

Mengal's papers challenged  
F.P. Report

QUETTA: Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal, leader of Balochistan National Party (Mengal), has not declared his assets while filing nomination papers for contesting election-2024 from NA-256-Khuzdar and PB-20-Wadh following which Jhalawan Awami Penel filed CP before the High Court of Balochistan, challenging the nomination papers of Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIX

No. 354

Regd. No. 241

JAMADI-US-SANNI 29 1445 -- THURSDAY, JANUARY 11 2024

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addressing the Global Health Security Summit.

Current situation better than 2008, 2013, says Solangi  
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday reiterated the commitment that general elections would eventually be held on February 8 in the country.

Talking to the media, he said that in the past elections were conducted even in the worst conditions. Murtaza Solangi pointed out that the current situation in the country was much better than the years 2008 and 2013. He said that the government had been in constant contact with the Election Commission of Pakistan since the first meeting of the Caretaker Cabinet.

The minister said the communication with ECP was underway on the daily basis and his visit was part of the routine communication process. He said he had not met the Chief Election Commissioner Raja Sikandar Sultan. He expressed the optimism that security situation in the country would further improve in the coming days. He said that Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ECP would provide information regarding the foreign media teams' arrival in Pakistan for election coverage.

To a question, he said that election activities would hopefully pick the momentum after the announcement of the candidates of the political parties as all parties were commencing their election campaigns now. On January 15, the Muslim League (N) had also announced a rally, he said and added election activities would further accelerate in days ahead. Replying to a question, he said that technical problems regarding the Internet, had been surfacing even before the caretaker government.

The minister clarified that the reason for the recent Internet outage was just technical, and not the political. He said that more details regarding Internet shutdown could be obtained from Pakistan Telecommunications Authority.

4 bodies recovered from ECP office  
F.P. Report

KHANDKOT: Bodies of four persons were recovered from the room of the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) office in Kandhkot, reported on Wednesday.

According to the district health officer (DHO), all four of them, who worked at the office, died due to gas leakage while they were asleep at night. Police shifted the bodies to hospital for the post-mortem.

Treason case  
SC upholds Musharraf's death sentence  
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld the death sentence of late former military ruler Pervez Musharraf, awarded to him by the Special Court in the high treason case.

Announcing the short order, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa said, "The impugned passed on January 13, 2020 by the Lahore High Court (LHC) [...] is not sustainable and accordingly set aside." The order comes as a four-judge SC bench took up a set of appeals pertaining to the Jan 13, 2020 LHC order declaring unconstitutional the death sentence awarded to Musharraf on Dec 17, 2019.

Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Aminuddin Khan and Justice Athar Minallah were other bench members hearing the appeals. In December 2019, a special court in Islamabad found Musharraf guilty of high treason and handed him a death sentence under Article 6 (high treason) of the Constitution. It marked the first time in Pakistan's history that a military chief had been declared guilty of high treason and handed a death sentence. The verdict was split 2-1.

In January 2020, the LHC had declared unconstitutional all actions taken by the government against Musharraf, including the filing of a complaint on high treason charge and the formation of a special court as well as its proceedings, leading to the abolition of the death penalty handed down to him. The bench — headed by Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi and also comprising Justice Mohammad Ameer Bhatti and Justice Mohammad



Masood Jahangir — had also set aside Section 9 of Criminal Law Amendment (Special Court) Act, 1976 for being violative to fundamental rights and ruled against retrospective effect given to an amendment in Article 6 of the Constitution, which deals with high treason.

In November, the top court had fixed for hearing a set of appeals, including one filed by the late military dictator. Days later, it had also admitted for hearing appeals against the ex-president's acquittal. The counsels in this matter including Vice Chairman of Pakistan Bar Council Haroon ur Rashid, senior counsel Hamid Khan, Rashid A. Rizvi and others had primarily challenged the Lahore High Court's decision for having "no legal or territorial jurisdiction, coram non judge (not before a judge), the high court's exercise of SC's powers and the maintainability of Gen Musharraf's petition filed before the LHC".

While presiding over the case in November, CJP Isa had assailed the LHC for knowingly overlooking earlier decisions of the apex court through its 2020 judgment. In a subsequent hearing, the top court had poked holes in the LHC decision, observing that it addressed issues beyond the scope of

the initial petition. In another hearing, Justice Minallah had remarked that the judges who granted legal cover to Musharraf's martial law should be tried in court.

During the proceedings today, petitioner Hamid Khan and Musharraf's counsel Salman Safdar appeared before the court. The court dismissed the set of appeals, noting that "despite attempting to do so, Musharraf's legal heirs could not be contacted".

At the outset of the hearing, Hamid said that the appeal filed by Musharraf against his sentence was a "criminal appeal" while his request before the SC was to set aside the LHC order, which he said was a "constitutional matter". He urged the top court to hear both appeals separately. CJP Isa then noted, "In the current case, the Lahore High Court's jurisdiction and appeal are separate matters."

The chief justice then said the court wanted to hear Safdar's arguments first. Here, Additional Attorney General Amir Rehman, the state counsel, opposed the appeal filed against the former president's sentence. Upon the top judge confirming whether he was opposing Musharraf's appeal or was in favour of it, the lawyer said he was against it.

4 martyred as police come under attack in Kohat

KOHAT: Policemen among four persons were martyred late-night attack on Tuesday after terrorists carried out an attack in the Lachi area of Kohat, as law enforcers remain the prime target of banned outfits in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to details, more than armed men targeted a check post near Lachi Toll Plaza — some 28 kilometres south of Kohat, resulting in martyrdom of three policemen and a civilian. The attack triggered a gunfight that lasted for a while after which the terrorists were forced to flee. A large contingent of police was later rushed to the area where a search operation has been launched.

Head Constable Amjad, Head Constable Junaid, Constable Waqar and Noor Muhammad — a citizen — have been identified as victims. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been experiencing a new wave of terrorism ever since the PTI government decided to hold so-called peace talks

2 soldiers embraced Shahadat  
F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: A fire exchange took place between security forces and terrorists in Lakki Marwat district. Own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location as a result of which two terrorists were sent to hell, Aftab @Malang and terrorist Masood Shah.

These terrorists remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces as well as target killings of innocent civilians. Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from them. However, during intense exchange of fire, two brave soldiers; Sepoy Muhammad Afzal (age 29 years; resident of district Bhimber, Azad Kashmir) and Sepoy Ibrar Hussain (age 27 years; resident of district Mansehra), having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat. Sanitization operation is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area as the Security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

with the TTP — a move that has proved to a disaster.

As admitted by the PTI founding chairman, he as prime minister opted for relocating the TTP terrorists and their families to the erstwhile tribal region, which enabled them gain a foothold and launch attacks across the

province.

President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians, Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari have strongly condemned the terror attack on police check post and toll plaza in Kohat.

US taunted over Israel banning journalists  
Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: The White House National Security Spokesperson, John Kirby expressed having no knowledge about the Supreme Court of Israel banning the entry of international journalists.

Multiple journalists during White House press briefing asked that more than one hundred journalists have have so far been killed by Israel in Gaza and now Israeli Supreme Court has banned the entry of foreign journalists into the country, so where does the U.S. stand as far as freedom of information and access to information is concerned. John Kirby on the other hand replied multiple times that he was not aware of this news and that he will look into it.

At one point NPR journalist, Asma Khalid mumbled to John Kirby that how could he not be aware because NPR was denied access to Israel and NPR had informed the White House about it. John Kirby also informed that the U.S. at present is not in favor of ceasefire in Gaza but it does support the humanitarian pauses.

Today's press briefing was mostly buzzed with US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin not informing the U.S. President on time about the cancer procedure that he went through and what if there was a national security crisis, who would have been held responsible for it. John Kirby did admit the fact that there is an investigation going on to find out how better communication can be done in future but he appreciated the fact that the Secretary was honest and candid to accept the responsibility in delay while informing the President, who according to John Kirby just found out today that the Secretary had went through the Cancer surgery. Fox News, Peter Doocy did taunt Kirby that an 81 years old President does not even know where his secretary is, while his troops are being attacked in Middle East.

Three killed in firing on vehicle in N Waziristan  
F.P. Report

MIR ALI: Kaleemullah Khan, an independent candidate contesting for the upcoming general elections from PK-104, was killed in firing on his vehicle in the Tappi area of North Waziristan on Wednesday, police said.

North Waziristan District Police Officer (DPO) Rohan Zeb told media that Kaleemullah was on his way back home from Miranshah when his convoy was attacked by unknown assailants. "Two of his bodyguards were also killed in the firing," the official added.

In a separate incident on Wednesday, former senator and PML-N leader Aslam Buledi was injured in firing in Balochistan's Turbat. He is contesting for the polls from NA-258. Kech Superintendent of Police (SP) Zia Mandokhail confirmed the incident to media. "Buledi was walking in a park when unknown persons opened fire and wounded him," he said. The official said Buledi sustained bullet injuries — one on the shoulder and the other on his foot. He has been moved to the District Headquarters Hospital Turbat.

In a statement issued immediately after the attack, caretaker Balochistan Chief Minister Ali Mardan Domki strongly condemned the incident and summoned a report from the interior department. CM Domki vowed that all resources would be used to arrest culprits involved in the attack. He also directed officials to provide foolproof security to all electoral candidates in the province.

PHC restores PTI's 'bat' election symbol

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) restored electoral symbol 'bat' and ordered uploading of Party Certificate on website by accepting Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) plea against Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) 22nd December 2023 decision, on Wednesday.

A divisional bench of PHC comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar Khan and Justice Arshad Ali announced that PTI was a political party and entitled of an election symbol as well as declared that detailed judgement would be announced latterly.

PTI's lawyers including Barrister Ali Zafar, Qazi Anwar, Syed Sikandar Hayat Shah, Nauman Kakakhel and Shah Faisal advocates while ECP's lawyer Sikandar Bashir Mohmand, Mohsin Kamran Advocates along with counsel for others Qazi Jawad Ihsanullah, Syed Aziz-u-Din Kakakhel, Tariq Afridi, Ahmad Farooq and Naveed Akhtar advocates appeared before the court.

The court declared the ECP's decision of revoking PTI's election symbol was incorrect. The court announced its verdict following the hearing of PTI's petition challenging the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision declaring the intra-party election of PTI as null and void and revoking their electoral symbol "bat".

The counsel Qazi Jawad advocate argued that his client is PTI general secretary Swabi district and aspirant for participation intra-party election but he was

aware from media that the election had concluded. However, Justice Ijaz Anwar observed didn't pleaded for repolling of intra-party election.

Justice Ijaz Anwar remarked you have to pleaded for repolling after declaration of intra-party elections null and void by ECP. In the meantime, Qazi Jawad Ihsanullah argued that they haven't provided with the opportunity and challenged intra-party elections before ECP.

Why intra-party election can't be challenged before PHC as it is concluded at Peshawar? Justice Ijaz Anwar inquired. However, Qazi Jawad Ihsanullah Qureshi advocate argued that due to the jurisdiction of power as declared in several decisions by Apex Courts.

PTI demanding level playing field while deprive its workers from participations in intra-party elections as well as party's activists weren't about the elections, Ahmad Farooq advocate argued. He added that here is poppet is changing day by day, however, Justice Ijaz Anwar observed that come to legal despite inducing political rhetoric.

After the verdict, the court ordered ECP to issue a certificate to the PTI and suspended the decision that stripped the party of its symbol. The court passed the judgment after hearing arguments by the counsels of ECP and the PTI. PTI's counsel, Barrister Ali Zafar declared the judgment of PHC was a victory of law and constitution. He added that ECP has no jurisdiction to strip electoral symbol under Election Act 2017.

SC's Justice Mazhar resigns after allegations

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi of the Supreme Court on Wednesday stepped down from his post following misconduct allegations.

"It was an honour to be appointed and to serve as a Judge first of the Lahore High Court, Lahore and then as the Supreme Court of Pakistan. In the circumstances which are a matter of public knowledge and to some extent public record, it is no longer possible for me to continue to serve as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Considerations of due process also compel so," the judge said in a resignation letter sent to President Arif Alvi.

"I, therefore, effective today resign as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan," the letter added. The development came a day after the Supreme Court declined to halt the proceedings being conducted by the SJC against Justice Naqvi with the ruling that without hearing the case on merits, stay cannot be granted.

A three-member bench of the apex court, headed by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan and comprising Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail and Justice Musrat Hilali, heard the petition of Justice Mazhar, challenging the SJC proceedings as well as the show cause notice issued to him on the charge of misconduct.

The SJC, on October 27 last year, issued a show cause notice to Justice Naqvi amid various complaints alleging bench manipulation and financial misconduct by the SC judge. Pakistan Bar Council, advocate Mian Dawood and others had filed complaints against the Supreme Court judge. In his response, the Supreme Court judge raised issues with the inquiry and called for Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and two other judges to recuse themselves from the matter.

On November 20, he contested the SJC



raised by multiple petitioners.

Justice Naqvi then on January 04 filed a petition in the apex court under Article 184(3) of the Constitution, terming the misconduct complaints filed against him a direct and blatant attack on the independence of the judiciary. It is important to note that the top court judge's name also surfaced in connection with the recent audio leaks purportedly involving him, former Punjab chief minister Parvez Elahi and others. Elevated to the top court on March 16, 2020, Justice Naqvi made headlines when in January 2020, as the Lahore High Court (LHC) judge, he ruled in favour of former military ruler Pervez Musharraf. The LHC bench comprised Justice Naqvi, Justice Muhammad Ameer Bhatti and Justice Chaudhry Masood Jahangir. The controversial verdict of the LHC was annulled by the Supreme Court today.

Cabinet okays reconstitution of committee on missing persons

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet on Wednesday approved the reconstitution of its committee on missing persons headed by the law minister. The reconstitution is being done on the recommendation of the Ministry of Interior. The position became vacant after the resignation of the previous head of the committee, Sarfraz Bugti.

The cabinet meeting, chaired by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, also approved regularisation of 227 daily-wage teachers as proposed by the Federal Directorate of Education and recommended by the Federal Public Service Commission in line with the Islamabad High Court's decision of 2018.

For the construction of the Supreme Court Karachi Registry building, the cabinet on the recommendation of Ministry of Law and Justice as endorsed by the

Supreme Court Building Committee, approved the transfer of federal courts and tribunals across the city. It approved the summary regarding the operationalization of the Livestock and Dairy Development Board so as to fulfill the legal requirements for the appointment of chief executive, in line with the decisions of the Islamabad and Balochistan high courts.

The cabinet gave in principle approval to the Cannabis Control and Regulatory Authority Ordinance 2024 and forwarded it to the Cabinet Committee for Legislative Cases. Under the authority, necessary guidelines would be formulated for the cultivation, extraction, refining, and medicinal and industrial use.

PM Kakar vowed to continue the anti-polio mission of the government till the complete eradication of the crippling disease. The meeting offered Fateha for

the security officials protecting the polio eradication team who were martyred in a terrorist incident in Bajaur.

The prime minister paid tribute to the martyred personnel and said the State would not forget their invaluable sacrifice for the homeland. He said the officials sacrificed their lives for the safety of future generations. He said the terrorists could not deter the resolve of the nation to fight polio.

The cabinet approved the decisions of the Economic Coordination Committee taken during the meetings held on 13th, 15th and 20th December, 2023. The cabinet gave approval to the decisions taken by the Cabinet Committee on State Owned Enterprises on 28th December, 2023. It approved the decisions taken by the Cabinet Committee on Legislative Cases in a meeting held on 22nd December, 2023.

11 found dead in Lakki

LAKKI MARWAT (INP): A total of 11 bodies, including children and women have been found in a house located in the town of Takhti Khel, KP on Wednesday. The discovery was made by the brother of the deceased household's head upon his return. The initial investigations by the local police suggested that the unfortunate incident is believed to happened two days ago from the consumption of a toxic substance mixed in the food.



## Traffic Police files 26000 cases on unlicensed driving

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Traffic Police, during its ongoing crackdown against unlicensed and under age drivers, filed over 26,000 cases so far, besides impounding thousands of vehicles in the provincial capital. According to a spokesman of the City Traffic Police, some 9,737 cases have been filed against underage drivers and a new fee schedule for new and renewal of licenses will be implemented from January 16, ensuring stricter measures for traffic safety.

Chief Traffic Officer Ammara Athar in her statement said that anyone driving a vehicle without a valid license, including motorcycles, was now subject to legal action. The crackdown has also been extended to those providing vehicles to underage individuals. "To date, more than 26,000 cases have been registered for driving a motor cycle without a license during the crackdown. Vehicles involved in violations have been impounded, with fines of 5,000 for unlicensed car driving", she added. Ammara said "the crackdown aims to curb accidents and ensure safe travel. Parents are urged to uphold their responsibility and refrain from allowing underage children to drive".

## Minister reviews Mayo Hospital revamping

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Minister for Transport Ibrahim Hassan Murad visited Mayo Hospital here on Wednesday and reviewed the progress of ongoing upgradation work.

He inspected main emergency of children, basements, doctors' labs on 7th floor and radiology department. He visited all floors and checked labour register for all shifts, expressed displeasure at pace of ongoing revamping work.

The authorities briefed the minister about delay in import of lifts and other equipment. Basements and ground floor (radiology department) was not handed over yet. So, the work progress at these floors was not satisfactory.

The minister said that the hospital management should keep close liaison with contractors to identify proper places for fixing electric points, as well as other key items to save time and money.

## ‘Stipend for artists raised’

LAHORE (APP): Information and Culture Minister Punjab Amir Mir said on Wednesday that stipend for artists in need had been raised, and the allocation for widows of artists had also been hiked.

Speaking at the 20th meeting of the Artists Support Fund Committee at Alhamra Arts Council, he emphasised the significance of supporting artists' welfare alongside promoting art, recognising their crucial role in maintaining a healthy society.

The Artists Support Fund aims to extend financial aid to deserving artists, with simplified disbursement mechanisms, including Jazz and MobiCash in addition to banks.

# CM inspects under-construction JIC building

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inspected an under-construction building of Jinnah Institute of Cardiology (JIC), here on Wednesday.

He ordered to complete it within the time-frame as the 256-bed facility spanning over 54-kanal would ease the patient load on the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC). A new hospital for heart patients was needed for a long time in a big city like Lahore, he said. A parking plaza has also been planned alongside, he added.

Provincial ministers Dr. Javed Akram, Amir Mir, health secretary, commissioner Lahore and others were also present.

**CM inspects new commissioner office building, police apartments:** Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi undertook a nocturnal inspection of the new commissioner's office building located at the former Navy War College in GOR-I. During the visit, he directed to transform the premises into a cutting-edge workplace, said a handout issued here on Wednesday. Emphasizing the urgency, he set a 14-day deadline for the completion of furnishing, stating that all departments would, subsequently, be relocated to this state-of-the-art facility.

Simultaneously, the chief minister's regular inspection visits have significantly expedited the construction progress of a six-storey building containing 24 police apartments in Qurban Lines. The CM, during his visit, closely monitored the ongoing work, interacted with laborers, and commended their dedication. Setting a target, he specified Jan 31 as the deadline for completing three floors of the apartment complex. CM Naqvi underscored the importance of achieving construction milestones with the highest standards promptly. Additionally, he mandated the plantation of trees on a vacant piece of land in front of the apartments to enhance the environmental aesthetics.

Senior Member Board of Revenue, Commissioner Lahore, IG police, Secretary C&W, DIG (tele) and others were present during the visits.

**CM orders allocating new site for driving licence test centres:** Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a visit to the site, being used for car driving test at Gaddafi Stadium, here on Wednesday. While declaring the allocated place for taking the tests as inappropriate, he ordered for establishing eight centres at an appropriate place for taking the tests. He ordered to functionalise the centres forthwith so that citizens should not face any delay or difficulty in getting licences. He said that tents should be established along with providing adequate sitting facilities to the candidates.

Inspector General of Police Dr. Usman Anwar gave a briefing with regard to establishing a new site for taking the car driving test.

Talking to the media, the CM said that there was a lot of public rush for obtaining the driving licences. "I have inspected the test centres site at the Gaddafi Stadium, but this site is inappropriate," he said. Secretary Sports and CTO Lahore would jointly allocate a new site for the test centres, he added. "We will select an appropriate site for the purpose and inform citizens about bit as well," he said.

Mohsin Naqvi said that eight driving test centres were being established right from today [Wednesday], adding that citizens would not need to stand in the long queues. Adequate sitting arrangements would be made for citizens at the driving test centres. He said up till now, 11 million driving licences had been issued, adding that 100,000 driving licences were being made in Punjab on daily basis, he said. 30,000 driving licences were only being made in Lahore daily while 70,000 were being made in other cities, he added.

# Sindh Tourism Department announces dedicated Tourism Police units

E.P. Report

KARACHI: Arshad Wali Muhammad, Minister for Tourism, Environment, Climate Change, & Coastal Development, Government of Sindh, announces to establishes dedicated Tourism Police units across the province. "This initiative aims to bolster confidence in Sindh as a premier tourist destination.", says Arshad Wali Muhammad.

Secretary Tourism and Culture, Government of Sindh, Khalid Chachar, has formally requested the Home Department to allocate police personnel

for deployment at key tourism sites in Sindh. This dedicated force will be trained in tourist-centric policing, focusing on cultural sensitivity, communication, and emergency response, creating a welcoming and secure environment for visitors.

The establishment of Tourism Police underscores the Government of Sindh's commitment to promoting sustainable tourism while ensuring the well-being of tourists. This initiative paves the way for increased tourism flow, boosting economic growth and cultural exchange in the province.

# Home department report claims significant decline in crime rate

KARACHI (APP): During the tenure of the interim government from August 14th to December 18th, 2023, Sindh maintained a commendable law and order situation, largely owing to the effective performance of the Sindh Police and Pakistan Rangers Sindh. A report compiled by the Provincial Home Department, reviewed by the Sindh Caretaker Minister for Home and Prison, Brig. (Rtd.) Haris Nawaz unveiled significant achievements.

Key highlights from the report: Police Actions Against Crime: - 932 encounters and the dismantling of 458 gangs. - Elimination of 101 dacoits, arrest of 6,458 criminals, and capture of 2 highway robbers and 11 kidnappers. - Apprehension of 5,373 proclaimed

offenders and 10,344 absconders. - Recovery of various firearms and ammunition.

Actions Against Narcotics: - Execution of 3,657 raids, leading to the arrest of 5,203 accused individuals.

- Seizure of substantial quantities of ICE, heroin, hashish, and liquor. Crackdown on Smuggling and Electricity Theft:

- Multiple operations resulting in arrests and the confiscation of smuggled goods, including sugar, urea, diesel, petrol, edible oil, and others. - Extensive efforts to curb electricity theft, disconnecting 9,173 connections and confiscating faulty meters, with legal action taken against several accused individuals.

# Pak-Qatar joint aerial Exercise Zilzal-II kicks off in Qatar

E.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Air Force and Qatar Emiri Air Force are all geared up to participate in joint aerial Exercise Zilzal-II, commencing in Qatar. First held in the year 2020, Zilzal-II air exercise is the 2nd in the series of these exercises, hosted by State of Qatar.

The exercise is one of the most complex joint air force exercises, which aims at promoting inter-operability between the two allied nations while providing an opportunity for shared learning. The exercise will mimic a near realistic aerial warfare scenario coupled with real-time opportunity for the participating Air Forces to test their operational readiness. Exercise Zilzal-II, aimed at improving joint planning mechanism, is considered



as a historical benchmark to further solidify the existing defence partnership between the two brotherly countries.

