

Police arrest JI ex-senator  
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Police on Friday arrested former senator of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Mushtaq Ahmed during a march organized by the party to express solidarity with the people of Gaza. As per details, Mushtaq Ahmed along with 20 workers of JI was arrested from outside the Faisal Mosque during the Save Gaza March protest.



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# Renegotiation of contracts with 8 more IPPs finalized: Tarar

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture, Attaullah Tarar, announced in the National Assembly that contracts with eight additional Independent Power Producers (IPPs) have been successfully renegotiated. This decision comes in response to concerns over rising electricity tariffs, especially for consumers using over 200 units.

Tarar noted that the government has terminated power purchase agreements with five IPPs, which is expected to save billions by reducing capacity payments. He highlighted a recent announcement by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) to lower the fuel cost adjustment by 86 paisas per unit, emphasizing the Prime Minister's commitment to lowering electricity prices for public relief.

For the months of July to September, the federal government allocated a Rs 50 billion subsidy for consumers using 1 to 200 units, while the Punjab government added Rs 45 billion for those using between 201 and 500 units. An annual subsidy of Rs 276 billion for consumers using up to 300 units has also been set, along with

an additional Rs 174 billion for K-Electric. Tarar expressed optimism for further tariff reductions as the Prime Minister's task force on IPPs continues its work. He pointed out positive economic indicators, including \$8.8 billion in remittances, reduced inflation, a lowered interest rate, increased exports, and growing foreign exchange reserves, stating, "Today, Pakistan is on the path of progress."

Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar urged the Sindh government to ensure completion of Safe City Project that was crucial to contain terrorism and crime rate in the province.

The minister was replying to the queries of Member National Assembly (MNA), Sharmila Sahiba Faruqi of Pakistan Peoples Party. Tarar said a Rs5.6 billion funding has been allocated by the Sindh Government and some 43 poles were installed in Karachi from Airport to the Red Zone. However, there was no harm in seeking technical assistance from other provincial departments for the project that had to be implemented into phases. He added that the remaining zones should be completed on priority.

The Punjab Safe City Authority, he said would also

provide full support to the Karachi Safe City projects as Peshawar and Karachi needed Safe City systems the most. The federal government was ready to provide all assistance in that regard. The first Safe City Project was established in the federal capital, whereas a four times bigger system was developed in Lahore, he added.

Attaullah Tarar said the Lahore Safe City Project had played a pivotal role in controlling terrorism and crime, particularly in the investigation and tracking of DIG Traffic Lahore, Captain (R) Mobeen Shaheed's killers. The project enabled authorities to probe and track the facilitators who aided the suicide bomber in reaching the spot.

He said: "We have facial recognition facility in the Safe City Project as all details are available. However, a separate briefing in the committee should be held on this matter." The project, he said was a government to government initiative between the Sindh government and the NRTC, Ministry of Defence, he informed.

Tarar vowed to launch a comprehensive media campaign in the upcoming week to raise awareness about drug trafficking and counter the narrative against drug usage

among youth.

Responding to questions from members of the National Assembly regarding the government's strategies on narcotics control and human trafficking, Tarar emphasized the stringent measures in place, including capital punishment and life imprisonment under Section 9C, to tackle drug-related crimes.

During the session, Tarar underscored the significance of mass narcotics destruction, revealing that recent operations have dismantled drug rackets valued at billions of rupees. He commended the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) for its relentless efforts, noting the sacrifices made by its officers in the fight against drug trafficking. "From August 2023 to October 2024, we have made substantial progress in tracking and apprehending gang leaders," Tarar stated.

He acknowledged the persistent issue of drug use in schools and urged for it to be addressed by a relevant committee, calling for collaboration among all political parties to devise effective solutions. "I would welcome the formation of a special committee to tackle this issue, ensuring that both opposition and treasury members are included," he added. Highlighting

the efforts of the previous Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government, Tarar noted the establishment of an Inter-Agency Taskforce aimed at enhancing coordination between provincial and federal governments in anti-drug operations. He praised the Sindh government for its capacity-building initiatives and stressed the importance of ongoing collaboration with provincial authorities to strengthen anti-narcotics efforts.

He mentioned the 90s PTV drama "Dhuwan," which subtly addressed the issue of drug trafficking and the glamorization of villains in the media. He expressed hopes for future films to further counter this narrative. The minister acknowledged the historical context of the ANF, which was first established in 1957 and reconstituted in the 1970s, and highlighted its global reputation as an effective anti-narcotics force. He also addressed the provincial setup before the 18th Amendment, noting that the development of provincial anti-narcotics forces remains the responsibility of provincial governments in coordination with the ANF. In a related discussion, Tarar touched on the grave issue of human trafficking, labeling it a serious concern.



WASHINGTON: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Auqarzeb met with Ms. Anna Bjerde, Managing Director of Operations at the World Bank.

## Three prison vans attacked near toll plaza

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: As many as three prison vans came under attack on GT Road near Islamabad on Friday. According to details, armed assailants attacked the prison vans carrying dozens of inmates near the Islamabad toll plaza. Several prisoners fled the scene after the attack and indiscriminate firing on the vans.

However, Islamabad IGP Ali Nasir Rizvi said all the inmates had been arrested again. The inmates were being brought from the Attock Jail for hearing. Later, police launched search operation in the area and arrested four suspects involved in the incident.

Sources said the son of a provincial minister was also arrested. "There were 82 inmates in three prison vans and they were being shifted to Attock Jail," said Rizvi. He said there were 18 to 20 assailants who attacked the vans. The Islamabad police chief confirmed that four attackers had been arrested.

## No intention of joining govt: Fazl

### F.P. Report

CHINHOT: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman says pitting one province against another reflects a non-political mindset. Talking to media in Chinhot on Friday, he said that 56 clauses in the amendment were reduced to 22, with five added back, highlighting the accomplishments of this change.

"I have no intention of joining the government. I am unaware of any such proposal; strong resistance will be made against the 27th constitutional amendment," he added. Fazl noted that the 27th constitutional amendment is not simple. He refrained from commenting on Sheikh Rashid's remarks, stating that he fundamentally does not believe in retaliatory politics, filing cases against politicians, or banning political protests.

The JUI-F chief also remarked that Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa has had a productive tenure and congratulated the incoming Chief Justice, wishing him success in delivering justice to the nation. Commenting on broader political dynamics, he clarified that JUI-F opposes revenge-driven politics and cases targeting politicians. "We believe in political freedom and do not support restrictions on protests," he said. Maulana Fazlur Rehman highlighted the importance of increasing resources to address public issues.

## 10 FC soldiers martyred in D I Khan check post attack

### F.P. Report

DI KHAN: In a tragic incident, 10 soldiers of the Frontier Constabulary (FC) laid down their lives in defense of their nation when Khawarij terrorists launched a fierce attack on an FC checkpoint in Darazinda, Dera Ismail Khan.

The assault, executed under the cover of darkness, was a well-coordinated effort by militants who targeted the Zam FC checkpoint using heavy weaponry. According to a spokesperson from the Ministry of Interior, the FC soldiers stood firm and courageously fought back, ultimately sacrificing their lives to protect the checkpoint and thwart the terrorists' assault.

The Ministry of Interior spokesperson confirmed that ten FC soldiers were

martyred in the confrontation, and three others sustained injuries. Despite the overwhelming threat posed by the heavily armed attackers, the soldiers' bravery prevented the terrorists from advancing further. "The martyred soldiers thwarted the terrorists' attack on the checkpoint by laying down their lives," the spokesperson said, honoring the soldiers' ultimate sacrifice.

Among the martyrs, six soldiers hailed from South Waziristan, while four were from the Karak district. Their brave resistance served as a testament to their commitment to the security of Pakistan and the preservation of peace in the region.

Three FC personnel were also wounded during the exchange of fire with the attackers. The injured soldiers—Naik Hamza,

Sepoy Hasan, and Sepoy Sabir Ayub—were swiftly transferred to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dera Ismail Khan for medical treatment. Their condition is currently stable, and they are receiving the necessary care.

Paying tribute to the martyred soldiers, the spokesperson emphasized that the FC remained unwavering in its resolve to combat terrorism and secure peace for Pakistan. "We pay tribute to the martyrs of the FC," the spokesperson stated, noting that these great sacrifices only serve to strengthen the forces' determination to eradicate terrorism. The Frontier Constabulary remains committed to eliminating the scourge of terrorism and ensuring peace," the spokesperson added.

## SC holds full court reference to bid farewell to CJP Isa

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Friday held a full court reference to bid outgoing Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa farewell, where senior lawyers recounted his tenure's highlights.

Justice Isa was sworn in as the 29th CJP on Sept 17, 2023 at a symbolic ceremony, where his wife Sarina Isa was standing beside him as he read out the oath. Justice Yahya Afridi, who was nominated by a newly formed Special Parliamentary Committee (SPC), is set to take oath as the next CJP tomorrow (Saturday). The full court reference was live-streamed on the Supreme Court's website and its YouTube channel.

Senior puisne judge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, who would have become the CJP had the 26th Amendment not been in place, was unable to attend the gathering as he was gone for Umrah along with his family. The seats next to the CJP—usually occupied by Justice Shah and Justice Munib Akhtar—were seen taken by Justice Afridi and Justice Aminuddin Khan instead due to their absence. Justices Ayesha Malik, Athar Minallah and Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan were also not present at the occasion.

A total of 16 judges, including two ad-hoc and two of the Shariat Appellate Bench, attended the event. Among the 16 judges were Justices Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Muhammad Ali Mazhar,

Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, and Shahid Waheed. Justice Isa's family, including his wife Sarina Isa, was also present at the full court reference. Attorney-General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan, Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) Vice-Chairman Farooq H. Naek, and Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Shahzad Shaukat spoke on the occasion, recalling highlights of Justice Isa's tenure.

Speaking at the rostrum, AGP Awan said the CJP had remained steadfast on the principles of the Constitution, law, democracy and accountability. "Even before becoming the chief justice, Qazi Faez sahib had a prominent and successful career as a lawyer," he stated, adding that CJP pioneered the fundamental rights of freedom and expression, as well as women's rights. The AGP praised the outgoing top judge for giving "several historical decisions", the AGP said, citing the verdict in the Faizabad sit-in case.

"He also clarified the role of the law enforcement agencies," Awan said, recalling that Justice Isa also summoned a full court as soon as he assumed his office and initiated live-streaming of case proceedings. The attorney-general added that the CJP had an important role in the February 8 general elections as he "united all stakeholders".

After attending the full court reference, CJP Isa will also attend a luncheon reception being hosted by

CJP-designate Justice Afridi on the apex court's premises. Last night, the SCBA and the PBC hosted a farewell dinner to honour outgoing CJP Isa. In his speech, CJP-designate Afridi described Justice Isa as a "good, hearing human being" but also warned of his "fury". Justice Afridi said: "If you meet, greet and treat Justice Faez Isa with a smile and humility, he will reciprocate with such gentle softness, likeness and care that it will leave you astonished [...]. "But mind you, if you in any way provoke him, or if I may say so poke the bear, then even hell hath no fury to match his scorn and only God may help and save you," he added. "I have faced such wrath of this bear many times. The experience was not pleasant," he recalled, stressing that he also "learned a lot" while sharing a bench with Justice Isa.

The incoming chief justice said he had "mixed feelings" about bidding his predecessor farewell as he would "surely miss your sense of humour and abruptness" but also was glad that he was leaving in good health to enjoy his time ahead. Justice Afridi praised the outgoing top judge for cases pertaining to women's rights, highlighting that Justice Isa "would leave no bounds to ensure the preservation of their rights and that with the full might of the court". He also complimented the CJP as he "openly admitted" that he required the assistance of a worthy counsel instead of feeling shy to express it.



By: Jalil Afridi

## Cadet Arif embarked Shahadat



### F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Khwarij attacked a Mosque in District Lakkhi Marwat during Maghrib Prayers, Gentleman Cadet Arif Ullah (under training at Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul & on leave at his hometown), was also present there, offering prayers in the same Mosque.

As soon as Khwarij started firing, he immediately responded and fought the khwarij bravely. However, during the incident, Gentleman Cadet Arif Ullah (Age 19 years; resident of Lakkhi Marwat) embarked Shahadat sacrificing his life, while saving many innocent lives of worshippers.

Such heinous and cowardly act of attacking worshippers in the mosque while praying reflects the true ideology of these Khwarij. Valiant act of a young Gentleman Cadet is a testament of spirit of sacrifice and dedication of Security Forces' personnel to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country and such sacrifices further strengthen our resolve.

## Imran's sisters get bail

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday granted bail to PTI founder Imran Khan's two sisters—Aleema Khan and Uzma Khan. ATC Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain conducted hearing of the case and after listening to the arguments from both sides, he approved post-arrest bail plea of Aleema Khan and Uzma Khan against surety bonds worth Rs20,000 each.

Aleema Khan and Uzma Khan who were arrested on October 4th from Red Zone of Islamabad were booked in an FIR at Kohsar Police Station for instigating a mob to attack policemen and state institutions.

## Israeli forces storm Gaza hospital as strikes kill 72

CAIRO/GAZA (Reuters): Israeli military strikes across the Gaza Strip have killed at least 72 people since Thursday night and Israeli forces launched a night-time raid on a hospital in the north of the enclave, Palestinian officials said. The Gaza health ministry said a strike on houses in the southern city of Khan Younis killed at least 38, many of them women and children.

The Israeli military said its forces had killed a number of Palestinian gunmen in air and ground strikes in the southern Gaza Strip and dismantled military infrastructure. Some residents of Khan Younis sifted through rubble on Friday in an attempt to retrieve clothes and documents, while children looked for their toys. Ahmed Sobh recounted how his cousin had screamed "Help me, help me."

"We ran and found her children, a boy and a girl, martyred. Her son was lying under the concrete column, it took us 1.5 hours to get him out," he told Reuters. Ahmed Al-Farra described digging relatives including his mother from the rubble, adding he had lost 15 members of his extended family during the airstrikes. "As I was trying to dig (my mother) out I looked at this wall and saw a tank aiming at me. I was thinking 'shall I dig or shall I watch the tank,' what shall I do? I dug her out full of fear. Everyone was doing the same, digging in fear," he said. At the nearby Nasser Hospital, medics prepared the dead, among them three children wrapped in the same white shroud.

In northern Gaza, where an area around the town of Jabalia has been the target of a weeks-long offensive, health officials said Israeli forces stormed Kamal Adwan Hospital, one of three medical facilities struggling to operate there, and stationed forces outside it. "The terrorizing of civilians, the injured and children began as they (the Israeli army) started opening fire on the hospital," Eid Sabbah, the hospital's director of nursing, said in a voice note to Reuters.

When the army retreated, a delegation from the World Health Organization arrived with an ambulance and evacuated some patients. The WHO confirmed it had transferred 49 patients and caregivers to the Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. "We saw mayhem and chaos... The emergency wards (in Kamal Adwan) were overflowing, and we

saw numerous patients being brought in and horrific trauma patients, completely overwhelming the staff," Rik Peepkerom, WHO Representative for the occupied Palestinian territory said in an update on the operation.

Israel's military humanitarian unit, Cogat, which oversees aid and commercial shipments to Gaza, said the military facilitated the transfer of 49 patients to other hospitals, the entry of a fuel truck for the Kamal Adwan Hospital, and the delivery of 180 blood units and medical supplies. After the partial evacuation, Israeli tanks returned and opened fire on the hospital, striking its oxygen stores, before raiding the building and ordering staff and patients to leave, the nursing director Sabbah said.

The Israeli military said it was operating in the area of Kamal Adwan Hospital based on intelligence "regarding the presence of terrorists and terrorist infrastructure" there. Medics at three hospitals have refused Israeli orders to evacuate and leave patients unattended. They said at least 800 Palestinians had been killed in northern Gaza since the army began the new offensive three weeks ago.

Israel says its forces returned to northern Gaza as Hamas fighters had regrouped there. "IDF troops continue their operational activity in the area of Jabalia and have eliminated dozens of terrorists, dismantled terrorist infrastructure, and located numerous weapons over the past day," the Israeli military said.

Meanwhile, Israeli strikes on three houses in the nearby Gaza town of Beit Lahiya killed 25 people and wounded dozens more, medics said. Later on Friday, an Israeli airstrike killed nine people in Shati camp in Gaza City, medics said, raising the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli fire across the enclave to at least 72 since Thursday night. The escalation came as the United States renewed its push for a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas.

A Hamas official confirmed to Reuters on Friday that a delegation led by the group's chief negotiator Khalil Al-Hayya arrived in Cairo on Thursday for talks with Egyptian officials. The official says Hamas was determined any agreement must end the war in Gaza, get Israeli forces out of the enclave and achieve a prisoners-for-hostages swap deal.

## PM congratulates nation

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday felicitated the nation as the Pakistan Stock Exchange's 100-index exceeded the historic mark of 90,000 points.

In a statement issued by the PM Office, the prime minister said that gradual increase in the stock market since March 2024 reflected growing investor confidence in the government policies. "Such a swift surge in Pakistan's stock market after 14 years is a result of untiring efforts of the economic team," PM Shehbaz said.

He attributed the 36% increase in the stock market since March 2024, a significant reduction in the inflation rate and overall economic stability in the country to the efforts of the economic team. He said the inflation rate had eased down from 38% to 6.9% while the current account had also been in surplus for

last two months.

During the previous quarter, he said the Overseas Pakistanis dispatched record remittances worth US\$8.8 billion. Similarly, the prime minister emphasized that the process of revising the contracts made with the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) had also been initiated to provide to the maximum facilitation to the power consumers.

Furthermore, he said that the long-term \$7 billion facility from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would also improve the country's economy. "Dreams of those wishing Pakistan fell into default have been broken," he said adding that he had pledged with the people that he would not let the country, obtained through millions of sacrifices, fall victim to the consequences of the negligence of those who were incompetent. He said, "We saved the country by sacrificing our politics."

The prime minister hoped that more good news regarding the improvement of the economy would come in the coming days.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also strongly condemned the terrorist attacks in Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu Districts, which claimed lives of security personnel. The prime minister paid tribute to the Frontier Constabulary personnel who embraced martyrdom while bravely fighting terrorists in the Drazanda area of DI Khan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also expressed condolence over the martyrdom of two police officials in another terrorist attack in Bannu District. He prayed to Allah Almighty for elevation of the martyrs' ranks in paradise and conveyed his condolence to the bereaved families. "The entire nation salutes its martyrs. We are resolved to root out the terrorism from the country," he said.



## CM meets PML-N MPs from Sargodha, Sialkot

LAHORE (APP): Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif met Members of Provincial Assembly (MPAs) from Sargodha and Sialkot districts, Manawar Hussain and Muhammad Faiz, respectively, here on Friday.

She directed the assembly members to continuously monitor development projects and the CM Initiatives. She directed

them to review fluctuation in prices of bread, flour and other essential commodities.

The CM said, "Punjab is the only province where bread and flour is available at the cheapest price. The efforts of the political and administrative team to reduce and stabilize the prices of bread and flour are commendable. The Punjab government will establish a commendable historic stan-

dard of public service."

She added, "For the first time in the history of Pakistan, we are establishing a formal system of price control and a separate department as well. Resolving economic hardships caused to the people due to inflation is foremost among our priorities."

The Assembly Members apprised CM Punjab about problems of their relevant constituencies and public needs.

## Chief Secretary calls on Governor Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman called on Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan and briefed the latter on the ongoing development projects in the province during a meeting at the Governor's House, here on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that it is the responsibility of the government to protect the life and property of the people and provide them facilities. He said the success or failure of the government policies depends on their implementation and bureaucracy plays a key role in this regard.

The Governor Punjab further said that the ongoing development projects in the province should be completed soon to facilitate the people. He emphasized that there is a need to improve public service delivery in the government departments.

## Lahore Youth Festival trials kick off

LAHORE (APP): The 100-meter girls' trials for the Lahore Youth Festival Athletics were held, featuring participants from 28 universities across Lahore.

Director General Sports Punjab, Perviz Iqbal, attended the event as the chief guest.

"The strong turnout of athletes in the 100-meter trials is highly encouraging," said DG Sports Punjab Perviz Iqbal. He further shared that the Lahore Youth Festival will feature a total of eight games, and winning athletes will receive cash prizes amounting to 8 million rupees.

The final competitions of the Lahore Youth Festival are scheduled to take place from November 8 to 10 at Forts Stadium. Highlighting the enthusiasm and dedication shown by the athletes during the trials, Perviz Iqbal expressed his optimism about the festival's impact.

Additionally, the Khelta Punjab Games are set to take place, featuring players from 116,000 clubs across Punjab. The DG Sports Punjab emphasized that this will be the largest sports event at the club level in Punjab's history.

Present at the trials were Dr. Muhammad Kaleem, Director of Administration; Yasmeen Akhtar, Director of Sports; Rana Nadeem Anjum, Director of Youth Affairs; along with directors of sports from the 28 participating universities.

## 128 new dengue cases reported across Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Health Department reported 128 new dengue cases across the province, on Friday. According to the latest figures, Rawalpindi is the hardest-hit area, recording 112 cases. Lahore and Sheikhupura each logged two cases, and Attock and Pakpattan three cases each. The cities of Gujranwala, Chakwal, Mianwali, Chiniot, Hafizabad and Layyah each recorded one new case.

Over the past week, Punjab identified 794 new cases, raising the total for 2024 to 4,785. In response, the Health Department reassured the public that all necessary resources, including adequate medicine supplies, were available across public hospitals.

## NCA organises exhibition on Kashmiris' plight

LAHORE (APP): A special exhibition was held on Kashmir Black Day at the National College of Arts (NCA) on Friday to highlight the atrocities being faced by the Kashmiri people.

The exhibition showcased the struggle for self-determination and the sufferings inflicted by the Indian forces on Kashmiris through impactful posters and images. The NCA students created these posters, which artistically portrayed the bloodshed and human rights violations ongoing in the Kashmir Valley.

NCA's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dr Murtaza Jafri, remarked on the importance of the world taking notice of Kashmiris and understanding their plight.

## Wafaqi Mohtasib stresses importance of transparent governance



E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Wafaqi Mohtasib, Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has said that transparent and efficient service delivery by the public sector organiza-

tions is indispensable for promoting good governance.

He was speaking as the Chief Guest at the certificate distribution ceremony of the 41st Mid-Career Management Course

(MCMC) at the National Institute of Management (NIM) here this afternoon.

Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi said that Pakistan is a large country with multiple challenges in diverse fields impacting on the well-being of our people. As such, it is imperative for the government officials and functionaries to redouble their efforts to become true public servants, being accessible and responsive to their needs.

The Wafaqi Mohtasib further observed that it

is only through the prompt and just response to the concerns of the general public that the government officials can earn their trust and confidence in discharge of their responsibilities.

He also briefed the participants on the mandate, scope of work and the achievements of the Office of Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) in providing free and expeditious dispensation of administrative justice to the general public against the complaints of maladministration on the part of federal agencies and its employees.

## PPP to hold rallies in favour of "26th Amendment"

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan People's Party Sindh Chapter has decided to hold rallies in all the divisional headquarters of the province on Monday (October 28), in favor of the passage of the 26th Constitutional Amendment.

This was stated by provincial president PPP Sindh MPA Nisar Ahmed Khuhro in a statement issued here on Friday. Khuhro said that the leaders and workers of the People's Party would organize rallies in all the divisional

headquarters of the province to celebrate the successful passage of the 26th Constitutional Amendment from Parliament. Celebration rallies will be held in Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur and Larkana.

Nisar Khuhro said the district organizations of Pakistan People's Party will fully participate in the meetings to be held in their respective divisional headquarters.



## PUBLIC NOTICE

## AUCTION OF GOLD

Finance facilities were extended by Mobilink Bank against the security of deposit and pledge of gold to the customers mentioned below. The customers who have neglected and failed to repay the finance extended to them by Mobilink Bank along with the markup thereon.

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address	Gold Weight (GM)	Detail of Gold Ornaments
Hina Zeeshan	17301-6549614-8	Gulbahar Number 2, Mohala Asad Anwar, Peshawar	4.2	2 Adad Balian
Kamran Khan	17301-9506762-1	Namak Mandi, Shah Qabool, H.No 1600, MO, Peshawar	3.34	4 Balian 1 Chain Locket
Nazish Shah	17301-8348580-6	Street Number 3, Dakakha Nah Ashrafi, Peshawar	5.8	2 Angoti
Muhammad Afzal	17301-1426643-7	House Number 590, Mohala Dabi Pura, Peshawar	4.25	1 Neckless, 2 Kanty

Notice is hereby given to the customers in above mentioned that if payment of entire outstanding amount financed along with markup is not made by them to Mobilink Bank within 1 day of the publication of this notice, Mobilink Bank shall auction the gold ornaments and no further Public Notice shall be issued to call upon the customers to make the payments.



## GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN NATIONAL DATABASE AND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (Regional Head Office Peshawar - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)



## RENTAL OFFICE SPACE REQUIRED FOR NADRA Offices, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

(Tender Notice No. 2024-25/Estate/3 x NRCs)

### OFFICE ACCOMMODATION WILL HAVE FOLLOWING FEATURES:

- Office Accommodation should be in the below mentioned locations: -

S#	NADRA Registration Center	Required Covered Area
1.	Batara (District Buner)	2000-3500 sq ft
2.	Nizampur (District Nowshera)	2000-3500 sq ft
3.	Torkow (District Chitral)	1500-3000 sq ft

- Space measuring of total covered area mentioned against each with public and staff washrooms.
- Prominent, having independent entrance and proposed building should be on main road.
- Security wise viable location and easily accessible by public transport.
- Dedicated 3 Phase Electrical Meter / Connection
- Preference will be given to the building in which dedicated transformer is installed.
- Water facility along with overhead tank.
- Ramp for wheel chair for disable citizens.
- Space for installation of direction board, sign board and heavy generator.
- Space for satellite dish antenna installation.
- Sufficient space for maintaining the public queue & parking area.
- Tenancy for a longer period (Preferably 10 years).

**Note:** - Interested parties / owners can purchase the bidding documents on submission of a written application at a cost of **Rs. 100/-** on below mentioned address or from concerned offices between **09:00 am – 03:00 pm hours** (except gazetted holidays). The bids / proposal should be submitted duly completed in all respects by **19th Nov, 2024 at 11:00 am** hours (under **Single Stage–Two Envelope** bidding procedure). The envelopes shall be clearly marked as Technical and Financial proposals. Technical bids / proposals will be Opened on **19th Nov, 2024 at 11:30 am** hours at NADRA Regional Head Office, Plot No. 05 Sector B-1, Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar in presence of bidders/their nominated representatives. Bid / proposals must include the following documents in addition to any other information that the bidder may find necessary: -

### Technical Bid (Separate Envelope):

- Photocopy of property ownership documents [Fresh Fard-e-Jaidad/Mutation/Allotment letter/Relevant Certificate by concerned authority (where settled revenue record is not available)].
- Certificate by concerned authority (where settled revenue record is not available)].
- Photocopy of valid CNIC.
- Fitness Certificate of the building
- Undertaking on Non-judicial stamp paper of Rs. 100/- certifying that owner / building is not temporary / permanently debarred from any Government agency / authority / department (without bearing any responsibility on NADRA whatsoever in this regard).
- Pictures of the building offered for lease.
- Valid Site Plan / Map of the building duly approved from concerned authority.
- In case of absence of owner, authority letter for representative duly signed by property owner, permitting him to attend tender process.

### Financial Bid (Separate Envelope):

- Owner's consent showing monthly rent & offered area of the building.
- Quoted price shall be inclusive of all taxes.
- No brokerage / service charges will be paid in case of real estate agent.
- Opening date / time of Financial Proposal will be informed to all successful bidders of General Proposal Evaluation.
- Bidding documents received after submission of due date / time mentioned above, will not be entertained.
- NADRA reserves the right to reject all bids / proposals under PPRA Rule 33 and can cancel the bidding process before acceptance of bid or proposal.
- Bid can also be rejected if owner of selected building fail to produce acceptable required / property documents.
- This advertisement is also available on PPRA website at [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk)

For any query contact on following address:

PID(I) 2870/24

## Director (Admin & HR)

NADRA Regional Head Office, Peshawar - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa  
Plot No. 05 Sector B-1, Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar  
Telephone: 091-9217840



## PAKISTAN AIRPORTS AUTHORITY

پاکستان ایئرپورٹس اتھارٹی

### TENDER NOTICE

#### HIRING OF MISCELLANEOUS MANPOWER (COOK, MESS HELPER, IMAM & MOAZZAN) AT PAKISTAN AIRPORTS AUTHORITY (PAA) LOCATIONS (IIAP, SKARDU, GILGIT, BKIAF & D.I. KHAN)

- Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) invites proposals from registered companies/firms having sound relevant experience and having valid registration with SECP, FBR, EOBI and ESSi for the provisioning of miscellaneous manpower (cook, mess helper, imam and moazzan) at Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) locations (IIAP, Skardu, Gilgit, BKIAF and D.I. Khan) for a period of two (02) years (extendable for a further period of six (06) months subject to satisfactory performance and mutual consent).
- Bids may be submitted by or before **(Monday) 18th November 2024** (1200 hours) as per conditions set out in the bidding documents available on PPRA E-PAD System <http://eprocure.gov.pk> (free of cost). Bids will be opened on the same day at 1230 hours. Bidders are required to get registered at E-PADS PPRA (Federal) to access the bidding documents and other relevant information including electronic bid submission.
- Bids must be submitted electronically through PPRA E-PADS web portal <http://eprocure.gov.pk> before the closing time and date as well as in hard copy format (in separate sealed envelopes for Technical and Financial Bids as per Single-Stage, Two-Envelope method) duly filled and attached with requisite information in the specified format provided in the bidding documents, to the office of O/C HR (Admin), Level-II, Terminal Building (PTB), IIAP, Islamabad.
- For registration and training on EPADS or in case of any technical difficulty in using EPADS, prospective bidder may contact PPRA's office, Room No. 109, 1st Floor, FBC Building, Sector G-5/2, Islamabad, and contact number 051-111-137-237.  
**[Note: All prospective bidders shall immediately inform PAA before the bid opening date/time and submit proof of being on Active Taxpayer List (100% compliance) and GST/NTN Certificates of FBR at the address below.]**
- Original Bid Security for an amount and on the bank account details specified in the bidding documents must be attached with the Technical Proposal (hard copy format, sealed envelope) and the Bid Security copy (pay order/bank guarantee) must be attached through EPADS online submission as well before the submission date and time.
- The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all the quotations for sufficient and cogent reasons which may be communicated to the bidder on request and without being liable to any claim/compensation of any/whatever nature. The tender notice is also uploaded and available at [www.caapakistan.com.pk](http://www.caapakistan.com.pk) and [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk).

COO/AIRPORT MANAGER  
ISLAMABAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
ISLAMABAD  
Telephone: 051-95550201/051-95550202

[www.caapakistan.com.pk](http://www.caapakistan.com.pk)



PID(KI) 293/24

## GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

## NATIONAL DATABASE AND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

(Regional Head Office Peshawar - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)

## RENTAL OFFICE SPACE REQUIRED FOR NADRA Offices, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

(Tender Notice No. 2024-25/Estate/6 x NRCs)

### OFFICE ACCOMMODATION WILL HAVE FOLLOWING FEATURES:

- Office Accommodation should be in the below mentioned locations: -

S#	NADRA Registration Center	Required Covered Area
1.	Kohat "Executive" (District Kohat)	2500-4000 sq ft
2.	Samarbagh (District Dir Lower)	2500-4000 sq ft
3.	Malakand (District Malakand)	3500-6000 sq ft
4.	Dargai (District Malakand)	2500-4000 sq ft
5.	Totakan (District Malakand)	2000-3500 sq ft
6.	Kiri Khaisor (District D I Khan)	1500-3000 sq ft

- Space measuring of total covered area mentioned against each with public and staff washrooms.
- Prominent, having independent entrance and proposed building should not be in residential area.
- Security wise viable location and easily accessible by public transport.
- Dedicated 3 Phase Electrical Meter / Connection
- Preference will be given to the building in which dedicated transformer is installed.
- Water facility along with overhead tank.
- Ramp for wheel chair for disable citizens.
- Space for installation of direction board, sign board and heavy generator.
- Space for satellite dish antenna installation.
- Sufficient space for maintaining the public queue & parking area.
- Tenancy for a longer period (Preferably 10 years).

**Note:** - Interested parties / owners can purchase the bidding documents on submission of a written application at a cost of **Rs. 100/-** on below mentioned address or from concerned offices between **09:00 am 03:00 pm** hours (except gazetted holidays). The bids / proposal should be submitted duly completed in all respects by **13th Nov, 2024 at 11:00 am** hours (under **Single StageTwo Envelope bidding procedure**). The envelopes shall be clearly marked as **Technical and Financial proposals**. Technical bids / proposals will be Opened on **13th Nov, 2024 at 11:30 am** hours at NADRA Regional Head Office, Plot No. 05 Sector B-1, Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar in presence of bidders/their nominated representatives. Bid / proposals must include the following documents in addition to any other information that the bidder may find necessary:

### Technical Bid (Separate Envelope):

- Photocopy of property ownership documents [Fresh Fard-e-Jaidad/Mutation/Allotment letter/Relevant Certificate by concerned authority (where settled revenue record is not available)].
- Photocopy of valid CNIC.
- Fitness Certificate of the building
- Undertaking on Non-judicial stamp paper of Rs. 100/- certifying that owner / building is not temporary / permanently debarred from any Government agency / authority / department (without bearing any responsibility on NADRA whatsoever in this regard).
- Pictures of the building offered for lease.
- Valid Site Plan / Map of the building duly approved from concerned authority.
- In case of absence of owner, authority letter for representative duly signed by property owner, permitting him to attend tender process.

### Financial Bid (Separate Envelope):

- Owner's consent showing monthly rent & offered area of the building.
- Quoted price shall be inclusive of all taxes.
- No brokerage / service charges will be paid in case of real estate agent.
- Opening date / time of Financial Proposal will be informed to all successful bidders of General Proposal Evaluation.
- Bidding documents received after submission of due date / time mentioned above, will not be entertained.
- NADRA reserves the right to reject all bids / proposals under PPRA Rule 33 and can cancel the bidding process before acceptance of bid or proposal.
- Bid can also be rejected if owner of selected building fail to produce acceptable required / property documents.
- This advertisement is also available on PPRA website at [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk)

For any query contact on following address:

## Director (Admin & HR)

NADRA Regional Head Office, Peshawar - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa  
Plot No. 05 Sector B-1, Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar  
Telephone: 091-9217840



PID(I) 2822/24

# What is Pakistan’s new constitutional amendment all about?

Aamir Latif

CONSTITUTIONAL changes approved by Pakistan’s Parliament this week have further strained the country’s political atmosphere, with critics accusing the government of undermining the independence of the judiciary.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s ruling coalition maintains that the 22-point Constitutional Package is aimed at regulating the country’s judicial system.

The 26th Constitutional Amendment Bill 2024 passed with a two-thirds majority from both the National Assembly and Senate, as lawmakers, oddly, worked through a Sunday night. In total, 65 senators and 225 assembly members voted in favor, enough for the majority needed for changes to the Constitution.

The senators included a man and a woman from the province of Balochistan who voted against party lines. Their party says the man himself and the woman’s son and husband were abducted by security forces and coerced, charges the government denies.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the main opposition party of jailed ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan, boycotted the assembly vote and opposed the bill in the Senate.

A previous attempt in September to make the changes failed because the coalition could not muster the numbers. It was then given to a special parliamentary committee set up last month, which had members from all parties, including the PTI.

## Key changes

The amendment has given the prime minister the power to appoint the next chief justice, sets the top judge’s term at three years, and has taken away the Supreme Court’s suo motu powers — the ability to take action on an issue without any request by the parties involved.

Previously, the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court would automatically become chief justice and serve until retirement at age 65.

Now a 12-member parliamentary committee will select one of the three senior-most judges and forward a recommendation to the prime minister, who will pass it on to the president. The committee, which has proportional membership from all parties in Parliament, has to pick a candidate with two-thirds majority.

The new process has already been used to appoint Justice Yahya Afridi as the next chief justice, who will take over later this week for a three-year term.

In addition, any new Supreme Court judges will now be appointed by a judicial commission that has the chief justice, the four most senior judges, four lawmakers and a representative of the Pakistan Bar Council.

Also, instead of the chief justice, the judicial commission will now decide which judges hear which specific cases, and there is a new provision for five-member “constitutional benches” to hear political and constitutional cases.

The latter was a compromise on the initial idea of setting up a separate Constitutional Court, equivalent to the Supreme Court.

## ‘Part of power politics’

The government says the legislation aims to decentralize powers and create a “balance” between the Parliament and judiciary.

In a speech after the bill was passed, Prime Minister Sharif hailed the amendment as a “historical achievement” and “example of national solidarity and consensus.”

Addressing Cabinet members a day later, Sharif reiterated that it would be a “milestone” for Pakistan and “bring ease for the common man who had to suffer owing to inordinate delays in seeking justice,” according to state media.

Thanking his coalition partners and independent lawmakers who supported the move, Sharif said the legislation was the result of “tireless efforts ... which also manifested a true spirit of consultation.”

That contention has been dismissed not just by opposition parties, but also watchdogs in the country and abroad, including UN human rights chief Volker Turk.

“Latest constitutional amendments — adopted hastily, without broad consultation and debate — will seriously undermine independence of the judiciary. Constitutional reforms must be in line with international human rights law,” Turk said in a statement.

Critics accuse the government of politicizing the judiciary and encroaching on its powers, while supporters of the move argue it was necessary to curb the judiciary’s “continuous involvement” in government affairs.

Political analyst Hasan Askari views it as “a part of power politics” in Pakistan, saying the government acted out of fear that the future judicial setup would become a threat to the political side. His remarks referred to Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, the senior-most judge who would have automatically become the next chief justice if the changes were not made.

Shah drew the government’s ire after he, along with seven other top court judges, ruled in favor of PTI in July in a case related to reserved parliamentary seats, which were allotted to the ruling alliance in the aftermath of the Feb. 8 general elections.

“They have used power to secure their power,” Askari told Anadolu.

Political commentator Sajjad Mir partially agreed with his viewpoint, but said the executive was compelled to “assert” itself because of “too much” concentration of power with the judiciary.

“The top judiciary, in collusion with the military establishment, has played a role against the democratic governments. That has resulted in the repeated ouster of governments and disqualifications of several prime ministers on flimsy grounds over the past seven decades,” he told Anadolu.

“No doubt, it’s all about politics,” he said, but added that he believes the crisis was “started by the judiciary.”

There were also some indicators “from a section of judiciary that propelled the government to take preemptive measures to thwart any judicial adventure,” Mir said.

“One can object to the timing of the legislation but it has several legitimate points, mainly to address the judiciary’s gradual intrusion into the domain of other pillars of the state.”

## Legal fraternity divided

Pakistan’s legal fraternity stands divided over the amendment, with opponents terming it “a blow to the judiciary,” while supporters acknowledge Parliament’s right of legislation.

“Parliament represents the 250 million people of Pakistan ... What the government has done is nothing new. Before the 18th amendment (passed in 2010), judges’ appointments were made by the government. Now this amendment gives that power to the Parliament, which is the right way to go about it,” Yaseen Azad, a former president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, told Anadolu.

“I was a member of the judicial commission for four years. I am witness to how the appointment of judges was a handful of people just picking and choosing their favorites. Parliament will handle it now, with both the ruling and opposition parties getting a say.” Denouncing the changes, Amir Nawaz Waraich, president of the Karachi Bar Association (KBA), said lawyers will launch a nationwide protest movement against what he termed “anti-judiciary legislation.”

“We recognize Parliament’s right to amend the constitution, but the manner in which this right was exercised marks a dark day in the democratic history of Pakistan,” he said in a statement.

He said the KBA will continue to monitor the situation and stands ready to offer legal assistance to “protect the independence of the judiciary and the rights of citizens.”

Courtesy Anadolu

## Dr. Abdul Mateen completes PhD

PESHAWAR: Mr. Abdul Mateen, PhD scholar, Department of Pharmacy, University of Swabi has successfully defended his PhD thesis on Friday, October 25, 2024 in the video Conference Hall, Department of Pharmacy, University of Swabi. His PhD project entitled “DEVELOPMENT AND CHARACTERIZATION OF SORAFENIB-LOADED CHITOSAN-MODIFIED POLYMERIC NANOPARTICLES FOR THE EFFECTIVE TREATMENT OF HEPATOCELLULAR CARCINOMA” was supervised by Associate Professor Dr. Abad Khan. His thesis was evaluated by two professors Dr. Ge Liang, Professor of Pharmacy, Department of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Sciences, Research & development of Sustained-release preparations & intelligent drug delivery system, China Pharmaceutical University, Nanjing, China and Dr. Faisal Shakeel, Associate Clinical Scientist, Clinical Pharmacology and Early Development Immunology, Cardiovascular, Fibrosis & Neuroscience, Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS), USA.

The work has been carried out in the Department of Pharmacy, University of Peshawar and in the Department of Pharmacy, University of Swabi. Mr. Abdul Mateen has published one publication in the journal of international repute and several others are in the pipeline. Prof Dr. Muhammad Ismail, Dean Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Pharmacy, City University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar was the external examiner, who after thorough evaluation and examination recommended Mr. Abdul Mateen for the award of PhD degree.

## Women role in civic leadership termed must

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Speakers among them youth during a daylong event stressed the need for promoting civic engagement among students, particularly women, by addressing the role of youth leadership in democratic spaces. The dialogue featured a dynamic panel of student leaders, with Moazma Shahid, Brekhna Khan, Tahira Gulfam, and Shafaq Aamir offering valuable perspectives on women’s empowerment and their critical role in Pakistan’s democratic future. The Peace and Education Foundation (PEF) in collaboration with the Culture Literature Arts and Development Organization (CLADO) organized a thought-provoking Democracy Dialogue at the Elvena Roosevelt Corner, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (SBBWU) Peshawar.



PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Prisons, Humayun Khan accompanied by Abdul Karim Tordher, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Industries, Commerce, and Technical Education, Higher Education Minister Meena Khan, Social Welfare Minister Syed Qasim Shah, Director of Youth Affairs Nauman Mujahid visiting Central Jail Peshawar.

# Saif denies rumours of any deal for release of Bushra Bibi

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information and Public Relations Barrister Dr. Saif, has categorically dismissed rumors of any “deal” regarding the release of Bushra Bibi, labeling them as baseless

propaganda by political opponents.

In a recent statement, Barrister Dr. Saif clarified that Bushra Bibi’s release was not the result of any deal or compromise.

He stated that those who engage in deals, such as the Sharif family, typically seek refuge in places like London or Saudi Arabia.

However, Bushra Bibi bravely faced the fabricated charges and, has not fled the country like Sharif family.

The advisor condemned the rumors spread by opponents, calling them baseless and merely a reflection of their own desires, unrelated to reality. He highlighted that

even during the most challenging times, Bushra Bibi remained a source of strength and determination for Imran Khan.

Barrister Dr. Saif further emphasized that Bushra Bibi’s arrest was solely an attempt to pressurize Imran Khan but Bushra Bibi became the strength of Khan during hard time.

# Professionally strong civil service termed must

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: “A professionally strong civil service is the foundation upon which the dreams of a nation are built. The knowledge and experiences you’ve gained during the MCMC will empower you to drive positive change, inspire your teams, and contribute to the continued progress of the country.”

These views were expressed by Lt. General (Retd.) Muntaz Gul, HI (M) & Tbt who was invited as the Chief Guest on the eve of the joint session on “Steering a balanced personal and professional life” followed by graduation ceremony of the 41st Mid-Career Management Course at



National Institute of Management, Peshawar. “As you move forward, remember that effective leadership is not just about the skills you’ve gained but also about the impact you will make in your organization,” the chief guest added. Director General NIM/PARD/PPSA Cap.

(Retd.) Usman Gul, faculty members of the three training institutes, staff of the administration, officers of 36th Senior Management Course, Officers of the 83rd PMS Pre-Service Course, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and graduating officers of the 41st MCMC were present on the

occasion. While stressing the importance of moral character, General Gul urged the officers to have strength of character, remain committed to excellence, diligent in their duties, and uphold the highest standards of professionalism. He said, “Let us forge ahead on the path of progress through commitment and professionalism.”

The chief guest later inaugurated the newly built state-of-the-art fitness gym at the NIM Complex. Captain (Retd.) Usman Gul also addressed the ceremony and extended his gratitude to Rector NSPP Dr. Ijaz Munir for his support and guidance. He also thanked General Gul for sparing his time and gracing the occasion.

# Workshop on patent, copyright, and trademark registration held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An awareness-cum-consultative workshop was organized on Friday at the Archives Library, Peshawar, focusing on assisting students, researchers, academia, and business professionals with patent, copyright, and trademark registration. The workshop was conducted under the Patenting and Prototyping Support Programme (PPS) by the Directorate General of Science and Technology (DoST, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in collaboration with the Intellectual

Property Organization Pakistan (IPO).

Notable attendees included Farukh Amil, Chairman IPO Pakistan, and Amjad Shah, Director General DoST, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, along with experts in science and technology, researchers, academia, and students from public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Chairman IPO, Farukh Amil, on this occasion highlighted the crucial role of intellectual property registration in safeguarding innovations and creative works. Amjad Shah, DG DoST, elaborated on the

supportive initiatives by the DoST Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to help bridge the gap between research and commercialization.

Experts in the workshop provided presentations detailing the processes and advantages of intellectual property registration, equipping participants with the knowledge and tools to protect their creations and innovations. The event concluded with a ceremony where shields were distributed among the guest speakers in appreciation of their valuable contributions.

This is pertinent to mention here that PPS Programme is a new initiative aimed at supporting researchers, students, start-ups, and small and medium enterprises in the province. Part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Science Agenda, 2022, the PPS Programme offers small grants of up to PKR 1.5 million to support patent filing and the development of early-stage prototypes of ideas. The programme is now open to applicants from institutions including universities, research and development organizations, and startup ventures.

# The burning paradise: Calls to awake

Rabeya Mughal

THE valley of people with smiling faces, with hopes high as of its mountains, the courage as strong as its rocks, and wish for peace as of its natural beauty—the valley that is called Paradise on Earth, has been wrapped into hell-fires, terror, helplessness, and genocide of its generations since its very inception. The brutality of Indian military occupation has changed the landscapes of Kashmir valley from paradise to hell and even it attains no shame for these heinous crimes that are done to innocent and unarmed civilians.

The indecencies of Indian forces ascended to a new rise every other day as Kashmiri people are tortured, and raped, children face harassment and they are being imprisoned in their houses in the name of curfews. Yes, these are the tragic scenarios of the valley which was once called paradise on earth, now giving the picture of a com-

plete burning hell.

On 27 October, Kashmiri people celebrate Black Day and Pakistan Accession Day in the occupied valley and around the world against the Indian military occupation of their homeland Kashmir Valley. Two months after the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan, India entered the Kashmir Valley on October 27, 1947, justifying a forged document attributed to Maharaja Hari Singh. And till today, after 77 years, the Kashmir valley is under the control of the Indian forces, who have left no stone unturned in all kinds of atrocities, coercion and violence to suppress the voice of Kashmiris raised for independence from Indian rule and accession to Pakistan. Even now, the siege and search operations in the illegally occupied Kashmir of India continue all the time, while the spirit of not hesitating any sacrifice for the freedom of the motherland could not create even a slight tremor in Kashmiris’ way to get independence. Every year

on October 27, the Kashmiri people celebrate Black Day and Pakistan Accession Day against Indian occupation and try to awaken the global conscience.

In the eye of history, on October 26, 1947, a document attributed to Maharaja Hari Singh by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was brought to the fore, which was a fictitious agreement on the accession of Kashmir to India, which India justified by annexing the state of Jammu and Kashmir on October 27, 1947. India spread the net of these false claims and launched a military attack on Kashmir, but the Kashmiris refused to accept this move, the entire valley turned into a protest and a street-to-street clash with the Indian army began. Pakistan was a formal party to this conflict and it had every right to take action to protect the adjacent Muslim state from Hindu rule. Thus, along with the Kashmiri libertarians, India also clashed with Pakistani military forces. By entering

its forces in Kashmir, it established its control over its dominant part and then declared Kashmir as a disputed territory and submitted a resolution to the United Nations Security Council for its settlement.

Meanwhile, India also refrained from attaching the annexation document attributed to Maharaja Hari Singh to this resolution so as not to expose its lie. Fearing military failure, India went to the Security Council and begged for a ceasefire. Discussions continued in the Security Council for the next two years.

The SC repeatedly passed ceasefire resolutions, each resolution emphasized that the parties should stop fighting and allow the Kashmiris to decide the future of Kashmir independently under the supervision of the United Nations. India accepted these resolutions and the war stopped temporarily, but that day and today, India refuses to give Kashmiris their right to self-determination and

identity, hence, this problem has become blatant as the peace of the subcontinent became deplorable.

