

**New polio case reported**  
ISLAMABAD (INP): A Polio virus has been confirmed in a nine-month old child in Orakzai district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to spokesperson of the Ministry of Health on Saturday, with this fresh case, the number of polio cases in the country this year has increased to six. He said that the confirmation of polio virus in 20 environmental samples from 12 districts of the country was alarming.

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**Sanam Javed gets bail**  
LAHORE (INP): The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Saturday approved the bail of Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activist Sanam Javed in a police attack case outside Zaman Park. According to the details, the ATC approved the bail plea of PTI activist Sanam Javed and directed her to submit a bail bond of Rs 200,000. Sanam Javed's lawyer in the court stated that after getting bail in one case, the police arrested Sanam Javed in another case.

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# PM for executing \$100b commitments for climate change finance

DUBAI (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Saturday called for immediately executing the US\$100 billion commitments for climate finance to ensure implementation of climate change actions by the developing countries and to mitigate the climate change impacts.

"Such finance should neither be at the cost of development finance nor add to the already high debt burden of the developing countries," the prime minister said while delivering National Statement at the 28th Conference of Parties of the United Nations (COP 28) here.

He also called upon the developed countries to take the lead in raising global mitigation ambition commensurate with their economic standing and historical responsibility and then help developing countries do the same. "We need to achieve global resilience through delivering an ambitious outcome in the form of a framework for global goal on adaptation with clear targets and indicators including regular monitoring of progress," he said adding that at least half of climate finance must be allocated to adaptation.

The prime minister said that the expectations from COP28 were high but not unrealistic hoping that this COP would deliver with action not just words. He laid emphasis on providing adequate means of implementation including climate finance, capacity-building and technology, to developing countries to tackle this growing challenge.

The prime minister highlighted that last year, Pakistan suffered super floods while this year would be the world's hottest year in recorded history. At COP 26 at Glasgow, he said Pakistan increased its ambitions presenting the revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) with a target of 60 percent overall reduction in projected emissions by

2030. "This year, Pakistan presented a comprehensive national adaptation plan and has also launched an innovative Living Indus Initiative that brings together our care for climate and for nature," he said adding "We will also be presenting our first update report during this COP". Last year, he said Pakistan led the endeavor to craft an agreement on establishing a global loss and damage fund while this year "we worked to activate an adequately financed loss and damage fund and its funding arrangement". He said climate justice demanded that the developing countries should be enabled to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) even as they contribute to climate objectives. "The provision of sufficient additional predictable grant-based climate finance by developed countries is imperative."

PM for fulfilling growing needs of developing countries to implement climate actions: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar stressed the need to fulfill the growing needs of developing countries to implement climate change actions. "The financial needs of the developing countries are way more than the unfulfilled US\$100 billion pledge," he said in his address to the Global Stock Take (GST) event on means of implementation here.

He said even to fulfill less than half of their existing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), the developing countries needed \$6 trillion by 2030. The prime minister pointed out that adaptation needs alone were \$387 billion per year until 2030, whereas with respect to the current estimates for loss and damage, they were around \$400 billion annually, which were expected to grow to \$1 to 2 trillion by 2050.

He urged that the outcomes of GST and the COP28 clearly highlight this enormous gap between the finance mobilized and the needs of

developing countries. The prime minister also called upon the developed countries to urgently rectify shortfalls and their financial commitments under the Paris agreement, unlocking scaled-up and improved financial support that would enable developing countries to contribute to bridging the implementation gaps in their mitigation and adaptation actions.

"We believe the outcomes of the GST are well timed to guide the critical discussion in 2024 on setting the post-2025 new collective quantified goals on finance commensurate with the needs of the developing countries," he remarked. He also stressed that the GST should strengthen the effectiveness of the technology mechanism in scaling up the development and transfer of proven climate technologies and enable a better degree of capacity building for developing countries. "The need for reform of the international financial architecture also requires focus," he added. Regarding the technology transfer, PM Kakar said, "We proposed to focus on key and high-emitting sectors with joint indicators of functioning solutions, time frames, and enabling conditions needed to put in place green technologies."

On capacity building, he said the developing countries required support and greater coherence and coordination across the UN system. "To attract the required private and public investment, developing countries must be provided capacity-building support to develop appropriate instruments and create pipelines of bankable projects for adaptation and mitigation," he remarked. He hoped that the discussions and deliberation here and throughout the COP could result in ambitious outcomes on the means of implementation that were equitable and responsive to the needs of developing countries.

(Continued on Back Page)



DUBAI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar makes a national statement at the World Climate Action Summit/COP28.

## Asad Qaiser re-arrested after release

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Former National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser was re-arrested on Saturday by police outside Mardan prison soon after his release in the cases related to May 09, violence. The district and session judge Mardan Muhammad Zaib Khan announced the order of his release. Which he had reserved a day before.

The PTI leader was ordered to submit surety ponds of Rs. 01 million in the court for his release. The officials of police station Parang located in Charssada district had arrested the ex-national assembly speaker Asad Qaiser as he was nominated in the FIR related to May-09 violence.

The district and session judge Mardan announced the release-order after hearing and completion of arguments in the said case. Asad Qaiser was released by the officials of Mardan Jail and as he came out of the prison, the situation took a dramatic turn because the Mardan police re-arrested him in another case. District Police Officer Mardan Najeeb-ur-Rehman told that the ex-speaker was re-arrested because of his nomination in FIR related to ransacking a medical store on May 09.

Earlier, an anti-corruption court in Abbottabad granted bail to PTI leader Asad Qaiser in a corruption case. Qaiser, who is accused of corruption in the procurement of equipment for Gajju Khan Medical College, was arrested from Bani Gala, Islamabad, on Nov 3. The ACE booked Mr Qaiser over his alleged corruption in the purchase of medical equipment for Swabi's Gajju Khan Medical College.

## Shahzad Akbar declared PO

ISLAMABAD (INP): A civil court in Islamabad on Saturday declared former prime minister Imran Khan's adviser, Shahzad Akbar, 'proclaimed offender' in a fraud and embezzlement case.

According to details, the former premier's adviser was declared 'proclaimed offender' in a fraud and embezzlement case registered at Secretariat Police Station.

The NAB issued arrest warrants for former premier Imran Khan's aides Shahzad Akbar, Zulfi Bukhari and two others in the £190 million settlement case. The development came after the accountability bureau filed a reference in the £190 million settlement case, officially nominating former prime minister Imran Khan as accused in the case.

## 8 killed, many injured in attack on passenger bus

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In the past week, many lives were lost in a series of violent incidents across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The city of Peshawar witnessed a tragic episode of gunfire in the Police station Hashtangri area, resulting in the death of two individuals.

Additionally, eight lives were claimed in chilas and an unfortunate shooting incident in the Yakka Toot area of Peshawar took another life. Similarly over the last ten days, the police in Bannu faced three separate attacks, highlighting the increasing challenges in maintaining law and order. The most recent incident involved an armed assault on a passenger bus in Kohistan border area chilas, leaving eight dead and around 15 wounded. The attackers, who remain unidentified, targeted a passenger bus traveling from Kohistan to Gilgit near chilas

Expressing concern over these incidents, the Chief Minister of KP, Justice (Retired) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah, condemned

the loss of valuable human lives. The Chief Minister lamented the tragic events and emphasized the need for enhanced security measures in border areas and along the Qaraqoram Highway.

In response to the escalating violence, the Chief Minister issued directives to closely monitor the security situation in the border regions and on the Karakoram Highway. The police have been instructed to remain vigilant and on high alert.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister has contacted the Additional Chief Secretary Home and directed him to take necessary steps to keep a close eye on the law and order situation on the border areas of Kohistan and the Karakoram Highway and to keep the local police on alert for this purpose. The Chief Minister has assured the Gilgit-Baltistan government of all kinds of support from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

Regarding the bus attack in Chilas, initial investigations have commenced, led by local authorities. The

police confirmed the tragic outcome and assured a thorough inquiry to bring the perpetrators to justice.

"Most of the people belong to all of Pakistan, including Kohistan, Peshawar, Ghizer, Chilas, Roundu, Skardu, Mansehra, Swabi and one or two people from Sindh." DC Ahmad said two Pakistan Army soldiers were also martyred in the "cowardly act" while one personnel of the Special Protection Unit was injured as well.

In a positive development, SSP Operations Kashif Abbasi Said reported that two suspects have been apprehended in connection with the recent murders in the city. However, the search for individuals involved in other killings in Peshawar is still underway. As the region grapples with these incidents, the authorities are committed to restoring peace and ensuring the safety of the citizens. The situation remains dynamic, and efforts are ongoing to address the root causes of the violence and bring those responsible to justice.

## Barrister Gohar Khan elected new PTI chairman

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Saturday elected Barrister Gohar Ali Khan as the new chairman in the intra-party elections held on the directives of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Gohar won the chairman's position unopposed.

Barrister Gohar, who was nominated by ex-PTI chief Imran Khan for the top slot a couple of days ago, submitted his nomination papers for the office of the party's chairman. Speaking in Peshawar after his election as chairman, Gohar said he will keep fulfilling this responsibility as Imran's representative.

He said that Pakistan has 175 political parties, all of which have been providing details of their intra-party polls to the ECP since 1960. "However, none of these polls have been scrutinised as closely as those of the PTI." "People are seeing this and will block the oppression," he said. "We have to take the country forward."

He further added that PTI's purpose is to struggle, and that Imran is in jail because of his efforts. "When elections take place, we will defeat everyone," Gohar said. Omer Ayub Khan was elected as the party secretary-general — also unopposed.

Provincially, Munir Ahmed Baloch was elected as the party president of Balochistan; Haleem Adil Sheikh of Sindh; Ali Amin Gandapur of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Dr Yasmin Rashid as the party's Punjab president.

Meanwhile, PML-N termed it a "selection, not an election". In a press conference in Rawalpindi, party spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb said: "Once again, the PTI has been involved in a selection all in 15 minutes." Questioning how all the candidates were elected unopposed, she said: "PTI's intra-party elections were done in secrecy."

Akbar S. Babar, one of the founding members of PTI, had rejected the nomination of Barrister Gohar Ali Khan as a candidate for the party chairman's slot, calling it "selection instead of an election". In a press statement, Babar, who had filed the foreign funding case against the PTI, said the nomination of the new PTI chairman has raised serious questions about the transparency and credibility of the entire PTI intra-party election process.

He said that a party that champions transparency and a level playing field in the national elections is shying away from allowing its workers a level playing field to elect its leadership without interference and

manipulation. The ECP had on Nov 23 annulled the PTI's intra-party polls held in June last year, terming them "highly objectionable".

The order came at a time when general elections are about two months away and political parties are ratcheting up their poll campaigns across the country. The PTI, however, has complained about an uneven playing field and termed the ECP's ruling an attempt to keep Imran and his party away from polls. A PTI leader told on condition of anonymity that the decision to appoint Gohar, who is an associate of PPP leader Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan, was not a wise move due to his proximity to the PPP stalwart.

But in a statement on Friday, a PTI spokesperson said the party's decision to hold intra-party elections on the ECP's directives was a clear sign of the party's unshakable commitment to democracy and unwavering belief in the rule of law. The statement said that PTI had also held intra-party elections last year according to the law. However, he added, in order to set a great example of respect for law, the party decided to hold the intra-party elections again despite the "illegal decision" of the electoral watchdog, declaring the last year's polls null and void.

## Will not contest polls, says Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Apparently disappointed with his party leadership, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has confirmed that he would not contest the upcoming general elections, slated to be held on February 8, 2024.

Abbasi had stepped down from the party office soon after the appointment of Maryam Nawaz as senior vice president and chief organiser. The senior leader, however, rejects reports claiming differences with the party leadership. Abbasi said that he had resigned as the party's senior vice president in an effort to give Maryam an "open field".

In an interview with Voice of America (Urdu), Abbasi said: "I am not contesting elections as I do not want to be part of the possible fault [that could emerge] after the election." Blasting the mainstream political parties, the senior leader said that the major parties did nothing but increase the suffering of the masses. "The core responsibility of political parties is to determine the way forward but they are not working on it."

Hinting at launching a new political party, the PML-N leader said that certainly there would be "a space for a new thought and a new political party". Responding to a question, the former prime minister said that he was not angry with anyone, adding that Maryam was like his younger sister. "But I can't agree with the vision adopted by my party."

He further said that his party's thinking revolved around the formation of a government, adding that they had to bring change in the mindset. Nowadays, politics is done to gain power, and elections are contested for it, he added. The politics aimed at coming into power will not work furthermore, he predicted.

Reacting to the PML-N-MQM-P alliance, the former premier said that the electoral alliance was not beneficial for both parties at the local level. "Where there is MQM-P, there are not enough voters of PML-N to benefit it." He further said that the sanctity of the vote means the country would be run as per the Constitution. — VoA

## COAS says enemy's designs will be defeated

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited troops at Khairpur Tamewali (KPT) to witness Field Exercise of Bahawalpur Corps. COAS was briefed about Field Exercise, aimed at enhancing professional skills at various tiers and battlefield procedures required to meet future challenges in operational environment.

COAS witnessed integrated fire and battle maneuvers of various elements, including Armour, Mechanized Infantry, Artillery, Air Defense, Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGMs) duly supported by Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and Combat Aviation. Later, COAS interacted with troops participating in the exercise.

COAS appreciated the training standards, operational preparedness and high



morale of officers and troops. COAS directed troops to keep serving the nation with traditional zeal and passion under all circumstances. "We are cognizant of the challenges and with the support of the nation we are prepared to thwart any nefarious designs of the enemies of Pakistan", COAS emphasized.

"Pakistan Army is fully prepared to defend territori-

al integrity and sovereignty of Pakistan against all odds. Pakistan Armed Forces are focused on defending the frontiers of motherland against full spectrum of threat and with the support of the nation, Armed Forces will defeat the enemies of Pakistan. In Sha Allah, COAS concluded. Earlier, on arrival, COAS was received by Commander Bahawalpur Corps.

## PPP to transfer full powers to Balochistan

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chairman of the People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Saturday asked PML-N supremo and former three-time prime minister Mian Nawaz Sharif to strive to earn respect for the vote rather than disrespecting it.

In a press conference, he asked Sharif to contest the elections on his own strength and advocated for a level playing field for all candidates. "We don't want politics of hatred and personal revenge," stated Bhutto Zardari, emphasizing the People's Party's commitment to inclusive and constructive politics.

He said that there was a dire need to introduce a new style of politics. "The politics revolving around hatred are not going to be great for our country," Bhutto-Zardari said. Bilawal expressed confidence in the People's Party winning the upcoming elections in Balochistan, vowing to form a government that addresses the concerns

of the people.

Highlighting the PPP's historical contributions, Bilawal mentioned President Asif Zardari's initiatives such as the NFC Award and the Aghaz Huqoq Balochistan Package, aimed at addressing the challenges faced by the province. Bilawal stressed the significance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) for the future of Balochistan and Pakistan. He insisted that the benefits of CPEC should directly impact the local population.

The PPP chairman pledged to solve the problems faced by the people of Balochistan, particularly focusing on providing employment opportunities for the youth. He highlighted the success of recent party activities and expressed confidence in a positive surprise on February 8. Bhutto Zardari emphasized the need for a shift towards positive politics, urging a politics of consensus rather than confrontation. He dismissed



the notion of presenting any political figure as a messiah, advocating for a collaborative approach to bring about change.

Discussing the implementation of the 18th Amendment, Bilawal promised that if the People's Party formed the government, it would transfer full powers to Balochistan. He underscored the importance of understanding and addressing the unique challenges faced by the people of Balochistan. He expressed the party's commitment to building a youth centre in every district and supporting vocational training.

## 'Elahi & son' main accused in reference

LAHORE (PPI): The Chaudhrys of Gujrat, or at least the faction led by former chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi, are in trouble as the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has filed a reference against him and his son after completing a probe into the alleged kickback received in connection with the development projects carried out in their home district.

Both Elahi, who is also the PTI president and is vying again for the

slot in the intraparty polls being held today (Saturday), and Moonis Elahi are the main accused nominated in the reference that says they are received kickbacks to the tune of Rs1.23 billion.

The reference says the duo caused heavy losses to the national exchequer as Elahi used his office to his personal advantage, as the junior Chaudhry's personal secretary Sohail Awan and two former government officials

decided to become approvers in the matter involving illegal approval of 116 development schemes.

Meanwhile, the mode of generating kickbacks remained the same old tactics — giving contracts to the blue-eyed persons — the main reason why the political parties, including the PPP, are against devolving powers to the local governments as development projects also provide leverage to the leadership at local level.





# First Lady for greater participation of women in workforce

KARACHI (APP): While addressing the inaugural ceremony of Professor Shahida Kazi Women Complex at the Karachi Press Club (KPC), First Lady Begum Samina Alvi has called for taking steps to ensure greater participation of women in the workforce for their socio-economic empowerment. She also stressed the need to provide a conducive and friendly environment for women, especially female journalists, at workplaces to increase women's inclusion in mainstream economic activities.

Begum Samina Arif Alvi inaugurated the Shahida Kazi Women Complex, which offers daycare facilities for women, a gym, work stations, restrooms, digital platforms, and entertainment spaces. The inaugural ceremony was attended by President KPC, Mr Saeed Ahmed Sarbazi, Director General (PR) of Press Information Department (PID) Karachi, Ms Iram Tanvir, Secretary Press Club, Mr. Shoaib Ahmed, Chairman of Gohar Group of Companies, Mr Muhammad Hanif Gohar, and members of the Karachi Press Club.

Addressing the occasion, Begum Samina Alvi



urged the media, especially female journalists, to play their role in highlighting women's issues and creating awareness about their rights. She said that female journalists could prove an asset for their organization by bringing a unique journalistic perspective and could also effectively highlight various issues being faced by women in the country.

The First Lady lauded the establishment of the first-ever Women's Complex at KPC, saying that it would facilitate working women in the performance of their professional responsibilities, besides taking care of their families. She also urged the need for the creation of a harassment-free work environment to encourage

women's participation in mainstream economic activities. She remarked that women made up almost half the population of the country, and it was impossible for the country to progress without their inclusion in the workforce.

Begum Alvi said that the media should continue to play its role in creating awareness about important socio-economic issues, including breast cancer, the rights and facilitation of persons with disabilities, and the importance of mental health and well-being. She said that due to the support from the media, her awareness campaign on breast cancer had yielded positive results, and different hospitals in the country had witnessed an improvement in the reporting of early-stage

breast cancer cases.

Begum Samina Alvi also appreciated the fact that the complex carried the name of Prof. Shahida Kazi, who had a remarkable influence on many journalists in Karachi. She said that the creation of such facilities, especially daycare centres at the workplace, was not only necessary but imperative to encourage women in professional careers.

Secretary of the Press Club, Mr. Shoaib Ahmed, said that the establishment of the Complex was a small but important step in the right direction to socially uplift women in Pakistan, especially in the field of journalism. He said that the creation of a separate space on the demand of female members of the KPC would also help motivate female journalists.

Ms Iram Tanvir lauded KPC for being the first press club in Pakistan and for inaugurating a complex solely dedicated to encouraging and facilitating women. She added that the complex would ensure diversity and inclusivity in the field of journalism. On this occasion, Begum Samina Arif Alvi was also granted lifetime membership by the President of KPC.

## MDCAT test becomes controversial

KARACHI (NNI): The second MDCAT test has also become controversial after Dow University of Health Sciences Karachi accused of first declared a student failed and then passed.

The students named Rehana Jatoti was declared failed first. Later, in an email, sent by the university Rehana Jatoti was informed of passing the test. For ten days, the student considered herself failed. When contacted, the administration of Dow University of Health Sciences refrained from giving any answer and was not ready to admit fault in this regard.

The paper of MDCAT, conducted by Dow University of Health Sciences was taken on November 19 while result was announced on November 25. The first MDCAT test was also declared controversial and later cancelled after Bluetooth scandal was unearthed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## Minister visits police officers in hospital

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Punjab Health Minister Prof. Dr. Javed Akram visited Jinnah Hospital on Saturday morning to check on police officers injured in a recent encounter.

He instructed the hospital staff for optimal treatment and expressed pride in the officers, saluting their bravery. Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi sent well wishes. The minister presented flowers to officers, Muhammad Asif and Muhammad Ashfaq, accompanied by Medical Superintendent Dr. Yehya Sultan.

## 240 encroachments removed

LAHORE (APP): The Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) carried out an anti-encroachment operation and demolished illegal structures in the provincial capital.

An MCL spokesperson told the media here Saturday that an anti-encroachment squad removed 240 encroachments during 24 hours from Shah Alam Market and sealed more than 20 shops over violation while six truckloads were shifted to the MCL junk yard.

During the operation, solid sheds, billboards and extended structures were demolished with heavy machinery and cleared the market of illegal encroachments.

MCL Chief Officer Iqbal Freed supervised the encroachment operation and warned that the operation would continue till clearance of city roads and bazaars. He urged citizens to cooperate with the MCL and its anti-encroachment squads to eliminate encroachments and bring back the lost glory of the provincial capital.

## FIA arrests leader of illegal currency exchange syndicate

KARACHI (APP): The State Banking Circle of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Karachi conducted a significant operation resulting in the apprehension of the ringleader involved in an illegal currency exchange syndicate located in Garden East area.

A substantial amount of domestic and foreign currency, valued at millions, was confiscated during the operation. The arrested individual, Noor Muhammad, was found to be engaged in unauthorized exchange of both local and international currencies, a spokesperson for the FIA told here Saturday.

Notably, the apprehended suspect was also implicated in foreign currency transactions without possessing the required license.

The raid yielded the recovery of 2600 US dollars, 650 UAE dirhams and 3.1 million rupees from the accused. Additionally, the authorities seized two mobile phones, messages pertaining to currency exchange and multiple registers containing transaction records.

# CM formally inaugurates Lahore Prime CBD Quaid District

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday formally inaugurated Lahore Prime CBD Quaid District.

Wide roads, excellent underground electricity system, latest sewerage and drainage system, uninterrupted water supply, awe inspiring horticulture and landscaping has been done at Lahore Prime.

Mohsin Naqvi visited the Central Business District (CBD) and inspected the main boulevard besides inspecting the whole route of the under construction boulevard from the Centre Point Gulberg up to Walton Road. He reviewed ongoing construction activities on the under construction boulevard project. He directed to completed the project within the given time frame. He also visited Lahore Prime near Kalma Chowk and issued directions to improve the traffic system.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of Lahore Prime, he said that today such an era has been started which would change the skyline of Lahore, adding that Lahore Prime holds the status of a milestone with regard to infrastructure completion of CBD Punjab Quaid District.

"We will make Lahore Prime an international business hub," Mohsin Naqvi stated that CBD has fulfilled its another promise. CBD prime was for those people who have already bought their plots. These plots would be sold at a double price then the normal price of Gulberg though balloting. Mohsin Naqvi remarked that the credit goes to CBD for developing the area nicely which accrued more prices. CBD has more than adequate area of land available till now and it is our endeavour to allocate additional land to CBD. "We are trying to make an effort with the CBD to link the main road with the Walton Road and Defence Road" he said.

A new bridge was going to be completed by January and would be linked with the main road, Defence and Walton Road, he said and added that CBD was taking up a project in Garden Town as well. "We are launching a CBD project to resolve traffic problems of Garden Town" he added. CBD has been allotted a land at Ferozepur Road on which CBD was undergoing work. "CBD should earmark a land in Rawalpindi so that we can commence

CBD Rawalpindi Project" he noted.

"These are such lands of the Punjab government which are getting wasted and we can acquire more than 100 times more revenue from these lands" he said. CBD has to accumulate 500 million dollars foreign exchange in coming 2 to 3 months. Approval to establish a Diplomatic Enclave in CBD Lahore has been granted and work was ongoing.

Mohsin Naqvi maintained that the whole diplomatic community would be shifted here with the establishment of a Diplomatic Enclave. CBD Rawalpindi has to be commenced immediately and the government was also going to commence work on CBD Multan. CM Mohsin Naqvi commended CEO Imran Amin of CBD and his whole team on establishing state-of-the-art infrastructure.

Provincial minister for Housing Azfar Ali Nasir, Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Secretary Housing, Commissioner Lahore Division, DC, COO CBD, project teams of NLC and NESPAK, prominent personalities doing investments in CBD and CBD partners were also present.

# PML-N issues show-cause notice to Daniyal Aziz

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) on Saturday issued a show-cause notice to PML-N leader Daniyal Aziz for violating party rules.

The president of PML-N Punjab, Rana Sanaullah, issued a show-

cause notice to Daniyal Aziz stating that the politician violated the party rules by making a 'rhetorical statement' against the PML-N leadership and damaged the reputation of the party.

Daniyal Aziz was directed to submit the

response to the show-cause notice within seven days.

"Daniyal Aziz has been told to be cautious while giving such statement to media," the president of PML-N Punjab Rana Sanaullah stated during a press conference.

It is pertinent to mention here that the PML-N leader Daniyal Aziz's controversial tweets on X, formerly twitter, and statement on TV channel caught eyeballs as he held his own party leader Ahsan Iqbal responsible for the price control.



**Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre**

A JCI Enterprise Accredited Organisation

**Career Opportunities in SKMCH&RC Peshawar**

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (SKMCH&RC) is a specialist tertiary care cancer Centre built and funded by charitable donations with a mission to provide the best possible cancer care to all patients. SKMCH&RC has a team of UK and US-trained physicians who provide state-of-the-art diagnostic, treatment and support services to patients. SKMCH&RC is pleased to invite applications for the following positions:

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- Consultant Breast Surgeon
- Consultant Clinical & Radiation Oncologist
- Consultant Clinical Haematologist
- Consultant Head and Neck Surgeon
- Consultant Medical Oncologist
- Consultant Nuclear Medicine
- Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Consultant Paediatric Oncologist
- Consultant Pathologist
- Consultant Physician (Critical Care & Pulmonary Medicine)
- Consultant Physician (General Internal Medicine & Pulmonology)
- Consultant Physician Internal (Medicine & Gastroenterology)
- Consultant Physician Internal (Medicine & Infectious Diseases)
- Consultant Physician Internal (Medicine & Nephrology)
- Consultant Radiologist
- Consultant Upper GI Surgeon
- Consultant Urologist
- Locum Consultant Anaesthetist
- Locum Consultant Breast Surgeon

- Locum Consultant Nephrologist
- Locum Consultant Pathologist
- Locum Consultant Radiologist
- Locum Consultant Urologist
- Part Time Consultant Anaesthetist

### Senior Instructors:

- Senior Instructor Anaesthesia
- Senior Instructor Breast Surgery
- Senior Instructor Clinical Haematology
- Senior Instructor Clinical and Radiation Oncology
- Senior Instructor Head and Neck Surgery
- Senior Instructor Medical Oncology
- Senior Instructor Paediatric Oncology
- Senior Instructor Radiology

### CPSP Approved Fellowships:

- Fellowship in Medical Oncology

### Hospital Based Fellowships:

- Fellow in Anaesthesia (Hospital Fellowships)

### Medical Officers:

- Medical Officer in Radiology

### Nursing & Paramedical:

- Clinical Nurse Manager – (Nursing Risk Management & Quality Assurance)

### MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION & TECHNICAL:

- Database Administrator
- MEP Supervisor (Pesh)

**Note:** All Senior Instructor positions for Karachi & Peshawar involve working at Lahore for two years, followed by two years of training overseas. For further details regarding the position and eligibility criteria, please visit our website on [www.shaukatkhanum.org.pk](http://www.shaukatkhanum.org.pk)

**TO APPLY:** Only online applications will be entertained. Please share your CV at the email address given below and do mention the position applied for in the subject line. We regret that only shortlisted candidates will be notified.

**We are an equal opportunity employer**

**Human Resources Department**

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre

5-B, Sector A-2, Office Enclave, Phase V,

Hayatabad, Peshawar, Pakistan.

**Tel: +92 91 5885000 Ext. 3537, 3538**

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# Achakzai asks Nawaz, Fazl, Bilawal to play role for civil supremacy



F.P. Report

QUETTA: The country has been trapped in a vicious circle for the last 75 years. Now is the time for only the truth to break that cycle, and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission is the sole solution, as stated by Mahmood Khan Achakzai, Chairman of Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party.

He made this declaration while addressing a massive public gathering at Ayub Stadium in Quetta, paying tribute to Khan Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai, affectionately known as Khan Shaheed, on his 50th martyrdom anniversary.

Setting aside political differences, Achakzai urged that revenge and Imran Khan's hatred should not blind the nation to compromise on democracy. Traditional elections alone cannot overcome the accumulated problems; instead, a stakeholder conference should precede elections.

Achakzai emphasized the need for a three-day deliberation to evolve a democratic path leading to democracy. In this context, he appealed to all, especially Nawaz Sharif, Bilawal, and Maulana, to rise to the occasion and play their role in achieving civilian supremacy, steering the country out of its present uncertainty and quagmire.

Achakzai reminded everyone that, to him, elections and democracy are not just paths to the assembly and power corridors but a way of life and creed, for which his leader and father made sacrifices, spending half of his life behind bars. Khan Abdul Samad Khan's political creed was anti-imperialism and democracy. Achakzai advocated for the establishment of a "Truth and Reconciliation

Commission' to determine responsibilities for the failure of democracy in the country. He suggested that judges of the supreme judiciary who legitimized martial laws and deviated from the constitution should be named and reprimanded, while those who stood by the constitution should be acknowledged.

Furthermore, Achakzai called for the acceptance of the demands of the Chaman protesters and warned against the escalating violation of human rights. He emphasized the immediate presentation of anyone involved in wrongdoing in a court of law, discouraging forced disappearances. Additionally, he urged the Afghanistan government to promptly convene a grand jirga, forming an all-inclusive government and addressing looming threats.

In a related statement, Abdurrahim Ziaratwal asserted that Pakhtunkhwa National Awami Party is the mother party of PMAP, registered in the names of Khan Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai and later Mahmood Khan Achakzai. He emphasized that no one would be allowed to usurp it.

The event also featured addresses by Nawab Ayaz Khan Abdurauaf Lala, Talimand Khan, Dr Mohammad Ali, Mir Kalam Wazir, Amjad Tareen, Haroon Advocate, and Sharraf Agha.

# Governor for respecting difference of opinion in society

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that it was necessary to respect a difference of opinion among people for a peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society.

Talking to a delegation of students from Law and Politics Society of the LUMS at the Governor's House here on Saturday, he said one should respect and understand others' varied perspectives and opinions, adding that students must inculcate a habit of research and don't believe in the information without verifying it. He said that an educated person does not believe in hearsay.

The Punjab governor welcomed the students to the Governor House Lahore and informed them about the historic Governor House. He also explained the constitutional role of the office of the governor.

He said LUMS is premiere educational institution of the country where analytical and critical skills of students are developed, adding that the most important purpose of education is

to develop tolerance.

The governor said that the young population of Pakistan is its biggest asset. He said unfortunately, disapproval was spread among the youth under a false narrative. He underscored the need to look at positivity in society, adding that there are fewer negative things and more positive things in our society.

While quoting the examples of organizations like Edhi and Akhuwat, he said that Edhi Ambulance is the largest network of private ambulances in the world, while the loan repayment rate under Akwat Foundation is more than 99 per cent. He said that those who return the loan belong to the poor class, adding that they are given loans without collateral, but still they return the loan.

He further said that if everyone shows responsibility and does not spread things on social media without research, then the spread of wrong and negative information can be stopped. He further said that the supremacy of law

and constitution is the only way forward.

He said, unfortunately, Constitution-violators launched a mudslinging campaign against the honest. Later, the students were shown round of the historical Governor's House.

**Differently-abled persons integral part of society: governor:** Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that differently-abled persons are an important part of society and they excelled in sports and other fields of life.

In a message on the eve of International Day of Persons with Disabilities on Saturday, he said paid homage to all those special people whose determination and courage is an example for others.

He said it is the responsibility of all of us to encourage the special people to make them useful citizens of the society. The governor said for the first time wheelchair ramps and elevators have been built in the Governor House Lahore for special people.





## Report: 127 operation conducted

PESHAWAR (APP): The security forces conducted 127 intelligence-based operations and killed 47 terrorists during these operations, said a month-long report of operations against terrorists issued by the security forces here on Saturday.

Security forces conducted 127 intelligence-based operations during a month and killed 47 terrorists during these operations conducted in Khyber, Dera Ismail Khan, Lakki Marwat, Bannu, North Waziristan, Tang, South Waziristan, and Chitral.

In the operation against the terrorists, a huge amount of arms and explosives were recovered. During one month, 3,580 SMGs, 1,673 miscellaneous ammunition, 5,580 rifles, 422 heavy machine guns, 116 pistols, 66 rocket launchers, 50 hand grenades, 29 mortar shells, 12 kilos of explosives including three IDs were recovered.

## Action of FIA against Hundi Mafia

PESHAWAR (APP): On the directive of Director Peshawar Zone Nisar Tanoli, the crackdown continues against elements involved in hundi and illegal currency exchange.

According to detail, one alleged accused involved in hundi and illegal currency exchange was arrested from Peshawar Cantonment area. During the raid, huge sums of money were also recovered from the accused identified as Haider Ali.

A sum of Rs. 2 million recovered from the alleged accused. Records related to illegal exchange of currency were also recovered from the alleged accused. The accused could not satisfy the authorities regarding the recovered currency. A case has been registered against the accused under the illegal currency Act with further investigation underway.

# 77 officers promoted to next grade in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The caretaker government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have promoted a total of 77 officers of the grade 17, 18 and 19 to the next grades.

According to a notification issued by the administration department, 30 officers were promoted from grade 18 to grade 19 and 2 officers were promoted from grade 19 to grade 20 while six officers were promoted in grade 19 to 20 on non-permanent basis. Besides this 39 officers of grade-17 were promoted to grade-18.

The Establishment Department has issued separate announcements for officer promotions wherein Assistant Commissioners and Section Officers are among the promotions in grades 17 to 18. Additional Secretary Science and Technology Habibullah Arif, Director Urban Area Development Authority Bannu Dil Nawaz Khan, Additional Secretary Information Abdul Haleem Khan, Director Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission Rashid Khan have been promoted.

Deputy Commissioner Kohistan Upper Irfanullah Masood, Basir Ali Rehman Khan, Additional Secretary Labor Khaliq Dad Khan were also promoted to next grade. Likewise, Deputy Secretary Finance Ms. Iram Naz, Registrar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Appellate Tribunal Khan Muhammad have been promoted.

DG Kaghan Development Authority Muhammad Tariq, Director PDMA Muhammad Iqbal Khan, Muhammad Iqbal II, Additional Secretary Law Muhammad Zaheeruddin Babar, Deputy Executive Director P&D Mir Khawas Khan, Chief of Section P&D Muhammad Anwar Khan Shirani, Additional Secretary Zakat Muhammad Farooq got promotion.

Similarly, Deputy Commissioner Tank Muhammad Shoaib, Deputy Commissioner Torghar Ziaur Rahman II, Deputy Secretary Finance Abdul Hadi II, Additional Secretary Agriculture Samiullah Khan, Muhammad Shiraz, Deputy Secretary Higher Education Muhammad Ishaq, Deputy Director Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority Saad Nawab Khan, Deputy Secretary Law Muhammad Zahid, Additional Secretary Hig-

her Education Javed Iqbal-I have been promoted.

District Monitoring Officer Education Department Javed Iqbal 2, Director Sports of the Merged area Pir Abdullah Shah, Additional Secretary Establishment Muhammad Tufail, Additional Secretary Chief Minister Secretariat Muhammad Saleh, Additional Secretary Education Department Mushtaq Hussain have been promoted from Grade 18 to 19 on prospective basis.

Two officers have been promoted from grade 19 to grade 20 on a prospective basis including Secretary Relief Department Inayatullah Wasim, and Secretary Minerals Hameedullah Shah. Six officers have been promoted from grade 19 to grade 20 on the basis of acting charge as well.

Waiting for appointment Mohammad Amin, GM Forest Development Corporation Khalid Akbar, Director Project Management Unit Higher Education Muhammad Fayyaz, DG Provincial Housing Authority Muhammad Roshan, Director Land Records Ijaz Rehman, and Additional Secretary Law Samar Gul promoted.



PESHAWAR: A group photo of ANP's leader Yasin Khan Khalil with others on occasion of Green Star Hospital Community medical camp.



PESHAWAR: Mayor Haji Zubair Ali visiting Namak Mandi Bazaar.

## Lifetime imprisonment sentences suspended F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprised of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah suspended lifetime imprisonment of alleged killers in murder case.

The counsel Shabbir Hussain Gigyani and Saeed Khan advocates appeared before PHC on behalf three accused allegedly involved in murder.

According to prosecution, Malak Momand, Malak Nasir and Malak Waqar arrested by police in murdering of Noor Bagh Afridi on Kohat road.

The trial court had sentenced all accused for lifetime imprisonment in murder case.

PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah suspended lifetime imprisonment and ordered their release after conclusion of arguments.

## Dr. Obaid defended his thesis

PESHAWAR (APP): Dr. Obaidullah, a scholar of the Department of Agricultural Chemistry and Biochemistry of the University of Agriculture, Peshawar, completed his PhD degree in Agricultural Chemistry and Biochemistry under the supervision of Dr. Mudassar Iqbal.

He presented his research paper titled "Phytochemical and Pharmacological Investigation of Bioactive Compounds from Dryopteris Juxtaposita Christ". His thesis was endorsed by renowned professors from America and Italy.

Dr. Obaidullah successfully defended his research paper by answering all the questions posed by the participants in the defense seminar and qualified him for the Ph.D. Dean Faculty of Nutrition Sciences Professor Dr. Muhammad Ayub and faculty members and scholars participated on this occasion.

## Terrorist plan failed

PESHAWAR (APP): CTD took a timely action by failing an attempt of terrorism and successfully arrested Sulieman of Mardan during a joint operation by security forces and CTD here on Saturday. On identifying the arrested terrorist, a large quantity of arms and ammunition was recovered, said an official of the CTD. Gunpowder was hidden in drums to plan a terrorist attack in the City.

PESHAWAR (APP): Two different training workshops for the professional development and skills enhancement of the school teachers concluded successfully here on Saturday.

Skills related to the inculcating positive attitudes and behaviors in students, developing children's skills and preparing them for the modern future challenges were also taught to 48 teachers of district Peshawar, Charsadda and Nowshera.

The workshop was jointly organized by Idar-e-Taleem Agahi, Participatory Rural Development Society and Voluntary Services Overseas in collaboration with Elementary and Secondary Education

Department KP under funds from Education Cannot Wait (ECW) in which 48 male and female teachers were trained.

District Education Officer Peshawar Sajjad Akhtar, Deputy DEO Peshawar, Dr. Raina Gul, MYRP provincial head Tariq Hayat Yousafzai, Early Childhood Specialist Sameena Baig, representative of Idar-e-Taleem Agahi, Muhammad Shakeel Ahmad and other male and female officers of the E&SE Department were also present at the closing ceremony.

Addressing the workshop, speakers said that what your child learns in the first five years of their life will have the biggest impact on their overall

# Returning illegal foreigners continued

PESHAWAR (APP): The safe returning of the illegal foreigners to their respective homeland continued and 1119 people were sent to Afghanistan via Torkham, said an official of the Home and Tribal Affairs Department, KP said.

The official said in total 6043 illegal foreigners were deported from Torkham border and a total of 247,785 people have been deported from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Afghanistan through the same Torkham border.

Pakhtunkhwa and 114 illegal foreigners were deported from Islamabad, 873 from Punjab, and 24 from Azad Kashmir, the official of the Home and Tribal Affairs Department, KP said.

The official said in total 6043 illegal foreigners were deported from Torkham border and a total of 247,785 people have been deported from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Afghanistan through the same Torkham border.

Like the Torkham border, the flow of people going to Afghanistan from other borders is also going on and a total of 3,447 people have been sent to Afghanistan through Angoor Adda border, while 698 people have been sent to Afghanistan from Kharlachi border, the official said.

He disclosed that a total of 2, 51, 961 people were sent to Afghanistan from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa so far.

# SSP operations visits PTI Intra-Party Election

PESHAWAR (APP): SSP Operations Peshawar Kashif Aftab Abbasi visited PTI Intra-Party Election venues and made a request to the organizers to provide PTI intra-party election details for security.

The organizers should provide us with the details of the vehicles so that we can make security arrangements, SSP operations. All appropriate measures have been taken for the peaceful election and the administration extended all out cooperation in this connection.

He said despite all measures and requests made by us to the organizers, they did not give details to the Police till 12:30 pm, last night, SSP Operations said. Despite not giving details, the Police will secure the

place of Intra-Party Elections, he added.

SSP Operations Kashif Aftab Abbasi while talking to the media said that all arrangements were made for peaceful elections.

He disclosed that around 200 policemen have been deployed during the PTI Intra-Party Election to ensure due security. "If the Police need an accused, they will definitely be arrested," he said while answering a question. There is no scope in the law for the police not to arrest the accused, he explained. "If someone has received relief from the court, they cannot be arrested," he further added.

**PTI ideological workers reject intra party election:** The ideological work-

ers of Pakistan Tahrir-e-Insaf Peshawar district here Saturday rejected the results of intra party election.

They were holding placards and banners inscribed with different slogans against election results at Kabotar Chowk on Dalazak Road, Peshawar.

They said that ideological workers were deprived of right of votes. They claimed it was not an election but a selection and demanded Election Commission of Pakistan to take notice of it.

Earlier, Gohar Khan was elected unopposed as new Chairman PTI.

Gohar said that he was a representative of former Chairman PTI and their struggle for supremacy of democracy would continue.

# KCD got ISO 9001:2015 certification

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dean Khyber College of Dentistry Prof. Dr. Syed Nasir Shah pursues the vision of the Board of Governance KTH/KMC/KCD for ISO certification. The ISO auditor's team undertook a detailed visit to each department of the college and was satisfied with the standards, procedures, and set SOPs by the support of the Director of Quality Assurance - Dr. Haseeb Awan.

Khyber College was established in 1964 with a glorious history spanning over fifty-eight years, whose brilliant alumni are spread around the world and leading in well-reputed healthcare organizations at prestigious positions. KCD has produced talented doctors



which are making us proud.

Prof. Dr. Syed Nasir Shah said that it's a proud moment for all the KCD family. This achievement reflects the dedication and hard work of the faculty and staff at Khyber College of Dentistry. It will not only boost the college's reputation but also increase trust and confidence in the quality of education offered at

the college. KCD has always been an institute with long-standing values that is deeply entrenched in its education culture.

Dean, KCD expressed his utmost gratitude to BOG for its cooperation and vision for Khyberian MTI. Moreover, he appreciated the role and efforts of college faculty and staff for their tremendous support.

# Cheezious's 32nd outlet opened in Peshawar

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Cheezious, the renowned culinary destination known for its delectable offerings, proudly announces the grand opening of its 32nd outlet on University Road, Peshawar. The momentous occasion was celebrated with the presence of esteemed guests, including Chief Guest HBK Haji Bahadur Khan, Mr. Shafi Ullah Khan (DG KPK Halal Food Authority), Iqbal Wazeer (DC Peshawar), the President of Peshawar Chamber of Commerce.

Cheezious, standing as a culinary trailblazer in the city, holds the distinguished honor of being the only restaurant in Peshawar to receive a coveted 4-star rating from the KPK Food Authority. This accolade reflects the commitment and dedication of the entire Cheezious team towards delivering an unparalleled dining experience.

Director of Operations, Abdul Qadir Khan, expressed his gratitude for the warm reception from



the local community, acknowledging their love and support that enabled Cheezious to establish its second outlet. He highlighted how the connection with the local people has been instrumental in the restaurant's success.

Zohaib Hassan, Head of Marketing, Cheezious said "Cheezious has been able to achieve exponential success because of the people who have trusted us as a brand. Today, we feel proud to open our 2nd outlet for the people of Peshawar and will continue serving the community with our signature culinary delights. The overwhelming support and trust bestowed upon us by our

patrons have been the driving force behind our rapid expansion. We are grateful for the love and loyalty of the people of Peshawar, and we look forward to continuing this incredible journey together. He also added that Cheezious was recently recognized as the Emerging Brand of the Year 2022, which reflects the brand's commitment to excellence."

As Cheezious continues to redefine the culinary landscape, the new outlet on University Road promises to be a hub of gastronomic delight, offering a diverse menu that caters to the discerning tastes of Peshawar's residents.





## In brief

## PPP eying on youth votes

HYDERABAD (INP): People's Party (PPP) Leader Sharmila Farooqi said that the vote of the youth is instrumental for any political party to win the next general elections to be held next year. "Around 65 per cent of the registered voters are young people who have the power to change the fate of any party through the ballot," she told media. Farooqi said PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was a recent example, who has emerged as a young leader, served on the key post as a foreign minister, and in a short period put Pakistan back on the global map. She underscored the need to quit the traditional style of politics by giving out-of-the-box solutions and giving space to young people so they can give more confidence to investors. The PPP leader criticized Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf policies and fooled people in the name of change. All false promises were made to the nation by luring them of millions of jobs and houses and the slogan of eliminating corruption in 90 days, which eventually disheartened the voters.

## Terrorist plan in Mardan failed

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The Counter Terrorism Department took a timely action by failing an attempt of terrorism and successfully arrested Sulieman of Mardan during a joint operation by security forces and CTD here on Saturday. On identifying the arrested terrorist, a large quantity of arms and ammunition was recovered, said an official of the CTD. Gunpowder was hidden in drums to plan a terrorist attack in the City.

## Open court held

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Deputy Commissioner Sundas Irshad held monthly Revenue Services Open Court at district complex to address complaints of people related to Revenue Department under a roof. She listened grievances of people patently and directed the concerned officers to resolved problems of the people on priority basis. Additional Deputy Commissioner Intiaz Ali Baig, AC Munawar Hussain and other officers of revenue department attended the meeting. DC said that it was our duty to resolve all kinds of complaints and problems only on merit to ensure provision of relief to common people without any hurdle. She said that the object of holding of open court was to provide easy access to people to concerned officers without any recommendation or reference to get justice and relief. Meanwhile, two people assaulted a leady health worker in village Kot Nawar near Hafizabad. Accused tore her clothes and tortured her while she was engaged in administrating drops of polio vaccine to children. Police have registered a case against accused. According to Police FIR, Nurgis a Lady Health Worker was administrating drops of polio vaccine to children. Meanwhile, accused Muzammal Hussain and Owais tortured her and tore her clothes. Hafizabad police have registered a case against accused but no arrest was made till filing of this story. Meanwhile, while addressing a press conference, Vice-President Kisan Board Pakistan Amanullah Chatha said that artificial shortage and inflated prices of fertilizers would cause decline in wheat production and negative impacts would be effected national economy which was already on ventilator.

## Governor awards gold medals to 60 students of KUST



F.P. Report

KOHAT: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Saturday awarded gold medals to 60 outstanding students of Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) for their remarkable achievements in the academic field.

The Governor in his address at the 14th Annual Convocation of Kohat University of Science and Technology, congratulated 360 graduating students who completed their bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. degrees in various disciplines. He extended his felicitations to the successful students, their parents, and the faculty members present at the ceremony.

During the event, Vice Chancellor of Kohat University, Professor Dr.

Sardar Khan, presented the annual performance report of the institution to Governor Ali, highlighting the achievements and progress made over the year. Governor Ghulam Ali, in his special address, commended the cultural richness of Kohat district and emphasized the historical significance of the region in political, cultural, religious, scientific, literary, cultural, and civilizational aspects.

He encouraged the youth to strive for their goals with determination and hard work. Highlighting the importance of education, Governor Ghulam Ali stressed that educated youth play a vital role in enhancing the dignity and honor of both the individual and the nation. He urged the graduates to face global challenges with modern knowledge and values.

Governor Ghulam Ali emphasized the need for contemporary education that not only provides knowledge but also instills resilience, tolerance, and ethical values. He said that fostering unity and inclusivity in education is crucial to overcoming societal challenges. Governor Ali applauded Kohat University for successfully implementing a five-year business plan, resulting in improved financial stability and control over expenditures. He urged all universities to maintain financial discipline for sustained growth.

In his closing remarks, Governor Ali reiterated the importance of controlling expenses and maintaining financial discipline across all universities in KP, ensuring a prosperous future for higher education in the region.

## India lady leaves for India on visa expiry

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: Ms Anju, a 34-year-old Indian woman who met Nasrullah, her Facebook friend from Upper Dir four months ago, left for India via Wagah border on Wednesday due to expiry of her visit visa in Pakistan, family sources told local journalists. They said that Nasrullah, her husband, departed from the Wagah border.

The thirty-four-year-old Indian woman, who became Fatima from Anju, arrived on July 22 through the Wahga border four months ago and married Nasrullah, a 29-year-old resident of Upper Dir. On Wednesday Anju (Fatima) silently left for India.

Nasrullah, the husband of Anju (Fatima), told this correspondent on contact that they both had gone to Lahore three days ago where they visited the historical places like Badshahi Mosque, Badshahi Qilla, Pakistan Park etc. He said that Ms Anju had been missing her two children

since she came to Pakistan. "I departed Ms Anju (Fatima) from the Wahga border and she entered exactly at two o'clock on Wednesday", he said, adding that Anju's one-month visa had already expired. He said that they had applied to the Ministry of Interior to extend the period, but due to some difficulties, it could not be completed yet and the formal process was supposed to take four months to one year.

Nasrullah said that despite repeated pleas of Anju (Fatima), the visa was not extended so she decided to go back through a fifteen-day departure letter and canceled the visa extension application. He said that before returning to India, they were given a farewell party by various friends in Lahore.

Responding to a question, Nasrullah said that she would come to Pakistan again after three months. He said that if her visa was extended for one year, it would have been better, but

it did not happen. "If I get a visa for India, then I will take Anju back myself", he said. He said that Ms Anju was facing a divorce case from her first husband in India and she wished to meet her children. He said that Ms Anju had got a lot of love and respect from everyone here in Pakistan. Nasrullah thanked the people of Dir for fully supporting him and said they did not let him lack anything.

Nasrullah's family sources said that they were trying to shift to Dubai permanently to live a peaceful life where Ms Anju could also call her two children. Ms Anju (now Fatima) had solemnized a court marriage with Nasrullah after her conversion to Islam on July 25 in Upper Dir district.

Later the couple got unprecedented love and respect from locals and outsiders. Several companies and business organizations also announced plots and awarded the couple with precious gifts in parts of the country.

## Students spends a day at Pano Aqil Garrison

PANO AQIL (INP): Students from various educational institutions in Sindh recently visited the Pano Aqil Garrison, spending a day with the Pakistan Army. The primary goal of this initiative was to provide students with an insightful understanding of the significant contributions made by the Pakistan Army in service to the nation.

The enthusiastic participants, hailing from esteemed institutions such as Sindh University, Sheikh Ayaz University, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Quaid-e-Azam University of Science and Technology, Shah Abdul Latif College, and Government Degree College Kashmore and Jacobabad. They represented the vibrant academic community of Larkana

Division. Likewise, students from IBA University, Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai University Ghotki, Begum Nusrat Bhutto University Sukkur, Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur, and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Nowsheroferoz added to the diverse group, showcasing unity across educational divisions in Sukkur.

A total of 650 students, including 450 boys and 200 girls, actively participated in the Pano Aqil Garrison tour. The day's activities included engaging sports, horse riding sessions, and informative activities designed to provide students with a view of the Pakistan Army's multifaceted role.

In addition to physical activities, a traditional

music program was organized by the Pakistan Army for both male and female students, adding a cultural touch to the day's festivities. The students were captivated by the event, expressing their gratitude and admiration for the valuable services rendered by the Pakistan Army in service to the nation.

This unique initiative not only provided a platform for students to appreciate the efforts of the Pakistan Army but also fostered a sense of unity among participants from various educational backgrounds. The event was deemed a success, leaving a lasting impression on the students, who gained both knowledge and fond memories from their memorable day at Pano Aqil Garrison.

## Seven robbers arrested, cash, weapons recovered

FAISALABAD (INP): Madina Town police claimed to have arrested seven members of two robber gangs and recovered cash and illegal weapons from their possession.