During the exercise, PAF's newly inducted state-of-the-art J-10C fighter aircraft will flex its muscles against Eurofighter jets of Qatar Emiri Air Force in their first ever face-off in an aerial exercise. The successful induction and operationalization of the J-10C

fighter jets in PAF's fighter fleet and their participation in yet another international exercise in an unprecedented short span of time is a remarkable achievement. The feat has been achieved in lines with modernization plan of Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, premised on smart inductions and focused indigenization. The participation of

these fighter jets in the aerial exercise marks a significant milestone in PAF's journey towards a technologically advanced and formidable air force. The rapid acquisition and operationalization of these advanced fighter aircraft showcases PAF's dedication to maintaining a cutting-edge force, capable of meeting evolving challenges and defending Pakistan's airspace with utmost proficiency. Exercise Zilzal-II serves as a platform to foster greater understanding, cooperation and friendship between Pakistan Air Force and Qatar Emiri Air Force, contributing to regional stability and security. Pakistan Air Force remains committed to its mission of safeguarding the skies, strengthening international alliances and promoting peace through mutual cooperation.



LAHORE: Visitor viewing the painting during Painting Exhibition “Palestine Live Matter” Art and Design Exhibition at Naseem Hafeez Qazi Gallery at Lahore College for Women University.

## PFA discards 1,900-litre adulterated milk

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) discarded 1,900 litres of adulterated and substandard milk during the ongoing operation against tainted milk in the provincial metropolis.

On the directions of PFA Director General Muhammad Asim Javaid, dairy safety teams inspected several milk carrier vehicles, dairy units and milk shops to ensure provision of pure and fresh milk to consumers.

The PFA DG said teams placed screening pickets at three different points of Lahore including Babu Sabu, Saggiyan Bridge and Ravi Toll Plaza on Wednesday. He said the purpose of the crackdown was to control the wicked practice of milk adulteration in Punjab and ensure implementation of Punjab Pure Food Regulations.

He said that the authority inspected more than 50 milk carrier vehicles, loaded with over 41,000-litre milk. He said teams took action against milk suppliers and discarded 47.5 maunds of milk over results found not up to the mark during the screening test. The teams found contamination of polluted water, a low level of fats and a lack of nutritional value in the milk, he added. Muhammad Asim said indiscriminate operation would continue till elimination of the milk-adulteration mafia across Punjab.

## LDA told to simplify building plan approval

LAHORE (APP): Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman on Wednesday visited the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) offices and inspected one-window cell and under-construction identification cell.

He asked the visitors about the quality of services being provided there and issued directions to authorities on the spot. Appreciating the LDA for expediting records sifting, the chief secretary said that after digitalization of records was completed in two months, the LDA would become an exemplary institution in terms of service delivery.

He lauded the efforts of DG LDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa and his team for resolving the long-standing issues of digitalization of Johar Town's record.

Later, the chief secretary presided over a meeting on the LDA related issues. He directed the authorities to introduce IT-based reforms in the town planning and housing wings and provide corporate sector-style services for approval of building design. He said that the process of design approval and ownership transfer should be made easier through IT interventions and citizens should not be made to visit offices unnecessarily.

Thursday, January 11, 2024



## Press Note

Name of an association (trade organization) to be notified by this press note

**All Pakistan Car Dealers Traders and Small Industries Association**

DGTO is going to be registered with the Director General Trade Organization

This association is for the improvement of car sector like importers and exporters, manufacturers, assemblers and other businessmen related to car sector to represent all departments of Pakistan as well as internationally. In this regard, a formal application has been made to the Regulator Director General Trade Organization for registration and issuance of license under Trade Organization Act and Rules Implementation 2013.

### SPONSORS

SHAHZADA SALEEM KHAN	BAKHT MIR JAN DURRANI	MUHAMMAD ADIL KHAN
SHOAIB KHAN	MAAZ ULLAH KHAN	ABDUR REHMAN KAKAR
CHAUDHARY IDREES	SARDAR WALI	JAMAL MUGHAL
SYED ZUBAIR AHMAD	GHULAM BILAL JAVED	SHAHZAD KHAN

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## GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

CRBC Irrigation Division DIKhan, Irrigation Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, invites electronic Bids from the eligible firms/ contractors in accordance with KPRAA procurement rules 2014 on single stage single envelop procedure for the following works:-

Sr. No	Work Name	Estimated Cost Rs	02% Earnest Money+ Stamp Duty+ Tender Fee (Rs.)	Required PEC Category	Time Limit
<b>ADM &amp; R TO CRBC CANAL NETWORK UNDER CRBC IRRIGATION DIVISION D.I. KHAN DURING 2023-24</b>					
1	Desiltation /Jungle clearance of Disty No.04, RD.00-Tail (in reaches).	650,000	15,045	CE-04	As per BQ/ Work Order
2	Desiltation / Jungle clearance of Dera Disty RD.00-Tail (in reaches).	1,000,000	22,150		
3	Desiltation/Jungle clearance of Mehmood Disty RD.00- Tail (in reaches)	600,000	14,030		
4	Desiltation / Jungle clearance of Disty No.5 RD.00-Tail along with minors & sub minors in reaches.	1,000,000	22,150		
5	Repair to lining/raising of Mehmood Disty RD.00-Tail (in reaches)	700,000	16,060		
6	Desiltation / Jungle clearance of Disty No.5/A, (in reaches)	700,000	16,060		
7	Desiltation / Jungle clearance of Disty No.6 & its minor, (in reaches)	900,000	20,120		
8	Desiltation / Jungle clearance of Disty No.7 RD.00-Tail (in reaches)	700,000	16,060		
9	Desiltation/Jungle clearance of Minors of Disty No.7 RD.00-Tail (in reaches)	600,000	14,030		
10	Desiltation / Jungle clearance of Disty No. 8 & 8-A, RD. 00-Tail (in reaches)	600,000	14,030		
11	Desiltation / Jungle clearance of Disty No.10 & 10/A RD. 00-Tail (in reaches)	600,000	14,030		
12	Desiltation/Jungle clearance of Disty No. 11 & its Minor RD. 00-Tail (in reaches)	600,000	14,030		
13	Desiltation/Jungle clearance of Disty No.11-A, & its Minor RD.00-Tail (in reaches)	750,000	17,075		
14	Desiltation/Jungle clearance of Disty No. 12 and its system RD.00-Tail (in reaches)	900,000	20,120		
15	Desiltation / Jungle clearance of Disty # 13 & its minors RD. 00-Tail in reaches	1,100,000	28,580		
16	Repair to Structures, lining, outlets & canal banks of Disty No. 13 and i/c Minors at different RDs.	650,000	15,045		
17	Desiltation/Jungle clearance of D-14 & MD-14 RD.00-Tail in reaches.	1,400,000	34,670		
18	Repair to Structures, lining & canal banks of Disty#14 and MD-14 at different RDs.	600,000	14,030		
19	Repair to Structures, lining & canal banks of Dist#15 and MD-15 at different RDs	600,000	14,030		
20	Desiltation/Jungle clearance of D-15 & MD-15 RD.00-Tail in reaches.	1,300,000	32,640		
21	Desiltation/Jungle clearance of Disty 16 & Minor of Disty-16 RD.00-Tail in reaches	800,000	18,090		
22	Desiltation/Jungle clearance of Disty # 17 RD.00-Tail in reaches.	700,000	16,060		
23	Desiltation/Jungle clearance of Disty # 18 & its Minors RD.00-Tail in reaches.	800,000	18,090		
24	Desiltation / Jungle clearance of Disty # 18-A & its Minors RD.00-Tail in reaches.	1,100,000	28,580		
25	Raising/repair of bank of Disty No.18/A in reaches i/c RD.25800 & M-II RD.00-2000 in reaches.	550,000	13,015		
26	Desiltation / Jungle clearance of Disty # 19 RD. 00-Tail in reaches	700,000	16,060		
27	Repair to culvert/structures of Disty # 19 at different RDs.	600,000	14,030		
28	Repair to Masonry work/ Damaged Lining of Disty-19 & 20 RD: 100-Tail in reaches.	600,000	14,030		
29	Desiltation / Jungle clearance of Disty # 20 RD.00-Tail in reaches.	500,000	12,000		
30	Desiltation/Jungle clearance of Disty # 20/A RD.00-Tail in reaches.	500,000	12,000		
31	Desiltation /Jungle clearance of Disty # 21 RD.00-Tail in reaches.	500,000	12,000		
32	Desiltation /Jungle clearance of Disty # 22 & its Minor RD.00-Tail in reaches.	600,000	14,030		
33	Desiltation /Jungle clearance of Disty # 23 & MD-23 RD.00-Tail in reaches.	650,000	15,045		

### TERMS AND CONDITIONS:-

- Bid Solicitation documents including Instructions to Bidders can be downloaded from Irrigation website <http://www.irrigation.gkp.pk> as well as KPRAA website <http://www.kpra.gov.pk/>.
- Bid Solicitation Documents contains mandatory requirements to be fulfilled in order for bidder to be eligible to participate. The bidders are required to agree to all terms & conditions of bidding documents.
- The bidder shall submit their bids through postal/courier service on or before the deadline along with required documents as per detail mentioned in bid solicitation documents.
- Venue of Bids Opening in **Superintending Engineer DI Khan Irrigation Circle DI Khan**.
- The bidders are required to quote their rates above or below on BQO both on MRS as well as non MRS components.
- Two percent (02%) Bid Security/Earnest Money + Stamp duty + Tender Fees of the Estimated cost from the account of firm/ bidder/ contractor who submits the bid must be accompanied with the tender document / Quotation through any scheduled bank in favor of **Executive Engineer, CRBC Irrigation Division, DI Khan**. Failure to submit the 2% CDR will lead to rejection of the bid.
- The bidders who quote their bids / rates more than 10% below on Engineer's Estimate shall submit along with their bids additional security as per KPRAA Notification No. S.R.O(14)/Vol:1-24/2021-22, dated 10-05-2022.
- If the evaluated electronic bid costs of two or more than two bidders are equal then the successful bidder will be declared through draw.
- The Employer has the authority to reject any or all the bids assigning cogent reasons.
- Bid security of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd lowest Electronic Bidder for the specific work may be retained by the Department for at least one week after issuance of letter of acceptance to the successful bidder.
- All the bidders / Firms must be register with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority.
- All the prevailing KPRAA Acts/Rules & other government notification will be applicable, issued from time to time.
- The No. of sub-works or sub-works quantities may decrease due to financial constraints or as the case maybe. Funds release depends upon policy of Provincial Govt, hence payment will be made accordingly. Bidder/ Contractor agreeing with the financial constraints in respect of payment etc are at liberty to participate in the instant E-Bidding as no claim whatsoever will be entertained in this regard.
- Last date/ time of submission of Tenders Forms on **19/01/2024 at 12:30 PM** & will be opened on same.
- All Government notifications / rules / taxes implemented from time to time shall be applicable.

### EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

**CRBC Irrigation Division DI Khan**

INF(P): 55/2024 Address: CRBC Irrigation Division DI Khan opposite Peshawar High Court Bench DI Khan Telephone & Fax No. 0966-9280237. (E-mail Address:- [xencrbcirri@gmail.com](mailto:xencrbcirri@gmail.com))





PESHAWAR: A delegation of lecturers of colleges situated in newly merged districts meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali at Governor's House.

## Reservation of seats for Transgenders: PHC issue notices to respondents

**Humayun Khan**

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali issued notices to respondents in plea seeking reservation of seats at both national and provincial assemblies for Transgender Community, on Wednesday.

The counsel Sahibzada Raizat-ul-Haq, Mehwish Mohib Kakakhel and Batool Rifaqat advocates argued that the petitioner Bilal alias Sobia Khan is graduate as well as serving society as social worker especially transgender community.

The counsel argued that

Returning Officer had turn-down nomination papers of Bilal alias Sobia Khan as there is no reserved seats for transgender community. The Transgender Community has right to contest election like vote and the Article 25 of Constitution of Pakistan provide equal rights to all citizens, the counsel added.

The lack of representation at assemblies had deprived Transgender Community from multiple opportunities as well as compelled the community members for indulgence in immoral and illegal activities, the plea stated. As per Transgender Law the community members are free to chose gender of their

choice, the writ pleaded. The counsel Raizat Ul Haq argued for reservation of special seat for Transgender Community at the assemblies and for provision of comments from respondents in this regard. He argued that Transgender Community can't obtain its due status in the society until provision of reserve seats for the community at the assemblies.

PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali ordered Attorney General of Pakistan, Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Chief Election Commissioner and Returning Officer PK-81 for submission of reply.

## Tribunal decides 116 appeals

PESHAWAR (APP): The Election Appellate Tribunals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have so far decided 116 appeals against rejection or acceptance of nomination papers for the Nation Assembly.

According to the spokesman of the provincial election commission, the tribunal disposed of 116 appeals of the National Assembly across the province.

The tribunal decided 102 appeals against the rejection of nomination papers for 45 general seats of the National Assembly.

Similarly, 213 appeals against the rejection of nomination papers for 115 general seats of the provincial assembly were heard.

Fourteen appeals were filed against the approved nomination papers for the provincial assembly.

The spokesman said that a total of seven Election Appellate Tribunals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had given verdicts on appeals.

## Civil Society calls for reforms

PESHAWAR (APP): Blue Veins a local civil society organization, in partnership with the Provincial Alliance for Sustainable Tobacco Control in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Wednesday called for comprehensive policy and legislative reforms to address the pressing issue of tobacco control in the province.

These proposed reforms aim to regulate new nicotine and tobacco products, including Smokeless Tobacco Products (SLTs), and strengthen the existing legislation to reduce the prevalence of smoking and its associated health risks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Tobacco use remains a critical public health challenge, with devastating consequences for individuals and communities across the province. Legislation governing tobacco products plays a pivotal role in curbing tobacco-related harm, raising awareness of the dangers of smoking and second-hand smoke, and ultimately saving lives.

Qamar Naseem, Program Manager at Blue Veins, emphasized the urgency of policy reform, stating, "Tobacco consumption in KP is a growing concern, particularly among youth. Immediate policy and legislative reform is essential to protect the health and well-being of our communities."

The adoption and enforcement of strong tobacco control laws are critical steps in our efforts to combat the tobacco epidemic and prevent unnecessary deaths."

## 400,000 liters adulterated food items discarded in 2023

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority conducted 150,000 operations across the province last year and discarded over 400,000 kg/litres of adulterated food items.

During the year 2023, about 2000 food-related businesses were sealed for violating the laws while warning notices were issued to more than 7,800 businesses over unhygienic conditions and imposed Rs 61.8 million penalties, said a performance report issued here Wednesday.

Similarly, 17,532 samples of different food items were checked from static food testing and mobile food testing laboratory, out of which 5,947 samples were found unsatisfactory, said the report adding that 8,600 samples of milk, 1094 of water, 1690 of beverages, 932 of fruit juices, 2232 of edible oil, 365 of spices, 421 of tea leaves, 310 of honey were tested.

## DIG emphasizes significance of modern technology



**Syed Adnan**

PESHAWAR: The Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Information Technology Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Irfan Tariq emphasized the significance of modern technology in policing, stating that it is a crucial need for effective law enforcement. Under the guidance of the IGP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan, the police department has taken significant steps to promote technological advancements.

During a press briefing at the Central Police Office in Peshawar, DIG Information Technology Police KP Irfan Tariq unveiled two new mobile applications (APPS) - the E-Police Post App and the Safe Election App, developed in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board (KPITB).

DIG Irfan Tariq explained that the primary objective of the E-Police Post App is to address public issues and problems promptly. Police personnel will utilize the app during routine policing at various checkpoints, enhancing the efficiency of police checking. The app will facilitate instant checking of stolen vehicles and verification of criminal records at the site, thereby easing the inconvenience faced by travelers and vehicle owners.

Similarly, the Safe Election App (SEA) aims to enhance the security plan for all election-related arrangements. Through the app, security personnel will be able to reach polling stations promptly and address issues and challenges related to duties with efficiency. The app emphasizes ensuring timely awareness of problems and challenges faced by the personnel and taking immediate actions for their resolution.

DIG Irfan highlighted that in the evolving era, the objective of police apps is to provide better police services in a pleasant environment, aligning with the satisfaction and necessities of the public and democratic society. These technological initiatives reflect the commitment of the police department to modernize and enhance the overall safety and security measures in the region.

## Governor urged to rehabilitate lecturers

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of lecturers of colleges situated in newly merged districts called on KP Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Wednesday and urged him to rehabilitate lecturers appointed under various projects.

The delegation was comprised lecturers of colleges situated in merged districts including Kurram, Waziristan, FR Bannu, Khyber, Kohat, Mirali Dara Adam Kge and Alizai. The governor was informed that about 42 lecturers have been suspended by Managing Unit Higher Education Department.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor assured cooperation to delegation and directed secretary higher education and Chief Secretary to resolve the issue. He urged lecturers to

work with dedication and said that lecturers would not be removed.

He said that government is spending huge amount on promotion of education and added that it is prime duty of teachers to focus capacity building of students and prepare them to meet the challenges of current world.

KP Governor stressed upon teachers to promote culture of research and help students to venture into fields of innovation for their own development. He said that effort of teachers is need to remove backwardness of under developed areas and to bring people in mainstream of development.

Assuring cooperation to lecturers, he said that problems of teachers and educational institutions would be resolved on priority basis.

## Minister directs to functionalize KP School of Aviation Training

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Technical Education, Industries Commerce and Newly Merged Districts Affairs Dr. Aamer Abdullah has directed the relevant authorities to functionalize the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa School of Aviation Training and Services Nowshera, for aviation training activities as soon as possible.

He further directed that a feasible plan should be presented to him for starting the latest aviation courses here and introduction of this institution in the region.

The caretaker minister along with Managing Director Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority Aamir Afaq and Managing Director Small Industries Development Board Ghazanfar Ali paid a surprise visit to Nowshera and inspected the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa School of Aviation Training and Services there.

It is mentioned that the said center had been handed over by TEVTA to Shaheen Technical Education Vocational Training

Project for the provision of aviation services training.

During the visit, the center's staff told the minister that the school has received modern machinery for training purposes in 2019, but due to the license required for the said training courses from the Civil Aviation Authority and some other obstacles, admissions for aviation training services here, have not been started yet.

On this occasion, the caretaker minister expressed his regret concern that the modern training center equipped with equipment was lying idle and not being used.

He said that despite the passage of many years, the training center is still lying non functional, which is equipped with modern machinery for aviation training.

The caretaker minister directed that this national asset should be made active as soon as possible for achieving training objectives and a suitable plan should be presented to them in this regard.

During the visit, he inspected various parts of the training center and reviewed the machinery for aviation training there.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah addressing Police Darbar during his visit to Police Line.

## 2024 election brings boom to printing, advertising industries

PESHAWAR (APP): Witnessing great boom in printing and advertising business in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the 2024 general election brought smile on the faces of printers, advertisers and publishers after receiving substantial orders from contesting candidates and political parties working till late night to fulfill the placed orders.

The printers and advertisers of Mohallah Jahnagi, a hub of printing, advertisements and designing businesses located at the backside of historic Qissa Khwani bazaar, received heavy orders from thousands of candidates and religio-political parties ahead of 2024 general election and were making handsome profits.

Busy like a honeybee in printing of posters, banners and others election related materials, Ali Khan (42), a motivated printer at Mohallah Jhangri Peshawar is working against the time to fulfill printing's demands of election candidates.

Attracting a substantial printing and advertising orders from political parties and independent candidates

regarding preparations of political parties flags, posters, advertisements, graphics designing, promotional cards, billboards, pana-flex, Ali Khan, who associated with printing and advertising business since 2014 said, "the response of election candidates especially of their supporters was overwhelming in KP where all printers received orders from Rs5lakht upt Rs3 million."

"I have engaged six extra labourers, who worked till late night to meet demands of printing materials of the tickets holders and independent candidates by January 15, 2024," he said, adding the printers and advertisers of Peshawar also received heavy orders from merged tribal districts and Attak district of Punjab province. Ali said the closure of Charsadda and Mardan paper mills have made a negative impact on the printing business in Peshawar where prices of finished goods have significantly increased due to transportation of election related papers from Punjab and electricity-cost.

## SALGAI Foundation holds dialogue on interfaith harmony

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: As part of its initiative to foster understanding and unity in the Pashtun-inhabited belt, SALGAI Foundation organised a meeting of stakeholders.

The event at the Police Public School & College featured enterprising and qualified youth, as well as influential community figures. Speakers underlined the imperative of promoting mutual tolerance and the spirit of coexistence among followers of different faith in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Nabeel Khan, S. Yasir Ali Shah, Shahab Ud Din, Dr. Sami-d Din Arman, Hayat Roghani, Pro. Fida Ur Rehman, Dr. Dervaihs Afridi, Sadiq Zharak and Subhash Chander called for devising strategies to advance interfaith harmony.

The Peshawar-based SALGAI Foundation, a newly created non-profit organisation, aims to



promote interfaith harmony and public awareness regarding the benefits of peace and the need for combating obscurantism.

## Faculty members attended meeting for upgradation of KMC

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Gathering of the KTH/KMC/KCD faculty took place at Khyber Teaching Hospitals' 5th-floor auditorium on Wednesday. A large number of faculty members and administration participated and passed the resolution to secure their unwavering commitment to the transformation of KMC into a university.

The entire faculty gives the surety that we are on the same page in the whole process of KMC - University upgradation and our mission is to make the vision of KMC University into a reality.

During his speech Dean KMC Prof. Dr. Mahmud

Aurangzeb pays his gratitude to the Medical Director for arranging such a fantastic event, and especially to Dr. Farooq Director of Medical Education KMC, Dr. Muhammad Idrees - Chairman Pathology KTH/KMC for their brilliant support. He also thanked the APPNA for the tremendous support in providing scholarships to 150 students.

Moreover, he said for the last 35 years we have been waiting for the rightful decision for KMC's upgrade as a University but due to financial and legal issues this long-awaited project is still pending.

He added that the establishment of a KMC university could have a significant

impact on healthcare education in the region. It could attract talented students and faculty, offer innovative programs, and contribute to advancements in medical knowledge and practice.

Dr. Farooq - Director of Medical Education at KMC presented a very compelling case for the upgrade of KMC to a university. Dr. Farooq's arguments present a strong and well-rounded justification for KMC's transformation into a university.

The emphasis on preparedness, growing demand, proven excellence, and comparative data builds a compelling case for the project's viability and significance. Here are

some key takeaways from his points:

KMC has already invested heavily in infrastructure and faculty development, with over 10 PhD scholars and well-equipped facilities. This demonstrates proactive planning and readiness for university status.

KP's population has doubled since KMC's establishment, highlighting the need for expanded access to higher education in healthcare. Having only one medical university is no longer sufficient.

KMC's Medical Education department has independently developed 15 out of 17 MBBS blocks, showcasing its dedication and capacity for effective management.

He further said that While KMC and KTH have been instrumental in KMC's success, granting KMC university status would recognize its individual contributions and allow it to further flourish.

KMU's affiliations with fewer institutes compared to Punjab University despite serving a larger population in KP strengthens the argument for establishing KMC as a separate university.

National Comparison: The disparity in the number of medical universities across provinces (KP: 1 vs. Punjab: 11, Sindh: 7) further bolsters the case for upgrading KMC.

During the speech, KTH Medical Director Prof. Dr.

Muhammad Ayaz Khan said that I am blessed to be a part of this prestigious institute and today is a special day and we are together with faculty from such a broad range of institutions (KTH, KMC, KCD) likely led to a vibrant exchange of ideas and perspectives on the topic of KMC's transformation into a university. This diversity can lead to a more comprehensive and well-rounded approach to the challenges and opportunities involved.

