

Tribal elder among 4 killed
F.P. Report

BANNU: At least four people including a tribal elder and a woman were killed when armed men fired multiple shots on their vehicle in Janikhel area of Bannu, police informed on Tuesday. Tribal elder, Malak Shudi Khan along with four others, was traveling in a pickup van when armed assailants intercepted their vehicle near Sin Tanga, Wariki Janikhel area and started indiscriminate firing on them.



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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting of Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan.

Preparations underway for Nov 24 protest: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, said that preparations were underway in all constituencies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the protest on November 24. Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has directed all elected representatives to intensify their campaigns in their respective constituencies.

"To prepare for November 24, rallies and corner meetings are being organized in all constituencies. Barrister Dr. Saif stated" He said that thousands of people, led by elected representatives from each constituency, would join caravans that will converge on the motorway and proceed to Islamabad under the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

Barrister Dr. Saif warned the federal government to refrain from fascist tactics, or face the consequences. He emphasized that November 24 will be a day of supremacy for the Constitution and law in the country. The Advisor expressed confidence that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would participate in large numbers, ensuring the success of the protest.

Political parties always keep doors open for dialogue: Aleema Khan, sister of PTI

founder Imran Khan, stated that political parties should always keep the doors open for dialogue.

Speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail alongside PTI chairman Barrister Gohar, she emphasised that the peaceful protest scheduled for Nov 24 is their democratic right. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur briefed the PTI founder about the Nov 24 protest.

Aleema revealed that Barrister Gohar and Ali Amin Gandapur had sought Imran Khan's permission to initiate dialogue. Imran Khan underscored the importance of discussions centered on the rule of law, restoring the people's mandate, and releasing innocent party workers, she maintained. "Imran Khan has given a deadline until Thursday for negotiations, hinting that Friday could become a day of celebration if significant progress is made," she added.

Meanwhile, PTI Secretary of Information Sheikh Waqas Akram has categorically denied any contact between the party and the federal government.

In a statement, Sheikh Waqas Akram dismissed rumors of dialogue, stating, "Our party has no contact with the government, nor will there be any. The news about such communication is baseless, and we strongly condemn it." He further

asserted that such reports aim to undermine PTI's preparations for its November 24 protest. "Let it be clear: no one can stop our protest now," he added.

PTI founder and former prime minister Imran Khan, currently incarcerated in Adiala Jail, has called for a decisive protest on Sunday, November 24. He has urged the nation and party workers to take to the streets on that day. In a related development, an audio clip of Imran Khan's wife, Bushra Bibi, addressing PTI workers at the KP Chief Minister's residence has surfaced. In the audio, she advised workers to strategize to avoid arrests, urging the need for alternative plans in the event of crackdowns.

Bushra Bibi also indicated that only those with evidence, such as videos of their protests, would be considered for party tickets in the upcoming elections. Separately, Bushra Bibi held separate meetings with some party officials. She also met with Gul Zafar, a leader from the Bajaur agency, and praised his contributions to the party on behalf of the PTI founder. Meanwhile, the federal government has imposed Section 144 in Islamabad to prevent the PTI protest. The law bans all political and religious gatherings, rallies, and processions in the capital.

Pak-ADB sign \$500m loan deal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Asian Development Bank (ADB) today signed a landmark five hundred million dollar loan agreement regarding 'Climate and Disaster Resilience Enhancement Program'.

Secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs Dr. Kazim Niaz, and Country Director, Pakistan Resident Mission, Asian Development Bank Ms. Emma Fan, signed the agreement at a ceremony in Islamabad today. While giving consent to Ministry of Economic Affairs regarding this agreement, the Federal Minister Ahad Cheema said that the signing of the agreement underscores Pakistan's commitment to prioritize climate change initiatives and scaling up disaster risk financing using a risk-layered approach.

In their remarks, Secretary Economic Affairs and ADB Country Director said that this program is designed as a programmatic approach and aims at strengthening Pakistan's capacity for climate change adaptation and disaster risk management. They said it will also address the country's vulnerabilities to natural disasters and climate impacts.

VPN case: LHC issues notice to govt

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday issued notices to federal government and others over a petition against slowed down Internet speed and blocking the VPN.

Justice Iqbal Chaudhry of the high court heard a petition, filed by Azhar Siddique advocate, challenging a slowed Internet service and the blockage of the Virtual Private Network (VPN). Petitioner's counsel pointed out that with slowed down of internet speed the users' facing disruption of the service and also grappling difficulties in the internet use. Petitioner pleaded to the court that the government is also going to impose ban over the VPN without any justification. The petition seeks the court order for ending obstacles in the Internet speed and restraining ban on the VPN.

The Frontier Post

50th polio case reported
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) has reported another polio case in Pakistan, bringing the total number of cases in 2024 to 50. It reported in media that National Reference Lab identified the latest case involving a 20-month-old girl from Tank district in KP. Tests confirmed the presence of Wild Poliovirus Type 1 (WPV1).

PM says no progress, prosperity sans peace

— wants all stakeholders to lend helping hands in economic, political stability; links it with end to terrorism

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday urged all the political leadership to continue lending their helping hands to the federation in overcoming the economic challenges, which was requisite to financial and political stability in the country.

The prime minister also clearly linked the stability and peace in the country with complete elimination of the specter of terrorism, which had resurfaced its head recently in southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

Addressing a meeting of the apex committee of the National Action Plan attended by the political and military leadership, the prime minister said with the grace of Allah Almighty, the economic efforts and sincerity of purpose, showed by all the stakeholders in the governments from the provincial chief ministers to the federation, the country was moving on the path to stability.

He commended the efforts put forth by all the federal and provincial governments, saying that without it, they could not move forward. The prime minister said the economic and political stability were interrelated with each other and no society could aspire to progress with these two vital factors. "It is imperative for the economic and political stability that the leadership should play their due role," he added.

He also thanked the provincial governments for their support in getting the approval of IMF programme, adding that all the provincial chief ministers had fully supported it. Prime Minister Sharif said that as result of these efforts, stock market was on the bullish trend, inflation dipped to a single digit, State Bank of Pakistan also curtailed its interest rates mark to 15 percent, besides country's IT export witnessed a record surge while the remittances saw significant increase.

He opined that all the indicators were showing stability in the process, however, he stressed that country's path to progress would open further when investment was enhanced. The foreign investors could follow the local investors once they were encouraged to invest in various sectors. The prime minister expressed the confidence that it would be the last IMF programme in Pakistan's history, if they worked with honesty, integrity and dedication.

