

PM felicitates

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday felicitated Mir Attaullah Lango on being elected as President of the Balochistan High Court Bar Association. He also congratulated other newly elected office bearers of the Bar. The prime minister emphasized that the success of the Balochistan High Court Bar Association election will promote the welfare of the lawyers' community.



BEIRUT: A view of damaged buildings in the Al Hadath neighborhood after an Israeli airstrike in the Dahieh region of Beirut, Lebanon, on Sunday.

Arab-Islamic Summit declares East Jerusalem a red line

Reaffirms two-state solution as key to Mid East peace

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, deputizing for King Salman bin Abdulaziz on Sunday condemned Israel's actions in Palestine, describing them as 'genocide' impacting over 150,000 individuals, including women and children.

Inaugurating the Extraordinary Arab and Islamic Summit recently held in Riyadh, he decried violations of Al-Aqsa Mosque's sanctity, impediments to humanitarian aid, and Israeli military actions in Lebanon, reaffirming Saudi Arabia's support for Lebanon's sovereignty and stability.

The crown prince urged global action to halt aggression and reiterated the Kingdom's commitment to a two-state solution, calling for an independent Palestinian state along 1967 borders with

East Jerusalem as its capital. He also highlighted Saudi efforts to mobilize international cooperation through the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan emphasized that a two-state solution is the only viable path to lasting peace in the Middle East. Speaking after the summit, he highlighted Arab and Islamic unity in addressing the escalating crisis in Palestine.

Prince Faisal called for immediate de-escalation, an end to Israeli violations, the easing of humanitarian aid restrictions, and international pressure on Israel to halt aggressive measures, including withholding Palestinian tax revenues.

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Secretary-General, Hissein Brahim Taha condemned Israeli violence in Palestine

and Lebanon as 'atrocities and genocide' during the summit.

He criticized attacks on UNRWA and warned of escalating risks of an all-out war, calling Israel's actions a 'blatant violation' of international law and UN resolutions.

Taha urged immediate global action, emphasizing the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2735 for a ceasefire and humanitarian aid access in Gaza. He also called for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories and the empowerment of Palestinian governance in Gaza, essential steps for stability.

On Lebanon, Taha urged adherence to Resolution 1701, advocating a halt to hostilities and protection of the country's sovereignty. He reaffirmed the OIC's demand for international intervention to safeguard Palestinian and Lebanese rights and ensure humani-

tarian aid, stressing the summit's unified call for peaceful resolutions to the crises.

Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit accused Israel of pursuing a strategy to dismantle Palestinian society in Gaza through forced or voluntary displacement, warning this approach aims to erase the prospects of a future independent Palestinian state.

Speaking at the summit, he said Israel's actions undermine coexistence and obstruct peace efforts based on justice. He stressed the region's unwavering demand for an independent Palestinian state along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

He also condemned ongoing Israeli bombings in Lebanon, which have claimed civilian lives, displaced over a million people, and worsened the

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Hezbollah spokesman killed in Israel strike on Beirut

BEIRUT (AFP): A Lebanese security source said Hezbollah spokesman Mohammed Afif was killed in an Israeli strike Sunday in central Beirut that hit the Lebanese branch of the Syrian Baath party.

"The strike on Ras Al-Nabaa killed Hezbollah media relations official Mohammed Afif," the security source said, requesting anonymity as they were not authorized to brief the media.

Ali Hijazi, secretary-general of the Lebanese branch of the Baath party, "confirmed the death of Hezbollah media official" Afif, the official National News Agency reported.

The Israeli army declined to comment.

Lebanon's health ministry said the strike killed one person and wounded three others, adding that the toll was provisional and that work was ongoing to remove rubble from the

site of the strike.

Afif for years had been responsible for Hezbollah's media relations, and provided information to local and foreign journalists under the cover of anonymity.

The NNA said the strike by "enemy aircraft" caused "great destruction," reporting an unspecified number of people "trapped under the rubble" in Ras Al-Nabaa, an area near the French embassy and a university.

It said "one of the residents of a neighboring building had received a warning call urging evacuation but it was not taken seriously."

Since the assassination in late September of longtime Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah in a huge Israeli strike, Afif had held several press conferences in Beirut's southern suburbs.

In one such event last month, Afif announced

that Hezbollah had launched a drone targeting the residence of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

That press conference was cut short when the Israeli army warned it would strike a building nearby.

Reuters add: Dozens of Palestinians were killed or injured in an Israeli strike on a multi-storey residential building housing at least six families in northern Gaza's Beit Lahiya town on Sunday, medics and residents said.

The Palestinian Civil Emergency said around 70 people were living in the property but the Gaza government media office put the number of those killed at 72. The Israeli military, which has been fighting Palestinian militant group Hamas in Gaza since October 2023, said several strikes were conducted overnight on "terrorist targets" in Beit Lahiya with

everything possible done to avoid civilian harm.

"All information released by the Hamas-run Ministry of Health should be treated with caution, as it has been repeatedly proven unreliable in previous incidents," it said.

Video footage of the strike site obtained by Reuters showed locals pulling bodies from a huge pile of rubble, with surrounding houses also damaged, some heavily.

The Israeli army sent tanks into Beit Lahiya and the nearby towns of Beit Hanoun and Jabalia, the largest of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, last month in what it said was a campaign to fight Hamas militants waging attacks and prevent them from regrouping.

It said it has killed hundreds of militants in those three areas, which residents said Israeli forces had isolated from Gaza City.

One killed, five wounded in South Waziristan blast

PESHAWAR (Monitoring Desk): At least one person was killed and five others sustained injuries following a remote-controlled bomb explosion near a mosque in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's South Waziristan District, police said on Sunday.

The wounded persons have been shifted to the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital, Wana, after the bomb blast rocked Azam Warsak bazaar in the tribal district, the police added. The martyred man was identified as Mufti Ejazul Haq while the wounded persons include Saddam, Shah

Hussain, Noor Hussain, Zain Ullah, and Maulana Shahzada Wazir.

Maulana Shahzada was seriously injured in the blast, and the condition of some of the injured is also critical, according to Deputy Medical Superintendent Dr Fazlur Rehman.

The injured are being treated at the DHQ Hospital and an emergency has been declared in the hospital by the authorities. Two injured were shifted to Dera Ismail Khan in critical condition for further treatment.

Station House Officer (SHO) Usman Wazir of

Azam Warsak Police Station confirmed the incident and stated that unidentified persons had planted a remote control bomb near the mosque.

The police have started investigating the incident, sources told Geo News.

Pakistan continues to battle militancy as terrorist activities spiked across the country, especially in KP and Balochistan, since the Taliban takeover of bordering Afghanistan.

As per a report issued by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), third quarter (July-September) of 2024 saw a sharp increase in

fatalities of terrorist violence and counter-terrorism campaigns, with a 90% surge in violence.

A total of 722 people were killed, including civilians, security personnel, and outlaws, while 615 others were wounded in as many as 328 incidents recorded during the period under review.

Nearly 97% of these fatalities occurred in KP and Balochistan — marking the highest percentage in a decade, and over 92% of these incidents of terror attacks and security forces' operations were recorded in the same provinces.

The Frontier Post

Fin Min hopes Pakistan to get status of \$3 trillion economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb on Sunday hoped that by 2047, the size of the country's economy will be \$ 3 trillion, which is currently standing at \$300 billion.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, the government has demonstrated economic discipline and introduced economic reforms, and now the country's economy has stabilized, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb said this in a televised message.

The minister said that there is a need for a Charter of Economy as well as a Charter of Environment in the country and improving the environment and population control are major challenges for the country at this time.

- Advertisement -

The Minister said the government is committed to building on the hard-earned macro-stability to further strengthen economy of the country.

The government's prudent economic policies have resulted in a reduction of inflation from 38 percent to just seven percent and the policy rate from 22 percent to 15 per-

cent, while foreign exchange reserves have surged from two weeks of import cover to 2.5 months of import cover.

The Minister said the international community, financial institutions, and rating agencies have commended the government's efforts in leading the country's economy from deficits to surpluses.

Talking about the recent visit of the IMF delegation to Pakistan, he said it is an ongoing dialogue process, and discussions were held on energy and SOE reforms, the privatization agenda, and public finance.

He said such interactions and discussions are

vital for mutual credibility and trust.

M u h a m m a d Aurangzeb said we have shared with the IMF our commitment towards the rightsizing of the Federal Government.

Regarding revenue and taxation, he said the government is firm on compliance and enforcement and every sector will have to play its due role in this regard.

The finance minister also requested all the political parties, media, and other stakeholders to join hands for charters on the environment and economy to ensure a safe and healthy future for the coming generations.

NDMA dispatches 19th shipment of aid to Gaza

ISLAMABAD: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) dispatched its 19th shipment of aid on Sunday to Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria, carrying 17 tons of essential supplies such as tents, food, milk, clothing, and hygiene kits in collaboration with the Al-Khidmat Foundation.

The aid supplies, including rice buckets, powdered milk, canned food, family packs, sleeping bags, and medical support kits, were dispatched on the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif via a chartered flight from Jinnah International Airport in Karachi to Damascus, Syria.

The send-off ceremony held at Jinnah International Airport was attended by MPA, Ali Khursheedi, Senator Amir Waliuddin Chishti, senior officials from NDMA, and Al-Khidmat Foundation.

Ali Khursheedi emphasized the urgent need to provide relief to the war-affected population, considering the ongoing conflict and the needs of the affected communities. He reaffirmed the Government of Pakistan's commitment to supporting the brothers and sisters in distress and stressed the importance of collaboration between welfare organizations and the Pakistani public in strengthening these efforts.

This 19th consignment was dispatched for the people of Syria and refugees from Lebanon, before this, the Government of Pakistan sent 12 aid consignments to Palestine and 6 shipments to Lebanon, with a total volume of 1722 tons.

The Government of Pakistan continues to send relief supplies based on the needs of the war-affected populations of Lebanon and Palestine.

On instructions of the Prime Minister, a special account named the "Prime Minister's Relief Fund for Gaza and Lebanon", has been established for the collection of donations from the public to aid their brothers and sisters in Gaza and Lebanon who are facing war emergencies

Bangladesh deaths from dengue cross 400

DHAKA (Reuters): Bangladesh is battling its worst outbreak of dengue in years, with more than 400 deaths as rising temperatures and a longer monsoon season drive a surge in infections, leaving hospitals struggling to cope, particularly in urban areas.

At least 407 people have died from related complications in 2024, with 78,595 patients admitted to hospital nationwide, the latest official figures show.

By mid-November, 4,173 patients were being treated, with 1,835 of them in Dhaka, the capital, and 2,338 elsewhere.

"We're witnessing monsoon-like rainfall even in October, which is unusual," said Kabirul Bashar, a zoology professor at Jahangirnagar University.

Shifting weather patterns caused by climate change provided optimal conditions for the Aedes aegypti mosquito, the primary carrier of the disease, he added.

"These changes in the season are fostering ideal conditions for the mosqui-

toes to breed."

Dense populations in cities exacerbate the spread of the disease, usually more common in the monsoon season from June to September though it has spilled beyond that window this year.

A rise in temperatures and longer monsoons, both linked to climate change, have caused a spike in mosquito breeding, driving the rapid spread of the virus.

Bashar called for year-round vector surveillance in Bangladesh to monitor and rein in the disease.

If detected early and treated properly, deaths from dengue can be reduced to less than 1%, said a renowned physician, Dr ABM Abdullah, adding, "Early diagnosis and prevention are key to controlling dengue."

Last year was the deadliest on record in the current crisis, with 1,705 deaths and more than 321,000 infections reported.

The growing frequency and severity of outbreaks strains Bangladesh's already overwhelmed healthcare system, as hos-

pitals battle to treat thousands of patients.

Health officials have urged precautions against mosquito bites, such as mosquito repellents and bed nets, while experts want tougher measures to eliminate the stagnant waters where mosquitoes breed.

Delays in seeking treatment, particularly among rural populations who must travel long distances to specialised facilities in Dhaka, are swelling the toll, doctors said.

Around 1,500 killed in Bangladesh protests that ousted PM Hasina

About 1,500 people died in protests that brought down Bangladeshi prime minister Sheikh Hasina this year, and as many as 3,500 may have been forcibly abducted during her 15-year rule, interim leader Muhammad Yunus said on Sunday.

The estimate by the economist and Nobel peace laureate, who is due to organise elections, is higher than the previous official count of about 1,000 deaths in the student-led demonstrations, which drew a ferocious crackdown.

Sikh pilgrims to visit Kartarpur today

LAHORE (INP): Sikh pilgrims from India and around the world have arrived in Pakistan to celebrate the 555th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak. They observed their rituals at Gurdwara Panja Sahib in Hassan Abdal.

The Sikh pilgrims will visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur on Monday (today).

The pilgrims have expressed immense satisfaction with the arrangements made by the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB). Commending the facilities, including security and accommodation, they described the efforts as

"commendable." They lauded Pakistan as a peaceful nation, highlighting the warm hospitality and respect extended by Pakistanis toward the Sikh community.

Sikh women pilgrims also shared their positive experiences, noting the honor and respect they received during their visit.

As per the official itinerary, the pilgrims will stay for one day at Kartarpur, where ceremonies have been organized by the ETPB. On November 20, they will visit Gurdwara Rohri Sahib in Eminabad before concluding their journey in Lahore.

ETPB Additional

Secretary Saifullah Khokhar highlighted the meticulous arrangements, including thorough cleaning and festive lighting of all Gurdwaras. Under the supervision of Security In-Charge Asim Chaudhry, ETPB teams are working tirelessly to ensure the safety and comfort of the pilgrims.

He also acknowledged the cooperation of district administration, Rangers, police, health, and other departments in facilitating the event.

This year's celebrations reflect Pakistan's commitment to fostering peace, interfaith harmony, and respect for religious minorities.

Sun finally shines on Punjab after smoggy darkness

LAHORE (APP): In Punjab, there has been a slight reduction in smog intensity and the index came down in the provincial metropolis and many other cities of the province.

Among the most polluted cities, Delhi is currently on the first place with an AQI of 559, while Lahore is the most polluted city in Pakistan. After the rain in Islamabad and Peshawar, there was a clear reduction in smog in Lahore and other districts of Punjab.

Chief Meteorologist Alim Al Hasan said that smog has decreased due to

the wind blowing from the northwest, adding it will be sunny during the day and cold at night.

On the other hand, on the instructions of IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, Punjab Police came into action to prevent smog and protect the environment. During the last 24 hours, 49 cases were registered and 18 people were arrested during the smog crackdown in various districts including Lahore.

In addition, 641 people were fined more than Rs1.2m by the administration, while 151 people were issued warnings, during

this period, 9 for burning crop residue, 556 violations for vehicles emitting smoke, industrial activity. Violations were reported at 3, 37 brick kilns and 5 other places.

According to the spokesperson of Punjab Police, IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has ordered speeding up the anti-smog crackdown on highways, industrial areas, agriculture and other places.

According to the Environmental Protection Department, citizens should take precautionary measures to avoid smog.



LAHORE: Spanish Parliamentary delegation led by Vicente Azpitarte Perez, in a group photograph with Senator Rana Mahmoodul Hassan, Pakistan's Ambassador to Spain Zahoor Ahmed, Allama Khabair Azad at Badshahi Masjid. —APP Photo

61 new dengue cases reported in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Health Department confirmed on Sunday that 61 new cases of dengue fever were reported across the province in the last 24 hours.

Among the districts, Rawalpindi recorded the highest number of cases with 48, followed by Lahore with 4, Attock with 3, and Chakwal and Faisalabad each with 2. Single cases were also reported in Sahiwal and Sialkot.

In the current week alone, 494 new cases have emerged, bringing the total number of the cases in Punjab to 7,395 for 2024. The Health Department has reassured citizens that hospitals are fully equipped with necessary medications and are prepared to manage the surge in patients.

Health officials have stressed the importance of preventive measures, urging residents to maintain hygiene, eliminate standing water, and cooperate with health teams working in high-risk areas. To further assist the public, the department has activated a helpline (1033) for information and to report concerns related to dengue. Authorities have also called for increased public awareness and strict adherence to preventive measures to curb the rising trend of Dengue cases.

Shafi Muhammad remembered

LAHORE (APP): Legendary television and film artiste Shafi Muhammad Shah was remembered on his 17th death anniversary here and across the country on Sunday.

Shafi Muhammad began his career as a radio presenter and took part in plays broadcast from the Radio Pakistan in the 1960s. During his thirty-year career, he performed in over fifty drama serials and over hundred television plays in Urdu and Sindhi languages.

His famous dramas were 'Chand Grehan', 'Dairey', 'Aanch', 'Bund Gulab' and 'Mohabbat Khawab Ki Surat'. It is to his credit that he acted in all mediums of entertainment including radio, theatre, film and television.

IPO Pakistan hosts seminar to discuss WIPO Treaty

F.P. Report

TANDOJAM: The Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan (IPO-Pakistan) hosted a day-long seminar at Sindh Agriculture University, Tandojam, (SAU) to discuss the recent WIPO Treaty on Genetic Resources, Associated Traditional Knowledge (GRATK) and other IP-related matters.

The seminar aimed to raise awareness about the importance of intellectual property rights in promoting innovation and economic growth in Pakistan. Ambassador (R) Farukh Amil, Chairman, IPO-Pakistan, emphasized the centrality of IP in Pakistan's progress and its attractiveness to foreign investors in a rules-compliant country.

Professor Dr. Fateh Muhammad Marri, Vice Chancellor, Sindh Agriculture University, welcomed participants and highlighted the critical role of academics and researchers in creating awareness and solutions. He underlined the importance of

Iranian delegation visits Bibi Pakdaman shrine

LAHORE (APP): A four-member Iranian delegation, led by Deputy Minister of Culture of the Iranian Cultural Centre, Dr. Hussein, visited the shrine of Hazrat Bibi Pakdaman here on Sunday.

The delegation comprised Dr. Adil Khani, head of the Iranian Cultural Centre for Asia, Asghar Masoodi, Director General of the Iranian Cultural Centre Lahore, and Syed Dilawar Abbas, Administrator of the Iranian Cultural Centre Lahore. The delegation was warmly received by Ambassador of Peace, Syed Waqar al-Hussain Naqvi, Aamir Hussain Hashmi (Public Relations Officer), Shahzad Zaidi, Wajahat Naqvi, Mohsin Naqvi, Mirza Zahid Iqbal (Shrine Manager), and Nabeel Shah (Security In-Charge), who showed them round.

Syed Waqar al-Hussain Naqvi offered prayers for the unity of Muslims, advancement of Pakistan-Iran friendship and for peace in the region. Special prayers were also

Aafia detention: Citizens send postcards to US President

KARACHI (PPI): Citizens of megacity Karachi in a large number reached to GPO Soddar to send postcards for the release of Dr Aafia Siddiqui to the US president on the appeal of Dr Fowzia Siddiqui.

According to a statement issued from Aafia Movement office today, Dr Fowzia Siddiqui previous day in a video message had appealed the citizens of Karachi to write letters regarding clemency petition number C-310439, appealing to release Aafia Siddiqui on humanitarian grounds.

Dr Fowzia Siddiqui said that the government of Pakistan has already written a letter to the US government and now it is the turn of our citizens to write to the US president in a large number for release of

Police projects must benefit common people

LAHORE (APP): Capital City Police Officer Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana presided over an important meeting to review progress on the police department's developmental schemes and welfare-oriented initiatives at his office on Sunday.

SSP (Admin) Atif Nazir briefed the participants about the progress on smart police stations and other schemes. The CCPO emphasized completing ongoing developmental projects within the stipulated time frame and directed to get Liaquatabad and Hayer police stations operational within a month. He also ordered completion of Harbanspura and Batapur police stations speedily.

Alongside, the SSP (Admin) was tasked with expediting work on Johar Town, Shafiqabad, Samanabad, Wahdat Colony and Nishtar Colony police stations.



enforcing relevant IP rules.

The seminar featured a panel discussion with leading stakeholders, including Syed Mahmood Nawaz Shah, President, Sindh Abadkar Board; Prof. Dr. Aijaz Ali Khooharo, Dean, Faculty of Agricultural Social Sciences, SAU; Dr. Raza Muhammad Memon, Principal Scientist and Head, Plant Protection Division, Nuclear Institute of Agriculture, Tandojam; Prof. Dr. Shah Nawaz Marri, Chairman, Department of Plant Breeding & Genetics, SAU; and Prof. Dr. Tanveer Fatima Miano, Director, Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC), SAU.

The WIPO Treaty on Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge aims to enhance the efficacy, transparency, and quality of the patent system regarding genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources. The treaty establishes a disclosure requirement for patent applicants who base their inventions on genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.

Call to promote religious harmony

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Auqaf Secretary Dr Tahir Raza Bukhari has said that it is the need of the hour to promote religious harmony.

He said this while presiding over a meeting held regarding making the Khatam-un-Nabiyeen (PBUH) University active and forming Centre of Excellence for Religious Harmony at Aiwan-e-Auqaf on Sunday. He said that role of 'Mehrab and Minbar' was very important in overcoming terrorism and sectarianism.

He said that the university actually reflected the sentiments of Muslims of Pakistan. It was told in the meeting that Quran Complex covering 55 kanals had been designated for setting up the Khatam-un-Nabiyeen (PBUH) University. Council of Islamic Ideology Chairman Dr Muhammad Raghhib Hussain Naemi said that establishment of Centre of Excellence for Religious Harmony was inevitable to promote harmony across the province.

He said that religious powers should play their role in rooting out extremism and violence. Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Syed Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad said that Auqaf department had made unprecedented efforts for 'Ittehad-e-bain-ul-Muslimeen'. Data Darbar Mosque Khateeb Mufti Muhammad Ramzan Sialvi, Punjab Quran Board Secretary Amir Shahzad and Religious Affairs Director General Khalid Mehmood attended the meeting.

PU awards ten PhD degrees

LAHORE (APP): Punjab University (PU) has conferred PhD degrees on ten scholars following the approval of their theses in various disciplines.

According to a spokesperson, Sobia Maryam D/o Muhammad Buksh awarded PhD degree in the subject of Arabic, Zaman Ali S/o Gulzar Hussain in the subject of Arabic, Beenish Mushaq D/o Mushaq Ahmad in the subject of Urdu, Muhammad Abdullah Sohl S/o Liaquat Ali Sohl in the subject of Space Science, Isma Ghulam Murtaza D/o Ghulam Murtaza in the subject of Mathematics, Rabia Kanwal D/o Mushaq Ahmed Salik in the subject of Art & Design, Zunaira Riaz D/o Riaz Ahmad in the subject of Biochemistry, Muhammad Asif Ali S/o Mian Ashiq Ali in the subject of Information Management, Muhammad Asif S/o Javid Aslam in the subject of International Relations and Muhammad Numan S/o Allama Muhammad Yousaf awarded PhD degrees in the subject of Arabic.

16 die in 1328 accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least sixteen persons were killed and 1397 injured in 1328 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 600 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 797 victims with minor injuries were treated.

Spanish delegation tours Lahore's historical sites

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of the Spanish Senate Foreign Affairs Committee toured several historical landmarks of the city to explore its rich cultural heritage, here on Sunday.

The distinguished guests visited several key sites, including the Lahore Museum, Badshahi Mosque, Royal Fort (Shahi Qila), the tomb of Allama Iqbal, and the Samadhi of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They deeply explored the city's rich cultural heritage, connecting with its history and traditions.