Further, he stated that the establishment of a KMC university could have a significant impact on healthcare education in the region. It could attract talented students and faculty, offer innovative programs,



and contribute to advancements in medical knowledge and practice.

After the question and answer session, Prof. Muhammad Ayaz Khan passed a resolution and took a pledge from the entire KTH/KMC/KCD faculty, for their unflinching support of the transformation of KMC into a university. This symbolic act signifies a momentous step towards realizing this shared vision.





## In brief

### CM's aide visits DHQ Tangi F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Special Assistant to Caretaker Chief Minister on Transport, Zafarullah Umerzai on Wednesday visited District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) Tangi district Charsadda and inspected its various sections. He visited medical, surgical and children wards, minor operation theatre, high dependency unit and ECG Room and inquired about provision of facilities to patients. He also met with patients and listened to their problems. Speaking on the occasion, he said that patients would be provided all the needed facilities and they would be facilitated and provided improve healthcare delivery system. CM's aide was also briefed about lack of facilities in the hospital and the problems being faced by staff. He was told about sanitation problems and shortage of beds and potable water in the hospital. Zafarullah Umerzai assured cooperation to hospital administration in resolving their problems and urged them to play role for bringing improvement in the system.

### Protest against SHO arranged F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Relatives of a youth allegedly killed in police custody put the body on the road in front of the session court and held a protest demonstration against the killing at Samarbagh here the other day. They demanded registration of First Information Report (FIR) against the SHO and other police officials. Speaking on the occasion the protesters' leaders including Kifayat Khan, Sakleem Momand, Mujibur Rehman and others alleged that the Samarbagh police arrested the youth Raheel in a drug abuse case and his relatives were informed on Sunday about his death. The relatives put the dead body on the road and chanted slogans against local police. They said the youth had died due to severe torture of police. The protesters demanded an inquiry regarding the incident and threatened to take revenge if the victim's family was not satisfied. Meanwhile the DSP Jandol Bakht Jamal Khan reached the venue and held talks with the protesters. He assured them that the case would be properly investigated and actions would be taken against the officials if they were found guilty.

### Two friends drowned F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: A high-speed car ran out of control and fell into the canal near Ahmadpur Chatha area of Hafizabad, 2 friends in the car drowned in the canal and died. The rescue teams of Rescue-1122 pulled out the dead bodies and the car from the canal. According to Rescue 1122, two friends, Muhammad Tariq and Arsalan, residents of Ladhaiwala Warrach area of Gujranwala, were going back to their village by car after leaving their close lawyer friend when their car went out of control due to high speed and fell into the Lower Chenab Canal. Resultantly two persons in the car drowned. Rescue-1122 rescue teams rushed to the spot and pulled out the dead bodies and the car from the canal. According to rescue sources, both friends Muhammad Tariq and Arsalan were going back to their village after leaving their close lawyer friend in his village when they met with an accident.



MINGORA: PML-N provincial president Amir Muqam addressing a press conference at his residence in Sangota, Swat.

## Female candidates overlooked by parties in nomination finalization

Anees Takkar

MARDAN: Absence of Female candidates raises concerns as major parties finalize nominees for upcoming elections. According to the details, three prominent political entities Awami National Party (ANP), Jamati-Islami (JI), and Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Fazl-ur-Rahman (JUI-F) have announced their candidates for three National Assembly seats and eight Provincial Assembly seats in Mardan. However, a notable gap in representation is observed, as none of these parties has issued a ticket to any female candidate for these constituencies. Reliable sources have indicated that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is considering issuing a ticket to the distinguished political figure Sayed Nazia Shah in Mardan. However, PTI (P) has yet to officially confirm its candidates for the upcoming general elections in 2024, leaving Mardan's political landscape in anticipation.

In a significant development, three prominent political parties have announced their final list of candidates for the upcoming general elections scheduled for February 8. The Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (F), Awami National Party (ANP), and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) have collectively identified their contenders for various constituencies in Mardan.

JUI-F made its ticket announcements recently, solidifying the participation of the three major political forces in the electoral race. With this revelation, the total number of parties finalizing their candidates has reached three, with the ANP and JI having already fielded their aspirants earlier.

JUI-F, in particular, faced challenges in deciding on ticket allocations, with the final selection encompassing a diverse array of candidates. Notably, among those securing tickets are two former provincial ministers and six ex-members of the assembly. The National Assembly's constituency NA-21 sees Senator Haji Dilawar Khan's brother, Azeem

Khan, as the JUI-F candidate, while NA-22 will feature Niaz Ali and NA-23 will have Kaleemullah Khan Tauru as their contenders.

The provincial assembly seats have also witnessed the nomination of key figures. Former provincial ministers Hafiz Akhtar Ali for PK54, Senator Haji Dilawar Khan's son Adnan Khan for PK55, ex-MPA Obaid Mayar for PK56, Maulana Amanat Shah Haqqani for PK57, who served as the provincial general secretary, Ex MPA Taj U Amin Jabal for PK58, Maolana Aqil Ansari for PK59, Ex Provincial Minister Ifthikhar Momand for PK60 and Ex MNA Maolana Muhammad Qasim for PK61 are among the candidates from JUI (F) for constituencies in Mardan for upcoming general election.

On the ANP side, their candidates for the national assembly include Ahmad Ali for NA-21, the former Chief Minister Ameer Haider Hoti for NA-22, and Ex MPA Ahmad Bahadur for NA-23. In the provincial assembly, the party has nominated Ex MPA Gohar Bacha for PK-54, Suhail Bacha for PK-55, Haji Abdul Aziz Khan for PK-56, Ahmed Bahadur for PK-57, Ameer Haider Khan Hoti for PK-58, General Secretary ANP Haroon Khan for PK-59 and Sher Afghan Khan for PK-60. Furthermore, for PK-61, the ANP has selected the party Secretary for Information Jamal Nasir for PK-61 for upcoming election 2024.

Jamaat-e-Islami has also declared its candidates for the provincial assembly seats. Ex MNA Dr. Ata-ur-Rehman is nominated for NA 21, Syed Kalim Bacha for NA 22 and Hafiz Ismail for NA 23. Jamati-Islami also nominated for provincial assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Imtiaz Ali Nangyal for PK 54, Sajad Sayed Bacha for PK 55, Akhter Ali Khan for PK 56, Advocate Shafiq Toru for PK 57, Mushtaq Semaab for PK 58, Ibrahim Buland for PK 59, Noman Yousaf for PK 60 and Abdul Wasii for PK 61 to contest

on 8 February 2024 general election.

Despite the clarity from these three parties, others like the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League (PML), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), and Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) are yet to finalize their candidates. The political atmosphere in Mardan is becoming more dynamic, particularly with the recent clandestine meeting between PTI (P) Chairman Pervez Khattak and former provincial minister Abdul Subhan Khan. Khattak's visit to Subhan Khan's residence is seen as a significant political move, hinting at potential collaboration.

While the tussle for candidacies continues, it remains to be seen how accurately these political maneuvers align with the upcoming electoral landscape. The following days are crucial as more details about alliances, strategies, and emerging candidates are expected to unfold, providing a clearer picture of the political scenario leading up to the elections.

The absence of female candidates in the nominations from major parties raises concerns about gender representation in the political sphere. As political dynamics evolve in Mardan, the role of women in the electoral process remains a critical aspect to watch, especially as parties make strategic decisions leading up to the elections.

Political expert have pointed out that the delay in the full-fledged commencement of election campaigning by various political parties stems from the pending allotment of election symbols. The non-availability of these symbols has hindered the initiation of comprehensive campaign strategies by the parties, raising concerns about the impact on their outreach and communication with the electorate. As parties await the resolution of this matter, it adds a layer of complexity to the pre-election landscape, requiring prompt attention and resolution for a smooth electoral process.

## Visitors take keen interest in a two-day street book-fair

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The district administration in collaboration with the National Book Foundation (NBF), youth affairs department and tehsil municipal administration arranged a two-day street book fair for the first time in the district here on Wednesday.

Deputy Commissioner Wasil Khan along with Assistant Commissioner Timergara Dr Nida Iqbal inaugurated the book fair. More than 4000 books were stalled while a digital screen was also installed in the book fair on the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner so that students can be made aware of e-libraries and artificial intelligence.

The schools' heads, teachers, educationists, students and youths took keen interest in the book fair and appreciated the efforts of the district administration.

All kinds of books on science, technology, history, war, religion, agriculture and sports are available at a 50 percent discount rate in the book fair. According to the organizers a record number of books were sold on the first day of the event. The book fair will continue till 8 pm on Thursday as well.

Speaking on the occasion the Deputy Commissioner said that the aim of the event was to draw the attention of youths and students towards book-reading. He said that it was book reading and education that elevated nations toward high position, development and progress. He said that book reading



had great importance in career building among the youths. The DC thanked district youth officer Shahzad Tariq, TMO Qadir Naseer and the NBF for organizing the successful book fair in the area. A prominent social activist Akbar Khan briefed the visiting officials regarding the history of Lower Dir and the various civilizations and customs of the area.

The Assistant Commissioner Timergara Dr Nida Iqbal inspected the multi-purpose book stalls during her visit to the venue. Assistant Director Ehtishamul Haq gave a briefing to the Deputy Commissioner regarding the Timergara Public Library that also provided books and set up stalls. The DC gifted free books to 20 deserving students. The president of All Sports Association Lower Dir Malik Shah Naseem, President Timergara trade union Haji Anwarud Din, government officials and media persons also visited the book fair and appreciated the efforts of the organizers.

**PPP election office:** The Pakistan Peoples' Party inaugurated its election office for NA 7 and PK 16 constituencies during a function held here at Timergara on Wednesday. The PPP district president and former provincial minister Mahmood Zeb, party candidate for PK 16 Kamran Zeb, information secretary Alam Zeb advocate, tehsil president Malik Barkat Khan, village councils' chairmen and party workers attended the event. Speaking on the occasion Mahmood Zeb Khan and others claimed the PPP would win all seats in the district as other parties had disappointed locals for the last 10 years.

The speakers said the PPP had completed record development projects during its government from 2008 and 2013 in the district. They said that PPP was being led by a young and energetic leader, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari who was committed to bring the country at par with other developed states. The speakers asked party workers to speed up their door to door campaign and convince the voters, especially youths to vote for the PPP for their bright future.

## Former minister Asia Jahangir joins PTI-P

F.P. Report

BANNU: Former provincial minister and former Chairman Board of Governors of MTI, Asia Jahangir, announced the joining of the Tehreek-e-Insaf parliamentarian in the presence of former chief minister Pervez Khattak, on Wednesday.

Speaking at the event, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentary Chairman, former Chief Minister Pervez Khattak said that Imran Khan had adopted the form of pharaohism, he did not even meet the MNAs of the party. I came to the top but Imran Khan did not accept our sacrifices

and always sidelined the loyalists of the party. What happened on this occasion, the former provincial minister, the party's information secretary, Zia Allah Bangash, and other leaders and party officials were also present.

The speakers used to ignore others, which is why most people did not bring these things forward in their own language. Former MNAs, MPs and municipal administrators from all over the world are joining us. They said that no one should teach us politics. He said that in the general elections of February 8, they will achieve such success that the so-called politicians

will be in danger of politics. They said that Imran Khan was opposed to BRT but when BRT was built, he was surprised. He said that he would achieve great success in the southern districts and especially in the male division, and such candidates would be fielded in the general elections.

Congratulating the former provincial minister Ms. Asia Jahangir on joining the party, she said that her participation in the construction of the southern districts and the elimination of poverty. Asia Jahangir is a fearless and brave woman who has always fought for women's rights and to solve the problems.

## Residents hold protest against construction of expressway

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: A huge numbers of local elders and land owners on Wednesday protested and asked the quarters concerned to change the route of the proposed Swat Expressway phase-II and demanded the to the concern authority to scrutinize its decision to build the road on agricultural land.

Addressing a press conference here at Swat Press Club, elders, including Zahid Khan, Fath ullah Khan, Amir Nawab, Zahid Hussain and other said that the proposed map would destroy their valuable orchards and would affect their fertile lands. "The government must change the project map. It will have environmental and economic conse-

quences, as thousands of trees as well as orchards will be destroyed," said Alhaj Zahid Khan, a local elder.

The protestors asked the Provincial and federal government to change the decision in the best interest of the area and save the land owner from looming starvation. "The proposed project is the violation of Land Acquisition rules 2020, Agricultural land protection act 2021, and National Climate Change Policy 2012. The government should build the motorway on the bank of river Swat, which will provide a beautiful landscape to the tourists, and will also provide protection to the land from the erosion and floods", Zahid Khan added.

The protestors along

with their kids also marched from Swat Press Club to Nishat square Mingora, and shouted against the proposed project. Amir Nawab Khan, a local resident said that if the proposed project was implemented, he would be deprived of all his agriculture land and valuable peach orchards. He urged the government to revisit the decision and took the locals into confidence.

Hailing from Charbagh area of Swat, Javed Khan, told this scribe that the former Chief Minister Mahmood Khan, and his brother Ahmad Khan had done nepotism, and have saved the lands of their dear and nears. He maintained that if their demand were not accepted, the affectees along with their families would take to the streets.

## 3500 tons garbage disposed off

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Additional Deputy Commissioner Saeedullah Jan shared significant achievements under the Prosperous Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Program. He issued a press statement stated that over the past month, 3500 tons of waste were efficiently collected and safely disposed of in various areas of Mardan.

To ensure an uninterrupted supply of clean water, 12 chlorine-treated tanks have been installed for the citizens. ADC further highlighted the efforts already taken for maintaining fair prices of essential items.

A total of 2993 shops were inspected, resulting in fines totaling Rs. 873,000 for 324 violators. Legal actions were taken against eight businesses for tax evasion, with notices issued to 117 establishments.

**Crackdown on violators:** Legal actions were initiated against 47 dairy farms, 16 hotels, and 20 sugarcane crushers involved in adulteration. Cases related to revenue have been resolved, and transparency ensured through the installation of CCTV cameras in service delivery centers and Patwar Khanas.

**Waste management and land reclamation:** The implementation of a domicile system allows residents to obtain domiciles conveniently. Additionally, 60 acres of land were reclaimed in the operation against encroachments.



QUETTA: Provincial general secretary, JUI Balochistan, Zahid Akhtar Baloch addressing a press conference.

## De-silting of irrigational channels kicks off

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: In order to ensure reach of irrigational water at tails ends of water channels, de-silting of 17000 kilometers long canal and distributaries have been started in the Punjab including district Hafizabad under the vision of prosperous farmer and increase in per acre yield.

These views were expressed by the Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Sundas Irshad while inaugurating desilting campaign started from cleaning of Mehdi Hassan Bhatti distributary near Sukehi feeded from Jhang Branc Canal. Executive Engineer Canal Hafizabad Division Muzafar

Khan and other officers were also accompanied by her. She said that the Punjab government was taking all possible measures for not only enhancing per acre agriculture production but also for improving socio economic condition of farmers in the Punjab including justifiy distribution and provision of irrigation water land situated at tails ends of water channels.

DC said that irrigational system was playing key role for increasing per acre yield that is why, the Punjab government was focusing on improvement of canal system in the province. She directed the officers of Irrigation department to monitor desilt-

ing work and to ensure completion of desilting work in stipulated time. She further said that officers and field staff of Revenue Department would also be checked desilting work.

She also directed the officers of irrigation department to continue steps against water theft in the district. Executive Engineer Mazafar Ahmad informed the DC that modern machinery was being utilized for desilting of 12 Kilo Meter long Mehdi Hannas Bhatti Distributary which was supplying irrigational water to 8500 land and in the first phase of desilting campaign, 100 km long distributaries would be cleared.



HYDERABAD: Employees of Regional Blood Centre holding a protest against non-payment of their salaries.





# Israel’s war on Gaza and ‘obligation to prevent genocide’

GAZA: It was just days into Israel's bombardment of the Gaza Strip when a grave warning rang out. United Nations experts had sounded the alarm that Palestinians in Gaza faced a risk of genocide. The Israeli army was battering the coastal enclave, forcing most of the population from their homes and imposing a stringent blockade barring food, water and other supplies from getting in.

More warnings have since followed alongside calls for the international community to act. Now, as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is set to hear a case alleging Israel is committing genocidal acts in Gaza, global attention is again focused on what can - or should - be done to stop the war and prevent crimes like genocide. South Africa, the country that brought the case to the ICJ, invoked in its decision an "obligation to prevent genocide" as a signatory to the United Nations Genocide Convention - something experts say is a critical step in such cases.

"Genocide is seen as having under international law this special character that it's relevant to everyone," explained Mark Kersten, assistant professor of criminology and criminal justice at University of the Fraser Valley in Canada. "What South Africa is saying, amongst many other things, is that it has the obligation to prevent genocide under the Genocide Convention and therefore the obligation to do something about what it sees as genocide in Gaza," he told Al Jazeera. Signed in 1948 in the aftermath of World War II, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide - the Genocide



Convention - "codified for the first time the crime of genocide". It "signified the international community's commitment to 'never again' after the atrocities committed during the Second World War", the UN says on its website.

Today, 153 countries are parties to the convention, confirming "that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish". States can meet their obligation to prevent genocide in several ways, including by appealing - as South Africa has done - to the ICJ, the UN's top court. In its filing, South Africa argued that Israel has not only "failed to prevent genocide", but it also "engaged in, is engaging in and risks further engaging in genocidal acts against the Palestinian people in

Gaza". "The acts in question include killing Palestinians in Gaza, causing them serious bodily and mental harm, and inflicting on them conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction. The acts are all attributable to Israel, which has failed to prevent genocide and is committing genocide in manifest violation of the Genocide Convention," the submission reads.

"South Africa is acutely aware of the particular weight of responsibility in initiating proceedings against Israel for violations of the Genocide Convention. However, South Africa is also acutely aware of its own obligation - as a State party to the Genocide Convention - to prevent genocide." This goes further than other genocide cases previously heard by the court, said Kersten. An important precedent, however, was a

case (PDF) brought by The Gambia in 2019. It argued that Myanmar was committing genocide through actions "intended to destroy" the mostly Muslim Rohingya minority group "in whole or in part". The proceedings are ongoing, and Canada, France, the United Kingdom and other countries late last year filed a joint petition in support of The Gambia's case.

"This case confirms that any contracting party can bring a case under the Genocide Convention," said Amanda Ghahremani, an international criminal lawyer and research fellow at the Human Rights Center at the University of California, Berkeley, in the United States. "It doesn't necessarily have to be a case between the states that are directly involved." In 2007, the ICJ also laid out when states can act to uphold their obligation to prevent genocide, noting that their responsibility does not solely begin "when perpetration of genocide commences". "That would be absurd, since the whole point of the obligation is to prevent, or attempt to prevent, the occurrence of the act," the court said (PDF) in a decision in a case brought by Bosnia and Herzegovina against Serbia and Montenegro over crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia. Instead, the obligation arises "at the instant that the State learns of, or should normally have learned of, the existence of a serious risk that genocide will be committed", the court explained. "From that moment onwards, if the State has available to it means likely to have a deterrent effect on those suspected of preparing genocide, or reasonably suspected of harbouring

specific intent ... it is under a duty to make such use of these means as the circumstances permit." In the Gaza case before the ICJ, South Africa has asked the court to take provisional measures, including to urge Israel to end its attacks on the enclave, punish public incitement of genocide and lift restrictions on aid deliveries to Palestinians in the territory.

Kersten explained that South Africa does not have to immediately prove that genocide is happening to get those measures approved, but rather it must show that there is "a serious risk of genocide" - a lower threshold. "We may differ on whether Israel as a state is committing genocide or has committed genocide," he said. "But we can definitely say, on the basis of all the statements and all of the violence and the starvation and the siege and the blockade and the expulsions and all of these things, that there is a serious risk of genocide, and if there's a serious risk of genocide, the duty to prevent it exists."

"And that's, to me, one of the more powerful things that South Africa has said." Meanwhile, if a state fails to comply with a ruling by the ICJ, the other party can go to the UN Security Council to enforce the decision, explained Ghahremani. But even that path does not guarantee compliance. Ghahremani noted that the court last year issued (PDF) provisional measures in Ukraine v Russia, ordering Moscow to immediately suspend its military operation as it considered Kyiv's case. Russia, which holds veto power at the Security Council, rejected the decision.

"In reality, you will see that states do fail to comply with legal rulings, but it's still really important that an international institution like the ICJ adjudicates these cases and publicly validates international norms," she told Al Jazeera. Ghahremani acknowledged that Israel's "consistent disregard for international law" over the past decades "doesn't paint a great picture of the international legal system and the enforcement capabilities of international institutions". Like Russia, the US - Israel's main ally - also has a Security Council veto. "There have been many legal interventions in the international sphere related to Israel's conduct against Palestinians, and yet Israel continues to breach international law. When you see that level of impunity ... you do lose a lot of hope in the international legal system to be able to halt and prevent genocide, amongst other atrocities," she said.

Still, she said lawyers and rights advocates persist with new and creative ways to use international law to get justice and accountability. "What's interesting here to me, with this [South Africa] case, is seeing how precedents from the situations in Ukraine and Myanmar - where there was more political will - are now being used in this context," Ghahremani explained. "I'm very curious to see how that plays out and whether we're going to see consistency in the positions that states take and in the positions of these international institutions... That will also be very telling and illuminating for all of us." — Aljazeera

## Maine House votes down GOP effort to impeach election official

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP): Democrats who control the Maine Legislature rejected a Republican effort to impeach the state's top election official for her decision to remove former President Donald Trump from the state ballot over his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol. The Maine House voted 80-60 against the resolution targeting Shenna Bellows, the first secretary of state in history to block someone from running for president by invoking the US Constitution's insurrection clause.

Bellows, who watched the entire proceeding from the gallery, vowed to abide by any legal ruling on her decision to keep Trump off Maine's March 5 primary ballot, which is under appeal in Maine Superior Court. Republicans are furious over Bellows' conclusion that the GOP frontrunner shouldn't be on the ballot. They argued that her decision disenfranchised the more than 300,000 voters in Maine who chose Trump in the last election.

GOP Rep. Michael Soboleski, of Phillips, called the secretary's action "election interference of the

highest order" and a fellow Republican, Rep. James Thorne, of Carmel, said it "does nothing but further divide the political banner between the parties, and indeed the people of the state of Maine." "There has been no conviction in a court of law. She is not a judge. She is not a jury. And I believe that the people feel absolutely disenfranchised," added Rep. Katrina Smith, a Republican from Palermo. But they had faced long odds in seeking retribution against the Democrat. The proposal called for a panel to investigate Bellows' actions and report back to the 151-member House. If the proposal had moved forward - and there had been an impeachment vote - then there would have been a trial in the 35-member Senate, where Democrats also have a majority. Democratic Rep. Kevin O'Connell, of Brewer, said Bellows "faithfully discharged her oath of office." He called her "an honorable person" who should not be removed from office for "simply doing her job."

"You might disagree with her decision, and some

folks do. But every government official has an obligation to follow the law and fulfill their oath to the Constitution," he said. Afterward, Bellows said she stood by her assessment that the impeachment effort was "political theater" and that she acted as required by state law after Trump's candidacy was challenged. "If people disagree with the decision, the proper venue for resolving that disagreement is with the courts. And indeed Mr. Trump has appealed to Superior Court. If people disagree with the authority delegated to the secretary under Maine election law, the proper venue is for the legislature to amend the law," Bellows said after the vote. Section 3 of the 14th Amendment prohibits those who "engaged in insurrection" from holding office. Some legal scholars say the post-Civil War clause applies to Trump for his role in trying to overturn the 2020 presidential election and encouraging his backers to storm the US Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. So far, Colorado is the only other state to bar Trump from the ballot. That decision by the Colorado

Supreme Court is currently under appeal to the US Supreme Court. Trump's lawyers asked a judge to pause his appeal of Bellow's decision to allow time for a US Supreme Court decision that could render it moot. But the attorney general's office, which is representing Bellows, objected to the effort to delay the legal process in Maine. Bellows, 48, is Maine's 50th secretary of state and the first woman to hold the office, beginning in the role in January 2021 after being elected by lawmakers. The former state senator also served as executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Maine from 2005 to 2013 and worked on successful drives to legalize same-sex marriage, same-day voter registration and ranked choice voting. While Maine has just four electoral votes, it's one of two states to split them, so the state could have outsized importance in what's expected to be a close presidential race this year. Trump earned one of Maine's electors when he was elected in 2016 and again in 2020 when he lost reelection.