A police spokesman

said here on Saturday that SHO Madina Town Umar Sarfraz Warraich along with his team arrested accused including Ali Riaz, Asghar Ali, Ali Asghar, Arsalan, Fayyaz, Amir and Mohsin, who were wanted

in 36 robbery and other cases. The police recovered Rs.1.3117 million in cash, illegal weapons, mobile phones and other items from their possession while an investigation is ongoing, he added.



SWABI: Qaumi Watan Party Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao addressing party's workers convention.

## District Implementation Committee held

F.P. Report

MARDAN: In the light of the orders issued by the federal and provincial governments regarding the deportation of all foreigners residing illegally, a follow-up meeting of District Implementation Committee was chaired by Deputy Commissioner Mardan Wasil Khan here.

District Implementation Committee members including District Police Officer Najibur Rehman, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Saeedullah Jan, Assistant Commissioner Mardan Ayesha Tahir and AC Takhtbhai Mahin Hassan participated.

On this occasion, while giving a detailed briefing to the Deputy Commissioner Mardan regarding the evacuation of all foreigners residing illegally in the district, it was said that all foreign families identified by the DIC, have voluntarily left the district. Deputy Commissioner Mardan directed the District and Tehsil Implementation Committee members to investigate all the issues further to ensure transparency.

## Man killed over old enmity

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A man identified as Muhammad Rahman 38, a resident of Shaltalo Barawal in Upper Dir was killed while a car driver Ashraf Ali, a resident of Malakand Payeen was injured when two unknowns motorcyclists opened indiscriminate firing on a moving car at Shamsi Khan in the jurisdiction of Talash police station here on Saturday. The attackers escaped from the scene. The injured driver was shifted to the Talash Category D hospital wherein his condition is stated to be out of danger.

The motive behind the incident is stated to be an old enmity. The Talash police registered a case and started further investigations.

## PTI grand conventions

F.P. Report

BUNER: The PTI district chapter leadership and tigers proved political dominance by holding historical grand gatherings at PK 25. PK 26, PK 27 on the same day same time. The district administration after a long time had allowed PTI to convene workers conventions at three different venue but on the same day same time. The unprecedented grand gathering was held in PK 25 at a on Malakpur road where the party district president former Aide to CM Riaz Khan addressed. The second largest gathering was held in PK 26 in Dewana Baba road where party general secretary former chairman DDAC Syed Fakhar Jehan Bacha addressed. The third largest gathering was held in PK 27 at Amazai Chinglai road where the party ex candidate PK 27 Afsar Khan addressed.

The party local leadership and tigers were largely attended. The party president candidate PK 25 Riaz Khan the party general secretary candidate PK 26 Syed Fakhar Jehan Bacha the party vice president and candidate PK 27 Afsar the party senior vice president and candidate NA Kamran Khan addressed the gatherings. The speakers very boldly defended party leader Imran Khan and repeatedly announced the PTI would be the winner in the upcoming general elections as all of male and female were supporting Imran Khan and PTI and no one dare to stop PTI from visible victory in general elections.

## QWP for transparent election in country

F.P. Report

SWABI: Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Saturday called for holding free, fair and transparent election to help steer the country out of the prevailing crises.

Addressing a convention of QWP workers in the Swabi district, he said that this election was a test case for the Election Commission of Pakistan, therefore, all the political parties should be provided a level-playing field to take part in the polls. "We are against rigging and selection," he said, adding that his party wanted the holding of the free, fair and transparent election so that nobody could raise objections about the electoral process afterwards.

He said that the 2018 general election was rigged to bring the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) into

power. He said that former prime minister Imran Khan ruined the economy as he lacked the expertise and competence to govern the country. He said that the main purpose of the Pakistan Democratic Movement was to oust Imran Khan from power.

Aftab Sherpao said that Imran Khan was removed through the constitutional method of the no-confidence movement. "Imran Khan conspired to ignite unrest in the country after his ouster," he remarked. He said the PTI leader committed a blunder by getting the provincial assemblies of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa dissolved and making baseless allegations against the state institutions.

He said that Imran Khan was responsible for the skyrocketing inflation being faced by the poor people. He said that a fair election should be conducted so that

the next elected government could take steps to revive the economy and provide relief to the people. He said that his party would continue to strive for getting the rights of KP which was rich in mineral resources.

He said that the provinces should be given control over their resources as this would help strengthen the federation. Aftab Sherpao said that the PTI ruled KP for nine straight years, but left the province in dire financial straits. He said that the cash-strapped KP now did not have funds to pay salaries to the government employees.

He said that though KP produced cheap hydel electricity, its residents were forced to pay inflated power bills. He expressed the resolve that the QWP would spare no effort to work for the wellbeing of the Pakhtuns after coming into power.

## Int'l day of persons with disabilities marked

Anees Takar

MARDAN: Health practitioners celebrated International Day of Persons with Disabilities with great zeal in Mardan. According to details, Dr. Javed Iqbal, the Medical Superintendent of DHQ Teaching Hospital Mardan, along with Guest of Honor Deputy Commissioner, Waseel Khan, led the celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The event aimed to raise awareness and sensitize the public through a well-organized gathering.

Distinguished personalities, including Dr. Mian Habib ur Rahman, Dr. Orangzeb Chief Medical Officers DHQ (Member of Service), Dr. Arshad Ali Development, Dr. Taj Khan DHQ2, senior doctors, physiotherapists Dr. Imran Khan and Dr. Shah Nawaz, along with other hospital

staff and individuals from various walks of life participated.

Guest of Honor Waseel Khan highlighted that every year, on December 3rd, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities is observed worldwide to shed light on the challenges faced by people with disabilities and promote their inclusion in society.

Dr. Javed Iqbal expressed the need for a comprehensive cultural shift to embrace and empower individuals with disabilities, fostering equal participation in society. He emphasized that the day serves as a reminder to promote the rights and well-being of disabled individuals.

Dr. Imran Khan, in charge of the physiotherapy department at DHQ Teaching Hospital Mardan, discussed the hospital's efforts in providing state-of-the-art facilities for persons with disabilities,

including modern machines and equipment.

The occasion celebrated the achievements of disabled individuals while acknowledging the hurdles they face. Despite global efforts, over one billion people globally live with some form of disability, often overlooked during emergencies.

DHQ Teaching Hospital Mardan's Physiotherapy Department, under the guidance of Dr. Imran Khan, has been actively contributing to enhancing facilities and services for persons with disabilities, aligning with the hospital's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility. The celebration concluded with a renewed commitment from all participants to work towards a more inclusive and supportive society for persons with disabilities, ensuring they are an integral part of all community activities.

## PTI grand conventions at 3 constituencies showed strength

F.P. Report

BUNER: The PTI district chapter leadership and tigers proved political dominance by holding historical grand gatherings at PK 25. PK 26, PK 27 on the same day same time. The district administration after a long time had allowed PTI to convene workers conventions at three different venue but on the same day same time.

The unprecedented grand gathering was held in PK 25 at a on Malakpur road where the party district president former Aide to CM Riaz Khan addressed. The second largest gathering was held in PK 26 in Dewana Baba road where party general secretary former chairman DDAC Syed Fakhar Jehan Bacha addressed. The third largest gathering was held in PK 27 at Amazai Chinglai road where the party ex candidate PK 27 Afsar Khan addressed.

The party local leadership and tigers were largely attended. The party president candidate PK 25 Riaz Khan the party general secretary candidate PK 26 Syed Fakhar Jehan Bacha the party vice president and candidate PK 27 Afsar the party senior vice president and candidate NA Kamran Khan addressed the gatherings. The speakers very boldly defended party leader Imran Khan and repeatedly announced the PTI would be the winner in the upcoming general elections as all of male and female were supporting Imran Khan and PTI and no one dare to stop PTI from visible victory in general elections.

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and candidate NA Kamran Khan addressed the gatherings.

The speakers very boldly defended party leader Imran Khan and repeatedly announced the PTI would be the winner in the upcoming general elections as all of male and female were supporting Imran Khan and PTI and no one dare to stop PTI from visible victory in general elections. The crowd time and again shouted Release Imran Khan and also raised slogans against political rivals including Mian Nawaz Sharif Maulana Fazlur Rehman Aimal Wali Khan Pervaz Khattak.

## ANP expedites election campaign in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Awami National Party central spokesman and party nominated candidate for NA 7

Zahid Khan has said the ANP will reject the imposition of taxes in Malakand division in case it forms government in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He was addressing a workers' convention at Malikabad Balambat as chief guest here on Saturday. The convention was also addressed by the ANP candidates for

provincial assembly Malik Sajjad Yousafzai, Malik Muhammad Zeb Khan, Khurshid Tajak, Ali Bakht and others.

Zahid Khan, a former senator, said the ANP had completed several development projects in the Lower Dir district during its government in the province. He said that the former princely state of Dir was merged in Pakistan without taking its ruler the Nawab of Dir into confidence so it was a held territory. He said the government had no man-

date to impose taxes upon residents of Dir.

The ANP spokesman said that his party had the credit for gas supply, construction of Jandol and Maidan grid stations and construction of Bacha Khan OPD at Timergara hospital. He said the people of Dir had to vote for his party if they wanted to develop the area. He asked the party workers to speed up their door to door campaign and convince voters to vote for the ANP in the next general elections.





‘Bombing everywhere’

# As Israel renews war, my eight-year-old has questions

GAZA STRIP: After a week-long temporary truce, the Israeli air strikes have unfortunately resumed. The past seven days of relative calm have come to an end, and the familiar sounds of bombings, explosions, aircraft, artillery, naval boats and live ammunition are back.

These were our daily experiences for seven weeks before the truce, and we had become adept at distinguishing between them, including the distinctive sounds of rockets from Gaza and Israeli bombings. This morning, at 7:00 sharp, the violent sounds resumed from land, air and sea, evoking new memories of sadness on my family's faces.

My brother, opening the window to see what was happening, remarked, "Bombing is from everywhere." The toughest question came from my eight-year-old daughter, Baniyas, asking if this was war again. My husband explained that the past "calm" days were just a temporary truce, and the war had not ended. Baniyas struggled to comprehend this strange cycle of war, pause, and then war again.

Reflecting on Baniyas's confusion, I wondered how a young mind grapples with the illogical nature of war—pauses followed by resumptions. Fifty-six days of conflict were apparently insufficient to secure a ceasefire. Yesterday, displaced people living in tents amid dire conditions near Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central Gaza Strip expressed distress, fear and despair, desiring not a temporary truce but a lasting ceasefire to return to their homes, even if damaged. Their fear – that a new resumption of war would mean that Israel would move to bomb the south. Early today, their expectations came true as Israeli troops threw leaflets asking people living in east Khan Younis to move to Rafah at the southern edge of Gaza.

As air strikes persist from north to south, I ponder the multitude of wars faced by the people of Gaza: displacement, destruction, humiliation, tent living, thirst, hunger and the anxiety of temporary pauses followed by renewed bombing. What should the

people of Gaza do to make the world feel for them? How can the world allow the genocide to continue again? How will we return to the bloodshed again and worry about the loss of our loved ones? How, how and how? I know that these questions will remain unanswered. The past 56 days have taught me, as they have shown to all of the people of Gaza, that our fears, lives, pain, hopes and dreams are not included in the calculations of this world.

When the humanitarian pause started in Gaza, Fatmeh Abu Swareh hadn't heard from her daughter Wafaa in nearly two weeks. "I'm not sleeping. I sit here at 3am and cry. I cry all night... all day," she said a few days before the pause in her living room in Beddawi, a Palestinian refugee camp northeast of Tripoli, Lebanon's second-largest city. She feared the worst for her daughter and four grandchildren. Once the pause was implemented, Wafaa finally got through to her mother, but things are still tough.

"My daughter doesn't have food or anything to drink," she said. "Even with the truce, they're scared of the [Israeli] planes." More than 15,000 people have been killed by Israel in Gaza since October 7, including at least 6,000 children. The Israeli assault was ostensibly in retribution for a Hamas-led attack into Israel that killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and captured more than 200. The Palestinian death toll is certainly higher than 15,000 as there are likely thousands of people still missing under the rubble of destroyed buildings.

Some 210,000 Palestinian refugees live in Lebanon, most still in the refugee camps set up for their forebears who arrived during the Nakba in 1948, fleeing violent Zionist gangs. Beddawi has about 20,000 people living in it, all of them transfixed by the news coming out of Gaza since October 7. The news has deeply impacted everyone, with physical and emotional signs of stress proliferating. It has also boosted national pride, with a huge uptick in sales of Palestinian flags and keffiyehs.

Everyone is suffering, but espe-

cially those with family in Gaza. Ducking into a clothing shop to get away from the noisy street outside, Ossama Najjar, 47, stood with his back to the enticingly stacked jeans. He's not interested. He has lost count of the family members lost in Gaza, he said. "Every day, I look online for the Ministry of Health lists with names of people from the Najjar family who were martyred," he said. Among the dead were a cousin and an uncle. Mustafa Abu Harb worries often about his own uncle and cousin in Gaza. The clean-shaven Fatah official for north Lebanon sits in his office with framed photos of Yasser Arafat and his successor as Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, over his shoulders.

"I'm talking to you here but my heart is there with my uncle and cousin," he said from behind his desk, slumping slightly in his crisp blue shirt and grey blazer. "They're killing the future generations of Palestine," he said, fighting back tears. Fatah member Ahmad Hasan Alaaraj, also in the office, lost six family members in Gaza since October 7.

He was overcome by emotion several times while Abu Harb spoke and was only able to add: "Most people here have someone [in Gaza]." On a normal day, Najjar works in aluminium. But since October 7, "No one is working," he said animatedly, his brow covered in sweat despite the sun beginning to set on this cool autumn afternoon. "All our attention is on Gaza. Everything on Facebook is Gaza." While many others in Beddawi have lost relatives, even those without family in Gaza are suffering.

Dr Ali Wehbe, Palestinian Red Crescent director in north Lebanon, said the constant news barrage of death and destruction in Gaza was impacting his patients. From his office in the Safad Hospital, he said many patients now had high blood pressure while others reported increased psychological distress. Wehbe doesn't have family in Gaza but has colleagues he studied with overseas and are now on the ground there, and he worries about them.



"We were in touch but then the electricity went out," he said. The feelings of helplessness have also manifested in an uptick in national solidarity.

At a small bridal shop in the camp, Nadia Mahmoud Moussa stood next to a tapestry shaped like Palestine, each region embroidered in a pattern representing local traditions. Moussa pointed to a turquoise section, decorated with flowers and small pink, grey, blue and orange lozenges. "Here's Gaza," she said. Before October 7, Moussa sold bridal dresses and hired out musical troupes to perform Palestinian traditions like the dabkeh, a Levantine folk dance, or zaffeh, an animated singing, drumming and dancing procession performed at weddings.

Black dresses embroidered in traditional Palestinian tatreez still hang from racks in her shop but now her big sellers are keffiyehs and Palestinian flags as people sought to express their solidarity by displaying

national symbols. "We're all living this pain," she said. "We pray for patience and resilience. From kids to the elderly, we are now learning what it means to be martyrs." Back in Abu Swareh's living room, she wipes away tears between pained sentences. Her daughter has already had at least one brush with death, she said, when the house next to hers was hit by an Israeli attack.

"It destroyed the whole house," Abu Swareh said. Even if her daughter and grandchildren survive the attacks, there is an extreme lack of food and water, which has led her daughter and her family to resort to drinking saltwater. A humanitarian pause between Israel and Hamas went into effect. As Israel and Hamas traded captives and prisoners, the pause has been extended twice, most recently.

Asked if the pause provided any relief, Najjar was dismissive. "There's supposed to be aid coming in but there's still no food or water or

help on the ground," he said. "And with the winter conditions, it'll only get worse." Najjar said the images he's seen in the media recall other humanitarian catastrophes like Yemen and Somalia. "I hope the Arab countries, the West, and the rest of the world start to genuinely support Gaza," he added. "Right now, it's all talk."

Back at the Abu Swareh residence, Fatmeh knew her relief counted for little as the fighting could restart at any moment. Furthermore, the acts of aggression haven't entirely stopped, she said. "Today, they shot at them from [Israeli] ships in the sea." Reports from Palestinian media said Israeli navy boats shot missiles at the coast of Gaza. Nearby, sat Fatmeh's son, Mohammad. He sat quietly until his mother encouraged him to speak. He started, but laboured over his words, choosing them carefully. "This ceasefire is meaningless," he eventually said. "It's a ceasefire without a ceasefire." — Agencies

## Republican MP Santos expelled from US House

WASHINGTON: United States lawmakers have voted to expel George Santos, the scandal-plagued politician who lied his way into Congress and has been indicted on charges of bankrolling his lavish lifestyle with stolen donor cash. The House of Representatives voted 311-114 to immediately oust the freshman lawmaker, above the two-thirds majority required to remove one of its own.

One of the most controversial figures in the 234-year history of the House, the 35-year-old New York Republican is only the third person to join Washington's rogues gallery of ejected lawmakers since the Civil War. He swept into the House in 2022, helping the Republicans grab a slender majority, but it quickly emerged that almost his entire backstory was a fabrication, from his education and religion to his personal history and professional experience.

Federal prosecutors have accused Santos of laundering campaign funds and defrauding donors. Santos has pleaded not guilty to those charges. But he was ultimately doomed by a congressional ethics investigation that found "overwhelming evidence" of misconduct and accused him of

seeking to "fraudulently exploit every aspect of his House candidacy".

"You, sir, are a crook," said Ohio's Max Miller, one of several members of Santos's own party to stand up on the House floor to denounce him in a debate on the expulsion. "My future former colleague is divorced from reality. He has manufactured his entire life," said Marc Molinaro, a fellow New York Republican, while another member from the state's delegation, Anthony D'Esposito, called Santos a "liar".

Santos allegedly used donor money for Botox treatments and the OnlyFans porn website as well as luxury Italian goods and vacations to the Hamptons and Las Vegas, according to the House Committee on Ethics. Two previous attempts to expel Santos had failed, but the ethics report was enough to sway many of his defenders, and he was ousted in an overwhelming vote supported by more than 100 of his fellow Republicans.

Aside from the criminal allegations, Santos has become notorious for a series of bizarre fabrications, including claiming to have worked for Goldman Sachs, being Jewish and having been a college vol-

leyball star. Beyond accusing the Ethics Committee of a "smear campaign", he has not publicly addressed the accusations in any detail.

Shortly before the vote, House Speaker Mike Johnson said he would vote against the expulsion, an aide said. He and the other three top Republican leaders in the lower chamber of the US Congress voted no. Santos is the sixth House member to be expelled since Congress first convened in 1789 and the first since 2002 when Ohio Democrat James Traficant was ousted over a bribery conviction.

There was considerable doubt ahead of the vote over whether it would get the required "super-majority" as the Republican leadership declined to whip the rank and file either way. Dozens of Republicans said they were reluctant to condemn a man who first deserves due process although he is unlikely to have his day in court until September – close to what would have been the end of his two-year term. "Since the beginning of Congress, there's only two ways you get expelled: You get convicted of a crime, or you participated in the Civil War. Neither apply to George Santos," Florida Republican Representative Matt Gaetz said in a floor speech. — Aljazeera

## UN SC to vote to end Somalia arms embargo

NEW YORK: The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is due to vote to remove the final restrictions on weapons deliveries to Somalia's government and its security forces, diplomats said, more than 30 years after an arms embargo was first imposed on the country.

The council put the embargo on Somalia in 1992 to cut the flow of weapons to feuding warlords, who had ousted dictator Mohamed Siad Barre and plunged the Horn of Africa country into civil war. The 15-member body is due to adopt two British-drafted resolutions, diplomats said – one to remove the full arms embargo on Somalia and another to reimpose an arms embargo on the al-Qaeda-linked al-Shabab group.

One of the draft resolutions spells out that "for the avoidance of doubt, that there is no arms embargo on the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia". It also expresses concern about the number of safe ammunition storage facilities in Somalia and encourages the construction, refurbishment and use of safe ammunition depots across Somalia. It urges other countries to help. — Aljazeera

## UN's top court bars Venezuela from action in Guyana border dispute

NEW YORK: The United Nations' top court has warned Venezuela to stop any action that would alter Guyana's control over a disputed territory, days ahead of a planned referendum over the territory. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) told the Latin American country to "refrain from taking any action which would modify that situation that currently prevails" in the Essequibo region that makes up some two-thirds of Guyana.

The court did not specifically ban Venezuela from holding the referendum over the oil-rich territory, as Guyana had requested. However, judges made it clear that any concrete action to alter the status quo should be stopped, and the legally binding ruling remains in place until a case brought by Guyana against Venezuela on the future of the region is considered by the court. Venezuela will hold

a referendum over the oil-rich Essequibo territory controlled by Guyana.

Despite pending litigation at the ICJ over where the two countries' border should lie, Venezuela has decided to ask its citizens' opinion on whether or not it should create a new "state" in Essequibo – a move Guyana claims would pave the way for its neighbour to "unilaterally and illegally" seize the region. At 160,000 square kilometres (62,000 square miles), Essequibo makes up more than two-thirds of Guyana, which has administered the area for over 100 years.

The Guyanese government insists on retaining the border determined in 1899 by an arbitration panel, while claiming Venezuela had agreed with the ruling until it changed its mind in 1962. Caracas, for its part, claims the Essequibo River to the region's east

forms a natural border and had been recognised as such from 1777 when the so-called Captaincy General of Venezuela, an administrative district of colonial Spain, was established.

It also refers to the Geneva Agreement signed in 1966 ahead of Guyana's independence from Britain, which provided for a negotiated settlement on the region's final borders, which never came to pass. The plebiscite – described as consultative and nonbinding – will pose five questions to Venezuelan voters.

They include whether or not to reject the 1899 decision, which Caracas says was "fraudulently imposed". Also on the ballot is whether Caracas should reject ICJ jurisdiction over the dispute, and whether or not to grant Venezuelan citizenship to the people – currently Guyanese – of a new "Guyana Essequiba State". Aljazeera

## Navalny says Russia has handed down new criminal charges

MOSCOW: Alexey Navalny, Russia's jailed opposition leader, said he has been informed of new criminal charges against him. The Kremlin critic, who is already serving a 19-year sentence, said on social media that he had additionally been charged under Article 214 of the penal code, which covers vandalism.

"I have no idea what article 214 is, and there's nowhere to look. You'll know before I do," he said on his Telegram channel. Navalny, 47, is already serving sentences totalling more than 30 years on charges including

extremism, which he denies, and has spent much of the last two years in solitary confinement for a range of alleged misdemeanours. "They really do initiate a new criminal case against me every three months. Rarely does an inmate confined to a solitary cell for over a year have such a vibrant social and political existence," read the comments issued through his associates.

The vandalism charge could add up to another three years to his sentence, Navalny said, citing a letter he had received from Russia's Investigative

Committee in prison. In September, he lost his appeal against the 19-year prison term, which was imposed on August 4 after he was convicted on six charges related to alleged "extremist activity", all of which he denied. That latest sentence was on top of 11 and a half years he was already serving at the IK-6 penal colony at Melekhovo, about 235km (146 miles) east of Moscow, on fraud and other charges, which he also rejected as politically motivated and designed to silence his criticism of President Vladimir Putin. — Aljazeera

## Lula faces numerous challenges as Brazil assumes G20 presidency

BRASILIA: As Brazil takes over the G20 presidency on December 1 from India, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva will be challenged to fulfil his promise of holding up the interests of the global south amid two ongoing wars and a slowing global economy.

Lula also takes over at a time of bitter internal divisions within the group, the legacy of outgoing president Narendra Modi, whose team, eager to force a joint declaration, ran roughshod over diplomatic niceties in closed-door meetings. Despite these hurdles, Lula is forging ahead and has announced Brazil's three key priorities as head of the G20: social inclusion and the fight against hunger, phasing out fossil fuels in favour of renewable energy and reforming global economic governance.

The Group of Twenty – the G20 – is a forum for the world's largest economies to coordinate on key issues of global policy. Between them, G20 countries represent 85 percent of global output and two-thirds of the world's population. The G20 is made up of the European Union and 19 other countries, a mix of advanced and emerging economies. At its G20 leadership summit in September, India invited the African Union – representing 55 countries from across the continent – to become a member of the group.

This was seen as a step to underscore Modi's self-prescribed role as "the mother of democracy ... to mitigate the global trust deficit" between rich and poor nations. The G20 was founded in 1999, following the Asian financial crisis. Originally designed as a council for finance ministers to discuss macroeconomic policy, its scope has since widened to cover issues ranging from global development to climate change and gender equality.

Critics, in turn, have dismissed the G20 as an ineffectual talking shop. In over 200 meetings, the group did coalesce around its yearly declaration. Otherwise, New Delhi only delivered one joint statement – on the African Union. Against a backdrop of rising geopolitical tensions, South Africa and Brazil have openly criticised Israel's bombardment of Gaza. For its part, China hosted a delegation of Muslim countries in November calling for a ceasefire. Elsewhere, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has also undermined efforts at consensus-building.

Despite maintaining a neutral stance on that conflict, India has become more critical of Russia in recent months. Modi has also pared back military purchases from Moscow and bolstered diplomatic ties with the West. Vladimir Putin,

who is under an international arrest warrant for war crimes, declined to attend September's gathering in New Delhi. President Xi Jinping of China also skipped the event, amid growing geopolitical tensions with India and deepening ties with Russia.

That didn't stop India from "turning the annual summit into a commercial for the personality cult of Modi," said Jayati Ghosh, an economics professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. "In practice, it was an ineffectual presidency," with the host keener on boosting its domestic image than addressing global challenges. "While trying to project India as a global superpower, Modi passes on the baton with no shortage of problems ... the world economy is slowing, climate change is looming and conflicts in the Ukraine and Palestine have undermined north-south relations," she added.

Ahead of this week's handover, Lula informed a virtual summit of G20 leaders that "I hope this [Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire] agreement can pave the way for a lasting political solution to the conflict." Brazil has long maintained support for a two-state solution. Since Hamas's attacks on October 7 and the ensuing Israeli bombardment of Gaza, Lula has repeatedly called for a swift and

definitive end to the fighting.