India’s current Modi government, under its Hindutva agenda, abolished the special constitutional status of Kashmir by deleting Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution five years ago on August 5, 2019, and divided it into two parts of Srinagar and Ladakh and integrated into India. Modi had tried to throw dust in the eyes of the world in the matter of solving this problem by giving up the pretense that the Kashmir problem has been resolved already. Certainly, India was trying to convert the population of Kashmir into a Hindu majority instead of a Muslim majority to fulfil its colonial ambitions.

On the one hand, Kashmiri Muslims and their leaders were being massacred and imprisoned through Israeli-inspired settlement in occupied Kashmir—on the other hand, approximately more than 40 million Hindus have

been issued domiciles and settled there, while millions of Indian citizens have been given the illegal right to vote in the disputed area initially. The fact is that India has been constantly trying to change the population ratio ever since it abolished the special status provisions of Jammu and Kashmir and it has succeeded somehow to alter the demography of this region, however, still got defeated in the current IIOJK elections. To break this stubbornness of Modi government, Kashmiri people celebrate Black Day and Pakistan Accession Day with more enthusiasm than ever before against Indian military rule.

At the time, the imperious Indian government has turned Occupied Kashmir into the world’s largest prison of more than 12 million people by deploying a million of its troops. Due to the desire to weaken Pakistan and expand its territory, India has maintained an unwavering obstinacy on Kashmir. It is on the basis of this Indian action

that an atmosphere of tension has arisen between Pakistan and India, while India started taking steps to increase tension instead of making the situation favourable, which has led to three wars between Pakistan and India so far. If there is a war between the two countries due to Indian aggression, it will lead to regional and global destruction because it will be a nuclear war instead of a conventional one. Therefore, it requires global leaders and institutions to stop India’s fanatical expansionist hand.

Purposefully, there is a need for Pakistan to increase pressure on India through a strong diplomatic campaign around the world to desist from the genocide of Kashmiris through its atrocities and attempts to change the proportion of the Muslim population. India’s only attempt is to occupy Kashmir through its blind military combat and to strangle every voice of Hurriyat leadership and civilians in the Kashmir Valley. If the world leader-

ship and representatives of international organizations still do not take notice of Indian fanaticism and avoid implementing the UN resolutions to resolve the Kashmir issue, the destruction of regional and global peace by India is not a far-fetched assumption or perhaps shadows of a nuclear war between Pakistan and India will continue to hover because of a long-standing issue of Kashmir. For this reason, it has been crucial to awaken the world and convince that peace cannot be established in South Asia without resolving the Kashmir issue. The government of Pakistan should also urge the United Nations to make India implement its resolutions, stop its gunmen’s actions, and cooperate to conduct free elections in the occupied territory so that their fate could be decided and nations could live in peace and harmony.

The writer is currently posting in Press Information Department, Karachi as Assistant Information Officer.



## In brief

### Lady drugs smuggler held F.P. Report

ATTOCK: The Attock Khurd Police foiled a bid to smuggle narcotics from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Punjab and arrested a lady drug smuggler, besides recovering a huge cache of narcotics. The police spokesman said that a team of police led by station house officer Khanzada Sheroze during a check at an inter-provincial check post foiled a bid to smuggle 11 kilograms of hashish from KP to Punjab and arrested a lady drug smuggler identified as Khanam Bibi, wife of Sarmast Khan, a native of Peshawar. He said that during preliminary interrogation, the suspect confessed to being a member of an inter-provincial gang of drug smugglers and also smuggled narcotics to different parts of the country. He said that a case was registered against the accused under Section 9-C of the Control of Drug Substances Act and launched further investigation.

### Four injured in road accident F.P. Report

NOSHKI: Four men sustained injuries in a road accident that took place at RCD highway at the site of Shair Jan Agha in Noskhi area of Balochistan province on Friday. According to rescue sources, four men namely Taimur Shah, son of Haji Muhammad Ghafoor, resident of Quetta; Allah Nur, son of Nur Khan, resident of Quetta; Muhammad Alam, son of Khaliq Dina, resident of Mastung; and Siraj, son of Rub Nawaz, resident of Dasht, were injured in the road accident near Shair Jan Agha area at RCD highway of Noskhi. The injured, two in a critical condition, were rushed to a Noskhi hospital for treatment. Further investigation was being conducted by the concerned authorities.

### AC visits govt school F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the directives of Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh, Muhammad Naeem Sindhu, Assistant Commissioner HQ Ali Sameer remains actively engaged in field visits. On his latest visit, he made a surprise inspection of Government High School, Chak No. 382 JB. During the visit, Assistant Commissioner Ali Sameer reviewed various departments, including classrooms, the computer lab, library, staff attendance, cleanliness, and other arrangements. He highlighted that the government is investing crores of rupees to ensure quality education, extending advanced educational facilities not only to urban areas but also to remote rural regions. Ali Sameer also issued directives to the concerned officers to maintain regular pruning of bushes, ensure proper care of school plants, and provide daily watering, stressing that any form of negligence will not be tolerated.

### 2 Afghans held F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: The Lora police in Abbottabad on Friday arrested two Afghan nationals for tearing up their Pakistani passports and uploading a video on social media. Following strict instructions of the DPO Abbottabad, Umar Tufail the police took immediate action and arrested the two Afghans during a raid at a scrap godown in the vicinity of Lora police station.

# Civil society in Swat condemns 26th amendment

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: The Swat civil society has vehemently denounced the 26th Constitutional Amendment, urging swift action to safeguard the judiciary's independence. The Awakening organization recently hosted



ed a one-day event, drawing students, civil society members, lawyers, and other concerned citizens.

Advocate Arshad Iqbal expressed concerns that the amendment introduces a performance evaluation process for judges, poten-

tially exploitable for political gain. This could compromise judges' tenure and impartiality. Iqbal also highlighted that the amendment limits the Chief Justice's term to three years, increasing the likelihood of political appointments within the judiciary

and disrupting leadership continuity.

Irfan Hussain Babak, Executive Director of The Awakening, stressed that judicial independence from political interference is crucial for impartial justice delivery. The amendment,

he warned, opens doors to political influence, unacceptable in any democratic society. Babak cautioned that this amendment poses severe threats to Pakistan's judicial independence.

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) has also condemned the amendment, stating it undermines the judiciary's fundamental principles, power distribution, and constitutional compliance. The ICJ criticized the lack of public consultation and secretive passage of the amendment.

Civil society members and lawyers are urging the government to reconsider the amendment and ensure the judiciary's independence. With the amendment approved by Parliament on October 21, 2024, concerns over its implications for Pakistan's democratic framework continue to grow.

## WSSCM approves special cleanliness drive

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The Board of Directors (BoD) of Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM) has approved special cleanliness and awareness campaign across 14 urban union councils. The BoD approved the hiring contract for provision of manpower and sanitation vehicles to WSSCM.

A meeting held under the chairmanship of chairman Engineer Adil Nawaz while members Javed Hussain, Haroon Rashid, Mubina Raziuddin, CEO Shahid Khan and CFO Naveed Akhtar attended the meeting while Additional Secretary Local Government Noor Wali Khan and Budget Officer Finance Department Qazi Zia ur Rahman participated in the meeting through Zoom. The board highlight-

ed critical sanitation issues stemming from staffing and resource shortages after the devolution of Ex-BoD. The BoD approved the hiring contract to address the challenges and improve both sanitation and clean drinking water supplies in Mardan city.

The Board has been briefed that the company bears Rs: 2400 per month on each water supply connection however the consumers have been charged on Rs: 210 per month but the recovery of the water bills is not up to the mark as less than 50% consumers pay their water bills to the company. The Electricity bills are at a hike causing an increased pressure on company's expenditures.

Chairman BoD Engineer Adil Nawaz directed the management of the company to carry out water quality tests at sources, distribu-

tion network and consumer end to ensure provision of clean drinking water to the residents of urban Mardan.

He emphasized the importance of Solarization of the Tube wells to control and minimize the increased electricity bills of Tube wells and operational costs. He stressed that elected representatives including the community elders of all the Urban Union Councils may be engaged to start a special cleanliness and awareness campaign to ensure the provision of a waste free and clean environment to the residents. He urged that beside than many financial constraints the company is still committed to provide improved sanitation services to the citizens and requested the community to extend their cooperation with the company to strive for a clean and waste free Mardan.



MULTAN: A tricycle rider transports the front body of a mini truck to a workshop, navigating with an unusual load in the city streets.

## Larkana police recovers stolen car

F.P. Report

LARKANA: On the strict orders of Larkana Senior Superintendent of Police Ruhul Khan Khoso, Larkana Police recovered a stolen car from Jamshoro last day. While blocking the stop of Aagani bridge, the stolen GLI car model 2012 plate number AVM093 belonging to Jamshoro resident Mohammad Hasan Brohi 15 days ago was recovered, while the accused fled after seeing the opportunity, while the vehicle was handed over to the owner after being informed, the successful operation of the police.

But the SSP has issued orders of commendation certificates for SHO police station Mahota and other team staff while further investigations and procedures including search of the accused have been issued for SHO P. S. Mahota, more Investigation will be continued to arrest the involved thieves.

Meanwhile, on the instructions of the Federal Minister of Energy and GMO SEPCO, an open discussion was held by the

SEPCO management under the leadership of SEPCO Superintendent Engineer Shah Muhammad Bajkani and Executive Engineer Riyaz Hussain Mangi in Sheikh Zayed Sub-Division for an immediate solution to the problems of electricity consumers.

The problems of the electricity consumers were solved on the spot, in the ongoing discussion from 9 am to 3 pm, the operational SDOs of the four sub-divisions of Larkana, Sheikh Zayed, Empire, Chandka and Jinnah Bagh sub-divisions and other relevant officers were also present.

Participated in which more than 200 electricity consumers were reviewed and solved problems like over-reading, over-billing, detection billing and disconnection immediately. Speaking to the media on this occasion, SEPCO Superintendent Engineer Shah Muhammad Bajkani said that the order of the officers An open discussion has been held while implementing the anti-theft campaign in Larkana district against the non-depositing consumers for more than 15

billion rupees.

### Sargodha varsity hosts workshop F.P. Report

SARGODHA: The Women Development Centre at the University of Sargodha (UoS) organised a series of workshops focused on raising awareness and mobilisation on critical issues.

The workshops aimed to enhance understanding and empower women on topics such as leadership, conflict management, peace promotion, workplace harassment, women's empowerment, and civic education. This training initiative is part of a larger project by IDEA Think Tank Punjab, under which two awareness seminars were also held, with over 120 selected students and faculty members from various departments participating.



BAHAWALPUR: A worker painting a building along the roadside in the city.

### Imran's possible release imminent, says Haidari F.P. Report

CHINIOT: Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidari, General Secretary of Jamiat Ulema Islam (F), announced that Imran Khan, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan and leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), may be released as early as tomorrow, following the release of Bushra Bibi.

Speaking to the media in Chiniot, Maulana Haidari expressed confidence in Khan's imminent freedom, highlighting PTI's role in supporting the recent 26th constitutional amendment. He noted that the PTI leadership had collaborated closely with JUI-F on the amendment, even providing the entire draft after negotiations were finalized.

Haider pointed out that all PTI leaders, except for Khan, endorsed the draft without raising any objections. However, he mentioned that the incarceration of PTI leaders prevented them from casting their votes in favor of the amendment. This statement comes amid ongoing political developments in Pakistan, raising questions about the future of PTI and its leadership as they navigate the current legal and political landscape.

### JUI-F MPA warns of protest F.P. Report

QUETTA: Provincial leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl, MPA Haji Mir Zahid Ali Reki on Friday said that a protest demonstration would be staged outside the building of Balochistan Provincial Assembly on October 28, 2024 (Monday) against the closure of borders with neighbouring countries in six districts of Balochistan.

In a statement, he said that a protest demonstration would be held on due date outside Balochistan Provincial Assembly against the decision of federal government regarding closure of borders in six districts of the province.

He said that owners of vehicles, drivers, cleaners and shopkeepers affiliated with the business of Iranian petrol and diesel would take part in the protest demonstration scheduled to be staged outside the building of Balochistan Provincial Assembly on October 28, 2024 (Monday), adding that apart from participating in the protest demonstration, opposition members in Balochistan Provincial Assembly would also raise voice on other forums against the closure of borders.

### Man commits suicide F.P. Report

QUETTA: A man distressed from poverty committed suicide by hanging himself with a rope in Spiny Road area of the provincial capital on Friday.

According to police, the incident took place at Spiny Road area of Quetta where a man, who served in a General Store as cook, was found hanged with a rope.

## Polio Day observed in bordering districts

F.P. Report

ZHOB: Like elsewhere in Balochistan, the World Polio Day also observed in Zhob and neighboring Sherani districts, which share borders with Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, South Waziristan, and Afghanistan. Pakistan and Afghanistan are the last two countries endemic for poliovirus.

UNICEF – ComNet and health department Zhob organized an event chaired by the District Health Officer, Dr Syed Muzaffar Shah. Area Coordinator World Health Organization Dr Muhammad Ibrahim, Immunization Officer WHO Dr Nayyar Loni, N-STOP Officer Dr Azizullah, Disease Surveillance Officer WHO Dr Asim Zaib and ComNet Coordinator Samad Hariphal, along with male and female frontline workers, participated in the event. ComNet Coordinator Samad Hariphal briefed the participants regarding the ongoing anti-polio initiatives in the district and said that protecting the children from the scourge of poliovirus remains their collective and topmost priority.

IO WHO Dr Nayyar Loni on the occasion said that the government and international organizations are determined and fully committed to eradicating the fast-spreading poliovirus, so that the chil-



dren could be saved from the crippling disease. Meanwhile, appreciation certificates were also distributed among the male and female frontline workers who performed their duty with dedication in far-off union councils of the district.

Simultaneously, on the eve of World Polio Day, an event was also organized by the ComNet and Health Department Sherani, where Deputy Commissioner Mah Jabeen Umrani participated as a chief guest. WHO Surveillance Officer Dr Noora Khan Kakar, Deputy DHO Dr Khair Muhammad Sherani, MS Dr Saifullah Khan Marri, BLIP Coordinator Afzal Kakar, PPHI representative Akbar Khatib, Bostan Ali, administrative officers, and health staff participated in a large number.

ComNet Coordinator Saeedullah Lawoon gave a briefing to the participants and appreciated the frontline workers' efforts for eradicating poliovirus and delivering vaccines to children in remote areas of the district.

The Deputy Commissioner also inaugurated the anti-polio campaign, which begins on October 28th across the district. She appealed to all the parents to get their children vaccinated and assured them of all kinds of support. Meanwhile, appreciation certificates and cash prizes were also distributed among the best-performing male and female front workers in various union councils of the district.

The global event World Polio Day, observed annually on October 24th, aimed at raising awareness about polio, a crippling and potentially fatal infectious disease. The day serves as a reminder of the importance of vaccination and health programs in achieving a polio-free world. The theme for World Polio Day 2024 'A Global Mission to Reach Every Child,' focuses on the continued efforts to ensure all children are vaccinated against polio, particularly in regions where the virus remains a hanging sword.

## KP Minister for Higher Education visits KUST

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Provincial Minister for higher education, Meena Khan Afridi visited Kohat University, where he received a detailed briefing from Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Muhammad Naseer Uddin. The briefing covered various aspects of the university, including its academic programs, infrastructure development, and future plans. During the briefing, Vice Chancellor Dr. Muhammad Naseer Uddin outlined KUST's strategic initiatives, including new departments, infrastructure, affiliated colleges, and resource development.

He also highlighted key projects, such as student

hostels, scholarships, mosque construction, and solarization, showcasing the university's growth and expansion. Meena Khan Afridi praised the university's efforts, saying that the Ministry of Higher Education will provide robust backing if such student-centric initiatives continue. Meena Khan Afridi emphasized that universities can secure scholarship opportunities for students by negotiating with various institutions. He also stressed the paramount importance of quality enhancement cell and ORIC for any university. Later, while addressing students at the Iftikhar Auditorium, he praised Kohat University of

Science and Technology for its financial stability and impressive performance among provincial universities.

He stressed that further efforts are needed to make the university financially autonomous. Afridi encouraged the students, saying that leaders will emerge from among them, and it's crucial that they utilize their talents to play a significant role in national development. He expressed his confidence in the students' potential to drive progress and make a meaningful impact. Provincial Minister Meena Khan Afridi distributed checks among KUST Endowment Scholarship recipients and inaugurated the Youth Development Center.

## Book stall inaugurated at Timergara College

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: In the light of the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Dir lower Muhammad Arif Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Bashir Khan along with District Youth Officer Malik Shahzad Tariq inaugurated the book stall at Government Post Graduate College, Timergara here Friday.

On this occasion, the Additional Deputy Commissioner said the purpose of the book stall is to attract the attention of students towards book reading

and enhance their knowledge. The Additional Deputy Commissioner thanked Youth Officer Shahzad Tariq and his entire team, Principal Government Post Graduate College Timergara Professor Dr. Saeedullah Jan for organizing the stall. Professor Dr. Saeedullah Jan welcomed the Additional Deputy Commissioner General on his arrival at the college and gave a briefing about the curricular and extra-curricular activities in the college. The Additional Deputy Commissioner appreciated the college

management for its efforts towards quality education and assured support from the district administration.

The principal thanked the district administration for deputing Levies on duty at the college. A large number of lecturers, academicians, and students participated in the book stall. Chief guest Additional Deputy Commissioner General presented certificates of appreciation to the students. The college management presented a book to the chief guest while the organizers presented a traditional shawl to the college principal.



# Putin warns against ‘illusory’ attempts to defeat Russia

MOSCOW (AFP): Russian President Vladimir Putin warned against "illusory" attempts to defeat Russia on the battlefield ahead of his first meeting with UN chief Antonio Guterres in more than two years for talks set to focus on the conflict in Ukraine.

Putin was speaking in the Russian city of Kazan on the final day of the BRICS summit, a forum Moscow hopes will help forge a united front of emerging economies against the West. Russia's opponents "do not conceal their aim to deal our country a strategic defeat", Putin said.

"I will say directly that these are illusory calculations, that can be made only by those who do not know Russia's history." Shortly before he spoke, Russia's lower house of parliament voted to ratify a defence pact with North Korea amid reports that Pyongyang has sent thousands of troops to Russia for training and possible deployment in Ukraine. At the meeting, Chinese President Xi Jinping also warned about "serious challenges" in the world and said he hoped BRICS countries could be a "stabilising force for peace". "We need to continue to push for a ceasefire in Gaza, relaunch the two-state solution and stop the spread of war in Lebanon. There should be no more suffering and destruction in Palestine and Lebanon," Xi said. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian slammed the UN Security Council's role as Guterres listened, saying international bodies "lack the necessary efficiency to extinguish the fire of this crisis".

Putin said the Middle East was "on the verge of full-scale war". Putin has faced calls from his BRICS allies to end the Ukraine conflict, which began when Moscow launched a full-scale military campaign in February 2022. Guterres has repeatedly criticised Moscow's military offensive against Ukraine, saying it sets a "dangerous precedent" for the world. The two men last saw each other in the first weeks of the offensive, when Guterres travelled to Moscow during Russia's siege of Mariupol in south Ukraine. Guterres has since been involved in peace efforts between the two sides, helping to broker a deal that allowed Kyiv to safely export grain from its ports in 2022. There has been little direct diplomatic contact between the two countries since. Ukraine has strongly criticised the UN chief's decision to meet Putin. Putin has demanded

Ukraine surrender territory in its south and east as a precondition for a ceasefire, a position Kyiv has called "absurd". The Putin-Guterres talks come as Moscow's troops advance in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, edging closer to the key supply hub of Pokrovsk. Ukraine has condemned Guterres's Russia visit, with Kyiv's foreign ministry blasting him for planning to meet the "criminal Putin". The pair will meet a day after the United States said it believed "thousands" of North Korean soldiers were being trained in Russia. "We don't know what their mission will be or if they'll go on to fight in Ukraine," a senior US official said. Putin has not yet commented on the reports. Russia said people should "ask Pyongyang" about troop movements, refusing to confirm or deny the allegations. Russian lawmakers voted unanimously to ratify a defence treaty with North Korea that provides for "mutual assistance" if either party faces aggression. The document has now been sent for approval by the upper Federation Council.

Pyeonggang and Moscow have drawn closer since Russia launched its 2022 offensive on Ukraine, with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un praising Putin as his country's "dearest friend". The West believes North Korea is already giving Moscow weapons to use in its Ukraine offensive. Several world leaders called for an end to the Ukraine conflict at the BRICS summit.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi - who has also tried to mediate between Moscow and Kyiv -- said he wanted the conflict to be resolved "peacefully". "We totally support efforts to quickly restore peace and stability," he said.

New Delhi has walked a delicate tightrope since Moscow launched its offensive, pledging humanitarian support for Kyiv while avoiding explicit condemnation of Moscow's actions. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has also urged an end to the conflict. Starting in 2009 with four members -- Brazil, Russia, India and China -- BRICS has expanded to include other emerging nations, including South Africa, Egypt and Iran. NATO member Turkey said last month it had asked to join the group and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told delegates that "we are determined to further our dialogue with the BRICS family, with whom we have developed close relations based on mutual respect".

# Australia's leader rejects Beijing's claims

WELLINGTON (AP): Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has rejected accusations from Beijing that his country is "plagued by systemic racism and hate crimes" after an Australian diplomat led a group of Western nations in renewing concerns about human rights violations in China. "When it comes to China, we've said we'll cooperate where we can, we'll disagree where we must, and we'll engage in our national interest, and we've raised issues of human rights with China," Albanese told reporters as he arrived in the Pacific Island nation of Samoa for a Commonwealth leaders' summit.

A day earlier, China's foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian had denounced a statement made by 15 nations to the United Nations General Assembly this week - presented by a top Australian envoy - underscoring "ongoing concerns" about "serious human rights violations" in Xinjiang and Tibet. James Larsen, Australia's ambassador to the UN, urged China to "uphold the international human rights obligations that it has voluntarily assumed" by releasing "all individuals arbitrarily detained in both Xinjiang and Tibet, and urgently clarifying the fate and whereabouts of missing family members." The statement amounted to "political manipulation under the pretext of human

rights," Jian said.

Singling out Australia for rebuke, Jian said the country was "long plagued by systemic racism and hate crimes" and should resolve its own affairs rather than criticizing China's. Albanese said Australia would "always stand up for Australia's interests" and had raised the matter of human rights with Beijing in a "consistent and clear way." The Chinese government launched in 2017 a campaign of assimilation in the northwestern Xinjiang region - home to 11 million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities - that has included mass detentions, alleged political indoctrination, alleged family separations and alleged forced labor among other methods. More than 1 million Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and other ethnic minorities are estimated to have been held in extralegal internment camps. The Chinese government at the time described the camps as "vocational training centers."

The UN Human Rights Office in 2022 found accusations of rights violations in Xinjiang "credible" and said China may have committed crimes against humanity in the region. Larson in his statement also cited "credible" reports of China subjecting Tibetans to coercive labor, separation of children from their families, erosion of cultural and religious freedoms, and detention for peaceful political protests. He urged

"unfettered and meaningful access" to Xinjiang and Tibet for independent observers. "No country has a perfect human rights record, but no country is above fair scrutiny of its human rights obligations," Larson added. In response, Jian decried what he said was Australia's hypocrisy, citing the country's treatment of refugees, immigrants and Indigenous people.

"Australian soldiers have committed abhorrent crimes in Afghanistan and other countries during their military operations overseas," Jian said. Jian appeared to be referring to allegations that elite Australian troops unlawfully killed 39 Afghan prisoners, farmers and civilians between 2005 and 2016, which led to a number of senior military officers recently being stripped of their medals. Australia's past policy of refusing to allow asylum seekers who attempt to reach its shores by boat to ever settle in the country is also often cited by China as tarnishing the country's standing on human rights.

Beijing's economic ties with Canberra are thawing after several years of official and unofficial trade blocks. But the relationship remains tense on matters of human rights and geopolitics as China becomes militarily more belligerent in the Asia-Pacific region and Australia grows closer to its Western-intelligence sharing partners, particularly the US.

# India evacuates hundreds as a tropical storm nears

NEW DELHI (AP): Indian authorities have shut schools, evacuated hundreds of thousands of people and canceled trains in parts of the country as rescue teams braced for a tropical storm brewing in the Bay of Bengal.

Tropical Storm Dana is expected to intensify, bringing winds of 100-110 kph (62-68 mph) and gusts up to 120 kph (74 mph), as it pushes toward the country's eastern coastline, where it is set to make landfall 1, according to the Indian Meteorological Department. Climate scientists say severe storms are becoming more frequent in South Asia. Global warming driven by planet-heating gases has caused them to become more extreme and unpredictable.