The delegation's visit began at the Lahore Museum, where the Director of the Lahore museum, Nabela Irfan, warmly welcomed the guests and presented them with souvenirs.

On arrival, Research Officer Ihtisham Aziz Choudhry guided the delegation through the museum's various galleries. The visitors explored the Art Gallery, Historic Gallery, and the Indus Valley Gallery, where they were briefed on key archaeological finds from Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, Cholistan, and other significant sites in the region.

Museum's keeper paintings Uzma Usmani then led the guests through the Islamic Art Gallery, China Art Gallery, Gandhara Art Gallery, and Jain Temple Gallery, offering in-depth explanations of the exhibited artifacts. The delegation expressed great interest in the rich history showcased within the museum's walls.

The Spanish delegates also visited the mausoleum of Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal. Upon arrival, the delegation was greeted by a ceremonial salute from the Rangers, who stood in formal guard. The guests paid their respects by placing a floral wreath at Mazar-e-Iqbal and signed the guest book with their impressions of the visit.

The delegation proceeded to the Lahore Fort (Shahi Qila), where they received a detailed briefing from the Walled City Lahore Authority (WCLA) and Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) on the fort's various sections. The delegation toured key features of the fort, including the Painters' Garden, Royal Baths, Sheesh Mahal, Nolakha Pavilion, Barood Khana, and the Elephant Gate. The visitors also had the opportunity to take group photographs at various scenic locations within the fort.

Later, the delegation visited the iconic Badshahi Mosque, where Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad welcomed them and provided a tour of the mosque's architectural and historical significance. The delegation marveled at the mosque's grandeur, a testament to Mughal architecture.

The final stop on the delegation's tour was Gurdwara Dera Sahib, a sacred site associated with the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji. Facilitation Officer Aqsa briefed the guests about the historical importance of the Gurdwara and the surrounding area, including the Samadhis of Maharaja Khadak Singh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and Samadhi Kunwar Nau Nihal Singh. During this visit, the Spanish Ambassador to Pakistan Zahoor Ahmed was also present.

Punjab govt increases number of Kissan cards

LAHORE (APP): The Chief Minister has increased the number of Kissan cards from 500,000 to 750,000 as over 1.2 million applications have been received through the portal for Kissan card.

Department of Agriculture official sources told APP that the Bank of Punjab has approved 487,000 applications, while farmers have received more than 361,000 cards. It may be mentioned here that farmers have purchased their required items and equipment worth Rs.18 billion so far through Kissan card.

Kissan card will be a game-changer for agricultural development and prosperity of farmers. Farmers can purchase seeds, fertilizers and agricultural medicines through the card.

Meanwhile, farmers of non-computerised fields will also be eligible for Kissan Card. It is worth mentioning here that 'Kissan Cards' are issued to registered farmers to facilitate them and provide benefits from various government schemes like subsidies, loans, insurance etc.

Moreover, farmers having this card will have an added convenience to use it on ATMs or debit at the point of purchase at a fertilizer dealer shop. Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) is providing complete digital support to this programme, initiating from registration of farmers, and by making entries of farmers through district administration.

PPP leader criticizes PTI leadership, warns

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Central Punjab Secretary-General Syed Hassan Murtaza on Sunday criticized the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership, calling the internal dissent within the party a "divine warning" for its founder.

He noted that even the founder's imprisoned allies are now urging him to adopt a political engagement approach.

Responding to PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi's recent statements, Murtaza remarked that the contradiction between PTI's words and actions has alienated its close allies and voters.

"Politics is like flowing water; stagnant water becomes foul," he emphasized.

He urged that political discourse must be based on mutual respect and tolerance among parties. Accusing the PTI of conspiring to weaken the nation's economy, he stated, "The public, already burdened by inflation, has just started seeing relief, and you are attempting to take that away from them."

Murtaza also condemned the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for allegedly misusing public resources to facilitate the release of a single individual from prison, rather than prioritizing the needs of the people.

He warned the PTI against turning the planned November 24 protest into another incident reminiscent of the May 9 violence. "Rectify your behavior before next Sunday, or humiliation will be your fate," he cautioned.

The PPP leader reiterated his party's commitment to ensuring political stability and economic progress while calling on all stakeholders to act responsibly.

IMF acknowledged Punjab govt's progress

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari has rebutted the contents of a news item published under the headline "Provinces face new targets under fiscal pact", in an English language daily on November 17, asserting that the news report falsely refers to the government of Punjab's investment in a UAE-based fund.

Contradicting the erroneous impression created in the news, the Information Minister said that the government of Punjab has not invested in any UAE-based fund.

"Since there is no such investment in a UAE-based fund, this was never discussed in the meeting of the IMF with the functionaries of the government of Punjab. Furthermore, the news item wrongly insinuates IMF's alarm over the previously incorrectly reported 1st quarter deficit of Punjab," she mentioned.

Azma Bokhari said that the IMF agreed that the Punjab government had a surplus of approximately Rs 40 billion at the end of the 1st quarter and as such the Ministry of Finance, government of Pakistan corrected its data and uploaded revised fiscal operations reflecting the Punjab government's surplus.

"Lastly, the news item also misreports that Punjab fell short of its surplus target of Rs. 150 billion at the end of the 1st quarter. Punjab does not have quarterly targets of surplus in the National Fiscal Pact and the IMF agreed that Punjab was on track to achieve its committed surplus of Rs. 630 billion at the end of the current financial year," she stated.

The minister concluded that the government of Punjab rejects such misreporting by a credible newspaper which has a stature and record of accurate reporting.

Toxic smog: over 5,000 asthma patients reported

LAHORE (APP): Difficulties, pneumonia, and chest infections, particularly among adults, children.

Many others have been affected by severe asthma, eye irritation and various skin diseases. Individuals with pre-existing heart conditions are also facing heightened risks due to the deteriorating air quality.

Mayo Hospital reported more than 1500 asthma cases last week, while Jinnah Hospital recorded around 1000 patients. Ganga Ram Hospital registered over 1000 cases, and Services Hospital and General Hospital each reported approximately 1500 patients.

Pulmonologists and other health experts while talking to APP said that smog and toxic air pollution had spiraled out of control, with large numbers of people seeking urgent medical treatment.

They urged citizens to minimize their travel and take necessary precautions to safeguard their health.

They further suggested people to wear a mask as the unprecedented smog wave is triggering a surge in respiratory diseases and eye infections, while affecting millions.

CS reviews progress of ‘Drug Free Peshawar’ drive

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary, paid a visit to the Drug Control Room at the office of Deputy Commissioner Peshawar to review the progress of the ongoing ‘Drug Free Peshawar’ campaign. During the visit, Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Khan Mehsud, and Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Sarmad Saleem Akram, briefed the Chief Secretary about the achievements and progress of the campaign.

It was reported that 1,021 drug addicts, including 19 children and 11 women, have been rescued from various areas of Peshawar and admitted to eight rehabilitation centers operating across the city. These centers provide treatment using internationally recognized methods to help individuals recover and reintegrate into society.

The Chief Secretary was also briefed about the live monitoring system of the Drug Control Room, which ensures real-time performance tracking of all rehabilitation centers.

Following the inspection

of the Drug Control Room, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary visited the ‘Dah Haq Awaz Rehabilitation Center’ in University Town and the ‘Khawaja Yunus Rehabilitation Center’ in Amanabad. He interacted with individuals undergoing treatment and inquired about the facilities and services being provided at the centers.

Director Social Welfare, Rafiq Khan Mohmand, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Rao Hashim Azim, District Social Welfare Officer Noor Muhammad Mehsud, along with officials from

the Excise Department, police, and other relevant departments, accompanied the Chief Secretary during his visits.

The Chief Secretary appreciated the efforts of the district administration, social welfare department, and law enforcement agencies in their commitment to making Peshawar drug-free.

He emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to curb drug addiction and reiterated the government’s commitment to rehabilitating affected individuals and creating a healthier society.

Muzammil flays internet disruption

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Adviser to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Finance and Inter-Provincial Coordination Muzammil Aslam has expressed his views on the communication disability in Pakistan i.e. Internet shutdown and the worsening situation of communi-

cation in a very concise and comprehensive manner.

By issuing a statement on the country’s communication disability on social networking website X, Muzammil Aslam said that I don’t know who is ensuring Pakistan to stay internally disconnected and now externally for last four decade. He wrote that at first we have abandoned

rail network and start building up motorways. He furthered that I’m not against motorways but ignoring railway networks was sin.

Finance’s Adviser Muzammil Aslam explained that then we have destroyed Pakistan Railway to ensure all traffic (commercial, cargo, passenger) to divert to road.

ETEA introduces modern recruitment process

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a significant step towards modernizing and ensuring transparency in the recruitment process for public sector institutions, the Educational Testing and Evaluation Agency (ETEA) successfully conducted a computer-based test for various posts in the Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP). This marks a milestone in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s efforts to adopt cutting-edge technologies for merit-based recruitment.

The test, conducted for posts such as Manager (Admin & Accounts/Customer Care), Assistant Manager (HR & Admin), Assistant Manager (Accounts & Payments), Assistant Manager (MIS), HR Officer, Fleet Officer, and MIS Assistant, was entirely computerized. Each candidate received a unique, randomly generated question paper, ensuring fairness and eliminating any possibility of bias.

Under this system, candidates were shown their results instantly upon completing the test, reducing reliance on manual intervention and reinforcing the integrity of the examination process. Candidates participated in the test in a calm and organized environment, with many expressing their satisfaction with the streamlined process. Immediate result announcements further boosted their confidence in the system.



PESHAWAR: Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, visited the Paraplegic Centre.

KPFA concludes special campaign

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority successfully concluded an eight-day special campaign against substandard and hazardous meat, seizing and disposing of thousands of kilograms of unfit meat while imposing hefty fines on violators. According to details unveiled by the Authority’s spokesperson, over 1,839 inspections were carried out across the province during the campaign. The operations included rigorous inspections of butcher shops and slaughterhouses, as well as the establishment of checkpoints on key routes to inspect meat transportation vehicles. A total of 5,038 kilograms of substandard meat, including beef, mutton, chicken, liver, and other products, was confiscated and discarded. Divisional-wise breakdown revealed that 1,020 kg of substandard meat was seized in Peshawar Division, 55 kg in Hazara, 240 kg in Mardan, 3,050 kg in Bannu, 272 kg in Kohat, and 498 kg in Malakand. The Authority took strict action under the Food Safety Act, issuing heavy fines and warning notices to those involved. Special teams, led by Assistant Directors of Food, were deployed to ensure thorough inspections. Additionally, checks on halal certification, cleanliness of slaughterhouses, and proper storage of meat were conducted. Director General KPFS and HFA, Wasif Saeed, commended the efforts of the food safety teams and highlighted that the campaign was carried out under the directives of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru.

NCEG signs MoU with Quaid-i-Azam University

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The National Centre of Excellence in Geology (NCEG) at the University of Peshawar and the Department of Earth Sciences at Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) have formalized a strategic partnership to advance research and development in key areas of earth sciences. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed the other day, marking a significant milestone in fostering collaboration between the two prestigious institutions.

The MOU focuses on utilizing the combined expertise of both institutions to address challenges in the fields of geology, geophysics, and hydrogeology.

The partnership is designed to strengthen the scientific community’s capacity to address global and regional issues related to natural resource management, environmental sustainability, and climate change.

Key Highlights of the Collaboration are exchange of scientific and technical information, facilitating knowledge-sharing and promoting collaborative research between both institutions. It also includes joint supervision of graduate students’ Research, offering students an opportunity to work across institutions, to enhance their research exposure and skills.



Under the MoU both sides will arrange joint workshops, seminars, symposia and organizing events to disseminate cutting-edge research and foster discussions on emerging challenges in earth sciences.

The MoU covers consultancy projects and commercialization of research findings which aim to covert academic research

into practical applications, contributing to economic and societal benefits.

Enhanced collaboration in natural resource exploration to strengthen efforts in its exploration, will be a part of the MoU.

The MOU was signed by Prof. Dr. Liaquat Ali, Director of NCEG, and Prof. Dr. Mumtaz Muhammad Shah, Chairperson of the Department of Earth Sciences at Quaid Azam University Islamabad, in a ceremony attended by faculty members and research leaders from both institutions.

‘This partnership marks an exciting new chapter for both institutions, as we combine our resources, expertise, and research capabilities to make significant strides in

earth and environmental sciences,” said Prof. Dr. Liaquat Ali. “We look forward to fostering innovation and nurturing the next generation of earth scientists through this collaboration.”

Prof. Dr. Mumtaz Muhammad Shah expressed similar sentiments, highlighting the importance of such collaborative initiatives in addressing the growing challenges faced by the earth sciences community globally.

The three-year agreement, with the option for renewal, is expected to foster long-term cooperation that will contribute to groundbreaking research and provide valuable insights for addressing both local and global challenges in the geosciences.

8th death anniversary of Haji Adeel today

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 8th death anniversary of the renowned nationalist, ANP stalwart and champion of the provincial rights late Haji Mohammad Adeel is being observed by his family, political workers and his well-wishers today (Monday).

Born on August 10, 1941, Haji Mohammad Adeel was died of renal failure in Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Peshawar on November 18, 2016 at the age of 75 years.

He was a Hindko speaker, from a family of anti-imperialists, the son of Hakeem Abdul Jalil (Hakeem Mohammad Jalil Sahib) who had actively participated in the non-violent movement, Khudai Khidmatgar against the British Empire in the Sub-Continent and was the president of All India National Congress Committee Peshawar District and a close colleague of Bacha Khan and Mahatama

Gandhi and Member of Central working committee of Congress.

Late Haji Adeel was a household political figure for Peshawaris, who won four consecutive elections to the provincial assembly and served as finance minister and deputy speaker of the provincial government of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

He was the senator and represented Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the National Finance Commission of Pakistan. Due to his active role and efforts, the then Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani led federal government succeeded in the announcement of a consensual National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, which is milestone in the history of the country that had increased the shares of the federating units in the federal divisible pool.

Since the announcement of that NFC Award no other such award is announced so far and KP has been paid a huge amount of Rs.585 bil-

lion due to his efforts.

Haji Adeel was also the member of standing Defence and Defence Production, Textile Industry, Information and Broadcasting and Functional Committee on Problems of Less Developed Areas.

He was also Parliamentary Leader in Senate of Pakistan President, Awami National Party (ANP) Pakistan, Chairman Election Commission of ANP and Coordinator ANP Lawyers. He was also Member Central & Provincial Executive Committees of ANP, Member, National Executive Committee, Pakistan India People Forum for Peace and Democracy and Member of National Steering Committee INSA (Imagine a New South Asia).

Haji Adeel was a believer of Pakistan and India friendship. He was very active in campaign and led the caucus of parliamentarians for New South Asia.

PPP’s strategic political transformation, transition to upcoming generations

Murtaza Rafiq Bhutto

I have been journaling the stories of Peoples party’s government since last 12 years. Witnessed a lot of changes & deviations inside provincial politics after the martyrdom of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

To learn the circumstantial deviations, it is really important to recall the history and the beginning environments of Pakistan Peoples Party.

Referencing a book “Constitutional & political history of Pakistan” - In the Pakistan that was left over after 1971, the PPP emerged as a major party with a nationwide following. Its initial pretensions were socialist in nature since it had amongst its ranks socialist and left-leaning political workers. Its intellectual mentor was a former civil servant, J.A. Rahim, who was deeply influenced by the methods of communist parties in China and the Soviet Union. The slogans adopted by the party and the display of its banners and flags were on the same lines as the communist parties in China, the Soviet Union, and North Korea. But Bhutto, who came from a feudalists of Sindh, ultimately inducted other feudalists of Sindh and southern Punjab into his party. This inherent contradiction between the feudalist and left-leaning politicians had to come to a head with the result that, by 1976, the socialist left had either been weeded out or had become ineffective and inconsequential.

Moving on to Z.A Bhutto’s Speech on the occasion of constitution enforced on 14th August 1973, Bhutto said that the

days of palace intrigues and coups were ended and that venom and violence in politics must stop.

Later, Even J.A. Rahim was ousted. Feudalist from other political parties joined the PPP and by 1977, when general elections were called, the party had changed completely.

Another factor that hurt the PPP was Bhutto’s dependence on bureaucratic channels rather than party cadre. All party offices being filled through nominations. The heads of security forces and bureaucrats around him became very powerful and party leaders and workers were sidelined. A time came when party workers could only reach Bhutto through the bureaucrats around him. The structure of PPP was thus weakened.

By October 1974, for all practical purposes, the stronger personalities from bhutto’s old team, Rahim, Khar, Khurshid Hasan Meer, and Mubashir were gone. Mumtaz had been sidelined to a non-political portfolio. Hayat Sherpao was assassinated in February 1975, and Rafi Raza was no longer in his old very close position to Bhutto as Special Assistant. Ramay had been removed from Punjab. The place of these people had been taken by Aziz Ahmad, Vaqar Ahmed, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Ghulam Jilani Khan, Saeed Ahmad, Masood Mahmood, Yahya Bakhtiar, and Kausar Niazi. Under Bhutto’s deft guidance, the power of the new team increased and by the end of 1974, tables had been completely turned on the old team or what remained of it. Still later, when Khar enquired from Bhutto as to why he had opted for the team comprising civil and

military establishments, his reply was frank and straightforward. Bhutto said that to come into power one needed a special team, but to retain power one needed another kind of team.

After the Martyrdom of Z.A Bhutto, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had no choice but to face the challenges occurred due to the politics of his respective father. Loyalists of Z.A Bhutto turned into rivals of his daughter. The splits were not remained limited to outside the family, but it also happened inside the family. She created her own path in politics and I believe she was the only leader who understood the value of a common person, A worker class, A leaders that came from the grass roots and by god willing she made her own team. Despite the fact that her governments could not completed the constitutional term, even today, I do not think there is anyone who denies the achievements, deliverance, and policies she made were not in a favour of public specifically, liberation & tolerance in the society for working women’s. Who knew that the People of Pakistan are going to lose their beloved leaders who were loyal to their homeland. the way Bhutto’s dynastic politics were targeted is unprecedented in the world’s history. We all witnessed what happened afterwards the hanging of Mohtarma’s father, martyrdom of brave leader and brother, the fate was written that she will embrace the martyrdom wholeheartedly.

After Mohtarma, the initial days of PPP government were harsh where on one side, we have been witnessing the popular “Pakistan Khappay” narrative of President Zardari. Whereas,

on the other side, there were members that expressed their grievances with the leadership & we have witnessed unhappy faces in political surroundings in early days of PPP government. Moving on, the government continued despite the hurdles in their way. Some new faces have been introduced in the politics and raised swiftly. Internal rifts occurred, political personalities were divided into groups, some of them left the PPP & joined other political forces. Whereas, some stayed & faced the consequences of divisions inside the party.

In current circumstances, similar situations are right in front of the PPP’s top leadership. Some of the workers are seen unhappy, and the divisions are quite visible in media & political surroundings. These divisions have affected the politics & democratic environment especially in Karachi. Despite, knowing the fact that some of the prominent political figures’ contribution are undeniable in strengthening the political party, tug of war between groups continued. This particular issue raised with the political rise of Saeed Ghani & Murtaza Wahab. Workers were forced to either join the Ghani group or Wahab group.

If we talk about the politics of Saeed Ghani, he is no doubt deeply rooted in political grounds. It is really difficult for me to compare both personalities. Whereas, if we talk about Murtaza Wahab I must say he made his way up on his own. Contradictions between groups occurred when Murtaza Wahab successfully captured a place in Karachi’s politics. Political leadership along with Chief Minister were preferring

Wahab over Ghani’s decision in development & political matters of Karachi.

I have witnessed one of the Ghani’s member advising the workers that we are in a middle of a combat with Murtaza Wahab and the workers are not allowed to talk, obey, and favour Murtaza Wahab in his development works or politics. It’s been year’s and things continued in a same manner and even today, he is seen as an outsider by the old visionary jiyala’s. both of the groups have worked together in the elections despite the divisions and I believe this strategy has affected the politics & created a compromised situation for both groups.

Currently, Pakistan People’s Party has captured the province of sindh by welcoming the opponents in the party. Whereas, the true jiyala’s are still intact with the old leadership that have been serving from early 90’s. Similarly, after Mohtarma when President Zardari took a charge to keep ahold the party matters & stay intact, courageous to continue the legacy. Some of the members were seen unhappy in his presidency.

Currently, most of the people who are intact with the party is because of the leadership of President Zardari & Faryal Talpur Sahiba. Today’s youth understands and knows that the upcoming generation, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto, and Asifa Bhutto’s vision is different & maybe that is the reason why gradually the politics inside Sindh is transforming.

The challenges for upcoming generations of Politicians are harsher than the previous ones. It feels like Bilawal Bhutto is creating his own team and trying to introduce upcoming gen-

erations of their members & some news faces in his reign.

One of the challenges that he has to face is to gather the loyalist’s members, and the members that recently joined PPP together without sparking any rivalry or creating divisions. Furthermore, his policies will decide the fate of PPP’s Provincial Politics. I guess most of the senior leaders & members of the party might not be able to continue in the upcoming government. Some of the leaders have already introduced their upcoming generations in a mainstream politics.

The youthful chairman has to establish a balanced team of senior loyalists, left-centred, right centred, and some from Student Federation or Youth Organization. While, some of them must be trained before entering into a political arena. Similarly, Inviting the new members in Student Federation & Youth Organization for the training of politics in democratic political institutions.

Currently, Hierarchal, administrative, and even the rules & regulations of business of People Youth Organization & People Student Federation are not the certainly established in a proper manner. Whereas, the current challenges include the resolution of ongoing rifts inside the PPP. Some of the loyalists and workers are side-lined. Particularly in the region of Sukkur, Larkana, Tharparkar, and Karachi.

Recently, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari & President Women Wing Faryal Talpur had discussed the ongoing politics issues with the leaders of sukkur region including Deputy General Secretary Syed Nasir Hussain Shah.

Political Office bearers like Nisar Ahmed Khuuro, Syed Waqar Mehdi, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah are definitely pushed back by a lobby inside PPP, similarly, Surrender Valasai, a former journalist & Incharge of the PPP media cell is also facing the issues, people stated that he is unheard by the fellow politicians of his district that affects his politics and minority affairs of Tharparkar surroundings.

Whereas, if we talk about the Karachi’s politics, workers are divided into different groups that are working against each other to create their space and in this tug of war other prominent personalities of PPP are somehow forced to compromise, bow down or treated as a substandard individual of the party.

In this whole scenario, party cadres needs to be respected in terms of responsibility, and right job for the right people that they deserve. From workers to top office bearers common grievance states the demands of deliverance, respect, distribution of development or political matters in a equal & justified manner & it should be authorized by seniors because they know the grounds & well deserved political workers.

The lobbies have affected political structure of PPP from bottom to the top especially, in Karachi. The well deserved president for karachi in terms of seniority & political maturity is Syed Waqar Mehdi. However, he chose to not be a part of any lobby but worked in the interest of party and somehow this asset of PPP karachi is compromised in between divisions.