In October, Brazil spearheaded a UN Security Council resolution which called for a pause in the conflict but was vetoed by the US. "Lula's position on Israel is delicate, but he's arguably the best-placed global statesman to try and stop the carnage," added Ghosh. Elsewhere, Brazil's president has irked Western leaders by suggesting that Russia and Ukraine share joint responsibility for their conflict. He has publicly backed both Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin to attend the G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro next year. At the G20 summit in New Delhi in September, President Lula urged leaders to try and end world hunger by 2030.

"Part of that could be achieved through the creation of a global task force against hunger," a Brazilian government official, who asked not to be named, told Al Jazeera. "The task force would seek to rally support in areas like low-carbon agricultural research and farming insurance improvements, especially in food-insecure countries ... that would require more funding from wealthy nations," the source said. It's not clear how likely it is that those would come through.

Lula has also backed the idea of a minimum global corporate tax rate of 15 percent. The Organisation for

Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) plan, designed in 2021 to clamp down on tax evasion and stem decades of tax 'competition' between governments, could generate at least \$150bn in additional global tax revenues annually. Almost 140 governments have signed up to the OECD agreement, and are at varying stages of turning the proposal into law.

"By expanding the OECD's scheme, Brazil also wants to ramp up investment in the green transition. Lula wants the G20 to deploy more funds in renewable energy and nature conservation projects," the official noted. For years, Lula has lobbied to reinforce the role of multilateral bodies such as the United Nations to try and resolve global challenges. His commitment to diplomacy, however, goes beyond a penchant for consensus.

At the UN General Assembly in New York in September, Lula defended the need to reshape the global governance system. "The unequal and distorted representation at the helm of the IMF [International Monetary Fund] and World Bank is unacceptable," he said. In 2022, the IMF provided \$160bn in SDRs, the Fund's reserve currency, to European countries and just \$34bn to all of Africa. "The unfair allocation of SDRs is

only part of the problem," says Rogério Studart, a former Brazilian representative to the World Bank.

"Fund quota limits are also too small for emergency lending," said Studart. He was alluding to IMF programmes such as the Resilience and Sustainability Trust, where country grants are capped at 150 percent of their capital commitments into the fund. "These curb the amount of money available for climate disasters, especially in low-income countries. I think that Lula will try and raise country quotas for emergency lending, and attempt to reduce the conditions attached to these programmes," he added, pointing out that its success was unclear as this had been tried for years.

Studart also dismissed the World Bank's "cautious" approach to risk tolerance. "The Bank can raise considerably more money for developing countries by adjusting its loan-to-equity ratio," he said. A higher ratio would add to the Bank's lending capacity, but come with a higher risk of non-repayment. His remarks echo a G20 report published in July which said that by raising their lending ratio slightly, groups like the World Bank could unlock billions of extra dollars in new lending. "Brazil will echo the findings from the report," Studart said. — Aljazeera



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## Spade of terrorism and Pak-Afghan ties

**P**AKISTAN has once again asked Afghan authorities to take immediate and effective steps against terrorist entities operating from their soil inimical to the interests of the state of Pakistan. The Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch voiced concern over the presence of terrorist sanctuaries in Afghanistan, who are continuously weighing war against Pakistan and causing loss of lives and damage to critical infrastructure and properties. She noted that Pakistan is strongly committed to protecting workers and projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and will defeat the designs of any terrorist entity against the CPEC or other investment projects in the country.

The bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are currently very tense and the security situation in the greater AfPak region has deteriorated significantly, after Pakistan publicly blamed the Taliban leadership in Afghanistan, for taking lenient actions against TTP hideouts in their country. The Pakistani accused Afghanistan of ignoring its concerns by resisting taking effective action against anti-Pakistan elements inside Afghanistan. According to the authorities, the proscribed Tahreek-e- Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is currently camped inside Afghanistan and has established massive training and lodging infrastructure and avails freedom of movement in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. The issue of terrorism took rebirth in Pakistan about a year ago and continuous terrorist attacks have been witnessed on Pakistani Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and military installations, particularly in Erstwhile FATA and Balochistan over the past year. The Pakistani authorities have revealed that Afghan nationals are also involved in terrorist activities in the country alongside the TTP miscreants causing grave concerns in the government regarding the rise of terrorism and the conduct of the Afghan brethren, who are at war against their host nation. Interestingly, the TTP still enjoys safe havens and freedom of movement in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan which it availed during the Ghani rule in the past.

Currently, Islamabad and Kabul struck a deadlock over the issue of terrorism, as Pakistan pressing Afghan interim authorities to fulfill their commitments regarding the Doha agreement and also uphold their obligation under the recent trilateral Islamabad Summit between Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China by taking decisive actions against the militant group. Unfortunately, Afghan interim leaders denied the presence of the TTP and any terrorist infrastructure on Afghan soil terming the terrorism and the TTP a domestic issue of Pakistan that astonished the Pakistani authorities as well as the common public. After continuous noncooperation from Kabul, the Pakistani government decided to repatriate millions of unregistered Afghans residing in the country, a significant number of whom were involved in illegal activities including street crimes, and smuggling of goods and currency. Currently, the people of Afghanistan face a serious humanitarian crisis, a lack of livelihood, and shortages of food grains and staples while the arrival of millions of Afghan returnees from neighboring nations further cause problems for the government as well as the public. The government and the people of Pakistan have great sympathies with our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan who have suffered a great deal because of difficult humanitarian and security situations.

The government of Pakistan has renewed its calls for Afghan interim rulers not to withhold and take decisive actions against the Pakistan's proscribed militant outfits amassed in their country, so peace prevails in the region. The courtesy, brotherhood, and good neighborliness are reciprocity, a two-way traffic, and vice versa. It is high time that the Afghan rulers must review their priorities vis-a-vis terrorism, the TTP, Pakistan, and the interest of the people of Afghanistan. Pakistanis are the biggest supporters of a free, peaceful, and stable Afghanistan, and the same must be reciprocated by the Taliban and the Afghans. Hopefully, sense will prevail and both nations will demonstrate wisdom, and patience in dealing with the issue of terrorism which has now become a matter of survival for Pakistan.

## FATA development and leaders' legacy

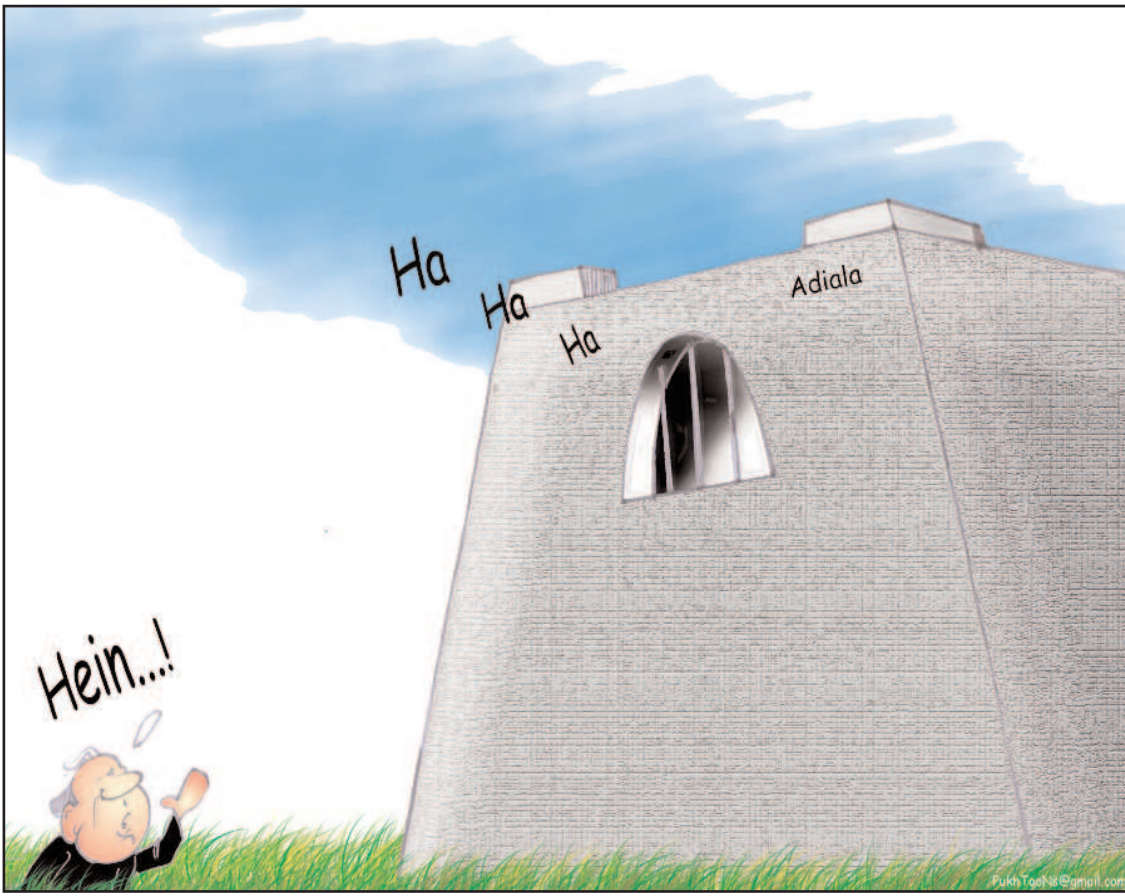
**I**NTERIM Provincial Minister for Commerce and Industry, and Tribal Affairs, has recently observed that the caretaker government will make all-out efforts to complete unfinished development work to ensure the provision of all facilities to the residents of Erstwhile FATA as being enjoyed by the citizens in other parts of the country. According to him, launching new development projects was not a mandate of the interim government, however, initiatives would be adopted to complete the ongoing progress schemes. He noted that the merged tribal belt had been ignored for a long period, and the interim government was competent enough to remove a sense of deprivation among the tribesmen.

Historically, the newly merged Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have faced challenges in socio-economic development due to factors like limited access to education, healthcare, and a lack of essential infrastructure. However, remarkable efforts have been made by successive governments to bring about positive change, and these endeavours became visible after FATA was merged with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province in mid-2018. The federal government reserved 3% of the NFC award along with a provincial grant under the PSPD to bring FATA up to par with the rest of the country in terms of social development indicators. Various development projects have been launched to improve educational facilities, healthcare services, and economic opportunities in the region.

Over the past two decades, the deteriorated security situation and continued counter-terrorism operations by the security forces seriously disturbed social life and significantly undermined development and growth in the entire border belt region along the Durand line. Although, the interim leaders have no mandate to initiate new development projects in any area. However, the interim government continued the ongoing development work on various projects for the larger benefit of the masses until prohibited by the court a few days back. In fact, the tribesmen suffered the utmost socio-economic deprivation in the past years, hopefully, they would harvest the blessing attached to their sacrifices in the future.

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## COP28: Israel should not be allowed to greenwash its war on Gaza

Ameera Kawash

**A**S its war on Gaza continues with no end in sight, Israel will be participating in the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) which started on Thursday in Dubai. For the Israeli government, this will be an invaluable opportunity to engage in "green diplomacy", promote its climate technologies, and divert the international community's attention from its illegal occupation, apartheid and ongoing war crimes against the Palestinians.

Indeed, participating in the world's top climate event while continuing to indiscriminately bomb an unlawfully besieged territory will allow Israel, which has long been trying to conceal its theft of Palestinian land and resources under a cloak of pseudo "environmentalism", to push its extensive "greenwashing" agenda to dangerous new extremes. Given the scale of atrocities Israel has committed in Gaza in the past few weeks, the presence of an Israeli delegation - no matter its size or the relative seniority of its members - will cast a shadow over COP28.

The Israeli government has said its delegation to the conference has been significantly "scaled down" due to "current events", and that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his top ministers will not be in attendance. Nevertheless, it said Israel will still have a pavilion at the conference which will be used to promote its environmental start-ups and initiatives, especially those from the southern regions affected by the war. Regardless of who in the Israeli government ends up attending the summit this year, however, they will struggle more than ever to sell the image of Israel as an environmental leader. The dissonance caused by Israel's representatives suddenly switching from genocidal threats to eco-friendly jargon will be mind-breaking for global audiences.

Can anyone take seriously, for example, any recommendations on clean

and sustainable energy from Israel's Energy Minister Israel Katz, who at the start of the war stated: "Humanitarian aid to Gaza? No electric switch will be turned on, no water tap will be opened, and no fuel truck will enter until the Israeli abductees are returned home"? Or can anyone with any self-respect take ecological advice from Israel's Agriculture Minister Avi Ditcher, who declared that Israel is "rolling out Nakba 2023" in Gaza? Saying the genocide part out loud, the Israeli government cannot expect its rhetoric to not have long-term diplomatic, economic, and potentially legal consequences, or to not damage the country's standing as a climate leader. Jordan, for example, has already pulled out of an energy and water deal with Israel which was hatched in COP27 due to what Jordanian Foreign Minister called "Israel's barbarism in Gaza".

The public relations fallout caused by Israel's war will also make it difficult for it to sell its climate tech solutions as global audiences will find it hard to reconcile Israel's supposed concern for the environment with its current actions in Gaza. Israel's air raids and total blockade of Gaza have left civilians on the verge of dehydration and starvation. The UN had to pressure Israel to allow clean water into the territory and refrain from using water as a "weapon of war". More than 15,000 people in Gaza have been killed in indiscriminate attacks on residential areas, schools, and hospitals, including thousands of children. Those who survive are without adequate shelter, food, and medical care.

The Gaza Strip was barely habitable before Israel's latest assault due to a years-long, relentless blockade. Now, Israel's indiscriminate bombardment and total siege - its ongoing genocide - has also triggered an ecocide in Gaza. Even if the war ended today, it would take years for Gaza's natural ecosystems to recover. Of

course Israel's greenwashing efforts also did not start with this war. Israel has been trying to greenwash its occupation of Palestine and oppression of the Palestinian people since its inception.

Indeed, since the founding of Israel in 1948, the Jewish National Fund, Israel's largest green NGO that controls 13 percent of state land, has been evicting Palestinians from their lands and destroying their villages under the pretence of protecting forests and preserving natural reserves. It has also uprooted hundreds of thousands of olive trees to destroy Palestinian lives and livelihoods. Meanwhile, Israel's national water company Mekorot created a "water apartheid" in the occupied West Bank, where Jewish settlers consume six times more water than 2.9 million Palestinians living there.

Despite its apartheid policies in the West Bank, in the international arena, Mekorot has managed to position itself as a leading contributor to the quest to achieve UN sustainability goals. It led a special session on water at COP27 and has been publishing annual environmental, social and governance (ESG) and corporate responsibility reports with little consideration or even mention of its practice of water apartheid against the Palestinians. At last year's COP27, Israel's President Isaac Herzog, who recently supported the collective punishment of civilians in Gaza, promised that Israel would be "net zero" by 2050. Since he failed to mention Palestine and Palestinians in his speech, however, it is unclear whether the environmental consequences of the occupation, the apartheid, or the 40,000 tonnes of explosives dropped on Gaza (which amounts to more than two nuclear bombs) would be included as part of Israel's carbon footprint this year.

Writer and analyst Zena Agha has described Israel's environmental policy as "Janus-faced", on the one hand promoting

"environmental reform and technological development" and on the other, depriving "Palestinians of their land, water, and other natural resources". Amid the ongoing genocidal assault on Gaza, at COP28, this two-sidedness will reach new extremes.

COP28 is already under fire for maintaining strong connections to big oil companies while purporting a technical and diplomatic agenda to transition away from fossil fuels. The optics of an Israeli delegation at COP28 amid an ongoing offensive that inflicted unprecedented humanitarian and environmental damage on Gaza will undoubtedly damage the reputation of the conference further. Indeed, the scale of the humanitarian crisis Israel created in Gaza has not only exposed Israel's decades-old greenwashing strategies and tarnished its image as a climate solution leader, but also called into question the credibility of a state-centred approach to global warming that ignores human rights. By allowing itself to become a venue for Israel to greenwash its increasingly more brutal attacks on Palestinian people, land and essential infrastructure, as well as its disregard for UN resolutions, institutions and staff (more than 100 UN employees have been killed in the Gaza war so far), COP28 threatens to undermine critical features of the global climate agenda, namely state compliance, accountability, and respect for international law and institutions.

While Israel's attendance at COP28 exposes one of the many existing problems with our current approach to tackling global warming, it is not too late to change course. Those committed to achieving climate justice should treat this conference as an opportunity to call out greenwashing and state the obvious connection between human rights and the climate emergency. As Greta Thunberg rightly said, there can be "no climate justice on occupied land", and occupiers should not be allowed to use climate conferences to greenwash their wars.

## Europe at risk due to its two-tiered defense hierarchy

Khaled Abou Zahr

**T**HIS week, the presidents of Czechia, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia found common ground on supporting Ukraine, despite their differing views on military assistance. While Czechia and Poland have been strong supporters of Ukraine, Hungary has refused to supply weapons and has accused Kyiv of violating the rights of its ethnic Hungarian minority. Slovakia, while it has ended its military aid, remains committed to offering humanitarian assistance. Despite these differences, the leaders agreed on the importance of Ukraine's success and the need to provide various forms of support.

Their unanimous consensus opposes allowing Russia to prevail in the war in Ukraine. This meeting and its declarations signal a more decisive approach by Central and Eastern European countries toward defense matters. These countries, collectively known as the Visegrad Group, seek to further their integration with the EU while promoting cooperation in military, economic, cultural and energy-related areas. The four states are all members of the Bucharest Nine, the EU and NATO. The war in Ukraine has given this group a broader outreach and, despite its members' differing views, it has been broadly aligned on the military side, especially thanks to NATO.

Central and Eastern European countries are increasingly vocal and assertive in influencing the future of the continent's defense. If the Europeans consider that Russia is their greatest military threat, then these countries are the first line of defense. This is why, earlier this year, a coalition of Eastern European countries led by Poland and Estonia urged NATO members to increase their defense spending benchmark from 2 percent to 2.5 percent or even 3 percent of gross domestic product. Poland's previous government, in particular, had been pushing for this increase and it committed to spending 4 percent of its GDP on the military, making it NATO's biggest spender in terms of percentage of GDP. Moreover, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia also meet or surpass the recommended minimum of 2 percent of GDP. This surge in defense spending is a response to the war in Ukraine and represents a shift in the center of security power in Europe toward the east.

These countries are also seeking to modernize their militaries and are dependent on foreign suppliers for their military buildup. Their increased spending has implications for NATO's strategic focus and could lead to Eastern European states gaining a stronger voice on defense matters within NATO and the EU. However, concerns exist about how these enlarged defense budgets will be spent and whether European security concerns will become purely continental, primarily focused on countering threats from Russia. Despite the push for greater European self-reliance in defense, the need for US power remains

acknowledged and Eastern European countries are generally more accepting of Washington's role as a security guarantor. Poland, in particular, is seeking a permanent American military presence on its soil. There are underlying issues on how Europe analyzes threats and it is very clear that these countries do not feel that their Western European neighbors are listening or are even concerned about the threats they have determined.

This shows a two-tiered European defense hierarchy. The western one with France and Germany, which follow their own paths, and the central and eastern countries that feel left as the first line of defense without real support. In short, there is more talk than action. One of the clear pieces of evidence of the war in Ukraine is that Europeans have been underinvesting in their military capacity. Declarations, for now, are showing a will to go back to a more traditional war positioning, with tanks and heavy artillery. However, one key point is the supply chain and sheer military industrial capacity. And here, in reality, there is a lack of contracts. There are encouraging signs and funds that are being set up to create this development, both at the national and European levels. Yet, the untapped capacity of developing an industrial output throughout Central and Eastern Europe and mutualizing efforts and resources does not seem to be at the top of the agenda. This is why these countries understandably feel more fulfilled with the transatlantic alliance than with the European Defence Agency. In order to put things into perspective, the budget of the latter is only 43.5 million (\$47.5 million) and was increased by 15 percent this year. This is not much to support the development of capacity and new initiatives.

There is no doubt that the EU needs to stay strongly anchored within the transatlantic alliance. However, it also needs to put forward a clear and consistent long-term vision that supports all its members in developing stronger military capacity, as well as ensuring their protection. It is very clear that this dual sovereignty - of European-level and national-level - is a major obstacle to this future development. This becomes especially true as the EU faces diverging views on key issues such as migration and border control. It is also clear that Central and Eastern European countries will not stay silent and, even if they have different views on the war in Ukraine and how to face or mitigate the Russian risk, the last Visegrad Group meeting showed they are increasingly in alignment about having their voices heard at the highest level of European decision-making when it comes to military affairs. In the meantime, they are forging stronger links with the US, which is in turn empowering positive capacity-building developments for these countries. One thing is clear: divisions and a two-tiered European defense are a bigger threat to Europe's security than Russia.

## Why is Israel at war with journalists?

Doud Kuttab

**T**HE idea that truth is the first victim of war has never sounded as true as it has since Oct. 7. The lies that have been fabricated and regurgitated so many times without the minimum of fact-checking has embarrassed even the president of the US multiple times. He was duped several times in a brief period, forcing his staff to walk back and clean up the gross errors. Joe Biden completely bought the Israeli lie of Hamas beheading Israeli infants and the totally false claim that Palestinians exaggerate the numbers of their dead and injured, among many other claims.

Major global media organizations like the BBC and others have been forced to apologize publicly, while many others have simply erased or stopped repeating many of the lies.

Perhaps the biggest and most costly falsehood, in terms of Palestinian human life, was the Israeli insistence

(with photos and graphics) that Hamas had its entire headquarters beneath Gaza's major hospital, Al-Shifa. This particular lie could have been easily debunked had Israel allowed international journalists into Gaza. Imagine if CNN's Ben Wedeman or a BBC war reporter had stood at Al-Shifa Hospital and told the world that this Israeli claim was totally untrue. Imagine how many Palestinians, including infants, would be alive today if international journalists were simply allowed entry into Gaza.

Israel would not even have had to directly permit such entry. All that was needed was for Israel, the overwhelming power in and around Gaza, to have allowed Egypt to allow journalists into the Gaza Strip of their own volition. Instead, Israel, with its powerful media machine and vast number of journalists based in its country, has been able to create the propaganda narrative it want-

ed, fully supplied with lies, manufactured stories, artificial intelligence-produced gimmicks, and graphics.

Israel not only forcefully barred Egypt from conducting any sovereign act on its border with Gaza, including twice shelling trucks attempting to enter the Rafah crossing, but it also conducted a wicked campaign against Palestinian journalists and media workers. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists has reported that, as of Wednesday, its "preliminary investigations showed at least 57 journalists and media workers were among the more than 16,000 killed since the war began on Oct. 7." Rafiah Al-Talei, the editor-in-chief for Sada in Carnegie's Middle East Program, this week wrote: "Israel's assault on Gaza has quickly become the deadliest for journalists covering conflict zones since 1992. No other war in the 21st century

has been so lethal for journalists, with 34 killed just within its first two weeks."

The Vienna-based International Press Institute has said that it is "horrified by the continually growing death toll suffered by journalists and civilians amid the Israel-Gaza war." It strongly urged Israel "to uphold journalists' rights to cover the conflict in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law, and to protect the safety of reporters, media workers, and their families." A number of journalists' families have been killed, including that of Wael Dahdough, whose wife, daughter, son and grandchild were killed while he was covering the conflict for Al Jazeera. The International Committee of the Red Cross has stated that the laws of war, specifically the Third Geneva Convention, cover journalists reporting on armed conflicts and pointed

out that they must be treated as civilians. "Article 79 formally states that journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in zones of armed conflict are civilians within the meaning of Article 50 (1). As such, they enjoy the full scope of protection granted to civilians under international humanitarian law."

More than 60 Palestinian media facilities have also been targeted by Israel, another war crime, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross. It stated that "Radio and television facilities are civilian objects and as such enjoy general protection. The prohibition on attacking civilian objects has been firmly established in international humanitarian law since the beginning of the 20th century and was reaffirmed in 1977 Protocol I and in the Statute of the International Criminal Court." International media organizations are said to be docu-

menting cases of the killing of journalists and attacks on media facilities with the goal of presenting a complaint to the International Criminal Court.

Meanwhile, as the current humanitarian pause continues, it is important that Arab and international media be allowed into Gaza to report on the volatile situation of Palestinians, who are the targets of a relentless, revengeful assault by an uncontrolled Israeli army and radical politicians who want to use their deaths as a guarantee for staying in power. Egypt and the international community, especially the US and Europe, along with major media outlets, should not take no for an answer from the Israelis. The Egypt-Gaza crossing point at Rafah is an Arab-Arab border and the sovereign country of Egypt should have the right and responsibility to allow in any Arab or international journalists who want to enter the Strip.



# Israel has lost the war of public opinion

**IN a new media landscape dominated not by Western media giants but by Instagram reels, TikTok videos and YouTube shorts, Israel's ongoing war on the besieged Gaza Strip is more than televised. Audiences across the world, and especially young people, have been watching the devastation caused by Israel's indiscriminate bombardment of the Palestinian enclave on their preferred social media platforms, in real-time, for over a month. Anyone with internet access has seen countless videos of babies torn apart by bombs, women crushed under tonnes of concrete and mothers cradling the dead bodies of their children.**

Israel, of course, still continues with its usual efforts - and more - to control the narrative about its bloody wars and decades-old occupation. It does not hesitate to brand as "terrorists" and assassinate Palestinian journalists who work tirelessly to tell Gaza's truth to the world. During this latest war alone, Israel killed at least 53 journalists and media workers, mostly in targeted air strikes alongside their family members, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Al Jazeera Arabic's Gaza Correspondent, Wael Dahdough, lost his wife, son, daughter and grandson in one such attack. He received the news while he was on air. And Israel does not allow foreign journalists to enter Gaza and report on what they see freely either. CNN's Fareed Zakaria recently admitted that the Israeli military currently only allows into the war-torn Gaza Strip foreign journalists who agree to "submit all

materials and footage to the Israeli military for review prior to publication". Zakaria said CNN agreed to these terms "in order to provide a limited window into Israel's ops".

