

## Zardari meets Kazmi

### F.P. Report

MULTAN: President of Pakistan People Party Parliamentarian Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday met with ex-federal minister Hamid Saeed Kazmi and discussed the political scenario for south Punjab, particularly Multan, in the wake of upcoming general elections. Ex-Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani and others were also present on this occasion.



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ISLAMABAD: Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah presenting a copy of souvenir to Chief Justice of Pakistan, Qazi Faez Isa in conference at Federal Judicial Academy.

## JI moves fresh resolution calling for timely polls

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A day after the resolution seeking to delay polls was approved by the Senate, a fresh resolution has been moved in the upper house seeking elections to be held on February 8 as per schedule.

Jamaat-e-Islami's (JI) Senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan, in the resolution submitted to the Senate Secretariat today, pointed out that holding elections is a constitutional requirement. The resolution stated that holding timely elections is the responsibility of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the caretaker government.

"Supreme Court verdict on elections has been issued and February 8 has been set as the date for the elections," states the resolution. It added that the recently passed resolution calling for a delay in the polls is "undemocratic and unconstitutional". "Free and fair elections should be held on February 8 and all parties should be provided with a level playing field," states the resolution. It added that the recently passed resolution be considered illegal.

A day earlier the Senate approved a non-binding resolution seeking a delay in the general elections, set to be staged on February 8,

## SC moved to initiate contempt proceedings against senators seeking poll delay

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court (SC) calling for contempt proceedings against senators involved in passing a resolution in the Senate that sought a further delay in the February 8 elections.

The elections are set to take place in 90 days when an assembly is dissolved, but the polls in all five legislative are yet to be held and they've already surpassed their constitutional limit. The polls for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Punjab assemblies — dissolved in January last year — have not been held for around a year, while the national, Balochistan, and Sindh assemblies have been pushed past their limits as well already.

With the fears rife of delays, a petition was moved in the apex court earlier, following which the SC directed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and President Arif Alvi to announce a date, which they did: February 8. Days after the announcement, the top court also ruled that no objections could be raised on the delimitations after the announcement of the schedule for the general elections, virtually closing all doors for a delay in polls. Moreover, Jamaat-e-Islami's (JI) Senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan has also moved a resolution in the Senate calling for holding polls at their scheduled time, which is expected to be taken up for a vote in the next session.

drawing strong criticism from major political parties. Senator Dilawar Khan, an independent lawmaker, moved the resolution in the upper house of the parliament, which got the approval during the presence of 14 senators — who were the only lawmakers present in the house of 100.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

(PTI) Senator Gurdeep Singh and Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) Behramand, Tangi abstained from voting. Following the vote, the Senate chairman adjourned the session indefinitely. Both parties have issued notices to their lawmakers seeking a response as to why they didn't oppose the resolution.

## Body formed to probe May 9 incidents: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Saturday said there was a dire need to carry out a holistic investigation of the May 9 incidents to determine causes, responsibility, and future course of action to prevent recurrence of such events.

Speaking in television talk shows of private media, the minister said the investigation of those involved in May 9 was underway on an individual basis, but Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar deemed it appropriate to probe into the matter holistically. He said the committee that was formed the other day would not only investigate the May 9 riots thoroughly but also give its recommendations to prevent a repetition of such events by strengthening the existing legal regime.

Solangi said the caretaker government never viewed the investigation of the May 9 incidents as invalid. The law would take its course in the matters related to the May 9 tragedy, he added. He said it was imperative to bring forth the reality before the people as to how these events were planned and what was its purpose. The law minister would be convener of the committee which would collect the details about the events that led to the May 9 incidents, Solangi said, adding the body could include a co-opted member to address any issues stemming from its proceedings.

He said the interior minister would provide secretarial support to the committee which would have two weeks to furnish the report. The minister said the committee would work by the law and compile its recommendations in light of the information provided by the state institutions. "The committee is not a tribunal, nor a court, and we do not have any authority to punish anyone," he remarked. To a query, he said the government would not divulge details about the action taken by the previous government against those involved on May 9.

He said the caretaker government was constitutional and would make all-out

efforts to ensure enforcement of the law. According to the information minister, a "ghost article" was published by a foreign media in the name of Imran Khan. "As per our information, no information leaked from the jail and nothing came inside the prison," he added.

The minister questioned whether the "ghost articles" could be published if nothing was written to the media from inside the jail. Suspension and termination of the sentence were two different things, he said, adding Imran Khan was not free as his Toshakhana case was not over yet. The minister said Imran Khan was still a convict as per the spirit of the law. He said the former PTI chairman had not given any interview to any critical journalist during his government's tenure. The situation did not differ any even when he was ousted from power, he added.

Solangi said the "ghost article" published in The Economist was based on propaganda. "We are writing to The Economist about this ghost article in detail," the minister added. He said there was no comparison between the interviews of former president Asif Ali Zardari and Imran Khan since the former was not a convict at that time.

Immense importance was given to the source in journalism, he said, adding it was not allowed to publish someone's article in the name of another person. He asked whether The Economist had given such a facility to any other person in jail. To another query, he expressed full confidence in the Election Commission of Pakistan for holding the elections.

He said the government would extend administrative and financial assistance to the ECP in this regard. Solangi said the country's history suggested that the elections were held in the country amid the severe weather and security concerns. The ECP had given dates for the general election and the government would assist in holding the polls at the given time, he added.

## US intel confirms ISIS behind Iran blasts

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Communications intercepts collected by the United States confirmed that ISIS' Afghanistan-based branch carried out twin bombings in Iran that killed nearly 100 people, two sources familiar with the intelligence told Reuters on Friday.

"The intelligence is clear cut and indisputable," one source said. That source and a second, both of whom requested anonymity to discuss the sensitive issue, said that the intelligence comprised communications intercepts without providing further details. The collection of the intercepts has not been previously reported.

ISIS on Thursday claimed responsibility for Wednesday's bombings, saying two operatives wearing explosive suicide belts staged the attack during a memorial service for Qassem Suleimani, a senior military commander assassinated in Iraq in a 2020 US drone strike. The group, however, did not specify that its Afghanistan-based affiliate, known as ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K), was responsible for the bombings in the southeastern Iranian city of Kerman.

"The US has pretty clear intel" that ISIS-K conducted the attack, the first source said. The Central Intelligence Agency declined to comment. Iran on Friday said security forces had arrested 11 people suspected of involvement in the attack and had seized explosive devices and vests.

## Ex-NAB chief summoned

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment (FOSPAH) Saturday issued notices to former National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chairman Justice (ret'd) Javed Iqbal in the Tayyaba Gul harassment case.

The notices were issued to Iqbal and 11 others as FOSPAH Chairperson Fauzia Viqar conducted the hearing of a case filed by Gul back in 2022, wherein she had complained of being subjected to sexual harassment and rape by the former NAB head and other officials of the anti-graft watchdog. In her complaint, Gul — whose controversial video with the ex-NAB chairman had surfaced in 2019 — had levelled serious allegations against Iqbal accusing him of sexual harassment during her visit to the anti-graft body's office — an allegation vehemently denied by the former NAB head.

"When I was presented before Director General (DG) NAB Shehzad Saleem, my clothes were torn off upon his directions and my body had to sustain bruises because of the search," she said.

# The Frontier Post

## Blinken meets Erdogan as Gaza diplomacy tour begins

ISTANBUL (Reuters): US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was meeting the leaders of Turkey and Greece on Saturday at the start of a week-long trip aimed at calming tensions that have spiked across the Middle East since Israel's war with Hamas began in October.

The Biden administration's most senior diplomat began in Istanbul, meeting Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, a strong critic of Israel's military actions in Gaza. In the talks, Blinken "emphasized the need to prevent the conflict from spreading, secure the release of hostages, expand humanitarian assistance and reduce civilian casualties," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said.

Blinken also stressed the need to work toward broader, lasting regional peace that ensures Israel's security and advances the establishment of a Palestinian state, he said. Blinken and Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan had earlier discussed Gaza, plus Turkey's process to ratify Sweden's membership of the NATO military alliance, Turkey's foreign ministry said.

US officials have been frustrated by the length of the process, but are confident Ankara will soon approve Sweden's accession after it won the Turkish parliament's backing last month, said a senior State Department official traveling with Blinken, speaking on condition of anonymity. United States lawmakers have held up the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey until it signs off on Swedish membership.

Blinken later traveled to the island of Crete to meet Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis. Fellow NATO member Greece is awaiting US Congress approval of a sale of F-35 fighter jets. "We'll be discussing this issue. I think there will be positive developments,"

Greek Foreign Minister George Gerapetritis told Greek Skai television.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's tour will include Arab states, Israel and the occupied West Bank, where he will deliver a message that Washington does not want a regional escalation of the Gaza conflict. The United States official said Turkey has relationships with many parties in the conflict, a reference to its ties to US adversary Iran and the Palestinian militant group Hamas. Unlike the United States, Turkey does not view Hamas as a terrorist group and hosts some of its members.

The war began when Hamas fighters attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people and taking 240 hostages. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed 22,700 Palestinians, according to Palestinian officials, and the conflict has spilled into the West Bank, Lebanon and Red Sea shipping lanes. Blinken also hopes to make progress in talks on how Gaza could be governed if and when Israel achieves its aim of eradicating Hamas.

Washington wants countries in the region, including Turkey, to play a role in reconstruction, governance and potentially security in the Gaza Strip, which has been run by Hamas since 2007, the official said. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Istanbul late Friday for the first leg of a trip that includes visits to Israel and West Bank, along with five Arab states. Blinken's fourth crisis tour since the start of the Israel-Hamas war three months ago comes with fears mounting that the conflict will engulf swathes of the Middle East.

Istanbul served as a base for Hamas political leaders until Hamas fighters raided Israel, killing around 1,140 people and triggering a

reprisal offensive that the Gaza health ministry says has claimed 22,600 lives — most of them women and children. Turkiye asked the Hamas chiefs to leave after some were captured on video celebrating the deadliest attack in Israel's history.

Turkiye this week countered by detaining 34 people suspected of planning attacks against Palestinians and spying for Israel's Mossad intelligence agency. Erdogan began to tone down his most strident comments after US President Joe Biden last month called the Turkish leader for the first time since the war broke out.

The call helped push along NATO member Turkiye's glacial progress in accepting Sweden into the US-led defense organization in the wake of Russia's war on Ukraine. A parliamentary committee approved Sweden's application in late December.

Biden's administration officially backs the sale, but has been unable to overcome resistance in Congress from lawmakers who express alarm about Turkiye's position on Sweden and its human rights record, as well as past military standoffs with historic rival Greece. "We have made clear that we do not believe the sale... should be linked with Sweden's NATO accession, but there are members of Congress who have a different opinion and they have linked the two," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said this week.

Blinken will travel to the Greek island of Crete on Saturday evening for talks with Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis. Greece has fiercely resisted the United States jet sales because of its longstanding territorial disputes with Turkiye in the energy-rich eastern Mediterranean region.

## KP CM calls for more seats in medical, dental colleges

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting regarding seats enhancement in public and private sector Medical and Dental Colleges of the province was held here the other day with Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice Retired Syed Arshad Hussain Shah in the chair.

Beside Advisor to Caretaker Chief Minister on Health, Dr Riaz Anwar and other high ups of the health department, authorities of the public and private sector Medical and Dental Colleges of the province attended the meeting. Briefing the participants about the existing seat strengths of the Dental and Medical Colleges and their capacities to enhance the seats, it was told that there were a total of 21 Medical and 11 Dental Colleges in the province with an accumulative strengths of 3210 seats per annum adding that due to such limited seats every year thousands of qualified students cannot get admissions in Medical and Dental Colleges.

Talking on this occasion, the Caretaker Chief Minister said that he had taken up the issue of seats enhancement in medical and dental colleges of the province with Pakistan Medical and Dental Council adding that the authorities of PMDC have agreed in principle to enhance the seats subject to fulfilment of the set criteria by the Medical and Dental Colleges. He remarked that it was a golden opportunity for the Medical and Dental Colleges for their seats enhancement, and steps are required on urgent basis to avail the opportunity.

On this occasion the management of both the public and private sector Medical and Dental Colleges were asked to work out their capacities for seats enhancement, and communicate the same to the provincial government for taking up the same with PMDC for formal approval.

The Chief Minister made it clear that with the enhancement of Medical and Dental seats, the set criteria and quality of education would not be compromised at any cost.



TEHRAN: People carrying the coffin of Kirman blasts victim for funeral prayer.

## Hezbollah fires at Israel army base after Hamas deputy killing

BEIRUT: Hezbollah fired dozens of rockets from Lebanon into northern Israel on Saturday, warning that the barrage was its initial response to the targeted killing, presumably by Israel, of a top Hamas leader in Lebanon's capital earlier this week.

The rocket attack came a day after Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said his group must retaliate for the killing of Saleh Arouri, the deputy political leader of the militia's ally Hamas, in a Hezbollah stronghold south of Beirut. He said if Hezbollah did not strike back, all of Lebanon would be vulnerable to Israeli attack. He appeared to be making his case for a response to the Lebanese public, even at the risk of escalating the fighting between Hezbollah and Israel as the war between Israel and Hamas rages on.

Hezbollah said it launched 62 rockets toward an Israeli air surveillance base on Mount Meron and that it scored direct hits. It said rockets also struck two army posts near the border. The Israeli military said about 40 rockets were fired toward Meron and that a base was targeted, but made no mention of the base being hit. It said it struck the Hezbollah cell that fired the rockets.

Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon hit the outskirts of Kouthariyeh Al-Siyad village, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the border, Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said, adding that there were casualties. Such strikes deeper inside Lebanon have been rare since the border fighting started nearly three months ago. NNA also said Israeli forces shelled border areas including the town of Khiam. Israel's army had no immediate comment.

Separately, the armed wing of the Islamic Group in Lebanon, the country's branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and a close ally of Hamas, said it fired two volleys of rockets toward the Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona on Friday night. Two of the group's members were killed in the strike that killed Arouri.

The cross-border escalation came as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was kicking off an urgent Middle East diplomatic tour, his fourth to the region since the Israel-Hamas war erupted three months ago. The war was triggered by a deadly Hamas attack on southern Israel in which militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took roughly 250 hostages.

In recent weeks, Israel has been scaling back its military assault in northern Gaza and pressing its heavy offensive in the territory's south, vowing to crush Hamas. In the south, most of Gaza's 2.3 million Palestinians are being squeezed into smaller areas in a humanitarian disaster while still being pounded by Israeli airstrikes.

On Saturday, the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said 122 Palestinians had been killed over the past 24 hours, bringing the total since the start of the war to 22,722. The count does not differentiate between combatants and civilians. The ministry has said two-thirds of those killed have been women or children. The overall number of wounded rose to 58,166, the ministry said.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in the central city of Deir Al-Balah received at least 46 bodies overnight, according to hospital records seen by The Associated Press. Many were men who apparently had been shot. Fighting has raged between Israeli forces and militants in the area. The dead also included five members of a family who were killed in an airstrike, the records showed.

The latest Israeli-dropped leaflets urged Palestinians in some areas near the hospital to evacuate, citing "dangerous fighting." In the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, the focus of Israel's ground offensive, the European Hospital received the bodies of 18 people who were killed in an overnight airstrike on a house in the city's Maan neighborhood, said Saleh Al-Hamms, head of the hospital's nursing department. — Arab News





## Governor Sindh visits Iranian Consulate

KARACHI (PPI): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori visited Iranian Consulate to offer his condolence on loss of human lives in a tragic twin blast near the mausoleum of Qasim Sulaimani few days back.

He was received by Consul General of Iran Hassan Nourian upon his arrival at the consulate. Governor Sindh while expressing his deep sense of grief and sorrow, said that he was with the families of martyred. He offered fatcha for the departed soul. Governor Sindh also recorded his sentiments in condolence book kept at the consulate.

## Youth delegation visits CCPO

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of youths visited the Capital City Police Office on Saturday.

The delegation was briefed about the organizational structure, professional training, performance and responsibilities of Lahore police. CCPO Lahore Bilal Saddique Kamyana, while talking to the delegation, said that under the Friends of Police programme, students from universities and educational institutions were being provided with an internship opportunity in the police department. He said that under the internship programme, young people were given an opportunity to work with police in various fields so that they could understand its working.

## Commissioner reviews PIC upgrade

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Divisional Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa conducted a comprehensive inspection at the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) here on Saturday and evaluated the ongoing construction of the Collection Center and Mehman Khana, aligning with the directives issued by the Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister.

Dr. Fargat Alamgir, Chairman of the Board of Management, PIC, Chief Engineers and other relevant officials were accompanied him. The commissioner meticulously assessed the advancements in the construction project. Notably, he revealed that the construction of the second floor of the Collection Center was progressing rapidly and on track to meet the set deadline.

Randhawa emphasized the significant impact of the Mehman Khana's construction, providing crucial facilities for patient attendants. The addition of washrooms further enhances the convenience for visitors. He was also briefed on the completion of fencing around the PIC and the near-finalization of horticulture work. He expressed satisfaction with the progress. The optimization of traffic management around the PIC Emergency ensures smoother operations for ambulances and vehicles entering, exiting, and parking. In line with the Chief Minister's directives, emergency infrastructure is undergoing enhancements, and ongoing improvements in horticulture around the emergency area are in progress.

# Strength of teaching workforce leads to nation's sustainable uplift: CM

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar has said that a nation's sustainable development relies on the strength of its teaching workforce and that teaching graduates have the potential to shape the future and elevate society.

This he said while speaking at the convention -2023 of Government Elementary College of Education, Hussainabad. The convocation was attended by Minister of Education Dr Rana Hussain, VC Karachi University Khalid Iraqi, Muhammad Ali Taba, CEO Durbeen Salma Alam, Shahzad Raoi, Khalid Mahmood and others.

The Chief Minister referred to it as a notable achievement that the first-ever batch of Hussainabad Teachers Training College has graduated under the leadership of Durbeen.

He mentioned that Durbeen took over the college in 2019 through a public-private partnership, and today, we are seeing the results of that collaboration as we proudly graduate the first batch.

The CM mentioned that the graduates who came before us not only excelled in their studies but also secured positions that were comparable to those of entry-level banking and medical professionals.

They are now the driving force behind the educational landscape and are imparting knowledge to shape the minds of tomorrow at esteemed institutions such as Zindagi Trust Government Schools, Khatoon-e-Pakistan, and SMB Fatima Jinnah.

Baqar emphasized that the teaching profession, which gave rise to all other professions, is the backbone of any nation. He explained that a strong teaching workforce is crucial for a nation's sustainable development.

He added that the graduates of this profession have the potential to shape the future and uplift society.

The interim Chief Minister expressed that government schools are a symbol of the power of education, where all students are given equal opportunities, regardless of their socioeconomic back-

ground, to enable social mobility. He said that choosing to teach in government schools reflects a dedication to uplift society.

He further mentioned that these graduates, as the torchbearers of Durbeen's commitment to quality education, have the potential to redefine and elevate the status of teaching in Pakistan.

The Chief Minister felt honoured to mention that all graduates, after acquiring their teaching licenses, would be qualified to become government teachers, given their competence as alumni of this training college.

Baqar emphasized that despite the challenges faced by society, such as brain drain and social disparities, it is of utmost importance to instil a sense of purpose that goes beyond personal success.

He believes that graduates must embrace the ideals of nation-building, contribute to a larger cause, and shoulder the responsibility of social change.

The CM praised the graduates for their academic accomplishments and commitment to education's transformative power.

# Advocators of delay in general elections enemies of democracy: Baloch

LAHORE (INP): Acting Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Liaqat Baloch has said that the elements sowing uncertainty and advocating for a delay in the timely general elections are, in fact, enemies of democracy.

Speaking during a corner meeting in NA-123 Lahore on Saturday, he asserted that the resolution passed by only 14 senators in favor of postponing the national vote holds no value.

Liaqat Baloch pointed out that the Supreme Court has removed all ambiguities regarding any delay or postponement of the polls. According to him, the resolution adopted by the Senate undermines the credibility of the upper house.

The Election

Commission should not succumb to any pressure and must ensure that the people of Pakistan exercise their right to elect representatives in a free and fair manner, upholding the supremacy of the constitution, he emphasized.

The JI Acting Ameer further highlighted Punjab's historical role in promoting harmony among all provinces, expressing dismay at elements that have brought shame to the largest province. He mentioned that JI has issued 237 and 250 national and provincial assembly tickets throughout Punjab, signaling a clear message and commitment to a better future for the province.

If elected with the sup-

port of the people, the JI would work towards progress and prosperity in Punjab, he assured.

In a separate statement, Liaqat Baloch demanded the restoration of passenger flights for Gilgit Baltistan, stating that the suspension of flights for over two months has created severe difficulties for the people in the hilly area, virtually blocking their access to other parts of the country.

The JI acting chief also extended congratulations to the National Labor Federation president, Shamsulhaq Swati, on winning the LDA referendum. He expressed hope that the PREM Union would also succeed in the Railways Workshop elections.

# School timings adjusted in Sindh due to cold weather

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh Education Department has announced a modification in the school timings across the province. In a recent notification, the department declared a shift in the starting time for schools to 8:30 in the morning, effective until the end of January.

This adjustment, applicable to both government and private schools, aims to provide relief to students and staff grappling with the chilly weather during early morning commutes. The decision comes as a proactive measure to ensure the well-being and comfort of the educational community during the winter season.

The revised schedule

acknowledges the challenges posed by the colder climate, especially for the younger students. It is anticipated that the new starting time will contribute to creating a more conducive learning environment, allowing students to arrive at school more comfortably and ready for the day's activities.

Parents, educators, and students have welcomed this decision as a thoughtful response to the seasonal conditions. The extended time before the start of classes is expected to ease the morning routines for families and ensure a smoother transition into the school day.

While the adjusted tim-

ings offer a reprieve from the cold, the education authorities have emphasized the importance of winter safety precautions. Schools are urged to remind students to dress warmly, carry water bottles, and adopt healthy habits to safeguard their well-being throughout the winter season.

This move by the Sindh Education Department underscores its commitment to prioritizing the welfare of students and staff, fostering an environment conducive to effective learning. As the revised timings take effect, educational institutions in Sindh are poised to navigate the winter season with greater comfort and resilience.



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi launching two books titled 'Sehra Ke Dohey' and 'Geetun Bhara Ragistan' at Arts Council of Pakistan.

# CM inaugurates Punjab's 1st e-registration model centre

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the first e-Registration Model Centre of the province for the transfer of land located at LDA Plaza Kashmir Road here on Saturday.

Sub-Registrar offices of Ravi Town, Samanabad Town and Data Gunj Baksh Town have been shifted for the facilitation of citizens at the e-Registration Model Centre, a model e-Registration system for the transfer of land in Punjab.

The CM ordered to complete further two e-Registration Centres at Raiwind and Shalimar by 31st January.

He conducted a detailed visit of the e-Registration Model Centre and inspected the e-Registration system for the transfer of land. He directed to formulate a system for the payment of online fee for the facilitation of citizens. He also visited the branch of Punjab Bank at the e-Registration Centre.

He inspected the Sub Registrar offices of Ravi Town, Samanabad Town and Data Gunj Baksh Town established at the centre. The CM conversed with citizens who had come for their transfer of land and inquired about the e-Registration system.

He asked a Garhi Shahi citizen present at the e-Registration Model Centre as whether anyone asked him for money for the registry. The citizens by appreciating the e-Registration system replied that no money was being taken and the registration system was much simplified and easier now.

Mohsin Naqvi revealed that the land

transfer process of all the three towns would be done under a single roof at the e-Registration centre. "People would get rid of frequently visiting the offices for their transfer of land."

The land transfer process would become transparent with the establishment of e-Registration centre and corruption will be eliminated. E-Registration Centres would be established in every Divisional Headquarter of Punjab. First e-Registration Centre has been inaugurated in Lahore while other two centres would be completed soon. I will review the pace of work by visiting the Shalimar and Raiwind Centres" he said.

All phases of e-registry would be completed in a short span of time at the e-Registration Model Centre. The CM lauded the performance of Senior Member Board of Revenue (SMBR), Punjab Land Record Authority (PLRA) administration and his team on the issuance of e-Registration system.

The SMBR and DG PLRA gave a detailed briefing about the land transfer process under the e-Registration system. Talking to media after inaugurating the first e-Registration Centre, he said that manual registry would not be made now and so far 221,000 registries had been made.

A ban has been imposed on doing manual registry in Lahore as only e-Registry would be made. Excellent facilities have been provided to the citizens in the e-Registration Centre. He said that he had inaugurated one e-Registration Centre in Lahore while two more e-

Registration Centres will be established in Shalimar Town and Raiwind.

"I have directed the Deputy Commissioner to complete both e-Registration Centres by 31st January". The BoP facility has been provided in the e-Registration Centre and it will soon provide NADRA facility as well. The CM stated that tax evasion would be eliminated with the establishment of e-Registration Centres. He said that he had visited the Data Gunj Baksh Town Registry Office some time earlier.