## US air strike foils rocket attack on Iraqi air base

ANBAR (Reuters): A US air strike on a rocket launcher foiled an attack on Ain al-Asad air base, which hosts US and other international forces in western Iraq, two Iraqi army sources said. Iraqi military sources said a rocket launcher fixed on the back of a small truck had been parked in a rural area about 7 km (4 miles) to the east of the base, with at least two rockets ready to be fired towards Ain al-Asad.

The US air strike destroyed the launcher, an army official said. US-led coalition officials were not immediately available to comment on the strike. The United States has 900 troops in Syria and 2,500 more in neighbouring Iraq and says their mission is to advise and assist local forces trying to prevent a resurgence of Islamic State, which in 2014 seized large swathes of both countries but was later pushed back. Since the Israel-Hamas war began last October, the US military has come under attack at least 100 times in Iraq and Syria, usually with a mix of rockets and attack drones. Iran-aligned militia groups in Iraq and Syria oppose Israel's campaign in Gaza and hold the US partly responsible.

## Indonesia ready to work with countries

MANILA (Reuters): Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said her country is ready to work with other Southeast Asian nations to finalise a long-delayed code of conduct for the South China Sea, where many of its neighbours have overlapping claims with China. "On South China Sea, Indonesia is ready to work together with all ASEAN member states including the Philippines to finalise the Code of Conduct as soon as possible," Retno said at a joint press conference with Filipino counterpart Enrique Manalo in Manila, ahead of a visit by Indonesian President Joko Widodo.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China have for years been trying to create a framework to negotiate a code of conduct, a plan dating as far back as 2002. But progress has been slow despite commitments by all parties to advance and expedite the process. China stakes its claim on its maps with the use of a "nine-dash line" that loops as far as 1,500 km (900 miles) south of its mainland, cutting into the exclusive economic zones of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam. A 2016 international arbitral tribunal ruling invalidated most of China's claims, a decision that Beijing has rejected.

## Minnesota hotel shooting kills clerk and 2 guests

MINNEAPOLIS (AP): A shooting at a small-town Minnesota hotel killed an employee and two possible guests, including the suspect, authorities said, one day after an active shooter alert was issued. An employee at the Super 8 in Cloquet, Minnesota, called police shortly after 6:30 p.m. to say they had found another employee who looked like she had been attacked, Cloquet police Chief Derek Randall said at a news conference.

Police arrived within three minutes and found a 22-year-old clerk with a gunshot wound inside the hotel. She was transported to a hospital but later died, Randall said. Officers also found a 35-year-old man from Deer River, Minnesota, with multiple gunshot wounds dead inside a vehicle in the hotel parking lot. And, they found a 32-year-old man from Ramsey, Minnesota, dead outside on the hotel's property with evidence suggesting he died from a self-

inflicted gunshot wound, and a handgun was next to him, Randall said. Authorities used hotel surveillance video to confirm he was the shooter. According to the video, the shooting lasted about 10 minutes before officers arrived, Randall said. Authorities did not immediately release the names of the three people. Randall said they did not have information yet about a motive or connection between the three, though they believe both the men were hotel guests. The investigation is ongoing. Police said there are no further threats to the public.

Officials had issued an alert at about 7 p.m. about an active shooter at the hotel and warned people in the surrounding area of Big Lake Road and Highway 33 to shelter in place. "Based on what the officers found, we believed that there was an active shooter situation," Randall said. "We took a cautious approach and issued an

alert until more information about the suspects whereabouts were known." A hockey game was finishing up at the town's arena a couple of blocks away when the alert was issued, Randall said. Officers escorted people at the arena to their vehicles and out of the area. The order was lifted about 90 minutes later after police reported finding the suspected shooter dead and announced there wasn't any active threat. About 12,000 people live in Cloquet, which is about 20 miles (32 kilometers) west of Duluth, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz mentioned the shooting at a separate news conference.

"In a community like this, the chances that someone knows someone involved is very high, and that makes it very much more personalized. ... We've got to continue to reduce gun violence," he said. "We cannot live in a world where we just accept that this is a normal occurrence. It is not."

## Kim visits arms factories amid criticism

SEOUL (Reuters): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visited arms factories this week, state media outlet KCNA reported on Wednesday as the United States and its partners condemned the country's arms transfers with Russia. Kim also highlighted recent "shortcomings" in the organisation of munitions production and called for readjustment while emphasizing the "strategic importance of the production of major weapons", state media said.

KCNA photos of Kim's visit to a munitions factory showed him inspecting mobile short-range missile launch vehicles. His visit comes as nearly 50 countries condemned Russia's procurement and use of North Korean ballistic missiles against Ukraine. "Russia's use of DPRK ballistic missiles in Ukraine

also provides valuable technical and military insights to the DPRK," the joint statement said, using the initials of North Korea's official name. White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan in a call with his South Korean counterpart, Chang Ho-jin, "condemned in the strongest possible terms" North Korea's transfer of the missiles to Russia, the White House said. US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said that after the initially reported uses of North Korean ballistic missiles on Dec. 30 and Jan. 2, Russia had fired more such weapons at Ukraine, including one that landed in Kharkiv. The United States and its allies and partners will raise the issue with the UN Security Council on Wednesday, he said at a briefing. Kim also said the time has come to define South Korea as a

state "most hostile" towards his country, KCNA reported.

He accused Seoul of inciting confrontation and an arms buildup while urging his country to step up its military capabilities for self-defence and its nuclear war deterrent. He described worsening relations between the two Koreas as a "new phase of change" and "unavoidable reality". "We would by no means unilaterally bring a great event by the overwhelming strength in the Korean peninsula but we have no intention of avoiding a war as well," the leader was quoted as saying. In remarks to a year-end party meeting last month, Kim said peaceful reunification is impossible, adding that the government would make a "decisive policy change" in relations with South Korea.

## Young people to stop leaving the state: Mississippi governor

JACKSON, Miss. (AP): Republican Gov. Tate Reeves used the theme "Mississippi Forever" as he was inaugurated for his second term, saying he wants to curb the trend of young people leaving to pursue careers elsewhere.

"For too many decades, Mississippi's most valuable export has not been our cotton or even our culture. It's been our kids," Reeves told lawmakers, state officials and several international diplomats during a ceremony outside the state Capitol on a chilly, blustery day. He said people from Mississippi hold prominent positions in government, business and entertainment. "They made other places better, and we missed out on

all they could have done here at home," said Reeves, who has three daughters with his wife, Elea. Other states in the South - including Texas and Florida - have seen substantial increases in population in the past decade, Mississippi has long been one of the poorest states, and its population has remained stagnant.

Reeves, 49, campaigned for reelection last year by focusing on tax cuts, job creation, low unemployment and strides in education, including improvements in test scores for fourth-grade reading between 2013 and 2022. In his speech, Reeves mentioned that Mississippi was among the top five states for improvements in reading scores by Black fourth-

graders. "We are making sure all of Mississippi has momentum," he said. Reeves held two other statewide elected offices before becoming governor four years ago. He served two terms as treasurer and two as lieutenant governor. Reeves is the fourth Mississippi governor to win two consecutive terms since the state lifted its ban on gubernatorial succession in the 1980s. Republicans have held the Mississippi governorship the past 20 years. The November general election was unusually competitive in a state where Republicans control all statewide offices and both chambers of the Legislature. Reeves received nearly 51% of the vote to defeat Democrat Brandon Presley.

## Kremlin has ‘no comment’ on US’, Ukraine claims it fired NK missiles

MOSCOW (Reuters): The Kremlin declined to comment on US and Ukrainian assertions that Moscow had fired North Korean missiles at Ukrainian targets, but it also accused Kyiv of using missiles produced by Western nations to strike targets in Russia. Last week the White House said Russia had used short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) sourced from North Korea to conduct multiple strikes against Ukraine, citing newly declassified intelligence. A senior Ukrainian

official later corroborated the assertion.

Both Moscow and Pyongyang have drawn closer since the beginning of the Ukraine conflict, though they deny making any arms deals. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met President Vladimir Putin in Russia's Far East region last September and senior Russian officials have made several visits to Pyongyang. Asked about the US and Ukrainian accusations during a call with reporters, Kremlin

spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "No comment." Peskov added that Ukraine had repeatedly struck civilian targets inside Russia using missiles produced by "Germany, France, Italy, the United States, and other countries". Ukraine struck the Russian border city of Belgorod on Dec. 30, killing more than 20 people including two children and injuring 111, Russian media reported. The Belgorod region, which adjoins northern Ukraine, has like other

Russian border zones suffered shelling and drone attacks all year that authorities have blamed on Ukraine, although none had previously been on such a scale. Moscow, which sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, with the stated aim of "demilitarising" and "denazifying" the country, has said Western nations including the United States bear responsibility for the consequences of supplying weapons to Kyiv.



**The Frontier Post**

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Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

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**Polio campaign and needs for harsh measures**

**A**nationwide anti-polio campaign is currently underway across the country to immunize more than 44.3 million children aged five or below. According to the details, a week-long polio campaign will administer polio drops to 10.3 million infants in Sindh, 22.6 million in Punjab, more than 7.4 million children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2.5 million children in Balochistan, and over 250,000 children in Gilgit-Baltistan would be vaccinated during the ongoing polio campaign in the country. Polio teams constituted by federal and provincial health departments are approaching the children through a door-to-door campaign in all 159 districts of the country. The government has appealed to the parents to cooperate with the polio staff and contact health authorities on helpline 1166 in case of anti-polio vaccination team fails to reach them during the campaign.

Pakistan and its first-door neighbor Afghanistan are the two nations worldwide that failed to defeat the deadly polio virus and polio continues to threaten the health and well-being of children in their countries. The successive governments along with their global partners have made concerted efforts to eradicate polio from our country over the past almost three decades but so far cases of polio infections are being reported in some areas including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Presently, Pakistan's failure to control this epidemic has become a stigma for the entire nation, because the South Asian country failed to achieve its goal despite massive global support, the availability of human and material resources and technical expertise only because of non-cooperation from the public in certain areas. There have been multiple conspiracy theories and self-coined religious biases linked to the anti-polio medicines and the purpose of the vaccination which prompted opposition and refusal of parents to administer polio vaccines to their kids. Meanwhile, the fake anti-polio campaign by the CIA to confirm Osama Bin Laden's presence in Abbottabad's Waziristan Haveli Complex further caused doubts and suspicions among the masses regarding the genuine need for polio immunizations in children.

Pakistan's continuous failure to achieve its goal against the deadly epidemic has caused a challenging and embarrassing situation for the country as all traditional strategies, incentives, and motivations have proved to be futile, while continued anti-state and anti-public propaganda and false conservativeness of parents pose serious risks to the children health, national interests, the country's prestige and the broader well-being of the public. The implementation of harsh measures becomes unavoidable to accomplish the national cause and secure future generations from grave risks. After implementing various measures to motivate parents to immunize their kids including the use of religious clerics, tribal notables, and awareness campaigns in the media, the government is currently mulling over the scenario to pass legislation to penalize the parents resisting polio administration to their children by introducing harsh measures such as blocking their national IDs or Bank Accounts, imposing fine or awarding imprisonment but so far no practical steps have been taken in this regard.

Historically, the great national cause of Polio Free Pakistan has largely been marred due to the lack of interest of the political leadership and the traditional slackness of bureaucracy that persists, and political leaders hesitate in taking regressive punitive measures against the individuals who resist polio vaccine and cause serious risk to children health and endanger vital national interests along with causing great embarrassment and humiliation at the international level. Although, a nationwide campaign is currently underway and authorities will surely administer vaccines to all children but unwilling segments of society will again be left out due to the absence/ no implementation of any punitive/retaliatory measures by the government. Hence, the government must prioritize the national interests while shedding off unjust biases by taking harsh measures to ensure 100 per cent vaccination of all children under 5 years of age, so no single case of polio infection ever occurs in this nation in the future.

**Curse of smuggling, past and future**

**CARETAKER Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday directed the relevant law enforcement agencies, including the Frontier Corps, Pakistan Customs, district administrations, and National Logistics Cell (NLC) to expedite their efforts to completely curb the evil of smuggling. During a high-level meeting regarding the ongoing anti-smuggling drive in the country, the caretaker Prime Minister directed the concerned authorities to formulate a comprehensive mechanism for the provision of employment opportunities to the local people in the border-belt region and impart skill training to youths to curb the tendency of illegal works including Smuggling of goods, drug trafficking and harboring of criminals etc by the locals. The Premier also directed the Ministry of Trade to ensure strict monitoring of the transit trade and apprise the relevant authorities about the unlawful activities and crimes associated with transit trade meant for Afghanistan.**

The smuggling of goods, foreign currency, animals, fuel, and food has shaped into a lucrative business for influential, criminal gangs, smugglers, and lower class residing in the border belt areas that persistently inflict billions of rupees loss to the national exchequer on a regular basis. Historically, the menace of institutional corruption with in the state institutions including Customs, Excise & Taxation Department, Police, the Frontiers Crops, and local administrations whose officials perform checking and scrutiny duties at border crossing points has shaped into oerisistent and incurable disease in the country. The goverment officials often forge a nexus with anti-social elements and smugglers permitting them to transport their illegal cargo across the border or retrun custom free costly items from Afghan side into the country in reward for huge money. Reportedly, government officials carry out corrupt practices fearlessly and with complete impunity, while rates have been set for different things including electronics items, daily use commodities, flour, animals, vehicles, etc to pass through the border crossing and money is distributed among all concerned departments fairly to avoid complaint and mutual clash.

Over the decades, the successive governments failed to curb smuggling on permanent basis due to absence of strict accountability of the LEAs and checking staff at the border points. It is important that the government initiative a nationwide investigation on bank accounts, properties and financial assets of the past and serving government officials including the LEAs deputed on border crossing, air and sea ports to uncover truth about their corruption, and dishonesty with the nation. While strict financial monitoring be impose on government servants detailed on sensitive positions and entry/exit points to permanently stall the menace of corruption, otherwise no recipe would work against this evil any time in the future.

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**Hasina remains high priestess of Bangladesh's dynastic democracy**

Shamim Chowdhury

**I**T has been said that for the past 15 years, Bangladesh's elections have been so skewed in favour of the ruling Awami League, they are enough to make North Korea's Kim Jong Un squirm with envy. An unfair comparison perhaps, but Sunday's results, where the party, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, secured 222 seats out of 300, are enough to make even the most unbiased among us raise a sceptical eyebrow.

But should we really be surprised by what was a foregone conclusion? And what does the result mean for the future of Bangladesh? Given that the election was uncontested by the country's main opposition, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), amid concerns that it would be rigged, and with large swaths of the 120 million eligible voters abstaining, it is hardly unexpected that the Awami League swept the board. Officials say some 40 percent of voters went to the polls, but media reports and analysts suggest the real figure is likely not more than 30 percent. Either way, it is clear that the people of Bangladesh voted with their feet. A look back at the 2018 elections reminds us that the BNP's concerns were not unfounded. At the time, Human Rights Watch and other groups called for an independent investigation following allegations of voter intimidation, vote rigging and partisan behaviour by election officials. Added to this, a UK broadcaster filmed a filled ballot box being taken away from a polling station before it had even opened. Little wonder, then, that the BNP feared the same would happen again.

More recently, on October 28, the massive antigovernment protest that turned violent signalled a resounding and systematic crackdown on dissent ahead of the elections. On that day, hundreds of thousands of opposition supporters demanded Hasina step down and the installation of a neutral caretaker government.

Tens of thousands of protesters, including senior leaders, were arrested and thrown into jail following speedy trials. They included those who had not even been involved in the protests, but instead had

cases against them dating back more than a decade. Authorities claim they were cracking down on violence but human rights groups defined what happened as "a violent autocratic crack-down ahead of the election". The government denies Sunday's election was uncontested despite the BNP's boycott, saying 27 parties took part, as well as independent candidates, and that more than 100 independent election observers were present. But this, though technically true, does not allay concerns. Many of Sunday's so-called "independents" are Awami League supporters. Bangladesh media also reported that the party deliberately did not field any candidates in several constituencies, instead making space for its ally, the Jatiya Party.

The road to a one-party state has been a steady one, with Sheikh Hasina - the world's longest-serving female prime minister - being placed at the helm of the country for a fourth consecutive term and, for all intents and purposes, unchallenged. Irony for the daughter of the country's founding father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who, along with her bitter rival, former BNP leader Khaleda Zia, fought so hard for years for multiparty democracy and an end to military rule. That does not downplay the BNP's own history of oppression and attacks on democracy.

During its two-term rule (1991-96 and 2001-06), it was confronted with many of the accusations currently faced by the Awami League: corruption, human rights abuses, suppression of opposition groups and more. What is more, the party is tarnished with a history of being borne out of a military dictatorship: it was founded by Zia's late husband, Ziaur Rahman, an army chief of staff who was president of Bangladesh from 1977 until his assassination in 1981.

The BNP has in the past also joined forces with Jamaat-e-Islami - a conservative party that did not support Bangladesh's independence in 1971 and has never made much headway in the ballot box. The BNP's current acting chairman, Tarique Rahman, is a convicted criminal - albeit on charges his party says

are politically motivated - and living in exile in London. It is a track record that does not bode well for a party desperate to regain power. Yet the October protests revealed that the party still has widespread support, and in a country where there is growing discontent over the government's handling of the economic downturn, it is quite possible that the BNP would have had a decent chance of winning, had the election been genuinely competitive.

As things stand, Hasina remains the high priestess of Bangladesh's distinct style of dynastic democracy. With a resounding majority in parliament for yet another term, her party can continue to push through any legislation it sees fit, with little by way of checks and balances. And with any resistance silenced, at least for now, the ground is fertile for more of the kind of human rights abuses the country already stands accused of. Even if the opposition continues to mobilise itself post-election, Hasina's security forces are likely to continue their crackdown and see to it that dissenting voices pay a heavy price.

If there is any pressure from outside Bangladesh, it is most likely to come from the United States. Before the election, Washington ramped up its political muscle-flexing with several recent visits to Dhaka by senior officials and by imposing visa bans on individuals it describes as "undermining the democratic process". There was also the threat of sanctions. The US and the European Union are the largest importers of Bangladesh's readymade garments - an industry worth \$45bn. Pierre Prakash, director of the International Crisis Group's Asia Programme, told me that any restrictions on the sector could inflict further pain on a population already reeling from rising food and fuel prices.

"It is going to be tricky to come up with sanctions that are effective and at the same don't hurt millions of people," he explained. "The vast majority of workers employed by the garment industry are women, so sanctions could also work against women's empowerment." It's not surprising, then, that US has already

issued a post-election statement stating that it does not believe the elections were free and fair, but that it "notes" that the Awami League won. It feels like a volte-face. It knows that if it imposes sanctions, not only could it end up punishing common Bangladeshis, but it also risks a dent in its coffers. Buying from other sources may increase its costs marginally, but it is an additional cost the BNP can do without at a time when the country has spent billions of dollars on military aid to Ukraine and Israel, and Americans across the country are feeling the pinch of a cost-of-living crisis.

For Bangladesh's neighbours and allies, the election is less of a concern. As a one-party state, China is hardly the standard-bearer for democracy. And India, where there are growing signs of democratic backsliding and rising autocracy, is also not in a position to start finger-pointing. The denouncements of this year's stage-managed election echo those of 2014 and 2018. Back then, little action was taken, and once the dust had settled, Hasina was welcomed into the international fold. Admittedly, it was an era when she had the support of many of her countryfolk and was credited for turning Bangladesh into one of the fastest-growing economies in the region, combating terrorism and providing shelter for more than a million Rohingya refugees.

Now, though, times have changed. Hasina's popularity has waned, largely due to the financial hardships her people are facing, but also because little doubt is left that she has instrumentalised the state machinery to cling on to power. Despite this, it seems that the worst Hasina can expect are limited sanctions by the US. If that happens - and it is still an "if" - the country's beleaguered economy will undoubtedly be dented further.

But with Chinese and Indian footprints firmly inside its territory, Western pressure is likely to have less of an impact on Bangladesh than it has in the past. There's no denying, however, that while it may well be business as usual for Sheikh Hasina for the next five years, it will be so without a mandate from her people.

**ICJ ruling on the Gaza war will be a game changer**

Osama Al-Sharif

**I**SRAEL is guilty of carrying out a genocidal war in Gaza. That is the judgment of millions of people around the world. Israel's guilt has already been established in the court of international public opinion. Even so, the carnage in Gaza continues despite the unprecedented backlash. But for the first time in history, Israel will appear in the world's highest court, the International Court of Justice, on Thursday to defend itself against an application submitted by South Africa accusing it of committing genocide in Gaza, and asking for an interim measure, a provisional ruling by the court, to cease and desist until the 15-member panel of judges makes a final adjudication.

This is a historic event. Israel has boycotted UN bodies looking into its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip for decades. As a member of the UN and a signatory to its charter, it has no option but to appear in court or face the legal consequences. The fact that South Africa, whose application is now supported by a growing list of countries, chose the ICJ is interesting. Israel is not a signatory to the International Criminal Court Rome Statute and can make strong arguments to skirt a ruling. The ICC is yet to rule on a Palestinian Authority application asking for an opinion regarding Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories. Meanwhile, all UN members are party to the ICJ statute, whose rulings are binding.

The two-day ICJ session will be open to the public. Millions around the world will certainly follow it. Some lawyers and experts will represent South Africa, a country with first-hand experience of war crimes and apartheid. Hundreds of experts from other countries, such as Chile, Bolivia, Malaysia and Jordan, will support it. Israel has chosen a British lawyer, Malcolm Shaw, to represent it. He is considered one of the world's leading experts on international law, and teaches a course at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem as a guest lecturer every year. Israel has nominated a former High Court judge to sit in the 15-member panel, which is within its right.

While the ICC can indict individuals in cases of war crimes, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, the ICJ examines conflicts between states. Israel may waste some time arguing that the court has no business looking into Israel's military operations in Gaza. But that is unlikely to change things. To prove that Israel is complying with international law in Gaza will be mission impossible. The ruling of this court will test its credibility.

While the ICJ has looked into numerous cases since it was established in 1945, one case of genocide stands out - the case against former Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro brought by Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1996. It took the court 11 years to make a final ruling, which resulted in convictions.

What is important to note here is that the South Africa case deals with an ongoing case of genocide. Pressure is needed to have the ICJ order a halt all Israeli military activities while the court is listening to arguments by

both sides and until it issues a final ruling, which could take years.

The fact that the ICJ's ruling is binding to UN members also counts. While Israel may choose to ignore an injunction, its allies, chief among them the US, will be seen as complicit if they, too, miss the order to cease the aggression. Undoubtedly, the ICJ will be dealing with a highly explosive case. Israel will present the Oct. 7 Hamas attack as a justification for its "self-defense" operation in Gaza. But the South Africa team will rely on testimonies by neutral UN, human rights, and other NGOs, who will present irrefutable evidence that Israel's military is carrying out what can only be defined as genocide in Gaza, where the death toll, after more than three months of aggression, stands at more than 24,000 killed, including 10,000 children, more than 100 journalists, and more than 60,000 injured, as well as more than 30 hospitals destroyed. At least 7,000 people are missing, believed dead. More than 70 percent of Gaza has been leveled.