For how long, the country would depend on IMF programme? he posed a question and expressed gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and China

COAS warns of consequences for disrupting national security

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir warned that those who obstruct the country's security and prevent the military from performing its duties will have to face the consequences. Speaking at a meeting of the Apex Committee Session of the National Action Plan chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, COAS emphasized that every Pakistani is a soldier in the war against terrorism. "We must all join hands to fight the scourge of terrorism," he said. The army chief further stated the Constitution placed the responsibility of the Pakistan's internal and external security on the military, and anyone who creates obstacles in Pakistan's security will have to bear the consequences. General Asim Munir also stated the Pakistan Army and law enforcement agencies are rendering sacrifices to address shortcomings in governance.

for their financial support. He also emphasized upon the need of broadening the tax net, besides overcoming the issues of leakage and evasion of billion rupees taxes, circular debt, gas and power theft which would supplement the national coffers, thus getting rid of the foreign debts. "All have to give lending hands; it is not about you and me; it is about us. Then the country will move forward," he said, adding that during the past eight months, there was no governance scam which reflected the strength of the government.

He thanked the chief ministers for their massive efforts and focus on improvement of economy, adding Punjab chief minister led with agriculture sector reforms, while the KP chief minister also got similar legislation approved from his cabinet. The Sindh chief minister was also making sincere efforts. The prime minister also regretted that despite the valuable mineral wealth and brilliant minds the country possessed, billions of rupees had been wasted on litigation over Reko Diq and Chinot minerals reserves cases in the past.

"We have to move in unison, though it may be a difficult task but no nation can emerge successful without unity," he observed and cited the examples of Japan and Germany, that emerged stronger after the World Wars. The prime minister enumerating government's efforts, said that the task force on power sector had successfully negotiated with the five IPPs and with these efforts, they were moving step by step towards the right direction.

He also underlined that today, the well to do segment of the society had to make sacrifices for the country's prosperity. The prime minister said the country's progress and prosperity was linked with peace and end to terrorism. Without blaming anyone, he said that he could say that during Nawaz Sharif's tenure in 2014, they

were succeeded in effacing the menace of terrorism which was also acknowledged by the world.

At that time all the representatives of the entire nation and military leadership had gathered at this place to take unanimous decisions, he recollected. In the year 2018, terrorism was eliminated from the country and in this fight, about 80,000 people had sacrificed their lives whereas the country suffered over \$130 billion losses. He said, recently, this specter again raised its head in KP and Balochistan provinces which required questions to be answered.

If not eliminated completely, the prime minister said, all their efforts which he had elaborated at the economic and political stability would come to naught. He termed terrorism as the huge challenge for Pakistan. Certain parts of KP southern districts and Balochistan provinces were witnessing the worst incidents of barbarity at the hands of terrorists and stressed that its head should be crushed.

The prime minister also asked for reconsideration of calls for political sit-ins at the high-level events including SCO Conference in Islamabad and advised the political leaders to ponder over it with cold minds. He said the country was no doubt dear to everyone, but the choice was for them as the 'time and tide wait for none'.

About other steps, the prime minister said that reforms were being taken in FBR to curb corruption and mismanagement. He cited an incident in March this year, when an officer brought to the notice of his high ups, with a letter, that an account of 80-year-old women was used with collusion of certain employees for the purpose of fake inversion. It could have resulted in loss of billions of rupees to the country if the scam had taken place. An amount of Rs370 million was already embezzled, he added.

PHC dispose off Gandapur plea

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Waqar dispose-off Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur petition against National Accountability Bureau (NAB) call-up regarding assets beyond income, on Tuesday.

The court's decision came after it was informed that Gandapur didn't appear before the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) despite being served notices, and no new notice has been issued.

The counsel Alam Khan Adeenzai advocate argued that case against Ali Amin Gandapur was related to assets worth Rs304 million, which is below the Rs500 million threshold after amendments in NAB laws. He argued that NAB can only investigate cases involving embezzlement of over Rs500 million.

In the meantime, Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim remarked that {You/Chief Minister/ PTI} are satisfied/ happy with the amendments made in NAB laws. However, NAB prosecutor, Hashmat Jehangir stated that the inquiry is ongoing and Gandapur was served notices, but he didn't appear.

ATC issues arrest warrants for KP CM

F.P. Report

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court in Lahore has issued non-bailable arrest warrants for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. The case was heard by ATC Judge Manzoor Ali Gul, where Gandapur failed to appear before the court. The warrants were issued in connection with a case registered at the Manawan Police Station. It should be noted that a police case had been registered against the CM Gandapur under serious charges for smashing car windows during a political rally in Kahna.

The court dismissed the case due to the lack of a new notice. The decision was made in accordance with NAB's amended laws, which empower the bureau to investigate cases involving embezzlement of over RS500 million.

PHC extends Bushra bail till 23rd Dec: PHC has approved Bushra Bibi's request for exemption from appearance and extended her protective bail till 23rd December. The court warned that if Bushra Bibi fails to appear on the next hearing, her exemption request will not be accepted.

The petitioner is wife of PTI founding chairman, had filed a plea seeking exemption from appearance due to health reasons. Her lawyer, Alam Khan Adeenzai informed the court that she is suffering from seri-

ous health issues and cannot attend the hearing. NAB informed the court that there is one case pending against Bushra Bibi, known as the Toshakhana-II case.

PHC extends injunction against block funds till Dec 2nd week: A divisional bench Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice SM Atique Shah and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah has extended the injunction against block funds, also known as "umbrella schemes," until the second week of December, on Tuesday.

This decision came after the court heard a petition filed by Dr. Ibbadullah, Arbab Waseem, and other MPs from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly's opposition. The umbrella schemes are illegal and were included in the budget without proper authorization.

12th edition of IDEAS 2024 kicks off at Karachi Expo Centre

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The 12th edition of International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS 2024) commenced at Karachi Expo Centre on Tuesday.

Inaugurated by Federal Minister for Defence and Defence Production Khawaja Muhammad Asif, the exhibition will continue till 22 November 2024. Besides trade visitors, more than 350 high-level delegations from 55 countries are visiting the exhibition, a mega-regional event; biennially organized by Defence Export Promotion Organization (DEPO) in Pakistan, said a statement issued by Defence Export Promotion Organization (DEPO) in Pakistan.

Since its inception in the year 2000, IDEAS has emerged as an international rendezvous for defence manufacturers, entrepreneurs, R&D specialists, financial experts and top-level policymakers to promote cooperation, knowledge sharing and support ventures in the field of defence collaboration. Indeed, IDEAS is an event that brings together the global defence industry for synergistic businesses and cooperation.

In his inaugural address, the federal minister said that Pakistan today offered enormous opportunities for profitable investments, joint ventures and trade in all sectors including the defence industry. In his regard, IDEAS served as a regional gateway

for international manufacturers and suppliers to explore new avenues of defence cooperation through joint ventures, outsourcing and collaboration.

He said technologies were playing a vital role in confronting modern-day security challenges and its responsible use can make the world a better and safer place. Pakistan being a responsible state is always committed to playing its role for international peace, stability and order. Reciprocity, mutual interests and international norms are the guiding principles that govern Pakistan's relations at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

He said that the government

always believed in meaningful dialogue on the basis of equality not only to resolve bilateral issues but also to give a chance for peace and harmony in the region. "At our end, we in collaboration with our partners are steadfast to this unflinching commitment for peace and stability in the world," he said.