Yet, despite all these efforts, thanks largely to social media, Israel is no longer able to conceal the truth about its conduct in Palestine. It can no longer control the narratives and the public opinion on Palestine. As mainstream media loses its ability to single-handedly decide what Western and, to a certain extent, global audiences get to witness about the situation in Palestine, the brutality of Israel's occupation has been laid out in the open for everyone to see. Now social media users are openly mocking Israel's desperate attempts to control the narrative of its war on Gaza, and swiftly exposing the Israeli lies parroted by mainstream outlets. On November 29, the #WeWontBeSilenced campaign was launched across social media platforms, encouraging posting this graphic, or a picture with one hand covering one's mouth, and a relevant message written on the other hand or a poster. Since its launch, it has received hundreds of thousands of impressions across platforms and will continue to gain traction as social media accounts feel the effects of shadow banning, censorship, and intimidation.

It's not only Israel that knows it's losing the PR war either - its biggest financier and enabler knows it, too. Last week's announcement of a temporary ceasefire, which is due to expire soon, has revealed the US is as concerned about changing public

opinion on the conflict as Israel. Politico reported that senior Biden administration officials have been concerned about how the temporary ceasefire "would allow journalists broader access to Gaza and the opportunity to further illuminate the devastation there and turn public opinion on Israel." In other terms, US officials are cognizant of the direction public opinion has shifted since the beginning of this episode of bombardment and are worried that an influx of journalists into the Gaza Strip could further expose the genocide Israel has been committing there with their permission and support.

Israel and the US, however, did not lose the all-important war on narratives just because of its latest war on Gaza. The current assault on Gaza has only expedited Israel's weakening grip on the media narrative and public opinion. In March of this year, many months before the beginning of the latest round of violence, Gallup published data that, for the first time ever, revealed that, "Democrats' sympathies in the Middle East now lie more with the Palestinians than the Israelis, 49 percent versus 38 percent." This shift in Democrats' sympathies is indicative of a weakening of the mainstream media monopoly on the narrative of Israel-Palestine. Meanwhile, many in the GOP have also begun to rethink the US-Israeli relationship vis-a-vis foreign aid. Former US President Donald Trump's "America First" doctrine has made many Republicans question whether supporting Israel with regular military aid should remain a

foreign policy priority for the party. Since October 7, Meta's reaction to accounts and posts that raise awareness of the mass murder of Palestinian civilians has largely been one of censorship, with reports of over 90 percent of pro-Palestinian content deleted. Now, there are concerns as to how X will respond to Israeli PR pressure.

This week, X CEO Elon Musk visited Israel and met Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a trip widely criticised as a form of "cleanup" after his endorsement of an anti-Semitic post on his platform. As part of the propaganda tour, an agreement was reached that Musk's Starlink, a satellite internet service, can only be used in Gaza with the approval of the Israeli government. The Israeli occupation wields and controls the flow of water, electricity, food, humanitarian aid - and now Musk's internet services - into Gaza, yet remains adamant it is not an occupier. Israel has only itself to blame for its increasingly negative image in the international community.

It cannot expect the world to turn a blind eye to the genocide it is committing in plain sight, with the support of the US. The short ceasefire - which allowed some humanitarian aid to enter the besieged enclave and the Palestinians to bury their dead and wrap their wounds as much as they can - is expected to end soon. Israel will likely continue with its indiscriminate bombardment and suffocating total siege on Gaza in the immediate aftermath of the brief truce. Israel's war on Palestinians may be far from over, but it has already lost the war of public opinion.

Aljazeera

## UN must not abandon Sudan amid war and atrocities

Mohamed Osman

**AS devastating videos and bone-chilling accounts of massacres continue to come out of Sudan, the United Nations has appeared to jettison what little remained of its civilian protection role in the country. The apparent decision to shut down the UN's political mission there, known as UNITAMS, came mere days after another wave of atrocities was committed by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and allied Arab militias in West Darfur.**

On November 16, the UN Security Council was receiving a briefing from UNITAMS when acting Foreign Minister Ali Sadeq announced in a letter that Sudan had requested that the UN "immediately terminate" UNITAMS. The mandate of UNITAMS was slated for renewal on December 3. The next day, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appointed Ramtane Lamamra as his personal envoy to Sudan. But Lamamra is just one person. It is unclear what kind of staff he will have and to what extent he will be able to publicly report to UN member states on human rights abuses and war crimes.

The UN mission's role in Sudan had been circumscribed for months, but shutting it down is still a significant setback. On the practical side, the termination of UNITAMS will most likely reduce UNSC's scrutiny of the warring sides' conduct. Symbolically, this marks the end

of the UN's 20-year mixed-bag experiment with protecting civilians notably in Darfur. UNITAMS was established in 2020 to assist Sudan's political transition after the toppling of longtime President Omar al-Bashir in 2019. It had a countrywide mandate. It started operations as the joint UN-African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur, UNAMID, was being drawn down before being shut down in December 2020.

UNAMID had a 20,000-strong uniformed force positioned in dozens of bases across Darfur. Many Darfuris criticised the mission's withdrawal, aware of the important deterrent role it had played. Instead of heeding calls to extend UNAMID's mandate, the UNSC followed up by rubber-stamping further UN disengagement. Replacing the peacekeepers was the UNITAMS, with a significantly watered-down mandate, budget and no physical protection presence. Since the onset of conflict in Sudan in April the UNSC has not adopted a single substantive resolution.

Today, the need for robust protection of civilians is greater than ever. The UN should be actively working to fulfil its responsibilities to protect civilians in Darfur and other parts of Sudan, not walking away. With six million people having fled their homes, Sudan is witnessing the world's largest displacement crisis. The

country's civilian infrastructure and services, including healthcare and education, have been devastated.

More parts of Sudan are engulfed in violent fighting than ever before. In the first week of November, the RSF and its allied militias killed hundreds and resorted to widespread looting, arson and acts of sexual violence in Ardamata, West Darfur. The UN special adviser on genocide recently warned that "a number of these attacks, if confirmed, may constitute acts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes". The RSF also attacked civilians in southern Khartoum, where pillage, sexual violence and killings have plagued communities since the conflict's onset.

The Sudanese army, on the other hand, has continued to bomb heavily populated neighbourhoods of the country's capital and to obstruct the delivery of humanitarian aid, including urgently needed medical supplies. Some members of the UNSC, including Gabon, Ghana, Mozambique and the United Arab Emirates, have blocked the Council's efforts to condemn the abuses. Meanwhile, media reports have indicated that the UAE is also implicated in providing weapons and material support to one of the warring factions. The United Kingdom, which leads action on Sudan at the UNSC, has played a waiting game instead of

actively working to build a robust response. The inaction of the three African states has further enabled this passive strategy to continue.

In 2007, after atrocities perpetrated against the civilians of Darfur mounted, the UNSC took action by voting to establish UNAMID. Today, as Darfuris are facing the same horrors, they should not be abandoned. All UNSC members should work with critical stakeholders, including Darfuri refugees and displaced communities, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, to explore the viability of alternative structures of deployment that could deliver on civilian protection and provide robust human rights documentation and reporting to the UN. The Council can start by organising a visit to eastern Chad to meet some of the tens of thousands of people who have fled the widespread abuses in Sudan. This would send an important message to survivors that the UNSC cares about what they have experienced and that it is still watching.

It should also publicly condemn those violating the arms embargo on Darfur as a first step towards sanctioning the parties responsible for serious violations. The UNSC, the UN as a whole and the AU have a duty to protect civilians. They must act to fulfil this duty and safeguard the safety, security and rights of the Sudanese civilian population.

# Chinese devotion to shared sustainable future

Li Wanxin

**IT cannot be emphasized enough that achieving sustainability is an essential but daunting task. Disasters such as forest fires, droughts, floods, sea level rise, biodiversity loss, deforestation, desertification and nuclear radiation among others are a few of the threats we have witnessed or heard of. However, it is too optimistic to think that such disasters befall or affect only the unlucky few.**

We may wish that any disruptions caused by such circumstances are temporary, so that we can continue business as usual in our work and life, but there is growing consensus worldwide that we need to act urgently to transition to a sustainable path. This paradigm shift is reflected in China's development strategies, the European Green Deal and initiatives of other economies. Nevertheless, turning the aspirations into reality, a future that is prosperous, equitable and sustainable, requires tremendous effort and innovation from all of society.

Evan Schofer, a sociologist, has emphasized the importance of institutional environments that exhibit the characteristics of structure, penetration and persistence for global conventions or consensus (for example, regulating greenhouse gases or CFC emissions) to take root at a country level. Structure refers to state organs, regulations and policies, and civil organizations such as professional communities that can uphold the culture and functions of world society. Penetration means the structures and culture mentioned above could directly influence actors at all levels of society, such as individuals, associations and firms. If this influence is persistent over time, it is highly likely to lead to desirable individual and firm behaviors, collective efforts and sustainability outcomes. The Chinese central government has established a robust policy framework for green transformation. The Decision of the State Council on Implementing Scientific Outlook on Development and Strengthening Environmental Protection was introduced in 2005, elevating the importance of environmental protection. This was followed, two years later, by the publication of China's National Climate Change Program. Since then, environmental protection and climate change have been placed high on the central government's policy agenda.

The 11th Five-Year Plan (2006-10) set national targets to reduce pollution (binding) and energy intensity (non-binding). The 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-15) witnessed the transformation of these targets into binding obligations. During the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20), a dual control mechanism was implemented to oversee the total amount and intensity of

energy consumption. These progressive national targets have translated into actionable objectives for economic sectors such as power, iron and steel, cement, transportation, and so on. Furthermore, financial incentive mechanisms such as the national carbon market complement those compulsory measures in building the delicate formal structure of the national environmental governance system.

However, it is challenging for the central environmental authorities to penetrate the various actors in Chinese society. We all know it is difficult to align the interests of the government across different levels, enterprises occupying different nodes along global value chains, and individuals and households with various means and demographic features. The central environmental protection inspection is unprecedented in Chinese history, as it explicitly imposes the high standards and green objectives of the central government at a local level, backed by enhanced information revelation by the public. Studies found the environmental inspection could reduce the area of land sold by local governments, particularly to industries that harm the environment. This proves that the Chinese government's environmental enforcement is effectively penetrating the local levels, influencing the core economic decisions that shape China's future.

Besides environmental inspection, the National Bureau of Statistics has been exploring alternative approaches to quantify development. By incorporating gross ecosystem product, or GEP - which is the total value of final ecosystem goods and services supplied to human well-being in a given region, like a county, a province, or a country annually - into a nature-social-economic accounting system, the country is paving the way for a scientific and systematic approach to assessing local environmental performance. With the help of the Gaofen, a series of state-of-the-art high-resolution Earth imaging satellites, the GEP could be successfully implemented, allowing for the measurement of both the stock and change of ecological and environmental assets. This innovative approach will play a key role in realizing the vision of ecological civilization across all jurisdictions in China. The challenge of promoting sustainability is not limited to the government alone. Instead, it is equally cumbersome for the government to regulate non-State actors such as financial institutions, polluting enterprises, carbon emitters and the public to ensure a cleaner, greener and low carbon future. Walter van Hattum, head of Trade and Economic

Section of the European Union Office to Hong Kong and Macao, rightly pointed out that in the global turn to sustainable finance, bankers and financial institutions have a critical role to play to mobilize the needed (private) capital toward green investments. Given their important role, he encouraged bankers to go beyond meeting regulatory requirements and to contribute to the greater good of society. The ultimate purpose of corporations is often to stay in business and make a profit. In that case, it becomes essential to educate an environmentally aware citizenry that could supplement the government's efforts at catching non-compliance and detecting greenwashing, which is the process of conveying a false impression or misleading information about how a company's products are environmentally sound.

The funding agencies play a pivotal role in stimulating public interest and finding solutions for realizing sustainability transitions. They have the resources to plant the seeds of socio-technological and institutional innovations, adopting transdisciplinary and cross-sector approaches. People who make funding decisions need to understand that eco-conservation, pollution prevention and control, climate mitigation, and climate adaptation are complementary, interconnected, and indispensable domains of the complex nature-society-economy system. To drive innovations for achieving sustainability transitions efficiently and effectively, it is necessary to build the capacity of funders to appreciate such complexity and develop a holistic view of the environmental-economic-social system. Learning from past experiences is crucial for driving innovation and forming persistent collective actions. The Web of Science Core Collection, a leading global knowledge repository, hosts nearly 9,000 academic articles on co-producing collaborative efforts for achieving sustainable development worldwide. China is the only developing country, with over 50 articles published, that has joined the global collaboration network to create knowledge related to this critical topic. Currently, the Chinese scholars' collaborators are primarily based in the United States and the United Kingdom.

As a fast-industrializing nation, China possesses valuable lessons for developing countries pursuing green growth. Through South-South cooperation, China can amplify its positive sustainability impact globally. We expect the partnerships formed under the Belt and Road Initiative International Green Development Coalition and other initiatives to co-produce knowledge and experiences of sustainability transitions and to contribute to our shared sustainable future.

## Hijacking island's well-being 'necessity' for DPP

Li Yang

**SOME civil society organizations in Taiwan invited the Mazu Temple in Meizhou, Fujian province, and the Guandi Temple in Dongshan, Fujian, to send their golden statues of Mazu, a Chinese sea goddess, and Guandi, the Chinese god of wealth and courage, to the island for a traditional blessing-giving tour. However, the island's Democratic Progressive Party authorities have obstructed this cultural activity by demanding the inviting parties on the island explain its "necessity".**

It is the DPP authorities that should explain their sensitivity to such a cultural activity. They are opposing the statues of Mazu and Guandi from Fujian being brought to the island, yet they allowed Mazu statues from Kunshan, Jiangsu province, to visit the island in October. The arbitrary change of heart by the DPP authorities and their indifference to the calls of residents on the island for the blessing tour to take place are "both unreasonable and rude", as the spokesperson for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council said. The incident exposes

the true obstacle to cross-strait exchanges is the DPP. The DPP authorities have also blocked the building of a cross-sea bridge between Kinmen island, and the 10-kilometer-away Xiamen city of Fujian province. It is from Fujian, mostly via Xiamen, where the 100,000 residents of the 152-square-kilometer Kinmen island obtain most of their basic everyday supplies, including drinking water.

Even though the DPP authorities know that if the bridge is built, it will greatly boost the development of Kinmen, they still choose to ignore what is the common call of Kinmen residents. Over the years, the Chinese mainland has continuously taken concrete measures to promote the interests and well-being of Kinmen residents, including supporting Fujian promoting cross-strait integrated development, realizing infrastructural connection between Xiamen and Kinmen. The two incidents show how the DPP puts its own political interests before those of the Taiwan people, and imposes its own political will upon the latter. That is

why it is losing the support of the Taiwan compatriots, which is evidenced by the cold shoulder young people in Taiwan have shown the new "college plus service" program. With Taiwan's compulsory military service being extended from four months to one year starting next year, the DPP authorities launched the so-called 3+1 program for college students. According to it, those participating in the program can obtain a bachelor degree and finish their military service within four years by spending their last year in barracks instead of on campus. Yet, as expected, the response from the university students to the program can only be described as tepid, as only 46 people have applied for it.

Taiwan residents can see clearly that it is the DPP authorities, which are determined to collude with external forces to "use force to seek independence", that are only intensifying cross-strait tensions, seriously damaging the security and well-being of the residents of the island, and sacrificing the future prospects of the island's young people.

The China Daily

## Action must be taken to address Middle East's record drought

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

**THE drought that has significantly impacted Iraq, Syria and Iran for the last three years is affecting millions of people. It is critical for the international community, particularly developed countries, to take immediate action.**

This drought, which began in 2020, is considered the second-worst on record anywhere in the world. Two factors - higher temperatures and lower levels of rain - have played key roles in the intensity of the drought. A study published this month by World Weather Attribution, following work by scientists from Iran, the Netherlands, the UK and the US, highlighted: "From boreal winter 2020 onwards, a large region in West Asia, encompassing the Fertile Crescent around the rivers Euphrates and Tigris as well as Iran has suffered from exceptionally low rains and elevated temperatures."

The drought has affected millions of people in the region. In Iran, seven provinces - Sistan and Balochistan, South Khorasan, Khorasan Razavi, Kerman, Hormozgan, Khuzestan and Isfahan - have been significantly impacted by water shortages. This has forced many people to leave villages in rural areas. And it has been particularly impacting the most vulnerable groups in society, including women and children. In 2021, water shortages compounded Iran's other problems and led to a series of protests, which initially broke out in Khuzestan province before spreading to other parts of the country. Chants such as "I am thirsty" became popular. Extended droughts have

a significant impact on the agricultural industry, turning arable lands into barren desert, forcing farmers to move to cities in search of other jobs and subsequently leading to a food security crisis, hunger and large-scale displacement in the country.

For example, in 2021, Syria was only able to harvest 25 percent of the wheat that it used to grow before the civil war erupted. More than 12 million people have been forced to leave their homes in Syria since the outbreak of war in 2011, including nearly 2 million living in rural areas who have been displaced by drought, according to MedGlobal. In Syria, access to water has become one of the greatest challenges in some parts of the country, including Suwayda. This has exacerbated people's dire economic situation due to the fact it has contributed to higher costs for obtaining basic needs such as food, water and energy.

In Iraq, the drought caused a 29 percent drop in water flow in the Tigris River in 2020-21 and a 73 percent drop in the Euphrates flow. Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani, in a speech to open the two-day Iraq Climate Conference in Basra in March, warned that "more than 7 million citizens have been affected in Iraq ... and hundreds of thousands have been displaced because they lost their livelihoods that rely on agriculture and hunting. The most disheartening aspect is the severe drought that harmed our beautiful marshes." It should be noted that, if water

scarcity continues to increase to the extent that freshwater resources are depleted in West Asia, this would have an impact on national security and political stability as well.

Unfortunately, droughts of such longevity and severity have become common in the region. One of the main causes is human-made, as climate change and global warming are causing temperatures to increase and rainfall to decrease. This is making Syria, Iraq and Iran hotter and drier. As temperatures continue to rise, the situation is unfortunately only going to get worse. The World Weather Attribution report stressed that, if the world had not warmed by 1.2 degrees Celsius since the mid-19th century, "it would not be a drought at all" in Syria, Iran and Iraq. The Middle East and North Africa is one of the most vulnerable regions when it comes to climate change because of its dry or semi-dry environment.

Temperatures in MENA are rising almost twice as quickly as in other parts of the world, according to a 2022 report by the Cyprus Institute's Climate and Atmosphere Research Center and the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry. This is why countries such as Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Iran have witnessed such significant desertification. The region is already characterized as the most water-scarce in the world. Water scarcity is a critical factor for the Middle East because of its rising population growth.

The world ought to take action

in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve water and adopt more sustainable strategies. This human-made crisis can be resolved if we pursue and implement greener policies in order to reduce global warming, such as adopting more efficient and sustainable practices. Unfortunately, developing countries, as well as communities with lower socioeconomic classes, such as a high population of older people, women and children, disproportionately experience the impact of losses and damages caused by global warming. According to a 2022 Dartmouth College study, global warming caused by only five countries has caused \$6 trillion in global economic losses. And these losses have not been "suffered equally. The burden has fallen disproportionately on low-income countries that have contributed the least to the problem."

Other steps to take include addressing unsustainable agricultural practices and the mismanagement of water, such as diverting rivers for manufacturing purposes. As Kaveh Madani, former deputy head of the Iranian Environment Department, has pointed out, the problem is "rooted in decades of bad management, poor environmental governance and lack of foresight." In summary, global warming is the main cause of the three-year-long drought that has hammered Syria, Iraq and Iran. To tackle this issue, all countries, particularly those in the developed world that are contributing the most to global warming, must take action in order to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.



# Algeria keen to promote trade ties with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Brahim Romani, Ambassador of Algeria on Sunday said that his country wants to develop strong trade and economic ties with Pakistan as both countries have good potential to cooperate with each other in many areas.

He said that Pakistan is one of the first countries to recognize Algeria and it is time that both countries should focus on improving business relations to achieve better results for their respective economies, said a press release issued here.

He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

The envoy said that Algeria occupies important geographic location with abundant natural resources including mines like iron, lithium, uranium etc. and Pakistani investors should explore investment opportunities in his countries to export their products to huge African market. He said that a delegation of Algeria would also visit Pakistan to attend exhibitions in Lahore and Karachi.

He said that ICCI should also plan a delegation for Algeria to explore business opportunities. Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that bilateral trade between Pakistan and Algeria is quite low and both countries should make efforts to take it to at least US\$ 1 billion.

He identified cotton, textiles, construction material, chemicals, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, aluminium, plastic goods, electric & electronic items, food products and others as potential areas of trade cooperation between Pakistan and Algeria.

He said that Pakistan is producing many quality products and Algeria should focus on their import from Pakistan. He assured that ICCI is ready to work with the Algerian Embassy for enhancing connectivity between the private sectors to improve trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Algeria.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan and Algeria have good potential to enhance cooperation in the steel sector and both countries should take advantage of this opportunity to strengthen their bilateral cooperation.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI emphasized that both countries should encourage regular exchange of trade delegations to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation.

Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG stressed for direct flights between Pakistan and Algeria to promote people-to-people and business relations. He said that the Prime Minister of Algeria Nadir Larbaoui is his personal friend and he as Ambassador of Algeria in Pakistan had played an important role in improving bilateral relations between the two countries.

He said that a delegation of ICCI would visit Algeria to congratulate him on his election as Prime Minister.

Sheikh Muhammad Ejaz, Maqsood Tabish, Dr Usman, Khalid Mehmood, Akhtar Hussain, Imtiaz Abbasi, Ms Munezih Majid and others also shared useful ideas for strengthening trade relations between Pakistan and Algeria.

# Chambers and trade bodies announce full support for BMP

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: A large number of Chambers of various cities, trade groups and industrial associations from across the country have so far announced their support for the Businessmen Panel (BMP) for the upcoming FPCCI elections 2024.

The presidential candidate of Businessmen Panel for FPCCI elections Muhammad Ali Sheikh observed that the leadership has visited various cities of all provinces across the country and winning their full support for all candidates of the Businessmen Panel.

Muhammad Ali Sheikh expressed his full confidence of his group's victory, as they have received overwhelming support from all chambers and other Trade Bodies from across the country.

The BMP chairman and ex-president of FPCCI Mian Anjum Nisar said the Businessmen Panel has nominated Ali Sheikh to contest presidential slot because he is a well-experienced business leader, rendering excellent services for the promotion of trade and industries on various business platforms, including GCCI as its senior vice president, which is one of the major chambers of the country. He declared the names of other candidates, who are contesting the elections of the apex trade body on platform of the BMP.

Muhammad Ali Sheikh observed that his group, for the last three years of victory, has been very actively engaged with the federal as well as the provincial governments in formulation of the policies on trade and industry including the annual budgets making.

Sheikh, highlighting the BMP's performance in the year 2023, said the chairman Mian Anjum Nisar along with his team of officer bearers and FPCCI President had been playing their best possible role from the platform of this apex trade body of the country for the resolution of the issues facing trade and industry, and for getting maximum incentives and facilities for them to boost industrial growth and exports.

Ali Sheikh stated that despite difficult situation during the last two years, the industry sustained and the exports witnessed significant increase. This could be possible due to continued efforts and pursuance by BMP leadership that the government, during previous years, came up with the bailout financial packages for the industry and businesses to absorb the shocks of pandemic.

Beside these packages, he added, BMP struggled to get the power tariff for the industry rationalized, for the key policy rate was reduced though the SBP has again increasing it but the Businessmen Panel would continue to pursue the central bank to relax it. He said that huge financial package for the housing and construction sector was prominent among the government relief lobbied by the BMP leadership in last couple of years, he said.

Muhammad Ali resolved that after his election as president of FPCCI, he would make the best and the most effective use of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry for promoting trade and industry, and local and foreign investment. Strongly believing in team work, he would ensure maximum participation of the business leaders representing different chambers and associations of the country for economic prosperity and development of the country, along with welfare of the business community. The candidate for President from BMP was fully confident and expressed that the BMP would sweep the upcoming Federation's election with record highest number of votes which would be the history in federation adding that all genuine and sincere voters had assured Mian Anjum Nisar and other BMP leaders of extending their full support to the BMP penal.

Mian Anjum Nisar said that the BMP would continue to push the government to initiate long-term economic planning for the betterment of business community of Pakistan and assured that the business community has ability to change the fate of Pakistan and transform it into a prosperous country.

On the occasion, the BMP leaders said that the country was passing through critical times and a true business leadership at every tier could help pull the country out of these economic issues.

They said that the government would be asked to rationalise the energy prices in the larger interests of the manufacturing sector and the trading community. They said that they are fully satisfied with the performance of the BMP.

# Pakistani businessman explores auto opportunities in Shanghai

BEIJING (APP): China has transformed itself to a global leader in advanced automotive technologies over the past few decades. Pakistan can benefit from these trends by collaborating with Chinese companies and staying updated on the latest technologies and trends in the industry, said Fahad Iqbal Butt, director of New Genuine Auto Parts at ongoing Automechanika Shanghai 2023 being held from 29 Nov. to 2 Dec.

With the goal of strengthening the presence of Pakistani companies in China and establishing new partnerships, he is confident that the expo will provide him with the platform to connect with potential suppliers, manufacturers and distributors.

He added that "I am very impressed with the growth and development of the automotive industry in China, and we see great potential for cooperation between our two countries."

Having been doing business with China for almost two decades and visiting the expo eight times, he came over this year to develop new items related to agricultural or auto parts such as filters and bushings.

He also met with several Chinese auto companies to discuss potential collaboration, focusing on areas such as parts supply and technology transfer. As a influential global service platform for the automotive industry showcasing automotive parts, repair, testing and diagnostic equipment and service supplies, this year's Automechanika Shanghai focuses on seven product segments covering 13 showrooms, with a comprehensive focus on innovative technologies and cutting-edge solutions for the entire automotive industry chain. It attracted 5,652 exhibitors from 41 countries and regions and visitors from 28 countries and regions.

# A beacon in the storm: Khan Shaheed's enduring legacy

**Niazbeen**

In the archives of history, there emerge individuals whose lives become a beacon of hope, unity, and sacrifice. Khan Shaheed Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai, a name etched in the hearts of Pashtuns, stands as an epitome of such a luminary figure.

