

**Nawaz visits Shujaat**  
**F.P. Report**  
LAHORE: PML-N supremo, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday visited the residence of PML-Q President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain after 15 long years. PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz, Rana Sanaullah, Ayaz Sadiq and Azam Nazeer Tarar accompanied the party supremo. The two parties have discussed electoral alliance and seat adjustments on Gujrat seats.

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# No doubt about polls on Feb 8: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said that the nation should not have any doubts about the general elections, scheduled to be held on February 8, 2024. "I have no doubt about it... The concerns are often associated with our political system. We have a history of our own," he remarked in an interview with Independent Urdu, published on Wednesday.

The prime minister expressed the hope that the elections would be held in free and fair manner. To a question, he said he did not consider the general elections of the 70s as a benchmark either as many people had different opinions about those polls. "Of course, they were very transparent. At that time, it was already decided before the elections which way they would go to, so I consider it a problem," he added. He said as the arrangements were in place, and he was hopeful that the caretaker government would be able to give results in a relatively better way.

The prime minister said that he endorsed the Election Commission's denial of any delay in the polls. "They (Election Commission) have to conduct (elections). We are with them." He said as per the Election Commission, the election schedule will cover 56 days, based on which the schedule should be announced by December 14. Asked about the notions of elections being associated with the decline in Imran Khan's popularity and his exclusion from the electoral process, the prime minister termed it a political analysis.

However, the elections would judge the popularity of any political leader, he commented. To a question about the participation of Imran Khan or his party in the general elections, he said that there was no restriction on him as yet. "However, if something unusual comes up, I can't say anything about it. As of today, they are in a position to contest elections and they will contest." About the disappearances and resurfacing of PTI leaders, the prime minister said such people went into hiding, fearing arrest for their involvement in attacks on state institutions on May 9.

He said while in hiding, they would have second thought to leave PTI or politics which was their personal decision. He said that no evidence of 'state coercion' had come to his knowledge, and even none of those people had spoken of 'state coercion'. Until then, it's just allega-

## Kakar orders emergency polio eradication plan for high-risk areas

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday directed formulation of an emergency polio eradication plan and launch of integrated programmes in high-risk union councils. Chairing a meeting on Task Force on Polio Eradication, he emphasized monitoring of polio vaccination campaigns by using modern technology.

Expressing the recent report of police cases, the prime minister regretted that the crippling disease, which was eradicated from the globe, still existed in Pakistan and Afghanistan. PM Kakar said regarding the use of Inactivated Polio Virus (IPV) vaccine, best international practices and research needed to be taken into consideration. He directed resumption of the regular polio immunization campaign across the country. The prime minister lauded the efforts of international community and development partners in polio eradication. He mentioned that enhanced cooperation on polio eradication was agreed upon in a meeting with Bill Gates, the co-chair of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on the sidelines of Conference of Parties (COP28). The prime minister stressed including teachers, scholars and parents for raising awareness on polio eradication.

Terming polio vaccine vital for the health, growth and future of children, he said all segments of the society needed to play their role in polio eradication. He directed holding an Ulema Convention and taking onboard scholars to raise awareness on the issue. The meeting was informed that special polio health camps had been set up in the high-risk zone of Dera Ismail Khan, while the same were being established in the vulnerable areas of Bannu, Lakki Marwat and Tank. In the recent polio awareness drives, 44 million children have been administered vaccine. It was highlighted that Punjab, Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan are polio-free, whereas some union councils in the southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are more affected. The meeting was told that the polio teams are administering vaccine to the children at the illegal Afghan repatriation camps at Peshawar, Nowshera and Chaman.

He added, Prime Minister Kakar disagreed with the view that the decision of May 9 arson should be left to the people for elections. He also rejected the allegations of not having a level playing field. Coming to the economic situation, he expressed his satisfaction with his government's efforts so far to improve the national economy.

"They will leave the blueprint for the rest of the work to the next government," he remarked. Discussing the PIA, he rubbished the allegations of any malpractice in privatisation process and said such conspiratorial assumptions had brought the country to that extent. He said that expert advisors had been appointed for privatization. "These are not union level talks. Best practices are being implemented. They will advise in accordance with the global market trend. They can be audited even 50 years from now," the prime minister said. Discussing the repatriation of illegal foreigners from Pakistan, he said those having no travel documents would have to go back, though they might be back after obtaining the

visa. In response to a question regarding the phased evacuation, Prime Minister Kakar said that it was the discretionary power of the government. We believe that it needed to be done at once to show the seriousness of the government," he remarked.

To a question, he told the interviewer that there had been no formal negotiations with the Afghan Taliban at present. "Our policy regarding TTP is clear. We consider them as an enemy of this society and state. We believe that fighting them is our survival, and we will fight till the last extent for the survival of this state," he added. He denied the impression that Pakistan had any role in the Afghan Taliban's return to power.

Coming to the Israeli aggression on Gaza, the prime minister said a lot could have been done, but Pakistan was still trying to establish an immediate ceasefire and humanitarian corridor. There is always something that can be improved, he remarked. He said that if the world had stood with the OIC and other countries, the pressure on Israel could have been increased.

## PTI will 'sweep' general polls: Jhagra

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: After months without making any public appearances, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Taimur Khan Jhagra resurfaced at a party convention in Peshawar on Wednesday and claimed that the PTI would "sweep" the general elections scheduled to be held on February 8.

"Despite all these difficulties, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) will sweep [the elections]. The reason for that is all of you. If you are standing then all of them are standing," he said while addressing party workers in the provincial capital. Jhagra also thanked "all those colleagues, workers who served time in jail, who remained standing, are still in jail".

He thanked ex-National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser and former MNA from Mardan, Mujahid Ali Khan, who he said were incarcerated before adding: "The one we must thank the most is Imran Khan sahib because he has been in jail for 120 days. "And he has said that he is ready to spend a 1,000 years in jail for his nation but will not opt for a deal," he said. The former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman has been in jail since August.

"The youth do not accept the laadla's politics. The youth do not accept the politics of traitors," he said. "Whatever the difficulties in front of us, on February 8 we will prove that this is a free nation."

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will come out [for the polls], God willing Punjab will also come out. God willing so will Karachi, so will Sindh, so will Balochistan for Imran Khan, for their honour," he said.



MULTAN: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi addressing the inauguration ceremony of 24/7 transmission of PTV National.

## Masses to decide who will rule Pakistan: Solangi

**F.P. Report**

MULTAN: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Wednesday that general elections would be held on February 8, 2024 and full preparations were underway to accomplish the task in a fair and transparent manner.

Talking to media persons at the inaugural ceremony of the 24-hour regional transmission of Pakistan Television Multan, he said that the people would ultimately decide the next government of the country and formally give the mandate on elections day through the ballot. He dispelled any doubt by some quarters about the holding of general elections. He pointed out that Preamble of the Constitution had indicated that elected representatives would ultimately run the affairs of the country. Answering a question, he said the media was free and the judiciary was independent in the country.

Solangi said that multiple

voices and slogans were the hallmark of democracy and no one should worry about the democratic norms. "Democracy does not harbour sheer silence just like a graveyard," he remarked. He said at the moment, the performance of the next parliament and government could not be assessed in advance.

"We will hand over affairs of the country to the next government in a better state than the point when the caretaker government took over the charge," he added. He categorically stated that fundamental decision-making was not the task of caretaker government, and it was surely the responsibility of an elected government and elected parliament. However, he said the present caretaker regime would do whatever the possible within next two months for the betterment of the country.

To a question, he said that Ministry of Food Security was doing its job in an efficient manner, and steps were being taken for agriculture sector development under SIFC. He said the Federal

government would work with provinces for the development of this sector despite the fact that agriculture was the provincial subject. He said that Pakistan Television has officially commenced the 24-hour regional broadcasting from Multan Center.

The minister said that the PTV Multan Center would broadcast eight current affairs programmes in a week. Moreover, it would also produce music, literature and children programmes from PTV Multan. He said that PTV Multan broadcasts would be seen in over fifty countries of the world. He said that when he was Director General Radio Pakistan, it initiated Saraiki news bulletin for the first time.

He opined that PTV Multan will play an important role in the promotion and projection of regional culture and heritage in addition to promoting the economic and cultural rights of the people of region. "We wish PTV Multan to be the voice of the real problems of the people of this region," he added.

## Putin arrives in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH: Russian president Vladimir Putin arrived in Riyadh on Wednesday ahead of an expected meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Earlier, the President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday landed in the UAE for a rare visit outside the former Soviet Union, UAE state media reported, as Moscow seeks to reassert itself on the global stage. "Putin's plane has landed in Abu Dhabi," the state-run RIA Novosti also reported on social media, while Russian state television showed Putin being greeted by officials on the runway.

The Russian president's plane was accompanied by a number of military aircraft to greet Putin upon entering the UAE airspace, UAE President Sheikh Mohamed greeted Putin at an official reception held at Qasr Al-Watan. The Russian leader's convoy was accompanied by a group of honor guards mounted on Arabian horses.

Sheikh Mohamed welcomed his "dear friend" and UAE jets greeted the Kremlin chief with a fly-past trailing the colours of Russia's flag. The two countries' national anthems were played and a 21-gun salute fired as part of a welcoming ceremony, WAM reported. An Emirati air display then followed, painting the sky in the colors of the Russian flag. — Arab News

## Terrorist killed in operation

**F.P. Report**

RAWALPINDI: Security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in general area Kulachi, Dera Ismail Khan District, on reported presence of terrorists.

Own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location as a result of which terrorist Habib Ur Rehman was sent to hell. Said terrorist had remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against security forces as well as innocent civilians in the area. Weapon, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorist.

Sanitization operation is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area, as the Security Forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country.

**Martyred soldier Ahmed Ali laid to rest in Charsadda with military honour:** Martyred soldier of Pakistan Army, Ahmed Ali was laid to rest in Charsadda on Wednesday with full military honour, Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

Sepoy Ahmed Ali 26, embraced martyrdom while bravely fighting with terrorists in South Waziristan the other day. The funeral prayers of the martyred was attended by officers of Pakistan Army, soldiers, family members, relatives and large number of local people.

He has left behind parents as mourners. "Armed Forces of Pakistan stand resolute and committed to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the motherland at all costs," the ISPR said.

## Withdrawal of Toshakhana case challenge

# IHC rejects Imran's request

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday rejected former prime minister Imran Khan's request to withdraw his appeal against disqualification in the Toshakhana reference.

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq announced the verdict, which was reserved on September 13. The reference alleging that Imran — who is currently incarcerated at Adiala Jail in the Toshakhana, Al-Qadir Trust and cipher cases — had not shared details of the gifts he retained from the Toshakhana and proceeds from their reported sales was filed by lawmakers from the ruling coalition last year.

The Toshakhana is a department under the Cabinet Division that stores gifts given to rulers and government officials by heads of other governments and foreign dignitaries. According to Toshakhana rules, gifts/presents and other such materials received by persons to whom these rules apply shall be reported to the Cabinet Division.

On October 21, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had concluded that the former premier had indeed made "false statements and incorrect declarations" regarding the gifts. The watchdog's order had said Imran stood disqualified under Article 63(1)(p) of the Constitution. Subsequently, the ex-premier had approached the IHC against the electoral body's decision contending that he had purchased the assets legally hence there was no reason for him not to mention the gifts in his assets statement.

However, on January 18, the PTI filed a fresh plea in IHC seeking to withdraw the petition, saying that Imran wanted the Lahore High Court to hear the matter. The reference was filed against Imran by the Pakistan Democratic Movement, for "not sharing details" of Toshakhana gifts and proceeds from their alleged sale. The PTI, while in government, had been reluctant to disclose details of the gifts presented to Imran since he assumed office in 2018, maintaining that doing so would jeopardise international ties, even as the Pakistan

Information Commission (PIC) ordered it to do so.

But later, in a written reply submitted to the ECP on September 8, 2022, Imran had admitted to selling at least four presents he had received during his tenure as the prime minister. The former premier, in his reply, had maintained that the sale of the gifts that he had procured from the state treasury after paying Rs21.56 million fetched about Rs58m. One of the gifts included a graft wristwatch, a pair of cuff links, an expensive pen and a ring while the other three gifts included four Rolex watches.

The reference against Imran was filed by MNA Barrister Mohsin Nawaz Ranjha carrying signatures of lawmakers Agha Hassan Baloch, Salahudeen Ayubi, Ali Gohar Khan, Syed Rafiullah Agha and Saad Waseem Sheikh and it was subsequently forwarded to CEC Raja.

In their disqualification reference, MNAs from the ruling alliance included documentary evidence to corroborate their claims against the ex-premier and sought his disqualification under Sections 2 and 3 of Article 63 of the Constitution, read with Article 62(1)(f). Article 62(1)(f) says: "A person shall not be qualified to be elected or chosen as a member of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) unless [...] he is sagacious, righteous and non-profligate, honest and ameen, there being no declaration to the contrary by a court of law."

Article 63(2) says: "If any question arises whether a member of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) has become disqualified from being a member, the Speaker or, as the case may be, the Chairman shall, unless he decides that no such question has arisen, refer the question to the Election Commission within thirty days and should he fail to do so within the aforesaid period it shall be deemed to have been referred to the Election Commission." While, Article 63(3) reads: "The Election Commission shall decide the question within ninety days from its receipt or deemed to have been received and if it is of the opinion that the member has become disqualified, he shall cease to be a member and his seat shall become vacant."

## Israel reviewing strike that harmed Lebanese troops

### Israel steps up Gaza assault

NEW YORK: UN officials have warned that the risk of "atrocities" is growing in Gaza, with Palestinians stuck in "deepening horror" as Israel intensifies its assault on the enclave. Speaking at a news conference on Wednesday, Volker Türk, UN high commissioner for human rights, urged Israel, Hamas, and international actors with influence to prevent "atrocities crimes" as Israel's advance into southern Gaza leaves displaced Palestinians with nowhere to run.

"Palestinians in Gaza are living in utter deepening horror," Türk continued, describing the displacement and the systemic deprivation of millions of Palestinians, who are surviving in unsafe, overcrowded and unsanitary conditions with no security. "My colleagues describe the situation as 'apocalyptic'. In these circumstances, there is a heightened risk of atrocity crimes," he stated.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) echoed his words, warning that the situation in Gaza is "getting worse each minute". "Another wave of displacement is underway in Gaza", UNRWA said in a post on X, labelling the enclave "one of the most dangerous places in the world". Speaking shortly before Human Rights Day on December 10, Türk noted that history has shown how a "cynical disregard" for human rights can lead to events that the world has declared should "never again" happen. It also risks resulting in impunity, he added, calling for all allegations of war-time crimes against civilians and hostages committed by Israel or Hamas to be investigated. Noting also the "alarming" escalation in "militarised violence" in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, Türk urged "the Israeli authorities [to] take immediate steps to end wide-spread impunity for such violations".

The UN official noted unlawful killings, aggressive settler violence, increases in arbitrary detentions, ill-treatment, sexual violence, and an alarming spike in deaths in custody of Palestinians. Allegations of sexual crimes committed by Hamas fighters during the October 7 attack on southern Israel must also be fully investigated "to ensure justice for the victims", he continued. "Violence and vengeance will only lead to more violence," he said. "The only solution is to end the occupation and achieve a two-state solution." The international community must come together "with one voice", to demand a ceasefire immediately on humanitarian grounds. At least 16,248 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since Israel launched its retaliation to Hamas's assault on southern Israel on October 7, according to authorities in the enclave. In Israel, the official death toll stands at about 1,200. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted on December 10, 1948. — Arab News

## Torkham border closed

**F.P. Report**

LANDI KOTAL: The Pak-Afghan border, Torkham was suspended for export and import, when a dispute erupted between the officials of the both countries over the installing of welcoming sign board at the crossing here on Wednesday. The official said that the Pakistani border security officials installing welcoming sign board at the export route.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairing a meeting of task force on polio eradication.



### IGP Sindh commends newly promoted inspectors

KARACHI (APP): A celebratory ceremony was held at the Central Police Office (CPO) here Wednesday to honor the promotion of Sub-Inspectors to the rank of Inspectors. The event saw the esteemed presence of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Riffat Mukhtar Raja as a distinguished guest, alongside the participation of the families of the promoted officers. Expressing felicitations, the IGP Sindh applauded the dedication and hard work of the officers, attributing their success to their unwavering commitment and loyalty to the department.

He emphasized the importance of the officers' continued dedication in their future roles, encouraging them to carry out their duties with utmost passion and devotion.

### PU, MUN Canada sign MoU

LAHORE (APP): The University of the Punjab (PU) and Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) Canada Wednesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to stride towards fostering international cooperation in education and research.

The MoU was signed by President MUN Dr Neil Bose and PU Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof. Dr. Khalid Mahmood at the vice chancellor's office here. Under the MUN, the PU and MUN will jointly work on faculty and students exchange programmes, exchange of publications, research materials, newsletters, joint projects related to research, teaching and faculty development, initiatives including joint or collaborative degree programs to offer students diverse educational pathways. Both the institutions will collaborate in various areas for enriching the academic experiences of students and faculty.

Prof. Dr. Saleem Haider of the PU and Associate Vice President Research and Graduate Studies MUN Dr. Mumtaz Cheema, will be the focal persons for collaboration. Dean Faculty of Agricultural Sciences Prof Dr Saleem Haider, Director External Linkages Dr Sobia Khuram and faculty members were present at the MoU-signing ceremony.

### Police unearth gutka factory in residential house

KARACHI (APP): The Azizabad police on Wednesday unearthed a gutka/mawa production factory, located in a residential house, and arrested two accused allegedly involved in production and supply of gutka during the raid. According to police, the suspects, identified as Junaid Aslam and Umair alias Bablu, were arrested during the operation. These individuals were allegedly engaged in the clandestine production and distribution of gutka/mawa.

The police during the raid seized 28 packets and one tub of prepared Gutka Mawa, along with one bag of lime and half a kilogram of tobacco from the factory premises.

A case had been registered and further investigations were initiated.

## FOSPAH, Karachi conducts an anti-harassment painting competition

#### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection against Harassment (FOSPAH) reaffirms its commitment to combat workplace harassment under the leadership of Regional Head Ms. Sabika Shah at the Regional office, Sindh. FOSPAH actively works towards creating awareness and fostering a culture of zero tolerance for harassment nationwide.

As part of its ongoing initiatives, FOSPAH col-

## CM Punjab revives land allotment process for Cholistan farmers

LAHORE (INP): Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday revived the stalled land allotment process for the landless farmers of Cholistan.

This initiative, which had been pending since 1978, has finally been completed in a matter of months.

Through a computerized lottery, 27,000 farmers of Cholistan have been allotted 3 lakh 44 thousand acres of land. This marks a significant milestone for the residents of Cholistan, who have long awaited the opportunity to own their own land.

"Today is a memorable day for the residents of Cholistan," said Chief Minister Naqvi during the lottery ceremony. "We have fulfilled a long-standing promise to the people of Cholistan, and we are committed to providing them with the resources they need to thrive."

Under the new land allotment scheme, each farmer will be leased 12 and a half acres of land for a period of five years. This will provide the farmers with the opportunity to cultivate the land and generate income for their families.

The Chief Minister also announced a number of other initiatives to support the development of Cholistan, including the provision of agricultural machinery and livestock. These initiatives will further empower the farmers of Cholistan and help them to achieve economic prosperity.

The revival of the land allotment process is a major victory for the farmers of Cholistan, and it is a testament to the Chief Minister's commitment to their well-being. This initiative will have a profound impact on the lives of the people of Cholistan, and it will help to revitalize the region's economy.

**Punjab CM visits shrine of Bibi Pak Daman:** Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Syed Mohsin Naqvi on Monday visited the shrine of Bibi Pak Daman in Lahore early Wednesday morning and reviewed the progress made on the shrine's expansion as well as its renovation. The chief minister went round different portions of the project and watched the ongoing work. He, on the occasion, ordered the installation of quality lights inside the shrine.

## Decision taken to increase the number of city council committees to 37: Murtaza

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that it has been decided to increase the number of city council committees to 37, and will work together with the political party that supports them to solve the basic problems of Karachi.

He expressed these views while addressing the press conference held on Wednesday at the lawn of the KMC head office. On this occasion, Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, People's Party Parliamentary Leader Najmi Alam, Chief Whip Karamullah Waqasi, Deputy Parliamentary Leader Dil Muhammad, Juman Darwan, and other officials were also present.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that he wants to bring everyone together in the wider interest of Karachi and the unanimously approved resolution of the city council will have more priority to solve the long-standing important problems faced by the city.

He expressed confidence that the City Council needs to play its role, and he is very hopeful that tomorrow's (December 7) meeting of the city council will be held in a pleasant atmosphere.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that the main task of the city council is to make a policy that benefits the people of Karachi. He is grateful to the opposition parties that they feel our seriousness regarding the solution of urban problems, so the Deputy Mayor Karachi talked to the representatives of Jamaat-e-

Islami, in which they also showed seriousness, he added.

While explaining the details of the agenda of the upcoming meeting of the city council, he said that water, sewage, gas and electricity are the main problems of the city on which all political parties agree. We will discuss the non-supply of gas in cold weather in tomorrow's meeting and a resolution will be passed in this regard, besides speeding up the construction work of Red Line on University Road and Green Line on MA Jinnah Road. He said that KMC now has the authority to appoint its property inspector in every town of Karachi. To show solidarity with Palestinians we are going to attribute the Gulistan-e-Johar underpass to them. The city council should decide where the money of Bahria Town received by Karachi should be spent.

After yesterday's meeting, the next meeting will be called soon, we are working on the things that come in our scope, and he said let's all work for the city, disagree but sit together to solve the problems.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that any house has sanctity, therefore parliamentary traditions should not be violated at all. We have given this message to all the parties to keep their differences in their place but work together seriously for this city. In response to a question, he said that action should be taken against whoever has done wrong, we cannot move forward without admitting our mistakes.

## LDA removes encroachments, demolishes several illegal constructions

LAHORE (APP): On the directions of Commissioner Lahore and DG LDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, the teams of TEPA and Town Planning Wing LDA conducted a mega operation in the vicinity of Main Boulevard Garden Town and Gulberg, here on Wednesday.

In the five hours long operation, more than a dozen properties around Main Boulevard Garden Town and Barkat Market were sealed, encroachments were removed from more than 24 properties. During the operation, more than a dozen private offices, plazas, private banks, marquees, and restaurants were sealed over violating parking rules.

The teams cleared encroachments from various plazas and parking area outside the offices. During the operation, encroachments were also removed from the parking area of Asia Center, Ibrahim Center, Salar Center, Al-Qadir Plaza and others located on Main Boulevard Garden Town. Encroachments built in the basement of commercial plazas and offices, cafes and other established on the space reserved for parking were also demolished.

Later, TEPA and Town Planning Wing LDA carried out another joint operation in the vicinity of Mehmood Kasuri Road Gulberg and removed several encroach-

ments and sealed the properties over parking rules violations. In the 3 hours long operation, at Mehmood Kasuri Road Gulberg and surrounding roads, encroachments were removed from commercial properties. Encroachments from the parking area of well-known coffee shops, food chains, restaurants, shopping malls, hotels and others established on Mehmood Kasuri Road Gulberg were cleared. Encroachments were removed from the parking area of hotels, restaurants and cafe shops. Famous restaurant located on the main road was also sealed, temporary encroachments were removed. Offices built in parking area, kitchen, seating areas were also demolished.

Several notices for corrective measures were issued to these properties prior to the operation. On the directions of Commissioner Lahore and DG LDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, LDA and TEPA are conducting a grand operation against those who violate the parking rules across the city. Officers of Director Parking and Enforcement, TEPA, Director PHS, Town Planning, Enforcement Wing, and officers of TEPA conducted the operation. Police and heavy machinery of LDA enforcement wing provided assistance in the operation.



KARACHI: A man drive thru Dust in area of Karachi.

## Saad Rafiq plans to challenge constituency boundaries

LAHORE (INP): Khawaja Saad Rafiq, a prominent leader of the Muslim League-N, has declared his intention to challenge the constituency boundaries in his area. In a statement on Wednesday posted on the social media platform X, he asserted that during the 2018 elections, the rural areas under the influence of PML-N and the president were unjustly removed from his constituency to favor Imran Khan.