Khawaja Asif said that Pakistan's defence industry has now reached the threshold of quality and reliability wherein its products are competing in the international defence market. However, to further excel in this domain there is a need of academia-industry interface, integration of public-private defence industry and involvement of R&D organizations in

defence manufacturing sector of Pakistan.

The minister further said Pakistan has the potential to emerge as a global platform for defence research, scientific growth, manufacturing and joint ventures, to strengthen our defence capabilities and spur developments as well as exports in this sector. Earlier during his welcome address, Major General Asad Nawaz Khan HI(M), DG DEPO welcomed the visiting delegates, foreign and domestic exhibitors, OEMs, trade visitors and participants of IDEAS 2024.

The Minister during the visit of exhibition halls lauded the participation of academia and defence indus-

try under one roof. He appreciated that participation of Startups by NUST, PMSTAP and NASTP will hone the skills of young entrepreneurs by having interaction with foreign and national defence exhibitors.

IDEAS 2024 has surpassed all previous milestones in terms of space, booking, exhibitors and delegates both domestic and foreign. Karachi Expo Centre has been booked to its full capacity with more than 560 defence equipment exhibitors from 41 countries participating including exhibitors from Turkey, China, Iran, UK, North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Far East out of which 55% are international and 45% local.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with JUI Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman at his residence. —APP Photo

Sindh launches 'Child Protection Management Information System'

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh government's Department of Social Welfare, UNICEF, and other key stakeholders have officially launched 'Child Protection Management Information System (CPIMS)' here on Tuesday.

This significant milestone was celebrated in conjunction with World Children's Day, aiming to initiate a new movement for the protection and promotion of children's rights and welfare.

The launching ceremony was graced by the Minister for Social Welfare, Mir Tariq Ali Talpur, Secretary of Social Welfare Pervez Ahmed Sehar, Deputy Head of Mission at the British Deputy High Commission Martin Dawson, and UNICEF Islamabad's Chief of Child Protection Ms. Susan Andrew.

While addressing the event, Mir Tariq Ali Talpur highlighted the importance of children's rights, stating, 'Children are the future of our society, and protecting their rights is our top priority. Emphasizing the sig-

nificance of CPIMS, the Minister said: 'This system will not only streamline the management of child protection cases but will also strengthen decision-making processes. It will help us identify areas and children requiring more focused attention.'

He further added, 'The Sindh government has always taken serious steps to protect children's rights. We are ensuring not only effective legislation but also its proper implementation. CPIMS will guarantee that no child is left without support.'

The Minister appealed to parents, teachers, and civil society, saying: 'Child protection is a collective responsibility. We must all work together to support systems that address children's issues. I urge parents and teachers to adopt a friendly approach towards children and understand their concerns.'

Reaffirming the government's commitment to child rights, Talpur said, 'We envision a society where every child can fully

realize their potential in a safe and empowered environment.'

He also announced that the Sindh government would soon introduce more comprehensive policies on child rights and protection, including awareness campaigns in schools and communities. The event featured a presentation on the development and features of CPIMS, followed by its formal launch. A heartwarming skit and a special performance by children made the day even more memorable.

On the occasion of World Children's Day, various activities were organized to raise awareness about children's rights. The Minister announced an awareness walk to be held on November 23 at Karachi's Sea View, inviting the public to participate and support the cause of child protection and rights. The Department of Social Welfare and its partners are optimistic that CPIMS will set a new standard for child protection services in Sindh, paving the way for a safe and inclusive future for every child.

Strict action taken against polluting brick kilns: Minister

LAHORE (APP): An intensive anti-smog operation is in full swing across Punjab to mitigate the effects of smog. According to Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, strict actions have been taken against multiple polluting brick-kilns and industrial units over the past four days.

The Senior Minister stated that between November 15 and 17, 34 brick-kilns operating without zigzag technology were demolished, with the highest number in Multan (14) and Layyah (8). Additionally, on November 15, 20 industrial units in Lahore and Gujranwala were razed for causing pollution. On November 16 and 17, 16 more industrial units were demolished, and 51 units were sealed, including 30 units in Lahore, where 5 units were demolished, and fines worth Rs. 400,000 were imposed.

Vehicle inspections are underway at entry points and major highways, while actions are being taken against unsafe transportation of construction materials. Commercial generators in green lockdown zones are being closely monitored, and the situation is under surveillance through Safe City cameras. Water sprinkling is being carried out on Lahore's roads to control dust.

Marriyum Aurangzeb commended all institutions, administrations, and staff involved in the operation and urged the public to support these efforts to combat smog effectively.

CCPO office complaint cell performance

LAHORE (APP): A total of 11,920 applications were received by CCPO Complaint Cell this year, out of which 11,480 have been resolved, while legal action is underway on the remaining 440 cases.

According to a statement issued by the spokesman for Lahore Police, 159 applications were received via the Chief Minister's Portal with 155 of them being addressed and the remaining four are under process. Additionally, 6,557 individuals visited the CCPO Office in person, of which 6,364 applications have been resolved and 193 are still being processed.

Regarding the 5,203 applications received by post, 4,960 have been dealt with and 243 are under review. The overall resolution rate of complaints related to police department at the CCPO Office stands at 96%.

CCPO Lahore, Bilal Siddique Kamyana emphasised that the Complaint Cell at the CCPO Office is working continuously to address public concerns.

He said that the department is resolving issues related to police matters without delay through this service added that the issues of elderly citizens, differently-abled persons and women are given top priority. He appreciated police department's people-friendly initiatives which are providing relief to the citizens. The CCPO further said that traditional culture of police stations has been transformed into public service centres. He instructed police officers to adopt an open-door policy for providing immediate justice to petitioners and to treat the citizens with respect.

Bilal reiterated that providing timely justice and supporting the oppressed is a key responsibility of the Lahore Police.

Governor Sindh meets Turkish Ambassador

KARACHI (PPI) Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori met Turkish Ambassador Irfan Naziroglu, who was accompanied by Consul General Cemal Sangu, at the Governor House.

During the meeting, the Governor invited Turkish investors to explore investment opportunities in Sindh, emphasizing the province's lucrative sectors, according to Governor House information on Tuesday.

Governor Tessori highlighted the significance of increasing trade between Pakistan and Türkiye, stat-

ing that diplomatic efforts would play a pivotal role in this regard. He also expressed gratitude for Türkiye's unwavering support during Pakistan's challenging times, noting that bilateral relations between the two nations have now evolved into a deep friendship.

Ambassador Irfan Naziroglu affirmed the strong interest of Turkish investors in Sindh's various sectors and expressed Türkiye's desire to see Pakistan grow economically and defensively. He further mentioned that Türkiye

has set up one of the largest stall at the ongoing IDEAS 2024 defense exhibition, reflecting the strong defense ties between the two countries.

As part of his visit, the Turkish Ambassador toured Quaid-e-Azam's historical room, gaining insights into the artifacts on display. He also participated in a flag-hoisting ceremony and planted a tree under the Governor's plantation drive.