The office condition was highly deplorable and there was no place to sit. Then it was decided to improve the condition of e-Registration office. Everyone worked hard and the credit goes to the SMBR who worked day and night. Comfortable facilities would be provided to the people at the e-Registration Centre and they would also be saved from fraud, he added.

He maintained that pending applications would be highlighted on the dashboard. The registry process would not be delayed with the establishment of e-Registration Centre and registry would be made on the spot.

In reply to a question Mohsin Naqvi stated that neither he cares for protocol nor criticism. "Criticism can be directed at many things and I have no issue with it. If I had cared for criticism then I would not have done any work. The complaints about corruption will be eliminated with the establishment of e-Registration Centre. Everything is computerised and there will be no waste of time," he added.



## Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre

A JCI Enterprise Accredited Organisation

## Career Opportunities in SKMCH&RC Peshawar

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

### Medical Consultant:

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

- Consultant Upper GI Surgeon
- Consultant Urologist Locum Consultant Anaesthetist
- Locum Consultant Breast Surgeon
- Locum Consultant Internal Medicine
- Locum Consultant Pathologist
- Locum Consultant Radiologist
- Locum Consultant Urologist
- Part Time Consultant Anaesthetist

### Senior Instructors :

- Senior Instructor Anaesthesia
- Senior Instructor Breast Surgery
- Senior Instructor Clinical Haematology
- Senior Instructor Clinical and Radiation Oncology
- Senior Instructor Head and Neck Surgery
- Senior Instructor Medical Oncology
- Senior Instructor Paediatric Oncology
- Senior Instructor Radiology
- Fellow in Anaesthesia (Hospital Fellowships)

### Medical Officers:

- Medical Officer in Radiology

### MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION & TECHNICAL: -

- Database Administrator

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

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

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## Human Resources Department

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre  
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LAHORE: A view of dense fog covering surrounding areas of Road during morning time. —APP Photo





PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali giving away degrees to students during annual convocation of KМУ Institute of Medical and Dental Sciences Kohat.

## Uncalled load shedding of gas, electricity continued

PESHAWAR (APP): Even after the closure of the CNG station, domestic consumers are facing difficulties and there is no sign of gas in the suburbs including urban areas.

Unannounced load shedding of gas is being done for 14 to 16 hours in urban areas, said a consumer Paras Ahmad Khan. "I do not know what to do either to

continue with gas connection or to convert to LPG or other means," he said. Similarly, there is the same with electricity but no heat was paid to the problem being faced by the people.

There is no gas in several areas including suburbs, Charsadda road wherein dozens of CNG stations but the consumers are facing hardship with no gas for cooking.

People of the Nadapa Bala, main Charsadda road and suburbs areas including Budh Bear, Matni, Lala Musa, Kohat Road, University Road, Charsadda Road, Bakhshi Pul, Nasapa Bala, Lala Zar Colony people are facing difficulties due no availability of gas.

The people of the area said that they could stage a complete boycott of the

forthcoming election and also stage a protest demonstration against gas and electricity load shedding.

The people, they said, were deprived of basic facilities like gas, electricity and poor condition of the hospitals even in severe cold. "We could not go for election and did not want to cost our votes," a head of the family of 17 said.

## Vaping in KP, a rising trend with alarming consequences

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In recent years, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly its bustling cities like Peshawar, has witnessed a significant rise in the trend of vaping, especially among its youth.

This surge is attributed to the easy availability of vaping products, even at small roadside shops in areas such as the Karkhano Market, where generally regulations seem lax and enforcement is minimal.

Vaping, often marketed as a safer alternative to traditional smoking, has gained popularity among the younger population. However, this perceived safety is a dangerous misconception. The lack of awareness about the negative impacts of vaping is causing significant harm, particularly to young individuals who are more susceptible to adopting such trends without fully understanding the consequences.

The easy availability of vape pens and e-cigarettes

at local shops, without proper age verification or health warnings, only exacerbates the problem. These devices, often sold with a variety of flavorings and appealing packaging, are attracting a younger audience, many of whom are unaware of the potential health risks. Vaping devices deliver nicotine, a highly addictive substance, which can lead to a long-term dependency and act as a gateway to traditional tobacco products.

Moreover, the health risks associated with vaping are not widely known or understood in the region. While research on the long-term effects of vaping is still evolving, studies have indicated potential risks, including respiratory problems and other health issues. The ease with which these products can be obtained in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, combined with a general lack of knowledge about these risks, poses a significant public health challenge.

The trend of vaping among youth in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa calls for immediate attention and action from health authorities and policymakers. There is a dire need for regulation and policy reform to address this growing issue. Regulations should include strict age restrictions on the purchase of vaping products, clear health warnings on packaging, and a ban on the sale of these products in unlicensed outlets.

Public awareness campaigns are also crucial in educating the youth about the potential dangers of vaping. These campaigns should focus on demystifying the false perception of safety associated with vaping and highlight the risks of nicotine addiction. Schools and community centers can play a pivotal role in disseminating this information.

In addition, there should be efforts to enforce existing tobacco control policies and extend them to include vaping products. This would involve regular inspections of retail outlets, stringent penalties for non-

compliance, and efforts to curb the illegal sale of these products.

The rising trend of vaping in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly among the youth, is a concerning development that requires immediate action. The easy availability of these products, coupled with a lack of awareness about their potential harm, calls for a concerted effort from government authorities, health organizations, and the community at large.

Through effective regulation, education, and enforcement, it is possible to mitigate the risks associated with vaping and protect the health and well-being of the younger generation.

### Meeting held

PESHAWAR (APP): A consultative meeting has been called to extend the winter holidays in government and private educational institutions due to an increase in the cold and heavy fog that hit different districts of entire KP.

In the meeting, 4 proposals towards school education will be considered with school holidays up to primary should be extended from January 9 to January 15, timing of school should be changed and the session of day would be from 9.00 am in morning to 2.00 pm.

It has also been discussed that only those students who are scheduled to take the exams should be called to school for the 9th and 10th Annual Exams to be held in March while the winter vacation should be extended in all other classes.



PESHAWAR: PPP candidate for NA-32 Abid Ullah Khan Yousafzai meeting with people during election campaign. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

## Nurturing well-being through governance, equality and sustainability in building ideal state

### Awrang Khan

In a dynamic world marked by constant change, the quest for an ideal state that nurtures the well-being of its citizens is a perennial contemplation. This concept transcends political boundaries, encapsulating the fundamental elements contributing to citizens' fulfillment. From effective governance to social equity, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability, an ideal state aspires to create an environment conducive to individual flourishing.

At the core of an ideal state is a robust governance system upholding the rule of law. Trust in fair, just, and accountable institutions forms the bedrock of citizens' confidence in their government. An independent judiciary, transparent legal processes, and adequate checks and balances foster a society where citizens feel secure in their rights. Social equality is

paramount in an ideal state, ensuring equal opportunities and rights irrespective of race, gender, or socioeconomic status. Inclusivity becomes a cultural ethos, where diversity is celebrated, and discrimination actively combated. Accessible education, healthcare, and employment opportunities lay the foundation for a harmonious and flourishing society.

Economic prosperity and job security are crucial components of citizens' well-being. An ideal state supports entrepreneurship, innovation, and a competitive business landscape. Job security, fair wages, and social safety nets contribute to a stable economic foundation, allowing citizens to plan for the future confidently. Education is a cornerstone of personal development and societal progress. An ideal state prioritizes quality education at all levels, ensuring citizens have access to knowledge and skills necessary for the

demands of the modern world. Lifelong learning opportunities foster a culture of continuous personal and professional development.

Accessible healthcare is another crucial element contributing to citizens' well-being. An ideal state ensures quality healthcare, mental health support, and a robust healthcare infrastructure. Preventive measures and responsible waste management contribute to a society where individuals can lead healthy and fulfilling lives. Environmental stewardship is a commitment an ideal state makes, recognizing the importance of preserving natural resources for future generations. Policies that promote clean energy, conservation efforts, and responsible waste management contribute to a healthy and sustainable environment. Citizens in such a state can enjoy a high quality of life without compromising the well-being of the planet. Active citizen

engagement is a hallmark of an ideal state. A robust democracy encourages citizen participation in decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability. Civic education and the protection of freedom of speech enable citizens to voice their concerns and contribute to shaping their society.

An ideal state for citizens blends good governance, social equality, economic prosperity, quality education, accessible healthcare, environmental sustainability, and civic engagement. Achieving this ideal is an ongoing and evolving process. Nations earnestly striving to create such an environment set the stage for a future where citizens can truly thrive. As societies evolve, the pursuit of an ideal state remains a shared responsibility that requires collaboration between citizens and their governments to build a better and more prosperous future.

### Weather in KP cold and fog reigns

PESHAWAR (APP): The weather in KP very cold, fog reigns as severe cold has been going on for the last three days across the province, official of Meteorological Department said here Saturday.

He said 4 degree Celsius recorded in Peshawar and Kalam recorded minus four degrees Celsius and the temperature would decrease by 3 to 5 degrees Celsius in the coming days. The official also predicted intermittent snowfall forecast on mountains in upper districts of the province.

## Governor visits PPC; congratulates newly office bearers

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali visited Peshawar Press Club on Saturday and congratulated the newly elected cabinet.

Governor Ghulam Ali said that democracy is a system in which everyone has the right to their own opinion.

He said that a senator had recently expressed concerns about the security situation in the province, but

said that the decision of holding of elections or not up to the Election Commission of Pakistan.

The Governor said that elections are necessary, but that the security situation is a concern. He called on the federal government and other relevant agencies to work together to create a safe environment for the elections.

He further said that the cold weather has also affected the election

process.

He said that it is important to provide a safe environment for both voters and candidates. He said that the demand for a delay in the elections is coming from those who want to participate in the process.

The Governor said that it is his wish that the elections be held peacefully. He said that a democratically elected government should now come into power and start working.

## Action of KP FS & HFA against adulteration mafia

PESHAWAR (APP): Actions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority continued against the adulteration mafia in Mardan, Dera Ismail Khan and Dir Upper.

According to the spokesman of the KP FS&HFA, the officials have conducted raids in different localities in different districts against Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Mardan, Dir Upper and Dera Ismail Khan on the secret information.

He said the Mardan team

raided a warehouse in Maqam Chowk and 750 kg of prohibited china salt and 150 kg of substandard spices were seized from the warehouse, by imposing heavy fines on the owners on the spot.

He disclosed that the Dera Ismail Khan team along with the officers of the Livestock Department also operated on the Bhakkar bridge on secret information and about 400 kg of unhealthy slaughtered buffalo was exported from the vehicle and

destroyed with a heavy fine imposed on the owner.

The spokesman said that in Dir Upper team also conducted inspections in various markets, seized more than 250 kg of non-standard and chewable chips and pops.

The adulteration mafia does not deserve any concession, strict disciplinary action will be taken against them, said Director General Food Authority Shafiqullah Khan while talking to the media here.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah chairing a meeting regarding seats enhancement of Medical and Dental Colleges.

## New antibiotic compound very exciting, expert says

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An expert microbiologist has hailed the discovery of a potential new class of antibiotics that could treat lethal hospital infections as "very exciting".

The new compound, zosurabalin, worked "extremely well" in test-tubes and mice, Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership scientific director Prof Laura Piddock said.

The research offered "definite hope" for other hard-to-treat infections, she told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

It is published in the journal Nature.

US researchers focused on finding a new way to treat infections caused by the carbapenem-resistant Acinetobacter baumannii (Crab) bacterium.

The organism, classed a "priority-one critical pathogen" by the World Health Organization, can cause very serious invasive blood and chest infections in critically ill hospital patients.

It is resistant to many known antibiotics.

And about 40-60% of those infected die. A key reason it is so hard to find new drugs that neutralise it is because of the bacterium's tricky structure - with a double walled "membrane" surrounding it and protecting it from attack.

This configuration "makes it very difficult to get drugs into it and to get drugs to stay inside".

But zosurabalin, found after screening about 45,000 small molecules with potential antibiotic properties, appears to destroy the organism's ability to successfully assemble this key protective membrane.

'First-in-man' studies

"What is exciting about this discovery is that one of the building blocks that are part of the outer part of this bacterial cell is disrupted by this new drug," Prof Piddock said.

In laboratory experiments, the compound stopped a critical building block - a lipopolysaccharide - being transported to the outer part of the cell, preventing the protective membrane from forming properly and ultimately leading to cell death.

It was "exciting" the researchers had already completed some "first-in-man" studies - on a relatively small number of healthy people - and were "set up now to go on and do full clinical trials in people with the infection", Prof

Piddock said.

But "we are a very long way" from it being used in hospitals.

'Definite hope'

Prof Piddock said: "Full clinical trials... take a lot of time, several years. And indeed, they cost millions of pounds to do. And even if the trial is successful, then the drug has to be approved for use and then made accessible to those that need it - and that is all over the world not just in a few countries that can afford it.

"Therein is the big problem - the economics of making antibiotics."

But despite the considerable hurdles, there is "definite hope".

"It is really exciting - and not only is it good for this type of bacteria, but this could be built upon for others as well," Prof Piddock added.

### Nathia Gali trip for special persons held

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) in collaboration with Directorate General of Sports organized three-day trip to Nathia Gali for special men and women of Special Life Foundation.

During the trip, special persons visited Khanspur Church, Ayubia, Donga Gali Pipeline and Nathia Gali track exploring various beautiful spots.

The aim of trip was to provide special individuals, especially women with opportunities to enjoy beauty of these tourist attractions.

Participants appreciated efforts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) and Directorate General of Sports for providing recreational opportunities to them.

They also suggested organizing more such events in future.

## Deputy Commissioner visits SDC

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner Swabi Dr. Tariqullah along with Assistant Commissioner Lahor Ayaz Khan visited Service Delivery Center Chota Lahor here on Saturday.

Deputy Commissioner Swabi reviewed the services and arrangements provided to the people in SDC.

During the visit, he inquired about the facilities available to the people there

and also inquired about the attitude of the service delivery center staff. The visitors expressed their satisfaction about the behavior of the staff and other services provided there.



PESHAWAR: Donkey cart holder on way carrying green fodder for delivery purpose at Ring Road.





## In brief

### 4 buried to death as roof collapse

**HAFIZABAD (INP):** Four people were buried to death when roof of their house collapsed in Ramke Chattah in Hafizabad on Saturday. The rescue teams pulled out four dead bodies and four injured persons from the rubble. The condition of two of the injured was stated to be critical. It has been learned that the family lit a fire on the roof to provide heat to their goats. But the fire engulfed the roof of the rickety house and caved in, killing four of the people and injuring another four. On Dec 24, nine members of the same family including women and children were killed when the roof of their house collapsed in Terdi village of Abbottabad following eruption of fire in their home due to short circuit. Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi expressed condolences over deaths in Hafizabad roof collapse incident. He conveyed his sympathies to the heirs of the deceased. The chief minister directed the administration to provide basic medical treatment to the injured.

### 2 robbers killed in encounter

**SHEIKHUPURA (INP):** Two robbers were killed in exchange of fire with police at Faisalabad road on Saturday. According to details, two robbers barged into a shop located in Feroze Watwan town and started looting whatever they found. The citizens informed the police about the incident and on directions of DPO Zahid Nawaz Marwat, a police team reached the scene. Upon sight of police, the robbers started firing which resulted in an encounter. In cross firing, both robbers were killed and their bodies were shifted to hospital. Police said that the killed robbers were wanted by police in dozens of different cases. Meanwhile, a woman was killed and four others injured in collision between passenger van and a bus here on Saturday, rescue sources said. According to details, the accident took place on Sardogda road near Ferozqabad where a passenger van and bus collided due to over speeding. As a result of accident, a 55-year-old woman identified as Munawara Bibi was killed on the spot while four others sustained injuries. The body and injured were shifted to hospital. The police impounded both vehicles and after registering a case into the incident started an investigation.

### Property dispute claims man's life

**BASIRPUR (INP):** Property dispute claimed man's life as an accused shot dead his real brother over property row Bohmanshah area here, police said on Saturday. According to details, two brothers were in dispute over ownership of a piece of land which often resulted in exchange of hot words and blows. A verbal clash over the same dispute intensified after which one brother gunned down other and fled the scene. The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem and police after registering a case into the incident started raids to arrest the culprit.

### One killed in road accident

**BAHAWALNAGAR (INP):** One person was killed in a road accident in Bahawalnagar on late Friday night. According to details, the accident occurred at the Chishtian Road in Bahawalnagar where a speeding car hit a bicycle from behind, killed one person on the spot. Police and rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the dead body to hospital.



SHANGLA: PML-N leader Engineer Amir Muqam addressing a public gathering at Bisham.

## Anti-India demo held in Muzaffarabad

**MUZAFFARABAD (INP):** A forceful anti-India protest demonstration was held in Muzaffarabad Saturday, on the completion of 31 years to the brutal massacre perpetrated by Indian troops in Sopore town of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The troops of Indian Border Security Force fired indiscriminately in Sopore town on this day in 1993, killing more than 60 innocent people. They also set on fire over 400 shops and residential houses.

A large number of people participated in the demonstration organized by Tehreek-e-Shababul Muslimeen Students Wing at Burhan Wani Chowk in Muzaffarabad. The protesters were holding banners and placards condemning the Sopore massacre and other Indian brutalities in occupied Kashmir.

Addressing the demonstrators, the speakers paid rich tributes to the martyrs of Sopore carnage. They said the massacres like Sopore are proof of Indian state terrorism in occupied Kashmir. They said India is mistaken if it thinks that by massacring the Kashmiris it can force them to give up freedom movement. They said the Kashmiri people are determined to continue their just struggle till it reaches its logical conclusion.

The protesters raised high-pitched slogans against the Indian atrocities in occupied Kashmir and in

favour of Kashmir's freedom from Indian illegal occupation. The demonstration was attended among others by Tehreek-e-Shababul Muslimeen Students Wing Chairman Riaz Ahmed Awan, Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Jammu and Kashmir leader Shaukat Javed Mir, Director Kashmir Cultural Academy Faizan Arif Mughal, district council member Ali Raza Sabzwari, Chairman Union Council Muzaffarabad Iqbal Yasin Awan, Allama Lal Deen Durrani, Saddique Dawood, Ishiaq Liaqat Awan, Engineer Javed Mir, Naseer Mir, Munir Konshi, Zubair Durrani, Faizullah Durrani, Aamir Abbasi, Qudus Mughal, Imtiaz Awan, Arshad Awan, Khawaja Khurram, Aamir Abbasi and Zeeshan Chaudhry.

Meanwhile, the speakers of a conference held in Muzaffarabad have urged the United Nations to implement its resolutions to resolve the Kashmir dispute. The conference was organized by All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter in connection with the Kashmiris' Right to Self-determination.

The speakers said the Kashmiris have never accepted India's illegal occupation of their motherland and would continue their freedom movement despite Indian state terrorism. They said due to the

criminal silence of the international community and the United Nations, the Indian troops are continuously killing innocent people in occupied Kashmir. Indian troops have killed around 100,000 Kashmiris and subjected thousands of others to custodial disappearance since 1989 till date, they added. The speakers said that India itself had taken the Kashmir dispute to the United Nations but later it backed away from its promise of giving the Kashmiris the right to self-determination and deployed lakhs of troops to continue its forced occupation of Jammu and Kashmir.

They said now is the time for the United Nations to take effective notice of the ongoing Indian oppression in the occupied territory and put pressure on New Delhi to give the Kashmiris their birthright to self-determination.

The speakers included Hurriyat leader Chaudhry Shaheen Iqbal, Shoaib Shah, Dr Younis Mir, Chaudhry Muhammad Ismail, Chaudhry Mushtaq Iqbal Yasin, Tanzeer Iqbal, Nazir Mir, Sardar Javed, Aamir Abbasi and Nasir Lodhi. A large number of people attended the conference. At the end of the conference, special prayer was offered for prominent Kashmiri leader, Professor Nazir Ahmed Shawl, who recently passed away in London.

## Four scholars defend M.Phil theses

### F.P. Report

**LOWER DIR:** Four scholars on Saturday successfully defended their M.Phil theses in the Mathematics department of the University of Malakand (UoM). Ihsan Ullah, an M.Phil Scholar defended his thesis titled 'ANALYSIS OF KORTEWEG-DE VRISE - CAUDREY-DODD-GIBBON (KdV-CDG) EQUATION VIA NON-SINGULAR FRACTAL OPERATORS' that was supervised by Dr Amanullah, assistant professor, UoM. The External Examiner was Dr Asad Ali, Hazara University Mansehra.

Similarly, Riaz Muhammad, another scholar defended his thesis titled 'ANALYSIS OF SHARMA-TASSO-OLVER EQUATION UNDER FRACTAL FRACTIONAL OPERATORS' under the supervision of Dr Amanullah, Assistant Professor, UoM. The External Examiner was Dr. Gohar Rahman, Hazara University Mansehra.

Mr Ibad Ullah, another scholar successfully defended his M.Phil thesis under the supervision of Dr Nigar Ali and Dr Imtiaz Ahmad, Associate Professor in Department of Mathematics, UoM. Prof. Dr Saeed ul Islam, Dean Faculty of Sciences from Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan was his external examiner.

Muhammad Idrees, also defended his M.Phil thesis under the supervision of Dr Nigar Ali and Dr Imtiaz Ahmad, Associate Professor in the Department of Mathematics, UoM. Dr Haider Ali, was an external examiner from the Department of Mathematics, UoM. Various students and guests were present in the presentation and appreciated the scholars. The external examiner, the Chairman Department of Mathematics, University of Malakand Dr Imtiaz Ahmad & Faculty Members congratulated the M.Phil Scholars and research supervisor in this regard and motivated the scholars for further research work.

### Man killed

**SIALKOT (INP):** A man was killed over an old enmity at Bhaid Pulley, Model Town, on Saturday.

According to a Rescue 1122 spokesperson, 35-year-old Tazeem Akhtar was shot dead by his rivals over an old enmity. The assailant fled the scene. According to family members, they had an old enmity and the opponent party shot him dead and fled. Rescue 1122 shifted the body to Allama Iqbal Memorial Hospital (AIMH).

# JI demands general elections to be held on February 8

### F.P. Report

**LOWER DIR:** The Jamaat-i-Islami Chief Siraj-ul-Haq has said that the Senate resolution in favor of elections' delay is a conspiracy against the country and its democracy. He expressed these views while addressing corner meetings and election rallies in his constituency NA-6 in Lower Dir here on Saturday. Scores of political workers on the occasion announced to join the JI at Samarbagh, Munda and Shalkandai.

The JI chief said the postponing of elections due to lawlessness and security situation in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be tantamount to surrendering to those spreading unrest and instability in the country. He asked who would dare to restore democracy once it was derailed due to unrest and weather conditions.

Sirajul Haq said that transparent and timely elections only would bring peace and stability in Pakistan. "The JI wants free, fair and transparent elections in the entire country on February 8", he said, adding his party had issued tickets to the candidates for the National and Provincial Assembly seats across the country. He asked the people to vote for 'Tarazoo (scale), the election symbol of the JI, for peace, prosperity and development.

Commenting on the senate resolution regarding delay in elections the JI chief said that 14 senators could not decide the fate of 250 million people. He alleged the senate had bypassed its rules of business as the session had ended after Friday prayer. He said the resolution of postponing the election was presented out of the agenda and such resolutions undermined the confidence of the people. He said the state institutions had to ensure



strengthening of democracy and the supremacy of the constitution and rule of law in the country. He said that it was the right of the people to elect their representatives through transparent elections as it was their fundamental right under any circumstances. He said that elections were the solution to terrorism, unrest and destruction of the economy.

The JI chief, who is also a candidate for NA 6 said that the powers in the country revolved around a few families and individuals instead of the public. He said the 21st century was for democracy which was getting stronger all over the world while the monarchies were being strengthened in Pakistan. He alleged the ruling elites who had been imposed on the country for 76 years did nothing but had increased the sufferings of the people. He said the previous ruling parties were working for personal interests instead of the people, the country had been burdened with loans, the institutions had been weakened, the economy had been destroyed and the elite class had been making money.

"The ruling group spent the resources on themselves instead of the people, their factories and properties continued to increase, while it became impossible for the common man to even earn two meals a

day", Siraj regretted and said the people were not able to continue their children's education. He said that about 30 million children were out of schools as their parents were unable to get them even primary education. He said that there was no treatment for the poor in hospitals while 80% of the population did not have access to clean drinking water.

Siraj alleged the center had deprived the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of its due rights and share in net hydel profit for years. He said the youth were unemployed and frustrated. He said that Malakand division was the worst affected region while promises made with the merged districts had not been fulfilled. He said the JI would come to power and solve the problems faced by the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "We will implement the system of Quran and Sunnah in Pakistan, the youth will get employment, we will abolish usury and build the economy on Islamic lines and accountability and justice will be ensured", Sirajul Haq said, adding the JI would ensure the supremacy of parliament and rule of law. He said that the people had the best opportunity to show confidence in the JI candidates on February 8 and lay the foundation for the end of the status quo in the country.