The South Africa team will also present evidence tying Israeli officials to calls for genocide, ethnic cleansing, and war crimes. Thousands of video clips will be presented showing the deliberate razing of entire residential neighborhoods in Gaza by Israel.

An injunction halting the war is essential. It will allow independent observers, as well as the international media, to see on the ground what Israel has done in the past three months. The testimonies of tens of thousands of surviving victims will make for a horrifying record of what has taken place - and continues to happen - in the beleaguered Gaza Strip. An injunction will also allow for the entry of humanitarian aid, doctors, medics, ambulances, food, water, and medicine that could save tens of thousands of lives.

The two-day session will further expose Israeli atrocities in Gaza, but Israel will put pressure on judges to ignore the evidence. If that happens, it will greatly affect the court and its credibility.

On the other hand, if and when the ICJ makes a final ruling, the onus will be on the ICC to move. So far, the ICC's Chief Prosecutor, Karim Khan, has said little about the carnage in Gaza. He showed stark bias in favor of Israel when he accepted an invitation to visit Israeli families who suffered in the Oct. 7 attack without doing the same in Gaza.

There is no doubt that Israel has a massive influence over Western politicians, as well as UN member states and officials. It uses antisemitism as a tool to sandbag, intimidate, and blamish those who dare stand against it. The ICJ will play out as a case where Israel, for the first time, stands as a defendant before the world's most important court. The outcome of this case could set a precedent, opening the way for multiple cases in the future, both individually and collectively, for Israel's victims. More importantly, a ruling in favor of South Africa will force the ICC to step in and look into what Israeli soldiers, officers, and politicians have done, or even said, to instigate what much of the rest of the world already defines as genocide.

**Gaza and us: Between words and deeds**

Eyad Abu Shakra

**I**S it in our interest to know the truth about what is happening in our region, or are we too innocent to handle the bitterness? My personal feeling, and I hope I am wrong, is that we are too innocent and helpless to deal with the challenges that 2024 will bring, especially after the past few months have exposed the intentions and approaches of many.

The Near East region is changing before our eyes, geographically and demographically, while we are expected to be distracted by visits and regional tours, and to believe the diplomatic statements that Washington and some Western capitals have been regurgitating incessantly. Meanwhile, some of the misled and "mis-leaders" in our Arab world and its surroundings are comforted by hollow threats and empty rhetorical escalation.

Many were concerned with listening to what Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary-general of Lebanese Hezbollah, would say after

Iran's assassination of the prominent Hamas leader Saleh Al-Arouri and members of his entourage in the Dahieh southern suburbs of Beirut, a Hezbollah stronghold. But Nasrallah did not say anything new. Moreover, Hezbollah is, in the first place, an integral part of Iran's strategy. Iran, whose Revolutionary Guard leaders have long and repeatedly threatened that "the annihilation of Israel" was a few minutes away, is still taking its time to achieve this "accomplishment" it promises, despite the horrific humanitarian conditions that the Israeli machine has left in the Gaza Strip over the past three months, which have claimed the lives of tens of thousands of innocent civilians.

As usual, Tehran has delegated the task of skirmishing and voicing positions to its Arabic-speaking proxies. It has fought and will continue to fight to enhance its regional influence - termed "resistance" - using the bodies of others, and building on the ruins of their nations and societies. Of course, Tehran expects a reward in return. It expects to be, as it has been for decades, included in the settlements and solutions that will be imposed on the remnants of the Near East after the West has handed Iran all of its entities, one after another, on a silver platter.

In Iraq, Tehran is waging a local "proxy war" through its militias under the pretext of avenging Gaza. Meanwhile, Washington does not seem troubled, and neither does Israel ... the Iraqi state, Iraqi identity, and Iraqi sovereignty have all become things of the past. In Syria, the "red lines" offered by former US President Barack Obama not only saved the regime, but also buttressed Iranian hegemony over the capital of Syria and its "middle belt" from the

Iraqi border in the east to what was once the Republic of Lebanon in the west. Now, Syrian territory has been divided into spheres of influence, drug factories, arms smuggling routes, and exporters of strife and unrest to neighboring countries.

In Lebanon, where "decisions of war and peace" are made by Iran that has financial and security hegemony through Hezbollah, the country's chemistry has changed, and its situation has changed. This could not have been achieved without the "resistance" - that is, Iran's plan for regional dominance. Under the guise of this "resistance," Hezbollah retains its arms, unlike all the other Lebanese parties and forces. With these arms, it skirmishes, maneuvers, and extorts.

Now, after having endorsed the demarcation of Lebanon's maritime borders with Israel, it awaits the arrival of "demarcation engi-

neer" Amos Hochstein, the US special envoy and coordinator for international energy affairs, to negotiate the next step and strike a deal on the land borders. In his latest speech, Nasrallah did not rule out a de-escalation "if Israel stops its operations in Gaza." In tandem with the rhetorical escalation, the exchange of rocket and artillery fire continues across the border, within the limits of the so-called "rules of engagement," bearing in mind that most of the targeted Israeli sites have been evacuated for a while now.

Based on the above, Yemen's Houthis are playing a new role in Iran's "war of agitation" in the Red Sea and near the Bab Al-Mandeb Strait. This new element has increased the significance of international intervention to protect maritime trade. It also increases the need for Iranian "services" that will help Tehran get a share once the region is split, especially after it has been affirmed that

Tehran has no intention of "destroying Israel." On the contrary, Tehran's threats over the years have strengthened Israel's expansionist right-wing, and US political and military support for Israel.

A few days ago, pro-Israel electronic activists attacked me on X, accusing me of being an idiot for discussing the "intersection" of interests between Tel Aviv and Tehran. But I am convinced that actions always speak louder than words. The Biden administration is fully aware that Iran has no intention of attacking Israel. It opposed expanding the war to displace the people of Gaza into a regional conflict because, firstly, it agrees with Israel on the need to liquidate the Palestinian question, and second, it wants to maintain Iran's regional role in the Middle East. Those who are still in doubt should consider the conditions of areas under Tehran's control in the Arab Levant, and remember Obama's words: "The Iranians are not suicidal."

Arab News



# Trump spreads birther lie about Nikki Haley

IT was only a matter of time before former President Donald Trump went birther on Nikki Haley. After all, the former South Carolina governor and UN Ambassador is a pioneering candidate, the daughter of immigrants from India, and she's rising in the polls. It's not only concern about his electoral prospects that's driving him; Trump's massive yet fragile ego also feels threatened. So he reached for the most reflexive slur he could find via the far-right news site Gateway Pundit, reposting on Truth Social the false claim that Haley is not constitutionally eligible to be president because her parents were not US citizens when she was born in South Carolina. The Gateway Pundit post cited a legal analysis piece on the American Greatness site.

This specious claim flies in the face of the 14th amendment, which says people born in the US are automatically citizens. The requirement to be a "natural born" citizen to be eligible to run for president means being a citizen at birth rather than through naturalization later. The claim about Haley is a lazy and xenophobic rehash of the so-called birther attacks Trump baselessly directed at President Barack Obama's supposed ineligibility for office.

This isn't a dog whistle; it's a bullhorn. In 2016, Trump also raised a phony birther issue about Ted Cruz. In 2020, he questioned whether Kamala Harris was eligible to run for office on similar but equally false grounds. See a pattern? Now he's trafficking in the same desperate play against Haley. No one who's ever described themselves as "Iowa nice" ought to fall for this desperate cut-and-paste bigotry. But Trump's mind hits rewind whenever he feels backed into a corner, repeating the same old attacks at higher volume.

There's another relevant - and revealing - example of this dynamic. Think back to 2016 Iowa caucus. Polls showed that Trump was narrowly ahead. But Iowa voters are open to last-minute persuasion and when caucus day came, Cruz beat Trump. What did Trump do? He reflexively cried that Ted Cruz had "stolen" the Iowa caucus through unspecified "fraud," tweeting that "either a new election should take place or Cruz results nullified." Lying and threats are the only way Trump can react to losing.

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Trump's tantrum was so absurd that it didn't get much traction at the time. Trump went on to legitimately win New Hampshire and ultimately the Republican nomination. Cruz went from warning about Trump's fundamental unfitness for office to eagerly lining up

John Avlon

same language he would later use to spread the election lie that led to the January 6 attack on the US Capitol by his supporters.

"We can't let this happen. We should march on Washington and stop this travesty. Our nation is totally divided!" "Lets fight like hell and stop this great and disgust-

**What did Trump do? He reflexively cried that Ted Cruz had "stolen" the Iowa caucus through unspecified "fraud," tweeting that "either a new election should take place or Cruz results nullified." Lying and threats are the only way Trump can react to losing. Trump's tantrum was so absurd that it didn't get much traction at the time. Trump went on to legitimately win New Hampshire and ultimately the Republican nomination. Cruz went from warning about Trump's fundamental unfitness for office to eagerly lining up to spit-shine his shoes, like so many of his Republican congressional colleagues. But the 2016 Iowa caucuses aren't the first example of Trump trying out the "stolen election" script. As McKay Coppins' excellent book "Romney: A Reckoning" reminded me, Trump first tried out this vile bile duct release on our democracy back in 2012. On election night, as President Obama pulled ahead of then-GOP candidate Mitt Romney, Trump rage-tweeted some of the same language he would later use to spread the election lie that led to the January 6 attack on the US Capitol by his supporters.**

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ing injustice! The world is laughing at us." "This election is a total sham and a travesty. We are not a democracy!"

The ugly echoes are direct evidence of the fraud Trump tried to pull on the American people after losing the 2020 election. The rhetorical attacks were ready to be deployed, absent facts and context - the furious blame-shifting of someone who would rather destroy our democracy than accept defeat with grace and dignity. So it's no

surprise that Trump mailers in Iowa are pre-emptively accusing Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis of rigging the caucus. The tragedy is that so many supporters have been willfully duped and played for fools. A recent Washington Post poll found that 69% of Republicans believe that President Biden's 2020 election win was not legitimate. Even more unhinged, 34% of Republicans believe that the attack on the US Capitol by Trump supporters intended to stop the certification of the election was an "inside job" by the FBI.

Trump's lies have a clear constituency in his party, perpetrated by a fragmented and hyper-partisan media market where algorithms elevate the most extreme accusations. Even worse are the Republican lawmakers and other leaders who are afraid to confront what they know to be Trump's lies and instead enable him with a flotilla of rationalizations. The latest example is every member of the GOP House leadership backing Trump before a single vote has been cast, including House Whip Tom Emmer, who Trump viciously attacked during his failed bid to become Speaker of the House. The New York Times reported that Trump marveled at Republicans' willingness to fold in the face of his threats, remarking "they always bend the knee."

Bullies have contempt for weakness. They only respect strength - even though they bitterly resent people who fight back. That's why Haley has come under Trump's fact-free fire as her campaign is hitting its stride. There's no basis for Trump's attack on Haley's eligibility for office, just as there was no basis for his attack on Obama's eligibility for office. There's no basis for claiming the 2020 presidential election was stolen by Joe Biden, just as there was no basis for saying that the 2016 Iowa caucus was stolen by Cruz. Trump's repeated, knee-jerk lies reveal the desperate, hollow core of his character. This month voters in Iowa and New Hampshire will have the opportunity to demonstrate their character and determine the direction of not just the Republican Party, but our democratic republic. When casting their vote, they should keep in mind the old adage, "fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me." If the GOP falls for Trump's lies again, the shame will reflect on all of us.

CNN

# Biden is no different than Trump

Andrew Mitrovica

JOE Biden is a lie and a liar. That opening sentence is meant to sting. More importantly, it is meant to shatter the happy caricature that the sitting US president is an antidote - in character, nature and temperament - to his predecessor, Donald Trump. Biden tried to promote the big lie that he is the antithesis of Trump late last week in a speech that was billed as the opening salvo of his, until now, somnolent reelection campaign.

A cliché-ridden appraisal in The Guardian of Biden's practised performance praised him for "taking the gloves off" in a "fired-up" evisceration of the likely Republican nominee for president come November. "Biden tore into his predecessor Donald Trump as never before. He brimmed with anger, disdain and contempt," a Guardian correspondent wrote approvingly. "If Biden was seeking to jolt his half-conscious 2024 re-election campaign into life, this may have done the trick."

Rather than a "jolt" of urgency and authenticity, Biden's halting, 33-minute soliloquy reflected his fraudulent core and mendacity and the blatant double standards that govern the establishment media's coverage of two supposedly disparate candidates who, truth be told, are more alike than unlike. When Trump "tears" into opponents with "anger, disdain, contempt" and signature vulgarity, he is routinely cast as the authoritarian villain, incoherent with animus and rage, who is motivated by one impulse above all: vengeance.

When Biden does the same - minus the profanity - he is applauded for dispensing with the obsolete straitjacket of decorum in a necessary burst of genuineness that "plenty" of fretting Democrats will welcome as an agreeable departure from the "grandfatherly figure predisposed to give people the benefit of the doubt". So, just like all those rabid, "deplorable" Republicans, most Democrats apparently prefer and are aching to see more of Mr Hyde than Dr Jekyll in their man, as well. Still, it was Biden's construct that America confronted an existential choice between democracy and dictatorship that reeked of his doddering Trump-like hypocrisy and deceit.

"Today, we are here to answer the most important of questions: Is democracy still America's sacred cause?" Biden asked. "I mean it. This is not rhetorical, academic or hypothetical." If Biden's injunction was even remotely sincere, then he or his surrogates ought to answer the following questions that are - to

borrow a phrase - not rhetorical, academic or hypothetical. Oh, and I mean it. What kind of "democracy" encourages, enables and endorses another so-called "democracy" to commit genocide - yes, genocide - against an imprisoned people with no means of escape or refuge from the "killing rage"?

What kind of "democracy" protects and defends another so-called "democracy" when it enforces a siege depriving millions of Palestinian civilians of food, water, medicine and fuel - triggering rampant starvation and disease? What kind of "democracy" supplies another so-called "democracy" with the spig-

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ot of weapons and ammunition to turn the bulk of a densely populated strip into Mars - barren and uninhabitable? What kind of "democracy" dismisses the will of a clear majority of its citizens who demand that their president work to end the "killing rage" by negotiating an immediate and lasting ceasefire?

The answers confirm that America's phantom "democracy" is not a "sacred cause" but a jejune myth - disfigured and corrupted beyond repair long ago. The nadir of Biden's pious posturing was his anguished, hyperbolic indictment that Trump did "nothing" to prevent an insurrectionist mob from storming the Capitol despite having been urged to "act" and "stop" the madness. "The entire nation watched in horror. The whole world watched in disbelief and Trump did nothing," Biden said. "It was among the worst derelictions of duty by a president in American history."

Well, Mr President, millions of enlightened Americans and much of the planet have "watched in horror" and "disbelief" as you and your craven administration rejected - again and again - calls to act and end the murderous madness engulfing the Middle East. Instead, you have fuelled the horrors and made sure that they go on and on until the "killing rage" is spent - no matter the thousands of children who have been killed, maimed, orphaned, traumatised or remain entombed beneath the mountain-range-like rubble. That, sir, is not just a "dereliction of

duty". It is an affront to decency that shocks the conscience and renders Trump's litany of crimes misdemeanours by comparison.

Biden's address mirrored language he used once before when he excoriated Trump for having "created and spread a web of lies about the 2020 election. He's done so because he values power over principle." But Biden has weaved his own "web of lies" because he also "values power over principle". Biden's lies are more lethal and pernicious. He has feigned "concern" about the human toll of Israel's "indiscriminate" bombing. In what amounts to a "concern" comedy, Biden and complicit company have

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Heavens, no.

Biden is "committed" to a "two-state" solution. Meanwhile, Netanyahu is busy ensuring there will never be a "two-state solution" by erasing one of the proposed "states" from the map - literally. There is no "daylight" between Joe Biden and Donald Trump when Israel invokes its "right to defend itself" however it wants to, wherever it wants to, for as long as it wants to. Any liberal or progressive in any quarter who claims otherwise is a liar, too.

Aljazeera

# The student loan racket is slowly bankrupting Britain

Matthew Lynn

THERE are lots of different criticisms that are made of lending out money. It is unfair. The interest rates can be punitive. And it adds little value to a productive economy. "Neither a borrower nor a lender be; for a loan doth often lose both itself and friend," as Shakespeare wisely observed in a memorable line from Hamlet.

Still, traditionally it did at least have one thing going for it. It turned a profit. And yet, the UK's student loan system no longer meets even that basic criteria. According to an extraordinary report from the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) this week, student loans will lose money even if they are repaid in full. The university system has turned into a racket that works for no one apart from a few overpaid vice-chancellors - and it is steadily bankrupting the country. It takes quite some skill to lose money on something that should be as straightforward as a student loan. You give an 18-year old some cash for their degree, and when they are earning lots of money as a doctor, banker or lawyer, they pay you back with some interest on top.

Simple right? Well, not as it turns out when the Government is at the tiller. According to the IFS, the Government is not just expected to lose money on all the loans that are never repaid, but may even do so when they do get the money back. The reason? The cost of government borrowing has in recent

years been lower than the interest rates it expected to charge on student loans. As the IFS points out, however, that has now changed. The yields on gilts are now higher than expected retail price index inflation (the measure used to determine interest on new student loans). By remorseless financial logic, the British state can therefore expect to lose money on every loan.

Those who designed this toxic set-up should have seen this coming. But the student loan system was essentially based on two assumptions, both of which have turned out to be completely wrong. It assumed that the near zero interest rates of the 2010s would last forever, meaning that government borrowing was essentially free, so it would be easy to make money on the loans. Any half-competent banker would have dismissed that assumption in an instant, but it seems it never occurred to the Rolls-Royce minds at the Treasury that rates might go up one day.

Even worse, it assumed that all of the 1.7 million people studying for an undergraduate degree would get a sufficiently well-paid job, and that all that extra training would boost the long-term growth rate of the economy. Unfortunately that didn't turn out to be right, either. We have already had plenty of reports warning about the off-balance sheet costs of student financing, based on the potential default rate - although it takes many

someone will earn enough to repay their loan, or even stay in the country (given that it is extraordinarily hard to collect the debt when a student emigrates). But now the Government is expected to lose money even if the debt is repaid.

The system is a sorry mess that works for no one. It doesn't benefit a great many students, who are not really encouraged to determine whether a degree offers value for money or not, or whether they might be better off starting their career at 18. It doesn't work for the huge number of taxpayers who don't go to university, but will still end up paying higher taxes to subsidise the studies of those that do. In the short-term, perhaps it worked for the universities, which massively expanded, and started paying vast salaries to an incompetent administrative class that got rich off the system. But even they have now been lumbered with too many staff, too many buildings, offering courses that have no real purpose, and are entirely reliant on government subsidies to stay afloat. It is a catastrophe.

The only solution is a total redesign of the whole system, with fewer universities, of higher quality, and with not nearly so many students. But so far there is no sign that any of our political leaders are brave enough to offer a solution as radical as that. Instead, they sit back and do nothing as another calamity engulfs the public finances.

The Telegraph

# Wealth to treasure

Satyajit Bose

SUSTAINABLE development is necessarily measured in a multi-dimensional way. Real wealth is embedded in productive factories, healthy citizens, resilient social networks, motivated employees, satisfied customers, patient and enlightened investors, access to food and energy, healthy ecosystems, nutrient-rich soil, clean water and clean air.

While in theory financial wealth can be calculated from the value of real wealth, in practice the monetary value of many types of capital is not easily measured. Hence, financial or monetary wealth is but a poor shadow of real wealth. We will never be happy to live in polluted environments and toxic societies, however much financial wealth we accumulate. Ultimately, the bank accounts, stock certificates, corporate debentures and government bonds that we have must be converted into healthy surroundings, clean air and water, affordable and effective healthcare and the provision of a happy life for family and friends. Monetary savings therefore do not amount to much unless combined with sustainable development for all.

Sustainable development is the opposite of putting our trust in financial wealth. Sustainable development means we invest in the smiles of our children when they have time to play outside, the excitement of a recent graduate going to work in a fulfilling job, the joy and utility of discovering new knowledge and the security of an effective and accessible healthcare system. It means we invest in the beauty of our rivers and moun-

tains, of a rural landscape whose inhabitants find meaningful work sustaining healthy ecosystems. Unlike financial wealth which is measured in renminbi or dollars or other currencies, no one can take the wealth of sustainable development away from us. This is encapsulated in the Chinese saying that heaping up gold is not as good as accumulating grain. The Integrated Reporting Framework of the International Financial Reporting Standards recognizes six types of capital, and financial capital is just one of them (the others are manufactured, intellectual, human, social and relationship, and natural capital).

The philosophy of the sustainable development measurement system should recognize the value of many different types of capital, or wealth. It should build on the economic concept that financial capital consists of mere paper claims on real capital. Real capital comprises human, natural, social and other forms of capital.

The 2023 China Sustainable Development Indicator System report demonstrates a dramatic improvement in the level of China's sustainable development. The index has increased from a level of 58.9 in 2017 to a level of 84.9 in 2023.

The two most impactful categories driving this improvement are social welfare and livelihood and consumption and emissions. Improvements in social welfare and livelihood comprised advances in educational attainment, expenditure and cultural access, social

security coverage, public health access and rural poverty alleviation. The period also witnessed strong reductions in the environmental intensity of economic activity, as measured by land, water and energy consumption and pollution per unit of GDP. The report is a fruit of a multi-year collaboration between Chinese and US researchers. Despite the vicissitudes of global power politics, academic cooperation proceeded with mutual trust and collegial sharing of knowledge. There are many countries around the world, in Latin America, in Africa, in the Middle East, in South Asia and Southeast Asia, in the Belt and Road Initiative, in the BRICS+ countries and beyond, that will benefit from the knowledge that China has developed in the management of sustainable development. It is important to invest additional effort to disseminate the lessons from China's sustainable development experience to other countries who wish to learn from China's example.

China has not only been a leader in economic growth and poverty alleviation, but also shown significant improvement in the quality of life of its ordinary citizens and the health of its natural ecosystems. This experience demonstrates that sustainable development goes hand in hand with increasing economic activity, vibrant trade, investment in infrastructure and the absence of conflict. Perhaps the greatest obstacle to sustainable development faced by the world today is the limited level of international

collaboration and the dearth of sincerely negotiated win-win agreements.

The pace of knowledge sharing remains slow and the scale of sustainable development finance is a minuscule fraction of what is needed. We need investments in the global public good of human and social capital. Easing the barriers to people-to-people contacts and fostering inter-country collaboration in research and training are essential, not just among the major powers, but also for smaller countries which need access to world-class expertise to facilitate innovation and remain competitive.

We also need to deploy financial capital in ways that enhance the value of natural and human capital. The social and environmental impact of any financial investment must be carefully considered and should constitute a key rationale for equity and debt flows. In order to achieve this, the financial sector in every country must build a practice of evaluating the holistic return on investments.

This requires going beyond financial analysis which merely measures success in monetary terms to cost-benefit analysis that integrates social costs and benefits in many dimensions. We all must work together to achieve sustainable global development. As the Chinese saying goes, a single strand of silk is not enough to make a thread nor a single tree sufficient to be a forest. In the context of sustainable development, success must be measured in many dimensions, and the community of nations must strive to achieve it together.

