

Afghans return continue
F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: As of January 25, 2024, the process of repatriation continues for illegal Afghan residents leaving Pakistan. The total number of such individuals has reached 475,603. On January 25, 2024, a total of 647 Afghan citizens, including 186 men, 145 women, and 316 children, returned to their homeland. The repatriation involved 54 vehicles, facilitating the return of 83 families to Afghanistan.

Israel must prevent genocide in Gaza

The UNs’ top court demands Israel contain deaths

THE HAGUE, Netherlands: The United Nations’ top court stopped short Friday of ordering a ceasefire in Gaza in a case accusing Israel of genocide in the tiny coastal enclave, but demanded that Israel try to limit deaths and damage caused by its military offensive there.

South Africa brought the case, which goes to the core of one of the world’s most intractable conflicts, and had asked the court to order Israel to halt its operation. While the ruling stopped short of that, it nonetheless amounted to an overwhelming rebuke of Israel’s wartime conduct and adds to mounting international pressure to halt the offensive that has killed more than 26,000 Palestinians, decimated vast swaths of Gaza, and driven nearly 85 percent of its 2.3 million people from their homes.

In the highly anticipated decision made by a panel of 17 judges, the International Court of Justice decided not to throw out the case — and ordered six so-called provisional measures to protect Palestinians in Gaza. Many of the measures were approved by an overwhelming majority of the judges. An Israeli judge voted in favor of two of the six.

“The court is acutely aware of the extent of the human tragedy that is unfolding in the region and is deeply concerned about the continuing loss of life and human suffering,” Joan E. Donoghue, the court’s president, said. Provisional measures by the world court are legally binding, but it is not clear if Israel will comply with them.

After the ruling, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected the genocide claims as “outrageous” and vowed to press ahead with the war. “We will continue to do what is necessary to defend our country and defend our people,” he said. Friday’s decision is only an interim one; it could take years for the full case brought by South Africa to be considered. Israel rejects the genocide accusation.



While the case winds its way through the court, South Africa has asked the judges “as a matter of extreme urgency” to impose provisional measures. Top of the South African list was a request for the court to order Israel to “immediately suspend its military operations in and against Gaza.” But the court declined to do that. South Africa also asked for Israel to take “reasonable measures” to prevent genocide and allow access for desperately needed aid.

The court ruled that Israel must refrain from killing Palestinians or causing harm to them and that it urgently needs to get basic aid to people in Gaza. It also ruled that Israel should prevent and punish any incitement to genocide, among other measures. Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyadh Al-Maliki welcomed “the significant order.” On Thursday, Israeli government spokesperson Eylon Levy had said that Israel expected the court to toss out the “spurious and specious charges.”

Israel often boycotts international tribunals and UN investigations, saying they are unfair and biased. But this time, it took the rare step of sending a high-level legal team — a sign of how seriously it regards the case and likely the fear that any court order to halt operations would be a major blow to the country’s international standing. An Israeli official said that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu huddled with top legal, diplomatic and security officials on

Thursday in anticipation of the ruling. He said Israel is confident in its case but discussed “all scenarios.” The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was discussing confidential meetings.

Israel launched its massive air and ground assault on Gaza after Hamas militants stormed through Israeli communities on Oct. 7 killing some 1,200 people, mainly civilians, and abducting another 250. The offensive has decimated vast swaths of the territory and driven nearly 85 percent of its 2.3 million people from their homes. More than 26,000 Palestinians have been killed, the Health Ministry in the Hamas-run enclave said on Friday. The ministry does not differentiate between combatants and civilians in its death toll, but has said about two-thirds of those killed were women and children.

The Israeli military claims at least 9,000 of those killed in the nearly four-month conflict are Hamas militants. UN officials have expressed fears that even more people could die from disease, with at least one-quarter of the population facing starvation. How the US, Israel’s top ally, responds to any order will be key, since it wields veto power at the UN Security Council and thus could block measures there aimed at forcing Israel’s compliance.

The US has said Israel has the right to defend itself, but also spoken about the need for the country to protect civilians in Gaza and allow more aid in. The genocide case strikes at the national identity of Israel, which was founded as a Jewish state after the Nazi slaughter of 6 million Jews during World War II.

South Africa’s own identity is key to it bringing the case. Its governing party, the African National Congress, has long compared Israel’s policies in Gaza and the West Bank to its own history under the apartheid regime of white minority rule, which restricted most Black people to “homelands” before ending in 1994. — Arab News

26,000 Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes

DUBAI: Relentless attacks against infrastructure and cold weather in Gaza are making the Palestinian enclave “completely uninhabitable,” the UN human rights office warned on Friday. “I fear that many more civilians will die,” said Ajith Sunghay, head of the UN Human Rights Office for the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

“The continued attacks on specially protected facilities, such as hospitals, will kill civilians, and there will be a further, massive impact on access to health care, safety and security in general of Palestinians,” Israel’s offensive has killed more than 26,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza health authorities, with thousands more feared buried under rubble and most of the 2.3 million residents displaced, facing acute shortages of food, water and medicine.

Israel launched its offensive in the wake of an Oct. 7 rampage by Hamas militants who killed 1,200 people and seized 240 hostages. Sunghay said his office was also concerned about the impact of rainy and cold weather in Gaza. “It was entirely predictable at this time of the year, and risks making an already unsanitary situation completely uninhabitable for the people,” he said.

“Most have no warm clothes or blankets. Northern Gaza, where IDF (Israel Defense Forces) bombardment continues, is barely accessible, even to provide basic humanitarian aid.” Sunghay said it would be “disastrous” if the bombardment or the street-to-street fight taking place in Khan Younis moved further south to Rafah, where some 1.3 million people are now massed in the town bordering Egypt in an attempt to evade the Israeli assault. — Arab News



MULTAN: Chairman Pakistan People’s Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a public gathering of the party.

PPP to bring CM from South Punjab: Bilawal

F.P. Report

MULTAN: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a mammoth public gathering of the party in Multan expressed his gratitude to the Jiyalas of Multan for coming out in huge numbers and proving that the city supports the PPP.

Bilawal said that the Jiyalas of Multan have supported the party through adversities. From February 8, there will be a new beginning and the tough times will come to an end. Pakistan is currently facing unprecedented challenges, and inflation, poverty and unemployment are on the rise. Simultaneously, terrorists are again conspiring against the country and trying to render the sacrifices of our policemen and soldiers redundant.

There is also a societal crisis in our nation. Traditional politicians have changed politics to a means of exacting revenge and settling personal scores. This has divided entire societies, institutions and families. The PPP resolves to bury the politics of hatred and division. The Party will unify the country and combat the challenges faced by the people, including the economic quagmire and the security situation. The PPP

will form a modern, powerful and progressive Pakistan.

Bilawal said that he is the sole politician who has been touring the country for many months, ranging from KP to Balochistan. The PPP is the only party that is looking towards the people and believes that they are the source of power. With the votes of the people, the people will form a government that serves them. The rest of the political parties do not care for the problems faced by the country, but coming to power for the fourth time. They are burning the country, harming the economy but are pleased just because they get to sit on the seat of the PM for the fourth time. Chairman Bilawal said that he is not contesting the election by resorting to violence or hate.

Chairman PPP said that he has prepared a 10-point economic charter to combat the plethora of crises faced by the nation. The PPP will take from the elite and give to the downtrodden, as per the ideology of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The PPP aims to devolve the 17 ministries operating in the federation that was to be done after the 18th Amendment. 300 billion rupees of the people are wasted on these ministries.

They will be devolved, their budgets will be cut and allocated to projects for the welfare of the people. Chairman Bilawal said that 1500 billion rupees are given to the elite annually, and the PPP aims to spend the amount directly on the farmers, labourers and students.

The PPP resolves to not only increase wages, but double them within five years. The Party also resolves to provide 300 units of electricity free-of-cost to the deserving citizens of the country through solar power. The PPP aims to construct three million houses for the people all over the country, and give ownership to the women of the households. The Jiyalas should convey to the people that the PPP government is resolving to regularise temporary houses while giving ownership to the women. Addressing the women of Waseb, Bilawal said that he wishes to serve the women of the nation as a son. The PPP plans to not only expand the revolutionary Benazir Income Support Programme but also provide interest-free loans to the women of the country so that they can gain financial independence and contribute to the economy of the country.

Nawaz pledges massive job & income opportunities

F.P. Report

BUREWALA: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Friday said that there had been great transformation since his ouster from power with massive inflation and price hike disrupting the social fabric of society and pledged to fully mitigate their effects by ensuring job and income opportunities for all following the mandate on February 8.

Addressing a public meeting in Burewala, the thrice elected prime minister said that ‘Roti’ (bread), which was available for Rs 4 per piece during the last PNL-N government, was now priced at Rs 20, while the electricity bill of Rs 500 had now jumped to Rs 20,000, with no gas supply.

Similarly, vegetables were available at Rs 10 per kilogram during his tenure, he added. Likewise, a urea fertilizer bag was now being sold for Rs 5,000 against Rs 1,200 during his tenure, while the price of a tractor had risen to Rs 3.8 million from Rs 900,000. The situation would not have worsened had he not been expelled from the government for not taking any salary from his son, Nawaz regretted.

It was the result of a bunch of people who disrupted the country’s social fabric like brutally axing a body, he said in an apparent reference to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf regime. Nawaz said that he loved the younger generation and would take steps for their betterment. He said after forming the government, he would again visit Burewala and give it the status of a district.

A motorway would be built in the area and if possible a new airport would also be constructed in the city, he further promised. PML-N Vice President Mayram Nawaz said that the people should vote for Nawaz Sharif as he was the one who could deliver and serve them better. She said the rival parties were campaigning for election in Punjab, but everywhere they found the development projects by successive PML-N government. They all knew that Nawaz Sharif was the only politician “who cares for the people and the PML-N’s manifesto focuses on the development of every city and every village.”

Maryam promised that a medical college would be established in Vehari if the PML-N were voted to power. PML-N nominee for NA-156 Chaudhry Nazir Ahmad Arain and Punjab Assembly candidate PP-231 Chaudhry Khalid Mahmood Dogar also spoke.

PML-N Spokesperson Maryum Aurangzeb, Senator Pervaiz Rasheed, Syed Sajid Mehdi Saleem, Saeed Ahmad Khan Manais, Mian Saqib Khursheed, Chaudhry Yousuf Kasailia (PP-229), Mian Khaliq Nawaz Arain, Noor Khan Bhabha and other leaders were also present.

PTI’s Senator Saifullah Abro joins PPP

F.P. Report

KARACHI: PTI Senator Saifullah Abro called on Pakistan People’s Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and expressed his trust in his leadership.

On the occasion, Senator Saifullah announced to withdraw from the election race in NA-194 constituency and promised to support candidate of Pakistan People’s Party. Abro was elected as senator on PTI’s technocrat seat from Larkana for March 2022 to March 2027 term.

PTI candidates from Sukkur announced to quit election race to support Pakistan Peoples’ Party candidates in the district. PTI nominated candidate from NA 200 Noman Islam Sheikh planned to withdraw election race and support PPP senior leader Khurshid Shah in the constituency.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman PTA, Major General (R) Hafeez-ur-Rehman presenting annual report to Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Feb 8 election to bring political stability: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Friday said that the general election on February 8 would bring political stability in the country. The prime minister, in an interview with a private television channel, said after the elections, the new government would work to achieve political and economic stability.

He said his government successfully achieved most of the targets set by it and a white paper would be issued to enlist those successes. “The biggest challenges were economic issues,” he said, adding the next government would have to work with the International Monetary Fund and bring reforms in the taxation system to take the economy forward.

He said the government carried forward the process of privatisation of state-owned entities, including Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). The process of privatisation was almost complete, he added. The prime minister said the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) led the effort to sign \$ 25 billion worth of memorandums of understanding with the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. The SIFC was formed by the previous government after enactment of a law in the Parliament, he recalled. He said the social media would be regulated and some people would have to stop the wrong use of the medium. The previous governments worked to control negative aspects of the social media and in future a “national firewall” through use of technology would be created to subdue the negative tendencies, he noted. He said May 9 was an attack on the concept of the State of Pakistan and from the very start he was very critical of the elements involved in the incidents.

However, the whole of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf could not be kept away from Pakistani politics, he said, adding only some specific people of the PTI were involved in the incidents of May 9. He clarified that his government did not target any political party. He remarked that

undermining social order created anarchy which was not acceptable in any society. “Social order is the guarantor of political order,” he added.

PM Kakar said the political parties needed to democratise themselves and decrease influence of individuals. The Supreme Court’s decision on the intra-party elections of PTI was a welcome step and would increase the opportunities for politicians from the middle class to make a mark on the political landscape, he opined. He said veteran politician Maulana Fazlur Rehman undertook a private visit to Afghanistan and the State of Pakistan was not involved in it, however, the Foreign Office did brief him on the situation in the neighbouring country.

He said the citizens of neighbouring countries including Afghanistan had to observe immigration laws of Pakistan as was done all over the world. He said Iran’s attack on Pakistani soil was absolutely wrong and Pakistan responded appropriately to the aggression. “We were shocked by the attack of Iran. We were not expecting this.” Both sides had agreed to the need for de-escalation, he added.

PTA revenue surges to Rs 850b; access to cellular services reaches 90pc: Chairman of Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) Major General (Retd) Hafeezur Rehman on Friday called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here. In the meeting, the PTA chairman presented to the prime minister the annual report 2023 of the Authority.

The prime minister was informed that the PTA’s revenue increased by 17 percent to Rs 850 billion comparing the last year while the access to cellular services in the country had reached 90 percent. The PTA chief said that the number of cellular consumers had touched 192 million and high-speed broadband users reached 130 million during 2023.

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Elahi, others get SC order to contest elections

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan on Friday granted permission to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Chaudhary Parvez Elahi, to participate in the upcoming elections. A three-member bench of the Supreme Court, led by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, issued the directive in response to an appeal filed by Chaudhary Parvez Elahi challenging the rejection of his nomination papers.

The apex court overturned the decision of the Election Tribunal which had rejected the nomination papers of the former Chief Minister. Parvez Elahi had appealed to the Supreme Court to participate in the general elections, prompting the Election Commission to form an Election Tribunal. He requested the annulment of Lahore High Court’s decision dated January 13, 2024.

During the proceedings, Parvez Elahi’s counsel, Ehsan Khokhar, emphasized, “We do not wish to delay the elections. My client should be permitted to contest in the PP-32 Gujrat constituency.” The court inquired about the source of documents related to a 10-marla plot, to which the lawyer explained that they were obtained from the Patwari.

SC allows Sanam Javed to contest elections

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Friday allowed five candidates of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), including incarcerated activist Sanam Javed, to contest the upcoming general elections, slated for Feb 8, 2024.

Besides Sanam Javed, the top court approved appeals of PTI candidates Umer Aslam, Major (ret’d) Tahir Sadiq, and Shaukat Mahmood Basra against returning officers’ (ROs) decisions to reject their nomination papers from different constituencies.

Justice Athar questioned whether the caretaker government was involved in the matter. The top court emphasized that voters must not be denied their right to vote, and the Returning Officer’s duty is to facilitate, not impede, elections. The bench expressed concern over the peculiar circumstances surrounding a single political party.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah remarked that Article 17 of the Constitution, which stipulates that individuals cannot be prevented from participating in elections without valid reasons. The court stressed upon the importance of enabling rather than obstructing elections.

The Supreme Court accepted Parvez Elahi’s appeal, nullifying the decision to reject his nomination papers and ordering his name and electoral symbol

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Snowfall in Neelum Valley
NEELUM VALLEY (INP): After a long dry spell, Neelum Valley on Friday morning received snowfall and rain; however, dense fog gripped Punjab cities including Lahore creating difficulties for commuters. Spokesman of Motorway police said that amid poor visibility in order to ensure the safety of passengers, motorways remained shut at various sections between Faisalabad to Pindi Bhattian and Lahore to Farooqabad.

FBR chief praises Customs Dept for increasing tax revenue



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana here Friday highly praised Pakistan Customs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for increasing tax revenue besides countering illegal trade and contraband goods.

Addressing as a chief-guest in a function organized by Pakistan Customs Peshawar in connection with International Customs Day, Chairman FBR said the theme of this year of the International Customs Day was "'customs engaging traditional and new partners with purpose'".

Malik Amjad Tiwana said that international day of customs was a testament to the essential role customs plays in fostering global trade, ensuring financial security and upholding legitimate economic trade in the world. This year's theme highlighted the important role of partnership within the customs community, emphasizing collaborative efforts for progress of international trade and ensuring enhanced cooperation in the global customs arena.

Malik Amjad said that technological advancement has created extra challenges such as menace of money laundering and great responsibilities rest on Pakistan Customs officials to utilize technology effectively for countering all kinds of smuggling and illicit trade besides promoting better service delivery and increasing tax revenue for Govt kitty. He thanked Pakistan Customs Peshawar for organizing an impressive function in connection with international customs day. The smartly turned out contingent presented a salute to Chairman FBR Malik Amjad Tiwana who also paid a visit to Yagdgar Shuhada at Customs House Peshawar where he laid a floral wreath.

Chief Collector Customs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Saeed Akram said that during the first half year of the current financial year, KP Customs Department has collected Rs21569 million of customs duty against a collection of Rs13,423 million during the corresponding period of the last fiscal year. "This is 60per cent increase in revenue collection year over year."

On the anti-smuggling side, he said that during the first half of the current financial year, KP Customs seized worth Rs5, 358 million as against seizure of Rs2, 174 made in the corresponding period of the last financial year, which is 146 percent more than the seizures of the last year. He said Pakistan Customs has embarked on a significant modernization drive, prioritizing the digitization of operational processes and investing in workforce development.

He said 30 jawans and officers of Pakistan Customs Department KP laid down lives in line of duty. Earlier, in his welcome address, Collector Customs Peshawar, Khwaja Khuram appraised today's event and achievements. Later, Chairman FBR Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana presented commendation certificates to the officers and officials of collectorate of customs enforcement Peshawar and DI Khan, directorate of intelligence and investigation of customs department besides other relevant officials of the department. A souvenir was also presented to the Chairman FBR.

46 children died of pneumonia

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: With the increase in the severity of cold, the infection is becoming viral and so far 46 children have died of pneumonia in three major hospitals in City, hospital officials told media men here on Friday.

They officials said that Pneumonia is affecting children with low immunity and a total of 46 children died of pneumonia in three hospitals of the city including 20 patients each in Lady Reading and Khyber Teaching Hospitals while 6 in Hayatabad Medical Complex.

The hospital's officials said that more than 700 children affected by pneumonia are being brought to OPD on a daily basis and the more than capacity children are being treated in Lady Reading Hospital. The officials also confirmed that most of the affected children belong to suburban areas.

Mainly very cold weather predicted

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Regional Meteorological Center Peshawar on Friday predicted that very cold and dry weather is likely to occur in most districts of the province.

However, it said that isolated light rain (light snow-fall over the hills) is likely to occur in Bajaur, Chitral, Upper Dir, Swat, Shangla, Kohistan, Mansehra and Abbottabad districts. It further said that the prevailing dense foggy condition is likely to continue over Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Swabi, D.I. Khan and Tank districts as well as over Motorway (M1) / Highways.

During the last 24 hours, very cold and dry weather prevailed over most districts of the province, while dense foggy conditions prevailed over plain areas. The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were Peshawar 12/04, Chitral 15-01, Timergara 16/01, Dir 16/-02, Mirkhani 16/00, Kalam 10/-04, Drosh 12/03, Saidu Sharif 15/00, Pattan 18/04, Malam Jabba 15/-01, Takht Bhai 12/02, Kakul 15/01, Balakot 15/02, Parachinar 12/00, Bannu 13/01, Cherat 12/03, DI Khan City 10/04. The lowest temperature recorded in the province was -04 in Kalam.

Governor urges doctors to work with dedication

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali Friday reiterated commitment to address problems of young doctors urging them to serve ailing community with utmost dedication and professionalism.

He was talking to a 15-member delegation of Young Doctors Association that called on him in Governor House. The delegation included Dr. Faisal Barakzai, Dr. Adnan, Dr.Karamat and Dr. Mudassar Khan. The delegation appraised governor about their issues including depriving them of training and inadequate facilities of

induction in Post Graduate Medical Institute.

Governor listened to their concerns patiently and assured them cooperation and assistance. He said that significance of doctors could not be undermined owing to their profession adding their problems would be addressed promptly with the help of provincial government. He also urged doctors to work compassionately to help out ailing community and treat them politely abiding by the principles of their profession.

Meanwhile, a delegation of doctors from Siffat Ghayur Children Hospital Peshawar also called on Governor and highlighted

their problems including load shedding. The delegation was led by Dr. Muhammad Haroon Zafar. Doctors demanded conversion of hospital on solar power due to load shedding and urged KP Governor to play his role for provision of TIG injections in the hospital.

Talking to delegation, Governor assured his cooperation in resolving their problems saying facilitation of doctors and conversion of medical facilities to solar energy in among priorities of government. He also urged doctors to restore confidence of people in public sector hospitals and come up to expectations of people.



PESHAWAR: PPP KP women wing president, Senator Rubina Khalid chairing party workers meeting.