The storm is expected to affect most parts of the eastern state of Odisha, which saw strong winds and rain. Authorities have closed schools, canceled more than 200 trains, suspended flights and warned fishermen not to venture out to sea. Downpours also began lashing areas of neighboring West Bengal state, where some districts are also likely to be hit, prompting officials there to be on high alert.

Odisha's Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi told the Press Trust of India news agency that around 300,000 people have been evacuated from vulnerable areas, adding that three districts were likely to be severely affected. Authorities plan to evacuate over 1 million people from 14 districts. Several teams of aid and rescue workers have also been deployed to the state, which is prone to severe cyclones and storms. "The government is fully prepared to tackle the situation. You are in safe hands," Majhi said. India's eastern coasts have long been prone to cyclones, but the number of intense storms is increasing along the country's coast. Last year was India's deadliest cyclone season in recent years, killing 523 people and costing an estimated \$2.5 billion in damage.

# Gangs in Haiti open fire and hit a UN copter

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP): Gangs opened fire and hit a UN helicopter, forcing it to land in Port-au-Prince in the latest attack in Haiti's capital as violence surges once again. No one was injured as several rounds of gunfire hit the helicopter that was carrying three crew members and 15 passengers, according to a UN source who was not authorized to confirm the incident. The helicopter, which had departed from Port-au-Prince before it was attacked, landed safely, the source said.

The attack comes five months after Haiti's main international airport reopened following coordinated gang attacks that forced it to close for nearly three months. The violence has spilled to nearby areas including Arcahaie, where some 50 suspected gang members died this week after attacking the coastal town located just northwest of the capital. Among the dead are at least a dozen gunmen who drowned after their boat capsized, a government official said. While the majority were killed by police, a group of gunmen drowned after their boat hit the reef as they ferried ammunition to gangs attacking the town of Arcahaie, said Wilner René from Haiti's Civil Protection Agency.

Beijing's economic ties with Canberra are thawing after several years of official and unofficial trade blocks. But the relationship remains tense on matters of human rights and geopolitics as China becomes militarily more belligerent in the Asia-Pacific region and Australia grows closer to its Western-intelligence sharing partners, particularly the US.

# How close are Erdogan and Putin?

ANKARA (Reuters): Here are some of the issues underpinning ties between Tayyip Erdogan and Vladimir Putin, who met in Russia on the sidelines of the summit of the BRICS grouping which NATO-member Turkey has voiced interest in joining: Relations between the long-serving Turkish and Russian presidents are sometimes tense, but they have both rebuffed US influence and in differing ways have shaped military conflicts from the South Caucasus to Syria and North Africa. Erdogan has said his relationship with Putin is based on a "joint understanding, mutual trust and respect". Putin has called Erdogan a "strong leader" and "reliable" partner while also saying he has not always found him easy to deal with.

Their two countries, both with Black Sea coasts, have expanded cooperation on trade, tourism and energy since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, although Turkey has opposed Moscow's intervention and provided Kyiv with attack drones. Military powerhouse Russia and regional power Turkey supported opposing sides in wars in Syria and Libya, and were not always on the same page in conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

In Syria, Putin backed President Bashar al-Assad while Erdogan backed rebel fighters. To head off the threat of direct confrontation in early 2020, they struck one of a series of ceasefire deals after 34 Turkish soldiers were killed in an air strike in Idlib, where Russian jets were patrolling. In 2019, Turkey angered its NATO allies by buying Russian S-400 missiles, air defences that the Western defence alliance had warned were incompatible with its systems and a security risk. In response, Washington imposed sanctions on Turkey's defence industries and ousted it from an F-35 fighter jet programme where it was a manufacturer and buyer.

Ankara has not used the S-400 batteries since then, but says they are at the ready. When energy prices soared with Russia's invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, Turkey was vulnerable as an importer of nearly all its energy needs with an economy hit by a currency crash that fuelled inflation and depleted its foreign exchange reserves. Russia, Turkey's largest gas supplier, threw Ankara a lifeline by allowing it to defer payment of gas imports until 2024, a move that sources said covered up to \$4 billion in payments. The deal helped Turkish authorities maintain enough reserves to stabilise the lira until a May 2023 election that Erdogan narrowly won. Afterwards, the currency hit new lows.

Just before the vote, Erdogan's



challenger accused Russia of interfering in Turkey's internal affairs and said his party had evidence - without revealing any - that it was behind the release of "deep-fake" online content. Both the Kremlin and Erdogan dismissed the allegation and continued expanding energy cooperation, including at Turkey's Akkuyu nuclear power plant. Russia's nuclear energy agency Rosatom built the plant, the opening of which has been delayed after Germany withheld key parts. In 2022, Putin proposed creating a Russian "gas hub" in Turkey that would help it reroute exports, after European countries curbed imports over the Ukraine war. Turkey is negotiating the proposal and could leverage its extensive gas infrastructure to become an alternative supplier to countries such as Bulgaria, Hungary and Moldova, with which it signed separate deals in 2023.

Turkey has opposed sanctions on Russia and opened its doors to Russian tourists and migrants, including oligarchs seeking safe havens for their yachts and investments. Russians are now the top foreign buyers of Turkish homes. Bilateral trade has reached record levels, with Turkish exports to Russia up 17% to \$11 billion in 2023, according to the Turkish Statistics Institute data. Ankara has faced Western accusations that Russia is acquiring war-related goods such as chips and semiconductors via Turkey and the United States; European countries have imposed sanctions on several Turkish entities - and threatened more.

Ankara has said nothing that transits its territory is used in Russia's war in Ukraine. Earlier this year, Turkish exporters to Russia faced more payments problems. The Kremlin said it was aware of Turkish banks tightening rules on Russian clients, and has been working with Turkey to find mutually acceptable

solutions. Turkey has kept close ties with both Kyiv and Moscow, hosted talks between them in 2022 and positioned itself as a natural facilitator of future peace talks.

Putin and Erdogan have held several calls and a handful of meetings since the war began, contacts that provided the Russian president a platform alongside a NATO leader and NATO with a reliable line to Moscow. Underscoring his balancing act with Russia and NATO, Erdogan has declared support for Ukraine joining the military alliance but delayed Sweden's membership bid. Turkey's diplomacy and control of the straits connecting the Black Sea to world markets put it at the centre of an agreement between Russia, Ukraine and the United Nations on safe passage of Ukrainian agriculture exports and enhanced Russian exports.

The UN heralded Erdogan's role in co-broking the 2022 Black Sea Grain Initiative, which it said helped relieve world hunger by freeing up exports of two top global producers. Putin quit the deal in July 2023, despite pleas by Turkey to both sides, citing obstacles to Russian food and fertiliser exports and questions about the destinations of Ukrainian grain. In recent months, Turkey has also voiced a desire to join the BRICS group, which originally consisted of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and has expanded to include Ethiopia, Iran, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. Ankara sees BRICS as an opportunity for more economic cooperation with member states, rather than an alternative to its Western ties and NATO membership. Then US Ambassador to Turkey Jeff Flake told Reuters in June that while he hoped Turkey would not join BRICS, such a move would not change its alignment with the West.

# Moldovan president says bribery affected election

CHISINAU (Reuters): Moldova's pro-European president said that mass bribery had affected a presidential election and a referendum on joining the European Union, but vowed to press on with a Nov. 3 runoff vote to win a second term, instead of ordering a new election. Maia Sandu issued her pledge, saying it was up to the people to determine Moldova's future, after police said pro-Russian fugitive businessman Ilan Shor had channeled \$39 million to voters in September and October. Moldovan authorities have said the campaign for dual poll was overshadowed by a massive Russia-linked election-meddling scheme aimed at defeating the pro-Europe side.

"Without the buying of votes, the outcome today would have been different. We would have had a convincing victory in the presidential election and the referendum!" Sandu wrote on social media. She said she had rejected suggestions of ordering a re-run of the ex-Soviet state's election as "no one has the right to deny our citizens a mass, sincere and free expression

of their will". "Let's go forward to the second round. We count strictly on our people as has always been the case when the fate of the country was on the line," she said. It was up to the judiciary to "wake up" and tackle the issue of bribery, she added.

Sandu came first in the presidential election, but failed to secure 50% of votes and now faces a runoff against former prosecutor-general Alexandr Stoianoglo, who is backed by a traditionally pro-Russian party. Sandu has singled out Russia as one of the biggest threats facing Moldova and made EU integration the cornerstone of her administration. In the referendum, a surprisingly slim majority compared to opinion polls - 50.46% of voters - supported EU accession. The police has accused Shor of an attempt to bribe 130,000 voters. He denies wrongdoing, and the Kremlin has denied interfering. It questioned the vote count, in which votes from Moldovans abroad pushed the "yes" vote over 50%.

Moldova's police chief, Viorel Cernauteanu, told a briefing that Shor used

Russia's Promsvyazbank to transfer \$24 million in October, in addition to \$15 million channelled in September, to pay off voters. During the campaign, Shor openly offered to pay Moldovans to persuade others to vote "no" in the referendum and to support a specific candidate, who he did not name publicly. He launched a bot on the Telegram messaging platform for this means. Cernauteanu said the police had blocked 97 chatbots before the vote explaining to people how to use the Promsvyazbank banking app and get the money.

Sandu called the campaign "an unfair fight" and claimed victory in the referendum designed to enshrine Moldova's EU path in the constitution. She said there was "clear evidence" that criminal groups backed by "foreign forces hostile to our national interests" had aimed to buy off 300,000 votes. Moscow has denounced the vote as not free. Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the United States and European Union had meddled in the campaign.

# Taiwan leader to visit frontline islands

TAIPEI (Reuters): Taiwan President Lai Ching-te will visit a sensitive group of frontline islands that sit next to the Chinese coast on Friday for the 75th anniversary of a key victory over communist forces and just over a week since China staged war games.

Taiwan has controlled Kinmen, and the Matsu islands to the north, since the defeated Republic of China government fled to Taipei in 1949 after losing a civil war with Mao Zedong's communists. The presidential office said that Lai would visit Kinmen on Friday for the anniversary of the Battle of Guningtou, when Republic of China forces beat off an invasion attempt by the People's Liberation Army, a rare victory for Chiang Kai-shek's forces in the final days of China's civil war.

In December 1949 the republican government withdrew to Taiwan and in the following years and months would lose a string of other islands and islets to communist forces. The Republic of China remains Taiwan's formal name. China views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory and last week staged a new round of war games around the island it said were a warning to "separatist acts".

# US-China tech war seen heating up regardless of whether Trump or Harris wins

WASHINGTON, BEIJING (Reuters): The US-China tech war is all but certain to heat up no matter whether Republican Donald Trump or Vice President Kamala Harris wins the Nov. 5 US presidential election, with the Democrat likely to come out with targeted new rules and Trump a blunter approach.

New efforts to slow the flow of less-sophisticated Chinese chips, smart cars and other imports into the US are expected, alongside more curbs on chipmaking tools and highly-prized AI chips headed to China, according to former officials from the Biden and Trump administrations, industry experts and people close to the campaigns. In her bid for the US presidency, Democrat Harris has said she will make sure "America, not China, wins the competition for the 21st century," while Republican can-

didate Trump has pitched ever-increasing tariffs as a cure-all that includes combating Chinese technological advancement.

In short, the battle to keep US money and technology from boosting China's military and artificial intelligence capabilities is bound to escalate under either Harris or Trump. "We're seeing the opening of a new front on the US China tech cold war that is focused on data, software and connected devices," said Peter Harrell, a former national security official in the Biden administration. Last month, the US proposed rules to keep connected cars made with Chinese components off America's streets, while a law was passed this spring that said the short video app TikTok must be sold by its Chinese parent by next year or be banned. "There's a lot of concern if a

Chinese company is able to access and provide updates to devices," Harrell said. "The connected car thing and TikTok are just the tip of the iceberg." Should Harris win the election, her approach would likely be more targeted and coordinated than Trump's, people close to both administrations say. For example, she is likely to continue working with allies much like the Biden administration has, to keep US tech from aiding the Chinese military, Harrell said. A Trump administration, on the other hand, may move more quickly, and be more willing to punish recalcitrant allies. "I think we learned from President Trump's first term that he has a bias for action," said Jameson Greer, former chief of staff to Robert Lighthizer, the US trade representative under Trump who remains close to the campaign.

Nazak Nikakhtar, a Commerce

Department official under Trump who knows his current advisors, expects a Trump administration to be "much more aggressive about export control policies towards China." She anticipates "a significant expansion of the entity list," to capture affiliates and business partners of listed companies. The list restricts exports to those on it. Trump added China's Huawei Technologies to the list for sanctions busting. Licenses to ship US technology to China also are more likely to be denied, Nikakhtar said.

She said she would not be surprised if a Trump administration imposed restrictions not only on imports of Chinese chips but on "certain products containing those chips." And she expects Trump to be tougher than Harris on allies who don't follow the US lead. "The Trump philosophy is more of a stick," she said. Bill

Reinsch, a former Commerce official during the Clinton administration sees Trump as likely to take a "sledgehammer" to controls where Harris would use a "scalpel."

"Trump's approach has been across-the-board, most clearly seen in his current tariff proposals," Reinsch said. Trump has said he would impose tariffs of 10 or 20 percent on all imports (not just Chinese) and 60 percent or more on Chinese imports. Harris has described Trump's tariff plan as a tax on consumers, but the Biden administration has seen the need for targeted tariffs including increasing the rate on semiconductors from 25 percent to 50 percent by 2025. China has repeatedly said it would safeguard its rights and interests. Last year, it targeted US memory chip maker Micron Technology after Washington imposed a series of

export controls on US chips and chip-making equipment, and the US accused Beijing of penalizing other US companies amid growing tensions. China also introduced export restrictions last year on germanium and gallium, metals widely used in chipmaking, citing national security interests. It issued new curbs on some graphite products that go into electric vehicle batteries in October 2023, days after the US tightened rules on chip-related exports. And in June it unveiled new rules on rare earth elements critical for military equipment and consumer electronics. Wilbur Ross, commerce secretary under Trump, said that the US needs to be tough on China, but strategic, too, noting the US is still dependent on China for rare earths. "It would be very dangerous to just try to cut them off," he said.

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## Invite Ukraine to join NATO

**WAR** is not an academic exercise. You either fight to win or you fight to die. And Ukraine is at war with the enemies of the free world: Russia and its accomplices Belarus, Iran and North Korea. Somehow, four of the most disgusting dictatorships on Earth are terrorizing Ukrainians and destroying a free country in the middle of Europe while the West watches from the sidelines. Kyiv has spent more than a decade defending itself against Russian aggression. Moscow cannot win the war. It lacks the resources and manpower required to conquer all of Ukraine, let alone to control it. Likewise, Kyiv, cursed by geography, cannot end the war without security guarantees that make it nearly impossible for Russia to invade Ukraine again further down the road.

Though Kyiv's development of nuclear weapons is one option, the best way to deter further Russian aggression while maintaining Kyiv's positive relationship with the West would be through NATO membership. Ukraine is our ally. Russia is our enemy. It is morally correct, long-overdue and in the West's interest to invite the biggest and most battle-hardened army in Europe to join NATO, immediately impose a no-fly zone above Ukrainian land west of the Dnieper River and deploy soldiers and air defense systems to enforce that commitment.

If a single Russian, Iranian or North Korean projectile launched from Belarus or Russia hits Ukrainian territory west of the Dnieper River, respond with overwhelming force - so the Russians get the message. This will deter Russia while alleviating pressure on Ukraine and the West in at least two ways. First, by protecting the Ukrainian people and infrastructure. As western Ukraine becomes safer and more stable, this would likely reduce the number of refugees headed to Europe and increase the number of Ukrainians returning home. Not only would this save the West money by not having to rebuild said infrastructure after the war, but it would also unlock the Ukrainian economy by allowing Kyiv to reopen its airports in western Ukraine.

Second, this security guarantee would also strengthen Ukraine's hand on the battlefield, and therefore, at the negotiating table. It would do so logically by enabling the West to manufacture weapons and train Ukrainian soldiers in western Ukraine rather than in Europe and America. It will help militarily by allowing Ukrainian border guards and soldiers to withdraw from the periphery and deploy toward the frontline in Kharkiv, Kherson, Zaporizhia, Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts where they are needed. The West must speak the language of the enemy. Putin is afraid of consequences, not rhetoric. He is emboldened by indecision and inaction, not by proactivity. His appetite for escalation and risk-taking is related to achieving or avoiding potential outcomes, not based on adherence to principles. If the West ups the ante by inviting Ukraine to join NATO and imposing a no-fly zone over western Ukraine, Russia will either buckle with indecision, as it did when Evgeny Prigozhin marched toward Moscow, or do nothing, as when we crossed all the other so-called "red lines" drawn by Putin. Despite the Russian government and its mouthpieces threatening to nuke the West, Russia is unlikely to use nuclear weapons in a conflict over Ukraine. First, the annexation of Ukrainian territory - mostly depopulated and destroyed villages in eastern Ukraine - is not existential for the Russian Federation. Second, a nuclear exchange would be the end of Putin, who seeks self-preservation above all else. It is more likely that Russia would stand down in western Ukraine, just as it stood down when the US won the Battle of Conoco Fields against the Wagner Group in 2018 or when Turkey shot a Russian fighter jet out of the sky in Syria. After all, it is in Russia's interest to avoid a direct military confrontation with NATO - which would give the Russian army the beating of a lifetime.

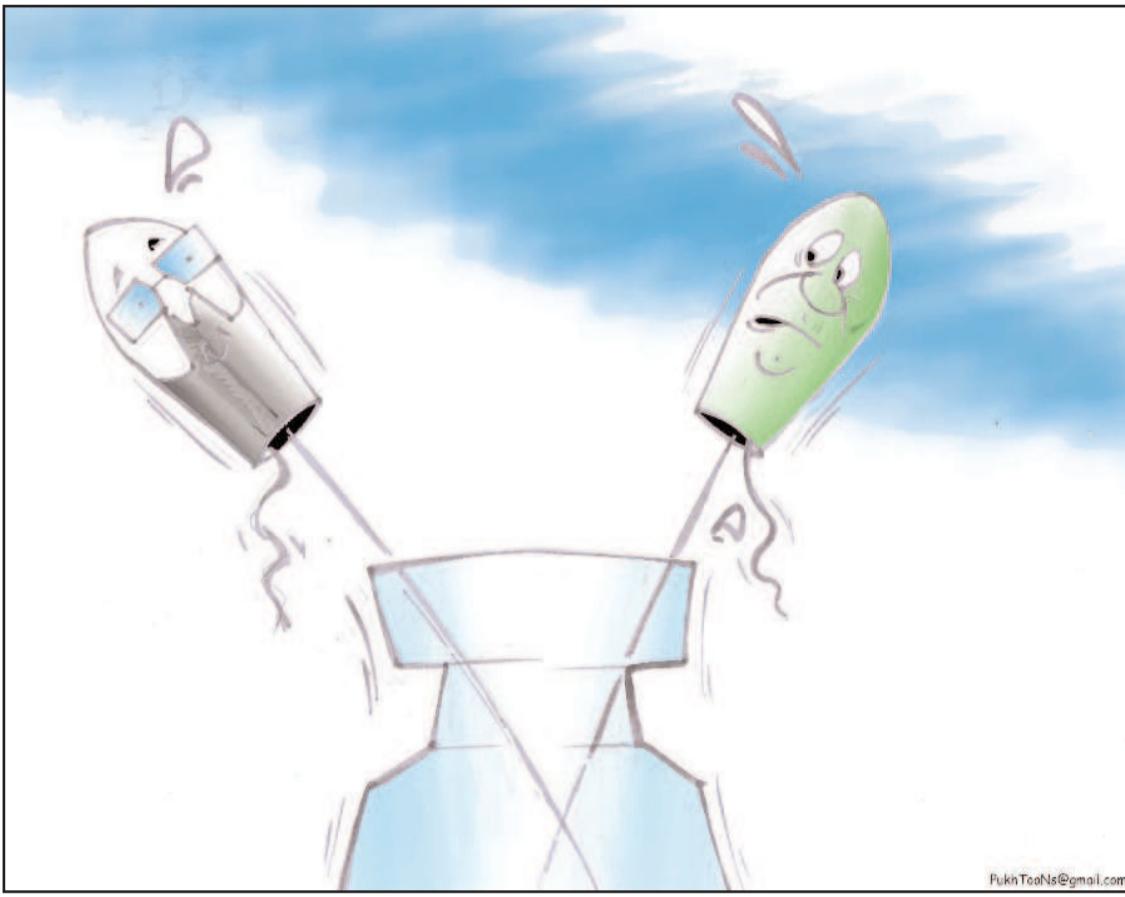
The West is, in fact, the most peaceful, prosperous and progressive civilization - and the most powerful military alliance - in the history of the world. Instead of acting like it, our leaders cede the initiative to Russia, which is little more than a mafia with a gas station and nuclear weapons masquerading as a country. And like all mafias, Moscow will cash in all of its IOUs and activate every client and partner in its quest for self-preservation. From Hamas giving Putin a birthday gift by invading Israel on Oct. 7 to recently released Russian arms dealer Victor Bout arming the Houthis in Yemen, birds of a feather always flock together.

They don't care about their own people, let alone for the West's "concern" or "condemnation." Result-oriented, they only care about avoiding and achieving potential outcomes. And their top priority is remaining in power. Russian ally Alexander Lukashenko, who has governed Belarus with an iron fist as Europe's longest-lasting dictator by stealing elections, killing hundreds of his own civilians and imprisoning thousands more since 1994, is still in power. Russian ally Kim Jong Un, who inherited the world's most totalitarian dictatorship from his father, reportedly killed his brother and enslaved his own starving people while building a nuclear weapons program to threaten and extort his neighbors, is still in power. Russian ally Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is still supreme leader of the world's biggest state sponsor of terrorism whose so-called "morality police" kills women like Mahsa Amini for not wearing hijabs properly and who executed at least 834 Iranians by hanging them from cranes in 2023.

Russian ally Bashar Al-Assad, who massacred more than 230,224 civilians, displaced up to 14 million Syrians, conducted at least 217 chemical weapons attacks, and destroyed up to 50 percent of all critical infrastructure in Syria, is still in power. Russian ally Nicolas Maduro, a narco-trafficker who lost multiple elections, oversaw the Venezuelan economy's implosion and had more than 7.7 million people (a quarter of Venezuela's population) flee from his country during peacetime, is still in power. Russia and its allies value self-preservation and the survival of their respective regimes above everything else. They are driven by fear of ending up captured, tried and executed by the people they terrorized for decades as did Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. Or worse, murdered on the street in an act of vigilante justice like Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. The Russian-led "Axis of Evil" is unfortunately winning. It will continue sticking together for the foreseeable future. The West must do the same and more because watching from the sidelines as the world's most repressive regimes destroy Ukraine is pathetic. Sometimes, leadership is about defeating your enemies. Other times, it's about helping your friends in their time of need. So do both by inviting Ukraine to join NATO and winning the peace in Europe.

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## Putin suffers another massive defeat, this time in Moldova

Jonathan Sweet &amp; Mark Toth

**R**USSIAN President Vladimir Putin is having a really bad week. White House National Security Communications advisor John Kirby confirmed that Russia's military is losing 1,200 soldiers a day in Ukraine. Failing to win on the battlefield, Putin is now desperately resorting to trying to buy his would-be empire with rubles.

But on Monday, Putin's motley crew of oligarchs failed him yet again. This time it was in Moldova. Russia allegedly spent \$15 million to bribe Moldovan voters against moving toward European Union membership. Moldovans, however, narrowly approved changes to their constitution that commit the country to joining the EU. The bribery plan was allegedly perpetrated by Ilan Shor, who was "accused of laundering the money and orchestrating the network, despite his political party being banned [in Moldova]." Shor is a Moldovan-Israeli industry mogul.

Nonetheless, Putin's Russian rubles for vote scheme in Chi?in?u fell short. Official Moldovan government results indicated a 50.46 percent to 49.54 percent victory for the small nation, which is wedged between Ukraine and Romania. Mad Vlad did achieve a Pyrrhic victory. Moldovan incumbent President Maia Sandu failed to win an outright majority. She secured just 41 percent of the vote and consequently faces a run-off election on Nov. 3 against Aleksandr Stoianoglo, who received 26 percent of the vote. Stoianoglo is supported by the pro-Russian Party of Socialists. Sandu accused Russia of committing an "unprecedented assault on democracy" by paying people to vote against the EU referendum. She says she has "clear evidence" that 300,000 votes were bought.