The visit underscored the mutual commitment of Pakistan and Türkiye to further strengthen economic and diplomatic relations.

Pakistan sends 16 tons of humanitarian Aid to Syria



F.P. Report

I S L A M A B A D : Government of Pakistan through NDMA in collaboration with the Al-Khidmat Foundation dispatched the 2nd shipment of 16 tons of humanitarian assistance for refugees in Syria through special chartered flight which was received today (19-11-

2024) in Syria on Damascus Airport.

The shipment contained medical supplies, sleeping bags, and packed food etc.

The assistance shipment is part of 80 tons of relief supplies due to arrive in the coming weeks.

The plane was received by Deputy Ambassador of Pakistan in Damascus Mr

Umer Hayat Khan along with Dr Moutaz Douaji, Deputy Minister of Local Administration and Environment.

The Syrian side extended gratitude to the people and Govt of Pakistan for support and will be distributed to the refugees through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

Jam applauds Baitussalam Welfare Trust's commitment to empowering youth

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, praised the efforts of Baitussalam Welfare Trust, calling it a "Motivation Trust" for its extraordinary role in serving humanity and empowering the youth.

Speaking at an event that brought together dignitaries including provincial ministers, former cricket captain Shahid Khan Afridi, and Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab, he emphasized the Trust's unparalleled contributions to societal welfare.

Reflecting on his association with the organization, Jam Kamal Khan said, "I am happy to witness this trust's growth over the years. Its ecosystem is amazing, not only in serving humanity but also in strengthening the youth in



ways that are unprecedented."

He credited the success of the Trust to the tireless dedication of Mulana Sattar Sb and his team. "Mulana Sattar Sb and his team have worked hard to achieve this level of impact. Without their dedication, this milestone would have been out of reach," he noted.

During the ceremony, Jam Kamal Khan distributed prizes and trophies among high-achieving students of the Baitussalam initiatives, lauding their efforts and encouraging them to continue excelling.

He also urged government leaders to extend their support to such initiatives. "Dedication must lead to

success if loyalty exists.

Our government must step in and do something to support this cause," he stated, describing the event as a "feel and feel" moment of pride and inspiration.

The event saw enthusiastic participation from various prominent figures, including Governor of Sindh Kamran Tessori, Shahid Khan Afridi, who commended the Trust for its dedication to community upliftment. Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab and other provincial leaders also expressed their admiration for the Trust's initiatives.

The ceremony concluded with a renewed commitment to expand Baitussalam Welfare Trust's mission, ensuring its continued role as a beacon of hope for youth and communities across the nation.

OGDCL boosts tight gas exploration efforts with strategic initiative



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan's industry leader in exploration and production (E&P), is making significant strides in the development of the country's unconventional hydrocarbon resources. This follows incentives introduced by Govt of Pakistan under the new tight gas policy in 2024, which offers a 40% premium over the 2012 policy price to promote the exploration and commercial exploitation of tight gas.

OGDCL has already made notable progress in

this area, with the successful production of its first tight gas well, Nur West-1, followed by additional wells to be fracked through in-house expertise. As part of its ongoing efforts to unlock the full potential of Pakistan's tight gas resources, OGDCL has launched a comprehensive study to assess tight gas prospectivity across key areas in the Lower Indus Basin, Sindh.

To support this ambitious initiative, OGDCL announced an international tender on March 7, 2024, for an Integrated Study of Tight Gas Prospectivity

Evaluation. After a rigorous

two-stage evaluation process involving 11 international bidders and 7 short-listed companies, Schlumberger (M/s SLB) was selected as the preferred contractor. The selection was based on Schlumberger's proven technical capabilities and financial competitiveness. The study, which will identify the most promising tight gas areas and wells, will play a crucial role in shaping OGDCL's future drilling and production strategies.

Upon completion, the study will pinpoint optimal locations for new wells, as well as re-entry opportunities for existing wells, to conduct

hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and unlock gas from tight reservoirs. This will help OGDCL to commercialize tight gas resources on a fast-track basis, helping to meet Pakistan's growing energy needs.

OGDCL's partnership with Schlumberger is a key milestone in its ongoing efforts to leverage advanced technologies and best practices in unconventional resource development. This collaboration is expected to bring valuable expertise and innovation to Pakistan's tight gas sector, ensuring the sustainable and efficient exploitation of the country's hydrocarbon resources.

Based on regional studies and using preliminary data, it is estimated the total prospective resource of Pakistan's tight gas is 25.2 TCF. On its part, OGDCL plans to execute 25 wells, with an initial production potential of 60-75 MMSCFD and an estimated reserve of 75-90 BCF over the next 5 years.

Through this strategic initiative, OGDCL reaffirms its commitment to driving Pakistan's energy security and contributing to the nation's economic growth by harnessing every available hydrocarbon resource.

36 shops sealed over time violation

LAHORE (APP): A total of 36 shops have been sealed in Lahore for violating official business operating hours as part of the ongoing efforts to combat smog.

The district administration has been active late into the night, ensuring compliance across all tehsils in Lahore. In Model Town, Assistant Commissioner Sahebzada Yusuf led the operation, resulting in the sealing of four shops at Minal Plaza for failing to close on time.

In Sadar, Assistant Commissioner Abdul Basit Siddiqui oversaw the sealing of seven shops and one departmental store for similar violations. In Ravi Tehsil, under the supervi-

sion of Assistant Commissioner Tariq Bashir, ten shops were sealed for operating beyond the allowed hours. In Raiwind, Assistant Commissioner Zainab Tahir led the enforcement operation, sealing three shops and two salons for non-compliance.

In Shalimar, Assistant Commissioner Anum Fatima supervised the sealing of five shops on Link Road and GT Road for violating the 8 pm closure rule. In Wahga, Assistant Commissioner Mohammad Amir Butt ensured all shops were found closed in line with the directive. He also briefed hotel owners about new SOPs for indoor dining and takeaways.



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Govt to solarize 195 health facilities: Ihtisham

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a major initiative to strengthen healthcare infrastructure, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Health Department has announced plans to solarize 195 health facilities across four districts under the Human Capital Investment Project (HCIP). The decision was made during a briefing to Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Health Mr. Ihtisham Ali by Project Director Dr. Ikram Ullah.

Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali directed the team to expedite the project's implementation, emphasizing its significance for improving healthcare services in KP.

He remarked, "This initiative is pivotal for enhancing our healthcare system and ensuring better health outcomes for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa."

Project Director Dr. Ikram Ullah while briefing the advisor health told that Initially focusing on Peshawar, Nowshera,

Swabi, and Haripur, the project has been expanded to include 16 districts, particularly targeting the restoration and revitalization of flood-affected healthcare facilities. Originally conceived three and a half years ago, this program is a key component in improving primary healthcare across the province.

The total budget for the project stands at \$85 million, comprising 42% grant funding and 58% loan financing, of which \$12 million has been utilized so far. The project aims to upgrade 195 health facilities, including 151 Basic Health Units (BHUs), 25 Rural Health Centers (RHCs), 13 Category-D hospitals, and 6 Category-C hospitals.