PESCO notifies power suspension

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Friday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Jamrud grid station on 28th January from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Consequently, it said consumers of PIC, Hayatabad 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, New Hayatabad, Health Care Hospital, Health Excellence, Northwest Hospital, Kidney Center, RMI, Kacha Garhi, Karkhano, Gul Abad, Hayatabad Surgical, Peshawar General, Foundation Hospital, Wood, Northern Bottling, Industrial Estate, Express 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, PHA, Omrak, Olympia, Industrial Estate, Mohmand Steel, Al Hafiz, Frontier Tech Wood, PPI 1, 2, Mica Steel, Alhaj, BSF, Olympia 2 and Gulabad feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, it said power supply will remain suspended from Shahi Bagh Grid Station on 27th and 30th January from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. resultantly, consumers of KSM, Industrial Naguman, Northern Bypass, Bakhsho Pull, Ghari Hamza, Old Naguman, Shah Alam, Latif Abad, Dalazak, Sarbuland Pura, Samar Bagh, New Takht Abad, New Naguman and Khazana feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar City Grid Station on 27th, 29th and 30th January from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Sikandar Pura, Lala, Hashtnagri, Chughalpura, Chamkani, Jahgra, Radio Pak, Sethi Town, Gul Barg, Hassan Abad, Zaryab, Phandu Road, City Home, Bana Mari, Urnar, Islamabad,

Faqir Abad, Sheikh Abad, Molvi G, Nishtarabad, NHA feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will also remain suspended from Balakot Grid Station on 27th, 29th and 30th January from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. resultantly consumers of Ghari feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from Mingora Grid Station on 27th and 30th January from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly consumer of Malam Jaba, Express Saidu Hospital, Bandai, Mingora 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Kabal, Nawa Kali, Saidu Sharif, Barikot 2, Odigram, Kabal 4, Matta 2, Faiza Ghat, Kabal 2, Gulda, Marghazar, Saidu Hospital, Kabal 3, Gogdara, Takhta Band, Qambar, Singar, MES, Haji Baba, Shin, Saidu Baba, Bara Bandai, Shah Dara, Hospital Express feeders will face inconvenience.

Allah Gul elected GS

F.P. Report

P E S H A W A R : International bronze medalist Allah Gul Afridi was elected as General Secretary of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mixed Martial Arts Association in an Executive Body meeting held here on Friday with Senior Vice President Allah Gul Afridi in the chair.

General Secretary of the Association Muhammad Amin and other members including Tehsin Ullah Khan were also present. After the stepping down of the General Secretary Muhammad Amin, the meeting decided to elect Allah Gul Afridi, who was earlier, acting as Senior Vice President, as General Secretary of the MMA Association, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PESHAWAR: A delegation of tribal area called on KP Caretaker Minister for newly merged districts Dr. Aamir Abdullah.

Body setup on recommendation of SCCI to resolve taxpayers' issues

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On recommendation of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chairman, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana has formed a committee, consisting of nominated members of the chamber and FBR officers, aimed at to resolve business community and taxpayers issues of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Fuad Ishaq, president of the chamber demanded the simplifying the present tax system, bringing tax ratio to single digit, equalizing tariff of 224 items to Afghanistan duties/tariffs, special incentives, along five years exemptions on income, sale tax and custom duties and utilities bills of the business community of the province.

The SCCI chief asked to avoid burdening existing taxpayers with new taxes and initiatives should be made to broaden the tax-base. According to the details, the FBR chairman Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana visited the chamber house and held a meeting with the business community, which was chaired by the SCCI president Fuad Ishaq, said in a press release issued here Friday.

The meeting was attended by the SCCI senior vice president Sanaullah Khan, vice president Ijaz Khan Afridi, Senator Mohsin Aziz, Senator

Nauman Wazir, Member Inland Revenue Islamabad Mir Badshah Gul Wazir, Chief Commissioner RTO Peshawar Zafar Iqbal Khan, Chief Collector Customs KP, Saeed Mukaram, collector Custom Enforcement Khawaja Kurram, former presidents of the SCCI Zahidullah Shinwari, Haji Muhamamd Asif, Riaz Arshad, Malik Niaz Ahmad, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, and members of the chamber executive committee, traders, industrialists and others.

Fuad Ishaq apprised FBR chairman about reservations and difficulties of business community owing to closure of Torkham border and urged government and relevant authorities take tangible steps to keep open the Torkham border for carrying out smooth cross border trade. The SCCI chief also informed the meeting about apprehensions of the business community regarding POS system, WHT, high ratio of various taxes, wrong assessment, cost of digitization, complications in tax system and gave a number of proposals for their amicable solution.

The FBR chairman agreed with proposals presented by the SCCI president during the meeting and said FBR and all relevant institutions are interconnected and established a close liaison among them, adding that

FBR has brought reforms to simplify the tax system and ease difficulties of taxpayers and the outcome of these initiatives are very promising. Amjad Tiwana informed that owing better border enforcement, Afghan transit trade has brought down to \$ 2billion, which earlier stood at \$6.85billion, which has eliminated the smuggling to some extent.

According to a rough estimate, the FBR chairman said 50 per cent Afghan transit trade has been cut down, which is highly appreciable. Following the directive of the prime minister, the FBR Chairman said that initiatives have been taken to provide relief to the business community of KP, adding that despite the IMF pressure, the government has extended tax exemption for next one year to KP's merged districts and PATA region.

Similarly, he said 40 per cent payment of refunds had been given to the business community, saying that FBR was paying Rs35 to Rs 40 Billion in head of refunds to businessmen every year. On the occasion, Senator Mohsin Aziz, Senator Nauman Wazir, former presidents, traders and industrialists also spoke on the occasion and apprised the FBR chairman regarding various issues and gave viable proposals and solutions to them.

Entire fraternity of Civil Service grieved over the passing of Khalid

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The entire fraternity of Civil Service has grieved the passing away of one of its senior most icon Khalid Khan Umerzai and all Pakistan PMS Officers Association convey its deepest condolences to the family and friends of the deceased.

Khalid Khan Umerzai was born to a noble family of Charsadda and received his education from Edward's College Peshawar and University of Peshawar. Afterwards, he joined PCS Executive service & dedicated his life to Civil service till his retirement a few years back. From Magistrate to AC and DC to Commissioner and Secretary to the Government, Khalid Umerzai always remained a towering figure among his colleagues, said Fahad Ikram Qazi, Coordinator APPMSA.

Being a man of principles and fol-

lower of the old-school traditions, he would often remain under suspension or an OSD — for the spirit de corps of the service of those times were far different than the mess we found ourselves in these days, Fahad Ikram Qazi said. Few would know that he remained an OSD for more than a decade in various phases throughout his career. Also being chased by the martial law driven watchdogs yet always stood by his words, he recalled.

One of the popular incidents at the end of his career was after the elections of 2013 when the PTI came to power in the province. The new CM called a meeting of the secretaries committee but the same was chaired by Imran Khan, not the CM.

He disclosed that late Khalid Umerzai countered the chair as to his legal capacity for chairing the meeting. Well, the obvious happened

afterwards and he was made an OSD and then made instructor of staff training institute till his retirement since Imran Khan had passed standing orders to that effect, he added.

Khalid Umerzai also struggled for the rights of provincial officers and remained President of the KP chapter as well as of All Pakistan PCS officers for years, he said. Officers in KP would rush to Khalid Khan for resolution of their career related issues. He and other comrades from provinces laid the foundation of administrative federalism with a slogan to reform the civil service in accordance with the Constitution of Pakistan, Fahad Ikram Qazi said. The dedication, aura, and liveliness of Khalid Khan Umerzai will always be missed. Yet, the PMS Officers across Pakistan will carry on his mission of efficient service delivery and administrative federalism, he said.

Irum Gul defends dissertation on ‘Chronic Granulomatous Disease’

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Irum Gul a doctoral candidate from the Department of Zoology at Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST), on Friday defended her PhD dissertation on "Clinical and Genetic Characterization of Chronic Granulomatous Disease in Patients of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa."

She completed her PhD under the supervision of Professor Dr. Shahid Niaz Khan, Department of Zoology KUST, and was Co-supervised by Dr. Taj Ali Khan, Associate Professor, Department of Microbiology, KMU Peshawar. Dr. Irum Gul worked on an extensive research and revealed the clinical and genetic aspects of Chronic Granulomatous Disease (CGD) prevalent in patients for the very first time Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The examination panel,

led by Prof. Dr. Aamer Ali Shahin (Department of Microbiology, Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad), Dr. Abid Ali, (Associate Professor Chairman Department of Zoology AWKUM Mardan) and Dr. Mubashir Hussain Associate Professor, Department of Microbiology, KUST rigorously assessed the research methodology, findings, and contributions to the field.

Chronic Granulomatous Disease is a rare genetic disorder characterized by the inability of the immune system to effectively combat certain bacterial and fungal infections. The importance of this research cannot be overstated, particularly in the context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The findings have the potential to enhance diagnostic approaches, guide treatment strategies, and inform genetic counseling for individuals and families affected by Chronic Granulomatous Disease in the region. Dr. Irum Gul's work contributes to the broader scientific community's understanding of the disease and may pave the way for future research endeavors aimed at improving patient outcomes.



Health Dept sacks 12 absent doctors

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department has dismissed 12 doctors over absence from duty on Friday. A separate notification has been issued for the dismissal of doctors.

According to notification, the duty was not joined even on the notices sent by the Director General (DG) Health to the absent doctors at their homes.

Among the sacked, six doctors are female including Dr Faiza Gohar, Dr Farah Gul, Dr Uzma Ehsan, Dr Mehreen Akhtar and Dr Roheela Gul. Among the male sacked doctors are Dr Jahangir, Dr Javidullah, Dr Muhammad Uzair, Dr Muhammad Saeed Ilyas, Dr Kafayat Ali, Dr Sohail Ahmed and Dr Taimur Zeib.



PESHAWAR: Head of KP World Food Organization and Agriculture, Farrukh Toru chairing a meeting regarding merged areas.



In brief

PTI workers join PML-N F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Scores of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers have changed their loyalty and joined Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz ahead of general election here in Landi Kotal last night. At a press conference held in Landi Kotal press club district Khyber on Thursday night esteemed leader of PTI Jamshed Shinwari, Muhammad Saraf, Rab Nawaz Afridi and Subedar (Rtd.) Muhammad Tasleem Shelmani along with dozens of their families' members and colleague quit PTI and joined PML-N. Speaking on the occasion they said that since last two decade being workers of PTI, they had utilize their energies to work against the prevailed system, based on injustice but ironically the party leadership ignored genuine workers and gave importance to those who had no contribution in bring the party into power. The disgruntled workers said that due to nepotism and continuous violation of the party rules and regulation compelled them to leave PTI and joined PML-N that was a true representative of laymen. District leader of PML-N Senator Taj Muhammad Afridi welcomed the disheartened volunteers of PTI and said they would honor all the workers. People had witnessed fruits, produced in the previous tenures of PML-N governments and if it comes into power in the upcoming election to be scheduled on 08 February 2024, it would take out country's of the crises being faced by it.

Miscreants torch house F.P. Report

BARA: A retired Subedar's house in the Tirah valley of Khyber district was set on fire by unknown miscreants, sources said on Friday. According to details, a three-storied building, which resembled a bungalow, in Ghulam Ali Kandao Kamarkhel was engulfed in flames and goods worth lakhs of rupees were also destroyed. The sources said that due to the eviction orders issued by the security forces who are currently carrying out a security operation against terrorists in the area, the residents have left the place and shifted to safer places. The houses situated in the area are now empty and unoccupied. The tribal elders have appealed to the Peshawar Corps Commander to take notice of the torching of the retired Subedar's house in the Ghulam Ali Kandao area of Tirah valley.

PTI's Ikram Ghazi fined F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: District Monitoring Officer Mansehra fined PTI-supported independent candidate from PK-39 Ikram Ghazi Khan for an aerial firing social media video and also served him a warning notice. The DMO had earlier written to District Police Officer Mansehra for registration of an FIR against the candidate for violation of section 17 of the code of conduct and rules and laws, however after a personal hearing of the respondent the request was withdrawn and a warning was issued to the candidate. The order of the DMO Mansehra available with this agency revealed that the PTI candidate admitted commission of the violation, however contended that someone from the public and not his supporter did the aerial firing. He condemned the incident and assured that the same would not happen in future.

Policemen asked to ensure security of polling stations

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: A training session was arranged at the Iqbal Shaheed police lines in Bannu to sensitise policemen about their election related duties. The session was arranged on the special instructions of regional police officer Qasim Ali Khan.

Police experts briefed the participants about their vital role to ensure conduct of general elections in a free, fair and peaceful environment. They shed light on various steps to be taken by the cops on polling security duty to maintain peace in and around the polling stations.

They asked the policemen to ensure security of polling stations and polling booths and provide assistance to the polling personnel deployed by the Election Commission for the conduct of polling. "The cops should keep an eagle eye on movements of suspects around the polling stations and those entering the premises of polling stations to cast their votes", said DSP Ihsanuddin on the occasion. He asked the police personnel to check original computerised national cards of voters and carry out their body search decently before allowing entry to the polling stations.

Other experts said that media personnel and observers would be allowed to enter the polling stations by showing accreditation cards and passes issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan. They also

acquainted the participants about the security measures in case any untoward incident happened at the polling station and in the surrounding areas.

Meanwhile, the divisional administration arranged a seminar at Bacha Khan Hall in Bannu to sensitise the contenders about the importance of election code of conduct. Divisional commissioner Parwez Sabatkhel, RPO Qasim Ali Khan, DRO Shah Saud, regional election commissioner Abdul Samad and other officials were also in attendance.

The regional election commissioner gave a detailed lecture to the participants on election code of conduct and asked the poll aspirants to adhere to relevant laws and rules and implement those in letter and spirit. The divisional commissioner said that true implementation of the code of conduct by all candidates was inevitable to hold free, fair and peaceful elections on Feb 8. Qasim said that the regional police had made foolproof security arrangements for the coming general elections. He asked the candidates and their supporters to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in maintenance of law and order on polling day.

Function arranged: Speakers at a function have said that around 30 million children are out of school in the country and there is the dire need to launch concerted efforts to ensure their admission to schools.

The education depart-

ment with support of national commission for human development (NCHD) and boy scouts association had arranged the function at Government Shaheed Muhammad Ghasan Khan Centennial Model High School No. 1, in Lakki City to mark international day of education. Speakers included the school's Vice Principal Khalilur Rehman, NCHD deputy director Munawar Khan and field officer Ali Abbas Khan and a social activist Muhammad Ilyas Khan.

Students and boy scouts sang national songs and highlighted the importance of the day in their speeches. "The day is being celebrated in the schools across the district with the determination that education is the basic right of every child and all children should go to school", said a speaker.

He said that a gigantic number of out of school children was a matter of great concern although getting education was their fundamental right. They shed light on the importance of education and said that Islam also emphasised upon getting education.

Education is the only tool that can lead the nation to the climax of development and prosperity", they maintained. Speakers said that the education department, NCHD and social organizations would launch joint efforts to enroll all out of school children in the district. Later, cash prizes were distributed among the students and boy scouts.

Indian Republic Day observed as Black Day in AJK

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): The so-called Republic Day of India was observed as Black Day as a mark of protest throughout Azad Jammu and Kashmir, on Friday.

Amassive protest demonstration was organized by Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir in Muzaffarabad, which was led by Pasban-e-Hurriyat Chairman Uzair Ahmed Ghazali, PPP leader Shaukat Javed Mir, Hurriyat leaders Mushtaq-ul-Islam, Usman Ali Hashim, Shoaib Ahmad Shah, Muhajiran leaders Iqbal Yasin Awan, Muhammad Farooq Sheikh, Raja Sajeed Khan, Ishaq Shaheen, Chaudhry Shahbaz Ahmed, Muhammad Fayaz Khan, Imtiaz Aziz and others.

The protesters on the occasion were chanting slogans like "Indian democracy Hai Hai" and "fake democracy Hai Hai". The participants were carrying black flags, banners and placards with slogans against India

written on them.

The participants of the protest also protested Indian atrocities in Kashmir, the martyrdom of the Babri Masjid, the forced construction of the Ram Temple and the attacks of Hindu extremist organizations on Indian Muslims. They were shouting slogans in favor of the freedom of Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the Black Day rally, Pasban-e-Hurriyat Chairman Uzair Ahmad Ghazali and other speakers said India is committing the worst terrorism in occupied Jammu and Kashmir under the guise of fake democracy. They said political, religious, social and human rights of Kashmiri Muslims are being severely violated under the guise of fake democracy.

The speakers said India is a blot in the name of democracy which has illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. With the implementation of the worst black laws, Armed Forces Special

Powers Act (AFSPA), Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Public Safety Act (PSA), the lives of the Kashmiri people have been made miserable, they lamented.

The speakers said India is such a brutal country in the name of democracy in which millions of Muslims are subjected to brutality, mosques are being demolished and madrasas are being burnt. India is one of the worst terrorist countries in which millions of minorities have been rendered helpless and dozens of Hindu terrorist organizations like Bharatiya Janata Party and Vishwa Hindu Parishad are attacking Muslims with the full support of the Delhi government.

The student wing of Tehreek-e-Shabab-ul-Muslimeen also organized an anti-India protest demonstration in Muzaffarabad to observe Indian Republic Day as Black Day.



HYDERABAD: Women on the way back carrying water pots on their head after filling water at bank of Indus River.



QUETTA: Chief Customs Collector Abdul Qadir Memon giving away certificates to an official during a ceremony on the occasion of International Customs Day.

QWP promises creation of jobs for youth F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Spearheading the election campaign for his party, Qaumi Watan Party Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Friday promised that if voted to power, the QWP would create job opportunities for the youth in KP.

Addressing a gathering at Dhakki union council in Charsadda, he said that unemployment was rampant in KP, which lacked industries to provide job opportunities to the youth. He said that the people in KP were facing poverty and lack of employment opportunities.

He advised the people particularly the young lot not to fall for catchy slogans as the ones, who ruled the province for over nine years, could not honour the pledges. He said that the purchasing power of the people had squeezed and they were unable to feed their children. Talking about his party's election manifesto, Aftab Sherpao said the QWP had put together a compressive plan to boost literacy rate in KP besides providing health facilities to the people from the downtrodden segments of the society.

Taking a swipe at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership, he said that its leader backed his benefactors in the back and cooked up the regime change narrative after his ouster from power in a face-saving effort. He said that Imran Khan pushed the country to bankruptcy as he was incompetent to deliver on his so-called reform agenda. He said that KP generated cheap and surplus hydel electricity, but it was unfortunate that the local people were facing power cuts and were receiving inflated bills.

Kohat Press Club elects new cabinet F.P. Report

KOHAT: Kohat Press Club and Kohat Union of Journalists Annual Elections 2024 Completes Noor Muhammad Bangash and Farhan Ahmed Elects Presidents. Kohat Press Club and Kohat Union of Journalists Annual Elections 2024 have been completed, Noor Muhammad Bangash got 23 votes and Farhan Ahmad Bangash was elected president of Kohat Union of Journalists with 22 votes.

Hashim Zaman, candidate for press club presidency, and Tahir Rashid, candidate for Union of Journalists presidency, got eight votes. Press Club Secretary candidate Faisal Nadeem was successful by getting 19 votes while rival candidate Irfan Hameed got 12 votes, General Secretary of Union of Journalists Khalid Makki got 22 votes while rival candidate Ijaz Khan got 9 votes.

Similarly, those who were elected unopposed from Kohat Press Club were Vice President Kamran Bangash, Joint Secretary Basit Gilani, Finance Secretary Faizan Banuri, Liaison Secretary Aleem Haider and Executive Members Bashir Khan, Qazi Noor Khan, Allahdad and Wazir Ali. Likewise, Vice President Yasir Shah, Finance Secretary Isar Ali, Joint Secretary Wazir Ali, Liaison Secretary Fayaz Muhammad and Executive Members Muhammad Sajid, Shakur Ahmed and Abid Hussain were elected unopposed for Kohat Union of Journalists.

PML-N kicks off election drive in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz district chapter on Friday launched its election campaign by holding a workers' convention at Khaima here in Lower Dir. The gathering was addressed by the PML-N candidate for NA 6 Haji Roothullah, PK 14 Malik Numan Yousafzai, district president Malik Farooq Iqbal and others. They said the PML-N would come into power again as a result of general elections to be held on Feb 8.

The speakers said that masses had fed up with mere slogans and hollow promises and they were eyeing on the PML-N leader Mian Nawaz Sharif. They said the PML-N would never disappoint people of the district if they voted for it.

Meanwhile the PML-N candidate for NA 7 Yasir Khan while addressing different corner meetings at Rabat, Talash and Khadagzai said that mega development projects would be approved in the district if the PML-N candi-

dates won the upcoming elections. He said the PML-N would make the Timergara Medical College and Koto Hydro power station functional as its first priority.

Sensitive polling stations: A total of 185 polling stations in the Lower Dir district have been declared highly sensitive, 292 sensitive and 138 as normal for which more than 4,000 police and Dir Levis personnel would be deployed to conduct peaceful elections in two national and five provincial assembly seats on Feb 8. Talking to local journalists at Timergara an official of the police department said that a total of 615 polling stations would be set up out of which 185 have been declared highly sensitive, 292 sensitive and 138 as normal.

He said that Levis personnel would also assist the police force. The official said that 1295 personnel would be deployed at highly sensitive, 1460 at sensitive and 552 at normal polling stations. He said that female police officials would be posted at the sta-

tions set up for women. The district has two national and five provincial assembly seats on which a total of 100 candidates of different political parties and independents are in the run. According to political analysts tough competitions are expected among the PTI, PPP, JI and ANP on those seats.

Teachers' elections: Qazi Habibullah was elected as president of the All Primary Teachers' Association (APTA) Lower Dir for the next three years. A meeting in this regard was held at the government primary school Timer Dherai with the APTA provincial head Badshah Mahmood in the chair.

The APTA district chief Ali Rehman and chairman supreme council Sirajud Din were also in attendance. A large number of primary teachers participated in the process during which Qazi Habibullah was elected as president. The previous cabinet was dissolved and it was decided that a new cabinet would be announced in a couple of days.

Zhob in grip of dust allergy, seasonal diseases

F.P. Report

ZHOB: The district that also falls in the 'monsoon' range has not received rain for the last couple of months. The prolonged dry spell and weather change have led to a significant increase in dust allergy, cough, chest and throat infections, especially among children and infants.

Both the public and private hospitals are packed with patients suffering from flu, coughing, sneezing, high fever and chest congestion.