He further claimed that this time, his constituency has been artificially divided, with the Walton Kent Board being split into four National

Assembly constituencies.

The former federal minister expressed dissatisfaction, stating that their compelling arguments and factual evidence were not considered, and the Election Commission erroneously dismissed their objections. In response, he declared his intention to appeal in the High Court and contest the constituencies designated by the Election Commission of Pakistan.

In a related development, Atta Tarar, another leader of the Muslim League-N, has also challenged the delimitation of NA 123

Gakhar Mandi in the Lahore High Court. Justice Ali Baqir Najafi has summoned the Election Commission and other relevant parties to respond on December 8. Azam Nazir Tarar, representing Atta Tarar, argued during the hearing that the population manipulation in one constituency has resulted in an unjust decrease in another. He contended that constituencies cannot be altered arbitrarily according to the law, and therefore, the court should declare the constituencies established on an unfair basis null and void.

## Modern facial recognition system shuts down at Karachi airport

KARACHI (INP): The modern facial recognition cameras installed to identify suspects and wanted individuals at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport have reportedly shut down.

Sources claimed that the advanced facial recognition system was installed a few months back at the international departure of the Karachi airport to bar the suspected and wanted individuals from fleeing the country became non-operational. The advanced system was installed at Karachi International Airport for the arrest of the accused as the first phase of the initiative which was later planned to expand to other International Airports across the country.

Sources indicated that the 'lack of interest' of appointed authorities played a vital role in failing to operate the advanced system. It is worth mentioning here that back in March 2023, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has been given control of modern facial recognition cameras installed at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport.

The aviation authorities built a control room at Karachi airport for 24/7 monitoring of passengers and visitors via the high-tech camera system. The control room was handed over to the FIA immigration officers.

It is pertinent to mention here that with the support of Japan, high-resolution cameras were installed at

Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Multan airports to record images of every person entering the terminal building.

The advanced cameras will also enable the authorities to make 60 percent of blurred images recognizable. The image of the suspect or wanted person will be flashed in the alarm monitoring room along with the relevant camera number, which will help the authorities to stop or arrest those persons in a short time. The replacement of faulty cameras would cost \$3,000 within the period of three years after its activation. It was learned that the concerned institution will be declared responsible for any kind of fault developed in the system.

## Lahore court discharges underage drivers

LAHORE (INP): The court of Cantt Katcheri on Wednesday discharged all the underage drivers arrested in the city from their cases. Judicial Magistrates Ejaz Ahmed and Rabia Riaz issued judgments on various cases, rejecting the request for judicial remand filed by the police.

The court verdict stated that the cases lacked any mention of speeding or reckless driving, and there was no evidence to link the accused with the crime. Additionally, the court pointed out that all provisions against underage drivers are bailable, rendering the police's plea for 14-day judicial remand invalid. Consequently, the court ordered the immediate release of the accused, assuming they were not involved in any other cases.

## LESCO detects 335 power pilferers in a day

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a total of 335 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) on the 88th day of grand anti-power theft campaign. The LESCO spokesman told media here Wednesday

that the company has also submitted FIR applications against 335 electricity thieves, out of which 157 FIRs have been registered in respective police stations, while 15 accused have been arrested. Grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are being conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division and LESCO Chief Executive

Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider is supervising these operations.

The LESCO chief vowed that the operations would continue without discrimination until the complete end of electricity theft. The electricity pilferers as well as the LESCO officers and employees who facilitate

them are also being brought to justice. On the 88th consecutive day of the anti-power theft campaign, the spokesman added, large commercial consumers were also found involved in electricity theft and all of them were also disconnected and charged with detection units.

### اطلاع عام

ہر ماضی دوام کو مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ پلاٹ نمبر 04 سروے نمبر 186 تعدادی رقبہ 555.5 مربع فوٹ اور پلاٹ نمبر 3-A سروے نمبر 186 تعدادی رقبہ 555.5 مربع فوٹ کو ذرا غلط کیٹھ جو محمد اللہ جان ولد عبد اللہ جان کے نام زیر شیعہ دی (VIII) دور کیا راولپنڈی آفس کو کھاتہ کیٹھ درج ہے محمد اللہ جان ولد عبد اللہ جان مورخہ 22/4/2014 کوٹ ہو گئے ہیں اسکے مندرجہ ذیل دروازے درخواست گزار کی ہے کہ مندرجہ بالا جائیدادوں کے حقوق زیر مندرجہ ذیل دروازہ نام منقول کیا جائے۔ 1 یا پکنان جان بیوہ 2 انعام اللہ جان پٹا 3 احسان اللہ جان پٹا 4 نبیم اللہ جان پٹا 5 شجاع اللہ جان پٹا۔ اگر کسی شخص یا ادارہ کو مندرجہ بالا جائیدادوں کے منتقل کر کسی قسم کا اعتراض ہو تو اندر معیاد 15 ہم بعد از اشاعت نوٹس پڑاؤں زیر مندرجہ ذیل طور پر منقول کرے۔ ورنہ مندرجہ بالا جائیدادوں کے حقوق زیر مندرجہ بالا دروازہ کے نام منقول کر دیئے جائینگے اور بعد میں کوئی مدعا قائل قبول نہ ہوگا۔ ملکی پٹنٹس آفس کو کھاتہ مرکل کو کھاتہ کیٹھ۔ 0922-920201

**OFFICE OF THE HOSPITAL DIRECTOR**  
**MEDICAL TEACHING INSTITUTION BANNU**  
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

**CORRIGENDUM No.01**  
(Tender Notice for Local Procurement for FY-2023-24)  
Reference advertisement published in The Frontier Post, Daily Mashriq & Daily Aaj dated: 02/12/2023 regarding Tender Notice for Local Procurement for FY-2023-24, the following amendments are hereby made.

S. No.	Name of Items	Remarks
3	Local Purchase for Emergency Drugs & Medicines	Single Stage Two Envelope
4	Lab Chemicals & ACD Bags	
6	X-Ray Films	

- Tender opening will be held on 22nd December, 2023 in the office of the undersigned at 12:00 PM.
- Bids shall be delivered on or before at the address given below at 11:30 AM on 22nd December, 2023.
- Pre bid meeting will be held on 12th December, 2023 in the office of the undersigned.
- Bid Security of Rs.200,000/- in the shape of CDR shall be deposited along with each sealed bid.
- All other terms & conditions shall remain intact.

**HOSPITAL DIRECTOR**  
**MEDICAL TEACHING INSTITUTION BANNU**

### NOTIFICATION





This is to certify that all products of Coca-Cola Beverages Pakistan Limited, are approved and certified by Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA)

### ڈائریکٹوریٹ آف لیبر صوبہ خیبر پختونخوا

### تصحیح (CORRIGENDUM)

ڈائریکٹوریٹ آف لیبر کا اشتہار بعنوان "ج درخواست برائے سال 2024" جو کروڑ نامہ مشرق وحدت اور فیکٹر پوسٹ نکوالہ اشتہار نمبر INF(P)2898/23 کو با ترحیب شائع ہوا تھا اُسے مندرجہ ذیل تصحیح / اضافہ کے ساتھ پڑھا جائے۔

(11) صنعتی کارکن / کارکن کن فعال ادارے میں کام کرتا ہوا اور ادارہ متعلق قوانین کے تحت منظور شدہ ہوا اور ادارہ اپنی اعلان کردہ آمدنی کا 2% درکارز و ملٹیر فنڈ ٹیکس 1971 آرڈی نینس کے تحت یا باقی ماندہ رقم کا 5% درکارز منافع بخش شرکت کارکن ایکٹ 1968 کے تحت مالی سال 2023 کے ٹیکس کی ادا شدہ چالان کی کاپی منسلک کریں۔

(12) درکارز و ملٹیر فنڈ حکومت پاکستان کی اعلان کردہ جچ پالیسی 2024 مطابق جچ اخراجات برداشت کرنے کا جس میں قربانی کی رقم شامل نہیں ہے۔

INF(P) 2947/23

سیکرٹری گورنمنٹ آف خیبر پختونخوا، لیبر ڈپارٹمنٹ / انجینئر مین و درکارز و ملٹیر بورڈ ڈائریکٹر لیبر خیبر پختونخوا

ڈائریکٹوریٹ آف لیبر پختونخوا منزل الیفی ٹریڈ بلڈنگ، سہری پتھر وڈ پشاور صدر





# Afghan refugees obtain Pakistan’s card at few paise

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Justice SM Attique Shah remarked that 40 years ago Afghan refugees had obtained Pakistani’s card at the cost of few paise which is continued till today while federal’s government didn’t take actions against officials involved in the malpractices. He added that after 40 years the departments became aware that such cards were issued against the law.

However, Justice Ijaz Anwar observed that petitions regarding identity cards from all over the country approached Peshawar High Court (PHC) and added that this court

can’t hear petitions beyond its jurisdiction.

The counsel argued that forefathers of petitioner named Rashid Khan were Pakistani citizen while obtained manual National Identity Cards as well as Proof of Registration (POR) was issued to them. The counsel further argued for cancellation of applicant’s POR card and issuance of Computerized National Identity Card.

In the meantime, Justice Ijaz Anwar inquired that what was doing the applicant till date because he is aged, however, the counsel argued that the petitioner wasn’t aware about the consequences as he has possessed POR card. He added

that Computerized National Identity Cards are already to his family members.

Additional Attorney General Sana Ullah the applicant isn’t Pakistan’s citizen because he possessing POR card while demanding nationality on cancellation of POR. POR holder wouldn’t be face any grievance till December as per Federal Government policy.

The counsel informed that police is harassing and stopping applicant on checkpoints while National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) is also investigating him.

The Legal Officer Shahid Gigyani argued that NADRA had submitted

reply before Supreme Court of Pakistan and added that if police is harassing applicant then it is matter concerned with police. He argued that PHC hasn’t jurisdiction in the plea as CNIC submitted in support belongs to Punjab province.

Additional Attorney General informed that PHC had already dispose of identical writ pleas and ordered to approach High Courts of concerned province but the petitioner had approached PHC.

The divisional bench dispose of writ petition and ordered to approach concerned High Court because its beyond territorial jurisdiction of Peshawar High Court.

## Hearing devices provided to disable persons



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Rural Support Program (SRSP) along PPAP and UNFPA provided 40 hearing devices among person with special abilities in wake of International Disable Person ceremony held at

Special Educational Complex, on Tuesday.

Secretary Social Welfare and Vocational Education Dr. Anila Rehman Mehfooz was chief guest of the ceremony. Director Special Educational Complex throws light on importance of the event and role of spe-

cial persons in development of society. Program

Anayast UNFPA Syed Jabin Qazi, SRSP Dr. Syed Hussain Shah and PPAF Taimor Jahangir addressed the event while stressing full participation of persons with special abilities in national development.

## PAJCCI expresses concern over closure of border

PESHAWAR (APP): Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) has expressed concern over closure of Pak-Afghan border at Torkham for trade for the last almost 24 hours.

In a press statement issued here on Wednesday, Coordinator PAJCCI, Zia ul Haq Sarhadi said the border crossing at Torkham has been closed for goods laden trucks at around 4:00 p.m of Tuesday.

Regarding reason behind closure, Zia shared that the decision of closing border has been taken after erection of a signboard at zero point inscribed with word-

ing of ‘Goodbye Pakistan’.

He also informed that pedestrian crossing is open, but trucks are not allowed to cross border from both the sides. Coordinator PAJCCI said it is very concerning for business community because closure of border inflicts heavy losses on business community of both the countries.

He said a lot of trucks are carrying perishable goods which can be rotten if delayed for a couple of days, burdening businessmen with huge losses.

Zia said already the volume of Pak-Afghan trade has shrunk by around 70 percent after restriction

over import of a number of items for transit trade, shifting large portion to Bandar Abbas port.

He said in the prevailing scenario closing of border for trade is very detrimental for promotion of commerce in the region and between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

He urged the concerned authorities to take up the issue with Afghan government for resolution of the problem and opening of border trade at the earliest.

Zia said queue of trucks has been started to appear on international crossing and if it became long, would take a lot of time in clearance and passage.

## SEC marks Int’l Day of Persons with Disabilities

PESHAWAR (APP): International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) 2023 was celebrated at the Special Education Complex (SEC) in Hayatabad on Wednesday. Dr. Aneela Mehfooz Durrani, Secretary Zakat, Ushr, Social Welfare, Special Education, and Women Empowerment Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, was the chief guest at the occasion.

Dr. Awlad Hussain Shah, Humaira Naz and Mukhtiar Gul of Sarhad Rural Support Program (SRSP), Taimoor Jahangir Provincial Advisor KP of PPAF, Meh-jabeen Qazi of UNFPA, Amna Durrani of KP CSW, Noor Muhammad DO

Social Peshawar, Mehboob ur Rehman, Amir Zeb of Paraplegic Centre Peshawar, Raza Khattak of Fakhur ul Islam of BISE Peshawar, Ijaz Muhammad Khan of KP Child Protection and Welfare Commission, and other distinguished guests from various organizations and government departments, as well as media personnel, participated in the event.

More than six hundred students with special needs, former students of SEC Peshawar, and a huge number of parents made the event colorful and meaningful. Said Ali Bakhsh, Director, SEC Peshawar, welcomed all the guests

and highlighted the importance of celebrating the day. Students with special needs presented their talent by performing different items on stage.

The Chief Guest, Dr. Aneela Mehfooz Durrani, announced in her speech a Rs. 3000 per student stipend for all the students with special needs enrolled at Government Special Education Institutes.

She urged all to come forward and play their part in making people with disabilities independent and useful citizens of society. She appreciated the management, faculty, and staff of SEC Peshawar for their efforts.



PESHAWAR: A labourer roasting peanuts in a traditional way at his workplace.

IRNUM Hospital:

## Governor directs resolution of problems

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Wednesday directed the authorities concerned to resolve problems related to the main entrance of the IRNUM cancer hospital.

He passed these directives while presiding over a high-level meeting about problems at the central entrance of IRNUM hospital, Peshawar.

The meeting exchanged views on parking problems and bringing ease in communication between patients, relatives, and other people at the main entrance of the hospital.

He directed the Director General Peshawar Development Authority, high-ups of the police, and Peshawar University to address these problems at the earliest. The Governor praised the long services of the hospital regarding the treatment of cancer patients.

The hospital is working under the aegis of the Pakistan Atomic Commission providing various kinds of healthcare services to oncology patients of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## Alliance for PHCBA announced

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Jamiat Lawyer Forum and Malgari Wakeelan announced their alliance and to contest upcoming Peshawar Bar Association (PBA) and Peshawar High Court Bar Association (PHCBA) elections jointly.

This was announced after a meeting held between JLF and Malgari Wakeelan in which members both organizations were present.

The alliance announced Amin-ur-Rehman and Amjad Hussain Tanoli advocates for PHCBA president and general secretary respectively.

PBA presidential candidate is Amjad Ali Marwat while Hilal Ahmad advocate nominated for general secretary candidature. The alliance is committed for successful of their candidates and argued legal fraternity to elect them for welfare legal community.

## Bid to smuggle drug foiled

PESHAWAR (APP): The Excise police on Wednesday foiled two different bids to smuggle drugs from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Punjab and arrested two drug peddlers along with huge quantity of narcotics.

In a crackdown against drugs, the Excise police intercepted an Alto car bearing registration No. LOP-8635 on Ring Road here and recovered 26 kg of hashish from the car.

The police arrested a drug peddler identified as Nazir Ali s/o Abdul Rahim, resident of House No. G451, Street No. 189, Sector G 7/3-1 Islamabad from the spot.

In another action on Ring Road Mardan, the Excise police recovered 2400 grams of hashish recovered from vehicle number FDM 3839, said spokesman of Excise.



PESHAWAR: Advisor Dr. Syed Sarfaraz Ali Shah cutting a ribbon to inaugurate KP Business Expo-2023 at University of Peshawar.

## CISNR, UET Peshawar and PEDO sign MoU

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Center for Intelligent Systems and Network Research (CISNR), UET Peshawar and the Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here on Wednesday.

The MoU was signed by the Vice Chancellor, UET Peshawar Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Hussain and Mr. Muhammad Naeem Khan, CEO PEDO in presence of senior officials. Dr. Syed Sarfaraz Ali Shah, Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Planning & Development, Energy & Power and Minerals Development was the chief guest on the occasion. The Purpose of MoU is to work jointly in five key areas including implementation of smart metering and billing in Chitral region,

implementation of early warning, safe and security system for all the remote micro-hydro power plants of PEDO, implementation of framework of KP NEECA, implementation of predictive maintenance system on all the power plants of PEDO and implementation of feasibility of utilization of unused electricity in remote regions by PEDO.

Dr. Sarfaraz Ali Shah said, education institutions play a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of developed countries, and it is encouraging to see that UET Peshawar is using latest technologies for practically solving real life issues through academic-industry linkages. He appreciated the role of CISNR in using AI for multiple fields including energy management, flood recovery and safe city, addressing various SDGs in particular categories. He

expressed his satisfaction over the progress of CISNR’s initiatives. He also stressed over exploiting precious gems and minerals of Pakistan which are misused by neighboring countries with their brands in the international market. He said, the untapped mineral resources in KP especially erstwhile FATA if exploited on scientific basis can bring lot of foreign exchange for the country. Mr. M. Naeem Khan, CEO PEDO while appreciating the efforts of CISNR said, this collaboration will help in solving technical barriers in metering and billing mechanisms on PEDO’s power plants.

Prof. Dr. Gul Muhammad Khan, Director CISNR briefed the audience about initiatives taken by CISNR for digitization which have proved successful in producing efficient and transparent mechanism for met-

ering data collection through Electrocure-Meterless smart metering concept to provide low-cost smart metering for efficient low-carbon smart metering and reduction of administrative, technical and commercial losses. He also gave a detailed presentation on CISNR’s joint initiatives with national and International agencies in the fields of water supply, early warning systems for flood and earthquake, safe city and infrastructural development.

Prof. Dr. Sahar Noor, Dean Faculty of Mechanical, Chemical and Industrial Engineering, Prof. Dr. Syed Waqar Shah, Chairman Electrical Engineering, Dr. Khizar Azam Khan, Registrar UET Peshawar, Dr. Shamaila Farooq, Director Media UET Peshawar, senior officials of UET Peshawar and PEDO were also present on the occasion.

## Pesco holds E-Katchery for consumers of far flung areas

PESHAWAR (APP): Following a vision of the Power Division Ministry, Pesco authorities hold a live E-Katchery for the facilitation of consumers residing in far-flung areas.

Chief Operation Officer Pesco, Gul Nabi Syed

chaired the E-Katchery and interacted with consumers of remote areas.

He listened to the issues and concerns of consumers and issued on-the-spot directives to address them.

He also informed consumers about initiatives of

Pesco to control electricity pilferage. He said that timely actions have reduced load shedding considerably. He also urged people to install meters, avoid power theft and pay their electricity bills to ensure a smooth supply of electricity to consumers.



PESHAWAR: Vendors busy in filling sacks with traditional sweet ‘Gur’ for selling purpose at Gur Mandi.

## Culture, Art Exhibition Day organized at KMU

PESHAWAR (APP): Culture and Art Exhibition Day was organized at Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar to promote a sense of unity, understanding of diversity and appreciation of different cultures that exist across Pakistan.

The day was organized by the students of fourth semester BSN and Post RN of the KMU Institute of Nursing Peshawar.

These activities included exposure to different cultures, traditional dress, cultural performances, and food fairs of different cultures, artifacts and knowledge about customs.

Registrar KMU Inam Ullah Khan was the chief guest of this grand ceremony, while Dr. Dildar Muhammad, Director Institute of Nursing Sciences, Imran Waheed Chief Organizer (Subject Teacher) and other respected faculty members and a large number of students were present on this occasion.

Registrar KMU Inam ullah Khan Wazir while addressing the event said that the ethical principles of

different cultures displayed by the students of INS

shows that Khyber Medical University always respects the values, beliefs, customs and rituals of different cultures. He said that this event of the students’ fair shows that Khyber Medical University Peshawar is not only doing an exemplary job in empowering and strengthening nursing education in Pakistan but also in cultural education and providing the best cultural environment to the students.

The KMU Institute of Nursing has always been a trendsetter in nursing education and leadership.

The array of leadership skills displayed by the nursing students on the cultural exhibition day is one of them and is a striking and excellent example. He hopes that the students will continue such activities in the future as well, along with providing uninterrupted healthcare to the patients, he said.

## Cold, dry weather forecast

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Wednesday predicted mainly cold and dry weather in most districts of KP. Dense foggy conditions are expected over Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, Peshawar, Swabi and D.I. Khan districts, as well as, over Motorway (M1) / Highways in morning and night. Travellers on motorways/highways were advised to take precautionary measures. During the last 24 hours, cold and dry weather prevailed over most districts of the province. Rainfall recorded (in mm) during the last 24 hours at different stations of KPK was nil. The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were Peshawar 22/04, Chitral 20/03, Timergara 21/03, Dir 20/-01, Mirkhani 22/00, Kalam 16/03, Drosh 17/04, Saidu Sharif 21/03, Pattan 25/17, Malam Jabba 14/04, Takht Bhair 23/05, Kakul 18/03, Balakot 22/03, Parachinar 18/01, Bannu 24/08, Cherat 14/05, DI Khan City 26/09.

## Officers posted, transferred

PESHAWAR (APP): The office of the Inspector General of Police on Wednesday notified posting and transfers of 11 police officers.

According to the notification Irfan Tariq appointed as DI Inquiry Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Imran Khan has been posted as SSP South CTD to Coordination Peshawar. Awaiting posting Waqas Khan posted as DPO Karak and Sajjad posted as SP Headquarters Traffic.

Awaiting postings Taimur Khan has been posted as SP Warsak Peshawar, Suleman Khan as SP Abbottabad and Muhammad Jawad as SP Sadar Kohat.

Similarly, DSP Asad Zubair has been posted to Special Branch, DSP Zahid appointed SP Investigation, Karak and DSP Arshad Khan to CTO Peshawar.

## Power suspension notified

PESHAWAR (APP): PESCO on Wednesday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Mardan grid station on 8th December from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. resultantly, consumers of New Matini, Tilaband, Dara, Old Matini, Matini City, Rezwana Flour Mill, Zangali Badbari feeders will face inconvenience.

It said that power supply will also remain suspended from Mardan Grid Station on 8th December from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Hassan Khel, Aka Khel, New Azakhel, Old Azakhel, Dawazgai feeders will face inconvenience.

Power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar Fort Grid Station on 9th December from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. resultantly, consumers of Bashir Abad, Karim Pura, Dabgari, Qissa Khwani, New LRH, Radio Pakistan, Govt House, Pak Medical Center, Kohati Gate, People Mandi feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will also remain suspended from Peshawar Fort Grid Station on 9th December from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. resultantly, consumers of Fort Jail, Chowk Yadgar, Kakshal, Secretariat, Shoba, Deans, Judicial Complex, MES 1, MES feeders.





## In brief

## Cop martyred as van attacked

KANDHKOT (INP): A cop was martyred when unidentified culprits attacked a police mobile van here Tuesday-Wednesday midnight. The police mobile was on routine patrolling in Miani police station jurisdiction when unknown gunmen sprayed bullets on van. As a result of firing, a cop Khalid Hussain hailing from Larkana was martyred. The assailants fled the scene after retaliatory firing of police. The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem. The police cordoning off the area conducted search operation for the attackers. A case was also registered against unknown culprits and investigations were kicked off.

## Two killed in road mishap

BHAKKAR (INP): Two people were killed while seven others injured in a collision between a high-roof coach and a tractor-trolley near Kotla Jan on Bhakkar-Dera Ismael Khan Road on Wednesday. Rescue sources informed that the coach driver was among those killed. According to reports, the incident took place when driver of the coach, heading from Okara to Dera Ismael Khan, dozed off. The injured were shifted to District Headquarters Hospital, Bhakkar after the provision of first aid.