Gaelic is "Glaschu", which means "green space". Just like its namesake, there is an abundance of green plants and forestry that "come late in autumn after the new rain in the empty mountains", as well as the riverbanks that "wander with the sky and clouds". People and nature are incredibly close here. Today, as I stroll along the banks of the River Clyde, or in churches and museums, blowing through every breeze, stepping on every brick and stone, everything that this city has experienced, from glory to decline and then to revival, from industrial pearls to the city of art, from the capital of thought to Scottish warriors, is so vivid and surging in my mind. Perhaps this diverse blend is precisely where Glasgow's unique charm lies. I recall a friend saying, "Glasgow is a city full of miracles and discoveries." Yes, Glasgow is such a city, its story is so fascinating, full of discoveries, and full of miracles.

The China Daily

# What kind of city is Glasgow?

Lu Xai

GLASGOW is a city full of discoveries and surprises. Unlike London's emphasis on modernity or Edinburgh's emphasis on history, Glasgow is difficult to describe as a "flagship city", but it has a rather distinct sense of hierarchy: the 18th and 19th centuries were the heyday of Britain, during which Glasgow enjoyed great honor as the "second city of the British Empire".

As the third most populous city in Europe, after London and Paris, with a population of one million, it was the center of the world's shipbuilding industry during the Industrial Revolution. The heavy cranes on the banks of the River Clyde tell this vivid industrial narrative; at the same time, some of the best brains that changed the world came from Glasgow. The names of Adam Smith, Kelvin, Watt, Owen and Pence have left a deep impression on human history and brought a unique humanistic

atmosphere to this city. They used their own thoughts and behaviors to influence the development and path of human society, and helped to shift the laws of operation of all things in the world, while also expressing their love for this land. For Glasgow, that was the most glorious era.

The setting sun is infinite, but unfortunately, it only shines brightly in one breath. The sound of gunfire from the two world wars echoed through the British Isles, and Glasgow played an important role in it: the Scottish Rifle Regiment and the Royal Air Force both had Glaswegians involved, and thousands of bus drivers rushed to serve on the battlefield. They fought bravely in the British air battle, the North African battlefield and the Normandy landings, deserving of the honor of the "fine red line".

Wreaths and monuments are the

best symbols of this time in history that will never be forgotten. After the war, the empire of the never setting sun slowly came to an end, and Glasgow also embarked on a long path of transformation - the once glorious manufacturing industry gradually declined, replaced by emerging financial services and art and cultural industries. Glaswegians, with a love of art, have painted various and life-like graffiti on the exterior walls of many buildings, from city guardians to small animals, from university classrooms to space satellites, all of which can become objects of artistic creation; Glasgow's football teams are also eye-catching, and the same city rivalry between Rangers and Celtics always catches everyone's attention. These emerging industries have injected new vitality into the city.

The name Glasgow in Scottish





## PSX stays bearish, loses 250 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 250.73 points, a negative change of 0.39 percent, closing at 63,919.85 points against 64,170.58 points the previous trading day.

A total of 636,168,115 shares valuing Rs.17,980 billion were traded during the day as compared to 448,990,545 shares valuing Rs.12,281 billion the last day.

Some 361 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 155 of them recorded gains and 183 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 23 remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were K-Electric with 151,248,373 shares at Rs.5.72 per share, Hascol Petrol with 67,980,000 shares at Rs.8.53 per share

and WorldCall Telecom with 42,068,813 shares at Rs.1.43 per share.

Pakistan Tobacco Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.79.00 per share price, closing at Rs.1,141.00, whereas the runner-up was Pak Suzuki Motor Company with a Rs.58.32 rise in its per share price to Rs.835.88.

Rafhan Maize Products Company witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.448.00 per share closing at Rs.9,550.00, followed by Hoechst Pakistan Limited with Rs.40.80 decline to close at Rs.1,300.00.

**Rupee gains 10 paise against Dollar**

The Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday witnessed an appreciation of 10 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs281.12 against the previous day's closing

of Rs281.22.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs280.5 and Rs283 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 94 paise to close at Rs307.16 against the last day's closing of Rs308.10, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen lost 02 paise and closed at Rs1.93, whereas a decrease of Rs1.139 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs356.97 compared to the last closing of Rs358.36.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 02 each to close at Rs76.54 and Rs74.96 respectively.

**Gold rates decline by Rs.300 to Rs216,100 per tola**

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.300 and was sold at Rs.216,100 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs.216,400 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs. 257 to Rs. 185,271 from Rs.185,528 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.169,832 from Rs.170,067 the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs.10 and was sold at Rs.2,650 whereas that of ten gram Silver decreased by Rs.8.58 to Rs.2,271.94. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$3 to \$2,047 from \$2,050, the Association reported.



ISLAMABAD: Laborer busy sorting good quality onions at vegetables market.

### Workers' remittances record \$2.4 bn inflow F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The overseas workers' remittances recorded an inflow of US\$2.4 billion during December 2023, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Wednesday said.

In terms of growth, during the month under review, remittances increased by 5.4 per cent on month on month basis and 13.4 per cent on year on year basis.

Workers' remittances inflow of US\$13.4 billion has been recorded during the first six months of the fiscal year 2023-24.

Remittances inflows during December 2023 were mainly sourced from Saudi Arabia (\$577.6 million), UAE (\$419.2 million), UK (\$368.0 million) and USA (\$263.9 million).

### Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, Maersk Detroit, MSC Desiree, Blue Bird and Al-Saad carrying Containers, Gas oil and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Oil Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on Tuesday. Meanwhile, two more ships, Klima and Sea Runner carrying Coal and Mogas also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim during the last 24 hours respectively.

A total of nine ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a Liquefied Natural Gas carrier 'Flex Volunteer' is left the port today (Morning).

A cargo volume of 210,237 tonnes, comprising 192,776 tonnes import cargo and 19,461 tonnes export cargo carried in 4,620 Containers (3,950 TEUs Imports and 670 TEUs export) was handled at the port during the last 24 hours.

There are 04 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them a bulk cargo carrier 'Kang Hong' & two more ships, X-Press Bardsey and Kyparisia carrying Coal and Containers are expected to take berths at PIBT and QICT respectively on Wednesday.

### US stocks mostly fall as Tokyo hits 33-year high

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): US and European stocks markets mostly retreated Tuesday as a rebound at the start of the week lost steam amid investor worries about the growth outlook.

Asian equities, however, enjoyed a much-needed bounce Tuesday, with Tokyo scoring a three-decade high after a rally on Wall Street on Monday.

But US stocks could not keep the momentum going, with sentiment dampened following a lackluster forecast by the World Bank, which projected global growth would slow to 2.4 percent in 2024 from the estimated 2.6 percent last year, due in part to weaker activity in the United States and China.

Meanwhile, US trade data from November showed drops in both imports and exports, a trend that "fits with a weakening global economic environment," said Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare.

Eurozone stock markets slid as news of a shock contraction in German industrial output fanned fears over the health of Europe's top economy.

"Having ended 2023 very much on the up there appears to be little in the way of enthusiasm to drive markets higher in the short term, with trading activity subdued and a relatively negative bias so far year to date," said CMC Markets analyst Michael Hewson.

Crude futures rebounded, one day after slumping following a sharp price cut by Saudi Aramco -- which fueled concerns that supply was outstripping demand.

Asian indices shot higher Tuesday, with Tokyo hitting its highest level since 1990 as traders pointed to the positive effects from Wall Street's recent surge.

"Buying dominated a wide range of stocks in Tokyo as a series of economic indicators, including the jobs report, raised expectations of a soft landing for the US economy and high-tech shares gained" in New York, Iwai Cosmo Securities said.

The outlook was given a partial boost by Monday's short-lived plunge in oil prices -- a key driver of inflation -- after Aramco announced a cut of \$2 a barrel as it looks to regain lost market share.

## Business delegation meet SM Tanveer

LAHORE (APP): The representatives of business community of Lahore and Faisalabad met Caretaker Provincial Minister for Industry and Commerce SM Tanveer, here on Wednesday.

Problems being faced by the industry were discussed during the meeting. The delegation congratulated the minister on success of United Business Group in the election of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI).

The minister said, "We have to solve business community problems together.

By promoting the industry, the direction of the economy will be corrected. The economy will move forward only when the wheel of the industry will move."

SM Tanveer said due to efforts of the government and the hard work of farmers, production of cotton had doubled this year. The government would also achieve record production of wheat. One-window facility had been given to investors for setting up new factories.

After Lahore, he said, Business Facilitation Centers (BFCs) were in the final stages of completion

in five major cities including Faisalabad. He said the success in election of the Federal Chambers was a manifestation of confidence of the business community in the leadership of UBG. The business community would not be disappointed in anyway, he added.

FPCCI Vice President Aman Pracha said that SM Tanveer is always trying to solve problems of the business community. Regional Chairman FPCCI Zaki Ejaz, Abdul Rauf Mukhtar, Mian Tanveer Riaz, Chaudhry Khalid Mehmood and others were also present.

## Poultry prices increase by 30% in twin cities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The prices of poultry items have increased by 30 percent in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi during the last six months, which has created huge volatility in the market.

According to the market survey conducted by APP here Wednesday, during the last six in the twin cities, a 30 per cent increase was witnessed in the price of chicken in the last six months, while as same as 33 per cent increase in the price of poultry eggs in the same period.

According to the survey, the price of live chicken in the twin cities was between Rs420 and 440 per kg from the last week of this month of January. Similarly, chicken meat is sold at Rs 680 to 700 per kg in the market of both cities.

During this time, it was also found that poultry eggs used to be sold at Rs 390 to Rs 405 per dozen in the

market of both cities.

Meanwhile, talking to APP, the Chairman Pakistan Poultry Association (PPA), Chaudhry, Muhammad Ashraf said the increase in the current prices of poultry is due to demand and supply issues.

He said that the increase in poultry business inputs and cost of doing business was seen across the country due to which the market was in crisis.

He said that many people related to the chicken business in the country were affected by the current crisis and especially small businesses and poultry farms were closed, adding the poultry business in the four provinces including Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is suffering from the current economic crisis.

Chaudhry Ashraf said that the country's economic conditions are also an important issue and the

poultry feed ingredients imported from foreign countries are very expensive, in which soybean is important.

He said that many soybean ships have stopped at Karachi port, which has an inevitable impact on poultry prices.

Pakistan Poultry Association (PPA) has also called for a further increase in the prices of chicken and there was an increase observed in the prices of poultry items in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

On this occasion, poultry feed industrialist and Senior Vice President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Hamza Sarosh said that soybean is included in the basic ingredients of poultry feed.

Hamza said that soybeans for poultry feed were imported from America, Brazil and Argentina.

## Army Chief's efforts for economic progress hailed

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has expressed satis-

faction over the military diplomacy and economic initiatives, undertaken by the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) as the nation witnessed a positive shift in various sectors.

In a media statement issued here on Wednesday, PBF President Khawaja Mahboob-ur-Rehman said that a wave of optimism was sweeping through the country as the caretaker government's economic policies, coupled with the strategic decisions of the Army Chief, had resulted in tangible improvements in key economic indicators.

He said, significant reduction in the value of the dollar against Pak rupee, that has seen a commendable drop from Rs 340 to Rs 280, prompting expectations of further stabilization.

PBF President added, "The caretaker government has taken the best measures for the economy; the price of the dollar has fallen, and we anticipate even more positive changes when the new IMF and Asian Development Bank funds arrive, with hopes of the dollar reaching Rs 250."

The impact of these measures is evident in the Pakistan Stock Exchange, where a positive trend has now emerging, bringing relief to investors, he said.

Additionally, the reduction in petrol prices has garnered praise from the

public, further raising a positive sentiment towards the government's economic policies.

PBF President appreciated the positive initiatives of the Army Chief, there is a positive trend in the Pakistan Stock Exchange, and petrol prices have decreased. These things are good for our country.

Furthermore, the decrease in essential commodity prices, such as daily useable items, has not gone unnoticed which needs to be monitored properly by the respective deputy commissioners so that masses may benefit.

PBF President further stated that the measures taken by Army Chief are for the betterment of the country and 'we hope for more improvements in future,' said Mahboob.

"The unwavering resolve by Pakistan's security forces to combat illegal activities and secure the nation's economic interests, ultimately working towards a more prosperous and stable Pakistan."

The PBF also appreciated the progress on two critical initiatives, the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and the Green Punjab Programme.

PBF President also underscored the need for synergy among all relevant departments to ensure the successful implementation of these landmark initiatives.

## SCCI expresses grief over martyrdoms in Kerman' bombings



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq held a meeting with

the Consul General of Iran in Peshawar Ali Banafshekha.

During the meeting, the SCCI chief Fuad Ishaq expressed grief over martyrdom in the deadly

Kerman bombings, said in a press release issued here on Wednesday.

He expressed anguish and pain on the terrorism incidents in Kerman, a city

of Islamic Republic of Iran, in which claimed lives of more than 84 people and wounded many more.

Fuad Ishaq said Pakistan, particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa business community and people standby the brotherly Islam Republic of Iran and its people in this grief.

He also expressed sympathy with bereaved families and prayed to give Allah courage to them to bear this irreparable loss.

He also prayed for the departed souls and speedily recovery of injured people of the deadly bombings.

Later, the SCCI chief also wrote his condolence remarks regarding the Kerman bombings in a memorial book in the Iranian Consulate in Peshawar.

## Over 6.154 million tons wheat available for local consumption

ISLAMABAD (APP): The wheat stocks of the country by the second week of the first week January 2024 were recorded at over 6.154 million metric tons, which is sufficient to tackle the local dietary needs.

Besides these reserves were enough for keeping the strategic stocks as well as maintaining supply and demand smoothly in local markets to provide the commodity at reasonable prices, said Food Security Commissioner of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research.

Talking to APP here on Wednesday, he said that out of the total stocks, the carry forward of the grains was recorded at 1.610 million metric tons, whereas the government had procured about 5.998 million metric

tons during last year's wheat procurement drive.

Meanwhile, the wheat reserves in Punjab province comprised over 3.498 million tons, Sindh has 0.817 million tons, whereas Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has 0.182 million tons of grains that were enough to meet local consumption of flour and other byproducts during the season, he added.

Balochistan has 0.089 million tons of wheat, whereas the wheat stock of Pakistan Agriculture Storage and Supplies Corporation (PASSCO) was recorded at 1.567 million tons, he added.

Traditionally, he said that the government was releasing about 46,000 metric tons of wheat per day in local markets for milling to maintain a smooth supply

of the commodity across the country and provide wheat and flour at affordable prices to consumers, he added.

Under the mechanism, the Punjab Province was releasing about 25,000 metric tons, whereas Sindh releasing 10,000 metric tons, KP 55,00 metric tons, Balochistan 1,000 metric tons and average release of 5,300 metric tons by PASSCO, he added.

"These reserves are poised to meet the country's vital requirements till Mach 2024 and after this period, the commencement of the new crop harvest season will see a surge in grain availability in local markets, further bolstering the carry-forward stocks," he added.

Meanwhile, the govern-

ment has encouraged and supported the private sector to import wheat as so far about 700,000 tons of wheat have been imported, whereas an additional 1.487 million tons of wheat are to be imported in order to ensure smooth demand and supply till the arrival of new crop.

It is worth mentioning here that the wheat crop has been sown across more than 22.81 million acres of land in various crop-growing regions during the current Rabi season to meet staple food requirements as well as to maintain strategic reserves throughout the year.

The crop sowing targets for the current season (2023-24) were fixed at 22.22 million acres as the cultivation targets surpassed by 102.67 percent.

## Asian markets drop again as traders prepare for CPI, earnings

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets on Wednesday resumed the losses that have characterised the year so far, following a tepid lead from Wall Street as traders prepare for the release of key inflation data and start of earnings season.

A nervousness has swept through trading floors in

the past week as investors grow concerned that they may have been too hasty at the end of 2023 in pricing in a series of Federal Reserve interest rate cuts this year.

The bank said at its December meeting that it saw three reductions over the next 12 months but a string of data showing inflation tumbling and the economy slowing saw markets factor twice as many -- sending stocks soaring.

But the release last week of minutes from that meeting, and a forecast-beating jobs report forced dealers to re-evaluate their positions.

Analysts said consumer price index data this week will be crucial to how markets perform in the near term, with a miss on the upside seen fuelling another sell-off.

Traders had ended last year optimistic that the Fed would cut rates for the first time in March but bets on that have fallen on swaps markets, while some analysts are now predicting the first to come in June.

Also coming up is the beginning of US earnings season later in the month, which could provide some idea about how companies

are faring in the high-rate environment.

"Attention gradually shifts to the upcoming earnings season to gain insights into companies' growth trajectories," said Stephen Innes at SPI Asset Management.

"Mega-cap technology firms... are under close scrutiny due to their significant influence and substantial weight in the S&P 500.

"Investors are keen to discern whether recent declines are justified or whether companies' profits remain robust enough to revive the end-of-year rally."

The S&P 500 and Dow ended lower, though the Nasdaq eked out a small gain, with sentiment also dampened by the World Bank decision to cut its 2024 global growth outlook, due in part to weaker activity in the United States and China.

Asia performed hardly any better, having enjoyed a much-needed bounce on Tuesday.

Hong Kong, Shanghai, Sydney, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei, Manila, Wellington and Jakarta all fell.

Tokyo extended gains after hitting a more than 30-

year high Tuesday, boosted by a slowdown in wage growth that observers said would make it harder for the Bank of Japan to shift away from its ultra-loose monetary policy.

That, along with the Fed rate outlook, weighed on the yen.

"With the market's expectation of an early Fed rate cut receding after the start of the new year, Japanese stocks remained firm on the back of expectations that the yen's depreciation against the dollar will support corporate earnings," said JPMorgan's Rie Nishihara.

Bitcoin was slightly lower after whipsawing Tuesday following an unauthorised message posted to the US Securities and Exchange Commission's official X account saying it had approved the bitcoin exchange traded funds.

The message sent the cryptocurrency to a 22-month high near \$48,000 but it sank back after SEC chair Gary Gensler took to his own X account to warn that the market account had been "compromised" and that an "unauthorised tweet" had been posted.

### Court Notice

In the Court of Abdul Halem Civil Judge V/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Dagar. Appeal No. 260/1. Institution 20/10/2023. Date of hearing 22/1/2024. Umer Dad VS Usmani Gul. Notice to No. 1. Usmani Gul s/o Uner Afghan resident of Torwatsak Tehsil Daggarr District Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the Court at 9 a.m dated 22/1/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.





In brief

AJK beats Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) claimed PAF T20 Cricket Championships Trophy for the Blind 2024, outshining Islamabad in the final at PAF Cricket Ground E-9 Islamabad on Wednesday. Islamabad choose to bat first after winning the toss and posted a challenging total of 259 for the loss of six wickets. Akmal and Shahzaib were main contributirs for them, scoring 88 quick 74 runs, respectively. In reply, Kashmir chased the target just in 19.4 overs for the loss of five wickets. Cptain Nisar Ali blazing 172 off 73 balls, while losing five wickets. Shahzaib, Matiullah and Fakhar Abbas shared one wicket apiece fir Islamabad. Nisar was named man of the match. Abbottabad's Riasat Khan was awarded best player in B1 Category, Kamran Akhtar was awarded best player in B2 Category, Muhammad Rashid was awarded best player in B3 Category and Nisar was awarded the best wicketkeeper award of the tournament. Air Commodore Ashar Jamil, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Admin) Pakistan Air Force, who was the chief guest at the closing ceremony awarded prizes to the teams.

It is going to be tough for champions Senegal

ABIDJAN (AFP): Senegal captain Sadio Mane predicts that "a really difficult group" lies ahead for the Africa Cup of Nations holders when they face Gambia, Cameroon and Guinea. "The match against Cameroon is going to be very tough and we dare not underestimate our other opponents," the two-time African Player of the Year told reporters. "While accepting that none of these matches will be easy, we have the ability and determination to reach the knockout stage," he said ahead of the tournament kick-off on Saturday. Senegal defeated Cameroon 34 years ago in a group match in Algeria when they first met in the African football show-piece. But Cameroon have had the upper hand since, winning a quarter-final, then the 2002 final and another quarter-final after penalty shootouts. Senegal have beaten Guinea twice, but only drew 0-0 against them in the group stage two years ago en route to winning the Cup of Nations for the first time. The Group C clash between the title-holders and surprise 2022 quarter-finalists Gambia will be the first in the tournament. Mane, one of several Senegalese stars who joined the lucrative Saudi Pro League this year, admits that while winning two years ago was difficult, retaining the title will be even harder. "I believe the 2024 Cup of Nations will be the toughest to win because the line-up is the strongest." The 31-year-old, who reportedly wed his long-time sweetheart Aicha Tamba at a private ceremony this month, was referring to the fact that the top 15 ranked teams have qualified. "Plotting to dethrone us' Among the top 20, only Gabon, Uganda and Benin failed to make it to a tournament that will feature 12 former champions, including record seven-time winners Egypt. "I cannot recall a stronger field. All the giants are going to be in the Ivory Coast and all of them will be plotting to dethrone us," added Mane. He has won the Club World Cup, Champions League and Premier League with Liverpool, but says none of those triumphs compare with lifting the Cup of Nations trophy in Yaounde two years ago.

## Babar Azam slips down in ICC Test Batting Rankings

DUBAI (Monitoring Desk): Star batter of Pakistan Babar Azam on Wednesday, dropped two spots down to eighth position in the latest ICC Men's Test Batting Rankings. Babar Azam slipped to eighth spot with 768 points following his dismal performance in the Test series against Australia, where he managed only 126 runs in six innings. Pakistan suffered a 3-0 whitewash at the hands of Australia in the away Test series, extending their win-

less streak in the country. However, there were two notable gainers from Pakistan in the latest ICC rankings, as wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan jumped 10 places to the 17th spot with 668 rating points. Meanwhile, all-rounder Aamir Jamal ended his debut series at 45th position with 432 points after jumping 12 spots following his brilliance with the ball, picking 18 wickets. Star Indian batter gained three places to sixth in the

ICC Test batting rankings with 775 rating points after his solid performance in the two-match Test series against South Africa. New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson continues to lead the Test batting rankings with 864 points, followed by Joe Root (859) and Steve Smith (818). Australia's Marnus Labuschagne jumped to the fourth spot with 802, swapping two places, courtesy of his performance against Pakistan.

## Peshawar Premier League Season-I to start from Jan 15

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Premier League Season-I will start from January 15 at the historic Tehmas Khan Football Stadium Peshawar and Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali would grace the occasion as chief guest and would formally inaugurate the League at 3.00 p.m. This was stated by Chief Organizing Committee Khalid Khan while talking to media men here on Wednesday. Peshawar Premier League Season-I Football Tournament Director Ismail Afridi was also present with him. He said that all the steps have been completed for the Peshawar Premier League Season-I and the fifteen best teams have already been short-listed among 25 teams submitted their entries. He added that

definitely, the 11-day Football League will play an important role in the promotion of football as the game of football is declining in Pakistan and this type of League will give the players an opportunity to present their hidden talent. He said food needed different types of provincial, national and international level competitions so that the players who are associated with the game would get the best opportunities to play and make Pakistan famous not only at the national level but also at the international level. He said that he is also grateful to Shama Industries Nowshera, Mamson and Director Anti-Narcotics Force Col. Ehsan who also provided full support in organizing this Peshawar League. About

Tehmas Khan Football Stadium, he said, the ground is famous for football matches and the same ground hosted not only national but also international matches as well that is the reason people participate in large numbers from remote areas to watch the matches there. Fifteen teams from across the province and Islamabad are participating in this Peshawar League, including SparTex Swat, Dara Adam Khel Stori, Khyber Green, Dara 90groups, Khyber Markhor, SDFC Peshawar, Dara Dostan Atesh, Akakhel FC Kohat, Shaheen FC Islamabad, DFA Chitral, Faji Karam, Muneri FC Swabi, Compound Academy Abbottabad. Three matches will be played on a daily basis, he said.