A renowned pediatrician in Zhob told journalist Rafiullah Mandokhail that, the current weather change and fall in the temperature causing dry cough, fever, sore throat and chest infections, adding the influx of patients continued to

increase with each passing day as most of the patients visiting the hospitals and private clinics complained of cold related diseases. The weather is in a transition phase, it contributes to the transmission of viral infections. The parents should keep their children warm and make sure their head, neck and hands are fully covered.

Free medical camp organized: Army Medical Corps organized a day-long free medical camp in Kill Appozai - on the outskirts of bordering district Zhob to provide free medical examination and medicines to the local people.

According to a press release, the camp was set up at the basic health unit (BHU) Appozai for the marginalized rural commu-

nity, where hundreds of male, female patients and children suffering from various ailments were examined by Army medical corps specialist doctors. The patients were also provided free medicine. "Apart from protecting the frontiers of the country, Pak Army is also providing health facilities to the people living in far-flung areas. AMC has played its due role and will continue to do so," the press release stated.

Meanwhile, the health officials in Zhob, community members and notables have appreciated the provision of free medical facilities to the poor and indigent patients at their doorsteps. They thanked the AMC and camp organizers for setting up a free medical camp.

DG KP BISP visits Mohmand

F.P. Report

GHALANAI: Director General (DG) Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Zehra Aslam on Friday visited tehsil offices of BISP in Upper Mohmand, Haleemzai and Baizai.

She discusses existing situation of registration process and proposed suggestion to improve it further. Officials of National Socio Economic Registry (NSER) were also present on the occasion.

During visi, DG BISP was also briefed about efforts being made to engage area elders, local government representatives for getting support. She also visited DRC in Ghalanai, reviewed registration process and listened to problems and concerns of staff.

Speaking on the occasion, she said that BISP is endeavoring to support



needy and poor by providing them financial assistance.

She directed staff be polite with people and said the facilitation of poor people is the prime responsibility of BISP. She also

stressed transparency in disbursement and said that BISP has been launched to reduce poverty, address social difference and bring positive change in lives of poor and deserving segments of society.



China presses Iran to rein in Houthi attacks in Red Sea

DUBAI (Reuters): Chinese officials have asked their Iranian counterparts to help rein in attacks on ships in the Red Sea by the Iran-backed Houthis, or risk harming business relations with Beijing, four Iranian sources and a diplomat familiar with the matter said.

The discussions about the attacks and trade between China and Iran took place at several recent meetings in Beijing and Tehran, the Iranian sources said, declining to provide details about when they took place or who attended. "Basically, China says: 'If our interests are harmed in any way, it will impact our business with Tehran. So tell the Houthis to show restraint,'" said one Iranian official briefed on the talks, who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity.

The attacks, which the Houthis say are in support of Palestinians in Gaza, have raised the cost of shipping and insurance by disrupting a key trade route between Asia and Europe used widely by ships from China. The Chinese officials, however, did not make any specific comments or threats about how Beijing's trading relationship with Iran could be affected if its interests were damaged by Houthi attacks, the four Iranian sources said.

While China has been Iran's biggest trading partner for the past decade, their trade relationship is lopsided. Chinese oil refiners, for example, bought over 90% of Iran's crude exports last year, according to tanker tracking data from trade analytics firm Kpler, as US sanctions kept many other customers away and Chinese firms

profited from heavy discounts. Iranian oil, though, only accounts for 10% of China's crude imports and Beijing has an array of suppliers that could plug shortfalls from elsewhere. The Iranian sources said Beijing had made it clear it would be very disappointed with Tehran if any vessels linked to China were hit, or the country's interests were affected in any way.

But while China was important to Iran, Tehran also had proxies in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, besides the Houthis in Yemen, and its regional alliances and priorities played a major role in its decision making, one of the Iranian insiders said. Asked for comment about meetings with Iran to discuss the Red Sea attacks, China's ministry of foreign affairs said: "China is a sincere friend of the countries of the Middle East and is committed to promoting regional security and stability and seeking common development and prosperity." "We firmly support Middle Eastern countries in strengthening their strategic independence and uniting and collaborating to resolve regional security issues," it told Reuters.

Iran's foreign ministry was not immediately available to comment. Military strikes by US and British forces on Houthi targets in Yemen this month have failed to stop attacks on shipping by the group, which controls a large chunk of Yemen including the capital Sanaa and much of the country's Red Sea coast by the Bab al-Mandab strait. The Houthis, who first emerged in the 1980s as an armed group in opposition to Saudi Arabia's Sunni religious influence in Yemen,

are armed, funded and trained by Iran and are part of its anti-West, anti-Israel "Axis of Resistance". A senior US official said Washington had asked China to use its leverage with the Houthis, including in conversations Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan had this month with senior Chinese Communist Party official Liu Jianchao.

A senior Iranian official said while Chinese officials discussed their concerns thoroughly in the meetings, they never mentioned any requests from Washington. On Jan. 14, China's foreign minister Wang Yi called for an end to attacks on civilian ships in the Red Sea - without naming the Houthis or mentioning Iran - and the maintenance of supply chains and the international trade order. Victor Gao, chair professor at China's Soochow University, said China, as the world's biggest trading nation, was disproportionately affected by the shipping disruption and restoring stability in the Red Sea was a priority.

But Gao, a former Chinese diplomat and an adviser to oil giant Saudi Aramco, said Beijing would view Israel's treatment of the Palestinians as the root cause of the Red Sea crisis and would not want to publicly ascribe blame to the Houthis. A US State Department spokesperson declined to comment when asked about bilateral Iran-China discussions on the issue. A diplomat familiar with the matter said China had been talking to Iran about the issue but it was unclear how seriously Tehran was taking Beijing's advice. Two officials in



the Yemeni government, an enemy of the Houthis, said they were aware that several countries, including China, had sought to influence Iran to rein the Houthis in. Analysts Gregory Brew of Eurasia Group and Ali Vaez of the International Crisis Group said China had potential leverage over Iran because of its oil purchases and because Iran was hoping to attract more Chinese direct investment in future. However, both said China had so far been reluctant to use its leverage, for several reasons.

"China prefers to free-ride on the US safeguarding freedom of navigation in the Red Sea by bloodying the Houthis' nose," said Vaez, adding that Beijing was also aware that Iran did not have total control over its Yemeni allies. Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdulsalam said that Iran to date had not conveyed any message from China about scaling back attacks. "They will not inform us of such a

request, especially since Iran's stated position is to support Yemen. It condemned the American-British strikes on Yemen, and considered Yemen's position honourable and responsible," he said. The four Iranian sources said it was unclear whether Iran would take any action following the discussions with Beijing.

The stakes are high for Iran as China is one of the few powers capable of providing the billions of dollars of investment Tehran needs to maintain the capacity of its oil sector and keep its economy afloat. China's influence was evident in 2023 when it facilitated an agreement between Iran and regional rival Saudi Arabia to end years of hostilities. Yet while there are robust economic ties between China and Iran, Beijing's influence on Tehran's geopolitical decisions was not absolute, one of the Iranian insiders said. Some within Iran's ruling establishment have questioned the

value of the partnership with Beijing, pointing to relatively low non-oil trade and investment volumes since China and Iran signed a 25-year cooperation agreement in 2021. Iranian state media says Chinese firms have only invested \$185 million since then. State media also said last year that Iranian non-oil exports to China fell 68% in the first five months of 2023 while Iran's imports from China rose 40%.

By contrast, Chinese companies committed last year to invest billions in Saudi Arabia after the countries signed a comprehensive strategic partnership in December 2022. Two of the Iranian insiders said while China could not be ignored, Tehran had other priorities to consider and its decisions were shaped by a complex interplay of factors. "Regional alliances and priorities as well as ideological considerations contribute significantly to Tehran's decisions," one of the people said. The second person said Iran's rulers had to adopt a nuanced strategy when it came to the Gaza war, as well as the Houthi attacks, and that Tehran would not abandon its allies. Iran's role as leader of its "Axis of Resistance" - which includes the Houthis, Lebanon's Hezbollah, Hamas and militias in Iraq and Syria - had to be balanced against avoiding getting sucked into a regional war over Gaza, the Iranian sources said. Tehran's messaging to - and about - the Houthis required a measure of deniability about the extent of its control over them - but also an ability to claim some credit for their anti-Israel actions, one of the people said.

Alabama executes prisoner with new nitrogen asphyxiation method

ATMORE, Alabama (Reuters): Alabama executed convicted murderer Kenneth Smith by asphyxiating him with nitrogen gas, the first use of a new method of capital punishment that the state is advancing as a simpler alternative to lethal injections.

The state has called its new protocol "the most painless and humane method of execution known to man." United Nations human rights experts and lawyers for Smith had sought to prevent it, saying the method was risky, experimental and could lead to a torturous death or non-fatal injury. Smith, convicted of a 1988 murder-for-hire, was a rare prisoner who had already survived one execution attempt. In November 2022, Alabama officials aborted his execution by lethal injection after struggling for hours to insert an intravenous line's needle in his body.

In Smith's second and final trip to the execution chamber, executioners restrained him in a gurney and strapped a commercial industrial-safety respirator mask to his face. A canister of pure nitrogen was attached to the mask that once flowing, deprived him of oxygen. The execution began at 7:53 p.m. and Smith was declared dead at 8:25 p.m. (0225 GMT), prison officials said. Smith appeared to remain conscious for several minutes after the nitrogen was acti-

vated, according to five journalists were allowed to watch the execution through glass as media witnesses. He then began shaking and writhing on the gurney for about two minutes, and then could be seen breathing deeply for several minutes before his breathing slowed and became imperceptible, the witnesses said. Alabama officials had said in court filings they expected Smith would be rendered unconscious in under a minute and die shortly after.

"It appeared that Smith was holding his breath as long as he could," Alabama Corrections Commissioner John Hamm said when asked at a press conference if the writhing had been expected. "He struggled against the restraints a little bit but it's an involuntary movement and some agonal breathing. So that was all expected." Before the nitrogen was switched on, Smith made a lengthy final statement that began: "Tonight, Alabama caused humanity to take a step backward." His wife and other relatives attended and he gestured towards them. "I'm leaving with love, peace and light," he said, according to media witnesses. "Love all of you." Smith mounted legal challenges in federal courts arguing that Alabama's method amounted to unconstitutional "cruel and unusual punishment," but he failed to cross the high bar needed to have a judge

order a delay of his execution. Smith's lawyers had told courts they feared the mask would not properly seal against Smith's face, allowing oxygen to seep in, delaying or even averting the moment of unconsciousness but risking serious brain injury. They proposed Alabama instead use a hood pre-filled with pure nitrogen, to be plunged over his head, or else to use a firing squad.

Smith's lawyers also told courts Smith had been repeatedly vomiting as his return to the execution chamber drew near. They raised fears he could be sick after the mask was strapped on and choke on his own vomit. In response, prison officials said they would serve him his final meal morning and forbid any solid foods after 10 a.m.. His final meal was steak, hash browns and eggs, prison officials said.

The US Supreme Court's conservative majority rejected Smith's final attempt to have his execution delayed to allow his legal challenge to continue, and the execution began soon after. The court did not explain its reasoning in denying Smith's appeal, but the three liberal justices offered written dissents. "Having failed to kill Smith on its first attempt, Alabama has selected him as its 'guinea pig' to test a method of execution never attempted before," Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote, saying

she would have granted the injunction. "The world is watching." US states that use capital punishment have found it increasingly difficult to get drugs for lethal injections, partly because pharmaceutical companies forbid supplying them to prisons to comply with a European trade ban on goods to be used in torture or executions.

Lawmakers in Oklahoma and Mississippi have also approved similar nitrogen-asphyxiation execution protocols in recent years, but have yet to put them into practice. Smith was convicted of murdering Elizabeth Sennett, a preacher's wife, after he and an accomplice each accepted a \$1,000 fee from her husband to kill her, according to trial testimony. Eleven of 12 jurors voted to sentence Smith to life in prison, but an Alabama judge overruled their recommendation under a law that has since been abolished as unconstitutional.

Several of Sennett's relatives attended the execution and they addressed the media after, saying they had forgiven Sennett's killers. "Nothing that happened here today is going to bring mom back," Mike Sennett said. "It's a bitter-sweet day, we're not going to be jumping around, hooping and hollering, hooraying and all that, that's not us. We're glad this day is over."

Not aware of cruise-missile swap offer: Germany

BERLIN (Reuters): German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said he was not aware of a swap offer that would see German Taurus cruise missiles going to Britain and Ukraine receiving British Storm Shadow systems in return. "I am not aware of this offer. If there are talks about it, then not in my house," he said in an interview with daily BILD, broadcaster WELT TV and news outlet Politico.

Britain has offered Germany a swap of cruise missiles that could allow the German government a way of overcoming concerns over a suggested delivery of missiles to Ukraine, German newspaper Handelsblatt reported. Kyiv has been pushing Berlin to supply its Taurus missiles, which could give Ukraine the ability to cause significant damage deeper within Russian-occupied territory, but the German government is hesitant due to concerns it could escalate the conflict. "With Taurus, we are talking about a highly technical system, not comparable with the products of other nations. And that's why we have to weigh up very carefully the conditions under which we do this," Pistorius said. The head of Germany's parliamentary defence committee criticized the idea of a swap and instead called on both countries to supply their systems to Ukraine. "Our European partners must think we are completely bonkers," Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann told Reuters. "Are we in kindergarten here on a merry-go-round?"

Vietnam to hold arms fair in December

HANOI (Reuters): Vietnam's defence ministry said it will organise an international arms fair in December, as it seeks to diversify its arms supplies and expand cooperation in arms production and exports.

The event, to be held at Gia Lam airbase in Hanoi from December 19-22, is "an opportunity for international defence cooperation and to seek partners to promote weapon production and exports", a ministry official said at the press briefing. The Southeast Asian nation is one of the world's 20 biggest buyers of weapons amid on-and-off tensions with China and has been seeking to reduce its reliance on Russian arms.

It has also been pushing to export weapons made locally with foreign partners. Vietnam held its first international arms fair in December 2022, which attracted 174 exhibitors from 30 countries, including all large arms-making nations except China. The ministry said "several deals were reached" at that arms fair, without giving further details.

Rampant extortion reveals 'corrosive' hole

MEXICO CITY (Reuters): When farmers in a tiny Mexican village last month hacked to death suspected drug cartel members who were squeezing them for protection money, it shone a harsh light on one of the country's biggest security problems: extortion.

While the government has reduced murders, extortion is far higher now than when President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador took office in 2018, making it a major risk for the economy that has drawn relatively little scrutiny. Critics say Lopez Obrador's strategy of trying to contain violence by dialing down direct confrontation with gangs has fueled the malaise because it has given them more room to prey on businesses.

"Burgeoning extortion has not grabbed the headlines, but it's been the all-the-more corrosive fallout of a security strategy that never merited the label," said Falko Ernst, a senior analyst at the International Crisis Group. Lopez Obrador denies his strategy has fed impunity, but said after the villagers' bloody takeover of extortionists in Texcapilla, some 75 miles (120 km) southwest of Mexico City, that Mexico must fight the problem. His office did not respond to a request for comment on this story. Registered victims of extortion jumped nearly 60% from 6,895 in 2018 to 10,971 in 2023, during which period homicides fell by 12%, official data show.

Business operators that refuse to pay extortion demands are generally threatened with violence against themselves, relatives or workers, or with destruction of their property.

Pursuing an approach he calls "abrazos, no balazos" ('hugs not bullets'), Lopez Obrador argues violence is not solved with more violence, and that the answer lies in improving living standards with welfare spending and better wages so as to root out chronic poverty and inequality that feed crime. Security frequently tops polls of voters' chief concerns ahead of the June 2 presidential election to succeed Lopez Obrador, who under Mexican law cannot run again. Even some close allies of Lopez Obrador's chosen successor, former Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum, the strong favorite to win, say criminals have felt emboldened on his watch. "This has been the presidency when the other side (organized crime) has been most comfortable in the last 25 years," said an aide to Sheinbaum. "That, or worse." Sheinbaum has defended the administration, while also pledging "zero impunity" and highlighting her own record on security in Mexico City, where murders fell far more sharply. Ernst, who closely monitors organized crime in some of Mexico's unruliest states, said policy under Lopez Obrador had at the very least implicitly sig-

naled to gangs they had freedom to act provided they did not derail the official narrative that "things are getting better."

Most extortion is not reported for fear of reprisals. A recent study by a Mexican Senate think tank said Mexico suffers some 13,000 acts of extortion daily. Impunity has encouraged cartels to engage in a growing portfolio of "extractivism" that increasingly impacts basic foodstuffs, threatening economic stability. Ernst argued, One senior Mexican executive, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said his businesses were being targeted far more by organized crime than under any past government and had to make regular payments to keep running in some areas. Another related how his company simply wound up operations in one state rather than accede to extortionists' demands.

Concurrently, Lopez Obrador has put billions of dollars worth of public infrastructure and traditionally civilian offices into military hands, stirring concerns the armed forces are being politicized and distracted from their core duties. "People are fed up feeling they can't protect themselves," said Carlos Heredia, a political analyst at Mexico's CIDE think tank. "There has objectively been a deep regression in the assertion of the state's authority." The Army did not respond to a request for comment.

NASA's historic Mars helicopter Ingenuity grounded for good

WASHINGTON (Reuters): NASA said on Thursday its Mars robot helicopter Ingenuity, the first vehicle to achieve powered, controlled flight on another world, has been grounded for good after flying dozens of times over three years, ending a landmark mission that far exceeded all expectations. The fate of Ingenuity was sealed when imagery beamed back to Earth after its 72nd and final flight on Jan. 18 showed that a portion of one of the miniature whirlygig's twin rotor blades had broken off, leaving it incapable of further operation, NASA officials said.

"It is bittersweet that I must announce that Ingenuity, the 'little helicopter that could' - and it kept saying, 'I think I can, I think I can' - well, it has now taken its last flight on Mars," NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said in a video posted on social media. What was planned as a 30-day technology demonstration of no more than five short flights ended up stretching well beyond the expectations of engineers who designed and built the helicopter at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) near Los Angeles. Ingenuity ultimately buzzed over the Martian

terrain 14 times farther than originally planned, logging more than two hours, eight minutes of flight time and covering a distance of 10.5 miles (17 km) through all 72 flights. Its peak altitude was measured at 78.7 feet (24 meters).

The rotor-craft was carried to the Red Planet strapped to the belly of NASA's Perseverance rover, which landed three years ago on the floor of a vast Martian basin called Jerezo Crater on a separate mission aimed primarily at collecting surface samples for eventual return to Earth. When the 4-pound (1.8-kg) rotor craft performed its modest, debut takeoff and landing in the thin Martian atmosphere on April 19, 2021 - a flight of 39 seconds - it was hailed as an seminal feat of interplanetary aviation. NASA likened Ingenuity's achievement at Jerezo Crater to the historic first controlled flight of the Wright brothers' motor-driven airplane near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, in December 1903.

Over time, JPL continued to send the helicopter on progressively more ambitious flights, pushing its capabilities. The end came after JPL teams began flying Ingenuity into a particularly barren, fea-

tureless area of Mars, testing the limits of an auto-navigational system that depends on visible landmarks for aviation guidance, according to Teddy Tzanetos, JPL's Ingenuity project manager. The U.S. space agency said Ingenuity made an "emergency landing" during what became its penultimate flight on Jan. 6, apparently setting itself down more abruptly than planned due to navigational disorientation.

When JPL controllers sought to perform a short, vertical flight 12 days later to determine Ingenuity's location, data shows it rose off the ground, hovered briefly, then began a descent before losing contact with the rover, which serves as its communications relay with Earth. Images the helicopter sent days later captured the shadow of its damaged rotor blade, apparently broken during its final touchdown. Tzanetos told reporters. Engineers believe guidance difficulties posed by the "bland" terrain where Ingenuity was flying resulted in a loss of equilibrium that caused the vehicle to suddenly tilt or move sideways, which in turn led to the rotors striking the surface, Tzanetos said.

Ingenuity, resembling a

box with four legs and parasol of rotor blades and solar panel, will live out its final days idle but emitting periodic blips of data before losing contact with the rover as Perseverance moves farther away. Still, NASA officials celebrated Ingenuity's exploits as paving the way for a new mode of aerial exploration on Mars and elsewhere in the solar system, such as Saturn's moon Titan, for which a rotor-craft called Dragonfly is under development. Building a helicopter to fly on Mars posed major engineering hurdles. While Mars possesses much less gravity to overcome than Earth, its atmosphere is only 1% as dense, making it especially hard to gain aerodynamic lift. Thus, Ingenuity was fitted with rotor blades that are larger and spin far more rapidly than would be needed on Earth for a similar craft of its size.

The small, lightweight vehicle also had to withstand punishing cold, with nighttime temperatures dipping as low as 130 degrees below zero Fahrenheit (minus 90 Celsius). Engineers will run final tests on Ingenuity and download remaining images from its onboard computer, NASA said.

an earlier report by The Hill. Haley raised \$24.5 million between October and December, her campaign said earlier this month. Dave Thul, a logistics manager in Minnesota who left the Republican Party in 2016 when Trump became its nominee, said in an interview that he donated \$100 to Haley after seeing Trump's threat. "I didn't donate previously to Haley because she was kind of wishy-washy on her stance on Trump. She's taken a different tone in last couple of days," Thul said. "Her being in the race, and being directly antagonistic towards Trump, increases the possibility that he has more verbal gaffes or lashes out at her in manners that prompt a backlash." Threatening Haley's donors is just one tactic Trump and his campaign are using to pressure the former South Carolina governor to quit. Trump's team has also been courting donors, urging them to support him and in at least one case promising one-on-one meetings with Trump at his Mar-A-Lago Florida estate. Some Haley donors brushed off Trump's threat. "Whatever," said Eric Levine, a New York litigator. "He sounds desperate," said venture capitalist Tim Draper.