## CTD arrests terrorist

JAMSHORO (INP): The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) arrested a terrorist of a banned outfit during operation in area adjacent to Hyderabad. According to CTD spokesman, on an intelligence tip-off regarding presence of extremists, crackdown was launched in Jamshoro area. During raid, an active member of a defunct organization was apprehended while his accomplices managed to flee. A hand grenade was recovered from possession of detainee. The nabbed terrorist was involved in terror activities at national transmission line and railway tracks. The CTD personnel cordoned off the area after the raid and launched operation for fled terrorists.

## FESCO nets electricity thieves

FAISALABAD (INP): The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has intensified its crackdown on electricity theft, conducting non-stop checks in six operation circles across eight districts. Special measures are also being taken to recover dues from defaulters. According to FESCO spokesperson, in the last 24 hours alone, FESCO teams have caught 31 more electricity thieves and imposed fines of over 26 lakh 13 thousand rupees. FIRs have been filed against them and their meters have been removed. Over the past 88 days, FESCO has issued more than 1.13 million detection units and fined over 52 crores to 4391 electricity thieves. These include 4133 domestic connections, 132 commercial connections, 116 agricultural connections, and 10 industrial connections. A total of 3648 electricity thieves have been arrested and 4181 cases have been registered against them. Additionally, FESCO has recovered over 34 crores from electricity thieves. In district Faisalabad, 1398 electricity thieves have been fined over 16 crore 41 lakh rupees. In Jhang district, 484 electricity thieves have been fined over 6 crore 54 lakh rupees. In Bhakkar district, 502 electricity thieves have been fined over 5 crore 65 lakh rupees.

# Bilawal to visit Dir on 9th

## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Pakistan Peoples' Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will visit the Lower dir district on Dec 9 wherein he will address a public gathering at Timergara as chief guest. This was stated by the PPP district president and former provincial minister Mahmood Zeb Khan speaking at a news conference at the Timergara press club here on Wednesday. The PPP district general secretary Alam Zeb advocate, City president Bakht Rehman and village council chairman Malik Javed Iqbal were also present.

Mahmood Zeb said the party had finalized all of its preparations for the public gathering to be addressed by Bilawal Bhutto. He said the leadership of other political parties had also been invited to attend Mr Bilawal's public meeting. The PPP district president claimed that his party would restore its past glory as its chairman had been more active than other politicians. He said the Dec, 9 gathering at Timergara would change the minds of the locals.

Advocate Alam Zeb said that the PPP founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had played an important role in the development of Dir. He said that it was ZAB who sent thousands of Dir

youths abroad for work and declared the entire Malakand division as a tax-free zone. He said the PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto would also follow the footprints of his grandfather ZAB.

The PPP district president Mahmood Zeb said the nation faced miseries owing to the current inflation and unemployment while the PPP had the ability to overcome these difficulties. He said the nation would take the previous rulers into account in the Feb 2024 general elections as the labourers and poor people were ignored. The PPP leader said that several mega projects were completed in the Lower Dir district during its government in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He asked traders' unions, businessmen and local residents to ensure their attendance in Bilawal Bhutto's gathering on Dec, 9 at Timergara.

**FIA raids:** The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) officials on Wednesday raided different markets at Timergara and took four shopkeepers into custody. The shopkeepers were involved in illegal money changers, official sources said.

They said the FIA team also recovered currency notes from the possession of the arrested persons. The sources said the FIA team

arrested Nimatullah and recovered Rs 105,000 and other illegal documents from his possession. A total of Rs 500,000 was recovered from Zeeshan Ahmad, Rs 1.2 million from Abdul Rehman and Rs 211,000 from Wajidullah.

**Food authority imposes fine on butchers:** Under the supervision of District Food Controller District Dir Payin Kashif Ehsan on the special instructions of Deputy Commissioner Dir lower Muhammad Fawad, Riyaz Ahmed (Assistant Food Controller) took action against the butchers in Badwan Chowk and checked the butcher shops on public complaint.

While fine imposed under the Food Act against butchers for not displaying the official price list and selling meat in excess of the official rate.

**Bilal foundation delegation visits AKF:** Bilal Educational System and Nursing College students visited the Al-Khidmat Foundation Water Filtration Plant, Timergara Dir Lower, and gave a briefing on the importance of water to purify water and plant operating, processing, Al-Khidmat Foundation Wash Program and detailed discussions were held on the services of Al-Khidmat Foundation. But different students also had a question and answer session.

## ANP and JI nominate candidates for polls in Dir

## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Electioneering is gradually gaining momentum in the Lower Dir district as some of the political parties have nominated their contesting candidates. The Jamaat-i-Islami, once the most popular political party in the district nominated its former MNA Sahibzada Yaqub Khan to contest the next elections from PK 14, Azizullah Khan from PK 15, former district councillor Shad Nawaz Khan from PK 16, former MPA Izazul Mulk Afkari from PK 17, former MPA Saeed Gul from PK 18, and JI chief Sirajul Haq from NA 6 and prominent religious scholar and former provincial 'khateeb' Maulana

Muhammad Ismail from NA 7.

The Awami National Party has also nominated its candidates. According to party sources the ANP has nominated Malik Muhammad Zeb for PK 14, Haji Wasil Khan for PK 15, Malik Sajjad Ahmad Yousafzai for PK 16, former MPA Haji Bahadar Khan for PK 17 and party central spokesman Zahid Khan for NA 7. The ANP would announce its candidates for PK 18 and NA 6.

Similarly the Pakistan Insaf Parliamentarian has also nominated Brigadier (retired) Saeedullah for PK 14, former provincial minister Muzafar Syed for PK 16, Haji Muhammad Nazir

for both PK 17 and NA 6.

The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz has also launched its election campaign and the party seems more active in PK 15 and PK 16 wherein party gatherings are held on daily basis. The PPP, PTI, JUI-F, Quami Watan Party and others are yet to announce their candidates. However, the PPP, PTI and JUI-F are also holding party gatherings and corner meetings. The PTI, despite hardships, succeeded in holding a workers' convention at Mayar here the other day. The former MNA Bashir Khan and other activists addressed the gathering which was attended by hundreds of party workers from parts of Jandol sub division.



HYDERABAD: Growers holding a protest demonstration in favour of their demands.

## Forest guards hold protest for release of salaries

## F.P. Report

BUNER: As many as 210 forest guards on contract have staged protest in demand of release of their 20 months delayed salaries at Buner press club, on Wednesday.

Leading by union leaders the angry guards raised full throat slogans in support of demands and threatened of sett in on roads with kids if salaries not released immediately. Talking to media persons the forest guards union president. Mushtaq general

secretary Sahib Rehman finance secretary Akbar Ali press secretary Suhail Ahmed flanked by colleagues told media.

The forest guards were recruited for five years term, three years ago against monthly salaries rupees 15000 only but for the last 20 months they were not paid single penny and the shopkeepers were no more ready to sell them edibles on loan due to which their kitchens were gone cold and families hungry.

They elaborated the

salary was too low and demanded double besides job permanent like guards from Swat. They complained of heavy duty of forest protection even from fire and incase of erupting fire they were called day night duty against nothing to pay extra while the nominal salaries also delayed for years long They termed it injustice and vowed to fight with kids for right on roads if forest department heads and present interim get government not headed to their demands as soon possible.

## 'Student died of natural causes'

KHAIRPUR (INP): Family members of a female medical student who was found dead in her hostel room at a college in Khairpur on Tuesday, have said that Sanhia Juti Keswani died of "natural causes".

The family member on Wednesday refused a post-mortem of the body, saying

she suffered a heart attack and could not make it. Her brother said his sister was rushed to a hospital after the heart stroke but she breathed her last. "She has been sick for last many days," he added.

The family took the student's body to Daharki town in Ghotki, said the medical

superintendent of Civil Hospital. Today's was the last paper of Ms Keswani, who was a final year student. A classmate confirmed that today was her last paper but she felt pain in the chest. "We rushed her to Khairpur's NICVD in a rickshaw but she died," the fellow student added.



QUETTA: Ending violence against women members holding a banner and placards for acceptance of their demands.

## Two cops injured by robbers firing

KHAIRPUR (INP): Two police officers were injured in a firing incident by robbers on Wednesday in Khairpur, Sindh. According to police, the incident occurred in the B section of the city's police station when a police team responded to a robbery call. Upon arrival, the robbers opened fire on the police officers, resulting in injuries to two of them.

The injured police officers were immediately rushed to the Civil Hospital, where one of them is reportedly in critical condition. The police have cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to apprehend the culprits.

## Two killed in road accident

MUZAFFARGARH (INP): Two people were killed in a road accident near Alipur North on Muzaffargarh-Jhang road on Wednesday.

According to Rescue Control Room Muzaffargarh, a high-speed trawler hit a motorcycle, as a result of which two motorcyclists, 35-year-old Gul Bagh Khan s/o Hakeem Khan and 37-year-old Sadiq Khan s/o Moradabad, were killed.

Upon receiving the information, the rescue control room of Muzaffargarh immediately sent an ambulance to the accident site from the nearby Key Point Khanpur Bagashira and an ambulance from Muzaffargarh Rescue Station and also informed the police control. The rescue staff reached the accident site and covered the bodies with a sheet. The relatives of the deceased did not want to shift the bodies or take any legal action. The rescue staff shifted the bodies to a nearby house. The accident happened due to the high speed and carelessness of the trawler driver.

## Jhelum police arrest 27 suspects

JHELUM (INP): Jhelum police have arrested 27 accused of six criminal gangs during massive crackdowns besides recovering arms, cash and jewelry worth millions of rupees. District Police Officer (DPO) Jhelum, Nasir Mehmood Bajwa said on Wednesday that the in the wake of surge in crimes, the police conducted district wide operations against criminals.

He said that during various actions, the police arrested two women among 27 accused of six criminal gangs wanted in murders, kidnapping for ransom, robberies, street crimes and other criminal cases.

The DPO Jhelum said that police recovered Rs4 million cash, stolen valuables valuing over Rs10 million, 13 pistols, 12 stolen motorcycles, jewelry and cellphones. He said that the busted gangs including Bali Gang, Niazi Gang and Deema Gang who have admitted of committed crimes in various districts of Punjab. Nasir Bajwa said that the nabbed culprits were wanted by Dina, Domeli, Kala Gujran, Jalapur Sharif and Pind Dadan police stations.

## Tirah IDPs complaint about lack of assistance

## F.P. Report

BARA: The tribesmen of Tirah Valley, who have left their homes due to an expected military operation to be launched against militants, have served their lives under an open sky as no facility has been provided to them.

It is worth mentioning here that nearly 324 families from Tirah areas including Ghulam Ali, Khapur, Kadow Kalley, Daroota, Jarobi, Dray Nagharay, Dwa Kholay, Sandapal etc. have vacated their residences and have taken refuge in downtown of Bara, district Khyber. The Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) said that on the short warning of the forces, they left their homes, leaving their all moveable and immovable properties behind them.

One of effectees, Khalil Khan, a social activist said that thousands of local IDPs including women and children provision less arrived in down Bara and temporarily took shelter in tents,



open fields and other makeshifts in extreme cold. Neither the local administration nor the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) provided any relief to the displaced people that was injustice to them, he regretted.

The IDPs went on being residents of mountainous areas; they depended on farming and livestock, however, the recent displacement had affected their crops and pet animals. They demanded of the government to ensure supply of

all necessary facilities to them during their temporary stay in down Bara and clear their native villages of militants as soon as possible.

Deputy Commissioner Khyber was repeatedly contacted on his phone but to in-avail. When a district official of PDMA was contacted on the matter he said that the administration had not contacted them therefore so far no relief activities were kicked off in the Bara for the ease of recent IDPs.

## AWKUM employee union to stop transport services

## F.P. Report

MARDAN: Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM) Employees Union has announced to stop the transport service in the second phase of the ongoing protest in favor of the demands while the hostel and library employees also stopped working, the employees of scale one to seventeen as well as teachers also joined.

Addressing the protestors, the president of the association, Adnan Saeed, said that the situation is deteriorating due to the stubbornness of the vice-chancellor and the university administration.

Chairman of the Association Muzamil Khan, Senior Vice President Jawad Singer, General Secretary Inam Afridi, Umeer Ali Shah, Media Incharge Ali Khan, Vice President Abid Ali, Ajmal Shah, Ashfaq Habib and Papu Khan while speaking said that the university employee's exploitation and economic killing should be stopped.

Ad hoc relief and salary increase should be paid and the stupid and illegal decision of transfer of 350 employees to Timergara campus should also be reversed immediately. Due to the lack of service structure, employees are deprived of fifteen years many points in the service structure fall into the category of violation and exploitation of the rights of employees.

**Molecular Genetics & Omics Tools conference held:** The international conference was organized with the support of Pakistan Science Foundation, Higher Education Commission Islamabad, ORIC Department, Eco Life Pharma Islamabad. On the first day of the conference, participants presented 50 research papers.

The chief guest of the conference was the Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Sultan Ayaz. On this occasion, while addressing

the conference with online participation from Thailand, America, Russia, China, Turkey and Afghanistan, Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Sultan Ayaz said that we hope that during the conference, the participants will use their knowledge, experience and skills in the best way. What's more, the environment of the universities is also very encouraging for such research activities. They should indicate this type more conferences in the near future.

Because mutual relations are established from this kind of conference, while more work can be done to acquire knowledge and technical skills from major educational and research institutions of the country, Undoubtedly, the universities of Pakistan are the highest and prominent analytical and research institutions of the country and the world. Through the media of the conference, we got an opportunity to speed up the efforts to solve these dangerous diseases. Remember that the chief organizer of this international conference on behalf of Abdul Wali Khan University was Prof. Dr. Tahir Usman.

**Certificate distribution ceremony held:** A web development certificate distribution ceremony was held at Sarhad University Mardan campus. Where 40 students successfully completed the web development course. President of Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) Zahir Shah was the Chief Guest of the event.

The event was attended by distinguished guests including Durshal Mardan Coordinator Pir Imad and (ECI) Islamabad Program Manager Kishwar Khan. Web Development Course in collaboration of (KP-IT Board), (ECI Islamabad), and Ansi Mardan was held. Sarhad University Campus Director Naseer Afridi warmly welcomed the Chief Guest and other dignitaries and highlighted the

importance of Information and technology in education and business.

**Anti-encroachment drive:** On the special instructions of Deputy Commissioner Mardan Wasil Khan, Additional Assistant Commissioner Headquarters, Additional Assistant Commissioner Aftab Alam and Additional Assistant Commissioner Khula Haqdar along with TMA encroachment staff took actions against temporary encroachments in various bazaars and squares and encroachment.

The temporary encroachments made by the people on the footpaths and streets in different areas of the city were demolished. This action was taken keeping in consideration the complaints of the citizens. The Additional Assistant Commissioner said that citizens are facing severe problems due to encroachment in the markets, so the encroachment mafia will be dealt strictly. The administration strictly instructed the shopkeepers to refrain from temporary and permanent encroachments otherwise action would be taken against them on daily basis.

## Tiger mauls man to death in Zoo

BAHAWALPUR (INP): A tiger mauled man to death in Bahawalpur Zoo on Wednesday. Four tigers present in the cage torn off body of the deceased. According to details, a citizen was killed after attacked by tiger in Sherbagh Zoo of Bahawalpur.

Four tigers present in the cage mauled the body of the man. Police and rescue teams reached the scene. However, identity of deceased could not be ascertained. The zoo administration was of the view that investigations have been kicked off that how the citizen entered into courtyard of the tigers.





## Searching for survivors after Israeli attack on central Gaza building

GAZA STRIP: Israeli forces continue to pound the Gaza Strip on the 60th day of its war on the besieged coastal enclave. The sky in the town of Deir al-Balah in central Gaza is grey with the aftermath of relentless Israeli ground attacks and aerial bombardment.

A fire breaks out in the middle of the street, littered with rubble. But that does not deter dozens of people from gathering at the site of a bombed building. The crowd of men are attempting to rescue the survivors and retrieve the bodies of those killed in the three-storey Abu Musbih building bombed by Israel. "We need stretchers," shouts a man. "Someone, find us stretchers."

Near him lies the lifeless body of a man, almost entirely covered by debris. He is pulled out by three men and taken on blankets being used as stretchers. The attack struck the building when about 150 people were inside, most of them displaced families from other parts of Gaza. According to Gaza's health ministry, 45 people have been killed and at least 50 others wounded. Some of the dead remain buried under the rubble.

The injured were transported in civilian cars, tuk-tuks and ambulances to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital. Meanwhile, a representative of the World Health Organization in the Palestinian Territories said the situation in Gaza is "getting worse every hour" as Israel intensifies its bombing of the enclave's southern areas. "I want to make clear that we are facing a growing humanitarian catastrophe," Rik Peepkorn said. More than 16,200 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza by Israeli forces since October 7 and about 42,000 others wounded. Meanwhile, the entrepreneurs of Gaza, a close-knit group who worked hand in hand to improve new graduates' prospects, are reeling from the relentless killing of their colleagues by Israel as it bombards the blockaded Gaza Strip. Mohammed Sharif Yousef, an entrepreneurship consultant at the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), has lost many friends and peers, some of them killed after they were displaced to the areas in the south that the Israeli army claimed were safe.

Yousef himself was displaced from his home in Gaza City and is now in the southern city of Khan Younis. He has more than 10 years of experience as an entrepreneur, trainer, mentor, and coach, but his displacement put him in a new role: volunteer relief

worker. "Families didn't have the money to buy flour, which was barely available, or canned goods or vegetables," he said. Yousef used his motorcycle to deliver provisions to families who needed them. Eventually, his bike ran out of fuel so he kept running it using paint thinner, which led to some malfunctions but still enabled him to go out daily. But as the casualties from Israel's aerial bombardment kept increasing, he stopped going out.

The people in Yousef's network had been the ones who found technological solutions to Gaza's problems and, as their institutions grew, had created jobs for graduates with few work opportunities due to a 17-year siege imposed by Israel on Gaza. On October 30, Yousef heard that his good friend Tariq Thabet, who directed the business incubator at the University College of Applied Sciences in Gaza, had been killed. "I didn't expect it," Yousef said, in shock. "He had just returned from a trip from the US after receiving a Fulbright scholarship." Yousef said Thabet had, over about a decade and a half, helped thousands of young people find jobs, making a huge difference in a region as constrained as Gaza. On November 14, two weeks after Thabet's death, Yousef received more devastating news - Abdelhamid al-Fayoumi, another friend, had been killed.

The two had become close friends after working together including at Gaza Sky Geeks and Work Without Borders. They were roommates at a certain point, Yousef said, adding that Abdelhamid was a fantastic cook, whipping up mujadaras (rice and lentils with caramelised onions) and maqlabas (a layered meat, vegetable and rice dish cooked one way and flipped the other upon serving) on a moment's notice. They had promised to sit down with each other after the war, to talk about ideas and explore new horizons. Al-Fayoumi had founded Sanabel, which produced software and multimedia resources for the local and regional Arab markets. "Sanabel moved from failure to success and then sustainability, with a team working at an international level," Yousef said. "What I loved about him was his diligence and the high productivity of his team. He ... achieved success for many entrepreneurs in Gaza, but now that has all stopped. Israel is killing Gaza's entrepreneur cadres."

As Israel's brutal offensive on Palestinians in Gaza nears the end of its second month, the scale of

destruction goes beyond the physical. The human cost has been staggering. According to the health ministry in Gaza, more than 15,500 people have been killed, and another 6,800 are missing under the rubble of their homes, presumed dead. With more than 41,000 others wounded, this means that one in every 40 Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip has been killed or injured by Israeli attacks. The vast majority of the victims are civilians - men, women and children. Among the professional class, dozens of doctors, university lecturers, business owners and journalists have been killed. In addition, roads, universities, historical buildings and places of worship have been targeted by Israeli warplanes and artillery. At least 60 percent of residential units in the Gaza Strip have been destroyed or damaged, in addition to 339 educational facilities. The targeting of an ethnic group's political and economic leadership is known as "eliticide", a word coined in the 1990s by British journalist Michael Nicholson to describe the Bijeljina massacre in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to Arnesa Buljusic-Kustura, a genocide expert, researcher and lecturer, the purpose of eliticide is to prevent the targeted community from regenerating or rebuilding itself.

"Targeting intellectuals, academics, activists, leaders of any sort has always been a common thread in genocide," she wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. "Killings of the most notable of your community are done to make you remember nobody is safe, to make you lose hope, to ensure the community doesn't resist or reorganise." On the same day al-Fayoumi was killed, Gaza's entrepreneurs were dealt another heavy blow when Dr Yasser al-Alam, the "godfather of entrepreneurship", was killed in an Israeli attack on the central town of Deir el-Balah. "Dr Yasser ... was a calm thinker and was keen on initiatives for innovative solutions," Yousef recalled. Al-Alam was known for finding unexpected solutions and creating innovative marketing strategies. "We expected [al-Alam] to have a great impact in the future, but his influence will remain in our hearts and minds," Yousef said. "All those who passed away in this war, whether I mentioned them or not, left a painful impact," Yousef said. "We must make their killings the fuel that pushes us towards the success of entrepreneurship in Gaza to complete their journey." — Aljazeera



GAZA: Neighbours and rescue teams look for survivors after the Israeli attack.

### Mauritania's ex-President Aziz jailed

MAURITANIA (BBC): A court in Mauritania has jailed former President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz for five years for corruption. It found Aziz guilty of money laundering and abusing his position to illegally enrich himself, but acquitted him on other charges. The court also ordered the confiscation of his illegally acquired assets.

Aziz, 66, was elected president in 2009 after toppling President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi in a coup, and went on to lead Mauritania until 2019. He had been on trial in the capital, Nouakchott, since January, alongside 10 other prominent figures, including two former prime ministers and former ministers who served in his administration. They had been charged with several offences, including abuse of power, money laundering, illicit enrichment and influence peddling. The court, which specialises in corruption and economic crimes, also sentenced some of the co-accused, albeit to lighter sentences than Aziz, while the former prime ministers and two ex-ministers were acquitted. Aziz maintained his innocence throughout the trial and described his prosecution as politically motivated. He is said to have fallen out with his successor and current President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, who was once his close political ally, the AFP news agency reports. He is also alleged to have amassed immense wealth during his decade-long rule.

"The trial we attended was a political trial, and its verdict is also very political," one of Aziz's lawyers, Mohameden Ould Icheddou, was quoted as saying by AFP. His lawyers have also said that they plan to appeal against the verdict.

### Crunch time for EU-Mercosur deal at summit

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP): The fate of a long-awaited but controversial Europe-South America trade deal hangs in the balance this week when Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva hosts a summit of the Mercosur regional bloc. The presidents of the Mercosur countries -- Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay -- will gather Thursday in Rio de Janeiro, with the clock ticking down on promises from both sides to finalize a trade deal between the bloc and the European Union by the end of the year.

The meeting was originally supposed to seal a final version of the deal, which has been more than two decades in the making and would create the world's biggest free trade zone. But last-minute bickering has erupted in recent days, with public criticism of the proposed deal from France and Argentina. French President Emmanuel Macron, who met Lula on the sidelines of the COP28 UN climate talks in Dubai, voiced his opposition to the deal, sharply criticizing supposed environmental shortfalls. Agricultural powerhouse Brazil, the world's top exporter of beef and soy, notably faces accusations of tearing down the Amazon rainforest to make way for farming.

## Mandela and how young S Africans view his legacy

JOHANNESBURG (BBC): "I have a love-hate relationship with the old man," says Sihle Lonzi, 26, of Nelson Mandela on the 10th anniversary of the death of South Africa's first black president. Mr Lonzi is the leader of the student wing of South Africa's third biggest party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), and part of a generation that grew up after the racist system of apartheid ended in 1994.

Too young to have witnessed the liberation struggle or Mr Mandela's presidential years, and unencumbered by the nostalgia of previous generations, Mr Lonzi and his peers have been re-evaluating the anti-apartheid icon's legacy. Mr Mandela is cemented in history as one of the most-influential people of all time. He led the fight against apartheid, spent more than 27 years in prison, and became South Africa's first democratically elected president in 1994 after negotiating an end to white-minority rule.