## Hamdard Pakistan organized 2 day Hakim Mohammed Said Hamdard Premier League 24 cricket tourney



F.P. Report

KARACHI: In remembrance of Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said, founder of Hamdard Pakistan, a prominent social reformer and visionary, Hamdard Pakistan organized a two-day Hakim Mohammed Said (Shaheed-e-Pakistan) Hamdard Premier League 24 cricket tourney, a few days ago, at UBL Sports Complex. Ten teams from different divisions of Hamdard, including Hamdard Foundation Pakistan and Hamdard University partook in the tournament. In the final match, the

marketing division team Tigers outshone the sales and distribution team Leopards in a one-sided contest, securing an easy win and the winners' trophy. Batting first, the Tigers posted a formidable score of 77 runs in their limited six overs, losing four wickets. Marketing Officer Basit Rasheed, scored an impressive 42 runs off 12 balls, earning the title of the Player of the Match. Chasing the target, the Leopards managed only 32 runs. Ms. Sadia Rashid, President of Hamdard Pakistan, graced the prize distribution ceremony as the chief guest and present-

ed the winning trophy to the victorious team's captain, Shaharyar Pasha (Head of Marketing). Ahsan Rana of Marketing was recognized as the best player and best batter of the tournament, while Ibrahim Ahmed from the Information Technology Division's team Eagles was declared the best bowler of the tournament. To encourage the players, Hamdard Pakistan's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Fatema Munir Ahmed, also attended the tournament and distributed prizes alongside Ms. Sadia Rashid.

## Former captain Lamichhane sentenced to eight years for rape

KATHMANDU (AFP): A court in Nepal on Wednesday sentenced former star cricket captain Sandeep Lamichhane to eight years in prison for rape. Lamichhane, 33, was once the poster boy for cricket in Nepal and the leg spinner's onfield success had boosted the sport's profile in the Himalayan republic. In 2022 he was accused of raping a young woman in a Kathmandu hotel but was freed on bail and returned to the squad to compete in international tournaments. He was convicted of rape in December after a repeatedly delayed trial that had left him free to continue his sporting career, with his sentence handed down on Wednesday. "The court has sentenced him to eight years," Kathmandu district court official Ramu Sharma told AFP. Lamichhane was also ordered to pay a court fine of 300,000 Nepalese rupees (\$2,255) and a further 200,000 rupees (\$1,500) to the victim as compensation for the "mental impact" of his attack. Lamichhane, who is not in custody, was not in court for the sentencing. His lawyer, Saroj Ghimire,



told AFP he "will appeal the decision" in a higher court. The victim had claimed she was a minor at the time of the rape, but the court in a previous ruling said she was 18. 'Eye-opening to others' The sentencing was welcomed by supporters of the victim. "This is good news, she has been fighting a long fight," said women's rights activist Hima Bista. "A decision like this in such a high-profile case should be eye-opening to others. But we have to stay vigilant and ensure that he does not get away." Lamichhane consistently denied the charge against him and enjoyed strong public support despite the accusation.



ADELAIDE: Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova plays a forehand in their match against Katerina Sinakova of Czechoslovakia during day three of the 2024 Adelaide International at Memorial Drive.

### India's Kohli to miss T20 opener against Afghanistan

MOHALI (AFP): Star India batsman Virat Kohli will miss the first of three Twenty20 internationals against Afghanistan due to "personal reasons", coach Rahul Dravid said Wednesday. Kohli and skipper Rohit Sharma both returned to the T20 squad after more than a year's absence for the series starting Thursday in Mohali, as the teams prepare for the T20 World Cup in June. "Virat Kohli will miss the first game due to personal reasons," Dravid said at a press conference. "He will be playing from the second and third T20."

Kohli and Rohit last played a T20 international in November 2022, when India lost to England in the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup in Australia. Dravid said Rohit and the left-handed Yashasvi Jaiswal remain as the team's first-choice openers in the T20 format. "As of now, we will be certainly opening with Rohit and Jaiswal," Dravid said when asked if Kohli could open with Rohit. "But when you have a squad, you have to have that flexibility to do whatever is required if that is in the best interest of the team and gives us the best chance to succeed. "So nothing is closed. But certainly, we're really happy with what Jaiswal has done as an opener for us, and he gives us a left-right combination as well at the top."

Jaiswal, 22, made the Indian team after a stellar show in the Indian Premier league last year when he scored 625 runs at a destructive strike-rate of 163.61. Rinku Singh was another IPL performer, who made his T20 debut for India in December and has impressed with his power hitting. "Rinku Singh has started well in international cricket and he is playing good cricket," Dravid said of the left-handed middle-order batsman. "He is playing the role of finisher well and this (series) is another opportunity for him to take forward his development. Hopefully he will play well even in the future."

## HBL PSL gains in stature and wealth

LAHORE (APP): The HBL Pakistan Super League had yet another historic day on Wednesday when its live-streaming and broadcast rights saw an increase of 113 and 45 per cent for the 2024 and 2025 editions, respectively. The ARY Communications (Pvt) Limited submitted the highest bid, pursuant to a public tender process, to broadcast HBL Pakistan Super League 2024 and 2025 in Pakistan, which saw a whopping increase of 45 per cent from the value for the last two years.

A public, transparent and merit-based tender process was followed for awarding the Pakistan region PSL TV Broadcast media rights for 2024-2025. Bids were received from Independent Media Corporation Pvt. Ltd (IMC – the parent company of Geo Entertainment Television Pvt Ltd), ARY Communications (Pvt) Limited (ARY), Pakistan Television Corporation Limited (PTVC) and Tower Sports (Ten Sports). Meanwhile, Walee Technologies submitted the highest bid, pursuant to a public tender process, to live-stream HBL Pakistan Super League 2024 and ARY Digital Founder

2025 in Pakistan, which sees a huge increase of 113 per cent from the value for the last two years.

The PCB received bids from five parties – Consortium of ARY Communications (ARY, Myco, Daraz and Tamasha), Walee Technologies, TransGroup FZE, Independent Media Corporation Pvt. Ltd (IMC – the parent company of GEO Entertainment Television Pvt Ltd) and Tower Sports (Ten Sports). The PCB Bid Committee has recommended the highest bids submitted by ARY and Walee Technologies to the competent authority for approval.

Chairman PCB Management Committee Zaka Ashraf: "I want to congratulate ARY, Walee Technologies, the Pakistan Cricket Board, its management committee and the franchises on this historic moment. HBL PSL is a huge brand and it has a massive fan following. "It is an unprecedented moment as the prices for both of these rights are unmatched. This is a testament to the growth of the HBL PSL brand and we are all waiting for HBL PSL 9 to begin now."

## Rybakina, Pegula dig deep to stay alive in Adelaide

ADELAIDE (AFP): World number three Elena Rybakina and fifth-ranked Jessica Pegula ground out wins at the Adelaide International Wednesday to book their spots in the quarter-finals. Coming off the back of crushing Aryna Sabalenka to lift the Brisbane International title on Sunday, top seed Rybakina had to battle hard to get past Spain's Cristina Busca 6-3, 7-5. The Russian-born Kazakh, aiming for a deep run at the upcoming Australian Open, will face either Veronika Kudermetova or Ekaterina Alexandrova for a place in the semi-finals.

Pegula rallied from a slow start to overcome Bernarda Pera and set up a quarter-final against 2021 French Open finalist Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova. The second seed needed two-and-a-quarter hours to win the all-American battle 4-6, 6-2, 6-3. "I stayed relaxed and tried not to get frustrated. I want to keep improving and have a good mindset," said Pegula. "It's a brand new year and I want to find my confidence for the Australian Open."

Pegula has made the quarter-finals at the Australian Open in each of the past three tournaments. Pavlyuchenkova defeated Katerina Sinikova 2-6, 6-3, 6-2 to keep her tournament hopes alive. Laura Siegemund, part of Germany's United Cup winning team, advanced past Romanian Ana Bogdan 6-4, 7-5 with either Anna Kalinskaya or Daria Kasatkina awaiting her in the last eight. Mweanwhile, Latvia's former French Open winner Jelena Ostapenko proved too good for

France's Caroline Garcia, coming through 6-4, 5-7, 6-4 and will next play Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk.

In men's action, top seed Tommy Paul scored an emphatic 6-3, 6-2 win against qualifier Alex Bolt, while fellow American and third seed Sebastian Korda saw off a stiff challenge from Lorenzo Sonego 6-4, 7-6 (12/10). They will play Briton Jack Draper and Australian Chris O'Connell respectively in the quarter-finals.

"The first match of the year, you never really know what to expect," said Paul. "I was obviously working pretty hard in the past two months, but you can't recreate the feelings that you have on court. So I was happy to get out there and play some good tennis."

Draper came through a marathon, battling for 3hr 39min before finally advancing against Serb Miomir Kecmanovic 5-7, 7-6 (11/9), 7-6 (9/7).

Chilean second seed Nicolas Jarry also needed more than three hours to topple Italian Matteo Arnaldi 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (9/7), 6-4, saving a match point in the second-set tiebreak.

In contrast, O'Connell cruised past Russia's Alexander Shevchenko 6-3, 6-1 in 60 minutes.

At the WTA Hobart International, top seed Elise Mertens powered into the last eight with a 6-2, 6-3 thrashing of the Slovak Republic's Anna Karolina Schmiedlova. She will face Arantxa Rus next after the Spaniard swept past France's Varvara Gracheva 6-2, 6-3.

Chinese pair Zhu Lin and Yuan Yue also progressed, but fifth seed and 2020 Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin crashed out.

and CEO, Salman Iqbal: "I am delighted that ARY has once again come out as the highest financial bidder for HBL Pakistan Super League and that fans will be able to watch HBL PSL again on A Sports for the next two seasons.

"My team and I have always prioritised Pakistan and this bid process is another indication of the same where we have gone almost 50 per cent above the value we bid successfully in the previous cycle.

"Together with the Pakistan Cricket Board, ARY will work to further amplify the PSL brand in the next two seasons."

Walee Technologies CEO and co-founder, Ahsan Tahir: "We are honoured to have won the bid for HBL PSL ninth and tenth editions live-streaming media rights. Walee Technologies looks forward to taking the HBL PSL digital experience to the next level.

"We are in a position to make an investment of this magnitude because patriotic data-literate advertisers recognise that we are the only platform with the highest trust media touchpoints that attracts Gen Z and Gen Alpha customer segments."

### Smith replaces Warner as Test opener

SYDNEY (Agencies): Steve Smith will replace David Warner as Australia's Test opener despite never batting in the position in his 16-year first-class career.

Smith, 34, will open alongside Usman Khawaja in the first Test against West Indies in Adelaide from 17 January. Smith has never opened in 167 first-class games, which includes 105 Tests.

"There were plenty within the team who were pretty keen to go on record and say that they weren't keen to do it," said selector George Bailey. "So it was refreshing that Steve had come forward and said he wanted it. "It was something that we'd been chatting about in the background as a selection panel with the coaches as well.

"It's selfless that someone who's had such success in one position or a couple of positions in the middle order is open and willing and hungry to go and have a crack at something new and something different."

Smith began his career as a leg-spinner and number eight before becoming a prolific middle-order batter. He has scored 9,514 runs at an average of 58.01 in Tests. He has batted at number three in 17 Tests - most recently in 2017 - although he has opened twice for Australia in T20s.

Smith's move up the order will allow all-rounder Cameron Green to return in Smith's current position of number four, after losing his place to Mitchell Marsh during last summer's Ashes in England. Established openers Matthew Renshaw, Marcus Harris and Cameron Bancroft, the leading run-scorer in Australia's Sheffield Shield in the past two seasons, have been overlooked in a 13-man squad.





## In brief

### Police arrest bike lifter

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested a bike lifter and recovered six stolen motorcycles from his possession, said a Police spokesman. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, R.A.Bazar Police Station managed to net a bike lifter namely Nabeel and recovered six stolen motorcycles and other items from his possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Potohar said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars. He said that on the directives of City Police Officer, Rawalpindi, the operation against the bike and car lifters had been accelerated.

### Hoshiarpuri remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): The death anniversary of prominent poet, Hafeez Hoshiarpuri observed on Wednesday. He was born on 5th January, 1912 at Hoshiarpur in India. He was a genius and very prominent among Urdu poets of his time. Famous poems of Hafeez Hoshiarpuri are, Teri talash mein ham jab kabhi nikalte hain, 'Mohabbat karne vaale kam na honge', etc. Hafeez was the Ustad of Nasir Kazmi, who later on became one of the renowned poets of Urdu language and began writing ghazals under his teacher's guidance. Hafeez died on 10th January, 1973 in Karachi.

### AIOU admissions to commence from Jan 15

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is commencing the admissions for the Spring 2024 semester (first phase) across the country, including AJK and GB, on January 15, 2024 while admissions in second phase will start from March 1. The admissions in first phase include Matric, FA, I.Com, certificate courses, BS (face to face), MPhil, and PhD programs, said a press release on Wednesday. The teacher training programs, Associate Degree (BA), Post Graduate Diploma and BS (ODL) programs will be offered in second phase. Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has instructed the regional heads of university to enable facilities in the regional offices of the university. SWIFT Centers have also been established across the country to provide information and support to students. Prospectuses and admission application forms for all the programs will be available online on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk) on January 15, 2024.

### Dr Mukhtar to continue services

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar would continue his services as Vice Chancellor of National Skills University (NSU) Islamabad till the appointment of a regular incumbent, said a press release issued here on Wednesday. The Senate of National Skills University (NSU) Islamabad, chaired by the Chancellor/President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, has expressed full confidence in Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar and believed that his continued leadership would further elevate the University's status, the press release added. On his arrival in October 2019 as founding Vice Chancellor of the NSU, Dr. Mukhtar and his team faced significant challenges as it was a deserted place occupied by illegal occupants.



ISLAMABAD: SAPM for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Mullick, witnessing artwork depicting the lives of the people of IIOJK and Palestine during a seminar on "US policies on the issues of Kashmir and Palestine" Organized by Area Study Center for Africa, North and South America, Quaid-e-Azam University.

## Sindhi assures to resolve teachers, students issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi on Wednesday assured to resolve teachers and students issues on priority basis.

According to a press release issued here, the minister met with a delegation of daily wagers and assured them to address all genuine issues relating to their profession.

The minister informed

that the Cabinet has also approved the regularisation of 227 daily wagers. He further stated that those daily wagers who passed the test of the Federal Public Service Commission, would have regularization as per the judgement of the high court. The judgement was also upheld by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, he stated. Madad Ali said that teachers form the nations and they should be facilitated in an

appropriate manner.

He vowed that all out efforts would be made to uplift the quality of education in the public sector, especially in the capital.

He said that out-of-school children is also a top priority of the government and for this, steps are being taken to bring them back to school for imparting education. He was of the opinion that these are critical issues and that should be given the highest importance.

## ANF seizes 65 kg drugs in 7 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country managed to recover 65 kg drugs and arrested 12 accused including four women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday.

He informed that 28.8 kg hashish and 1.2 kg opium were recovered from the possession of an accused netted near Chungi No. 26.

10.5 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of six accused including four women arrested near Burhan Interchange Attock. 8 kg heroin and 2.2 kg Ice drug were recovered from two suspects near Sangiani Toll Plaza Islamabad.

8.4 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects near Bahria Town Phase 4 Islamabad.

In fifth operation, 5 kg hashish was recovered from Khar border area in Khyber.

In sixth operation, 1.1 kg hashish was recovered from an area in Gilgit while in 7th operation, 175 ecstasy tablets were recovered from the possession of an accused near Labor Colony Peshawar. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.

## Six stolen motorcycles recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested an accused involved in motorcycle theft and recovered 6 stolen motorcycles from his possession here Wednesday.

Police spokesman told on Wednesday that during course of action, R.A bazaar police held Nabeel and recovered 6 stolen motorcycles from his custody. Police have registered a case against him and further investigation was in progress, he said.

The challan will be presented to the court with concrete evidence and will be punished. Strict action will be taken against organized and active gangs operating in the city, the spokesman added.

Meanwhile, Rawalpindi police arrested three drug dealers during crackdown and recovered more than 05 kg drugs from their possession. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and started investigation.

## Ministry launches crack down on unauthorized Hajj bookings

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has launched a crackdown against firms involved in unauthorized Hajj bookings.

Special teams of the Ministry has started punitive action against "Fifth Pillar Family Takaful Limited" involved in illegal booking of Hajj, said the spokesperson of the Ministry here Wednesday.

He said FIA is investigating the fake company for unauthorized activities and actions will be taken accordingly. He clarified that no takaful company was allowed to book Hajj and Umrah.

Be cautious of companies like Fifth Pillar Takaful. Verify their details on the Ministry's website before booking for Hajj or Umrah, the spokesperson said.

## Mushaal highlights double standards in global discourse on Kashmir & Palestine

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick on Wednesday highlighted the prevailing double standards in the global discourse on Kashmir and Palestine.

She was addressing a seminar on "US policies on the issues of Kashmir and Palestine", organized by Area Study Center for Africa, North and South America of the Quaid-e-Azam University. The event, which saw participation from distinguished speakers including Ambassador of Iran in Pakistan Reza Amiri Mughaddam, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi, and Ambassador Naila Chohan, drew a significant audience comprising students, media professionals, and members of civil society.

Mushaal said the world appeared to be divided between those who support

ed the oppressive regimes and those who advocated for the rights of the oppressed. In the contemporary global landscape, she added, moral values and principles took a back seat to economic opportunities, power dynamics, and materialistic gains.

She pointed out the shifts in the United States policies towards Kashmir and Palestine, which, she said, were dictated by their own strategic interests rather than a steadfast commitment to democratic principles, human rights, and the right to self-determination. Mentioning the escalating deterioration of the global human rights situation over time, she lamented that genocide had seemingly become an unfortunate new norm in international affairs.

She highlighted the plight of the people in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and underscored the challenges faced by

minorities within India due to oppressive policies of the fascist regime.

She asserted that addressing the challenges in Kashmir and Palestine was indispensable for global peace and lasting security. Mushaal pointed out the connection between the aspirations of the people of Kashmir and Palestine while emphasizing their shared objective of seeking freedom from oppressive occupying forces. She lamented that both India and Israel exhibited a lack of genuine interest in pursuing peaceful resolutions to the two long-standing issues.

She asserted that humanity itself was being buried alive in the two regions under the weight of oppression. She emphasized the imperative for unity and collaboration among the people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and Palestine in their unwavering commitment to unarmed resistance.

## Four plots auctioned on first day

ISLAMABAD (APP): So far four plots were auctioned on the first day of the auction organized by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) here on Wednesday.

On the first day of the auction, a large number of investors participated and intense competition was seen in which plots were auctioned for Rs 7.796 billion rupees. The three-day auction of plots will continue till January 12 at Gandhara Centre, F-9 Park.

According to the details,

on the first day of the three-day public auction of commercial plots, plot number 9 of the blue area was sold for Rs 4.453 billion. Plot No. 53H located in the I-8 center of Islamabad was auctioned for Rs 1.46 billion. Similarly, Plot No. 53F located in Center I-8 was auctioned for Rs 1.15 billion. While Plot No. 9A located in I-14 Center has been auctioned on Rs. 653 million. Commercial plots of different categories are being offered for investment in the developed commer-

cial centers of Islamabad in a public auction.

The auction is being supervised by the Auction Committee headed by CDA Member Finance whose Secretary is Director State Management-II. Other members of the committee are Member State, Member Planning and Design, Member Technology Digitalisation, DFA-II, DG Law, Director Urban Planning, Director Regional Planning, Director Public Relations and Director Finance.

## Rawalpindi police launch Pakistan's first regular school classes for transgenders

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a major development, the Rawalpindi police have launched regular school classes catering specifically to the transgender population of the city.

The classes, conducted at Islamia Higher Secondary School in Liaquat Bagh, have garnered support from the district administration and the Education Department.

A spokesperson for the Rawalpindi police told media on Wednesday that 52 transgender individuals had been enrolled in these special classes, emphasizing the significance of pro-

viding education as a fundamental right.

This initiative is aligned with the broader efforts of the Rawalpindi police, which recently established Pakistan's inaugural Transgender Protection Center, he added.

The spokesperson highlighted the multifaceted approach of the Transgender Protection Center, which extends beyond education. The center has successfully created employment opportunities for over 100 transgender individuals, offering them dignified work. This holistic approach is not only

empowering the transgender community but also challenging societal norms.

The Rawalpindi police's pioneering step is expected to set a commendable example for other institutions and communities across Pakistan. By prioritizing education and inclusivity, they are actively contributing to the creation of a more just and equitable society. The initiative aligns with global efforts to promote diversity, ensuring that everyone, regardless of gender identity, has equal access to opportunities, ultimately fostering a society where all individuals can thrive.

## EV charging stations to come up at 50 locations of Punjab province soon: minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Provincial Transport Minister Ibrahim Hassan Murad Wednesday said that Punjab was making a big push for electric vehicles in controlling environmental pollution where over 50 charging stations will soon be set up at various points of the province.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that CM had issued the first E-Rickshaw license while providing over 10,000 electric bikes will be distributed among graduate university students, adding, 2,000 electric three-wheeler bikes will also be granted to special individuals free of interest.

He said that the government's historic initiative aims to become a manufacturing hub for electric vehicles, EV batteries, and components, adding, that the electric three-wheeler market is the most ripe market right now for electrification.

Minister added that with the adoption

of EVs, we will not only positively impact the country's economy but also help in achieving the country's target of net zero emissions.

Pakistan's electric vehicle market is gathering momentum and is poised for significant growth in the next few years, he mentioned.

To encourage the shift to electric vehicles, he also emphasized the high quality of electric rickshaws and their role in combating pollution.

Replying to a query, he said that beyond promoting sustainable and eco-friendly modes of transport, the 'Green Wheels' initiative also marks a noteworthy shift in government procurement practices.

This program will also reflect a multifaceted approach and will address both public accessibility to electric vehicles and the government's commitment to adopting environmentally friendly options.



RAWALPINDI: Heavy machinery being used for repairing sewerage line at Commercial Market.



Shaheen met with Kuromiya

KABUL (BNA): Suhail Shaheen, Head of IEA's Political Office in Doha, Qatar, met with Kuromiya Takayoshi, Japanese Envoy to Afghanistan. Shaheen said that he met with Kuramaya, Japanese Envoy to Afghanistan, in Doha and discussed the current situation, humanitarian help, addiction treatment and projects for the support of farmer. The importance of interaction with the IEA, as well as some other crucial issues were also discussed between the two sides.

AAA begins flights to Kabul

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation has announced that Air Arabia Airlines (AAA) conducted its inaugural flight to Kabul International Airport on Wednesday. AAA is scheduled to operate a daily flight connecting Sharjah and Kabul, enhancing connectivity between the two cities. In addition to AAA, Flydubai has also recently resumed its flight operations to Kabul, further contributing to the re-establishment of air travel to Afghanistan's capital.

Afghanistan needs in 2024 require \$3.06 billion

KABUL (TOLOnews): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that of the 23.7 million people in need of life-saving assistance, "humanitarian partners have prioritized 17.3 million people to receive well-coordinated multi-sectoral assistance in 2024, for which US\$3.06 billion is required."

According to the report released by OCHA, the 23.7 million people—more than half of Afghanistan's population—will require humanitarian assistance to survive in 2024 as the country continues to reel from decades of war and grapple with climate-induced crises, recurrent natural disasters, entrenched poverty, and barriers to women's participation in public life.

