

Earthquake hits KP F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A 5.3-magnitude earthquake struck several areas of KP, including Peshawar, on Wednesday, sending tremors across various cities. The tremors were reported in Peshawar, Charsadda, Mardan, Nowshera, Abbottabad, Malakand, Kohat, Buner, Chitral, Dir, Mohmand, Bajaur and Swat. The epicentre was located in the Hindukush region of the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border.



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BAKU: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meeting with President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev on the sidelines of COP-29 Climate Action Summit.

4 terrorists including ring leader killed in IBO

F.P. Report

RAWALPIND (APP): Security Force killed four terrorists including a high value target, terrorist ring leader Sana @ Baru in intelligence based operation (IBO) on Tuesday night in general area Balgatar of Kech District on reported presence of terrorists.

"During conduct of the operation, after an intense fire exchange between own troops and the terrorists, four terrorists including a High Value Target, Terrorist ring leader Sana @ Baru were killed," said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release. "He was a focal recruitment agent, especially suicide bombers, for so called Majeed Brigade in District Kech and was highly wanted by the Law Enforcement Agencies," it further said.

Weapons and ammuni-

tion were also recovered from the terrorists. "Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area. Security Forces of Pakistan, in step with Nation, remain determined to thwart attempts of sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan," it added. Pakistan's cuisine

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday paid tribute to security forces for a successful intelligence-based operation against terrorists in District Kech, Balochistan. The president and prime minister lauded the bravery and professionalism of the security forces for killing four terrorists including a high value target in the operation.

The president said that they would never allow terrorists to disrupt progress,

prosperity and law and order of Balochistan province. The entire nation lauded the contributions of security forces for peace and stability in the province, he added. President Zardari reiterated the commitment to continue operations till eradication of menace of terrorism, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister said those disrupting law and order would have to pay a very heavy price. He said that they would continue to foil the nefarious designs of terrorists as the entire nation was standing shoulder to shoulder with their security forces. The fight against terrorists would continue till terrorism was completely rooted out from the country, PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying.

Pakistan briefs IMF on BISP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani officials, currently engaged in talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) team, have briefed the visitors about the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

It reported that officials have informed the Fund that during the first four months of the ongoing financial year (FY), despite financial difficulties, timely provision of aid to the deserving people has been ensured. Sources have further said that the IMF officials are satisfied with the government's briefing.

On arrival, Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb welcomed the delegation, which was led by Mission Chief Nathan Porter. Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik, the Governor of the State Bank, the Chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), and senior finance ministry officials were also in attendance. The finance minister briefed the IMF delegation on Pakistan's current economic situation and highlighted key developments that took place in the first fiscal quarter. The IMF team had reached Islamabad on Monday to hold a five-day loan assessment talks with Pakistani authorities. The talks are set to continue until November 15 (Friday).

SC issues cause list

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has released a cause list for the constitutional bench, which is scheduled to hear cases on Nov 14 and 15. On Nov 14, the court will hear 18 cases, while 16 cases are set for Nov 15.

Key cases include a petition to remove former president Arif Alvi and another requesting to reschedule the 2024 general elections to the first week of March instead of February. Additionally, hearings will address a petition to disqualify assembly members with overseas businesses and assets, as well as a petition to ban government officials from marrying foreigners. The six-member bench, led by Justice Aminuddin Khan will oversee the proceedings starting today (Thursday).

Meanwhile, the pollution is no longer an issue confined to Lahore alone as it has reached as far as Islamabad where the air quality index (AQI) was recorded at 210 on Wednesday, making the city hazardous for people's health.

Trump meets with Biden at White House

WASHINGTON: US President-elect Donald Trump returned triumphantly to Washington on Wednesday and walked into the White House for the first time in four years to meet with outgoing President Joe Biden.

Biden invited Trump for the traditional visit — a show of the coming Jan. 20 peaceful transfer of power in the American democracy between the current US leader and the incoming chief executive. But the Biden-Trump get-together is rife with political tension.

Biden, a Democrat running for reelection, had sought to defeat Trump, the Republican, for a second time before ending his campaign in July after he faltered badly in a debate against him. Biden quickly endorsed his vice president, Kamala Harris, to succeed him, but Trump swept through seven political battleground states in the election and easily defeat-

ed her. When Biden defeated Trump in 2020, Trump offered no White House invitation to meet him ahead of the inauguration and then left Washington two hours before Biden's swearing-in on the steps of the US Capitol.

Trump, who to this day claims falsely that he was cheated out of winning the 2020 election by vote fraud, was the first president to not witness his successor's inauguration since Andrew Johnson skipped the swearing-in of Ulysses S. Grant in 1869. Trump also met with Republican lawmakers in the House of Representatives. Republicans hold a narrow majority in the chamber in the current Congress and are nearing a slight majority control in the Congress set to be sworn in Jan. 3, but the outcome of more than a dozen seats remains uncertain.

Trump has moved quickly to fill

his nascent administration with Republican officials who have been the most politically loyal to him in the four years he was out of office. He has sought to fill several key defense and national security positions, including Pete Hegseth, a Fox News host and veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, to be his next defense secretary. The choice of Hegseth was outside the norm of those usually named as the Pentagon leader. But he was a vocal supporter of Trump during his first term, embracing his "America First" agenda of trying to withdraw US troops from abroad and often taking up the cause of combat veterans accused of war crimes.

Trump has also announced South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem as his choice for Homeland Security chief, picked John Ratcliffe as the director of the CIA and, according to news accounts, settled on Florida Senator

Marco Rubio as secretary of state, the country's top diplomat. Both Rubio and Noem were on Trump's short list of possible vice-presidential running mates several months ago. While Trump later picked first-term Ohio Senator JD Vance, now the vice president-elect, to join him on the Republican national ticket, both Rubio and Noem remained Trump stalwarts as he won the election.

Ratcliffe was the nation's sixth director of national intelligence, serving for the last eight months of the Trump administration after a rocky confirmation process. Trump also announced that billionaire businessman Elon Musk and entrepreneur and former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy will lead what he called the Department of Government Efficiency. The announcement said they would provide advice and guidance to "drive

large-scale structural reform" of the federal government.

The acronym for the new agency, DOGE, is a nod to Musk's favorite cryptocurrency, dogecoin. Other notable picks by Trump include William McGinley as White House Counsel, Florida Congressman Michael Walz as national security adviser and Thomas Homan, former acting immigration chief, to be "border czar" to head efforts to deport undocumented migrants living in the United States.

Just ahead of the election, Trump, who only rarely publicly admits making any mistakes, told podcaster Joe Rogan that his biggest error during his term from 2017 to 2021 was hiring "bad people or disloyal people." "I picked some people that I shouldn't have picked," he said. Some of the top officials Trump chose then, including former chief of staff John Kelly and

national security adviser John Bolton, became sharp public Trump critics after he ousted them. Kelly said during this year's campaign that Trump met the definition of a fascist ruler. Trump attacked both former officials, calling Kelly "a bully but a weak person" and disparaging Bolton as "an idiot."

Rubio sparred sharply with Trump during their 2016 run for the Republican presidential nomination, which Trump captured enroute to his first term as president. Rubio mocked Trump as having small hands and sporting an orange spray tan, while Trump derided Rubio as "little Marco." But Rubio, like numerous other one-time Trump critics, was a staunch Trump supporter in this year's campaign. In recent years, Rubio has proved to be an outspoken foreign policy hawk, taking hard lines on US relations with China, Iran, Venezuela and Cuba. — VoA

CTD eliminates 3 terrorists F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a joint operation of Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Mardan and Malakand, three terrorists were eliminated in Palai area of Malakand district, CTD Spokesman informed on Wednesday. The action taken on intelligence-based information in Shahkot Khugdar area of Palai in the vicinity of Bazaizi police station in Malakand district.

At COP29, Pakistan calls for grant-based climate finance

PM praises Pak-Azerbaijan strong ties

BAKU (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday sensitizing the global community on the risks posed by climate change and the vulnerabilities of developing countries, called for grant-based climate finance that should not add to the debt burden of the developing nations.

The prime minister, addressing the High-Level Segment of the "World Leaders' Climate Action Summit" of the 29th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29) here, called for fulfilling the pledges of COP27 and COP28 as well as those made in Paris 10 years ago.

"I strongly feel, that climate finance must be grant-based and not add to the debt burden of vulnerable developing countries. Here is the opportunity that the COP29 should make an understanding loud and clear that we will have to fulfill those financial pledges of COP27 and COP28... Ten years ago in Paris, we had failed to stop the rise in emissions and catastrophic global warming. The Paris pledges made 10 years ago have yet to see the light of the day," the prime minister said.

He viewed that the COP29 would help understand the calamities already faced by some of the countries and others might face if counter-measures were not taken to create a conducive environment to avert calamities like the one faced by Pakistan in the form of 2022 floods which left millions of the people homeless, millions of house and acre of land submerged, standing crops destroyed, and almost 1700 people dead. Besides, the country also faced an economic loss worth around \$30 billion, he added.

Highlighting the devastation faced by the people of Pakistan caused by the climate change-induced floods in 2022, Prime Minister Shehbaz recalled his interaction with a boy Ikramullah in the flood-hit Balochistan who had lost everything to the calamity including his home, school, and entire village.

"My memories are still fresh. I was meeting with people in Balochistan who were affected by the flood. I met a boy by the name of Ikramullah

whose entire village was razed on the face of the earth, his home completely demolished and his school submerged," the prime minister said. He said as the government had arranged the said boy's education in another part of the country, he was now becoming a very productive hand of Pakistan. However, even all-out efforts could not subdue the sufferings of all flood-hit children in Pakistan or any other part of the world, he added. To meet the needs of the populations hit by the impacts of climate change and avert such devastations in the future, Prime Minister Shehbaz reiterated his call for the fulfillment of the pledges made in previous COP summits.

He told the gathering of heads of state and government that Pakistan was one of those countries that hardly contributed half a percent of global emissions but was among the most vulnerable countries at risk of similar devastations. "Without climate justice, there can be no real resilience and I don't want other countries to face what Pakistan faced in 2022. Pakistan is a resilient, hardworking and responsible nation. We are fully committed to becoming part of the

global climate solutions," he assured.

Prime Minister Shehbaz told the summit that his government had taken concrete actions to deliver on its commitment to producing 60% of all energy from clean sources and shifting 30% of vehicles to Electric Vehicles (EVs) by the end of this decade. At the same time, Pakistan is going through a renewable energy revolution, he said and also mentioned the presentation of a comprehensive National Adaptation Plan last year and the National Carbon Market Framework this year.

"But we cannot do it alone. Pakistan needs international support to deliver on its climate ambition. The developing countries will need an estimated \$6.8 trillion by 2030 to meet at least half their NDCs... We believe that COP29 can transform into Finance COP by restoring confidence in scaling up climate finance," he remarked. "Two years ago, I warned that the future would never forgive inaction. Today, I echo that warning with greater urgency and the fullest energy. We know the causes. We know the solutions. Now, we must find the courage to act and act swiftly," he urged.

PM departs for Pakistan

BAKU (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday left for Pakistan after wrapping up his three-day official visit to Azerbaijan. At Baku airport, Azerbaijan's Minister for Justice Farid Ahmadov bid farewell to the prime minister, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During his visit, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif attended the COP-29 Climate Action Summit and apprised the world leaders, participating in the conference, about the difficulties faced by climate change adversely affected Pakistan. He also emphasized on the fulfillment of global economic commitments over the climate change by those countries historically responsible for the environmental pollution.

The prime minister hosted the Climate Finance Roundtable conference on behalf of Pakistan and stressed upon the fulfillment of global economic commitments regarding climate change. He also attended a high-level event organized by Tajikistan on the conservation of glaciers and highlighted Pakistan's initiatives for the protection of glaciers and water resources.

'No turning back this time', says Gandapur

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Hours after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan issued a "final call" for protest in Islamabad on November 24 against the ruling coalition, firebrand Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur said that there would be no "turning back" this time until the fulfillment of their demands.

PTI leadership would join the protest and everyone knew his role very well. The authority to call off the protest would be rested with an empowered committee while KP CM Ali Amin Gandapur would also reach Islamabad with the party workers.

Meanwhile, Aleema Khan also confirmed that Imran Khan gave the final protest call in Islamabad on Nov 24. Aleema Khan, said that Imran had set the date of November 24 for starting the anti-government movement.

Speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi, she said that the PTI founder had said this was the time for the

nation to decide whether it wanted freedom or to live under a military dictatorship. "Everybody be it a PTI voter, MNA, MPA or people belonging to different professions has to take this decision." "The situation the country is going through these days makes it obligatory on each and every citizen to come out on the roads for the protection of his or her rights.

This is a matter that concerns our future generations. People will have to take to streets for the rule of law, democracy and getting back the mandate stolen from the PTI following the February 8 elections," Aleema said while quoting her brother.

Sharjeel directs authorities to expedite BRT construction



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has directed the authorities to accelerate the construction work on the Red Line and Yellow Line BRT projects.

A high-level meeting of the Department of Transport and Mass Transit was held in Karachi, chaired by the Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, Mass Transit, Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon.

Transport Secretary Asad Zamin,

Managing Director of the Sindh Mass Transit Authority Kamal Dayo, consultants, contractors, and senior officials attended the meeting.

The progress on the Red Line and Yellow Line BRT projects was reviewed. During the meeting, Minister Memon instructed that the ongoing construction work on both BRT lines be expedited, emphasizing that these modern BRTs will bring significant relief to the city's residents.

He stated that there can be no compromise on the quality of work. The purpose of the Sindh government is to provide the public with

low prices and modern means of travel at the earliest possible time.

Senior Minister Memon stressed that efforts should be made to complete both BRT projects ahead of schedule to benefit the public, the completion of these projects will make travel easier for citizens and benefit millions.

He noted that all parties are actively working to ensure the projects' timely and successful completion. These projects are a top priority for the Sindh government, and their timely completion will bring considerable relief to millions of people.

Arrangements finalized for LG polls: PEC

KARACHI (APP): Provincial Election Commissioner Sindh Sharifullah on Wednesday said all arrangements for holding Local Bodies by-election on Thursday (Novemehr 14) in which voters will exercise their right of franchise.

As many as 173 candidates are contesting for different vacant seats of chairmen, vice chairmen, general councilors and district council members, PEC said while addressing a press conference at his office.

Sharifullah said out of 77 vacant seats, 41 candidates had already elected unopposed while nominations had not been filed on 4 vacant seats. He said for 32 vacant seats.

PEC said all arrangement were finalized for holding Local Bodies by-elections in different districts of Sindh including Karachi. As many as 433,951 voters will exercise right to vote for 32 vacant seats. Out of 32 vacant seats, 11 chairmen, 6 vice-chairmen, 13 general Councilors and 2 members of the district council will be elected by the voters, PEC said and added that total 271 polling stations have been set up, including 48 polling stations for men, 45 for women and 178 combined polling stations.

Regarding security arrangements, Sharifullah said that out of 271 polling stations, 213 were declared as highly sensitive, 47 as sensitive and 11 normal. He said more security personnel will be deployed at highly sensitive and sensitive polling stations as per requirement. He expressed hope that the voting process will be peaceful and smooth.

CM, Fed Maritime Minister vow to address fishermen issues

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Federal Minister for Maritime Qaiser Shaikh, during their meeting, discussed addressing fishermen's issues, tackling sea pollution and plans to develop Ketu Bandar as a new port.

According to CM House statement, meeting held here at the Chief Minister's House on Wednesday and was attended by Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh and Chairman Port Qasim Rear Admiral Nasir Shah.

The Chief Minister noted that provincial government has banned sensitive fishing nets, known as Bulloo and Gujo.

However, the matter of determining which government-issued licenses to trawlers remains unresolved.

To tackle the trawlers' issue, the Chief Minister and the federal minister agreed to form a joint committee comprising members from the Maritime Ministry, as well as the governments of Sindh and Balochistan.

They also discussed the problem of untreated wastewater being discharged into the sea, which contributes to sea pollution. In response, the CM said that Sindh government has initiated the West Karachi Water Recycling Project. Murad Shah and Qaiser Shaikh discussed the installation of a Combined Effluent Treatment Plant, agreeing that both provincial and federal governments should collaborate on this project.

During the conversa-

tion, it was noted that Karachi Port Trust and Port Qasim currently handle sea traffic. However, there is an increasing need for another deep port, such as Ketu Bandar, to help alleviate some of this load. Ketu Bandar Road has connectivity to the National Highway and motorway, facilitating efficient transportation of goods to inland areas.

The Chief Minister stated that the Ketu Bandar project was initially approved as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects but has not been pursued for unspecified reasons.

The federal minister expressed his intention to discuss the issue within his ministry and seek a private partner to establish the port.

No load-shedding at exam centers: LESCO

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) will ensure uninterrupted power supply at the examination centres during examinations, being conducted under the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE).

The company's spokesmen told media here Wednesday that on the instructions of LESCO Chief Executive Officer Engineer Shahid Haider, the Chief Engineer (Operations) Abbas Ali has completed the arrangements for uninterrupted supply of electricity during the board of intermediate examinations. Abbas Ali also instructed the relevant staff not to do load-shedding on the feeders of examination centers from 9 am to 12 noon and from 2 pm to 5:30 pm so that students and examination staff do not face any problem.

The spokesmen further informed the media that LESCO is also taking strict action against power pilferers and defaulters. He said that Kot Radha Kishan Division's X-En Intiaz Noor Mayo has removed three transformers of the defaulters who have not been paying their outstanding dues of Rs 3.1 million despite receiving several notices by the company in this regard. The three defaulters have yet to pay LESCO outstanding dues of Rs 2 million, Rs one million and Rs 100,000 respectively.

SIU mistakenly raids private property during high-profile investigation

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Special Investigation Unit (SIU) Karachi recently conducted a raid in Karachi on the night of November 7-8, 2024. The team was on an assignment to investigate and capture a target in relation to a high-profile case. Acting on intelligence, the SIU team was dispatched to the specified location.

However, due to an error in location details, the SIU team inadvertently entered a private property, mistaking

it for the intended target site. This led to a situation where the occupants of the private premises were taken by surprise. On realizing the error, the SIU team immediately ceased the operation and vacated the property. They assured the residents and all present that this was a case of mistaken identity and that no harm was intended.

Following the incident, the SIU issued a formal apology to the affected individuals for any inconvenience caused. The SIU

authorities emphasized that this was an isolated incident resulting from incorrect location data.

The unit has initiated an internal review to prevent similar mistakes in the future.

This incident serves as a reminder of the importance of accuracy in intelligence gathering and the need for agencies to work meticulously to avoid such mishaps.

The SIU has reaffirmed its commitment to serving the public responsibly and maintaining the trust of the community.

Number of field hospitals to be increased: CM

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz promised on Wednesday that "all resources will be spent on welfare of people and we will provide treatment facilities at the doorstep of every citizen". While noting that free and best treatment at the doorsteps of more than 5.3 million patients across Punjab had been provided in just 148 days, she added that good treatment, medicines and tests were the right of those living in the villages also.

The CM said that number of field hospitals and 'Clinics on Wheels' would be further increased to ensure ease and service of people. Maryam Nawaz said, "We are daily monitoring the performance of Clinic on Wheels and Field Hospitals where an average of more than 30,000 patients benefit from the services every day. She underscored, "Medical consultation, tests and ultrasound facilities are also available at the Clinic on Wheels."

The CM said, "202 Clinic on Wheels vans and 42 ultrasound plus vans are providing services in semi-urban and congested areas across Punjab." She added, "15 Clinics on Wheels and 3 ultrasound vehicles are busy in semi-urban and congested areas of Lahore, whereas more than 736,000 people received treatment from the field hospital in remote areas of Punjab." She flagged, "More than 100,000 people in the villages were provided free lab test facility through the field hospitals."

PTI always indulging in protests, sit-ins: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Information Minister Azma Bokhari has said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has always been indulging in protests, sit-ins, rallies and chaos.

She said that prosperity returning to Pakistan was unacceptable to the 'chaos' party. She said those who incessantly chanted 'thief, thief' had now been caught red-handed in their own family's corruption.

The Punjab information minister said the 'disruptive' group had used the nation's youth for

their power lust, while their own children were enjoying a luxurious life in London.

The minister said that PTI's politics had now been reduced to street-level politics. "Nawaz Sharif had once said, 'We will build roads, and you will just measure them,'" she recalled former premier's statement. The development in Punjab is not being accepted and tolerated by the PTI, she added.

Azma said that CM Maryam Nawaz had taken historic and revolutionary

steps in Punjab. In just a few months, she introduced relief packages and development projects in every sector of the province, she added. The minister said political figures always engage in political struggle and they did not dream of invading the federation under the guise of politics.

"We will not allow any form of mischief under the garb of peaceful protests. Anyone who breaks the law or spreads fear among citizens will be dealt with strictly," she warned.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
LOCAL GOVERNMENT & RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
TEHSIL LOWER MOHMAND DISTRICT MOHMAND

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

Sealed tenders for the below mentioned Scheme based on MRS-2024 (1st Biannual) / NSI are hereby invited on the basis of single stage single envelope procedure from the government contractors Pre-qualified vide PESCO letter No. 3251-76/COO/DDT/PESCO, dated 10-07-2024 and registered with PESCO/TESCO/WAPDA, PEC in the relevant category/codes and having registration, enlistment renewal for the current financial year with C&W as per centralized enlistment policy, as per following schedule.

Work Name	Estimated Cost (M)	Bid Security @2% (Rupees)	Last date & time of submission of electronic tender form	Date & time of opening of electronic bid
Repair & Maintenance of Transformers in PK-67 district Mohmand	10.000	200,000	02-12-2024 11:00 AM	02-12-2024 12:30 PM

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

- The Financial bidding will be through E-bidding System, Tender form and BOQ can be filled and downloaded by the original contractor available on the official website of LG&RDD, DG Office (www.lgkp.gov.pk) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after Publishing of NIT.
- The bidders are required to fill Electronic Bids online (up to specified time) and upload Scanned copy of Bid Security in shape of Call Deposit in the name of Assistant Director, LG&RDD Lower Mohmand and submit a hard copy of the same printed electronic bid form along with original call deposits to the office of AD LG Lower Mohmand.
- Sealed bids send through registered mail/Courier service should reach to the office of Assistant Director, LG&RDD Lower Mohmand same at the specified time and date as mentioned above.
- Only those contractors/firms will be eligible whose workshops are registered with PESCO/TESCO.
- All those contractor/firms are eligible to participate in the tender who are registered with Inspectorate of Electricity, Energy & Power Deptt; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of electricity act 1937 Under Rule 48 & hold Class-E license as well as Provide One-year warranty of the particulars as per PESCO SOP. Furthermore, the Bidders must have the relevant codes for the above mentioned works as per PEC.
- The contractor or his representative may be present at the time of opening of Electronic bids opening.
- The call deposits i.e. Bid Security for the work must be prepared after publishing of NIT, before closing time of the Electronic bid apply.
- The contractors quoting their bids up to a limit of 10% below Engineer estimate shall submit bid security @2% only of Engineer Estimate.
- The contractor quoting their bids more than 10% below up to 20% below on Engineer's Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional security of Engineer estimate in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of Additional security then the bid shall be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- In case a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineers Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineer Estimate along with detailed rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and/ or required amount of additional security, then the bid shall be considered as Non responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly as per KPPRA Notification No. 6058-71 Peshawar, the May 10, 2022.
- In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bid is, in view of the procuring entity, not convincing, the Head of the procuring entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reason thereof.
- The procuring entity may offer the contract to the next lowest bidder after due diligence in the context of financial difference between such two bids or may advertise procuring opportunity afresh. (KPPRA Notification No. 6058-71 Peshawar, the May 10, 2022).
- Any Electronic bidder who provide false or materially inaccurate or incomplete or do not send information in hard form will be disqualified as per KPPRA Act Section 29(1) read with KPPRA Rule (43). Furthermore, this office will recommend and send cases for Debarring/Blacklisting and will take action in light of Approved Procedure/mechanism as per KPPRA Act section 29(2) read with KPPRA Rule (44) and as per the instructions issued by the DG LGRRD from time to time.
- The firms/contractors who want to participate in tendering process may approach Directorate General LG&RDD Peshawar within two days before closing time of electronic apply for uploading their names on the official website i.e. (www.lgkp.gov.pk).
- In case of tie bids, the contractor shall be decided through a free toss which shall be final.
- The time limit of each work shall be as per work order issued to successful bidder and the contractor will have to start work within 15 days 'time period' after the issuance of work order failing which the work be cancelled and security / additional security (if any) will be forfeited.
- All applicable taxes will be recoverable as per directives of the government in vogue.
- The procuring entity may reject any or all bids at any time prior to the acceptance of a bid in light of KPPRA Rule-47.
- Work order will be issued subject to release of fund.
- All material testing and all sorts of tests will be performed by contractor as per the instructions of the procuring entity.
- Bidders can download bidding documents from e-bidding website.
- Any addition made in terms & conditions in the NIT advertised in the newspaper will be implemented as per KPPRA Rules.