## Furniture industry playing key role in eco development

### F.P. Report

**MARDAN:** The President of Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) and Markaze Tanzeem-e-Tajiran Provincial General Secretary (GS) Zahir Shah On Saturday has said that the furniture industry is playing an important role in the economic development of the country. Steps should be taken to solve the problems of the gentlemen on a priority basis. Maximum opportunities should be created for the promotion and investment of the furniture industry of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province.

He expressed these views while speaking on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the furniture showroom in Eidgah Road as a special guest. On this occasion, President of Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Zahir Shah said that the platform of Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry is very important for the availability of Computer Numerical Control Router (CNC) machines for the business

community related to furniture in Mardan district will start soon. Computer Numerical Control Router also has many attractive wood carving designs and other features on 31 types of machines.

Which will provide maximum relief to the furniture trading community and the working class with them. Mardan is the second largest city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and about 20 thousand workers are associated with the furniture business in Mardan, which will drive the economy in the right direction. He said that the business community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province is facing difficulties due to the current economic and various problems and the business community has always supported the country's economy in all kinds of difficult situations.

The government should create a friendly environment with the business community. Zahir Shah further said that like other important sectors, the furniture industry is also playing a key role in the economic development of the country and increasing exports. He

demanding the government to Should the problems of the business sector be solved immediately for the development and stability of the country's economy.

**Protest against load shedding held:** In the vicinity of Mehtar Ghundai area of Takhtbhai, the people of the area protested against the disconnection of electricity supply by the WAPDA authorities for the last four days.

The main Malakand road in front of WAPDA Takht Bhai was closed for all types of traffic. The people's strong protest led to the restoration of electricity in the area. The protest demonstration was led by PPP Mardan District General Secretary and provincial assembly candidate nominated from PK 60 Takhtbhai Irfan Khan Mohmand and others.

As soon as the incident was reported, the district administration and police officers reached to negotiate with the protestors. After successful negotiations with the protestors, they dispersed peacefully and WAPDA authorities restored electricity to the area.

## MTI Bannu hospital meeting discuss various issues

### F.P. Report

**BANNU:** The newly appointed chairman of MTI Bannu former District and Sessions Judge Abdul Rauf Khan has said that the three hospitals in Bannu will be modeled. A roster has been prepared to give overnight duties to hospitals throughout the district.

To ensure that concrete measures will be taken to eliminate the problems faced by the staff, he expressed his views while addressing a meeting at the Khalafat Gul Nawaz Medical Complex and during a meeting with a delegation led by the former president of the Bannu Press Club, senior journalist Muhammad Alam Khan.

The board members were also present, Chairman MTI Abdul Rauf Khan said that the provision of better facilities in the health sector to the millions of people in the Bannu district is one of my first responsibilities and priorities. I am visiting the three hospitals so that patients and staff in this regard, a comprehensive report of

the three MTI hospitals in Bannu is being prepared, which will make the problems here completely clear.

They want to show negligence and irresponsibility in front of the hospital, will there be a separate action in which the officers and officials of the relevant department will not be excused under any circumstances, he said that KGN, DHQ And the funds available for the Women and Children's Hospital will be used to provide better medical facilities to the patients here.

They said that the facilities provided to patients in the three hospitals in Benno are good if a tout from outside will rob the patients' relatives for the sake of the commission and the relevant staff at home In this regard, an online complaint system has been implemented in all three MTI hospitals, which the general public and patients' relatives can benefit.

Meanwhile, the leader of the PTI Parliamentarian, Syed Qaisar Abbas Shah, said that by ending the rule of a

family from the politics of the sons, the politicians here will become rich, while the poor people are under pressure and always vote for Islam in the name of the streets and streets.

Those who wandered in Abad and Peshawar will be informed of the return address to the people of Bannu in the last 60 years, electricity, load shedding, employment and big projects have not been given, because of which the people here have gone further down the line of poverty. No one can buy the conscience of the people of Bannu. I am in the field of action to serve the people and solve the fundamental problems here. They expressed their thoughts while addressing the event held in Chakar Mandan. Akhtar Nawaz Khan, Irfan Pirzada Advocate also spoke and they said that those who are in the big government positions in Bannu have not done anything for the people here, except for the pressure and the building of the old streets to vote again from the people.

## Cancer patient appeal for help from govt agencies and philanthropists

### F.P. Report

**CHITRAL:** Ghulam Nabi son of Mir, a resident of Shah Mirandah Singori, is a poor laborer who is suffering from cancer and has appealed to the government and philanthropists for help.

Talking to media, Ghulam Nabi, who currently sells perfumes, Miswak, Tasbeeh etc in Chitral Bazar and was earning livelihood for his family but a year and a half ago he was diagnosed with a throat cancer due to which he stopped his work and stayed at home.

"I have my treatment in the Shaukat Khanum Cancer Hospital Lahore, which is now not possible to visit because I have no work and no money to carry on my treatment there or visit every time to Lahore," Ghulam Nabi said while narrating his sad story.

He said his two brothers are also disabled, Ghulam Nabi has small children and a wife. He had bought a small house at Daneen, but when he was diagnosed with cancer, his children began to suffer from starvation due to no income and nothing to purchase eatable

things. Ghulam Nabi said that he belongs to the Gujar community who has no property or any other source of income except selling things on a small cart.

Ghulam Nabi also sold his personal house in Daneen to feed his children. Ghulam Nabi himself was deprived of food and drink and he continued to take soft food through a pipe fixed in his throat by pushing through a syringe. He has a small son and a daughter who are not able to earn something for his family.





# China-US cooperation ‘no longer an option ... but an imperative’: Wang Yi

BEIJING (Reuters): Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the most urgent task for Sino-US relations is to establish a correct understanding and cooperation between the two sides, stressing it is "no longer an option ... but an imperative" for the world.

Cooperation is the "most correct choice for China and the United States to get along", Wang said in a keynote speech at an event to mark the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the US. "It can be said that China-US cooperation is no longer an option for the two countries and even for the world, but an imperative that must be seriously addressed," Wang said.

Relations between the United States and China have been tense over a range of issues, including national security, global conflicts, trade curbs, climate change and Taiwan. The diplomatic rift deepened last year as both accused each other of flying high-altitude balloons in their respective air spaces.

This past week, the two superpowers held competing military drills in the South China Sea as run-ins intensify in the region over disputed territory. Wang said China hopes the US will relax its mindset and "in an attitude of equality and inclusiveness" respect the choices made by the Chinese people and China's development path, including when defending its national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"We are willing to commit ourselves to building a stable, healthy and sustainable China-US relation-



ship on the basis of mutual respect," he said. Wang also said China's development and revitalisation has a "strong endogenous momentum", which he said meant that China will assume greater responsibility for the world's peace and development.

"We have no intention of replacing anyone, overriding anyone, and have no intention of seeking hegemony," he added. The US and its allies have often said they are concerned about an increasing alignment between China and Russia.

China's top diplomat travelled to the United States recently as both countries sought to manage their differences to avoid conflict. Wang said that while both nations were built on different backgrounds, the differ-

ences should not lead to confrontation, and that the "big stick of sanctions" should not be used at every turn to exercise power or hegemony. "We must insist on peaceful coexistence, and the most important thing is to effectively manage differences," Wang said. Observers fear new turbulence could rattle the relationship as the year begins. David Meale, U.S Deputy Chief of Mission for the Embassy of the US in Beijing, who attended the event with Wang, said "as we look ahead to 2024, my colleagues in the US Embassy and in our four consulates general look forward to working with our counterparts to continue to responsibly manage our bilateral relationship."

## UN chief names a new envoy for Cyprus talks

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP): UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres named a former Colombian foreign minister as his personal envoy to scope out the chances of reviving talks to resolve Cyprus' ethnic divide, an issue that has defied international diplomacy for nearly five decades.

Maria Ángela Holguín Cuéllar will work on Guterres' behalf to "search for common ground on the way forward" and to serve as the UN chief's advisor on Cyprus, UN associate spokesperson Stephanie Tremblay said. Cuéllar served as Colombia's top diplomat during 2010-2018 and as the country's representative to the UN during 2004-2006.

She is expected to travel to Cyprus soon to sound out Greek Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides and the leader of the breakaway Turkish Cypriots, Ersin Tatar. Cyprus was divided into ethnic Greek and Turkish sides in 1974, when Turkey invaded just days after a coup mounted by supporters of union with Greece. Only Turkey recognizes a Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence and keeps some 40,000 troops in the Mediterranean island nation's breakaway north.

A Cyprus peace deal would reduce a source of potential conflict next door to an unstable Middle East and allow for the easier harnessing of hydrocarbon reserves in the eastern Mediterranean Sea's natural gas-rich waters. But Guterres' appointment of an envoy to inform him whether it would be worth trying to jumpstart the long-stalled peace talks reflects a more cautious approach as a result of numerous failed attempts to produce an accord. If anything, the two sides have grown further apart since the last major push for progress in the summer of 2017.

Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots say they have ditched an agreed-upon framework that called for reunifying Cyprus as a federated state with Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot zones. Instead, they are advocating for what effectively amounts to a two-state deal. Turkish Cypriots argue that the majority Greek Cypriots want to lord over the entire island by refusing to equally share power. They also support Turkey's insistence on maintaining military intervention rights and a permanent troop presence on the island as part of any deal.

Greek Cypriots strongly oppose a deal that would formalize the island's ethnic cleave and reject a Turkish Cypriot demand for veto powers on all government decisions at a federal level. They also reject Turkey's stipulations, arguing a permanent Turkish troop presence and a right to military intervention would undercut the country's sovereignty. Before Cuellar's appointment, the two Cypriot sides appeared to have eased up on antagonistic rhetoric, but tensions between them linger.

# Ukraine unleashes more drones, missiles at Russian areas

KYIV (AP): Russian air defenses downed dozens of Ukrainian drones in occupied Crimea and southern Russia, officials said, as Kyiv pressed its strategy of targeting the Moscow-annexed peninsula and taking the 22-month war well beyond Ukraine's borders.

Air raid sirens wailed in Sevastopol, the largest city in Crimea, and traffic was suspended for a second straight day on a bridge connecting the peninsula, which Moscow seized illegally a decade ago, with Russia's southern Krasnodar region. The span is a crucial supply link for Russia's war effort. The Russian Defense Ministry said its defenses intercepted 36 drones over Crimea and one over Krasnodar, part of an emerging pattern of intensified Ukrainian aerial attacks in recent days.

A Ukrainian Neptune anti-ship missile also was destroyed over the northwestern part of the Black Sea, the ministry said. The developments came after three people were injured night by other Ukrainian rocket and drone attacks on the Russian border city of Belgorod and the surrounding region, said Belgorod Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov.

He posted photographs on Telegram of an apartment building with some windows shattered and damaged cars. He said authorities could help those wanting to move farther from the border. Ukrainian attacks on Dec. 30 in Belgorod killed 25 people, officials there said. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has pledged to hit more targets on the Crimean Peninsula and inside Russian border regions this year. The goal is to unsettle Russians as President Vladimir Putin seeks another six years in power in a March 17 elec-

tion.

A Ukrainian attack on military facilities in Crimea affected a command center and the peninsula's air defense system, according to a spokesperson for Ukraine's southern joint forces, Natalia Humeniuk. She said the Russian military recently relocated its Crimean launch sites for Shahed drones. It was not possible to verify either side's claims.

Following a drone strike deep inside Russia last year, Zelenskyy said Ukraine had developed a weapon that can hit targets 700 kilometers (400 miles) away. He said last month Kyiv plans to produce 1 million drones, which have become a key battlefield weapon. Other Ukrainian officials said it aims to manufacture this year more than 10,000 attack drones with a range of hundreds of kilometers, as well as more than 1,000 longer-range drones that can hit targets well behind the front line and inside Russia.

Both sides are raising the stakes of their long-range warfare as soldiers remain bogged down on the wintry battlefield. The U.K. Defense Ministry said that "ground combat has continued to be characterized by either a static front line or very gradual, local Russian advances in key sectors." The Kremlin, meanwhile, has acquired ballistic missiles from North Korea and fired at least one of them into Ukraine on Dec. 30, the White House said, citing recently declassified US intelligence. It also is seeking close-range ballistic missiles from Iran, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said. British Defense Minister Grant Shapps said Pyongyang would pay a high price for supporting Russia, although he didn't

say in what way, and he accused Moscow of violating a UN embargo on arms shipments to and from North Korea. "The world has turned its back on Russia, forcing Putin into the humiliation of going cap in hand to North Korea to keep his illegal invasion going," Shapps said on X, formerly Twitter.

Asked about the development, Ukrainian air force spokesman Yuri Ihnat said in televised comments that he couldn't immediately confirm the use of the North Korean-supplied missiles, adding that experts need to study the fragments. Russian officials have refrained from commenting on previous US claims that North Korea has supplied ammunition to Moscow. Ukraine said it stopped 21 out of 29 Russian Shahed drones launched. The assault injured two people, including a 14-year-old, and was the latest of almost daily Russian drone attacks in the new year.

Zelenskyy thanked Germany for a delivery of military aid, especially air defense materiel that he said "is timely and focused on our priorities." Ukraine "should look to continue degrading Russia's ability to wage war by conducting an escalating campaign of airstrikes on targets far behind the front lines throughout occupied Ukraine and inside Russia itself," according to Mykola Bielieskov, a research fellow at Ukraine's National Institute for Strategic Studies. "This could include attacks on troop concentrations, military bases, and munitions stores along with logistical hubs and armament production facilities," he wrote in an assessment published by the Atlantic Council, a US think tank.

## Burhan says 'no reconciliation' with RSF

CAIRO (Reuters): Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan vowed to continue a nine-month war between the military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), rejecting the latest peace efforts.

RSF head Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo agreed earlier this week to a ceasefire proposed by civilian groups, contingent on the military agreeing also. But observers responded sceptically in light of the paramilitary force's prior unfulfilled promises. The US has accused both the army and RSF of war crimes, and it says the RSF is also responsible for crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

"The whole world witnessed these rebel forces committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in West Darfur and the rest of Sudan. For that reason, we have no reconciliation with them, we have no agreement with them," Burhan, who is also Sudan's head of state, told troops gathered in Port Sudan in video released by his office. He was referring to ethnic cleansing in and around the West Darfur city of El Geneina.

The war that began on April 15 has devastated wide swathes of Sudan and displaced more than 7.5 million people. With the RSF appearing to gain the upper hand in the fight, the International Development Authority on Development, an African trade bloc, got Burhan and Dagalo, known as Hemedti, last month to agree to an in-person meeting.

# India, China eye strategic areas bordering 'last barrier' Bhutan

THIMPHU (AFP): Squeezed between giant arch-rivals India and China, the landlocked mountain kingdom of Bhutan was long isolated by icy Himalayan peaks.

But as Bhutan readies to elect a new parliament in Thimphu on January 9, China and India are watching the contest with keen interest as they eye strategic contested border zones, analysts warn. A "cooperation agreement" inked between Bhutan and China in October after talks over their disputed northern frontier sparked concern in India, which has long regarded Bhutan as a buffer state firmly under its orbit.

Bhutan is "one of the last barriers" in China's bid to exert influence in South Asia, said Harsh V. Pant, an international relations professor at King's College London told AFP. India is determined not to let China extend its influence further across what New Delhi sees as its natural sphere of influence, wary after a swathe of muscular trade deals and loans by Beijing, including with Bangladesh, Nepal, the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

Thimphu and Beijing do not have formal diplomatic relations. India, however, effectively oversaw Bhutan's foreign policy until 2007. The relationship was "in exchange for free-trade and security arrangements", Britain's Chatham House think tank wrote in a December report.

The report included satellite photographs it said showed an "unsanctioned programme of settlement construction" by China in

Bhutan's northern frontier region, which could "become permanent Chinese territory" pending the outcome of a border deal. China's foreign ministry told AFP in a statement of its "determination to strive for an early resolution of the boundary issue and the establishment of diplomatic relations".

"Beijing will anticipate that a deal consolidating its gains in northern Bhutan may lead to formal diplomatic relations and the opportunity to draw Thimphu into its orbit", Chatham House said. "Any such deal would have far-reaching implications for India."

If China succeeds in that, Beijing "can push a view that India is now marginal in its immediate neighbourhood", Pant added. New Delhi has been wary of Beijing's growing military assertiveness and their 3,500-kilometre (2,175-mile) shared frontier has been a perennial source of tension. In 2017, there was a 72-day military standoff after Chinese forces moved into the disputed Doklam plateau, on the China-India-Bhutan border.

The plateau pushes south towards India's critical Siliguri Corridor, dubbed the "Chicken's Neck". The perilously narrow strip of land lies between Nepal and Bangladesh, and connects India's northeastern states with the rest of the country. China and India fought a month-long war in the region in 1962.

"New Delhi would be concerned that, in the event of a deal demarcating

Bhutan's northern border, attention may turn to territory in Bhutan's west which China disputes, including the Doklam plateau," Chatham House added. For Bhutan, dwarfed by China, striking a deal makes sense, said Pant.

"If they don't resolve their border now, tomorrow they will be in an even more unfavourable position," he said. Subasini Haidar, diplomatic editor of The Hindu newspaper, said India was worried that a Bhutan-China border deal "seems imminent". She said that Bhutan's "fast-tracking" of boundary talks with China after the 2017 Doklam standoff was a decision that "India has viewed with quiet concern".

Analysts say foreign policy plays little role in the domestic concerns of voters in Bhutan -- about the size of Switzerland with around 800,000 people -- who are more worried about high unemployment and young people migrating abroad seeking jobs. However, India is the biggest source of investment and infrastructure in Bhutan -- Thimphu's ngultrum currency is pegged to New Delhi's rupee -- and boosting bilateral relations is key.

"Any government coming to power will seek to shore up ties," Haidar said. Bhutan has strong economic and strategic relations with India, "particularly as its major trading partner, source of foreign aid and as a financier and buyer of surplus hydropower", according to the World Bank.

eligibility, and then the UN agencies refer cases to the US, which makes the final decision. If they're denied, the government could evaluate them for different, more temporary programs.

"This process facilitates and reduces time" for refugees, said Luiz Fernando Godinho Santos, a UNHCR spokesman for the Americas. Jefferson Castro, who first told Llanos about the program, also applied to come to the US from Colombia, after arriving from Venezuela in 2018, when he said he was threatened by police. In September, he traveled nine hours by bus with his wife and their two children, ages 8 and 4, from Medellín to Bogotá, where US officials interviewed them, examined them medically and provided US cultural immersion courses.

He knew at least three other families had been approved and assumed he would be, too. So he took his children out of school and sold his refrigerator, beds and motorcycle, which he used to work as a delivery person. But they heard nothing for weeks. "I was left without a job, without money, without answers," said Castro, 28, in a recent phone interview from Medellín.

In late December, he finally received good news. They have one

hurdle left: His daughter, born in Colombia, needs a passport. But he lacks the \$100 to cover the costs. "How can I have faith without work? How do I get a passport if I don't have money?" Castro said. "I don't know what to do."

Immigrant advocates say the safe mobility initiative needs work — it can be confusing, isn't advertised well so enough migrants aren't aware of it, and it isn't open to enough people. For example, in Colombia, only Cubans, Haitians and Venezuelans present in Colombia before or on June 11 are eligible right now. Still, they say, it's a start. And when families do make it, they are usually handed off to a non-governmental organization that helps resettle them into the US.

"It is certainly a step in the right direction in terms of providing people mechanisms to seek asylum safely rather than relying on coyotes and undertaking a dangerous trip," said Lee Williams, chief programs officer at Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. Adanny Hurtado, a Venezuelan, and his family arrived in October and live in Houston. An NGO pays their rent and has helped with food and paperwork for work authorization. He is already working as a welder. His wife is a customer assistant at Walmart, and their two

children are in school.

"I still can't believe it. I think it's not real," said Hurtado. The initiative "was the hand that God offered to me." Nevertheless, Santos and others say, it is not a catchall solution or an asylum replacement. The UNHCR projects there are about 18.4 million people displaced in the Western Hemisphere — it's a problem that's only growing.

Llanos, his partner, Diomaris Barboza, 26, and their kids spent anxious weeks in Colombia wondering whether they would be eligible to come to the US, waiting for 10 days in a hotel after their interviews. "We didn't know the answer until the last day," he said. The family sold their belongings and, with the help of the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, settled in Lehigh Acres, near Fort Myers. They live in a two-bedroom house on a quiet street where they are already making friends. The Lutheran services are helping them obtain medical exams and all the paperwork they need to resettle, including the school enrollment for the children. They are being helped with food, money and rent, and Llanos is already working in construction. They must repay their \$3,000 plane tickets. But they have three years to do it.

# A new immigration policy that avoids a dangerous journey is working

LEHIGH ACRES, Fla. (AP): Five years ago, Alexis Llanos and his family fled Venezuela for Colombia, escaping death threats and political persecution. The family then planned to make the dangerous and deadly journey north, through the Darien jungle leading through Panama, with hopes of eventually crossing illegally into the United States.

Their plans changed when a friend mentioned a new migration program from the US government that would allow them to stay put while they pleaded for a chance to come legally. It worked. After a four-month process that included medical exams and interviews with the United Nations and the US, Llanos, his partner and their 7-year-old girl and 3-year-old boy arrived in Florida.

"It was a unique opportunity, a miracle that God prepared for me," said Llanos, 27, during an interview with The Associated Press from his new home. "I feel blessed, grateful. ... I did not want to take the risk. I would not have forgiven myself if something had happened to them because of me," crossing the jungle. The Llanos family is among the first migrants allowed into the US under the Biden administration's new "safe mobility offices," set up in Colombia, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Ecuador beginning in the fall. The program is

designed to streamline the US refugee process so migrants don't give up and pay smugglers to make the journey north, further straining the US-Mexico border, which has seen record-high numbers of crossings.

So far, 3,000 refugees have arrived in the US, and 9,000 have been approved. But it's a small number compared with what's happening at the US-Mexico border, where there were more than 10,000 arrests for illegal crossing per day over several days in December alone. In cities including Chicago, New York and Denver, migrants who have no access to work permits sleep in police station foyers and in airports. These are the scenes that dominate the early phase of the 2024 presidential campaign, with Republicans exhorting President Joe Biden and considering whether to impeach his Homeland Security secretary.

Republicans are also pushing the Democratic president to back more restrictive policies that would dramatically reduce asylum protections, among other things, and they believe they have leverage if he wants to see another infusion of tens of billions in aid to Ukraine. The Biden administration has worked to crack down on illegal crossings but has also sought to broaden legal pathways through

efforts like the safe mobility initiative, to provide alternatives for migrants in the hope they don't journey north.

Those who do arrive on foot to the US-Mexico border and ask for asylum get a court date and must prove they are eligible to stay. The system is badly backlogged, so they often end up waiting years for a court date while they sit in limbo in the US without authorization to work. With the safe mobility initiative, they're arriving as refugees who have already met the requirements and will be legally allowed to live and work in the US. The process takes only months, while more traditional refugee screening is a yearslong effort. Immigrant advocates laud the new pathways but don't think they replace asylum.

"It is absolutely critical that these pathways now exist," said Hannah Flamm, policy counsel at the International Refugee Assistance Project. But, "no enhancement of access to refugee resettlement can ever come at the expense of the rights of asylum seekers at the border." To implement its plan, the Biden administration is working with the UN High Commission for Refugees and with the UN's International Organization for Migration. To apply, migrants answer questions online to screen for



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## Unlawful agenda of lawmakers

**T**HE Upper House of the Parliament adopted a resolution with a majority vote on Friday calling for postponing general elections slated to be held in the country next month due to security concerns. The resolution was moved by Senator Dilawar Khan which states that the elections scheduled to be held on February 8 should be deferred indefinitely, citing attacks on leaders of political parties and threat alerts against politicians for putting off the polls. Interestingly, only 14 senators out of a hundred were present in the Upper House of the Parliament when the resolution was tabled and put to vote. According to the resolution, the Ministry of Interior has conveyed serious threats to the lives of prominent politicians increasing the challenges faced by political parties in exercising their right to a free and fair election. The lawmaker further highlighted that there had been a spike in attacks on security forces and citizens, particularly in KP and Balochistan. The intelligence agencies have warned of militant attacks and threats on election rallies in both provinces which merits a caution and pre-emptive strategy to avoid human/ material losses that are possible only through postponement of the election.

The country is all set for a nationwide general election for the National and Provincial assemblies in all federating units after the months-long delay and the completion of fresh delimitation amid political chaos, and uncertainty. The electoral process has already begun, and the scrutiny of the candidates is currently underway after the submission of the nomination papers. A few weeks have been left before a countrywide grand contest to be opened on the 8th of February. Surprisingly, doubts are being cast and uncertainty is being spread by some quarters about the timely holding of the upcoming general elections. Unfortunately, the Senate of Pakistan, the topmost parliamentary forum in the country is perpetually being used by some disillusioned and selfish politician to achieve their self-centered undemocratic agenda in the garb of so-called security risks and self-assumed hazards.