Similarly, in a party cadre Nisar Ahmed Khuuro & Syed Nasir Hussain Shah

should have been appointed as the Senior Minister in the cabinet. Instead, the leadership has chosen the smartest and not the loyalist as their Sr. Minister. A wrong move that essentially suffocated the politicians especially Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, looking into his journey nobody will deny that he is a well deserved minister of local government. Instead, he was awarded the ministry of Energy and i must admit that at the beginning it was difficult for him and public had witnessed this particular injustice in political arena.

Currently, the things that were against the party office bearers eventually turned into their favor and that happened with a lot of tolerance power against disrespect, and as we say in urdu “Karam-???” the things that individual sacrifice for the betterment of their institution or cause.

Whereas, Sr. Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon is indeed ! stuck in a mud of this political arena and definitely needs a helping hand of his respective party members & leadership. I must say that his whole political career is at stake. He along with approx. 20 other bureaucrats, business owners, employees of ad agency are already facing the courts and recent raid at his son’s Tv channel is a exemplification of injustice.

I apologize in advance if this opinion directly or indirectly hurts the sentiments of an individual political worker, office bearer, Cabinet Member, and the Top Leadership. I hope that i am going to see a day in this lifetime when i don’t get a chance to give opinion in order to portray the ground reality in front of the top leadership of their respective political party.



In brief

Olive project launched F.P. Report

K A L A Y A : Commissioner Kohat Syed Mohtasimbillah Shah has launched an ambitious project to promote olive cultivation and reforestation in the Orakzai district. This initiative is part of the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's "Awami Agenda" program, aiming to enhance the region's environmental sustainability and economic growth. As many as 3,000 olive saplings in the Orakzai district's main nursery. To Plant millions of new trees. Moreover, 300,000 existing trees to be breedesld. The Project will benefit environment, forests, and wildlife. The project has received technical support from Italy, with the Italian Government funding the "Olive Culture - Holistic and Multi-Professional Mechanism for a Pakistani Olive Oil Value Chain" project. This collaboration aims to build a comprehensive olive and olive oil value chain in Pakistan, enhancing olive production and food security. Commissioner directed to conduct micro-planning for the project, similar to polio campaigns. Organize training sessions for students in boys' high schools and colleges to promote environmental awareness. The will arrange training programs for local landowners and volunteers in collaboration with the Agriculture and Forestry Department.

KP govt releases funds F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Pakistan Tahreek Insaf MPA from PK 16 Malik Shafiullah Khan has said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has released Rs 5 million for the Kalpani Talash bypass road work on which will be resumed soon. He was talking to local journalists after inaugurating a private health unit at Talash as chief guest here on Sunday. Earlier the inaugural ceremony was also addressed by Malik Shafiullah Khan, director general public health Dr Irshad Rughani, Timergara tehsil chairman Muftri Irfanud Din, Dr Tufail Khan, president Talash Dushkhel Qaumi Jirga Ibrahim Khan, Principal government degree college Dir Prof Noor Hassan, principal Aminul Haq, educationist Aftab Alam Khan, managing director of the medical complex Abdul Qadar and others. MPA Shafiullah clarified that work on Talash bypass road was delayed due to a court case between two land owners. He said that work on the project would be resumed soon as the KP government had released Rs 5 million for it. The lawmaker claimed that classes at the Timergara Medical College would be started from the next academic session as a principal had been appointed to the college.

PKI announces protest

MULTAN (INP): Pakistan Kisan Ittehad (PKI) has announced a countrywide protest in December, against the imposition of agriculture tax on IMF's demand. The announcement was made by Khalid Mahmood Khokhar, President of the Pakistan Kisan Ittehad. He highlighted that farmers are unable to recover their cost of production, making it increasingly difficult for them to sustain agriculture. Khokhar clarified that their movement is independent and not aligned with any political party. Criticizing the imposition of agricultural income tax, he remarked that farmers may as well recite Inna Lillahi wa Inna Ilayhi Raji'un.

Kundi for more opportunities to KP's youth

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday said more opportunities should be created for the youth including females to excel in various fields and boost the pace of the country's development.

He was addressing Black Belt Certification ceremony held here at a Taekwondo academy.

"Women play a crucial role in the socio-economic development of our country, and we must continue to provide them with the platforms they need to succeed," the governor said. Referring to the significant contributions of the young athletes, he said they were playing crucial roles in promoting a positive image of Pakistan internationally. He said these young athletes who have not only excelled in their sport but were representing Pakistan on the international level.

He also lauded the academy's efforts in empowering young female athletes, particularly in martial arts, and commended their success on both national and international platforms.

During the ceremony, certificates were awarded to a group of talented athletes, including Iqra Javed, Mamoonah Nasir Baloch, Aiman Laraib, Asyha, Ajwa Nadeem, Syeda Sherbano Sherazi, Umsha Shah, Fatima Noor, and Manima Khalid, all of whom earned their black belts in Taekwondo.

The governor was briefed on the academy's impressive track record, which includes training over 40 girls who have earned black belts. The academy has also made a mark internationally, with 19 of its athletes representing Pakistan globally.

The athletes have won a total of seven international titles, including a gold medal by Mamoonah Nasir Baloch, a silver by Ajwa Nadeem, and bronze medals by Areeba Baloch and Asyha.

Moreover, the academy's athletes have claimed 30 national gold medals. Meanwhile, two athletes Sofyan Mehsud and Irfan Mehsud also called on the governor who lauded them for recently setting world records in their respective fields.

Speaking on the occasion, governor Faisal Karim Kundi has underlined the need for supporting the young players to improve the country and individuals who are contributing to improving the country's international image.

He said they had not only earned recognition for their families but had also brought honor to Pakistan on the global stage.

He said their achievements reflected the potential of youth in the region and challenged negative stereotypes about areas such as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dera Ismail Khan, and South Waziristan.

He said the youth of our region possessed great talent and by breaking records in sports, they were showing the world that we are not defined by extremism but by excellence. He also noted that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had personally acknowledged the players' achievements.

He also suggested the establishment of an academy dedicated to preparing the next generation of world record holders.

Kundi pointed to the impressive achievement of setting 125 Guinness records as a testament to the untapped potential in these areas and expressed confidence that with proper support, many more such records could be broken.

Three days conference at KUST concludes



Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) and Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, jointly hosted a three-day conference on "The Integration of Social Sciences, Challenges, and Pathways." The event brought together prominent researchers and educators from across the country.

In his welcome address, KUST Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Muhammad Naseer Uddin emphasized the vast opportunities for research and innovation, describing the research environment as "academic fun" that offers numerous benefits for students.

Director Ilmiyat Professor Dr. Rafiqat Ali highlighted the integration of social sciences as an innovative concept aimed at providing avenues for research. Notably, this conference marked the first of its kind in KUST's 21-year history. Dr. Imran Ullah Marwat, Director Higher Education Department KPK, also shared insights on the positive aspects of social sciences.

The conference drew participation from esteemed figures, including Registrar KUST Dr. Imran Ali, Dr. Ghani

Ur Rehman, Registrar Khushal Khan Khattak University, VC FATA Dr. Alamzeb Amir, Dr. Zeeshan Bangash, Director Quality Enhancement Cell KUST, and Dr. Dilwar Khan, Dean Faculty of Management Sciences. Faculty members, students, and directors from both universities also attended.

On the second day, Meena Khan Afridi, Minister for Higher Education KPK, participated as the chief guest at the Karak University event, praising KUST's efforts in organizing such conferences.

Commissioner Mutasim Billa Shah attended the third day as the chief guest, emphasizing the importance of focusing on student education.

The conference concluded with KUST Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Muhammad Naseer Uddin and Conference Secretary Dr. Asif Ali extending gratitude to participants. The Vice Chancellor distributed shields among participants and presented a special shield to Commissioner Mutasim Billa Shah.

This joint conference fostered academic collaboration and research innovation, marking a significant milestone in KUST's history.

KP govt promoting higher education: Meena Khan

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi has said that the PTI government is making sincere efforts to promote higher education in the province and his visits to various colleges and universities of the province are a step towards this direction.

His visits to the entire province are aimed to getting aware of the problems of colleges and universities by taking concrete steps in this regard, he added.

He expressed these views during a briefing given to him at the Government Post Graduate College Karak regarding all colleges of the district. Earlier, he was also given a

detailed briefing at the Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak.

On this occasion, Provincial Minister for Agriculture Major (R) Muhammad Sajjad Barakwal, Shahid Khattak MNA, Chairman DDAC Karak Khurshid Ahmed Khattak, the party's district leadership and the principals of male and female colleges were also present.

The minister was beside informing of the performance of 6 Male, 4 Female and a Commerce college of Karak district, was also briefed about the problems and difficulties faced by them.

Meena Khan declared that there can be no compromise on the quality of education and teacher attendance.

Teachers must deliver, he said. He expressed deep regret that despite the presence of PhDs and highly qualified teachers in government colleges, their poor performance in comparison to the private colleges is a question mark because private educational institutions do not have the qualified manpower like government institutions.

The provincial minister, while talking on the transfer policy, said that all transfers will purely be merit-based and transfers to wrong posts will be discouraged. He said that there is no question of disobeying the transfer orders. Everyone has to implement it or else they will have to go home, he warned.

abroad to participate in the 555th birth anniversary celebrations of Baba Guru Nanak.

The minister said Sikh pilgrims had been provided a peaceful environment to perform their rituals across the country. He said all minorities in Pakistan enjoyed full freedom to perform their religious obligations.

Group leader of Sikh pilgrims from Canada Sardar Jasbir Singh Boparai said arrangements by the government of Pakistan and Punjab were excellent.

The defence minister was presented a souvenir by Sardar Jasbir Boparai and caretaker Sardar Jaskaran Singh Sidhu on his visit to Gurdwara Babe Di Ber Sahib.



LARKANA: Foreigner visitor visiting the world famous archeological site of Mohen-Jo-Daro.

Sherpao vows to get rights for Pakhtuns F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman on Thursday vowed that he would spare no effort to help the Pakhtuns get their due rights.

He was speaking at a well-attended gathering, which was held at Watan Kor, secretariat of QWP, to mark the 12th foundation day of the nationalist party.

A large number of party workers from all over the province attended the gathering. A cake was cut to celebrate the occasion.

Recalling the services his party had rendered for the cause of the Pakhtuns, Aftab Sherpao said the QWP leadership and its workers faced many terrorist attacks, but the party did not falter in its resolve to serve the Pakhtuns and highlight their problems. He vowed the QWP leadership would continue serving the Pakhtuns without any consideration for political affiliation.

Commenting on the prevailing political situation, Aftab Sherpao said the 2024 general election added to the uncertainty, which the country was facing before the polls. "This government is the byproduct of the rigged election," he said, adding that the fake representatives of the people lacked the ability to steer the country out of the prevailing crises. He maintained that even the agreement International Monetary Fund did not produce the desired results.

He explained that the country could not progress without the restoration of peace coupled with political instability. He remarked that economic stability was linked to political stability. The QWP leader shed light on the challenges facing the country.

He said Pakistan was faced with a host of issues ranging from political and economic instability to growing acts of terrorism. Aftab Sherpao expressed concern over the worsening law and order in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa particularly the southern belt, asking the government to take corrective steps or else the situation would spiral out of control.

He said that though the PTI had been ruling KP for the third term, it failed to project the rights of the province. He said the PTI government was least bothered to secure the rights of KP, including the arrears of the net hydel profit. The QWP leader said that KP lacked industries due to which the Pakhtuns were compelled to work as labourers in Punjab and Sindh. He also questioned the payment of the capacity charges to the IPPs and called for revisiting the agreements reached with them.

He also called for the accountability of the ones, who were responsible for anti-people deals.

He flayed the government for attempting to introduce hasty legislation for the establishment of the proposed constitutional court.

He said the government should avoid amending the constitution in haste and try to evolve consensus before doing so. He called for boosting trade with Afghanistan so that the people of the two countries could benefit from business activities.

KKKUK scholars, supervisor honored



F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak (KKKUK) is proud to announce that, Ms. Bakhtawar Nasrullah, Ms. Anum Sajjad, and Mr. Shaban Ahmad, along with their supervisor, Dr. Fasih ur Rehman, Lecturer in English, Department of English, received the Best Papers of the Conference shield at the closing ceremony of the International Conference on Integration of Social Sciences: Challenges and Pathways for Pakistan.

The conference was jointly organized by

Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak and Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST), in collaboration with Ilmiat Lahore. The award recognized the exceptional quality of research presented by the team, marking a significant academic achievement for both the individuals and the university.

The shields were presented during the closing ceremony, attended by distinguished academics, researchers, Commissioner Kohat division and professionals from across the country.

Speaking at the occasion, Dr. Fasih ur Rehman

expressed his gratitude to the organizing committee and highlighted the importance of promoting interdisciplinary research in addressing contemporary challenges faced by Pakistan.

Vice Chancellor of KKKUK, Prof. Dr. Naseer Ud Din and Registrar Dr. Ghani Ur Rehman congratulated the team, commending their dedication and the guidance of Dr. Fasih ur Rehman, who led to this remarkable accomplishment.

He further added "This recognition is a testament to the growing academic excellence of Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak".

The conference theme itself, provided a platform for insightful discussions on the challenges and potential solutions for integrating social sciences into Pakistan's development narrative. The award-winning papers by the KKKUK team contributed significantly to these discussions, earning praise from the panel of judges for their depth and originality.

Orphan students obtained winter kits at GPS Ambela



F.P. Report

BUNER: The teachers with the support of donors from civil society granted winter kits among 176 orphans and poor students of Government.

Primary School Ambela Bala to ensure that no child shall leave education due to lack of facilities and uniform.

The school winter kit was comprised of winter cloth, boot, warm sweaters. The winter kits were distributed in ceremony in which Ham'ad, Na'at and speech competition was held among students. Assistant Sub Divisional Education Officer

(ASDEO) Asad khan was chief guest of ceremony while Headmaster Muhammad Salah, school leader Hussain Ahmad, school staff and children were present.

The chief guest Asad Khan said that education is right of every child while the government is providing free books to secondary level to higher literacy in the country.

He added that teachers of GPS Ambela Bala had set an example for rest of the country to resolve hurdles facing by students in every aspect of life.

ASDEO said that co-curriculum activities are

helpful for development of spirit and tolerance while GPS Ambela Bala had proved it. He added that such teachers can uphold standard of government institution which can develop best perception among public.

Headmaster GPS Ambela Bala Muhammad Salah said that the initiative of providing school uniform to students was started in 2014 with help of donors to ensure that no child can leave education due to economic hurdles. He added that the faculty members are committed to assist students in every walk of life.



ATTOCK: Horsemen moving towards their target during the tent pegging Championship held in Attock. — F.P. photo



Putin critics lead a march in Berlin

Calling for democracy in Russia, an end to war in Ukraine

BERLIN (AP): Prominent Russian opposition figures led a march of at least 1,000 people in central Berlin Sunday, criticizing Russian President Vladimir Putin and his war in Ukraine and calling for democracy in Russia.

Behind a banner that read “No Putin. No War,” the protesters were led by Yulia Navalnaya, the widow of top Putin critic Alexei Navalny, as well as Ilya Yashin and Vladimir Kara-Murza, who were freed from Russian detention in a high-profile prisoner exchange this summer.

Shouting “Russia without Putin” and other chants in Russian, the demonstra-

tors held up signs with a wide array of messages on a red background, including “Putin = War” and “Putin is a murderer” in German.

Some marched with the flags of Russia or Ukraine, as well as a white-blue-white flag used by some Russian opposition groups.

Organizers said the march began near Potsdamer Platz and went through the Brandenburg Gate and Checkpoint Charlie and was expected to end outside the Russian Embassy.

“The march demands the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine, the trial of Vladimir Putin as a war

criminal, and the release of all political prisoners in Russia,” the protesters said in a statement.

Yashin, in a statement before the demonstration, said demonstrators were “using the freedom we have here in Berlin to show the world: A peaceful, free, and civilized Russia exists.”

Navalnaya, Yashin and Kara-Murza have all billed Sunday’s rally as a show of unity at a time when recent rounds of acrimony have roiled the anti-war camp.

Russia’s exiled anti-war opposition has so far largely failed to speak with one voice and present a clear plan of action.

The landmark East-West

prisoner swap in August freed key dissidents and promised to reinvigorate a movement unmoored by the death in prison of Navalny, a charismatic anti-corruption campaigner and arch-Kremlin foe.

Instead, tensions have spiked in recent months, as Navalny’s allies and other prominent dissidents swapped accusations that appeared to dash any hopes of a united anti-Kremlin front.

Many opposition-minded Russians have voiced deep frustration with the infighting, and with what some view as efforts by rivaling groups to discredit and wrest influence from one another.



BERLIN: Yulia Navalnaya, center, with Russian opposition politician Vladimir Kara-Murza, center left, and Ilya Yashin, center right, lead a demonstration under the slogan “Stop Putin! Stop the War! Freedom for Political Prisoners!” in Berlin, Germany, Sunday.

Tropical Storm Sara makes landfall in Belize

SAN PEDRO SULA, Honduras (AP): Tropical Storm Sara on Sunday made landfall in Belize, where forecasters expect heavy rain to cause life-threatening flash flooding and mudslides.

The storm moved inland in Belize after drenching the northern coast of Honduras, where it stalled since Friday, swelling rivers and trapping some people at home.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center’s tropical storm warning as of Sunday included the Caribbean coast of Guatemala; the coast of Belize; and northward into the coast of Mexico’s state of Quintana Roo, from Chetumal to Puerto Costa Maya.

Those areas, along with portions of El Salvador and western Nicaragua, could see up to 5 inches (13 cm), with localized totals reaching 15 inches (38 cm). The conditions “will result in areas of



flash flooding, perhaps significant, along with the potential of mudslides,” according to the Hurricane Center.

“A storm surge could raise water levels by as much as 1 to 3 feet above ground level near and to

the north of where the center of Sara crosses the coast of Belize,” the center said Sunday. “Near the coast, the surge will be accompanied by large and destructive waves.”

Meanwhile, northern Honduras is not in the

clear yet. The center expects Sara to drop up to 3 inches (8 cm) of rain there, but some areas could see totals hit 40 inches (1 meter), with “catastrophic and life-threatening flooding” still possible.

Senegal votes for lawmakers in test for new president

DAKAR (Reuters): Senegal headed to the polls on Sunday to vote in a legislative election that the president hopes will give his party the clear majority it needs to implement an ambitious agenda for reforms.

The heated campaign period has revived concerns about unrest as political rivals clashed, sometimes violently. The West African nation saw some of the worst political violence in recent history ahead of the presidential election in March. Voting in his home town of Ndiaganio, President Bassirou Diomaye Faye urged the electorate to remain calm no matter the outcome.

“I once again call on voters... to show serenity, commit to the peaceful route, and to accept the

popular will that will be expressed through the ballot box.”

Polls opened at 8 a.m. (0800 GMT) and close at 6 p.m., with a timetable for results still to be announced. More than 7 million registered voters will have the chance to vote for candidates for the 165-seat assembly, choosing between 41 registered parties or other entities.

At stake is Faye’s mandate to make good on promises to crack down on corruption and improve livelihoods that helped sweep him to power in April following a landslide election victory.

Top priorities for Senegalese voters are jobs and the economy, as inflation has squeezed livelihoods and the nation’s growing youth population struggles to find employ-

ment. Many are impatient for change.

Faye says his commitment to help has been stymied by the opposition-led assembly, which he dissolved in September to pave the way for Sunday’s vote.

People patiently waited at a polling station in a school in the Dakar suburb of Parcelle Unite, where several said they were voting for Faye’s party Pastef.

“I hope they will address the issues our population faces. I want these elections to go smoothly and for them (Pastef) to get to work. We have faith in their program,” said El Baye Toure in the leafy schoolyard.

Faye’s government is also grappling with slower-than-projected growth and a worsening budget

Over 37,000 vote in New Zealand Khalistan Referendum

AUKLAND (APP): Over 37,000 Sikhs exercised their right to vote in the Khalistan Referendum held here for the creation of an independent Sikh state of Khalistan within India.

The independent Punjab Referendum Commission (PRC) is conducting the referendum. Dr Bakhshish Singh Sandhu, the President of Council of Khalistan and founding member of Sikhs For Justice, announced that the total votes cast were over 37,000.

The referendum was held in Auckland’s Aotea Square on Sunday, where thousands of Sikhs thronged to the venue to cast their votes, prompting the organizers to extend the voting time by one hour.

“The Indian govt had lobbied against the voting and had asked New Zealand to ban Sikhs from taking part in the voting but the local authorities approved the referendum and clarified instead that New Zealand is a country committed to freedom of expression.

Throughout the day, thousands of Sikhs chanted slogans for the creation of Khalistan and accused the Indian govt of being involved in Sikh genocide and transnational oppression against Sikhs.

They have shown how much love there is for Khalistan in the hearts of Sikhs”, Dr Bakhshish Singh Sandhu told thousands of supporters of Khalistan in his speech.

After the Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) announced the event in New Zealand, the matter was raised by S Jaishankar, India’s minister of external affairs, with NZ Foreign Minister Winston Peters during their meeting on the sidelines of the Raisina Down Under conference in Canberra on 6 November.

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, the Counsel General of SFJ, told the audience at the conclusion of the referendum that Sikhs had terrified the Indian state through peaceful voting process and the Hindutva state has resorted to terrorist

means to punish Sikhs for seeking their homeland. “No other option is acceptable to Sikhs other than liberation from India. It’s either freedom or martyrdom.”

The Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) chief announced a bounty of 1 million dollars for anyone who shares intelligence on Union Home Minister Amit Shah’s foreign trips – and held him responsible for authorising the “terror campaign” against Sikhs.

He said that Sikhs have decided to take on the Hindutva violent ideology by all means possible and the campaign to do so has started from Ayodhya, the birthplace of violent Hindutva ideology.

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun said: “Sikh Sangat in their thousands have cast their votes today to liberate Sikhs from the Indian occupation. This is a democratic way of seeking freedom but the terrorist Modi govt is trying to stop Sikhs through bullets and terrorism.

Shaheed Bhai Hardeep

Singh Nijjar was martyred in Canada inside the Gurdwara on orders of the Indian govt.

“The principal is blood for blood and bullets for bullets and the Sikh Panth had shown their actions how it can avenge and execute for its rights – as seen in the assassination of Indira Gandhi – but today we are fighting India’s bullets with the ballots. We are working through non-violence and through our votes but this is a message for Amit Shah and Narendra Modi we have brought political death upon you through the weapon of ballot. We will hold each and every Indian leader accountable and bring them to justice through legal process.

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun announced that the next phase of Khalistan Referendum would be held in the US state of Los Angeles. He ended the speech with the slogans of “Delhi banay ga Khalistan. Na Hindi, Na Hindutva, Na Hindustan, Delhi banay ga Khalistan. Khalistan Zindabad.”

Nigeria and India agree deeper ties in maritime security

ABUJA (Reuters): Nigeria and India on Sunday agreed to deepen collaboration in maritime security, intelligence and counter-terrorism during a state visit to the West African country by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Modi is the first Indian premier to visit Nigeria in 17 years after an invitation by President Bola Tinubu, who is seeking investments

from some of the world’s biggest economies.

Modi arrived in the capital Abuja on Saturday night and met Tinubu at the presidential villa on Sunday where the two leaders also discussed economic development, defence, healthcare and food security, a joint statement said.

With growing threats in the Gulf of Guinea and the

Indian Ocean, the two countries agreed to coordinate action to safeguard maritime trade routes and combat piracy.