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India's state sponsorship of terrorism

THE Pakistani authorities have recently alleged India engaging in a sophisticated and sinister campaign involving extra-territorial and extra-judicial killings within Pakistan. During a press briefing at the Foreign Office, the Foreign Secretary claimed that Indian agents utilized technology and safe havens abroad to carry out assassinations in Pakistan, recruiting, financing, and supporting individuals, including criminals, terrorists, and unsuspecting civilians to play specific roles in these acts. According to him, the government of Pakistan has sufficient credible evidence linking Indian agents to the assassination of two Pakistani nationals on Pakistani soil. These targeted killings were part of high-profile cases and implicated a sophisticated international setup spanning multiple jurisdictions across the world. According to the details, two Indian agents Ashok Kumar Anand and Yogesh Kumar based in a third country in the Middle East, masterminded the murders of two Pakistani nationals, namely Shahid Latif and Muhammad Riaz in Sialkot and Rawalkot Azad Kashmir respectively in recent months. As said there is a series of such cases having strategic importance and linked to secret operations undertaken by the Indian intelligence apparatuses in various countries including Pakistan.

Historically, the Indian government and its infamous Intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) have always pursued the policies coined by the old-age Hindu monk and Scholar Chandragupta Chanakya who is considered to be the pioneer of political science and economics in today's India. The ancient sixth-century Hindu philosopher taught the Hindu rulers to use a double policy of co-existence together with March and war by implementing all possible tactics including gift and bribery, deceit, pretense, and open war to crush their opponents and secure their supremacy at all levels. After the formation of a Hindu-majority independent state, the Indian rulers had always followed Chanakya's policies in true letter and spirit from the very first day. New Delhi suppressed ethnic and religious minorities in their country from Kashmir to Punjab and Nagaland to Manipur while Indian dissidents, political and human rights activists, fled the country to escape prosecution from Indian rulers, but killed cold-bloodedly through mercenaries abroad in North America, Europe, and Africa. On the other hand, Indian rulers pretended to be the biggest victims of terrorism while fueling violence and separatism in neighboring states particularly in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Banga Dash.

Ranging from the arrest and conviction of Indian Naval officer, Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav by Pakistani security forces in Balochistan in early 2016 to eye-opening revelations of Brussels-based EU Disinfo Lab about New Delhi-sponsored network of online propaganda news outlets, fake think tanks that weighed a propaganda campaign against Islamabad. The government of Pakistan highlighted multiple times, the issue of India's involvement in state-sponsored terrorism in Pakistan. The Foreign Office specifically briefed the UN Security Council and diplomats of important nations along with providing dossiers containing irrefutable evidence of Indian involvement in terrorism-related incidents in Pakistan. Unfortunately, Pakistan's repeated calls could not reach the ears and minds of the civilized world until Canadian authorities charged an Indian diplomat for his involvement killing of a Canadian Sikh and the US government accused Indian intelligence of an assassination bid on an American Sikh in New York last year.

The recent killings of two Pakistani nationals at the hands of Indian secret agents operating out of a third country further exposed the true face of Indian leaders who try to champion India's fake secularism and democracy and demand a greater role at the International level. The government of Pakistan must raise this issue at the UN, demanding a probe through Interpol along with filing a lawsuit against the Indian government at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to get justice for its citizens and stall continued Indian support for separatist and terrorist elements in the country. The Western nations and the global community have now become fully aware of India's continued state sponsorship of terrorism and inference into other countries that constitute a persistent risk to regional peace and stability. The United Nations and the civilized world must reprimand New Delhi for its reckless behavior to stall the repetition of such unlawful action that might have grave consequences for global peace in the future.

Gaza conflict and Qatari diplomacy

THE Qatari government has expressed annoyance over the recent remarks of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who was allegedly caught on tape calling the emirate's role as mediator in the Gaza war problematic. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu purportedly said that Qataris finance Hamas and they have the means to put pressure on them. Yahu also criticized Washington's decision to renew its military basing agreement with Qatar. A Qatari spokesman termed these remarks as irresponsible and destructive to the efforts to save innocent lives. According to the Qatari Spokesman, Qatar is still involved in talks aimed at securing a new hostage deal, and Netanyahu's remarks were detrimental to those efforts.

The State of Qatar has always upheld its long-held partnership with Western nations including the United States, the UK, France, and multiple other states while keeping an arm's distance from its GCC allies and other Muslim countries in the world. Over the past decades, US Central Command has positioned its regional command post in Doha, while American fighters roam in Qatari airspace and US Navy ships sail in territorial waters in the Middle East and the Gulf of Oman. Doha has played a vital role in shaping global politics and maintaining regional as well as global peace in the past. Ranging from hosting Taliban political office to conceiving a historic Doha agreement between the US and Taliban, making possible US-Iran prisoners swap deal to the recent release of Israeli captives and a temporary truce between Israel and Hamas, are a few glimpses of Qatar's tactful and kinetic diplomacy over the past decades.

The Haredi-Judaism and the extraordinary response of the Netanyahu regime on the October 7 attacks coupled with the persistent refusal to a ceasefire has attracted across-the-spectrum criticism from the global community including friends and foes. Qatar, Egypt, and the United States played vital roles in achieving the release of over a hundred Israeli captives, while shuttle diplomacy and backdoor contacts are currently underway to realize a truce and restore lasting peace in the region. Netanyahu looks at other states and individuals with the pure orthodox Jewish lens and demands Sar-El service for Israel. In fact, Qatar has played the role of a broker between Muslims and Judaism, which encourages Tel Aviv's Doha criticism otherwise the entire world has acknowledged the services of Qatari rulers during the months-long conflict in the Middle East.

PM urges Saudi Groups to invest in Pakistan..



Gaza war's spillover effects on American academic freedom

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

ISRAEL'S war on Gaza has had a devastating effect on free speech around the world, but especially in the US. Academic freedom is imperiled at college campuses across the country because of restrictions on views opposed to the war. This has had a chilling effect on the public debate about the war, with many expressing fears of a new form of McCarthyism on campus, fueled by traditional and social media and by politicians in the heightened climate of US elections.

At the US Congress grilling of prominent university administrators, the harsh rhetoric used by some members of Congress reinforced those fears of a new McCarthy-like witch hunt. They were fiercely scolded for not doing enough to curb anti-Israel criticism. Following their public humiliation, the presidents of Harvard and Pennsylvania universities were subsequently forced to resign.

Censure of those deviating from the official Israeli line has been common, including through firings, teaching bans, public rebuke and smear campaigns. There has been widespread intimidation and censorship of critics, accusing them of anti-semitism and subjecting them to disciplinary measures and even arrests. In some cases, new legal measures have been adopted to further suppress the voicing of anti-Israel views, conflating legitimate criticism of Israeli policies with antisemitism and even terrorism.

There have been multiple examples of faculty members being swiftly investigated and sometimes punished for their statements on the crisis - often after they blew up on social media or in the conventional media or after the intervention of an important donor or politician.

The US group Inside Higher Ed reviewed more than a dozen cases in which faculty speech had been censored, investigated or punished by universities or professional associations. Most cases involved those expressing statements favorable to Palestinians, usually voiced outside the classroom, at protests or on social media.

The war is testing how

tolerant universities really are of free speech when they are under pressure from politicians, lobbyists or donors who are favorable to Israel. The Academic Freedom Alliance observed: "A lot of universities are on a bit of a hair trigger when it comes to faculty speech on this particular issue at the moment." They rush to action because they "know

take part in the harassment.

Faculty Responders, a group funded by the American Association of University Professors, monitors websites that write about higher education and offers aid to faculty members who come under attack. Since October, it has documented "a sharp increase in attacks on faculty who express solidarity with Palestine, who

Israeli legal scholar and professor of human rights and humanitarian law living in the UK, said recently that he is worried there has been a major clampdown on academic freedom in the US, Europe and Israel. His research looks at the laws of war, with a special focus on Israel-Palestine, and on definitions of antisemitism. He has been following the impact of the Gaza war on free speech at universities. He reported more than 100 cases in Israel of students and staff who have been suspended or dismissed, as well as at least 10 cases of students being arrested for their criticism of Israel's attack on Gaza.

Adam Shinar, a professor of law at the Harry Radzyner Law School at Reichman University, recently wrote that free speech restrictions in Israel, both formal and informal, have increased significantly since the war started. The government has succeeded in creating a chilling effect, with the mere voicing of criticism - especially when coupled with empathy toward Palestinians - being conflated with treason and triggering harsh responses, from police questioning to hate speech and attacks on social media.

In the West Bank and in Gaza itself, Israel's measures to silence criticism are extreme. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists reported this week that at least 83 journalists and media workers have been killed since Oct. 7, while Palestinian sources put the number at more than 100. The committee said that it is "particularly concerned about an apparent pattern of targeting of journalists and their families by the Israeli military."

It called for Israel to end the long-standing pattern of impunity in cases of journalists killed by its security forces.

Pro-Israel groups and lobbyists in the US are trying to whitewash what the occupation is doing by limiting debate on American campuses. The rising influence of social media has aided this process. However, US politicians bear much of the responsibility, as they express blind support for Israel's actions in Gaza, thus encouraging extremist groups to wage witch hunts against academics who may hold different views.

Arab News

Irene Mulvey, president of the American Association of University Professors, said: "For sure, there's no question in my mind that the violations of academic freedom have increased. Incidents are happening at an alarming rate and faculty are holding the line and trying to get their administrations to hold the line for academic freedom in polarizing times." The association recently released a warning on the pitfalls of "overly broad definitions of anti-semitism," reiterating its long-standing position on the subject.

they're being watched by pressure groups and, in some cases, receiving pressure from donors and politicians."

Under pressure to restrict anti-Israel views, the US Education Department is now expected to come out with regulations to make clear when a university must intervene, along the lines of former President Donald Trump's 2019 executive order, which threatened to pull federal funding from colleges that ignore anti-semitism on campus.

Fueling the campaign against Israel's critics are well-established pro-Israel outlets, newly setup groups and ad hoc websites, which frequently name individuals and organizations that promote what they see as views critical of Israel. They keep databases of professors, writers and others accused of unfavorable views of its war on Gaza or of expressing favorable views of Palestinians. They hunt down critics, branding them as antisemites or "haters" of Israel and encourage harassment and bullying of those they name. At times, politicians

express criticisms of the state of Israel."

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The association recently released a warning on the pitfalls of "overly broad definitions of anti-semitism," reiterating its long-standing position on the subject. It stated that it "rejects the characterization of pro-Palestinian speech or critiques of the Israeli state as invariably antisemitic ... These efforts to control what is thought, said, taught and researched are antithetical to the educational mission of a university and the democratic values upon which it rests."

Actions by anti-Palestinian campaigners in the US echo what extremists are doing in Israel itself. Neve Gordon, an

G7 agenda emerges in face of geopolitical gale

Andrew Hammond

THE Italian-chaired G7 of 2024 is likely to be dominated by the geopolitical gale that is blowing from the Middle East and Europe. But the outline of a wider agenda, including energy security and artificial intelligence, has this month become much clearer. Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has said the Global South "will be central" to Italy's G7 presidency due to its economic, commercial and cultural importance. To this end, Meloni is likely to ensure that the Western club includes a wider circle of nations in this year's meetings, including BRICS members India, Brazil and South Africa.

Reflecting the focus on the Global South, one defining priority of Italy's chairing of the event will be a new Africa-focused energy security and development plan, which Rome wants Western partners to embrace. Meloni wants the so-called Mattei scheme to be integrated into a broader "Marshall plan" for Africa. Named after Italian firm Eni's founder, Enrico Mattei, the goal is to turn Italy into a major hub for energy transit from Africa to Europe, especially gas, potentially laying the ground for wider cooperation in other sectors. A key part of the ambition here is promoting European energy security. In the two years since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Italy has been at the vanguard of the 25 energy deals the EU has signed with Africa. To put this number into context, it represents about a fifth of the total 122 energy agreements signed by Europe since February 2022, according to the European Council on Foreign Relations' EU Energy Deals Tracker.

Important as this energy security agenda is, however, the goal of Italy's Mattei plan is broader. Another aim is to boost African growth to help stabilize the continent and reduce migration through equitable energy partnerships and wider cooperation. Meloni said this month: "What needs to be done in Africa is not charity. What needs to be done is to build cooperation and serious strategic relationships as equals, not predators." She has stressed the need "to defend the right not to have to emigrate ... and this is done with investments and a strategy."

The reason Meloni is putting such G7 priority on this is her domestic electoral promise to stop massive migration flows to Italy. In 2023, the path from North Africa across the Central Mediterranean to Italy became Europe's busiest migration route. Data from Italy's Interior Ministry highlights that migrant arrivals in Italy skyrocketed 50 percent in 2023 compared to the previous year. Some 155,750 migrants reached the nation last year, up from 103,850 in 2022.

A second plank of Italy's G7 economics agenda is centered on AI and inequality. Meloni says she wants to focus on creating "ethical guardrails" for the development of the technology, including a potential steer-

ing committee to ensure greater G7 coordination on AI.

Despite the importance of this economic agenda for Meloni, geopolitics will inevitably be a massive focus as well. In recent years, the G7 has assumed a bigger role as a global geopolitical linchpin - and this has only increased since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As well as this year's G7 priority of Ukraine, a second key focus for the Italian government is the conflict in Gaza and the wider Middle East. This includes the growing threat to commercial shipping in the Red Sea due to Houthi attacks.

In recent years, issues such as the geopolitics of the South China Sea have also been on the G7 agenda. And then there is the issue of economic coercion, which the Western club has asserted "undermines the policies and positions of G7 members as well as partners around the world." For instance, when Lithuania allowed Taiwan to open a representative office in Vilnius in 2021, China started limiting imports from the country. The G7 last year announced a new economic coercion toolkit to "increase collective assessment, preparedness, deterrence and response." This includes a "coordination platform" to help nations assist each other by increasing trade or funding to any country that is targeted.

The focus on these topics has prompted strong objections from China, which asserts that the G7 should focus on its founding mandate of global economic cooperation. As this reaction indicates, the G7's geopolitical dialogues have been met with significant international criticism from time to time. It is sometimes asserted, especially by developing countries, that the G7 lacks the legitimacy of the UN to engage in these geopolitical and security issues and/or is a historical artifact given the rise of powers such as the BRICS nations.

However, the international security role of the G7 is not new. The body helped coordinate Western strategy toward the then-Soviet Union during the Cold War, for instance. Its capacity for action was shown when it played an important role in convincing Moscow to pull the remnants of the Red Army out of the Baltic states.

There are many international skeptics of the Italian G7 producing any meaningful outcomes this year. However, the group has previously been at its best in times of crisis and when tackling the big issues of the moment. The fact it was founded in 1975, in the aftermath of the geopolitical and economic shocks after Washington pulled out of the gold standard, underlines the argument that it is fit for purpose amid today's turbulence. For all these reasons, geopolitics is set to dominate the Italian-hosted G7, despite its parallel emphasis on economics. The stress on international security may only grow if events in Ukraine and the Middle East escalate further.

Israel has two choices: Share the land or share the power

Daoud Kuttab

IT has been known for 30 years, but Western Leaders only believed it when the top Israeli leader admitted it: Israel has no plans and no interest in allowing Palestinians to live in freedom on their land. The talk is not about Hamas or Gaza, the talk is about Palestinian areas occupied in 1967. At that time, the preamble of UN Security Council Resolution 242 noted that it is "inadmissible" to take land by war.

Palestinians have always known that Israeli claims of peace were fake because they saw first-hand what it was doing; namely, creating facts on the ground that would make the creation of an independent Palestinian state impossible. Strategic locations were carefully sought and exclusive settlements for Jews were built there precisely to blunt any serious effort by Palestinians to fulfill their inalienable right to self-

determination.

Sure, the Israelis give plenty of public support for peace - regularly blaming Palestinians for not being responsive enough, for inciting violence and for refusing to accept the concept of a "Jewish state." But in reality, these were smoke-screens aimed at fooling the international community.

World powers did oppose the settlements, sometimes calling them an obstacle to peace and, at other times, like in the last days of the Obama administration, clearly stated in a binding UNSC resolution that they were illegal. But there were never any consequences for Israel or any real deterrent for ignoring the international will. The Oct. 7 attack on Israel and the subsequent "take no prisoners" style of revenge that has shocked the world's consciousness have reinvigorated world opinion. Naturally, political forces have returned to the drawing board and insisted -

this time a little more seriously - that, after the end of the war on Gaza, a political solution that will satisfy Palestinians' legitimate aspirations must be found.

This forced Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to admit that, for 30 years, he has been opposed to a Palestinian state and that it would never see the light while he was in power.

Again, the global community condemned these words, but it failed to translate these condemnations into pressure and create an irreversible process toward this goal. Western countries have the political weapons to create such a process. They can follow their own people's desires (as often made in parliamentary resolutions) and recognize the state of Palestine on the 1967 borders. Such a move would change the paradigm. The gradual approach of

the Oslo process did not work. Israel used this to relieve itself from guarding populated cities while flexing its settlement enterprise. The number of settlers in the West Bank has more than quadrupled in the 30 years since the famous White House lawn handshake between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat.

The public Israeli rejection of an independent Palestinian state has escalated calls for a different form of solution. If Israel refuses to share the land between the river and the sea with Palestinians, the only other realistic alternative is for Israel to agree to share power with Palestinians in the same historic Palestinian territory.

Marwan Muasher, the former Jordanian deputy prime minister and current vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, last

month made this quite clear at the UNSC. The world will not accept Israel controlling the entire area and applying the war crime of apartheid, he argued, adding that therefore what is needed is a process that allows for equality between Israelis and Palestinians.

The war on Gaza has been a human tragedy of the worst kind and the repercussions will last for decades. But the one issue that the war has revealed is the false Israeli peace claims and its justifications for refusing to end its military occupation of Palestinian lands. The latest pronouncements have vindicated Palestinians and brought to light the state-

ments of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict did not start on Oct. 7, 2023. The world community has a clear challenge now. If it is serious about the two-state solution, it must recognize Palestine and encourage the legitimate representatives of Israel and Palestine to negotiate the modalities as two UN member states. Short of that, all efforts must be placed on forcing Israel to grant equal political rights to all the people under its control. Put simply, Israel needs to decide to either share the land or share the power in historic Palestine - there is no third choice.

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Democrats could be repeating their mistake from 2016

DEMOCRATS should not make the mistake of underestimating former President Donald Trump. This is exactly what the party did in 2016, when former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was the Democratic nominee, and there are some who currently risk repeating the error. Following Trump's strong showing in the New Hampshire primary, which has effectively knocked his final opponent - former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley - out of the race, some of his critics continue to search for slivers of good news.

They point to the fact that despite "almost" being an incumbent, he didn't receive a share of the vote on par with what previous incumbents have encountered in primary contests. Incumbents usually bring to the table unequalled name recognition, fund-raising capacity and the benefit of looking presidential as they run for reelection. Trump has most of this, with his supporters holding on to the memory of him in the Oval Office, and with many of his backers believing he literally won the presidency in 2020, yet Haley pulled a decent part of the electorate away from him.

Moreover, they note, Haley was able to win independent voters who theoretically would be more amenable to President Joe Biden than Trump in the fall. Moreover, the number of Republicans who keep saying they won't vote for Trump under any circumstances, gives Democrats hope that on Election Day, many voters in the GOP won't turn out. But these arguments downplay the threat Trump will pose to Biden in November by ignoring several fundamentals. In fact, given the extraordinary baggage and problems Trump brings to the table, it is remarkable that the former president is doing so well and points to the formidable threat he poses.

Most important, Trump is not an incumbent: he is a one-term president who lost to the person he is running against just four years ago. Moreover, he is polling well and defeating his primary opponents despite the fact that the GOP suffered stunning blows to their congressional power, costing the party control of the Senate in 2020 and again in the midterm elections of 2022, and hurting them in state

offices in a number of special elections. Trump is succeeding even though the United States has never had a major presidential candidate saddled with so much legal baggage. Trump is not just a defeated one-term president, but a one-term president who allegedly attempted to overturn an election he lost - a period that can truly be called

Moreover, he is polling well and defeating his primary opponents despite the fact that the GOP suffered stunning blows to their congressional power, costing the party control of the Senate in 2020 and again in the midterm elections of 2022, and hurting them in state offices in a number of special elections. Trump is succeeding even though the United States has never had a major presidential candidate saddled with so much legal baggage. Trump is not just a defeated one-term president, but a one-term president who allegedly attempted to overturn an election he lost - a period that can truly be called

unprecedented in American history. As if that was not enough, he has subsequently been indicted four times, including on charges that revolve around an alleged massive abuse of presidential power (he has denied all wrongdoing).

Meanwhile, two states have decided to ban him from the ballot based on allegations of insurrection (he is appealing). And civil cases about sexual assault, tax fraud and defamation are also underway (he has challenged these as well). Yet, not only is Trump defeating his Republican opponents despite these legal challenges, but they keep defending him and rallying to his side even in the heat of political battle. Indeed, Donald Trump continues to win as Donald Trump. There has been no turning point, no shift to acting presidential and no serious effort to abide by the traditional norms of national politics. He has continued to blast his opponents with name-

calling insults, to spread disinformation and falsehoods and to conduct politics in the spirit of a WWE cage match rather than a forum of serious deliberation. Trump 2024 is acting very much like Trump 2020 and 2016.

That's no doubt because the qualities that propelled him in the past to command media attention

continue to be effective. Even if he has lost many steps as a result of age - as Haley and others have argued - Trump continues to retain all of his talents as a showman. Trump still knows how to do television. He is the entertainer in chief. Trump's enduring ability to garner attention through provocative performances was clear right after the media projected Trump as the winner in New Hampshire. Instead of a standard victory speech, Trump lit into Haley. He unleashed a series of vindictive comments about her, even going so far as to insult her clothing. Though some analysts were surprised by his decision and noted that he might have goaded Haley into continuing to run, they missed the point. The point was to do and say things that drew attention to him, that created 24 hours of social media conversation about Trump, that took attention from everyone else on the playing field.