Assistant Engineer, LG&RDD Tehsil Lower Mohmand
Assistant Director, LG&RDD Tehsil Lower Mohmand

INF(P) 2998/24

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
COMMUNICATION & WORKS DIVISION UPPER DIR
Ph # Fax # 0944-880836
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CORRIGENDUM

In response to the Advertisement Published vide INF(P) No-2963 / 24 dated 08-11-2024 Daily "EXPRESS".

The following correction may be made.

01- Date of opening may be read as 03-12-2024 instead of 26-11-2024

Executive Engineer
C&W Division Upper Dir
INF(P) 3031 / 24

URBAN AREA DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY SWAT, KANJU TOWNSHIP
Exchange: 0946-613093
Fax: 0946-613094 Web: www.sdda.gkp.pk

Endst; No. 4087 /UADA/Swat Dated: Swat, The 07/11/2024

TENDER CANCELLATION NOTICE

It is notified for the information of all concerned that the tender for the works "Supply & Laying Internal Distribution Network for Supply of Gas to Kanju Township District Swat" that appeared on KPPRA on 16/10/2024, is hereby cancelled due to change in requirements. Revised Tender Notice shall be published soon.

The Director
URBAN AREA DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY, SWAT

INF(P) 3022/24

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

A Public Sector Organization invites applications from committed and qualified candidates having domicile of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the following position purely on contract basis for its Project till the end of project period.

S.No.	Post Name	No. of Post	Age	Qualification/Experience
01	Computer Operator (BPS-16)	01	22-30 years	i. BA/B.Sc with one year Diploma in IT (DIT) from Technical Board. ii. 3 years' experience in data processing/data entry.

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

- Application along with CV clearly mentioning the marks obtained in all educational certificates/degrees duly supported with attested Academic documents/Experience Certificate, Photocopy of CNIC, domicile certificate and two Passport Size recent Photographs must be sent to the PO Box No. 134 within 15 days of the Advertisement.
- Applicants already in Government Service must apply through proper channel.
- Only shortlisted candidates will be called for Interview.
- Applications received after the due date will not be entertained.
- No TA/DA will be permissible for Test/Interview.
- The Salary will be given as per Govt. Project Policy and approved PC1.
- This office is equal opportunity providing organization.

PO BOX NO. 134 GPO PESHAWAR

INF(P) 3021/24

ٹینڈر نوٹس

محکمہ پولیس ضلع دیر بالا کے پولیس اڈان اودقانہ جات و غیرہ کی مختلف مرتبی کام برطانیہ حکومت صوبہ خیبر پختونخوا سے منظور شدہ ٹینڈر اعلان جنہوں نے مالی سال 2024-25 کیلئے اپنے لائسنس کی تجدید کرانی ہوئے سربراہ ٹینڈر / کوٹیشن مطلوب ہے۔ جو کہ دفتر زیر کوٹیشن کو مورخہ 29-11-2024 تک معمول پر آجائے۔ ٹینڈر فارم کے ساتھ 2% ضمانت بطور (کال ڈیپازٹ) جمع کیا جائیگا۔ ٹینڈر / کوٹیشن ای روز یعنی مورخہ 29-11-2024 کو بوقت 11:00 بجے دفتر ہذا میں اصل ٹینڈر اعلان کی موجودگی میں کھولے جائینگے۔ تجوہ کام کے تفصیلات کی بھی دفتر ہی اوقات سامانے ایام تعطیل کے برائے دفتر ہذا سے حاصل کئے جاسکتے ہیں۔

نوٹ:

- تمام ٹینڈر اعلان کی PEC, KPPRA, FBR کے ساتھ رجسٹریشن لازمی ہے۔
- زیر کوٹیشن کے پاس اختیار ہے کہ وہ برطانیہ رولز KPPRA 2014 کے تحت کسی بھی دقت ٹھوس وجہ بنا کر ٹینڈر ریپروڈسٹریکشن سے مکمل مسترد کر سکتا ہے۔
- تمام ٹینڈر بیکار KPPRA رولز کے مطابق ہوگا۔
- کوٹیشن ہذا KPPRA ویب سائٹ پر بھی دستیاب ہوگا۔

(ظفر احمد خان)، ضلعی پولیس آفیسر، دیر بالا

INF(SW) 79

Illegal appointments could derail future of KP’s health services

Ishaq Khan

PESHAWAR: The nepotism and illegal appointment in health and education sectors not only deprive deserving candidates of their rightful opportunities but also threaten the integrity and functionality of our health-care and education systems.

The Frontier Post learnt that the recent appointments at Khyber Girls Medical College (KGMC) have raised concerns about nepotism, as many of the newly selected demonstrators appear to be chosen for their familial connections as most of the selected candidates were the children of Dean, Vice Dean and others top rank officials of the college.

The Frontier Post was informed by the source familiar with the ongoing corrupt practices that some of the top posts were illegally occupied by retired and non qualified officials in Khyber Girls Medical College (KGMC) with the help of the Dean and Board of Governors (BoG) of Hayatabad Medical Complex (HMC) Peshawar, despite that the qualified and eligible doctors are waiting for the promotions but the health department are not willing to give the right to these employees and continue to twist the rules without any fear of action against them.

It is worthy to be noted that these officials are not only denying eligible individuals their rights but also imposing a financial strain of millions of rupees on the provincial budget. Having already retired and receiving their benefits, they have been collecting extra payments for years.

According to sources, the recent appointments have been deemed illegal because a recruitment ban has been in effect since July 1, 2024. All these appointments were made based on an advertisement from July 14, 2024, which violates established rules and laws.

Source further revealed that Zahid Aman's daughter was one of the candidates, who were successfully appointed in the recent selections. Zahid Aman, the Dean of KGMC, retired from government service on April 2, 2024. However, he continues in his role because he states that the Board of Governors (BoG) appointed him to a five-year term in 2018, which permits him to serve until the end of November. There is report that the BoG is going to consider his extension illegally without any prior advertisement on 16.11.2024.

Son of Amir Muhammad, Chairman Selection committee for promotions, wife of Manager HR Rizwan Raza, Maria Rehmat a demonstration against the rules as she was a BDS not eligible for MBBS teaching, additionally, relatives of Amir Muhammad were among those who received appointments, which are being viewed as illegal and against established rules and regulations.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa failed to bring any positive change in health sector, despite their main pledge to enhance health and education for the benefit of the people.

Despite bringing the change in these sectors, the PTI government has turned the blind eye towards some officials to use their power in favor of their own interest by reappointing corrupt officers especially in health sectors with the aim to safeguard their loot and corrupt practices.

The PTI led provincial government introduced Medical Teaching Institutions Reforms Act, passed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly in 2015, The MTI 2015 Act was first enforced in Peshawar's Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) and later in Khyber Teaching Hospital (KTH) and Hayatabad Medical Complex (HMC), currently the law covers 10 hospitals and their affiliated medical colleges in Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Abbottabad, Swat, Nowshera, Mardan and Swabi districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The MTI Act was intended to improve the health sector and provide the public with better access to quality treatment in government health institutions but unfortunately some of the ill-minded people used the act for fulfillment of their own wishes.

It is worrisome that some officials of KGMC involved in anti-corruption cases seem to have no fear of consequences from the government or any other agency as they continue their corrupt practices and mocking the law and rules.

The health department and PTI government must take charge to resolve the issues at KGMC, ensuring deserving candidates receive appointments and fulfilling the commitment to enhance health and education for the people's benefit.

Pak-Afghan trade Businessmen apprise Chief Collector Custom about issues



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A delegation of businessmen from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa met with newly appointed Chief Collector Customs KP, Khawaja Khurram and apprised him about the problems causing hindrances in smooth sailing of Pak-Afghan trade.

The businessmen delegation was led by President Frontier Customs Agents Association (FCAA), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi.

Other members of the delegation are SVP FCAA, Khalid Shezad, VP Imtiaz Ahmad Ali, GS Mian Waheed Bacha and member Executive Committee including Mansoor Ahmad, Tariq Afridi, Israr Afridi, Arshad Khan, Nizam Shah and Wahab Khan.

During the meeting, Collector Custom Appriasegment, Mateen Alam and Madam Iqra Shaukat were also present. President FCAA, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi congratulated newly appointed Chief Collector Customs KP and expressed the hope that he will give due consideration to problems being faced by business community of the province.

He said Khawaja Khurram Naem has held this office for several times and is fully aware about the issues being faced by business community of the province.

Zia urged Collector Customs to take practical measures for removal of hindrances in trade at border posts including Torkham, Kharlachi, Ghulam Khan besides making Azakhd Dryport as fully functional.

Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi who also holds the office of SVP Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) businessmen are facing great hardship due to lack of Export Cargo Train at Peshawar Dryport.

Due to lack of Cargo train, export of different items from KP including furniture, carpet, honey, tobacco, handicraft, match sticks etc are made by transporting in private trucks to Karachi where its GD is filed for onward transportation abroad.

Due to this practice of sending export items to Karachi and its documentation in port city, the custom clearing agents in KP have become jobless.

While containers of Commercial Cargo are held at Karachi ports for several days as a result of which businessmen have to pay huge amount under the head of detention charges, Zia continued.

He also informed that due to enforcement of two percent cess on import and export of goods to Afghanistan, export business has dropped to nil in the province.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Collector Customs assured delegation members of giving due consideration to points raised by them in the meeting. He said government focus on providing ease to business community by removing hurdles in commerce and trade and positional steps would be taken for ensuring smooth flow of Pak-Afghan trade.

3rd Bariatric Surgery Masterclass concludes at KTH

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The two-days 3rd Bariatric Surgery Masterclass was held at Khyber Teaching Hospital on November 12th and 13th, 2024, with distinguished Chief guests of the ceremony including the Dean of Khyber Medical College, Prof. Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb, and Khyber Teaching Hospital's Medical Director, Prof. Dr. Mohammad Ayaz Khan.

The event commenced with a warm welcome address by Prof. Dr. Muzaffar-ud-Din. Prof. Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb, Dean of Khyber Medical College, highlighted the significance of the Masterclass, emphasizing its role in enhancing surgical skills and advancing medical knowledge. Prof. Dr. Mohammad Zarin presented a comprehensive overview of Chapter GS, showcasing his in-depth expertise. Following him, Prof. Dr. Farooq Afzal spoke on "The Future of Weight Loss Surgery - Advances and Horizons," discussing emerging trends and innovations in the field. Dr. Muhammad Imran outlined the diverse surgical approaches to manage obesity, detailing the available bariatric procedures and their indications, which provided valuable insights for the attendees.

The highlight of the event was the live surgery demonstrations conducted by renowned experts, including Prof. Dr. Mumtaz Mehar, Prof. Ghulam Saddiq, Prof. Dr. Imran Abbas, Dr. Tahir Younas, Prof. Amir Khan, Prof. Atif Inam Shami, Prof. Tanseer Asghar, and Prof. Farooq Afzal. These demonstrations offered participants hands-on exposure to advanced bariatric techniques.

During the closing ceremony, Khyber Teaching Hospital's Medical Director, Prof. Dr. Mohammad Ayaz Khan, commended Prof. Dr. Mohammad Zarin and his dedicated team for their outstanding efforts, which played a key role in the event's success. Finally, Dr. Nisar Ahmed expressed gratitude to all participants, and certificates and shields were presented to the organizers.

The 555th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak observed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Minority Affairs Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa staged a simple and dignified ceremony held in Peshawar. The ceremony was started with the National Anthem followed by Babaji's birthday cake cutting.

Additional Secretary of Auqaf, Haji, Religious and Minority Affairs Department Abdul Kabir was the Chief guest of the ceremony while Sikh leader Sardar Parvinder Singh, Monitoring Officer of Minority Affairs Department Mian Asjad, Planning Officer Sahibzada Haider Jan, Liaison Corporation team, women, children, Muslims and Youth from minority communities (Sikhs, Hindus, Christians and others) participated in large numbers.

The ceremony paid tribute to Babaji Guru Nanak's services for peace, love and humanity.

Chief guest Additional Secretary Abdul Kabir while addressing the event said that the provincial government is trying to provide rights and protection to the minorities. All religions can make the world a cradle of peace.

Baba Guru Nanak has also given the message of humanity and peace. Sikh leader Sardar Parvinder Singh while addressing the event said that Baba Guru Devji has taught everyone the lesson of love, we are followers of Babaji Guru Nanak and are playing our role in the development and prosperity of Pakistan by following his ideology.

The Sikh community read Babaji's message of peace to the participants at end.



Uplift of Merged Districts priority F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Arshad Ayub Khan, has reaffirmed the government's commitment to the development and prosperity of the merged districts, emphasizing that their growth remains a top priority. Arshad Ayub Khan shared these views during a meeting with the chairmen of village councils from Orakzai, Mohmand, and Bajaur districts, held at his office. The meeting was also attended by Director General Local Government, Junaid Khan.

During the meeting, Arshad Ayub Khan assured attendees that the provision of funds to all merged districts is being systematically ensured. He further announced that development funding from the World Bank support would soon be available to support comprehensive development projects across these districts.

Additionally, a special sports fund of five lakh rupees per district will be allocated to foster recreational and community activities.

To enhance the capacity of local governance, Minister Local Government directed the Director General Local Government to initiate regular training sessions for the chairmen and councilors of village councils within the merged districts. These sessions aim to increase awareness and streamline processes for efficient local administration. To further improve transparency and responsiveness, he instructed the establishment of a dedicated help desk, along with the installation of a toll-free number. This contact information will be prominently displayed in council offices and shared with all village councils to ensure a swift resolution of public issues.

In support of effective local governance, Arshad Ayub Khan also assured that additional funding would be provided to address the needs of village council chairmen's offices and related requirements.



PESHAWAR: A dilapidated condition of the road in vegetable market needs attention of the authorities concerned.

Spelling Bee competition held F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Making record at national level as students of a private school, Peshawar Millennium School Charsadda won 15 gold medals, bronze and silver medals in Urdu and English spelling bee competitions across the country.

According to details a total of 215 schools from across the country participated in the English and Urdu spelling bee competitions.

Students of different classes including third, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth classes of PMS Charsadda participated and won a total of 15 gold, 12 bronze and 6 silver medals and set a record. Parents of winning students described this success as a blessing for the school and a great honor for Charsadda.

School director Khawaja Shiraz Nasir, Principal Nusrat Nazir expressing their views on the wonderful record said that quality development in education is our first priority for bright future of the young generation.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandpur giving away trophy to the winning team of All Pakistan Inter-Boards Girls Cricket Championship.

CS chairs secretaries committee meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Secretaries Committee meeting was held at the Civil Secretariat, chaired by Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary. Attendees included the Senior Member Board of Revenue, Additional Chief Secretary of the Home Department, Additional Chief Secretary of the Planning and Development Department, the Additional Advocate General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, along with various administrative secretaries and concerned officials.

A detailed briefing was given by Director of the Performance Management and Reforms Unit (PMRU), who presented the departmental performance assessment covering the last three months under multiple performance indicators. In light of this, suggestions were discussed for strengthening governance and enhancing the public service delivery system to benefit citizens effectively.

A detailed presentation was also given on various issues, including the Task Management System, the application of the File Tracking System within government departments, and the redressal of public grievances highlighted through the Citizen Portal and Khuli Kacheris. Emphasizing the importance of timely problem resolution and administrative efficiency, Chief Secretary Chaudhary directed that departments utilize technology, particularly through the effective implementation of the File Tracking System, to expedite processes and support the goal of paperless governance. He noted that the shift towards digital governance is essential to improving departmental efficiency.

Chief Secretary stressed that negligence in addressing public grievances would not be tolerated, urging all departments to continue proactive measures in this regard. It was noted in the meeting that online Khuli Kacheris are being organized to facilitate direct public grievance redressal, an initiative aimed at resolving citizen issues promptly.

He further directed that all secretaries ensure compliance with the assigned responsibilities under the Rules of Business within their departments.



PESHAWAR: A dilapidated condition of the road in vegetable market needs attention of the authorities concerned.

FPCCI urges govt to implement fair taxation reforms F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In response to the severe economic pressures affecting millions of citizens across Pakistan, senior representatives of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have called for immediate, decisive action to address the nation's ongoing economic challenges. Representing a united front, key leaders of the FPCCI, including Mr. Ghazanfar Bilour, Former President FPCCI, Haji Muhammad Afzal, Regional Chairman FPCCI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr. Akbar Khan, Coordinator FPCCI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as prominent members Mr. fazal Muqem, Mr. Zahid Shinwari, Mr. Riaz Arshad, Mr. Adeel Rauf, Mr. Niaz Ahmad, Mr. Faiz Muhammad, Mr. Zulfiqar Ali, Mr. Jawad Hussain Kazmi, Haji Atta Ur Rehman, Mr. Noor Muhammad Khan, Mr. Taj Muhammad, Mr. Fazal Rahim, Mr. Rasheed Ahmad Paracha, Mr. Niaz Muhammad, Mr. Saif Ur rehman, Ms. Rabia Basri and Mr. Kifayatullah, highlighted the urgent need for comprehensive reforms in the country's taxation policy and energy sector. The appeal is grounded in the awareness of the tremendous inflation burden borne by the public, which has escalated by a staggering 60% over the past 2.5 years. In light of a recent tax shortfall of over 180 billion in just the first four months of the fiscal year, the FPCCI leadership emphasized that any policy response should avoid imposing further hardships on the common people. "This shortfall highlights policy weaknesses that can be addressed through meaningful taxation reforms," they stated. They advocated for reforms that prioritize fairness by focusing on sectors with "abnormal profits" that continue to operate under protective measures, ultimately supporting a more equitable tax burden distribution and fostering sustainable economic growth.



In brief

Police recover drug

WAH CANTT (INP): The police have arrested five drug peddlers working for an intercity racket of drug peddlers and recovered drugs over seven kilogram from them. According to police spokesman, during crackdown against the drugs mafia, Taxila police recovered 2.60 kilograms hashish from an accused Dilawar, Sadar Wah police recovered 1.18 kg hashish from accused, Waqas, while 1.40 kg hashish was recovered from accused Kashif.

Wah Cantonment police recovered 1.65 kilogram hashish from Irfan, 2.50 kilogram hashish from Khursheed while 0.52 kilogram hashish from Shahzad. The police registered Separate cases against the accused and launched further investigation.

Drug peddler arrested

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Dera police during the operation arrested the drug peddler and recovered 120 grams of ice in the limits of newly established Giloti Police station here on Wednesday. According to the police spokesman, on the direction of the District Police Officer Dera Nasir Mehmood, SHO Giloti Police station Bashir Khan conducted the successful operation and arrested the drug peddler Muhammad Shakeel son Abdul Majeed resident of Bahadari. Police recovered 120 grams of ice from his possession. The police registered the case against the accused and started further investigations.

Land owners hold protest

F.P. Report

MARDAN: University land victims protested in front of the press club against the delay in payment of compensation the protesters were holding placards with slogans against the government and in favor of their demands, on Wednesday. The protesters were led by Usman Ghani, Naem Khan and others. Later, addressing the press conference, the representatives of the victims demanded that the land of Abdul Wali Khan University, Agricultural University and Bacha Khan Medical College should be paid immediately to the victims as per the decision of the Supreme Court. He said that 5000 kanals of land from 12 thousand victims were bought 15 years ago in the name of universities at high prices, our ancestral houses and mosques were demolished, they fought a legal battle for 15 years and the Supreme Court decided in our favor but the government has not any action till yet.

Scheme launched

F.P. Report

MULTAN: The Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Department launched a special scheme on Wednesday, allowing citizens of Punjab to get personalised vehicle number-plates for their vehicles. The citizens could submit their applications online for installing number plates on their own choice. The initiative, called the "Vanity Number Plates" was divided into three categories including Corporate, Platinum, and Gold. Interested people across Punjab could participate in the excise department auction process to secure these exclusive numbers. Since its launch on November 11, the scheme has already garnered significant attention, with 64 applications submitted from various parts of the province. Prominent business figures and renowned companies, especially from Multan and the South Punjab region, could submit applications to acquire these premium numbers.

Admn kicks off drive against illegal taxi stands



F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Campaign against illegal taxi stands in Landi Kotal Bazaar was launched on Wednesday. It is to be stated that approximately more than one dozen taxi stands have been unlawfully set up in Landi Kotal bazaar.

On repeated complaints, filed from the residents, the local administration with assistance of Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA), C&W, traffic police, traders union and other stakeholders, a comprehensive anti-unlawful taxi stands drive was carried across the bazaar.

Speaking on the occasion, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Landi Kotal Adnan Mumtaz said that in the first phase the owners of the taxi stands were asked to voluntarily shift to the main stand, adjacent to the compound.

In the coming one to two days, all the illegal taxi stands found inside the bazaar will be forcibly shut and legal action will be taken against its functionaries, he remarked. He urged the traders' community to support them while conducting the drive against the taxi stands.

Meanwhile, AC along with officials of TMA, President Anjuman-e-Tajran, Landi Kotal and councilors visited the bazaar and examined various sections of it. He directed the C&W official to demarcate the road and government land in the bazaar to clear it of all encroachments through a fulfill drive. Dwellers of the area appreciated the administration for the public interest operation and said, numberless taxi stands, established inside the bazaar and encroachments had made the lives of the commuters miserable.

Almost 100 women obtains vocational certifications

F.P. Report

HYDERABAD: A fascinating graduation ceremony was held at the Arynabad Vocational Training Center, where certificates were awarded to 100 women who completed training in sewing and stitching clothes. The vocational training course of three months was initiated by Aga Khan Higher Secondary School Arynabad facilitating around 100 women majority of them belonging to families in destitute.

Chief organizer of the Project Qasim Pirji while addressing the gathering said that the project aimed at empowering women who could not get opportunities in the society owing to multiple reasons. He further said that he had spent more than 50 years of his life serving people of Sindh adding that soon he would launch this project in other areas of the province to improve the quality of life of the poor masses.

Shedding light on his past achievement he said that around 150 women belonging to the Bagri community of Ghafor Basti area of Hyderabad were trained in sewing and stitching garments in 2022 and 2023 and further mentioned that later sewing machines were distributed among them to help them utilize their skills and learning. Salma Fazal, a middle-aged woman sharing her views at the ceremony said that this training institute

has given hope to several hopeless and jobless women of Hyderabad adding that she was one of those lucky women who had got a chance to change their lives.

Another lady Nasreen said that women empowerment in the society had been a challenge in this society but such initiatives would pave the way for women empowerment in future. In charge of the training centre Noorul Huda extended best wishes for graduating women and urged them to play their part in the progression of the society. She further said that women were no longer a suppressed class of this society. Towards the end best performance awards were given to the deserving trainees.

Numdar Association to support framer's rights

F.P. Report

ATTOCK: Chairman Numdar Association Tehsil Pindi Gheb Malik Imtiaz Khan has said that Pindi Gheb Numdar Association fully supports the demands of the farmers. Fertilizer and seed rates should be reduced. He expressed these views while addressing a meeting held at Pakistan Kisan Ittehad Tehsil Pindi Gheb in Khaur Company. He said that Schemes from the Department of Agriculture and other institutions should be made easier for farmers, including the abolition of mixed fertilizers and commission from farmers in the markets.

Government should provide ample funds for the welfare of the farmers and also provide them with financial assistance on easy terms for the convenience of the farmers So that the economic condition of the farmers can be improved

and the country can be self-sufficient in terms of food. He said that the government should pay special attention to the agriculture sector.