He stood down after one presidential term and died at the age of 95 on 5 December 2013, to the wails of a nation mourning their beloved father figure. Cautiously choosing his words, Mr Lonzi tells the BBC that Mr Mandela gave the people of South Africa political freedom, but he failed to give them economic freedom. Adamant not to label him a "sell-out", as some critics have done over the years, Mr Lonzi does say that Mr Mandela compromised too much during negotiations with the white-minority government. The disappointment is apparent in Mr Lonzi's voice as he says he wanted Mr Mandela to have "pushed harder" for an

agreement on land and wealth distribution, as he had initially promised to do.

In 1990, Mr Mandela confirmed the intentions of the African National Congress (ANC) - the liberation movement which he led into government in 1994 - to nationalise mines, banks and "monopoly industries". But following concerns that nationalisation would have a ruinous effect on the economy and to ensure a smooth transition of power, Mr Mandela dropped the policy. For Mr Lonzi, this has left South Africa as one of the most unequal countries in the world. As it stands, about 10% of the population own more than 80% of the wealth, according to a 2022 report by the World Bank.

It says that race remains a key driver of economic inequality. The white-minority population has retained most of the wealth they acquired during apartheid. Mr Lonzi says because of this he feels the economy is heavily weighed against Gen Z, especially black people. "There is a massive gap between the promises Nelson Mandela made and the reality we live in," he says. The reality Gen Z has been saddled with is an unemployment rate of around 60%, a murder rate that has reached its highest in 20 years and rampant drug abuse. Anita Dywaba, 24, a United Nations Foundation Next Generation Fellow, tells the BBC the current state of South Africa has left a single question on a constant loop in her mind: "Will I live long enough to have a family of my own?"

Many of her friends lost their lives because of violent crime, fuelled by the

dire economic situation. But Ms Dywaba does not blame Mr Mandela for South Africa's failings. She insists that he did what he had to do to end apartheid peacefully. Her admiration for his sacrifices has never wavered even as "Nelson Mandela's legacy is contested amongst Gen Z", she says. Her mother fought in the liberation struggle, and she passed on more than just genetics, but also a deep admiration for Mr Mandela, even in the face of criticism. A leader of the ANC youth wing in Eastern Cape province, Mzobanzi Nkwentsha, says his father had a painting of Mr Mandela in the family living room to ensure that every visitor saw it.

His voice pitches slightly as he tells the BBC that he will hang a photo of the former president when, one day, he has his own home. "I have always revered Nelson Mandela as the leader of the South African revolution and a great statesman," Mr Nkwentsha says. He lists Mr Mandela's achievements as improving education and housing for black people, and providing social grants to the financially needy. He says these policies still "resonate with the poorest of the poor" in South Africa. Mr Nkwentsha counters the argument that Mr Mandela compromised too much in talks with the apartheid regime, saying that if peace was not achieved a civil war would have erupted. He says the baton has been passed on to his generation to fight for economic change. But can the ANC still conjure Mandela magic to garner votes in next year's general election, especially among Gen Z?

## Toxic air divides Delhi between poverty and privilege

NEW DELHI (AFP): Environmental change hits the poorest the hardest, experts say, and in India's toxic smog-filled capital that includes the air people breathe. In Old Delhi, the ancient heart of the capital, 39-year-old Rizwan pedals a rickshaw tricycle, transporting passengers and heavy goods through crowded streets often too narrow for cars, earning about seven dollars on a good day.

There is no escape from Delhi's deadly smog that cloaks the city in a misty winter grey and chokes the lungs of its 30 million residents, making it one of the world's worst capitals for air quality. "My eyes burn... I am aware of the health risks but what else can I do?" said Rizwan, who uses only one name, panting hard to manoeuvre through traffic-clogged streets. Levels of fine particulate matter -- cancer-causing microparticles known as PM2.5 pollutants that enter the bloodstream through the lungs -- often hit more than 30 times the World Health Organization's danger limits. Authorities in Delhi asked people last month to work from home and limit time spent outside to protect themselves from the poisonous air. But Rizwan said his choice was to work or starve.

"I've left my village to come here, I have to work hard, it is a necessity," he said. "I am not educated enough to work in an office

or do some other job. Either I can pedal a rickshaw or pull a cart." Adjoining Old Delhi is the modern city created when building expanded exponentially early last century. New Delhi's affluent Gulmohar Park neighbourhood lies just 10 kilometres (six miles) south of the old city walls but it could be a different world given how people there live and cope with the smog. With an air purifier machine buzzing reassuringly in the background, successful 31-year-old cinematographer Madhav Mathur starts his day by checking pollution levels on a WhatsApp group made by residents. Mathur, a keen long-distance runner born and brought up in Delhi, said he can no longer exercise outside during winter when pollution is at its worst. "I have stopped running outside because of the pollution," he said, noting a stark change since he was a boy. "I realised it is harming me more than it is benefiting me." Mathur lives with his parents and usually works from home. When he does have to venture outside for prolonged periods, such as filming for work, he wears a tight-fitting mask.

It mitigates the worst health risks but Mathur's key challenge is that colours on camera lose their vibrancy because of the "thick layer of soot". Experts say that those suffering the worst from air pollution are not only those

least responsible for it, they are also the least able to cope. "There is a contrast in the air pollution impact across diverse socio-economic ranges," said Sagnik Dey, professor at the Centre for Atmospheric Sciences at Delhi's Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). "Poor people cannot afford those personal mitigation measures. They cannot afford masks, a purifier is completely out of reach." For rickshaw driver Rizwan, wearing a mask tight enough to keep pollution out makes the hard work of pedalling too tough.

Prolonged exposure can trigger strokes, heart disease, lung cancer and other respiratory diseases, according to the WHO. The average city resident could die nearly 12 years earlier due to air pollution, a report by the University of Chicago's Energy Policy Institute said in August. Mathur said he was all too aware of his privilege in being able to afford to escape the smog and "sympathises" with those who can't afford better air. "I am aware that someone whose economic life is synonymous with being outside, they cannot afford to be indoors, their economic life is going to come to a halt," he said "I cannot relinquish it... but I think about it, definitely." Smog in Delhi is caused by a melange of factory and vehicle emissions, exacerbated by seasonal agricultural fires clearing harvest stubble for tilling.

## ‘Obey and shut up’ to survive in Colombia controlled by groups

COLOMBIA (AFP): "Here you obey and shut up," says Jose, a resident of Colombia's northern Bolivar department where forgotten communities eke out a terrified existence under the yoke of armed groups fighting over access to rich gold deposits. The man in his 40s who goes by Jose, along with many other inhabitants of the vast mountains of Bolivar, are too afraid to give their real names or reveal too much identifying information.

Of Colombia's 32 departments, Bolivar is the third-worst affected by crimes committed by parties to the decades-old conflict, with nearly 700,000 victims -- direct or indirect, according to an official report in June. In 2020, 335 acts of violence were recorded in the department, 145 of them murders. AFP visited the municipalities of Morales and Arenal with staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), one of few organizations working to help residents of an impoverished region so remote that the state is all but absent.

This has left a void filled

by a deadly resources dispute between the ELN guerrilla group -- dissidents of the FARC armed force that disarmed under a peace deal in 2017 -- and the powerful Gulf Clan drug cartel (AGC). To the best of their ability, communities have developed strategies to survive the many dangers, which include getting caught in the crossfire, forced confinement, minefields, extortion, and sometimes the killings of those who step out of line. Even in times of relative calm the groups' presence is always felt -- their acronyms spray-painted onto town and village walls serve as a constant, ominous reminder to the locals who mostly make a modest living growing corn, potatoes and cacao. "They are rarely seen in uniform or with weapons. But they are there, watching us without letting us see them," said resident Javier, 35.

In just the last few weeks, fighting between the ELN and the Gulf Clan forcibly displaced at least 1,400 people in south Bolivar fleeing a "climate of fear and anxiety," according to the government. The consequences of

the conflict on the civilian population "have become structural," ICRC representative Sara Luchetta told AFP. "The war has profoundly affected the daily lives of these rural populations," she said. According to Colombia's Truth Commission, the "resilience of these populations is extraordinarily strong."

Rugged Mountains cover most of the Bolivar's southern region, which is nearly the size of El Salvador, and they serve as hard-to-monitor logistical corridors for moving contraband to and from neighboring Venezuela. The main trade was once in coca, the plant used to make cocaine. But the goal nowadays is far more profitable gold, much of it extracted by artisanal miners. Javier explained how locals learn to live under certain "rules" imposed on them by the armed groups. "For example, driving at night is forbidden," he told AFP.

The fighters know of, and approve, every single activity; even buying a motorcycle and having to explain where the money came from, said another

resident. "The people are afraid. They are constantly on alert, waiting for misfortune if armed men come to the door at night," explained villager Carlos Quintero. Some locals ally themselves to one group or another, whether by choice or coercion, but this can also get them into trouble with rivals. "Mostly, we try to stay away. It is a matter of coexistence," said Javier. "When there is only one actor, you more or less know what to do, you adapt. The problem is when there are several actors and you are in the middle," added Juan, who also did not want to give his full name. "We find ourselves like frightened mice with a nest of eagles over our heads."

Many inhabitants of the region live near minefields and other unexploded ordnance. According to the ICRC, at least 10 people stepped on landmines so far in 2023. "If it weren't for the conflict, we'd be living pretty well," said Juan. "Conditions are tough, but the land is generous," he explained. "The problem is this war, which is a never-ending story."

## Brazil reinforces border with Venezuela and Guyana

BRASILIA (Reuters): Brazil's military is reinforcing its northern border due to rising tensions between its neighbors Venezuela and Guyana over Venezuela's claim to the Esequibo region, the Ministry of Defense said. The Brazilian army is moving armored vehicles and more troops to Boa Vista, the capital of Roraima state that borders both Venezuela and Guyana after Venezuelans voted in a referendum to approve the annexation of the Esequibo.

The four-wheel drive Guaiqueri armored vehicles will join an upgraded 18th Mechanized Cavalry Regiment whose force will

increase to 600 soldiers to improve security along the border and intensify surveillance to avoid surprises, a military source told Reuters. "Neither side will be able to take advantage of our territory," the army officer said. At issue is a 160,000-square km (61,776 square-mile) region more than twice the size of Ireland that is mostly thick jungle. Venezuela reactivated its claim over the Esequibo in recent years after the discovery of offshore oil and gas.

Brazil's top diplomat for Latin America and the Caribbean, Gisela Padovan, said the main road connection between Venezuela and

Guyana is through Brazilian territory due to the inaccessible terrain of the Esequibo, but its use in any military action would not be accepted by her country. "We are following the situation with concern. I do not believe it will come to an armed conflict," she said in an interview in which she urged a peaceful resolution. In referendum, Venezuelan voters rejected the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice over their country's territorial dispute with Guyana and supported the creation of a new Venezuelan state in the potentially oil-rich Esequibo region. The court

prohibited Venezuela from taking any action that would alter the status quo in the area, but President Nicolas Maduro's leftist government went ahead with the referendum. Brazil did not ask Venezuela to cancel the vote, but President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's government is expected to criticize the stepped up Venezuelan campaign for the Esequibo.

The region has been in dispute since the 19th century, when Guyana was a British colony. An international tribunal in Paris in 1899 settled the issue, but Venezuela says the ruling was rigged.



## The Frontier Post

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## Student unions, past and present

**SENATE Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training has recently unanimously passed the Islamabad Capital Territory Student Unions Bill-2023 while paving the way for Student grouping and alliances on various grounds from politics to ethnicity and religion to geographical affiliation of the students as well as the academics.**

The student unions have both positive and negative aspects on the educational activities, learning environment, and overall society as well as the national political landscape in the country. The Student Unions offer a platform for students to voice their concerns and opinions, advocating for their rights and interests. It nurtures leadership skills by providing opportunities to organize events, lead initiatives, and manage teams along with fostering a sense of community engagement among students, promoting unity, diversity, and inclusivity among the youth at the educational institutions. Meanwhile, Student unions push for changes in academic policies, campus facilities, and student services based on collective interests of their community.

At the same time, the Students Union often prompts polarization/division leading to conflicts over ideologies, opinions, or leadership at the institutional and national levels. There might be instances where unions prioritize specific agendas, or groups on ethnic, social or political grounds over others, leading to a lack of inclusivity or fairness along with erupting controversy/conflict within or outside a group. Similarly, student unions are mostly linked with external politics, religious or ethnic political entities operating at the national level that largely influence the functioning of student unions, potentially deviating from their primary objectives.

Historically, student unions in Pakistan have a long history of involvement in politics and student leaders have been acting as mouthpieces for warring political parties seriously disturbing the educational process along with polluting the learning environment in Universities and colleges in the country. Later, the government banned student unions in 1984 due to their alleged involvement in violence and political unrest. However, in 2019, the government lifted the ban, allowing student unions to reform under strict regulations. Although, these unions can represent various political ideologies and play a significant role in advocating for student rights while resulting from participation in broader political activities within educational institutions, but it never happened in the past. Realistically, student groups could not dissociate themselves from national politics, political, ethnic, religious, and sectarian based grouping that spoiled the educational process and poisoned the teaching/ learning environment in schools, colleges and Universities. In fact, the effectiveness of a student union largely depends on its members, leadership, and the balance struck between advocating for student interests and maintaining a conducive academic environment along with the focus on curricular activities that are the core objectives of all social, extra-curricular engagements and volunteerism.

So far, student unions exist in various countries worldwide and play diverse roles depending on the country's education system and political landscapes. In some countries, student unions have a strong political influence and actively participate in national politics, while in others, they primarily focus on campus-related issues such as academic policies, student welfare, and extracurricular activities. Each country's student unions reflect the unique socio-political context and educational structure of that nation and owe merits and demerits based on the peculiar socio-political situations in that nation. As for Pakistan, the idea of a non-party-based local government system failed badly in some provinces because Pakistani political groups and politicians exploit each aspect of national life to their advantage polluting/polarizing each segment of the society. Pakistan's educational system is already experiencing acute fragility, mismanagement and depletion, therefore politicians must resist opening a new Pandora box that might fulfil their political agenda but is likely to weaken our academia and educational standards in the longterm.

## Dilemma of African Generals

**NIGER'S military junta ended military cooperation accords with the European Union, dealing a blow to Brussels' efforts against Islamist insurgents in West Africa's Sahel region. According to the details, Nigar will no longer be a part of the European Union Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP), and the Nigerien military will no further take part in an EU-led training mission to reinforce security capacity in the Sahel state. Meanwhile, Niger's military leaders also exited an agreement worth 1.7 billion (\$1.84 billion) to contain migration from Africa to Europe.**

Niger a Western African nation is currently ruled by a military junta following a July coup that ousted the country's democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum, who is currently under detention. Before the military coup, Niger had been the West and Europe's major security partner in the Sahel. But since the army seized power, tensions have been growing between Niger and its former allies. Historically, the violence-hit Western African Sahel and Sub-Saharan regions have been embattled with serious security challenges from armed extremist groups over the past decades. Regional militaries are incapable of defeating armed rebels and controlling violence in all African states including Niger, Burkina Faso, Sudan, Central Africa, and others yet Military Generals are well-versed in weighing war against democracy and ousting democratically elected leaders from power. A majority of the African nations struck security deals with the European Union and France, the former colonial power in Africa for capacity building and Counterterrorism cooperation to defeat the menace of terrorism in their countries. Previously, about 1500 French Special Forces were stationed in Nigar while 120 Europeans are permanently deployed in Niger under the EUCAP mission.

Interestingly, European Nations are pro-democracy and enjoy good relations with publically elected governments in South Africa. Whereas a majority of EU nations not only condemned the repeated military coups in African countries but snubbed military leaders for their unlawful acts and treason. Therefore, the military junta in Niger and other Sahel states are very apprehensive about Europe and abruptly sever ties and cooperation with the European Union disregarding the security needs and well-being of their nations. Apparently, African leaders have no such grief for their nations, as they care for their self-service and extension in their rule otherwise no nation saviour ever refused to free rounds and unpaid army for the protection of his countrymen against contemporary challenges.

### Important Notice

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



## The China-Russia-North Korea triangle looks unlikely to last

Yukihiro Hotta

**WHEN Russian President Vladimir Putin met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Sept. 13 - their first meeting in four years - Putin stated that Russia would adhere to its international obligations. However, he also mentioned the potential for bilateral military-technical cooperation within established guidelines.**

Although details of the meeting at Vostochny Cosmodrome spaceport in Russia's Far East have not been disclosed, Putin's comments to reporters indicate that Russia is highly likely to provide North Korea with technology to build satellites. During his visit to Russia, Kim also toured an aircraft factory and inspected the cockpit of Russia's most advanced fighter jet, the Su-57. A month after the Putin-Kim meeting, on Oct. 13, US National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby stated during a news conference that Pyongyang had delivered around 1,000 containers of military equipment and munitions in recent weeks to Russia. The White House referred to satellite photos of containers at Pier No. 2 of the port of Rajin in northeastern North Korea being shipped to Russia.

During my visit to the port in 2018, I recall observing piles of coal left exposed in the open air. This was in response to the UN Security Council's imposition of sanctions on North Korea, which included a ban on trading coal with the country. The image of numerous black, strip-like trails streaming from weathered coal into the sea remains vivid in my memory. At the port of Rajin, North Korea mainly uses Pier No. 2 while a Chinese logistics company made investments to renovate Pier No. 1. Pier No. 3, the largest pier, is leased to RasonKonTrans, a Pyongyang-Moscow joint venture, and has been used for the transportation of coal excluded from United Nations sanctions. The reason why Pier No. 3 was not used this time to deliver arms to Russia may be because Russia aimed to create the appearance of complying with its international obligations. North Korea's space development is suspected of involving the redirection of technologies for ballistic missiles. This activity has been effectively restricted by the UN Security Council's resolution, which Russia voted in favor of. The same can be said about North Korea's arms transfer.

While there are questions about Moscow's violation of international agreements, especially as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the attention is shifting to how the growing relationship between Russia and North Korea will impact China, given its close ties with Pyongyang. It could be said that China, Russia and North Korea have distinct intentions, and it seems improbable that the three countries will significantly enhance their cooperation. Firstly, it is important to reflect on the history of how China and Russia have developed their relations with North Korea. Some might mistakenly believe that China, Russia and North Korea have continuously maintained strong ties ever since the Cold War to the present day. However, in reality, their relationship underwent significant changes from the 1990s.

While China effectively maintains an alliance with North Korea, in 1992 Beijing abolished barter trade with Pyongyang, which it had been conducting in the name of supporting the building of socialism. Instead China insisted that all trade should be settled in hard currency. In August 2010, at a meeting between Chinese President Hu Jintao and North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in Changchun, in China's Jilin province, Hu expressed China's readiness to develop trade and economic cooperation. He emphasized principles such as "government guidance with enterprises playing a major role, market operation and mutual benefits for win-win results." This indi-

cated that Beijing was adopting a market-oriented policy based on economic rationality with a focus on the role of companies. After Hu's visit to North Korea in October 2005, there was a 14-year gap without a visit to the country by a sitting Chinese president until President Xi Jinping's first visit as president in June 2019. This prolonged gap was seemingly due to Beijing's distrust of Pyongyang's nuclear development. While China has expressed its readiness to collaborate with North Korea to develop friendly and cooperative relations, it has maintained a rational approach in its diplomatic dealings. Similarly, Russia, like China, has historically been an ally of North Korea. While the Soviet Union signed the Soviet-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in 1976, it expired in 1996 without being extended. The two countries newly signed the Good Neighborly Friendship and Cooperation Treaty in 2000, but it lacked any clause pertaining military assistance.

**In September 2022, after US officials said Russia had approached North Korea to request ammunition, an unnamed vice director-general of the North Korean Defense Ministry's General Bureau of Equipment issued a statement denying any exports of weapons or ammunition to Russia and condemning the US for making such comments.**

And, in the following month, Chinese, Russian and North Korean deputy foreign ministers met in Moscow and released a joint statement which, among other things, re-clarified their common stand against independent sanctions. The statement was a show of criticism by countries that were facing sanctions - China under trade sanctions imposed by the US, Russia under sanctions from Western countries for annexation of Crimea and North Korea subjected to international sanctions for its nuclear and missile developments. In May 2022, China and Russia vetoed for the first time a UN Security Council resolution seeking to impose tougher sanctions on North Korea. China clearly shifted to restoring ties with North Korea in June 2019, with Xi making a visit to the country and meeting Kim. Putin also met the North Korean leader in the Russian city of Vladivostok in April of that year. Both Beijing and Moscow saw the United States and North Korea approaching each other, and after a February 2019 meeting between Trump and Kim in Hanoi ended without the signing of a joint statement and the dialogue reaching a deadlock, China and Russia seized the opportunity to take advantage of the situation.

The strategic value of North Korea was heightened again for China and Russia in their relationship with the US. Following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, North Korea voted against a resolution by the UN General Assembly condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It also officially recognized the independence of Donetsk and Luhansk, two pro-Russian separatist regions in eastern Ukraine. In September 2022, after US officials said Russia had approached North Korea to request ammunition, an unnamed vice director-general of the North Korean Defense Ministry's General Bureau of Equipment issued a statement denying any exports of weapons or

ammunition to Russia and condemning the US for making such comments. And when Tokyo Shimibun exclusively reported on Dec. 22, 2022, that Pyongyang had shipped by train munitions including artillery shells to Russia, a spokesperson for the North Korean Foreign Ministry said in a statement that an arms transaction between the two countries "has never happened," calling the article "the conspiracy report by Japanese media." North Korea must have been nervous about being interrupted when it was negotiating under the table with Moscow on military cooperation. The war in Ukraine has deepened Russia-North Korea relations to a stage different from before.

However, China does not necessarily welcome military cooperation between Russia and North Korea. This is because military cooperation with North Korea, which is pushing toward a goal of possessing nuclear weapons, would face criticism from the US and the international community and also could result in harming the power balance in northeast Asia.

When asked to comment on the Putin-Kim meeting, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning refrained from commenting, saying that it was a bilateral matter. Meanwhile, North Korea appears to be seeing through Beijing's complicated state of mind and trying to further raise its presence, being aware of its increased strategic value to China and Russia. In July, North Korea marked the 70th anniversary of the Korean War armistice with delegations from China and Russia.

North Korean media's coverage of the Russian delegation, headed by Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, differed markedly from that of the Chinese delegation, with state-run television airing footage of Kim accompanying Shoigu at an arms exhibition in Pyongyang showing off North Korea's newest weaponry. Through such moves, Pyongyang seemed to be trying to appeal to Beijing and increase its value as much as possible.

While China shares the same stance with Russia in confronting the US, Beijing must in fact be hoping to draw a line with Moscow, which has gone as far as expanding ties in military fields with North Korea - a country that is advancing nuclear and missile development. China is likely to maintain cooperation with Russia and North Korea regarding policies against the US, but it would be more beneficial for Beijing to deal with Pyongyang on a bilateral basis so that it can keep its grip on regional affairs. It is unlikely, therefore, that the relationship between China, Russia and North Korea will develop into something like a trilateral alliance. The three countries don't necessarily share a common goal concerning how to settle their relations with the US in the first place. In view of the changes in the relationship between the US and China, or between the US and North Korea, as well as what comes after the war in Ukraine, we can easily imagine the possibility of the anti-US triangle of China, Russia and North Korea collapsing.

The Japan Times

## How Europe can restore its credibility in Middle East

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

**AS Israel has now resumed its massive bombardment of the defenseless Gaza Strip, Europe is once again paralyzed by divisions on how to react to the massive loss of life and Israel's gross violations of international humanitarian law. While it is important to sort out its internal differences, the EU needs to move quickly to address at least some of the most pressing aspects of this devastating conflict.**

When the UN General Assembly voted on Oct. 27 on a mild resolution calling for a humanitarian truce, the protection of civilians, the upholding of legal and humanitarian obligations and unhindered aid delivery, only about a dozen European countries, including some EU members, supported it. Four even opposed it (Austria, Czechia, Croatia and Hungary), while the majority abstained, including Europe's largest countries, such as Germany, the UK, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and the Scandinavian countries (except Norway, which voted for the resolution). Outside of the UN, Europe is also divided between principled, duplicitous and complicit countries. A number of European countries, such as Belgium, France, Ireland and Spain, have stated out neutral positions, taking steps to help mediate the conflict and provide humanitarian assistance. Many have remained aloof to the suffering of Gaza's civilians, even when hospitals were attacked and premature babies were pulled out of incubators and left to die. Worse still, a small minority of European countries have continued to provide material and active political support for Israel to continue its war of aggression against Gaza's civilians.