Trump, who lives by the maxim

that all publicity is good publicity, will no doubt create similar obstacles for Biden in communicating his message and securing national attention as the race heats up. Finally, by most indications, Trump still has strong support in the Republican Party. It is not clear whether those currently telling pollsters they would never vote for Trump will feel the same way by November, once Trump has unleashed his scorched-earth attacks on Biden and depicted him in conservative circles as the second coming of Karl Marx.

When voters go to vote on November 5, many of those Americans might very well decide that tax cuts, deregulation and conservative justices are much more important than any concerns they have about what a second term Trump presidency would do. And despite the legislative success of the Biden presidency, as well as strong economic indicators, Trump benefits from the fact that many Republicans perceive the pre-Covid years of his presidency to have been much more prosperous than today, when they see higher prices, major wars abroad and chaos at the borders as well as in cities as a result of undocumented immigration. To them, it is "American carnage" all over again.

In 2016, many observers wondered if the election would be like 1964, when President Lyndon Johnson trounced right-wing Arizona Sen. Barry Goldwater, who many saw as an extremist and dangerous to the nation. The answer was no. Most Republicans came home. None of this is to say that Trump is invincible. He is not. Indeed, 2020 proved the point. Polls for 2024 show that the race is close and will probably come down to turnout in a handful of swing states. A few swing state polls have Biden ahead. As Democratic strategist Simon Rosenberg recently told The New York Times' Ezra Klein, Democrats have been doing extraordinarily well in national elections. Trump can be defeated with a massive voter turnout operation. But his performance thus far in the caucuses and primaries, especially given the context of what he faces, has been notable for the underlying strength behind his candidacy that the contests have revealed.

CNN

Letter from Panama's 'Little Hiroshima'

Belén Fernández

ONCE upon a time, the United States was good buddies with a fellow named Manuel Noriega, a long-standing CIA asset and the dictator of Panama in the 1980s. Then one day, Noriega outlived his usefulness as an imperial lackey and needed to be sent packing. And so with a straight face, the gringos accused him of the unpardonable offence of drug trafficking and undertook to overthrow him in 1989.

This was funny; after all, since at least 1972 the US had known about - and intermittently benefitted from - Noriega's links to the drug trade. Furthermore, the US president spearheading the dictator's removal was none other than George H W Bush, the very same George H W Bush who as director of the CIA in 1976 had ensured Noriega's preservation on the agency payroll. Anyway, boundless hypocrisy has always been America's strong point. And it was once again on full display in the selection of the name for the unilateral US military operation to bring "democracy" to Panama by killing a bunch of Panamanian civilians, pulverising the impoverished Panama City neighbourhood of El Chorrillo to the extent that local ambulance drivers began to call it "Little Hiroshima", and hauling Noriega off to Miami. Following some heavy contemplation, the preliminary title "Operation Blue Spoon" was changed to "Operation Just Cause". The late Colin Powell, who was then serving as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, explained in his 1995 autobiography, A Soldier's Way, that he preferred the "inspirational ring" of the revised title - and the fact that "even our severest critics would have to utter 'Just Cause' while denouncing us".

Plus, Powell reasoned, Blue Spoon was just "hardly a rousing call to arms... You do not risk people's lives for Blue Spoons". Of course, the change in labelling was irrelevant to the civilian inhabitants of El Chorrillo - the site of Panama City's central military barracks - who bore the lethal brunt of the ensuing "just cause". Then again, it wasn't their lives that Powell was concerned about risking. Just after midnight on December 20, 1989, the neighbourhood was jolted awake by the fanatical show of US firepower that would quickly earn it the moniker "Little Hiroshima". As US General Marc Cisneros, one of the operation's commanders, admitted in 1999 on the 10th anniversary of the invasion, the military's approach was probably a bit overzealous: "We made it look like we were battling Goliath... We have all these new gadgets, laser-guided missiles and stealth fighters, and we are just dying to use that stuff."

Almost exactly 34 years after the fun with gadgets, on this past New Year's Eve, I paid a visit to El Chorrillo, taking an Uber down the hill from a friend's house in the Quarry Heights area of the Panamanian capital - the US military's former command centre in the Panama Canal Zone. My plan to wander around and photograph El Chorrillo's assortment of anti-American graffiti was thwarted when the female Uber driver, citing concerns for my safety, insisted on delivering me into the care of two policemen standing on a street corner. Too young to have experienced the 1989 invasion, they proved chatty albeit not so confident in their own crime-fighting prowess: "Sometimes we're standing here and people are getting robbed in the supermarket next door." One of the cops escorted

me down the street to view the diminutive statue of a crouching human, a monument to those killed during Just Cause. Estimates of Panamanian civilian deaths during the operation range from a few hundred to many thousands, depending on whether you ask the United States or human rights organisations. Hec

As US General Marc Cisneros, one of the operation's commanders, admitted in 1999 on the 10th anniversary of the invasion, the military's approach was probably a bit overzealous: "We made it look like we were battling Goliath... We have all these new gadgets, laser-guided missiles and stealth fighters, and we are just dying to use that stuff."

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Advertisement To politely extricate myself from the company of the two policemen, I asked whether they knew anyone who might want to talk to me about the invasion. As a matter of fact, they said, there was an older man named Hector who lived nearby and was the only resident of El Chorrillo to have 24-hour police protection on account of four gang attempts on his life. Hector knew all about 1989. A few phone calls were made and I was handed off to a different set of police, who waited with me in front of Hector's dilapidated apartment block. A young boy shot at all of us with a triceratops-shaped toy pistol, and a group of giggling young girls asked me the English words for "knife", "dirty teeth" and "Santana" - the last name of one of the cops.

Then it was into Hector's cramped kitchen, where preemptive New Year's fireworks outside provided a fitting soundtrack to the subject at hand. Seventy-seven years old and in possession of a certain joie de vivre that is perhaps inaccessible to those of us who have not survived four assassination attempts, Hector unearthed a tattered 33-year-old newspaper - published on the first anniversary of Just Cause - and encouraged me to peruse the photographs of corpses and mass graves. As it turned out, Hector had not been present during the invasion, having been expelled from Panama for political reasons some months earlier. He returned to the country in February 1990, shortly after Just Cause had been brought to

its swift and triumphant close, and became a leader in the fight to prevent Panama's new "democratic" powers that be from appropriating El Chorrillo for their own lucrative ends. In Hector's words, the mentality of the new opportunists was: "Let's get the chorrilleros out of there since the gringos already burned everything." And burn they had, the fire spreading easily as most of the houses were made of wood. Many, incidentally, had decades previously housed the workers who built the Panama Canal - another crowning achievement in the United States' lengthy history of imperial

exploitation. While then-US Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney would claim that Just Cause had "been the most surgical military operation of its size ever conducted", you can't really have a surgical Hiroshima. Fishing a pamphlet by Panamanian sociologist Olmedo Beluche out of the clutter on his kitchen table, Hector set about reading to me from the section on aircraft and armaments used in Just Cause that were then deployed on a massive scale in the first Persian Gulf war: F-117 stealth bombers, Blackhawk helicopters, Apache and Cobra helicopters, 2,000-pound bombs, Hellfire missiles, and so on. Indeed, as historian Greg Grandin has emphasised, the road to Baghdad "ran through Panama City", with Just Cause marking the start of an "age of preemptive unilateralism, using 'democracy' and 'freedom' as both justifications for war and a branding opportunity". In 2018, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ruled that the United States should "provide full reparation for the human rights violations" committed during Operation Just Cause, "including both the material and moral dimensions". You can guess how that's panning out.

As I made my way back to Quarry Heights on New Year's Eve, I passed a memorial to Martyrs' Day - a reference not to the martyrs of El Chorrillo but rather to the martyrs of January 9, 1964. On this day, US forces in the Canal Zone killed at least 21 Panamanians during riots in the aftermath of an attempt by Panamanian students to raise Panama's flag next to the US one. Sixty years on from Martyrs' Day, the US still hasn't managed to kick its habit of killing people - including indirectly in the Gaza Strip, a "little Hiroshima" if there ever was one. Forget "moral dimensions"; the US operates in a strictly iniquitous one.

Aljazeera

Why are Israeli soldiers sharing snuff videos from their genocide in Gaza?

SINCE the beginning of the genocide in Gaza in October, Israeli soldiers have been posting what can only be described as snuff videos on social media platforms. In the videos, soldiers can be seen - often gleefully - committing war crimes against Palestinians.

In one video, an Israeli soldier dressed in a dinosaur costume loads artillery shells into a tank and dances as the shells are fired in the direction of Gaza. In another video, a soldier is filmed dedicating an explosion to his two-year-old daughter for her birthday. Seconds later, a Palestinian residential building behind him is blown up. Other videos show Israeli soldiers setting alight Palestinian food supplies during a starvation campaign and mocking stripped, rounded-up and blindfolded Palestinian civilians.

There has been shock and outrage over the videos on social media platforms by Palestinians and their allies with many noting that the videos should be used as evidence in the case against the Israeli regime for genocide before the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Indeed, this latest aggression on Gaza has been one of the most visually documented atrocities in history. And genocidal intent has never

been so blatantly expressed by both soldiers and political leaders.

Even those who support the Israeli regime seem to be shocked at the brazenness with which Israeli soldiers are sharing these videos. British broadcaster Piers Morgan, for example, asked on X, formerly Twitter: "Why do Israeli soldiers keep filming themselves doing this kind of crass, insensitive thing? Why don't their commanders stop them? Makes them look callous when so many children in Gaza are being killed." For Morgan, it seems, the problem is not what the soldiers are doing but rather that they are filming themselves doing it.

People less informed on the context might find it strange that these soldiers are implicating themselves in such horrific crimes without a second thought. But those with deeper knowledge of the Zionist settler colonial project in Palestine know that decades of impunity not only for the Israeli regime but also for Israeli individuals guilty of war crimes has led us to this point.

Indeed, the Israeli regime has yet to face any serious consequences from third states for the crimes it has been committing against the Palestinian people since

its inception. Rather, it enjoys exceptional diplomatic and trade relations with much of the Western world and has been the largest recipient of United States aid. Rather than being shunned from global institutions and events, it is included and celebrated from Eurovision to the Olympics.

And there is another aspect of Israeli impunity that is often overlooked: Israeli soldiers routinely admit to horrific crimes they commit against the Palestinians to clear their conscience and absolve themselves of personal responsibility but never face any accountability. Israelis themselves describe the practice as "yorim ve bochim", which translates from Hebrew as "shooting and crying". A favourite pastime of the Zionist left, it takes centre stage in dozens of Israeli films and documentaries.

Take the widely celebrated film Tantura, named after a Palestinian fishing village that was subjected to a massacre in 1948. In this film, several Israeli veterans talk with ease about the fact that they killed hundreds of Palestinian civilians. Others openly admit to participating in ethnic cleansing, yet all are portrayed as complicated individuals who are traumatised by the

trauma they inflicted on Palestinians. "Yorim ve bochim" is also epitomised in the work of the Israeli NGO Breaking the Silence. A darling of the liberal West, the organisation of Israeli army veterans tries to expose the reality of the "Occupied Territories" by providing a space to Israeli soldiers to confidentially recount their experiences in the Israeli army and at times admit to taking part in systematic abuse and destruction. The testimonies on its website make for incredibly difficult reading, particularly in this moment when we are seeing what is happening in Gaza. And yet nowhere does this organisation call for accountability or address what justice might look like for the Palestinians whom the soldiers they work with have systematically abused over decades.

The reality is that over the last seven and a half decades, there has been complete impunity for brutalising and slaughtering Palestinians. The ongoing genocide in Gaza and the way in which it is being so brazenly shared on social media by the perpetrators is a manifestation of that impunity. The only way to make sure that it stops and never happens again is to hold not only those who have taken part in the genocide accountable but also those who are complicit.

Trump has captured new conservative zeitgeist

David Frost

HAVE you ever had the feeling that it doesn't matter who you vote for, because nothing ever changes? That certain policies get implemented even when they are unpopular? That "they", "the establishment", "the elite" know how things should be done?

It's easy to rail against the elite, but rarer to get actual evidence that they really do think differently from the rest of us. This month we got that, in the form of a Rasmussen poll in America, picked up here by Toby Young's Daily Sceptic website. This poll specifically looked at the opinions of the elite - defined as people with a postgrad degree, earning \$150,000 annually, and living in dense cities. That's about 1 per cent of Americans.

The results are pretty striking. Nearly half of the elite think there is "too much freedom" in America, while only 16 per cent of Americans as a whole think that. Seventy-seven per cent support rationing of energy and meat (all Americans: 28 per cent). Well over two thirds would ban gas stoves and petrol cars, and over half would ban non-essential air travel and air conditioning (all Americans: 13 and 25 per cent). Seventy per cent of the elite trust the government, more than twice as many as ordinary Americans. And finally, though hardly surpris-

ingly, while only 40 per cent of Americans approve of President Biden, 84 per cent of the elite do.

Look no further for what has driven Donald Trump to all but tying up the Republican presidential nomination this week. He's appealing to those many Americans who think that the people in charge of the country just don't share their aspirations and are not in touch with the realities of their lives. This poll suggests they aren't wrong to think that. To outsiders, one of the most baffling features of the past year is the way that Trump became more popular as the number of court cases against him increased. Yet if you see the governing establishment as wholly different from you, motivated by quite different values, you are more likely to see Trump as a genuine victim of that system, and hence as the only real opportunity to change it.

However things play out for Trump in the months to come, and I certainly see him as a distinctly mixed candidate, it's obvious from his campaign that technocracy is just not a winning proposition on the Right. Instead, the rocket motor comes from anti-system politics, populism if you will, and from fundamentals like immigration control. Nikki Haley is a pretty good traditional Republican figure - a

believer in free markets at home and in American leadership abroad. In the past she might have won. But Republican voters now want something different, not a more competent version of the past: they think that's what got them where they are now.

It's also clear that populism is more than just policy. Ron DeSantis offered Trumpism without Trump. His record in Florida - on resisting lockdowns and masks, on putting parents back in charge of education, of resisting the diversity and "woke" agenda - is almost entirely admirable. Only four states out of 50 have a lower tax burden. Three hundred thousand people moved to Florida just last year. Yet none of this was enough at the national level. Somehow he didn't cut through and didn't convince that he had what it took to be president. In short, personality matters. Earnest political analysts tend to think it's unreasonable to vote on that basis. I don't really agree. Yes, obviously Republicans want a Republican, but they also want the kind of Republican who can deliver change rather than give in to resistance.

So they want someone who is prepared to kick around the bureaucracies, to appeal over their heads to the public, and who doesn't see it as a killer argument when someone says "well we have

always done it like this" or "a court might disagree with you". Perhaps Republican voters are right to sense that Trump's very brashness, his indifference to convention, is precisely what may make him able to break the mould and make things happen. And therefore the ability to connect with the general public is vital. If you are uncomfortable with actual voters, like both Haley and DeSantis in different ways, then you are unlikely to cut it in democratic politics. Trump's worst enemies don't deny his ability here. Indeed, that is why they fear him. His humour, his one-liners, cheap though they are sometimes, his ability to capture the essence of an issue - this is vital in a political world where you need to grab people's attention. I'd love to hear it if he were ever to come up with a nickname for Keir Starmer.

All these things come together in one thing: leadership, the ability to articulate a vision, to show where you want to take the country, and to capture it in ways people can readily understand. Some people, like Trump, have it, and some people don't. Oh, and there is one other thing we can learn from American politics. Don't elect a Leftist who's claiming to be a moderate. You just might find they turn out to be a woke diversity obsessional, a believer in open borders, an open-the-spending-taps socialist, after all, when it's too late.

EU policymakers intent on reshaping economic ties

THE European Commission put forward several proposals for deliberations among members of the European Union on Wednesday to strengthen the bloc's economic security. Although the commission does not name the countries these measures are intended for, China, Russia and even the United States are widely believed to be among those that the EU seeks to prevent from "hurting" its economic security. The measures related to trade are thought to be the ones that will directly reshape the EU's economic relations with its major trading partners.

The steps include improving the screening of foreign investments in the EU to prevent investments that may pose a risk to the EU's security; having a more coordinated approach to the EU's exports of dual-use goods - goods that can be used for both civil and military purposes - to ensure they do not fall into the wrong

Li Yang

hands; and understanding the potential risks associated with certain EU investments abroad. The commission is also looking into ways to support research and development in technologies which can be used for different purposes, and at how to enhance research security across the EU.

This package follows up on the European Economic Security Strategy enacted from June 2023, reflecting the EU policymakers' rising concerns over the challenges the growing geopolitical tensions and profound technological shifts pose to the bloc's economic security. Although many major economies share these concerns and are mulling over similar measures as well, most of them act with great prudence when it comes to the implementation of these moves in the fear that any overreach might turn the measures into restrictive, protectionist and discriminatory actions hurting normal foreign investment

and partners, and thus their own interests.

With an annual growth of just 0.6 per cent in 2023, the eurozone may have already been in recession in the second half of last year. In comparison, the economic performance of China and the US is much better. That being said, if the newly proposed measures further complicate the procedure for normal investment, trade and research cooperation, they are very likely to do a disservice to the EU's already weak economic fitness. It is a pity that the commission stopped short of defining the criteria for the EU members to evaluate and finally determine what investments, research and trading activities pose security threat to the EU's economy. That ambiguity creates a large murky space for the implementation, if not misuse, of the measures. So it remains to be seen whether these proposals can pass the bloc's internal deliberations, and if so, to what extent they will realize their intended objectives in practice.



Agricultural machinery imports grew by 70.42% in 6 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of agriculture machinery and implements into the country during the first half of the current financial year grew by 70.42 per cent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of the last year. During the period from July-December, 2023 agricultural machinery costing \$36.475 million was imported as compared to the imports of \$21.482 million of the same period of the last year.

During the period under review machinery group imports into the country grew by 11.45 per cent as machinery worth \$3.605

billion was imported as compared to the imports of \$3.235 billion in the same period of last year, according to the data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

However, in the last 06 months of the current financial year, the imports of agricultural and other chemicals decreased by 18.07 per cent as these commodities valued at \$4.240 billion were imported as compared to the imports of \$5.175 billion in the same period of last year.

In the last two quarters of the current financial year, about 586,868 metric tons of fertilizer valuing \$314.887 million imported

as compared to the imports of 672,816 metric tons worth \$476.182 million in the same period of last year.

The imports of insecticides and plastic materials were reduced by 5.62 per cent and 9.35 per cent respectively as 18,058 metric tons of insecticides valued at 94.946 million were imported as compared to the imports of 19,738 metric tons valuing \$100.603 million of the same period of last year.

It may be recalled here that during the period under review, the exports increased by 5.17 per cent to \$14.981 billion compared to the exports

of \$14.244 billion during the corresponding period of last year, according to the latest PBS data. On the other hand, the imports narrowed by 16.28 per cent and were recorded at \$26.129 billion compared to \$31.209 billion last year.

Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the exports from the country increased by 22.21 per cent in December compared to the exports of the same month of last year.

The exports during the month were recorded at \$2.812 billion as against the exports of \$2.301 billion in December 2022.



LAHORE: People selecting and purchasing old toys from vendor.

ACCA, SECP sign MoU to foster investor education, sustainability

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) to promote investor education, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices and corporate growth.

ACCA and SECP have been enjoying a robust partnership since 2017 under Jama Punji initiative. This MoU reaffirmed both organizations' dedication to promote financial literacy, sustainability, ethical standards, mentorship for startups and supporting learning initiatives, said a news release here.

The event featured a series of insightful discussions and presentations, culminating in the MoU signing. Chairman SECP, Akif Saeed, remarked, "the collaboration with ACCA under this MoU was a testament to our dedication to fostering an environment of transparency and governance in Pakistan's corporate sector."

"The commission is committed to advancing

investor education, collaborating on sustainability initiatives and promoting startup ecosystem. It believes that our joint efforts with ACCA will play a pivotal role in strengthening the economic framework of the country," he added.

ACCA Director of Asia Pacific, Pulkit Abrol said "this renewed partnership with SECP is not just a continuation of our long-standing relationship but a step forward in our joint efforts to empower the financial and corporate sectors with sustainable practices, innovation initiatives and governance."

"We are excited to work together towards a future where investor education and sustainability reporting are not just norms but drivers of economic growth and stability," he said. The MoU solidifies a long-term partnership focused on enhancing corporate and capital market development with an emphasis on transparency, reporting, and governance.

It also aims to broaden the scope of collaboration, including capacity building of SECP employees, enhancing public sector engagement.

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Pakistan Refinery Limited unveils vision for a sustainable energy future at PRL connect 2024

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Refinery Limited (PRL) hosted its flagship event, PRL Connect 2024, on Friday, January 26, 2024, at Mövenpick Hotel, Karachi, under the theme "Powering Progress, Doubling Capacity." The event provided a platform for industry leaders, stakeholders, and partners to converge and explore PRL's transformative journey towards a sustainable energy future.

Key Highlights:

1. Exceptional Operational Performance: PRL's Chairman of the Board of Directors highlighted the company's stellar operational performance in the current and last quarter, achieving record-breaking profits, 100% plant availability, and Company's highest ever sales of Diesel & Petrol in September 2023.

2. Strategic Shift with Brownfield Refinery Policy: PRL showcased its strategic decision to embrace the Brownfield Refinery Policy, approved by the Federal Cabinet in August 2023. The policy, lauded for encouraging existing refineries to upgrade and expand, positions PRL for a transformative change in the refining industry.

3. Pioneering Refinery Expansion & Upgrade Project (REUP): PRL is spearheading a transformative Refinery Expansion & Upgrade



Project (REUP) aimed at doubling the crude processing capacity from 50,000 to 100,000 barrels per day. This strategic initiative not only ensures a significant boost in capacity but also focuses on enhancing profitability. The project is designed to zero Furnace Oil production, redirecting efforts towards maximizing the production of highly profitable products like Petrol and Diesel of Euro V standards. By aligning with market demands and prioritizing lucrative fuel products, PRL's REUP initiative aims to set new industry benchmarks for financial success and sustainability.