The government should provide relief to farmers regarding wheat cultivation. Fertilizer prices should be reduced. The farmer, who is the backbone of the economy, has been displaced. If farmers sell wheat, the rate is Rs 2500 and if they buy it for seeds, the same wheat becomes Rs 6200. The government is creating this contradiction instead of preventing it, he added.

He said that agriculture is the most important component of our country's economy and the country's development is linked to its development. Therefore, it is important that the government encourages the people associated with this sector so that the country can be prosperous.

Dr. Sher defends Ph. D thesis

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Muhammad Sher successfully defended his PhD thesis titled: Existence theory and analytical study of different fractional order differential problems with different types of kernels. He was supervised by Dr. Kamal Shah and co-supervised by Dr. Muhammad Sarwar. The scholar has published several valuable articles in highly reputed journals of good quality. The external examiners were Prof. Dr. Akbar Azam COMSATS University Islamabad and Prof. Dr. Wali Khan Mashwani Dean faculty of numerical sciences Kohat University of Science and Technology.

Academic activities, hotels closed

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Academic activities and hotels facilities in Bolan Medical College, Quetta have been closed for period of two weeks effective from November, 13, 2024 in the light of renovation work in the college and following a recent law and order situation involving two groups that escalated over the past week.

A notification issued the Principal, Bolan Medical College Quetta on November 12, 2024 says, "In light of the ongoing renovation work in the hostels of Bolan Medical College, Quetta and following a recent law and order situation involving two groups that escalated over the past week, it is hereby ordered by this College Administration that all Hostels shall be closed for period of two weeks effective from November, 13, 2024.

Consequently, all academic activities and hostels facilities will remain suspended for two weeks from the aforementioned date. This decision has been made in the interest of safety and Security for all students and Staff. It is pertinent to mention that Baloch and Pushtun students studying in Bolan Medical College clashed the previous day within the premises of Bolan Medical College, Quetta, causing injuries to many students.

Girl dies in Lodhran road mishap

F.P. Report

LODHRAN: A female student of Islamia University died while 13 others sustained injuries when their collided with a trowler and bus at Bahawalpur Road in Adam Wahan area of Lodhran amid thick smog and fog on Wednesday morning.

Rescue 1122 team reached the site of the accident and shifted the injured persons to District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ). The dead female student later identified as Afra Nawaz daughter of Mohammad Nawaz, who was a student of BS in Islamia University.

Police after registering a case started investigation. At least 20 passengers were injured when a passenger bus overturned near Sadowal, Zafarwal Road, Narowal due to thick smog and fog. The passenger bus was destined for Lahore from Dhudu Chak to Lahore. No rescue team arrived at the site of the accident and local residents of the area shifted the injured persons to hospital on self-help basis.

Armed men kidnap three laborers

DUKI (PPI): Armed men torched a construction company in Gharwas area of Duki and kidnapped three labours working for the construction company.

According to police, unidentified gunmen attacked the camp of a construction company in Gharwas area of Duki in Balochistan province, torched all goods, including generator, and kidnapped three labours. Police said that missing labours namely Naseebullah Miryani, Noor Muhammad Miryani and Hikmatullah Miryani, residents of Kuchlak Quetta, were working as labours with the construction company for construction of Duki to Chamalang Road.

Board of Studies meetings held at KUST for various departments

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Department of Psychology at Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) convened a Board of Studies meeting to review and refine its undergraduate programs. The meeting, held at Ibn Ul Haitham Hall, was chaired by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naseer Uddin (Vice chancellor KUST) and attended by distinguished academic experts from various Universities and Colleges.

The Board unanimously approved the revised course content for BS Psychology and Associate Degree in Psychology programs, aligning with the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) Undergraduate Policy 2023. VC said "this development ensures KUST's psychology curriculum remains contemporary, comprehensive, and aligned with national educational standards.

VC further added, the revised curriculum will enhance the quality of education and research in psychology, benefiting students and contributing to the growth of the field.

Meanwhile KUST's Emergency Care and Technology Department also hold its first Board of Studies Meeting under the convenship of Dr. Abdul Wahab Mahsud, Chairman of the Department. The meeting witnessed the approval of the Emergency Care and Technology curriculum, aligning with the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) guidelines. Eminent academicians and experts from various universities attended the meeting, including, Prof. Dr. Sagheer Ahmad, HoD Basic Medical Sciences and

Director ORIC, Shifa Tameer e Millat University, Islamabad, Dr. Haji Bahadar, Assistant Professor, Khyber Medical University, Peshawar, Dr. Muhammad Imran, Department of Biological and Health Sciences, Pak Austria Fachhochschule, Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology, Mang, Haripur.

Vice chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naseer Uddin said this development marks a significant milestone in the department's journey, ensuring that students receive quality education and training in emergency care and technology. He added that KUST's Department of Emergency Care and Technology is committed to delivering exceptional education and research opportunities, fostering collaboration with renowned institutions.

Admn organizes seminar on importance of water

F.P. Report

KOHAT: District administration under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda" organized a one-day seminar on the "Importance of Water" on Wednesday.

Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Daud Shah Afridi was the chief guest on this occasion while Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram was the guest of honor. The Seminar beside Tehsil Nazim Lachi Ehsan Khan and Tehsil Nazim Gumbat Sajid Iqbal and Heads of line departments was also attended by the progressive farmers.

On this occasion, the departments of Public Health Engineering, Soil & Water Conservation, WSSC Kohat, Irrigation, District Administration, Agriculture (Extension) and Water

Management also set up their stalls. The Heads of the 6 provincial-level water-related departments gave a detailed briefing on the importance and utility of water and their departmental responsibilities. A question and answer session was also held on this occasion while school children also presented a tableau on the topic.

Daud Shah Afridi MPA in his address said that the water table in Kohat has dropped extensively so there is an urgent need to build as many small dams as possible in the district. He directed the authorities concerned to identify suitable locations for small dams and water reservoirs across the district so that the required funds can be arranged for this.

Daud Shah said that water is life and life without water is unimaginable. Therefore, it is the religious and national responsibility

of all of us to save every drop of water from being wasted, he added. Deputy Commissioner Kohat in his address said that water is a great blessing of Allah Almighty and the importance of water is very clear from the Holy Quran. He said that it is the common responsibility of all of us to use water sparingly and prevent its wastage for the prosperity of future generations. He said that Allah Almighty has blessed Pakistan with the best gifts like all kinds of minerals, plants, rivers and four seasons.

It is necessary that we make the best use of these blessings of Allah Almighty for the betterment of our country and the new generation. Earlier, Tehsil Nazim Gumbat Sajid Iqbal and District Khattib Mufti Shafiullah also addressed the seminar and openly expressed their views on the topic.

Unknown dacoits looted advocate's residence

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Almost six unknown dacoits looted 70 tola gold ornaments worth Rs. 17 million and Rs. 1.5 million cash from house of Shazia Batool advocate to make hostage family members in Sukheki town areas, last night.

According to details, six unidentified armed dacoits entered in the house of Shazia Batool Advocate at Mohallah Fazal Pura in Sukheki Town last night and made hostage her brothers, sisters in law, and other family members. The dacoit looted 70 tola gold ornaments worth Rs. 17 million and Rs. 1.5 million

cash from the house and sped away from the scene. Police registered a case against six unknown accused and started investigation.

DC inspects trauma centre at DHQ: Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq visited DHQ Hospital, Trauma Centre and Rural Health Centre Rasulpur Tarar and reviewed provision of treatment facilities being provided to people in the hospital.

DC said on this occasion, he said that provision of the best medical facilities to the people at local level was top priority of the Punjab government led by Chief Minister, Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He also said that he himself was visiting hospitals of the district to ensure implementation on people friendly measures taken by the provincial government.

Literature festival to start on 17th

F.P. Report

LARKANA: A three-day literary festival organized by Arts Council of Pakistan Larkana will start from November 17 in Larkana. Bhittai Literary Hall. Lectures on various topics in open air theatre.

ACP President Ismail Jatoti speaking to the media. Secretary Muhammad Hanif

Shahag. Vice President Engineer Javed Ahmed Shaikh and others said that we are trying our best to work for the growth of literature, this literature festival in Larkana is a link of it. Nazim Chandio, Sikandar Abbasi, Barkat Gad said in a joint statement that for the development of literature such programs are to create awareness among the people, apart

from the artists, stage actor the poet able Painters. Those who have served the art and continue to do so have also encouraged them and will continue to do so. The Larkana Literary Fair will continue for three days from Nov 15. Scholars, teachers, writers and researchers will participate in this Larkana Literary Fair. And there will be literary pleasures.

Untold struggle: Mental health challenges in Pakistan

Marya Haleema

AS we all know Pakistan is a resource limited, lower-middle-income country. Where like other low and middle-income countries psychiatric disorders are highly prevalent. According to World Health Organization (WHO), 24 million people in Pakistan need psychiatric help.

The lack of resources to meet this need is exemplified by 0.19 psychiatrists per 100,000 population, the lowest in the world. Psychiatric disorders are responsible for more than 4% of the total disease burden. The appreciation of the impact of psychiatric disorders is important as they are linked to substantial disability, reduced productivity,

low quality of life and worsening socioeconomic circumstances.

The weighted point prevalence of psychiatric morbidity in adults is 31.6%. That means one in three adults in Pakistan is reported to have a mental health condition at any given time. Causes of mental disorders are poverty, unemployment and financial instability create chronic stress and anxiety. Mental health issues are often stigmatized, preventing individuals from seeking help.

Exposure to domestic violence, terrorism, or abuse contributes to mental health problems. Limited understanding of mental health leads to neglect and improper treatment. A shortage of mental health profession-

als and facilities leaves many without adequate care. High expectations and lack of support exacerbate psychological distress. Increasing use of drugs and alcohol worsens mental health conditions.

We as nation mostly facing anxiety disorders, depression, Bipolar disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Schizophrenia, eating disorders, disruptive behavior and dissociative disorders, Neurodevelopmental disorders. Our own people are suffering from these illnesses, and we take them to saints and mystics, subjecting them to even more distress. This too is a moment for reflection. Many individuals suffering from mental health issues face discrimination and are often

hesitant to seek professional help. The limited availability of trained psychiatrists and psychologists exacerbates the problem, leaving a significant portion of the population without proper treatment. Additionally, cultural and societal norms often lead people to rely on faith healers or alternative methods rather than medical professionals, which can delay or worsen their conditions.

Poverty, unemployment, and political instability further contribute to the prevalence of mental health issues, creating a cycle of distress and neglect. There is an urgent need for widespread mental health education, accessible healthcare services, and a supportive environment to address this critical issue effectively.

We should talk about these issues as much as possible and make people realize that this is also an illness like any other common disease.

Raising awareness about mental health through education and media campaigns is essential to reduce stigma and encourage early intervention. Expanding access to affordable mental healthcare, particularly in rural areas, is crucial to ensuring treatment for those in need. Families and communities play a vital role in offering emotional support and recognizing signs of distress early. Stress management techniques like physical exercise, mindfulness, and counseling should be promoted widely.

Schools can introduce mental health education and provide

counseling services to help children develop resilience. Addressing substance abuse through rehabilitation programs and stricter regulations can help mitigate one of the major contributors to mental health issues. Economic empowerment through job creation and social welfare programs can reduce financial stressors that often exacerbate mental disorders. A balanced approach combining faith practices and professional mental healthcare can cater to cultural preferences while ensuring effective treatment. Strengthening government policies to prioritize mental health and establishing helplines for immediate support are also necessary steps towards a healthier society.



Thursday, November 14, 2024



MADRID: People cleaning mud in an affected area in Paiporta after the passage of DANA storm, Spain.

World's longest detained journalist wins prize

LONDON (BBC): A journalist detained in Eritrean prison without trial for 23 years has won a Swedish human rights prize for his commitment to freedom of expression. Dawit Isaak, who holds dual Eritrean-Swedish citizenship, was given the Edelstam Prize "for his... exceptional courage", the foundation behind the award said in a statement.

Dawit, who holds dual Eritrean-Swedish citizenship, was one of the founders of Setit, Eritrea's first independent newspaper. He was detained in 2001 after his paper published letters demanding democratic reforms. Dawit was among a group of about two dozen individuals, including senior cabinet ministers, members of parliament and independent journalists, arrested in a government purge.

Over the years, the Eritrean government has provided no information on his whereabouts or health, and many who were jailed alongside him are pre-

sumed dead. The Edelstam Prize, awarded for exceptional courage in defending human rights, will be presented on 19 November in Stockholm. Dawit's daughter, Betlehem Isaak, will accept the prize on his behalf as he remains imprisoned in Eritrea. His work with the Setit included criticism of the government and calls for democratic reform and free expression, actions that led to his arrest in a crackdown on dissent. The Edelstam Foundation has called for Dawit's release, urging the Eritrean authorities to disclose his location and allow him legal representation. "Dawit Isaak is the longest detained journalist in the world. We are very concerned about his health and his whereabouts are unknown, he is not charged with a crime, and he has been denied access to his family, consular assistance, and the right to legal counsel - effectively, it is an enforced disappearance," said Caroline Edelstam, the

chair of the Edelstam Prize jury. His "indefatigable courage stands as a testament to the principle of freedom of expression."

The Edelstam Foundation also urged the international community to pressure Eritrea for Dawit's release and to advocate for human rights reforms. The Edelstam Prize honours individuals who show exceptional bravery in defending human rights, in memory of Swedish diplomat Harald Edelstam. Eritrea is the only African country without privately owned media, having shut down its private press in 2001 under the pretext of "national security."

Dawit, who fled to Sweden in 1987 during Eritrea's war for independence, returned after the country gained independence in 1993 after becoming a Swedish citizen. There have been no elections in Eritrea since its independence, and President Isaias Afwerki has held power for nearly 31 years.

Russia jails doctor

MOSCOW (AFP): Russia sentenced a 68-year-old paediatrician to five-and-a-half years in prison for allegedly criticising the Ukraine campaign, after she was denounced by the ex-wife of a soldier killed in combat.

The case against Nadezhda Buyanova has exemplified the level of repression in Russia and how common denunciations have become while the country's troops fight in Ukraine. Arrested in February, the Moscow doctor was accused by Anastasia Akinshina, the ex-partner of a soldier, of calling the man a "legal target" of Ukraine, in comments allegedly made during a medical appointment for her son.

Buyanova has said she is innocent and "just a doctor". Judge Olga Felina sentenced her despite no public evidence that the conversation took place and after Akinshina's seven-year-old son testified against the doctor, in a practice reminiscent of Soviet show trials. "I believe this is absurd," grey-haired Buyanova said moments before she was handed the prison term. Several supporters, mostly medics, shouted "Shame on you!" in court as the sentence was read out. "I am a paediatrician... I do not regret a single day," Buyanova said.

Many have pointed to Buyanova's birthplace -- Ukraine's western city of Lviv -- as the real reason for her harsh treatment. Handcuffed in the defendant's glass cage and wearing a black jumper, she thanked supporters for coming to the court. "We must empathise with one another and love others," she said in court. "But there is no paradise on earth, there is no peace on earth. And I would like that." The medic cried in court last week as prosecutors demanded a six-year sentence for her, saying she was from a "simple family" and did "not have an easy life". "The evidence has not been presented," her lawyer Leonid Solov'yev said after the verdict. Her defence insists there is no audio recording of the alleged comments and decried that prosecutors brought Akinshina's child into the trial, saying he had been pressured by the FSB security service. Despite his mother saying earlier in the trial that he was not present during the conversation, the boy told the court that Buyanova had called his father a "legal target for Ukraine".

Despite 30-day Gaza aid ultimatum, US says support for Israel will proceed

WASHINGTON: The United States was unambiguous in a message to Israel last month: Take specific steps within 30 days to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza or face consequences. The deadline has now passed, and the United Nations is warning that famine is "imminent" in parts of northern Gaza. But there will be no consequences for Israel, the administration of outgoing President Joe Biden said.

"We, at this time, have not made an assessment that the Israelis are in violation of US law," State Department spokesperson Vedant Patel told reporters. He argued that Israel had made "some progress" to allow more aid into the besieged territory but the US "would like to see some more changes happen". Patel would not say whether the specific conditions set out by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin in an October 13 letter to Israeli leaders had been met.

The US assertion caused fury among Palestinian rights advocates, who dismissed the entire push as another ploy to distract from Washington's complicity in Israel's killing and starvation of Palestinians. It also came on the same day that Biden met Israeli President Isaac Herzog at the White House, where the latter said they held a "productive meeting". Tariq Kenney-Shawa, policy fellow at Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network, a US-based think tank, called the Blinken-Austin letter, which was presented as an ultimatum, a "charade". "Biden has no intention of using his final months in office to better the humanitarian situation in Gaza or work towards a lasting ceasefire or hostage exchange, despite what he might say, and it should be clear that every step his administration has taken has been to buy Israel time and shield it from accountability," Kenney-Shawa told Al Jazeera in a statement.

Hours before Patel made his remarks, several humanitarian groups issued a joint report, concluding that not only did Israel fail to improve the humanitarian conditions in Gaza, but the situation has deteriorated since the US issued the letter. The organisations - which include the Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam, Refugees International and Save the Children - accused Israel of taking "actions that dramatically worsened the situation on the ground, particularly in northern Gaza". "Israel has failed to comply with its ally's demands - at enormous human cost for Palestinian

civilians in Gaza," they said.

The Blinken-Austin warning had pressed Israel to ease the humanitarian situation in Gaza or else risk "implications" under US law, which prohibits security assistance to countries that block US-backed humanitarian aid. The US-requested measures included allowing at least 350 aid trucks to enter Gaza daily, implementing humanitarian pauses to enable the distribution of the assistance, rescinding displacement orders "when there is no operational need" and ending the "isolation of northern Gaza".

According to a recent Brown University research paper, the US provided Israel with \$17.9bn in military aid over the past year, covering a significant part of the cost of the war on Gaza. The US security aid to Israel will continue to flow, the State Department announced, with Patel saying that there would be no change in policy. However, Israel has not come close to fulfilling the US demands on humanitarian aid. For example, instead of 350 aid trucks a day, an average of 42 trucks entered Gaza daily over the past 30 days, according to the humanitarian groups. "Israeli forces continue to besiege North Gaza and have ordered civilians to leave - including patients from the main hospitals - demonstrating its intention to forcibly evacuate civilians in practice," the aid organisations said in their assessment. A UN-backed hunger-tracking body described the situation in Gaza as "extremely grave and rapidly deteriorating".

There is a strong likelihood that famine is imminent in areas within the northern Gaza Strip," it said. It is unclear how the US came to its conclusion against the findings of rights groups and experts. Patel refused to comment on the process that led to the decision. A ProPublica report in September said Blinken had ignored findings by his own staff as well as the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to certify that Israel is not blocking aid to Gaza.

Israel appears to have intensified its blockade in Gaza in recent weeks. Early in October, the Israeli military ordered the evacuation of the entire population of northern Gaza and stopped aid from entering the area. Critics have accused Israel of enforcing a plan, devised by former generals, that calls for emptying northern Gaza of its residents in what could amount to ethnic cleansing. Zeina Ashrawi Hutchison, development

director at the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, said the US decision shows that the Biden administration is a full partner in Israel's war on Gaza, which she described as a genocide.

"The fact that they even allowed them an additional 30 days to continue the starvation and slaughter in the first place is - in and of itself - unfathomable, outrageous and already in violation of US law," Ashrawi Hutchison told Al Jazeera. "This is merely more proof added to the heaps of evidence confirming and documenting the US administration's depravity and partnerships in widespread crimes against humanity." Ahmad Abuznaid, executive director of the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USPCR), slammed the Biden administration's seemingly boundless support for Israel regardless of what the US ally does to Palestinians. "This administration continues to show that it is morally bankrupt," Abuznaid told Al Jazeera. "Not only can it not be trusted to tell the truth, it cannot be trusted to follow international law or US law in its support of this genocide."

Many Palestinian rights advocates had little hope that the letter would lead to an actual shift in policy. The ultimatum itself was an admission that the Biden administration was in violation of the law, they argued. US regulations - as spelled out by Section 620I of the US Foreign Assistance Act - prohibit military assistance to countries that restrict humanitarian aid; they don't offer a 30-day grace period.

"The Biden administration is just hoping that people won't pay attention to that letter because they never intended to do anything about it anyway, clearly," Annelie Sheline, research fellow for the Middle East at the Quincy Institute think tank, told Al Jazeera. Sarah Leah Whitson, executive director of the US-based rights group DAWN, said the October 13 letter showed that the Biden administration was aware of Israeli abuses. She warned that violations of US and international law open US officials to prosecution at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

"If President Biden, Secretary Blinken, and Secretary Austin continue to support Israel after this letter with full knowledge of its well-documented violations, they could be putting themselves at risk of ICC prosecution for enabling Israeli crimes," Whitson said in a statement. — Aljazeera

French farmers hold protest against EU-Mercosur deal

PARIS (AP): French farmers protested against a trade deal that would increase agricultural imports from South America, saying it hurt their livelihoods. The European Union and the Mercosur trade bloc, composed of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia, reached an initial agreement in 2019, but negotiations stumbled due to opposition from farmers, and some European governments, leading to sweeping rallies where they particularly expressed worry about the use of pesticides in South American produce.

Protest in Aurillac, in southern France, was the start of a fresh wave expected to spread among the European agricultural community amid concern that the deal could be finalized at the G20 summit in Brazil on Nov. 18-19 despite the French minister of agriculture, Annie Genevard, saying it was "highly unlikely."

A group of more than 600 French lawmakers also published an open letter in Le Monde, telling the EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen that the conditions for adopting an agreement with the

Mercosur bloc "have not been met." Last week, French protesters blocked the state building in the western commune of Niort, while, the Copa-Cogeca European farmers' group sent a letter to von der Leyen, urging her to reject the Mercosur deal and adopt "a coherent trade policy."

Meanwhile, France's three biggest farming unions have vowed action: The FNSEA, France's largest, has called for nationwide protests once the winter sowing season ends in mid-November. Coordination Rurale has promised "an agricultural revolt" starting on Nov. 19 in Auch and Agen, two cities in the Southwest of France, while the Confédération Paysanne, known for its anti-globalization stance, is also planning its move against "free trade agreements." Farmers in Belgium have also called for demonstrations close to the EU headquarters in Brussels on Wednesday.

European farmers' apprehensions stem from what they say are the too-strict EU environmental regulations they follow

while the Mercosur deal could flood the market with imports from South America which are produced under lower environmental and labor standards, according to Véronique Le Floch, the president of Coordination Rurale, France's second-largest farmers' union. "The anger hasn't gone away. It's still there, and, in fact, our worries have grown," said Le Floch whose organization has been linked to France's far-right party National Rally. "If the Mercosur agreement is signed, it will spell the end of our agriculture," she said.

Genevard, the agriculture minister, reiterated the government's opposition to the deal. In an interview with TFI, she said: "We don't want this agreement because it's harmful. It will bring in products, including substances banned in Europe, at the cost of deformation. It will unfairly compete with our domestic production." But Le Floch was not convinced. "When the minister says the agreement won't be signed, she's either naive or thinks we are," she said. "Why should we believe her when so many countries are in favor of it?"

Surge in Russian drone strikes test Ukrainian defences, devastate families

KYIV (BBC): Maria Troyanivska had come home early the night a Russian drone hit her bedroom. "It flew in through the window, right into her room," her mother Viktoriia tells the BBC. After the explosion, she and her husband Volodymyr ran from the next room to find their daughter's room on fire.

"We tried to put it out, but everything was burning so strongly," she says through tears. "It was impossible to breathe - we had to leave." The Russian Shahed drone killed the 14-year-old in her bed, in her suburban apartment in Kyiv, last month. "She died immediately, and then burned," her mother said. "We had to bury her in a closed coffin. She had no chance of surviving."

Russia is massively increasing drone strikes on Ukraine. More than 2,000 were launched in October, according to Ukraine's general staff - a record number for a single day. The same report says Russia fired 1,410 drones in September, and 818 in August - compared with around 1,100 for the entire three-month period before that. It's part of a wider resurgence for Russian forces. The invaders are advancing all along the front lines. North Korean troops have joined the war on Moscow's side. And with the election of Donald Trump for a second term as US president, Ukraine's depleted and war-weary forces are facing uncertain support from their biggest military donor.