Dr. Ikram Ullah highlighted the development of KP's first referral mechanism under the project, with a strong emphasis on maternal and child health. Vaccination of 14,000 defaulters children has been made Under this project across four districts.

He added that budget allocations include \$63 million for improving basic health services, \$3 million for capacity building and addressing staff shortages, \$7.037 million for enhancing governance and management, and \$10 million for the restoration of 158 flood-damaged health facilities.

Meanwhile, a decision has been made to activate the Blood Transfusion Authority across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to ensure safe blood transfusion, the only way to prevent diseases transmitted through blood. This was stated by Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Health, Ihtisham Ali, during a briefing by Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Kaleem.

The Safe Blood Transfusion Program, in collaboration with the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and GIZ, is constructing facilities for regional blood authorities. The Blood Transfusion Authority oversees the management

of regional blood centers (RBCs). While RBCs have been established in all four regions, only Peshawar is currently operational. The Peshawar Regional Blood Center supplies screened blood to hospitals, significantly reducing costs while ensuring safety.

The Advisor instructed that all blood centers in the province must obtain licenses from the Blood Transfusion Authority. The Authority will regulate both public and private hospitals blood banks, ensuring adherence to SOPs and safe blood donations through functional regional blood centers.

Ihtisham Ali emphasized that integrating the Blood Transfusion Authority with other programs, such as the HIV, thelesemia and Hepatitis Program, is essential. He also mandated that hospitals on the Sehat Card panel must be licensed by the Blood Transfusion Authority to ensure the safety and quality of services.



PESHAWAR: Minister for Local Government, Arshad Ayub Khan chairing a meeting of WSSP.

Sanitation and Hygiene KMU hosts inter-university speech competition

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The WaStan Cell, Local Council Board of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in collaboration with Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar, successfully organized the 2nd Provincial Inter-University Speech Competition. The event was held to commemorate World Toilet Day, focusing on the theme "The Role of Environmental Sanitation in Building a Healthy Society."

The event hosted by Mr. Imran Ullah Khan Mohmand, Assistant Coordinator of Local Government Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the competition drew participants from 14 universities across the province. A total of 20 contestants delivered speeches in English and Urdu, highlighting key issues such as the importance of environmental cleanliness, the impact of climate change and global warming, and the role of public participation in tackling these pressing challenges.

In the English category, Abdul Basit from Sarhad University secured first place, followed by Laiba Yousaf of City University in second place, and Nawal



Sohail from Iqra National University in third. In the Urdu category, Haseeb Ahmad from Gomal University, D.I. Khan claimed the top spot, with Manahil Sagib from Iqra University, Peshawar, taking second place, and Abdullah Shah from the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences earning third.

Addressing the audience, Vice Chancellor KMU Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq delivered a keynote speech emphasizing the crucial role of sanitation and hygiene in preventing diseases and fostering international cooperation. He

commended the provincial government's focus on hygiene and public health while encouraging the active involvement of youth in promoting a culture of cleanliness. Honorary Chief Guest Prof. Dr. Ijaz Khattak Vice Chancellor of Gandhara University and guest speaker Dr. Awais Qarni from the University of Peshawar also elaborated on the importance of hygiene in building a healthier society. They stressed the need for sustained awareness campaigns and collective action to address sanitation challenges effectively.

The event concluded with an awards ceremony where shields and certificates were presented to the winners, celebrating their outstanding performances. Faculty members, administrative officers, and students from various institutions attended, reflecting a united commitment to advancing public health awareness.

This competition underscored the dedication of educational institutions across the province to fostering sustainable practices and promoting essential public health initiatives aimed at building healthier communities.

PML-N warns KP govt against misusing state machinery

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Additional Secretary of Information for the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Arbab Khizr Hayat, has issued a stern warning to the provincial government.

He cautioned that if Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, known for his provocative slogans like "Al-Jihad, Al-Jihad", attempts to use the province's state machinery to launch an attack on the federal government on November 24, PML-N workers will not hesitate to

surround the Chief Minister's House upon a single directive from the party leadership.

Arbab Khizr Hayat emphasized that the Chief Minister and PTI leadership should not mistake their silence for weakness, stating, "We are not helpless. We are democratic people engaging in politics through democratic means, but our patience should not be tested further."

He pointed out that the country is finally moving in the right direction, with economic and financial stability improving and terrorism being effectively countered. In such circum-

stances, any attempt by the PTI to destabilize the federal government is an attack on the country's progress, which no patriotic Pakistani will tolerate.

Khizr Hayat accused PTI of employing underhanded tactics to challenge the state, aiming to secure the release of their founding chairman, which he declared as impossible. He firmly stated, "There will be no deal, nor any leniency, with the PTI founder."

He acknowledged that while peaceful protest is the right of every political party, the use of violent rhetoric and direct challenges to the state will be

met in kind. He remarked that it is evident Ali Amin Gandapur and the PTI leadership are struggling to mobilize their workers, which is why they are enticing government employees with various incentives to participate in their protests. This, he claimed, reflects the public's rejection of PTI in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Arbab Khizr Hayat concluded by warning that if the Chief Minister attempts to misuse state machinery to assault the federal government on November 24, the Chief Minister's House will not remain safe.

PTI's agitation politics: A threat to democracy, economic development

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan, a country born from a monumental democratic struggle on August 14, 1947, has weathered countless political storms in its 77 years of existence.

From democratic governments to dictatorships in Pakistan, the nation's journey has been marked by political instability mainly due to wrangling between political forces for power.

One persistent challenge has been the derailment of democracy through politics of agitation, long marches, and allegations of corruption against the political governments in the past, resultantly the country's economy was badly suffered.

These irrational events, often spearheaded by the opposition parties or political leaders, have not only disrupted the democratic process but have also hindered the country's political and economic development besides increased mass problems.

Professor Dr. A.H. Hilali, former Chairman of the Political Science

Department at the University of Peshawar, pointed out that agitation politics—characterized by long marches, sit-ins, and street protests—poses a significant threat to democratic governance in the country.

"Democracy derives its strength from the people's vote, not from agitation rallies on streets or blocking of roads," Dr. Hilali said, emphasizing the developed nations achieved economic heights by ensuring political stability and continuity in policies, rather than by pursuing disruptive movements or revolutions to achieve power through back channels.

Professor Dr Hilali said that Pakistan's political history has unfortunately reflected a pattern of instability, often triggered by dissatisfaction with election outcomes, resultantly democracy have been derailed four times in the past.

Despite the abundance of natural resources, significant geographic location and a large population, he said opposition leaders have

yet to realize the full economic potential of their country.

He attributed this to the frequent interruptions in democratic process, where elected governments were overthrown on charges of corruption besides due to a lack of political tolerance and respect for electoral mandates.

He said the absence of a strong constitutional framework in the early years after independence and the untimely deaths of founder leaders—such as Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1948 and Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan in 1951 had further hampered the country's democratic evolution.