Nigeria, Africa’s most populous nation, is seeking to woo more Indian investment and cheaper lines of credit to boost its economy and create jobs.

On the sidelines of the G20 summit last year, Nigeria said it had secured

nearly \$14 billion of pledges from Indian investors, including Jindal Steel and Power which committed to pump \$3 billion into Nigeria’s steel sector.

There are more than 200 Indian companies operating in Nigeria.

After Nigeria, Modi was set to travel to Brazil to attend this year’s G20 summit.

Big voter turnout this year benefited Republicans, contradicting conventional political wisdom

NEW YORK (AP): The 2024 presidential election featured sky-high turnout, approaching the historic levels of the 2020 contest and contradicting long-held conventional political wisdom that Republicans struggle to win races in which many people vote.

According to Associated Press elections data, more than 152 million ballots were cast in this year’s race between Republican Donald Trump, now the president-elect, and Democrat Kamala Harris, the vice president, with hundreds of thousands of more still being tallied in slower-counting states such as California. When those ballots are fully tabulated, the number of votes will come even closer to the 158 million in the 2020 presidential contest, which was the highest turnout election since women were given the right to vote more than a century ago.

“Trump is great for voter turnout in both parties,” said Eitan Hersh, a political scientist at Tufts University.

The former president’s victory in both the Electoral College and popular vote — Trump currently leads Harris by nearly 3 million votes nationwide — also contradicts the belief in politics that Democrats, not Republicans, benefit from high-turnout elections.

Trump himself voiced it in 2020 when he warned that a Democratic bill to expand

mail balloting would lead to “levels of voting that, if you ever agreed to it, you’d never have a Republican elected in this country again.” That warning came as Trump began to sow conspiracy theories about using mail voting during the coronavirus pandemic, which he then used to falsely claim his 2020 loss was due to fraud.

That claim led to a wave of new laws adding regulations and rolling back forms of voting in GOP-controlled states and an expansion of mail voting in Democratic-led ones, as the battle over turnout became a central part of political debate. Such laws usually have a minuscule impact on voting but inspired allegations of voter suppression from Democrats and cheating from Republicans.

“It’s such an embarrassing story for proponents on both sides, because it’s so obviously wrong,” Hersh said.

Though both sides are likely to continue to battle over how elections are run, Trump’s high-turnout victory may take some of the urgency out of that confrontation.

“Now I think, you just won the popular vote, I think it’ll quiet down,” said Patrick Ruffini, a Republican data analyst and pollster who has long argued his party can succeed in a high-turnout election with a diverse electorate.

Experts note that turnout in the seven swing states at the heart of the election was even higher than in the rest of the country.

“This was a campaign in seven states much more so than previous elections have felt like,” Ruffini said.

While the rest of the country shifted significantly from 2020, when Democrat Joe Biden won the popular vote by 7 million, or 4.5 percentage points, the outcome in the swing states was closer. The turnout story also was different. Turnout dropped from 2020 in noncompetitive states such as Illinois, which recorded more than 500,000 fewer votes than in the last presidential election, and Ohio, which reported more than 300,000 less.

Meanwhile, the number of votes cast topped those in 2020 in the battleground states of Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, all of which Trump won. Arizona’s turnout was nearly even with four years ago, as the state continued to count ballots.

Harris even met or topped Biden’s vote totals in Georgia, Nevada, North Carolina and Wisconsin, and turnout has far eclipsed that of the 2016 presidential election, when 135.6 million voters cast ballots in a race won by Trump over Democrat Hillary Clinton. The problem for Democrats is that Trump

did better in the battlegrounds than four years ago.

“The Harris campaign did a pretty good job getting voters out who wouldn’t have come out,” said Tom Bonier, a Democratic data analyst. “She did get her voters out. Trump got more.”

Those Trump turnout victories included first-time voter Jasmine Perez, 26, who voted for Trump at the Las Vegas Raiders stadium.

“I’m a Christian and he really aligns with a lot of my values as a Christian in America, and I like that he openly promotes Christianity in America,” Perez said.

Voting alongside her was Diego Zubek, 27, who voted for Trump in 2016 but didn’t vote in 2020 because he figured Trump would win easily. He voted for Trump this year.

“I wasn’t going to let that happen again,” Zubek said.

A key part of the GOP strategy was reaching out to voters such as Perez and Zubek, encouraging early and mail voting after Republicans had largely abandoned them in the past two elections due to Trump’s lies about vote fraud. Conservatives mounted extensive voter registration and get-out-the-vote operations targeting infrequent voters, a demographic that many operatives have long believed would not vote for the GOP.



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Migration patterns and woes in Europe

NEARLY 30 per cent of Portugal's working population between the ages of 15 to 39 is working in other countries. Most of them were migrating to Britain before Brexit. Now they go to the Netherlands for better wages.

It is the same pattern in other countries. People are moving from Hungary to Austria, and from Italy to London. Everywhere it is the same story. Migrants are looking for better wages and better standards of living. Portugal is trying to stem the tide of migration by offering tax exemption, 100 per cent for five years. And some of the potential Portuguese migrants are reconsidering their option.

But the Italian government is reconsidering its tax exemption measures because it finds it to be a costly measure. And the migrants are irked by the conditions set for the migrants who return. They are supposed to have children. One of them who was working in London and had returned to Italy is now thinking of moving back to London.

The migration paradigm is the same. People move from the poorer regions to the richer, from lower wage countries to countries where the wages are higher and attractive, and from countries where the living standards are low because of the poor economy to countries with thriving economies where the living standards are better.

Portugal, Hungary and Italy might want to discourage people from leaving the countries by offering tax incentives as in the case of Portugal and Italy. But, can tax incentives help if the economies of Portugal and Italy do not improve? That is indeed the bigger question. What is a matter of concern for countries like Portugal, and for Europe in general, is the ageing population and decline in birthrates. It poses a bigger challenge for the future.

Behind the migration stories are the dire economic figures. In Portugal, a single person without children earned 16,943 euros a year after tax while the earning in the Netherlands for the same person would be 45,429 euros in 2023. That is a wage gap difficult to close on the face of it. But what is attracting the potential Portuguese migrants is the offer of cheap housing as well.

Pedro Monteiro, studying space engineering and planning to go abroad, says, "The country needs and us and we want to stay but we need to see signs from the government that they are implementing policies that will help." He points out that housing has become costly because the government is offering incentives to rich foreigners to settle in Portugal and that has shot up home prices.

The migration issue is quite acute in Portugal, though it is an issue that is haunting many countries in Europe. It is a vicious circle in some ways. Portugal wants to hold back the young and skilled people. But they go away in search of higher wages. It is interesting to note that 50 per cent of the 50,000 people who graduate from universities go abroad, costing Portugal billions of euros in lost in income tax revenue and social security contributions.

Pedro Ginjeira do Nascimento, executive director of Business Roundtable Portugal, says, "This is not a country for young people. Portugal is experiencing a true democratic hell because the country is unable to create conditions to retain and attract young talent." The challenge faced by Portugal is not that of Portugal alone. It is the story of many European countries in the south and east.

And inside the prosperous and west and north of Europe the conditions of economic growth may not last. Germany is already facing problems. France is simmering on the surface.

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Who needs gatekeepers if Netanyahu and Ben-Gvir are in charge?

Yossi Mekelberg

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu does not seem to think that his country fighting a war on seven fronts is enough. Therefore, he has opened another one. Or, more accurately, he has reopened a battle on the domestic front with greater intensity.

More specifically, he is targeting the gatekeepers of Israel's democratic system. Without them to worry about, he believes he can remain in power forever, while avoiding a reckoning in his corruption trial.

Long before the Oct. 7 attacks by Hamas, and the subsequent war, Netanyahu's sole aim was to get himself off the hook from the fraud, bribery, and breach of trust charges that have been under deliberation by a court in Jerusalem for a staggering four-and-a-half years.

The first trial of an Israeli prime minister while in office should have been a triumph for the rule of law, an illustration of the equality of all people in the eyes of the law and of good governance. Instead, it has become a battle for the very soul of Israeli democracy, conducted cynically by Netanyahu through exploitation of the fragility of the democratic system and the ever-widening cracks within it.

Netanyahu and his political minions have been purging the democratic system of its gatekeepers, without whom the path to authoritarianism is frighteningly short.

When the first allegations of corruption against Netanyahu emerged in 2017, over expensive gifts from wealthy businessmen with economic interests in the country, I naively believed his days in politics were surely numbered. After all, even if the case was found not to be worthy of criminal prosecution, it still demonstrated a gross lack of judgment, and detachment from the daily hardships that many of those who voted for him endure in their daily lives.

Instead, Netanyahu, his family, and his close political allies declared war on anyone who suggested he might be guilty of any wrongdoing, be it the public prosecutor, the media, political rivals or civil society. His critics became the targets of vicious attacks, including allegations that they were serving foreign interests; in other words, they were guilty of treason.

When Netanyahu was offered a plea bargain deal by Avichai Mandelblit, the attorney general at the time, he rejected it almost instantly. To be honest, the offer also felt wrong to me; it would have stuck in the collective Israeli memory that, unlike us mere mortals, the high and mighty receive preferential treatment when they break the law, and it would have allowed him to leave politics with hardly any blemish on his character.

This would probably have seen him become a darling of the political right, mainly in the US but also in Europe, able to charge obscene fees for lecture appearances worldwide while galvanizing those who believed the "deep state" was out to get him.

On reflection, despite my opposition at the time to the very idea of a plea bargain for the most powerful politician in the country, I now believe that the lives of so many Israelis, Palestinians and others could have been spared had he not still been in power, and Israeli society would not have become so polarized.

However, the plea bargain train left the station a long time ago. Instead, there has been an all-out attack on the very foundations of Israeli democracy. It began immediately after the first allegations against Netanyahu came to light and has intensified in stark correlation with the worsening state of his political and legal entanglements.

To this end, in 2022 he was prepared to form a coalition government with

the most extreme, far-right, racist, and antidemocratic elements in Israeli society, and has bent over backward to appease them. With their support, he has embarked on an assault on the judiciary and its independence, and is subjecting the civil service to his personal whims and interests.

Netanyahu is now behaving like the head of a mafia family by making it clear that the only criterion for working with him is to demonstrate total loyalty and be prepared to support his toxic machinery of smears, slurs, and incitements against all those still fighting to save Israel's democracy, the rule of law, and the principle of decency in public life.

No one is more directly in the firing line than Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara, who has been under constant attack to the extent that she requires round-the-clock security to protect her. It was reported that during a recent Cabinet meeting, Netanyahu accused her of being a "contrarian" who was prepared to allow the previous Bennett-Lapid government to act illegally but obstructs his government with legal challenges.

No one plays the victim, domestically and internationally, better than Netanyahu. Of course, he is actually the bully.

In an unprecedented move against the problem that Baharav-Miara presents him with, he has ordered Justice Minister Yariv Levin "to solve it." This is the type of behavior one might expect from the head of an organized crime family, not the leader of a free country.

Baharav-Miara infuriates Netanyahu's government because she insists, for example, on following the orders of the High Court of Justice to ensure that ultra-Orthodox youths are drafted into military service like everyone else, or that appointments to key civil service positions are

transparent and meet legal guidelines.

It remains to be seen what kind of "solution" Levin, who is the driving force behind the judicial coup, will come up with; we can only hope no bags of cement will be involved.

But it is not only Baharav-Miara who has been targeted by the coalition. Defense Minister Yoav Gallant was sacked this month. He advocated for a ceasefire deal with Hamas, the drafting of ultra-Orthodox youths into military service and, sin of all sins, a formal inquiry into the disastrous security failures of Oct. 7 that most likely would have found Netanyahu to be the principal culprit and would have led to calls for his resignation.

For similar reasons, Netanyahu would also like to see the back of the Israeli army's chief of staff, Hertzvi Halevi, and the head of security agency Shin Beit, Ronen Bar, thereby allowing him to replace them with loyalists and lay the entire blame for Oct. 7 at the door of the security services while portraying himself as the innocent victim of their failures.

Both Halevi and Bar, unlike Netanyahu, accepted responsibility for their parts in the disaster almost from day one. But it was the prime minister who appointed them, and that alone should have been enough for him to shoulder the responsibility for their failures, let alone the fact that they were implementing his policies, which ended in the worst massacre of Jews in a single day since 1945.

Make no mistake, the most dangerous of all the fronts in this war for Israel is the attacks by Netanyahu and his current coalition partners on the country's democratic system and the institutions that are keeping the country going despite a failing government.

Without them, Israel would change beyond recognition forever and be much the worse for it.

Trump's regional changes

Abdulrahman Al-Rashed

One of the gravest mistakes that people make when dealing with US President-elect Donald Trump is underestimating his capabilities. The fact that he doesn't speak the language of academia, doesn't use the jargon of analysts, and isn't known for the politeness or maneuvering of seasoned politicians doesn't mean he has any less understanding or awareness of the issues at hand. His opponents have mocked him extensively, whether domestically, during his electoral campaign and partisan skirmishes, or internationally, as foreign commentators sought to tarnish his reputation.

Trump is not like Bill Clinton, a Yale graduate, nor like Joe Biden, with 50 years of experience navigating Congress and the world of politics. However, what he achieved when dealing with unfolding issues in the four years he governed the US was far more successful, by comparison.

changes to immigration, the economy, and education, which will likely lead to many controversies during his upcoming four-year term.

What about the Middle East?

Let's recall what he did at the beginning of his term in 2017. He decided to bypass protocol. Traditionally, Britain is the first overseas call for a new American president. Trump chose Riyadh. At the time, Saudi Arabia faced fierce criticism from US politicians, and Trump's predecessor, President Barack Obama, had relegated the relationship with the Kingdom to the past of US diplomacy. Trump, despite having entered the elections amid accusations of racism against Arabs and Muslims, made a bold move which surprised everyone by choosing Saudi Arabia as his first stop.

That visit sent a message to adversarial politicians in Washington and to coun-

Trump demonstrated his leadership capabilities, most notably with his shock victory in his first presidential campaign, which he repeated, even more surprisingly, this month. Unlike most previous American presidents, who relied on the support of their parties and PR campaign planners, Trump's victories have been unique, in that they can largely be attributed to him personally — a testament to his popularity.

When he threatened to cancel or renegotiate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran, he was met with refusal and told it was an international agreement from which he could not withdraw. He ripped it up entirely, altering the course of history in the region and saving it from the dangers of that flawed agreement.

Trump may not be as intellectual as Henry Kissinger or as humble as Jimmy Carter, but coming from a background in business, investment, and real estate plays to his advantage in a capitalist country like the US, which thrives on hard work, competition, and success. Trump demonstrated his leadership capabilities, most notably with his shock victory in his first presidential campaign, which he repeated, even more surprisingly, this month.

Unlike most previous American presidents, who relied on the support of their parties and PR campaign planners, Trump's victories have been unique, in that they can largely be attributed to him personally — a testament to his popularity. And this enables him to make changes and decisions many others would not dare to.

Trump is geared to face numerous domestic battles, as he promised his supporters that he would make

tries in the region. Over the next four years, the US-Saudi relationship progressed as Trump intended. When Biden succeeded him, he eventually followed Trump's path.

When the president-elect claims he can resolve serious crises like Ukraine, and the wars in Gaza and Lebanon, we should believe it. With a majority in both houses, he has already begun reaching out before he officially assumes office on Jan. 20.

The final point worth examining is not how Trump views the world, but how the world views Trump. Internationally, he is seen as a strong personality, quick to act, and committed to his words. This image forces America's adversaries to think twice before getting entangled with him in conflicts. Most would prefer to negotiate deals with him, given that he possesses both the will and the tools to push such deals through.

I believe Trump intends to reshape the Middle East his way. We will see this through agreements and sanctions, not wars. Indeed, as he repeatedly emphasizes, he governed for four years without waging a single war.

He was firm in enforcing sanctions. The region must prepare for, and adapt to, the changes his second term will bring.

Can Baku maintain the momentum on climate change action?

Ranvir S. Nayar

The 29th UN Climate Change Conference, COP29, began in Baku, capital of Azerbaijan, on Monday. Over the course of two weeks, representatives of more than 190 nations have been tasked with finding ways to bring under control global carbon emissions, which have been rising for decades.

The negotiators are expected to secure concrete commitments and pledges of action from the leading economies of the world on how they intend to cut emissions and, more specifically, the time frame for doing so.

But this is not all they are expected to do. Another equally or even more challenging task is to ensure rich countries finally meet their commitments on financing to help the developing world deal with climate change through mitigation, adaptation, and upgrading infrastructure to cut carbon emissions.

For more than two decades, wealthier nations have repeatedly reneged on agreements to provide the hundreds of billions of dol-

lars needed each year to help developing nations, in which more than 75 percent of the global population live, address the effects of climate change, which are already causing havoc and widespread destruction, again mainly in the developing world.

In any global negotiations, international geopolitics are a key factor; countries that are not viciously divided over numerous issues can, indeed, find ways to reach agreement. However, the current global situation is terrible; the world has rarely been so divided and countries rarely so distrustful of each other as they are now.

This is not only a matter of prolonged conflicts such as those between Russia and Ukraine or Israel and Palestine, but also China's disagreements with the US and the EU, and friction between Africa and European nations, notably France. The list goes on. Even at the peak of the Cold War, the world did not appear so divided.

The geopolitical situation seems unlikely to

evolve in a positive way in the near future, although there are some who are hoping against hope that the Trump 2.0 White House might actually help to reduce tensions globally.

It is against this backdrop, then, that COP29 began in Baku on Nov. 11 and will continue until Nov. 22. One vital question for negotiators is whether they can maintain what little momentum was obtained, against all odds, during COP28 in Dubai last year.

The first major breakthrough a year ago was an agreement for the first-ever global stocktake, basically an exercise to determine exactly what is happening with carbon emissions at the global and national levels, and to benchmark the figures against commitments made during COP21 in Paris in 2015.

This review of the situation is essential to ensure the nations that signed up to the Paris Agreement are actually keeping their promises, to ensure accountability, and so that

corrective action can be taken in terms of adjusting the pace and form of efforts to meet the goals of the agreement.

The global stocktake also includes a review of the financial assistance provided by developed countries to their developing counterparts.

Another significant outcome of the conference in Dubai was a commitment by nations, for the first time in 30 years of UN negotiations, to transition away from fossil fuels in a "just, orderly, and equitable manner."

The fact that this agreement on a commitment to ditch oil, gas, and coal was reached in a country, and region, that depends on fossil fuels for more than 70 percent of its gross domestic product was not lost on anyone.

Though this transition agreement remains only a promise on paper for now like almost every other major decision so far in climate change negotiations, COP28 President Sultan

Al-Jaber nonetheless deserves plaudits for pulling it off during his presidency. Compare this to COP24 in Katowice in 2018, when host nation Poland refused to push a proposal to phase out coal because the host city was the site of a historic coal mine and the country depends on coal to meet a small fraction of its energy needs.

Five years later, the momentum generated under the presidency of Al-Jaber indicated that even in difficult situations, the right kind of guidance and leadership can help negotiators to find a way to navigate even the most complicated issues.

The man who took up the mantle from Al-Jaber as president of COP29 is Mukhtar Bahadur Babayev, an Azerbaijani minister, whose country, like the UAE, depends to a very large extent on oil and gas exports.

Babayev can perhaps take inspiration from what Al-Jaber managed to achieve in Dubai and try to keep the ball rolling in

Baku. Despite the many differences between the backdrops to the two conferences, he can maybe take heart from the similarities that also abound.

After all, both the UAE and Azerbaijan are relatively small, wealthy countries, with economies that depend to a significant degree on fossil fuels, and both Baku and Dubai are among the most modern cities in the world, attracting millions of tourists each year.

Just as Al-Jaber managed to secure an agreement on the transition away from fossil fuels, Babayev can perhaps secure an agreement for a mechanism to ensure that countries, in particular the rich ones, are actually held accountable and face a real threat of punitive action if they continue to fail to keep their promises and meet their commitments.

This is what the world needs to see after watching the leaders of wealthy nations make false promises, year after year for more than two decades.

Starmer tries to stay focused on his domestic agenda

Andrew Hammond

When the Conservatives won the 2019 UK general election with their largest majority since the victories of Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s, party leader Boris Johnson had high hopes of remaining in power for another decade.

Within a few weeks, however, the political landscape was upended by the COVID-19 pandemic, and at the general election in July this year, the Conservatives were defeated by Labour in a landslide.

It is now more than a month since UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer marked his first 100 days in office, and he will be aware that Johnson's experience illustrates the truth of the famous political maxim from former Conservative Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, who said it is often "events, dear boy, events" that decide the fate of governments.

Though Macmillan is widely credited as the originator of this insight, others voiced it before him. After the 1918 general election, for example, future prime minister Winston Churchill asserted that the main concern for the then dominant coalition government was the "opposition of events." That government enjoyed a 283-seat majority; even with the historic nature of Labour's overwhelming win on July 4, Starmer's majority is more than 100 seats less than this.

Even during a relatively

short time in power, Starmer's government has already faced several significant, unexpected developments. The standout example was perhaps the riots across several UK urban areas in August following the murder of three young girls in Southport, England.

However, the biggest obstacles to the smooth running of the Labour government might prove to be international in nature. As the experience of the pandemic underlined, the global challenges the new government might face could be largely, if not entirely, unexpected.

Perhaps the biggest defined uncertainty is the dawn of a second Donald Trump US presidency. The full scale of the challenges Trump could create for bilateral relations are huge. These include issues related to economic factors such as sanctions, environmental and climate change matters, and defense and military challenges in, for example, Ukraine and the Middle East.

Disagreements between the countries, traditionally close allies, were legion when Trump was president from 2017 to 2021, and might be worse during the next four years.

The best that Starmer can probably hope for when Trump takes office in January is to largely set aside their political differences and try to forge some sort of constructive part-

nership, even if it is much more transactional in nature than he would prefer.

It could be best built on emphasizing the traditional ties between the two nations, which are founded on demographics, religion, culture, law, politics, and economics. This could be supplemented by highlighting the longstanding security cooperation that has traditionally been at the core of the bilateral relationship, given the close partnership between the nations in areas such as intelligence and defense.

The UK, and indeed other key states in western Europe, could send a signal to Trump that the region is serious about this agenda in particular. In 2023, Britain was the biggest military spender in Europe in absolute terms. A strategic defense review ordered by Starmer's government is expected to make the case for increasing defense spending, sooner rather than later, to meet Britain's commitment of 2.5 percent of gross domestic product (it is currently estimated to be about 2.3 percent).

As he seeks a potential upside to his government's relationship with Washington, however, Starmer would be wise not to overestimate the UK's ability to shape US power under Trump. He will not be unaware that Trump might care little about core British interests unless they align with his "America

First" vision, despite his connection to Scotland as the birthplace of his mother.

As we move into what might, once again, be a much more volatile period for transatlantic ties, now is therefore the time for the UK to plan ahead for some very difficult decisions. That there will be bilateral tensions under Trump is inevitable, the only question is when.

Given this volatile international backdrop, Starmer probably spent more time on foreign policy during his first few months in office than any other prime minister in living memory. This has continued into November with, for example, his trips to Azerbaijan for COP29, followed by one to Brazil for the G20 summit.

Despite this, Starmer knows he must also try to push ahead as quickly as possible with his domestic agenda so that it is not derailed. He will be acutely aware that although Democratic President Joe Biden achieved a wide range of significant accomplishments in the past four years, his administration's record has been trashed by Trump, and Kamala Harris lost the presidential election by a clear margin.