The majority of the Russian drones

raining down on Ukraine are Iranian-designed Shaheds: propeller-driven, with a distinctive wing shape and a deadly warhead packed into the nose cone. Russia has also started to launch fake drones, without any explosives, to confuse Ukraine's air defence units and force them to waste ammunition. Compared to missiles they are much cheaper to build, easier to fire, and designed to sap morale. Every night, Ukrainians go to sleep to notifications ping on their phones, as inbound drones crisscross the country, setting sirens blaring. And every morning, they wake to news of yet another strike. Just since the start of November, drones have hit Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Mykolaiv and Zaporizhzhia. Russia launched 145 drones at Ukraine, according to President Volodymyr Zelensky - a record number for a single day since the start of the full-scale invasion.

Kyiv said that day it had managed to shoot down 62 drones, and that a further 67 were "lost" - meaning they were either downed by electronic warfare, or disappeared from radar screens. Ukrainian air defences are struggling to cope with the surging numbers. "So far we have been intercepting them. I hope we will keep intercepting them," Sgt Mykhailo Shamanov, a spokesperson for Kyiv city military administration, told the BBC. While he says Russia tries to hit military installations, the "general aim is terrorising civilians". They know the Russians will continue to

ramp up these attacks, he said - it's why his government is constantly asking for more air defence from Western allies. It's also why Ukraine is nervously waiting to see how US President-elect Trump will approach the war when he re-enters office.

"Even if air defence works well, drone or missile debris falls on the city. It causes fires, damage and unfortunately sometimes victims," he explained. "Every night it's a lottery - where it hits, where it's shot down, where it falls and what happens." Vitaliy and his men have no fixed post - their weaponry for shooting down the Shaheds is carried on the back of a flatbed truck, allowing them to manoeuvre quickly. "We try to monitor, move, outpace the drone, destroy it," he said. It's clear the job is taking its toll. "Half a year ago, it was 50 drones a month. Now the number has risen to 100 drones, every night," he said. Their days are getting longer too.

When the Russians used mainly missiles to bomb Ukraine, the unit commander said, the air alerts would last about six hours. "Now, it's around 12 or 13 hours," he said. Vitaliy is confident in front of his men, declaring that they can handle all that the Russians can fire at them if they get weapons from Western allies. "Our guys could even deal with 250 drones [in a night]," he said. But air defence can only do so much. Ukrainians will continue to suffer until Russia stops its invasion and its air assaults on cities.

Canada moves to end port lockouts and orders binding arbitration

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP): Canada's labor minister said he is intervening to end lockouts of workers at the country's two biggest ports. Labor Minister Steven Mackinnon said the negotiations have reached an impasse and he is directing the Canada Industrial Relations Board to order the resumption of all operations at the ports of Vancouver and Montreal and move the talks to binding arbitration.

Port of Montreal's workers were locked out and workers in Vancouver on the Pacific Coast have been locked out since Nov. 4. "There is a limit to the economic self destruction that Canadians are prepared to accept," Mackinnon said. "In the face of economic self destruction there is an obligation to intervene. As minister of labor that responsibility falls to me."

Mackinnon said \$1.3 billion Canadian dollars (\$930 million) of goods is affected every day. He said it was impacting supply chains, the economy and Canada's reputation as a reliable trading partner. Business

groups had been calling for government intervention to get the flow of goods moving again. The move to end the stoppages comes after the government stepped in to end halted operations at Canada's two main railways in August. Mackinnon says he hopes operations can be restored in a matter of days.

The Maritime Employers Association locked out 1,200 longshore workers at the Port of Montreal after workers voted to reject what employers called a final contract offer. The workers were seeking raises of 20% over four years. The job action came after port workers in British Columbia were locked out amid a labor dispute involving more than 700 longshore supervisors, resulting in a paralysis of container cargo traffic at terminals on the West Coast. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government directed an independent labor board to end lockouts at Canada's largest ports, as it did with railways in August, to stop

an economic disruption in the country. Labor Minister Steven Mackinnon announced that he has invoked his authority under the Canada Labor Code and forced the matter to the Canada Industrial Relations Board, requesting it to order the parties to go back to work, resume operations and enter into an arbitration process to resolve the dispute.

The use of this measure is highly unusual, and could further damage the Liberal government's relations with labor groups. Dock foremen at British Columbia ports have been locked out for more than a week. Montreal port employers did the same after their 1,200 unionized employees rejected a contract offer that included pay increases of about 20% over six years. That would have provided average annual compensation of more than C\$200,000 (\$143,330) by the end of the contract. "These work stoppages are impacting our supply chain, hundreds of thou-

sands of Canadian jobs, our economy and our reputation," Mackinnon said at a news conference. He justified his decision by saying the negotiations had reached a "total impasse" and there was "no perspective, no possibility realistically" of agreements being reached after more than a year of negotiations. "Canadians have limited tolerance right now for economic self-harm," he said. More than C\$1.2 billion in goods handled every day in those ports have been disrupted, snarling supply chains. The Maritime Employers Association, the group representing companies operating the Montreal port terminals, said in a news release that it is waiting for next steps from the industrial relations board, and that it will do what's necessary to quickly restart activities. The BC Marine Employers Association also said it would follow direction from the board. The representative for the Montreal Longshoremen's Union, Patrick Gloutney, called a "dark day for

workers' rights." "We must collectively wake up and denounce this step back for the rights of the middle class," he said in a statement.

The union representing the railway workers, the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference, has challenged in court the government's ordering of the labor board to stop the railway disputes, arguing it set a dangerous precedent by violating workers' constitutional rights.

A spokesman for the union representing BC dockworkers it would challenge the minister's direction and forced arbitration in court, based on "interference with the constitutional right to free collective bargaining and the right to strike." "Minister Mackinnon and the Liberal government have sided with big business against workers and this will not be forgotten or forgiven," Frank Morena, president of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Ship and Dock Foremen Local 514, said in a statement. That sentiment

was echoed by Jagmeet Singh, leader of the left-wing New Democratic Party, which in September pulled out of a deal that had helped keep Trudeau's Liberal Party in power. Trudeau "caved to corporate greed," Singh said in a post on X. "We maintain that this decision is made under powers that are granted to me by the Parliament of Canada, and we will defend those actions vigorously in court," Labor Minister Mackinnon said.

Greater Vancouver Board of Trade President Bridgitte Anderson said her members were "very relieved" by the intervention. She argued Canada must focus on improving the environment for business ahead of Donald Trump's presidency, which could bring sweeping trade barriers on the US's northern neighbor. "We need really to focus on getting our economic house in order, probably more now than ever if you look at the outcome of the US election," she said by phone.

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Baku climate summit starts on sombre note

THE Conference of Parties 29 (COP29), the United Nations climate summit, began in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, on Monday on a sombre note. Many of the presidents and prime ministers who had attended the Dubai COP28 summit were absent on Monday.

The meeting has the toughest agenda of pushing for the \$1 trillion annual climate finance commitment, raising it from the \$100 billion annual commitment made in 2009 and which has not been honoured.

The fund is to help the poorer and developing countries make the transition to green energy sources. In more than a decade, the costs have indeed grown up. Had the developed countries kept to their promise to fund \$100 billion annually, then the task would have been slightly easier. But the developed countries were always asking the question as to who should pay, and how much. The maximum amount the green funders ever touched was \$40b.

And now the developed countries argue that the situation has changed radically since 2009, and now the emerging economies of oil-producing countries and China should be contributing to the climate fund as well. The new goal of the COP29 is to define the terms of the New Climate Quantitative Goal (NCQG), and who should pay and in what manner.

It is quite unlikely that the developed countries would agree to it easily. There will be hard bargaining and it has to be some sort of a compromised formula. But host Azerbaijan and the UN are keen to push for meeting the NCQG. The United Nations climate chief Simon Stiell said in unambiguous language, "Let's dispense with the idea that climate finance is charity. An ambitious new climate finance goal is entirely in the self-interest of every nation, including the largest and wealthiest."

There are other factors that are casting a shadow over the summit, especially the election of Republican candidate Donald Trump as the US president. He will take over office on January 20, 2025. He has been opposed to any kind of reduction of carbon emission, nor is he willing to contribute to America's share of the global climate fund.

But John Podesta, the US envoy at the summit, and member of the outgoing President Joe Biden team, has assured that the US will sit committed to its climate commitments, and the Trump presidency can slow the process but there will be no change in direction. President Biden in his landmark Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) has provided finances for the Clean Air Act and many other green provisions which the states can implement.

Podesta said, "For those of us dedicated to climate action, last week's outcome in the United States is bitterly disappointing. But what I want to tell you today is that while the United States federal government, under Donald Trump, may put climate action on the backburner, the work to contain climate change is going to continue in the United States."

In the next 10 days, there will be intense and tortuous parleys over many minor agreements and the major one on climate finance. Dubai's COP28 summit ended on the positive note that there would a move away from the fossil fuel economy. At the time, it was considered a vague commitment, but there was unanimity that everyone was committed to it.

The Biden Administration tried to push some of it into law through the IRA. A similar commitment followed by action however small would alter the picture in a big way across the world.

What is required is movement, and the ball is set rolling. The hesitancy and the procrastination would end.

There is need for an urgent and decisive move forward. If the big economies like the US would take a step forward then it would pick up momentum as the US and rest of the world move forward.

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Many demographic groups shift toward Trump

Kerry Boyd Anderson

AS the US election results wrap up, Donald Trump has won all seven battleground states — and thus a clear majority of the Electoral College votes necessary to win the presidency — and is likely to win a majority of the nationwide popular vote. He successfully maintained his core base of older white voters and white voters without a college degree, while also making gains with nearly every demographic group in the country.

Many left-wing and right-wing politicians and political commentators have long assumed that the country's changing demographics — with growing numbers of non-white voters — would inevitably benefit the Democratic Party, which has strongly embraced the idea that racial, ethnic and cultural diversity is a fundamentally good thing. Trump's 2024 win disproves that assumption.

In this year's presidential election, many voting trends continued as expected. Trump won a majority of white voters, a majority of male voters and a majority of voters who do not have a college degree. Vice President Kamala Harris won a majority of Hispanic voters, Black voters, female voters and a majority of voters with a college degree.

However, although Harris won majorities among nonwhite voters, Trump made significant gains with those groups, cutting into the Democratic Party's base, while Harris did not chip away at Trump's base. These shifts were sufficient to give Trump a clear electoral victory and signal a national shift

toward the Republican Party. "Of the counties with nearly complete results, more than 90 percent shifted in favor of former President Donald J. Trump in the 2024 presidential election," according to a New York Times analysis.

Shifts among Hispanic voters are perhaps the most important to Trump's victory and to shaping the future of US politics. Many Democrats have long assumed that this growing constituency would continue to favor their party, but the Republican Party made significant gains among Hispanic voters. This year, Trump won much larger portions of Hispanic voters than he did in 2020 or 2016.

At least two factors help to explain why many — though not all — political observers overestimated Hispanic support for Democrats.

First, Hispanics form a very loose identity group and many people who supposedly belong to the Hispanic demographic do not identify with many other people in that group. Hispanic Americans form a very diverse group.

For example, there are Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans, Tejanos, Mexican Americans and many more, with significant cultural differences. Hispanics also have a wide range of experiences in the US. Those who can vote must be US citizens, which suggests that most Hispanic voters were born in the country or emigrated to America legally (or received amnesty in 1986) and have lived there for many years.

This group does not always identify or sympathize with more recent

immigrants who have entered the country without legal permission.

Second, while recognizing the high level of diversity among Hispanics, there are some commonalities that offer advantages for Republicans. Hispanics tend to be religious and socially conservative — traits that align more with the Republican Party than the Democratic Party. Many are immigrants or the children and grandchildren of immigrants who came to the US in search of safety and economic opportunity, and the Republican Party traditionally portrays itself as the party of law and order and economic prosperity. For a demographic group that tends to be socially conservative, entrepreneurial and deeply desirous of safety and security, left-wing Democrats' emphasis on social justice and equity is often unappealing.

A gender gap and concerns about immigration played a role. Hispanic men, in particular, shifted in favor of Trump, with more Hispanic men voting for Trump than Hispanic women. Also, a sense of insecurity at the US' southern border — with very large numbers of undocumented migrants crossing the border — helped shift some Hispanic voters in those regions toward Trump.

Black Americans have been a bastion of Democratic support since the civil rights movement and Harris easily won a majority of Black voters. However, Trump made notable gains with younger Black men. "Trump about doubled his share of young Black men" compared to the

2020 election, according to AP News.

Reporting among Black communities suggested that older Black voters, who experienced the civil rights movement, remain loyal to the Democratic Party, as do Black women. However, the same reporting found that younger Black men are increasingly questioning whether the Democratic Party has benefited them or cares about their concerns. To some extent, many young Black men appeared to doubt whether a woman could be a sufficiently strong president.

Arab American voters also demonstrated their frustration with the Biden administration's handling of the war in Gaza at the polls. Initial results from areas with large Arab American and Muslim communities in Michigan suggest that the Democrats lost thousands of votes compared to 2020, with more Arab Americans voting for Trump or third-party candidate Jill Stein than for Harris.

This shift is less likely to be durable than the changes among Hispanic and Black voters, as Trump is likely to pursue extremely pro-Israel policies and also won support from strongly pro-Israel voters.

Nonetheless, the vote clearly demonstrated Arab American anger with Democrats.

Democrats will engage in much debate about why Trump won and they lost — and there will be many different explanations. Any useful explanation must take into account the reality that the current Democratic Party is losing its appeal among a diverse array of Americans.

The spillover effect of Israel's banning of UNRWA

Zaid M. Belbahi

AS the war in Gaza continues with no end in sight, the Israeli parliament's decision last month to sever ties with UNRWA risks adding further volatility to the conflict. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs subsequently canceled the 1967 cooperation agreement that formed the legal basis of Israel's relations with the UN agency. This agreement provided UNRWA with protection and diplomatic immunity. Foreign Minister Israel Katz said this decision was motivated by Israel's assessment that UNRWA's alleged ties to Hamas make it complicit in the ongoing conflict.

Since its establishment in 1949, UNRWA has been a lifeline for Palestinian refugees, delivering vital services such as education, healthcare, food assistance and emergency relief. Its prominence has particularly grown in the last two decades, as the number of refugees dependant on it for food assistance has grown from 80,000 people in 2000 to more than 2 million today. As of 2023, the poverty rate in Gaza stood at 64 percent and in the West Bank it was 12 percent.

This Israeli move will disrupt Gaza's fragile aid distribution system at a time when the humanitar-

ian crisis has been greatly exacerbated and Israel is facing growing pressures to allow aid into the Strip.

The Palestinian Authority is already facing a severe financial crisis amid the war and economic collapse and is struggling to pay public servants. This may increase dependence on Hamas for social services and support, given its role in the governance structure in Gaza. However, this will further delay the resolution of the conflict between Israel and Hamas.

The gap in humanitarian aid caused by UNRWA's withdrawal from Gaza will inevitably require the support of regional and international actors. Until a formal replacement for UNRWA is established, Egypt and the Gulf states will be faced with the primary responsibility for aid and reconstruction in Gaza, as their geographical location makes them particularly vulnerable to outward migration from the Strip. Since October 2023, the Gulf states have already increased their aid outflow to Gaza and this momentum will continue. In the past year, the UAE has sent more than 50,000 tonnes of urgent supplies to Gaza, while Saudi Arabia, in addition to supplies, has announced a monthly financial grant for Palestinians. The two

countries are also among the top 20 UNRWA donors.

The US has traditionally been the largest international donor, although in January it temporarily paused all funding to the organization as a result of Israel's accusation that 12 Hamas-linked UNRWA staff were involved in the Oct. 7, 2023, attack. Nonetheless, the US will play a key role in filling the aid vacuum in Gaza, as it has expressed deep concern over Israel's latest move. Moreover, incoming President Donald Trump is keenly focused on regional stability to expedite US military withdrawal from the Middle East. The next US administration may increase the flow of aid to Gaza while encouraging Israel to replace UNRWA.

In response to Israel's letter to the UN on severing ties with UNRWA, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres highlighted that it is Tel Aviv's responsibility to establish or appoint a replacement for the aid agency. UNRWA is not the sole aid agency operating in Gaza and the West Bank, with several leading international humanitarian organizations like the Palestine Red Crescent Society, Doctors Without Borders, the UN Population Fund and UNICEF also present.

However, UNRWA, known as the "backbone of the humanitarian response in Gaza," has served as a consolidated anchor agency for Palestinian refugees in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. It will therefore be a major challenge for a single organization to replace it.

Israel's decision comes at a critical juncture in the conflict in the Middle East, which, though far from being over, will be followed by a mammoth reconstruction effort in Gaza that could cost nearly \$80 billion. Postconflict rebuilding will require not only financial support but also on-the-ground experience of working with Palestinian refugees and authorities, which is UNRWA's expertise. Due to the lack of a stable political system in Gaza and the West Bank, the removal of UNRWA translates into the removal of the most advanced available administrative structure in the Occupied Territories.

While the Israeli decision is unlikely to be reversed, the international community is likely to encourage Israel to expand the avenues of humanitarian aid into Gaza and to increase cooperation with the other humanitarian agencies present in the region.

A new deterrence for Lebanon is needed to avoid a war with Israel

Sami Halabi

FOLLOWING the re-election of former US President Donald Trump, efforts to negotiate a ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel have seemingly gained momentum. On Monday, US special envoy Amos Hochstein and Israeli Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer met in Washington to discuss the matter.

In October, Hochstein traveled to Beirut, but his visit bore no fruit, as he made clear that for the US, "both sides simply committing to [United Nations Security Council Resolution] 1701 is not enough" and that there needs to be a new "formula that brings an end to this conflict once and for all". Casting aside UN decisions appears to have become commonplace among US officials of late, with disastrous consequences.

In their latest offer, Israel and the US are demanding that Lebanon accept a new arrangement in which Israeli troops can engage in "active enforcement" of demilitarisation in southern Lebanon. In other words, Israel would have effective military control over Lebanese territory.

No sovereign nation — or non-state actor — would ever agree to such terms. Neither Lebanon nor Hezbollah would give up their military deterrence. Therefore, US and Israeli insistence on these new conditions will only prolong the war.

Building a new consensus around Resolution 1701 remains the only viable path towards peace.

The resolution brought to an end Israel's last war with Lebanon in 2006, acting as a mechanism to stop the hostilities and outlining measures to clear the border area of armed group presence. Although there were issues with its full implementation — which both sides were aware would happen — it effectively put an end to the fighting.

The grim prospect of a long war

On Sunday, Israel's Defense Minister Israel Katz declared that after 40 days of intense fighting, Hezbollah has been defeated. "Now it is our job to continue to put pressure in order to bring about the fruits of that victory," he reportedly said during an official ceremony.

Israel seems to be convinced that it can bring Hezbollah to capitulation by force. However, going for a military solution in Lebanon means war that will not be anything like the 2006 conflict.

Back then, Israel's ground offensive faltered, and public support eroded as losses mounted. Today, Prime Minister Netanyahu has the Israeli public's backing, buoyed by military successes that have eliminated Hezbollah's leadership and disrupted its communications networks.

Despite these losses, Hezbollah is also better prepared, better equipped, and arguably more disciplined than in 2006. It's little wonder that Israel has not managed to gain more than a few miles of ground in since its land incursions began and the daily rocket salvos directed at northern and central Israel continue.

Barring some major change or diplomatic shift under the incoming Trump administration that would put pressure on Israel, all of this means that we are in for a very long war.

An essential deterrent

Hezbollah restarted hostilities with Israel in support of its ally Hamas and, up until recently, made a ceasefire with Israel contingent on a ceasefire in Gaza. The group knows that while many Lebanese understand its ongoing intervention, many are also dissatisfied, to say the least, with its actions over the past two decades.

By propping the Syrian regime in the 2010s, helping maintain the rule of the corrupt Lebanese elite when the economy collapsed in 2019, and blocking the investigation into the 2020 Beirut port blast, Hezbollah has made a lot of enemies at home and abroad and has had to rely

almost completely on Iran for diplomatic leverage and military prowess.

Its refusal to integrate into a national defence strategy by maintaining its weapons outside of the command and control of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) has also led to a colossal mismanagement of national security and left the country vulnerable to Israel's far superior military.

The devastation Israel is wreaking across Lebanon is also a major cause for concern. The longer the huge displacement from the south and east of the country continues, the more social tensions and anger towards Hezbollah will grow.

At the same time, Hezbollah's deterrent arsenal of missiles and fighters is Lebanon's only real bargaining chip. Without Hezbollah, Israel's Merkava tanks would almost certainly roll into Beirut and install a puppet regime, facing little resistance along the way.

The Lebanese calling for Hezbollah to give up its arms for peace are either living in a fantasy world or are just terrible negotiators.

That said, if Hezbollah wants to salvage any semblance of Lebanese unity, the onus is on it to come to the table with a political plan for the implementation of Resolution 1701. It also needs to prove it can work within a national framework, not just act as an Iranian proxy.

Given the distrust among its detractors, for these initiatives to work they would need to happen in phases. For starters, Hezbollah would need to explain how it will formally coordinate with the LAF to form a joint deterrent force, just like it did in 2017 when they fought together against ISIL (ISIS). In addition, Hezbollah will need to accept that the national army and government speak on its behalf and that it needs to take its place in such a configuration without the threat of arms or veto power over political decisions.

From there, the party will need to elaborate on Lebanon's national defence strategy, which can't rely solely on the woefully under-resourced LAF. That strategy needs Hezbollah's arms — but with a clear roadmap for integration.

New deterrence framework

Any new defence strategy that leaves Lebanon without a deterrent against Israel's war machine is bound to fail and reinforce the justification for Iran and Hezbollah to maintain a non-state deterrent. Talk of a new national security framework and support for the LAF at conferences like the one organised by France in late October remains irrelevant, as it comes without concrete security guarantees for Lebanon.

If French President Emmanuel Macron, or any other Western leader, were serious about supporting Lebanon, they would offer something more concrete than mere talk of an arms embargo on Israel. France could offer Rafale jets or air defence systems, for instance, which would allow the LAF to establish its own deterrence.

Of course, that would mean France overstepping the US in terms of material support to the LAF — something that is unlikely before, at the very least, a well-defined stance on Lebanon's national defence is made by Hezbollah and Iran.

What is clear at this stage is that an international diplomatic solution is needed, but not one which discards the consensus reached in 2006. The West and the incoming Trump administration need to face the fact that without a return to Resolution 1701, security guarantees and a military deterrent for Lebanon, wars with Israel will continue.

Hezbollah and Iran also need to understand they cannot run a private army in Lebanon and get away with it without deadly consequences. Otherwise, everyone will find themselves back on the battlefield talking about yet another "new formula".

Trump rolls out his most MAGA picks for new White House term

IT was a night of MAGA shock and awe that even Donald Trump's most devoted fans might not have dreamed possible.

But the president-elect's blizzard of Cabinet and staff picks on Tuesday, each one more unorthodox than the last, only bolstered fears among his critics that his chaotic crew is about to take the country on a dangerous ride.

Trump named his new super buddy Elon Musk, the Tesla and SpaceX pioneer, to head a new department to gut government agencies and budgets. Musk is an authentic genius and visionary. But in his new job, the world's richest man may be able to wipe out governance and regulations while enjoying the largesse of vast federal contracts for his businesses. It's a situation that makes the ethical alarms and conflicts of interest of Trump's first term look minuscule by comparison.

Musk will be joined at what Trump is calling the "Department of Government Efficiency" by rabble-rousing GOP presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy, who left little doubt that the plan is to eviscerate government itself. "SHUT IT DOWN," he posted on X, the platform owned by Musk and now bristling with pro-Trump propaganda. It's unclear how this new department, which Trump said would "provide advice and guidance from outside of Government," would actually operate.

Trump is reaping the rewards of his victory

What may be the most unorthodox White House and Cabinet staff in decades is the product of Trump's sweeping election victory a week ago. Many of his supporters despise Washington government and want revenge against elites. The defeat of Vice President Kamala Harris, meanwhile, plunged her voters into gloom and conjured a palpable sense of fear that the nation is about to enter a volatile and perilous new era.

But for a while Monday, it was almost possible to think that Trump might not turn out as disruptive as expected and that his efficient new White House chief of staff Susie Wiles was manag-

ing a tight ship as Cabinet selections methodically rolled out. CNN and other media outlets reported Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, a statesman known around the world, was likely to be picked for secretary of state.