He said the political landscape became a battleground of competing parties when opposition groups accused the ruling elite of rigging elections, sparking unrest and instability in Pakistan.

"One of the most significant examples of agitation politics in Pakistan's history was the 1977 general elections, which led to the over-

throw of the elected Govt of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto," he said.

The opposition alliance i.e. Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), launched a nationwide agitation claiming electoral fraud after ZA Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party won a landslide victory in the 1977 general election.

Despite Bhutto's frequent denial of any rigging, the PNA's protests escalated into widespread unrest, leading to overthrowing of an elected Bhutto Govt on July 5, 1977, marking the beginning of the third dictatorship in the country.

He said the cycle of political intolerance continued into the 1980s and 1990s after successive governments of PPP and PMLN were removed on allegations of corruption and electoral manipulations.

Dr Hilali said as a result of political chaos, the Govt of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Government was dismissed and democracy was derailed for the fourth time on October 12, 1999.



PESHAWAR: Men carrying bananas during a busy hour at Fruit Market. — INP photo

Pakistan's smog crisis: What can be done and how?

PESHAWAR (AA): Large swaths of northeastern and northwestern Pakistan are currently choking with pollution-fueled smog, triggering a surge in respiratory diseases and forcing the government to take desperate measures such as shuttering schools, parks, and other public venues.

Warnings abound of further deterioration in air quality in the coming years, particularly if authorities fail to come up with a serious strategy for immediate and sustainable steps.

Along with the Indian capital New Delhi, Pakistan's second-largest city Lahore, and various other districts of the north-eastern Punjab province have been dominating the list of the world's most polluted cities for several years now, with their air quality crossing all possible levels of danger.

Satellite images

released by NASA earlier this month showed Punjab, and particularly the provincial capital Lahore, cloaked in a toxic haze that extended to India's northern regions and New Delhi.

Lahore — home to over 14 million people — had an air quality index of above 1,900, a record high, earlier this month. Any reading more than 300 is considered hazardous, while the acceptable range is between 0 to 50.

Hundreds of people are facing health issues such as sore throats and itchy eyes, with doctors and authorities advising public to stay indoors as much as possible.

Air pollution claims an estimated 128,000 lives in Pakistan every year, according to Fair Finance Pakistan, a non-government body working to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

UNICEF also issued a recent warning for Pakistan, saying more than 11 million children under age 5 are exposed to smog in Punjab.

"Unfortunately, environmental issues like smog have reached a point where they cannot be addressed overnight. Pakistan now needs a serious approach to deal with this ever-worsening problem," said Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, an environmentalist based in the capital Islamabad.

Imrana Tiwana, another environment expert in Lahore, warned that Pakistan is simply not ready to face all the humanitarian crises emerging because of climate change. Her remarks referred to regular droughts, heat waves, unseasonal rains and floods that have become ever more frequent in the South Asian country over the past few decades.

Smog, she added, was restricted to just Lahore up until a decade ago, but it has now crossed the borders of Punjab and entered the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province.

Need for immediate measures

Speaking to Anadolu, Sheikh emphasized the urgent need for both long- and short-term measures, including decarbonization of the economy in accordance with the Paris Agreement, increasing public transportation in big cities, and conversion of two-stroke and three-stroke vehicles into battery electric vehicles (BEVs).

The Paris Agreement, which entered into force in 2016, is a legally binding international treaty that aims to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and boost adaptation to climate change.

As a short-term step,

there can be an additional weekly day off or arrangements for working from home, he said.

Only public transport could be allowed on that day to reduce vehicular emissions, which make up more than 80% of the air pollution in Lahore, he added.

Of this 80%, emissions from two-stroke vehicles account for 69%, according to the Punjab Environmental Protection Department.

Part of the smog crisis, according to Sheikh, can be put down to Pakistan's "avid" dependence on fossil fuels, and that too low-quality fossil fuels, said Shaikh.

"We have poor micro-standards, micro-testing, and fitness testing systems. Otherwise, the same quantity of fossil fuel in better environmental governance will not have as adverse an impact as we have in

Pakistan," he said.

Regional cooperation

Pakistan blames the increasing smog on winds from neighboring India, mainly due to stubble burning by farmers in India's Punjab province.

"Stubble burning is the biggest problem that we've been facing in winter," Raja Jahangir Anwar, environment secretary for Punjab, told Anadolu.

He said unilateral measures to curb the practice will not work, stressing the importance of a joint and collaborative approach.

However, environmentalist Sheikh dismissed what he views as a "wrong narrative" being pushed by both Indian and Pakistani authorities.

"Farmers only burn stubble because they want to increase their income by growing vegetables between the two major cropping seasons," he explained.

"Instead of blaming them, we need to work on providing them technologies that can help them grow a third crop."

To this, Anwar said the Punjab government is already providing subsidies to farmers for machinery that will help avoid burning stubble.

Environment specialist Tiwana also emphasized that climate change-induced smog is no longer a local issue in Pakistan.

"It's a regional problem and requires a regional approach to be addressed properly," she told Anadolu.

The worsening situation has already led to Pakistani Punjab's Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz calling for "climate diplomacy" with India.

The process to engage with India, according to Anwar, has been initiated through the Foreign Ministry, and an official

letter will soon be sent to New Delhi.

Pakistan plans to convene a regional climate conference next month, involving India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and other countries, to chalk out a joint strategy, he said.

Despite frosty relations between the two nuclear rivals, Anwar remains optimistic about the chances of successful diplomatic outreach.

"The two sides have no other choice because the wind does not care about borders," he said.

In addition to stubble burning, New Delhi and Lahore also share a burden of urban pollution, he added.

"This has to be long-term diplomacy that continues for decades. There will be ups and downs, but I am sure it will succeed, as there is no other option," said Anwar.



LONDON: Seth James, left, and Eddie England, right, accompanied with their parents, attending a farmers protest to urge the government to change course over its inheritance tax plans, in England.

Leader of Georgia breakaway region quits

TBILISI (BBC): The leader of Georgia's breakaway region of Abkhazia is resigning after days of mass protests over a controversial pro-Russia bill. Aslan Bzhania's press office said he was quitting "to maintain stability and constitutional order" and that the two sides had agreed protesters who had stormed the parliament in Sukhumi must disperse on Tuesday.

The bill, which would have legalised Russian investment and land ownership, has been withdrawn. Abkhazia declared its independence in 1999, and Russia recognised it as an independent state after the Georgian-Russian war in 2008. Georgia says Abkhazia is "occupied" by Moscow. Most countries regard the area on the Black Sea coast as part of

Georgia.

In a statement posted on Telegram, Bzhania's press office said Abkhazia's parliament would consider his resignation on Tuesday. It said Bzhania's deputy would become Abkhazia's acting leader, who would then dismiss the current prime minister. The statement warned that Bzhania would withdraw his resignation offer if protesters refused to leave the government buildings. Bzhania describes himself as Abkhazia's president - Georgia and most of the world do not recognise his authority.