Starmer's goal of redefining the UK's polity and economy into the 2030s reveals a huge ambition that will require more than a single term in office. He has repeatedly warned

the British public that his government inherited a "societal black hole" from the Conservatives and "things are worse than we ever imagined."

The prime minister has promised to "fix the foundations of this country" but warned that "change will not happen overnight. When there is rot deep in the heart of a structure, you can't just cover it up. You can't tinker with it or rely on quick fixes. You have to overhaul the entire thing. Tackle it at the root. Even if it's harder work and takes more time."

One example of this is the government's ambition to transform the UK into a "clean energy superpower." Some down payments on this have already been made, including the creation of Great British Energy, a new state-owned generator of green electricity, and the reversal of a Conservative ban on new onshore wind farms. However, this will be a long-term, generational project.

Labour therefore has a big agenda it hopes to deliver in government, which will require intense focus amid the growing international flux. While the party enjoys a huge majority in the House of Commons, whether or not it succeeds with its agenda might ultimately depend, to a critical degree, on events and factors that are not fully within its control, including those created by Trump's second presidency.

How Libya turned gridlock and polarization into a way of life

Hafed Al-Ghwel

alarming example of how systemic crises can become the bedrock of political survival. Another striking example was an Aug. 5 decision to shut down Libya's largest operational oil field by Saddam Haftar in a calculated move to "punish" Europe following his detention in Naples. This was no isolated incident but part of a larger trend where state resources have been transformed into currency for personal and political gain.

Moreover, Libya's political economy, fragmented by foreign influences and internal rivalries, is unsuitable even for its leaders, and incapable of constraining them, perennially unable — by design — to meet the needs of its citizens. The closure of oil fields, military flare-ups, institutional paralysis, and political standoffs are symptoms of a system engineered to permanently malfunction, reinforcing the power of a kleptocratic

penalties on the Libyan factions for their manipulative use of these resources, allowing the ruling elite to divert funds at will, reinforce their power bases and grease palms, all while the general population suffers from chronic instability.

However, foreign governments remain wary of their own economic and strategic interests — often avoiding taking decisive action that would disrupt their transactions with Libya, ultimately bolstering a kleptocratic cabal that is all too thrilled when potential intervening actors look the other way. A collective reluctance to impose asset freezes or more stringent financial controls out of fear of losing access to Libya's oil and markets only deepens an existing divide.

Meanwhile, instead of driving progressive change, the UN's involvement has — at times — magnified the dysfunction. For instance, the UN-backed preliminary deal to appoint a new central bank gover-

Access to Libya's vast oil revenues remains the foremost prize in this standoff, worsened by the international community's failure to enforce stringent economic measures or foster comprehensive political dialogue. The Central Bank of Libya, the repository of tens of billions of dollars in oil revenue, has also become a focal point in this same struggle. Yet, international financial institutions still failed to impose firm penalties on the Libyan factions for their manipulative use of these resources, allowing the ruling elite to divert funds at will, reinforce their power bases and grease palms, all while the general population suffers from chronic instability.

elie.

However, when the international community attempts to "restart" Libya's broken system, it always ends in temporary fixes that never target nor address the underlying issues crippling it. This cyclical process of crisis and reset only perpetuates dysfunction. Clearly, Libya's political deadlock is not just a consequence of endless internal power struggles; it is fueled by the international community's short-sighted strategies and reluctance to engage deeply.

By repeatedly endorsing quick fixes and temporary measures, global actors have played into the hands of Libya's ruling elite, who exploit these interventions to maintain their grip on power. This "input-output" dysfunction ensures that while interim solutions are continuously proposed, the deeper structural reforms necessary for long-term stability remain unaddressed.

Access to Libya's vast oil revenues remains the foremost prize in this standoff, worsened by the international community's failure to enforce stringent economic measures or foster comprehensive political dialogue. The Central Bank of Libya, the repository of tens of billions of dollars in oil revenue, has also become a focal point in this same struggle. Yet, international financial institutions still failed to impose firm

nor demonstrates how international mediation often becomes a pawn in the local power game. Although the agreement aimed at resolving fiscal disputes, the competing factions manipulated the process to gain a stronger foothold, thus perpetuating the status quo. This illustrates how international actors, despite their well-meaning attempts, have facilitated a system where state capture and political inertia thrive.

Libya's version of "dysfunctionism" goes beyond mere inefficiency — it is a self-propagating governance model that systematically blocks any meaningful reform. As state institutions crumble and moribund laws are manipulated, armed militias and a disengaged international community keep public outrage at bay. This absence of accountability solidifies the ruling elite's hold over the country which is characterized by cyclical crises without resolution.

It is imperative to recognize that until this system is uprooted, Libya will remain trapped in a cycle of collapse and pseudo-reconstruction, staving off democratic transition and entrenching corrupt rule. This country, on the brink of a democratic miracle a decade ago, has seen that vision swallowed by "dysfunctionism" — a grim testament to the intractability of entrenched power.

COP29 and power of youth: Building healthier, educated generations for climate resilience

Majed Al-Qatari

COP29 is a vital opportunity for positive and productive youth participation in climate change efforts. Previous conferences have not emphasized youth involvement to the extent needed, and therefore more concrete action is crucial.

Climate change is a unique phenomenon that has a considerable impact on youth. Youth participation during COP29 is critical in enhancing governmental action to tackle climate change.

As the UNFCCC has pointed out, half of the world's population is aged under 30, hence youth exclusion from climate policy would be a significant deterrent to global climate management.

Such demography causes ever-increasing societal pressures, necessitating a shift in approaching youth engagement across climate-resilience mechanisms.

The empirical evidence supporting the urgency of youth-focused climate action is compelling. A study by UNICEF found that 1 billion children are at extremely high risk of the impacts of climate change.

Another factor increasing this vulnerability is environmental health hazards. According to World Health Organization statistics, air pollution affects 93 percent of children aged under 15.

These statistics emphasize a problem affecting youth populations' access to public healthcare and climate resilience. COP29 should focus on rebuilding the concept of health resilience and do this with the greatest priority.

Climate change adversely affects the young generation in many ways. The negative impacts of climate change on the health of the youth are alarming. The WHO has estimated that deaths due to climate

education situation presents significant challenges. UNESCO's assessment reveals that only 53 percent of countries incorporate climate change into their curriculum frameworks.

A survey by Plan

ing generations with sufficient climate change literacy to support mitigation policies.

Nevertheless, youth groups such as Fridays for Future indicate that climate activism may be effectively

The existing climate education situation presents significant challenges. UNESCO's assessment reveals that only 53 percent of countries incorporate climate change into their curriculum frameworks. A survey by Plan International highlighted this deficit in education, showing that 82 percent of respondents aged 15 to 24 were not well informed about climate change policies in their countries. This deficit in education is the critical barrier to establishing generations with sufficient climate change literacy to support mitigation policies. Nevertheless, youth groups such as Fridays for Future indicate that climate activism may be effectively initiated by youth, since millions of people have joined. Such divergence between the activist and policy actor roles implies that there is more unexplored capacity of youth in climate governance. The implementation of COP29 represents a critical juncture for integrating youth perspectives into global climate policy. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, there are indications that youth engagement will aid in developing rational climate resilience solutions.

change will increase by 250,000 every year.

The above mortality rates call for COP29 to consider health protection measures for vulnerable young persons in focused ways.

The existing climate

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The implementation of

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This is essential because as the World Economic Forum pointed out, increased youth participation is an important strategy for addressing climate change.

As we approach COP29, the imperative for substantive youth inclusion in climate policy becomes increasingly evident.

COP29 must become a catalyst for youth-engaged climate policy based on the intersection of health risks, education inequity and policy disenfranchisement of the young. The failure to exploit this opportunity will not only miss climate change mitigation potential, but would also, arguably, lead to the absence of an entire generation from the climate change decision-making process.

COP29 can shift how we approach youth involvement in climate action. The evidence is overwhelming: From the UNICEF risk assessment to the WHO health-impact projections, there are clear signs that young people must be at the heart of climate action.

Ultimately, the successes of COP29 will be determined by policy results and by the extent to which youth can take part as agents of change in developing climate-resilient societies.

Zambia's Kariba Dam crisis is one of inequality

Harry Verhoeven

As discussions at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku over how to finance climate action remain gridlocked, Southern Africans are learning that some "renewable energy" might not be renewable after all in an age of climate age.

This year, Zambia and Zimbabwe experienced a major drought that devastated both countries. It destroyed harvests and sent the Zambezi River's water flows to an historic low.

For decades, the Kariba Dam on the River had provided the bulk of electricity consumed in Zambia and Zimbabwe. However, in September, Zambian officials signalled that, owing to desperately low water levels, only one out of six turbines on its side of the lake could continue to operate.

Entire cities have been deprived of electricity, sometimes for days on end.

Sporadic access to power has become the norm since, in 2022, record low rainfall led to a glaring imbalance between the water intake level at Lake Kariba — the world's biggest dam reservoir — and water consumption by Zimbabweans and Zambians. This has hit hard urban households, 75 percent of which normally have access to electricity.

Rural areas, too, are suffering from the dramatic reduction in precipitation. Zambia is experiencing its driest agricultural season in more than four decades. The worst-affected provinces usually produce half of the annual maize output and are home to more than three-quarters of Zambia's livestock population, which is reeling from scorched pastures and water scarcity.

Crop failure and livestock losses are fuelling food inflation. UNICEF has reported that more than 50,000 Zambian children under the age of five are at

risk of falling into severe wasting, the deadliest form of malnutrition. Zambia has also been battling a cholera outbreak with more than 20,000 reported cases, as access to water has become increasingly scarce. This is a water, energy and food emergency all at once.

While many are blaming climate change for these calamities, its effect on weather has only exacerbated an already existing crisis. This grave situation is the consequence of two interrelated policy choices that are presenting massive challenges not just in Zambia, but across much of Africa.

First is the prioritisation of urban areas over rural ones in development. Zambia's Gini coefficient — a measure of income inequality — is among the world's highest. While workers in cities are much more likely to earn regular wages, the poorest layers of the population depend on

agricultural self-employment and the vagaries of the climate.

The massive gap between rich and poor is not accidental; it is by design. For instance, tax reforms in recent decades have benefitted wealthy urban elites and large rural landowners, with subsistence farmers and agricultural labourers left behind.

The result is that children in Zambia's towns enjoy much more reliable access to an adequate diet, clean water, electricity and toilets than their rural peers. If 15,000 Zambian children die annually in rural districts due to a preventable disease such as diarrhoea and Zambia has for decades had one of the highest rates of malnutrition and stunting in Africa, a pro-urban bias in policies and budgets is a major culprit.

That bias is also evident in coverage of the current

crisis, which concentrates on urban dwellers being deprived of electricity because of the cuts at Kariba rather than the nine-tenths of Zambia's rural population that have never had any access to electricity.

Second is the enduring preference of many African governments for hydropower. Across much of the continent, the penchant for hydroelectric plants is a colonial legacy eagerly continued after independence; Zambia and its Kariba Dam are cases in point.

Dams can provide flood control, enable year-round irrigation and hydroelectric power and, in the age of global warming, their reservoirs can manage extreme weather events while their energy is renewable and clean — or so their proponents purport.

Over the last two decades, billions of dollars have been spent on upgrad-

ing or building dams in Ghana, Liberia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and elsewhere. Despite the crisis at Kariba, where the reservoir has not been at full capacity since 2011, and at the smaller Kafue Gorge, Lower Kafue Gorge, and Itezhi-Tezhi Power Company hydropower plants, Zambia, too, wants to further boost its capacity through the \$5bn Batoka Gorge Hydro project. This appears foolhardy when the global trend is that climate change is undercutting hydropower generation and irrigation ability.

Moreover, it is important to emphasise that the distributional effects of dams are not neutral.

They are constructed in rural areas, but their main beneficiaries usually reside elsewhere. While dams provide, or provided, relatively reliable and affordable electricity to urban constituencies and mining interests that matter to

governments, the people and ecosystems in the vicinity of the project often suffer.

Kariba was built between 1955 and 1959 by British colonial powers without an environmental impact assessment and caused the displacement of tens of thousands of Tonga Goba people who have suffered a long history of broken promises pertaining to compensation and resettlement.

They, like the 90 percent of other rural Zambians who lack access to electricity, have historically not enjoyed the spoils of the dam while successive Zambian governments have celebrated Kariba as a symbol of Zambian nationhood and Southern African brotherhood.

Climatic changes, like big dams, do not affect everyone equally. The simultaneous crises in water, energy and food systems underline that in

Zambia, and many other African countries, fundamental decisions must be urgently made.

Rural dwellers should not be asked to bear the brunt of debt repayment and related austerity any more. They cannot be compelled to adapt to climatological havoc and the broader economic malaise on their own.

Zambia and other African countries need to ensure that rural areas and their needs in terms of reliable and affordable access to water, energy and food are prioritised. The necessary political will and budgets for that must be made available.

The electricity cuts and crop failures engendered by the latest drought, once again, point to the injustices and risks associated with urban bias and big dams. Global warming will only enhance these pathologies — unless resolutely different paths are taken.



ADB launches major initiative to build resilience to melting glaciers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Sunday launched a new regional program, Glaciers to Farms, that will promote sustainable water use and food security in Central Asia, the South Caucasus, and Pakistan amid the catastrophic impacts of accelerated glacial melt due to climate change.

Supported by the Green Climate Fund's (GCF) Project Preparation Facility, ADB will conduct risk assessments of glacial melt in Azerbaijan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan—forming the scientific and technical basis for the Glacier to Farms program, according to ADB press release received here.

With temperatures in the region projected to rise by up to 6 degrees Celsius by 2100, the loss of glacial mass threatens the fragile balance of ecosystems, jeopardizing water supply for agriculture and hydropower, and risking the livelihoods of more than 380 million people.

COP29 President and Azerbaijan Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources Mukhtar Babayev; Kazakhstan Minister of

Ecology and Natural Resources Yerlan Nyssanbayev; Kyrgyz Republic Minister of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision Melder Mashiev; Tajikistan Committee on Environmental Protection Chairman Bahodur Sher-alizoda; and Uzbekistan Minister of Ecology, Environmental Protection, and Climate Change Aziz Abdulkhakimov signed a declaration of support for preserving glaciers with ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa and GCF Chief Investment Officer Henry Gonzalez.

"As melting glaciers change waterflows, disrupt lives, and destroy ecosystems, we must act now," said Asakawa.

"As Asia and the Pacific's climate bank, we are pleased to be joined by key partners to launch this program to drive international collaboration and deliver results where they matter most—on the ground, in communities at risk," he added.

Glaciers to Farms envisages mobilizing up to \$3.5 billion from ADB, GCF, governments, development partners, and the private sector, subject to the participating institutions' board approvals.

In addition to water and agriculture investments, the program will support vulnerable communities threatened by glacial melt, particularly in fragile mountain regions.

"The GCF recognizes the regional Glaciers to Farms program as a vital initiative to enhance climate resilience and promote sustainable development," said Gonzalez.

"Recognizing the profound vulnerability of mountain communities and ecosystems, this program is instrumental in safeguarding our precious water resources and empowering those most at risk. This program embodies the essential collaboration and innovative strategies needed to address the severe challenges posed by climate change. Together, we can build a resilient and sustainable future for all—especially for the vulnerable populations who depend on our mountain landscapes," Gonzalez added.

Minister of Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb and Georgia Minister for Economy and Sustainable Development Genadi Arveladze also attended the COP29 side event, the press release added.

Glaciers are essential

natural service providers, it said adding they store freshwater that melts gradually, feeding rivers that support demand for agriculture, hydropower, and drinking water across national borders.

In upstream areas, shrinking glaciers diminish water flow, impacting local agriculture and increasing water shortages. Downstream, increased glacial runoff can cause floods. As glaciers continue to shrink, both upstream and downstream communities face greater water and food insecurity, and more risk to critical infrastructure.

Glaciers to Farms is one of several ADB initiatives to help Asia adapt to melting glaciers.

In the Hindu Kush Himalaya, ADB is establishing early warning systems and climate-resilient infrastructure. In monsoonal South and Southeast Asia, the bank is enhancing resilience throughout entire river basins.

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2025 the International Year of Glacier Preservation, while Tajikistan will host the International Conference on Glaciers' Preservation in Dushanbe next year.



ISLAMABAD: Vendor displaying fish to attract customers at Weekly Bazaar.

SNGPL: 97 connections disconnected

F.P. Report

LAHORE: SNGPL intensified its ongoing crackdown against gas theft, disconnecting 97 illegal connections across Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad. Additionally, fines amounting to Rs.6.9 million were imposed on violators.

In Lahore, the team disconnected 33 connections due to illegal gas usage and 4 more for using compressors. Fines totaling Rs.2.74 million were imposed on offenders.

In Faisalabad, 6 connections were disconnected for unauthorized gas usage and 1 for using a compressor. A fine of Rs.0.05 million was also imposed.

In Sheikhupura, 3 illegal connections were disconnected, with fines amounting to Rs.3.8 million imposed on gas thieves.

In Bahawalpur, the team disconnected 3 illegal connections and 16 for compressor usage.

In Multan, 30 connections were disconnected for unauthorized gas use, while 1 was disconnected for compressor usage.

In Sahiwal, a fine of Rs.0.28 million was imposed on violators involved in gas theft.

Iftikhar calls for action on tax evaders

LAHORE (APP): SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik has called for stringent action against all identified influential tax evaders without succumbing to any sort of pressure to strengthen tax base.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, he urged the authorities that fraudulent involved in mega tax scandal of Rs 529 billion detected by the Federal Tax Ombudsman Dr Asif Mahmood Jah should also be taken to task including corrupt tax officers.

He emphasised the recovery of outstanding tax liabilities from powerful evaders was essential to broaden the tax network and reduce the undue burden on existing taxpayers. He highlighted that the persistent culture of tax evasion by affluent mafia not only undermined the national exchequer but also discourage honest taxpayers, ultimately hampering economic growth.

He urged the adoption of a transparent and impartial approach in addressing tax defaulters, ensuring that accountability was upheld for all, regardless of their social or political status.

Saudia shows interest in Pakistan's premium snacks: Shahid Imran

LAHORE (APP): Saudi Arabia has shown keen interest in high-quality food products from Pakistan, especially snacks that meet international standards.

Upon his return here on Sunday from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, after attending the 3-day Halal Food Expo, Shahid Imran, Convener of the Pakistan Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Regional Committee on Food, noted that the growing interest in Pakistani products reflects the rising demand in the Saudi market for diverse and premium food items, where Pakistani goods have proven to be highly competitive.

He said Saudi businesses have invited Pakistani companies to expand their supply of these sought-after products. Pakistani snacks, including chips, nimko, biscuits, and other convenience foods, align well with Saudi people tastes and have been recognized for their superior quality and flavor.

The invitation for Pakistani companies to

scale up exports indicates the potential for a deepened trade relationship, benefiting both countries economically.

Shahid Imran said this opportunity allows Pakistani companies to not only boost their export revenues but also enhance their presence in the international market.

As Pakistan ramps up production to meet Saudi Arabia's demand, both Muslim countries are set to benefit from strengthened economic ties and an increased flow of high-quality Pakistani products into the Saudi food market, he added.

Saigol nomination as KPT acting chief honor for PIAF

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Industrial & Traders Associations Front (PIAF) leadership has greeted its chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol for his nomination as the Acting Chairman of the Karachi Port Trust (KPT) Board, stating that it is honour for the PIAF, as its chairman has been chosen to head this prestigious post for the first time in the history.

In a reception, hosted in honour of newly-nominated chairman of the KPT Board, the whole leadership of PIAF, including Patron-in-Chief Mian Anjum Nisar; Senior Vice Chairman, Nasrullah Mughal; Vice Chairman, Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry; former

Muhammad Ali Mian; former Vice Chairman, Khawaja Shahzeb Akram; and other senior members, congratulated the PIAF Chairman for assuming the charge of the country's very important slot.

While addressing the reception, they stated that Faheem-ur-Rehman Saigol nomination as Chairman of the KPT Board is a testament to his hard work and is a matter of pride for PIAF. He has previously served as the Vice President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce, and as part of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers and various standing committees of the Lahore Chamber, he has contributed significantly to the business community.

Karachi Port is considered the gateway to

Pakistan and the Central Asian region, playing a vital role in Pakistan's economy. With his extensive experience, Faheem-ur-Rehman Saigol has been effectively addressing the issues of the business community. It is worth noting that Faheem-ur-Rehman was nominated as Acting Chairman of the KPT Board by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, government of Pakistan recently. This is the first time that a chairman has been appointed from the private sector for the KPT Board, marking an honor for PIAF.

Faheem Saigol will continue to fulfill his responsibilities as Acting Chairman of the Karachi Port Trust Board until a permanent chairman is appointed.

Handmade furniture gains global recognition

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq has said that handmade Chitral furniture, renowned for its historical and traditional designs, has gained global popularity due to its distinctive style and exceptional durability.

Talking to a delegation of furniture manufacturers from Chitral valley led by Gul Rehmat, here on Sunday, he said this furniture reflects the rich cultural heritage of the area. Each piece is crafted by skilled artisans who have inherited

their techniques through generations, making the furniture not only beautiful but also a testament to the craftsmanship of the past.

He said the designs often feature intricate carvings, with patterns inspired by the natural beauty of the region, such as floral motifs, geometric shapes, and symbolic figures. These designs are carefully hand-carved into high-quality wood, like walnut and cedar, which are chosen for their strength and longevity. Due to the use of traditional methods and tools, every piece is unique and has a rustic charm that

appeals to those who value authenticity and heritage in their home decor.

He said in addition to its aesthetic appeal, Chitral furniture is known for its durability. Crafted to withstand generations, it is not uncommon for pieces to be passed down as family heirlooms.

This combination of artistry, tradition, and durability has propelled Chitral furniture onto the global stage, where it continues to captivate international collectors and admirers. He assured the delegation that they will be facilitated for furniture exports.

Govt to steer country to prosperity, says trade leader

SIALKOT (APP): Chairman Supreme Council All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajran, Naem Mir, has said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the government will surely succeed in bringing the country out of darkness.

He expressed these views while talking to media representatives after a special meeting with a delegation of businessmen in Sialkot.

He said the business community rejects the call of protest by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). "The PTI founder has not understood the state system till date and has always fostered the politics of chaos and instability in the country. But now the people

have realized that the PTI and its government are responsible for the worsening situation in the country, so now the people will not fall in the trap," he added.

He said, "People are suffering the consequences of the wrong and failed policies of the PTI but we are determined that under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the government will definitely succeed in bringing the country out of darkness. Today, all the international organizations including the World Bank are sitting with Pakistan and the IMF is also working with Pakistan which is proof that the trust of international organizations has been restored in Pakistan

and the country is moving in the right direction again and the day is not far when the country's economy will be stable and people will be prosperous."

He said that state institutions would have to fulfill their responsibilities. "They must fulfill their responsibilities and destroy those who spread anarchy and chaos in the country. Tax should be spent from the rich man to the poor. We have also taken up this matter with the IMF so that our traders can do their business without any problem so that the country can progress and prosper. Traders will definitely pay taxes based on justice and fairness and no tax will be imposed on a poor and small trader," he maintained.