But Tuesday night's flurry of activity from the rarified atmosphere of Trump's Mar-a-Lago club — where Musk is reportedly sitting in on the selection process — suggested the coming Washington storm would be as extreme as expected. (And Rubio's selection — which relieved many allies abroad who fear for alliances with Washington — has not been made official amid suggestions that Trump's base is chafing at the elevation of an ex-critic who once leaned neo-conservative.)

The sense of mounting chaos was exacerbated by a Wall Street Journal story that the Trump transition team is considering an executive order that would create a "warrior board," which would have the power to recommend the removal of three- and four-star officers. The story fueled new fears that Trump — who threatened to fire generals wholesale during the campaign — will purge top brass and politicize the military, after mulling on the trail that he could turn its might on his political enemies when in office.

What Trump is thinking

Four things are true about Trump's shocking picks for top staffers on Tuesday.

The president-elect is entitled to name who he wants to his Cabinet and team after the democratic legitimacy of his presidential election victory.

The selection of people like Musk, Noem and Hegseth are partly designed to honor the aspirations of Trump's voters and epitomize the president-elect's own outsider brand — as well as his deeply developed craving for loyalty.

His choice of ultra-loyalists is borne out of Trump's frustration that establishment military officers, officials and c o n v e n t i o n a l Washington operators reined in his own most extreme impulses in his first term. Many of his nominations are also consistent with the ideo-

Stephen Collinson

logical undertones of his political movement. Former White House official Steve Bannon — who was released from federal prison the week before Election Day, after being convicted on two counts of contempt of Congress — famously declared early in the first term that Trump was all about the "deconstruction of the administrative state." That seems about to be sent into warp speed.

But Trump is also taking a risk. While it makes sense to pick outside revolutionaries to tear down governance, many of his picks lack the kind of in-depth experience and knowledge of the departments they will run. They could be churned up by the agencies they're meant to transform.

Musk, from space pioneer to government reformer?

Trump's new relationship with Musk, who emerged as a powerful force in his bid to win a second term, is a fascinating development even if it is not clear that the supposed new department he will head will be a real government agency.

The president-elect and the tech pioneer are in some ways an odd pairing. Musk is deeply read, and biographers say he has spent considerable time pondering the mysteries of the universe, the future of mankind and the riddle of consciousness. Trump makes no pretense at such an intellectual hinterland. And during his business and political career laced with scandals and drama, the president-elect has often looked like he's simply trying to make it to the end of the day in one piece.

But both Musk and Trump thrive in the chaos that they create. They are both iconoclasts who have shown that the rules that apply to others don't inhibit them. Both have used wealth to access power and to topple entrenched businesses and political interests.

In Musk's case, a personality that strains convention has resulted in astonishing advances in the electric vehicle industry that few others have been able to make profitable. The SpaceX line of rockets that res-

cued US orbital exploration has Musk aiming to put men on Mars.

With that background and a record of turning around red-tape-bound industries with innovation, Musk might be an ideal figure to reform the hide-bound US government and a federal system that often stifles fast change.

Yet Musk's increasing political radicalism and the specter of his massive potential conflicts of interests raise the possibility of an American oligarchy that rather than revitalizing government could corrupt it. And Musk makes a habit of destructive reinvention — a factor that could have enormous consequences in his new position in Trump's team.

Musk caused consternation when he suggested that he could cut \$2 trillion in federal spending in the run-up to the election. The entire budget comes in at roughly \$6.5 trillion. Spending restrictions along these lines would almost certainly cut into programs like Social Security, the military budget, and other popular items that could cause a political firestorm and considerable hardship for millions of Americans who lack his and Trump's fortunes. If that pain becomes clear, Trump may balk at paying a personal political price for his government overhaul.

It's also unclear how realistic the Musk-Ramaswamy project will be. It's up to Congress to approve budgets for government. Trump and Musk can't just decree what will happen. And even with the likely GOP monopoly on Capitol Hill, the idea that lawmakers will agree to such drastic fiscal surgery seems fanciful.

'Wow': senators react to Hegseth nomination

The case for Hegseth at the department of defense starts with his decorated military career, which includes deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. One of his major tasks, if confirmed, will be to seek to significantly boost the defense budget in line with Trump's campaign promises to improve readiness, especially with a view to the rising challenge from the new

superpower, China.

But his relative lack of political and international experience left some Trump critics bewildered by the choice.

Democratic Rep. Dan Goldman of New York told CNN's Erin Burnett, "I'm shocked. And this is exactly what we worried about, and we warned about Donald Trump, which is that he is going to appoint unqualified loyalists to shape the government into his own personal fiefdom." Goldman added, "I appreciate Mr. Hegseth's service in our armed forces but being a serviceman, it does not make you qualified to lead the department of defense and to have access to our nuclear weapons."

Former Trump national security adviser John Bolton, meanwhile, told CNN's Kaitlan Collins the biggest challenge for Hegseth would come if the president-elect put him in a position of obeying or refusing a potentially unlawful or unconstitutional command. "What will Pete Hegseth do the first time Trump tells him to put the 82nd Airborne on the streets of Portland, Oregon?" Bolton said.

Hegseth's selection surprised Capitol Hill too, but there were no immediate signs that he'd have trouble winning confirmation.

"Wow," said Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska.

GOP Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina had one word: "Interesting." Several Republicans said they trusted Trump's choice and predicted that Hegseth would be surrounded by capable people.

But Trump's former White House attorney Ty Cobb, speaking about the quality of the president-elect's nominees more generally, drew an analogy with the NBA. "I think we are seeing a lot of Bronny James and not many Steph Currys," he told CNN's Burnett.

In the case of Hegseth, there was one particular quality that appealed to the president-elect, who has reportedly been vetting nominees by watching their television appearances.

"Trump also thinks he has the look," one source told CNN's Alayna Treene.

Driving events

Michael Jansen

tion or cast ballots for Stein were motivated by anger, bitterness, and a desire for revenge rather than good sense.

There are 3.5 million Muslims in the US of whom 2.5 million are registered voters. Of the 3.7 million citizens of Arab background, 40 per cent have roots in Lebanon and 63 per cent of them are Christians. Many Muslims and Arabs live in the key swing states of Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Since their votes would contribute to the outcome of the tight race against Trump, Harris visited Michigan 16 times during the campaign.

To make matters more difficult for Harris, millions of young voters from all backgrounds joined Arab and Muslim anger and rejection of the Democrats due to Harris inability to distance herself from Biden's policies. After Democrat Hillary Clinton was defeated by Trump in 2016, the party blamed Stein for the loss of key swing states Michigan and Wisconsin.

Frist Nation — or US Native communities — have concentrated on the domestic front where they are noticed every four years when their votes matter but are ignored the rest of the time. As they inhabit swing states Nevada and Arizona, their votes became precious this year. They have generally supported Democrats and were well aware that as few as 10,000-15,000 of their votes could decide the race in Arizona, in particular. While they have the numbers to swing elections, the politicians they elect do not tackle poverty and the lack of paved roads, electricity and running water on Native reservations. High unemployment has driven most of the young to seek jobs off the thinly populated, vast arid lands which have been turned into Native reservations.

Native US citizens have long seen parallels between what happened to them in the past 500 years and the challenges faced by Palestinians today. Israel's evacuation orders which have driven Palestinians from their homes, lands, and communities in Gaza have been compared to the "Trial of Tears." This was the evacuation of 100,000 Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw,

Choctaw and Seminole men, women, and children, from rich cotton lands east of the Mississippi river to designated areas west of the river. Some 15,000 were estimated to have perished during this journey. After arriving at areas allocated to them, these and local tribes were eventually rounded up and consigned to reservations on just two per cent of US land.

This scenario has been revived, revisited and commemorated by Indigenous families who suffered the privations of a long walk under guard of US troops. Native activists have joined Muslim and Arab citizens by taking up Palestine as a foreign policy issue in addition to their domestic agenda.

US Native backing for Palestine began in the 1970s when The Native American Movement and the Palestine Liberation Organisation campaigned together to reclaim their stolen rights and lands. In 2016, Palestinian activists joined Natives sporting Palestinian keffiyehs in protests at Standing Rock in North Dakota against oil pipelines that would destroy Indigenous religious and cultural sites and pollute underground water. Indigenous people joined Palestinian demonstrations during Israel's 2021 assault on Gaza and have participated in this year's university campus protests against Israeli's all-out war on Gaza. However, Indigenous activists have criticised pro-Palestinian "immigrants" to the US from Europe, Asia, South America and this region for failing to recognise the parallels between Native and Palestinian experiences.

In April this year, the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association "condemned in the strongest possible terms the Israeli genocide in Gaza and the ongoing settler colonial elimination targeting Palestinians." The Association called for an immediate ceasefire, access for humanitarian aid, an end to US military aid to Israel, investigations into atrocities, an end to the Israeli occupation and recognition of the right of return of refugees.

"Indigenous peoples best understand what it means to be subjects of settler states that deny, conceal, or attempt to erase their complicity in genocide and colonialism," the Association stated.

Ancient civilizations can seek modernization together

RECENTLY China and India have reached resolutions on issues concerning the border areas through diplomatic and military channels, which is a good sign for both nations and the region.

Historically, China and India shared peaceful relations for thousands of years. As the world's second- and fifth-largest economies, the two countries manage their differences with a strategic mindset, emphasizing the importance of open communication. Their commitment to fostering a healthy and stable relationship is essential for building a multipolar world, as sought by the Global South.

India and China, as ancient civilizations, had much in common as Buddhism played a significant role in shaping both societies. The two countries established diplomatic relations in 1950, with India being the first non-socialist country to establish diplomatic ties with China, a move that was globally significant.

In 1954, China and India jointly proposed the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, laying the foundation for their future relations. The Global South views these principles as crucial for contemporary international relations and for giving a collective call for improving global governance.

Also, the two countries are expected to emerge as two of the most powerful global players. Together, they account for one-third of the world's population and contribute to almost half of global economic growth. And their emer-

Maya Majueran

gence is one of the most significant developments in the 21st century.

China and India recognize the complexities of today's geopolitical landscape and the common challenges they, and the other developing nations, face. They share broad interests and understand that good bilateral relations are beneficial to them as well as for the rest of the world.

However, Western powers have been trying to exploit the differences between India and China, portraying them as rivals for the leadership of the Global South. This narrative has been perpetuated through systematic campaigns, and by fuelling the belief that China is India's enemy, so India should strengthen ties with the US to counter the "Chinese threat".

China and India agreed to organize meetings between their foreign ministers and other officials to restore healthy and stable bilateral relations, and pledged to strengthen communication and cooperation in multilateral forums to safeguard the common interests of the developing world.

As key members of BRICS and the Global South, their cooperation represents a win-win for all developing countries. Positive relations between India and China are particularly significant for the Global South, as the countries play pivotal roles in shaping the future global order.

The growing cooperation between these two largest developing countries, along with their

involvement in organizations such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, will help widen the influence of the Global South, as well as promote a truly multipolar world, one that is not dominated by the US and other Western powers.

To reduce the dominance of the US and its Western allies in reforming the existing world order that primarily serves the West's interests, BRICS member states and the Global South are advocating for improving the world order that benefits all countries and fosters a community with a shared future for humanity.

The improvement in China-India relations is a win-win for not only those two nations but also the expanded BRICS members and the Global South as a whole. With the two countries playing key roles, the Global South can establish a new, balanced, open and inclusive multilateral cooperation mechanism, capable of addressing global challenges.

As for the Global South, China and India could join forces to oppose unilateralism, resist bloc confrontations, safeguard the interests of developing countries, and contribute to regional and global peace, stability and development.

Strong Sino-Indian ties have the potential to promote regional and global peace and prosperity. By standing together for more fairness and justice, they can help create a multipolar world that opposes supremacism and fosters a fairer and more equitable world order.

— China Daily

A new triangular relationship

ZHANG XINYU

integration. The emergence of larger integrated organizations with clearer political agendas and more well-organized structures, such as the Southern Common Market, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, signifies that the LAC countries are more powerful and have a unified voice in responding to the new triangular relationship.

However, the LAC countries have certain concerns about the new triangular relationship. At the economic level, they believe that in the short term, they can take advantage of the Sino-US competition for their own interests, but their long-term economic interests will be damaged due to the tensions in international relations caused by the competition.

In terms of security, the LAC countries are concerned that Sino-US competition may trigger regional conflicts.

In recent years, behind subregional conflicts such as the border crisis between Venezuela and Colombia and the territorial sovereignty dispute between Venezuela and Guyana, the shadow of great power games can be seen. In terms of foreign relations, the LAC countries might find themselves

under strong pressure to choose sides between China or the US in the future.

By adopting the strategy of active nonalignment, promoting the process of regional integration, and seeking to strengthen cooperation with countries outside the triangle, the LAC countries are responding to the potential negative impacts of the Sino-US strategic competition.

For example, the concept of active nonalignment has become quite popular in debates about Latin America's positioning in international politics and the Ukraine crisis. Latin American governments should not accept a priori position of any of the Great Powers. Instead, they must act in defense of their own national interest, without giving in to pressures from major powers. However, under the coercion and seduction of the US, the LAC countries' strategic choice has become complex and uncertain.

Due to a long history of US intervention in the region, most LAC countries still have unsteady expectations and insufficient confidence in the US. At the same time, Sino-Latin American relations have made new progress through cooperation in various fields. With the rapid intensification of the trade relationship, China has become LAC's second-

FOR Latin America and the Caribbean, the United States is a strong northern neighbor with similar political and cultural traditions and profound historical influence, while China is a new partner thanks to its increasing economic presence and political influence in recent years.

As China's national power and international influence rise, the US is trying to contain and suppress it as a strategic competitor. The fierce competition between China and the US has led to the formation of a new triangular relationship between China, the US and the LAC, which is different from the historical trilateral relationship.

The concept of the new triangular relationship between China, the US and the LAC was first proposed by LAC scholars.

That is to say, LAC countries recognize both the long historical, political and economic ties with the US and the growing socioeconomic presence of China in the region. China's growing influence in the LAC region has challenged traditional US influence, significantly altering the geopolitical and economic balance there.

From this perspective, the LAC countries are at a crossroads and in the middle of the US-China competition. In addition, Sino-US relations play a key role in this new triangle, whose

nature and status largely determines the development of the trilateral relationship.

The first new feature of the new triangular relationship is that the growth of bilateral economic and trade relations between China and the LAC region is significantly higher than that between the US and Latin America.

From 2000 to 2020, US-LAC trade grew from \$350 to \$500 billion, still substantially greater than China's 2020 figure of \$350 billion, but its rate of growth — increasing by nearly 50 percent — was dwarfed by China's 2,600 percent increase.

Second, China's presence in Latin America has attracted unprecedented attention from the US. Compared with historical responses to the presence of the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union in the region, the US is displaying unprecedented strategic concerns and anxiety toward China's growing influence in the context of Sino-US competition. Third, when dealing with major power relations, the LAC countries are more independent, autonomous and integrated than at any other time in history.

With the rise of the "pink wave" in this century, left-wing governments in Latin America have achieved fruitful results in the process of regional



Pakistan losses \$100 billion due to illicit trade: Leaders demand action against ‘economic threats’

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A high-profile advocacy event organized by the ACT Alliance in Peshawar brought together key provincial and local leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders to discuss the pressing challenges of illicit trade, tax evasion, smuggling, and counterfeiting in Pakistan. The event highlighted the urgent need for decisive government action to counter “the threats to Pakistan’s economy.” Mubashir Akram, National Convener of ACT Alliance, briefed the attendees on the severe economic consequences of these illicit activities, which collectively cost Pakistan’s economy an estimated \$100 billion each year.

In attendance were prominent figures from the political spectrum and government bodies, including Muhammad Zubair, Mayor of Peshawar; Behar Ullah, Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami; Zulqarnain, President of the Pakistan Chamber of Commerce; Farhad Khan, President of ANP; Sania Javed, Deputy Speaker; Sobia Khan, Member of Provincial Assembly; Dr. Ibad, Leader of the Opposition; Malik Liaquat, Population Minister; and Mehrunnisa, former MPA. The leaders expressed deep concern over the scope of these issues and pledged to support more stringent policies to counteract the harmful impacts on Pakistan’s economy.

In his opening remarks, Muhammad Zubair, Mayor of Peshawar, voiced his gratitude to the ACT Alliance for shedding light on the critical economic damage caused by illicit trade. “The insights shared informed us about the staggering economic losses our province and country suffer from illicit trade. It is a wake-up call for us to take immediate action,” he said, calling provincial authorities to partner with federal agencies and industry leaders to tackle these issues effectively.

Mubashir Akram provided an in-depth presentation on the scale of the challenge, citing that retail, POL (petroleum, oil, and lubricants), real estate, and tobacco sectors are among the most significant contributors to tax evasion in Pakistan. Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Behar Ullah spoke passionately about the socio-economic impact of illicit trade on ordinary citizens. “For too long, we have let this go unchecked, thinking it only affects the wealthy. Today, we see the reality—it impacts us all, eroding our economy, public services, and opportunities for future growth. This fight needs collective, social and political action,” he stated.

President of the Pakistan Chamber of Commerce Zulqarnain emphasized the need for a focused approach to eradicate counterfeiting and smuggling, particularly in the retail sector, and said that the businesses are being stifled by those who evade taxes and undermine legitimate enterprise.

President ANP Farhad Khan highlighted the provincial government’s role in leading the fight against illicit trade. “We, as representatives of the people, must ensure that policies reflect the seriousness of this issue. The provincial government must work closely with federal agencies to crack down on these networks, and we must act swiftly to mitigate further damage.”

Expressing shock over the staggering losses to the national exchequer, Deputy Speaker Sania Javed underscored the need for strict action. “As policymakers, we must uphold the integrity of our economic system. Today’s revelations remind us that our legislative frameworks must be fortified to prevent such economic bleedings,” she said.

MPA Sobia Khan added her voice to the call for accountability, urging that anti-smuggling laws be implemented immediately. “We cannot afford to let such loopholes go unchecked. The FBR and provincial law enforcement agencies must work together to ensure that those who participate in illicit trade are brought to justice,” she said.

Leader of the Opposition Dr. Ibad expressed his solidarity with the initiative and stressed the importance of holding those involved in illicit trade accountable. “This is a moment for unity. Regardless of political affiliations, we must collectively strive to protect Pakistan’s economic health from being undermined by unscrupulous actors,” he affirmed. Population Minister Malik Liaquat echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing the broader impact of tax evasion on public welfare programs. “Every rupee lost to smuggling and tax evasion is a rupee taken from the people of Pakistan. We cannot stand idle while our economy suffers,” he concluded, pledging to rally support within the provincial government for more stringent policies.

Former MPA Mehrunnisa commended ACT Alliance for their dedicated efforts, noting, “Today’s briefing has been enlightening. We must appreciate and support such initiatives that aim to curb the negative forces acting against our economy.” The event concluded with a unanimous call for urgent action and a collective pledge from the attendees to advocate for more robust policies and enforcement mechanisms.

ACT Alliance’s advocacy effort has now spotlighted the pressing need for decisive action from all sectors of society to protect Pakistan’s economic future. The organization has called on the provincial and federal governments to take serious measures against these issues, acknowledging that a coordinated and collective response is the only path to safeguard Pakistan’s economy from the adverse effects of illicit trade and tax evasion.

Meezan Bank and CashNow sign MOU



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Meezan Bank, Pakistan’s leading Islamic bank, has entered into a strategic alliance with CashNow, Pakistan’s pioneering supply chain finance platform, to revolutionize Shariah-compliant supply chain finance. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed at Meezan Bank’s Head Office in the presence of senior management from both organizations.

This partnership, the first of its kind in Pakistan, enables CashNow—a cutting-edge fintech platform—to power a fully integrated digital Islamic supply chain finance solution for suppliers, developed in collaboration with Meezan Bank. Through this initiative, Meezan Bank’s customers will gain access to digitally streamlined Shariah-compliant financing.

Under the terms of this MoU, Meezan Bank and CashNow have co-developed a digital Islamic product for finished goods financing. The CashNow platform integrates with Meezan’s core banking system to fully digitize the transaction process, offering the Bank’s customers rapid access to Shariah-approved working capital. “Meezan Bank is committed to fostering growth across all business sectors, with a strong focus on supporting SMEs & Supply Chain finance,” said Syed Tanveer Hussain - Group Executive Corporate, Commercial & Investment Banking, Meezan Bank.

VW launches \$5.8b tie-up with Tesla rival Rivian

BERLIN (BBC News): Volkswagen Group (VW) and Tesla rival Rivian have launched a joint venture, with the German car giant increasing its investment in the partnership. The two companies say the deal is now worth \$5.8bn (£4.55bn) - up from an initial pledge from VW of \$5bn.

Gas production from Dera Bugti well begins with 5MMSCFD

QUETTA (INP): The Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has commenced gas production from a newly drilled well located in Dera Bugti, Balochistan, says in media reports. This development marks a significant contribution to Pakistan’s natural gas output. According to a letter from OGDCL to the Pakistan Stock Exchange, the Uch-35 well is producing an impressive five million standard cubic feet of gas per day (MMSCFD).

The gas output has been successfully integrated into the Uch Gas Processing Plant, which will aid in streamlining and distributing the additional gas supply. OGDCL, the country’s largest exploration and production company, holds complete ownership of the Dera Bugti well, as confirmed in its letter to the PSX.

On Nov 12, Pakistan decided to stop the purchase of imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) and redirect it to domestic consumers, following a reduction in electricity consumption. According to documents from the Ministry of Petroleum, providing LNG to domestic consumers will require an investment of Rs163 billion.

Sources said that the imported LNG is increasing pressure on pipelines on a daily basis. Sources confirmed that the power sector had been using 600 million cubic feet per day (MMcfd) of LNG. With the closure of captive power plants, 150MMcfd of LNG will now become surplus, while the gas sector is also earning a revenue of Rs400 billion from captive power.

Chicken prices see massive hike across Punjab province

LAHORE (INP): Consumers in Lahore and other parts of Punjab have seen a sharp rise in prices for essential commodities, including chicken, eggs, and cooking oil, impacting household budgets as the cost of daily necessities soars. According to the latest official rate list issued on Wednesday, the price of chicken meat surged by Rs21, bringing the cost per kilogram to Rs511, up from Rs490.

The price hike has affected both live chicken and dressed meat, with the wholesale price rising by Rs15 to Rs339 per kilogram, while the retail price now stands at Rs353 per kilogram. In Multan, a similar trend was observed. The wholesale price of live chicken was Rs322 per kilogram, with the retail price fixed at Rs336. Chicken meat is being sold for Rs485 per kilogram, reflecting the province-wide increase in poultry prices.

Egg prices also on the rise. Egg prices have also seen a slight upward adjustment. In Lahore, the cost of a dozen eggs has risen by Rs2, with the new rate fixed at Rs334, up from Rs332. In Multan, the price has been set at Rs330 per dozen, leaving consumers bracing for further price changes as winter demand for eggs grows. The price of cooking oil and ghee has seen a substantial rise in recent days despite a decline in inflation rates across the country.

Reports indicate that the retail price for first-grade ghee and cooking oil has increased by Rs54 per kilogram, with a steeper rise of Rs60 per kilogram for second and third-grade products. First-grade ghee and oil, previously priced at Rs505, now retail for Rs559. Second-grade ghee, which was earlier available for Rs440, now costs Rs500, while the price of second-grade oil has increased from Rs452 to Rs512 per liter.

SEPA to take urgent steps to avert smog

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) is taking urgent steps to prevent a potential smog crisis in the province. Director General SEPA Naeem Ahmed Mughal has directed his team to focus on strictly regulating all major sources of air pollution. Chairing a meeting of the high officials of SEPA, he emphasized the critical importance of issuing necessary environmental approvals but stressed that the immediate threat of smog requires immediate attention. All efforts must be directed towards strengthening SEPA’s air pollution control mechanism to prevent the onset of smog, especially in districts bordering Punjab, which are particularly vulnerable as winter intensifies.