4. Shareholder's Support: A major development highlighted during the event was the shift in majority shareholding to Pakistan State Oil (PSO), signalling PSO's

strong commitment to upgrade and expand PRL. This move also ensures vertical integration for PSO as it secures a reliable supply chain.

5. National Impact: The Chairman emphasized that REUP is not only beneficial for PRL but also for PSO and the entire country. The project generates employment opportunities, stimulates economic activity, and contributes significantly to the national GDP, reducing import dependency and saving valuable foreign exchange.

6. Invitation to Partnerships: The Chairman extended gratitude to the attendees and invited banking and financial institutions to join hands with PRL in realizing the ambitious REUP project. The call for partner-

ships aims to forge ahead, doubling capacities, embracing sustainability, and contributing to the progress of Pakistan.

Quotes:

• Tariq Kirmani, Chairman, PRL Board: "PRL Connect 2024 marks a pivotal moment as we unveil our vision for a sustainable energy future. Our achievements and strategic decisions pave the way for transformative change, and we invite partners to join us in this ambitious journey."

• Zahid Mir, Managing Director/CEO: "Our journey towards doubling capacity is not just about numbers; it is about laying the foundation for a self-sufficient and sustainable energy future for Pakistan. We invite banking partners to become integral parts of our journey."

Urea selling prices exhibited significant variations within the fertilizer industry, with FFC offering urea at lower selling prices by around Rs 200-500 per bag during most part of the year. Sona urea prices towards the close of 2023 stood at around Rs 3,400 per bag in contrast to international prices hovering around Rs 6,200 per bag.

FFC ensured fertilizer supply across the country through its nationwide network of warehouses and dealers, and also to avoid unscrupulous practices by some elements through equitable fertilizer distribution and real time monitoring fertilizer shipments and dealer stock.

Dealerships were sensitized to market fertilizers at FFC suggested rates, while the farmers were also made aware to purchase product through registered dealers at prescribed rates. To further ease out urea availability and pricing issues for the farmers, the Company along with the Industry has coordinated a plan with Government to import urea and distribute it during 2024. Urea production stood at an outstanding 2,521 thousand tonnes, 5% higher than last year while maintaining high reliability factors and optimum standards of Health, Safety and Environment.

The profitability for 2023 barely covers the Company's requirement to build up reserves for the capital-intensive and foreign exchange denominated nodal compression project in addition to essential maintenance of plants at world class level. The Company is about to kick

ICCI for enhancing education budget to promote knowledge economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Friday urged the need to enhance budgetary allocation for educational sector in the country. He said that the youth were the future of country and still, less than 2% of the GDP was being allocated for education, thus millions of children were deprived of education. He was addressing a ceremony organized to

observe the International Day of Education at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He pleaded for substantially increasing the budget for education so that the educated youth could play an active role in the economic development and promote the knowledge economy. He said that mosques might be the centre to educate the out-of-school children. He said that the business community was

ready to cooperate with the government to improve the poor condition of schools.

Professor Dr Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Director General, National Language Promotion Department and former Vice Chancellor of Punjab University said that Pakistan could not progress without properly educating its children.

He stressed that education in Urdu should also be focused, which was the

national language of the country. He said that "to develop a tolerant nation, we should promote arts, poetry, literature, and painting as well."

Imtiaz Haider, Director General, Hamdard University said that prejudice, hatred, inequality, and other negative elements could be eradicated from society by providing quality education to the children.

He stressed for close academia-industry liaison to improve the economy.

SECP proposes anti-harassment measures for listed companies

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to promote safety and respect in the workplace, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has issued draft amendments to the Listed Companies (Code of Corporate Governance) Regulations, 2019 for public consultation.

The proposed amendments require the board of directors of listed companies to implement robust anti-harassment policies that align with the protection against harassment of women at the Workplace Act, 2010, and relevant provincial laws, said a news release issued here on Friday. These policies will

uphold the rights and well-being of all employees, fostering a more inclusive and equitable work environment. The amendments mandate several critical measures to ensure the effective implementation of anti-harassment policies as required under the Workplace Act, 2010, including development of a Code of Conduct, formation of Inquiry Committee, designation of Competent Authority and the display of Code of Conduct for awareness of all employees ensuring clear communication and accessibility.

This initiative marks a significant step towards building a more equitable

and ethical corporate landscape in Pakistan.

Integrating robust anti-harassment policies into the Code of Corporate Governance sets a strong precedent for responsible business practices and demonstrates the SECP's commitment to fostering safe and empowering workplaces for all.

The draft amendments are available for public comments and feedback on the SECP's website at <https://www.secp.gov.pk/document/notification-amendments-to-the-listed-companies-code-of-corporate-governance-regulations> - 2019/?wpdm=50448

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC) has announced its financial results for the year ended December 31, 2023 in its Board of Directors meeting held on January 26, 2024.

The year 2023 faced high inflation and interest rates while the Pak Rupee also continued its downward trajectory against US dollar, resulting in higher operating and financing costs of the Company. The retrospective increase in Super Tax levy led to higher effective tax rate of 45% compared to 40% last year, further pressurizing Company profitability.

Gas prices for the fertilizer sector were also increased significantly by 75%, however, the Company only passed on a partial impact in urea price during 2023, to offer urea at most economical rates to the farmers.

Urea selling prices exhibited significant variations within the fertilizer industry, with FFC offering urea at lower selling prices by around Rs 200-500 per bag during most part of the year. Sona urea prices towards the close of 2023 stood at around Rs 3,400 per bag in contrast to international prices hovering around Rs 6,200 per bag.

FFC ensured fertilizer supply across the country through its nationwide network of warehouses and dealers, and also to avoid unscrupulous practices by some elements through equitable fertilizer distribution and real time monitoring fertilizer shipments and dealer stock.

Dealerships were sensitized to market fertilizers at FFC suggested rates, while the farmers were also made aware to purchase product through registered dealers at prescribed rates. To further ease out urea availability and pricing issues for the farmers, the Company along with the Industry has coordinated a plan with Government to import urea and distribute it during 2024. Urea production stood at an outstanding 2,521 thousand tonnes, 5% higher than last year while maintaining high reliability factors and optimum standards of Health, Safety and Environment.

The profitability for 2023 barely covers the Company's requirement to build up reserves for the capital-intensive and foreign exchange denominated nodal compression project in addition to essential maintenance of plants at world class level. The Company is about to kick



off phase II of the critical Nodal Compression Project with capital outlay of over USD 100 million.

Profit after tax stood at Rs 29.67 billion and it includes Rs. 17.1 billion of other income. The earnings in dollar terms, however, registered negative growth compared to 2021 and

stood at the level of 2017.

FFC also continued its significant contribution towards the national exchequer through taxes and levies of Rs 36 billion compared to Rs 30 billion last year. The Company also enabled savings of around USD 1 billion foreign exchange to the

Country via import substitution during 2023 with aggregate savings of around USD 4.8 billion during the last five years.

The company also declared the final dividend of Rs 4.10 per share, with an aggregate distribution of Rs 15.49 per share for the year 2023.

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COURT

NOTICES

BUNER

IN the Court of Qaisar Khan Afridi Additional District Judge II/Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar. Appeal No. 96/13, Institution 6/9/2023. Date of hearing, 17/2/2024. Malok etc VS Sahib Gul etc. Notice to no. 4.Mohamadi Gul s/o Rahim Gul. 5.Mst. Farasat d/o Mohamadi Gul resident of Gagra tehsel Gagra district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 9 am dated 17/2/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

KOHAT

In the Court of Fazal Gul ADJ-IV Kohat, Appeal no.MCA-7/14 Date of hearing.06-02-2024 Titled:- Haseena Laiqat Vs Sana Obaid, Notice against:- (2)Khuram

Ali Khan Son of Laiqat Ali Khan presently R/o(now in Abroad Australia) (3)Huda Beenish Dughter of Laiqat Ali Khan R/o Hayat Abad District Peshawar (Respondents)Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a Appeal against you Respondents in which date of hearing 06-02-2024 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you Respondents is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 06-02-2024. otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law.order Issued on.08-01-2024 (Court of ADJ-IV Kohat)

KOHAT

In The Court of Fazal Gul ADJ-IV Kohat, Appeal no.CA-29/13, Date of hearing.12-02-2024, Titled: Abdul Manan (etc) Vs Yousaf Khan (etc), Notice against:- (5/2)Muhammad Saqib Khan Son of Yousaf Khan R/o Sudal Lachi Tehsil Lachi District Kohat presently R/o (now in Abroad Doha Qatar) (Respondent) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a Appeal against you Respondent in which date of hearing 12-02-2024 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you Respondent is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 12-02-2024. otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance

with law. order Issued on.10-01-2024 (Court of ADJ-IV Kohat)

KOHAT

In the Court of Shadab CJ-IX Kohat, Suit no.769/1, Date of hearing. 01-02-2024, Titled:- Muhammad Hamza Vs Gul Malook, Notice against:- Gul Malook (Farooq) Son of Muhammad Saeed R/o Lachi Tehsil Lachi District Kohat presently R/o (Now in Abroad QATAR) (Defendant) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a civil suit against you Defendant in which date of hearing 01-02-2024 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you Defendant is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 01-02-2024. otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law.order Issued on. 12-01-2024 (Court of CJ-IX Kohat).

KOHAT

My Father's correct name is Muhammad Nawaz while mistakenly written in my Educational documents as Mohammad Nawaz please make the required correction in it. Haris Nawaz S/o Muhammad Nawaz, warsak Road Tehsil Mathra Distt. Peshawar. 03159430732.

NAME

CORRECTION



In brief

Pak team to tour UAE

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan blind cricket team will tour United Arab Emirates (UAE) next month to participate in Tri-Nation Blind Cricket Series, Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) said on Friday. The event, scheduled to be held at the ICC Cricket Academy in Dubai, UAE from 22nd to 25th February 11 will feature teams from Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka, a PBCC statement said. Syed Sultan Shah, chairman PBCC has approved the team and also deputed the officials.

Squad: Category B1:- Zafar Iqbal, Riasat Khan, Muhammad, Shahzaib, Fakhar Abbas, Muhammad Salman
Category B2: Nisar Ali (Captain), Badar Munir (Vice Captain), Shahzeb Haider, Moain Aslam, Babar Ali
Category B3: Matiullah, Muhammad Rashid, Muhammad Safdar, Kamran Akhtar, Akmal Hayyat
Team officials: Muhammad Jameel (Head Coach), Tahir Mehmood Butt (Trainer).

Allah Gul elected General Secretary

PESHAWAR (APP): International bronze medalist Allah Gul Afridi was elected as General Secretary of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mixed Martial Arts Association in an executive body meeting held here on Friday with Senior Vice President Allah Gul Afridi in the chair. General Secretary of the Association Muhammad Amin and other members including Tehsin Ullah Khan were also present. After the stepping down of the General Secretary Muhammad Amin, the meeting decided to elect Allah Gul Afridi, who was earlier, acting as Senior Vice President, as General Secretary of the MMA Association, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The meeting proposed the name of Allah Gul Afridi, who has outstanding performances in the Mixed Martial Arts by winning medals both at the national and international levels. Just recently, Allah Gul Afridi won a bronze medal in Mixed Martial Arts at the Asian Mixed Martial Arts Championship held in Thailand. Speaking on this occasion, Allah Gul Afridi thanked the house for reposing confidence in him and assured that he would continue his work hard for the promotion of Mixed Martial Arts Game in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular and in Pakistan in general.

Inter-Club Cricket Tournament begins

KARACHI (APP): Landhi Gymkhana is off to a flying start when they beat Sir Syed Cricket Club by 6 wickets in the opening match of the Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament at Aga Khan Gymkhana Ground. Earlier, Tabish Jawed Senior Vice President of Regional Cricket Association Karachi inaugurated the tournament in a simple but impressive ceremony after hitting the ball, a communique said here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, he announced full cooperation to RCAK and sponsored the tournament for the promotion of Club Cricket in Karachi. The tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi after a gap of 6 years. In which 214 affiliated clubs of seven zones of Karachi were participating in the tournament. Summarized scores of the opening match. Sir Syed Cricket Club 178/9 in 40 overs.

Sinner ends Djokovic Grand Slam history bid at Australian Open

MELBOURNE (AFP/APP): Jannik Sinner ended Novak Djokovic's bid for a record 25th Grand Slam title on Friday, snapping the Serb's astonishing 33-match winning run at Melbourne Park to set up a final against Daniil Medvedev.

The Italian fourth seed was unfazed by dropping his first set of the tournament against the king of Rod Laver Arena, winning the semi-final 6-1, 6-2, 6-7 (6/8), 6-3.

Russian third seed Medvedev rallied from two sets down for the second time in the tournament to beat Alexander Zverev and make Sunday's title match. Ten-time champion Djokovic fought off a match point in the third-set tie-break but racked up 54 unforced errors and failed to create a single break point in an sub-par display by his stellar standards.

"It was a very tough match," said Sinner. "I started off really well. I missed the forehand but this is tennis. I just tried to be ready for the next set, which I started off really well." Sinner, 22, said he felt he had learned from defeat to Djokovic in last year's Wimbledon semi-finals -- the furthest he had previously gone at a Grand Slam -- and had been looking forward to the match.

"I think we play really similar -- you have to return as many balls as possible, he's such an incredible server," he said. "So I was just trying to push him around a little bit. I'm not going to tell you the tactics." Djokovic admitted he was "outplayed" by a man 14 years his junior.

"I was, in a way, shocked with my level, you know, in a bad way," he said. "There was not much I was doing right in the first two sets.

"I guess this is one of the worst Grand Slam matches I've ever played, at least that I remember."

But the 36-year-old insisted it was not the "beginning of the end" and vowed to return for another shot at the title next year.

Djokovic, who had not tasted defeat at the Australian Open since 2018, lacked his usual metronomic consistency as the super-cool Sinner raced into a 3-0 lead.

The Italian broke again in the sixth game and seized the first set when Djokovic went long with a forehand.

The decibel count on centre court rose at the start of the second set and the top seed settled himself with a convincing hold.

But his error count continued to mount and Sinner, who had beaten Djokovic in two of their previous three encounters, broke in the third game to establish a vice-like grip.

The defending champion urged the crowd to come to

his aid and cries of "Nole" rang around the packed stadium but he was broken again and slipped two sets down.

He saved a match point in a tie-break following a third set that went with serve before clinching it at his first opportunity and raising a clenched fist.

But the Serbian's serve came under renewed pressure again in the fourth set and he cracked to give Sinner a 3-1 lead, with the Italian keeping his nerve to earn victory and end an era at Melbourne Park.

In the later match, sixth seed Zverev appeared to be on his way to a second Grand Slam final when he won the first two sets.

Medvedev, 27, was two points away from defeat in the fourth set tie-break but toughed it out to pull level.

He engineered two crucial breaks in the decider to win 5-7, 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 in four hours 18 minutes, moving through to his third final in Melbourne.

"Physically and mentally, five sets is tough and many times I was not strong enough, so I'm happy," said the Russian, who has played three five-setters so far.

"A month ago I wanted to change to be stronger mentally and think less about one guy in the crowd who screams something or when I think the referee has done something wrong. I'm still far from perfect, but I'm trying."

West Indies weather Carey storm to stay on top at tea

BRISBANE (AFP/APP): The West Indies weathered an attacking storm from Australian wicketkeeper Alex Carey to keep their noses in front at tea on day two of the second Test at the Gabba on Friday.

At the second break, Australia were 161-7, still 150 runs behind the West Indies' first innings total of 311. Opener Usman Khawaja was not out 40, with Mitchell Starc falling on the last ball before tea.

Carey, who came to the crease with Australia reeling on 54-5, launched a blazing counterattack, racing to 50 runs off just 38 balls. He and Khawaja put on 96 runs in quick time before Carey, on 65, tried one big shot too many, mistiming a pull shot straight to Tagenarine Chanderpaul at deep fine leg. Kemar Roach took three quick wickets before the first break to stun Australia, leaving the hosts stagger-

ing on 24-4 at the first break.

After resuming on 266-8, the West Indies reached 311 in their first innings.

They then struck early to dismiss Steve Smith, Marnus Labuschagne, Cameron Green and Travis Head before dinner, leaving the Australian reply in tatters. The Australian experiment of moving Smith up the order to open the batting after David Warner's retirement hadn't worked in the first Test in Adelaide last week, and it failed again on Friday.

After hitting a beautiful straight drive off Roach to the boundary in the opening over, Smith was hit on the pad next ball, drawing a huge appeal from the West Indies. Umpire Nitin Menon said not out but the West Indies reviewed immediately and replays showed the ball would have crashed into middle stump, leaving Australia 6-1.

It was 11-2 in the next over when Labuschagne got a thick edge to fourth slip off Alzarri Joseph, where Kevin Sinclair took a brilliant diving catch to his right. Smith's move up the order was prompted by the Australians' desire to bring Green back into the side.

But Green failed in Adelaide and again on Friday, driving Roach on the up to give a simple catch to Kraigg Brathwaite at mid-off.

Head, who smashed a brilliant 119 in the first Test, was out first ball, ticking a down the leg side to be caught by wicketkeeper Joshua Da Silva.

Mitchell Marsh smashed his way to 21 off just 19 balls but on his 20th, he miscued a pull shot and got a leading edge to mid-off, giving Alzarri Joseph his second wicket and leaving Australia 54-5.

Carey and Khawaja then launched their recovery before Carey's dismissal.



MELBOURNE: Serbia's Novak Djokovic during a press conference after losing his semi final match against Italy's Jannik Sinner.

Shah Khawar promises PCB BoG formation, electing chairman at the earliest

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Cricket Board Acting Chairman Shah Khawar has said he will ensure formation of the Board of Governors (BoG) of the PCB and election of chairman in the shortest possible time, under the PCB constitution.

Addressing a press conference at the PCB headquarters at Gaddafi Stadium here on Friday, he said: "I have the mandate from PCB Patron Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar as the election commissioner and will discharge my duties under the PCB constitution."

Shah Khawar was confident that the BoG would be notified by tomorrow (Saturday), and the election of the PCB chairman would follow in the shortest possible time, adding that his first task was to complete the BoG through appointment of new members. The PCB acting chairman said the prime minister was authorised by the PCB constitution to appoint two BoG members, adding that Mustafa Ramday and Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi were his nominees in the wake of resignation by Zaka Ashraf.

About appointment of CM Mohsin Naqvi as the BoG member, and likely chairman PCB, he said a public office-holder like a prime minister or chief minister could not hold an office of profit, adding since the PCB chairman office was not an office of profit, Mohsin Naqvi could may assume the charge without any legal hiccup. He said once the PCB chairman was elected, the incumbent chairman would be hand over charge within seven days of the election as per the constitution.

On the day of election of the PCB Chairman, Shah Khawar said the election may be held before or a little beyond the general elections of February 8, 2024. He further said no inordinate delay will be tolerated in the election of PCB Chairman.

On new appointment by the inter-

im set-up, the Acting Chairman PCB Shah Khawar has said that the interim set-up may make short term appointment without going beyond its mandate, adding that some contracts of the coaching staff had expired while some had resigned and there may be need for some temporary appointments. On PSL 9 preparations, Shah Khawar, who is a renowned lawyer, dispelled the impression that the recent changes at PCB headquarters will effect the schedule of the PSL 9, adding that marquee event will take place without any ado. He said the body is run by professionals who will ensure that PSL 9 runs successfully.

On dissatisfaction of Peshawar Zalmi regarding match venues, the Acting Chairman said the Peshawar Zalmi grievance regarding match schedules may be addressed.

Dispelling impression of interference by the Ministry of Inter provincial coordination (IPC) in PCB affairs, he said there is not an iota of reality that the IPC Ministry has interfered with the running of PCB. He said the IPC ministry is not the regulatory ministry but the PCB affairs are to be guided by the patron - the Prime Minister.

On ineffectiveness of election of PCB Chairman if held under the caretaker government, Shah Khawar said it wil not be easy to undo the election of the PCB Chairman under the caretaker government if it is held held after formation of the BoG under the rules and regulations. He said let us set an example for the incoming governments to respect mandate of PCB elections for the next three years.

On Mohammad Hafeez, he said Mohammad Hafeez had had an informal meeting with him in the in the presence of Chief Selector Wahab Riaz and Barrister Salman. However, he added, Hafeez was given a contract for one month and he had

already exceeded while being with the Pakistan cricket team in New Zealand, adding the case for appointment of Director Cricket team is lying with the Patron.

To a question, he said the decisions of the Acting Chairman PCB may be challenged before the PCB Adjudicator Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani. On rescheduling of President Cup final between February 6 and 10 and ultimate clash with general elections, he said the dates of the final may further be rescheduled, adding the SNGPL had written to the PCB for rescheduling.

On ad-hocism, the Acting Chairman Shah Khawar said ad-hocism was not an ideal situation to run affairs of the PCB, adding that ad-hocism was not the the main reason of poor performance of the team in Australia and New Zealand. However, he said the incumbent PCB chairman will look into the performance of the cricketers.

On uniformity of policy on NOCs for leagues to players, he said there is need to create harmony in the matter of NOCs for league cricket, adding that under the PCB contracts players may be issued NOCs for two leagues.

Earlier, the Acting Chairman PCB described the circumstances which led to his appointment as Election Commissioner and Acting Chairman PCB. "It is worth mentioning that we were earlier confronted with a serious problem because of a restraining order of the Balochistan High Court which prohibited the formation of a new Board of Governors (BoG). However, we were able to convince the Balochistan High Court to dismiss that writ petition and the restraining order altogether. After this, I approached the Management Committee and its chairman and urged them to hold elections in light of this new development.

Islamabad United renews association with Bismah, Aliyah, Diana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad United has renewed its association with three leading Pakistan's female players Bismah Maroof, Aliyah Riaz and Diana Baig, as the team's Women Empowerment Champions.