Historically, the continuity of the democratic process and functioning of state institutions including the judiciary, Law Enforcement, service delivery, and educational activities are of utmost importance for ensuring stability and security and running a routine business within a country at all times even in the state of war, insurgency, and natural calamities. A consistent democratic system enables peaceful transitions of power, upholds the rule of law, fosters public trust in institutions, and provides avenues for resolving conflicts through legal and political means. At the same time, interruptions or disruptions in this process can lead to political instability, and unrest, along with causing potential security threats, impacting the nation's stability, both domestically and internationally. Similarly, the continuity of a judicial system during wartime insurgency ensures that legal processes continue to function, protecting fundamental rights, maintaining order, and facilitating resolution mechanisms, all of which are crucial for societal stability, preservation of democracy, and the consolidation of the political system in the country. Disruption in the democratic/ political process directly undermines national security and indirectly fulfills the nefarious objectives of the anti-state and anti-democratic forces in the country.

Presently, a self-elected lawmaker has moved a politically motivated, undemocratic, and anti-public resolution in the upper house whose sole purpose is the defence of public rights, promotion of democracy, and protection of the national interests of the country. Such politically motivated and greed-driven resolutions do not serve national/ public interests but expose political conspiracies and undemocratic plans of certain political groups/ individuals. The nation is fully braced up for the upcoming general election, the public representatives and national institutions must work for their timely conduct of the election and smooth transition of government, so the country moves toward peace and stability as soon as possible.

## Lukashenko's decree and divine law

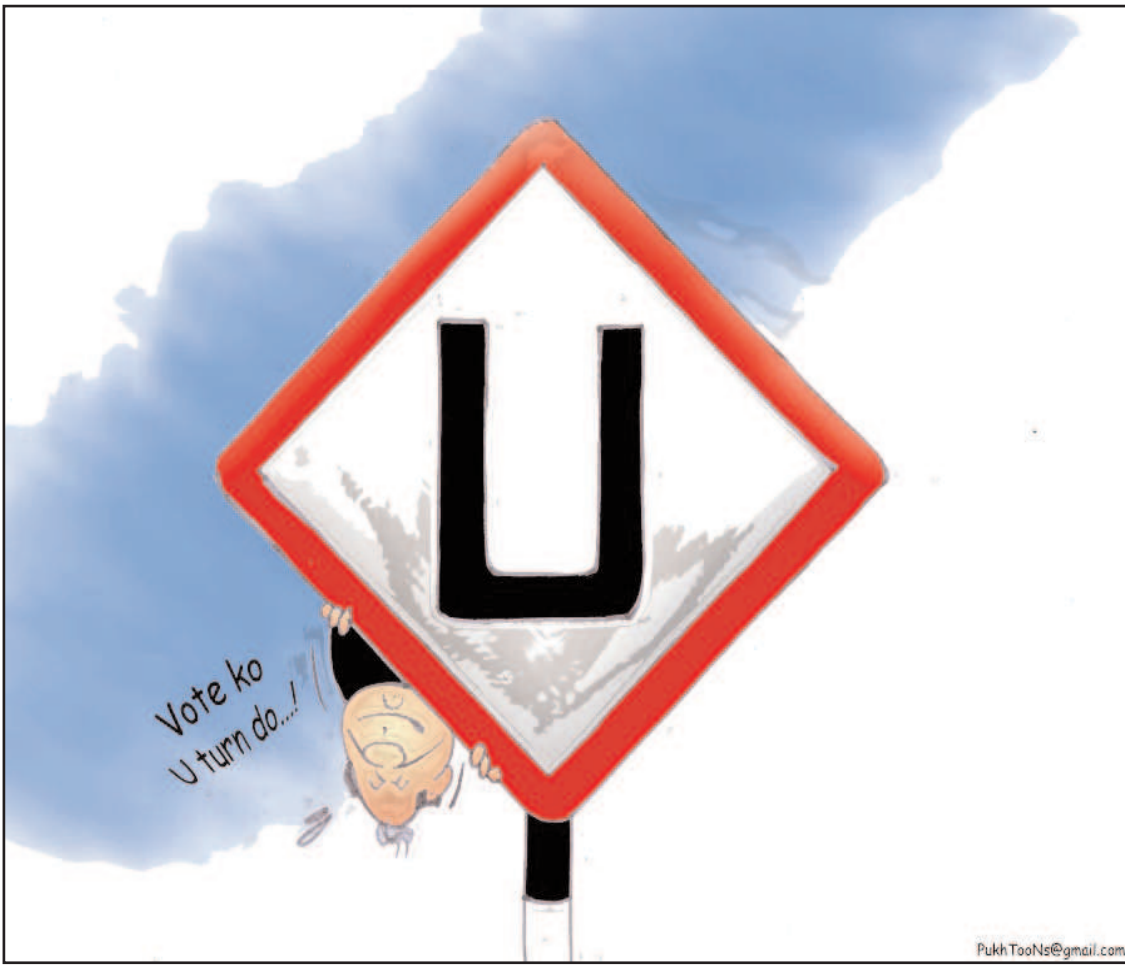
**P**RESIDENT Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus signed a new law Thursday that gives him lifelong immunity from criminal prosecution and prevents opposition leaders living abroad from running in future presidential elections. According to the text of the new law, Lukashenko, if and when leaves power, cannot be held accountable for actions committed in connection with exercising his presidential powers during his term in office that sprawl over the past three decades. The law also says the president and members of his family will be provided with lifelong state protection, medical care, and life and health insurance. After resigning, the president would also become a permanent lifelong member of the upper house of parliament.

The latest decree of the long-held Belarusian leader is another manifestation of draconian monarchy and a personally crafted dark version of democracy that prevails in several countries even in the current modern. So far, the longheld authoritarian rules of Russian President Vladimir Putin, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, former Kazak leader Nursultan Nazarbayev, Egyptian dictator Al-Sisi, and multiple other leaders who have prolonged their rule for several decades through self-coined legislation, dictatorial decrees, and authoritarian executive orders have recently signed by the Lukashenko to give himself lifelong impunity, unceasing incentives, and unchallengeable pardon to cover up his unlawful actions which he did in the past or likely to commit in the future.

Historically, lust for power and desire for unlimited rule is human greed that has been largely displayed by several global leaders throughout history. Pakistan is also self-sufficient in such self-claimed nation saviours who floated the idea of a Presidential form of government and advocated for Riasaat-e-Madina style Khalifiyat. Some conferred themselves the titles of Khadim-e-Ala others portrayed as a lone patriot and the greatest leader of the nation. However, nature failed all such philosophies and those followers of Chankiya became a part of history. Presently, the 69-year-old Lukashenko has brought about an interesting instrument to consolidate his grip over Belarus as his greed could not be satisfied with almost 30 years of rule in that nation. The new measure appears aimed at further shoring up Lukashenko's power and eliminating potential challengers in the country's next presidential election, which is due to take place in 2025. After all, nature has the best strategies to foil such greed-driven legislation and these power-hungry leaders finally end up in acrimony and gall.

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## Bangladesh elections mark a pro-China tipping point in South Asia

Sourabh Sen

**T**HE year 2024 will witness key elections to choose democratic governments across the world, and the season begins with the Bangladesh election on January 7. Altogether, 29 political parties, including the governing Awami League (AL) and a faction of the opposition Jatiya Party, will fight the elections. With almost all the opposition parties led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Jamaat-e-Islami (Jamaat) sitting out, the return of AL to power for a fourth term is a fait accompli.

Bangladesh's general elections have always drawn international attention. But this time round, certain geopolitical issues at play have pushed the level a few notches up. Till the opposition parties were in the race, countries like the United States and India, and blocs like the European Union, resorted to rhetoric, administrative action and backroom diplomacy to pressure the AL government into ensuring the elections appear to be free and fair.

This was counterbalanced by China and Russia, who told others — read the US — not to meddle in Bangladesh's internal matters. Such a polarisation of world powers reveals the geopolitics at play in South Asia. It matters to these countries as to who rules Bangladesh. It is about who gains out of a status quo versus who is looking at potential gains if AL is voted out of power.

By late 2021, the US had already made up its mind. In a press statement on December 10 that year, Secretary of State Antony Blinken imposed sanctions on two Bangladeshi security officials, Benazir Ahmed and Miftah Uddin Ahmed, for alleged extrajudicial killings, making them and their immediate family members ineligible for entry into the US. The Department of the Treasury also designated Bangladesh's elite Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Benazir Ahmed and five

other officials under the Global Magnitsky Sanctions Program in connection with serious human rights abuse.

In May 2023, the US government enacted a visa policy which denied visas to those engaged in undermining the “democratic election process”. In September 2023, the US announced that it was taking steps to implement the new visa policy. On November 13, 2023, US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu wrote to all three major parties — the AL, BNP and the Jatiya Party — calling for “dialogue without preconditions”. The beaming pictures of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and US President Joe Biden taken at the September G20 Summit in New Delhi do not appear to have translated into a more benign US policy over the AL-affiliated Bangladeshi government.

In the run-up to prior elections, it was customary for the AL and the BNP to elicit support from India and other leading world powers, and this time was no exception. During its visit to New Delhi in August 2023, a five-member AL delegation, led by Agriculture Minister Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, met senior Indian ministers and leaders of the governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and advocated that re-election of the AL was essential to ensure stability in the South Asian region.

The AL's talking points were familiar: a combination of fear-mongering over the BNP-Jamaat combine's political Islamist tilt and reassurance that Dhaka would not ignore New Delhi's sensitivities about Beijing; that China was more of a development partner, not a strategic partner; that Bangladesh has not forgotten the antagonistic role China and the US played against the country's liberation struggle in 1971, and how India was the friend that truly helped

the country gain independence.

Compared with the US and its Western allies, China and India have shown more restraint in their reaction to the Bangladesh elections. While China has stated that it will back the Bangladeshi government against external interference, India believes that putting “too much” pressure would strengthen hardline forces in Bangladesh's opposition parties.

The Chinese have identified opportunities in retaining the AL government. Since 2010, China's influence has been growing in the decision-making architecture of both Bangladesh and the AL at various levels. Beijing has strong strategic compulsions to turn Bangladesh into a state heavily dependent on it, like Myanmar and Cambodia.

Doing so will ensure easier Chinese access to Indian Ocean sea lanes, bypassing the Malacca Strait via the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) connecting Yunnan province to the seaport city of Kyaukpadaung in Myanmar's Rakhine state. Geographically, the G a n g a - P a d m a - Brahmaputra delta hosts the shortest land route to access the sea lanes from mainland China.

That was the British calculation when they set up Calcutta (now known as Kolkata), which was then part of undivided Bengal, as their transshipment point to support the East India Company's opium and tea trade with China. As things stand, AL in power will ensure a predictable, stable and favourable political climate to protect and promote China's large infrastructure investments in Bangladesh.

AL's metamorphosis from a mass-based party of middle-class, secular, pro-Indian leaders, wedded to the spirit of the 1971 liberation struggle, to a party run by China-backed oligarchs — some with dubi-

ous credentials — is cause for concern both in New Delhi and Washington. Take Hasina's top adviser, Salman Rahman, who criticises claim effectively runs the government. Rahman's family owns Beximco, one of Asia's largest textile firms, which has significant business deals with China; or Zunaid Ahmed Palak, lawyer and minister of state for information and communication technology, who has faced accusations of being soft on Chinese companies in his role.

It is not that the AL is the only governing party being driven by oligarchic interests. In neighbouring India, for instance, oligarchs close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi also push their interests, cloaked in the garb of national interests, shaping and driving domestic and foreign policies. Geopolitical issues like transborder infrastructure, disaster and pandemic response and wars provide platforms that put invisible men in grey suits on the same page as they parse out territories for commercial exploitation transcending borders.

With AL set to retain its control over Bangladesh, the US effort to disrupt this metamorphosis by using human rights as a diplomatic weapon appears to have failed. To put it more bluntly, the outcome of the elections marks the tipping point at which Bangladesh buckles into China's Belt and Road Initiative more firmly than the US-backed Indo-Pacific efforts to counter Beijing.

With street violence and demonstrations on the rise, this is easier said than done.

Like many other South Asian and Indian Ocean Rim Association countries, Bangladesh may not be in a position to manage the shift when China transitions from a “development partner” to a “strategic partner”. What happens after the January 7 elections is as important as the vote itself — for Bangladesh, the region, and the world's big powers.

## The (not so) surprising revelations of the Epstein list

Belén Fernández

**WHAT do former United States presidents Bill Clinton and Donald Trump have in common with Hyatt Hotels executive chairman Thomas Pritzker and celebrity lawyer Alan Dershowitz?**

In addition to being white American men who have usurped a disproportionate share of the planet's wealth, they were among the first names recently exposed in previously sealed court documents identifying associates of paedophile financier and sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein, who died by suicide in a US prison in 2019.

Assorted other members of the international elite were also named, including Britain's Prince Andrew and the late Michael Jackson. More than 150 identities in total are expected to be released. Of course, the naming of names in itself does not constitute a criminal accusation and while media outlets have raced with orgasmic fervour to exploit the tabloidesque potential of the news story, we are not actually talking about any shocking revelations here.

After all, in a world defined by US-led patriarchal capitalism — in which women suffer a particular sort of objectification and commodification — it's no surprise that those at the top of the hierarchy would fully endorse the whole brutal arrangement. Take Donald Trump, for example, who has faced all manner of rape and sexual harassment allegations while also intermittently emitting lewd comments about his own daughter, among them: “If Ivanka weren't my daughter, perhaps I'd be dating her.” Is it so astounding, in the end, that he would hobnob with the likes of Epstein?

Meanwhile, Bill Clinton's name appears no fewer than 73 times in the documents released thus far, including in Epstein victim Johanna Sjöberg's testimony, according to which Epstein once informed her that Clinton “likes them young”, referring to girls’.

Tell us something we didn't know. Anyway, ethics have never been the strong point of any head of state of a global superpower that has long been dedicated to, well, slaughtering and otherwise making life hell for folks worldwide. For his part, billionaire Thomas Pritzker of the Hyatt Hotels empire comes up in the unsealed court documents as one of the men whom Epstein victim Virginia Roberts Giuffre was allegedly forced to service. He is also an “amateur scholar of Chinese history”, as per his bio on the website of the Washington, DC-based Aspen Institute — just another charmingly cultured super-capitalist whose existence is predicated on crippling inequality and other nice things.

And then, of course, there's criminal lawyer and former Harvard Law professor Alan Dershowitz, who appears in the documents as someone Epstein “required” an underage woman to have sex with various times, according to

the woman's allegations. As Al Jazeera reported on January 4, Dershowitz furthermore “played a significant role in negotiating an agreement that provided immunity from federal prosecution in the Southern District of Florida not only for Epstein but also for ‘any potential co-conspirators of Epstein’, the documents say”.

Of all the contenders on the so-called “Epstein list” to date, the Dershowitz case is perhaps the most deserving of consideration at the present moment, given that he has potentially been tapped by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to defend Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. Israel will appear before said court to contest the accusation, made by South Africa, that it is committing genocide in the Gaza Strip, where the Israeli military has killed more than 22,000 Palestinians in less than three months.

In other words, the “genocide” case is a no-brainer in theory. But Dershowitz happens to specialise in that brand of “criminal law” that defends criminals against fact and logic.

He has already branched his beyond-fanatically Zionist credentials on numerous occasions — like during the summer 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon that killed 1,200 people in 34 days, the vast majority of them civilians. One week into the assault, Dershowitz took to the pages of the Wall Street Journal in an appeal titled “Arithmetic of Pain”, where he proposed a “continuum of civilianity” to basically argue that, contrary to international opinion, there simply weren't that many bona fide “civilians” in places like Lebanon.

On the Dershowitzian “continuum”, not even women and children could “always be counted as civilians, as some organisations do”. Such notions will no doubt come in handy in the event that Dershowitz does indeed become the face of Israel at the ICJ. In 2012, during Israel's brief “Pillar of Defence” offensive in the Gaza Strip, Dershowitz took media outlets to task for their failure to specify that Israel only commits “lawful actions” while Hamas only commits war crimes. In this particular offensive, Israel killed 87 Palestinian civilians in eight days, among them 35 children and 14 women — at least in the view of those of us who continue to subscribe to the concept of “civilians”.

Fast forward to the current genocide, and Dershowitz has predictably slammed “radical feminists” for obsessing over the Epstein stuff rather than “condemning Hamas”. To be sure, the Epstein list comes not so much as a shock as a reminder that lots of horrifying behaviour is being conducted by the powers that be in a nasty system where elite domination remains above the law. But as the tabloidesque coverage rolls on, remember that this is not really news at all.

Aljazeera

## Crises could be a catalyst for renewed Turkiye-Syria dialogue

Sinem Cengiz

**I**N the global landscape, each new crisis tends to overshadow the previous one. Thus, currently, Israel's war on Gaza has superseded the conflict in Ukraine, which before had taken center stage from the Syrian civil war.

After 13 years of conflict, Syria is a fractured country in which humanitarian and security concerns are still growing. Despite a reduction in violence the crisis is far from over, and the Gaza war may make things even worse. This heightened risk is a cause for concern for Turkish policymakers, given the implications for both Syria, which sees the fire on its doorstep, and the broader region.

Recent comments on Syria by Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan are significant. Fidan was Turkiye's spy chief for over a decade, and has closely monitored regional issues since the Arab uprisings that began in 2011. A few months after he assumed his new role fol-

lowing elections in Turkiye last May, the Gaza war erupted. Nevertheless, the Syria issue is of particular importance to Fidan, given his pivotal role in facilitating talks between Ankara and Damascus.

Turkish-Syrian normalization was on the agenda even before the 2023 elections. Foreign ministers of Syria, Turkiye, Russia, and Iran met on May 10 in Moscow amid efforts to end decades of tension between Syria and Turkiye. Russia proposed a roadmap for restoring Syrian-Turkish relations to normal. Evaluating the process after that meeting, Fidan said communication — both direct and indirect — was continuing at various levels. He highlighted Turkiye's current priority of preventing conflicts between the Syrian regime and opposition, expecting both sides to maintain their positions within the Astana framework.

Turkiye has vested interests in maintaining the status quo in Syria amid escalating

tensions in the region from Israel to Lebanon, and from Iran to Yemen. First, preventing the resurgence of terrorist elements in Syria is a key concern. In the event of renewed tension between regime and opposition forces, terrorist elements are likely to find fertile ground. To prevent this, Fidan said Turkiye had engaged in intense diplomatic, intelligence and military activity to ensure that matters remained in equilibrium and that the parties stayed in their positions. A military balance of power continues to exist in Syria.

Second, avoiding a new wave of refugees into Turkiye is crucial, and normalization with Syria could help to address this issue. From the Turkish point of view, normalization with Syria could benefit Turkish interests in two ways. First, Ankara would expect collaboration with Damascus in combating the YPG, which Turkiye views as the Syrian

branch of the outlawed PKK. Second, there is an expectation that the normalization process would prompt the Assad regime to take concrete measures facilitating the return of the Syrian refugees currently residing in Turkiye.

Ankara has recognized that advocating leadership change in Syria is now impractical and is actively looking for ways to negotiate with Assad regime. With the establishment of suitable conditions, Ankara envisions the return of Syrian refugees in Turkiye to their homeland. This move is also seen as a means to bolster Ankara's position in dealing with the US-backed YPG in northern Syria.

Finally, Fidan stressed the potential for political reconciliation and peace building when the two sides experienced a level of calmness. “The hatred of both sides can be forgotten and a political stance toward peace and the

construction of the future can be formed, that is, through interactions. This is important,” he said. The problems between Turkiye and Syria are multidimensional and intertwined, including terrorism, refugees, and the existence of several foreign actors. There are conditions set by both sides, which hinders the process of normalization — but the process is not over.

The Gaza war has been the latest in a series of setbacks for Turkish-Syrian talks, but Turkiye is more concerned about Syria, which has been posed threat to its stability and security for years. The situation on the Lebanon-Israel border is the most probable trigger for a major conflict engulfing Syria. With so many external powers operating inside Syria's airspace and on its territory, an escalation in violence poses serious risks. While Assad himself has kept a fairly low profile since the start of the war in Gaza, the opposition forces in the

Turkiye-dominated areas favor the Palestinians against Israel. There is a concern that the Gaza war might shift the balance in Syria.

On the other hand, the Gaza conflict could actually be a factor to facilitate Turkiye-Syria talks. This reminded me of when Turkiye strengthened its relations with Syria as a result of Israel's offensive on the Gaza Strip in 2009. At that time, Ankara held its first military drill with Syria, using ground forces in a border area that has been the focus of a 25-year conflict between Turkiye and Kurdish forces. This cooperation was considered “very troubling” by Israel. Despite setbacks, including the Gaza war, Turkish-Syrian talks may find an opportunity for progress amid the escalating tensions. Turkiye and Syria share concerns about regional instability, and the continuing crises could be a catalyst for renewed dialogue.

Arab News



# Court rulings on Trump loom large over US electoral landscape

As the curtain rises on a new year, the collective gaze of Americans is steadfastly fixed on the upcoming elections, which are scheduled for Nov. 5. In the forthcoming months, the political landscape of the US is poised to undergo a transformational journey, marked by a wave of political campaigns orchestrated by the Republican and Democratic parties.

Their efforts are focused on two primary objectives: winning the White House and gaining more seats in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. In pursuit of these overarching goals, they strategically plan and execute various maneuvers aimed at securing the desired positions within the government. Their campaign tactics involve careful consideration of each electoral battleground, as they aim to claim the presidency and establish a substantial presence in the legislative branch. The upcoming elections will be a crucial test of democracy. Candidates will compete to get voters' attention and support by sharing their goals, beliefs and plans. The outcome will play a significant role in determining the country's direction for the next four years.

The presidential race is a pivotal electoral contest that commands attention from both the media and the public. In this race, President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump are actively pursuing the official nomination of their respective parties. The process involves early voting in individual states to secure their party's endorsement, thereby gaining crucial support for their candidacy.

Several states conduct their primary elections six to nine months before the presidential vote. During these primaries, voters select candidates through

secret ballots. The state hosting the primary considers the voting outcomes to allocate delegates to the winning candidates. This process — a source of pride for democratic nations — is particularly prominent in the US. However, there are unprecedented efforts in some states to prevent Trump from participating as a candidate, potentially significantly impacting the election results.

Colorado and Maine have grabbed attention for their recent actions aimed at excluding the former president from their upcoming presidential ballots. These endeavors, however, are not isolated incidents, as a broader trend has emerged across the nation. Challenges to Trump's eligibility for the presidential ballots have surfaced in some 30 states, reflecting a widespread and concerted effort to navigate the electoral landscape. This unfolding scenario underscores the complexity and diversity of approaches taken by various states in addressing Trump's potential candidacy.

A significant example in this context is the recent decision by the Colorado Supreme Court to bar the former president from the 2024 primary ballot. This decision stemmed from the court's ruling that Trump is ineligible to feature on the state's ballot despite being the front-runner for the Republican Party's nomination. The court's rationale for this exclusion is linked to Trump's alleged role in the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the US Capitol. This decision sparked discussions about the intersection of legal considerations and political eligibility criteria.

The crucial questions are who gets to make this decision and what are the potential ramifications of such a ruling, which may

Dalia Al-Aqidi

set a precedent for similar actions against political rivals in the future. In a democratic framework, the essence lies in citizens' right to decide without undue political interference. This prompts reflection on the implications for subsequent elections and the broader landscape of democratic processes.

Indeed, it is evident that a significant majority of Democrats and a portion of Republicans do not favor a Trump return to the White House. However, within this collective sentiment, a noteworthy and large group emphasized the importance of ensuring that the former president should not be excluded through political maneuvering or the exploitation of the American justice system.

This critical perspective is consistent with a broader commitment to upholding the principles of justice and due process, emphasizing that, even in politics, individuals — including ordinary voters — should be protected from political decisions that would prevent them from making their own decisions. This debate reflects a tension between political preferences and a commitment to upholding democratic values, raising complex questions about the intersection of justice, politics and the rights of private citizens in the electoral landscape.

The unfolding events stimulate a broader conversation about the resilience and adaptability of democratic institutions in the face of evolving challenges and the need to uphold the democratic principles that form the cornerstone of our governance. If the trend of states excluding unwanted candidates persists, it will raise concerns about the future direction of the US. Governments and leaders often arbitrarily exclude candidates from elections in many third

world countries. The question arises: Could America find itself heading down a similar path?