EU spokesperson Peter Stano acknowledged the validity of Sandu's claim. "This vote took place under unprecedented interference and intimidation by Russia and its proxies, aiming to destabilize the democratic processes in the Republic of Moldova," he said. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied the accusation, calling for evidence to support her

claims. That evidence was presented shortly thereafter, when a BBC reporter interviewed a woman at a polling station for residents of the breakaway region of Transnistria, who said she was offered 1,000 rubles to vote against the referendum and Sandu. Sandu is likely to win the November run-off election. In the process, she is exposing Putin's desperation and growing military weakness.

Yet Putin remains undeterred for now. Up next is Georgia, whose parliamentary election takes place Oct. 26. Enthusiasm is evident in the streets of Tbilisi, where tens of thousands of pro-EU protesters were observed Monday evening. Holding her own pro-EU rally on Monday before

imposed any economic sanctions against Moscow, nor has Tbilisi provided Ukraine with military assistance.

In direct contrast, earlier this week, Zourabichvili supported Ukraine's fight against Putin's illegal war.

"I want to address Volodymyr Zelensky - from here, on your behalf - and tell him that we know that he is fighting for us and will win!" she said. "And we will enter Europe together!" Nika Gvaramia concurs. He is the opposition leader of the Georgian political party Coalition for Change. While leading a protest in Freedom Square in Tbilisi, Gvaramia told Georgians that, "Our choice is Europe." Much, therefore, is at stake for the nation of Georgia, which strategically bridges Europe and Asia. This is arguably the last opportunity for Tbilisi to join the European Union. A loss would likely crush democracy in Georgia. If the Georgian Dream party wins on Saturday, Ivanishvili has vowed to ban all Georgian opposition parties.

Putin has a lot to lose as well. For Russia, a defeat of Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream could lead to Georgia regaining control over its breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. If so, the Russian naval base being constructed at Ochamchire in Abkhazia would be at risk. It is being built to house Russia's Black Sea Fleet, recently expelled from Crimea. Putin's rubles are also desperately at work in North Korea. In addition to buying upwards of 3 million artillery shells a year - or half Moscow's needs in Ukraine - Putin is finalizing plans with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to use his troops in the Donbas. On Tuesday, Ukrainian intelligence chief Kyrylo Budanov said that North Korean soldiers are expected to arrive in Russia's Kursk region on Wednesday.

This is yet another sign that all Putin has available to him now to secure his kingdom are rubles and his evergreen nuclear bluffing. Western freedom isn't free. Putin is trying to buy it with rubles that are rapidly losing their value. The West must resolve to defeat him with dollars and Euros in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia - and if necessary, with military might.

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# Still without any opposition, Uzbekistan votes for parliament

Navbahor Imamova

**A country that appeared to promise genuine political opposition during a parliamentary election campaign five years ago is about to vote again on Sunday - still without any. Uzbekistan's dissidents persist in efforts to register their parties despite repeated rejections. And America's top diplomat in Tashkent continues to encourage the country to stay on the course of reforms.**

But for many Uzbeks, real democracy remains a remote and not particularly appealing prospect. "What is an independent parliament? What is democracy? We have never had either," said Matluba Boltayeva, an entrepreneur in Andijan, eastern Uzbekistan. Boltayeva told VOA it is more important to her that she can now visit relatives in neighboring Kyrgyzstan, which became possible after the government of Uzbekistan's president, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, increased crossing points and expanded commercial opportunities. "I don't care about the members of the Oliy Majlis," she added, referring to the Uzbek parliament. "I don't want any political change, and certainly no opposition." Boltayeva's sentiments resonate with many in Uzbekistan. During VOA's travels around the country, residents frequently expressed low expectations of their legislators. Many believe that the country's laws are made and enforced solely by the president.

A popular blogger, known for discussing rural issues and who ran for local office in 2019, now fears revealing his name to share this opinion: "We deserve this regime. People want a strongman as a leader, taking care of our basic needs. They don't want to complicate things." His views reflect the widespread cynicism about democracy VOA heard in several cities and villages. "Our people look at democracies like those in America, India, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia and

wonder, 'Why would we want that chaos?' There isn't enough desire, if any, for political or ideological contest here, which to people means disagreement and disorder." Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East have also shaped Uzbek perceptions, reinforcing the value of independence and stability - key election themes echoed by the five political parties, all supporting President Mirziyoyev and his policies. Alisher Qodirov, head of the National Revival Democratic Party, who in 2019 pledged to turn his faction into an opposition, later told VOA, "How can we oppose the administration when it's doing exactly what we advocate - economic reforms, investing in education, health care, and infrastructure, while also promoting our national values?" While Qodirov and others contend that the parliament is relevant, social media users often disagree. They refer to the parties as "puppets," accusing them of merely promoting the state's agenda rather than offering solutions.

In an interview with VOA, US Ambassador to Uzbekistan Jonathan Henick praised recent televised debates but noted that the parliament lacks transparency. "We need to see more of that because, for the parliament to fulfill its potential in the Uzbek system, it needs to be empowered and communicate its role to the public," Henick said. The US government does not support any specific political party, he says, "but we do support the registration of opposition parties in Uzbekistan. I think the Uzbek people, the voters, deserve as much choice as they can get." Both the US and Uzbekistan are members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or OSCE, whose Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, ODIHR, has deployed an election observation mission, with 14 interna-

tional experts, 26 long-term and 300 short-term observers. OSCE/ODIHR has previously monitored 10 elections and referenda in Uzbekistan, none of which was deemed free or fair. Its consistent recommendation has been to create space for political competition. "People will feel more vested in the system if their representatives - the ones that speak to them and get their votes - are represented in parliament," said Henick. The administration deserves credit for its reforms so far, he told VOA. "But I've also been candid about where things fall short." Henick cited the US State Department's critical reports on human rights, which point out problematic areas in Uzbekistan. "We see this government as a partner," he said, underlining that Washington values its strategic ties with Tashkent. Henick works closely with President Mirziyoyev's office, now largely run by his eldest daughter, Saida Mirziyoyeva, whom he described as "a productive and capable interlocutor." "I don't presume to judge or cast judgment on the president here regarding whom he chooses as his advisers. That is up to him," said Henick, who also spoke positively about Western-educated ministers, regarding them as strong advocates for reform. Like Henick, many Uzbeks argue that their society is undergoing a transition. They now expect more from their government, especially local authorities. While the media environment is less vibrant compared to 2017-2021, the initial reform period, journalists and bloggers say they still push for public discourse on key issues. Henick observes that civil society groups struggle to register because officials do not view them as partners in delivering public services. However, he assesses the impact of bloggers and grassroots activists as evidence Uzbekistan will shape its own

democracy. "If we are truthful in our desire to support that democratic development, we shouldn't be trying to impose a model from the outside. We should be working with the individuals and organizations already here in Uzbekistan," Henick said. Khidrnazar Allakulov, who has been trying to register a political party since 2021, firmly believes Uzbekistan needs and deserves real opposition. Nearing 70 and with his activist son in prison, Allakulov said he is "committed to fighting authoritarianism." He claims to have thousands of supporters "despite arrests and repression" and rejects the popular skepticism about democracy. "I wouldn't push for change if I thought our people had no faith in freedom and justice, which are essential for stability. Uzbekistan aspires to have all these things. But we also know that fear rules," he said.

Allakulov believes the main reason authorities block his party's registration is its opposition to "one-man rule and nepotism." He believes Uzbekistan deserves better governance - not through a coup, but through democratic elections. Recently renaming his group the "Liberator Nation Party," Allakulov talks with the international community, including OSCE/ODIHR, but insists that no outside influence should interfere with the registration process. Authorities maintain that Allakulov's party has failed to meet the registration requirements, including securing the necessary 20,000 signatures. "We won't know the impact of political competition until we see it," said Jasur Muminov, a graduate student in Tashkent. "How we get there, I don't know. But knowing our state, I predict two scenarios: either the government will introduce its fake 'opposition party' to show the world 'democratic progress,' or we'll continue without any. But I'll be voting on October 27."

VOA

# North Koreans fighting for Russia put warm words into practice

Anthony V. Rinna

**YEARS of speculation, even within Russia itself, have seemingly ended in a far-fetched proposition appearing to be a reality. In line with recent assessments from South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS), emerging media reports indicate that North Korean troops have been sent to Russia to receive military training ahead of a likely deployment to Ukraine.**

The deployment of North Korean troops to Ukraine concurrently signals the sincerity with which North Korea and Russia plan to put their recently upgraded military partnership into practice, as well as the latest manifestation of the ever-shrinking distance between the security crises in Eastern Europe and Northeast Asia.

The number of members of the Korean People's Army (KPA) in Russia has been put at anywhere between 1,500 to 12,000, based on eyewitness accounts and South Korea's own intelligence assessments. There have even been reports that over a thousand of these troops belong to Pyongyang's special forces.

Speculation that the KPA would be deployed to Ukraine stretches back to at least 2022. Far from being a very online fantasy limited to fringe bloggers, media personalities and even policy figures with ties to the Kremlin have repeatedly floated the idea that Pyongyang may provide Russia with military assistance going as far as troops. To be sure, there was a degree of media coverage of the supposed deployment of North Korean military engineers to help rebuild parts of Ukraine's battered east in June of this year. These particular reports, however, did not stand up to scrutiny at the time.

Now, however, the situation is very different. In fact, the nature of North Korean troops deployment abroad is eerily reminiscent of previous media discourse within Russia. Writing for the Russian media outlet *Bloktan*, Russian military journalist Aleksandr Pylev argued that a group of North Korean snipers, which would not need to number more than 1,500 troops (similar to the figure provided by the NIS), would be able to help Russian forces make breakthroughs in urban combat.

Similarly, in 2023 Aleksander Sladkov, a member of the Kremlin's mobilization committee, that a source of his in Pyongyang had indicated the North Korean government was prepared to provide boots-on-the-ground assistance. The concrete groundwork for the

KPA's deployment to Ukraine came to fruition in June 2024 when President Vladimir Putin and his North Korean counterpart Kim Jong Un signed an agreement stepping up their military partnership. One of the most eyebrow-raising aspects of this stepping-up in their relationship was the agreement to provide "mutual assistance" if either country is attacked. Of course, it is not entirely safe to assert that North Korea and Russia have a full-fledged military alliance in the works, with their partnership still being primarily transactional, and one that is even now on shaky ground.

Nevertheless, it is precisely due to the potential pitfalls in North Korea-Russia military cooperation that Pyongyang likely sees an opportunity to make itself useful to Russia in the hopes of getting a proverbial return on investment. On the surface, it may seem surprising that North Korea, a country that has adopted an increasingly militant stance against South Korea, would want to expend any of its forces in distant Ukraine, particularly given South Korea's vast military superiority over the DPRK. Nevertheless, as much as North Korea risks losing troops in combat in Ukraine, Pyongyang has reason to sacrifice some of its military forces in Ukraine for a long-term payoff.

Ukraine's own incursion into Russia has proven to be a perfect opportunity for North Korea and Russia to show how intent they are on making their actions match their words. Should North Korea not have responded to a direct attack on the Russian Federation, it would have been ample ground for the rest of the world to doubt the strength of military ties between Pyongyang and Moscow. Aside from providing the world with a clear example of the extent to which they are ready to realize the text of their agreement, North Korea is potentially hoping to store up goodwill with Russia in the hopes that the Kremlin will come to Pyongyang's aid if the Korean Peninsula descends into violence. There are several forms of direct military support to the DPRK that Moscow could provide. One South Korean expert cited the possibility that the Kremlin could deploy its S-400 missile defense system in the Russian Far East to protect North Korea.

Additionally, deploying troops to Ukraine offers members of North Korea's armed forces a chance to gain real combat experience, which would be valuable if active combat with South Korea erupted. A country

risking its own troops in distant combat theatres as preparation for waging its own war is not without precedent, as Nazi Germany's participation in the Spanish Civil War shows clearly. However much North Korea may benefit from its deployment to the battlefields of Ukraine, Russia also stands to gain from the additional support in materiel. But Moscow is running serious risks of its own. By allowing the DPRK to participate in active combat operations, Moscow has opened itself up to a more active South Korean role in security affairs on Russia's western periphery.

Putin has repeatedly warned South Korea not to provide Ukraine with lethal weaponry, lest it "destroy" Seoul's ties with Moscow. Even South Korean military sales to Poland have drawn scorn from Moscow. Seoul has thus far abided by the Kremlin's warnings, limiting its aid to Ukraine to non-lethal military equipment and official development assistance (even as it has found ways to circumvent the Kremlin's admonitions). Of course, Putin's visit to North Korea this year seemed to indicate a willingness to do serious damage to Russia-South Korea relations. Nevertheless, with a country South Korea's defense establishment officially labeled an enemy now engaged in combat operations, Seoul has even less reason than before not to arm Ukraine directly. Likewise, South Korea has less of a reason to view its ties with Russia as being separate from the great power conflict between Moscow and Washington, particularly in East Asia.

The extent to which North Korea's efforts to build political capital with Russia will yield any benefits for Pyongyang is unknowable at this point. One thing that North Korea has learned the hard way is that Moscow cannot necessarily be trusted to live up to its commitments. Any outbreak of hostilities on the Korean Peninsula would involve Russia to some extent by sheer virtue of Russia's geographic proximity. Nevertheless, Kim Jong Un likely does not take the idea that the Kremlin will reciprocate Pyongyang's support for Russia for granted. All the same, for North Korea to be willing to send elite units to Ukraine shows a degree of confidence, or at least a high tolerance for risk, in terms of the DPRK-Russia relationship. Should North Korean soldiers ultimately see active duty in Ukraine, NATO and South Korea will not forget it. Today, geography no longer separates different security theaters across Eurasia, but unites them.

# Another day, another social care review

Polly Toynbee

**A collective groan greeted the rumour that the government will announce yet another royal commission on social care. The fear is that it just kicks this problem into the blue yonder; it was Harold Wilson who jibed that royal commissions "take minutes and waste years", which can be politically convenient.**

The world of the NHS and local government needs a resolution to the care crisis: 250,000 people wait for a care assessment and almost 30,000 a year die waiting while councils go bankrupt because of soaring care cases and NHS beds are blocked for lack of care in the community. Everyone concerned already knows exactly what is needed: urgent funding and a pay and career path to attract new care staff.

There have been, according to the King's Fund, at least 12 green papers, white papers or reviews on care reform, the Dilnot commission from 2011, along with five independent reviews since the last Sutherland royal commission in 1997 - and all of them have been ignored. Their conclusions were filed away on the too-difficult shelf. It's easy to see why there are reports of having and wavering within government. This is known as a "third rail" issue: "you touch it politically and you get fried". Ask Theresa May after her 2017 mid-election disaster when her care policy was denounced as a "dementia tax", or Labour in 2010, whose sensible plan was weaponised as a "death tax". All the alternatives for real reform are, in their own way, politically toxic.

Labour's manifesto committed to a "national care service, underpinned by national standards" and the employment rights bill in parliament this week includes the first fair pay agreement for care workers. So far, the only decision has been (rightly) to ditch the old coalition government-era plan - not yet implemented - to cap individual care costs at £86,000, with the state stepping in to pay above that (costing an immediate £1bn). There is to be a 10-year plan for health and social care: it must include the rising needs of care for younger adults with disabilities, which is often costing half of councils' care budgets.

Reform is an administrative as well as political nightmare. Owing to another Thatcher privatisation fiasco, there are about 18,500 care providers, mostly very small homes or homecare services, but 13% are owned by private equity chains, and the proportion owned by local councils has been estimated to be as low as 3%. There are several organisations representing them, so when it comes to pay negotiations with these very different interests, it won't be easy. Care was privatised because the cost of running private, rather than council, care is lower for all the usual reasons: worse pay and conditions, zero-hours contracts and cheaper pensions.

But the political dilemma is the same as ever: who pays? It still comes as a shock to many families to find it is not free, like the NHS, except for those without means. Any assets or property have to be

used to pay the bills: half the residents in care homes pay for themselves, the King's Fund tells me, as do a third receiving care in their own home. The lottery of life sees one in seven people paying more than £100,000. Pooling that risk seems the obvious answer, as Andy Burnham, then health secretary, proposed in 2010: everyone with means on retirement would pay in, say, £30,000 (or a lien on their home) and never pay again. But that was politically explosive. The Tories are already running with "Labour's war on the old". Why not free care for all, paid from taxation like the NHS? Campaigners point out no one asks what your home is worth if you need cancer treatment. But not only would that be unaffordably expensive in these stricken times, it would mean taking taxes from the working young to pay for the old in order to preserve the assets of the old who already own most property. An extra national insurance levy hypothesised for care would do the same. Some on the right argue for paying into a private insurance system, but the King's Fund points out that insurers say there is no market: people won't buy it, even if there were a cap to limit liability.

That's why nothing has changed all these years. Making the old lose their property and savings is detested; any new solution that abides by that principle will just shine new attention on it. And there really is no other solution. Although Covid showed people how much social care matters, it's not a high public priority: unlike

the NHS, most families only encounter its random chaos for very few years. Yet doing nothing at all is no longer an option either, as council bankruptcies are imminent.

That's why a royal commission would, ultimately, be a very good idea. There are no new facts to unearth, no new solutions, but it would open up necessary public discussion and oblige everyone to confront the inevitable. There could be citizens' assemblies and discussions around the country. Laying out every option, it would oblige the opposition not just to rouse anger against any particular proposal but to choose a realistic one itself. The plan needs to be conducted in two parts: an immediate emergency plan to keep social care going now, reporting ahead of this spring's spending review - and then a longer term plan for reform and restructure. The name in the frame for this tough job is Louise Casey, a tough nut who would take no nonsense from those pretending there is a pain-free way out. A royal commission would need her ferociously rational style of argument to make plain that savings and property are there to be used for your care in old age.

She is the sort to dare ask the public to step back and consider national priorities. How should we spend whatever state money is available? Would you spend it on preserving the property and inheritances of better-off old people, or should it go to children, on early years, schools, further education and apprenticeships to invest in the country's human capital for the future?

# How Russia returned to gerontocracy

Andrey Pertsev

**IN September, the State Duma voted to allow Russian President Vladimir Putin to keep the chairman of the Investigative Committee in office past the age of 70. Alexander Bastrykin, the incumbent since 2011, is already 71.**

Until recently, hitting that age would have disqualified Bastrykin from continued service. The retirement age for Investigative Committee officials - up to and including its head - had previously been set at 65, with the possibility of a five-year extension. Now, age is no impediment for Bastrykin, a longtime close associate of Putin, who himself turned 72 this month.

Putin was elected president at the relatively young age of 47, and those he appointed to key positions upon first entering the Kremlin were of a similar age. At the time, officials in Russia had to retire at 65, without exception, and it did not occur to anyone that the country's relatively young leadership might still be around at that age. In the early 2000s, Putin repeatedly assured Russians that he did not intend to rule beyond 65 or to make it possible to govern past that point.

Yet as Putin served term after term, the deadline neared, forcing him into action. Letting Bastrykin remain at the helm of the Investigative Committee is only the latest example of Putin changing the rules to protect his allies' jobs.

Officially, the Kremlin's personnel policy promises Russia's best and brightest young people a path to the top. In reality, however, those opportunities largely stop at the regional level, or in the best case at a second-tier federal post. Putin has taken to calling veterans of the war in Ukraine

"the new elite," but even his foot soldiers cannot displace Russia's true elite: those who have aged in office alongside the president.

In his old age, Putin has come to derive comfort from seeing familiar faces in the same positions. Keen to maintain the status quo, he has stopped at nothing to keep his team intact, giving rise to a gerontocracy. The first rule changes came in 2010 and 2012, when veteran top judges Valery Zorkin and Vyacheslav Lebedev were permitted by then-President Dmitry Medvedev and Putin, respectively, to serve beyond 70. Medvedev made that exception for Zorkin even as he lowered the retirement age for civilian officials to 60, with the option of a five-year extension if employer and employee agreed.

Lowering the age limit made political sense for Medvedev. Purportedly, the self-styled modernizer wanted young, progressive people, not old-timers, to implement his innovative policies. Moreover, had Medvedev run for reelection, the emergence of a new administrative elite would have reduced the pressure to retain Putin's people, who simply would have been phased out through mandatory retirement. In any event, by the time the deadline arrived for Putin's allies, Medvedev was no longer president, Putin having returned to the Kremlin in 2012. In 2013, he reversed Medvedev's change to the retirement age for civilian officials, not because it applied to Putin as president but because it threatened his contemporaries. Sergey Ivanov, Putin's then-chief of staff, turned 60 in 2013 and would have required a waiver to remain in his role. Foreign Minister

Sergey Lavrov, then 63, and Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, then 62, had already been cleared to serve until the age of 65.

Much of Putin's team, then, was only two to five years from retirement, prompting Putin to raise the retirement age for officials to 65 with the possibility of a five-year extension. Yet his lieutenants continued to age, leading to further rollbacks. In 2019, Putin did away with the age limit for rectors of large universities. In 2021, he decreed that the government's most senior officials could serve beyond 70. At the same time, Putin proposed to the State Duma that he be empowered to decide for how long senior military officials should serve, and lawmakers obliged. Even lower-ranking officials have seen their age limits raised.

It is entirely possible that Putin will eventually scrap age limits altogether. Doing so would eliminate the need for him to personally sign off on every extension: each one an invitation for the public to scrutinize not only Russia's gerontocracy generally, but also Putin's age specifically. There is already a precedent: governors and lawmakers are not subject to any such restrictions. In the 24 years that Putin has been in power, the president and his inner circle have gone from being young advocates of reforms to elderly warmongers. Even the youngest members of Putin's team are either pushing 60 or already there, such as Sberbank CEO German Gref (60) and VEB state development corporation chairman Igor Shuvalov (57). The president's potential successors are not exactly young either, from Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin (66) to Prime

Minister Mikhail Mishustin (58).

The system has chewed up and spat out young, ambitious sorts such as Andrei Turchak, the 48-year-old former United Russia general secretary who tried too hard to become governor of St. Petersburg and speaker of the Federation Council. Old-timers like Nikolai Patrushev, the 73-year-old former secretary of the Security Council, are being replaced by officials who are not much younger. Sergei Shoigu, Patrushev's 69-year-old successor, was himself succeeded at the Defense Ministry by a 65-year-old, Andrei Belousov.

The Russian leadership increasingly recalls the gerontocracy that ran the late Soviet Union. Back then, elderly officials died in office, only to be replaced by other geriatrics, death a kind of forced retirement. Putin's subordinates have already started dying on the job. This year, Lebedev, the Supreme Court chief justice whose tenure was extended back in 2012, died at 81. He was succeeded by Irina Podnoshova, Putin's 70-year-old university classmate.

Judging by the Bastrykin case, none of this bothers Putin. On the contrary, he associates longevity of service with stability and so seeks to ensure old-timers can remain in office as long as possible. The danger is that things could play out as they did in the late Soviet period, with a carousel of senior officials leaving office in a hurry. Those who grew old and tired while waiting for a job at the top will simply not be able to cope with the crises that have accumulated, while younger candidates will not have the necessary experience or ambition - for there is no place for such people in a gerontocracy.

The Moscow Times

# Teflon Rayner will outlast dull Starmerites

**ALL hail Ange, queen of the come-back. She's been mocked for her wardrobe; mocked for her accent; and falsely accused of trying to distract political opponents by crossing and uncrossing her legs. On the brink of political superstardom, this summer she came perilously close to losing it all, thanks to a bizarre row over her living arrangements almost 15 years ago.**

But Angela Rayner is back and, just as she did on the dance floor of an Ibiza nightclub, she is ready to give it her all. While Sir Keir Starmer is marooned at a conference more than 9,000 miles away, the Deputy Prime Minister is showing herself to really be in charge. In her other capacity as housing secretary, she has just secured a cool £17billion for a scheme to double the number of council houses built each year. Fizzing with a formidable energy and spirit - that her boss manifestly lacks, it looks very much as if she is enjoying her new role.

For a woman who was on the brink of being forced to resign from the Labour front bench less than six months ago, Rayner's revival is quite the turnaround. Back in May, the vultures were circling amid questions over a possible tax dodge involving the sale of her own council house in 2010. Her critics and political rivals could barely hide their glee at the prospect of her downfall. As claims that she tried to save a few quid by wrongly

Isabel Oakeshott

designating a second home as her main residence refused to go away, it seemed at times as if she would be forced to quit. But acting with the grit required to make her way from the toughest of back-grounds on a council estate in Stockport to Downing Street, Rayner toughed it out.