Born in 1907 in the muddy village of Inayat Ullah Karezi, Khan Shaheed's journey was one marked by unyielding determination in the face of adversity. His multifaceted roles as a freedom fighter, statesman, prolific writer, journalist, educationist, and rights activist showcased the depth of his commitment to the cause he held dear.

In a tribal landscape where Pashtun people were fragmented into tribes and sub-tribes, Khan Shaheed revolutionized the political arena, uniting them into a cohesive nation. He transcended individuality, evolving into a symbolic movement. By pioneering first political Party Anjuman e watan in history of Pashtun Afghan In 1939, Khan Shaheed presented his people with a transformative vision—one of a singular nation, highlighting the paramount values of national unity, National Interest, and independence. His legacy extends beyond being an individual; he symbolizes a dynamic force shaping a collective destiny.

Khan Shaheed pioneered the inaugural newspaper, Istiqlal. This visionary effort marked a milestone, catalyzing societal change and becoming a beacon of independence. Istiqlal provided a platform for diverse voices, shaping public opinion and fostering informed civic discourse.

Khan Shaheed, a visionary political leader, demonstrated remarkable foresight during the uncertain times of 1947. In April of that year, while the British departure from India left many in doubt, Khan Shaheed penned an article in a renowned "Pashtun magazine". In this article, he boldly asserted that the Britishers were on the verge of leaving India, and it was crucial for Pashtuns, including members of the Muslim League, Khudai Khidmatgars, and other communities, to come together and diligently plan for their collective future.

Khan Shaheed introduced a distinct Pashto script/ orthography, aiming to diminish the impact of Arabic and Persian languages on Pashto, advocating for its purity and originality. His efforts extended beyond linguistic reforms, as he passionately translated numerous books from various languages. Khan Shaheed's unwavering advocacy for the preservation of Pashto language and culture resonated across generations.

Khan Shaheed, an anti-imperialist and non-violent leader, faced arrest 11 times throughout his political journey—five times during British India and six times in Pakistan. Remarkably, he spent over 22 years incarcerated during his 66 years of life, he was the first political prisoner of Pakistan. His steadfast commitment to non-violence and his numerous detentions mark a compelling chapter in the history of resistance against imperialism and injustice.

Khan Shaheed strategically introduced hunger strikes to Pashtun nationalist politics, and his unwavering commitment was exemplified in the longest hunger strike among Pashtun leaders—lasting an astonishing twenty-one days.

Khan Shaheed's visionary acumen was prominently showcased during his 1969 visit to Kabul, a pivotal moment in Afghanistan's history. Invited by Pashto Tolana Afghanistan, he toured the country alongside Diplomatic Guide Muhammad Deen zhowak, observed a newly constructed road from the Herataan Bridge to Kabul. Khan Shaheed, known for his perceptiveness, raised suspicions about the road, foreseeing its potential use for military purposes. A decade later, his foresight was validated as USSR tanks utilized the same road during the tumultuous events that followed Sardar Dowood's coup.

Amidst the populist sentiments following the coup and the ousting of King Zahir Shah, while everyone welcome his coup, Khan Shaheed stood as a dissenting voice, he condemned the coup, predicting a blood war that would bring immense suffering to Afghanistan. Tragically, his ominous forecast materialized five years later when the nation descended into a prolonged and devastating conflict. The enduring Afghan war, lasting over four decades and claiming millions of lives, stands as a somber testament to Khan Shaheed's prescient understanding of the consequences of political upheaval in the region.

Khan Shaheed emerged as a prominent leader within the National Awami Party (NAP), a key political entity formed in opposition to the controversial One Unit system in Pakistan. NAP's manifesto advocated for the restoration of provinces in Pakistan based on linguistic foundations. Khan Shaheed, displaying unwavering courage, endured imprisonment throughout the era of the dictator Ayub Khan. Upon his release, despite the advice to remain cautious, he fearlessly engaged in resistance, leading to his arrest after two months.

Following the reversal of the One Unit system, the reorganization of provinces disproportionately divided Pashtuns into four regions, causing an identity crisis. Khan Shaheed vehemently opposed this division, but unfortunately, his political allies either weakened, compromised or remained silent, leading to the success of the new provinces plan. In adherence to his principles, Khan Shaheed parted ways with NAP, embarking on a new political journey from scratch. Even after almost 50 years, Khan Shaheed's viewpoint on the divisive restructuring of Pashtun territories finds resonance among the Pashtun population, highlighting the enduring impact of his principled stand.

Khan Shaheed's legacy lives on through the political parties he formed, including Anjuman e Watan, WROR Pashtun, and the National Awami Party Pashtoonkhwa, which continue to champion the rights of Pashtuns. Today, his spirit endures in the political struggle led by the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party.

Khan shaheed was a freedom fighter who was against all sorts of colonizer policies. He had a clear, indisputable, and unequivocal narrative on National struggle and democracy. The nature of Khan Shaheed's struggle from day first had remained National-Democratic, anti-feudal, and anti-imperialism. His struggle was against the abolition of FCR and exploitation of labour under British colony. His struggle continued for democracy, rule of law and constitution after the independence of Pakistan, ethnic marginalization of the Pashtuns in the state of Pakistan and against one-unit system. Confronted with sedition charges, subjected to propaganda orchestrated by tribal chiefs, and enduring attacks on his public demonstrations, Khan Shaheed unwaveringly adhered to his political principles. In the face of these challenges, he recognized that nothing could sway him from his chosen path.

Tragically, Khan Shaheed's journey was cut short on December 2, 1973, when an unknown assassin threw a grenade into his Quetta residence. Yet, his legacy persists in the hearts and minds of the Pashtun people, serving as a reminder that the flame of unity and freedom burns eternally.

## Court Notice

In the Court of Senior Civil Judge/Guardian Judge/Aala Allaha Qazi Buner at Daggar. Application No. 51/5. Institution. 25/11/2023. Date of hearing 5/12/2023. Mst. Naray Bibi Vs. General Public. Notice to General Public. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants (General Public) can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore anyone concerned will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 9 am dated 5/12/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court,

## Correction of name

My name is Asadullah Khan. But in some academic certificates it is noted as Asadullah. Please rectify as Asadullah Khan s/o Humayun Khan.



MULTAN: A large number of laborers unloading onions on delivery truck at vegetable market.

## Gold rates up by Rs.3,100 to Rs.223,600

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.3,100 and was sold at Rs.223,600 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs. 220,500 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.2,658 to Rs.191,701 from Rs.189,043 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.175,726 from Rs. 173,290, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram Silver remained stagnant at Rs.2,550 and 2,186.21 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$31 to \$2,091 from \$2,060, the Association reported.

## PMEX holds InvestExpo 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Mercantile Exchange (PMEX) on Sunday organised an 'InvestExpo', featuring exhibitions by leading entities in the financial sector, including stock brokers, commodities brokers, mutual funds, insurance, and microfinance companies.

The first-ever expo in Islamabad is a significant move towards the goal of encouraging safe investment alternatives and raising financial knowledge.

The Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Akif Saeed, inaugurated InvestExpo 2023.

In his inaugural speech, Akif emphasized the importance of ensuring investor protection, stating that the SECP is committed to maintaining a fair and transparent marketplace through regulatory safeguards to instill confidence in investors.

He said that the SECP investor education program, Jamapunji, aims to improve financial literacy by providing individuals with the necessary knowledge to make informed financial decisions.

The expo is part of efforts to empower individuals with knowledge on diverse investment avenues, fostering financial literacy across Pakistan.

The event highlighted the variety of safe investment opportunities and provided a platform for dialogue and idea exchange to enhance the nation's financial landscape. Besides the expo, the event also includes insightful awareness sessions by market experts, focusing on investing in stocks, commodities, and mutual funds. Speakers shed light on the intricacies of insurance, takaful, and microfinance.

The expo attracted a diverse audience, highlighting the growing significance of financial literacy in the country.

Strategic partners, including the PSX, CDC, NCCPL, Pakistan Stock Brokers Association, Mutual Funds Association of Pakistan (MUFAP), Insurance Association of Pakistan, Pakistan Microfinance Network, and the Institute of Financial Markets of Pakistan (IFMP), played a pivotal role in ensuring the success of InvestExpo 2023.

# To greenwash or do the right thing? Corporate dilemmas at COP28

DUBAI (AFP/APP): They call the giant climate business expo running outside the COP28 United Nations talks in Dubai the "green zone".

With the enormous former Expo 2020 site given over to green -- and not so green -- companies to trumpet their climate credentials, the private sector has never been embraced so warmly at a climate summit as it has been in the oil-rich city state.

An astonishing 400,000 visitors have registered for day passes to the futuristic jamboree, with stands touting the latest carbon capture tech to a vegetable garden trying to hold up under the desert heat.

And that is not counting the 80,000 people accredited to the talks themselves.

Corporate pledges have been coming thick and fast, with Dubai-based Emirate Airlines -- which has its own pavilion -- heralding its first flight with "100 percent sustainable aviation fuel" and BNP Paribas bank saying they were phasing out financing projects related to extracting coking coal.

Others have been more hazy. The public relations teams of big companies feel they have to "come up with something during COP", sustainable finance expert Laurent Lascols told AFP. But most of the time they recycle "something they already have on the go".

But Sanda Ojiambo, assistant secretary-general of UN Global Compact, which tries to spur corporations towards sustainable development, praised the "very active and dynamic business movement that happens at COP.

"As long as it's credible and tangible and transparent, I think it really continues to demonstrate forward-looking discussion," she added.

But only 18 percent of big firms worldwide are cutting emissions "fast enough to reach net zero by 2050", according to a report last month by consultants Accenture.

Another by the Boston Consulting Group found that just 14 percent had reduced their carbon emissions in line with their own ambitions in the past five years -- and only one in 10 measured them precisely.

While COP28's Emirati president Sultan Al Jaber could not be more business friendly, experts say lingering suspicions of conflicts of interest -- Jaber is also CEO of the UAE's national oil and gas company -- put corporations in a complicated position.

It is not as easy to make big announcements in Dubai "where you might be in the firing line" compared with the COP26 in Glasgow, said Lascols, because the UK was "more a model pupil in terms of energy transition".

"We did ask ourselves the question" whether we should go to Dubai, admitted the representative of a large French group, before deciding to press ahead "because it is important to take every chance to help move the lines". Other companies questioned by AFP took a similar stance.

But corporations are also at COP28 to influence as well as sell, with a huge number of lobbyists present. And not all of them are trying to help wriggle out of responsibility for the climate.

More than 200 major corporations including the likes of Ikea, Coca-Cola, Sony, DHL, Heineken and Nestle have recently called on national leaders to set a timeline for phasing out unabated fossil fuels -- without the use of controversial carbon capture and storage technologies.

Many of them are also urging their energy suppliers to do the same and decarbonise their businesses.

Maria Mendiluce, head of We Mean Business, which coordinated the appeal, said we need to back companies trying to do the right thing. "We tend to focus on criticising those who are doing something... (but) we need to highlight those that are not doing anything."





## In brief

## Peshawar Football League to start from Dec 6

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Football League Season-6 will start from December 6 at Tahmas Khan Football Stadium in which 8 different teams from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Lahore, Islamabad will participate. Talking to the media, Chairman Organizing Committee Gul Haider said that after the success of five seasons, Peshawar Football League Season-6 is being organized from December 6, for which all preparations have been completed. He disclosed that eight different teams are participating in the League. Group-A team comprising Street Children Football Club, Hazara Football Club, Popo Club, Ace Garden, while Group B consists of Shaheen Football Club, Tank FC, Ideal Chitral Football Club and Mamson Football Club. The League will start on the basis of the League matches from December 6. He said that the League is being organized for the sixth time in a row, in which opportunities are being provided to the youth to express their talents. It is being telecasted live on V-TV. He said that the success of any nation depends on healthy activities and unless the youth of a nation is healthy, we cannot think of establishing a good society.

## Naseem Shah joins IU

LAHORE (APP): Fast bowler Naseem Shah has joined the Islamabad United for Pakistan Super League-9 (PSL-9). He came to Islamabad United in exchange for Abrar Ahmed and Muhammad Wasim Junior, while Abrar Ahmed and Muhammad Wasim Junior joined Quetta Gladiators. In this regard, Naseem Shah also shared a picture of himself on Instagram, captioning it as: Destination, Islamabad. Quetta also got Islamabad's first round platinum pick, while Islamabad got Quetta's third round platinum pick.

## O'Sullivan beats Vafaei

LONDON (Agencies): Ronnie O'Sullivan marched into the UK Championship final with a comprehensive 6-2 victory over Hussein Vafaei. The seven-time world champion, 47, led from start to finish as he proved too strong for Iran's Vafaei in York. He will play either Judd Trump or China's Ding Junhui on Sunday for the £250,000 first prize. "Sometimes survival is just the difference, it can help you win tournaments," O'Sullivan told the BBC. "He missed a few balls, let me off the hook a few times and didn't put any pressure on me. "I just want to do myself justice in matches and play well. "Playing well under pressure is important, but I'm just motivated by cash." Breaks of 113 and 54 enabled world number one O'Sullivan to lead 2-0, but Vafaei, 29, rallied with a century and won a scrappy fourth frame to restore parity. It was one-way traffic after that as the seven-time world champion showed his pedigree with breaks of 90, 60, 52 and 50 to secure a spot in his ninth UK Championship final. "I didn't have my heart in front of my hero," said Vafaei, the world number 18. "My body just felt heavy, it felt like somebody had poured cold water on me. "I've had a good tournament and only one man could stop me - and that was Ronnie O'Sullivan." O'Sullivan will be appearing in the final for the ninth time and is chasing a record-extending eighth UK title.



ISLAMABAD: Players in action during CAS-Serena Hotels International Squash Championship for Men & Women organized by Pakistan Squash Federation in collaboration with PAF & Serena Hotels. —APP Photo

## Southie refuses to blame WC fatigue for Bangladesh Test loss

SYLHET (AFP): New Zealand Test captain Tim Southee refused to blame fatigue from a gruelling ODI World Cup campaign in India for his side's defeat in the first Test of a two-match series against Bangladesh in Sylhet on Saturday.

New Zealand retained several players from the World Cup for the tour, but they failed to reproduce their sparkle from the earlier tournament, slumping to 181 all out in their second innings to fall to a 150-run loss.

The Kiwis lost to hosts India in the semi-final of the World Cup, which ended on November 19.

Saturday's defeat was only New Zealand's second in Tests against Bangladesh, with the first coming at home in January 2022.

"We had a little bit of a break after the World Cup. But I think as players, you know that it's a busy schedule," said Southee after the defeat in Sylhet.

"You know what's in

front of you. You're trying to freshen up as well as you can. The guys were in good spirits before this.

"It's been a long time on the road for some but that's part and parcel of being an international cricketer."

New Zealand have played 55 matches across all formats this year, mostly away, with the side last playing a home series against Sri Lanka in March and April.

This series in Bangladesh marks the beginning of a new cycle of the World Test Championship, but Southee preferred to focus on the present.

"Nothing changes for us. You worry about what's in front of you, and what's in front of us is a Test match in Dhaka," he said, referring to the upcoming second Test.

"Our next challenge is to try and be better than what we've been here... as players, we look back on this and we'll keep looking at ways to move forward."

He defended his side's team selection, which saw Kyle Jamieson preferred ahead of Neil Wagner, with Ish Sodhi and Ajaz Patel forming the spin attack.

"You look at the conditions, and you look at the squad you've got, and you pick your best 11," he said.

"You look at the bowling group and KJ (Jamieson) has been a phenomenal performer for us. Ish Sodhi was the man of the series in the last series that he played, and AJ (Patel) has been a great bowler for us," he said.

He also praised the Bangladesh team for their performance instead of blaming the wicket.

"I think the Bangladesh bowlers bowled well, and (were) very accurate," he said.

"We were probably a little bit off in terms of our ability to build pressure for long periods of time."

The second Test of the series will be held in Dhaka between December 6 and 10.

## Four matches decided in DC South girls, boys basketball championship

KARACHI (APP): The Deputy Commissioner (DC) South Girls and Boys Basketball Championship continued its competition with the decision of four matches on the second day at the International Abdul Nasir Basketball Court in Arambagh.

According to a communique here on Saturday, the event, a collaboration between the Karachi Basketball Association and the Alliance of Markets Arambagh, witnessed distinguished guests, Director of Physical education at National College Saeeda Iftikhar, and ADC One South Samiullah Pathan and were introduced to the players. KBBA President Ghulam Mohammad Khan, Sponsor Asif GulFam, Media Coordinator Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi, and other dignitaries graced the event with their presence.

In the girls' event, Beaconhouse school secured a victory against Islamia College with a scoreline of 10-5. Riya Shahid led the winning side with 6 points, complemented by Nabihah Hussain and Anusha Younis with 2 points each. Laiba Gul, Salma Waqar, and Hafiza Khan contributed 2 points each for the losing side.

The second girls' match of the day showcased Whites dominating KMA College with a commanding score of 22-8.

Aruha Atiq, Saira Khan, and Mahnaz stood out for the winning team, scoring 8, 6, and 2 points, respectively. KMA College managed 2 points, with Hamina and Parveen Khan scoring 5 and 3 points.

Turning to the boys' events, Arambagh Club narrowly defeated Nixor College Red with a score of 46-40. Ali Asad (17 points), Moaz Ashraf (15 points), and Haris Shahid (11 points) were instru-

mental in securing the win, while Ali Asad (13 points), Zakaria Ali (12 points), and Yash Parwani (10 points) made notable contributions for Nixor College Red.

In the second boys' match, Nixor College emerged victorious against Rangers College, winning 31-28. Shayan Khan (10 points), M Hamzah (8 points), and M Zahid (7 points) were the standout

players for Nixor College, while M Ayan Malik (14 points) and Ziaur Rehman (9 points) led the charge for Rangers College.

The matches were officiated by Zahid Malik, Nazakat Khan, Amir Sharif, Muhammad Ashraf, Tariq Hussain as referees, and Zaima Khatun, Naem Ahmed, Daniyal Marwat as technical officials.

## PCB removes Salman Butt as consultant after backlash

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Saturday removed former Pakistan captain Salman Butt from a consultant panel to assist the selection committee a day after his appointment.

PCB move came after the board received severe backlash over Butt's appointment as he was the main figure during the infamous and unfortunate spot-fixing saga that had unfolded in 2010 and led to the ban from cricket to fast bowlers Muhammad Amir, Muhammad Asif and Butt.

Pakistan chief selector Wahab Riaz who was also part of that squad and was implicated in the scandal earlier but was left off the hook due to lack of evidence announced Salman Butt's removal from the consultant panel in a press conference at the PCB headquarters.

Wahab said Butt was yet to be appointed as a consultant and was not associated with the PCB as of yet.

He said Butt played no role in selecting the team for the Australia tour. He



said Butt's appointment was under consideration, however, after a thorough deliberation, the PCB has decided not to appoint Butt in this role.

Wahab said Asad Shafiq now will be the new member of the consultant team.

However, Wahab's claim is contrary to the official press release issued by the PXCBB a day earlier that confirmed the appointment of Butt.

"The PCB has confirmed the appointment of former Pakistan cricketers Kamran Akmal, Rao Iftikhar Anjum and Salman Butt as consultant members to chief selector Wahab Riaz," the board said in the press release.

"The three have assumed their responsibilities in the selection panel with immediate effect. Their first assignment as consultant members to the chief selector includes the upcoming five-match T20I series against New Zealand, set to commence on 12 January 2024 following the conclusion of the Test tour to Australia," the press release added.

Wahab said the selection committee consists Taseef Ahmad, Wajahatullah Wasti and Waseem Haider. He said the job of the consultants is only to identify the players. Wahab said he talked to Khurram Manzoor, Fawad Alam,

Ruman Raees, Usman Shinwari and other players and those who expressed willingness have been appointed as consultants.

He said the issue of Butt is being hyped unnecessarily. He said he has discussed with Butt and he will no longer be a part of the consultants team. He alleged that some quarters have maligned him and Butt under specific agenda.

Wahab said PCB was not to blame in this matter as he was the one who included Butt and it is also him who removed Butt from his team after talking to him.

He said he took the responsibility taken by the selection committee to improve the domestic cricket.

Wahab said it is common practice in the world that whoever completes the sentence should get his rightful place in the society and urged the people who are targeting a person for no reason should think about it.

He said there was no pressure in Butt's matter (to remove him) but this has been done to avoid further controversy.

## Domestic cricketers 'unhappy' with PCB over contracts

LAHORE (NNI): Hundreds of Pakistan domestic cricketers are reportedly awaiting contracts and payments for participating in the ongoing National T20 Cup, which will be concluded on December 10. Sources told a private news channel that Pakistan domestic cricketers expressed disappointment with Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) over delay in issuance of contracts and payments. Sources further claimed that the players, for the past five months, were also not getting daily allowance for their participation in domestic season.

Responding to the claims, PCB Director Domestic Cricket Nadeem Khan confirmed a delay in the distribution of the payments and contracts, attributing it to increase in number of domestic cricketers — from 192 to 360. Furthermore, he noted, contracts will be awarded based on performance as per the request forwarded by the regions. Nadeem Khan asked the players to contact their respected managers as "daily allowances were handed over to them".

He went on to say that the remaining fee of National T20 Cup will also be paid soon. Earlier this week, the PCB reiterated that the priority for all Pakistan players must be Pakistan and not T20 franchise leagues. The remarks were made by team director Mohammad Hafeez on the eve of the side's departure for Australia.

## Pakistan to face New Zealand in first T20I on Sunday



ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan women's team are all set to take on New Zealand in their own backyard when both sides meet in the first of a three-match Twenty20 International (T20I) series at the University of Otago Oval in Dunedin on Sunday.

Since arriving in New Zealand on November 25, Pakistan women's team had a couple of training sessions and practice games in Christchurch before traveling to Dunedin on Friday afternoon. The team had a three-hour training session under the supervision of coaching staff at the University of Otago Oval on Saturday.

New Zealand, at present, maintain a 100 percent winning record against Pakistan women in eight head-to-head outings, but Pakistan Captain Nida Dar says she has faith in her teammates that they can perform well in the series.

"New Zealand are known for their cricketing excellence, and we respect that. However, we are here to compete, and I have faith in the players who can do good for the team in the series," she said in a statement shared by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

"We see the forthcoming T20I series as an opportunity for our players to perform against one of the most formidable sides in the world. We are looking ahead to next year's T20 World Cup, and with a minimum of nine T20Is to be played before the mega event, the series against New Zealand provides us with a chance to work on the combination of the team for next year's event."

Pakistan left-arm spinners Nashra Sundhu and Sadia Iqbal are positioned at the fifth and seventh spots, respectively, in the ICC Women's T20I rankings and are looking forward to performing well for the team in the upcoming series. Nashra is one match shy of completing 50 T20I appearances for Pakistan. In the all-rounder category, Dar is placed on the fifth position in the ICC T20I rankings.

Dar said the series against New Zealand would allow them to assess their strengths and areas of improvement. "It's a valuable experience, and I am sure the players have now got a good idea of the conditions here after playing practice matches and also undergoing training sessions," she added.

The second T20I will also be staged at the same venue on Tuesday, while the third T20I will be played at the Sir John Davies Oval in Queenstown on December 9.

At the conclusion of T20I series, both sides are scheduled to play three one-day internationals (ODIs) — part of the ICC Women's Championship — from December 12 to December 18 in Queenstown and Christchurch.

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

## Yasir scores maiden T20 century for Rawalpindi, Iftikhar's all-round performance takes Peshawar over the line

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Iftikhar Ahmed, Tayyab Tahir and Yasir Khan showed up with the bat for their respective teams to take all important points on day two of Super Eight stage of AH Group Presents Jazz Super 4G National T20 Cup 2023-24. The first three games of the day had a lot of entertainment at offer at three venues in Karachi. Match four of the Day two of Super-Eight Stage is set to begin at 2000 PKT, to be played between Abbottabad and Sialkot. The toss will take place at 1930 PKT.

Peshawar vs Karachi Whites at UBL Sports Complex, Karachi

Iftikhar Ahmed-led Peshawar registered their second consecutive triumph of the Super-Eight stage as they beat Karachi Whites by 56 runs. After being asked to bat first, Peshawar got off to a disappointing start as the in-form opening batter Mohammad Haris fell for a golden duck. Soon, Karachi Whites reduced Peshawar to 43 for three when skipper Iftikhar (72 not out, 45b, 2x6s, 9x4s) was joined in the middle by Adil Amin (75 not out, 44b, 4x6s, 6x4s). Both the batters combined to yield a partnership of 143 taking Peshawar to a total of 186.

In reply, Karachi got off to a bad start as Mohammad Ilyas dismissed Khuram Manzoor for a 3-ball duck. Ammad Alam (32, 27b, 2x6s, 3x4s) and Omair Bin Yousuf (24, 13b, 2x6s, 2x4s) put



on a partnership of 56 runs for Karachi Whites after the early blow but then the Asad Shafiq-side lost nine wickets at the expense of just 74 runs. Iftikhar led from front with the ball as well and eked out three vital wickets. For his heroics with both bat and ball Iftikhar was declared player of the match.

Lahore Whites vs Lahore Blues at NBP Sports Complex, Karachi

The second day of Super-Eight Stage also saw the Lahore derby as Lahore Whites locked horns with Lahore Blues at NBP Sports Complex. Lahore Blues managed to post a total of 148 in the allotted 20 overs after Lahore Whites won the toss and elected to bowl first. After a decent start to their innings, Lahore Blues lost wickets at regular intervals. Wicketkeeper batter Junaid Ali

coming in to bat at number six, played a vital knock of 34 runs with the help of six boundaries.

Lahore Whites, in pursuit of the target, lost two early wickets. Umaid Asif struck with the new ball leaving them two for two. Opener Imran Dogar (45, 29b, 2x6s, 5x4s), playing his maiden T20 game, kept his calm and combined with Tayyab Tahir (67 not out, 54b, 1x6s, 5x4s) to take Lahore Whites out of trouble. With Tayyab Tahir holding one end, Lahore Blues struck thrice after Imran Dogar's departure but failed to defend the total. Lahore Whites sealed the triumph with five wickets in bag and one ball to spare.