"Key priorities include food aid, safe drinking water, healthcare, education, and addressing acute water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) needs," the report said. "The protection of vulnerable groups, especially women, children and those living with disabilities, remains paramount."

TOLOnews interviewed Alam Bibi, 55, who collects discarded bottles of water, and metal, in the capital of Kabul.

Alam Bibi said that she is forced to do so in a bid to make ends meet for her family of 10 members.

"I don't have a home. Some people give 10 or 5 Afs. My son is small and my husband is old," she said.

Nearly half of all

FM meets Norway's Chargé d'affaires



KABUL (Ariana News): Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai met with Paul Klooman Bekken, Chargé d'affaires of Norway for Afghanistan, Abdul Qahar Balkhi, the foreign ministry spokesman said in a post on X.

At the meeting, Bekken acknowledged progress in

SIGAR expresses concerns over misuse of trust fund

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United States Special Inspector for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) has expressed concerns about the misuse of Afghan trust funds in Switzerland by the Taliban in a published report.

SIGAR released a 55-page report, the 8th of January, regarding the oversight of frozen assets of the Afghan Central Bank and sent it to the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs. According to this report, SIGAR has also raised concerns about the designation of Haji Mohammad Idris, the head of the unit known as "FinTRACA," listed as an international terrorist by the United States.

Previously, Michael McCaul, the Chairman of

Taliban detains Vajeh publishing employee

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Taliban security forces forcefully detained an employee of the Vajeh Publishing House and Bookstore.

Qasim Farzam, the head of publications at Vajeh Publishing, revealed that the Taliban violently apprehended one of their colleagues.

Qasim Farzam, responsible for publications at Vajeh, posted on his Facebook page on Wednesday 10th of January that the Taliban once again visited bookstores and confiscated numerous books.

Farzam added that one of his colleagues who resisted the Taliban's actions was brutally subjected to physical violence, with a cover over their head, and forcibly transported.

800 Women imprisoned in jails

KABUL (TOLOnews): The deputy head of the Office of the Prison Administration said that around 19,000 people, including 800 women, are currently held in prisons across Afghanistan for various crimes.

In an interview with RTA, the country's national TV channel, Habibullah Badar stated that there is no private, unofficial prisons in the country. He also denied the reports about detainees facing "torture" in the prison, saying that there is no torture and mistreatment of prisoners.

"There are total of 19,000 detainees in various provinces and districts of the country. Many of them are under investigation. 800 of them are women," Badar said.

Badar also claimed that there are no political detainees in the country's prisons. However, he, said that some foreign nationals have been detained on various charges.

"We have prisons across Afghanistan. The surveillance houses belong to the intelligence directorate. No one can prove that there are private prisons in the country," he said.

Meanwhile, some political and military analysts urged the interim government to launch educational training for the detainees.

"Education is a very important issue for the detainees. The detainees should also be provided with various skills," said Zahorullah Zahir, a political analyst.

"There should be many craft fields for the detainees, so that they become better after the prison term," said Ahmad Khan Andar, a military analyst.

This comes as last December, the US Department of State urged its citizens to refrain from traveling to Afghanistan "due to terrorism, risk of wrongful detention, kidnapping and crime."

"US citizens should not travel to Afghanistan for any reason," the State department said in statement.

He is striving to find a way to join his family again.

"My two brothers and parents are still in Iran, I have been arrested and repatriated," said Sediqullah, an Afghan returnee.

"We ask the Afghan government to give us money so that we can go to our homes," said another

‘Marja clinics lack medicines’

L A S H K A R G A H (Pajhwok): Residents of Marja district in southern Helmand province complain health facilities in the district lack medicines and provide inadequate services.

Mohammad Lal, a resident of the district, said: "Patients are not getting proper treatment here, they are given only a packet of tablets."

Mahmood, a resident of Block Tosi area, said many residents took their patients to Lashkargah due to lack of medicine and proper services in the district clinics.

He said most of the time they had to take their patients to Lashkargah, the provincial capital, for treatment.

Meanwhile, deputy director of public health for Marja district said in order to provide better services, the district health centres should be upgraded.

On the other hand, provincial Public Health director Dr Sayed Ahmad Saeed did not fully accept the lack of medicines and inadequate health services in Marja district.

But he said the shortage of medicines occurred in Marja at the end of 2023.

"The scheme of institutions that provided medicines to health centres in 2023 has now been shifted to UNICEF. Therefore, the shortage of medicines started in the entire country amid an increase in the population."

According to him, every year the Ministry of Public Health provides health facilities to Helmand based on its population, but as Helmand residents do not have electronic ID cards, they are given the share of 1.9m people.

He adds if a precise population census is conducted in the province and are given health facilities accordingly, they will not face such problems in the future.

Kabul ready to host meeting of special envoys



KABUL (Ariana News): Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir Khan Muttaqi and Iran's special representative for Afghanistan, Hassan Kazemi Qomi, have discussed and exchanged views on holding a meeting of special representatives of regional countries for Afghanistan in Kabul.

Recent bilateral economic developments between Afghanistan and Iran, expansion of diplomatic relations, facilitation of consular services for Afghan refugees in Iran, border security and increasing bilateral cooperation are among the other issues that have been discussed between the two sides, according to a statement released by the Foreign Ministry.

Iran deports nearly 900 Afghan minors in two months: Official

NIMROZ (TOLOnews): Nearly 900 Afghan minors have been deported from Iran to Nimroz province in Afghanistan in the last two months, a local official in Nimroz said.

Sediqullah, 14, is one of hundreds of children who have been deported by Iranian security forces but whose families remain in Iran.

‘Historical treasures to be altered into handicrafts market’



HERAT (BNA): Mullah Khairullah Khairkhan, Acting Minister of the Ministry of Information and Culture, expressed the central government's commitment to preserving and reconstructing the historical treasures of Herat on his recent visit to the city's historical sites.

The Acting Minister of Information and Culture highlighted the ministry's dedication to protecting and reconstructing all historical treasures across the country.

During their visit, Minister Khairkhan proposed utilizing these historical sites for future cultural events and exhibitions.

Moreover, he emphasized the ministry's efforts to transform these historical structures into covered markets specifically designed for selling handicrafts.

This transformation aims to attract foreign tourists and revitalize both the cultural and economic aspects of Herat.

One notable example of the historical treasures in Herat is the historical dams, which were constructed during the reign of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan.

These dams cover an

Government urged to control coal and firewood rates

AIBAK (Pajhwok): Some residents in northern Samangan province have complained against the high prices of fuel especially coal in this province and asked the acting government to pay attention in reducing the price of these materials.

Their complaints against soaring fuel items come at a time when coal from the Samangan mines is exported to other provinces and some foreign countries.

According to the wood and coal sellers there was increased in the rates of coal, woods and other items this year compared to the past.

Last year, seven kilograms of coal was accounted for 50 afs which had now surged to 60 afs, while the rates of petrol and gas had reduced.

Edres, the resident of Samangan province told

Pajhwok Afghan News: "The lack of business faced us with economic problems for this reason still we have not prepared for the winter so far, I have borrowed some money from a person and will buy some coal with it."

He asked local officials to addressed this issue and said coalmine existed in the province and the local officials should controlled the coal price so that all the people are able to purchase coal in winter.

Farahuddin, one of the Racksaw drivers in Aibak, also complained against soaring coal prices and said every year he used to transport coal and firewood for tens of people, and he used to buy fuel for himself, but this year, due to economic problems, people are buying less fuel

Some coal sellers also complained against high

fuel items rates and decline of their business activities in the province.

Moahmmad Nabi, one of the firewood and coal sellers, in the province said: "I sell here different varieties of woods and coal, due to inflation our sell had reduced this year."

He said seven kilograms of almond wood is accounted for 60 afs and seven kilograms of coal accounted for 60 afs, due to high rates this year there are less customers.

He said last year the same quantity of fire wood and coal sold at 50 afs each.

Surge in the prices of fuel items negatively impacted the market and caused the decline of customers, he added.

"When customers come for coal purchase, they complain about the high price of coal, while the coal is extracted from

Samangan and the government should pay attention to lowering the price so that people can buy it to meet their needs, and we will sell it too."

Mawlawi Fida Mohammad Farzam, the representative of Aibak Municipality, said the Samangan coal is not only used by its people but it was dispatched to other provinces and some countries as well.

He said: "If it is continuously used, we will be faced with the shortage and it caused price hike."

He said a price list had been distributed to sellers in order to control the coal price.

He said the Municipality had fixed the rates of fuel and sellers worked accordingly, adding that in cases of violation legal action would be taken against the violators.





PESHAWAR: PTI Counsel Ali Zafar and others lawyers talking to media persons after hearing in High Court.

## History of KP police full of sacrifices: KP CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah said that history of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police is full of sacrifices; and the people as well as the government of the province are proud of the invaluable sacrifices rendered by police adding that for the protection of the lives and properties of the general public, police personnel are performing their duties with utmost dedication, bravery and courage, and putting their own lives to risk.

"The way our police is fighting against the menace of terrorism is matchless", he remarked and added that the government and entire nation stand by the police to eliminate this menace for all.

This, he said while addressing "Police Darbar" as the chief guest during his visit to police line, Peshawar on Wednesday. Syed Arshad Hussain Shah maintained that cowardly attacks of the enemy cannot demoralize the police force; morale of our police personnel is as high as ever and they are always ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the nation and country. He said that law and order was the top most priority of the caretaker provincial government, and it is taking all possible steps to strengthen police, and all the requirements of police force would be fulfilled on priority basis. He further said that special funds would be arranged for the treatment of injured police personnel, and wellbeing of police would be taken proper care of.

Earlier, the chief minister visited the Monument of police martyrs at police line and offered Fatiha for the eternal peace of the Martyrs. The chief minister also visited the Data Analysis Section, where he was briefed about the functions of that section and other related matters.

Later on, talking to media persons, the chief minister said that at present, the province is faced with financial crunches, as it is not getting it's due shares in various heads including the shares of merged areas from the federal government. However, Syed Arshad Hussain Shah made it clear that his government, despite the financial difficulties, is taking every possible step to strengthen the police force. Responding to a question on the occasion, the chief minister said that the province was short of around 56,000 security personnel for the security of upcoming general elections adding that the matter has been taken up with the federal government. In response to another question, the chief minister said

that decision of Courts and Election Commission would be final for holding general elections. "Whatever they decide, the provincial government will extend all out support for its implementation", he remarked.

**CM directs removal of bottlenecks in operationalization of KICH:** In order to remove bottlenecks in the operationalization of Khyber Institute of Child Health Peshawar (KICH), an important meeting was held here on Wednesday at Chief Minister's House Peshawar with Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah in the chair.

Advisor to CM on Health Dr. Riaz Anwar, Additional Chief Secretary Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, Secretary Health Mehmood Aslam, Chief Executive Officer PESCO Qazi Tahir, Director General Peshawar Development Authority Khalid Mehmood and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

Briefing the meeting about progress on KICH, it was told that project was launched in 2013 under federal Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) with the objective to provide a specialized medical facility for children. The meeting was informed that, around 90 percent civil work had been completed on the project, however, the concerned authorities were facing issues in operationalization of KICH due to unavailability of gas and electricity connections and external sewerage line for waste disposal of hospital.

Besides release of funds for procurement of medical equipment, creation of new posts was also required for functionalization of hospital. The Chief Minister directed the Peshawar Development Authority to chalk out a plan for the construction of sewerage line for hospital and take necessary measures for its early construction.

He also directed the authorities concerned to move a case for approval of SNE for KICH in the next cabinet meeting. He also directed the quarters concerned to devise a plan in coordination with high ups of SNGPL and PESCO for provision of gas and electricity facility to the hospital. Addressing the participants, Arshad Hussain Shah Said that, issue of release of funds for procurement of medical equipment for hospital would be taken up with relevant authorities at federal level. He added that KICH was of vital importance for the citizens of province and no further delay would be tolerated in its operationalization.

## Blinken meets Abbas

RAMALLAH: Israel kept bombing Gaza on Wednesday as US top diplomat Antony Blinken met the head of the Palestinian Authority, which Washington hopes could govern the coastal territory after the war ends.

As the US secretary of state arrived under tight security in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, protesters held up signs that read "Stop the genocide", "Free Palestine" and "Blinken out". Blinken then met Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas, who was later set to discuss a "push for an immediate cease-fire" in talks with Jordan's King Abdullah II and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in the Red Sea port city of Aqaba.

The bloodiest ever Gaza war started by the October 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel has raged on for more than three months and killed over 23,000 people in the Hamas-run territory, according to its health ministry. Global concern has flared over the spiralling humanitarian crisis, and Blinken while voicing continued US political and military support for top regional ally Israel — has urged steps to reduce the surging civilian death toll.

Dire shortages brought by an Israeli siege mean the "daily toll on civilians in Gaza, particularly children, is far too high," Blinken said on Tuesday at a joint press conference with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Amid the latest round of US crisis diplomacy, the Gaza war raged on unabated. The Israeli army said it had killed dozens of "terrorists" and hit another 150 targets in Gaza's central Maghazi and southern Khan Yunis areas.

Troops had found 15 tunnel shafts as well as rocket launchers, missiles, drones and explosives in Al-Maghazi and destroyed machinery for producing the rockets that have been fired at Israel, the army said. The Gaza health ministry said 70 people were killed and 130 wounded in overnight attacks on the territory of 2.4 million where the United Nations says most people are displaced and at risk of disease and hunger.

The war started when Hamas launched its unprecedented October 7 attack, which resulted in about 1,140 deaths in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official figures. Militants also took around 250 hostages, of whom Israel says 132 remain in Gaza including at least 25 believed to have been killed.

Israel has responded with a relentless military campaign that has killed at least 23,210 people, mostly women and children, according to the Hamas-run health ministry. The Israeli army says 186 of its soldiers have been killed inside Gaza.

The United Nations estimates 1.9 million Gazans have been displaced inside the besieged territory that had already endured years of blockade and poverty before the war. One of them, Hassan Kaskin 55, told AFP: "We have lost our money, our houses, our jobs. We are losing our youths as well."

"We've sacrificed our children for our homeland," Blinken is on his fourth tour of the Middle East since the outbreak of the war, with earlier stops in Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Washington has floated a post-war scenario in which a reformed Palestinian Authority governs Gaza as well as towns and cities in the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since 1967. — Agencies

# PM for establishing global fund to ensure worldwide health security

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday stressed the need to explore mechanisms for global funding that could support nations in need, ensuring that no one was left behind, in the global pursuit of health security.

"The call for a sufficiently funded, widely supported country medium-term road-map, as highlighted in the International Health Regulations Core Capacities evaluation, resonates globally. We must invest in open, transparent, and multi-sectoral processes to strengthen buy-in and commitment at all levels," the prime minister said while addressing the inaugural session of the first-ever two-day Global Health Security Summit 2024.

Highlighting the importance of enhancing coordination in the health sector beyond borders, Prime Minister Kakar said "One Health" approach, recognized the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health. "Our commitment should extend to establishing global frameworks that facilitate information sharing, joint research, and collaborative strategies for an effective response during emergencies."

He stressed the need for a strong, visible, active surveillance and tiered public health laboratory system that was integral to early detection, response, and mitigation. He also called for collaboratively working towards establishing international standards for food safety, harmonizing regulations to ensure the highest level of protection for populations worldwide.

"A cross-sectoral approach to managing antimicrobial resistance requires international collaboration," he said adding "We need a unified front against antimicrobial resistance, with coordinated efforts to develop and enforce global standards for the responsible use of antibiotics and infection prevention," he remarked. Highlighting the need of collective response to address external and internal health challenge, he said no state in the world could meet the health challenges all alone. Likewise, he said the internal challenges posed by population growth, rapid urbanization and climate change could not be dealt with by a country alone.

"New diseases, like COVID-19 and climate-induced incidents such as the historic floods of 2022 in Pakistan, are disrupting our citizens' health and causing social and economic impacts. While the developed world has systems in place to timely respond to such health emergencies, a similar ideal system is lacking in the developing world

as health systems are relatively weak," he added. The prime minister said the COVID-19 pandemic had taught us invaluable lessons about the importance of collaboration, preparedness, and a unified response. "It is in this spirit that we convene today, not merely as representatives of our respective countries, but as overseers of global health security."

He called for establishing a shared vision of the world where health security was not a privilege but a universal right and where the strength of a nation's health systems was measured not only by its capacity to respond to crises but also by its ability to prevent, detect, and mitigate health threats. "In pursuit of this vision, we must recognize that health security extends beyond the realm of traditional healthcare. It encompasses multi-spectral collaboration, as highlighted in the "Joint External Evaluation of International Health Regulations Core Capacities," where the interplay of health, environment, agriculture, and security is crucial. Our collective vision is not just about reacting to crises but forging a proactive, precipitated and interconnected global health ecosystem."

As regards the challenge of climate change, the prime minister said the global Climate Risk Index identifies Pakistan as the eighth most vulnerable country to the impacts of climate change. "As echoed in the "Framework for Climate Resilient Health Systems Pakistan", we must integrate climate resilience into our health policies and systems. This is not a challenge confined to borders; it is a shared responsibility that necessitates a collective response," he added. He said the cost of climate injustice in Pakistan was 33 million affected population, 17,000 deaths, and economic loss of more than 30 billion USD. The prime minister hoped that the Summit would mark a huge moment in the journey of global progress towards a healthier world besides ensuring a future where health is truly a global asset. He also appreciated Minister for National Health Services Dr. Nadeem Jan and his ministry for tireless efforts to organize the event successfully.

Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani said the summit was a timely initiative which would help ensure a safer and healthier world for future generations. He said the COVID-19 pandemic that incurred loss of 3.5 million lives and US\$ 12.5 trillion across the globe, ruthlessly exposed the vulnerability of global health security. He said Pakistan continued to collaborate with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other

international entities in shaping global health policies. He said international cooperation was required to make the health sector more resilient. Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan said the summit, aimed at collaborating with global leaders to ensure equity-based pandemic preparedness financing for low and middle-income countries and mutual exchange of knowledge and rich experience with member states and experts around summit thematic areas which focuses on vaccine equity, patent deregulation and transfer of technology.

He said the ongoing global health challenges had highlighted the significance of working together, exchanging information, and taking united action. He said this summit provided a forum to combine our knowledge, exchange perspectives, and establish the partnership that go beyond international boundaries.

Ambassador of the United States to Pakistan Donald Bloom said the US was helping the developing nations to improve their health systems and enabled them effectively responding to future outbreaks. Deputy Health Minister of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Hani Jokhdar said his country believed in importance of the global health security. Besides, he also acknowledged the significance of pandemic fund. Afghanistan Minister for Public Health Dr Qalandar Ebad said the developing nations needed the international cooperation in health sector as they were not able to tackle the infectious diseases such as Malaria, TB, and HIV Aids alone. He said both Pakistan and Afghanistan were facing the challenge of the polio disease. He said these infectious diseases could challenge global health security. Heads of delegations from Türkiye, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan also spoke on the occasion.

**PM vows to continue anti-polio mission till its complete eradication:** Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar vowed to continue the anti-polio mission of the government till the complete eradication of the crippling disease. The prime minister expressed these views while chairing a meeting of the federal cabinet here at the PM House.

The meeting offered fateha for the security officials protecting the polio eradication team who were martyred in a terrorist incident in Bajaur. PM Kakar paid tribute to the martyred personnel and said the State would not forget their invaluable sacrifice for the homeland. He said the officials sacrificed their lives for the safety of future generations. He said the terrorists could not deter the resolve of the nation to fight polio.

## SC issues written orders about last hearing on ZAB references

F.P. Report



KOHAT: KP IGP Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur and others offering funeral prayer of martyred policemen, killed by terrorist in Lachi check post attack.

## Mahrang using Baloch protests in bid to move abroad: Minister

F.P. Report

QUETTA: As protests for the recovery of Baloch missing persons continue in Islamabad, caretaker Balochistan Information Minister Jan Achakzai has said that Dr Mahrang Baloch, a human rights activist who is leading Baloch Yakejhti Committee's (BYC) camp in the federal capital, wants to move abroad on asylum.

The minister's remark came during a press conference in Quetta on Wednesday, where he shared the Baloch Enforced Disappearance Commission's report on the missing persons. This report may shut the propaganda mills, he added. The interim minister said that the issue of Baloch missing persons has been used as an organised campaign and some people's motivation can also be used in election campaigns and other interests.

"Everyone knows Dr Mahrang's motivation. She wants to get asylum in any foreign embassy or settle in any foreign country by getting a visa. She has a dream to become Malala II," Achakzai said. The minister said that the activist would keep selling this narrative but this "is a fact that the entire data has been received".

He disregarded the authenticity of any statistics part of the "propaganda" which are circulating in the private sector or media. Achakzai said that the commission's report has been

## Tribunal upholds rejection of Imran's papers from NA-122

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Election Appellate Tribunal of Lahore High Court (LHC) has upheld the rejection of the nomination papers of PTI founding chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan from National Assembly constituency of NA-122 in Lahore.

Disposing of the appeal against rejection of nomination papers on Wednesday, the Election Tribunal consisting of Justice Muhammad Tariq Naeem pronounced its verdict reserved earlier. On December 30 last, the nomination papers of Imran Khan had been rejected from Lahore's NA-122. The returning officer had accepted the objections of former PML-N MPA Mian Naseer to Imran's nomination papers.

The objection stated that Imran Khan's proposer and second were not related to the constituency. Earlier, the Election Tribunal in Rawalpindi had also reserved its decision after completing the hearing into the returning officer's rejection of the nomination papers of Imran Khan from National Assembly's NA-89 Mianwali constituency.

presented before the Supreme Court. He said that allegations were levelled regarding the people's arrests in Tonsa and other areas "Banned outfits give the people names to be added to missing persons' lists," the minister said, adding that Pakistan is being defamed in the name of missing persons.

He went on to say that more than 200 attacks took place in Balochistan last year. "Someone is involved in these attacks. Innocent people can't be involved in terror attacks," Achakzai stated. He said that people affiliated with banned outfits carry out attacks after getting training in camps.

In response to the

provincial minister's remarks, Dr Mahrang told media that Achakzai and his government have been involved in "propaganda against us for a long time now". "All they want to do is character assassination of the victims' families," she claimed, adding, "I am not leaving Pakistan, I'm sitting here in Islamabad and I'll be here in this country." The human rights activist added: "Why would I fly to somewhere else? Are we demanding anything unconstitutional? I want to tell the world that the issue is not about me. It's about missing persons." People like Achakzai, she further said, are "merely pawns" who speak what they are told.

The order further said, "Raza Rabbani states that he represents Ms. Sanam Bhutto, Ms. Bakhtawar Bhutto Zardari and Ms. Aseefa Bhutto Zardari respectively, the daughter and maternal granddaughters of the late Mr. Bhutto. "Mr. Zahid. F. Ebrahim was appointed as amicus but states that he had already been approached by Ms. Fatima Bhutto and Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the paternal grandchildren of the late Mr. Bhutto.

"We enquired from the learned counsel and others present whether anyone has any objection to Mr. Zahid F. Ebrahim being counsel instead of amicus and none object." The SC said, "Khawaja. Haris Ahmed was appointed as amicus but he has disclosed that his father was counsel in a contempt case of Masood Mahmood, who was co-accused/approver in the case, therefore, his name may be withdrawn as amicus."

The order read, "Mr. Salahuddin Ahmed was appointed as amicus and discloses that he is married to the granddaughter of the murdered Nawab Ahmed Khan, therefore, if anyone objects to him being amicus he will withdraw. However, none present object to Salahuddin Ahmed appearing as amicus. "We commenced by hearing amicus Mr. Makhdoom Ali Khan. He has also filed material contained in two voluminous bound sets."