Mughal highlighted the alarming air pollution levels across Pakistan, with Ghotki, Sukkur, Qambar-Shahdadkot, and Larkana being particularly susceptible to smog. He expressed concern over the absence of a proactive plan to control air quality. To prevent smog in Sindh, Mughal outlined a strategy that involves intensifying efforts to control air pollution from all sources, including vehicular emissions, industrial emissions, and garbage burning. He also emphasized the need to monitor industries that may be resorting to biomass-based energy production due to energy crises, as this can exacerbate emissions. Mughal stressed the serious health implications of elevated air pollution levels, which can lead to an increase in airborne diseases. He directed all districts in-charges to submit detailed action plans outlining strategies to control air pollution within their jurisdictions.

He further emphasized the importance of prioritizing air quality monitoring over routine office activities and instructed the Director Laboratory to operationalize the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) laboratory to effectively monitor various air quality parameters, particularly particulate matter, which is especially harmful when inhaled. The Director General directed the Director of Karachi Region to send a letter to the Mayor of Karachi urging the implementation of measures to control road dust emissions, such as water sprinkling and road cleaning. All civic bodies should be instructed to conduct air quality monitoring within their areas using available resources, and land-owning agencies should be encouraged to install air quality monitoring stations. He acknowledged the challenges in controlling vehicular emissions due to a lack of a regular monitoring mechanism and the reliance on makeshift solutions.

He recommended relaunching a comprehensive drive to inspect vehicle emissions in collaboration with traffic police. Similarly, a letter should be sent to the Secretary, Transport Department of Sindh to ensure the effective issuance of fitness certificates and the proper maintenance of old vehicles. “These measures should be implemented not only in Karachi but throughout Sindh. All Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) offices should keep a vigil on activities that could lead to air pollution, such as stubble burning, which can significantly worsen air quality,” he added. He said that the EIA Section must direct the management of BRT to water their constructed roads to suppress dust emissions. Failure to comply with environmental approval conditions will result in strict action against responsible parties, regardless of whether they are private entities or government organizations. All cement manufacturers must be instructed to monitor their mining activities. With the support of the Sindh Information Department, public service messages on air pollution precautions will be disseminated through electronic media to raise awareness about the harmful effects of poor air quality. The Director General emphasized the utmost importance of these measures and warned that any negligence would result in strict disciplinary action. He will personally monitor the performance of each official every week.

Karwan-e-Hayat successfully celebrated World Quality Day

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Karwan-e-Hayat, one of Pakistan’s leading mental health care provider and the only facility in the Sindh province to be awarded the prestigious Sindh Health Care Commission (SHCC) regular license, successfully celebrated World Quality Day 2024 at its hospital facility in Keamari. The theme for the event, “Quality for Wellness Management” was chosen to recognize the vital role of quality in enhancing mental health services and to celebrate the organization’s commitment to excellence. The day’s program commenced with opening remarks by Karwan-e-Hayat CEO, Mr. Arshad Rahim Khan, where he spoke about quality as an inherent trait in all human beings. Echoing his thoughts, were Karwane-Hayat Chairman, Muhammad Salim and Karwan-e-Hayat Board Member, Dr. Aamir Jafarey, who clearly defined quality as a never-ending journey of improvement. The proceedings also featured a compelling session titled “The Impact of

Quality in Mental Health” by Dr. Minhaj Qidwai, respected expert in the field. Dr. Qidwai’s talk underscored the significance of quality-driven practices in mental health, from improved patient outcomes to sustainable, compassionate care models. His insights resonated with the audience, further emphasizing Karwan-e-Hayat’s mission to uphold the highest standards in patient care. Karwan-e-Hayat also announced the launch of its Clinical Quality Circle and Zero Error concepts—key initiatives aimed at embedding quality assurance in clinical practices and striving for error-free care delivery. To promote the mentality of mental health care among the medical staff, badges were also distributed to showcase “Champions of Care” to remind the staff of their responsibilities and commitment. These initiatives reflect Karwan-e-Hayat’s proactive approach in promoting safety, continuous improvement, and a culture of excellence across all levels of care. Guests at the event also enjoyed a vibrant gala with



food stalls, art activities, and interactive experiences, reinforcing Karwan-e-Hayat’s focus on mental wellness and community engagement. The World Quality Day celebration provided a meaningful opportunity to strengthen Karwan-e-Hayat’s mission of destigmatizing mental illness and promoting an inclusive, quality-focused approach to mental healthcare. For more than four decades Karwan-e-Hayat (KEH) has been one of the pioneering not-for-profit welfare organizations providing treatment and rehabilitation services for the mentally ill. Aside from being pioneers in psychiatric care and rehabilitation, Karwan-e-Hayat is

also one of the few organizations who are Shariah compliant, ISO 9001:2015 certified and registered with the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP) for provision of quality psychiatric services. It is also the only mental health care facility in the Sindh province to have been granted the regular Sindh Health Care Commission license. Last year, KEH facilitated more than 243,000 patient visits with almost 96% of overall patients treated free of cost and provided with medications at highly subsidized rates at its Keamari and Korangi facilities and completely free of cost treatment and medication at its 22 community outreach camps.

US consumer prices rise as expected in October

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US consumer prices increased as expected in October, and progress towards low inflation has slowed since mid-year, which could result in fewer interest rate cuts from the Federal Reserve next year. The consumer price index rose 0.2% for the fourth straight month, the Labor Department’s Bureau of Labor Statistics said on Wednesday. In the 12 months

through October, the CPI advanced 2.6% after climbing 2.4% in September. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the CPI gaining 0.2% and increasing 2.6% year-on-year. The up-tick in annual inflation also reflects last year’s low reading dropping out of the calculation. Frustration over inflation helped to propel Republican Donald Trump to victory in last week’s

presidential election, defeating Democratic Party candidate and Vice President Kamala Harris. Economists are, however, forecasting higher inflation next year if Trump forges ahead with his economic policies, including tax cuts and higher tariffs on imported goods. He has also vowed mass deportations of undocumented immigrants, which economists say will shrink labor

supply, raising costs for businesses that are then passed on to consumers. Though the US central bank is expected to cut interest rates again in December, economists see the scope for more cuts next year as limited. US Treasury yields have surged as investors expect the president-elect’s policies will proceed unhindered, with Republicans controlling the US Senate and on

the verge of clinching the House of Representatives. The annual increase in inflation has slowed considerably from a peak of 9.1% in June 2022, but remains above the Fed’s 2% target. The central bank last week cut its benchmark overnight interest rate by 25 basis points to the 4.50%-4.75% range. The Fed launched its policy easing cycle with an unusually large half-per-

centage-point rate cut in September, the first reduction in borrowing costs since 2020. It hiked rates by 525 basis points in 2022 and 2023 to tame inflation. Excluding the volatile food and energy components, the CPI increased 0.3% in October, rising by the same margin for the third consecutive month. In the 12 months through October, the so-called core CPI gained 3.3%.



In brief

Rivals Pakistan, India placed in same group

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Traditional rivals Pakistan and India have once again been placed in the same group, this time for the inaugural Under-19 Women's Asia Cup, as the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) unveiled the tournament schedule. The competition will run from December 15 to 22 in Malaysia, featuring six teams vying for the title. Group A consists of Pakistan, India, and Nepal, while Group B includes hosts Malaysia, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. The U-19 girls from Pakistan and India will clash on the opening day, December 15. Pakistan will then face Nepal in their second group match on December 16. The top two teams from each group will advance to the Super Four stage, scheduled for December 19 and 20. In this phase, teams will compete against the top two qualifiers from the opposite group. The final is set for December 22, where the best two teams from the Super Four stage will battle for the championship. This is not the first time Pakistan and India have been placed in the same group in a cricket tournament. The pairing of these two South Asian neighbours has become a regular feature in International Cricket Council and ACC events, underscoring the significance of the rivalry at every level of the game.

Kane unhappy at England squad withdrawals

LONDON (Agencies): Captain Harry Kane is unhappy with the number of players who have withdrawn from the latest England squad, insisting "England comes before club". Eight players have dropped out of the squad for Lee Carsley's final two matches as interim manager before Thomas Tuchel takes charge in January. "I think England comes before anything. England comes before club," Kane told ITV Sport. "England is the most important thing you play as a professional footballer and Gareth [Southgate] was hot on that and he wasn't afraid to make decisions if, you know, that started to drift from certain players." When asked if the desire to play for England has drifted this international break, Kane said: "Yeah, it's a shame this week obviously. I think it's a tough period of the season, maybe that's been taken advantage of a little bit. I don't really like it if I'm totally honest. I think England comes before anything, any club situation." Trent Alexander-Arnold, Cole Palmer, Phil Foden, Jack Grealish, Bukayo Saka, Declan Rice, Aaron Ramsdale and Levi Colwill are the players who have dropped out. England likely must beat Greece in Athens on Thursday and Republic of Ireland at Wembley on Sunday if they are to be promoted to League A of the Uefa Nations League. Why England's players withdrew Full-back Alexander-Arnold was forced off in the first half of Liverpool's 2-0 win over Aston Villa on Saturday. Midfielder Rice was a doubt going into Arsenal's 1-1 draw with Chelsea on Sunday and was subbed off in the 71st minute. Saka was also a doubt, but the winger did start for Arsenal before limping off late on. Chelsea's Palmer played the duration of the match, despite being a doubt before kick-off. Goalkeeper Ramsdale reportedly fractured his finger during Southampton's 2-0 defeat by Wolves on Saturday.

Shaheen Afridi becomes No.1 ODI bowler

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan quick Shaheen Shah Afridi is back as the No. 1 ODI bowler in the latest ICC rankings, making it a double for Pakistan cricketers at the summit with Babar Azam extending his lead as the top batter in the format. Afridi's eight wickets at an average of 12.62 in three outings against Australia took him past Kuldeep Yadav, Rashid Khan and Keshav Maharaj to the top. Rashid remained at No. 2, while Maharaj slipped from first to third and Kuldeep one place down to fourth. This is the second time Afridi has reached top position in ODI rankings after a brief stay there during the 2023 ODI World Cup. Afridi's seam-bowling partner Haris Rauf moved up 14 places to 13th after bagging 10 wickets in the ODIs against Australia, that had earned him the Player-of-the-Series award. Naseem Shah also climbed 14 spots to a career-best 55th. Babar's scores of 37, 15*

and 28* increased his lead among ODI batters. He stays well ahead of the Indian trio of Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli who remain in second, third and fourth respectively. There were big gainers among allrounders after the ODI series between Afghanistan and Bangladesh in the UAE. Player of the Series Mohammad Nabi remained as the No. 1 ODI allrounder and Rashid went up a place to third, and Azmatullah Omarzai's strong showing pushed him two places up to No. 9, making it three Afghan players in the top 10. Bangladesh's Mehidy Hasan Miraz, who took three wickets in the series and scored 66 in the third ODI, jumped four places to No. 4. Samson, Hasaranga, Salt make gains in T20Is

In T20Is, Wanindu Hasaranga's series haul of 6 for 37 against New Zealand - despite limping through the second fixture where he claimed 4 for 17 - took him four places up to second spot among the bowlers, only

behind England's Adil Rashid. Akeal Hosein's economical performance against England lifted him to third place while Ravi Bishnoi's four scalps in two games against South Africa took him one spot up to No. 7. Among batters, the England pair of Phil Salt (second) and Jos Buttler (sixth), alongside West Indies' Nicholas Pooran (10th) all moved one place up each in the batting rankings after two games in the five-match series in the Caribbean. From the ongoing South Africa vs India T20I series, Sanju Samson continued his rise in the batting ranks. A second successive T20I century for the India opener, this time a 50-ball 107 in the first game, saw him leapfrog 27 positions to 39th. The South African duo of Reeza Hendricks (up two places to 12th) and Tristan Stubbs (up 12 spots to 26th) also made headway on the T20I batting charts that is still led by Travis Head. Salt and Suryakumar Yadav round off the top three.



DAMBULLA: Kusal Mendis celebrates his century with Avishka Fernando.

Record stand propels Sri Lanka to 324-5 against New Zealand

DAMBULLA (AFP): Top-order batsmen Kusal Mendis and Avishka Fernando both slammed centuries to lead Sri Lanka to an imposing 324-5 in the rain-interrupted first one-day international against New Zealand on Wednesday. The duo stitched together a 206-run stand off 215 balls for the highest second wicket partnership in ODIs for Sri Lanka against New Zealand. Their effort eclipsed a 21-year-old record held by Sanath Jayasuriya and Hashan Tillakaratne, who added 170 against the Black Caps in the 2003 World Cup in Bloemfontein.

The stand was also the highest partnership for any wicket at Dambulla in ODIs. Sri Lanka's innings was cut short in 49.2 overs because of rain.

For Avishka, it was his first century since 2021, breaking a dry spell after a string of low scores.

Avishka scored a 115-ball 100 with nine fours and two sixes before being caught while attempting a sweep shot off Ish Sodhi. It was his fourth ODI hundred.

Kusal powered his way to a career-best 143, also marking his fourth ODI century and first in 2024. His knock was the highest individual score at Dambulla, surpassing India's Shikhar Dhawan's 132 in 2017.

A cameo 40-run knock by skipper Charith Asalanka off just 28 balls capped a fine day with the bat for the islanders.

It was New Zealand paceman Jacob Duffy who dismissed Kusal, caught at extra cover by Henry Nicholls.

Kusal's brisk 128-ball knock was studded with 17 fours and two sixes.

Sri Lanka's batters seized control after Asalanka won the toss and opted to bat first.

Opener Pathum Nissanka was dismissed early for 12 but Kusal and Avishka made the most of the conditions.

The New Zealand spinners struggled to rein in the Sri Lankan batsmen, who kept the scoreboard ticking at over 6.5 runs per over.

Rain halted play just one ball into Sri Lanka's innings, causing a 39-minute delay. Downpours returned with four balls left in the Sri Lankan innings.

The ODI action will next move to Palkelele where the remaining two games in the series will be played.

Shahzaib's unbeaten century leads Pakistan to 10-wicket win

ISLAMABAD (APP): An unbroken 193-run partnership for the opening wicket between Shahzaib Khan and Usman Khan led Pakistan to a comprehensive 10-wicket win over UAE in the opening match of the U19 tri-series here at the ICC Academy in Dubai on Wednesday. According to details, chasing 192 runs to win, both Pakistan opening batters Shahzaib and Usman played shots to all parts of the ground and achieved the target in the 43rd over. Left-handed batter Shahzaib, scored an

unbeaten 109 off 133 balls, which included 10 fours and two sixes. His fellow southpaw, Usman returned undefeated on a 122-ball 77, hitting three fours.

Earlier, after being put into bat, UAE were bowled out for 191 in the 50th over with Uddish Suri contributing 40 runs off 63 balls, which included two fours.

For Pakistan, Abdul Subhan was the most successful bowler, taking two wickets for 42 runs in 10 overs, while Ali Raza, Hassan Khan and Usman Khan snapped a wicket each.

Five batters from the hosts were run-out. Shahzaib Khan was declared Player of the match.

Pakistan will now face Afghanistan in the second match of the tournament scheduled on Friday, 15 November. The first ball of the match will be bowled at 10:30am PKT.

Scores in brief: UAE U19 191 all out, 49.3 overs (Uddish Suri 40, Madhav Manoj 34, Yayin Rai 33; Abdul Subhan 2-42).

Pakistan U19 193-0, 42.3 overs (Shahzaib Khan 109 not out, Usman Khan 77 not out).

No need to imitate Warner's rapid-scoring approach, Khawaja tells McSweeney

MELBOURNE (INP): Australia's Usman Khawaja said his new opening partner Nathan McSweeney should not feel the need to imitate the quick-scoring approach of David Warner in the test series against India.

McSweeney will make his test debut in the series opener in Perth next week, the 25-year-old given the chance to make the role his own following Warner's retirement earlier this year.

Steve Smith had first go at replacing Warner but failed to fire in his stint at the top of the order and is returning to his preferred slot at number four. Warner's 70-plus strike rate in first class cricket is significantly higher than

McSweeney's 41.92 but Khawaja said there were other ways a test opener can build an innings. "I don't know where this myth started that you need someone to score really fast to do well," Khawaja said.

"You've got five days to do it... I don't know why you need to score fast. "Opening's as much about scoring runs as it is about being able to absorb." Warner dominated all three formats of the game with his take-no-prisoners batting, which often put Australia in charge early in a test match. "Davey was special, he could score runs while absorbing but he didn't do it (score fast)

every time," Khawaja said.

"He was consistent, out there and setting a platform, and Nathan does that very well." South Australia number three McSweeney will have to adapt to a new role in the five-test series against India but Khawaja expected it to be a smooth transition. "There's no guarantees in cricket... but he doesn't have to do anything different," he said.

"Just repeat the process. He's been able to handle the pressure at Shield level. "When you look at his demeanour, the way he plays, you do kind of feel over a longer period of time he'll be able to handle the scrutiny, the pressure of test cricket."

Women's Nations Cup: 3rd edition to be played in Chile

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Hockey Federation (FIH) is glad to announce that the third edition of the FIH Hockey Nations Cup (women) will be played in Chile from 23 February to 2 March 2025.

The participating teams include Canada, Chile, Ireland, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Scotland and USA, said a press release.

"For us it is a tremendous pride to be able to host an FIH event again. We will be the hosts of a Nations Cup! This is a giant achievement not only for hockey, but for Chilean sport in general. We are waiting for all the players

from several of the best teams in the world with open arms for action", said Andres de Witt, President of the Chilean Field Hockey Federation and the Local Organizing Committee of the event.

Commenting on the announcement, FIH President Tayyab Ikram said, "It's with great pleasure that we're returning to Chile for another major FIH event. The South American country is a rising hockey nation and has always put together fantastic FIH hockey tournaments. I would like to thank Chile for hosting us once again and I wish all athletes to experience a

great FIH Hockey Nations Cup in Chile."

The FIH Hockey Nations Cup was launched in 2021 with the aim of offering a top-level competition to the best-ranked teams not participating in the FIH Hockey Pro League and giving the winning team the option to be promoted to the FIH Hockey Pro League the next season, precisely.

The first two editions of the FIH Hockey Nations Cup (women) were played in Spain (in Valencia in 2022 and in Terrassa in 2024). India won the inaugural edition, whilst Spain won the second one.

S.Africa football chief arrested on fraud, theft charges

JOHANNESBURG (AFP): South African Football Association (SAFA) president Danny Jordaan was arrested and charged Wednesday with using the group's resources for his own purposes in a fraud and theft case amounting to 1.3 million rand (\$72,000), police said.

Jordaan, who led South Africa's successful bid to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup, denied the charges in a Johannesburg court. "The allegations are that between 2014 and 2018, the president of SAFA used the organisation's resources for his personal gain," a police statement said.

He was accused of hiring a private security company for his own protec-



tion and a public relations company without authorisation from the SAFA board, the statement added.

Jordaan, 73, is reported to have hired the public relations firm after his reputation took a knock when a South African singer and former law-

maker alleged in 2017 that he had sexually assaulted her 25 years previously. He denied the allegations.

He was arrested "following an intensive investigation by the Serious Commercial Crime Investigation based in Johannesburg into allegations of R1.3 million fraud and theft," police said. Jordaan has been SAFA president since 2013 and was elected for a third time in 2022.

He was arrested with SAFA chief financial officer Gronie Hluyo and businessman Trevor Neethling, head of the communications company cited in the charges, who also denied the accusations. The court released the three on bail.

Alcaraz beats Rublev to open ATP Finals account

TURIN (AFP): Carlos Alcaraz opened his account at the ATP Finals on Wednesday with an entertaining 6-3, 7-6 (10/8) win over Andrey Rublev which boosted his hopes of reaching the semi-finals.

World number three Alcaraz comfortably defeated Rublev to lift himself off the bottom of the John Newcombe Group and looked in much better form despite struggling with fatigue and illness in the lead-up to the match.

There had been some doubt as to whether Alcaraz, who lost his opening match in straight sets to Casper Ruud, would continue in Turin after quickly ending his training session on Tuesday, with his coach Juan Carlos Ferrero saying that he had trouble breathing.

"I could be better, I'm not going to lie," said Alcaraz on court after beating Rublev. "I've been struggling with my health the last week and today I thought I was going to feel better. I was OK to play, but thinking about the first match I was thinking a lot about that I was sick, that I couldn't play. "Today I really wanted to step on the



court and just think about tennis, try to play a high level... When I played the first match I felt like I did not entertain the people, I did not play good tennis."

Alcaraz, who has won the Wimbledon and French Open titles this season, cruised to the first set in 38 minutes, breaking Rublev in game seven and quickly winning the next two to go one set ahead. And although the Spaniard had a harder time of it in the second set he delighted the spectators with a series of spectacular shots which suggested he might be approaching his best form.

Alcaraz winning in straight sets means that

Ruud will reach the semi-finals if he beats two-time Finals champion Alexander Zverev in the day's late match. Rublev meanwhile drops to last place after losing his sixth straight Finals match, although he put up a battle and had two opportunities to win the second set.

The Russian will be cheering on Zverev later as he will be eliminated should Ruud win and secure passage to the knockout stage. On Thursday world number one Jannik Sinner will reach the last four if he claims a single set against Daniil Medvedev, and will top the Ilie Nastase Group with a third straight win.

McIlroy aims for glory on happy hunting ground in Dubai

DUBAI (AFP): Rory McIlroy gave himself an eight out of 10 for the 2024 season that promised much but delivered only two titles, but on a Dubai course where he has always brought his A-game, things can get a lot better come Sunday.

Only one player in the field -- Thriston Lawrence -- has enough points to prevent the world number three from winning a sixth DP World Tour Order of Merit crown to match Spanish legend Seve Ballesteros and get closer to Colin Montgomerie's all-time record of eight.

However, the South African's only chance is to win the title and hope that McIlroy finishes tied for 11th or worse. McIlroy leads Lawrence by 1,785.02 points after finishing tied third last week in Abu Dhabi. The winner at the season-ending \$10 million DP World Tour Championship receives 2,000 points and the runner-up gets 1,335 points.

However, McIlroy rules the Greg Norman-designed Earth course with an iron fist. He may have won only twice in 13 starts, but he is a combined 179-under-par in 13 starts (3.44-under-par each round), with two wins in 2012 and 2015 and seven other top-six finishes. In the 56 rounds he has played on the course, he has shot only four over-par rounds.

Only one player has a better record than McIlroy on this course -- Jon Rahm --



and he is not in the field. McIlroy said he was aiming to win the tournament for the third time and not to share the 18th green on Sunday with any other player.

Consistent, but no majors Last year, he had already wrapped up the Order of Merit before Dubai and had a lacklustre outing, finishing tied for 22nd -- his worst result in the tournament. Denmark's Nicolai Hojgaard won the biggest prize on the DP World Tour.

"I think it's a nice time to reflect on the year when you come here and you're on the cusp of doing something that, to me, is still pretty meaningful, and just thinking about the body of work you've put together over the last 10 or 11 months," said McIlroy, who won the Hero Dubai Desert Classic at Emirates Golf Club in January this year.

"When you get to the business end of things at the end of the year, you start to realise at least I've put together a year that I'm

pretty proud of, even if it hasn't culminated in some of the things that I've wanted to achieve." McIlroy has failed to add to the number of majors under his belt, which is why he said his season was just a pass.

He said he had been "incredibly consistent" but "thinking about the ones that got away. I could be sitting up here with a fifth major title and I am not. So that stings and that's something that I have to come to terms with". "You've got two guys at the top of the World Rankings with Xander (Schauffele) winning two majors and Scottie (Scheffler) winning a Masters and a Players and the Olympics.

"They certainly separated themselves from the pack this year. I'm very aware of that, and it only makes me more motivated to try to emulate what they did this year." Lawrence has his own score to settle with the course. He made three birdies in his final three holes on Sunday of last year's DP World Tour Championship.

**In brief****Deputy Chairman Senate visits Quetta**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Wednesday visited Quetta's Trauma Center to inquire about the health of those injured in the recent railway station incident. He extended his best wishes for their recovery and expressed sympathy to the families of the martyrs. Speaking to the media, he said that terrorists deserve no leniency and expressed the government's resolve to bring those who threaten national integrity and sovereignty to justice. He acknowledged the crucial role of security forces in combating terrorism. It is everyone's shared responsibility to work together to eliminate terrorism and counter hostile elements. He also highlighted Balochistan's strategic importance as the gateway to Central Asia. He said that the province's progress toward economic development, stressing that cowardly acts, such as the railway station attack, cannot weaken their resolve. Provincial Ministers Mir Saleem Ahmed Khoso and Raheela Hameed Durrani are also present, and condemned the terrorist attack and reaffirming their commitment to peace and stability in the province.