Even among those competing with Trump for the Grand Old Party nomination — candidates who stand to gain from this decision — a unanimous stance of disapproval has been voiced, including by former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and former US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley. They categorically reject this measure, asserting that it poses a threat to the fundamental principles of democracy. According to them, the decisions in question represent a potential impediment to the democratic process. They undermine the core tenet that the ultimate authority to choose a representative should rest solely with the citizens. This shared sentiment among Trump's Republican rivals reflects not only a concern for fair democratic practices, but also underscores the significance of upholding the right of every citizen to participate in the electoral process without external interference.

As we witness the unfolding legal proceedings, the implications of this decision on the political dynamics — not just within particular states but on a national scale in the context of the upcoming presidential election — remain uncertain. The ongoing discourse surrounding this issue catalyzes a more in-depth exploration of the intricate interplay between partisan interests and the bedrock principles underpinning a fair and equitable democratic process. This deliberation prompts us to scrutinize how such rulings may reverberate across different regions, shaping the electoral landscape and influencing the delicate equilibrium between political considerations and the fundamental tenets of a just democratic system.

# For feminists, silence on Gaza is no longer an option

LIKE many around the world, I am emotionally drained. I spend most of my waking hours scanning the news, reading about one tragedy after the other, and yearning for a lasting end to the relentless war in Gaza. I am also physically worn out. My weekends are spent marching, driven by a desperate hope that maybe, if enough of us consistently take to the streets and speak up, our collective voice could urge our leaders to finally call for a permanent ceasefire.

But beyond this physical and emotional exhaustion, I am also consumed by a deep anger, a profound disappointment, towards feminists in my country, the United Kingdom, and beyond, who appear completely disinterested in the suffering of women in Gaza. Every day, I come across opinion pieces and social media posts by feminists rightly condemning Hamas's egregious actions towards Israeli women during their October 7 attack and their treatment of female hostages in its aftermath. These arguments and statements are unquestionably valid and undoubtedly necessary. Such grave crimes against women and girls, against anyone, should never be ignored, excused or forgotten.

And yet, these very individuals, these self-proclaimed feminists, are eerily silent about Israel's similarly egregious actions against Palestinian women.

Israel's near-total siege and indiscriminate bombardment of Gaza have already killed, maimed and disappeared under the rubble tens of thousands of Palestinian women and children. Many more have been displaced and left to survive the harsh winter without appropriate shelter and supplies. The almost complete breakdown of the healthcare system, coupled with the lack of food and clean water, means that some 45,000 pregnant women and 68,000 breastfeeding mothers in Gaza are facing the risk of anaemia, bleeding, and death. Meanwhile, hundreds of Palestinian women and children in the occupied West Bank are still imprisoned, many without trial, and trying to survive in abominable conditions.

This catastrophe is playing out in the open, but the majority of feminists in Britain, and more generally in the West, seem to have nothing to say about it. Why are the stories of Palestinian women ignored? Why do the struggles of Palestinian women and children seemingly not merit the same level of concern? Increasingly, I am led to believe that this is not just a lapse in attention, but wilful blindness — the consequence of a moral compass that may be broken beyond repair.

In the past three months, I've pondered these questions deeply. I immersed myself in numerous "feminist" texts by authors I once held in high regard, to try and understand their interpretation of feminism, and why it does not seem to include Palestinian women.

Gradually, I've come to realise that their brand of feminism perceives Palestinian women as oppressed primarily not by Israel or any other outside force, but by Palestinian men. For them, Palestinian women have little to no agency and are perpetual victims of a society that has gender-based violence engrained in its very core.

Further, in their eyes, Palestinian men are synonymous with deeply patriarchal, religious, and socially conservative groups like Hamas that are known to abuse and oppress women. Thus, these "feminists" buy into Israel's claims that its assault on Gaza will help "liberate" Palestinian women from the clutches of Hamas, and ignore the actual, grave harm the war has been inflicting on them.

This approach is part of a disconcerting historical pattern — a form of feminism imbued with colonial and imperial prejudices and preconceptions. "Feminists" of this ilk supported the US invasion of Afghanistan because it supposedly aimed to "liberate Afghan women", but they would never think of arguing for the forceful "liberation" of, for example, Jewish women living in deeply patriarchal and religious communities in Israel.

In this brand of feminism, empathy and outrage

Maryam Aldossari

is aligned not with universal feminist tenets, and a desire to give all women agency and power, but with personal identities and political affiliations. This results in a hierarchy of concern, where some feminist struggles — and especially those against Muslim, brown men — are given precedence over others, allowing for the rhetoric of women's liberation to be co-opted to further the aims of the powerful, often at the expense of the oppressed.

In this context, the Western feminist silence on the necessity of a ceasefire in Gaza represents not only a moral lapse, but also a political one. It perpetuates a brand of feminism intertwined with colonial and imperial power structures, which have historically inflicted harm under the pretence of protection.

This silence is emblematic of a modern "colonial feminism", where the rhetoric of "liberating women" conceals deeper acts of violence. It justifies invasions and occupations under the guise of aid, portraying Palestinian women as mere victims in need of rescue, while simultaneously deny-

ing their right to resistance. Ultimately, the selective empathy of Western feminists serves to reinforce power structures that continue the cycle of violence.

Meanwhile, some feminists excuse their refusal to call for a ceasefire by pointing to the Palestinian society's complex stance on LGBT rights. Hamas imprison or do worse to LGBT individuals, they say, so the war should continue until the group is eliminated in full. However, this rationale overlooks a crucial element often heralded in feminist discourse: intersectionality. While the challenges faced by the LGBT community in Gaza under Hamas's rule are indeed significant, using these as a pretext to abstain from advocating for an immediate ceasefire sidesteps the larger humanitarian crisis at hand. Such a selective approach not only disregards the pressing needs of thousands of women and children enduring daily violence and oppression, but also belies a concerning trend of selective empathy. Furthermore, it ignores the fact that Israel's war is also killing and maiming LGBT Palestinians.

Withholding support for a ceasefire due to Palestinian society and Hamas's perceived animosity towards the LGBT community undermines the core tenet of feminist solidarity — the commitment to protect and uplift all women and marginalised communities, irrespective of their sociopolitical circumstances. By withholding support for a ceasefire on these grounds, these feminists inadvertently place ideological purity above the urgent necessity to halt further loss of life and suffering. True feminist activism should transcend geopolitical biases, upholding the rights and dignity of all women and vulnerable groups, regardless of their background or the complexities of their societal contexts.

Beyond those who point to Hamas and the wider Palestinian society's oppression of women, and apparent prejudices against the LGBT community, as reasons for not endorsing the calls for an immediate

**True feminist activism should transcend geopolitical biases, upholding the rights and dignity of all women and vulnerable groups, regardless of their background or the complexities of their societal contexts. Beyond those who point to Hamas and the wider Palestinian society's oppression of women, and apparent prejudices against the LGBT community, as reasons for not endorsing the calls for an immediate ceasefire, there are also feminists who remain silent on the issue because they want to remain "neutral" on a "complex" issue. Perhaps this stance perplexes, and infuriates, me more than any other.**

es, always vocal in their views on gender, sex and society, are still conspicuously silent on the struggles of Palestinian women. While their platforms have the power to bring critical issues to light, they also have the subtle power to relegate others to the sidelines. Too often, we see that the concerns of non-Western women are being pushed to the periphery by the reluctance of these high-profile activists to write and speak about them.

This selective silence challenges the universality of feminist solidarity. Especially when it comes from prominent feminists who many others look up to, silence becomes a form of complicity. Do you believe your silence on the tragedy of Palestinian women has gone unnoticed? I hate to break it to you, but your silence is deafeningly loud, and has stripped your work of any credibility in the eyes of many.

If you are one of those "feminists", who do not speak about the suffering of Palestinian women, or endorse the calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, for whatever reason, I have one, very simple demand from you. Look at the photographs coming out of Gaza. You may have been avoiding them, dismissing them as mere propaganda — but for one second, leave your biases and smart excuses behind, and look at them. Look at the images of mothers cradling the lifeless, bloodied bodies of their children. Look at the images of confused toddlers, often missing limbs and flesh, lying alone on hospital floors. Look at the images of young women, with dead eyes, trying to collect fragments from their lives and murdered families in the rubble of their destroyed homes. Look at those images, really look at them, and then explain to me why you think "it is not right to demand a ceasefire now". And after seeing those images, really seeing them, you still want to stay "neutral", stay silent, or talk about "Islamist oppression" and "LGBT intolerance", don't call yourself a feminist. Because you are not one.

# Drop the charges against Indigo 'Peace 11' protesters

ON November 22, Canadian police conducted coordinated pre-dawn raids on seven homes across the greater Toronto area and made 10 arrests. They broke doors, ordered suspects out of their beds, and went on to completely ransack every single room and confiscate computers, cars and other private property, in some cases in the presence of terrified children and the elderly.

Looking at its ferocity and size, involving dozens of officers and presumably costing taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars, you could be excused to think the raids were part of a massive counter-terror operation or targeting high-level, violent and hard-to-pin-down drug dealers and gang members.

Shockingly, this was not the case. The suspects, known to their supporters collectively as "the Peace 11" — including one that was arrested separately on November 14, were professors, community organisers, legal workers and labour activists, targeted for the ostensibly dangerous offences of plastering posters and splattering washable red paint on the window of a Toronto branch of the Indigo book store chain. They had taken action against the store, like hundreds of others across Canada, to protest the material support Indigo's owners have long been providing to the Israeli military.

For their transgressions, the 11 suspects were all charged with "Mischief (property damage) over \$5000" and criminal harassment. Ten of them were further charged with "conspiracy to commit an indictable offence". If the prosecutor decides to proceed by way of indictment, which is a very real option, the accused can receive prison sentences of up to 10 years.

Considering the suspects caused no physical harm to anyone, posed no imminent threat to society, and displayed no flight risk, why did

the police, who had already secured warrants to search their homes, opt to conduct incredibly expensive and aggressive early morning raids on their homes? Why was this apparent show of force, this act of intimidation, necessary?

It seems the raids were designed to terrorise, and scare into silence, Canadians who have been taking to the streets in large numbers in Toronto over the past few weeks to call for an end to Israel's war on Gaza. And these early morning raids, during which peaceful protesters were treated as violent criminals and humiliated in front of their family members, are not even the most troubling aspect of this intimidation campaign.

The media coverage of the protest action and its aftermath, the nature of the charges, and the police messaging on the case, raise serious questions about abuse of police powers and systemic anti-Palestinian discrimination in Canada.

Founded in 1996, Indigo Books & Music Inc stands as the largest Canadian book retail chain, with CEO Heather Reisman and her husband Gerry Schwartz controlling more than 60 percent of the company's shares. In 2005, Reisman and Schwartz, who are Jewish Canadians, established the HESEG Foundation for Lone Soldiers, which provides financial support and educational opportunities to foreigners who have served in the Israeli military.

Since 2006, Indigo bookstores have faced protests and boycotts due to the HESEG Foundation's overt support for Israel and its military, and consequent complicity in the oppression and dispossession of the Palestinian people. According to the Canada Revenue Agency, in 2022 alone the foundation paid at least \$5.5 million Canadian dollars (US\$4.1m) in

Faisal Kutty

scholarships and grants to foreign Israeli military recruits.

Given HESEG's efforts to increase foreign recruitment to the Israeli military, Reisman and Indigo are undoubtedly legitimate targets for protest, especially amid Israel's continuing bombardment, siege and ground invasion of the Gaza Strip which, in just under three months, has killed more than 22,000 people, many of them children, and led several UN experts and genocide scholars to warn of a "risk of genocide".

Nevertheless, merely for gluing posters accusing Reisman of "funding genocide", and pouring red paint representing blood on the doors and windows of an Indigo branch, the Peace 11 were immediately accused of committing an anti-Semitic act.

All news reports on the protest action included references to "anti-Semitism" and most implied Indigo was targeted only because it is a "Jewish" or "Jewish-owned" business. Most media organisations did not even touch upon the store owners' long history of support for the Israeli military or the protests that their business has faced because of it for nearly 20 years. The reports on the protest were also bundled in with the coverage of rising anti-Semitism in Canada, which led to people protesting for peace being branded as hateful anti-Semites taking advantage of the current moment to target Toronto's Jewish population and businesses.

This was, of course, a horrible smear against protesters, some of whom are themselves Jewish, that harmed their reputations and led to them facing suspension from their jobs and other serious professional and personal consequences. Furthermore, the media's amplification of this misleading narrative allowed the Toronto police to treat the protest as a "hate-motivated

offence" and use it to further state-backed efforts to conflate criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism.

In an undoubtedly calculated move, the police force even announced the arrests of the Peace 11 alongside a statement on the rise in anti-Semitic incidents across Toronto, which further reinforced the perception that the protests against Indigo bookstores were anti-Semitic.

Instead of swallowing the official narrative hook, line, and sinker and blindly joining the race to accuse all who dare to criticise Israel's actions against the Palestinian people of anti-Semitism, had the media done their job of uncovering facts and putting the acts of the Peace 11 in a relevant context, they would have found a real story to report: A leading Canadian business providing material support to a foreign military force presently accused of committing war crimes, and even genocide.

The police and state's forceful response to peaceful and justified protests against Indigo and its owners was an egregious overreach, which not only inflicted immense harm on the Peace 11, but also damaged Canada's credentials as a democratic state where residents' right to peaceful protest and free speech are protected. While acknowledging that anyone vandalising property should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law, when the Peace 11 appears in court again next week, prosecutors must act with the legal system's integrity in mind. Proceeding with these charges as standard summary conviction vandalism offences, rather than indictable charges, is crucial to prevent disrepute to the concept of hate-motivated crimes, and the Canadian justice system. Better yet, given the damage already done to their reputations, and the reputation of the state, the charges should be stayed or dropped against the Peace 11.

# Aircraft carrier Fujian worthy of expectations

CHINA'S third aircraft carrier, CNS Fujian, reportedly undergoing mooring tests in Shanghai, is equipped with electromagnetic catapults and arresting devices, the most advanced means of launching fixed-wing, manned airplanes from aircraft carriers. This is a great technological breakthrough for China because unlike CNS Liaoning and CNS Shandong, which use ski ramps (ski jumps) to launch airplanes, CNS Fujian will employ electromagnetic catapults for the task.

But why is the use of electromagnetic catapults a breakthrough? Aircraft carriers have been using either ski ramps or catapults to launch airplanes. Many aircraft carriers still use ski ramps, and it was the US's newest aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R Ford, on her first major deployment in 2017 that was using the latest in aircraft launching technology — an electromagnetic catapult.

Compared with a ski ramp, a catapult is a more powerful but more complex means of launching

aircraft. To operate steam-powered catapults, an aircraft carrier normally has two or more channels running along a length of its flight deck. A free-floating shuttle that traverses the length of the channels is attached to the front landing gear of an aircraft, which gains enough momentum to achieve a lift and fly when steam generated in the ship's engine section and piped to an area just under the flight deck is released, driving the shuttle (and aircraft) rapidly down the track.

The problem with steam-powered catapults is that they are expensive and difficult to maintain, and cannot accommodate heavier aircraft planned for the future. Also, the amount of steam needed to launch an airplane depends on its weight, and once a launch has begun, no changes can be made. If too much steam is released, the nosewheel landing gear attached to the catapult can be ripped off the aircraft. And if enough steam is not released, the aircraft won't reach takeoff speed and could fall into

Wang Xiaoxuan

the water.

The advantage of the electromagnetic air launch system of catapults is that it knows precisely what speed an aircraft should have at any point of the launch process, and can make adjustments during the process to ensure an aircraft is within the desired takeoff speed. Equipped with such advanced technology and state-of-the-art equipment, CNS Fujian, whose schedule for maiden sea trial is yet to be decided, will not only strengthen but also further modernize the People's Liberation Army Navy. And once CNS Fujian, which has a flat, straight flight deck and a full displacement of more than 80,000 tons, is launched, it will form a great fleet along with CNS Liaoning and CNS Shandong.

The three aircraft carriers will also expand the operational area of the PLA Navy. In fact, the aircraft carriers have filled a significant strategic blank in the PLA Navy, allowing China to shift from coastal defense to oceanic defense.

China has been fulfilling its growing international responsibilities, and with a stronger navy and offshore operational capability, it can better safeguard peripheral security and contribute more to global peace by facilitating the free movement of merchant ships and combating piracy. When CNS Fujian, China's first fully domestically developed and built aircraft carrier with electromagnetic catapults, completes the combat capability test and is commissioned, the Chinese navy can provide more relief materials for disaster-hit countries and conduct bigger rescue and anti-piracy operations because it can carry more supplies and personnel.

Compared to the 11 aircraft carriers currently in service with the United States, the exaggerated claims of the "China threat" theory by certain Western media outlets lack credibility. The remarkable progress of the PLA Navy deserves recognition and should continue to evolve in order to contribute to regional and global peace.





# New challenges to keep burdening weak economy

## F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) senior vice chairman and prominent leader of the PIAF Shahbaz Aslam has said that the new investment challenges keeping on burdening the already weak economic landscape in the country mainly due to constant escalation in energy cost, as asking the government to take concrete steps to attract foreign investment, saving the livelihood of millions of workers associated with various sectors.

The PIAF noted leader observed that the focus should be on streamlining the long-standing structural bottlenecks in the investment climate such as streamlining the FDI approval process. At the same time, stability in the country's economic and political scenario is critical for any resurgence of investment in the country.

Shahbaz Aslam said that poor economic and political climate have been additional factors in bogging down the business and investment in the country over the last one year. He said there is no visible improvement in employment while the

small and medium industries (SMEs)—the main providers of jobs— are struggling because of lack of funds and demand.

The BMP chairman said that the larger industries are also operating partially. Textile sector that was the major provider of permanent and daily wage jobs has lost 50 percent of both domestic and export market. The auto sector is operating at less than half capacity. The job losses at the original equipment manufacturers not significant but at auto vendors, where bulk of auto-related jobs exist are operating with minimum possible staff.

Shahbaz Aslam said that with a view to save the economy the government should announce special incentives for a cash-strapped SMEs, which represents more than 90 percent of around 3.2 million business enterprises in Pakistan, contributing 40 percent to the GDP, employing more than 80 percent of non-agricultural workforce, and generating 25 percent of export earnings.

He, expressing dissatisfaction over the financial packages, called for a significant cut in import duties

and waiver of sales tax, income tax and additional income taxes which are still being charged in this time of grave economic crisis. He said that other factors have been the holding back of profits and dividends of the MNCs to control dollar outflow, which has left scared away foreign investors tremendously as they see the existing foreign investors unable to repatriate their earnings to their home countries.

The FRIA senior vice chairman said that China has been the leading investor in Pakistan for few years and was a major contributor to the increase in the size of FDI. However, the outgoing fiscal FY24 may drag down the inflows from elsewhere due to slowdown of economies in the developed countries, he warned.

He said that Pakistan has remained a potential market for foreign investors, who still have plans to make fresh investment in the country, but they have continued to wait for the return of economic stability. He highlighted uncertainty in the rupee-dollar parity as one of the major concerns of foreign investors. He said a slowdown in the economy

had badly impacted business confidence. It is must for the authorities concerned to first create an enabling environment for the local businessmen desiring to make new investment.

Shahbaz Aslam advocated the need for raising the country's tax base so that tax-to-GDP ratio improves from current poor level. He urged the trade officers to explore opportunities to diversify exports of goods and services in their respective areas, asking them to meet the challenges faced by Pakistan in European markets.

He also suggested the ministry to devise strategies for promotion of Pakistani products, calling upon trade officers to take advantage of opportunities offered by China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He said that previously, foreign investors mostly poured money into the sectors which did not pose a risk to their profit margins due to rupee depreciation such as the power sector. It is hoped that Pakistan's economy will now gain growth momentum, which should encourage foreign investors to invest in new projects, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Vendors displaying seasonal fruit oranges to attract customers at Islamabad Fruit and Vegetable Market.

## Gold rates increase by Rs1,000

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,000 and was sold at Rs.218,000 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs. 217,000 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs857 to Rs186,900 from Rs186,043 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs171,325 from Rs170,539, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram Silver remained stagnant at Rs.2,660 and 2,280.52 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$7 to \$2,065 from \$2,058, the Association reported.

## AA grounds Boeing 737 MAX 9

NEW YORK (Reuters): Alaska Airlines (ALK.N) has grounded dozens of Boeing 737 MAX 9 (BA.N) jets for safety checks after a cabin panel blowout forced a brand-new airplane loaded with passengers to make an emergency landing.

Airline CEO Ben Minicucci said in a statement the 65 similar planes would be returned to service only after precautionary maintenance and safety inspections, which he expected to be completed in the "next few days".

Flight 1282 had reached 16,000 feet bound for Ontario, California, before returning to Portland, Oregon, where it landed safely at 5:26 p.m. on Friday with 171 passengers and six crew, according to the airline and FlightRadar24.

"We'd like to get down," the pilot told air traffic control, according to a recording posted on liveatc.net.

"We are declaring an emergency. We do need to come down to 10,000," the pilot added, referring to the initial staging altitude for such emergencies, below which breathing is considered possible for healthy people without extra oxygen.

Social media posts also showed oxygen masks deployed and a portion of the aircraft's side wall missing.

Passenger photos appeared to show that a panel that can be used for an optional rear mid-cabin exit door had been torn away, leaving a door-shaped gap.

The extra door is typically installed by low-cost airlines using extra seats that require more paths for evacuation.

However, those doors are permanently "plugged", or deactivated, on Alaska Airlines jets.

# China exports electric buses to Pakistan

BEIJING (APP): A Chinese company handed over 160 high-end pure electric buses to Pakistan at a ceremony held in Suzhou Industrial Park, China.

The officials from Pakistan, including General Manager Suzhou Higer, Qiu Yuanhong, Deputy General Manager Xie Jianghong, Customer Service Director Jiang Haifeng, and General Manager of Overseas Sales, attended the ceremony.

The value of the order exceeds RMB 150 million, which is the first time that Pakistan has introduced pure electric buses in large quantities, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

The officials from Pakistan delivered speeches, respectively, expressing high recognition for this batch of buses. The day before the ceremony, the Pakistani side tested these buses, which performed perfectly in appearance,

performance, and all other aspects. Currently, Higer's new energy buses have occupied the largest market share in Pakistan, contributing to Pakistan's green and low-carbon travel.

Since entering the Pakistani market in 2006, in response to the local dusty and congested road traffic characteristics, Higer has continued to carry out technological innovation and customize high-quality buses for Pakistan that can calmly cope with the local climate environment and complex road conditions.

The batch of pure electric buses exported this time has the advantages of zero emissions, low operating costs, and low noise pollution, which will greatly improve the efficiency of public transportation operations and the quality of residents' travel.

In addition, the cruising range of the buses exceeds

250 kilometers, and the entire vehicle uses the most advanced cathodic electrophoresis technology, which has an anti-corrosion period of more than ten years.

In terms of software intelligence, 160 pure electric buses are equipped with the intelligent operation system T-BOX, which can monitor driver behavior and vehicle operation data in real time to ensure operational safety and protect passenger travel.

As an important part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Belt and Road Initiative, the transportation field will continue to usher in more efficient and green reforms in the future.

The arrival of 160 e-buses to Pakistan is a new starting point, promoting the high-quality development of CPEC and BRI in the field of public transportation.

# CDA to hold first auction of FY 2024 on Jan 10-12

ISLAMABAD (APP): Nauman Khalid, a Member of Technical & Digitization of Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Saturday said that the authority would hold the first action of the plots on January 10, 11 and 12 in F-9 Park, Islamabad.

He along with his team visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and briefed the business community about the auction of CDA plots, said a press release.

CDA would auction a total of 35 plots out of which 11 plots would be auctioned on the first day, 10 on the second day and 14 on the third day, he added.

The categories of plots include Marakaz, Blue Area, Park Road, apartments, hotels, petrol pumps, hospitals, timber, agro-farms, I&T Centers, Aabpara Market, Class-III shopping centers and revision of deferred plots, he

added.

Nauman Khalid said that CDA would give possession of auctioned plots on payment of 75% of the premium while a 10% rebate would be given on payment of the lumpsum amount.

He also briefed the business community about various development initiatives of CDA including the development of a cycling lane in Islamabad to reduce traffic congestion, the introduction of more bus routes, digitization of land records, automation of approval of building plans and automated parking.

He said that ICCI should cooperate with CDA in making the auction successful. He said that ICCI should give a list of prioritized issues of the business community and CDA would form a team to address them.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI said that CDA should ensure the provision of all required

infrastructure and civic amenities for the plots being auctioned to save the investors from unnecessary problems.

He urged the CDA to introduce mobile apps to provide online services to the business community and the citizens regarding the approval of building plans and other plot-related matters.

He also urged to set up its Facilitation Desk in ICCI to facilitate the business community in CDA-related affairs, besides the replacement of old sewerage lines with new ones and the development of markets. He assured ICCI would cooperate in mobilizing investors for active participation in the CDA's auction of plots.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI shared many useful ideas to make the auction process of CDA more attractive which would get the attention of local and foreign investors.