Rawalpindi vs FATA at National Bank Stadium, Karachi

Rawalpindi made it two wins out of two games in the Super-Eight stage as they thrashed

FATA at the National Bank Stadium, Karachi. Rawalpindi made no fuss in chasing FATA's total of 168 courtesy of a brilliant hundred by the opener Yasir Khan.

Earlier, FATA lost their openers in batting powerplay as they were put in to bat by Rawalpindi's captain Shadab Khan. Barring Salman Khan Jnr (83, 52b, 3x6s, 8x4s), no other FATA batter managed to convert their starts. Meanwhile, towards the end of innings Asif Afridi chipped in with an unbeaten cameo of 16 from nine balls, including a six and a four, to help FATA post a respectable total. Zaman Khan impressed with three wickets including a hat-trick chance.

Rawalpindi lost Zeeshan Malik early in the chase but aggressing batting by opener Yasir Khan (107, 59b, 8x6s, 8x4s), combined with Umar Amin's (48, 38b, 1x6s, 4x4s) efforts with the bat allowed a massive partnership of 154 runs, outfoxing FATA. Except for skipper Khushdil Shah and Azaz Khan, all other FATA bowlers leaked runs at more the eight an over. Yasir Khan's maiden T20 hundred not just took Rawalpindi home but also fetched him player of the match award.

Scores in brief:  
Peshawar beat Karachi Whites by 56 runs at UBL Sports Complex, Karachi  
Peshawar 186-3, 20 overs

(Adil Amin 75 not out, Iftikhar Ahmed 72 not out; Ghulam Mudassar 1-39, Arif Yaqoob 1-40, Sohail Khan 1-41)

Karachi Whites 130 all out, 20 overs (Sohail Khan 34 not out, Ammad Alam 32; Iftikhar Ahmed 3-17, Mohammad Imran 3-31, Azam Khan 2-28, Mohammad Ilyas 1-26, Niaz Khan 1-28)

Player of the match — Iftikhar Ahmed (Peshawar)

Lahore whites beat Lahore Blues by five wickets at NBP Sports Complex, Karachi

Lahore Blues 148-5, 20 overs (Junaid Ali 34 not out, Qasim Akram 27, Hussain Talat 24 Mohammad Naveed 2-36, Saad Nasim 1-15, Imran Dogar 1-21, Mohammad Rameez Jnr 1-27)

Lahore Whites 149-5, 19.5 overs (Tayyab Tahir 67 not out, Imran Dogar 45; Umaid Asif 2-26, Qasim Akram 1-6, Nisar Ahmed 1-26, Usman Qadir 1-30)

Player of the match — Tayyab Tahir (Lahore Whites)

Rawalpindi beat FATA by seven wickets at National Bank Stadium, Karachi

FATA 168-7, 20 overs (Salman Khan Jnr 83 not out, Khushdil Shah 19; Zaman Khan 3-25, Kashif Ali 1-16, Jahandad Khan 1-39, Shadab Khan 1-40)

Rawalpindi 169-3, 18.2 overs (Yasir Khan 107, Umar Amin 48; Shahid Aziz 2-38, Irfanullah Shah 1-26)

Player of the match — Yasir Khan (Rawalpindi).





## In brief

### IRSA releases 88,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 88,800 cusecs water from its various rim stations with inflow of 44,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1495.94 feet and was 95.94 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. The water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 22,800 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1174.50 feet, which was 125.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,100 cusecs and 28,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 52,700, 43,700, 41,700 and 10,800 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 7,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### DRAP issues directions to syrups' manufacturers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Health on Saturday directed all pharmaceutical companies making syrups to ensure pre-sale testing of glycerine and sorbitol. According to spokesperson of the Ministry of Health, glycerin and sorbitol are used to make cough and allergy syrups. He said that the World Health Organization (WHO) has already declared glycerine density diethylene glycol as harmful to health. He said that in Indian cough syrup, children have died due to diethylene glycol. He said that Dr Nadeem Jan has laid the foundation of merit and transparency in DRAP. Caretaker federal Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan said that strict crack-down is being done against fake and unregistered medicine sellers. He said that providing quality medicines and services to the people is my mission. Dr Nadeem Jan said, "I am ensuring my mission by representing the aspirations of the people."

### Police accelerates efforts against traffic violators

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police has accelerated its efforts against those bikers who drive their bikes without helmet and driving licenses, and vehicles for having fancy or non-pattern number plates, a police public relations officer said. He said that Islamabad capital police is working on hastening actions against traffic violators under the special directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan in order to reduce accidents and maintain the smooth flow of traffic. In this regard, all zonal DSPs are directed to take strict action against all motorists violating traffic rules, especially against those bikers who drive their bikes without helmets, driving licenses, and vehicles with fancy or non-pattern number plates. Islamabad capital police have constituted special squads to conduct operations throughout the city and work to improve road safety awareness for the public on several highways and boulevards in the capital. Police officials are directed to deal with the citizens in a courteous manner, as disrespect will not be tolerated, and to take unbiased action against rule violators. Islamabad Capital Police urged the motorists to display the number plates issued by the Excise and Taxation Office and also keep with them their driving licenses and vehicles' documents.

# Pakistan needs sufficient energy to boost GDP growth: Musadik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Minister of State for Petroleum, Senator Musadik Malik on Saturday said, "Pakistan's 250 million people need energy, and the country do not have sufficient energy while utilisation of energy is also low, but its crucial to increase its GDP."

He said environment and energy production and utilisation are closely linked due to its crosscutting nature and multi sectoral impacts.

He was speaking at the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) organized first ever all parties' conference here to draw attention to the importance of high-level political commitment for urgent, synchronised, and decisive steps towards Just Energy Transition (JET) from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy. All major political party representatives participated in the event, and in total more than hundred participants attended the meeting.

Senator Malik while representing the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) said, "Due to air pollution only the rich can breathe because they can afford machines to clean air for themselves. We need to look at the complexity of the energy problem. Solar, run of the river, and wind hybrid solution can be very helpful", he added.

"Pakistan's dependence on fossil fuels for energy is not only a major cause of our growing import bill and the consequent balance of payment crisis but also of environmental degradation and climate change resulting in higher temperatures, more intense smog in winters and increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters like floods", said Executive Director, CPDI, Mukhtar Ahmad Ali while inaugurating the all parties conference on energy. "This situation calls for top-level political commitment for urgent measures to reduce dependence

on fossil fuels and substantially increase the share of renewable sources of energy like solar, wind, small hydro in our overall energy generation and consumption.", he added.

"The political parties must commit to increase the share of green and clean renewable energy in the overall energy generation installed capacity to at least 35% by 2030, devolve the power generation, transmission, and distribution in accordance with articles 157 of the constitution, and 2/3 electricity generation shifted on local energy resources", he added.

"CPDI has keenly analyzed the 2018 election manifestos of various political parties to assess their energy-related commitments. We noted that most political parties have been putting substantial emphasis on the energy sector in the past, but they are of the view that new fresh pledges will further demonstrate the political solidarity with the state and people of Pakistan in view of the recently emerged challenges i.e. climate change, floods, high import bill, new Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), growing cost for consumers, opportunities to reduced cost of energy, improve grid and transmission system, and more efficient battery solutions etc.", said Mukhtar Ahmad Ali while laying emphasis on the need of political commitments.

A documentary produced by CPDI was played on Delta Blue project conducted in Sindh. The documentary familiarized the participants about the dynamics and implications of climate change and carbon credits.

Dr. Farid Paracha, representing Jamat-e-Islami, asked the rulers why they have been selling expensive energy to the common Pakistanis. Energy prices have robbed people of their economic well being, and it is a serious problem. "We will not get dictation from the World Bank, IMF and make

our own policies in the interest of the people of Pakistan, producing cheaper energy for development", he concluded. M. Rehan Hashmi, representing MQM Pakistan, emphasised the importance of renewable energy and showed commitment to facilitate investment in cheap, reliable, and renewable energy.

Muzzamil Aslam, representing Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf, suggested five-pronged strategy to rescue the energy sector from the current crisis. It included local resource development, privatisation, and reduction in circular debt. He criticised the previous governments on their failure to keep the energy prices low.

Dr. Khalid Waleed, representing SDPI, talked about energy and economic turmoil. We consume only 88.44 Mtoe which is quite insignificant as compared to India, China, and US. He built the case for the right kind of subsidies to encourage renewables and build potential for high quality growth. "There is a need to develop a charter of environment, economy, and energy in political will and political discourse", he emphasised.

Shahida Akhtar Ali, Jamiat Ulema Islam Pakistan, argued against the presence of special interests that cause misallocation of resources and do not help the poor to come out of poverty, and rather exploits them. She expressed the need of improving governance and management in the energy sector and formulate pro-poor policies.

Palwasha Khan, representing PPP said that Pakistan Peoples Party has shown commitment to energy renewables in the past, and it will continue its legacy of facilitating pro-people development models in every sector of the economy. In the end, Ubaidullah Chaudhary thanked the participants and political parties in showing commitment and solidarity with the cause of sustainable renewable energy.



ISLAMABAD: Children enjoying play in a street at the slum area of G-7. —APP Photo

## L&D Fund operationalization needs massive scale up to meet global targets: Dr Suleri

ISLAMABAD (APP): Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri on Saturday said the climate debate at the biggest environmental conference, COP-28, has gained momentum amid increased discussions on Loss and Damage Fund (L&D Fund), just energy transition and climate finance.

The SDPI Executive Director who is at present in Dubai, UAE to attend the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP-28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting being held annually.

Talking to APP, Dr Suleri said the discussion at COP-28 is also critically important because of the first-ever global stocktake (GST) of the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) pledged by the nation-states under the Paris Agreement in 2015 which will be the evaluation of the progress on those goals.

"One thing is clear the global targets to limit the world average temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius have not been met so far through carbon emissions' reduction. It has been deeply realised here at this forum that it is mainly due to the fossil fuel-based economy and human consumption patterns," the SDPI Executive Director said.

Commenting on the ongoing COP process, he said there are three terms used at the forum: "One is

fossil fuel phase-out, fossil fuel phase down, and just energy transition." He said the energy transition is discussed by countries like Pakistan who have vowed to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels by phasing out coal, and crude oil usage. However, these countries also argue that this transition could not be achieved overnight and has a cost and it will be financed by whom.

The developed countries, he said are against the energy transition whereas the petroleum-producing countries are also against the fossil fuel phase-out.

"In the previous COP-27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, the government of Pakistan and the former Climate Minister, Senator Sherry Rehman made a great contribution in the creation of a loss and damage fund. Although, the Fund got active at the start of the COP-28 and got pledges but from our (Pakistan) perspective these pledges are very minuscule," he said.

"I believe that it will reach nearly one billion dollars and these are peanuts keeping in view the devastation in Pakistan post-2022 floods that alone incurred \$30 billion losses to the country and the one billion dollars pledges are very low for the entire world's developing countries marred by climate catastrophes," Dr Suleri said.

Despite that, the SDPI Executive Director said the Fund has a historic significance as it has been a long-standing demand of the

developing countries for the past many decades. The fund not only was created but is going to be made operational under the supervision of the World Bank and after four years it will be reviewed to replace its position.

"The developed countries demanded the fund to be placed under the World Bank whereas the least developed countries believed that the fund would become like IFI (international financial institution) and demanded the UNFCCC to devise a separate mechanism for the Fund. Pakistan took the middle situation here, advocating, to first place the Fund under the World Bank for some time and then should be made independent after becoming operational after some time and many other countries supported Pakistan on this as this mechanism has been adopted," he said.

Other than the Loss and Damage Fund, he said the Global Climate Fund (GCF) is also receiving pledges as the US has pledged \$2 billion, adding, "But the 2020 target of \$100 billion gap is still not met and countries like Pakistan are pushing the larger emitters to fully contribute in L&D Fund and GCF who have a historic role in increasing global carbon emissions.

Apart from this, there were Adaptation Plan negotiation stream was also under the global discussions whose contact group meeting has started. "In adaptation, you learn to live with climate change, conform policy

measures and lifestyle according to it and mitigation is to take measures to reduce losses due to climate change-induced disasters."

The negotiations, he said will look into the commitments made by the countries in their adaptation plans during the discussion. "The mitigation is a costly business." Adaptation, he said is pre-incidental compensation and mitigation is post-disaster compensation which is more visible and the rich countries are focusing more on mitigation funds whereas Pakistan demands to take both adaptation and mitigation simultaneously.

The third important thing, he said is renewable energy transition. "The G20 countries in its meeting in New Delhi a few months back discussed to increase renewable energy share by three times which is being debated here at COP-28 to how to increase the renewable energy resources and its share in the energy mix."

These are the three main pillars of COP-28 negotiations and historically COP decision-making process goes beyond 12 days whereas nine more days are left and it may extend beyond that, he added.

Commenting on the activities held at the Pakistan Pavilion, Dr Abid Suleri said a panel discussion on the Living Indus Initiative was held participated by the Caretaker Prime Minister and WWF-International President, Dr Adil Najum spoke extremely well on it.

## Elections only option to avert economic crisis, says Speaker

ISLAMABAD, (APP): National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf reiterated on Saturday that only timely, 'free and fair' elections could avert the current economic and political crises in the country.

"There is no other option but to conduct elections, as if the political system collapsed, everything would be controversial," he told a private news channel.

He was confident that general elections would be

conducted on February 8, as the country could not bear the burden of another major political crisis.

Ashraf maintained that the political dynamics have changed; people have rejected 20 dissident members of Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf in the recent by-elections.

"Today's voter is not an old voter; you cannot make them fools in this age of social media; they are monitoring every development

closely. The ballot will go in favour of the party that wins their confidence," he said.

He said the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had never enjoyed a level playing field; however, it is ready to surprise in Punjab in the general elections.

To another query, the NA speaker said the PML-N leaders should focus on their politics as people like Attaullah Tarar were damaging the party's reputation.

## Dr. Amjad Saqib reaffirms BISP's commitment towards lifting needy families

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib on Saturday reaffirmed BISP's commitment to lifting needy families out of poverty.

During his visit to the BISP Tehsil Office in Sukkur, Dr. Amjad Saqib was actively engaged in listening to the problems of needy women, attentively addressed their concerns, and ensured their voices were heard. According to a news release, Dr. Amjad Saqib directed his team to employ all available means to facilitate individuals in need.

He underscored the importance of maintaining office cleanliness and treating needy women with utmost respect, fostering a dignified environment. Chairperson BISP reaffirmed the program's

commitment to timely and transparent payment of Kafaalat stipends through a constructive dialogue with POS agents. Dr. Amjad Saqib also instructed the staff to monitor the process of payment disbursement.

Later on, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib also addressed BISP employees at Toba Mosque in Sukkur. He shed light on the program's basic goal to alleviate poverty in needy families. "BISP is currently supporting 9.3 million deserving families and acting as a lifeline for those facing economic hardship", he stated.

In his address, Dr. Amjad Saqib highlighted the humanitarian essence of the program, stating, "Serving humanity is worship." He urged employees to recognize the rights of

needy women and imparted practical wisdom to uplift poor families from the clutches of poverty.

Furthermore, Dr. Amjad Saqib emphasized on lifting needy families out of poverty, connecting children from such families with technical skills, and highlighting the importance of small businesses in poverty alleviation.

He proposed the establishment of an endowment fund to improve the economic conditions of needy households, considering it a social responsibility to create an exemplary institution in the form of the Benazir Income Support Program.

In a collaborative spirit, Dr. Amjad Saqib also welcomed and listened to valuable suggestions from program employees for continuous improvement.

## ANF recovers 241kg drugs in 14 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 14 operations across the country managed to recover 241kg drugs and arrested 14 accused including five women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday.

He informed that in an operation, 1942 grams Ice drug was recovered from the possession of a woman at Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore. The accused, a resident of Karachi, was leaving for Bahrain by flight number GF-0767.

A female passenger, a resident of Sahiwal, going on flight no QR-617 to Qatar was arrested at Multan International Airport. 855 grams Ice drug was recovered from her possession.

In the third operation, 995 grams Ice drug was recovered from a passen-

ger's trolley bag netted at Bacha Khan International Airport. The accused, a resident of Peshawar, was leaving for Doha by flight number QR-601.

In the fourth operation, one kg Ice was recovered from two accused, residents of Sahiwal arrested near Chungi No. 26, Islamabad.

500 grams hashish and 250 grams Ice were recovered from the possession of a woman rounded up near Chungi No 26.

22.8 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of two women arrested from Orangi Town area in Karachi. 9.6 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Pattoki Toll Plaza Multan while an accused was also arrested.

3 kg heroin and 1 kg Ice were recovered from the possession of an accused travelling in a bus near

Kamilpur Interchange, Faisalabad.

46.8 kg hashish was recovered from a truck intercepted near Chiragabad Interchange, Faisalabad, while two accused were netted during the operation.

3.6kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused, riding a motorcycle, arrested near Daewoo Bus Terminal, Okara.

19kg hashish was recovered during two different operations conducted in Zakhakhel Khyber area.

In the 13th operation, 80 kg hashish hidden for smuggling was recovered from an uninhabited area in Panjgur. In the 14th operation, 50 kg hashish, hidden in Piski Road Turbat area was seized.

Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused while further operations are under process.

## Young hikers cleanup Margalla Hills Trail-5

ISLAMABAD (APP): More than one hundred university students and nature lovers participated in the hiking and cleanup drive at Margalla Hills Trail-5 after an interactive session on wildlife and biological diversity of the Margalla Hills on Saturday.

It was the 13th Pakistan Mountain Festival's day-long kickoff event, organized by the Development Communications network (Devcom-Pakistan), DTN and Islamabad Wildlife Management board (IWMB) in collaboration with the Comsats University Islamabad Campus Computer Science Adventure Society (CSAS). Pakistan Mountain Festival (PMF) is an annual flagship event of Devcom-Pakistan to commemorate the UN's International Mountain Day (IMD) that falls on December 11, a news release said.

Speaking on the occasion, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director and founder Pakistan Mountain festival said the Margalla Hills National Park increasingly becoming a focus of visitors and illegal constructions. Solid waste management and littering have increased manifold despite many interventions by the IWMB and civil society organizations. The

environmentally unfriendly practices have damaged the natural resources in all three parts of the National Park including hills, Rawal Lake and Sharkarparian despite many initiatives. Mountain Resources are the lifeline of the over 80 per cent of the people living downstream who are responsible for heavy carbon emissions, and devastation of the mountain ecosystems.

Ahmed said we shall encourage youth for environmentally friendly outdoor pursuits. It is good for their mental and physical health besides making them a responsible visitor to nature. Several youth engagements are in pipeline for the 13th Pakistan Mountain Festival including 9th Pakistan Mountain Youth Forum and cultural shows, and a conference. We need to work out a joint action plan for the promotion of mountains and its communities, culture, art, and heritage instead of individual and scattered efforts.

IWMB Deputy Director Sakhawat Ali briefed the participants about the rich biodiversity of the Margalla Hills National Park that was established in 1980. It is the third-largest national park in the world with an area of 17,386 hectares (42,960 acres) under the

foothills of Himalaya. In the recent decade, its importance was realized after seeing the impact of unwanted haphazard constructions and movement of vehicles more than its carrying capacity. Many initiatives have been taken so far to protect the wildlife and biological diversity including awareness raising among the communities living in the habitats.

He urged the youth to respect diversity of species, and help manage wildlife and human beings live together. The park is rich in biodiversity, especially rich in Sino-Himalayan fauna, most notably gray goral, barking deer and the Leopard. Combined MHN is home to around 600 plant species, 402 bird varieties, 38 mammals and 27 species of reptiles.

The IWMB Deputy Director said under the new management recently the IWMB has taken many steps for the protection of the Park and visitors. Many cases of woodcutting and forest fires were averted. The renovated IWMB nature education centres are the hub of activities and awareness raising sessions, and community engagement. Zamina Khan, a participant of the mountain cleanup, was of the view that it is quite healthy to go in nature.



Interest transactions banned

KABUL (BNA): The Governor of Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB), Mullah Hidayatullah Badri, announced that all interest transactions are forbidden in Afghanistan and that the country's banking and financial sector has been fully Islamicized. He made this statement at a conference in Bahrain, where he also expressed his intention to learn from the experience and expertise of other Islamic countries and institutions.

Six killed in armed attack

HERAT (Ariana News): Security sources confirmed that 6 individuals were killed and 2 others injured in an armed attack by unknown men in Herat province. The attack took place at around 2:00 pm in the 13th district of Herat city, sources said. Reportedly, four women are among the victims. Sources added that the victims were riding a rickshaw vehicle towards their home after prayers when they were attacked by unknown armed men.

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

## HRW raises concerns about arrests of women

KABUL (TOLOnews): Human Rights Watch has expressed concern about the current situation of activist women in Afghanistan and said that the arrests, threats, and suppression of women are still ongoing.

A report published by Human Rights Watch expressed concern about the continued detention of female protesters, including Julia Parsi, Manijeh Sediqi, Neda Parwani, and Parisa Azada.

“These are four women’s rights activists arbitrarily

detained by the Taliban right now. Remember their names. But please also remember that there are many more in custody who have not been named.

You haven’t heard of most of the detained women. Families are terrified into concealing their arrests, hoping silence might buy their release or reduce abuses in custody,” said Human Rights Watch.

However, the Islamic Emirate said that some women have been arrested to prevent the implementation of foreign programs

and to maintain public security. “Seizure does not mean that we silence someone’s voice or that someone is oppressed; It is for the sake of maintaining public security and preventing external conspiracies from happening in Afghanistan,” said Mujahid.

Some women’s rights activists are calling for the release of the protesting women.

“The goal of women’s rights activists and those who took to the streets was to be able to hear the voices of Afghan women for the

world,” said Hwaida Hadis, a women’s rights activist.

“The women who were arrested did not have any anti-government and security activities, they only wanted Afghan women and girls to study,” said Sonam Latif, a women’s rights activist.

After the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate in the country, some women took to the streets in the capital and other provinces and started protests demanding women’s right to education and work in the country.

## EU provides 142.8m for Afghan basic services and livelihoods

KABUL (Khaama Press): The European Commission approved 142.8 million in funding to support Afghans by improving essential services and livelihoods, especially for vulnerable groups like displaced individuals.

Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen, said: “The EU’s commitment to stand by the Afghan people remains unwavering. To address their growing basic needs, the EU has mobilised a new support measure.”

She added, “This 142.8 million package will focus on health, nutrition, education, clean water and sanitation, particularly for women, girls, displaced populations and those affected by displacement.”

On the other hand, Urpilainen said, “We are also supporting their livelihoods, paying special attention to women’s economic empowerment. The Afghan people deserve a future where they can thrive, and the EU continues to support them.”

The EU continues its commitment to the Afghan people by delivering essential aid using a principled approach focusing on women and girls. This contribution is part of a larger 1.2 billion package initiated after Commission President von der Leyen’s pledge in August 2021 to allocate at least 1 billion in support of Afghanistan. With this new package, the EU’s total mobilized assistance now stands at 676 million, complementing the existing 554 million in humanitarian aid.

According to the EU statement, the new aid will focus on essential services, including strengthening health, education, and nutrition services while ensuring the active involvement of Afghan women. Support includes school meals, teacher training, drug abuse prevention, and psychological health services, considering the high prevalence of mental health issues. Water, sanitation, and hygiene support will also be integrated.

Meanwhile, it also revealed to ensure livelihood to the vulnerable people. To do so, the EU will establish community-based safety nets, improve income-generating opportunities, and enhance market access. Women’s economic empowerment is a crucial priority, recognizing their potential in civil society and the need for their active participation in the economy and society.

## Minister meet scholars association



KABUL (BNA): Acting Minister of Interior, Khalifa Sirajuddin Haqqani, while meeting with the high-ranking delegation of the Islamic World Scholars Association, called the visit of this delegation to the country a good means of connecting Afghanistan with the Islamic world.

Haqqani said in this meeting that we are suffering from the injustices of the Palestinian Muslims and the injustices of the Jewish occupiers. He expressed his hope that as a result of the resistance of the Palestinians, the Palestinian land will be freed from the grip of the invaders.

The acting head of the Ministry of Interior also

said that the future is in the hands of Afghanistan’s scholars and they can better understand the interests and priorities of the country.

At the same time, Dr. Ali Qara Daghi spoke on behalf of the said delegation and called the struggle of Afghans for independence in Afghanistan a torch for the Muslims of the world and a historical victory of the Islamic world.

He mentioned the problem of Palestine as a common pain of the Islamic Ummah. Referring to Qatar’s aid to Afghanistan, Qara Daghi assured the continuation of cooperation with Afghanistan.

At the same time, Sheikh Dr. Nawaf Takroori, the

head of the Palestinian Scholars Association, said in this meeting that the oppressed nations of the world take inspiration from the 20-year struggle and heroism of the Afghans.

According to him, the struggle of the Palestinian people and Mujahideen against the oppressors continues, but all the Muslims of the world have a responsibility to support the oppressed Muslims.

The Acting Minister of the Ministry of Interior thanked the Qatari government for its assistance to the victims of the earthquake in Herat province and the good advice of the delegation of the Islamic World Scholars Association.



KABUL (Ariana News): As the winter season approaches, most needy families are worried about the worsening of their living conditions.

These families say although the cold season has arrived, they have not been able to buy fuel to

heat their homes in the winter due to economic problems.

In addition to other problems, they do not even have the economic ability to meet their basic needs.

The Ministry of Economy meanwhile accepts the

economic problems in the country, it emphasizes that they have plans to control the situation and improve the economic situation of the people.

“To overcome economic challenges and eradicate poverty, the Islamic

Emirate of Afghanistan has various programs, including developing exports, strengthening Afghanistan’s transit position, supporting regional projects, as well as developing trade with neighboring countries and the region, and finally, launching large-scale job-creating projects inside the country is one of the most important of these programs,” said Abdul Latif Nazari, deputy minister of economy.

Based on the statistics of international institutions, about 28 million Afghan citizens are struggling with economic problems and need humanitarian assistance.