Chairman Anjuman-e-Tajran Sialkot Al-Khidmat Group, Haji Ehsan-ul-Haq Butt, thanked Naem Mir for coming to Sialkot. He said, "We are grateful to Naem Mir who sat with us and listened to all the problems of the traders and then assured them of their solution."

On this occasion Farooq-e-Azam was also nominated as Secretary Broadcasting by Anjuman-e-Tajran Sialkot Al-Khidmat Group.

Supreme Leader Al-Khidmat Group Sialkot Malik Abdul Majeed, Senior Vice Chairman Malik Sabir Mehmood, Secretary Tehsil Bazar No. 3 Khawaja Muhammad Arif, General Khidmat Group Sialkot Atif Mirza and others were also present.

Shahbaz Aslam elected new Chairman of FRIA



F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has elected Shahbaz Aslam as a new chairman and Shafiq Butt as senior vice chairman unopposed for tenure of two years. The decision in this regard was taken by the FRIA executive committee, who met here today.

FRIA leadership as well as several other prominent personalities congratulating the newly-elected chairman

of FRIA, hoped that the new chairman along with his body will utilize their best abilities to serve the traders attached with this business.

While issuing a press statement, the new chairman Shahbaz Aslam urged the government to take up the issues of business community on priority basis.

Meanwhile, PIAF patron-in-chief Mian Anjum Nisar, Chairman Faheem Saigol and LCCI former vice president

Adnan Khalid Butt observed that FRIA is playing a significant role for the promotion of trade and industry issues for the last several years which is the main reason of winning the hearts of business community.

A delegation of Anjuman-e-Tajran, led by Mr. Babar Mehmood, President Alkhidmat group Hall Road Lahore, also visited the FRIA office to congratulate the newly-elected Chairman Shahbaz Aslam,

Shafiq Butt Sr Vice Chairman and the executive Committee FRIA.

The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) members expressed its satisfaction over the performance of outgoing office-bearers and eulogized their services for the business community. They were of the view that the way the leadership had run the affairs of the FRIA has no match.

Shahbaz Aslam, on this occasion, said that the high cost of production is not good for our exports. The cost of production is a major factor, which makes an industry stand out among competitors in the world market, he explained.

Shahbaz Aslam said that high energy tariffs, shortage of fuel for machines, high rate of taxes, and lack of skilled labour are the main reasons behind the increase in the cost of production.

He said that Pakistan's

BMP asks govt to announce clear economic strategies to achieve growth target

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has called upon the government to announce clear and robust economic strategies, as the country has stuck in low economic growth situation, where double-digit policy rate for the last few years has diminished capacity to increase domestic production, and exports, negatively impacting domestic resource mobilization.

FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said that the government will have its

work sharply cut out as far as the economic challenges are concerned. Coming at the back of fast-unfolding climate change crisis that pushed millions into poverty with little fiscal capacity of government to provide anywhere near close to what was needed in stimulus spending. Then there is acute debt distress, and seriously high inflation at the back of global aggregate supply shock, and accentuated by a world of rising conflicts, mainly in Ukraine, and the Middle East. They emphasized that such transparency from the government is crucial, as the country has had trouble raising enough money to

cover its expenses.

He said that the domestic investment at the moment is alarmingly low which has sent a negative signal to the potential foreign investors and now is the time that the federal government should give some patient hearing to the private sector calling. They said if the government was seriously desirous of having economic turnaround in the coming years it would have to do two things that are: an immediate freeze on domestic and foreign borrowing and secondly put in place a well-tailored strategy to show-case Pakistan's potentials to the outer world.

Anjum Nisar said that even though Pakistan's economic crisis is a recurring factor in the country's political unrest, it has a history of ignoring the nation's true issues, which include poor governance, a broken judicial system, outdated laws, complicated tax system, lack of transparency, duplication in the government system, ineffective bureaucracy, improper use of our human, natural and water resources, lack of efficient local government, inadequate data for country's planning, and the consistent flaws in policies in execution by the government departments.

He said that Pakistan's

GDP growth rate has always remained below its potential despite efforts to boost economic growth. He said that the development of important sectors and investment prospects was hampered by inadequate revenue collection, structural problems, and governance issues.

BMP Chairman said that due to the low tax-to-GDP ratio, borrowing and outside help are heavily relied upon to close the fiscal imbalance. There is a recurring budget deficit because the government spends more than it takes in. The national debt burden has risen, as a result, needing substantial financial

resources for debt repayment. Both internal and external debt in Pakistan has been constantly rising.

Anjum Nisar was of the view that the SBP had taken the decision to enhance the policy rate as per instruction of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as the decision is not based keeping in view the situation of trade and economy, he added. They said the SBP had taken a unilateral decision in view of the absence of any government. They said the SBP had previously cut the interest rate on government intervention and pressure from businesses, but now it was free to raise the policy

rate.

He cannot understand how the policy rate will curb food inflation as the high-interest rate and rupee depreciation will increase the cost of doing business, he said.

He said the SBP had been watching the rupee fall against the greenback from the sidelines since the political uncertainty has gripped the country. Now it has come up with minor cut in interest rates to do the rest of the damage to the economy.

He said inflation in Pakistan was cost-push, which spiked due to surging prices of commodities in world markets as well as

depreciation of the rupee against the dollar.

The economy doesn't have the capacity to absorb the high interest rate as it was already struggling with the weak exchange rate," he pointed out.

He added that the free hand given to the SBP was in fact making matters complicated for the country, as well as industry.

Ruling out the impression that high interest rate would dent credit off-take to industry, they said in reality only large businesses were the beneficiaries of bank credits. SMEs are still deprived of this facility and will remain so in the present situation, he said.



In brief

Windies chase 219

ST LUCIA (Agencies): West Indies pulled off a sensational run-chase of 219 to earn their first win of the series in a thrilling fourth T20 in St Lucia. Openers Evin Lewis and Shai Hope blasted 136 from the first nine overs, before they lost three wickets in as many balls to allow England back into contention. Rehan Ahmed had Lewis caught for 68, Hope was run out for 54 and Nicholas Pooran was bowled for a duck, but captain Rovman Powell's 38 from 23 balls again shifted the momentum in the hosts' favour. Powell's dismissal in the 17th over helped England regain some control, only for Sherfane Rutherford to hit back-to-back sixes in the penultimate over to seal a five-wicket win. England's 218-5 was set up by Phil Salt's 55 - his sixth T20 score of 50 or more against West Indies - in explosive partnerships of 54 with fellow opener Will Jacks and 48 with Jos Buttler, who made 38. Jacob Bethell, 21, then continued his eye-catching start to international cricket with a 22-ball fifty and an unbeaten 62, including five sixes, as England seemed to make the most of a flat pitch having lost the toss. However, Lewis and Hope responded with class to the harsh treatment their bowlers received, reaching their half-centuries from 26 balls and 23 balls respectively. Powell's departure and a couple of economical death overs from Saqib Mahmood and T20 debutant John Turner sent a few nerves through the West Indies' dugout but Hope and Lewis' dynamic stand ensured they were comfortably ahead of the run rate, Rutherford eventually finishing on 29 from 17 balls. The T20 leg of the tour concludes with the fifth T20 on Sunday at the same venue, with England having already sealed a series win by winning the first three matches.

Davis leads LA Lakers

LOS ANGELES (Agencies): Anthony Davis starred for the Los Angeles Lakers as they defeated the New Orleans Pelicans 104-99 to secure their fifth consecutive NBA win. The 31-year-old scored 31 points and added 14 rebounds, while Lakers rookie Dalton Knecht scored 27 points. LeBron James managed 21 points, seven rebounds and five assists for the visitors but failed to extend his career-best streak of four consecutive triple-doubles. Brandon Boston Jr and Brandon Ingram, who had 32 points for the hosts, made consecutive three-pointers to give the match tie to a 97-95 lead. But 39-year-old James responded with back-to-back three-pointers to give the Lakers a 101-97 lead with 37 seconds remaining. "Big-time win. We want all the wins we can get. We don't have no time to feel out the first month or two," James said. "Every game is important. To get this win in a hostile environment was big for us." Elsewhere on Saturday, Jayson Tatum scored a three-pointer at the buzzer to guide the Boston Celtics to a 126-123 overtime win over the Toronto Raptors. Tatum narrowly missed a triple-double with 24 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists as Jaylen Brown led the Celtics with 27 points. De'Aaron Fox scored 49 points as the Sacramento Kings beat the Utah Jazz 121-117 while the Dallas Mavericks posted a 110-93 win against the San Antonio Spurs, who were without the injured Victor Wembanyama.

Aaqib set to replace Jason Gillespie as Pakistan head coach

LAHORE (Cricinfo): Jason Gillespie is set to be removed as Pakistan head coach and replaced, across formats, by Aaqib Javed as the high rate of turnover at the PCB continues apace. Gillespie is Pakistan's Test coach and currently the interim coach of the white-ball side, but is expected to be relieved of all duties, with Aaqib - recently appointed convenor of the men's cricket selection committee - taking over. ESPNcricinfo understands the decision could be announced as early as Monday. It is the day Pakistan play their final white-ball game on their ongoing tour of Australia - the third T20I of a series Australia have already wrapped up 2-0. As things stand, it would be Gillespie's final engagement of a brief, tumultuous time as head coach.

It is understood Aaqib was not the PCB's first choice, with the board initially sounding out Gillespie to take over as all-format coach until the end of the Champions Trophy next March. However, he was asked to take on the additional white-ball responsibility without a change in his current contract: in effect, to take on two additional formats without being paid more for the increased scope of his role. Gillespie turned that offer down, prompting the PCB to decide they did not wish to have him in charge of the red-ball side, and beginning the search for an all-format coach.

A PCB official, though, attributes the decision to replace Gillespie down to him not spending enough time in Pakistan. It is something the PCB had privately used to explain the resignation of Gary Kirsten, the most recent white-ball coach before until he quit last month. ESPNcricinfo understands Gillespie's view is that he has spent every day his contract demanded he be in Pakistan within the country, in addition to which he also did the Shaheens tour of Darwin without pay as a gesture of goodwill.

How much time Gillespie needs to spend in Pakistan is a moot point at the moment. They have no cricket at home for the next



two months in any format and go directly from Australia to Zimbabwe, after which they play an all-format series in South Africa. Their next home engagement is a two-Test series against the West Indies at the end of January, and their only white-ball games before the Champions Trophy come in a short tri-series against South Africa and New Zealand in February.

After the PCB began looking for a coach, they initially considered the possibility of either elevating Azhar Mahmood, or appointing Saqlain Mushtaq, who served as coach in from 2021-22. Neither, though, appeared to draw enough support from within the PCB's advisory circle, which led to Aaqib being offered the position. It is understood he will be asked to take on the role until the end of the Champions Trophy, following which the PCB will reevaluate.

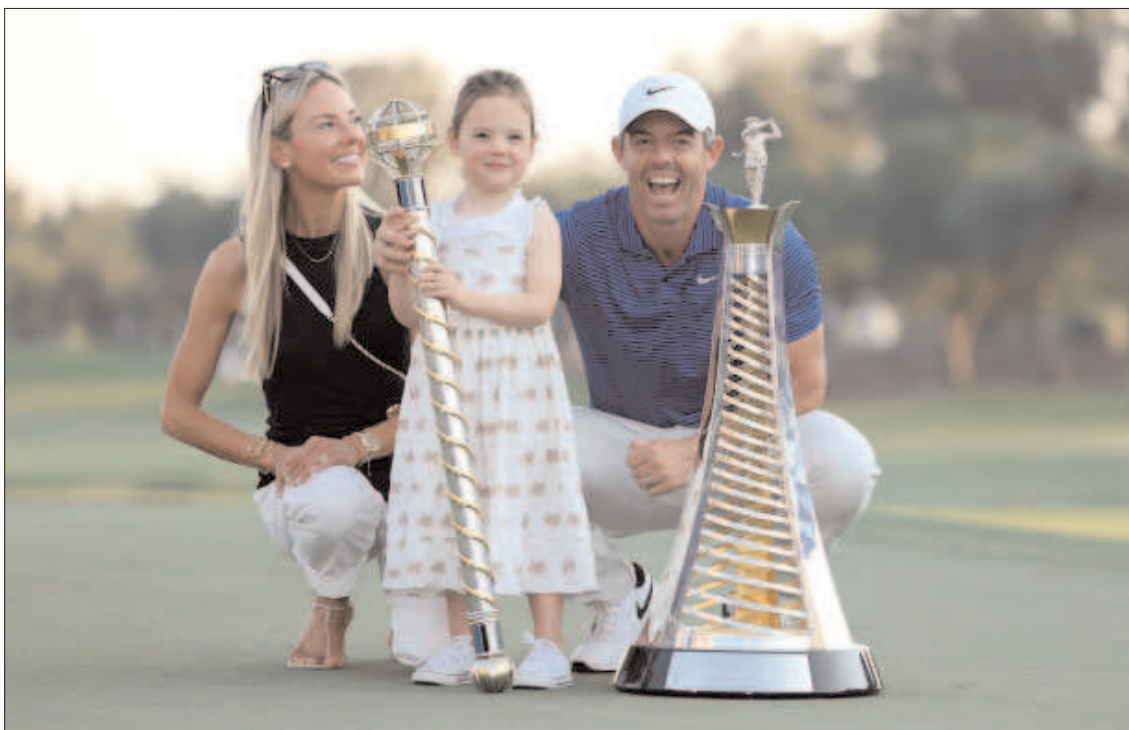
Gillespie's time - should it come to an end, as expected - has been eventful. It began ignominiously when Pakistan slumped to a home 2-0 defeat against Bangladesh, but things turned around with a come-from-behind 2-1 triumph against England - Pakistan's first Test home series win in nearly four years. With Kirsten resigning soon after, he was appointed interim white-ball coach for the tour of Australia, and oversaw Pakistan's first series triumph in the country in 22 years, turning around another opening-game defeat by romping to two crushing wins in the ODI series. The T20I series that followed was rain-curtailed, but Australia wrapped it up with a game to go.

A decision to part ways with Gillespie would also draw a close to a remarkable year in Pakistan's pursuit for coaching staff. Last November, Mickey Arthur, then team director, was told by then PCB chairman Zaka Ashraf he would not be going with the team for the Test series in Australia - Mohammad Hafeez performed that role instead. Arthur and Grant Bradburn, then head coach, left soon after. Mohsin Naqvi assumed the PCB chair weeks later, beginning the hunt for what he called "the best possible coaches", ultimately appointing Gillespie and Kirsten.

At the time, he said "their stellar track records preceded them" and that they would be given independence to work with their respective sides. Six months later, Kirsten had left, without coaching Pakistan in a single ODI - the format that he won the 2011 World Cup with India in. Gillespie, it appears, is set to follow him out of the door imminently.

For Aaqib, meanwhile, the speed of his ascent has been supersonic. Until a few weeks ago, he was Lahore Qalandars' long-term coach and director of cricket operations, where he had a mixed record; he led the side to consecutive PSL titles, but also saw several bottom-placed finishes, including earlier this season. When appointed a member of the selection committee, he was viewed by the PCB's top brass as the mastermind behind the implementation of spin-friendly wickets against England to turn that series. He quit his role at the Qalandars to focus on the PCB, where he was initially viewed as the favourite to be appointed director at the National Cricket Academy.

He served a stint as Sri Lanka's bowling coach earlier this year, but now begins his highest profile challenge. Pakistan have a choc-a-bloc cricket season until the Champions Trophy. Six white-ball internationals against Zimbabwe will be followed by as many in South Africa, with two Test matches to come after. Pakistan then play two Tests against West Indies at home and a tri series featuring South Africa and New Zealand before the Champions Trophy, which is set to begin on February 19.



DUBAI: Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland poses with his Wife, Erica Stoll and Daughter, Poppy McIlroy alongside the DP World Tour Championship trophy.

ICC Champions Trophy makes its way to Khanpur

ISLAMABAD (APP): The ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 tour on Sunday was displayed at the Khanpur Dam, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa serving as the backdrop for this significant event on Sunday.

The trophy, a symbol of cricketing excellence, was displayed at the dam, attracting cricket fans and local residents who came to celebrate this special moment.

The event featured a photo shoot and video session at the dam, with one of the highlights being a shoot on a traditional boat in the reservoir. Cricket fans and the public were also invited to take photos with the trophy, creating an enjoyable and inclusive atmosphere.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) team, along with DSP Khanpur Circle Uzair Khan and Hassan Nisar, CEO of Metrix Pakistan, attended the event. Pakistan's cuisine

The prestigious silverware will journey across the eight participating nations during the tour, providing unique experiences for fans.

After Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the tour will also head to other iconic cities and venues in Pakistan before leaving the land of defending champions to embark on an extensive international tour.

McIlroy wins DP World Tour finale & Race to Dubai

DUBAI (Agencies): Rory McIlroy held off Denmark's Rasmus Hojgaard to win the season-ending DP World Tour Championship and clinch his sixth Race to Dubai title.

The Northern Irishman finished two strokes ahead of Hojgaard on 15 under at Jumeirah Golf Estates after a three-under-par 69 in his final round. McIlroy, 35, was confirmed as the Race to Dubai winner midway through his round when nearest challenger Thruston Lawrence - who had needed to win the tournament to have any chance of clinching the overall title - finished at one under.

It is the third year in succession that McIlroy has topped the tour's season rankings and his sixth title overall - matching Seve Ballesteros' record. "Everyone knows what Seve means to European golf and Ryder Cup players," an emotional McIlroy told Sky Sports. "The European Ryder Cup locker

room, all we have are quotes from Seve. We had a changing room with Seve's shirt from '95, the last Ryder Cup he played. "He means so much to European golf and for me to be mentioned in the same breath, I'm very proud."

Sharing a three-way lead at the start of the final round, McIlroy put two shots between himself and Hojgaard with four birdies in his first five holes. But bogeys on the ninth and 13th allowed the Dane to draw level with four holes remaining.

Just as Hojgaard was piling on the pressure, McIlroy produced a stunning approach shot on the 16th to tee up a birdie putt. It was precisely the type of risky, aggressive play that has worked against McIlroy in the past but it moved him one stroke clear on this occasion with two holes left. Hojgaard was forced to be aggressive in reply, but the Dane narrowly missed a birdie putt on

the 18th - relieving the pressure on McIlroy who held his own birdie attempt to seal the win.

Despite his success this season, McIlroy failed to end his decade-long wait for another major. The 35-year-old collapsed during his final round of June's US Open, eventually losing by one stroke to Bryson DeChambeau.

"I've been through a lot this year, professionally, personally and it feels like the fitting end to 2024," said McIlroy. "I've persevered this year a lot, had close calls, wasn't able to get it done, so to be able to get over the line... I'm really pleased with the way I finished and thankfully I hung on on a tough day and got the job done."

McIlroy will be joined on the PGA Tour next year by countryman Tom McKibbin. The 21-year-old shot a 72 in his fourth round to finish tied for 11th on eight under and claim the final dual membership spot.

End of an era as Nadal aims for winning Davis Cup farewell

MALAGA (Agencies): Spanish superstar Rafael Nadal is aiming to cap his emotional farewell from tennis with another Davis Cup triumph in Malaga next week.

Nadal, 38, has battled injuries over the past few years and the extent to which he can compete for his country is unknown, but all eyes will be on the 22-time Grand Slam winner. The veteran led Spain to victory in Madrid five years ago - the last time they won the trophy and Nadal's fourth.

However, he admitted Saturday that his role in Malaga may be limited to doubles rather than singles.

"First off, we'll have to see how I feel in training and, if I really don't feel I have a chance to win the singles, I'll be the first to not want to play," Nadal said in comments to the Spanish Tennis Federation (RFET).

"If I don't feel ready, I'll be the first to speak to the captain (David Ferrer). I've already told him on a few occasions not to make any decisions based on the fact that it's my last week as a professional tennis player."

French Open and Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz will be Spain's leading player and his presence offers Nadal a real chance of retiring on a high note.

"Probably one of the most special tournaments that I'm going to play. Last tournament of Rafa, I'll be able to be next to him in the last moments on a tennis court for him," said Alcaraz who played alongside Nadal in doubles at the Olympics in Paris this year. "I think it's most important for Rafa, for his last tournament. I really want him to retire with a title. It's going to be really, really emotional and a really special tournament for me."

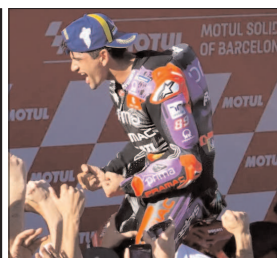
Representing Spain, Nadal won singles gold at the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and triumphed in the doubles at Rio 2016 alongside Marc Lopez. But former world number one Nadal's injury setbacks in the twilight of his career have seen his ranking slump to 155.

The last of his 92 career titles came with his 14th French Open and 22nd major at Roland Garros in 2022. He hasn't played a competitive singles match since losing to Novak Djokovic at the Olympics in July while in 2023 he played just four times. Many are hoping for Spain and Alcaraz to meet world number one Jannik Sinner's Italy, the defending champions, in the final, as the two young stars continue to build on a gripping rivalry.

Record 32-time champions the United States have selected a strong team spearheaded by US Open finalist Taylor Fritz and are also among the most likely contenders. Nadal clashed with Alcaraz in Saudi Arabia at the "Six Kings Slam" exhibition in October, losing in straight sets, but they will be fighting for the same goal in Andalusia. The start of the Billie Jean King Cup was delayed because of a weather alert in the Malaga region, in the wake of devastating floods in the east of Spain.

Alcaraz, ranked third in the world, said the flooding in Valencia increased his motivation to help his country triumph. "I'm here to give my grain of sand because playing for Spain is the biggest thing that there is for me," he continued. Tennis greats and stars from other sports are among those clamouring to watch Nadal's farewell, with career rivals Djokovic and Roger Federer among those expected to attend. Spain face the Netherlands on Tuesday in the last eight, with the winner taking on Germany or Canada in the semi-finals. Italy defence

Italy ended a 47-year wait to win the Davis Cup again a year ago as they beat Australia in the final with Sinner as their key player and are favourites to defend their title. The Australian Open and US Open winner is still waiting for an appeal from the World Anti-Doping Agency against him to be resolved.



Bagnaia wins finale but tearful Martin takes first MotoGP title

BARCELONA (Agencies): Jorge Martin claimed his first MotoGP title with a third-place finish at the season-ending race in Barcelona, which was won by his nearest challenger Francesco Bagnaia.

Italian Bagnaia started the day 19 points behind Martin, but victory at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya was not enough to overhaul the Spaniard.

"I am completely shocked," said Pramac rider Martin, who took the title by 10 points. "This is for my family, for the people who are supporting me, this is for them." "I started crying at the end. It was a really emotional race. It's been a long journey with a lot of crashes and big injuries but finally we are here. I hope we can keep improving and enjoy the moment."

The 26-year-old needed to finish no lower than ninth to become the champion if Ducati's Bagnaia won the race from pole position. Two-time defending champion Bagnaia had won the Malaysian Grand Prix earlier this month to take the title battle to the final weekend, before a sprint win on Saturday cut his rival's lead further. Martin, who will join Aprilia for next season, had challenged the 27-year-old Italian for the title in 2023, but crashed out early in the season-ending Valencia GP.