## Wall Street up

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Wall Street stocks edged higher Friday, despite strong US jobs numbers pouring cold water on hopes the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates in the world's top economy in the next few months.

The Fed signaled last month it sees itself beginning to cut interest rates in 2024, which helped stock markets finish the year on a strong note.

But minutes from its policy meeting, released this week, showed officials were in no hurry and expected to keep borrowing costs at a two-decade high for some time to ensure they have inflation under control.

With a tight labor market and wage growth seen as a potential threat to the central bank's goal of bringing inflation down to its two percent target, investors were eyeing employment data for its implications on policy.

Friday's data showed US job growth surged in December to 216,000 jobs in the final month of 2023, confounding expectations

of a slowdown from November.

"The key takeaway from the report is that it wasn't weak, so the market is going to have to grapple with the notion that the Fed may not cut rates as many times in 2024 as the market had come to expect at the end of 2023," said market analyst Patrick O'Hare at Briefing.com.

But Wall Street stocks eked out gains on Friday, even as major indices posted their first weekly declines in weeks.

"The US economy appears to have maintained its resilience into the end of 2023 with little sign of the recession that markets have become increasingly fearful of," said CMC Markets analyst Michael Hewson.

Jack Ablin, chief investment officer at Cresset, said: "A strong labor market is good news, it really helps make the case for a soft landing."

This refers to a scenario where inflation comes down without a major downturn.

On Friday, data also showed that US service

sector activity grew less than expected in the final month of 2023.

European markets were off sharply after data showing eurozone inflation turning higher again last month also raised questions about the timing of European Central Bank interest rate cuts.

But they managed to claw back most losses, with Frankfurt's DAX index briefly poking into the green.

Meanwhile, shares in French spirits makers tumbled after Chinese authorities launched an anti-dumping probe into brandy imported from the European Union.

China imported more brandy than any other spirit in 2022, most coming from France, said a report by research group Daxue Consulting.

Shares in Remy Cointreau, which sells cognac and brandy, closed down nearly 12 percent. Shares in Pernod Ricard, maker of Martell cognac, dropped 3.6 percent. Luxury group LVMH, maker of Hennessy cognac, shed 1.4%.

# APBF calls for cut in key policy rate to ensure Ease of Doing Business

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: As the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) was likely to announce the new monetary policy in the next meeting this month, the All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has called for a cut in the monetary policy rate to attain the high position in Ease of Doing Business ranking, amidst record high markup rate, hyperinflation and rising energy prices.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood said that already unprecedented inflation and high markup rate have drastically reduced private sector borrowings during the outgoing fiscal year, besides the country has been far behind in the ease of doing business ranking. So, further hike in discount rate will deteriorate the economic conditions, he added.

He said the SBP has raised its key policy rate by 12.25 percentage points since April 2022, mainly to curb soaring inflation. However, it held rates steady in June saying inflation had peaked at 38pc in the preceding month. It raised rates by 100 bps at

an emergency meeting in an effort to secure IMF funds, citing slightly deteriorated inflation outlook.

Maaz Mahmood said that the central bank raised its key interest rate to 22 percent, exceeding investor expectations, as the cash-strapped country attempts to encourage the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to release critical funding. The key rate of the State Bank of Pakistan now stands at 22 percent, its highest level since October 1996. Now, there are reports that the SBP would raise the interest rate by another 1 percent at the upcoming meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to please IMF.

The APBF chief suggested the central bank to adopt an accommodative monetary policy stance, asking the finance minister to fulfill his commitment of reinvesting in inflation besides cutting interest rate and strengthening the undervalued local currency against dollar.

In the last scheduled meeting of December 2023, the SBP maintained the policy rate unchanged at 22 percent citing that the decision took into consideration

the impact of the surge in gas prices in November 2023, which exceeded the MPC's initial projections for inflation.

The MPC acknowledged that this could have repercussions for the inflation outlook, but also noted certain mitigating factors, such as the recent decline in international oil prices and improved availability of agricultural produce. Additionally, it also evaluated that the real interest rate remained positive when assessed on a 12-month forward-looking basis.

Demanding competitive interest rate at regional countries' level, he said that the SBP's stance of keeping monetary policy rate at 22 percent was already high compared to the markup rate of China, India and Bangladesh. He said that further monetary tightening and high current account deficit had sparked panic selling across the board, leading to the capital market's massive tragedy.

Maaz Mahmood said that the government, for its part, should try to cut expenditure and increase revenue through taxes, and has allowed the rupee to depreciate. He stressed the

need for reduction in the discount rate, arguing that low key policy rate is essential to make the Pakistani exports sector, as well as the local industry competitive.

He said that in view of achieving exports target and stabilization of the economy we need accommodative monetary policy measures by extending reduction in the policy rates so that the debt liability of the business sector is compensated through lower markup rate.

The APBF President also demanded the immediate reduction in the electricity tariff, especially for the Small and Medium Enterprises as a first step towards a cut in the production cost, while the second and vital step towards this direction would be bringing discount rate to the regional level with a view to provide level-playing field, especially to the export industry.

He said the central bank should announce an initiative related to loans for the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), as the sector has to show collateral to banks, which are always reluctant to offer them concessional credit.

# SCCI president hosts luncheon to celebrate UBG win in FPCCI polls

SIALKOT (APP): Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Abdul Ghafoor Malik hosted luncheon to celebrate the victory of United Business Group (UBG) in Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) annual elections 2024-2025, where the services of group leader Riaz-ud-Din Sheikh were appreciated.

The ceremony was attended by Group leader Sialkot Business Community and the UBG leader Riaz-ud-Din Sheikh, Senior Vice President (SVP) SCCI

Wahub Jahangir, chairmen of associations and trade bodies, former SCCI Presidents, SVPs, VPs, Chairman SIAL Sohail Barlas, former SIAL Chairmen, President Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) Dr. Mariam Nouman and Sialkot business community.

Addressing to the participants, SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik congratulated Riaz-ud-Din Sheikh, chairmen and group leaders of associations, former SCCI Presidents, President WCCIS Dr. Mariam Nouman and Sialkot business community for the outstanding success of UBG in FPCCI annual elections 2024-2025.

Abdul Ghafoor Malik said, "I am deeply grateful to all dignitaries that they

not only supported UBG Group in FPCCI elections but also provided all possible support for its success by reposing complete confidence in the leadership of Riaz-ud-Din Sheikh.

The SCCI president said that there was no doubt that all the leaders in the UBG group belong to reputed business groups of the country, who were not only well aware of the problems and difficulties faced by the country's economy but also had full capacity to face the challenges faced by the industry.

Malik said that the outstanding success in the FPCCI elections for the year 2024-25 is a testimony that the business community of the country has confidence in the capabilities of UBG. "There is no doubt that the newly elected offi-

cials of the UBG are highly competent and talented. I hope that they will not only work for the development of Pakistan's business community but also play their role in restoring the lost prestige of the FPCCI," he said.

He added, "I would like to pay special tributes to the leadership skills of Riaz-ud-Din Sheikh. Due to his sincere efforts, the business community of Sialkot today not only has an atmosphere of complete unity but also full confidence in his leadership. Riaz-ud-Din Sheikh has a long journey of service to the business community, his decisions always reflect the collective interest of the country's business community, which is certainly a testament to the leadership skills of any good leader."

## KATI commends Qaiser Bengali's suggestions for industrial growth

KARACHI (PPI): Nighat Awan, Acting President, and Muslim Mohamedi, Acting Senior Vice President of the Korangi Association of Trade & Industry (KATI), praised the insightful recommendations presented by Dr Qaiser Bengali, a distinguished economist, to stimulate industrial growth.

Dr. Qaiser Bengali outlined a comprehensive set of suggestions during a

meeting led by the Caretaker Minister of Commerce & Industries, Sindh, Younus Dhaga, according to a statement on Saturday. The proposals aimed at fostering industrial activities in Sindh included the establishment of new industrial zones and the provision of subsidized loans and other facilities.

The meeting, attended by Acting Senior Vice President Muslim

Mohamed as KATI's representative, witnessed the participation of numerous business personalities and other dignitaries.

Acting President Nighat Awan highlighted the importance of developing economic zones with adequate infrastructure facilities, especially given the current economic scenario.

She urged the government to collaborate with the State Bank to provide special

subsidized loans for the acquisition of locally manufactured machinery. This, she emphasized, would contribute to an upswing in industrial activities and offer support to local machinery manufacturers.

Nighat Awan also called for the declaration of areas adjacent to industrial zones as industrial areas, particularly to support the development of cottage industries.





In brief

Afghanistan announce squad for India T20Is

KABUL (Agencies): Star leg-spinner Rashid Khan was named in Afghanistan's 19-member squad for the three-match away series against India, scheduled to commence on January 11 in Mohali. Rashid, who underwent a minor lower-back surgery in the United Kingdom (UK), made it to the Afghanistan squad that would take on India in the three-match T20I series. However, there are concerns regarding his availability given that he's recovering from back surgery. Consequently, the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) named Ibrahim Zadran as the stand-in skipper for the series. Zadran recently led Afghanistan in the three-match T20I series against the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The side, under his leadership, edged out the hosts to win the series 2-1. Meanwhile, wicketkeeper batter Ikram Alikhil, who was in reserves for the UAE series, has also returned to the Afghanistan squad. Besides them, Mujeeb Ur Rahman also made his return to the team after missing the series against the UAE. Afghanistan Squad for India T20Is: Ibrahim Zadran (C), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (WK), Ikram Alikhil (WK), Hazratullah Zazai, Rahmat Shah, Najibullah Zadran, Mohammad Nabi, Karim Janat, Azmaullah Omarzai, Sharafuddin Ashraf, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Fazal Haq Farooqi, Fareed Ahmad, Naveen UI Haq, Noor Ahmad, Mohammad Saleem, Qais Ahmad, Gulbadin Naib and Rashid Khan.

De Minaur beats Zverev

SYDNEY (AFP): Australia's Alex De Minaur backed up his upset of Novak Djokovic by defeating Alexander Zverev Saturday, but it was not enough to prevent Germany booking a United Cup final against Poland. De Minaur battled past the world number seven 5-7, 6-3, 6-4 to send the tie to a deciding mixed doubles after Angelique Kerber dug deep to beat Ajla Tomljanovic 4-6, 6-2, 7-6 (9/7). But Zverev made amends, partnering Laura Siegemund to claw past Stiem Hunter and Matt Ebdon 7-5 (7/2), 6-7 (2/7), 13-13 in a see-sawing match which finished at 2:18am and saw them save four match points. Earlier, world number one Iga Swiatek led top seeds Poland to a 3-0 sweep of France to make their first final after crashing in the semis last year to eventual champions the United States. De Minaur has now earned three consecutive wins against top 10 players, having also beaten Taylor Fritz in an ideal build-up to the Australian Open. His straight sets victory over Djokovic in the quarter-finals was his first over a world number one. "This is my favourite court in the whole world and every time I step out here I get goosebumps," De Minaur said of the Ken Rosewall Arena in Sydney. "It's what I've worked so hard for. It's another milestone, but the job's not done," he added of surging into the top 10. Zverev looked comfortable in the opening set, but a forehand winner down the line from De Minaur to break for 5-3 in the second swung the momentum. From that point on, with the crowd roaring him on, he was in charge. Three-time Grand Slam champions Kerber came from a set down and saved two match points to defeat Tomljanovic and post the first win of her comeback from maternity leave to give Germany a 1-0 lead.



SYDNEY: David Warner acknowledges the crowd after being dismissed by Sajid Khan in his final innings during day four of the Men's Third Test Match in the series between Australia and Pakistan.

Hamza lifts junior singles title of Federal Cup Tennis C'ships

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the Junior 18&U category, Second Seed Hamza Roman clinched the junior singles' title as he eliminated top seed Hamid Israr in a well-contested straight-set final at PTF-SDA Tennis Complex, Islamabad. Hamza toppled Hamid 7-5 6-3 to secure the title. In the boys 14&U category, 5th seed M. Hassan Usmani proved his skills to grab the title. He overpowered Zohaib Afzal Malik in a well-contested straight-set final 7-6(3) 6-2.

Top seed Muhammad Shoaib and 2nd Seed Aqeel Khan will vie for the top honours in the men's singles final on Sunday.

In the ladies singles event, top seed Sarah Mahboob Khan and Aman Ali Qayum qualified for the final after beating their respective opponents.

In the first semifinal top Sarah Mahboob Khan struggled hard to win her

match against upcoming Natalia Zaman from Karachi in a three-set match. Talented Natalia Zaman proved her metal against Sarah Mahboob and won the first set at 6-4 by breaking the 5th game of Sarah and taking the lead 1-0. In the 2nd set Sarah bounced back aggressively and gained her strength, utilising experience and leveled the match 1-1 set all.

In the final set Sarah Khan kept the same pressure and did not allow her opponent to settle down and won the set without conceding a single game and match at score line of 4-6 6-2 6-3. The match lasted for hour and 45 minutes. The best encounter of the day was played in men's foubles final when 2nd seed Muhammad Shoaib paring with Muzammil Murtaza struggled hard to win the title against top seed Yousaf

Khalil and Barkatullah with score of 4-6 7-6(2) 10-6.

Results in brief: Men's Singles Semifinal Aqeel Khan beat Mudassar Murtaza 6-1 6-1 Men's Doubles Final Muhammad Shoaib / Muzammil Murtaza beat Yousaf Khalil / Barkatullah 4-6 7-6(2) 10-6.

Ladies Singles Semifinal Sarah Mahboob Khan beat Natalia Zaman 4-6 6-3 6-0, Amna Ali Qayum beat Sheeza Sajid 6-3 6-1.

Junior 18&U Singles Final Hamza Roman beat Hamid Israr 7-5 6-3 Boys 14&U Singles Final M.Hassan Usmani beat Zohaib Afzal Malik 7-6(3), 6-2.

Boys 14&U Singles Semifinal Muhammad Arsh beat M.Ibrahim Hussain Gill 4-2 4-2, Amir Masood beat Muhammad Faizan 4-0 4-0.

Isak stars as Newcastle beat bitter rivals Sunderland in FA Cup

LONDON (AFP): Newcastle ended their 13-year wait to beat bitter rivals Sunderland as Alexander Isak's double inspired a 3-0 win in the FA Cup third round on Saturday.

In the first Tyne and Wear derby since 2016, Eddie Howe's side put their bitter local rivals to the sword thanks to Dan Ballard's first-half own goal and Isak's brace after the break at the Stadium of Light.

Newcastle had lost six of their previous seven clashes with Sunderland, but their composed display neutered the fired-up Black Cats and delivered a first derby success since a 1-0 victory in 2011.

After four successive defeats in all competitions, Howe hoped the derby would be a "season-changing" moment to salve the wounds from their Champions League exit and poor Premier League form.

Whether vanquishing

second-tier opponents will prove transformative remains to be seen, but for now local pride was all that mattered to the 6,000 Newcastle fans who waved their black and white scarves in delight at the final whistle.

While the northeast rivalry might lack the glamour of the Manchester and north London derbies, there is no questioning the rivalry between clubs separated by just 14 miles.

Encapsulating the enmity was a bizarre incident this week when Sunderland were forced to apologise to furious fans after a stadium bar was redecorated with Newcastle colours in the corporate hospitality section of the visitors' support.

Newcastle's fans were taken to the stadium on buses in a huge police convoy, then given their tickets to the match, in a bid to avoid the violent scenes that have marred previous

encounters.

Howe had enlisted the help of the few Georgies in Newcastle's squad to tell the rest of his globally assembled squad just how important the derby is.

The message clearly hit home as Newcastle dominated a frenetic encounter.

Responding to the sound and fury in the stands, tackles flew in with abandon from both teams.

Newcastle take derby spoils

Sunderland's Jobe Bellingham, brother of Real Madrid star Jude, caught Joelinton with a crude lunge before Jack Clarke poleaxed Sven Botman to the audible delight of the Black Cats fans.

Amid the maelstrom, Newcastle kept their nerve and snatched the lead in the 35th minute as Ballard stretched to block Joelinton's cross but only succeeded in diverting the ball into his own net.

Shahid Afridi tight-lipped on Pakistan's performance

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi refrained from commenting on the national team's dismal performance in the recently concluded Test series against Australia but praised all-rounder Aamir Jamal.

Pakistan succumbed to an eight-wicket defeat in the Sydney Test against Australia, which meant that the hosts claimed the three-match series 3-0.

This increased Pakistan's wait for their first Test victory in Australia since 1995-96. Meanwhile, star all-rounder Shahid Afridi took to Twitter after the side's 17th consecutive loss in Australia and shared that he was 'reserving his views' on the defeat but instead lauded emerging all-rounder Aamir Jamal.

"Going to reserve my views on our team's performance but for sure Aamer Jamal is an excellent addition to the side," wrote Afridi. Afridi then congratulated Australia on a dominating victory and also praised their 'never give up mindset'. "Congrats Australia on a dominating win, been a fan of never give up mindset," he added.

He then went on to congratulate David Warner, who hung up his boots from Test cricket at his home ground against Pakistan. "[David Warner] congrats on an amazing career and prayers for your future," wrote Afridi.

It is worth mentioning here that Pakistan could only add 47 runs to their overnight score of 68-7 and were eventually bundled out on a meagre 115.

The tourists set a modest 130-run target for Australia, which they comfortably chased down for the cost of just two wickets.

Retiring opener David Warner and middle-order batter Marnus Labuschagne played pivotal roles in their side's triumph, both scoring half-centuries.

Warner, however, could not score the winning runs for his side as he fell victim to Sajid Khan after scoring 57. At the time of his dismissal, Australia needed a mere 11 runs. Labuschagne, on the other hand, stood his ground firm and guided Australia home with an unbeaten 62 in 73 deliveries, laced up with nine boundaries.

Australia defeat Pakistan by eight wickets in third Test

SYDNEY (Monitoring Desk): David Warner enjoyed a fairytale finish to his Test career as his half-century spearheaded Australia's comfortable chase of the 130-run target on day four of the SCG Test against Pakistan. Australia's eight-wicket win, following victories in Perth and Melbourne, sees them claim a series sweep over Pakistan.

The day began with solid resistance offered by Mohammad Rizwan and Aamir Jamal over the course of the first hour. The two nudged the ball around to help Pakistan cross the 100-run mark before Rizwan (28, 57b, 1x4) eventually fell to Nathan Lyon. The wicketkeeper-batter, who ends the series as Pakistan's leading scorer with 193 runs in four innings, insidedged the Lyon delivery to Warner at first slip.

Pakistan's woes worsened when Aamir (18, 47b, 2x4s) was caught by Travis Head at deep square leg while attempting to whack one out of the park off the bowling of Pat Cummins. Lyon did the honours of taking the last Pakistan wicket to fall when he dismissed Hasan Ali as the visitors were all out for 115.

Australia's pursuit of the modest target of 130 was disrupted early with the wicket of Usman Khawaja in the first over. Khawaja, dismissed for nought, was beaten by a Sajid Khan delivery to hit his pads and was adjudged LBW.

The first-over wicket did little to deter Australia's charge as Warner unleashed an array of attacking strokes to put his team in the ascendancy. He employed some adventurous strokeplay marked by the use of switch-hits and reverse sweeps to bring up the 37th and final fifty of his Test career.

Australia went to lunch needing only 39 runs more for victory with Marnus Labuschagne also growing in confidence. With Australia 11 runs short of the target, Sajid removed Warner (57, 75b, 7x4s) following a successful review of an LBW shout turned down by the on-field umpire.

Labuschagne knocked off the winning run, finishing the chase unbeaten on 62 off 73 balls with nine fours.

Aamir was declared player of the match for his stellar 82 in the first innings followed by a brilliant six-fer with the ball. Meanwhile, Australia captain Cummins

was named player of the series for his series-topping tally of 19 wickets.

The post-match presentation ceremony highlighted by heartwarming tributes for Warner also saw Pakistan skipper Shan Masood presenting a signed Babar Azam jersey as a parting gift to the retiring opener.

Scores in brief

Australia beat Pakistan by eight wickets

Pakistan 313 all out, 77.1 overs (Mohammad Rizwan 88, Aamir Jamal 82, Salman Ali Agha 53, Shan Masood 35; Pat Cummins 5-61, Mitchell Starc 2-75, Mitchell Marsh 1-27) and 115 all out, 43.1 overs (Saim Ayub 33, Mohammad Rizwan 28, Babar Azam 23; Josh Hazlewood 4-16, Nathan Lyon 3-36)

Australia 299 all out, 109.4 overs (Marnus Labuschagne 60, Mitchell Marsh 54, Usman Khawaja 47, Alex Carey 38, Steven Smith 38; Aamir Jamal 6-69, Salman Ali Agha 2-43) and 130-2, 25.5 overs (Marnus Labuschagne 62 not out, David Warner 57; Sajid Khan 2-49)

Player of the match – Aamir Jamal (Pakistan)

Player of the series – Pat Cummins (Australia)

Mardan, Bannu, Peshawar Academy record win in Pak Army Inter-Region Volleyball



PESHAWAR (APP): Spirited Mardan, strong titles contenders Bannu and Peshawar Academy recorded victories against their respective rivals in the ongoing Pakistan Army Inter-Regional Boys Volleyball Championship League being played here at the Indoor Hall of PSB Coaching Center on Saturday.

Mardan Region stunned strong Hazara in a thrilling 3-1 battle in the League round match of the ongoing Pakistan Army Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inter-Regional Boys Volleyball Championship. Mardan lost the first set by 22-25 but later won three consecutive sets at 25-22, 25-21 and 27-25. Mardan players including Sajid Nawaz, Ibrahim, Tahir Ullah and Irfan Ullah played well and did not give many chances to the strong Hazara team to strike back. Hazara, Ajmal, Ahmad Hassan, Nouman, Baqir Ali, and Rizwan Ahmad played and after winning the first set at 22-25, it was looking like Hazara would win the battle but Mardan dominated the rest of the match and

raced up to victory.

Strong title contender Bannu, the last time winner, recorded a one-sided victory against Malakand team in straight sets, the score was 25-21, 25-19 and 27-25. Malakand players did some resistance in the third set wherein both stretched to 27-25 before being locked at 5-5, 6-6, 7-7, 10-10, 13-13, 17-17, 19-19, 20-20, 21-21, 22-22, 23-23, 24-24, 25-25 and thus Bannu took the set. For Bannu team main spikers Umer Tajid and Saud Khan with setter Shakeel Khan along with blockers Irfan Ullah and Asmat Ullah gave tough time to Malakand strikers at the net. For Mardan Aftab, Shakir Ullah, Asmat Ullah, Nisar Khan and Jibran played well.

Peshawar beat Kohat 3-0, the score was 25-23, 25-21 and 25-22. Peshawar another top title contender, who defeated strong Bannu, the defending champion, did not give much time to Kohat to settle down in the whole match and dominated the proceedings. A peshawar team including main spikers Tufail and Azad with Nigar and Awais Senior strongly defended at the net and set-

ter Awais Junior played tremendously by succeeding in dodging Kohat main blockers Zeeshan Ullah and Barkat. The Peshawar libro Talha also played well with his excellent receptions and had no room for Malakand strikers to get points, thus the match was decided in straight sets.

In the last match of the League round Peshawar Academy beat Dera Ismail Khan by 3-0, the score was 25-23, 25-22 and 25-20. Peshawar Academy players including Inayat Ullah, Bilal, Mikail, Shakir, and Usman with coach Wasif Ullah combined well and did not give much time to the Dera Ismail Khan team to strike back, thus winning the match in straight sets.

Now Peshawar topped the group-A, would play the first semi-final against Mardan, the runners-up of group B while the Bannu, the winners of the group-A would play the runners-up of group A Peshawar Academy team in the second semi-final to be played on Sunday while the final of the League would be played on Monday at 11.30 a.m.

Rameez Jnr spins Ghani Glass to win, Kamran Ghualm's ton helps SNGPL maintain the winning streak

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): On the last day of fourth round of President's Trophy Grade-I 2023-24, Ghani Glass beat Higher Education Commission (HEC) while Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) beat Khan Research Laboratories (KRL) by eight wickets. On the previous day, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) had also beaten Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) by nine wickets. After four rounds in the tournament, Ghani Glass' Saad Nasim tops run scorers list with 470 runs while his teammate Mohammad Rameez Jnr leads the bowling charts with 28 wickets.

SNGPL vs KRL at National Bank Stadium, Karachi

SNGPL beat KRL by eight wickets as they chased the target of 232 runs in 54.4 overs on day four. Earlier, KRL lost their last wicket in the first over of the day

as Mubasir Khan picked up his fourth wicket in the innings.

In pursuit of the target, SNGPL started steadily but then lost Abid Ali (29, 48b, 4x4s) as Umer Khan struck to end the 49-run opening partnership. Omair Bin Yousuf bagged a 2-ball duck as he was removed by Maaz Sadaqat. Azhar Ali (93 not out, 156b, 7x4s, 2x6s) then joined forces with Kamran Ghulam (101 not out, 124b, 11x4s, 3x6s), who struck his 14th first-class hundred.