Abkhazia's opposition has not commented on Bzhania's resignation offer. Located along the Black Sea and Caucasus mountains, Abkhazia is known for its natural beauty and coastline, and was one of

the favoured holiday destinations for the Soviet elite until the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Locals feared that the proposed bill would trigger an influx of Russian investment, pricing them out of the property market and further strengthening Moscow's grip on the region.

Backed by Russia, Abkhazia fought a war of secession with Georgia in 1992-93, before unilaterally declaring independence. Abkhazia's economy depends overwhelmingly on tourism from Russia. In 2009, Moscow signed a five-year agreement with Abkhazia to take formal control of its frontiers with the rest of Georgia, while in 2014 Moscow and Sukhumi signed a "strategic partnership" agreement.

Norwegian mass killer seeks parole

OSLO (AP): Norwegian mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik, who killed 77 people in a bombing and shooting rampage in 2011, was in court on Tuesday for a parole hearing. It was the far-right extremist's second bid for freedom after spending more than a decade behind bars.

Breivik, 45, who is serving a maximum 21-year sentence, is eligible under Norwegian law for a parole hearing after 10 years in prison. He has been held in isolation since he began serving his prison sentence in 2012 and has argued several times that his treatment amounts to inhumane punishment under the European Convention on Human Rights. Each time courts have rejected his claims. As he arrived at the court, Breivik, dressed in a black suit, had the letter Z shaved on the side of his head — a symbol seen on Russian tanks and other military vehicles in Ukraine and embraced by supporters of the war — and was holding a poster with a political message.

The authorities have said Breivik's parole request should be rejected because there is still a "qualified and real" risk that he will commit another serious violent crime if he is released, the Norwegian news agency NTB reported from the hearing. Prosecutor Hulda Olsen Karlsdottir said Breivik has not changed his ideological thinking or his political position. Authorities in Norway have insisted Breivik has the same rights as any other prisoner, arguing that treating him differently would undermine the principles that underpin Norwegian society, including the rule of law and freedom of speech.

Two years ago, Breivik was transferred to Ringerike prison, where he is held in a two-story complex with a kitchen, dining room and TV room with an Xbox, several armchairs and black and white pictures of the Eiffel Tower on the wall. He also has a fitness room with weights, a treadmill and a rowing machine, while three parakeets fly around the complex.

Thousands of UK farmers descend on Parliament

LONDON (AP): With banners, bull-horns, toy tractors and an angry message, thousands of British farmers descended on Parliament on Tuesday to protest a tax hike they say will deal a "hammer blow" to struggling family farms. U.K. farmers are rarely as militant as their European neighbors, and Britain has not seen large-scale protests like those that have snarled cities in France and other European countries. Now, though, farmers say they will step up their action if the government doesn't listen.

The flashpoint is the government's decision in its budget last month to scrap a tax break dating from the 1990s that exempts agricultural property from inheritance tax. From April 2026, farms worth more than 1 million pounds (\$1.3 million) face a 20% tax when the owner dies and they are passed on to the next generation. "Everyone's mad," said Olly Harrison, co-organizer of a protest that flooded the streets around Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Downing Street office with angry farmers. He said many "want to take to the streets and block roads and go full French."

Organizers urged protesters not to bring farm machinery into central London, though a handful of tractors drove past Downing Street festooned with signs saying "the final straw" and "no farmers, no food." They were cheered by a tightly packed crowd — many in the countryside uniform of Barbour jackets. Some held signs proclaiming "Stand with a farmer, not Starmer."

Children on toy tractors were due to lead a march around Parliament Square after a rally addressed by speakers including former "Top Gear" TV host and celebrity farmer Jeremy Clarkson. Another 1,800 farmers were invited into Parliament for a "mass lobby" of lawmakers nearby organized by the National Farmers' Union. "The human impact of this policy is simply not acceptable, it's wrong," NFU President Tom Bradshaw told farmers gathered for

the mass lobby. "It's kicking the legs out from under British food security."

Volatile weather exacerbated by climate change, global instability and the upheaval caused by Britain's 2020 departure from the European Union have all added to the burden on U.K. farmers. Many feel the Labour Party government's tax change, part of an effort to raise billions of pounds to fund public services, is the last straw. "Four out of the last five years, we've lost money," said Harrison, a fifth-generation farmer who grows cereal crops on his family farm near Liverpool in northwest England. "The only thing that's kept me going is doing it for my kids. And maybe a little bit of appreciation on the land allows you to keep borrowing, to keep going. But now that's just disappeared overnight."

Starmer's center-left government says the "vast majority" of farms — about 75% — will not have to pay inheritance tax, and various loopholes mean that a farming couple can pass on an estate worth up to 3 million pounds (\$3.9 million) to their children tax-free. The 20% levy is half the 40% inheritance tax paid on other land and property in the U.K. Supporters of the tax say it will recoup money from wealthy people who have bought up agricultural land as an investment, driving up the cost of farmland in the process.

"It's become the most effective way for the super rich to avoid paying their inheritance tax," Environment Secretary Steve Reed wrote in the Daily Telegraph, adding that high land prices were "robbing young farmers of the dream of owning their own farm." But the famers' union says more than 60% of working farms could face a tax hit. And while farms may be worth a lot on paper, profits are often small. Government figures show that income for most types of farms fell in the year to the end of February 2024, in some cases by more than 70%. Average farm income ranged from about 17,000

pounds (\$21,000) for grazing livestock farms to 143,000 pounds (\$180,000) for specialist poultry farms.

The last decade has been turbulent for British farmers. Many farmers backed Brexit as a chance to get out of the EU's complex and much-criticized Common Agricultural Policy. Since then, the U.K. has brought in changes such as paying farmers to restore nature and promote biodiversity, as well as for producing food. Some farmers have welcomed those moves, but many feel goodwill was squandered through missteps by successive governments, a failure of subsidies to keep up with inflation, and new trade deals with countries including Australia and New Zealand that have opened the door to cheap imports.

National Farmers' Union Deputy President David Exwood said the tax hike was "the final straw in a succession of tough choices and difficult situations that farmers have had to deal with." The government has "completely blown their trust with the industry," he said. Starmer spokeswoman Camilla Marshall said the decision had been "difficult" but was not being reconsidered.

Opposition politicians see an opportunity. The main opposition Conservative Party — which was in government for 14 years until July — and the hard-right populist party Reform U.K. are both championing the farmers. Some far-right and conspiracy theory groups attended Tuesday's protest, though the organizers were not affiliated with them. Harrison said the demonstration was intended as "a show of unity to the government" and an attempt to inform the public "that farmers are food producers, not tax-dodging millionaires." "It's every single sector, whether you're a landowner or a tenant, whether you're beef, dairy, milk, cereals, veg, lettuce — you name it, everyone has had a hammer blow from this," he said. "Every farmer is losing."

Amnesty criticises ministers for arms firm funding

LONDON (BBC): Amnesty International has accused the Scottish government of turning "a blind eye" to the risk of being part of the supply chain of arms which could be used in the war in Gaza. Amnesty says the checks done on arms companies before giving them business grants fail to take account of where some of the products may end up.