"This day is for him," added Bagnaia, who won 11 of the season's 20 races compared to Martin's three. "I think he is deserving of what he achieved." Six-time world champion Marc Marquez finished second in Sunday's race as Martin dedicated his maiden championship to the city of Valencia.



PARIS (AFP): Netherlands outclassed Hungary with a 4-0 victory in their winner-takes-all Nations League encounter on Saturday while record-setting Germany hammered Bosnia and Herzegovina 7-0. Netherlands and Hungary went into the match tied on five points each and with the winner set to join Germany in ensuring their progress from Group A3 to the quarter-finals. First-half penalties by Wout Weghorst and Cody Gakpo sent the Oranje on their way, before Denzel Dumfries and Teun Koopmeiners made the game safe in the second period.

"There are always things we can improve upon," Dutch captain Virgil van Dijk told SBS6. "But in the end, we deserved to win."

The match at the Johan Cruyff Arena was briefly interrupted in the seventh minute following a medical emergency on the Hungarian bench. The referee stopped play for some 10 minutes while

Hungary's assistant coach Adam Szalai received treatment, shielded from view by huddled players and staff members, as well as a large white sheet.

Szalai, 36, was stretched off to applause from spectators and players alike, the Hungarian FA later released a statement saying he was "conscious" and in a "stable condition" at an Amsterdam hospital.

"It was a scare of course," Gakpo told NOS. "Fortunately, I just heard he regained consciousness on the pitch. Things like this are more important than football." Almost forgotten in the aftermath of the worrying incident was the handball by Tamas Nikitscher as the ball was crossed into the Hungarian box.

The referee consulted the touchline video monitor and promptly restarted play by pointing to the spot, allowing Weghorst to sweep the Netherlands in front. Denes Dibusz was the busier of the two goalkeepers as the first period wore on and had to be alert

to keep out efforts from Tijjani Reijnders and Donyell Malen.

In the 11th minute of added time, Dutch dominance told and Malen was clipped by Zsolt Nagy in the box. Gakpo dispatched the resulting spot-kick, sending Dibusz the wrong way and Netherlands into a two-goal lead.

Right-back Dumfries sealed the Netherlands' spot in the quarters as he latched onto Malen's flick-on at the back post and fizzed a volley back into the far corner shortly after the hour.

Koopmeiners marked his first international match since 2022 by nodding in a fourth in the 86th minute.

"Good fun" Germany cemented their spot at the top of the group with a 7-0 win over Bosnia - the heaviest in the six-year history of the Nations League.

"It was good fun tonight. After a couple of goals we did the work defensively and then everything came together offensively. The more that happens, the

more fun we have on the pitch," German attacker Jamal Musiala told UEFA's website.

Musiala opened the floodgates after two minutes with a header from Joshua Kimmich's cross.

Tim Kleindienst scored his first goal for Germany in the 23rd minute and Kai Havertz made the game safe eight minutes before the break, slotting home after a slick one-two with Florian Wirtz.

Wirtz then made it four on 50 minutes with a sublime swerving free-kick from wide on the left, before doubling up seven minutes later.

"Seeing Flo (Wirtz's) free-kick was kind of nice but just in general everyone played well, had good moments. We're just playing good football," added Musiala.

Substitute Leroy Sane scored Germany's sixth in the 66th minute and Kleindienst completed the rout just over 10 minutes from time as he guided home a pinpoint cross from centre-half Antonio Rudiger. The emphatic result leaves Germany five points ahead of Netherlands with only one match left to play.

In Group B1, Georgia played out a 1-1 draw at home to Ukraine and stay two points ahead of the fourth-placed visitors.

The Czech Republic drew 0-0 in Albania and remain top of the group on eight points, one ahead of Georgia in second and their third-placed opponents.

Turkey stayed top of Group B4 with a 0-0 draw at home to Wales, while Iceland beat Montenegro 2-0. Turkey were presented with a golden opportunity to grow their two-point lead over Wales but Kerem Akturkoglu sent his 89th-minute penalty wide.



In brief

Students' study tour arranged

RAWALPINDI (APP): Students from various public schools of Rawalpindi Cantonment areas visited Murree on Sunday to witness different historical places. The tour was organized by Military Lands and Cantonments (ML&C), under the special instructions of DG ML&C Major General Irfan Ahmed Malik. According to the details, the school students were taken to churches, TV station in Convent School Bhuri, Murree Arts Council and the Wildlife Department, and were introduced to the beautiful tourist attractions of Murree. They were also taken to the scenic places of Murree. The purpose of the tour was to increase other activities along with education for the students. The tour will enhance the image of the cantonment schools and will expose the students to the environment outside the classroom. On this occasion, the school students thanked DG ML&C for organizing a special trip for the students, which provided opportunities for sightseeing along with studies. The students said that visiting other tourist places along with education will further enhance the knowledge of the children.

114,100 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 114,100 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 62,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1509.74 feet and was 111.74 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 27,800 cusecs and 55,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1169.35 feet, which was 119.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 5,700 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 65,900, 47,300, 35,200 and 5,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 20,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Police arrest 31 persons

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Police have conducted search operations in various areas and held 31 for violating the tenancy act on Sunday, informed police spokesman that heavy police contingent, Elite Force, Special Branch personnel and ladies police participated in the search operations. During the operations, police officials searched tenancy records of houses, tenants, and residents. As a result, 31 individuals were arrested for violating the Tenancy Act who were identified as Tariq, Shabbir, Ahmed Zeb, Ghazi, Sarwar, Hasnain, Gul Hassan, Zeeshan, Bilal, Mazhar, Israr, Sajjad, Nisar, Asad, Sajid, Ilyas, Shaheer Khan, Omar Khan, Hanif, Aqeel, Rizwan, Umair, Sajid, Zohaib, Zeeshan, Binyamin, Ayaz, Baladin, Faisal, Anwar, and Gulzar. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress. City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani stated that the search operations aim to monitor criminal activities and bring offenders to justice. He assured that Rawalpindi Police remain committed to safeguarding citizens' lives and property while maintaining law and order.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people busy in shopping at weekly Bazaar in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

Education central route to development: Khalid Maqbool

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has said, education is the sole path to Development of the country. He expressed these words while addressing as chief guest at the convocation of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Sindh Chapter, held in Karachi on Sunday. The minister emphasized that education is not only a necessity of the times but also the first commandment of our religion. He warned that if we fail to align ourselves with the demands of the present era and do not strive to change ourselves, external forces will impose their changes upon us. Federal Minister for Education and Vice-Chancellor AIOU has distributed degrees to passed out students and the students with outstanding performance

were awarded gold medals.

Congratulating the graduates, the Federal Minister emphasized that their success is a testament to their dedication, hard work, and the quality education provided by Allama Iqbal Open University, along with the efforts and competence of its teachers.

He remarked that the fast-changing world has transformed everything, and those who fail to adapt are left behind, as even divine intervention does not aid those unwilling to change themselves.

Highlighting Pakistan's youth as both an opportunity and a challenge, he noted that 65% of the country's population comprises young people, equating to approximately 180 million youth. He urged them to adapt to contemporary changes to contribute effectively to the country's progress.

The Minister gave special congratulations to the gold medal recipients, stating that their medals are a source of pride for the nation. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Nasir Mahmood mentioned that AIOU has 10 regional campuses in Sindh, with around 44,000 students currently enrolled.

He revealed that approximately five million students have graduated from the university to date, claiming that there is hardly a household in Pakistan without a student or graduate of AIOU. Dr. Nasir highlighted that AIOU's educational scope is no longer confined to Pakistan, with students from 36 countries pursuing education at this prestigious institution. He congratulated the graduates, saying, "This university is yours, and you are our pride. Let us contribute to the progress of this nation."

Green Tourism, GRCP partner for cultural preservation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Gandhara Resource Centre Pakistan (GRCP), a flagship project of the Center for Culture and Development (C2D), hosted a meeting with Lt. General (R) Sardar Hassan Azhar Hayat Khan, Managing Director of Green Tourism, to explore a mutual partnership.

The meeting focused on building an alliance to advance eco-friendly tourism and community development in the region, said a press release. Lt. Gen. (R) Sardar Hassan Azhar Hayat Khan, was welcomed at GRCP's Taxila Garden premises by a team comprising Sara Mehmood, Team Lead; Waqar Haider Awan, Member Advisory Committee; Riaz Ahmed, Program Coordinator; Sohail Ahmed, Manager, Media & Communications; Iftikhar Ahmed, Sculptor and Heritage Conservator; and Iftikhar Uddin Siddique, Community Outreach Officer.

Discussions revolved around strategies to promote Gandhara's archaeological, focussing on key priorities, including eco-friendly tourism initiatives as business model initiatives to attract local and international visitors. Lt. Gen. (R) Sardar Hassan Azhar Hayat Khan proposed collaboration to GRCP in alignment with Green Tourism's vision to integrate tourism with heritage conservation and community empowerment.

being improved through computerized interlocking and installation of solar system, locomotive failures are being removed through timely maintenance and new passenger coaches are being introduced.

rise further during the upcoming year.

Pakistan Railways has made special arrangements to facilitate passengers at stations and in trains en-route including provision of state-of-the-art dining cars, mobile charging sockets are provided in coaches and provision of water dispensers in coaches to provide clean drinking water to passengers.

Besides this, the department has installed Ticket Vending Machines (TVM) for purchasing tickets, information counters to guide and facilitate passengers, digital display boards for arrival and departure of trains and provision of wheel chairs and ramps for disabled people.

To improve the punctuality of trains, Pakistan Railways is removing speed restrictions through special maintenance of track, signaling system is

Number of railway passengers increased

ISLAMABAD (APP): Around 41.91 million passengers traveled by train during 2023-24 compared to 35.40 million in 2022-23 - an increase of 6.51 million in the annual count, according to the data of Pakistan Railways.

According to the data, a total passenger earning in the fiscal year 2023-24 was Rs. 47.712 billion, exceeding the budgetary target by a margin of Rs. 8.712 billion. Besides, there is an increase in earnings by Rs. 13.799 billion as compared to the earnings of the previous financial year 2022-23.

The revenue generated through other means in the fiscal year 2023-24 was Rs. 39.803 billion which includes freight, military traffic, property and land, scrap and others, it added.

The railway authorities are hopeful that the number of railway passengers will

Lok Mela serves as lifeline for country's fading traditional crafts

ISLAMABAD (APP): The lively Lok Mela festival has evolved from a celebration into a vital support system for the country's diminishing traditional crafts, allowing artisans nationwide to display their creations, earn recognition, and preserve their ancestral legacies.

Lok Mela stands as a beacon of hope in a rapidly modernizing world where centuries-old crafts often face the risk of extinction. This year, a significant number of young artisans graced the festival, many of whom were apprentices learning the trade under the tutelage of their elders. Participation of these artisans has reflected a growing interest among the youth in preserving the cultural treasures of their regions.

Samia Inam, a wholesale cloth entrepreneur, shared her journey of employing women from Bahawalpur to produce exquisite hand-embroidered garments. Her dresses, ranging from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 10,000, exemplify intricate craftsmanship. While buyers increasingly lean towards branded

outfits, Samia believes the uniqueness and durability of hand embroidery are regaining popularity.

However, she noted a disparity in earnings, with artisans from remote areas working for minimal wages while sellers earn significant profits. Naeem Soomro, a Kashigar from Hala, Sindh, captivated visitors with his display of Kashi Kari products such as jars, vases, and fountains. This ancient art form, traditionally limited to blue and white colored designs, has evolved with vibrant colors to meet modern demand. While Naeem takes pride in continuing his family's legacy, he lamented the intense labor required and the younger generation's waning interest in the craft. Yet, training centers in Hala are striving to keep the art alive for local and international markets.

While Lok Mela provides a vital platform for artisans, many expressed concerns about low profitability, lack of patronage, and diminishing interest among the younger generation. But still, events like these bring

hope, connecting craftspeople with larger audiences and opening doors to new opportunities.

Shahid Hussain of Khairpur is preserving the craft of 'Lungi and Khes weaving', a legacy handed down by his mother, Siyani Khatoun who is a Civil Award recipient.

Despite the admiration for handmade shawls, Shahid faces declining demand due to the availability of cheaper, machine-made alternatives. He emphasized the need for government support to ensure the survival of these labor-intensive yet culturally significant crafts.

Raiban Baloch from Balochistan brought a unique touch to the Lok Mela with her stall of date-leaf products, including table mats, baskets, and pen holders. Having earned over Rs. 60,000 throughout the event, she highlighted the arduous nature of her craft and the reluctance of her children to continue this unprofitable tradition.

Denaar from Chitral at a stall featured Kalashi hand-made caps, dresses, and

ornaments, items admired for their uniqueness worldwide. She expressed concern over the economic viability of such crafts, advocating for their promotion in larger markets while encouraging the younger generation to prioritize education alongside cultural preservation.

For many young artisans, Lok Mela is not just a marketplace but it is an affirmation of their value in preserving Pakistan's cultural identity. The recognition and appreciation they receive at the festival boosts their morale and their commitment to crafts.

For Noor-e-Sahar, a student from Kashmir said, Lok Mela provided her first taste of entrepreneurship. Her stall featuring Kashmiri tea, kulchas, and homemade cupcakes drew overwhelming praise.

Inspired by her initial success, Noor is planning to continue blending her academic pursuits with her passion for showcasing Kashmiri culinary culture through such platforms.

Amir Hamza, a young boy from Peshawar expressed his

NA speaker calls for stronger Pak-Spain parliamentary diplomacy

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq Sunday emphasized strengthening parliamentary diplomacy to foster closer ties between Pakistan and Spain and advocated for the effective use of Parliamentary Friendship Groups (PFGs) to enhance inter-parliamentary relations.

He expressed these views during a meeting with a high-level Spanish parliamentary delegation comprised of Spanish Senators Vicente Azpitarte Perez, Ms. Natalia Ucero, Antononio Gutierrez Limones, Luis de la Peña and Ambassador of Spain in Pakistan Jose Antoniode de Ory. He said, "Enhancing Parliament to Parliament contacts are pivotal for strengthening ties between both nations."

The discussion focused on enhancing bilateral trade, investment, and cooperation in areas such as agriculture, technology, education, and IT."

Speaker stated that

Pakistan and Spain share cordial ties rooted in unanimity of views on various regional and international issues. Pakistan and Spain have enduring and strong ties. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq lauded the Spanish government and parliament for their principled support of the Palestinian cause. NA Speaker expressed grief over the loss of precious lives and property due to the devastating floods in Spain.

He said, "Both, Pakistan and Spain, contribute the least to climate change, yet face most of its impact." He also expressed gratitude to the Spanish government and Spanish people for supporting Pakistan during severe floods in 2022.

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq also highlighted Pakistan's untapped economic potential and geo-strategic importance as a partner for European nations. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to fostering stronger ties to promote regional stability and economic growth. He condemned the severe human rights violations against Palestinians, noting that over 40,000 innocent children, women, and men have been martyred.

Moreover, he called for

urgent global action to address these atrocities and praised Spain's unwavering advocacy for the rights of the Palestinian people.

NA Speaker also highlighted the plight of the Kashmiri people, who have been denied their fundamental rights for more than seven decades. He emphasized the urgent need to resolve the Kashmir dispute in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions, urging international support to alleviate the suffering of Kashmiri people. On this occasion, MNA/Convener of Pak-Spain Parliamentary Friendship Group (PFG), Syed Ali Musa Gilani and Pakistani Ambassador to Spain, Zahoor Ahmed were also present.

Mushahid welcomes Trump resolve to contain 'Deep State'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed has welcomed Donald Trump's election as US President, terming it, as good for world peace and also welcomed his resolve to control the US 'Deep State'.

In a keynote address at the 'Margalla Dialogue', he also defined the 'red lines' in Pakistan's national security and foreign policy, listing these as the nuclear/missile programs, Occupied Kashmir & Palestine, China/CPEC, rejection of Indian hegemony and refusal to be part to any destabilisation of Iran.

Referring to the conference themed 'Emerging Global Realities', he cited new realities as retrenchment of Western and American power with diminished clout, the peaceful rise of China and resurgence of the Global South, with the likely emergence of Muslim Middle Powers like Pakistan, Turkiye, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia playing pivotal regional roles in the coming decade. Mushahid Hussain praised Donald Trump as the

first US President since John Kennedy who's not a representative of the American security establishment, which, he said, tried to block Trump in this election.

He also welcomed President Trump's resolve to contain the US 'Deep State' which had been active in fomenting unrest, destabilisation and regime change in developing countries. Mushahid Hussain also called for a regional reset in Pakistan's foreign policy, urging the government not to unilaterally beg India for trade, talks and cricket matches, build better friction-free ties with Afghanistan and Iran, and alleviate Chinese concerns on Terrorism.

Mushahid Hussain concluded his keynote address by stating that 'Pakistan now has Strategic Space' in the region but the biggest challenge for Pakistan is the mindset of defeatism and fear, which was demoralising and damaging for the country. An interactive question & answer session also followed the speech.

Govt to end digital gender divide: Shaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Sunday said that the government was committed for ending digital gender divide.

"Women's access to technology and Internet is utmost necessary, as they can be empowered through the provision of digital devices and Internet", she expressed while addressing virtually a

conference titled 'Digitalization and Women in Politics' in Doha, Qatar.

She said the government was taking steps to remove hurdles in using mobile phone and Information and

Communications Technology (ICT) by women. Socio-economic hurdles impede women entry in politics, she said, adding that women could be empowered and brought

into mainstream politics through digitalization.

Shaza Fatima said work is going on Gender Digital Divide Policy to facilitate women in their access to digital economy.

She said the Prime Minister's Free Laptop Scheme was playing important role in enhancing access to digital tools. She said work is underway on the Smartphones for All Policy.



ISLAMABAD: A girl is fetching water at a stall during the 10-Day 'Folk Festival (Lok Mela) 2024'.

in jewelry design since completing her education at the Indus Valley School of Arts, shared her journey of blending artistic innovation with cultural heritage.

The annual feature of Lok Mela arranged by the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok

Virsa) served as a reminder that cultural heritage is not just a relic of the past but a living, breathing part of our identity. By inspiring the youth to embrace and evolve these traditions, Lok Mela ensures that Pakistan's cultural tapestry remains vibrant for future generations to come.

Mayor inspects projects

KABUL (BNA): Mayor of Kabul, Mawlawi Abdul Rashid, conducted an inspection of ongoing road construction projects across the city. The Mayor reviewed several key projects, including the asphalt paving of the North-West Main Road, the road linking Qambar Square to Qargha, the construction of Padola Road, the rehabilitation of roads in Kabul's Mandawi area, and the construction of an underground commercial market opposite Pul-e-Khishti Mosque.

The Frontier Post

Jamadi-ul-Awwal 15 1446 — Monday, November 18, 2024

Construction of 3 hospitals

PANJSHIR (BNA): The spokesman for Panjshir province announced that the Ministry of Public Health has finalized plans for the construction of three well equipped 30-bed hospitals in the province, with practical work set to commence soon. These hospitals, directed by His Excellency Amir-ul-Mu'mineen, the Supreme Leader of IEA, will be built in the districts of Dara, Hisa-e-Awal, and Paryan to enhance healthcare services for residents of the region.

Kabir holds meeting with Afghan envoy in Malaysia



KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, met with Naqibullah Ahmadi, the Acting Envoy of Afghanistan in Malaysia. The Presidential Palace stated in a statement that during the meeting, Naqibullah Ahmadi provided information to Deputy Prime Minister about the

achievements and progress of the Afghan Embassy in Malaysia.

He mentioned that the embassy has resolved issues faced by Afghan students, immigrants, and traders in the host country and maintains regular contact with them.

Ahmadi added that senior Malaysian officials have a positive view of Afghanistan and have

repeatedly pledged to share their experiences to help rebuild Afghanistan in collaboration with the Islamic Emirate.

According to him, the recent visit of a Malaysian delegation to Afghanistan was highly significant and had a positive impact on the relations between the two countries.

Mawlawi Abdul Kabir appreciated the efforts of

the Afghan Embassy in Malaysia and emphasized the importance of developing relations between Kabul and Kuala Lumpur. He noted the need to further enhance these ties.

The Deputy Prime Minister also instructed the acting ambassador to prioritize resolving the problems of Afghans and to represent Afghanistan effectively.

Aid for 3.5m women in Afghanistan announced

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has announced providing critical assistance to 3.5 million mothers and pregnant women in Afghanistan.

These efforts were made between January and October of this year with the support of the US Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

On Sunday, November 17, UNFPA stated that pregnant women and new mothers in Afghanistan face heightened risks and vulnerabilities due to the ongoing crisis in the country.

The UN agency's announcement comes amid alarming statistics revealing that a mother dies every two hours in Afghanistan due to preventable complications. The European Union has reported that 90% of women in the country lack access to essential healthcare services.

Afghanistan currently has one of the highest maternal and child mortality rates globally, underscoring the dire state of its healthcare system and the urgent need for continued humanitarian assistance.

The ongoing restrictions imposed on women and girls in Afghanistan, including bans on education and employment, have further exacerbated their vulnerability. These measures have also hindered women's ability to access healthcare and contribute to household income.

Poverty remains a significant challenge in Afghanistan, where millions face food insecurity and limited resources, further compounding the humanitarian crisis. Women and children are among the most affected groups, bearing the brunt of the deteriorating socio-economic conditions.

The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is deeply intertwined with the systemic restrictions on women and girls. The inability to access education and employment opportunities leaves them more vulnerable to poverty and health risks, creating a cycle of dependency and suffering.

Uruzgan establishes security unit

URUZGAN (TOLONews): Local officials in Uruzgan have announced the establishment of a security unit to protect the province's historical sites. They say efforts to restore historical monuments in the province have also begun.

"We have established a security unit in Uruzgan to ensure the serious protection of historical sites. We have shared information about some historical areas with the relevant ministry to collaborate on restoring these sites," said Agha Wali Qureshi, head of the Information and Culture of Uruzgan.

Meanwhile, residents and tourists emphasize that some historical sites damaged by past wars and natural disasters urgently need restoration.

One such historical site is Kafir Qala in the Mehrabad area of Tirinkot city, the capital of Uruzgan, parts of which have been damaged due to past conflicts and natural events.

"We came here to visit this historical site. It's truly a beautiful area. We enjoyed it a lot, but one thing is clear—these sites need restoration," said, Abdul Wali Jansar, a tourist visiting Uruzgan.

Imran Khan, a tourist from Paktia, added: "When we visited Uruzgan and its historical sites, we realized that many of them were destroyed by floods and wars. Some of these sites have also been seized by locals. The government must take serious steps to restore and protect these historical areas."

According to the Uruzgan Department of Information and Culture, 136 historical sites have been registered in the province. Among them, Kafir Qala, Takht-e-Suleiman, and Qala-e-Morcha are considered the most notable.

Kunduz invests \$40 million in rice processing factories

KUNDUZ (TOLONews): The Directorate of Industry and Commerce of Kunduz said that over the past three years, nearly \$40 million has been invested in the construction of rice processing factories in the province.

With the establishment of these factories, rice products are being processed to standard quality, creating employment opportunities for many people.

Kunduz is one of the agricultural provinces in the north of the country known for rice cultivation and production. Many farmers in the province sustain their livelihoods through this activity.

"Fifteen new factories have been established in the districts of Kunduz province, with a total investment of approximately \$30 to \$40 million. If these factories start operat-

ing, they will provide jobs for dozens of people," said Mohammad Rahim Seerat, head of Kunduz's Industry and Commerce.