A continuation of the empowerment programme, Islamabad United recognises the immense talent, dedication, and contribution our cricket stars make on and off the pitch, and was delighted to partner once again with these inspirational leaders, said a press release. Bismah Maroof, renowned for her strategic captaincy and stellar batting performances,

joins forces with Aliya Riaz, a formidable all-rounder, and Diana Baig, known for her pace and versatility.

This strategic alliance goes beyond the boundary, aiming to inspire and empower women both within and outside the cricketing arena. Islamabad United's commitment to gender equality and inclusivity was exemplified by this powerful trio, who not only excel in their sport but also serve as role models for aspiring professionals.

Speaking on the occasion, Amna Naqvi said, "We are thrilled to welcome Bismah Maroof, Aliya Riaz,

and Diana Baig to Islamabad United. Their prowess on the cricket field is matched only by their dedication to promoting women's empowerment. This collaboration underscores our commitment to fostering an environment where talent knows no gender boundaries." The Women Empowerment Champions initiative aligns with Islamabad United's broader vision of creating positive societal impact through sports. The franchise believes in harnessing the potential of cricket to break barriers and inspire the next generation of female athletes.

Dara Dostan Atish Club wins Peshawar Premier Football League title

PESHAWAR (APP): Enthusiastic Dara Dostan Atish Club of Dara Adam Khail clinched the trophy of the Peshawar Premier Football League Season-I after defeating Striker Defenders of Peshawar on a penalty shoot-out before playing a goalless draw in the stipulated 90-minute time.

The vociferous crowd at the historical Tehmas Khan Football Stadium saw a battle between Dara Dostan Atish Club and Strikers Defenders Club and responded well with their cheering hands. The players of both Dara Dostan Atish Club and Strikers Defenders of Peshawar City made some incisive rallies of attacks but both failed to score any goal due to poor finishing.

After the goalless first half, the second half also ended goal-less and to decide the fate of the match both the teams were awarded five each penalty kicks on which the goalkeeper of Dara Dostan Atish Club Ihsan thwarted all attempts of the Strikers Defenders team which the

services of some players from Chaman, Quetta, Balochistan as well.

The final match after a thrilling and nerve-wracking contest was decided on penalty kicks in Dara Dostan Atish Club defeated SDFC by 4-3 and became the champions. The honour was claimed at the closing ceremony of the final match played at Tahamas Football Stadium, Peshawar. CEO Spartax Fazaldino, a UK-based footballer, specially visited to see the League, graced the occasion as chief guest and distributed the prizes to the players. Chairman Organizing Committee Khalid Afridi, international footballer Basit Kamal and veteran footballer Syed Zahir Shah among others were present while thousands of spectators witnessed the thrill-packed match.

Later, the decision was made on penalty kicks in which Dara Dostan Atish's team won 4-3 when Dara's promising goalkeeper Ihsan saved two timely attempts to give his team a most deserv-

ing victory. He was also declared the best goalkeeper of the League. Special guest Fazaldino said that the organizers are commendable for organizing the best event in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, wherein hundreds and thousands of spectators turned up for every match.

He said that the performance of the players can be further improved by organizing competitions wherein the players could get a chance to show their hidden talent appropriately.

He said that the football talent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is quite high but to improve further, the continuity of activities should be maintained in this way. He said that it is hoped that next time a football league will be organized at the country level wherein teams from other provinces would also be invited. Earlier, in the first semi-final, SDFC Peshawar defeated Dara 90 by 4-2 in a thrilling match while in the second semi-final, Dara Dostan Atish Club defeated Popo Islamabad by 2-1 in another thrilling match.



In brief

Metro bus-coaster collision

ISLAMABAD (APP): Several people were critically injured after a horrifying crash between a Metro bus and a passenger coaster near Bhara Kahu, here Friday morning. As per details, rescue sources 1122 said that a metro bus collided with a coaster near Bhara Kahu, and as a result several people received serious injuries, a private news channel reported. The coaster was carrying employees when it met with the accident, the sources added. Rescue 1122 shifted the injured to nearby hospitals.

Two killed in a bus-bike collision

RAWALPINDI (APP): Two people here on Friday were killed and one severely injured in a road accident at IJ Principal Road. According to a spokesman Rescue-1122, the rescue teams reached the spot near Carriage Factory and shifted the injured and bodies to a nearby hospital. The spokesman informed that according to an eye witness, the misfortune incident occurred when a speedy passenger bus hit a bike.

Gohar offers Jumma prayer in Faisal Mosque

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Dr. Gohar Ejaz on Friday offered Jumma prayer in the capital's largest and beautiful Faisal Mosque. The caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar had instructed to offer Namaz-e-Istisqa across the country for rains across the country, necessary to deal with drought like situation causing serious threats to the health of human lives, especially the children. After the prayers, the minister said that Faisal Mosque was a national asset of Pakistan and its beautification needed special attention. He directed the Chief Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner Islamabad to complete the decoration work of the mosque as soon as possible.

Police arrest 11 outlaws

RAWALPINDI (APP): The district police in an operation against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers, illegal weapon holders and other lawbreakers here on Friday arrested 11 accused besides recovering over four kg hashish, 45 liters liquor, a 30 bore pistol, ammunition and other items from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Bani police rounded up three drug suppliers including two women namely Sadia Bibi, Zarka Bibi and Mudasir for having over four kg charras. Similarly, Rattaamral, Sadiqabad, Wah Cantt, and Dhamial police netted six accused with 45 liters liquor, a 30 bore pistol, ammunition and other items. Westridge and Mandra police arrested two accused namely Usama and Ahsanullah for having fireworks items and operating an illegal petrol agency.

Fatehpuri's birth anniversary observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Eminent Urdu linguist, researcher, writer, critic and scholar Farman Fatehpuri was remembered on the occasion of his 98th birth anniversary on Friday. He is widely regarded as the supreme authority on life and work of Ghalib. Born on January 26, 1926 in Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh, his real name was Syed Dildar Ali. He received his matriculation from Fatehpur and intermediate education from Allahabad in 1948 and graduated from Agra University in 1950. Farman migrated to Pakistan in 1950 and settled in Karachi.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister and Commerce Dr. Gohar Ejaz & Federal Minister for National Health Dr. Nadeem Jan visited PIMS Hospital.

Ashrafi led Salat al Istisqa to seek relief from drought, diseases

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Special Representative on Religious Affairs and Pakistani Diaspora in Middle East and Muslim Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, on Friday led a special prayer for rain (Salat al Istisqa).

Ashrafi, who is also the chairman of Pakistan

Ulema Council, said Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar's special directives and appeal resulted in the observance of the rain prayer across the country. He emphasized that the prayer was offered nationwide to seek relief from the ongoing drought and diseases.

He led the congregation

at Jamia Masjid Bahria Town, where he made special supplication for rainfall and an end to the drought affecting the country.

"Let us pray earnestly today, seeking forgiveness for our sins and mercy from our Lord," stated Ashrafi, urging the community to beseech Allah Almighty for rainfall and forgiveness of their transgressions.

ANF recovers huge quantity of weapons

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in an operation managed to recover huge quantity of weapons and other items, an ANF spokesman said here on Friday. He informed that a large number of weapons were recovered during a targeted operation conducted against drug trafficking.

The operation was conducted in Padizar area of Gwadar's coastal belt.

The ANF team during the operation spotted a point near the shore where some persons were unloading goods. Despite quick action of the team, the accused managed to escape while taking advantage of the darkness. On inspection of the shipment, the team found that the goods contained modern weapons including 259, 9-mm Glock pistols. The operation is a reflection of the ANF's determination to tackle threats to national security, apart from counter-narcotics, he added.

Sohrab lays foundation stone OPF School Rawalpindi's new academic block

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD), Jawad Sohrab Malik on Friday laid the foundation stone of the new academic block of OPF School Rawalpindi. On the occasion, the SAPM reiterated the Government of Pakistan's unwavering commitment to providing quality education to the children of overseas Pakistanis.

Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a new Academic Block at OPF Girls Higher Secondary School, Rawalpindi, the SAPM emphasized that this initiative reflects the government's dedication to meeting the educational needs of both the overseas community and the general public, a news release said. At present, 710 students including 279 children of Overseas Pakistanis are enrolled in the said school. New Academic Block will be constructed on an area of 21057 Sq. Ft to accommodate around 300 more students. The proposed construction work of the new academic block will be completed with an estimated cost of Rs.99.93 million.

934 candidates to contest for 13 NA seats, 26 Punjab Assembly seats in Rawalpindi Division

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the upcoming general election scheduled for February 8, a total of 934 candidates are contesting for 13 National Assembly and 26 Punjab Assembly seats of Rawalpindi Division.

According to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) approximately 729,617 voters will use their right to franchise in electing 93 representatives for both national and provincial assemblies.

Several prominent political figures, including Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf, former Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, former Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Sheikh Aftab Ahmed, Ghulam Sarwar Khan, Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, and Haneef Abbasi, are among the seasoned politicians vying for seats in the assemblies. According to available data, 284 candidates from various political parties, including independents, are contesting for the 13 seats in the National Assembly.

Meanwhile, for the 26 constituencies of the Punjab Assembly, 650 candidates are competing to represent these constituents in the assembly. The Attock district, with 1349,040 voters, will elect representatives for 2 seats in the National Assembly and 5 seats in the Punjab Assembly.

For NA-49 Attock-I, 14 candidates are contesting, and 20 candidates are competing for NA-50 Attock-II. Similarly, there are 16 candidates for PP1 Attock, 17 for PP2 Attock-II, 15 for PP3 Attock-III, 17 for PP4 Attock IV, and 14 for PP5 Attock-V. In the Murree district, 295,163 voters will elect representatives for one constituency in the National Assembly and two constituencies in the Provincial Assembly. For NA-51 Murree, 27 candi-

dates are in contention, and there are 32 candidates for PP6 Murree and 23 for PP7 Kahuta. Rawalpindi district, with 3,378,500 voters, will elect representatives for 6 seats in the National Assembly and 12 seats in the Punjab Assembly.

In Chakwal district, 771,916 voters will elect representatives for one seat in the National Assembly and 2 seats in the Provincial Assembly. For NA-58 Chakwal, 21 candidates are contesting, along with 21 for PP20 Chakwal and 11 for PP21 Chakwal.

Talagang district, with 429,923 voters, will elect representatives for one seat in the National Assembly and 2 seats in the Provincial Assembly. Jhelum district, with 1,056,480 voters, will elect representatives for 2 seats in the National Assembly and 3 seats in the Punjab Assembly.

For NA-60 Jhelum, 18 candidates are in the running, and 13 candidates are contesting for NA-61 Jhelum II, while there are 30 candidates for PP24 Jhelum, 24 for PP25 Jhelum, and 21 for PP26 Jhelum.

Several candidates from different constituencies of the National Assembly have served multiple terms. For instance, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan is running as an independent candidate from NA-53 and NA-54. Additionally, members like Former federal minister Sheikh Aftab from Attock and Major (ret'd) Tahir Iqbal from Chakwal have been members of the National Assembly more than once.

Other notable candidates who have been members of the National Assembly more than once include Ayaz Amir from NA-58 Chakwal, Chaudhry Farrukh Altaf from NA-61 Jhelum, Malik Sohail from NA-50 Attock, and Iman Tahir.

International Clean Energy Day observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Day of Clean Energy was celebrated on Friday by the General Assembly (resolution A/77/327) as a call to raise awareness and mobilize action for a just and inclusive transition to clean energy for the benefit of people and the planet.

January 26 is also the founding date of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), a global inter-governmental agency established in 2009 to support countries in their energy transitions, serve

as a platform for international cooperation, and provide data and analyses on clean energy technology, innovation, policy, finance and investment.

Coal, oil, and gas (fossil fuels) are responsible for nearly 90 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions. Scientists emphasize the need to cut emissions by almost half by 2030 and achieve net-zero by 2050 to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

Fossil fuels still dominate global energy production, but renewable sources of energy, such as

wind, solar, hydro, and geothermal, now power about 29 percent of electricity worldwide.

Energy lies at the core of a double challenge: leaving no one behind and protecting the Planet. And clean energy is crucial to its solution. In a world grappling with climate change, clean energy plays a vital role in reducing emissions, and can also benefit communities lacking access to reliable power sources. Still today, 675 million people live in the dark - 4 in 5 are in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Much awaited-rain to bring respite to citizens

ISLAMABAD (APP): After the prolonged dry period, the much-awaited rain with snowfall over the hills in upper parts of the country during the coming days, as per weather experts forecast, will weaken dense foggy conditions and provide relief to the citizens by improving air quality. According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), rain of light to moderate intensity with snowfall over the hills will lash upper parts of the country with occasional gaps.

The rain will also reduce travel hazards in the fog bearing areas of the country and prove as a sign of relief for those suffering from viral diseases especially allergy patients. A westerly wave was likely to enter western parts of the country on January 27 (night), and may persist over upper parts till January 31. Under the influence of this weather system, light to moderate rain with

snowfall over the hills is expected in Gilgit-Baltistan including Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar while in Kashmir including Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur from January 27-31. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, light to moderate rain with snowfall over the hills is expected in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Haripur, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Karak, Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Swabi, Buner, Bajaur, Kurram, Waziristan, Bannu and Kohat from January 27(night) to January 31 with occasional gaps.

In Punjab/Islamabad, light to moderate rain is expected in Islamabad, Potohar region from 27 (night) to January 31.

Light to moderate rain with snowfall over hills is

expected in Murree and Galliaty during the period with occasional gaps, while in Gujranwala, Sialkot, Lahore, Narowal, Mandi Bahauddin, Mianwali and Sardogha on January 30/31.

Cold and dry and foggy conditions during night and morning hours elsewhere in the province. In Balochistan, light to moderate rain with snowfall over the hills is expected in Quetta, Zhoib, Ziarat, Chaman, Barkhan and Makran coast with occasional gaps on January 28/29. In Sindh, cold and dry weather is expected in most parts of the province with shallow to moderate foggy conditions in upper Sindh. About the possible impacts and advises, the PMD said that the snowfall may disrupt roads in Murree, Galliaty, Naran, Kaghan, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Shangla, Astore, Hunza, Skardu, Neelum valley, Bagh, Poonch and Haveli during the forecast period.

Energy Ministry to organize national-level career expo

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division), in collaboration with prominent Oil, Gas, and Mineral companies, is set to organize a national-level career expo scheduled for January 31 and February 1.

Themed "Fuelling Futures," the Career Expo 2024 aimed to foster awareness and bridge the gap between students and companies in the Oil, Gas, and Mineral sectors.

The expo will provide a platform for meaningful interactions and access to career development resources. Senior management and Human Resource representatives from leading companies will be present, offering attending undergraduates and graduates a unique opportunity to explore exciting career prospects in the energy and mineral sector.

Minister for Energy Muhammad Ali expressed high expectations for the upcoming event, highlighting its reflection of the government's commitment to talent development and innovation in the workforce. He said that investing in youth and skills development is crucial for the future energy roadmap, enabling the harnessing of the true potential of young engineers, subject specialists, and experts.

Muhammad Ali encouraged students to seize the opportunity to network with leading companies, explore diverse sectors, and gain insights from professionals at the forefront of their field.

The expo aimed to host over 5000 students from diverse disciplines of Engineering and Business Management, representing leading universities from across Pakistan.

High school students aspiring to gain insights into current trends and pursue careers in these fields are also welcome, contributing to the nurturing and encouragement of the next generation of professionals in the energy and mining industry.

This national-level Career Expo extends a warm welcome to all registered participants, offering an unparalleled opportunity to connect with industry leaders, strengthen industry-academia linkages, and foster meaningful communication between the energy think tank and the workforce of the future. Pakistan Petroleum Limited, one of the leading national Exploration and Production companies, is sponsoring the event.

Individuals interested in attending the Expo are advised to register at www.careerexpo2024.com.

Kashmiris expressed strong disapproval, resentment towards India; Mushaal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) Mushaal Hussain Mulick stated that Kashmiris across the Line of Control (LoC) marked Indian Republic Day on Friday as a Black Day, expressing their strong disapproval and resentment towards India.

In her special message on Black Day here Friday,

she stated that the people in Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) along with the rest of the world, marked Indian Republic Day as a Black Day. She criticized the RSS-led Indian government for celebrating the abrogation of the constitution, targeting minorities and undermining the so-called scholarly democracy.

Mushaal further commented that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the idol of Lord Ram at the new temple constructed on the site where the Babri Masjid stood for centuries before being demolished by a Hindutva mob. She also predicted that India would eventually disintegrate due to divisive RSS policies.

Fake cigarette manufacturing factory in Rawalpindi raises concerns

ISLAMABAD (APP): The recent discovery of a fake cigarette manufacturing factory in the Jhangi Syedan area of Rawalpindi has raised significant concerns regarding the illicit activities of the tobacco industry. The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) addressed the broader implications of this disturbing revelation.

Malik Imran Ahmed, Country head of Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK), stated that the existence of such clandestine operations underscored the insidious tactics employed by the tobacco industry to evade regulations and profit at the expense of public health and economic stability. The production and distribution of counterfeit cigarettes represented a tactic by the tobacco industry to confuse the government and compel them to lower taxation on tobacco products. Whether taxation was lowered or not, the industry benefited, leaving the people of Pakistan at a loss, said in a Press Release issued here on Friday.

Malik Imran emphasized the detrimental impact of counterfeit tobacco products

on public health and the economy. He stressed the urgent need for heightened vigilance and enforcement measures to thwart the tobacco industry's deceptive practices and protect the well-being of communities across Pakistan.

Dr. Khalil Ahmad Dogar, Program Manager at SPARC, condemned the tobacco industry for its relentless pursuit of profits at the expense of public health. He added that the discovery of the fake cigarette manufacturing facility served as a stark reminder of the urgent need for comprehensive regulatory measures and enforcement mechanisms to curb illicit activities within the tobacco industry.

Dr. Dogar emphasized that this incident should not serve as an excuse to advocate for lowering tobacco taxation. Increased tobacco taxation was necessary for Pakistan, as highlighted by the World Health Organization and the World Bank. It was the government's duty to ensure that tax revenue was collected from the tobacco industry and that they were not granted any relaxation under the guise of illicit trade.



ISLAMABAD: CDA workers are busy preparing the land for planting along the Expressway.

‘25 foreign nationals in jail’

KABUL (TOLONews): The deputy head of the Office of the Prison Administration, Habibullah Badr, said that there are 25 foreign nationals currently in the prisons of the Islamic Emirate. In an interview with TOLONews, Badr said that they were detained for committing various crimes, but he did not give details. “The total detainees of foreign nationals are nearly 25 who are detained on charges with criminal cases,” he said.

NAI suspends its operations

KABUL (TOLONews): Muejeeb Khelwatgar, the head of NAI (a group that supports open media in Afghanistan) in a video message announced the temporary suspension of this organization's activities in Afghanistan. Khelwatgar stressed that no representative will be representing the organization in Afghanistan anymore. “The leadership of the NAI in their latest meeting reached an agreement to halt the activity of NAI for temporary period of time in Afghanistan,” he said.

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

UN to host follow-up meeting on Afghanistan in Doha on February 18-19



KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations has announced that a follow-up meeting of special envoys from countries and regional organizations regarding Afghanistan will be hosted by Antonio Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on February 18 and 19, 2024 in Doha.

Stephane Dujarric, the spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, stated on Wednesday, January 24th that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss how to increase international engagement on Afghanistan in a coherent, coordinated, and structured manner, taking into account the recommendations of an independent assessment of the country.

The independent assessment report was conducted by Feridoun Sinirloglu, the Special Coordinator of the United Nations for Afghanistan. The United Nations Security Council has issued a resolution to implement the recommendations of this assessment and has requested the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative for Afghanistan.

In its resolution, the Security Council also urged the Secretary-General to designate this special representative with strong expertise in human rights and gender issues related to Afghanistan, in consultation with its members, Afghan authorities, women, civil society, and regional countries. The Security Council stated in its resolution that this special representative should implement the recommendations of the independent assessment of Afghanistan without affecting the mandate of UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) and the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan. However, the Taliban is opposed to the appointment of a new special representative by the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan.

Afghan activists call on Swedish Parliament to recognize ‘Gender Apartheid’ in Afghanistan



KABUL (Khaama Press): A group of Afghan residents in Sweden met with some members of the Swedish parliament, requesting that the Swedish government officially recognize “gender apartheid in Afghanistan and the genocide of the Hazaras.” Members of the “Solidarity Union” and several human rights defenders met with Swedish parliamentarians on Thursday, January 25th.

A member of the Swedish Social Democratic Party stated that they would not recognize the Taliban government until they respect human rights. Participants in this meeting told Afghanistan International that Linnéa Wikman, the foreign affairs spokesperson for the Swedish Social Democratic Party, has stated that Sweden will not recognize the Taliban until they respect human rights, girls’ and women’s right to education, and the rights of religious minorities. Sweden will not cooperate with this group in any way. Meanwhile, the members of the Solidarity Union asked Swedish authorities to respond strongly to the detention and torture of women and girls in Afghanistan and to impose sanctions on Taliban officials through the European Union, international organizations, and human rights bodies. During this meeting, Afghan activists expressed concern about the human rights situation and urged the global community to take action to stop targeted attacks against the Hazaras.

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Kyrgyzstan delegation meets with Islamic Emirate officials

KABUL (TOLONews): The delegation of Kyrgyzstan, led by Daniyar Amangeldiev, minister of economy and finance of Kyrgyzstan met with the acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum, Shahabuddin Delawar and acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi.

According to the statement of the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP), the two sides discussed cooperation in bilateral economic fields and investment in mines in Afghanistan. Delawar was quoted in the statement as saying that the ministry has made calls for bids for gold, iron and gas mines for and that the Kyrgyz investors can present their proposals to the ministry.

The minister of economy and finance of Kyrgyzstan also met with Muttaqi and discussed the trade and transit issues. According to the deputy spokesman for the Foreign Minister, Hafiz Zia Ahmad Takal, Muttaqi said that the security and stability in Afghanistan has been provided which created a better opportunity for transit and trade. He also expressed Afghanistan’s readiness to work on major economic projects such as CASA-1000. According to Takal, the Kyrgyz delegation pledged to provide opportunities for the Afghan traders to be connected with China through Kyrgyzstan.