In a gamble that could have spectacularly backfired, she staked her political future on the outcome of a police investigation, and was cleared. Nor was this the first time she had seen off detractors. Back in 2023, Starmer tried to sack her - and learnt the hard way not to underestimate her. In a mark of the strength of her own political power base, rather than being shuffled out, she emerged from the stand-off with a promotion. Even after Labour's election victory and her appointment as Deputy Prime Minister, Rayner's enemies were not done, putting it about in the early days of the administration that she was being "frozen out" by a tight-knit group of loyal Starmerites answering to aide Morgan McSweeney. Rumours began circulating that she was being unfairly stripped of responsibilities - perhaps because our dreary Prime Minister considers her charisma and growing popularity to be a threat to his authority.

Yet here she is, with £1billion in her pocket for her pet housing scheme; in charge of radical legislation to reform workers' rights; and acting as if she is the

real Prime Minister while Sir Keir swans around Samoa - with Commonwealth heads of state. In his absence she took his place at the Dispatch Box for Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesday, putting in a wittily self-assured performance that left her opposite number, Oliver Dowden, looking characteristically flat. OK, so Rayner may have been "passed over" in favour of Chancellor Rachel Reeves in a tussle for the use of grace and favour homes. Doubtless she would have enjoyed following in the footsteps of that other working-class warrior, John Prescott, who was given access to 21-room Dorneywood in Buckinghamshire when he held the same job. But, then again, she is rather too busy for croquet on the lawn.

For one who grew up in such poverty that her illiterate mother accidentally fed her dog food, her rise is an extraordinary testament to the force of her personality and social mobility, enabled by her early involvement in the trade union movement. Having left school at 16 after becoming pregnant, she could easily have been destined for a life on benefits.

Instead, she is the second most powerful politician in the land, continuing to be (as she herself memorably put it) "punching above her gene pool". Still in her early 40s, it is hard to avoid the sense that Rayner has only just begun. After the worst start to a new Government in living memory, her boss better watch out.



## Performance during nine months of 2024 BankIslami reports 33.6% surge in profit before tax

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: BankIslami continues its growth trajectory, delivering substantial returns to its shareholders with a remarkable 33.6% increase in profit before tax for the nine-month ended September 2024. The Bank's profit before tax reached Rs. 19.9 billion, while its post-tax profit surged to Rs. 10.2 billion, reflecting a robust 20.5% growth. Despite challenging market conditions, BankIslami remains steadfast in its commitment to financial excellence.

A key highlight of this period was the significant rise in non-fund-based

income (NFI), which grew by nearly 1.3 billion rupees compared to the same period last year. The NFI ratio to total income also improved, rising to 9.4% from 7% in the previous year, underscoring the Bank's strategic focus on diversified revenue streams.

In response to ongoing economic uncertainty, BankIslami strategically expanded its investment portfolio while prudently optimizing its financing portfolio. The investment portfolio reached Rs. 346.7 billion, while the gross financing portfolio saw a controlled reduction of 21.5%, settling at Rs. 199.5

billion. This strategic adjustment led to an increase in the infection ratio from 9% at the end of 2023 to 12.7% in the current period.

The Bank's deposit portfolio experienced significant growth, rising by 19.5% compared to the period ended September 30, 2023, and by 5.6% compared to December 31, 2023. This growth was largely fueled by a 12.2% rise in Term Deposits since December 2023 bringing stability in deposit book. The CASA ratio also remained strong, maintained at 60%, reflecting growing consumer confidence, enhanced liquidity,

and a strategic emphasis on expanding trade finance and other business avenues.

With heightened profitability and a strengthened credit risk profile, BankIslami's Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) stood at an impressive 29.16%, well above the regulatory threshold of 11.50%.

Looking ahead, BankIslami is committed to further strengthening its growth by expanding its deposit base, leveraging its extensive network of over 500 branches, and enhancing the customer experience through targeted technological advancements and a broader digital footprint.



PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan presenting shield to Collector Customs Jameel Nasir.

## SNGPL intensifies gas theft crackdown

### F.P. Report

LAHORE: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) continues its rigorous crackdown on gas theft, with teams in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad disconnecting 69 illegal connections and imposing fines amounting to Rs 3.1 million.

In Lahore, SNGPL teams disconnected 14 illegal connections and levied fines totaling Rs 0.95 million. In Faisalabad, 10 illegal connections were severed, with a Rs 0.21 million penalty imposed. Sheikhpura saw the disconnection of 3 illegal connections and the imposition of Rs 1.11 million in fines on gas thieves.

Further actions included the disconnection of 11 connections in Bahawalpur due to compressor usage, while Multan teams disconnected 1 illegal connection and 12 others for compressor misuse. Additionally, Sahiwal authorities imposed Rs 0.21 million in fines related to gas theft. In Mardan, 18 illegal connections were disconnected, with fines of Rs 0.66 million imposed on offenders.

## CCP approves acquisition of Claforan trademarks

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) on Friday approved the acquisition of trademarks for the pharmaceutical product Claforan by M/s Hoechst Pakistan Limited from M/s Sanofi Aventis Deutschland GMBH through a trademark assignment agreement.

Hoechst Pakistan Limited, a public listed company in Pakistan, specializes in the manufacture, sale, and trading of pharmaceutical products, said a news release.

Sanofi Aventis Deutschland GMBH, a German-based limited liability company, is a prominent pharmaceutical manufacturer and distributor across Europe.

### COURT NOTICE

In the court of Muhammad Adil Civil Judge XII Kohat, Suit no. 361/1 Date of hearing 31-10-2024, Titled:- Muhammad Mansoor Bangash Vs Sulaiman, Notice against:- Faheem Khan Bangash-Sohail Khan Sons Muhammad Taimoor Khan Bangash- Mst. Rubella Khan- Mst. Shazia Faisal Daughters of Muhammad Taimoor Khan Bangash- Faisal Javed Bangash-Muhammad Nasir Javed Sons- Mst. Meena Bangash Widow of Muammad Javed Bangash R/o Taimoor Street Mohallah Sangair District Kohat presently R/o (now in Abroad) (Defendants) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a civil suit against you defendants in which date of hearing 31-10-2024 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you defendants is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 31-10-2024 otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law order Issued on 14-10-2024 (Court of C.J.XII Kohat)

## SCCI urges slashing interest-rate to single digit

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan urged the government and State Bank of Pakistan to bring down interest-rate to single digit for industrial and economic growth.

Fazal Moqem in a statement issued here on Friday said prices of import-items and raw materials had escalated owing to current high interest-rate, resultantly, cost of doing business and production also increased that has pushed inflation up instead of downward.

It is highly essential to bring down interest-rate to single digit to boost business, industry and economy, Moqem stressed.

He added it is quite difficult for the business community to gain loans from commercial banks at 17.5 percent.

On the other hand, the SCCI chief said cost of doing business had almost increased manifold in wake of continuous hike in prices of electricity and gas, making the Pakistani manufacturing products uncompetitive in the global market.

Fazal Moqem said making functional business

and industry under the current interest is not difficult but completely impossible.

In the prevailing scenario, the SCCI chief said the business community is already in great trouble while stagnant situations prevailed in business and industry.

The chamber president urged the government to adopt business-friendly policies and provide relief to the business community at every level.

He also urged SBP to bring down the current interest rate to single digit during its upcoming monitoring policy meeting.

## Lucky Cement wins excellency award

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Lucky Cement Limited, one of Pakistan's leading cement manufacturers, has been honored with the Excellency Award in the Cement Category at the 39th Management Association of Pakistan (MAP) Awards.

The prestigious ceremony took place in Karachi on October 23, 2024, recognizing outstanding corporate performance and management practices across various industries.

This award reaffirms Lucky Cement's commitment to excellence in the cement sector and high-

lights the company's continuous efforts to maintain high standards of quality and innovation in its operations.

The MAP Awards celebrate corporate success and promote best practices in management across Pakistan's business landscape.



## FFC wins top industry award

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Fauji Fertilizer Company (FFC) has been honored with the prestigious Amir S. Chinoy Corporate Excellence Award in the Fertilizer Sector at the 39th Corporate Excellence Awards, organized by the Management Association of Pakistan (MAP) at the

Marriott Hotel, Karachi.

FFC was recognized as the top company in the Industrial Category, out of three nominees, for its exceptional corporate governance, outstanding management practices, and industrial achievements.

Receiving this esteemed award on behalf of FFC, Jahangir Piracha, Managing Director and CEO, empha-

sized the company's unwavering commitment to excellence and its significant contributions to Pakistan's industrial growth, further solidifying its leadership in the nation's fertilizer sector.

This is indeed a momentous occasion for FFC, and we look forward to continuing our journey of excellence in service to the nation.

## NOTICE FOR AUCTION OF MINOR MINERALS LEASE OF DISTRICT DIR LOWER

The District Auction Committee of District Dir Lower invites applications from registered contractors of Minor Minerals for participation in auction and grant of Minor Minerals lease of the following blocks in District Dir Lower under the provision of section-78 sub section (3) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mines & Mineral Act 2017 for a period of one year mining lease on the basis of "As is where is" against reserve price and call deposit given against each block in the Office of Deputy Commissioner Dir Lower on **19/11/2024 at 11:00 AM**. In case of non-auction due to any reason, next date of auction will be 20/11/2024 at 11:00 AM. Further in case of non-auction on above mentioned dates due to any reason, next date will be decided by the District Auction Committee.

S.No.	Block Name	Acreage	Location	Reserve Price	Call Deposit
River Panjkora					
1.	Block-1	12.27 Acres	Near Akhgram	670,000/-	167,500/-
2.	Block-2	92.33 Acres	Near Malak Abad Bridge to Shalfalam Bridge	2,144,000/-	536,000/-
3.	Block-3	99.99 Acres	Near Shalfalam Wooden Bridge to Khali Bazar RCC Bridge	2,144,000/-	536,000/-
4.	Block-6	82.79 Acres	Near Koto Dam to Munjai RCC Bridge	1,742,000/-	435,500/-
5.	Block-7	47.62 Acres	Near Munjai RCC Bridge to Ashari Gat/Odigram Suspension Bridge	1,742,000/-	435,500/-
6.	Block-8	82.73 Acres	Near Ashari Gat/Odigram RCC Bridge to Zawal Baba Suspension Bridge	1,876,000/-	469,000/-
7.	Block-9	163.83 Acres	Near Under construction Hajjiabad Bridge to Balambat Bridge	3,630,000/-	907,500/-
8.	Block-10	140.41 Acres	Near Girls Degree College Timergara to Khazana Bypass Bridge	7,920,000/-	1,980,000/-
9.	Block-11	68.07 Acres	Near Khazana Bypass to Zulam Bridge	1,265,000/-	316,250/-
10.	Block-12	48.50 Acres	Near Zulam Bridge to Shago Kas	2,640,000/-	660,000/-
Sub Division Maidan					
1.	Block-13	14.75 Acres	Near Veterinary hospital to Kumber Bazar Bridge	1,276,000/-	319,000/-
2.	Block-14	62.60 Acres	Near Kumber Bazar Bridge to Lal Qilla then Markhanai Bridge	2,277,000/-	569,250/-
3.	Block-15	105.30 Acres	Near Lal Qilla Bridge to Hayaserai Bridge	2,277,000/-	569,250/-
4.	Block-16	105.27 Acres	Near Hayaserai Bridge to Qazi Stadium Odigram	2,827,000/-	706,750/-
Toormang Khwar					
1.	Block-17	47.52 Acres	Near Toormang Khwar Khali	804,000/-	201,000/-
Sub Division Munda/Samarbagh					
1.	Block-18	21.33 Acres	Near Kambat RCC Bridge to Smarbagh	938,000/-	234,500/-
2.	Block-19	26.15 Acres	Near Samar Bagh to Chamartalai Kandaro	871,000/-	217,750/-
3.	Block-20	77.20 Acres	Near Chamartalai Bridge to Mayar Bridge	737,000/-	184,250/-
4.	Block-21	119.75 Acres	Near Kotki lo Zardali Banda	938,000/-	234,500/-
5.	Block-22	66.18 Acres	Near Mayar Bridge to Grid Station/Toor camp	871,000/-	217,750/-
6.	Block-23	68.72 Acres	Near Toor Camp to Munda Bazar Bridge	737,000/-	184,250/-
7.	Block-24	42.46 Acres	Near Munda Bazar Bridge to Gosam	871,000/-	217,750/-
8.	Block-25	21.34 Acres	Near Gosam to Matakko RCC Bridge	1,005,000/-	251,250/-
9.	Block-26	140.39 Acres	Near Matakko RCC Bridge to Qalagai Suspension Bridge	670,000/-	167,500/-
10.	Block-27	14.90 Acres	Near Qalagai Suspension Bridge to Khazana Bypass	871,000/-	217,750/-
Andherai Khwar Balambat					
1.	Block-28	28.58 Acres	Near Government Degree College Timergara	670,000/-	167,500/-
Gulabad Khwar					
1.	Block-29	174.01 Acres	Near Kityari to Gulabad Chakdara Road	1,556,500/-	389,125/-
River Swat					
1.	Block-31	126.83 Acres	Near Gora Gat/Ramora to Malakand University Bridge	3,102,000/-	775,500/-
2.	Block-34	53.68 Acres	Near Badwan	1,776,500/-	444,125/-
3.	Block-35	41.69 Acres	Near Khadagzai	1,072,000/-	268,000/-
4.	Block-36	68.45 Acres	Near Terona Khadagzai	1,826,000/-	456,500/-

### TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Only those persons or firms registered with Directorate General Mines & Minerals Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as Minor Minerals Contractors can participate in auction. Interested parties can register themselves in the Directorate General Mines & Minerals Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- The registered parties/individuals shall submit application form at the cost of **Rs. 10000/-** (Ten thousand) non-refundable on any working day at least three (03) days before the auction. Last date for submission of application form is **15/11/2024**.
- Blacklisted/Defaulter persons or those persons who are not registered with Directorate General Mines and Minerals are not allowed to participate in the auction.
- The interested parties can visit and check the advertised areas before auction. The sketches of the areas are available for the interested parties in the office of the undersigned.
- Call deposit shall be deposited under account No. **0066-2008140092** and application fee under account No. **0066-2008209319** in any branch of Bank of Khyber.
- The registered applicants/parties shall also submit attested copies of CNIC, income tax registration certificate (NTN) and partnership deed/article & memorandum of association along with evidence of paid-up capital (if applicant is partnership firm/company).
- The successful bidder shall deposit 1/4th of the total bid money as security within three days from the date of auction, otherwise, call deposit shall be forfeited in favor of the Government and the bid of second highest bidder shall be considered as highest bid, subject to condition that the difference between the first and the second highest bids is not more than 10 percent of the highest bid.
- The successful bidder shall demarcate his leased area within fifteen days from the issuance of Allotment Letter on his own expenses.
- The successful bidder shall be bound to pay Excise duty to Commissionerate of Mines or its approved excise duty collection contractor on government notified rates.
- The successful bidder before issuance of allotment letter shall be bound to deposit withholding tax under Rule-236-A of ITO2011 with Income Tax Department and Professional Tax as per rules to the Excise & Taxation Deptt; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- The successful bidder will be bound to pay surface rent to the land owner under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mines & Mineral Act 2017.
- The successful bidder shall be responsible to work in leased area strictly in accordance with the provisions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mines & Mineral Act 2017 and in accordance with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mining of Minor Minerals from River Bed Rules, 2022.
- The successful bidder shall be bound to use only verified challans for transportation of minor minerals duly verified by the concerned Assistant Director. Transportation without a verified transit challan shall be considered as un-authorized transportation and action under section-56 of the Ibid Act shall be initiated against the lessee as well as other offenders.
- The competent authority reserves the right to accept or reject any bid with cogent reason.
- Other information in this regard can be obtained from the office of undersigned during office time i.e., 09:00 AM to 05:00 PM on any working day.

**Assistant Director (Tech)**  
**Mineral Development Dir Lower**

INF(P) 2798/24



**URBAN AREA DEVELOPMENT  
AUTHORITY D.I.KHAN**  
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## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Applications are invited from suitable candidates (Male)/Female of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for filling the below mentioned contract post in Urban Area Development Authority D.I.Khan as per prescribed required / qualification.

Name of Post	No of Vacancy	Age Limit	Minimum Qualification	Experience
Sub Engineer (BPS-12 Contract)	01	20-30 Years	BSc (Civil)/ DAE (Civil) or B. Tech	Three years relevant experience with BSc Civil and Four years Relevant experience with DAE/ B.Tech

### TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- Candidates working in Government / Semi Government bodies of Autonomous organization should apply through proper channel.
- Only short-listed candidates will be called for Interview.
- No TA/DA will be admissible.
- Original documents shall be produced at the time of interview.
- Candidates should be eligible in all respect by the last date of receipt of their application i.e. 28-11-2024.
- Age shall be reckoned from the last date of receipt of application.
- Application should be sent to through Courier/Registered post alongwith copies of attest documents accompanied by Bank draft of Rs. 3000/- in favour of Director Urban Area Development Authority (Dera Town) Daraban Road D.I.Khan.
- Incomplete applications and applications received after due date shall not entertained.

**DIRECTOR** | **URBAN AREA DEVELOPMENT  
AUTHORITY, DERA ISMAIL KHAN**



## In brief

## Pak duo reach ITF final

RIYADH (APP): Pakistani tennis players Ahmad Nael Qureshi and Bilal Asim advanced to the doubles final of the International Tennis Federation (ITF) J30 tournament in Riyadh representing Ace Tennis Academy, the duo earned their place in the final by defeating Mohammed Alghafli (ARU) and Ghannam Alghannam (KSA) with a score-line of 6-3, 7-5. Bilal Asim also excelled in the singles category, making it to the semi-finals after a hard-fought win in the quarterfinal against top-seed Artem Semenov from Russia, a player ranked among the top 300 junior players globally. Bilal triumphed 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, underscoring his potential on the international stage. Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) President, Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, congratulated both players on their remarkable achievements, expressing confidence that they would continue their strong performance in the finals. Col. Zia-ud-din Tufail (R), Secretary General of the PTF, also commended the young players, encouraging them to stay focused and bring home the title.

## Injuries holding Man Utd back

LONDON (Agencies): Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag says his club's ongoing injury issues are holding them back. Last season United suffered 45 injuries - more than any Premier League rival - while they were without 10 first-team players for Thursday's Europa League draw with Fenerbahce - nine because of injury. And while veteran central defender Jonny Evans could return for Sunday's trip to West Ham, there are huge doubts over Brazilian winger Antony, who went down with no-one near him after coming on as a second-half substitute in Turkey and had to be carried off on a stretcher. Defensive trio Luke Shaw, Leny Yoro and Tyrell Malacia are all yet to make an appearance this season, while Mason Mount has made five, including the Community Shield, and is currently in his second spell out of action in this campaign alone. "Yes, it holds us back in our levels and also in our position in the league," said Ten Hag. "When you don't have the players available, you can't line up the best team." United hoped they would solve their problems through the hiring of Gary O'Driscoll from Arsenal as their new head of medical 12 months ago. But it hasn't happened and Ten Hag knows his side will struggle to fulfil their potential until an answer can be found. "We need more players available often," he said. "We all have to work together on this point - the players, the coaching staff and all the other staff. "We have to do better at that because we know when we have them we are a really tough team to play and we can be really successful." United go to London Stadium 12th in the Premier League, and now 21st in the expanded Europa League, after a run of three away draws and a home win over Brentford in the four games since the sham-bolic home defeat by Tottenham on 29 September that led to intense speculation over Ten Hag's future. Because they lost that game, United's draw with Fenerbahce means they have won once in seven games in all competitions.

## England reeling at 24-3 after gritty Shakeel century

RAWALPINDI (AFP): Spinners Sajid Khan and Noman Ali left England reeling at 24-3 after Saud Shakeel's fighting hundred put Pakistan in control of the series-deciding third Test in Rawalpindi on Friday.

England came in looking to erase a deficit of 77 but had no answers for the Pakistan spinners on a turning pitch. Sajid dismissed Ben Duckett for 12 and Noman Ali removed Zak Crawley (two) and Ollie Pope (one) in the space of five runs.

When bad light ended the second day's play with five overs remaining, Joe Root and Harry Brook were at the crease on five and three respectively. England still need 53 runs to avoid an innings defeat with seven wickets in hand and three days left to play.

The series is tied at 1-1 after England won the first Test by an innings and 47 runs while Pakistan took the second by 152 runs, both in Multan.

On another day dominated by spin, Shakeel's brilliant 134 was the highlight, pulling Pakistan within touching distance of a first home Test series win since they defeated South Africa in February 2021.

Shakeel anchored Pakistan's innings, lifting them from a precarious 177-7 to 344 all out.

"We had an idea that this pitch will help spinners so with that in mind I prepared myself," said Shakeel, admitting it was one of his best knocks. The left-hander held Pakistan's innings together with a gritty knock spread over 322 minutes and 223 balls,

hitting just five boundaries.

"A hundred is a hundred and it's the best feeling and now we are in the best stage of the match."

But leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed, who was the pick of the England bowlers, said his team had plenty of fight left. "I think we are still quite positive with so much batting to come so we are still very positive in the changing room come tomorrow," he said.

Ahmed took 4-66 while off-spinner Shoaib Bashir finished with 3-129.

Defiant Shakeel The 29-year-old Shakeel defied England with an eighth wicket stand of 88 alongside Noman who made 45 before falling in the final over ahead of the tea break to spinner Bashir.

Shakeel added another 72 for the ninth wicket with Sajid who scored an unbeaten career-best 48.

Shakeel was finally caught off a miscued pull off pacer Gus Atkinson while Ahmed dismissed the last man Zahid Mahmood for nought. The visitors looked to be in control when young spinner Ahmed bagged three quick wickets to leave Pakistan teetering at the end of the first session.

England were eyeing a lead after Ahmed's burst left Pakistan on 187-7 at lunch but the Shakeel-Noman stand turned those expectations into frustration. Shakeel batted with composure and reached his fourth Test hundred with a single off Rehan in a resistance-packed innings. Noman -- surviving a

leg-before decision on review and a dropped catch off Root -- assisted Shakeel admirably, hitting a six and two fours as the duo helped Pakistan add 80 in the second session. Rehan sent Mohammad Rizwan (25), Salman Agha (one) and Aamer Jamal (14) back to the pavilion and threatened to derail Pakistan.

England's frontline spinners Jack Leach and Bashir could not extract the same sharp turn from the pitch as rival Sajid Khan, who took 6-128 on Thursday.

Pakistan resumed the day at 73-3 in search of a sizeable lead to press for a series win. But Shakeel was the only top-order batter able to build a meaningful innings after reaching double figures.

## New Zealand eye history after Santner's 7-53 in India Test

PUNE (AFP): New Zealand were in sight of a historic series win in India after spinner Mitchell Santner took 7-53 to help bowl out the hosts cheaply in the second Test on Friday. A stunned India fell to 156 all out in their reply, gifting the visitors a first-innings lead of 103 on a turning Pune pitch.

New Zealand, who have never won a Test series in India and lead the three-match series 1-0, were 198-5 at stumps in their second knock, a lead of 301, after skipper Tom Latham hit 86. Wicketkeeper Tom Blundell, on 30, and Glenn Phillips, on nine, were batting at the close of play.

"Still a job to do with the bat," bowling hero Santner said. "Obviously the more runs we get now, it makes our job with the ball a little bit easier." Spinner Washington Sundar grabbed four wickets to take his match tally to 11 after returning figures of 7-59 on day one.

Sundar trapped Devon Conway lbw for 17 in New Zealand's second knock before senior spinner Ravichandran Ashwin sent back Will Young for 23 before tea. Sundar also bowled Rachin Ravindra for nine as the left-hander went back for a cut only to miss and the skidding ball hit the off-stump.

Daryl Mitchell fell for 18. Latham reached his fifty and kept firm in a 60-run partnership with Blundell until his departure when Sundar trapped the left-hander lbw. "It is satisfying," Santner said of the visiting batsmen taking on the Indian spinners in favourable conditions.

"We know how challenging it can be in these conditions. Seen India squeeze a lot of teams for a long time and I guess it was pleasing with the bat with guys trying to fire some shots and play some sweeps and take on the bowlers."

## Kohli shock

Santner sparked for New Zealand with his left-arm spin as he claimed his first five-wicket haul in 29 Test appearances to trump India at their own game of spin.

Ravindra Jadeja top-scored with 38 but India's batting fell apart, with the hosts bowled out in the second session in just 45.3 overs. Overnight batsmen Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill started cautiously before Santner struck in the 11th over of the day.

He trapped Gill lbw for 30 with a slider to the right-hander. The home fans were then stunned into silence when Santner took the prized wicket of Kohli, bowled on a low full toss for one. Santner admitted it was a "shock" to get the star batsman out in that manner.