Some factory owners are calling for greater support from the caretaker government for their activities and for the prevention of foreign rice imports.

"Alhamdulillah, rice production in the northern part of the country exceeds regional demand. Now, companies have been established that process products to standard levels like foreign countries. We ask the Islamic Emirate to stop the import of foreign rice," said Mohammadullah, the head of a rice production factory in Kunduz.

"We request the Islamic Emirate to support us so we can process and supply rice properly within the country," said, Ajab Khan

Khalil, the manager of a production factory in Kunduz. Several workers employed in these factories welcome the establishment of such facilities.

"I am very happy to work in such a factory. Other young people can also find jobs like I have in these factories," said Sibghatullah, one of the workers.

"The activation of these factories provides good job opportunities for young people who have studied but are unemployed," said Abdul Samad, another worker.

Rice, wheat, melons, watermelons, and grapes are among the important agricultural and horticultural products of Kunduz, which, in addition to meeting domestic needs, are also exported to other provinces and foreign countries.

117m afn public welfare projects completed

KABUL (BNA): Dozens of developmental public welfare projects, costing 117 million Afghanis, have been completed in Farah province during the first six months of the current solar hijri Year.

Mufti Mohammad Naseem Sarhang, the Head of Rural Rehabilitation and Development in Farah, told BNA correspondent that 23 development projects, including 10 small water storage dams and 13 water supply networks, have been completed and made operational in the center and districts of the province. These projects were funded by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and cooperat-



ing organizations.

With the completion of these initiatives, 3,500 families now have access to clean drinking water, and hundreds of families are benefiting from irrigation water.

Additionally, over the past six months, the Direct-

orate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, with financial support from the World Food Programme (WFP), distributed food assistance to 84,000 vulnerable and needy families across the province's center and districts.

Loan fund for Afghan teachers now active

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Education has announced that the loan fund for public school teachers, which was previously operational in four provinces, has now been expanded to 17 additional provinces since the return of the Islamic Emirate, bringing the total to 21 provinces.

Mansoor Ahmad Hamza, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Education, stated that the purpose of establishing the loan fund is to address the economic challenges faced by teachers in the country.

According to Hamza, the process is carried out under a specific guideline, ensuring loans are provided to

teachers based on their level of need.

The spokesperson said: "The loan fund for teachers under the Ministry of Education of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is currently active in 21 provinces. The Ministry has created these funds to address the challenges faced by teachers. Loans are provided based on a specific procedure and the eligibility of teachers."

At the same time, some public school teachers have expressed satisfaction with the establishment of the loan fund.

Wazhma Elias, a public school teacher, commented on the fund, saying: "Teachers face many chal-

lenges because their salaries are very low, and their economic situation is poor."

Ahmad Qaseem Raufi, another teacher, added: "In the Ministry of Education, there was a fund called the Teacher's Fund. Teachers who wanted to take loans from this fund were able to borrow up to 25,000 Afghanis, which they would repay monthly from their salaries over the course of a year."

The Ministry's spokesperson said that the loan distribution process is managed by the education directorates in the respective provinces, with plans to extend the program to other provinces in the future.

Hunters arrested for killing rare brown bear

BADAKHSHAN (Khaama Press): Local authorities of in Badakhshan province report the arrest of hunters involved in capturing a rare brown bear in the province.

The Directorate of Information and Culture in Badakhshan announced that the hunters were apprehended in the Shaki district after targeting this endangered species.

Badakhshan and Nuristan provinces in northern and northeastern Afghanistan are key habitats for rare wildlife species. The hunting of these animals has been ongoing in the region for years.

The snow leopard, Marco Polo sheep, and brown bear are among the endangered species in these ecosystems, frequently targeted by hunters.

Recently, images circulated on social media showing hunters posing around a brown bear they had hunted. Local officials confirmed that these photos were taken in Shaki district, where the hunters



were arrested.

Faizur Rahman Ebrahimi, head of environmental protection in Badakhshan, emphasized that hunting rare wildlife species is prohibited and violators will face legal consequences.

The arrest of these hunters reflects the increasing efforts of local authorities to protect endangered wildlife in Afghanistan. However, the persistence of illegal hunt-

ing highlights the need for stricter enforcement and public awareness about the importance of conservation.

Preserving these rare species is crucial not only for Afghanistan's biodiversity but also for the global ecological balance. Strengthened policies and community engagement are essential to safeguarding the unique ecosystems of regions like Badakhshan and Nuristan.

Efforts to restore Kunar's forests amid destruction

KUNAR (TOLONews): Local officials in Kunar say that because of the past two decades of conflict, missile attacks, and timber smuggling, around 3,000 hectares of forests in this province have been destroyed.

They add that with the cooperation of aid organizations, at least 300 hectares of these forests have so far been restored, and to prevent timber smuggling, Green Unit forces have also been activated in this province.

Kunar is one of the provinces where most areas are covered with forests, but these forests have suffered significant damage.

"In the past 20 years, for

various reasons including timber smuggling, bombings, and missile attacks, nearly 3,000 hectares of forests have been destroyed. Since the Islamic Emirate came to power, extensive efforts have been made in this area, thanks to Allah. Under the leadership of the Department of Agriculture and with the cooperation of aid organizations, about 300 hectares of forests have been restored in various districts through the planting of fruit and non-fruit-bearing saplings," said Sulaiman Ayman, head of Kunar's Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock.

Residents also express satisfaction with the

Islamic Emirate's efforts to restore the forests and call for more attention to this issue.

"The forests that have been cut down should be replanted by the Islamic Emirate, and they should supervise them. Also, those who cut down forests should be punished," said Shir Hassan, a resident of Kunar.

Noorullah, another resident of Kunar, added: "Saplings should be planted again in these areas, and councils made up of local people should be established to protect the forests so that they are not destroyed in the future."

Another resident of this province, Islamuddin, said: "Cutting down forests leads

to water shortages. Therefore, we ask the officials of the Islamic Emirate to prevent the cutting of forests."

According to the Kunar Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, 120 Green Unit forces have so far been deployed in various districts of this province. These forces have managed to seize about 16,000 cubic feet of timber that had been illegally cut from the forests.

The activity of Green Unit forces and the restoration of forests are considered an important step toward preserving natural resources and preventing further destruction of the province's forests.

\$200 million cement factory to be established in Balkh

KABUL (BNA): Local officials in Balkh province have announced that two Afghan and Chinese companies are planning to establish a cement factory in the region at an estimated cost of \$200 million.

Mawlawi Noorullah Abo-Edris, Deputy Governor of Balkh, told a Bakhter Agency reporter that these companies are set to invest in the construction of a cement factory in the province, valued at \$200 million.

He further explained that the factory will be built on 300 acres of land, with an annual production capacity of one million tons of cement. The project will not only meet the cement



needs of Afghanistan, particularly in the northern provinces, but will also create employment for 1,000

individuals.

It is worth noting that the establishment of this factory will reduce the import of

cement from neighboring countries and mark a significant step towards self-sufficiency for Afghanistan.

27 Afghan migrants arrested in Turkey

KABUL (TOLONews): Turkish media have reported that 27 Afghan nationals attempting to enter the coastal city of Çanakkale, Türkiye, were arrested and transferred to the city's migrant return center.

Meanwhile, some Afghan migrants residing in Türkiye have told TOLONews that they face severe economic and social challenges in the country, with little to no support from organizations assisting migrants in Türkiye.

Afghan migrants have further noted that restrictions on migrants in Türkiye have significantly increased.

Ahmad Yurtash, an Afghan migrant in Türkiye, described the challenges, stating: "Those

who have come and are staying illegally are arrested by Türkiye's migration department and transferred to camps. After weeks or even months, following several days of detention, they are deported back to Afghanistan."

Mohammad Jamal Muslim, another Afghan migrant in Türkiye, added: "Afghans living in Türkiye today are enduring some of the hardest days in history. They suffer from unemployment, poverty, lack of resources, absence of proper documentation, lack of support from the migration department, and the absence of health insurance."

In recent months, arrests and restrictions on Afghan migrants have intensified in neighboring and region-

al countries, including Türkiye.

Senior officials of the Islamic Emirate have repeatedly called on host countries to refrain from mistreating Afghan migrants.

Ali Reza Karimi, an activist for migrants' rights, told TOLONews: "International organizations should support Türkiye and enhance humanitarian services. Türkiye must respect migrants' rights and increase social support for them."

Previously, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation reported the deportation of more than 300 Afghan migrants from Türkiye on the 18th and 19th of Aqrab (November) this year.

Ottawa taking detention of Canadian very seriously

KABUL (Ariana News): The Canadian government is taking "very seriously" the detention in Afghanistan of a former member of Canada's elite special forces, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said.

Retired soldier David Lavery, known in Kabul as Canadian Dave, was detained by the Islamic Emirate shortly after landing in Kabul on Monday, according to Canadian broadcaster CTV News.

His whereabouts are unknown, the outlet added, citing unnamed sources.

Asked about Lavery, Trudeau said: "I can first of all assure you that the Canadian government is taking very, very seriously the situation."

Pakistan’s revolutionary housing initiative emerges as a global exemplar for climate resilience at COP29

F.P. Report

BAKU, AZERBAIJAN: Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, showcased the remarkable achievements of the Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affecteds (SPHF) program in a keynote address, positioning it as a global model for climate-resilient reconstruction.

A humanitarian housing program larger than the population of 154 countries captured global attention at COP29 today,

In a landmark address at a conference A Blueprint for Global Resilience COP29 regarding the Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affecteds in Pakistan Pavilion, Baku, Azerbaijan Murad Ali shah stated that SPHF unveiled its revolutionary approach to climate-resilient reconstruction. At a landmark panel discussion in the Pakistan Pavilion titled, "Sindh People's Housing for Flood

Affectees: A Blueprint for Global Resilience," international development leaders explored how this Government of Sindh initiative has redefined the parameters of post-disaster recovery and community rebuilding.

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah emphasized that the project is inspired by the vision of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, with a mission to build resilience for flood-affected communities.

Shah highlighted several key milestones: Currently, 2.1 million homes are being constructed. Over 1 million bank accounts have been opened, facilitating 810,000 disbursements to families affected by floods. In Sindh alone, 300,000 climate-resilient houses have already been completed. The next phase will focus on enhancing Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities, with 60,000 resilient settlements

currently in progress.

In a gesture of gratitude, a flood-affected village has been named after UN Secretary-General António Guterres, recognizing his support. CM Sindh expressed his sincere appreciation to the global community for their unwavering assistance.

The keynote address was followed by a high-level panel discussion featuring: * Mr. Khalid Mehmood Shaikh, Chief Executive Officer of SPHF

* Ms. Xiaohong Yang, Deputy Director General, Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank

* Dr. Issa Faye, Director-General, Global Practices and Partnerships, Islamic Development Bank

* Dr. Valerie Hickey, Global Director for the Environment Department, World Bank

Beginning the session, Ms. Xiaohong Yang, when asked about the inclusion of

technology and transparency in the project's execution, said, "It truly deserves outstanding applause. The transformational digitalization through the MIS mechanism means that anywhere, anytime, we can see how funds are being spent and how many facilities are being built. We know the exact number of women beneficiaries and are working to create a resilient system for future floods by including community input in the project design. This strategy of transparency adopted by the Government of Sindh leadership has accelerated the efficiency of the project tremendously."

The initiative's cutting-edge Management Information System (MIS) has revolutionized aid distribution through direct beneficiary transfers, eliminating intermediaries and setting new global benchmarks for transparency in humanitarian assistance.

Addressing what motivated the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) to support the SPHF initiative, Dr. Issa Faye stated, "It is in our charter to show solidarity and support the countries of our Ummah. We need to deliver for the people of Pakistan. Our strategy is based on two pillars: one, green, sustainable infrastructure development-building resilience-which completely aligns with this project; and second, human capital development. These two pillars provide the framework to support this project. Beyond this, we have witnessed the deep commitment from the Sindh government toward rehabilitating rural Sindh, reaffirming our ongoing support."

SPHF's pioneering approach extends beyond housing to comprehensive community rebuilding. Through innovative settlement-level planning, the program integrates GIS

technology, household surveys, and community engagement to create climate-resilient villages.

"In many ways, we view this initiative as more than a project. This is a miracle happening in Sindh province-for decades, there have been smaller floods in many countries, and governments have never figured out how to provide housing. Government of Sindh's efforts are highly commendable in this regard. It's not just about the house or bricks and mortar; it's about the family living in that house-about families now living in 300,000 houses that have been built, finding independence. Through monsoons this year and previously, to know they are safe; their livelihoods are safe. This miracle is equivalent to a million job opportunities, financial inclusion, and security within the community. It's allowed tens of thousands of women

to open bank accounts and acquire land certificates safeguarding their future-they now have assets they can leverage," Dr. Valerie Hickey expressed, sharing how the World Bank views large-scale housing initiatives like SPHF in building climate resilience for historically marginalized communities.

Speaking on SPHF's transformative impact as the world's most significant post-disaster housing reconstruction effort, Mr. Khalid Mehmood Shaikh highlighted two major achievements: "First, the sheer scale of impact, reaching 15 million people, and second, the unprecedented advancement in women's empowerment and financial literacy. When people with meagre financial resources were entrusted with \$1,000 for rebuilding their houses, they demonstrated exceptional entrepreneurial skills. They opened bank

accounts, withdrew money, made informed decisions about materials and masons, and built remarkable houses that we now see across Sindh. This proves that when people are empowered to manage their resources, it opens doors not just for housing, but for their overall prosperity, health, and education."

The discussion at COP29 highlighted how SPHF's multi-hazard-resistant housing aligns with climate adaptation goals while also driving economic growth, women's empowerment, and social transformation. Panelists emphasized that the initiative not only rebuilds communities but transforms them, offering a replicable model of climate resilience. By integrating technology, community engagement, and sustainable practices, SPHF has set a global benchmark for disaster recovery efforts.

Russia pounds Ukraine’s power grid in air strike

KYIV (Reuters): Russia unleashed its largest air strike on Ukraine in almost three months on Sunday, launching 120 missiles and 90 drones that killed at least seven people and caused severe damage to the power system, officials said.

Ukrainians had been bracing for weeks for a renewed Russian attack on an already hobbled energy system, fearing long winter blackouts and mounting psychological pressure almost 1,000 days after Russia launched its full-scale invasion.

The strikes, which caused numerous power cuts, came at a time when the impending U.S. presidency of Donald Trump, who has pledged to end the war without saying how, has raised the prospect of a push for negotiations.

Air defences could be heard engaging drones over the capital Kyiv in the night, and a series of powerful blasts boomed across the city centre during the missile attack. Residents huddled in underground metro stations, wrapped in winter coats.

"Severe damage to Ukraine's energy system, including to DTEK power stations. These attacks

again highlight Ukraine's need for additional air defence systems from our allies," said Maxim Timchenko, CEO of DTEK, Ukraine's largest private power company.

The extent of the damage was hard to assess. After repeated Russian attacks on the power grid, officials reveal little detailed information about the outcome of strikes and the state of the network.

Officials confirmed damage to "critical infrastructure" or power cuts in regions from Volyn, Rivne, Lviv in the west to Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia in the southeast.

DTEK imposed emergency power cuts in the southern Odesa region, but had lifted them in three other regions by late morning. Emergency work was ongoing in the Odesa, Rivne and Volyn regions, national grid operator Ukrenergo said.

Russia's defence ministry said it had launched a massive strike on energy facilities that supply Ukraine's military-industrial complex. "The enemy's target was our energy infrastructure across Ukraine," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Kyiv's air force said it had destroyed 104 of the incoming 120 missiles and shot down 42 drones. Another 41 disappeared from radar, it said.

At least seven people were killed, in the regions of Lviv, Mykolaiv, Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk, authorities said.

Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister Mihai Popsoi said Russian missiles and drones had violated Moldovan airspace during the attack. NATO member Poland, which also borders Ukraine, said it had scrambled its air force as a precaution.

Russia last launched a major barrage at Kyiv on Aug. 26, when officials said it had fired more than 200 drones and missiles at targets across Ukraine.

Its latest onslaught piles more pressure on Ukraine as Moscow's troops notch up their fastest battlefield gains in the east since 2022 in their effort to seize the entire industrial Donbas region.

Ukrainian troops are meanwhile trying to hold an area of land that they seized in Russia's Kursk region in August, something Kyiv has said could one day be a bargaining chip.



KYIV, UKRAINE: A woman with a dog shelters at the Taras Shevchenko subway station amid a Russian air strike on Sunday.

Arab-Islamic Summit declares....

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country's existing crises. Aboul Gheit called for a ceasefire and full implementation of UN Resolution 1701 to ensure border security.

The summit, he added, sends a clear message: unchecked Israeli actions threaten regional stability and global peace.

In a historic move at the summit, the OIC, League of Arab States, and African Union Commission signed an agreement to intensify joint efforts in support of the Palestinian cause.

Witnessed by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan and senior leaders, the pact underscores a unified stance among Arab, Islamic, and African nations to advocate for Palestinian rights and address regional chal-

lenges.

The agreement will help align diplomatic and humanitarian strategies, push for a two-state solution, and rally support for Palestine at the United Nations and other global platforms. They emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts to address human rights violations and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Palestine.

The resolution reaffirmed unwavering support for the Palestinian cause and condemned escalating Israeli aggression in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria. It emphasized the Palestinian right to self-determination, establishment of an independent state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and right of refugees to return under UN

Resolution 194.

It declared East Jerusalem a 'red lin' for Arab and Islamic nations, pledging to defend its Arab and Islamic identity.

The resolution urged international sanctions on Israel, suspension of its UN participation, and full UN membership for Palestine. It highlighted the need for humanitarian aid to Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria while supporting Palestinian unity and Gaza's reconstruction.

In a significant step, the resolution welcomed a tripartite cooperation mechanism between the OIC, Arab League, and African Union to bolster advocacy for Palestinian rights. It tasked the League of Arab States and OIC secretaries-general to oversee the resolution's implementation.

Saif visits Paraplegic Centre Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, visited the Paraplegic Centre Peshawar.

During his visit, he toured various sections and departments, including rehabilitation wards for persons with disabilities (PWDs), the physio gym, the orthotics department, the autism section, the clubfoot clinic, the occupational therapy gym, and several other areas.

Barrister Saif praised the Paraplegic Centre Peshawar as a unique national institution providing exceptional rehabilitation services for PWDs in Pakistan and the neighboring country of Afghanistan. He highlighted the center's significant role in rehabilitating individuals with spinal cord injuries and disabilities resulting from accidents, empowering them to lead productive lives through comprehensive training programs.

He further emphasized that the center's in-house workshop manufactures high-quality, customized wheelchairs and supportive devices, tailored to meet the specific needs of persons with disabilities. These locally produced aids align with modern standards, offering improved functionality and comfort.

Barrister Saif recognized that these initiatives not only enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities but also promote their financial independence by enabling active participation in economic activities.

Commending the center's exemplary contributions in rehabilitation and the production of customized assistive devices, Barrister Saif assured that the government would take serious measures to further develop this unique local industry.

He also emphasized the provincial government's commitment to prioritizing locally manufactured wheelchairs and supportive devices over imported ones, thereby promoting the indigenous industry and conserving valuable foreign exchange.

Naqvi hails security forces

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has paid homage to the seven brave security personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty while successfully thwarting a terrorist attack on a checkpoint in Kalat.

The operation resulted in the elimination of six terrorists, averting a major threat.

In his statement, Naqvi commended the heroic efforts of the security forces, stating, "The brave sons of the nation sacrificed their lives to foil the nefarious designs of terrorists. By risking their lives, these valiant soldiers sent six terrorists to their doom."

The minister emphasized that the sacrifices made by the Pakistan Army's personnel for the peace and security of the country are unparalleled.



BAKU: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah addressing a conferecnce ‘A Blueprint for Global Resilience COP29’.

Pope for investigation to determine if Israel’s attacks constitute ‘genocide’

ROME (AP): Pope Francis has called for an investigation to determine if Israel's attacks in Gaza constitute genocide, according to excerpts released Sunday from an upcoming new book ahead of the pontiff's jubilee year.

It's the first time that Francis has openly urged for an investigation of genocide allegations over Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip. In September, he said Israel's attacks in Gaza and Lebanon have been "immoral" and disproportionate, and that its military has gone beyond the rules of war.

The book, by Hernan Reyes Alcaide and based on interviews with the Pope, is entitled "Hope never disappoints. Pilgrims toward a better world."

It will be released on Tuesday ahead of the pope's 2025 jubilee. Francis' yearlong jubilee is expected to bring more than 30 million pilgrims to

Rome to celebrate the Holy Year.

"According to some experts, what is happening in Gaza has the characteristics of a genocide," the pope said in excerpts published Sunday by the Italian daily La Stampa.

"We should investigate carefully to determine whether it fits into the technical definition formulated by jurists and international bodies," he added.

Last year, Francis met separately with relatives of Israeli hostages in Gaza and Palestinians living through the war and set off a firestorm by using words that Vatican diplomats usually avoid: "terrorism" and, according to the Palestinians, "genocide."

Francis spoke at the time about the suffering of both Israelis and Palestinians after his meetings, which were arranged before the Israeli-Hamas hostage deal and a temporary halt in fighting was announced.

The pontiff, who last week also met with a delegation of Israeli hostages who were released and their families pressing the campaign to bring the remaining captives home had editorial control over the upcoming book.

The war started when the militant Hamas group attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people and abducting 250 as hostages and taking them back to Gaza, where dozens still remain.

Israel's subsequent year-long military campaign has killed more than 43,000 people, according to Gaza health officials, whose count doesn't distinguish between civilians and fighters, though they say more than half of the dead are women and children.

The Israel-Hamas conflict in Gaza has triggered several legal cases at international courts in The Hague involving requests for arrest warrants as well

as accusations and denials of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

In the new book, Francis also speaks about migration and the problem of integrating migrants in their host countries.

"Faced with this challenge, no country can be left alone and no one can think of addressing the issue in isolation through more restrictive and repressive laws, sometimes approved under the pressure of fear or in search of electoral advantages," Francis said.

"On the contrary, just as we see that there is a globalization of indifference, we must respond with the globalization of charity and cooperation," he added. Francis also mentioned the "still open wound of the war in Ukraine has led thousands of people to abandon their homes, especially during the first months of the conflict."

Hafiz Naeem urges all political parties to unite for peace

KARACHI (INP): Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman urged all the political parties to unite in order to establish peace in the country.

He was addressing a press conference in Karachi on Sunday.

The JI strongly condemned the killing of party's general secretary of Bajaur chapter.

"It is the responsibility of federal

and provincial governments to ensure security of the citizens. Jamaat-e-Islami is the largest political party of Bajaur," said Hafiz Naeem.

He said that Pakistan should avoid to fight any proxy war in the region.

The Afghan government should also play a responsible role to achieve peace in the region, he added.

The JI emir also highlighted the need to address the issues in

Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"All the political parties should sit together and resolve the country's problems collectively," he said.

Hafiz Naeem also grilled the government for its handling of the economy and national issues.

The deteriorating law and order situation is also affecting our economy badly, he added.



LIANYUNGANG, CHINA: Aerial view of fishing boats moored at the Liandao Central Fishing Port to take shelter from wind and waves brought by cold wave on Sunday in Lianyungang, Jiangsu Province of China.