European support for Israel is at odds with the global consensus against the Gaza war and the desperate calls by UN officials and humanitarian organizations working in the Strip to stop the war. It is also clearly inconsistent with the European position on the Ukraine war and the continent's advocacy of peace and human rights and its championing of international law, including humanitarian laws, all of which have been brazenly violated by Israel's sadistic destruction of Gaza and its killing of thousands of civilians, the majority being women and children.

While Ukraine in 2022 united the EU beyond expectations, the Gaza war redivided the bloc in 2023. In the EU's responses to Israel's war against Gaza, senior officials have struck different tones, reflecting the divisions between member states. They were unequivocal in their condemnation of Hamas' attack, but were divided on Israel's response. While most members insisted on prioritizing the delivery of humanitarian aid into Gaza, many focused only on "unconditional" hostage release and Israel's "right to defend itself."

Most of the disagreement, however, was on a ceasefire, with only a minority of EU states demanding one. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, for example, called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire to allow aid into Gaza, echoing UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. He was joined by only a few others, such as Belgium and Ireland. German officials, on the other hand, backed Israel unconditionally and expressed concern that a ceasefire would limit Israel's "right" to self-defense. Chancellor Olaf Scholz said he had "no doubt" the Israeli army would follow international law. His deputy evoked the Holocaust as implicit justification for Israel's excesses, as if Gaza's children have to atone for Germany's crimes. Germany's Green foreign minister also defended Israel. Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer went as far as saying that "all the fantasies of ceasefires and the cessation of hostilities led to the strengthening of Hamas."

Reflecting this disarray among its key members, the EU's collective response has been difficult to discern. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, herself a German center-right politician, promptly trav-

eled to Israel in a show of solidarity and expressed near-total support for Tel Aviv. By contrast, EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell expressed a more nuanced position on the conflict. In the past, the EU had a more or less even-handed approach, with a slight pro-Israel bias, and tried to act as an honest broker. The impression in the Arab world now is that the EU has been overboard pro-Israeli, especially at the start of the conflict, and has not done much to dispel that impression since. Queen Rania of Jordan has accused Western leaders of applying a "glaring double standard," reflecting the views of many in the region.

While Europe quickly projected a unified position on Ukraine last year, its messaging on Gaza has been muddled. This division chips away at Europe's credibility and lowers expectations from EU institutions.

Chafing at such criticism, European Council President Charles Michel said: "We do not have double standards. We have a fundamental standard, that we believe in international law." He added that some were "attacking" the EU and "instilling doubts" about its credibility, but that "our unity will be our best argument when we are engaging with the Global South." However, those reassuring words were lost in the actions on the ground and the disparate statements from individual member states and EU officials. As Gaza is relentlessly bombed by Israel, hundreds of EU officials are reported to have written to Von der Leyen, criticizing what they described as her "uncontrolled" support of Israel. They said they "hardly recognize the values of the EU," claiming that there was a "seeming indifference demonstrated over the past few days by our institution toward the ongoing massacre of civilians in the Gaza Strip, in disregard for human rights and international humanitarian law."

They said they were saddened by the European Commission's "double standards," since it considers the blockade of Ukraine by Russia as an act of terror, while Israel's blockade of Gaza is "completely ignored." The EU's ambiguous positions, they said, "seem to give a free hand to the acceleration and the legitimacy of a war crime in the Gaza Strip."

While a unified position by the EU and Europe in general would be extremely helpful in terms of mediating the conflict in Gaza, it would also restore Brussels' credibility and its diplomatic weight, which has taken a hit since this crisis started. Until such a unified stand is achieved, a division of labor may be helpful so as to avoid totally eclipsing Europe's role in this vital region. This could be achieved by deconstructing the conflict into its main components and assigning responsibility for each to a particular state willing to take it up or to the EU bureaucracy.

There are at least six different issues that could be handled separately. First and most urgent is a call for a ceasefire, which some European countries have already championed. Second, respect for international humanitarian law and accountability for all parties who have violated it.

Third, better access to humanitarian assistance, unhindered by logistics or Israeli restrictions. For example, Cyprus, supported by others in Europe, has proposed a maritime aid corridor from Larnaca to Gaza. Fourth, a resumption of negotiations for the release of civilian hostages and detainees.

Fifth, containment of the conflict to avoid it further spreading into the West Bank or neighboring countries. Sixth, reenergizing talks on the wider Palestine question. In September, the EU joined Saudi Arabia and the Arab League in launching a new initiative to revitalize peace efforts. The current bloody conflict makes it imperative to redouble those efforts. By engaging on these six issues, the EU and Europe can reclaim their rightful roles as significant actors in mediating this conflict and contribute to restoring international peace and security.

Arab News



# Change in Washington, not Israel, the priority for Palestinians

Osama Al-Sharif

ISRAEL'S war on Gaza, now almost two months old, has polarized the world and created a yawning rift between people and governments in the West, with millions of Europeans and Americans marching for a "free Palestine" and an end to the occupation, while their governments continue to support Israel's military campaign in Gaza without calling for a permanent ceasefire.

But the initial blind support of Israel in the wake of Hamas' Oct. 7 attack has slowly morphed, with the Biden White House and most European capitals now calling on Israel to adhere to international humanitarian law, avoid targeting civilians and allow for an uninterrupted flow of aid to the people of Gaza. The most extreme support of Israel came from US President Joe Biden and his Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Both continue to support Israel's right to defend itself against "terrorist Hamas," while complementing this with the almost vacuous statement that the US supports the two-state solution, even when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu comes out and says that he is the best man to derail it.

But where the White House speaks of the two-state solution, the mood on the Hill is different. The vast majority of US lawmakers have pledged unquestioning support to Israel, providing billions of dollars and openly calling for the total destruction of Hamas at any cost. Sen. Lindsey Graham, a warmonger, responded to a question by CNN on the hefty civilian cost of the Israeli war on Gazans by saying that Americans did not care how many people died when US bombers were raining bombs on Tokyo. He blames Hamas for every civilian death, repeating the Israeli claim that it uses civilians as human shields.

Aside from a handful of lawmakers - namely the so-called Squad, the informal name of a group of eight progressive Democratic representatives - no

key US senator or representative has openly called for a ceasefire and an investigation into Israeli war crimes. When it comes to the two-state solution and the possibility of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, both chambers are completely and vocally at odds with the declared US foreign policy position on the Palestine-Israel conflict. The solution to the occupation of Palestine, resolving the refugee problem and establishing a permanent and lasting peace in the region will not come from Israel. That hope dissipated long ago - thanks to Netanyahu and his sponsorship of the far right over the last 20-plus years.

The Israeli left is dead. All polls show that, if elections were to be held in Israel today, Labor, the party that led Israel for decades after its founding, would not get the necessary votes to pass the legal threshold to enter the Knesset. The right and far right now have the upper hand and will continue to do so for some time. The Palestinian answer to ending the occupation lies in Washington. And there is the problem. There are more than 50 pro-Israel groups active in the US today. The most prominent and influential of these, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, has sway over the most influential lawmakers and potential candidates. Last year, pro-Israel pressure groups spent more than \$4 million on lobbying alone. Much more goes into the so-called super PACS, which are defined as "independent expenditure-only political action committees." They are unlike traditional PACs, in that they may raise unlimited amounts from individuals, corporations, unions and other groups to spend on, for example, ads overtly advocating for or against political candidates.

American citizens elect these officials, but AIPAC and other pressure groups own them after-

ward. These pressure groups appeal to ordinary Americans through the mainstream media, which remains the main source of news and information for millions of adult Americans. One pro-Israel pressure group is the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America, founded in 1982. It is a nonprofit, pro-Israel media monitoring, research and membership organization. According to its website, this organization is "devoted to promoting accurate and balanced coverage of Israel and the Middle East." Naturally, one can guess how the committee makes sure that only the Zionist point of view of the Palestine-Israel conflict is portrayed in US mainstream media. In addition, Israel has managed to penetrate the US Christian community by focusing on so-called shared Judeo-Christian values. One such group, Christians United for Israel, which claims to have more than 10 million members, moved to raise more than \$2 million in support of Israel soon after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack. But more importantly, it was able to issue a joint "Evangelical statement in support of Israel" with the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission - an arm of the Southern Baptist Convention. This denomination has 45,000 churches in the US.

The Palestinians have no way of counterbalancing this huge Israeli/Zionist infiltration of US politics and religious culture. Arab lobbies in the US are more focused on promoting bilateral military and economic ties with the US. The Palestinians have no voice in American politics.

But things are slowly changing. America's Generation Z is a rebellious one; rejecting the corruption of Washington politics and supporting the Palestinian cause. This is because they have discarded mainstream media and are heading to social media platforms. They could play a pivotal role in the 2024 presidential election.

According to the Pew Research Center, 58 percent of people aged 18 to 29 have an unfavorable view of Israel, versus 28 percent of Americans older than 65. An NBC News poll released last week found that Biden's approval rating among voters aged 18 to 34 fell from 46 percent to 31 percent between September and November. US Muslim voters are also abandoning Biden.

That might not change the final outcome of the November 2024 election. There are many other factors in play. But while a slim majority of Americans still support Israel's war on Hamas, according to multiple polls released last week, more people are now asking questions about the plight of Palestinians - thanks to social media platforms. The sad reality is that the American presidency has been weakened by bipartisan squabbling in Congress, servility toward Israel and unprecedentedly deep polarization over issues such as abortion, immigration, traditional family values, taxing the rich and climate change, among others. But while candidates for the highest office in the land bicker over such issues, they all agree on one thing: blind support for Israel.

The world wants a two-state solution but lacks the political will to enforce it. Israel is in revenge mode but has no answer on what to do about Gaza, the West Bank or its Palestinian citizens. The Israeli far right proposes radical solutions, such as mass displacements and even transfer. How far will the US political establishment go in supporting bigots, racists and potential war criminals? The Israeli political establishment is seeking revenge at any cost. The world's political order is about to keel over as a result. The Palestinians will not get their freedom so long as Israel is defended and protected by the US. Something has to give and, unless a major change happens in America first, the Palestinians will have to endure more years of apartheid and oppression.

**As an Arab, I do not need to write for Palestinians. Palestinians have written to all of us for years with their words, lyrics, prose, verse, silence, blood and limbs. But their narrative, no matter how eloquent, mild, angry, or distressing, remains impossible.**

As the bombs rain on Gaza today, killing and maiming thousands of civilians and displacing more than a million, how does one write of Palestinian pain, Palestinian tears? What burden of believability must the Palestinians endure for their grief to meet the decency of recognition? In what language will their suffering be understood? What medium will ever carry their agony to safety?

In Arabic, the Palestinian pain needs no translation. It is visceral and piercing. Consider this scene from the live coverage of Palestine TV channel when reporter Salman al-Bashir broke down live as he delivered the news of the passing of his colleague Mohammed Abu Hatab and his entire family in a bombing in Gaza. Al-Bashir, speaking outside a hospital and in tears, removed his protective gear in a sign of utter despair as he delivered a harrowing account of his friend's murder amid the blaring sounds of ambulances. "The only difference between us and those who died already is just a question of time," he said.

"We are hunted down one after the other. Nobody looks out for us or realises the severity of this tragedy in Gaza. No international protection at all. These jackets and these helmets don't shield us from anything. They are mere slogans we wear for nothing. We are pure victims live on air. We are just waiting for our time." I wish everyone understood Arabic to feel the sonic vibration of pain in this reporter's words and connect with the sorrow in the voice of the studio anchor as she sobs in the background. In this tongue, there is no distrust, no test of sincerity, and no heartless expectation of proof of humanity.

In English, al-Bashir's torment was greeted with questions, suspicion or eviscerating calls of self-condemnation, while this narration found a tender chorus in Arabic. In English, it registered for many as mere information to be endlessly verified despite an appalling heap of evidence of thousands of children deliberately killed, dozens of journalists targeted, hospitals and schools bombed, and countless homes destroyed. Through screams and moans, through unbearable scenes of children trembling with fear, through the wailing of mothers and fathers holding dead babies in their arms, and through the anguish of the elderly forced to experience the dread of the Nakba twice in their lifetime, why does this Palestinian suffering feel like an endless performance with no resolution? Why does their pain need countless statements and signatures? Who are we to require another human being to audition for their humanity? Why is Palestinian testimony forbidden? Palestinians have had to deal with conditions of deletion and erasure since 1948, the year the occupation of their lands began. At the heart of their experience is a colonial project that pursues the expulsion and removal of a population from its land and simultaneously maintains that the land was empty and without a people.

For 75 years, Palestinians have had to resist a systematic campaign of occupation that has maligned their history and rendered them invisible. At every escalation of violence since then, the history of this occupation has been rendered a predictable loop of fragmented facts, misinformation and testimonies continuously discredited. During these terrifying episodes of violence - like the one we are bearing witness to today - Palestinians must always defend their narrative against a series of unacknowledged negotiations and stage their pain

Nabil Echchaibi

to the world with a cruel optimism that maybe this time, the world would finally believe them. Can the Palestinian ever be believed? Instead, and despite unprecedented street support in capitals across the world, Palestinian suffering feels imperfect in English, illicit, and contingent. Worse, it sounds like this: "Human animals; flatten Gaza; finish them; bounce the rubble; their kids keep Mein Kampf by their bedside; their mothers raise monsters; they hide terrorists in their hospitals and schools; they are all barbarians."

Rules of engagement, the Geneva Conventions and international law do not mean anything here. Kill them all, dehumanise them, and tell the world the occupier is the ultimate victim while the unspeakable unfolds on our screens. Nobody captures the impossibility of Palestinian narration as writer Adania Shibli does in her 2017 masterpiece Minor Detail, a fascinating tale in Arabic that defies the occupier's insistence on suppressing the account of the marginalised and effacing their right to narrate their own story. Shibli digs out a horrifying and well-documented "detail" from the archives about a young Bedouin girl who was raped repeatedly and killed in 1949 by a group of 17 Israeli soldiers. Through the narration of a Ramallah woman who is obsessed with finding the grave of the young girl and retelling the story of this "unworthy life", the novel resorts to an imperfect archive, erased maps and fragile memories to restage the pain of Palestinian absence since the traumatising experience of the 1948 Nakba.

Shibli's painstaking attempt to piece together fragments of an incident covered up in silence and distortion has been itself met with attempted erasure. Shortly after the October 7 attack, Litprom, a German literary association, withdrew an invitation to celebrate Minor Detail at the Frankfurt Book Fair, a prestigious event in the publishing world.

An interview that was scheduled with the author, whose book was a finalist for the National Book Award in the United States in 2020, was postponed to a later time with a "less politically charged atmosphere", according to the fair organisers. In obsessing over the location of the burial site, Shibli and her narrator are insisting on reclaiming the voice of all Palestinians silenced by the occupation and frustrated by the weight of their continuous cancellation. By cancelling the celebration, Litprom affirmed once again that Palestinian storytelling is ultimately suspicious.

Can the Palestinian ever narrate to live? Many invoke Israel's right to defend itself. I understand the Jewish fear of annihilation. It is real and I will never slight the heaviness of that memory. But why should that fear trump Palestinians' perpetual fear of erasure? What makes one fear more acceptable, more relatable than the other? Why must Palestinian life exist only as a litigation of someone else's fear? Are Palestinians condemned to be a mere audit of their existential ailment? They deserve freedom from a fear they did not create.

It is remarkable that yet again we must affirm not only Palestinians' right to live, but also the fact that Palestinians do not live just to resist. They also fall in love, laugh, sing, play, pray, dance, cook, make love, make art, act, write, build, farm, tell stories, dream, grieve, forget, forgive and remember. Sadly, we do not see them this way.

This is all too familiar. Like Palestinians, Arabs appear as unresolved questions, threats in a narrative authored by someone else. After 9/11, many of us felt detected, tracked down. We were told we must be smoked out of our caves. More than a million of us were killed to satisfy a mighty vengeance while the world stood watching. The vengeful "war on terror" brought out the worst of us, but it ignored the

best of us. An entire civilisation, a rich history, and an abundant life experience were reduced to a brutalising question mark, a mere confrontation with the "modern West".

Palestine has met the same fate in a world where the beautiful density of their existence has been compressed to a basic desire to stay alive. Words are bombs and bombs are words. We can no longer tell the difference. We are tired of living a life dictated by someone else's neuroses of fear and insecurity. We can't stand the constant questions. Why is it that the ones dropping bombs are always those asking the questions? Frantz Fanon, the champion of the Wretched of the Earth, said, "I came into this world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects." Fanon's Blackness was a crushing objecthood in a racist white world. Palestine is a crushing objecthood in an anti-Arab world.

How else could we explain those cheering for war, knowing that a child's life in Gaza expires underneath the rubble or in the hands of a distraught mother every 10 minutes? If bombs appease the rage, I hope scenes of wailing mothers are worth it. Some ask what Palestinians want. What do Arabs want? What do Muslims want? We want to be left out of imperial schemes and moralising decrees of what we should wear and how we should live. Try it once: leave the Middle East alone. This is how Arabs and Palestinians feel and have felt for decades, if others cared to ask such a simple question, a humane way to address all of us with a benign "How are you?" Instead, the official language has been coups, bombs, drones, collateral damage, absurd caricatures, brutal dictators shoved down our throats, farcical peace treaties, and occupation. Yes, it is our fault, too, but our biggest mistake has been accepting to be spoken to only in this impoverished idiom.

You may think I'm writing about anger, but these lines carry the crushing weight of exhaustion. I learned English many years ago with the lyrics of Bob Dylan and Bob Marley. Words were biting and soothing. The sounds of a new language felt uplifting. Get Up, Stand Up! Everything's Gonna be Alright. I did not understand then why Bob Marley sang in a band called The Wailers. I do now. For far too long, English to me has been about a one-way call and response, a relentless interrogation with words experienced like a rattle of bullets. My writing has felt like waiting to be understood. Speaking in English feels like a prisoner gazing at the warden's keys.

These days, I am Sixo, the character in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, who stops speaking English because he sees no future in it. I am the nameless Palestinian narrator in Shibli's *Minor Detail* who stutters because speaking at the checkpoint is treacherous. To make things worse, university officials tell us teachers and students to be neutral, not to take sides in this war, and maintain our commitment to conflict of ideas and critique. This may be the biggest farce I have heard in all my time in academia. Should I remind you that these silencing ploys come to me in English?

To be clear, there is nothing in English, or any other language, that is inherently callous or heartless. I write about the helplessness some of us feel in speaking a language that seldom loves us back.

Palestine is narration. You may hear it as noise, as mere information, but we hear it as an eloquent testimony of endurance, a proof of life. As the poet Fady Joudah says, "I live Palestine in English. But in my heart Palestine is Arabic. And Palestine in Arabic does not need to explain itself." Despite all this, I cling to a glimmer of hope that one day this English will feel the warmth of our Arabic.

# The Israeli far right is sinking to new lows

Yossi Mekelberg

FOR any decent human being, regardless of religion, ethnicity, gender or age, the horrors we have been witnessing since Oct. 7 in Israel and Gaza are shocking and terrifying. The very notion that people can willingly inflict such unimaginable pain and suffering on their fellow human beings - pain and suffering that no religion, ideology or political objective could remotely justify - questions the very notion of humanity and what it means to be human.

And despite all the bloodshed and destruction, there are still those on both sides who justify these atrocities and believe that they are on the journey to victory, while the truth is that they are taking us all on the road to hell. The brutality of what Hamas committed on that horrific October day is well documented and responding to it and preventing such threats in the future is understandable, but this cannot justify Israel's mass killings of Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

Worse is that there is a segment of Israeli society that sees the war as a license to release their darkest, most sinister inner political selves and openly call for mass atrocities against the Palestinians. The far right, which is a combination of messianic-religious and secular ultranationalists, has come out of the woodwork to promote, with no shame and no qualms, the committing of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Something of a conjunction of incitement to genocide and sheer idiocy was the suggestion last month by Jerusalem Affairs and Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu that dropping a nuclear weapon on the Gaza Strip was "an option." His "reasoning" for considering this as an acceptable option was that there

are "no noncombatants in Gaza." Admittedly, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded with the understatement of the year, when he declared that Eliyahu's comments were "divorced from reality," but what he should have done was the decent thing and sacked him from his government even before the interview was over. This was merely a ticking off; a nutcracker when a sledgehammer was required. I do not suspect that there are any in Israel who remotely believe that a nuclear strike is an option, given its moral and practical implications, but the very fact that a government minister has expressed a view that the entire population of Gaza is blameworthy and hence deserves to die is chilling. And Eliyahu did not stop there. He suggested, as have some other of his colleagues, that humanitarian aid should not be allowed into the Gaza Strip; in other words, if an atom bomb cannot be dropped, then mass starvation and disease will do the trick.

As a side note, Eliyahu implied - and perish the thought - that Israel possesses nuclear military capability, an admission which in the past has carried with it a lengthy prison term. That is something for later, but his explicit suggestion of eliminating the entire Palestinian population for the sake of Israel's security is something that needs urgent discussion. As wacky as these remarks may have been, they are not a million miles away from a suggestion made by another minister, security Cabinet member and former Shin Bet director Avi Dichter. When he was asked whether what is currently taking place is a "Gaza Nakba," Dichter replied: "Gaza Nakba 2023. That's how it'll end."

Nothing is more terrifying for Palestinians to hear, especially from a senior member of the security Cabinet, that they might have to relive the most horrific epoch in their history: the mass displacements and disposessions of 1948. As in the case of Eliyahu's remarks, it might be that some Israeli politicians suffer from a judgment bypass whenever a microphone is put in front of them, but I suspect that these have been their long-held views that were only waiting for the "right time" to surface, and that they felt this war was that time. Nevertheless, it is not only live interviews that are giving a platform for Israeli ministers to unburden themselves about their "vision" for Gaza. Gila Gamliel, who as the current minister of intelligence should have resigned the day after Oct. 7, preferably accompanied by Netanyahu, wrote for The Jerusalem Post her opinion of what should be done with the population of Gaza after the war. Unlike Dichter's remarks, which were a full-on advocacy for another Nakba, here was something of a Nakba-lite, although equally disturbing.

Part of Gamliel's piece was an unsubstantiated attack on UNRWA, claiming that it "has done zero to help the Palestinian people" - a remark that represents sheer ignorance combined with the distortion of a difficult reality in which this UN organ operates to provide humanitarian aid under the most horrendous of circumstances. It has already lost at least 111 of its people to the war, yet it still provides, under fire, basic needs and shelter for hundreds of thousands in their overcrowded facilities. Gamliel's attack on UNRWA was

mainly aimed at promoting her so-called plan to deprive the organization of its budget and use it instead to "help" the people of Gaza to "resettle" in other countries. How had we never thought of this brilliant idea until now? Obviously, Gamliel has too much of a humanitarian soul to suggest a forced expulsion, yet she does not suggest that the people she wants to resettle are going to be consulted or who is going to absorb them. From being a failed intelligence minister, she has reinvented herself as the "Minister of Palestinian Emigration" or, to put it more bluntly, the "Minister of Nakba 2.0."

Times of crisis and conflict can bring the best out of humanity, with people showing their caring and empathetic nature. But as far as some of Israel's right wing is concerned, this war is showing them at their very worst. In the West Bank, groups of extremist settlers are taking advantage of the situation, while the eyes of the world are on Gaza, to intensify their violence against Palestinians. And one of their most prominent leaders, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, is even handing out weapons to them.

This not only risks their increasing use against Arabs, but also the creation of a militia that will resist any concessions in a future peace agreement. There is no room for complacency regarding what at this point may appear to be the extreme views of a minority of Israeli politicians and ordinary citizens. It should not be assumed that such views will not take hold in wider segments of Israeli society. Hence, these ideas should not be taken as simply anecdotal and of no consequence, but rather responded to in all seriousness and nipped in the bud.