Off-spinner Phillips struck on his fourth ball to get the left-handed Jaiswal caught at slip for 30 to leave the hosts on 70-4 and then 83-5 when he bowled Rishabh Pant for 18. First-match centurion Sarfaraz Khan managed 11 before Santner got him caught at mid-on. "I thought the pace that Santner bowled today was spot on for this surface," India bowling coach Morne Morkel said.

"You want to be playing cricket on the front foot in these conditions, but we couldn't find that rhythm and momentum today," India resumed the day on 16-1 and their batting collapse was the second in the series after they fell to 46 all out in the first Test in Bengaluru for their lowest-ever home total. Last week's win by New Zealand was their first Test victory on Indian soil since 1988.

## Sri Lanka A beat Pakistan Shaheens by seven wickets to qualify for the final

MUSCAT (Monitoring Desk): Sri Lanka A beat Pakistan Shaheens by seven wickets in the first semi-final at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground in Muscat on Friday to qualify for the final of the ACC Men's T20 Emerging Teams Asia Cup.

The second semi-final will be played between Afghanistan A and India A later today. The final of the tournament will be held on Sunday, 27 October.

Chasing 136 to win, Sri Lanka 'A' achieved the target in the 17th over. For the winning team, Ahan Wickramasinghe returned undefeated on 52 off 46 balls, which included four fours and a six. Wicketkeeper-batter Lahiru Udara, opening the innings, scored a quick-fire 43 off 20 balls, hitting two fours and four sixes.

Earlier, opting to bat first in the first semi-final, Pakistan Shaheens managed to score 135 for nine in their 20 overs. Opening batter Omaid Bin Yousuf was the top run-getter for the side scoring 68 off 46 balls, which included five fours and four sixes. Haider Ali (14, 15b), Mohammad Imran Jnr (13, 12b, 2x4s) and Arafat Minhas (10, 8b, 1x4) were the other batters to reach double figures. For Sri Lanka A, Dushan Hemantha bagged four wickets for 21 in four overs, while Eshan Malinga and Nipun Ransika took two wickets apiece.

Scores in brief: Sri Lanka A beat Pakistan Shaheens by seven wickets

Pakistan Shaheens 135-9, 20 overs (Omaid Bin Yousuf 68; Dushan Hemantha 4-21, Nipun Ransika 2-21, Eshan Malinga 2-28)

Sri Lanka A 137-3, 16.3 overs (Ahan Wickramasinghe 52 not out, Lahiru Udara 43)

Player of the match - Dushan Hemantha (Sri Lanka A).



RAWALPINDI: Noman Ali removed Ollie Pope before stumps to cap Pakistan's day.

## Pakistan Army wins National Men's Softball C'ship title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Army secured the KPT 7th National Men's Softball Championship title defeating Wapda by 12-3 in a one-sided final at the KPT Football Ground.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa triumphed over Balochistan with a score of 16-1, claiming the bronze medal in the tournament, said a press release. Pakistan Army scored 12 runs in seven innings. Wasim hit a home run, while Nazir Ahmed and Aftab Alam contributed with three runs each. In response, Wapda managed to score only 3 runs in their seven innings. In the match for third place, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa outclassed Balochistan, winning by 16-1.

The closing ceremony featured Brig Tariq Bashir, General Manager admin of KPT, as the chief guest, who distributed trophies, shields, and certificates to players and officials alongside President Pakistan Softball Federation, Asif Azeem, Chairman Organizing Committee Professor Dr Farhan Eesa, Chairperson Yasmin Hyder, and Vice President Shahid Khan Shinwari.

On this occasion, Maj (R) Mahmood Riaz, Sports Manager of KPT, Wasim Hashmi, Aisha Lena, Zeeshan Merchant, and others were also present.

Tariq Bashir praised all participating

teams for their exemplary discipline, congratulating all players and officials. He noted that the championship not only provided players with ample opportunities to showcase their skills but also fostered mutual harmony, brotherhood, and affection among them.

Asif Azeem and his team were commended for their tireless efforts in making the championship successful while the KPT management assured of full support in providing continuous support to the Softball Federation of Pakistan.

Dr. Farhan Eesa expressed appreciation for the active participation of the teams, indicating that the championship would serve as a platform for preparing the national team for international events. He expressed confidence that the standout performers in the event could become part of Pakistan's national softball team in the future.

Chairperson Yasmin Hyder emphasized that no sport can flourish without sponsorship, extending gratitude to KPT, the Sports Department of the Government of Sindh, EFU Insurance, Dr Eesa Lab, Organic Meat Company, and Comeback Sports for their significant support in successfully organizing the event.

## PSG reject league order to pay Mbappe 55 mn euros in back pay

PARIS (AFP): Paris Saint-Germain will refuse to comply with an order by the league to pay Kylian Mbappe 55 million euros (\$59.5 million) in back pay, a source close to the case told AFP on Friday.

A French league appeals committee has attempted to mediate in the increasingly bitter row between Real Madrid forward Mbappe and the club he left this year.

Mbappe has demanded the figure which he says is made up of the final three months of his salary plus several bonuses.

But Qatar-owned PSG argue that the 25-year-old had agreed to waive the sum in August 2023.

With PSG flatly refusing to abide by the league's order to pay their former player the money, the case looks set to drag on.

AFP has contacted Mbappe's spokespeople for comment. According to



reports in Sweden, Mbappe is the subject of a rape investigation following a visit to Stockholm earlier this month, although Swedish authorities have not named him.

Mbappe trained in the Spanish capital on Friday in preparation for his first El Clasico -- the clash with Barcelona that is traditionally the Spanish league's most eagerly-awaited match of the season -- since he joined the European champions in June.

Real host Barca at the Santiago Bernabeu on Saturday. Coach Carlo

Ancelotti said Friday the star forward was preparing well.

"He seems very calm in the way he is getting ready, he has confidence in his own ability, and I think he will give us a lot tomorrow, as always," Ancelotti said.

A World Cup winner as a teenager in 2018, Mbappe scored a club record 256 goals for PSG after joining the Qatar-owned club from Monaco on an initial loan deal in 2017.

He eventually moved to PSG in a 180-million-euro deal -- all at the age of 18.

Mbappe helped PSG to six Ligue 1 titles and steered them to the 2020 Champions League final, but they lost to Bayern Munich. He scored a hat-trick in the World Cup final against Argentina in Qatar in 2022 but still finished on the losing side as Lionel Messi's Argentina won on penalties.

## Olympic champion Zheng finds mojo to reach Tokyo semis

TOKYO (AFP): Zheng Qinwen reached the Tokyo semi-finals on Friday despite admitting to struggling for motivation after winning Olympic gold and receiving a hero's welcome in her native China.

The top seed beat Canada's Leylah Fernandez 6-0, 1-6, 6-3 to set up a final-four showdown with Russia's number six seed Diana Shnaider.

Zheng became the first Chinese player to win Olympic singles tennis gold when she triumphed in Paris this summer.

She said her "life changed" as a result and she "couldn't walk on the street" when she returned to play in China last month.

The 22-year-old is playing in a more sedate environment at the Pan Pacific Open in the Japanese capital and said it was "tough to find motivation".

"Especially after I finished in China because I got big expectations, a lot of stress, a lot of pressure there to play good in the Chinese events," she said. "I already did one mis-



she said.

"But I'm still able to push myself and get the match."

Zheng arrived in Tokyo after losing to Aryna Sabalenka in the final of the Wuhan Open. Sabalenka also beat her in the final in Melbourne.

Before Wuhan, Zheng played at the China Open in Beijing, where she says the impact of her Olympic gold finally began to sink in.

"When I won the gold medal, honestly I didn't feel my life had changed until I went back to China," she said. Zheng will face Shnaider for the first time in Saturday's semi-finals.

The Russian advanced with a walkover when Japanese quarter-final opponent Sayaka Ishii withdrew injured.

Britain's number nine seed Katie Boulter will face American wild card Sofia Kenin in the other semi-final.

Boulter beat Canada's Bianca Andreescu 6-2, 6-1 while Kenin beat Russia's number three seed Daria Kasatkina 6-3, 6-4.

## Messi leads MLS MVP finalists as Inter Miami teammate Suarez joins final five

MIAMI (Agencies): No surprise here: Lionel Messi is among the finalists for Major League Soccer's MVP award for this season.

In addition to Messi, Inter Miami teammate Luis Suarez is among five finalists for the Landon Donovan MLS MVP announced on Thursday. The others include Evander from the Portland Timbers, Cucho Hernandez of the Columbus Crew and D.C. United's Christian Benteke, who also won this season's Golden Boot for most goals.

Inter Miami finished the season atop the Eastern Conference standings at 22-4-8 with an MLS-record 74 points, winning the Supporters Shield for best regular-season record.

Despite missing a chunk of games because of injury and national team commitments with Argentina, Messi still led Miami with 20 goals and 16 assists in 19 appearances.

"Yeah, he missed some time this year with us, the Copa America injuries and (for) him able to come back and still have that impact -- I think it was 30-some-odd goal contributions -- he had a great year," Inter Miami goalkeeper Drake Callender said. "There are plenty of other players across the league who had great years as well. ... But the fact that he did what he did this year was pretty amazing."



Suarez, who joined his former Barcelona teammate in Miami this season, had 20 goals and was also a finalist for newcomer of the year. Inter Miami is set to play Atlanta United in the first round of the playoffs starting Friday night.

Evander had 15 goals and 19 assists for the Timbers, who were eliminated from the playoffs in a 5-0 loss to Vancouver in a wildcard match on Wednesday night.

Benteke had 23 goals this season for D.C. United, which was eliminated from playoff contention after a 3-0 loss to Charlotte in the team's final regular-season game.

Hernandez had 19 goals and 14 assists for the Crew, the defending MLS Cup champions. Columbus opens the postseason with a first-round series against the Red Bulls.

The finalists for the league's annu-

al awards earned the highest average votes from MLS club technical staff, league first-team players, and select media members. The other finalists for this season's MLS awards:

Sigi Schmid MLS Coach of the Year: Chris Armas (Colorado Rapids), Gerardo "Tata" Martino (Inter Miami), Wilfried Nancy (Columbus Crew).

Audi Goals Drive Progress Impact Award: Andrew Farrell (New England Revolution), Darlington Nagbe (Columbus Crew), Ilie Sanchez (LAFC).

MLS Comeback Player of the Year: Robin Lod (Minnesota United), Maxi Moralez (New York City), Lewis Morgan (New York Red Bulls).

MLS Defender of the Year: Jordi Alba (Inter Miami), Steven Moreira (Columbus Crew), Jackson Ragen (Seattle Sounders).

MLS Goalkeeper of the Year: Kristijan Kahlina (Charlotte FC), Hugo Lloris (LAFC), Patrick Schulte (Columbus Crew).

MLS Newcomer of the Year: Luca Orellano (FC Cincinnati), Gabriel Pec (LA Galaxy), Luis Suarez (Inter Miami).

MLS Young Player of the Year: Diego Gomez (Inter Miami), Diego Luna (Real Salt Lake), Cristian Olivera (LAFC).



## In brief

### IRSA releases 106,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 106,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 66,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1533.60 feet and was 135.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 35,500 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1193.95 feet, which was 143.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,300 cusecs and 32,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 60,700, 43,900, 43,200 and 11,300 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 13,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Police issue challan slips to 8818 PSVs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police have issued challan slips to 8818 public service vehicles (PSVs) and impounded 1088 during 60 days, said a police spokesman here on Friday. He informed that Rawalpindi district police during a campaign launched on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, Syed Khalid Hamdani took action in accordance with the law against unfit PSVs. He said that police challaned 8818 and imposed fines amounting to over Rs 9.5 million on the rules violators. Police were taking action against unfit PSVs, checking route permits and licenses of the drivers, he added. Legal action was taken against 724 drivers for driving vehicles without licenses, he added. The licenses of 27 drivers found guilty of negligence were cancelled, he said adding, 52 cases were also registered against drivers and the owners of public service vehicles.

### Police arrest 8 suspects

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, illegal weapon holders and other lawbreakers here on Friday arrested eight accused besides recovering over 2.5 kg charas, weapons, ammunition and other items from their possession. A police spokesperson said that R.A.Bazar police arrested Muhammad Ali for having two kg charas while Taxila police rounded up an accused namely Tayyab and recovered 530 grams charas from his possession. Similarly, Airport, Gujar Khan and Jatlai police arrested four accused namely Majid, Yasir, Haider and Umar and recovered four 30 bore pistols, ammunition and other items from their possession. Taxila police also arrested two proclaimed offenders, Muhammad Karzar and Anwar, wanted in two different cases. Separate cases have been registered against all the accused while further investigations are underway.

### 3 stolen vehicles recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Three stolen vehicles had been recovered from an inter-district car lifter Arshad, who was arrested by the Sadr Wah Police after exchange of fire a few days ago, a Rawalpindi Police spokesman said on Friday. The car lifter, who was fleeing in a car stolen from Attock, opened fire on the Sadr Wah Police personnel, who signalled him to stop.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam looking at a Painting of snow leopard in its natural habitat displayed at the wildlife.

## Accurate reporting key to tackling trafficking: Kundi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday emphasised the crucial role of accurate reporting in guiding government actions, particularly in combating Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, where media plays a vital part.

He expressed these views while addressing an interactive session with journalists on media reporting in Trafficking in Persons (TIP), Smuggling of Migrants (SOM) and bonded labor in Pakistan organized by the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO), where he was the chief guest.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi praised SSDO's initiative and called the awareness session a significant effort in addressing Trafficking in persons and forced labor. He said that media reports on Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and the Smuggling of Migrants (SOM) play a critical role in shaping national policies and improving society. "Accurate reporting, based on factual information and current laws, can support the government's efforts in dismantling trafficking networks," he said.

He explained that the police handle cases of internal trafficking with in the country, while the FIA is responsible for investigating cross-border trafficking. The Governor further stressed the importance of protecting the identities and dignity of victims when reporting on these sensitive issues.

He encouraged media professionals to evaluate the actions of law enforcement agencies within the framework of the law to improve their effectiveness. He also said that the media can serve as a bridge between victims and governmental and non-governmental organizations that provide legal aid.

On this occasion, Executive Director of SSDO, Syed Kausar Abbas, expressed his gratitude to Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi and Journalists for attending the event. He highlighted the growing concern of Trafficking in persons (TIP) and bonded labor in Pakistan. Syed Kausar Abbas stressed that to tackle these issues, media and law enforcement agencies must collaborate with a solid strategy. He added that it is very important to fully

implement the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018 to counter this challenge.

During the session, journalists were briefed on national and international laws related to trafficking in persons (TIP). Syed Kausar Abbas informed the participants that Trafficking in persons in Pakistan occurs in two forms, internal trafficking within the country and cross-border trafficking. He said that children under the age of 18 are most vulnerable with child labor and exploitation in commercial sex being widespread. Both men and women, as well as children and transgender's are victims of this exploitation.

Executive Director of SSDO, Syed Kausar Abbas, elaborated on the efforts of law enforcement agencies such as the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Police, Labor departments and child protection institutes that are working against human trafficking. The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018 stipulates that those convicted of human trafficking could face up to seven years in prison, fines up to 1 million rupees, or both.

## IHC orders CDA to fast-track license renewal for Tandoori hotel

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to expedite the license renewal process for the Tandoori Junction hotel in F-7 within seven days.

The court also issued the directions to ensure that the hotel remains operational until the renewal is finalized.

The Chief Justice of Islamabad High Court Justice (IHC) Justice Aamer Farooq, reviewed a petition challenging the recent closure of Tandoori Junction, a private hotel situated in the F-7 sector.

Advocate Qaiser Imam

represented the petitioner Javed Asif, while Directorate of Municipal Administration (MDA) and Municipal Corporation Islamabad (MCI) lawyer Yaqoob Mastoi, Deputy Director of CDA Raheel Junejo, CDA's lawyer Shehryar Tariq appeared before the court.

Petitioner's lawyer, Advocate Qaiser Imam, argued that despite submitting a license renewal application to the CDA, the agency had delayed processing it. Chief Justice Aamer Farooq ordered the CDA to complete the renewal and submit a report within seven days. Meanwhile, the hotel is

allowed to continue operations pending the renewal decision.

Previously, Chief Justice Aamer Farooq criticized the CDA's handling of the matter. He pointed out inconsistencies, noting that the CDA initially sealed Tandoori Junction, labeled it as illegal, and then shut it down. The court has now mandated that the hotel remains open until the next hearing.

The petitioner's lawyer also brought up issues with another hotel, Hill View, claiming that the entire building was constructed without proper approvals under CDA regulations. He urged the court to order its

demolition, arguing that the hotel's structure violates building control rules.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq questioned the CDA's approach and sought clarification on the legal grounds for the closure of the hotel. He also noted irregularities in CDA's notices, describing them as inconsistent. Additionally, Advocate Qaiser Imam raised concerns about the prolonged appointment of the Director General of the Building Control Authority, alleging that his qualifications do not align with the role.

However, the court adjourned the hearing till further orders.

## Romina highlights visual arts' role in wildlife protection

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Friday said that while the climate change impacts grow more frequent and intense, innovative approaches such as painting and visual arts can play a vital role to sensitise policymakers and public about various threats being faced by the wildlife species.

"In the face of escalating threats to wildlife and their habitats, the role of painting and visual art has never been seen more crucial as in today's times of global warming. Artists can effectively use their talents to illuminate the pressing issues surrounding wildlife vulnerability, inspiring action and fostering a deeper connection between communities and the natural world," the PM's climate aide remarked during her keynote address at an inaugural ceremony of the Wildlife Art Exhibition here at the Pakistan National Council of Arts.

Through compelling imagery, artists' role is of unprecedented importance to highlight the beauty and fragility of endangered species and threatened ecosystems for public awareness. Because, paintings and visual have always served as powerful visual narratives that hold the power to effectively engage the public, prompting conversations about the urgent need for conservation.

Romina Khurshid Alam observed that art possesses the unique ability to evoke emotions and cultivate empathy. Therefore, by exhibiting wildlife in their natural habitats, artists can play an effective role to encourage viewers to reflect on the struggles faced by these creatures and the environmental challenges threatening their existence. Art can also help peo-

ple reflect cultural values and perspectives on nature. By amplifying local voices and traditional ecological knowledge, artists contribute to a richer understanding of conservation and the diverse ways communities engage with wildlife, she added.

"Artists are natural storytellers, using their work to convey the interconnectedness of species and ecosystems. Through their paintings, they educate audiences about the impacts of habitat loss, climate change, and pollution, creating a sense of urgency and responsibility," she emphasised.

Highlighting the important role of visual and painting arts in raising a call for action, the arts through their painting and visual artwork not only can enhance awareness but also serve as a call to action. By showcasing the vulnerability of wildlife, artists motivate individuals and communities to participate in conservation efforts and advocacy initiatives, turning concern into meaningful change. She said that art exhibitions showcasing artwork on endangered wildlife and their threatened habitats can also create opportunities for education and advocacy.

"As we confront the urgent challenges facing wildlife and their habitats, the role of painting and visual art remains crucial in raising awareness and inspiring action," she stressed.

The PM's climate aide highlighted that in storytelling through visuals, artists are effectively able to play a vital role, using their work to illustrate the effects of climate change on landscapes, wildlife and human lives. These visual narratives not only highlight the challenges we face but also showcase potential solutions, empowering communities to envision a more sustainable future, she added.

Romina Khurshid Alam remarked, "In a world increasingly split by language and culture, visual arts transcends barriers and communicates complex ideas in an accessible manner, ensuring that diverse audiences can understand and engage with climate issues. This inclusivity is crucial for fostering a global movement toward sustainability."

The PM's climate aide said further that attending today's paintings of threatened wildlife species, their habitats and the climate change-caused risks they face, we can confidentially say that today's artists have become environmentally sensitive and feel the responsibility to communicate for increased need for public response to the environment and adopt a lifestyle that does not harm environment and aggravate climate impacts.

"It's heartening to observe that today's painting and visual artists effectively envision a sustainable future through their work, offering hope and innovative solutions. By presenting optimistic perspectives, painting inspires individuals and communities to take meaningful steps toward environmental stewardship," she emphasized. While addressing the media in her concluding remarks, PM's climate aide Romina Khurshid Alam stressed that while the global community confronts the challenges posed by climate change, the role of painting and visual art in communication and advocacy cannot be overstated. She pledged to play her part with relevant stakeholders including climate artists, activists, advocates, communicators and media to jointly harness the transformative power of art to inspire action, foster understanding and create a sustainable future for all.

## Pakistan to continue supporting depressed Kashmiris until final resolution: Ch Anwar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Parliamentary Secretary for Kashmir Affairs, and Gilgit-Baltistan Ch Anwar Ul Haq on Friday said that Pakistan will continue its support to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) until the final resolution of the dispute in line with the UNSC resolutions and as per aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Talking to APP, he said that the criminal silence of world over the human rights violation, unilateral decision of August 05, 2019, and non-implementation of UN resolutions has been encouraging Indian to continue with its brutal policies. Kashmiri people are

enduring multi-faceted curbs, with their leadership incarcerated and their voice muzzled. However, the ongoing human rights violations cannot dampen the Kashmiris' just struggle, he added. He said it was very unfortunate that Kashmir dispute was still unresolved despite agreed resolutions of UNSC.

He was of the view that India has let loose reign of terror in occupied Kashmir to suppress the Kashmiris' voice and punish them for demanding right to self-determination, while on August 05, 2019, it also revoked special status of Kashmir to pave for settler colonization.

The nightmare that started on October 27, 1947, has

not ended yet for people of Kashmir who are suffering every single day under the occupational forces, he said. Currently, India maintains around one million troops in Kashmir, making it the most militarized zone in the world, he lamented.

He stressed the international community and media to highlight the plight of these defenseless people and hold India accountable for its brutalities and human rights violations in IIOJK.

He said that Pakistan has shown its steadfast support and solidarity with the oppressed Kashmiri brothers and sisters since the beginning of Indian Occupation in 1947.

## Uganda Delegation concludes BISP study visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): A 21-member Ugandan delegation, led by Ms Lucy Nakoye Mbonye, Secretary of Public Service, concluded their four-day study visit to the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) today.

The visit focused on gaining insights into BISP's experiences in social protection. During the visit, the delegation received comprehensive briefings on Pakistan's socio-economic context and BISP's operations, including the evolution of BISP since 2008, Unconditional and Conditional Cash Transfer (UCT and CCT) programs, and the BISP National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER).

They also observed BISP's use of the NSER for adaptive social protection, notably in response to COVID-19 and the 2022 floods. The delegation also visited the BISP Dynamic Registration Center and Nashonuma Health Facilitation Center in Murree to witness firsthand the field operations, including real-time NSER updates and health services for mother and

child beneficiaries.

Ms Lucy Nakoye Mbonye expressed her gratitude to BISP's management for their facilitation and hospitality, commending the organization's dynamic registry, targeted outreach, and efficient digital payment system. She praised BISP's use of technology and data collection and described BISP as a role model for women's empowerment.

She highlighted the importance of coordination among stakeholders, adding, "Through BISP, we can enhance our social protection system to be more inclusive, transparent, and effective in reducing poverty in Uganda."

Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmad congratulated the Ugandan delegation on their successful study tour, expressing hope that Uganda's government will implement or replicate these learning's to strengthen their own social protection programs. He noted, Social protection is our common goal; through mutual collaboration and knowledge exchange, our relationship will strengthen, leading to better outcomes.

## ANF recovers over 81 kg drugs in 13 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 13 operations across the country managed to recover over 81 kg drugs worth more than Rs 10 million and arrested 12 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He informed that 4 kg hashish was recovered from an accused rounded up near a university in Hyderabad. 230 grams hashish was recovered from an accused arrested near Bedra Chowk, Mansehra. The arrested accused confessed to selling drugs to the students of educational institutions.

In another operation, 2.4 kg ice was recovered from a passenger going to

Bahrain at Multan Airport. 16.6 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused held in Gujranwala while 1.4 kg ice was seized from GT Road Gujranwala and an accused was arrested during the operation.

1.5 kg heroin and 500 grams ice were recovered from an accused rounded up near Sabi Road, Quetta. In an operation conducted in Panjgur, 25 kg hashish was recovered.

1.2 kg opium and 12 kg hashish were recovered from two suspects netted near Chungi No. 26 in Islamabad and 10 kg heroin was recovered from vehicle intercepted on M-1 Islamabad.

4.8 kg hashish was seized near Koh-e-Noor Mills Rawalpindi and two accused was nabbed.

1.8 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused held near Express Market in Karachi.

The spokesman informed that 490 grams hashish was recovered from a drug dealer arrested near Fateh Chowk, Hyderabad. 46 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel sent to Karachi from a courier office in RCD Road Hub.

