian official news agency WAFA said. — Arab News



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari talking to media persons.

# We want justice for Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto: Bilawal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing the media after attending a hearing of the Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Presidential Reference at the Supreme Court Pakistan, said that he is present at the building where President Zardari had sent a reference twelve years ago. Twelve years later, the hearing took place today, headed by Justice Qazi Faez Isa. We are grateful to the judges for taking the decision to listen to this case at last.

Bilawal said that he had submitted an application in 2018, for this case to be heard and for him to be made a representative as a legal heir. We are grateful for getting the opportunity to be heard in this case along with our lawyers. While being a challenge for the judiciary, this case is also an opportunity to correct the mistakes of the past. We want justice for Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and surely, we demand the answers to the questions raised by the former President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari in his reference. We want for the stain on this institution and law to be removed. While a decision in this case cannot return the Quaid-e-Awam, Shaheed

Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Mir Murtaza Bhutto, Shah Nawaz Bhutto and the Jiyalas of the party who accepted martyrdom to us, but we can at least hope that the Chief Justice and his brother judges would do what they can at least. The nation should be told that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was labelled a 'murderer' was actually the victim, Bilawal said. Those who accused him were General Zia ul Haq and the entire system of the time which had been acting as a facilitator. We want to expose the perpetrators, including the dictator, judges, lawyers and politicians of the time.

The people of Pakistan had decided long ago that Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is innocent. They know that Henry Kissinger had said that 'We will make a horrible example out of you', but Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gifted atomic power to the country and did not compromise on his principles. The people of this country know that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a leader of the Muslim Ummah, and not only did he unite the Muslim world, he made them realise their true potential. Even at the time, when our Palestinian broth-

ers and sisters were suffering, it was the Quaid-e-Awam who made the Islamic leadership realise that the oil they possess is their strength. They collectively decided to apply an embargo till the Palestinian people are given relief. None of the leaders of the Muslim Ummah involved in this decision died a natural death.

"Our only appeal with the court is that history is rectified, this mistake is corrected and those involved in this crime are brought to book", Bilawal said. The person Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was accused of attempting to murder is still alive and was present in the court, but Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was martyred. "Everyone calls Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto a martyr, is a murderer ever called so?", Bilawal questioned. Bilawal said that the parameters of the case that involve our Constitution, law, Islamic jurisprudence and the laws of natural justice and whether they allow for someone to be sentenced to the gallows while the supposed subject of the conspiracy is still alive act as a jarring question mark. Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was given a death sentence, but our religion, law and the Constitution do not allow that.