# No Palestinian is safe anywhere in world

Marwah Abdel Jabbar

ON November 26 in the afternoon, I received a call from the director of the school where I teach informing me that three former students had been shot in the United States. Hisham Awartani, Kinnan Abdulhamid, and Tahseen Ali Ahmad, some of the brightest students I knew and taught, were shot and almost killed. I choked on my tears as I phoned another teacher to let her know.

I started teaching English at the Ramallah Friends School in the central occupied West Bank in October of 2019. The following year, I started teaching Hisham and Kinnan and met Tahseen. I came to know them as they were preparing to cross the finish line of their high school career, and in one year, they managed to leave an incredible mark on me as their teacher. Their diligence and commitment to excelling at their studies motivated me to be the best teacher I could be. The Ramallah Friends School is the only International Baccalaureate and Quaker school in the occupied West Bank. Our student body is diverse and includes students from the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem but also dual nationals from Western countries.

All students come from families that are working tirelessly to provide their children with the best possible education that Palestine can afford. Our students go through a rigorous curriculum, in order to make them more eligible to apply for universities abroad. Yet, living under the precariousness of military occupation means that my students regularly miss classes because of general strikes that take place after Israeli soldiers kill children and adults - sometimes metres away from the school or their homes. Every Palestinian student, whether going to a private or a public school, has a classmate who has been arrested, detained, tortured or killed by the Israeli military. Palestinian children are constantly facing their mortality and have to be hyper aware of their surroundings every time they cross a checkpoint or commute to another city.

My students - and Palestinian students in general - who are applying to go to university abroad are searching for better opportunities, and ultimately, safer ones. Kinnan, Hisham, and Tahseen all applied to many top tier universities. I vividly remember when Kinnan and Hisham shared they

had been admitted to Haverford and Brown with me. It was the first time I finally saw all their stress and anxiety wither away. They crossed their most important finish line to their high school careers. I was incredibly proud, but not surprised. I witnessed their eloquent and introspective thoughts in class. I saw them grapple with course material and excel. I knew what they were capable of achieving even when they couldn't see it immediately themselves. I was their teacher, and they were my students, and that was all that mattered to me at that moment. When Kinnan, Hisham and Tahseen graduated, I realised that this would most likely be the last time I see them, as they were leaving for the US. I never imagined that the next time I heard from them or about them would be that they had fallen victim to a shooting. I think I can speak for my entire school community when I say that we were all into a state of shock and disbelief. Western media and government officials cannot divorce the attempted murder of our students from the ongoing genocide in Gaza, the assault on the Jenin refugee camp, the land theft and serial settler violence and colonisa-

tion of Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank - all perpetrated by Israel.

My students were shot because their language and their identity are perceived as a threat by the white coloniser's mind. I grappled with whether or not I should say anything about the shooting. I made a decision when I saw Hisham's heartfelt and principled statement read out at a candlelight vigil at Brown University. Even though I wasn't surprised by his wisdom, I was still awestruck. He put things in perspective for me and many others with his closing sentence: "your mind should not focus on me [him] as an individual, but rather as a proud member of a people being oppressed."

The cruelty of this tragedy has left me in a state of unease. How do I face my students? How do I motivate them and give them hope? How do I assure their safety? The reality of being a teacher in Palestine means that these questions haunt one's mind. This is incomparable to how Palestinian parents feel every day. The truth is, after November 26, I found out that my students always gave me more hope than I did to them, and that no Palestinian is safe anywhere in the world.

Aljazeera





# SBP launches ‘RAAST’ P2M payment service

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan has issued instructions to its Regulated Entities (REs) for enabling RAAST Person-to-Merchant (P2M) payment service for their customers. The Raast P2M system will enable merchants to accept payments through different modes including Unified Quick Response (QR) Codes, Raast Alias (such as mobile phones), bank accounts (IBAN), and Request to Pay (RTP).

The SBP Digital Finance Group Circular issued on December 05, 2023 requires all REs i.e. Banks, Micro Finance Banks (MFBs), Electronic Money Institutions (EMIs) and Payment Service Providers (PSPs) to enable the capabilities such as (i) Read/Scan RAAST QR Codes, (ii) Process Request to Pay (Now and Later), (iii) Push Payments to merchant RAAST Aliases and IBANs and (iv) initiate the request for returns/refunds in their respective Apps by

March 2024. The REs have also been instructed to provide efficient, seamless and easy to use interfaces to their customers. Further, REs have been instructed not to charge any fee from their customers using Raast payment options to pay for their transactions.

The SBP has also instructed the existing merchants acquiring REs to complete the integrations with ‘RAAST’ for enabling their respective merchants and e-commerce players to accept payments through

‘RAAST’ P2M service by March 31, 2024. Further, all REs shall ensure that billers/bill-aggregators already on-boarded by them are also enabled to accept payments via Raast payment options by March 31, 2024.

The enablement of RAAST P2M facility is likely to give a big boost to the SBP digitization efforts enabling hundreds of thousands of vendors across the country to receive payments against the goods and services in their accounts on real time basis.



**HYDERABAD:** Labourers busy in preparing wooden boxes for packing fruits and vegetables at vegetable market.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships, MSC Jemima, MSC Greenwich, Maersk Chicago, Meratus Jayawijaya and Ardmore Cherokee Carrying Containers and Palm oil, berthed at Container Terminal and Liquid Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile two more ships, FMT Efes and Eget Bulker carrying Coko and Chemicals also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during last 24 hours.

Double Eagle, Marathopolis, MSC Rania, CM ACGM Nabucco, Al-Sadafra and Umm Al-Amad Golden Denise.

A total of 11 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, a chemicals carrier Horizon left the port on Wednesday morning and four more ships, Umm Al-Amad, Maersk Chicago, MSC Jemima and BP Poiner-lare expected to sail on today afternoon.

Cargo volume of 211,200 tonnes, comprising 155,509 tonnes imports cargo and 55,691 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 6,605 Containers (4,428 TEUs Imports and 2,177 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 13 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Hai Phuong, Egret Bulker and Golden Denise & another ship Xpress Bardsey scheduled to load/offload Rice, Coke, Chemicals and Containers are expected to take berths at MW-1, PIBT, EVTL and QICT on Wednesday.

## Exports to Afghanistan increased

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's export of goods and services to Afghanistan witnessed an increase of 2.65 per cent during the first four months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

The overall exports to Afghanistan were recorded at US \$180.686 million during July-October (2023-24) against exports of US \$176.019 million during July-October (2022-23), SBP data revealed.

On a year-to-year basis, the exports to Afghanistan also surged by 6.57 per cent from \$48.862 million in October 2022, against the exports of \$52.077 million in October 2023.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to Afghanistan rose by 29.49 per cent during October 2023 as compared to the exports of \$40.217 million in September 2023, the SBP data revealed.

Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 1.13 per cent in the first four months, from US \$9.666 billion to US \$9.776 billion. On the other hand, the imports from Afghanistan into the country during the months under review were recorded at US \$1.898 million against US \$10.151 million last year, showing a decline of 81.30 per cent in July-October (2023-24).

On a year-on-year basis, the imports from Afghanistan witnessed a decrease of \$7.60 per cent from US \$1.991 million in October 2022, against the imports of US \$0.844 million in October 2023.

# German team led by Usman met Motiwala

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: A high profile delegation from Germany headed by Mr. Muhammad Usman, German Emirati Joint Council for Industry & Commerce, Dubai, Country Head Pakistan met Mr. Muhammad Zubair Motiwala, CE, TDAP.

The delegation, warmly received by the Chief Executive, TDAP and shaded light on Pakistan - Germany bilateral trade and trade promotional activities, a comprehensive overview on the promotional activities was shared with the distinguished delegates.

The delegates on its part highlighted its global presence with offices in various countries, it was emphasized that the Dubai chapter

plays a pivotal role in advancing trade promotion activities within the region, focusing on countries such as Pakistan, Iran and the UAE.

During the meeting, the delegation outlined its primary objective of fostering stronger ties between German Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and their counterparts in Pakistan. Discussions ensued regarding the logistical support that will be extended to a forthcoming German delegation specializing in Agro-Textile.

The honorable guest highlighted the German Government's initiative under "Market Development Program" and "GIZ" for encouraging trade ties between the both countries.

The Chief Executive offered space for "GIZ Help Desks" in the TDAP offices across the country.

In a forward-looking initiative, the Chief Executive of TDAP proposed the organization of an Agro and Textile exhibition in Pakistan. This exhibition aims to serve as a platform for showcasing German SMEs to their Pakistani counterparts, fostering collaboration and facilitating bilateral trade.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with a commitment to further groundwork on the proposed delegation and exhibition liaison. Both parties expressed eagerness to nurture and strengthen the economic ties between Germany and Pakistan.

# Sesamum seeds export increased tremendously

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan exported \$351 Million sesame seeds in the 5 month of current fiscal year, which is 294% more in comparison with the same period in the previous year. In 2022, it was just \$ 89 Million in the same period.

Zubair Mottiwalla, Chief Executive TDAP said that Pakistan is the 5th largest exporter of sesame seed in the world. Export of sesame seed in last five months is more than total

export of last 2 years. Our 90% export is destined to Chinese market. Due to disruption in Sudan and Niger, supply chain of sesame seed is disturbed, and Pakistani exporters have availed this opportunity to penetrate further in the Chinese market.

He has further said that In order to further enhance our share in international sesame export market, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan in coordination with Ministry of Commerce, has approached relevant

growers and exporters. Based on feedback, it is decided that awareness sessions on International market trends will be organized in main clusters of sesame growing areas.

Sessions will also contain awareness about value addition and pre and post harvest procedures for getting better yield. Experts from Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC), Our Trade Missions in China, and relevant stakeholders will attend the session.

# LCCI hails Business Facilitation Centre

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Wednesday hailed the Punjab government for establishing Business Facilitation Centre and expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, who took a giant leap towards facilitating the business community.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that the one-window operation, consolidating services from 20 provincial and federal departments under a single roof, is the biggest relief for the business community as it would save their capital

and time.

The LCCI president also appreciated the untiring efforts of the Punjab Industries Department and matchless cooperation to the business community. He said that the one-window operation by the Punjab government would facilitate the business processes and would also improve the business climate in the province.

He said that the great initiative of Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi and Minister for Industries SM Tanveer had provided business community a point where various procedures

related to businesses requiring interaction with different government agencies are centralized in one location.

Kashif Anwar said that Lahore and other Chambers of Commerce & Industry were calling for a long time now that there should be a one window operation to facilitate the local and foreign investors.

He said that Punjab one-window operation would not only encourage the foreigners but would also give encouragement to the local businessmen to put their money in new ventures.

# ICCI for fostering entrepreneurship

ISLAMABAD (APP): President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari Wednesday said that the youth was the future of Pakistan and urged the government to take measures to foster entrepreneurship in students right from the school level to facilitate the growth of start-ups that would help uplift the economy.

Addressing students after administering oath as Chief Guest to the Student Council Body of Roots International Schools (RIS), he said that the entrepreneurship education would develop a range of skills and competencies in students that would help them gain success in

their personal and professional lives, said a press release issued here.

The president said that the entrepreneurship education at school level would also enable students to think like an entrepreneur and take the skills and knowledge gained in school or college to apply them in the real-world challenges for becoming successful businesspersons.

Fostering entrepreneurship in students would create new businesses and jobs to address unemployment and economic challenges in a better manner, he added.

On the occasion, the RIS students vowed under oath to perform their duties honestly and to the best of their abilities.

They affirmed that they would be responsible members of the Student Council Body and abide by the rules and regulations made by the RIS to guarantee themselves and the student body a better campus life.

Ms Saira Habib of RIS congratulated and advised the students to work with responsibility and honesty and through this platform learn how to uphold these honorable positions with integrity, and maintain discipline, interact with their peers and aid their fellow students.

The president ICCI interacted with the students and gave them useful tips to excel in their life and emerge as a successful professional in various fields.

# FF's ‘Salam Kissan’ Campaign wins Prestigious DRUM Award

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: Fatima Fertilizer, a leading name in the fertilizer industry, has once again garnered international acclaim with its groundbreaking ‘Salam Kissan’ campaign, winning the prestigious Drum Award 2023 in London, in the category, ‘Social Purpose: Social Media’. Titled ‘Life without Kissan (Farmers),’ the campaign aimed to highlight the stark reality of a world without the contributions of farmers. This remarkable achievement underscores Fatima Fertilizer's unwavering commitment to meaningful social impact and innovation in the realm of digital marketing.

The Drum Awards Festival is an annual light-house event for the global

marketing community, celebrating excellence in every key marketing discipline. Distinguished as one of the largest in the world, The Drum Awards uniquely elevates teams and their hard work, offering unparalleled recognition within the industry, granting global recognition and international prestige.

In line with this spirit of excellence, Salam Kissan, the flagship initiative of Fatima Fertilizer, goes beyond being a mere project as it reflects the company's ethos and resolute commitment to supporting and uplifting the farming community in Pakistan. By amplifying voices of farmers and recognizing their hard work and resilience, this achievement reinforces Fatima Fertilizer's commitment as a pioneer in bring-

ing about positive change and progress in the agricultural sector.

Rabel Sadozai, the Director Sales and Marketing at Fatima Fertilizer, expressed her deep appreciation upon receiving the Drum Award, stating, ‘This prestigious accolade is a testament to the collective dedication of my team, the entire Fatima Fertilizer family and the spirit of our nation. It underscores the pivotal role farmers play in the prosperity of our country. We are committed to providing them with an effective platform to engage with policymakers and to continue our efforts towards a brighter and more sustainable future for Pakistan.’

The Drum Award is a testament to the success of the ‘Salam Kissan’ initia-

tive, which aims not only to uplift the lives of farmers but also to harness digital innovation and technology to modernize the agricultural sector in Pakistan. The initiative, encompassing programs such as Sarsabz Tabeer (Female Farmer Empowerment program), Sarsabz Pakistan (Farmer App), Sarsabz Asaan (Dealer App) and Sarsabz Kahani (Agri Webseries), strives to empower farmers, bridge gaps, and unlock the immense potential of Pakistan's agricultural landscape for the benefit of all.

Fatima Fertilizer's win at the Drum Awards 2023 further solidifies its position as a trailblazer in the industry and a beacon of excellence for companies dedicated to making a positive impact on society.

# PSX crosses another milestone, reaches to 63,917 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) crossed another milestone on Wednesday and reached to 63,917.72 points by gaining 961.70 more points, a positive change of 1.53 percent, PSX reported.

A total of 984,813,834 shares valuing Rs 35,094 billion were traded during the day as compared to 765,418,288 shares valuing Rs 30.858 billion the last day.

Some 383 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 258 of them recorded gains and 117 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 08 remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 143,664,783 shares at Rs3.52 per share, WorldCall Telecom with

56,892,842 shares at Rs 1.57 per share and Hascol Petrol with 54,500,000 shares at Rs 6.69 per share.

Nestle Pakistan Ltd witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 99.99 per share price, closing at Rs 8,700.00, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Fiber Ltd with a Rs 89.50 rise in its per share price to Rs 1,309.50.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 91.00 per share closing at Rs 11,399.00, followed by Pakistan Tobacco Ltd with a Rs 55.69 decline to close at Rs 1,091.01.

**Rupee gains 23 paise against Dollar**

Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday witnessed an appreciation of 23 paise against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs284.14 against the previous day's closing

at Rs284.37.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs283.3 and Rs286 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.05 to close at Rs306.50 against the last day's closing of Rs307.55, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.93; whereas a decrease of 86 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs358.10 compared to the last closing of Rs358.96.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 07 and 06 paise to close at Rs77.37 and Rs75.75

respectively.

**Gold rates decrease by Rs.1,300 to Rs.218,100 per tola**

The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed a decrease of Rs.1,300 on Wednesday and was sold at Rs.218,100 against its sale at Rs 219,400 the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs1,114 to Rs.186,986 from Rs 188,100 whereas that of and 10 gram 22 Karat gold declined to Rs.171,403 from Rs 172,425.

The price of per tola silver and ten-gram silver remained unchanged to close at Rs 2600 and Rs 2,229.08 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$9 to \$2,048 from \$2,057, the Association reported.

# Chinese cotton producer welcomes collaboration with Pakistan

BEIJING (APP): ‘Our cotton consumption still falls short of achieving complete self-sufficiency, leading our company to consider importing cotton. In the future, we plan to collaborate with leading cotton-producing nations globally, tailoring our partnerships based on specific variety requirements,’ said Ms. Zhang Yan, the interim

CEO of WinnerMedical.

‘While we do not directly procure from cotton farmers, our approach primarily involves utilizing platforms like China Cotton to select the most suitable global supply chains. Collaboration with major cotton-producing nations like Pakistan is entirely feasible,’ she said at the conclusion of the inaugural China International Supply Chain Promotion Expo, in an interview with China Economic Net.

As a leading Chinese cotton product manufacturer, in response to the national ‘Belt and Road’ initiative, the Winner Group has expressed strong interest in collaborating with cotton-producing giants like Pakistan, extending its trade network worldwide.

Pakistan's domestic cotton industry faces various challenges, including the need for research and development of high-quality cotton varieties and innovative approaches to cotton prod-

uct manufacturing. The entry of foreign enterprises' investment may pave the way for a new chapter in the country's cotton sector.

Pakistan ranks as the world's fifth-largest cotton producer and the third-largest consumer, proudly holding the title of the globe's premier cotton yarn exporter. With the easing of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a notable upswing in Pakistan's cotton harvest this year, witnessing an impressive 81% year-on-year increase.

However, despite this surge in production, the country finds itself compelled to import cotton bales to meet the ever-growing demands of its textile industry.

## Court Notice

In the Court of Shafqat Qadeer Civil Judge XIV Bannu. Suit No.386/1. Institution no.16-11-2023 Next date of Hearing 13-12-2023 Case title: Muhammad Ali Shah etc VS Nazam Badshah etc. Notice to (2) Ali Badshah son of Islam Badshah (7) Inam Ali Shah (8) Nafid Ali Shah Sons Mir Habib Shah R/o Piran Khan Badshah Teshil and District Bannu. Presently Abroad Whereas in the above mentioned case the above mentioned defendants cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8.00 am on 13-12-2023, the proceedings will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

## Court Notice

In the Court of Samina Sahar Civil Judge-XIII Bannu. Suit No. 123/FC, institution 04.07.2023 Next date of hearing is 15.12.2023. Title: Meena Sana vs Abdul Samad TO: Abdul samad son Muhammad Hanif Khan R/O Ghori wala Teshil & District Bannu presently Abroad Phone No. 00966501042268. The defendants are informed through this notice to appear in this court on 15.12.2023. After this no excuse would be accepted and ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. Given under my hand and seal of this court.

## Court Notice

In the Court of Shafqat Qadeer Civil Judge XIV Bannu Suit No.387/1. Institution no. 08-11-2023 Next date of Hearing 13-12-2023 Case title: Hamid Ali Shah etc. Vs Sahibz Ali Khan etc. Notice to (6) Sher Ghafoor Khan S/o Abdul Ghafoor Khan (7) Abdul Saboor S/o Abdul Ghafoor Khan (8) Noor Muhammad (9) Muzafar Khan son of Abdul Ghafoor Khan R/o Noghari Mamesh Khel Bobari Kaley Bannu. Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendant cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8.00 AM on 13-12-2023, the proceedings will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

## Court Notice

In the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi Civil Judge I /Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Suit No 545/1. Institution 11/10/2023. Date of hearing. 22/12/2023. Abdullah etc VS Hakem Khan etc. Notice to no. 9. Amot Khan s/o Zaeed Lhan. 12. Sher Umer s/o Sher Wali Khan. 13. Gul Dad Khan s/o Said Mastan. 15. Intiaz s/o Said Mastan residents of Daggar Kalay tehsel Daggar district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 9 am dated 22/12/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.





## In brief

## Pakistan claims first victory

KARACHI (Web Desk): Musharraf Khan displayed magnificent performance helping the Pakistan Baseball Team bag first victory in the Asian Baseball Championship. The Pakistan team beat high-rank Thailand by 4-1 in the tournament being held in Taiwan. Musharraf Khan, 18, threw 111 pitches in all 9 innings and gave only 1 run while recording all 27 outs in his 2nd International game leading Pakistan to beat the opponent side. "The most dominating performance by any pitcher in Asian Championship. Musharraf Khan pitched all 9 innings recorded all 27 outs. @pakbaseball won by 4-1. What a performance. Congratulations team Pakistan," the federation said in a tweet. Although, Pakistan failed to qualify for the Super Round from Group B but the performance has garnered praise from social media users.

## ITF Committees &amp; Commissions

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Tennis Federation on Wednesday named three Pakistani officials in the 2024-2025 Committees and Commissions. They include Senator Salim Saifullah Khan (President PTF) as Davis Cup & Billie Jean King Cup Taskforce; Asim Shafik as ITF Coaches Commission and Mohammad Ali Murtaza in Juniors Committee. It was a matter of great pride and honour for Pakistan and for Pakistan Tennis Federation, that services of Pakistani officials have been recognized at such a high level for the first time in the history. Salim Saifullah Khan and PTF management also thanked David Haggerty, President ITF, and his team for the appointments. The president PTF also assured that he and his team would continue to work with same zeal and dedication for the promotion and development of tennis.

## Pak judokas to undergo training

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



CANBERRA: Shan Masood celebrates after scoring 150 during day one of the Tour Match between the Prime Ministers XI and Pakistan at Manuka Oval.

## Spinners drag Bangladesh back into contest as Kiwis teeter on 55-5

DHAKA (AFP): Spinners Mehidy Hasan and Taijul Islam shared five wickets between them to help Bangladesh claw their way back into contention with New Zealand struggling at 55-5 in Wednesday's opener to the second Test.

An astonishing 15 wickets fell in the first day's play in Dhaka, with the hosts all out for just 172 in an innings where Mushfiqur Rahim became just the second batsman in Test history to be dismissed for obstructing the field.

Mehidy and Taijul then cut a swathe through New Zealand in the final session before bad light prompted an early finish.

Mehidy scalped Devon Conway (11), Kane Williamson (13) and Tom Blundell (0) in between Taijul's dismissal of Tom

Latham (4) and Henry Nicholls (1) to obliterate the tourists' early advantage.

Daryl Mitchell was batting on 12 alongside Glenn Phillips on five when stumps were drawn at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, with nine overs remaining.

Mitchell Santner and Phillips earlier took 3-65 and 3-31 respectively after the hosts opted to bat, while Ajaz Patel claimed 2-54 for the tourists as they dominated in their bid to level the two-match series.

Mushfiqur top-scored with 35 after Bangladesh opted to bat, helping the hosts recover from a dismal 47-4.

But he then suffered a rare dismissal in the second session when, after defending a delivery from Kyle Jamieson in the 41st over, he instinctively swatted the ball away with his hand.

New Zealand appealed and television umpire Ahsan Raza declared Mushfiqur out.

England's Leonard Hutton was the only other batsman to be dismissed for obstructing the field in Test cricket, during a match against South Africa at the Oval in 1951.

Mushfiqur's out would have previously been considered a "handled the ball" dismissal, but a change in the laws in 2017 brought the category under "obstructing the field".

His 57-run partnership with Shahadat Hossain had helped the hosts recover from the spin demolition of their top order by Santner and Patel.

But after Mushfiqur returned to the pavilion, Phillips dismissed Shahadat (31) and Nurul Hasan

(seven) to put Bangladesh into further trouble.

Santner -- who replaced Ish Sodhi in the only change among both teams from the first Test -- took the wicket of Mehidy, who made 20 before edging a catch at slip.

Phillips grabbed his third wicket, trapping Taijul Islam leg before for six, before Tim Southee snared the last wicket of Shoriful Islam for 10.

Southee did not concede a run in his 5.5 overs.

Earlier, Zakir Hasan and Mahmudul Hasan put on 29 runs in the opening stand before a disastrous five overs saw Bangladesh lose four wickets for just 18 runs.

Bangladesh are chasing a first-ever Test series win over the Black Caps after their 150-run victory in Sylhet last week.