20 outlaws held

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Police apprehended 20 outlaws involved in different criminal activities including drugs peddling, gambling and possessing illegal weapons during last 24 hours. The police teams also recovered liquor, narcotics, gambling tools and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a public relations officer told APP on Wednesday. He said that, the Tarnol, Industrial Area, Nilore, Bani Gala, Shams Colony and Phulgran police station teams took legal action against accused involved in drug peddling, gambling and possessing illegal weapons. Islamabad Police also arrested 17 accused namely Muaz, Akbar Khan, Zain, Rasool Din, Sajid Gul, Irfan, Ehsan Chinedu Hillary, Yasir, Mulazim, Akhtar, Imtiaz, Zahoor, Altaf, Zahid, Basharat and Ashiq. Moreover, police teams also recovered 25 liters liquor, 1070 gram heroin, gambling tools, six 30 bore pistols with ammunition and one dagger from their possession. Three absconders were also arrested from various areas of the city during the last 24 hour. SSP operations Islamabad said that the Islamabad Police is actively working to ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property in the federal capital, emphasizing that no elements will be allowed to disrupt citizens' peace. Protecting the lives, property, and dignity of citizens is the Islamabad Police's top priority. The citizens are urged to report any suspicious activities to the relevant police station, emergency helpline "Pukar-15" to help make the city crime-free through cooperation between the police and the public.

CDA to upgrade emergency services, cybersecurity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) Board in its 16th meeting on Wednesday announced major upgrades for emergency services and cybersecurity. The board meeting was chaired by CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa at the CDA Headquarters. All board members were in attendance, and a range of agenda items were discussed, leading to several important approvals and decisions. One of the key decisions was to fully operationalize the Capital Emergency Services.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China, Mr. Jiang Zaidong, giving a shield to the winner of the Chinese Speech Contest 2024 at National University of Modern Languages (NUML) in federal capital. —APP Photo

Gilani: Parliament to support country's socio-economic revival

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Wednesday reiterated the Parliament's commitment to supporting the country's socio-economic revival. He highlighted that political stability remains instrumental for economic stability in Pakistan.

He remarked this during his address at Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) after meeting the business community.

"Inspired by the spirit of our Charter of Democracy which helped restore democracy, I propose a Charter of Economy", he said and added that the charter would be a collective, bipartisan effort to stabilize and grow Pakistan's economy, ensuring policy continuity that fosters confidence for long-term investment.

Appreciating the pivotal role of the business community in driving Pakistan's economic growth and resilience, the Chairman Senate said that industrious efforts and unwavering commitment of our entrepreneurs and industrialists have been instrumental in propelling Pakistan's economic momentum, even in challenging times.

"Their resilience, adaptability, and visionary leadership in confronting both local and global challenges, job creation, innovation, and wealth generation are commendable", he said. He further noted that the entrepre-

neurs have nurtured growth across diverse industries, contributing significantly to a more robust and diversified economy. Gilani also urged for collaboration between the public and private sectors.

"A conducive business environment, supportive policies and a shared vision, can help generate robust economic activity", he said adding together we can pave the way for sustainable economic growth that uplifts all segments of society.

Highlighting the key economic challenges facing the national economy, Gilani said "Pakistan faces significant economic hurdles: inflation impacts livelihoods, high debt limits growth investment, and elevated energy costs restrict industrial expansion". He called for both resolve and reform to ensure stability, competitiveness, and inclusivity in our economy to counter the prevailing challenges. Gilani stressed for ensuring 'Ease of Doing Business' by streamlining regulations to attract domestic and foreign investment.

"At the same time, we need to focus on lowering energy cost and financing expenses to improve productivity and competitiveness", he said. He further pointed out that reducing imports and promoting export on a war footing is essential for economic revival. The way forward

lies in identifying high-potential industries and expanding access to international markets, he added.

The Chairman Senate said that in order to remain competitive with the rest of the world, embracing technology was the need of the hour to drive innovation and job creation. There is also a dire need to strengthen and expand the scope of Social Safety Nets like Benazir Income Support Programme to protect vulnerable populations as we progress. He strongly recommended the continuity of stable policies to inspire confidence and trust of investors and attract lasting investment.

He urged all stakeholders—nationally and internationally—to join hands with Pakistan in transforming Pakistan's economy into a resilient and thriving one. "Together, we can create a prosperous Pakistan, where opportunity and progress are within reach for all. Let us reaffirm our commitment to fostering an ecosystem where innovation thrives, partnerships flourish, and economic opportunities abound for every Pakistani", he concluded.

The event was attended by a large number of reps from the business community, led by President RCCI Usman Shaukat and Group Leader Sohail Altaf. Representatives of RCCI's body, former presidents, VPs and executive body also attended the event.

Admin taking all possible steps to control smog: Commissioner

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khatta has said that the administration is taking all possible steps to control smog.

Chairing a meeting he said that the Punjab government is spending a huge amount of Rs 10 billion to control smog and artificial rains. Additional Commissioner Coordination, Syed Nizarat Ali, Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi, Secretary RTA, Chief Traffic Officer, Deputy Director Environment, CEO Health and other officers concerned attended the meeting. Anti-Smog Committee, Secretary RTA, Rawalpindi, Deputy Director Environment and Traffic Police representatives briefed the meeting about measures being taken against smog.

The Commissioner was informed that since July this month, 24 smog-causing brick kilns were demolished and a fine amounting to Rs 8.1 million was imposed on the rules violators. Two industrial units on the violations were also sealed and a total fine of Rs 900,000 was imposed. Some 2,711 challans were issued to smoke emitting vehicles while 441 such vehicles were impounded and a fine amounting to Rs 550,000 was imposed.

The Commissioner said that after Lahore and other divisions, smog has now turned to Rawalpindi. Due to the winds coming from India, the intensity of smog has increased in different cities of Punjab, he added.

An anti-smog committee for Rawalpindi district was formed under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner, he said adding, a crackdown is underway on smog-emitting vehicles, burning of garbage and crop residues, and kilns operating without zigzag technology. A health advisory has also been issued by the health department for the public, Engineer Aamir Khattak informed.

IG orders strict measures to combat crime

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi presided over an important meeting at the Central Police Office regarding the security and crime situation in the federal capital on Wednesday.

A police spokesperson told APP that, the meeting was attended by all divisions DIGs, AIGs, SSPs, and SPs. He said divisional officers provided briefings on city security and crime matters, and an audit report of the Islamabad Police force was presented. The IG Rizvi also collected suggestions from officers and gave further instructions for improvement. IG highlighted the need to improve investigation standards through the use of modern technology and called for optimal utilization of available resources to enhance performance.

Additionally, IG Rizvi directed concrete actions to control crime and strengthen security in the city. The performance of all patrolling units should be improved and made more effective. Officers should take steps to enhance the welfare of the force to boost their morale, IG Rizvi added. During the crime meeting, the IG Rizvi directed all officers to ensure crime prevention, effective patrolling, and prompt emergency response.

IG also emphasized intensifying crackdowns on snatchers, missing gang members, proclaimed offenders, habitual criminals, accused involved in serious crimes, and court absconders. IG Rizvi further said that if any crime incident occurs within the jurisdiction of a police station, the relevant officer will be held accountable. IG affirmed that all possible measures would be taken to ensure the safety of Islamabad citizens' lives and property and to maintain public order, adding that citizen safety remains the top priority. Islamabad police will leave no stone unturned to make the federal capital a haven of peace.



ISLAMABAD: A scene of heavy traffic near bus stations in Pirwadhai, Federal Capital. —APP Photo

Pakistan shows remarkable improvement in economic stability: Chinese envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong Wednesday acknowledged Pakistan government's efforts towards stabilizing its economy reflected through improvement in the economic indicators.

"The economic indicators have shown improvement which has been recognized by the international institutions", the ambassador said while addressing an enthusiastic audience at the Chinese Speech Contest held at National University of Modern Languages (NUML).

He described the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a "landmark project" within the Belt and Road Initiative, which he believes will greatly enhance the prosperity for Pakistan and the region.

Reflecting on the deep-rooted bonds and strong strategic partnership between the two countries, the ambassador praised the university's efforts in promoting the Chinese language and culture among Pakistani youth. "It's an honor to speak to you all," he began, expressing admiration for the cooperation between Pakistani universities and Chinese institutions.

He commended NUML's Rector for fostering an environment where students can learn Chinese, emphasizing that such initiatives strengthen mutual understanding and bilateral ties. The ambassador also expressed appreciation for the speeches and performances by the students, which he described as a heartwarming display of cultural exchange and friendship.

Recounting memories of his own university days, the ambassador shared that campus life was filled with both joy and challenges. "When I was a student, China was going through financially tough times. But despite these challenges, we persevered," he said, adding that these experiences fostered resilience—a quality he encouraged Pakistani students to embrace. "Youth is the greatest asset of any country," he remarked, calling on the next generation to work diligently toward a prosperous future.

During his interaction with the students, the ambassador discussed the importance of cultural understanding and language learning. He mentioned the enduring influence of classical Chinese poetry and urged students to read and learn from the works of renowned Chinese poets, known for their enthusiasm and depth.

He also referred to Chinese President Xi Jinping's life as a model for young people, noting that President Xi's commitment to hard work and learning is an example to fol-

low. "Struggle is the main ingredient for success," he advised, encouraging students to remain committed to their goals.

The ambassador highlighted China's remarkable progress under President Xi's leadership, from its significant achievements in poverty alleviation to becoming the world's second-largest economy. In his closing remarks, the ambassador encouraged students to be active participants in national development. He cited Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, who believed that progress is achieved through unity and shared efforts.

"Through collaboration, we can make the world a better and more developed place to live," he said, underscoring the need for continued cooperation between Pakistan and China. The ambassador reaffirmed that Pak-China friendship has withstood the test of time, calling it "deeper than oceans and higher than the Himalayas."

He emphasized China's readiness to work alongside Pakistan in various fields for shared prosperity. "CPEC is a symbol of our partnership," he stated, expressing hope for further collaboration. Referring to a large number of Pakistani students currently studying in China, as well as Chinese students studying in Pakistan, the ambassador said that these exchanges will deepen mutual understanding and pave the way for greater cultural and educational collaboration in the future. "Together, our youth will flourish, strengthening the relationship between our nations and exploring new avenues for growth and development," he said.

The ambassador's visit to NUML underscored the importance of Pak-China friendship and the role of youth in shaping a prosperous future, leaving students inspired to contribute to their country's development and the shared vision of both nations.

Addressing the event, the Rector NUML, Maj Gen Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI(M), Retd conveyed heartfelt pride in NUML students' achievements and expressed gratitude to the Chinese ambassador for his presence during this special event at the university. "I feel immense pride in our students for their dedication and hard work," the Rector stated. The Chinese ambassador, known for his commitment to educational cooperation between Pakistan and China, has been a consistent supporter of Pakistani students, a gesture the Rector described as "highly commendable."



ISLAMABAD: Plenary Session of Workshop on Refurbishment of draft of Pakistan Maritime Policy is going on. —APP Photo

World Diabetes Day to be observed on Thursday

ISLAMABAD (APP): World Diabetes Day (WDD) will be observed globally on Thursday to raise awareness about diabetes, a chronic condition affecting millions and advocating for equitable access to comprehensive, affordable, and high-quality care for all individuals diagnosed with diabetes.

World Diabetes Day, observed on November 14 each year, has this year's theme, "Breaking Barriers, Bridging Gaps." It aims to promote equal access to quality care, reduce diabetes risks, and ensure comprehensive, affordable treatment for all those affected by diabetes. The day marks the world's largest diabetes awareness campaign reaching a global audience of over 1 billion people in over 160 countries.

The theme for WDD changes annually, often emphasizing crucial aspects like diet, exercise, mental health, or healthcare accessibility for those affected by diabetes.

WDD, created in 1991 by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and the World Health Organization (WHO), was established in response to growing global concerns about diabetes. In 2006, the United Nations officially recognized it as a global health threat. November 14 was chosen

to honor the birthday of Sir Frederick Banting, who, alongside Charles Best, discovered insulin in 1921, transforming diabetes from a fatal disease into a manageable condition.

WDD emphasizes the importance of early diagnosis, proper care, and lifestyle changes in managing the condition. WDD also serves as a platform for health organizations and advocates to call for policy changes that ensure accessible, affordable diabetes care, especially for vulnerable communities.

As diabetes cases continue to rise, WDD's role in educating the public about prevention and promoting healthier lifestyles has never been more crucial in tackling the diabetes epidemic. Pakistan has over 33 million diagnosed diabetics, 11 million with impaired glucose tolerance, and 8.9 million undiagnosed cases.

There is strong evidence that an unhealthy food supply, including industrial trans fats in ghee, free sugars in sugary beverages, and bakery products, contributes to malnutrition, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes, exacerbating the public health burden.

"We've developed poor dietary habits and sedentary lifestyles due to urbanization and aggressive marketing by processed food producers," said Zubair Faisal Abbasi,

advisor at the Centre for Governance and Public Accountability (CGPA). "Additionally, our outdated food governance system and policies have left consumers, especially children and adolescents, vulnerable to unhealthy products high in sugars, fats, and salt," added Muhammad Anwar, Executive Director of CGPA.

"There is an urgent need to reform public policies, such as taxing unhealthy foods more, regulating aggressive marketing, and implementing front-of-package warning labels," said Zubair Faisal Abbasi. "It's time for provincial food authorities and the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) to enhance their governance and take action to control and penalize producers of unhealthy foods contributing to noncommunicable diseases," argued Muhammad Anwar.

Fayza Khan, General Secretary of the Pakistan Nutritionist and Dietician Society (PNDS), stressed the importance of a balanced diet rich in whole foods, fiber, and healthy fats, while limiting added sugars and refined carbs, for preventing and managing diabetes. She recommended consulting a registered dietitian for a personalized nutrition plan, along with regular exercise and stress management for optimal diabetes health.

France pledges 3m to aid
KABUL (Amu TV): The French government has committed 3 million euros (approximately \$3.3 million) to support the World Food Programme's efforts to address malnutrition among Afghan mothers and children, as Afghanistan continues to grapple with a severe hunger crisis. WFP said the funds, allocated from France's Food Assistance Program, will bolster WFP's school feeding and nutrition initiatives across Afghanistan, targeting the country's most vulnerable populations.

WHO reports 23 polio cases
KABUL (Khaama Press): WHO has released a report stating that 23 cases of polio in children have been recorded in Afghanistan since the beginning of this year. WHO reported in its weekly update that three new polio cases were registered in October, two in the Maiwand and Ghorak districts of Kandahar and one in the Nahri Saraj district of Helmand. The report noted that a total of 71 polio cases have been documented, with 23 occurring in Afghanistan.

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

Kabir pledges balanced development for Bamyan



BAMYAN (TOLOnews): Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, stated in a meeting in Bamyan that the Islamic Emirate government holds no enmity toward anyone and that developmental projects across the country are being implemented with balance and fairness.

He further noted that all

citizens have participated in the last twenty years of struggle and that no one should be exploited by foreigners.

The Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs added, "Whether it's a dam project, road construction, a clinic, or any other project, please prepare your proposals and submit them to your respec-

tive ministries. Rest assured, your requests will move forward; if additional support is needed, the Political Deputy Office is here to assist you."

Attaulah Omari, the Acting Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, who also traveled to Bamyan, assured that Afghanistan is preparing for the export of agri-

cultural products.

The Acting Minister of Agriculture stated, "The people of Afghanistan have an abundant yield of produce that needs foreign markets. To address this, the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Emirate has formed a delegation of senior officials to explore countries with strong markets for our agricultural products. They will meet with their leaders to open new markets for our goods."

Some religious scholars present at the meeting urged the caretaker government to address the challenges facing Bamyan residents.

Sayed Nasrullah Waizi, a religious scholar in Bamyan, said, "One of the primary demands of the people who have welcomed you today is the issue of electricity in Bamyan."

This is the first visit of the Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs to Bamyan, undertaken to assess and address the province's challenges directly.

Water crisis forces residents to abandon homes

HELMAND (TOLOnews): Residents in parts of Nawzad District in Helmand have been forced to leave their homes due to lack of access to clean drinking water. They have urged officials in the interim government to construct the Farhad Dam in this district.

Nawzad District is located 90 kilometers from Lashkargah, the capital of Helmand. Recent droughts, along with other negative impacts, have lowered groundwater levels across the district.

Local residents report that groundwater levels have dropped between 10 to 100 meters in various parts of the district.

Pir Mohammad, a resident of Helmand, said, "This area used to be an almond orchard with good yields, but due to water shortages, poverty, and the effects of wars, it's reached this condition, with nothing left but traces of what it was."

Saqat Mohammad, another resident of Helmand, stated, "Ninety percent of Nawzad's residents have left their homes, and only ten percent remain."

Meanwhile, local officials say that the preliminary survey for constructing the Farhad Dam in Nawzad District has been completed. With the allocation of budget, work will begin, which will increase groundwater levels and irrigate farmlands.

Mohammad Qasim Riaz, spokesperson for the governor of Helmand, said, "Plans for the Farhad Dam are in place. The Helmand Provincial Authority has submitted proposals to the national leadership and relevant ministries. We hope that with sufficient resources and budget, this project will commence soon."

Previously, four safe drinking water projects, funded with three million Afghanis from the Helmand Provincial Authority, were completed in the districts of Dishu and Khanashin.

Taliban team attends conference

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Taliban's spokesperson announced that Barat Shah Agha Nadim, head of the Afghanistan Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (ATRA), led a delegation to India to participate in the 25th Meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council (SATRC-25).

The meeting took place in New Delhi from November 11 to 13, 2024, and included representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Iran, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and other countries.

The purpose of the Taliban delegation's participation in SATRC-25 was to exchange experiences in the development and expansion of the telecommunications and information technology sectors.

Recently, J.P. Singh, head of the Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran division at India's Ministry of External Affairs, visited Kabul and met with senior Taliban officials, including the Ministers of Defense and Foreign Affairs. During these meetings, both parties discussed the expansion of bilateral relations.

The Taliban's participation in SATRC-25 and the recent diplomatic engagements with India indicate a potential shift towards increased regional cooperation in telecommunications and information technology. Such interactions could pave the way for enhanced connectivity and technological development in South Asia.

However, the international community remains cautious regarding official recognition of the Taliban-led government. While technical collaborations in sectors like telecommunications may proceed, broader diplomatic and political engagements are approached with careful consideration of human rights and governance issues.

Iran to transfer 1,000 Afghan prisoners

KABUL (Khaama Press): Askar Jalalian, Iran's Deputy Minister of Justice for International Affairs and Human Rights, announced that within the next two months, 1,000 Afghan prisoners will be transferred to Afghanistan.

He also expressed intentions to visit Kabul to discuss the transfer of these prisoners and the repatriation of Iranian detainees in Afghanistan with the Taliban. According to a report by ISNA on Wednesday, November 13, Jalalian stated that the agreement for transferring convicts between Iran and Afghanistan was established in 2006, and the Taliban are committed to this official accord.

He added, "I am now heading to Kabul to negotiate the transfer of Afghan prisoners in Tehran and the repatriation of Iranian prisoners in Afghanistan."

Jalalian detailed that the Afghan prisoners, upon being handed over to the

Taliban, will serve the remainder of their sentences in Afghanistan.

He noted that most of these Afghan inmates are convicted of drug-related offenses.

The Iranian judicial official claimed that the transfer of Afghan prisoners to their homeland is conducted with their consent.

Jalalian emphasized that if a prisoner does not consent, they will not be returned to Afghanistan. Additionally, these prisoners should not have private complainants or debts, and their sentences should not include execution or retribution.

Jalalian stated, "According to the latest statistics, the number of Iranian detainees in Afghanistan is less than ten, and we are striving to repatriate them through a logical process based on the agreement."

Previously, when Afghan prisoners were handed over from Iranian prisons to the Taliban, concerns were

raised that some of them might be opponents of the group and could face human rights violations.

The situation of Afghan refugees and detainees highlights significant human rights concerns. Many Afghan refugees, fleeing conflict and instability, often find themselves in precarious conditions without adequate legal protection.

The lack of access to legal representation and judicial institutions for prisoners exacerbates their vulnerability, leading to potential violations of their fundamental rights.

Ensuring that detainees have access to attorneys and fair legal processes is crucial in upholding human rights standards.

Addressing these issues requires collaborative efforts between nations to uphold international human rights obligations, ensuring that refugees and prisoners are treated with dignity and have access to justice.

Tourists call for better facilities at Wakhan Park

BADAKHSHAN (TOLOnews): Wakhan National Park in Badakhshan, with its springs, stunning natural attractions, wildlife, and rare bird species, has drawn the attention of both domestic and international tourists. Some tourists who recently visited Wakhan district are urging officials in the interim government to provide more facilities for tourists.

Afiat Khan, a tourist, said, "Currently, tourism conditions in Afghanistan, especially in Wakhan district, are well-prepared,

making it an excellent destination for tourists."

"We urge the Islamic Emirate to provide more facilities for both domestic and international tourists so they can visit these areas," said another tourist, Nematullah.

Meanwhile, the Head of Information and Culture in Badakhshan, who visited Wakhan National Park, pledged that facilities for both local and foreign tourists are available in the province.

"Guesthouses have been established in Wakhan and

the national park, and tourists visiting the park can be assured of security, with no problems or obstacles in place," said Zabiullah Amiri, head of Information and Culture of Badakhshan.

The Wakhan Corridor was designated as the country's second national park in 2014 by the previous government. According to the Badakhshan Department of Environment, the area is home to nearly 30 species of rare wildlife and over 270 species of rare birds.

Stanikzai urges world to help Afghanistan



KABUL (Ariana News): Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, the political deputy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, called on industrial countries to help Afghanistan in the fight against climate change.

Stanikzai made the remarks at a conference in Kabul titled "From Isolation to Inclusion – Afghanistan's Urgent Call for Climate Action," which was held on the day the UN climate talks kicked off in Azerbaijan's capital Baku.

"Our demand from the United Nations, the great powers, the rich countries

and the countries from which gasses come is to help us improve our environment and serve our people," Stanikzai said.

Stefan Rodriguez, the Chief of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), also said that climate change has forced some Afghans to live in tents as natural disasters regularly occur in the country.

Rodriguez, however, said that after three years, Afghanistan has now gained access to financial mechanisms in the environmental sector and some institutions are ready to

resume their incomplete projects in Afghanistan.

The organizers of the conference warned that if the international community does not step up to assist Afghanistan in the fight against climate change, there will be dire consequences.

They called on COP29 in Baku to keep the issue of fighting climate change in Afghanistan away from political issues and work with their financial and technical partners to prevent the spread of negative effects of climate change in the country.

Three-day exhibition promotes Kabul's new image

KABUL (TOLOnews): A three-day exhibition themed "The New Image of Kabul" was organized by the Kabul Municipality at Zarnegar Park.

The organizers stated that the aim of the photography exhibition is to showcase the achievements and work of the Kabul Municipality.

Mohammad Khalid Sajistani, Deputy for Urban Services at Kabul Municipality, said, "Kabul Municipality, as a service-oriented administration, has managed to gain significant satisfaction from the residents of Kabul city."

"Kabul Municipality is

providing its services, and certainly over the past three years, they have delivered more services. All Kabul residents are satisfied, and this is the responsibility of Kabul Municipality and the Islamic Emirate," said, Abdul Baqi Haqqani, head of the National Examination Authority.

Meanwhile, the acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, present at the event, stated that Afghanistan currently has a unified government and that the development and construction of roads is the responsibility of every citizen.

Khalil Rahman Haqqani, acting Minister of Refugees

and Repatriation, added, "They have taken steps and made efforts for development, and you yourselves are witnesses to this, from Herat to Kabul, and from the north to the south."

"Kabul is the capital of the country. People from all over the world come here. This is where embassies are located, foreigners come here, and Afghans who live abroad also visit. News from here spreads very quickly internationally," Farooq Azam, Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Energy and Water.