Kamran and Azhar's 185-run third wicket partnership ensured that SNGPL bagged their third consecutive win of the tournament. Maaz and Umer picked up a wicket each. SNGPL's Arif Yaqoob, who got 10 wickets in his debut game, got an eight-wicket match haul in this game.

SNGPL will face WAPDA while KRL will face SBP in the next round of the tournament

starting on 9 January.

Ghani Glass vs HEC at UBL Sports Complex, Karachi

Ghani Glass was awarded a huge 161-run victory after HEC got bundled up for 317 in 67 overs. Continuing from their overnight score of 276-6, HEC only managed to add just 41 more to their total while losing the remaining four wickets. Adeel Meo (75, 75b, 9x4s, 1x6) departed without adding any runs to his overnight score as Shoaib Akhtar dismissed him. His fellow batter, Haris Khan (32, 48b, 5x4s) also failed to capitalize on the start. Waseem Akram (19 not out, 17b, 1x4, 2x6s) put up some resistance but soon ran out of batting partners.

Mohammad Rameez Jnr picked up a five-wicket haul, his second of the match, and registered his maiden ten-wicket haul in first-class cricket. He was aided

by Shoaib Akhtar who bagged three wickets in the innings while Mohammad Irfan and Moez Ghani dismissed one batter each.

HEC have lost three games on the trot. They will face Pakistan Television (PTV) in the next round of the tournament. Ghani Glass have won two games, lost one while their first game in the tournament was drawn. They will face Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) in the sixth round.

Scores in brief:

SNGPL beat KRL by eight wickets at National Bank Stadium KRL 281-9, 80 overs (Imran Rafiq 67, Sarmad Bhatti 53, Maaz Sadaqat 42 not out; Arif Yaqoob 4-83, Mohammad Ali 2-40, Mubasir Khan 1-63) and 299 all out, 102.2 overs (Imran Rafiq 78, Sharoon Siraj 52, Ali Zaryab Asif 44; Arif Yaqoob 4-108, Mubasir Khan 4-35, Bilawal Bhatti 1-26,

Mohammad Awais Anwar 1-55) SNGPL 349-7, 80 overs (Azhar Ali 140, Asad Shafiq 69, Abid Ali 61; Maaz Sadaqat 3-83, Umer Khan 1-163) and 235-2, 54.4 overs (Kamran Ghulam 101 not out, Azhar Ali 93 not out; Maaz Sadaqat 1-37, Umer Khan 1-105)

SBP beat WAPDA by nine wickets at State Bank Stadium

WAPDA 140 all out, 43.1 overs (Umar Abid Kayani 32, Umar Akmal 24; Nisar Ahmad 5-30, Afaq Afridi 2-22, Mohammad Ilyas 2-44, Mohammad Abbas 1-30) and 122 all out, 40.2 overs (Mohammad Saad 39, Umar Abid Kayani 19, Khalid Usman 17; Afaq Afridi 6-38, Aftab Ibrahim 3-24, Nisar Ahmad 1-22) SBP 222 all out, 66.5 overs (Rameez Aziz 71, Mohammad Mohsin 59, Zain Abbas 37; Akif Javed 4-69, Nageebullah Masood 2-68, Irfanullah Shah 1-40, Khalid Usman 1-31) and 43-1, 7.1 overs

(Zain Abbas 18 not out, Umar Amin 12, Mohammad Mohsin 9 not out; Irfanullah Shah 1-16)

Ghani Glass beat HEC by 161 runs at UBL Sports Complex

Ghani Glass 221 all out, 67.5 overs (Tayyab Tahir 103, Shahbaz Javed 71; Wahaj Riaz 4-39, Aqib Liaqat 3-75, Asadullah Hamza 2-18, Haris Khan 1-63) and 446-8 dec, 100.3 overs (Saeed Ali 118, Saad Nasim 115, Mohammad Irfan 64 not out, Shahbaz Javed 50; Waseem Akram 2-83, Aqib Liaqat 2-110, Asadullah Hamza 1-46, Haris Khan 1-71)

HEC 189 all out, 38.5 overs (Ghazi Ghouri 66, Haris Khan 35; Mohammad Rameez Jnr 5-60, Shoaib Akhtar 4-49, Shiraz Khan 1-25) and HEC 317 all out, 67 overs (Saad Khan 104, Adeel Meo 75, Mohammad Huraia 33; Mohammad Rameez Jnr 5-81, Shoaib Akhtar 3-60, Mohammad Irfan 1-54, Moez Ghani 1-62).





## In brief

### 7 held, arms, ammunition recovered

RAWALPINDI (INP): Rawalpindi police have apprehended seven individuals, recovering a cache of arms, ammunition, and liquor during the multiple operations. According to police reports on Saturday, Thana City police seized 20 liters of liquor from the possession of Bilal, and another two bottles of liquor from a suspect named Adeel. Additionally, Sadiqabad police confiscated 20 liters of liquor from Jameel. The crackdown also resulted in the recovery of a 30-bore pistol with ammunition from Wazir Khan, another 30-bore pistol from Muzmal, and a 9 mm pistol with ammunition from Kashif, as reported by Naseerabad and Sadrwah police, respectively. Chontra police successfully seized a 30-bore pistol and ammunition from the possession of the accused Naeem. Separate cases have been registered against each of the arrested individuals, signaling a robust response from law enforcement against criminal activities in Rawalpindi.

### Four perished in roof collapse

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least four people have lost their lives when the roof of their house collapsed in Ramke Chattah area of Hafizabad district on Saturday. According to police officials, the family lit a fire on the roof to provide heat to their goats. The fire engulfed the roof of the rickety house and caved in, killing four people and injuring another four. The rescue teams pulled out four bodies and four injured persons from the rubble. The condition of two of the injured was stated to be critical.

### Sheesha center raided, 03 held

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have raided a 'Sheesha Centre' here in the jurisdiction of the Saddar Wah police station and arrested 3 accused, informed police spokesman on Saturday. He said that on a tip-off, Saddar Wah police carried out an operation and arrested 3 accused identified as Saeed, Sohail and Awas. The police team recovered 'Huqqas' and other smoking items from their possession. Police have registered a case against them and started investigation. The spokesman said that anti-smoking drive had been launched in the city to ensure implementation of anti-smoking law, 2002.

### Police seized 850 kites

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested 6 kite sellers and confiscated more than 850 kites and 95 strings from their possession during a crackdown here on Saturday, informed a police spokesman. During the operation, Pir Wadhai police arrested 3 kite sellers identified as Haroon, Younas and Rafaqat and recovered 630 kites and 90 strings from their possession. Similarly, Sadiqabad Police held two kite sellers Nauman and recovered 170 kites and 2 strings from his possession. While, Kalar Syedan police during raid nabbed kite seller Ramzan and recovered 38 kites and 2 strings from his custody. Following the operation, Gujjar Khan police recovered 12 kites from kite seller Tafheem. SSP Operations appreciated the performance of police teams adding that Kite flying is a deadly sport and crime. The crackdown will be continued against kite sellers and kite flyers, he added.

# Minister leaves for Saudi Arabia to finalize Hajj arrangements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed, departed for Saudi Arabia on Saturday to finalize the arrangements for Hajj.

During the visit, the minister is scheduled to

hold significant meetings with Saudi officials and evaluate the arrangements for Hajj.

The minister will also visit Jeddah to attend the International Hajj Conference organized by Saudi Arabia.

Secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Dr. Attaur Rahman, along with Joint Secretary Hajj, Sajjad Haider Yaldrum, is also accompanying the minister on this visit.

## Safeguarding interests of Kashmiri people Law Ministry's top priority

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Minister for Law and Justice Ahmad Irfan Aslam has said that safeguarding interests of Kashmiri people was top priority of the law ministry.

This was stated by him while talking to a delegation comprising representatives from various Bar

councils of Pakistan which called on him in Islamabad on Saturday.

Commending the lawyers for their proactive stance on the Kashmir issue, Ahmad Irfan Aslam emphasized the importance of crafting a unified counter-narrative involving all key stakeholders.

They discussed the issue

of the Indian Supreme Court's decision to uphold the Modi government's revocation of special status for the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Ahmad Irfan said Law Ministry was committed to working collaboratively with all relevant parties to safeguard the interests of the people of Kashmir.

## ANF recovers 12 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover over 12 kg drugs and arrested two accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday.

He informed that 150

grams weed was recovered from two parcels sent from the UK at the courier office in Rawalpindi.

510 grams Ice and 90 grams heroin were recovered from two different parcels sent from Jinnah Airport to Bahrain and Australia.

In an operation, 9 kg Ice

drug and 2.4 kg hashish were recovered from the possession of two suspects netted near Lahore railway station.

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

## LIMS launches mobile phone App to monitor cleaning of canals

ISLAMABAD (PPI) Land Information and Management System (LIMS) has launched a mobile phone App to monitor the cleaning and repair of canals.

According to a report, training session in this regard was also held at the main office of LIMS which was attended by the officers of the irrigation department.

LIMS will monitor the cleaning and repair of 22,000 km long canals through drones and satellite. The Land Information

and Management System (LIMS) is a system introduced in Pakistan to improve contemporary agricultural practices. Its goal is to boost the agriculture sector, which accounts for nearly 25% of the country's GDP.

LIMS is based on a geographic information system (GIS) that aims to streamline the digitization of farming processes. It gives farmers online access to data on climate shifts, satellite-based crop monitoring, water usage, fertilizer

application, and targeted spray zones. Its developers believe that LIMS will create jobs for the youth and rejuvenate unused and underutilized land.

LIMS offers real-time updates to farmers regarding soil conditions, crops, weather, water availability, and pest monitoring using remote sensing and geospatial technologies. Additionally, the system is designed to reduce the reliance on intermediaries through an effective marketing framework.

## PDMA forecasts season's first snowfall in Murree

ISLAMABAD (INP): In anticipation of the season's first snowfall, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has issued a forecast for Murree and surrounding areas, with the snowfall expected to commence on Tuesday morning, January 9.

The weather in Murree, Galyat, and nearby regions is predicted to turn cold and dry, with temperatures dropping further following rain and snowfall on Monday and Wednesday, a spokesperson from PDMA told a private news channel.

In response to a query about the tragic events of January 2022, when 22 lives were lost due to a snowstorm that left many

stranded on the roads around Murree, he said the authorities have been diligently working to prevent a recurrence. The disaster was attributed to the negligence of local authorities, allowing an excessive number of vehicles (over 13,000) into Murree, surpassing its capacity of 4,000, the spokesperson maintained.

To mitigate such risks, he noted that the administration of Murree has taken proactive measures. Last week, three facilitation centers for tourists were set up, and this number has now been increased to 13. The focus is on ensuring the safety of visitors, particularly those arriving in their cars, said the

spokesperson.

Authorities are keen to avoid a repeat of the 2022 tragedy, he said, emphasizing the importance of responsible management and adherence to capacity limits to ensure the safety of both tourists and residents in the picturesque hill station.

Meanwhile, travelers, accompanied by families primarily arriving from various districts of Central Punjab and northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, were observed in significant numbers in the valleys of Kalam, Madain, Bahrain, and Malam Jabba in Upper Swat. This occurred amidst light to moderate rains and snowfall, resulting in a notable drop in temp.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor displaying chicken yakhni to attract the customers at his roadside setup during winter season in Federal Capital. —APP Photo

## Ramazan & Diabetes Conference organized

RAWALPINDI (APP): The 10th International Ramazan and Diabetes Conference was organized here on Saturday to spread awareness regarding the prevention of diabetes complications during Ramazan.

Provincial Minister of Health Dr. Javed Akram was the chief guest at the conference.

Federal Minister of Health Dr. Nadeem Jan, Provincial Minister Dr. Jamal Nasir, Director BIDE Prof. Abdul Basit, Vice Chancellor RMU Dr. Umar, Dr. Umar and other doctors participated in the conference.

At the conference, awareness was given regarding the prevention of diabetes complications during Ramazan. Dr. Javed Akram said that diabetics could fast during Ramazan.

Administering insulin and checking sugar during fasting does not break the fast, Dr. Javed Akram added. The physician should educate the diabetic patients about the benefits of fasting, he said.

Dr. Javed Akram said that fasting is very important to lose weight, adding diabetic patients should take special care of their diet during fasting.

He informed that large-scale research is being conducted in Europe regarding the benefits of fasting. "The Holy Prophet (PBUH) told us about the benefits of the fasting fourteen hundred years ago," he added.

## FIRs lodged against underage drivers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi District Police registered over 5622 FIRs against underage drivers during a special campaign so far, said a police spokesman.

He informed that police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani were taking action by the law against underage drivers.

The CPO had directed the City Traffic Police officers to take solid steps to control traffic rules violations and underage driving, he said. The parents were also advised to discourage driving by underage drivers. He said that fatal road accidents occur due to speeding and reckless driving of the drivers particularly underage.

The ongoing operation against underage drivers and other traffic rules violators had been accelerated on the instructions of the CPO. The vehicles and motorcycles of the underage drivers were also being impounded in respective police stations, he said.

In addition to issuing fines for underage driving, police were also conducting awareness campaigns in schools and colleges to educate young individuals about the legal age requirements for obtaining a driver's license, he added.

## Commissioner visits RIUT, inspects medical treatment facilities

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chhatta here on Saturday visited Rawalpindi Institute of Urology and Transplantation (RIUT) and inspected the medical treatment facilities being provided to the patients.

Vice Chancellor, Rawalpindi Medical University, Dr. Umar, DMMS, RIUT Dr. Azhar, Xeon Building and other officers were present on the occasion.

The Commissioner took notice of non-functional heating system in some wards of the hospital due to technical fault in HVAC sensors.

He said that HVAC sensors should be replaced immediately and the heating system should be made fully functional as the patients could not bear this cold.

The Commissioner also visited Emergency, Operation Theater,

Radiology, Dialysis Center and OPD.

The DMS briefed the Commissioner about the facilities being provided to the patients in the hospital. The Building Department representative also briefed about the repair work.

The Commissioner was informed that in this state-of-the-art 250-bed hospital, more than 100 emergency patients are admitted and provided medical treatment daily while on an average, 250 to 300 patients visit the OPD of the hospital daily.

Currently, five departments of the hospital are fully functional.

So far, the patients are being provided surgery, dialysis, pathology, radiology and nephrology medical facilities at RIUT.

The transplant unit would also be fully functional by March, the Commissioner was briefed.

Apart from this, 13 departments of Holy Family Hospital are also temporarily providing services in this hospital.

Medical facilities are also being provided at RIUT due to the rush of the patients and revamping project of the Holy Family Hospital.

All encroachments from the service road were removed to provide the patients easy access to the hospital.

The Commissioner said that the administration was striving to provide quality medical facilities to the resident of Rawalpindi.

The RIUT is providing state-of-the-art medical facilities to the patients, he added.

The Commissioner also talked to the patients and their families who expressed satisfaction on the medical facilities being provided in the hospital.

## Haba Chaudhry face disqualification as hidden assets, trips surface

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Election Tribunal in Rawalpindi has disqualified Haba Chaudhry, wife of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry and from contesting the upcoming provincial elections.

This decision comes after revelations of her undisclosed foreign trips and bank accounts emerged, casting a shadow over Fawad Chaudhry's own candidacy as well.

The controversy stems from objections raised against Haba Chaudhry's nomination papers, highlighting discrepancies in her asset declarations.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) presented evidence

of her nine bank accounts and three foreign trips, none of which were mentioned in the required documents.

Faced with this damning evidence, the Election Tribunal upheld the objections, disqualifying Haba Chaudhry from contesting the Jhelum provincial constituency.

The decision also carries significant implications for Fawad Chaudhry, who faces similar accusations of concealing his wife's financial dealings.

Following Haba Chaudhry's disqualification, the Election Tribunal has withdrawn its approval order for Fawad Chaudhry's nomination

papers in the NA-60 and NA-61 constituencies. He has been summoned to appear before the court on January 9th to explain why he should not be disqualified for hiding these details.

With both his wife's candidacy and his own nomination now in jeopardy, Fawad Chaudhry finds himself in a precarious political situation. The Election Tribunal's decision has sent shockwaves through the PTI, raising questions about transparency and accountability within the party. As the January 9th hearing approaches, all eyes will be on Fawad Chaudhry as he attempts to defend his position and salvage his political future.

## Winter camp concludes at AIOU

ISLAMABAD (INP): The closing ceremony of a two-week winter camp for children and the graduation ceremony of a three-month Turkish language course concluded here on Saturday.

Addressing the closing ceremony, Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that parents should allow their children to do activities from an early age that will bring out their hidden talents.

He said that to develop children's creativity, it is important to keep them in their imaginary world.

Dr. Nasir said that we organize summer camp, winter camp and other educational activities for children in cooperation with Yunus Emre Institute of Turkiye.

The ceremony began with the national anthems of Pakistan and Turkiye. The Education Attaché of Turkish Embassy, Dr. Mehmet Toyran and Director, Yunus Emre Institute, Dr. Halil Tokar were the guests of honour. Country Director, Red Crescent Turkiye, Ergest Limka, Muhsin Balci, Turkish language teachers Mrs. Halil Tokar, Dr. Rashid and calligrapher, Wasil Shahid also participated in the event.

The closing ceremony was hosted by Director of Academic Planning and Course Production, Dr. Zahid Majeed. Deans, Professors and Principal Officers of AIOU also participated in the event.

VC AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, announced that an activity

will be organized for parents and schoolteachers to improve children's creativity so that they can be trained better.

Dr. Mehmet Toryan and Professor Dr. Halil Tokar expressed that Pakistan and Turkey share a unique friendship that is unparalleled in the world.

They emphasized that the love and respect between the two nations is exceptional and is being passed on to future generations through such events. Dr. Zahid Majeed presented a detailed report on both courses.

The event concluded with children presenting various poems and songs in Turkish and Urdu. Parents appreciated the organizers and trainers for providing such a wonderful opportunity.



RAWALPINDI: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah visits Rawat Fort to revive conservation work.



**Rival families end feud**

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): Following mediation from tribal leaders and local officials, a 62-year-old enmity has ended between two families in Nazyan district of Nangarhar. Originating from a land dispute, the enmity surfaced between M. Kitab and Aqal M. families during the regime of Mohammad Zahir Shah. Mullah Ibrahim Khairkhw, police chief for Nazyan district, told the reconciliation gathering that Muslims are all brothers and Nangarhar is the home of Jirga.

**Grape harvest exceeded**

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock said grape harvest exceeded 232,000 metric tons in Kabul this year, showing a significant increase over last year's yield. MAIL wrote on its X handle that according reports from districts of Kabul province, a significant increase was recorded in the yield of grapes this year compared to last year. The ministry linked the increased yield of grapes to lack of hailstorms, rain and floods this year.

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

## Infrastructure projects to start in 2024: IEA

KABUL (TOLONews): The Islamic Emirate said that efforts are being made to start the work of some infrastructure projects in the country in 2024.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, told TOLONews that the construction of the Wakhan Corridor with China, the start of the Trans-Afghan project and the extraction of more mines in the country are among the major goals of the Islamic Emirate this year.

According to the spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, many infrastructure projects are under construction this year, some of which will be completed and the work of some other projects will begin.

Mujahid said: "One of our great economic goals is to connect Wakhan with China. Second, there is hope that the practical work on the Trans-Afghan railway will begin next spring,

and also in our mines sector, we will return from the exploration stage to the extraction stage, especially in the oil sector."

The Ministry of Economy said that the general goal of implementing new infrastructure projects and half-finished projects is to provide work for people and achieve self-sufficiency.

The deputy minister of Economy, Abdul Latif Nazari, in this regard said: "Our goal is to create employment for our people and create a platform for the economic growth and development of Afghanistan for the country's self-sufficiency."

Some economic analysts said that the implementation of large infrastructure projects in the country will be effective in the growth of the country's economy.

"The implementation of national and infrastructure projects, especially in

the economic dimensions of the country, can help us in a very potential and strategic way in the process of economic growth in Afghanistan," said Shabir Bashiri, an economic analyst.

"We should pay special attention to the extraction of mines, we should pay attention to the extraction of energy, such as oil and gas, which is available in our beloved country," said Ahmad Ferdaws Behguzin, another economic analyst.

Based on the information of the World Bank, projects worth more than \$4.5 billion dollars have been stopped in Afghanistan.

Earlier, the Ministry of Finance of the Islamic Emirate has said that as a result of the consultations of the Ministry with the World Bank, the work of 45 half-finished projects will be resumed this year by the World Bank.

## Foreign reserves in Swiss Bank earned \$155m profit

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Afghan Trust Fund board members in Switzerland have announced that a portion of Afghanistan's blocked assets, which were transferred to a trust fund in Switzerland in September 2022, have generated approximately \$155 million in profit.

Tolo News reported, citing Shah Mohammad Mehrabi, one of the board members of the Afghan Trust Fund in Switzerland, that Afghanistan's assets of about \$3.5 billion in this trust fund have yielded \$155 million in profit over 16 months.

The Afghan Trust Fund was established in the month September 2022 to preserve Afghanistan's assets. Approximately 16 months have passed since its establishment.

A portion of Afghanistan's assets valued at \$3.5 billion had been deposited in this trust fund, which has yielded a profit of \$155 million, but an agreement on how to utilize it has not yet been reached.

Afghanistan's economic system and banking stability were deeply affected after the Taliban administration came to power, impacting the lives of millions. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the need for humanitarian assistance increased from 6.3 million in 2019 to 28.3 million people in 2023.

However, as Shah Mohammad Mehrabi, a member of the Afghan Trust Fund in Switzerland, pointed out, this trust fund was not designed for "humanitarian initiatives" and is intended to be used in a "particular manner" for economic projects.

## UNHCR, IDB sign three agreements on Afghanistan



KABUL (Ariana News): UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) have signed three agreements aimed at bolstering access to education, health-care services, and livelihood opportunities in Afghanistan.

The agreements were signed at the headquarters of the Islamic Development Bank in Jeddah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, by the Special Advisor to the President of the Islamic Development Bank and Coordinator of the Afghanistan Humanitarian Trust Fund, Muhammad

Jamal Al-Saati, and UNHCR's Senior Advisor and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Representative, Khaled Khalifa, UNHCR said in a statement.

Through these agreements, UNHCR will implement several projects to support education programmes, such as building 16 integrated schools for boys and girls, and creating information and inquiry points to enhance and ensure access to education for more than 30,000 school-age children. In addition, it will improve and expand the health-care service net-

work in more than 34 regions by establishing eight health-care centres, benefiting more than half a million people from returnee, displaced and host communities. The agreements will also allow for the implementation of programmes to enhance vocational skills and facilitate livelihood opportunities through traditional crafts, such as beekeeping and wool spinning, according to the statement.

"The decades-long conflict in Afghanistan has had a devastating impact on all aspects of people's lives, leaving more than two-

thirds of Afghanistan's population in urgent need of assistance," Khaled Khalifa said. "With this generous contribution from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Fund for Development – through AHTF – UNHCR will be able to provide critical services in several vital sectors, including health, education, and livelihoods. We are grateful to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and AHTF for this much-needed support."

Approximately 28.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, according to United Nations.

## Slow internet speeds hinder girls' online educ

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Financial Times, using information from online education networks, says that even though there are problems with internet access, Afghan girls are getting better at learning online, especially in subjects like English, science, and business.

According to the newspaper, the strict policies of the Taliban regime have jeopardized the progress made in girls' education over the past two decades and have led to growing despair among women and girls in Afghanistan.

The report highlights that the de facto government is considered one of the "most oppressive" regimes globally.

The Financial Times reports that many girls and women in Afghanistan have started using online education like never before to bypass the ban on regular schooling.

Leila Hosseini, a girl who couldn't go to school in Afghanistan, shares how online education has enabled her to keep learning despite the challenging situation. She's been studying online for four months,

appreciating the peaceful environment that allows her to explore subjects like English, school topics, and photography. Despite facing difficulties due to the high cost and slow internet, she's determined to continue her online education for a better future.

The report highlights a substantial surge in online learning, with over 21,000 students enrolling at the "People's University" in the United States in 2023. The Financial Times specifically mentions that commerce and English language courses are in high demand among Afghan students seeking online education.

A Gallup survey conducted in 2022 revealed a significant gender disparity in internet access, with 25% of men but only 6% of women having access. This gap widens in rural areas, where just 2% of women reported having internet access.

Rubina Azizi, the founder of Girls on the Path of Change organization, has been actively addressing the restrictions on girls' education in Afghanistan. Over the past three years,

she has worked tirelessly to offer opportunities and motivation for approximately 600 Afghan girls from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran to participate in online education.

Rubina believes that even though despair is at its peak in Afghanistan, online education provides hope for girls to continue their education. However, she acknowledges that it cannot fully replace the physical presence of girls in schools and universities. Many girls are keen to learn languages like English and German, along with skills like writing, through online education, meeting the aspirations of Afghan youth.