In addition, the process of forced deportation of Afghan immigrants from Pakistan continues and this issue can expand the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

## DABS establishes department to attract investment

KABUL (TOLOnews): Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) has established the Investment Attraction Department in order to increase investment in the electricity sector.

The spokesperson of this organization told TOLOnews that they provide facilities to investors and domestic and foreign companies to invest in the electricity sector in the country.

Some economic analysts said that Afghanistan has many water resources and investment in the electricity sector will also be effective in economic growth.

“At DABS, we have

created a department under the title of Investment Attraction Department, the duties of this department are to make regular plans for investors in the electricity generation sector in different parts of the country,” said Hekmatullah Maiwand, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) spokesman.

Meanwhile, the former head of DABS said that for more investment in the electricity sector, it is necessary for the Islamic Emirate to provide facilities to the investors first.

“Afghanistan’s electricity problems in the current situation is because there is no donor, there is no

attention from the international community, and the government itself does not have money, the only solution is the private sector is to solve the current electricity problem, without the cooperation of the private sector, it is impossible for the Ministry of Energy and Water or for DABS to solve the electricity problems soon,” said Amanullah Ghaleb, former head of Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS).

“It is clear that Afghanistan has reached self-sufficiency in terms of internal sources of electricity production. We have enough water. If attention

is paid to dams to generate electricity, we do not need such sources from other countries in this sector. The only thing that remains is technical matters and it will also be solved if some countries cooperate with Afghanistan,” said Shaker Yaqubi, an economic analyst.

Meanwhile, nearly 20 days ago, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) said that the contract for the remaining work of the 500 KV electricity transmission project of Turkmenistan from Sheberghan-Dashte Alwan of Baghlan Province was signed between the Islamic Emirate and a private company.

## One in five children in Afghanistan engaged in child labor

KABUL (Pajhwok): In Afghanistan, one in five children are engaged in child labor and the number of such children is high in Khost, Bamyan and Helmand provinces and less in Kabul, Badakhshan and Laghman provinces.

Under the labor law, employing children in work which is harmful to their health is forbidden.

The government says it has taken some steps to deal with the stigma of child labor and has initiated some programs in this regard.

**Child labors complain about their difficult life**

16-year-old Dawatullah, a resident of eastern Kunar province, has been working in a shoe manufacturing factory in the industrial park in the ninth security district of Kabul since last six years.

He said his parents, three brothers and five sisters were living in Kunar and he being the eldest among his siblings had to work to support his family.

“We work for 12 hours from 4am to 4pm, we paint shoes, carton them, put them in sacks, then we put some of the sacks in go down and others we load into trucks. It is not easy, but I have no choice”.

Dawatullah goes home twice a year on Eid holidays and sometimes after months for a few days when there is no work in

the factory. He earns up to 4000 afghanis a month.

To a question, he said he never had time to go to school and has been working since he was a minor.

It does not mean Dawatullah does not love education and a good life, but problems in his life are preventing him to achieve these goals.

“When alone, I think if I had good education or own business, my future would have been better, but I am helpless and that’s why I am here, I still want our lives to improve.”

He spends a long time in Kabul and always misses weddings of his close relatives and villagers.

He said his gray-bearded father owned a food stall in village, but his income was insufficient to meet family’s needs.

11-year-old Wihdatullah, a resident of Laghman province, carries people’s goods in a hand-cart in return for money in Mehtarlam, the provincial capital.

He said he studied in 6th grade, but he also worked in free time to help his father meet the expenses of his 11-member family.

He said his father sells ice cream and earns from 50 afghanis to 100 afghanis a day, but sometimes he returns home empty-handed.

Another child, Sidameer, a resident of Nimroz province, said he wanted to get education, but due to

poverty he was working with his brother in a block-making factory since last three years.

The 10-year-old said: “I earn 200 or 300 afghanis a week. My father and mother are ailing. I love going to school, but I can’t because I have to work to pay for house expenses.”

Thirteen-year-old Sakhi Dad, a resident of Badghis province, stopped going to school due to economic problems two years ago and has since been working in a small tin-making factory.

Being the eldest son of his father, he has to work to meet family’s expenses. He said his parents were sick and his small siblings attended a seminary.

12-year-old Faizullah, a resident of Maidan Wardak province, said his father was no more and he had shouldered all responsibilities of his family of six. He works in a car mechanic shop and earns 250 afghanis a day.

He said he would want to go school if his economic situation improved.

These children say the government should help resolve their problems

**In Afghanistan, about 20pc children engaged in child labor**

One in five children in Afghanistan is engaged in child labor and the number of working children is high in Khost, Bamyan and

Helmand provinces compared to other provinces and less in Kabul, Badakhshan and Laghman provinces.

According to National Statistics and Information Agency’s report of last year (1401), 44.6 percent children in Khost, 36.2pc in Bamyan, 31.5pc in Helmand, 30.7pc in Samangan, 29.5pc in Daikundi, 28.1pc in Takhar, 27.8pc in Kandahar, 27.5pc in Parwan, 26.1pc in Zabul, 26pc in Logar, 22.6pc in Farah, 22.4pc in Maidan Wardak, 21.4pc in Faryab, 20.3pc in Ghazni, 19pc in Panjshir, 18.4pc in Baghlan and 18.3pc of children in Ghor between the ages of five and 17 are working.

In Balkh 18.2pc, in Badghis 18.2pc, in Paktia 16.8pc, in Herat 16pc, in Kunduz 15.3pc, in Paktika 15.3pc, in Nangarhar 14.3pc, 14.1pc in Jawzjan, 14.1pc in Kunar, 13.8pc in Uruzgan, 13.5pc in Kapisa, 12.6pc in Nimroz, 12.5 pc in Sari Pul, 12.1pc in Laghman, 9.3pc in Badakhshan and 7.4 percent of children in Kabul are engaged in child labor.

Girls constitute 19.1 percent of all working children. According to the National Statistics and Information Agency’s 1400 year report, the population of Afghanistan is estimated at 33.6 million and 16 million of them are children under the age of 15.

According Ramin Beh-zad, the Senior Coordinator of the International Labour Organization (ILO) for Afghanistan, 160 million children aged five and 17 years are engaged in child labor worldwide.

According to his information for 2021, 1.6 million children are working in Afghanistan, but their numbers are likely to have increased considering recent developments.

In Afghanistan, according to the 4th paragraph of Article 13 of the country’s labor law, it is prohibited to recruit children below 18 years of age for hazardous work that can result in physical damage, including disability.

**Heavy work causes health problems to children**

Dr. Wihdat Alakozai, director general of Central Hospitals at the Ministry of Public Health, said children under 18 years of age were not physically fit to do heavy works.

He said: “Children doing hard or heavy work may have growth problems, they may develop physical problems that will haunt them in future life. Their spine cannot lift heavy weight and they may suffer for the rest of their lives, but at age 18, their ability increases.”

According to him, children under 18 years of age have less experience and

they work too much and harm themselves.

“Such children may also suffer from mental problems and become hopeless.”

According to Alakozai, children under 18 years of age should not do heavy work, they should study and live a normal life from medical point of view.

**Past wars, instability push children into hazardous works**

Former head of Afghanistan human rights commission, Lal Gul Lal, says the past wars, political, economic and social instability in the country pushed Afghan children into hazardous works.

He said more than two million peoples lost their lives in the past wars i and around one and a half million more disabled, depriving many children from guardians.

Children of such families are forced to do hard work to support their families and some have turned to begging.

According to Lal Gul, children having no family and society support are left with no option but to do heavy works.

He said the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child obliged governments to take into account the rights of children, but unfortunately children’s rights were violated in the third world

countries re struggling with poverty.

He said there had been no stable government in Afghanistan for 45 years and short and temporary governments lacked economic and political stability.

“That’s why Afghanistan did not pay attention to the rights of children according to the United Nations Convention”.

**Government: Various programs in place to support children**

Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs spokesman Samiullah Ibrahim told Pajhwok their ministry was responsible for the protection and care of children at the national level.

He said: “With the Islamic Emirate’s reestablishment, serious attention has been paid to prevent child labor. Kindergartens and orphanages are established in Kabul and all provinces. Children whose parents have died, missing, imprisoned, or orphaned are trained and cared for and vocational education programs are also launched for the children of families who are facing economic problems.”

According to Ibrahim’s information, about 10,000 orphans and poor children are imparted education in more than 80 educational institutions in the country.

Islamic Emirate’s deputy spokesman Bilal Karimi said this year: “The Islamic

Emirate is responsible to solve the problems of all people, especially children, who are the needy and weak sections of society. The Islamic Emirate considers this its obligation and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has various programs to support children”.

Karimi said the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs was running centers in 200 districts of 34 provinces with the support of Child Protection Network (CPN). In these centers, children whose parents were disabled or imprisoned were provided care.

He revealed that these centers were built with financial assistance from the United Nations Children’s Fund.

Without giving details, he said as part of the campaign to collect beggars, many beggars and working children were collected from streets and handed over to training and support centers.

Karimi added next year the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs would enroll and protect about 10,000 orphans and children working on roads in educational and training centers.

The Ministry of Education also plans to build educational centers next year for children engaged in child labor and those returning from neighboring countries.



# Israel intensifies its assault on southern Gaza

KHAN YOUNIS: Israel pounded targets in the crowded southern half of the Gaza Strip on Saturday and ordered more neighborhoods designated for attack to evacuate, driving up the death toll even as the United States and others urged it to do more to protect Gaza civilians a day after a truce collapsed.

At least 200 Palestinians have been killed since the fighting resumed following the weeklong truce with the territory's ruling militant group Hamas, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza. Several homes were hit across Gaza on Saturday, with multiple casualties reported in a strike that flattened a multi-story building on the outskirts of Gaza City.

Separately, the ministry announced that the overall death toll in Gaza since the Oct. 7 start of the Israel-Hamas war had surpassed 15,200, a sharp jump from the previous count of more than 13,300 on Nov. 20. The ministry does not differentiate between civilians and combatants, but it said 70 percent of the dead were women and children. It said more than 40,000 people had been wounded since the war began.

The appeal from the United States, Israel's closest ally, to do more to protect civilians came after an air and ground offensive in the first weeks of the war devastated large areas of northern Gaza. Some 2 million Palestinians, almost Gaza's entire population, are now crammed into the territory's southern half.

Israel's military said Saturday that it had hit more than 400 Hamas targets across Gaza over the past day, including more than 50 strikes in the city of Khan Younis and surrounding areas in southern Gaza. At least nine people, including three children, were killed in a strike on a house in Deir Al-Balah city in the south, according to the hospital where the bodies were taken. The hospital also received seven bodies of others killed in overnight airstrikes, including two children.

In northern Gaza, an airstrike flattened a residential building hosting displaced families in the urban refugee camp of Jabaliya on the outskirts of Gaza City. The strike left dozens dead or wounded, said residents Hamza Obeid and Amal Radwan. "There was a loud bang, then the building turned into a pile of rubble," Obeid said. AP video showed smoke rising from a fire as men, some in sandals, picked their way over the debris. The Israeli military confirmed it was operating in Jabaliya and said it had found and destroyed Hamas tunnels in the surrounding area. And a powerful strike hit a cluster of multi-story buildings in Hamad City, a Qatari-funded housing development on the outskirts of Khan Younis. Huge clouds of smoke engulfed the com-

plex. There was no immediate word on casualties.

Meanwhile, Palestinian militant groups in Gaza said they fired a barrage of rockets on southern Israel. There were no immediate reports of damage or injuries. Lt. Col. Peter Lerner, an Israeli army spokesperson, said Hamas had launched more than 250 rockets at Israel since the cease-fire ended. The prospect of further cease-fires in Gaza appeared bleak, as Israel recalled its negotiators and Hamas' deputy leader said any further exchange of prisoners would happen after the war ends. Saleh Arouri asserted to broadcaster Al-Jazeera that any remaining hostages are men, "all of whom served in the (Israeli) army." Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant told reporters that Hamas violated the agreement by refusing to return two children and 15 women it is holding.

With the resumption of fighting, the Israeli military published an online map carving up the Gaza Strip into hundreds of numbered parcels and asked residents to familiarize themselves with the number of their location ahead of evacuation warnings. On Saturday, the military listed more than two dozen parcel numbers in areas around Gaza City in the north and east of Khan Younis. Separately, it dropped leaflets with evacuation orders over towns east of Khan Younis.

One Khan Younis resident said a neighbor received a call from the Israeli army warning that houses in the area would be hit and everyone should leave. "We told them, 'We have nothing here, why do you want to strike it?'" said the resident, Hikmat Al-Qidra. Al-Qidra said the house was destroyed. The maps and leaflets generated panic and confusion, especially in the crowded south. Unable to go to northern Gaza or neighboring Egypt, their only escape is to move around within the 220-square-kilometer (85-square-mile) area.

"There is no place to go," said Emad Hajjar, who fled with his wife and three children from the north a month ago to Khan Younis. "They expelled us from the north, and now they are pushing us to leave the south." Amal Radwan, who sheltered in the Jabaliya refugee camp, said she wasn't aware of such a map, adding that she and many others were not able to leave because of the bombardment.

Mark Regev, a senior adviser to Netanyahu, said Israel was making "maximum effort" to protect civilians and the military has used leafletting, phone calls, and radio and TV broadcasts to urge Gazans to move from specific areas. Regev added that Israel is considering a future security buffer zone that would not allow Gazans direct access to the border fence on foot, adding that Israel doesn't plan to

annex any territory from Gaza. Israel says it targets Hamas operatives and blames civilian casualties on the militants, accusing them of operating in residential neighborhoods. It claims to have killed thousands of militants, without providing evidence. Israel says 77 of its soldiers have been killed in the ground offensive in northern Gaza.

Also Saturday, the Palestinian Red Crescent said it had received the first convoy of aid trucks through the Rafah crossing since fighting resumed. Wael Abu Omar, a spokesman for the Palestinian Crossings Authority, said a convoy of 100 trucks entered Gaza, including three carrying 150,000 liters (nearly 40,000 gallons) of fuel. "Current conditions do not allow for a meaningful humanitarian response, and I fear will spell disaster for the civilian population," said Pascal Hundt, who is in charge of operations in Gaza for the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Meanwhile, US Vice President Kamala Harris, in Dubai on Saturday for the COP28 climate conference, said in a meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi that "under no circumstances" would the United States permit the forced relocation of Palestinians from Gaza or the West Bank, the besiegement of Gaza or redrawing of its borders, according to a US summary. Harris was expected to outline proposals with regional leaders to "put Palestinian voices at the center" of planning the next steps for Gaza after the conflict, according to the White House. President Joe Biden's administration has emphasized the need for an eventual two-state solution, with Israel and a Palestinian state coexisting.

The Oct. 7 attack by Hamas and other militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in southern Israel. Around 240 people were taken captive. The renewed hostilities have heightened concerns for 136 hostages who, according to the Israeli military, are still held by Hamas and other militants after 105 were freed during the truce. A 70-year-old woman held by Hamas was declared dead on Saturday, according to her kibbutz, bringing the total number of known dead hostages to eight.

During the truce, Israel freed 240 Palestinians from its prisons. Most of those released by both sides were women and children. The truce's end also saw new activity along Israel's northern border. Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group said its fighters attacked at least five Israeli posts along the border, and Israeli forces struck several areas on the Lebanese side. There were no reports of casualties. — Arab News



NEWSHERA: KP Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah interacting with a patient during surprise visit to Qazi Hussain Ahmad Medical Complex.

## PML-N asks ECP to take notice of PTI's polls

RAWALPINDI (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Marriyum Aurangzeb has rejected the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Intra party elections, saying that the Election Commission should take notice of it.

"There was a massive rigging in PTI's intra party elections today," said Marriyum Aurangzeb while addressing a press conference in Rawalpindi on Saturday. The PMLN leader said that the results of the intra party elections were announced right after 15 minutes the elections. She said the PMLN conducted Intra party elections just one and half month ago and it was all live. She stated that the Intra party elections of the PTI were held at some undisclosed place. "How can PTI demand now the free and fair elections?," she asked. She stated that the PTI was brought into power by failing the RTS system. Marriyum said that the PTI was not familiar with the true elections.

She alleged that the PTI wanted chaos and anarchy in the country, and they (PTI) could not make nation and the ECP fool by such intra party elections. The PML-N leader demanded the ECP to take notice of the Intra party elections of the PTI.

## JUI-F Senator Talha meets Dr Aafia

E.P. Report

KARACHI: Jamait Ulema-Islam Fazal (JUI-F) Senator Talha Mehmood met Dr Aafia Siddiqui in the US jail and appealed that the daughter of the nation should be released immediately.

In his message from the US, Senator Talha Mehmood said he met for two hours with Dr Aafia Siddiqui in FMC Carswell jail and he found health of Dr Aafia Siddiqui further deteriorated. He said she was under huge mental pressure.

He said he had met her in the same jail for three hours in 2008 and as compared Dr Aafia was seen in more stress and difficulty now. He said when asked to give message for the nation and her supporters, she said she should be released from here immediately. Talha Mehmood said fifteen years have passed and Dr Aafia is still in this prison.

## CJP Isa responds to Imran's letter

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa has responded to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supremo Imran Khan's letter seeking a level playing field for his party ahead of the February 8, 2024, general elections.

Dr Muhammad Mushtaq Ahmad, top judge's secretary, stated Saturday in a letter that CJP Isa is fully cognisant of his constitutional duties and will neither be pressurised nor favour anyone. Imran had urged the chief justice to take notice of "discrimination" against PTI, citing arrests and registrations of cases against the party leaders.

"CJP Isa will neither be pressurised nor favour anyone, and by the grace of the Almighty shall continue to fulfil his duties and abide by the oath of his office," read the statement issued by the top court. Referring to the PTI supremo's letter, the statement said an undated seven-page application was received on December 1 at 12:25pm.

"The document comprises of a typed application, tabulated tables and photocopies, altogether 84 pages, bound in a yellow paper-book, the kind used for filings in the Supreme Court; the identity and contact details of the advocate who prepared the document does not appear in the document. As per the envelope, the document was couriered by Intazar Hussain Panjutha (Adv)".

It further said that misgivings also arise when the political party on whose behalf the document has ostensibly been sent is well represented by advocates.

"Only recently its advocates conducted two significant cases in the Supreme Court, on the military courts and on the elections."

Surprisingly, the letter added, that before receiving the document (in a sealed envelope), it had already been distributed to the media. Imran, who has been replaced by Barrister Gohar Khan as the party's chairman, had called on the top judge to direct the federal and provincial govern-

ments as well as the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to allow PTI, like all other political parties, to hold political meetings and gatherings without "discrimination".

The deposed prime minister, who was removed from power via a no-trust motion in April last year, stated in the letter that the PTI leaders and activists were being targeted through the registration of multiple and successive criminal cases to keep them behind bars. He termed this a "tactic of abuse and oppression", which he said is being used all over the country.

"Those bailed out by the courts in one or more cases are immediately booked in further case that purport to pertain to events several months in the past. Often several FIRs are registered against persons affiliated with the PTI with respect to the same event. The same persons are also implicated in successive FIRs with respect to different and unrelated events all across the country," the letter read.

## 'US sends 'bunker buster' bombs to Israel for war on Gaza'

NEW YORK: The United States has given so-called 'bunker buster' bombs and an array of other munitions to Israel for its war on Gaza, according to a report by The Wall Street Journal. Washington has transferred 100 BLU-109 bombs to Israel that are meant to penetrate hardened structures before exploding, the report said, citing unnamed US officials.

The bomb carries a war-head weighing more than 900 kilograms (19,80 pounds) and has previously been used by the US in conflicts including the war in Afghanistan. It is not the only type of ammunition provided by the US to Israel for the war on the besieged enclave, which has so far killed more than 15,000 Palestinians, including at least 6,150 chil-

dren. The October 7 Hamas attack on Israel that started the war killed 1,200 people.

Unlike the regular arms updates by the US about the war in Ukraine, the Pentagon has remained mostly silent on its level of weapons support for Israel amid international condemnation of Israeli military operations in Gaza. The WSJ report said a surge of US arms to Israel since the start of the war has included 15,000 bombs and 57,000 155mm artillery shells that have primarily been carried on C-17 military cargo planes.

Washington has also sent more than 5,000 unguided Mk82 bombs, more than 5,400 Mk84 bombs, about 1,000 GBU-39 small-diameter bombs, and approximately 3,000 JDAMs, a guidance

kit that turns unguided bombs into precision-guided munitions, it said. This is on top of the billions of dollars Israel receives each year in US financial support for its military operations. According to the WSJ, large bombs made by the US have been used in some of the deadliest Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, including a strike that levelled an apartment block in the Jabalia refugee camp, killing more than 100 people. Israel said the attack was justified as it killed a Hamas leader.

Israel's intense aerial bombing of Gaza restarted shortly after the end of a weeklong truce on Friday that saw dozens of captives held in Gaza exchanged for Palestinians held in Israeli prisons. — Aljazeera

## 'Powerful people' involved in cipher case being protected: Imran

E.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan Saturday claimed that the "powerful people" behind the cipher case were being protected. "I ordered to initiate an inquiry into the matter when I was the prime minister," said the PTI supremo during the cipher case hearing at Adiala jail on Saturday.

The former premier added that he, along with his party leaders, are locked inside jails "like goats" while Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif was brought back to Pakistan. A special court, established under the Official Secrets Act 2023, held an open court hearing at Adiala jail, where Khan and the party's Vice-Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi are incarcerated in the cipher case.

Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain has been conducting the cipher trial since the registration of the case against the PTI leaders under the Official Secrets Act. Khan and Qureshi were indicted on the charges of misusing a classified document by the special court on October 23. The federal cabinet on Thursday approved the summary to hold the jail trial of Khan and Qureshi in the cipher case after it was moved by the

Ministry of Law and Justice.

The decision was taken in light of special court judge Zulqarnain's order to hold the trial in jail due to "serious security risks" brought to light by the Adiala jail's superintendent. The court also stated that the proceedings can be attended by anyone who wishes to do so including the journalists. Khan's wife Bushra Bibi, Qureshi's daughter Mehr Bano and son Zain Qureshi were also present in the court.

However, local and international journalists, who were present outside the jail to cover the open court hearing, could not be allowed inside today. Khan and Qureshi's attendance was marked after which the proceedings were adjourned till December 4 (Monday).

During the hearing, Qureshi asked if their trial was being conducted under the Official Secret Act 1923 or 2023, adding that he never had any security concerns and had been travelling alone in his car. He said that the jail administration violated the orders to produce him and Khan before the court and failed to produce their records. "We are being tried in a bogus case. The president is also against the Official Secrets Act amendment law," he stressed. Qureshi also requested that the president be summoned and he will tell whether he accepted this law or not.

The court told Qureshi that media representatives were at the jail for the hearing. "You were not produced in court due to security concerns," said the court, adding that Qureshi and Khan's trial cannot be held separately. The court told Qureshi that his trial will be held under Sections 9 and 5 of the Official Secrets Act, adding that the proceedings will be held on merit.

Khan's lawyer Intazar Hussain Panjutha, speaking to the media persons outside Adiala jail, said that today's hearing was not in accordance with the open trial. "The media representatives present in the jail said that they do not represent all the media. Today's hearing violated the high court's orders as Imran Khan's lawyers did not have internal access," said Panjutha. He claimed that specific people were brought inside the jail in the name of the public, adding that the hearing was wrapped up when the media persons were allowed inside.

Meanwhile, Qureshi's son Zain said that the security concerns were just an excuse to not produce his father before the court. "All local and international media representatives were present but they were not allowed inside the jail," said Zain, adding that all the facts related to the cipher case should come before the public.

## PM for executing \$100b commitments

(Continued from Page 1)

He said, "We have all come here with one aim: ensuring that the planet remains liveable for our children and our children's children." "Our assembly here recognizes the acuteness of challenges faced in the realm of climate extremes. The notion of implementation and support is a critical element of the Global Stock Take report," he added. The prime minister maintained that climate change was happening now; some were witnessing it on television screens, while others, like people in Pakistan, were witnessing it firsthand. "The critical concern for developing countries like Pakistan is the recurring natural disasters and consequent adaptation needs in the impacted sectors of water, agriculture, urban resilience, natural capital, and human health," he said.

PM, Syrian Prime Minister ask Israel to stop brutal use of

**force on Palestinians:** Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and Prime Minister of Syria Hussein Arnous asked Israel to stop the brutal use of force on the Palestinians, ensure ceasefire, facilitate humanitarian assistance and resolve the Palestinian question in line with UN Security Council resolutions.

During a meeting held here between the two leaders on the sidelines of COP 28, the two sides discussed the ongoing Israeli violence against Palestinian people and called on the international community to take meaningful notice of the situation. The two leaders also expressed the commitment to strengthen bilateral cooperation in diverse fields including economic, cultural and tourism besides agreeing to revive the Joint Ministerial Commission.

They also reviewed the bilateral relationship and agreed to enhance the frequency of bilateral political exchanges to foster understanding

between the leadership and the brotherly peoples of the two countries.

**Pakistan, Maldives agree to advance cooperation in combating climate change:** Pakistan and Maldives emphasizing the need of progress on result-oriented outcomes in the domain of climate action and justice, agreed to advance mutual cooperation in combating climate change. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar held a bilateral meeting with the President of the Republic of Maldives, Dr Mohamed Muizzu on the sidelines of COP 28 here. During the meeting, the two leaders discussed sharing of expertise in the realm of plantation of mangroves and other climate resistance floras. The prime minister assured the President of Maldives of Pakistan's full support to the Government and people of Maldives. PM Kakar felicitated Dr Mohamed Muizzu on assumption of the office of the

President of Maldives.

He also expressed his desire to promote peace and development in South Asia through enhanced regional cooperation. The two leaders resolved to further strengthen Pakistan-Maldives bilateral relations and capitalize on the immense goodwill between the people of the two countries. They agreed to enhance high-level dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation especially in economic, trade, cultural and tourism sectors. The President of Maldives thanked the prime minister for conveying warm sentiments on behalf of the government and people of Pakistan.

**Caretaker PM, Bill Gates discuss progress on Pakistan's polio eradication efforts:** Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and Bill Gates, Co-Chair Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), on Saturday met on the sidelines of COP-28 and discussed progress on Pakistan's polio eradication efforts.