## Amir's heroics help Strikers trump Braves in low-scorer

ABU DHABI (Agencies): Four wickets in the second over left Chennai Braves in a hole from which they could hardly find their way back up, as New York Strikers stroled to a five-wicket win.

After running Kobe Herft out to start the over, Strikers' Mohammad Amir struck three times in the next five balls to remove George Munsey, and both Bhanuka Rajapaksa and Charith Asalanka without scoring. Jason Roy and Sikandar Raza briefly rebuilt with a 30-run stand from 6 for 4 at one stage, before Sunil Narine got Raza for 14 in the sixth over. Amir dismissed Roy for 18 in the eighth, and finished with 4 for 7 in two overs, as Strikers restricted Braves to 75 for 9.

But a rude shock awaited Strikers in the chase. Sam Cook nearly replicated Amir's heroics by reducing Strikers to 1 for 2 after just three balls, as openers Niroshan Dickwella and Rahmanullah Gurbaz were sent back for golden ducks.

But Muhammad Waseem and Mark Deyal limited the damage by adding 30, before Asif Ali wrapped the game up for Strikers with an unbeaten 23 off just 13 balls. Their fifth successive win meant Strikers continued to top the points table.

## Wozniacki gets Australian Open wildcard

SYDNEY (Agencies): Former champion Caroline Wozniacki has been awarded a wildcard for next month's Australian Open.

The Dane, 33, retired in 2020 but returned in August after giving birth to her two children. Wozniacki reached the US Open fourth round in September on her Grand Slam comeback, losing to eventual winner Coco Gauff. The Australian Open at Melbourne Park starts on 14 January. The tournament has been extended to 15 days for the first time in an attempt to reduce the number of late-night finishes.

## Shan Masood hits unbeaten 156 on first day of four-day game

CANBERRA (Monitoring Desk): Shan Masood registered his 25th first-class century to start off his maiden tour as Pakistan's captain, taking his team to 324-6 after 89.4 overs on the first day of the four-day game against Prime Minister's XI at Manuka Oval in Canberra.

Right-arm pacer Jordan Buckingham struck early to dismiss opening batter Imam-ul-Haq (9, 24b, 1x4) after Pakistan won the toss and elected to bat first.

Shan came to bat at the conclusion of the eighth over of the innings, with Pakistan 18-1. The 34-year-old weaved a brilliant und efeated knock of 156 from 235 deliveries, including 13 boundaries and a six, ensuring Pakistan remain in reach of an impressive total

in the first innings.

He was the top-scorer for the side and successfully held one end throughout the day while six wickets fell on the other end.

Shan had joined opening batter Abdullah Shafique (38, 76b, 1x4) on the crease. The two stitched a 58-run stand before the latter was caught at short cover after mistiming a length ball delivered by Steketee.

Babar Azam then batted together with Shan to add 92 runs to the total. Buckingham struck again to take Pakistan's most prized wicket as Babar walked back to the pavilion after scoring 40 from 88, including five fours.

The next batter in, Saud Shakeel (13, 35b, 1x4), failed to stay on the crease for too long as he fell vic-

tim to off-spinner Todd Murphy. Wicketkeeper-batter Sarfaraz Ahmed produced a brisk 41 from 47, studded with six boundaries before he was caught off Buckingham's bowling. The partnership between Shan and Sarfaraz yielded a total of 73 runs for the fifth wicket.

Faheem Ashraf (17, 35b, 1x4) was the last batter to fall today as Pakistan ended the day at 324-6 after batting for 89.4 overs. The second day's play at Manuka Oval will resume on 0430 PKT.

**Scores in brief:** Pakistan 324-6, 89.4 overs (Shan Masood 156 not out, Sarfaraz Ahmed 41, Babar Azam 40, Abdullah Shafique 38; Jordan Buckingham 3-63, Mark Steketee 1-43, Nathan McAndrew 1-55, Todd Murphy 1-90).

## Pakistan register comeback draw against Netherlands in Junior Hockey World Cup

KUALA LUMPUR (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan hockey team kicked off their Junior World Cup campaign with an impressive draw against the Netherlands 3-3 on Wednesday at Malaysia National Hockey Stadium.

The Netherlands started the game on high with two field goals in the 21st and 30th minutes by Boris Aardenburg and Casper van der Veen respectively to end the first half with a massive advantage over Pakistan.

Pakistan then decreased the deficit by one goal in the third quarter courtesy of

midfielder Arshad Liaquat's field goal to bring the scores down to 2-1.

The Green Shirts then earned a penalty in the 36th minute of the third quarter, which was successfully converted by Sufian Khan to level the scores.

However, the Netherlands did not slow down and took the lead again in the 47th minute with a field goal by Olivier Hortensius.

Their lead did not last long as Pakistan's Arbaz Ahmed helped his side level the scores with an equalizing penalty corner.

Pakistan will play their next Junior Hockey World Cup match against New Zealand tomorrow and then against Belgium on 9th December.

Pakistan won the inaugural Junior World Cup in 1979 and then claimed bronze medals in the next three editions before getting a silver in the 1993 edition.

They have not been able to win any medal in the Junior World Cup since 1993 and finished at their lowest 11th position in the 2021 edition in Bhubaneswar, India.

## Peshawar Football League Season-6 begins

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Football League started at Tahamas Khan Football Stadium and in the opening matches Shinwari Club defeated Hazara Club by 4-0 while the match between Atash Club Tank and Ideal Football Club Chitral played a 1-1 draw on Wednesday.

Head of the Brain Education System and known education Zafar Ullah Khan was the chief guest on this occasion and formally inaugurated a crowd opening ceremony with the top eight teams, divided into two groups, taking part.

Shinwari Football Club defeated Miraj Club Hazara 4-0 in the opening match, while the second match between Atash Tank and Ideal Chitral Football Club was a 1-1 draw. Regional Sports Officer Zakirullah, District Sports Officer Miss Gul Rukh, Match Commissioner former

Pakistan team captain Gohar Zaman, Chief Organizer Chairman Youth Glam Welfare Organization Gul Haider, and other personalities were present.

The official opening of Peshawar Football League Season 6 started at Tahamas Khan Football Stadium in Peshawar. Eight different teams including Islamabad, Lahore, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are participating in the Championship. The opening match was played between Shinwari Football Club and Hazara Football Club.

Main Shinwari Club won by 4-0, on behalf of Shinwari Club Mansoor scored two goals, Asad and Muhammad Ali scored one goal each. In the second match, Atash Club Tank and Ideal Club Chitral Club played 1-1 wherein Atash took the lead in the 53rd minute through Rahmanullah while on the other Sheraz tied the tally in the 58th minute through a

field attempt. It was a nice goal as he travelled past three defenders during his attack on the rival goalpost and netted it nicely for a timely equalizer.

Besides teams from Islamabad and Lahore, eight teams are taking part from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa wherein Group A includes Shinwari Football Club, Hazara Football Club, Popo Club, and Ace Garden, while Group B consists of Shaheen Football Club, Atash Tank FC, Ideal Chitral Football Club and Mamson Football Club.

The Championship will be held on a League basis for a week. Organizing Secretary Gul Haider 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. In the match, Anwar Khan, Ehsanullah, Ikram and Zahid performed the duties of match referees.

## Nadal confident he will be 'competitive' on return

MADRID (AFP): Rafael Nadal on Wednesday insisted he will be "competitive" when he returns to professional tennis next month after enduring nearly a year out of action due to injury.

The 22-time Grand Slam champion has undergone surgery twice in 2023 after struggling with a hip injury.

He has said next year will likely be his last season before retirement and announced last week he would make his comeback at the Australian Open warm-up event in Brisbane, which runs from January 1-7.

"I don't know at what level (he will play at), I don't know what to expect, I have no idea, but I don't care right now," Nadal said in a video posted on social media.

"I'm just happy to be back and with great excitement to make the effort that is necessary to have fun and I believe that I will be competitive," Nadal last played at the Australian Open in January, losing in the second round to American MacKenzie McDonald.

He originally hoped to be back in time for the clay-court season and Roland Garros, where he is a 14-time



French Open winner, but had to end his campaign early. The 37-year-old Spaniard has slipped to 664th in the world rankings while sidelined.

"It's been a long year in which I've gone through many phases, from trying to get back to compete at the clay season, week after week, disappointment after disappointment," said the former world number one.

"Of course I have had many doubts, of course there were moments where it seemed impossible that this moment would come, but we've maintained the work, spirit and hope and I think I am ready."

Nadal is a two-time Australian Open champion,

in 2009 and 2022. He has slipped behind old rival Novak Djokovic in the all-time list of Grand Slam singles titles, as the Serb won three this year in his absence to take his tally to a record 24.

"I have finally had good training weeks at a level that allows me to have the possibility to compete again," added Nadal.

"I have gone through many phases, but today I think it's time -- I'm coming back in a tournament that I've played in the past, that I'm familiar with..."

"I know it's a difficult tournament but I hope to be ready to compete, I don't aspire to anything else but to be competitive."



DHAKA: Mehidy Hasan Miraz wheels away in celebration after getting the big wicket of Kane Williamson.

## KP announces lifetime monthly stipend for ailing squash legend Jansher Khan

PESHAWAR (Monitoring Desk): The caretaker government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has announced a monthly stipend of Rs 100,000 for the treatment of squash legend Jansher Khan and his wife.

The provincial government would provide the amount as monthly stipend to them for a lifetime. Approval for the payment of stipend would be granted at the meeting of the provincial cabinet.

Achieving the world champion title of squash for eight times and winning British Open Squash Championship for six times, Jansher Khan was nowadays struggling to recover from a novel disease called Parkinson's, a progressive disorder that affects the nervous system and parts of the body controlled by the nerves. Cure for the disease was not yet available in Pakistan.

On world level too, the health experts were just advising medicines to the patients of Parkinson's for a temporary relief as no proper treatment for recovery from the disease was available.

## Shane Watson appointed as Head Coach of Quetta Gladiators for PSL 9



KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Quetta Gladiators have appointed former Australian all-rounder Shane Watson as the head coach ahead of the upcoming season of Pakistan Super League (PSL).

Quetta Gladiators announced Shane Watson's appointment as the head coach on their official X (formerly Twitter) account. "The Quetta Gladiators owner and the team management has decided to appoint Former Australian all-rounder and Gladiators' best run-getter in the PSL, Shane Watson as head coach of the team," the 2019-PSL champions posted.

Quetta Gladiators yes-

terday announced the change in their coaching team with Moin Khan being appointed the Team Director, who served as their head coach since the inaugural season of PSL.

Under Moin Khan's coaching, Quetta Gladiators reached the play-off stage in the first four editions, playing three finals.

Quetta Gladiators became PSL champions in 2019 under the captaincy of Sarfaraz Ahmed, with Shane Watson leading their batting line-up.

Watson was the highest run-scorer with 430 runs at a strike rate of 143.81 and was named player of the tournament during the 2019 edition.

However, since then Gladiators failed to qualify for the play-off stages in the next four editions of the PSL.

Shane Watson has previously served the IPL franchise Delhi Capitals as an assistant coach in 2022, as well as the head coach of the Major League Cricket franchise San Francisco Unicorns earlier this year.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 86,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 86,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 41,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1491.82 feet and was 91.82 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 21,400 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1171.15 feet, which was 121.15 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 5,400 cusecs and 26,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 56,800, 43,500, 39,400, and 10,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 7,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Underage driver threat for other road users

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi District Police registered over 1665 FIRs against underage drivers during a special campaign so far, said a police spokesman. He informed that police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani were taking action by the law against underage drivers. The CPO had directed the City Traffic Police officers to take solid steps to control traffic rules violations and underage driving, he said. The parents were also advised to discourage driving by underage drivers. He said that fatal road accidents occur due to speeding and reckless driving of the drivers particularly underage. The ongoing operation against underage drivers and other traffic rules violators had been accelerated on the instructions of the CPO. The vehicles and motorcycles of the underage drivers were also being impounded in respective police stations, he said. In addition to issuing fines for underage driving, police were also conducting awareness campaigns in schools and colleges to educate young individuals about the legal age requirements for obtaining a driver's license, he added.

### Latest tech innovation for crop's growth

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik on Wednesday said that maize is a strategic crop with respect to the national food security needs. He said the Ministry will make all efforts to promote the latest technological innovation and provide an enabling policy for the crop's continued growth. He expressed these views during a meeting with the Crop Life Pakistan delegation. Crop Life Pakistan delegation apprised the Minister of his contribution to the seed sector, in particular Maize, where over the past two decades yields have grown four-fold and overall production has increased from a little over one million metric tons to an impressive 10.5 million metric tons in 2022/23. The Minister said that various steps have been taken to this end, including the enactment and implementation of Plant Breeders Rights Act, DNA finger printing to ensure transparency in intellectual right protection of seed companies and independent breeders, and streamlining of operating standards for seed companies to improve overall quality of seed research and supply.



ISLAMABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Alvi addressing the graduation ceremony of students with disabilities of the Network of Organizations Working with Persons with Disabilities Pakistan (NOWPDP).

## Samina Alvi for inclusive approach to mainstream persons with disabilities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Samina Alvi, wife of President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday emphasized the need for providing opportunities to persons with disabilities to help them become part of mainstream economic activities.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony of the Network of Organizations Working with Persons with Disabilities Pakistan (NOWPDP), she said it was the joint responsibility of the State and the society to accommodate such people by ensuring the inclusive approach. Samina Alvi said persons with disabilities comprised 10 to 12 percent of the country's population, however, they lacked enough representation in society and public domains.

She regretted that due to negative attitudes towards disability, the families restricted their such members to homes and avoided their outdoor activities.

Also, the lack of infra-

structure such as access ramps at public buildings and parks restricted the mobility of persons with disabilities, she added.

Samina Alvi urged for providing education to such students at mainstream schools to ensure their inclusion in society.

She stressed for the training of teachers and sensitizing society that persons with disabilities could play a positive role in society if provided with ample opportunities including assistive technology and rehabilitation services.

She recalled that a comprehensive awareness campaign was launched from the platform of the Presidency to raise awareness about mainstreaming persons with disabilities.

She mentioned that the campaign was supported by non-governmental organizations, chambers of commerce, and the media.

Also, the Pakistan Telecommunication

Authority relayed 120 million short messaging services on sensitization about persons with disabilities.

She urged the public and private sector departments including banks, chambers of commerce, and welfare foundations to adopt inclusive policies to accommodate persons with disabilities. She lauded that the government and banks were extending easy loans to persons with disabilities to ensure their financial self-reliance. Also, the government is extending scholarships and fee waivers to such students at universities and other educational institutions.

Samina Alvi emphasized fulfilling the quota reserved for persons with disabilities in public jobs and also urged the private sector to follow suit.

She expressed satisfaction that NOWPDP was giving skill-based training to such persons as per market needs and helping them get employment.

### Govt to ensure supply of standard medicines

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Health has taken coordinated measures to ensure the supply of quality and standard medicines. According to the spokesperson of the Ministry of Health, these steps were taken on the direction of Caretaker Federal Minister for Health, Dr Nadeem Jan.

The minister said that he would not compromise on the quality of medicines.

He said that providing safe, effective and quality medicines to the people is our priority.

Dr. Nadeem Jan said that the registration board suspended the registration of six manufacturers for producing adulterated and sub-standard medicines.

He said that the board has issued show-cause notices to seven manufacturers. He said that notices were issued by the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan's (DRAP) Licensing Board on violation of good manufacturing practices. Dr. Nadeem Jan said that the board has cancelled the licenses of three pharmaceutical companies.

He said that the board approved veterinary vaccines for cattle especially the vaccine for lumpy skin disease.

## Measures enhanced at Capital's high security zone

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad Capital Police have enhanced security within federal capital with special focus on high security zone by deploying all available resources.

A spokesperson of the police said on Wednesday that the Islamabad police have actively ensured comprehensive data registration, meticulous examination of identification documents, and searches of individuals entering the high security zone on a routine basis.

Notably, the police took action against 2,905 vehicles and 1,613 motorcyclists for traffic rules violations at various checkpoints within the high security zone.

In the preceding month, the Islamabad Capital Police undertook measures such as removing tinted glasses and improper number plates from 2,849 vehicles, impounding 56 vehicles lacking proper documentation, and issuing challan tickets to 1,613 motorcyclists for violations relat-

ed to helmets and over-speeding.

Stringent directives have been issued to police officers and officials stationed at high security zone checkpoints, emphasizing the need for responsible duty execution. Paramount importance is placed on the protection of crucial public and private properties, as well as embassies situated in the high security zone, police spokesperson added. Furthermore, police officials are instructed to record the data of all citizens entering the high security zone. Scrutiny of identification documents, thorough searches of suspicious vehicles, and maintaining a positive interaction with the public are integral aspects of their duties.

Citizens are earnestly urged to collaborate with the Islamabad Capital Police and promptly report any suspicious activities through the designated channel, "Pucar-15," reinforcing the collective effort to bolster security within the high security zone.

## Religious scholars, leaders unite against Israeli aggression, call for global solidarity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prominent religious scholars and leaders representing diverse schools of thought on Wednesday gathered at the Jinnah Convention Centre for the National Conference titled 'The Sanctity of Al-Aqsa Mosque and Responsibility of the Muslim Ummah.'

Organized by Majlis Ittehad-e-Ummah Pakistan, the conference saw a joint declaration expressing full solidarity with the freedom of Al-Aqsa Mosque and condemning the oppression faced by Palestinian brothers. Addressing the gathering, the religious scholars and leaders highlighted Israel's relentless aggression, branding it as a violation of international law since its illegal establishment. They emphasized the recent brutal bombings in Gaza, resulting in the martyrdom of over 15,000 Palestinians, including 6,000 children and numerous women.

They declared these actions as war crimes against humanity, targeting mosques, churches, hospitals, and even newborns. The Ulema and Mashaykh criticized Western powers for their complicity in supporting Israel's crimes through financial, practical, and military assistance. They called for an immediate end to the brutal bombings, war crimes, and all forms of support for Israel.

They asserted that the entire land of Palestine belonged to its original inhabitants, condemning the unjust settlements established by Zionists. They urged the people of Palestine to resist this aggression,

emphasizing the religious duty of Muslims to support the cause.

Labelling the current conflict as a grand defensive Jihad rooted in pure Islam, the scholars and leaders stressed liberating the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the land of the Last Prophet Peace Be Upon Him from Zionist dominance. They demanded basic rights for the people of Palestine according to United Nations resolutions, calling for an end to military intervention, the siege on Al-Quds, Gaza Strip, and the West Bank, and the permanent opening of the Rafah border. They, expressing concern over the ongoing suffering of Palestinians, called on the Islamic world to take a united defensive stand. They urged Muslims worldwide to provide aid to the suffering people of Palestine and commended Pakistan's efforts in sending aid ships to Gaza. The scholars and leaders appealed to experts in international law to file cases against Israel's leaders in the International Court of Justice for war crimes. They called for peaceful protests globally, exposing Israel's inhuman acts and urged Muslims to boycott Israeli products and companies supporting Israel.

They announced the celebration of Friday as Masjid al-Aqsa Day across the country, appealing to Muslims to hold strong protests, pass resolutions against Israeli atrocities in mosques, and inform the public about the issue of Palestine and their responsibilities.

## Speakers calls for women's easy access to justice to end gender-based violence

ISLAMABAD (APP): The speakers at a panel discussion called gender-based violence a 'public safety crisis' and emphasized the need for women's easy access to justice and implementation of laws protecting vulnerable communities.

The discussion titled 'Ending gender-based violence: Challenges, strategies, and resources' was organized by the U.S. embassy here at the mission in Islamabad.

Director, Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, Lori J. Antolinez said the United States was advancing a comprehensive, government-wide effort to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence. In this regard, she stressed a holistic approach that encompassed prevention, well-being, economic security, housing stability, online safety, and legal and justice systems.

In Pakistan, she said, the U.S. embassy was, in particular, implementing four programmes that specifically addressed gender-based violence. These programs increase women's access to justice through improved law enforcement response to gender-based violence and extending services to the survivors, she added. "More women working in the

criminal justice sector will lead to better services for women and an overall improvement in women's access to justice," she said.

Antolinez highlighted that the U.S. embassy supported Pakistan's efforts to increase women's recruitment, retention, and advancement across the criminal justice sector to build a representative and responsive police force and justice system.

Already, the services include increasing the number of women police in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) by over 20 percent, she added.

She mentioned that the Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) partnered with the Anti-Narcotics Force to develop its gender strategy, which commits to having 20 percent women in its workforce by 2030.

"We want to maintain this momentum and expand our efforts throughout Pakistan so victims of crime can access the justice services they need," she said. She said that given the media's role in raising awareness, INL was conducting training for journalists to shape a narrative on the protection of survivors, including rape victims, rather than vilifying them.

Executive Director (ED) at Asma Jahangir Legal Aid Cell, Nida Aly said gender-based violence was experienced by individuals from all backgrounds and could occur at any point in a person's life.

She said the factors contributing to gender-based violence included women's lack of representation in the justice sector and workforce, low literacy rate, limited access to justice, and non-implementation of laws protecting women and vulnerable communities. She said the government of Pakistan was working extensively on the legislative of rights protection, however, emphasized the need for its implementation.

Mission Spokesperson Jonathan Lalley moderated the panel discussion that aimed at educating and informing the public about the root causes of gender-based in Pakistan, the current country-wide scenario, and where and how to access resources and support.

The students of gender studies, journalism and law programmes from Fatima Jinnah Women University, National Defence University (NDU), and the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) attended the panel discussion.

## ANF recovers 26 kg drugs, heroin-filled capsules from possession of six women

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting different operations managed to recover over 26 kg drugs and 87 heroin-filled capsules from the possession of six women involved in drug trafficking during last week, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that during five operations, more than 26 kg of drugs were recovered from the possession of arrested women who were involved in provincial and international drug trafficking. The women revealed to be associated with various drug trafficking gangs.

He said that using women for drug trafficking is a dangerous practice and ANF is using all resources to ensure safety of women. 87 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from a woman's stomach at Allama Iqbal International Airport. The accused namely Samira, a resident of Lahore, was leaving for Oman by Oman Airline Flight No. WY-342. Two suspects

including a woman were arrested at Multan International Airport.

855 grams Ice drug was recovered from the bags of Aqsa and Noor Ahmed, residents of Sahiwal. The accused were leaving for Qatar by Qatar Airways flight number QR-617.

1.942 kg Ice drug was recovered from a woman's bag netted at Allama Iqbal International Airport. The accused namely Sadia, a resident of Karachi, was leaving for Bahrain by Gulf Airways flight number GF-0767.

Two women were rounded up during an operation in Orangi Town area, Karachi. 22.8 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of Saima and Sharifa Bibi, residents of Karachi. A woman namely Amina, resident of Peshawar was arrested near Chongi No. 26, Islamabad.

500 grams hashish and 250 grams of Ice drug were recovered from the possession of the accused.



ISLAMABAD: A group of students and faculty members of the Balochistan residential college, Zhob visiting senate museum at Parliament House.



Kandahar exports dried fruits

KANDAHAR (BNA): Kandahar province, known for its high-quality and flavorful dried fruits, has exported more than 53,000 tons of them to various countries this year. The export revenue has reached \$181 million, according to the deputy head of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment in Kandahar. The main destinations for Kandahar's dried fruits are Pakistan, India, China, Dubai, and some European and American countries.

UNAMA's silence shameful

KABUL (Khaama Press): Reports continue to highlight the poor health of female activists like Julia Parsi and Manizha Seddiqi, who are currently in the Taliban's prisons. Tamana Zaryab Paryani, a former detainee and activist, is disappointed by the United Nations' silence on this issue, considering it "shameful." Reports reveal worrisome health conditions among female protestors in Taliban prisons. Julia Parsi was moved to a hospital for treatment.

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

IE wants good relations with all countries: Hanafi



KABUL (Ariana News): Abdul Salam Hanafi, the administrative deputy of the Prime Minister, said on Wednesday that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) wants good and positive relations with all countries, especially neighbors. Hanafi made the remarks at a seminar under the theme of "Advantages of Neutral Foreign Policy of Afghanistan" in Kabul. He maintained that the Islamic Emirate does not want to be a member of any international coalitions.