In another part of the event, the acting Minister of Economy welcomed the

holding of such exhibitions and requested the Traffic Police Department to cooperate with Kabul Municipality. "The Traffic Department should coordinate with Kabul Municipality. Just as new squares have been created in Kabul, traffic signals should also be installed," said Din Mohammad Hanif, acting Minister of Economy.

Kabul Municipality officials pledged further initiatives aimed at providing more facilities in various areas under Kabul Municipality. According to the officials, this exhibition will be open to visitors for three days.

Food crisis persists in Afghanistan, WFP reported

KABUL (TOLOnews): The World Food Program (WFP) has reported a slight improvement in food security in Afghanistan; however, food needs remain very high in the country. According to this report, despite minor improvements, 11.6 million people in Afghanistan still face crisis-level food insecurity or worse.

The organization attributes this situation to fundamental causes, including unemployment, family debt, low income, the return of migrants from neighboring countries, and fluctuations in food prices.

The World Food Program projects that approximately 3.5 million children under five and 1.15 million pregnant and

breastfeeding women will suffer from acute malnutrition. "With winter approaching, it is expected that more people will need emergency assistance, and the World Food Programme plans to assist more than 6 million people," said Ziauddin Safi, the communications officer for the World Food Program.

Simultaneously, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that between January and August this year, 14.4 million people in Afghanistan received aid.

The organization noted that sudden crises continue to create new needs and exacerbate infrastructural vulnerabilities.

Sayed Rahman, a Kabul resident, said, "Winter is here, and snow will come. I have young children, and we need help—not just me but also those who have returned from neighboring countries with difficulty and lack basic resources."

"Winter is coming, and we have neither coal nor wood. There is no assistance, and no one has helped us so far. We request help from our government," said another Kabul resident, Amin Gul.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Economy says it is intensifying efforts to meet people's needs. The ministry has requested that the international community enhance cooperation in infrastructure and agricultural development to help Afghanistan gradually achieve food self-sufficiency.

"Relying on existing economic capacities and focusing on national programs, such as transportation infrastructure and energy, supporting local production, and the private sector through trade facilitation and export development, as well as prioritizing job-creation sectors and small businesses to improve the economic situation, are among our priorities," stated Abdul Rahman Habib, spokesperson for the Ministry of Economy.

Previously, Save the Children announced that it faces a \$4.2 million shortfall to provide winter assistance to 18,000 vulnerable families in Afghanistan.

UNAMA calls on Taliban to halt public executions

KABUL (Amu TV): The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) urged the Taliban to immediately suspend all public executions, condemning Wednesday's execution of a man in eastern Afghanistan's Paktia Province as a clear violation of international human rights obligations.

In a statement posted on X, UNAMA denounced the Taliban's public displays of capital punishment, calling them "contrary to Afghanistan's international human rights obligations" and an affront to global standards of justice.

The agency appealed to the Taliban-led government to establish an immediate moratorium on executions, with the aim of permanently abolishing the death penalty.

"UNAMA urges Afghanistan's de facto authorities to establish an immediate moratorium on all execu-

tions with a view to abolition of the death penalty," UNAMA's statement read. "We also call for respect for due process and fair trial rights, in particular access to legal representation."

UNAMA has consistently pressed the Taliban to adhere to international norms on human rights, but their responses have been limited, with officials often citing Islamic law as justification for capital punishments and other harsh penalties.

Taliban conducted a public execution in Gardez on Wednesday, with senior Taliban officials, including Sirajuddin Haqqani, the Taliban's interior minister, overseeing the punishment. The Taliban's Supreme Court said in a statement that Mohammad Ayaz Asad, a resident of Paktia, was convicted of killing a man named Habibullah and was executed under "qisas," or retributive justice,

in front of a large crowd at the stadium.

Images shared on social media showed hundreds of spectators gathered to witness the execution, highlighting a continued pattern of public punishments since the Taliban returned to power in August 2021. This marks the latest in a series of executions, lashings, and stonings administered by Taliban courts, drawing widespread condemnation from human rights advocates.

In the three years since their takeover, the Taliban have reportedly carried out at least 176 public executions, with over 400 additional detainees in Taliban prisons currently awaiting sentences of qisas, according to information from the Taliban's Supreme Court. The court further reported that in the past year alone, the Taliban have stoned 27 individuals and recorded four formal executions.

Human rights advocates

and Afghan citizens have expressed outrage over these practices, which they say violate fundamental human rights. "The Taliban are committing severe abuses against the people of Afghanistan," said Sanam Kabiri, a human rights activist. "The world must not ignore the Taliban's cruelty. Every day, they impose new restrictive decrees, adding to the suffering of the Afghan people."

A Kabul resident echoed this sentiment, saying, "The Taliban have turned sports stadiums into places of violence and punishment. Instead of addressing the needs of the Afghan people—like education and employment for women—the Taliban respond with lashes and torture."

Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada issued a decree in November 2022 mandating the implementation of "hudud" and qisas punishments.



WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden meeting with President-elect Donald Trump in the Oval Office of the White House.

Turkiye given strongest response to Israel’s atrocities: Erdogan

ISTANBUL (AA): Without doubt, Turkiye gave the strongest response to Israel’s atrocities in Palestine through such steps as halting trade, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday. Ankara suspended all trade with Israel in May, citing a worsening humanitarian tragedy in Gaza, where Israel has killed more than 43,000 Palestinians since last October.

“As long as arms shipments continue, Israel will be more aggressive, as every day that Israel is not stopped, the situation in Palestine and Lebanon worsens,” Erdogan told reporters on his return flight from visits to Saudi Arabia and Azerbaijan. One of the concrete steps that can be taken against Israel’s attacks is to work for recognition of the state of Palestine, he underscored, adding: “Without a two-state solution, peace and stability will not come to the region.” “Trade restrictions and sanctions on Israel are another form of struggle. Active diplomacy to corner Israel in all areas and boost diplomatic pressure is also crucial. We’re in the middle of a great test of humanity,” the president said.

“Passing this test is only possible by being part of the humanitarian alliance. Otherwise, history will judge both those who stood by Israel and those who remained silent in the face of oppression,” Erdogan also said Ankara’s initiative at the UN to prevent the shipment of weapons and ammunition to Israel has been supported by 52 countries and two international organizations. “We recently sent a letter on this initiative to the

president of the UN General Assembly, the president of the Security Council, and the UN secretary-general. At the (joint Arab-Muslim) summit in Riyadh, a decision was made to invite all organizations and Arab League members to sign our letter. Our country’s steps to halt the massacre and its humanitarian aid efforts were praised,” he added.

The Turkish president also highlighted that he had the opportunity to hold bilateral meetings during the summit, including with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, adding that they had a fruitful meeting. Emphasizing that he also held bilateral meetings in Baku, Azerbaijan, during the COP29 UN Climate Change Conference, Erdogan said that these meetings included discussions of bilateral ties and regional developments.

On Turkiye’s zero emissions target for 2053, Erdogan said: “The climate issue is one of the most critical issues facing the world. Just as we care about wars, conflicts, and migration, we approach this issue with the same seriousness.” “Turkiye is persistently discussing what measures we can take with the relevant ministries. We have taken, are taking, and will continue to take measures to use the world’s limited resources most efficiently and to elevate the civilization we have developed over centuries to a much higher level. “Turkiye cares about this issue and is making every effort to do our part. However, finding a fundamental and lasting solution to this issue is not possible with the efforts of just us or a few coun-

tries together.”

He called for collective action to shoulder the burden of climate-related efforts. “If some countries fully engage in the fight against climate change while others, driven by greed, ignore necessary measures or even increase pollution, we cannot overcome this problem,” warned Erdogan. President Erdogan added that the importance of the Zero Waste initiative, spearheaded by Turkiye, is gaining more recognition every day and that efforts are being made to spread it and turn it into a way of life.

The initiative, which started in 2017 under First Lady Emine Erdogan’s leadership, aims to raise awareness of the importance of waste elimination in addressing climate change. On the US’ incoming administration, Erdogan voiced hope that Donald Trump’s taking office in January will start to put ties between Ankara and Washington on a different track.

“Undoubtedly, there are always opportunities between the two countries. Our basic expectation is to assess these opportunities and take steps that will benefit both countries,” he said. “The Trump administration views the economy as one of its main priorities. Turkiye, with its strategic geographical location and young population, is a country that offers investment opportunities. “We can create new opportunities to boost the trade volume and encourage investments between the two countries. Particularly in energy, infrastructure, and technology, we can develop new collaborations,” he underlined.

Israeli airstrikes alter landscape of Beirut’s southern suburbs

BEIRUT: The Israeli army expanded its airstrikes on neighborhoods in the southern suburbs of Beirut on Wednesday, as part of a relentless campaign that has continued day and night over the past 48 hours. Israel’s policy of maximum pressure against Hezbollah, targeting displaced individuals from the south and the Bekaa Valley, has increasingly resulted in mass fatalities.

Egypt’s foreign minister, Badr Abdel Atti, said during a visit to Beirut on Wednesday that “the current priority is to achieve a ceasefire and halt the Israeli aggression.” He stressed “the importance of preserving Lebanese state institutions, particularly the presidency, and the necessity of selecting a consensus president for Lebanon, one who is supported by all Lebanese sects and the entire Lebanese populace.” The office of president has been vacant since Michel Aoun’s term ended in October 2022, as rival political factions have been unable to agree on a successor. Abdel Atti said: “The resolution of the presidential vacancy should not be a precondition for the cessation of hostilities. It must be a national issue (dealt with by) the Lebanese people.” During his visit, the minister held long talks with Lebanese officials, the commander of the Lebanese Army, and the grand mufti.

Meanwhile, Israeli airstrikes on

the suburbs of Beirut on Tuesday night and throughout the day on Wednesday caused significant damage that reportedly altered the very landscape of several neighborhoods. The most recent attacks struck several suburban areas of the city, including Ghobeiry, Haret Hreik, Bir Al-Abed, and Lailaki. A medical center in Haret Hreik that contained clinics and laboratories was among the buildings completely destroyed. Even cemeteries serving both the Sunni and Shiite communities have been hit, and the Musharrafieh area was targeted for the first time.

The Tayouneh roundabout, marking the border between Beirut and Shiyah, has become an impromptu refugee camp. Residents gather there after being forced from homes they had only recently reluctantly returned to after previous Israeli attacks. Many have exhausted their life savings on temporary accommodation after finding government shelters filled to capacity.

Throughout the day on Wednesday, evacuation warnings issued by Israeli military spokesperson Avichai Adraei sent families fleeing. The realities of the escalating humanitarian crisis were revealed in the resulting scenes: mothers pushing young children in strollers to safety; young men carrying disabled siblings; and entire families seeking refuge in grassy areas where the

tainty due to the grinding war nearby. There are also concerns about whether Donald Trump will remain committed to Europe’s security when he returns to the White House in January. “The whole world will see clearly that this is not Russia’s sphere of interest anymore,” Polish President Andrzej Duda said at the ceremony in Redzikowo. “From the Polish point of view, this is strategically the most important thing.”

Poland’s Defense Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz called the opening of the base with its hundreds of US Navy personnel “an extraordinary event in the history of the security of Poland, the US and NATO.” He said the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East are showing the importance of air defenses. “The base in Redzikowo means the eternal presence of American and allied troops on the territory of the Republic of Poland and, strategically for Poland, it is one of the most important events in history after 1989,” he said.

Lebanese Civil Defense has established emergency shelters. People endure hours of waiting in fear as the ground and buildings shake from airstrikes, and the pressure waves caused by the explosions spread panic. There have also been reports of strange chemical odors causing respiratory distress.

“Although the Israeli maps (for military action) do not include my house or its vicinity, who can trust the enemy’s plans?” said Fatima, who fled her home in Shiyah and went to the roundabout camp with elderly neighbors. “Staying home under these Israeli missiles, which exceed human endurance, is madness.” This feeling of distrust in Israeli evacuation orders appears justified, as some strikes reportedly hit areas considered safe, including locations outside the southern suburbs, with no warning.

A dawn raid on Wednesday struck Aramoun in Aley district, a densely populated area in which numerous displaced families were sheltering. The attack, which destroyed the first and second floors of a residential building, left eight people dead and 18 wounded, some of them critically.

Civil Defense and Red Cross teams worked throughout the day to rescue survivors and recover the remains of the dead from the rubble and a nearby valley. Several children were reported missing. — Arab News

US opens missile base in Poland

WARSAW (AP): US and Polish officials inaugurated a NATO missile defense base in northern Poland on Wednesday, with Polish officials welcoming it as a significant boost to the security of the country as well as of the NATO alliance at a time of war in neighboring Ukraine.

The US missile defense base, which is being integrated into NATO’s defenses, was originally planned under President George W. Bush as a way to protect Europe from ballistic threats from Iran. Poland, however, has always seen it as a form of US protection in case of Russian aggression, fears that have grown since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The Kremlin has long protested the plans, and on Tuesday it denounced the base as a challenge to its own military potential that would require measures “to ensure parity.”

Polish officials, who gathered with the US ambassador and other officials, welcomed it as historic step that increases the US commitment to the security of Europe at a time of uncer-

The facility is equipped with the US Navy’s modern Aegis Ashore system, which can detect, track and destroy ballistic missiles in the initial phase of their flight. It is the second land element of Aegis Ashore in Europe after the first such installation went into operation in Romania in 2016. Asked about the base during a news briefing Wednesday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russian President Vladimir Putin had expressed his concerns to the US plans even during the Bush administration.

“We then insisted that the Americans saying all these plans are aimed against the ephemeral Iranian threat are in fact a lie, that all these plans were drawn up from the very beginning as an attempt to militarily contain our potential,” he said. “This is the advancement of American military infrastructure on European territory toward our borders. This is nothing other than an attempt to contain our potential. And, of course, this leads to the adoption of appropriate measures to ensure parity,” Peskov added.

PHC grants bail to ex-policeman Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court has granted bail to former policeman Jamsheed, who was accused of making inflammatory speeches against state institutions. PHC’s Justice Sahibzada Asadullah issued a six-page verdict, ruling that the prosecution failed to provide sufficient evidence, on Wednesday.

According to prosecution, Jamsheed was accused of delivering speeches that incited public sentiment against state institutions. The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) arrested Jamsheed, citing social media videos of his speeches. The prosecution alleged that Jamsheed’s actions threatened national security.

The counsel Bashir Wazir advocate argued that the prosecution failed to provide concrete evidence. He further added that the prosecution is also failed to proof link between anti-activities with the accused petitioner.

ATC rejects alleged terrorist bail: Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar Judge Muhammad Iqbal Khan has denied bail to alleged terrorist involved in attacking a police mobile with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), injuring an officer and damaging the vehicle.

According to prosecution, the accused Gul Nawaz attacked police van on 17th October in Peshawar’s Shamshato area. He was arrested and charged by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD). The prosecution presented evidence linking Gul Nawaz to the attack. ATC rejected bail application, ordering his imprisonment.

Houthis launch drone attacks on US warships

SANAA: US warships came under sustained missile and drone attack from Houthi fighters as they sailed off the coast of Yemen, the Pentagon has confirmed, with the armed group claiming it attacked the US aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln and two US destroyers.

Pentagon spokesperson Air Force Major General Patrick Ryder said on Tuesday that the United States military’s Central Command (CENTCOM) forces “successfully repelled multiple Iranian backed Houthi attacks during a transit of the Bab al-Mandeb strait”, which connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. Ryder told reporters at a news conference that two US-guided missile destroyers – the USS Stockdale and USS Spruance – were attacked by at least eight one-way attack drones, five antiship ballistic missiles and three antiship cruise missiles.

All the Houthi drones and missiles “were successfully engaged and defeated”, and neither of the US Navy ships were damaged or personnel hurt, he said. Ryder added that he was not aware of any attacks against the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln. Earlier, Houthi fighters announced that they had carried out two “specific military operations” against the US Navy in an assault lasting eight hours.

“The first operation targeted the American aircraft carrier (Abraham) located in the Arabian Sea with a number of cruise missiles and drones,” Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea said in a statement. “The other operation targeted two American destroyers in the Red Sea with a number of ballistic missiles and drones,” he said, adding that the operation had “successfully achieved its objectives”.

The Houthis, who control large areas of Yemen, including the capital Sanaa, have been carrying out attacks on Israel-linked shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since November 2023, in what it says is a campaign of solidarity with Palestinians. The armed group, however, has also been accused of attacking commercial ships with no obvious connection to Israel or its war on Gaza. The Houthis have targeted more than 90 vessels with missiles and drones, killing four sailors and sinking two ships. The crew of one vessel – the Galaxy Leader, a British-owned and Japanese-operated carrier, hijacked last November – remain detained in Yemen. — Aljazeera

A person becomes great when he dreams big: KP CM

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, attended as chief guest the concluding ceremony of All Pakistan Inter-Boards Girls Cricket and Tennis championship held at Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Peshawar and distributed trophies, shields, and cash prizes to the teams with outstanding performances in the competitions. The Chief Minister also announced cash prizes of RS 50,000 for each participating team.

The inter-boards sports competitions commenced on November 9 and concluded on November 13, featuring teams from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and various other educational boards across the country. In the tennis category, five boards, including Lahore, Mardan, Faisalabad, Peshawar, and the Punjab Board of Technical Education (PBTE) Lahore, participated. The Lahore Board secured first position, followed by Mardan Board in second position, while Peshawar Board and

PBTE Lahore shared third position. Similarly, a total of 10 teams participated in the cricket tournament, including teams from Lahore, Faisalabad, Abbottabad, Malakand, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Swat, Mardan, Peshawar, and PBTE Lahore. The Lahore Board clinched the first position, with Peshawar Board taking the runner-up position.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also inaugurated a newly constructed gymnasium at the Peshawar Board, established at a cost of Rs 160 million. The facility includes boxing, karate, taekwondo, table tennis, a fitness gym, wrestling, and other sports amenities.

Addressing the ceremony, the Chief Minister welcomed participants from other provinces and emphasized the importance of organizing sports activities alongside academic activities. “The purpose of holding such events is to polish the skills of our youth, and get them prepared for practical life ahead,” he stated.

He reiterated the government’s commitment to providing opportunities for

students in both education and sports, and the athletes not to succumb to despair, as perseverance is key to success in life adding that striving forward with determination and high spirits ultimately leads to success. Quoting Chairman Imran Khan, he remarked, “A person becomes great when he dreams big, and added that one must set ambitious goals and move forward with courage. The Chief Minister highlighted that challenges are part of the journey to success and should be faced head-on.

He congratulated the Lahore Board’s cricket team on their victory and affirmed the importance of investing in youth. Ali Amin Gandapur remarked that his government was committed to providing maximum opportunities for girls so that they can excel and prove themselves. He expressed hope for the organizing of such events in even better forms in the future. The event was attended by Provincial Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education Faisal Khan Tarakai, government officials, high ups of educational boards and players in a large number.

Imran’s call will prove to be last nail in govt’s coffin: Saif

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Adviser Barrister Saif has stated that whatever the fake government does, their last time has come, after the final call of protest, the constitution and law will prevail in the country, Imran Khan’s final call will prove to be the last nail in the government’s coffin. The arrest and released of central and elected members of PTI showed the desperation of the fake government’s final call, he added.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, he said that preparations are being finalized for the final call of protest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur himself is supervising all the preparations, now only founder PTI Imran Khan’s final call.

The call is awaited, as soon as the final call is announced, the protest will start from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Barrister Saif stated that that Ali Amin Gandapur will bury the political body of the fake government, whatever the fake government does,

its final time has come.

There will be strict accountability of the mandate thieves including the release of TI Imran Khan, the final call will be so severe that maybe fake princess Maryam Nawaz and her father will delay their return from Geneva and stay there. In this regard, Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has said that Imran Khan will call for protest in November. Yes, I conveyed the message of Imran Khan to the nation, now as soon as Imran Khan gives the final call, we will be on the streets.

PTI founder, others acquitted in section 144 violation case: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan along with other party leaders, has been acquitted in a case related to violating Section 144. As per details, the Sessions Court in Islamabad announced the verdict, granting relief to Imran Khan, Asad Qaiser, Sheikh Rasheed, Faisal Javed, and other PTI leaders.

The case was filed on August 20, 2022, at the Aabpara Police Station,

accusing the former Prime Minister and his party members of violating Section 144 imposed by the authorities.

Judicial Magistrate Yasir Mehmood announced the decision after reviewing the acquittal plea and acquitted Saifullah Niazi, Sadaqat Abbasi, and Ali Nawaz.

Earlier, an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore granted bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan in four May 9 cases. The ATC judge Arshad Javed heard the bail pleas and approved the pleas filed by the former prime minister Imran Khan.

In a separate development, the Punjab government provided the high court with information regarding the FIRs registered against Imran Khan in different districts of province. The report indicates that a total of 54 FIRs are registered against PTI founder Imran Khan across various districts in Punjab. The breakdown of cases against the former prime minister include 21 cases in Lahore, 19 in Rawalpindi, seven in Sheikhupura, five in Faisalabad, and one in Gujranwala.

Russia stages first missile attack on Kyiv

KYIV (Reuters): Blasts boomed across Kyiv on Wednesday morning after officials said Russia launched its first missile attack on the Ukrainian capital since August, forcing elderly women and small children to take shelter in an underground metro station. Ukrainians have been waiting for a big missile attack for months, worried that it could deal a new blow to the hobbled energy system and cause long blackouts as winter sets in.

Air defences intercepted two incoming cruise missiles, two ballistic missiles and 37 drones across the country, the air force said. No casualties or major damage were reported in Kyiv. “Putin is launching a missile attack on Kyiv right now,” Andriy Yermak, the head of the president’s office, wrote on Telegram. Falling debris came down in the region outside Kyiv, injuring a 48-year-old man and causing a fire at a warehouse, the head of Kyiv region’s administration said.

Kyiv has faced Russian drone attacks almost nightly for weeks. City mayor Vitali Klitschko said a drone was still flying over central Kyiv in the morning. “Explosions in the city. Air defence forces are working. Stay in shelters!” the Kyiv city administration wrote on Telegram. Around 100 residents took shelter in the central metro station Universitet, including small children sleeping on yoga mats and elderly women sitting on fold-out chairs.

Some complained of a

lack of sleep from the regular drone attacks, which trigger the air raid alert that sounds across the city and buzzes on phones. “The mornings are totally ruined. I started college in September and every morning has been ruined by the bloody Russians. I cannot sleep, cannot think and I drink energy drinks all the time,” said Mykyta, a teenager hugging his dog in the metro. Russia targeted Ukrainian power facilities with strikes earlier this year, causing blackouts. The situation has since improved, but officials believe the Kremlin may plan to attack the grid again soon.

Andrii Kovalenko, a senior official at the National Security and Defence Council, warned that Russia was ready to conduct another “massive” attack and had accumulated a large number of cruise missiles.

After Wednesday’s strike, power grid operator Ukrenergo said it would limit electricity supply for businesses due to “significantly” lower power imports and lower generation. The last time restrictions on power supplies were imposed on both businesses and households was after a big Russian missile and drone attack in late August.

It was unclear whether the new restrictions were linked to the latest attack. Ukraine’s largest private power generator and distributor DTEK said the restrictions would apply to Kyiv, the surrounding region and the regions of Odesa, Dnipro and Donetsk. Despite regular

drone attacks, Russia has not struck Kyiv with missiles since Aug. 26 when it launched a massive attack across the country that officials said deployed more than 200 drones and missiles. That attack killed seven people, Ukraine said.

Senior Russian naval officer killed in car bombing claimed by Kyiv: A bomb planted under a car blew up and killed a senior Russian naval officer in occupied Crimea’s city of Sevastopol on Wednesday, in what a Kyiv security source said was a Ukrainian hit on one of its highest-ranking targets to date.

Russia’s state Investigative Committee, which handles probes into serious crimes, said in a statement that an improvised explosive device had detonated in an act of terrorism, killing a serviceman whom it did not identify. A source in the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) told Reuters that the explosion had killed Valery Trankovsky, a Russian naval captain and the chief of staff of the 41st brigade of Russia’s missile ships in the Black Sea.

The operation was carried out by the SBU, which saw him as a “legitimate” target in line with the laws of war because of “war crimes” he committed, the source said. The source said he had ordered missile attacks that hit civilian targets in Ukraine, including a deadly strike on the city of Vinnytsia in July 2022. Reuters could not independently verify Trankovsky’s precise role or his involvement in alleged war crimes.