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Denmark provides \$2.2 million aid to Afghanistan



KABUL (Khaama Press): Following Denmark’s humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, the United Nations Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has announced that this country has provided a contribution of \$2.2 million to Afghanistan. OCHA reported this on Thursday, January 25th, on its social media platform X, stating that Denmark has added the equivalent of \$2.2 million US dollars to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund, which is aimed at supporting life-saving activities. Furthermore, OCHA added that Denmark has contributed a total of 236.4 million Danish Kroner, equivalent to \$36.4 million US dollars, to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund since 2015.

Prior to this announcement, the United Nations’ Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund had disclosed that Denmark had contributed \$6.2 million to support the people of Afghanistan, with a particular focus on empowering women and girls. These contributions come at a time when several aid organizations and agencies had previously warned about the increasing poverty and needs of the people in Afghanistan. Since the political landscape changed in the country in August 2021, the people have been facing a severe humanitarian crisis.

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Girls’ participation in Art Workshop in Afghanistan fades due to fear of detention

KABUL (Khaama Press): Recent restrictions, including the detention of girls on charges of “dress code violations,” have instilled fear and terror among families whose daughters attend educational centers or art workshops. Educational centers for foreign languages, art workshops, and calligraphy classes have covertly or openly provided opportunities for the education of several girls. However, according to officials of art workshops, the detention of girls from various parts of Kabul has led to a decrease in the presence of girls in these centers.

Qorban Najafi, the chief manager of an art workshop in Kabul, told Khaama Press that following concerns in various parts of Kabul, especially the detention of girls in recent weeks, the presence of girls in this center has decreased by more than 70 per cent. He stated that before the mass detentions of girls on charges of immodesty, approximately 70 girls were engaged in learning the principles of painting at this center, making significant progress in the field. However, the number has now dropped to less than 20.

Latifa Bahadari, one of the students in this art workshop, told Khaama Press that the recent actions of the Taliban regime have instilled fear among families and caused serious concerns. She mentioned that these detentions have even affected her work process, saying, “I used to finish a painting in a week, but now it’s been two weeks, and I still haven’t completed one.” Samira, another girl who turned to painting due to the closure of schools, is also a student at this gallery. She told Khaama Press, “I was in the ninth grade when the Taliban closed the schools. We hadn’t even received our transcript yet.”

After the return of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan, the practice of painting art significantly declined in the country, with several art workshops closing in various provinces, and artists were banned from painting portraits and certain other objects.

Local, intl flights out of Khost begin

KHOST (TOLONews): A flight was made from Khost International Airport to Al Ain, UEA on Friday (January 26). The Ministry of Transportation and Civil Aviation said that the first flight, which was a commercial flight, was conducted by Ariana Afghan Airlines from Khost province to Al Ain after a two-year wait. According to the spokesperson of the ministry, two flights will take off from the airport every week. “First flight to Khost International Airport was conducted from Kabul by Ariana Afghan Airlines, meanwhile, the first ever flight took off from Khost to Al Ain city of UAE,” Imamudin Ahmadi, the spokesman for the Ministry of Transportation and Civil Aviation said. Passengers and Khost residents expressed joy over the inauguration of flights from Khost province while asking the government to also provide facilities for other airlines to conduct flights. “I am very happy to see flights taking off from Khost, Al Ain-based Afghans are also happy because the price of tickets will decrease and they will afford coming and going back,” said Saidullah. “When government services begin, it is usually a positive move. The Khost residents will no longer be taking the five-hour drive to Kabul to fly to UAE, they will be flying from their own province,” said Sabrak Ali Shah, another resident of Khost province.

According to officials at the ministry of transportation and civil aviation, the Khost International Airport is ready for all flights, adding that efforts are underway to facilitate other airlines to begin flights to and from Khost province.

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Houthi rebels fire a missile toward US warship

JERUSALEM: Yemen's Houthi rebels launched a missile Friday toward a US warship patrolling the Gulf of Aden, forcing it to shoot down the projectile, officials said. The attack marks the latest by the rebels in their campaign against ships traveling through the Red Sea and surrounding waters, which has disrupted global trade amid Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

An anti-ship ballistic missile came near the USS Carney, an Arleigh-Burke class destroyer that's been involved in American operations to try and stop the Houthi campaign since November, the US military's Central Command said. "The missile was successfully shot down by USS Carney," the statement said. "There were no injuries or damage reported." The Iranian-backed Houthi rebels did not immediately acknowledge the attack, though they typically take several hours afterward to claim their assaults.

The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Operations, which oversees Mideast waterways, earlier reported the attack as happening southwest of Yemen's port city of Aden. The American statement again took pains to avoid saying the Houthis directly targeted the Carney, something that Washington has been doing since the attacks began in November. That's likely aimed at trying to not have the Red Sea crisis grow larger as experts worry about the Israel-Hamas war morphing into a wider conflict. However, the US and Britain have launched multiple rounds of airstrikes in the time since targeting Houthi missile depots and launcher sites in Yemen, a country that's been wracked by conflict since the rebels seized the capital, Sanaa, in 2014.

Since November, the rebels have repeatedly targeted ships in the Red Sea, saying they were avenging Israel's offensive in Gaza against Hamas. But they have frequently targeted vessels with tenuous or no clear links to Israel, imperiling shipping in a key route for global trade between Asia, the Mideast and Europe. Since the airstrike campaign began, the rebels now say they'll target American and British ships as well. On Wednesday, two American-flagged ships carrying cargo for the US Defense and State departments came under attack by the Houthis, forcing an escorting US Navy warship to shoot some of the projectiles down. — Arab News

Barrister Gohar offers cease fire

F.P. Report

BUNER: The PTI central chief candidate NA 10 Buber Barrister Gohar Khan has asked state agencies for cease fire and to let the public freely decide their future statesmen by fare free and transparent elections on 8, February this year.

Barrister expressed unhappiness over state agencies including judiciary for what he called injustices done with Khan and PTI by imprisonment rejecting intra party elections depriving from party symbol and forcing them independent candidates to snatch the right of reserved seats as well. He was addressing a well attended grand workers convention of the party in tehsel Daggar on Friday. The party candidate PK 25 Riaz Khan tehsel Daggar Nazim Haji Rozi Khan Qaym Khan Inam Khan Liaqat Khan Irshad Khan Kamran Khan and many others addressed too.

Barrister in his Pushto and Urdu languages speeches repeatedly gestured toward the ground breaking crowd of PTI activists in the convention and asked the state agencies to look into their courage and antihisiam who were eager to bring Imran Khan back to the chair of premiership. Barrister repeated the Junun of the workers high many times and they would definitely cost vote to the PTI nominated candidates through out Pakistan especially in Buner all of PTI candidates would clean sweep.

Big money fails to stop Trump

WASHINGTON (Reuters): From Wall Street to Silicon Valley, wealthy donors have thrown tens of millions of dollars at Republican US presidential candidate Nikki Haley in an effort to keep Donald Trump from returning to the White House. They have learned a hard lesson: Big money can't win the Republican presidential nomination — at least not against Trump, who holds the support of a wide majority of the party's voters.

Pro-Haley forces outspent the main outside group supporting the former president's candidacy by more than two to one over the past year, according to a Reuters analysis of campaign finance disclosures filed with the Federal Election Commission. The SFA Fund Inc, the main pro-Haley super PAC, has so far reported spending more than \$70 million backing her run over the last year, and a super PAC affiliated with billionaire Charles Koch reported spending around \$40 million to support Haley or oppose Trump.

In contrast, the main pro-Trump super PAC, known as MAGA Inc, reported spending about \$50 million over the same period. Despite that, Trump romped to two strong wins, first in Iowa on Jan. 15, and then on Tuesday in New Hampshire. While Haley has vowed to carry on, Trump has driven all of his other rivals out of the race and has all but clinched the Republican nomination to face Democratic incumbent Joe Biden in the November general election.

In interviews with around a dozen donors and strategists who opposed Trump, a feeling of powerlessness seeped through. "Trump has a base that basically is impenetrable. I don't think money was the issue at all," said metal magnate Andy Sabin. Sabin himself is illustrative of some donors' frenzied quest for a Trump opponent: At first, Sabin backed Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. Then, put off by DeSantis' foreign policy stance, Sabin decided to back U.S. Senator Tim Scott.

When Scott dropped out, Sabin chose to back Haley. After she lost New Hampshire, however, Sabin said on Wednesday that the race was effectively over. The apparent failure of anti-Trump Republicans to stop him highlights his popularity with his supporters, many of who dismiss the multiple criminal prosecutions he faces as politically motivated. Trump says he is innocent of all the charges.

The disempowering of wealthy donors is yet another way that Trump, who is financially fueled by small contributions, has fundamentally remade the Republican Party. "The idea that any single entity can take checks and spend hundreds of millions of dollars to impact a presidential campaign is just not a 21st-century reality," said Ed McMullen, a top fundraiser for Trump and his former ambassador to Switzerland.

Trump's financial model was sparking imitators, McMullen said. "I'm finding more candidates who are starting to focus more on a broader donor base than a singular high-dollar donor base." Hardline conservatives in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, for instance, already rely heavily on small campaign donors. The Trump and Haley campaigns did not respond to requests for comment.

The disconnect between wealthy donors

and Republican voters on the ground is apparent. Keith Rabois, a Miami-based venture capitalist backing Haley, in December shared a graph on social media platform X showing her climb in public opinion polls. "This is exactly what a successful startup's KPIs look like," he wrote. Key Performance Indicator, which aims to gauge business performance, is unlikely to be among the average Trump voter's — or average American's — daily lexicon.

"Key Performance Indicator? I just chuckle," said Gary Leffler, a general contractor who was a precinct captain supporting Trump in Iowa and is known for driving a Trump-themed tractor to rallies. "It's a classic mistake made by people who have money. They take people out of the equation. It's a total disconnect," Leffler added of the donor class. "They're not going to the grocery stores, to the home improvement stores, they're not really connecting to people on the street."

When asked about his comments and donors' role, Rabois said he never believed "money matters" in politics, and said voters would again reject Trump. Another illustration of the apparent diminishing power of old-line Republican money comes in Charles Koch, the fossil fuels magnate whose family-built Americans for Prosperity (AFP), one of the most formidable U.S. conservative advocacy and donor networks. While Americans for Prosperity Action's endorsement of Haley gave her more money and momentum, their advertisements and door knocking failed to convince enough voters. To be sure, AFP Action's 2024 strategy also involves congressional races, where it aims to prevent Democrats from gaining seats.

Reed Galen, a former Republican consultant who is raising money for the anti-Trump Lincoln Project, said that donors might have had more success if they had started spending against Trump a year earlier, been relentless in their attacks, and benefited from stronger candidates. Still, he conceded: "I'm not sure even that would have worked."

Some donors who had previously bet against Trump have already begun to support him. Dan Eberhart, a prominent donor who previously supported DeSantis, is now backing Trump, for example. And Sabin, the metals magnate, said he would vote for Trump in November, although he said he wouldn't give him a "nickel." Several donors told Reuters that Trump's team had been calling to try to get them on board, including in at least one case by enticing them with the offer of a Trump meeting at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida. Trump upped the ante, saying that anybody making a contribution to Haley would be "permanently barred" from his political orbit. One Haley donor said he feared speaking out against Trump for fear of getting on his bad side, adding, "That's dangerous." Of course, Trump has long had some major, committed donors on his side, including Home Depot billionaire Bernie Marcus, who told Reuters he'd likely fund Trump even if the candidate is convicted. George Glass, a major Trump campaign fundraiser and his former ambassador to Portugal, said he expected "at least half" of donors who backed a non-Trump candidate would return to the fold, adding, "It's pretty much a unification behind President Trump."



ISLAMABAD: Activists of All Parties Hurriyat Conference holding a banner during protest as they observe Indian Republic Day as Black Day during an anti-Indian protest.

Elahi, others get SC order

(Continued from Page 1)

arrest grounds, as highlighted by his lawyer Ali Zafar.

Notably, one application for Umar Aslam's election candidacy was rejected, while another was approved, creating a legal paradox. A division bench of SCP heard the cases of the appeals against rejected nomination papers of candidates by Returning Officers (ROs).

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah remarked on the fundamental right to participate in elections, stating that punishing any individual by depriving them of this right required careful consideration. The debate also touched upon the legal aspects of preventing a fugitive or an individual violating advertising laws from contesting elections.

Reference was made to Article 17, emphasizing that people hold paramount importance under fundamental human rights, as noted by Justice Athar Minallah.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah advocated for letting the people of Pakistan decide their elected representatives. The discussion further explored the clauses of Article 17, 62, and 63 that prevent a fugitive from participating in elections, with Justice Mansoor Ali

Shah asserting the role of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) or the courts in determining the status of an individual as an advertisement.

Questions were raised about the accountability of the ECP, with Justice Athar Minallah asserting that it must answer to the people of Pakistan. Despite the commencement of ballot paper printing, concerns were expressed about depriving candidates of their basic rights, prompting a reflection on the decision-making process before the irreversible printing stage. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah pointed out the need for foresight before printing, suggesting that anticipating legal challenges could have prevented the complications that subsequently arose in the courts.

On the other hand, PTI leader Arif Abbasi faced a setback as his appeal against the rejection of nomination papers for PP-19 was dismissed. The apex court upheld the Election Tribunal's decision, citing critical factors that contributed to the dismissal. The Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) revealed that the petitioner had two criminal cases against him wherein a detail that was not disclosed in the nomination papers. The omission raised concerns, and

when questioned about his son's properties in London by the returning officer, the petitioner reportedly remained silent.

The SC remarked that two FIRs were registered against Arif Abbasi in the Waris Khan police station, a fact brought to light by the petitioner's lawyer during the proceedings. Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa urged transparency, advising the petitioner to present the relevant documents and disclose all facts if intending to pursue the case. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar expressed concern over a person with two cases freely moving around the city.

Addressing the petitioner's decision not to seek bail in the trial court, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar questioned the rationale behind bypassing the standard legal process. The Chief Justice, recalling a recent case where bail was granted, emphasized the importance of proper preparation when making legal applications. The petitioner's lawyer, Abdul Razzaq, argued that both criminal cases were mentioned in the affidavit, but the court seemed dissatisfied, with Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa pointing out the necessity of truthfulness in legal proceedings.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Gilgit-Baltistan, Syed Mehdi Shah, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Rs 5b budget needed for 4-month in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): A request has been made to the Finance Division, Govt of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the release of Rs. 5 billion for the provincial budget for four months for 36 government sectors departments with Rs. 900 million have been recommended for the health department and Rs. 600 million for the construction of roads.

According to a letter addressed to the Finance Division, Govt of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a details budget needed for 36 government sectors departments including Rs. 500 million for multi-sectoral development, Rs. 500 million for water sector, Rs. 350 million for the Department of Primary Secondary and Higher Secondary Education. Likewise, Rs 250 million for drinking water and sewage drainage projects while it has been requested to release Rs. 250 million immediately for energy and power.

Similarly, it is recommended to release Rs 350 million for Higher Education Department and Rs 200 million for Livestock and Dairy Development and Urban Development, Rs 50 million for sports, Rs 100 million for agriculture, tourism, forests and local governments and Rs. 60.10 million have been requested for industries and Rs. 55 million for the department of interior and tribal affairs. Rs. 45 million for relief and rehabilitation while Rs. 40 million each for Urban Policy Unit, Lion Justice and Board of Revenue.

The finance department has been requested to give money immediately for the rest of the departments as well through the letter while it has been demanded to release a total of five billion rupees. However, the Finance Department has not yet given any response regarding the proposal of the Planning and Development Department.

UK's King Charles hospitalized

LONDON: The United Kingdom's King Charles III has been admitted to a London hospital for scheduled surgery. Buckingham Palace said, joining his daughter-in-law Kate who is recovering from surgery. "The king was this morning admitted to a London hospital for scheduled treatment," the palace said in a statement on Friday.

"His Majesty would like to thank all those who have sent their good wishes over the past week and is delighted to learn that his diagnosis is having a positive impact on public health awareness." Royal officials took the unusual step last week of issuing a bulletin on the 75-year-old monarch's health, disclosing that he had an enlarged prostate but the condition was benign.

The king was pictured arriving with his wife Queen Camilla at the private London Clinic in west London on Friday, where Kate, the princess of Wales, is also having treatment after undergoing abdominal surgery last week. A royal source said Charles had visited Kate before his own treatment. The palace has declined to say how long the king would stay in hospital but his upcoming public engagements have been postponed to allow a short period of recuperation. — Arab News

KP CM, KOICA team discuss welfare projects

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A delegation headed by Country Director Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Mr. Yeon Je Hoe and Country Manager United Nation Office for Project Services (UNOPS) Ms. Jennifer Ankrom Khan called on caretaker Chief Minister

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah here at Chief Minister's House the others day and discussed with him matters of mutual interest with special focus on public welfare projects being executed in the province with the assistance of UNOPS and KOICA.

Provincial Minister Dr. Syed Sarfaraz Ali Shah, spokesperson to Chief Minister Brigadier (R) Syed Mujtaba Tirmizi and others were also present on the occasion. The meeting discussed the matters related to timely completion of ongoing development projects being implemented with the assistance of UNOPS and KOICA. Prospects of mutual cooperation in the near future especially development projects for merged districts were also discussed on the occasion.

Speaking on this occasion, the chief minister said that UNOPA and KOICA are playing an important role in the public wellbeing



and development of backward areas; especially in providing clean drinking water to the people. Touching upon the priorities of his government regarding development of newly merged districts, the chief minister said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially merged areas had been affected badly during the war against terrorism.

"Militancy is not a problem of this province but the entire country as well as international community is also faced with this challenge", he remarked and added that people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are on the front line in the war against terrorism. That's why, he said that this war has badly affected our economy, peace, development and all other sectors of society.

He made it clear that fast track development of newly merged districts is the priority area of the provincial government adding that, despite the numerous challenges and difficult financial situation, special efforts are being made for this purpose; and the government also need cooperation from international

donor agencies and developmental organizations in this regard.

He said that economic development and prosperity is the better and an effective tool to combat the negative impacts of militancy and terrorism. He maintained that the provincial government has devised "Human Resource Export Strategy" under which, youth of this province would be imparted with market-based crash courses, thereby enabling them to get job opportunities.

Youth of this province are highly talented; they just need to train in accordance with the needs and requirements of modern market and for this purpose, the government will also require support and cooperation from donor agencies.

He said that these youth once trained and equipped with the skills as per their capabilities, would be deployed to local and international markets. "We can also provide skilled human force to foreign countries especially our development partners as per their demand," he concluded.

ECP grants magisterial authority to DROs, ROs

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has delegated the powers of a first-class magistrate to District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs) to ensure the seamless execution of the general elections 2024.

According to the ECP notification released on Friday, magisterial powers were conferred upon District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs) in accordance with Section 193 of the Election Act 2017. These powers can be utilized by ROs and DROs during the general elections for national and provincial assemblies in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan until the official announcement of final results for the candidates.

Returning Officers (ROs) and District Returning Officers (DROs) have the authority to initiate action against candidates who

breach the code of conduct prescribed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). The aforesaid officers will exercise the powers of the Magistrate first class in respect of the offences defined in Sections 169 and 171 and take cognizance of any such offence under Section 190 of the code of criminal procedure and shall try it summarily under Chapter XX of the code.

A day earlier, the Federal cabinet issued an official notification regarding the deployment of Pakistan Army's personnel across Pakistan to perform duties at sensitive constituencies and polling stations during the general election 2024. "Under Article 245 of the Constitution, the army will be deployed across the country," the notification stated.

The notification further stated that the military personnel – deployed outside sensitive polling stations from Feb 05 till Feb 10 – will serve as a quick response force. The notification mentioned that the

deployment of Army personnel will play a major role in the transparent and peaceful polling process. The notification further added that the Civil Armed Forces will also be stationed at the Printing Corporation of Pakistan and the Pakistan Post Foundation.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has taken action against 24 candidates and a local government chairman for violating the Code of Conduct during elections, imposing fines as a penalty.

In NA-23 Mardan, candidate Aqib Ismail has been fined Rs 50,000, while from PK-99, Awami National Party (ANP) candidate Noorani Khan has been imposed a fine of Rs 10,000. Similarly, candidate Ikram-ul-lah Ghazi from PK-39 has been fined Rs 10,000. These fines, totaling various amounts, have been submitted to the national treasury through the returning officers (ROs) as a consequence of the candidates' breaches.

Feb 8 election

(Continued from Page 1)

The prime minister lauded the services of the PTA chairman and his team in extending mobile phone and Internet services to the common man.

PM lauds role of Rotary int'l, world community for polio eradication in Pakistan: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar lauded the Rotary International, world community and development partners for their role in the eradication of polio in Pakistan.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of Rotary International led by Stephanie A. Urchik, also appreciated the organization's services for the promotion of education and other sectors. The delegation briefed the prime min-

ister about the Pakistan Smart Village Programme and performance of the Rotary International for polio eradication.

The prime minister congratulated Stephanie for becoming the first female president of Rotary International and expressed good wishes. He also reiterated his government's resolve to make every Pakistani children safe from polio. He assured the Rotary International for his government's all-out cooperation in the execution of its programmes, and expressed the hope that the organization would expand the accessibility to their programmes. The prime minister was told that Rotary would help uplift the living standards of the people while taking advantage of innovation and tech-

nology. It was told that the Smart Villages would help promote the agriculture sector, take advantage of alternative energy, improve irrigation, provide drinking water, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. The meeting was told that the Rotary International had donated around 800,000 books across Pakistan, with 200,000 distributed in Balochistan.

The delegation also gifted another 10,000 books to the prime minister which would be distributed in different parts of the country. It was told that the mobile library of Rotary International was helping to promote book reading and literacy. Caretaker Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.