Meanwhile, the Eurasia Review magazine has published a report titled "Life under the Taliban's Rule," revealing that nearly 100,000 female students have been prevented from attending universities in Afghanistan. This report suggests that the progress achieved in girls' education over the past two decades is now at risk of being undone, resulting in widespread despair among women and girls in Afghanistan.

## \$52m needed to support migrants

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has announced that \$51.9 million is needed to address the issues of migrants and provide support to them in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

This agency stated in a report released on Friday that due to the intersection of insecurity, instability, environmental hazards, and ongoing economic inflation, the needs are still increasing.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, from November 2023 to July 2024, \$43.48 million is required to address the situation of migrants in Afghanistan, with \$8.43 million of it allocated for migrants in Pakistan.

The statistics from this organization indicate a decrease in the number of Afghan migrants returning from Pakistan, with an average of 1,500 individuals returning to their country daily.

Furthermore, UNHCR emphasizes that health services, water, and sanitation are the most vital needs for returning individuals in border camps, and this organization has provided cash assistance to approximately 65,000 people.

## Haji Agha Mir earns praises for his dispute resolution efforts

KUNDUZ CITY (Pajhwok): A tribal elder in northern Kunduz province has been engaged in disputes resolution efforts at his personal cost and helped address tens of small and complicated local disputes in the past two years.

Haji Agha Mir Nasir, 40, hails from the Charkh Ab locality of Kunduz City, the provincial capital. He represents the Nasari tribes in the province from the past several years.

During an exclusive interview he told Pajhwok Afghan News that in the past two years he addressed nearly 200 small and big local disputes at his personal cost.

These included 50 murders, some legal and the remaining criminal disputes.

As a result of his efforts and cooperation from local elders and government these disputes had been resolved, he added.

He said: "Lately, I became interested and compassionate and I decided to establish peace and brotherhood among the people, to serve the people and solve their problems. There have been many revolutions in Afghanistan, but there are problems of their own in every village and town."

Haji Agha Mir said since he started dispute resolution he never asked the disputed parties or any other source for payment rather he paid for the expenses of Jirgas conventions and other activities required for this purpose from his personal pocket.

He said: "We resolved a conflict in one case in which 10 murders had occurred, after 36 years, we reconciled these two families and they embraced each other, this is the greatest honor for me."

Meanwhile, some civil society activists in Kunduz hailed Haji Agha Mir's dispute resolution efforts and said lately he resolved many public disputes and reconciled conflicting parties.

Beryani Hammawa, the resident of Kunduz referring to Haji Agha's personality, said: "We admire Haji Agha's reconciliation efforts, he is a tribal elder and working in dispute resolutions for years."

Ziauddin Zyarmal,

another civil society activist, said: "Haji Agha Mir is an influential personality in dispute resolutions between tribes and families. Jirgas have played positive role in disputes resolutions in Afghanistan, we want other elders and influential people to play similar role."

Local officials also hailed Haji Agha's role in dispute resolutions.

Hameedullah Ahmadi, an official of the Borders and Tribal Affairs Department, said: "Haji Agha Mir Nasari, head of the Nasari Council strive hard, we in line with the government policies support councils, there are 22 councils in Kunduz and we strived to convert them into one council."

## AI urges immediate halt to women's dress code crackdown, detentions

KABUL (Khaama Press): Amnesty International has called on the Taliban to immediately cease their crackdown on women in Afghanistan, including detaining those who do not adhere to strict dress codes that require only their eyes to be visible.

This global rights group strongly condemns these actions as severe violations of women's freedom of movement and expression.

Amnesty International stated on its social media platform on Friday, "The Taliban's dress-code crackdown and arbitrary arrests are further violations of women's freedom of movement and expression in Afghanistan."

They further urged the Taliban administration to immediately halt the crackdown and release the detained women, saying, "The crackdown must be ceased immediately, and those detained should be released."

Zahra Mohammadi, one of the female protestors, tragically took her own life after being released from Taliban captivity. Officials from the Afghan Women's Solidarity Movement confirmed on Friday that a member of their protest group had taken her own life in Kunduz Province.

The group's women's rights activists revealed that

Bibi Gul, a 21-year-old, had been imprisoned since the onset of the Taliban regime and had been contemplating suicide continuously after her release from prison.

They stated that Bibi Gul, who tragically threw herself into a well in Kunduz Province on Friday, December 23, 2023, ultimately lost her life in a local hospital on Sunday, January 1st, 2024.

Members of the Afghan Women's Solidarity Movement stated that this 21-year-old woman, named "Zahra Mohammadi," had been detained by the Taliban in Kunduz Province along with other women's

rights activists during the protests against the Taliban in September 2021.

On the other hand, the Taliban's Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice confirmed the detention of several women in Kabul for improper veiling. However, the exact number of detainees remains undisclosed.

The Taliban had detained 'dozens' of women in western Kabul under the pretext of "bad hijab," taking them to undisclosed locations without informing their families. Women's rights activists are demanding their unconditional release and UN intervention.

## Taliban arrest women for 'bad Hijab' in Afghanistan, sparking fear and outrage



KABUL (Khaama Press): At least a week ago, authorities from the Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, in coordination with intelligence

forces and security agencies, have been detaining girls in some regions of Kabul due to what is referred to as "bad hijab" or "non-observance of Islamic

dress code." According to the girls, this action has sparked widespread reactions and instilled fear.

Mullah Abdulghaffar Farooq, the spokesperson

for the Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, stated to the media that these detentions were carried out to prevent "vice" and prevent bad hijab, leading to the detention of several girls.

The recent detentions of young girls in western Kabul have been prominent in the past two to three days. Reports indicate that more than a dozen young girls were transferred to security agencies due to inadequate hijab. Most of these detentions have been reported in areas of Dasht-e Barchi, Pol-e Khoshk, Qalai-e Naw, and Pol-e Sukhta.

The continuation of these detentions has raised serious concerns among the girls in these areas. Mezghan, one of the detained

girls, told Khama Press that the authorities took her from the market, and she spent a day in detention.

Mezghan described her detention: "My sister and I went out to buy something from our house. When we entered the market, there was a commotion as the forces of the Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice arrived, and young girls and teenagers were desperately looking for a place to hide."

She added, "My sister and I entered a shop, and from the window, I saw several men in white clothes instructing some ladies who were wearing full black attire and had sunglasses on to get on a vehicle. The black-clad ladies forcefully placed the

girls on the vehicle using electric shocks."

Mezghan further mentioned that when she tried to record these moments with her mobile phone, she was also detained and had her phone confiscated.

Sahar, living in western Kabul, said, "I study in a girls' school, and when I came out of the school, the Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice forces wanted to detain me, but I resisted."

Sahar added that she now refrains from going to school out of fear of being detained. Sources in Kabul's Taimani district claim that the authorities from the Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice have detained several girls, even

though they were wearing appropriate hijab, allegedly because they possessed "smartphones or cameras."

The spokesperson for the Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice of Taliban, however, states that female police officers are present during detentions, and no harm comes to the girls.

These detentions due to non-compliance with hijab have faced criticism from human rights organizations and UN experts. Richard Bennett, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Afghanistan, wrote on his Twitter page that detaining girls for "bad hijab" restricts women's freedom of expression.

Mr. Bennett has called on the Taliban administra-

tion to release the detained girls unconditionally.

Amnesty International has also expressed concern about the detention of girls in Kabul, stating, "The Taliban's arbitrary detentions and crackdowns violate women's freedom of movement and expression in Afghanistan. Suppression must cease immediately, and those detained must be released."

Naseer Ahmad Faiq, Afghanistan's interim representative to the United Nations, regarding the detention of girls, emphasizes that no government has previously attacked the culture and way of life of its people. He adds that people in Afghanistan currently lack mental security and peace.



## F.P. Report

Rehman said the FO had arranged a briefing for him on January 3. "They informed me about Pakistan's stance and its demands. I have realised that officials are attaching importance to my visit.

## F.P. Report

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that the PPP has contested elections in very difficult circumstances. Those who are complaining about rejection of their nomination papers should know that in 2013 more nomination papers were rejected than now. Our demand has

Chairman PPP responding to another question said that he was studying at the University of Oxford during the PPP government of 2008-2013. The performance of this government was better than the governments in 2013 and 2018. The PPP's economic policy, the alleviation of poverty, support for the downtrodden, the right of the province were all the achievements of our government in 2008-2013. Shehbaz Sharif was able to work because through the NFC, the PPP provided the required resources.

We introduced the 18th Amendment in the Constitution as well as the Benazir Income Support Programme. Chairman Bilawal said that the promises made in Sindh were all implemented. The promises which were made to the flood victims are being fulfilled. We will fulfill all the promises made to the youth, labourers and growers in our 10-point manifesto. We have promised to double the income of the people in the next five years and give 300 units of electricity to the poor free-of-cost. Behind these aspirations, we have got a strategy and the finances necessary. When the PPP comes to power, the people will reap the benefits of this 10-point agenda. Chairman Bilawal said that he is contesting the elections to see to it that his manifesto is implemented, while the PML-N's intention to contest the elections is to help their leader avoid prison while the PTI is doing the same for its leader to be released from prison.

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Defying a Senate resolution demand- ing postponement, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has asserted that the upcoming general elections will proceed as planned on February 8th.

سوی ناردرن گیس  
Sui Northern Gas  
SNGPL Official

سوی ناردرن گیس سہولتیں

# نمبر تافرووری

خصوصی احتیاط ہے ضروری

سر دیوں کے 4 ماہ گیس استعمال  
0.9Hm<sup>3</sup> سے زیادہ ہوگا  
تو گیس بل گئی گنا بڑھ سکتا ہے

Consumption Level	Bill Amount (Rs.)
3 سلاپ	Rs. 300
4 سلاپ	Rs. 600
5 سلاپ	Rs. 1,000
6 سلاپ	Rs. 1,200
7 سلاپ	Rs. 1,600
8 سلاپ	Rs. 3,000
9 سلاپ	Rs. 3,500
10 سلاپ	Rs. 4,000

لہذا!

روایتی گیس گیزر کا استعمال ترک کریں  
غیر ضرورت چلپا چلتا نہ پھولیں  
گیس بیڑ کا استعمال ہرگز مت کریں  
لہج سے بچنے کیلئے ہاتا دی گیس آلات چیک کریں

PIDIL21220-D

## F.P. Report

PTI's Asad Qaiser was granted permission to run for election from NA 19 and PK 50 while Taimur Jhagra was cleared to take part in election from three constituencies. Fawad Chaudhry's wife Hiba Chaudhry was declared ineligible by a tribunal to contest election for provincial assembly seat. Election tribunal accepted appeals of PTI's

Subhan Sahil and Amjad Afridi and allowed them to contest election from NA 243 and 242, respectively. PTI's Malik Niaz Ahmad Jhakar was granted permission to vie for election from NA 182 (Layyah). Similarly, PTI candidate from PS 113 Hasnain Chohan was also cleared by election tribunal to run election. The Pakistan Peoples Party candidate Rauf Ahmad's appeal against RO decision to reject nomination paper was adopted by the election tribunal. Independent candidates Rafiqi Hassan (PS 126), Jamaluddin, Deedar Ali's appeal were also accepted by tribunals and they were allowed to contest elections scheduled for Feb 8. PTI candidate from Haala, Makhdoom Fazal was given go ahead by the tribunal to vie for election. A tribunal, while declaring RO's decision null and void, allowed Fiza Zeeshan to contest election from NA-237. Appellate Tribunal Judge Adnanul Karim Memon expressed his anger over the ability of returning officers. The judge while passing remarks said, "Are the candidates being deliberately barred from contesting polls.

## F.P. Report

The electoral symbol is crucial to any political party as voters are aware of which

candidate to vote for on the polling day; however, if PTI does not have a unified symbol, it might lose votes due to confusion among the people. If the top court does not restore the PTI's electoral symbol, it will have to play the election innings without the bat, with its leaders calling it a "major setback" to the party as it has been contested on the sign in several polls.

It is pertinent to mention here that the PHC, in its six-page order noted that its earlier verdict had "prima facie created hindrance in the smooth process of the election which is to be conducted by the ECP". "...the interim order of this court passed in favour of the PTI is hereby recalled and consequently the Election Commission of Pakistan is directed to proceed with the election process as per its constitutional mandate."

The electoral body had filed a review petition at the high court against the PHC's December 26 decision which had suspended the ECP's order and restored the party's 'bat' symbol till a final decision on the matter. The ECP, in its order on December 22, had declared PTI's intra-party polls "illegal" and stripped it of using the 'bat' symbol. The party's candidates would now, given the PHC's January 3 order, have to contest elections "independently", Ahmed Bilal Mehbob, chief of the think tank Pildat, told media.

میں بحیثیت ایئر مین شمولیت اختیار کریں

آن لائن رجسٹریشن 08 جنوری تا 14 جنوری 2024 [www.joinpaf.gov.pk](http://www.joinpaf.gov.pk) پر کیجیے۔

<p>ایروٹریڈز</p>	<p>قومیت : پاکستانی مرد / ازدواجی حیثیت : غیر شادی شدہ  <b>تعلیمی قابلیت</b>          میٹرک سائنس کم از کم 60% نمبروں کے ساتھ پاس کیا ہو، فزکس، کمپیوٹر اور ریاضی کم از کم 33% نمبروں کے ساتھ پاس ہو۔ انگریزی میں کم از کم 70/150 (47%) نمبروں۔</p>	<p>عمر : 15½ تا 20 سال بشمول تاریخ 24 جون 2024 تک          قد : 163 تا 188 سینٹی میٹر</p>	<p>ایم۔ ٹی۔ ڈی</p>
<p>پی ایف اینڈ ڈی آئی</p>	<p>قومیت : پاکستانی مرد / ازدواجی حیثیت : غیر شادی شدہ  <b>تعلیمی قابلیت</b>          میٹرک سائنس کم از کم 60% نمبروں کے ساتھ پاس کیا ہو۔ فزکس، کمپیوٹر اور ریاضی کم از کم 45% نمبروں کے ساتھ پاس ہو۔ انگریزی میں کم از کم 75/150 (50%) نمبر ہوں۔ سلیکشن سٹنر پر بورڈ انٹرویو سے پہلے فزیکل ٹیسٹ بھی ہوگا جس میں 1 mile (8 min) Running، 15 Reach ups، 20 Pushups، 04 Chin ups اور Command Test (Loud &amp; Clear Voice) شامل ہوں گے۔ فزیکل ٹیسٹ پاس کرنا لازمی ہے۔</p>	<p>عمر : 16½ تا 22 سال بشمول تاریخ 23 دسمبر 2024 تک          قد : 178 تا 188 سینٹی میٹر          نظر 6/6</p>	<p>سیکیورٹی</p>
<p>ایم۔ ٹی۔ ڈی</p>	<p>قومیت : پاکستانی مرد / ازدواجی حیثیت : غیر شادی شدہ  <b>تعلیمی قابلیت</b>          میٹرک سائنس کم از کم 55% نمبروں کے ساتھ پاس کیا ہو اور انگریزی میں کم از کم 68/150 (45%) نمبر ہوں۔</p>	<p>عمر : 17½ تا 22 سال بشمول تاریخ 24 جون 2024 تک          قد : 168 تا 188 سینٹی میٹر          نظر 6/6</p>	<p>ایم۔ ٹی۔ ڈی</p>
<p>سپورٹس مین</p>	<p>قومیت : پاکستانی مرد / ازدواجی حیثیت : غیر شادی شدہ  <b>تعلیمی قابلیت</b>          میٹرک سائنس کم از کم 60% نمبروں کے ساتھ پاس کیا ہو اور جن امیدواران نے ضلعی، صوبائی، قومی یا بین الاقوامی سطح پر کھیلوں میں نمایاں کارکردگی کی اسناد حاصل کی ہوں ایسے امیدواران انگریزی میں 45% نمبروں کی بجائے 33% نمبروں کے ساتھ کھی اہل ہوں گے۔ سپورٹس کی بنیاد پر مقرر ہونے والے امیدواران سپورٹس ڈیپارٹمنٹ کے ساتھ ساتھ فریڈ ڈیپارٹمنٹ بھی سرانجام دیں گے۔</p>	<p>عمر : 15½ تا 20 سال بشمول تاریخ 24 جون 2024 تک          قد : 163 تا 188 سینٹی میٹر</p>	<p>ایم۔ ٹی۔ ڈی</p>
<p>دیہی علاقہ جات / خیبر پختون خواہ (فاٹا) / گلگت بلتستان / بلوچستان</p>	<p>(1) پاکستان اور آزاد کشمیر کے منظور شدہ دیہی علاقوں سے تعلق رکھنے والے امیدواران جنہوں نے میٹرک سائنس کم از کم 50% نمبروں کے ساتھ اپنے علاقے کے سکول سے پاس کیا ہو اور انگریزی میں 50/150 (33%) نمبر ہوں۔          (ب) خیبر پختون خواہ (فاٹا)، گلگت بلتستان اور بلوچستان سے تعلق رکھنے والے امیدواران جنہوں نے اپنے علاقے کے سکول سے میٹرک سائنس کم از کم 40% اور انگریزی میں 50/150 (33%) نمبر حاصل کیے ہوں۔          (ج) بلوچستان صرف ضلع کوئٹہ سے تعلق رکھنے والے امیدواران جنہوں نے اپنے علاقے کے سکول سے میٹرک سائنس کم از کم 50% اور انگریزی میں 60/150 (40%) نمبر حاصل کیے ہوں۔          مندرجہ بالا علاقوں سے تعلق رکھنے والے امیدواران کسی بھی ٹریڈ میں بحری کے اہل ہوں گے بشرطیکہ وہ آفس ٹریڈ یا بائی ٹیلیٹ یا پورا اترتے ہوں۔</p>	<p>عمر : 15½ تا 20 سال بشمول تاریخ 24 جون 2024 تک          قد : 163 تا 188 سینٹی میٹر</p>	<p>ایم۔ ٹی۔ ڈی</p>

**نوٹ** PAF حاضر و سرور اور جازڈ ڈانسن کے بچے انوار اور شرف علی محمد اڈو چارسدہ کے برادر اولیٰ کو انفس کا بچہ (Verification) کے وقت اعراج کا کہیں نہیں ہوا۔ اعراج ختم ہوگا۔ 2021 یا اس سے پہلے بچہ پاس کرے تو دلائل کو اسلی (Original) سہلا دینا چاہیے کہ ہوگی۔

اعترفیہ میں پانچ سو اسی اعترفیہ میں انگریزی میں کم از کم 60/150 (40%) نہیں ہوں۔ دیکھی جرنی کیلئے کیلئے ہیں۔ تمام امداد و مراد کو کھر کی بالائی حد میں سال کی رعایت دے جائے گی۔

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مطلوبی کی کتابچہ پر امتحان کے دن دستیاب ہوگا۔

دلت ملازمت، تنخواہ، مراعات، دیگر سہولیات اور ترقی کے مواقع	نااہلیت	سلیکشن کا طریقہ کار
<p>(ا) دلت ملازمت، تنخواہ اور الاؤنسز (پی۔ اے۔ ایف۔ کی سرحد پر پالیسی / پے اسکیل کے مطابق)۔</p> <p>(ب) مفت کھانا اور پائین۔</p> <p>(ج) ٹرانسپورٹ کے بعد شادی شدہ افراد کو رہائش پی۔ اے۔ ایف۔ کی سرحد پر پالیسی کے تحت دی جائے گی۔</p> <p>(د) جیلی اور دواؤں کے لیے مفت طبی سہولیات۔</p> <p>(ر) گروپ انشورنس سکیم۔</p> <p>(س) اندرون ملک دوپہر دن کا کورس اور پوزیشن کے نامور مواقع۔</p> <p>(ش) ریل اور ہوائی سفر، ایک فیصد رعایتی ٹکٹ۔</p> <p>(ص) اضافی تعلیمی اداروں میں بچوں کی تعلیم کے لیے خصوصی کوٹہ۔</p> <p>(ض) فریڈینج کی ادا کئے جانے کے لیے رعایتی سفری سہولیات۔</p>	<p>درج ذیل قوانین کی خلاف ورزی کے مرتکب امیدواران بہر صورت سلیکشن انٹریٹک کے لیے نااہل ہیں۔</p> <p>(1) پی۔ اے۔ ایف۔ سے ملنے یا قائم رضی کی بنیاد پر نامزدوار قرار دیے گئے امیدواران</p> <p>(ب) جو امیدواران ایئر بین کی برتی کے لیے ہونے والے امتحانات میں تین مرتبہ شامل ہو چکے ہوں۔</p> <p>(ج) ایسے امیدواران جنہوں نے اپنی اسٹانڈ پر رد بدل کیا ہو یا غلط معلومات فراہم کی ہوں۔</p> <p>(د) اخلاقی جرائم کی بناء پر عدالت سے سزا یافتہ۔</p> <p>(ر) ایک ایسٹری کے لیے ایک سے زائد سٹینڈ پر برزش پیش کر دینے والے امیدواران۔</p> <p>(س) کسی بھی سرکاری ملازمت سے برطرف شدہ۔</p>	<p>(ا) سلیکشن سینٹر پر ذہانت، تضابطی امتحان (انگلش ٹیکس اور ریاضی مضامین)، پرسنلٹی (Personality) ٹیسٹ، انٹرویو اور ایڈمٹنسی ملٹی مائنڈ۔</p> <p>(ب) ابتدائی امتحانات پاس کرنے کے بعد میرٹ کی بنیاد پر منتخب امیدواران کا سلیکشن سنٹر پر انٹرویو کا ورکرز سلیکشن پروڈ انٹرویو۔</p> <p>(ج) میرٹ کی بنیاد پر منتخب ایئر بین کو تربیت کے لیے کوہاٹ بھیجا جائے گا۔</p> <p><b>ایئر بینڈ کارکرز کے میرٹ کی بنیاد پر کسے سلیکشن کے تمام مراحل کے نتائج حتمی ہو گئے۔</b></p> <p>ابتدائی طور پر امیدواران کا کوہاٹ میں دوبارہ عملی محاذ میں جیل ٹائمنس پی۔ اے۔ ایف۔ کیا جائے گا۔ جو امیدواران ملٹی مائنڈ اور دواؤں درجہ ٹیکس میں بیکل پر سلیکشن لائیکل دیو جات کی بناء پر نامزدوار ہائے گئے ان کو سرور سے ڈسچارج کر دیا جائے گا۔</p>

اہل اُمیدواران اصل اسناد بشمول ڈیٹیل ماکس شیٹ (DMC)، قومی شناختی کارڈ (سمارٹ کارڈ)، ڈیجیٹل اور چار عددی تصدیق شدہ پاسپورٹ سائز تصاویر کے ہمراہ درج ذیل کسی بھی ایک نزدیک ترین پی اے ایف انفارمیشن اینڈ سلیکشن سینٹر پر رابطہ کریں۔

081-9201753 0304-8220054	فون : ☆ کونسل ☆ محمد جبار دادو	021-99240999 021-3457022	فون : ☆ کراچی : ☆ مشاہیر اعلیٰ نزل، بی ایف سی، فیصل ☆	9992-385157 9992-385166	فون : ☆ 310 ڈی ایچ بی ٹیکس سمسو روڈ : ☆
071-9310409 071-5624515	فون : ☆ سکھر ☆ میاں وردو، باغ اعلیٰ سلسلہ کالج	042-99220084 3667104143	فون : ☆ لاہور : 14-☆ میروڈ، چوک ڈی ایف ہسپتال ☆	041-9201199	فون : ☆ جن جھنگ روڈ نزد انٹرپرائز ٹک : ☆
0966-9280311	فون : ☆ ڈیرہ اسماعیل خان ☆ فضل الہی میروڈ نزد ڈی ایف ہسپتال	061-9201183 061-92017951	فون : ☆ مٹان : 217☆ شیر شاہ روڈ ☆	022-9200936 022-2780949	فون : ☆ 49 صلاح الدین روڈ نزد کینٹ ☆
0459-350226	فون : ☆ میاںوالی ☆ بی ایف سی، ڈی ایف اعلیٰ سلسلہ شرف میاںوالی	091-9210829	فون : ☆ پشاور : 9☆ دی مال روڈ پشاور کینٹ ☆	051-5701143 5701257-58	فون : ☆ راولپنڈی : 3☆ دی مال روڈ کینٹ، باغ اعلیٰ AFIC ☆
05811-930088	فون : ☆ گلگت : ☆ ایف سی کیمپ کراچی رٹورن نزد نیو سیکشن ☆ جلال اڈہ	0344-0969323	فون : ☆ مظفر آباد : حرکت انٹرپرائز نزد کیمپ اعلیٰ سلسلہ، مظفر آباد کینٹ، مظفر آباد ☆		

پاکستان ایئر فورس

## قوم کا سرمایہ، افتخار