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan wants good relations with all its neighbors and does not interfere in their internal affairs, and it also wants good relations with all regional countries and beyond based on mutual respect and engagement," Hanafi said. Referring to the 20-year presence of foreign countries in Afghanistan, the participants of the seminar said that their presence caused Afghanistan's confrontation with neighboring countries and the region.

They also said that the geopolitics of Afghanistan and the experience of the past years require that for its development, Afghanistan must maintain a policy of neutrality forever and develop a strategy for its relations with countries based on national interests. "Considering the geopolitics of Afghanistan, this country has tried throughout history to refrain from interfering in global conflicts. During the first and second world wars, Afghanistan was able

to successfully keep itself away from confrontation with the superpowers," Mohibullah Wasiq, chief of staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said. Abdul Baqi Haqqani, head of National Examination Authority of Afghanistan, said: "The country needs reconstruction again. In order to rebuild the country and maintain its independence and protect itself against the harm of others, it is necessary for the Islamic Emirate to maintain political relations with all countries."

WFP warns of uncertain future for returnees

KABUL (Khaama Press): The World Food Program (WFP) has announced that alongside over six million internally displaced people in Afghanistan, newly returning migrants from Pakistan are facing an uncertain future.

On Wednesday, the organization stated on its social media platform X, cautioning about the uncertain future of returning migrants from Pakistan.

The World Food Program has emphasized that "they [migrants] have nowhere to go and don't know how to spend the winter." This comes as Pakistan's decision to expel over 1.7 million "illegal" Afghan migrants from Afghanistan has faced international backlash.

Previously, the UN and human rights organizations expressed concerns about the expelled migrants' situation, particularly with the onset of winter.

Recently, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees expressed concern about the situation of returning migrants, calling for a halt to their expulsion during the winter season.

However, according to reports, since the start of the expulsion process from Pakistan, more than 400,000 individuals have already returned to Afghanistan.

5-year plan to uplift electricity sent to EC



KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Water and Energy said that it has sent the five-year plan for the development of electricity in the country to the Economic Commission of the Prime Minister.

electricity are also included," said Abid.

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Industry and Mines said that the implementation of electricity projects in the country is valuable in the development of the industry. Industrialists have always called the lack of electricity a serious challenge.

"Unfortunately, Afghanistan's industries are facing a serious lack of electricity, we still have natural resources of gas, coal, and crude oil materials that we can use to generate electricity from these sources," said Sakhi Ahmad Payman, deputy of the chamber.

The former head of

Breshna Sherkat said that Afghanistan has the capacity to produce 23,000 megawatts of electricity from water, and investing in the field can be effective in solving the problem of electricity shortage.

"If the Ministry of Energy and Water wants to focus on electricity production, it should not only focus on dams but also focus on solar, wind, and coal," said Amanullah Ghalib, the former Head of Breshna.

Earlier, Breshna Sherkat announced that it had created a committee to attract investment in the electricity sector to provide the necessary facilities for investors.

China hopes Kabul further responds to int'l expectations

KABUL (TOLONews): The Chinese Foreign Ministry's spokesman, Wang Wenbin, said that China hopes Afghanistan will further respond to the expectations of the international community.

In response to a question about the appointment of Bilal Karimi as the Islamic Emirate's ambassador in Beijing and whether China will formally recognize the Islamic Emirate, China's foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said: "As a long-standing friendly neighbor of Afghanistan, China believes that Afghanistan should not be excluded from the international community."

But he also stressed the importance of building an open and inclusive political structure in Afghanistan.

Sayed Jawad Sijadi, a political analyst, said that the international communi-

ty is pressing their demands on the interim Afghan government.

"The formation of an inclusive government, considering the realities in Afghanistan, recognition of the rights of and freedom of the people of Afghanistan are the demands of the international community of the Taliban. It doesn't look like the international community will let it fall short on these demands," he said.

The Chinese FM spokesman hopes Afghanistan will "adopt moderate and prudent domestic and foreign policies, firmly combat all forms of terrorist forces, develop friendly relations with other countries, especially with its neighbors, and integrate itself into the world community."

"We believe that diplomatic recognition of the

Afghan government will come naturally as the concerns of various parties are effectively addressed," he said.

The Islamic Emirate said that its government is inclusive but stressed it wants to improve relations with the international community.

"The matters that are being mentioned should be mentioned through legal paths, so practical steps are taken for them. We want good relations with all countries and we will provide the grounds for it gradually," said Zabiullah Mujahid, Islamic Emirate's spokesman.

Last week, the former deputy spokesman for the IE, Bilal Karimi, presented his credentials to the Director-General of the Protocol Department of the Foreign Ministry of China, Hong Lei.

EU allocates \$27m to UNICEF for Afghanistan

KABUL (Ariana News): The European Union has allocated \$27 million to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to improve and upgrade the learning environments for an estimated 200,000 girls and boys in primary schools across Afghanistan.

According to a statement, the EU's contribution will enable UNICEF to improve the quality of existing school infrastructure in up to 385 primary schools by restoring classrooms, providing gender sensitive sanitation facilities and boundary walls.

The project will furthermore support in-service training for teachers to improve the quality of teaching, particularly in early grades.

"The classroom should feel like a second home for children. When classrooms are child-friendly and safe, children are motivated to learn, and their attendance, performance and completion rates go up," said Raffaella Iodice, the EU Chargée d'Affaires to Afghanistan.

This two-year project will build on UNICEF's ongoing support for children's education in Afghanistan's public schools and community-based education centres.

We are proud to partner with the EU to keep thousands of children in school. Continued investment in the public school system is critical to support girls and boys who are still able to attend school, said Fran Equiza.

West to kick off visits to region to discuss Afghanistan

KABUL (TOLONews): Thomas West, US Special Representative, said that he has started travels to Pakistan, UAE, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia from December 5-15.

"Look forward to meeting with key partners to discuss shared security interests, refugee protection and resettlement, humanitarian needs, human rights, and economic issues," West said.

Political analyst Torek Farhadi said the West may ask for financial support for the UN operations in

Afghanistan.

"Thomas West may seek financial support in the Gulf countries for the UN agencies," he said.

Meanwhile, Islamic Emirate's spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said that Afghanistan wants to improve its relations with the international community.

"Afghanistan itself wants to extend its relations with the countries. And the agenda of the visit of the Americans and its purpose belongs to them," he said.

However, some political

analysts believe that the visit of the US special envoy for Afghanistan is important considering the current circumstances.

"If the US special envoy for Afghanistan is visiting Pakistan, I hope he should come to Afghanistan also. The concerns and propaganda should be shared with the government of Afghanistan," said Hameedullah Hotak, political analyst.

"Thomas West's visit is for the interest of the US. It is the Afghan refugees who are suffering from the prob-

lems in Iran and Pakistan. I hope the Afghan nation has a plan for consensus and unity in consultation with the current government," said Zalmai Afghanyar, political analyst.

This comes as Asif Durrani, Pakistan's Special Representative on Afghanistan, wrote on X that in a meeting with Julieta Valls Noyes, US Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, they discussed issues concerning Afghan refugees and their resettlement.

Azizi: Returning businesspeople exempt from taxes for five years

KABUL (TOLONews): Nooruddin Azizi, head of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, said that traders returning to the country will be exempt from taxes for five years.

Azizi, head of the Facilitation Committee for Businessmen and Industrialists, said that they will also create incentives for investors in other sectors such as land distribution in industrial parks and banking facilities.

"Traders who return from foreign countries and who invest in Afghanistan for five years in the industrial sector will be exempt from all their taxes for five years," said Nooruddin Azizi, acting head of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

Azizi further empha-

sized that they are working to transfer the assets of Afghan investors in Pakistan to the country through a special mechanism.

"No one can create problems, confiscate, or impose any other plan on the assets of an Afghan citizen or another citizen," said Nooruddin Azizi.

A member of the committee said Afghan investors outside the country should return to Afghanistan and invest here.

"Currently, the conditions are provided for Afghan investors who are active in other countries, have businesses or factories, to return to the country and transfer their trade and industry to the country," said Abdul Rahman Sajad, a member of the commit-



tee. The Chamber of Commerce and Investment emphasized that 30 to 35% of Afghan investments are involved in Pakistan's economy and it is necessary to transfer the capital to the country.

"Afghan immigrants in Pakistan do business in that country," said Khanjan

Alkozi, a member of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment's Board of Directors.

After the expulsion of immigrants from Pakistan, the interim government of the country has announced that immigrants cannot transfer more than fifty thousand Pakistani rupees.

4 innovative Balkh students build their own vehicle



BALKH (Ariana News): Four innovative high school students in Balkh

province are enthusiastically building a vehicle, at their own cost, and are

using only basic materials. The teenage boys have so far spent about 100,000

afghanis (\$1,400) on the vehicle, which they started building about 40 days ago.

The ambitious teenagers say they want the government to support programs that encourage creativity in the youth. Local authorities in the province meanwhile gave their assurance that they will support innovation among young people.

Using only the most basic of equipment, the teenagers say once complete their vehicle will carry passengers and hold up to one ton in weight.

This comes amid growing appeals from the youth across the country for the government to establish centers where such innovations, and others, can be realized.

World Bank to resume projects in Afghanistan, says Ministry

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Finance said that the World Bank will resume around 45 incomplete projects in Afghanistan.

The payment for some projects which stopped following the collapse of the previous Afghan government will be completed by April 2024.

According to the spokesperson for the ministry, this will include CASA-1000.

"As the result of our two-year negotiations with the World Bank, they [World Bank] were interested in engaging and resuming their incomplete projects and payments for projects by April 2024. The bank has paid \$24 million for CASA-1000," said

Ahmad Wali Haqmal, spokesman for the Ministry of Finance.

In the meantime, the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment said that the resumption of world bank-funded projects will help Afghanistan's economic growth.

According to officials at the chamber, the World Bank was conducting projects of construction, roads, health, energy, and agriculture.

"In the health sector, the World Bank used to run the best projects, they were building hospitals and clinic. Except buildings for the Ministries of Defense, Interior and National Security, all other projects of the World Bank were in the sectors of health, educa-



tion and economy," said Khan Jan Alokozay, ACCI deputy head.

Economists suggested that the Islamic Emirate should make the conditions for other organizations such as the Asian Development Bank to resume their operations in Afghanistan.

"The resumption of projects by the World Bank means that our relations have become better with the world. We hope that the Asian Development Bank and USAID will also come to Afghanistan," said Muhammad Nabi Afghan, economist.



## KP CM attends National Task Force meeting

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah, on Wednesday attended a meeting of the National Task Force on polio eradication held in Islamabad under the chairmanship of Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar. Various matters related to ongoing polio eradication campaign in the country, challenges and future course of actions were discussed in the meeting.

Later on, the Chief Minister Syed Arshad Hussain Shah paid a visit to the Secretariat of Election Commission of Pakistan and met with Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja and discussed with him matters related to upcoming general elections; and apprised him of the preparations of the provincial government to this effect.

During the day, caretaker chief Minister also met with the caretaker federal minister for finance Dr. Shamshad Akhtar and foreign minister Jalil Abbas Jilani during his visit to respective ministries. Arshad Hussain, took up financial matters of the province related to federation with finance minister and apprised her of financial crunches, especially funding issues for newly merged districts. The chief minister also discussed various matters with foreign minister with regard to attracting foreign investment and foreign tourists to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## 6th Maritime workshop commences

**F.P. Report**

LAHORE: Sixth edition of Maritime Security Workshop (MARSEW-6) commenced at Pakistan Navy War College Lahore. Commandant Pakistan Navy War College Rear Admiral Javed Iqbal inaugurated the workshop.

The Maritime Security Workshop is a national level forum being organized under auspices of Pakistan Navy having theme 'Secure Seas, Prosperous Pakistan'. The Workshop aims at generating understanding on dynamics of maritime security, awareness of the blue economy and exploring the untapped maritime potential of Pakistan. The workshop also seeks to highlight challenges and opportunities available in maritime sector of Pakistan and the manner it may support country's economy. This national level forum organized under the auspices of Pakistan Navy brings together participants from public and private sectors and military which include Senators/ Parliamentarian, senior bureaucrats, maritime sector, business community, academia/ think tanks and media.

During his welcome address, Commandant Pakistan Navy War College welcomed the participants and highlighted rundown of workshop activities including familiarization on maritime potential of Pakistan in the context of policy formulation. He dilated on the need to reposition our strategic gaze towards sea and comprehend the transpiring developments in the wider Indian Ocean which casts bearing on Pakistan's national security. He alluded to wide ranging challenges and formidable role of Pakistan Navy to shield the country's maritime interests.

## No more free electricity facility

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has ended free electricity units for the DISCOs and GENCOs, WAPDA and NTDC officers, effective from December 1, reported on Wednesday.

In a notification issued by the power division, it was stated the federal cabinet had approved monetisation of free electricity units admissible to the employees of Wapda, ex-Wapda companies, including distribution companies (Discos), generation companies (Gencos), National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC) and Power Information Technology Company (PITC). According to the notification, 17 to 21 officers of the power companies will get a utility allowance instead of free electricity units from now onwards.

# Mall-residential complex fire kills three in Karachi

**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: At least three people died and the two got injured when a six-storey apartment building in Karachi's FB Area near Ayesha Manzil — which remains very busy throughout the day — caught fire Wednesday, with residents of the building present inside at the time of the incident.

Initially, a shop caught fire as a result of a short circuit, but the flames later spread to other shops that were part of the furniture market situated under the building. The blaze spread rapidly and soon engulfed the entire building comprising 250 shops and 450 apartments, creating panic among the dwellers. However, the building was completely evacuated within two hours, as the Fire Department teams reached to the site and acted swiftly to douse the blaze after it was reported.

During the rescue operation, a man with severe burns was taken out of the building, while Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab confirmed that as many as two people were injured in the fire incident. Director Rescue 1122 Sindh Abid Shaikh, talking to media, said: "Maximum people have been evacuated. The fire extinguishing operation is still underway. The fire is of the third category, which has engulfed the entire building."

The affected building has a total of two commercial floors — ground and mezzanine — and the four floors at the top are residential. Later, Wahab, when he reached the site said three people who had lost their lives could not be identified.

fied. He added that an investigation would be launched to see what led to such a massive fire. As per Rescue 1122, over 300 people have been evacuated. The rescue service also expressed the fear of building collapse due to the high intensity of the fire.

Though the fire was partially doused, a search operation was still underway at the site of the incident. This is the latest massive fire incident that took place in less than two weeks in the port city, with a fire tearing through a shopping mall situated on Rashid Minhas Road on November 25, killing at least 11 people and injuring several others. Fire safety measures are overlooked in several apartment complexes that are in the metropolis which houses nearly 20 million, with reports revealing that around 12,000-15,000 losing their lives in fires across the country.

The Rashid Minhas Road fire prompted the authorities to conduct a fire safety audit across several buildings in Karachi, but as it was underway, the Ayesha Manzil fire in the Federal B Area erupted. Almas Talha, a resident of the building, said she was still inside when the fire erupted, but her watchman responded quickly and evacuated people from the flat. "I was inside my flat [...] and I am with my 'special child' who is four years old. People are cooperating, but I just hope our flat is saved. I pray for everyone here," Talha, who lives on the fourth floor of the flat, told media.

Speaking to media, SSP Central that there are residential flats above the shop

that caught fire — and people were in them at the time of the incident. He said that the shop that caught fire initially, was a mattress store, and the flames have engulfed the surrounding shops as well. Shopkeeper Waheed told media that he was present on site when the incident took place, prompting the people to make a run for their lives — as it happens in any situation when panic spreads.

"It happened in seconds," he said, further informing media that the fire first erupted at the mattress shops located at the front of the building. In a statement, caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar said he had taken notice of the fire and directed authorities to take control of the situation. A spokesperson said that the CM also ordered an inquiry into the incident to find out the actual cause of fire. A committee headed by Karachi commissioner has been formed in this regard, he added.

The probe committee has been directed to submit a report within three days. Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori told media that he would do his best to take steps so such incidents do not take place again. "I will beg authorities to sit together and find ways to avoid these incidents," he said, lamenting that fire engines were late in reaching the site, asking stakeholders to stop trading blame. Earlier, in a statement from the Governor's House, it was mentioned that Tessori had taken notice of the unfortunate incident and directed authorities to ensure people were evacuated safely. "All resources should be utilised to handle the situation," he said.

## Constituencies delimitation, IHC sends matters to ECP

**F.P. Report**

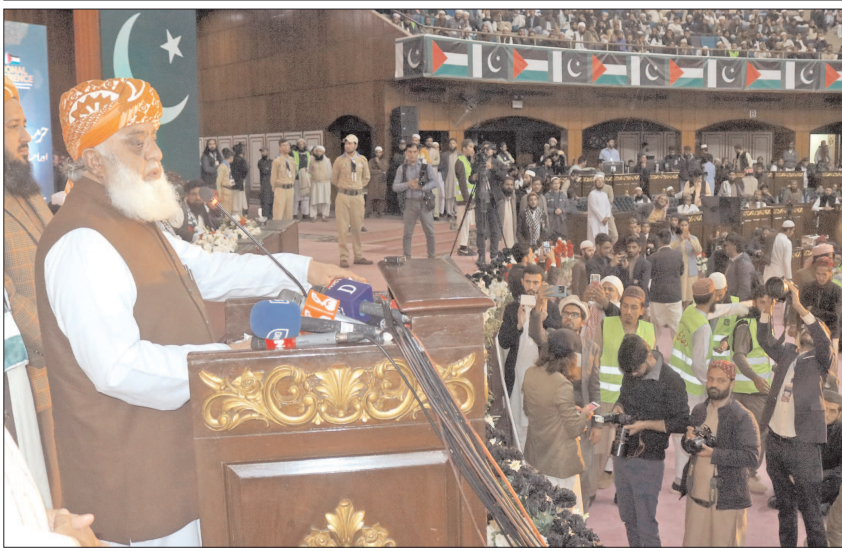
ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday sent the matters pertaining to the delimitation in various constituencies of the country to Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case filed by senior lawyer Ahsan Bhoon regarding the delimitation in Hafizabad. The ECP lawyer at the outset of

hearing, adopted the stance that he was in court in another case, adding that the department has not received court notice in this case.

The chief justice inquired that when the ECP was going to announce schedule for general elections. He said that several people have challenged the delimitation before the court. The court said that these were just minor issues which should be addressed by the electoral body as early.

Ahsan Bhoon Advocate said that there was no any constituency in the country where the population was more than 1.3 million. He said that the total population of Hafizabad was 1.319 million but only one constituency was made. The court asked the ECP to address the issues after hearing the complainants as soon as possible and pass orders along with. The court sent the matters to the ECP.



ISLAMABAD: President of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazlur Rehman addressing during 'Hurmat-e-Al-Aqsa Conference' at Convention Center.

## Pakistan secures nearly \$659m loan from ADB

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved \$659 million of financing to carry out development projects like rehabilitating schools damaged by the devastating August 2022 floods and enhancing agricultural productivity to improve food security in Pakistan.

Pakistan, a founding ADB member, has received more than \$52 billion in public and private sector loans, grants, and other forms of financing from the bank to promote inclusive economic growth and improve the country's infrastructure, energy security, transport networks and other social services.

The country has also grappled with major financial challenges in the last few years, with its current administration trying to revive the economy by seeking foreign direct investment in various sectors. "This significant new wave of financing will help Pakistan recover from the impacts of last year's cost-of-

living crisis and super-floods and return to the path of long-term development that is sustainable and inclusive," ADB Director General for Central and West Asia Yevgeniy Zhukov noted in a statement issued on Wednesday.

"This multifaceted approach is part of ADB's strategic engagement in Pakistan and cohesively deploys our program lending and project investments to enhance support for Pakistan's efforts to improve its economic situation and enhance the quality of life for its people," he added. The ADB statement hoped the new financing under the Improved Resource Mobilization and Utilization Reform Program will support Pakistan's government to achieve economic growth that is sustainable, broad-based and inclusive.

"The \$300 million policy-based loan will support the initiative's first subprogram, which focuses on laying the foundation for reforms to policies, laws, and institutional capacity that will

improve domestic resource mobilization and utilization," the statement said. "The program is helping to transform tax administration, public expenditure management, and other institutional structures to strengthen resource mobilization including non-debt resources such as private investment and savings."

It added that the ongoing Sindh Secondary Education Improvement Project would receive additional financing of \$275 million emergency assistance loan that was part of ADB's \$1.5 billion pledge of support for Pakistan's recovery from the devastating 2022 floods. "The additional financing will help reconstruct up to 1,600 flood-damaged schools using disaster- and climate-resilient and gender-responsive designs," it informed. "This will boost resilience and inclusivity in the education system in Pakistan, helping recovery of learning and earning losses especially for girls in the most disadvantaged and vulnerable districts of Sindh."



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi being briefed about innovative technological startups and their products, at the Angels Investors Summit and Startup Showcase held at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## ECP to conduct contempt case hearing against Imran, Fawad

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has decided to hold hearing of contempt case against former prime minister and PTI ex-chairman Imran Khan and former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry in Adiala Jail. The ECP pronounced its reserved decision on Wednesday after consulting interior and law ministries.

The ECP will conduct the hearing in Adiala Jail on December 13, saying the indictment proceedings will also take place during trial in prison. The contempt case pertains to allegations of rigging and bias levelled by Imran Khan and Fawad Chaudhry against the ECP and the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC). The ECP had initiated contempt proceedings against the two leaders for violating the code of conduct and undermining the authority of the commission.

## Afghan refugees married to Pakistanis PHC orders provision of POCs to spouses

**Humayun Khan**

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) relaxed the rules for Afghan refugees who have married Pakistani men or women and ordered the provision of Pakistan Origin Cards (POCs), on Wednesday.

PHC issued the detailed judgment, penned by Justice Waqar Ahmed and marks a significant step towards facilitating the lives of Afghan refugees who have chosen to build their lives in Pakistan.

PHC allows Afghan nationals married to Pakistanis to apply for Pakistan Origin Cards (POCs), a document that grants them certain rights and privileges associated with Pakistani citizenship. This move aims to streamline the process for Afghan refugees seeking to regularize their status in Pakistan and integrate into society seamlessly.

The decision emphasizes the importance of simplifying

the marriage registration process for Afghan-Pakistani couples, eliminating the mandatory requirement of a passport and ID card for POC applications in cases of marriage. Additionally, the court mandates that POC cards be issued promptly following security clearance, ensuring that eligible individuals are not subjected to unnecessary delays.

In instances where NADRA (National Database and Registration Authority) rejects an application, the court has directed that the applicant be provided with a detailed written explanation of the reasons for rejection. This transparency measure aims to safeguard the rights of applicants and ensure fair treatment.

The court's decision has been welcomed by Afghan refugees and their Pakistani spouses, who have long faced challenges in navigating the complexities of

Pakistani immigration laws. The relaxation of rules and simplified procedures are expected to alleviate the burdens faced by these couples and allow them to focus on building their lives together in Pakistan.

**Gas prices hike: Court orders federal govt to submit till 13th:** A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Abdul Shakoor and Justice Syed Arshad Ali ordered Federal's government for submission of reply against hike gas prices, on Wednesday.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cement and Textile companies had challenged hike in gas prices at Peshawar High Court while Shumail Ahmad Butt advocate before court. The counsel argued that price hike notification on 8th November 2023 by Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) is illegal and administrative insensitivity.

**\$1 BILLION\***  
**LOSS DUE TO ILLICIT CIGARETTE TRADE**  
**\$0.7 BILLION**  
**2<sup>ND</sup> TRANCHE OF IMF STAND-BY ARRANGEMENT**

Pakistan is annually losing more than **Rs 300 billion** revenue due to illicit cigarette trade. In dollar terms, this amount is 43% more than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tranche of **USD700 Million** under the IMF Stand-by Arrangement. A nationwide crackdown on illicit cigarette trade and recovering evaded taxes could be the right step towards self-reliance.

**STOP TAX EVADERS**

**#AbKhasaraNahinGawara**

\*Rs. 300 Billion equivalent to approximately USD 1 Billion

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