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

## IG orders officials to eliminate crime

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi presided over a crime control meeting at the Central Police Office (CPO) on Friday.

A public relation officer told APP that, the meeting was attended by Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Headquarters Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer, DIG Security Jawad Tariq, and other senior police officers.

He said during the meeting, IGP reviewed the overall crime situation and crime prevention measures in the federal capital.

IG Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi gives necessary directions to the police officers regarding the arrest of accused involved in robbery, murder, street crime, and other cases, as well as obtaining evidence for ongoing investigations. IG Rizvi also issued orders to senior police officers to pay special attention to heinous crimes, street crime, and crime hotspots.

IG emphasized that protecting the lives, property, and honor of citizens in Islamabad is the utmost priority for the Islamabad Police. Moreover, the IG ICT reviewed the overall security situation in the federal capital.

## Early breast cancer diagnosis key to recovery: Dr Ayesha

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ayesha Isani Majeed of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), Department of Radiology on Friday stressed women over 40 to have their yearly mammogram procedure and the regular breast self-examinations to be conscious of their good health.

She said early detection and early diagnosis was the key with 98% recovery rates at the early detection stage, and 27% in advanced stage of the disease.

Yearly mammograms for women over 40 and breast self-examinations, as well as healthy lifestyle, nutritious food and exercise can help bring down the incidence of the disease.

In observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Serena Hotels organized a dedicated awareness session for its employees, aimed at empowering them with knowledge about early detection, diagnosis, and treatment options for breast cancer.

The session featured esteemed medical professionals, Dr. Ayesha Isani Majeed and Dr. Saeeda Yasmin, both are renowned and leading practitioners for breast cancer treatment and diagnosis.

Both the doctors highlighted the importance of early detection and shared details about the state-of-the-art facilities available for mammography, ultrasound, and biopsies. They have also shared important insights into breast cancer detection and treatment, emphasizing the life-saving importance of regular screening and self-examinations.

The session also included a practical demonstration on how to perform self-examinations, a key method in early detection. Employees had the opportunity to engage in testing and consultations with the doctors, further enhancing the session's impact.

Speakers at the session emphasized the organization's commitment to promoting the well-being of its employees and supporting initiatives that empower them through health awareness.

Breast cancer awareness is a vital part of not only women's but men's health, and Serena Hotels is proud to provide this platform where our employees can learn from leading medical professionals.

**Young man reportedly shot dead in Panjshir**  
PANJSHIR (Amu TV): A young man was reportedly shot and killed in Panjshir Province on Friday morning, with sources alleging that Taliban forces were responsible, according to local contacts who spoke with Amu. The incident took place as the young man, identified as Ahmad Faheem, was heading toward the mountains to tend to his livestock, sources said. Mr. Faheem was a shepherd in the Jahr Ali area of Panjshir's Abshar district.

**Afghanistan qualifies to ACC Asia Cup final**  
AL AMERAT (TOLONews): The Afghanistan A Cricket Team secured its place in the final of the ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup 2024 by defeating the India A team in a thrilling match. Winning the toss, the Afghan team chose to bat first. Outstanding performances from opening batsmen Sediqullah Atal and Zubaid Akbari helped set an impressive target of 207 runs for India within the 20-over limit.

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

## Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan urge lifting Kabul from isolation

KABUL (TOLONews): The presidents of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan highlighted the importance of bringing Afghanistan out of global isolation, during the BRICS summit.

Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev stated that Afghanistan's current situation should not be ignored, stressing the importance of addressing the challenges facing the country.

President Mirziyoyev said: "When it comes to global and regional security, we cannot overlook the problem of Afghanistan. Our common task is not to isolate but to help the Afghan people and the country's de facto authorities to address the pressing problems of socio-economic development, peace building and prosperity."

Meanwhile, Kyrgyzstan's President Sadyr Japarov also highlighted the necessity of comprehensive support for Afghanistan and the integration of its economy with global and regional economic systems. He stressed providing foreign assistance to Afghanistan and lifting it out of international isolation.

The Kyrgyz president stated: "As a bordering country, Kyrgyzstan considers it especially important to fully support Afghanistan and the Afghan people towards integrating the country's economy into regional and international economic processes. We cannot leave Afghanistan in international isolation without outside help."

While the Islamic Emirate has not commented on the remarks made by Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan's leaders, it has consistently praised international cooperation aimed at resolving Afghanistan's issues.

"It is necessary to cooperate with one another, particularly the BRICS member countries, which should provide Afghanistan with more political, economic, and military support so that Afghanistan can eventually return to a normal state, meeting the needs of both BRICS and other countries," said Moeen Gul Samkani, a political analyst.

The three-day BRICS summit, attended by leaders from 36 countries and a number of international organizations, started on Tuesday in Kazan, Russia, and concluded late Thursday.

The organization includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Ethiopia.

## China pledges tax exemption for Afghan exports

KABUL (TOLONews): A spokesperson for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that China intends to reduce customs tariffs with Afghanistan to zero.

Zhao Xing, China's ambassador in Kabul, announced in a meeting with Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the deputy prime minister for political affairs, that this measure aims to strengthen cooperation between the two countries.

Hamdullah Fitrat, Deputy Spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, also mentioned that during the meeting the establishment of a new economic corridor through Tajikistan to Afghanistan was stressed.

Fitrat said: "Zhao Xing highlighted that a new economic corridor to Afghanistan will be opened through Tajikistan, and for this purpose, a trilateral meeting between Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and China will be held. Discussions were also held regarding the Wakhan Corridor. Zhao Xing highlighted Afghanistan's recent progress and stated that China intends to invest in Afghanistan."

Meanwhile, the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment reported that currently, approximately \$1 billion in trade is conducted annually with China, and zeroing customs tariffs would be beneficial for Afghanistan.

"After Iran, we have substantial trade with China, with approximately \$800 million in imports and around \$50 million in exports annually. Although exports are limited, China remains one of our key trade partners. Most of our imports from China consist of food products and raw materials for factories," said Khan Jan Alokozay, a member of the board of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment.

Several businesspeople also stressed China's importance as a major economic partner for Afghanistan in recent years, noting that Chinese investment would positively impact Afghanistan's economic growth and development.

"China is beneficial for us and plays a positive role in the region, especially economically. We should establish a direct route with China, which is the Wakhan route," said Mohammad Nabi Afghan, an economic analyst.

Statistics from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce indicate that Afghanistan's trade with China from January to September 2024 was valued at \$548 million, of which \$12 million was exports.



## Expanded relations discussed with Uzbekistan delegation

KABUL (TOLONews): An Uzbekistan delegation, led by the country's Minister of Hajj and Religious Affairs, recently visited Kabul and met with Abdul Salam Hanafi, the Administrative Deputy of the Prime Minister's Office.

According to a statement from the Arg, discussions during this meeting included various topics, particularly the expansion of relations between Kabul and Tashkent. The delegation arrived in Kabul on Wednesday and has since engaged in talks with various officials of the Islamic Emirate.

Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, said, "The Uzbekistan delegation shared information about Uzbekistan's progress in cultural, religious, and educational sectors."

Based on the statement from the Arg, the Administrative Deputy of the Prime Minister's Office regarded the visit of Uzbekistan's religious scholars as a sign of friendship, close neighborhood ties, and shared interests between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. He added that this visit provides opportunities to establish new cooperation between the two countries based on existing commonalities.

Meanwhile, several political analysts consider these visits by delegations from different countries beneficial for Afghanistan.

Salim Paigir, a political analyst, said, "The more interactions we have with Uzbekistan, and vice versa, the more we can use these engagements for the benefit of the Afghan people, and Uzbekistan can also help strengthen our positive relations with the world."

Zalmay Afghanyar, another political analyst, added, "Uzbekistan has maintained good economic and political relations with Afghanistan since the establishment of the Islamic Emirate. The arrival of these scholars can serve as a turning point in relations between Afghanistan and Central Asian countries."

Earlier, a Malaysian delegation led by a representative of the Malaysian Prime Minister visited Kabul on 4th of Saur (solar calendar) and met with various officials of the Islamic Emirate.



## UN Reaffirms commitment to support Afghanistan in crisis

KABUL (TOLONews): Roza Otunbayeva, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, emphasized during an event in Kabul marking the 79th anniversary of the United Nations that the UN is committed to supporting the people of Afghanistan during times of crisis.

Otunbayeva said that the UN has been a long-standing partner of Afghanistan for several decades, striving to assist the Afghan people in achieving peace, security, and development.

The UN Special Representative added that UNAMA will continue its constructive engagement and goodwill to identify mutual areas of interest in order to build trust through the Doha process and support Afghanistan's economic sectors.

Roza Otunbayeva said: "We will continue to do so, including with our presence here throughout the country, at the Kabul level, through the Doha process. In near future, through working groups, on two key areas of concern for ordinary Afghans, first, it's supporting the transition from an opium economy for thousands of farmers, and helping the private sector..."

The UN Special Representative also said: "Since the establishment of UNAMA in 2002, we have worked tirelessly in a challenging context to support the Afghan people in their cases for peace, security, and development."

The United Nations was founded on October 24, 1945, and now has 193 member countries. In 1947, the UN General Assembly declared October 24 as United Nations Day.

## Muttaqi highlights infrastructure and drug eradication efforts



KABUL (TOLONews): Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, speaking at a graduation ceremony at the Institute of Diplomacy, emphasized that some joint exhibitions have been held both inside and outside the country to promote economic and commercial growth.

Muttaqi said that work on the TAPI, TAP, and fiber optic projects has begun, and work on the Trans-Afghan and CASA-1000 projects will also start in the near future.

He emphasized that "major projects such as TAPI, TAP, and fiber optics have commenced, with the Trans-Afghan and CASA-1000 projects set to start soon." Muttaqi also noted enhanced efforts to improve electricity production and to restore dams and water check-dams across 400 districts in Afghanistan.

Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, said that the government is focused on creating job opportunities for citizens and reducing poverty, aiming to prevent citizens from migrating abroad for work.

Muttaqi further highlighted that Afghanistan's drug production has sharply decreased, nearing zero.

## Taliban claim UK envoy pledged not to support anti-Taliban groups

KABUL (Amu TV): Taliban released a statement on Friday claiming that Robert Dickson, the U.K. chargé d'affaires for Afghanistan, assured them that Britain would not permit activities by anti-Taliban groups within its borders.

According to the statement, Abdul Kabir, the Taliban's deputy prime minister, met with Dickson in Kabul on Thursday evening.

The Taliban quoted Dickson as stating that Britain would continue its cooperation in areas such as humanitarian aid and climate initiatives. The British diplomat also reportedly described the Taliban's recent participation in the third Doha meeting as "valuable," according to the Taliban's account.

While the Taliban's statement provided few details about additional bilateral discussions, it mentioned that Dickson proposed holding further meetings on issues requiring joint deliberation.

Taliban claimed that Britain was working to open pathways for improved relations between their administration and the international community.

Neither Dickson nor the British Embassy has commented on the reported meeting. During the conversation, Taliban said that Kabir asserted that they are "fully committed" to upholding human rights in Afghanistan and adhering to their stated obligations. Britain, however, remains one of the most outspoken critics of Taliban policies, particularly concerning women's rights. British representatives at the United Nations have frequently condemned the Taliban's restrictions on women and girls, including the ongoing ban on girls' education.



## Construction of 540M AFN Commercial Complex underway

BAGHLAN (BNA): The construction of a major commercial market is progressing in Pul-e-Khumri, the provincial capital of Baghlan, with a total investment of 540 million Afghanis.

During a formal ceremony marking the commencement of the project, Baghlan Governor Mawlawi Abdul Rahman Haqqani commended the initiative of local investors for their commitment to Afghanistan's economic growth.

He encouraged further investment from the business community, emphasizing the need to generate employment opportunities for Afghan youth within the country, thereby reducing their reliance on seeking work abroad.

Governor Haqqani stressed that the completion of such significant projects would pave the way for Afghanistan's economic independence, lessening the country's reliance on foreign aid and boosting its path to self-sufficiency.

In parallel, Mawlawi Abdul Latif Mazloom, Mayor of Pul-e-Khumri, outlined other urban development projects underway, including the construction of roads in six municipal districts. He announced that work on another commercial market, located to the south of the city's central square, would soon begin, promising additional infrastructure enhancements for the community.

Supporting these efforts, Haji Saleh Mohammad, head of Pul-e-Khumri market, urged the contracted company to expedite the construction process to provide merchants and business owners with improved facilities as soon as possible.

According to the Pul-e-Khumri municipality, the new commercial market will cover an area of 10,000 square meters and will be built across six floors. The project, funded with an investment of 540 million Afghanis, is set to accommodate 1,200 shops upon completion.



## Afghanistan's U-17 team qualifies for 2025 Asian Cup

KABUL (Amu TV): Afghanistan's under-17 national soccer team secured a spot in the 2025 Asian Cup after a decisive 3-1 victory over Cambodia on Friday, marking a historic milestone for Afghan youth soccer.

Afghanistan opened the scoring in the first half with a goal from Yasser Safi, setting the team on a strong course. Additional goals from Waris Shirzai and Arash Ahmadi solidified the win, with all three players making key contributions to the victory.

The Afghanistan Football Federation celebrated the achievement, calling it a "historic qualification" for the under-17 team in the prestigious Asian Cup tournament.

The game took place in Cambodia, which also hosted Afghanistan's earlier matches in the qualifying rounds. In these matches, the Afghan team defeated the Philippines 8-0 and Macau 9-0, as they advance to the continental championship.



# Financial autonomy play vital role in uplift: CM KP

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, stated that the provincial government is working towards implementing revolutionary reforms in social sectors like education and health to actualize the vision of a welfare state, inspired by the concept of a "State of Madinah," as envisioned by Imran Khan.

He emphasized that self-reliance and financial autonomy play a vital role in a nation's development, and achieving this goal is our mission. He noted that there is no shortage of resources and talent in the province, but the real challenge lies in setting the right priorities. To move forward, we need to promote merit, justice, and a spirit of sacrifice within ourselves.

He expressed these views while addressing the certificate distribution ceremony of the first batch of a six-week specialized training course for nurses at Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar. The course was jointly conducted by a consortium of British universities, the Department of Health, and KMU. Senator Shibli Faraz, Central Leader of PTI; Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi; Health Advisor Ihtesham Ali; Provincial Minister for Sports and Tourism Syed Fakhir Jahan; KMU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq; Dr. Ijaz Hussain; Special Secretary Health; Registrar

Inamullah Wazir, as well as heads of various institutions, faculty members, and students, were also present at the ceremony.

Ali Amin Gandapur stressed that youth are our asset, and equipping them with modern knowledge and training is our responsibility. Preparing the young generation to meet future challenges and compete in the international market is crucial. He stated that individuals serving in the health and education sectors, including teachers, doctors, paramedics, and nurses, are our true heroes. He praised KMU for its commendable contributions to research, education, and training across various health disciplines. He added that any space required for the establishment of new institutes at KMU would be provided immediately upon identification.

Ali Amin Gandapur emphasized that the concept of a welfare state introduced by Imran Khan is based on social justice, and without a system of accountability, merit, and justice, collective national progress cannot be achieved. He highlighted the need for medical staff to view their service in remote areas of the province as a national duty and a challenge.

Gandapur stated that building a nation requires sacrifices, and we must be prepared to give up our comfort today for the benefit of future generations. He emphasized the importance of teamwork, adding that no task can be completed alone. Only

by embodying selflessness and compassion can we alleviate the suffering of humanity. Highlighting the vital role of nurses in hospitals, he noted that patients spend most of their time with nurses, and if they possess both professional skills and a spirit of service, patients will receive better care and treatment.

The Chief Minister praised the launch of the project to train over 500 nurses professionally, describing it as a promising step. He noted that after the successful completion of this project, it would be expanded to include the private sector, with trained nurses becoming master trainers to assist in further training. He stressed the need for reform in the education system to align it with market requirements, assuring that the provincial government would provide guidance and support to universities in this endeavor.

Earlier, in his inaugural speech, KMU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq elaborated on the university's various educational and research programs, the transparent conduct of the MDCAT, admissions on merit in public and private medical and dental colleges, and the interest and importance of students in allied health sciences, as well as KMU's initiatives in these areas. Dr. Ijaz Hussain, Coordinator of the Nursing Training Program, also spoke on the occasion. Chief Minister KP Ali Amin Gandapur also planted a sapling in KMU lawn.



BEIRUT: People inspecting the damage at the site of an Israeli air strike that targeted an area where a number of journalists were located in Hasbaniya, southern Lebanon.

## FO clears air on backdoor diplomacy between Pak-India

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch addressing rumors of backdoor diplomacy between Pakistan and India, Baloch firmly denied such claims, it reports in media. She emphasized, "There is no truth in the news of backdoor diplomacy between Pakistan and India."

The spokesperson clarified that Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar's recent visit to Pakistan was solely for the SCO Conference, where only formal talks took place. Baloch announced that at the government's special invitation, Palestinian students will be allowed to complete their medical education in Pakistan.

The initiative comes in response to significant educational losses suffered by Gaza's medical students during recent tensions. Baloch noted that Palestinian students have previously studied in Pakistan and highlighted the commitment to support their education during these challenging times.

## Senate session adjourned amid lack of quorum

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Senate of Pakistan was adjourned Friday to meet again on October 28 (Monday) at 3 pm for lack of quorum.

As the session of the House resumed after a two-day break, question hour was underway when lack of quorum was pointed out, PPP Senator Saleem Mandviwalla who was presiding over the sitting adjourned the House for reconvening after 30 minutes. Later, as the House reconvened, the quorum was again pointed out, the count was made but the House was not in order, forcing the Chair to adjourn the session till Monday.

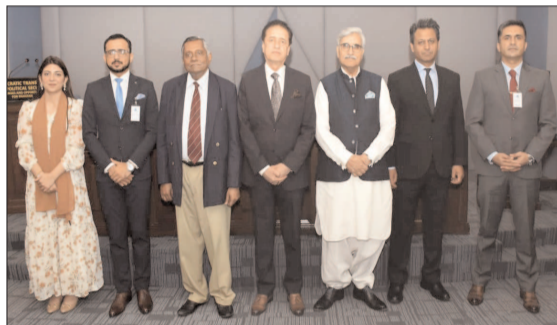
# CASS holds seminar on national security

**F.P. Report**

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a seminar titled "Democratic Transition and Political Security: Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan" on 17 October 2024. Ameer Abdullah Khan, a Senior Researcher at CASS Lahore, opened the seminar by highlighting the nexus between political and national security.

Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, President PILDAT, delivered the keynote address, outlining Pakistan's political landscape from the perspectives of Islamic identity, political autonomy, institutional balance, and parliamentary democracy. He praised the drafting of a robust constitution and the institutionalisation of a vigorous election commission as important milestones in Pakistan's democratic consolidation. He also analysed the parliament, political parties, and institutional balance as determinants of Pakistan's political security.

Fahad Hussain, President Aik News, provided a compelling analysis of the factors shaping Pakistan's political security. He discussed the role of



provincial, demographic, and political fault lines, misinformation and fake news being spread through social media, and the influence of bloodlines visible in the form of dynastic politics and elite privileges in determining Pakistan's political stability.

Professor Dr Moonis Ahmer mentioned authoritarian mindset, corruption, nepotism, non-professional nature of political parties, and marginal role of education and youth as major factors of democratic fragility. He accentuated the importance of political pluralism, institutional dedication to the political process, and press freedom as avenues to political security.

The seminar concluded with closing remarks by Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President CASS, Lahore who said that

Pakistan's path to democracy has been anything but easy.

He highlighted that Pakistan's democratic future relies on a stable political process, robust institutions, and active participation from civil society. President CASS emphasised that adherence to the Constitution, serves as the nation's guiding light and Pakistan must learn from its past and use these lessons to build a better future.

The seminar provided an important platform for dialogue on Pakistan's democratic journey and the relationship between political transition and security. It laid the groundwork for future discussions on democratic consolidation, political security, and the role of emerging generations in shaping Pakistan's political future.

# Pashtoons have made great sacrifices: DG ISPR

**Syed Adnan**

PESHAWAR: Director-General Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry engaged in a comprehensive session at Kohat Garrison Cadet College with educators, students, cadets, and civil society members from various institutions across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During the session, DG ISPR addressed Pakistan Army's role in the current security environment and highlighted key security challenges.

DG ISPR elaborated on the measures taken by the Pakistan Army to counter threats on the eastern and western borders of the country, while also providing insights into ongoing operations by security forces against insurgents. He emphasized the need for students, teachers, and civil society to play a proactive role in countering social media propaganda.

Lieutenant General Chaudhry praised the resilience of the Pashtun community, acknowledging their long-standing sacrifices for the nation. He emphasized that the Pakistan Army holds great respect for Pashtoons, who have always stood at the forefront in defending Pakistan's sover-

eighty. He also recognized the significant contributions of the Pashtun community in the country's mainstream development, highlighting their dedication to promoting peace and progress.

Attendees expressed their gratitude, noting the sacrifices of the Pakistan Army and other security agencies in maintaining peace throughout the country. Participants voiced their unity with the Pakistan Army in the fight against elements attempting to destabilize the nation. In a gesture of respect, they presented DG ISPR with a traditional shawl, cap, and turban upon his arrival in Kohat.

## Sindh govt allocated Rs20b for Hari Card: Sharjeel

**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the political upheaval in the country has now come to an end. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and President Asif Ali Zardari had already directed the Sindh government to focus on public welfare and provide relief to the people. Recently, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah visited Karachi and inaugurated six projects in a single day. The Pakistan People's Party government in Sindh has delivered exemplary services across all sectors.

Addressing a press conference at the Directorate of Social and Electronic Media in Karachi, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon, announced that a 2,320 MW solar project has been completed at Dow Medical Campus, Karachi Central Jail has also been fully solarized. Provincial Energy Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah and his team at the Energy Department are actively working on solarization initiatives across various districts in the province, with ongoing projects for 656 schools and 211 rural health centers.

He stated that the Sindh government's priority is to provide electricity to the people of the province through alternative and affordable energy sources. In line with Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's vision, solar systems are being provided to 200,000 families in Sindh, allowing them to enjoy a lifetime of electricity without monthly bills. While negativity is often highlighted, the positive work happening across the country also deserves attention. Bilawal Bhutto issued the Hari Card, and a Labor Card was introduced during the previous government. Additionally, 2.1 million people are being provided with new homes, and these positive developments should be emphasized.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that Pakistan is an agricultural country, and in recognition of this, the Sindh government has allocated 20 billion rupees through the Hari Card. He emphasized that



every beneficial project initiated by the Sindh government sets a precedent, often inspiring similar initiatives in other provinces.

He stated that in the transport sector, double-decker buses are being introduced in Karachi, and work on the Yellow Line BRT is progressing rapidly. The Sindh government launched Pakistan's first eco-friendly EV buses, the Pink Bus Service. Plans are also underway to introduce EV taxis, with separate services for men and women.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon noted that there were issues with the Red Line BRT project, as not a single brick had been laid in the monitoring setup, causing difficulties for the public. Additionally, the Excise Department has initiated online registration and transfer of vehicles. He emphasized that all departments of the Sindh government are performing effectively.

He stated that the 26th Constitutional Amendment was passed by a two-thirds majority with the consensus of all parliamentary parties. All political parties demonstrated agreement on this matter; when Maulana Fazlur Rehman presented the draft, PTI expressed its approval of it.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the People's Party had faced severe retribution from certain members of the judiciary, yet it has never conducted campaigns against anyone. He emphasized that

the new Chief Justice and all honorable judges are respected. However, after the passage of the 26th Constitutional Amendment, PTI has resumed its campaign against the PPP. The public still recalls the founder of PTI supporting General Musharraf and reciting praises for Bajwa Sahib. When in power, they are unmatched in flattery and compromise. Imran Khan even told General Bajwa he was willing to extend his tenure if it would save his government.

He stated that Israeli media is campaigning in favor of the mentioned party, supporting the late Dr. Israr Ahmed's assertion that it was launched by Israel. Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon remarked that this is not merely a political accusation; he believes Imran Khan to be a project of Israel. He added that causing division among brothers, polarizing the population, and increasing social discord is being strategically achieved through social media. Actions under "Project Goldsmith" or "Mission Goldsmith" are detrimental to Pakistan. Furthermore, at the time of Imran Khan's arrest, an Israeli envoy expressed full sympathy regarding his detention.

He stated that the Pakistan People's Party has made the greatest sacrifices for Pakistan in every challenging time. The People's Party honors all its martyrs, emphasizing that it has made unparalleled contributions to the nation.

# Prime Minister's Relief Fund for Gaza and Lebanon



## Government & People of Pakistan Determined to Support Gaza & Lebanon in this Turmoil



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