It claims this is "inconsistent" with the Scottish government's demands that the UK should stop selling arms to Israel. The Scottish government said no grants were given for the manufacture of arms in Scotland, and that the funding supported research, training and apprenticeships. And Scottish Enterprise, the government's economic development agency, strongly denied any suggestion that its human rights checks were not adequate. The companies involved say the UK defence sector has robust and ethical standards and that the UK government administers export licences through a "rigorous and transparent" system.

Amnesty International submitted Freedom of Information requests to establish what checks were carried out before the grants were awarded. They have shared these with BBC news. The FOIs reveal that to date no company has failed Scottish Enterprise's human rights due diligence checks. They show that the level of checks is based on the amount of money being requested, not what the company sells or where it sells to. There are three levels — from £100,000 to £2m, from £2m to £5m, and then above £5m. Grants below £100,000 are not subject to human rights checks.

The papers also show that in the past 18 months Scottish Enterprise has provided grants worth hundreds of thousands of pounds to defence companies including Leonardo, Raytheon and BAE Systems, who all

have or have had UK export licences to sell to Israel in the same time period. BAE Systems Surface Ships LTD received £9,600 from Scottish Enterprise in 2023 and £360,000 in the first half of 2024. Leonardo received £786,125 in 2023 and Raytheon Systems received £500,000 in the first half of 2024. The companies employ thousands of people in Scotland.

Scottish Enterprise says its human rights due diligence checks involve a detailed examination of a company's history and profile by searching and reviewing publicly available information. Amnesty says money from Scottish Enterprise could directly or indirectly find its way into the supply chain sending weapons for use in the conflict in Gaza and other countries. They say the supply chain of arms is complex, with some companies selling component parts to one country - such as the US - for them to be assembled into planes and sold on to others.

In May the International Criminal Court accused Israeli and Hamas leaders of war crimes and applied for arrest warrants. A United Nations report also accused Israel of crimes against humanity. Last month the UK government said it was suspending 30 of the 350 export licenses to Israel because of concerns about the risk they may be used in violation of international humanitarian law. The three defence companies which received Scottish Enterprise grants - Leonardo, Raytheon and BAE Systems - did not clarify whether their licences were among those suspended last month.

BAE Systems says it does not currently sell directly to the government of Israel. Leonardo and Raytheon did not comment. Earlier this year, the then first minister Humza Yousaf called for an immediate end to UK arms sales to Israel, warning that the

UK was "in danger of being complicit in the killing of innocent civilians". Last month, John Swinney called for an immediate ceasefire in Israel. Amnesty says Scottish ministers "are correct to highlight to the UK government its own risk of complicity in such crimes by Israel if it continues to permit the export of weapons. "However, it is entirely inconsistent to turn a blind eye to the possibility that the Scottish government's own financial support for arms companies may be involved, whether directly or indirectly, in manufacture and supply chains."

The FOIs also reveal that the PCS union — which represents civil servants within Scottish Enterprise - raised concerns earlier this year that their members were "potentially complicit" in war crimes, should Israel be found to have broken international law. An email from the PCS said the concern was gaining "traction" among its members and asked if they would be affected. In response, the Scottish government said it believed it was "established business as usual" for Scottish Enterprise and that it could be argued that staff would not be affected.

Amnesty has written to Finance Secretary Kate Forbes calling for an "urgent review" of Scottish Enterprise's funding for arms companies selling components or parts going directly or indirectly to states accused of international humanitarian law breaches, including Israel and Saudi Arabia. And it says the due diligence checks carried out before awarding Scottish government grants are "inadequate" and risk failing to ensure Scotland upholds its international obligations. Business Minister Richard Lochhead told BBC Scotland News that no public funding goes towards the manufacturing of munitions in Scotland.

Senegal's radical govt claims win in legislative polls

DAKAR (BBC): The Senegalese government has claimed victory in parliamentary elections with most of the votes already counted. It said the ruling party, Pastef, had won with a "large majority".

A victory for Pastef would give President Bassirou Diomaye Faye a strong mandate to implement the radical agenda of economic and social reform on which he was elected in March. Former President Macky Sall, Prime Minister Amadou Ba and Dakar's

mayor Barthélemy Dias, who were heading different opposition coalitions, have all accepted defeat.

Official results are expected. The vote was conducted peacefully across the country, although there were sporadic clashes between supporters of different parties in the run-up to the elections. "We are proud of the Senegalese people and we would like to thank them for the large victory that it has given to Pastef," government spokesman Amadou

Moustapha Ndieck Sarre told the BBC.

Pastef has not said how many seats it has won. It needs 83 for a majority in the 165-seat National Assembly. Faye and his Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko had struggled to get their reforms passed in recent months in the opposition-dominated parliament. Faye appointed Sonko, his political mentor who was barred from running for the presidency, as his prime minister soon after he became president.

Meloni's coalition suffers setbacks in two elections

ROME (AP): Italy's Premier Giorgia Meloni suffered election setbacks in two regions as the opposition Democratic party won a tight race in the central Umbria region and deepened its control of the traditional left-leaning stronghold of Emilia-Romagna.

The results of the two days of voting that ended were a clear victory for Democratic Party leader Elly Schlein, who called the outcome "extraordinary."

Stefania Proietti won with 51% of the vote in Umbria, compared with 46% for the conservative coalition's candidate. In the northern region of Emilia Romagna, the left's candidate Michele de Pascale won 57% of the vote, improving the party's 51% result in the last regional vote in 2020. In both cases, the Democratic Party candidate won without the support of the 5-Star Movement, which has been in a shaky center-left coalition.

The bigger electoral test for Meloni comes in 2025 when six regions head to the polls, including the populous northern region of Veneto that has long been governed by the populist League, a key member of her ruling coalition. Meloni's coalition held on to control of the Ligurian region last month in an election prompted by the resignation of the right-wing governor in a scandal.

From political outsider to Ghana's 'Mr Digital'

GHANA (BBC): Mahamudu Bawumia soared from being a political outsider to become Ghana's second-in-command - and in December he could make history as the country's first Muslim president. Bawumia, currently Ghana's vice-president, was chosen by the governing New Patriotic Party (NPP) as their candidate for the forthcoming general election.

The 61-year-old Tottenham Hotspur supporter has quite the reputation. He is an intellectual educated at Oxford University, is never seen without his signature slim, rectangular glasses and has been dubbed "Mr Digital" thanks to his pledge to whip Ghana into a technological heavyweight. But because he is head of the government's economic management team, many Ghanaians associate Bawumia with the punishing cost of living crisis they're experiencing.

Should Bawumia overcome the criticism and win the election, he will replace his current boss President Nana Akufo-Addo, who is approaching the end of his two-term limit. "Mr Digital" barrelled onto the political scene in 2008, sparking bemusement and scepticism. Bawumia was a 44-year-old who had never held public office, yet Akufo-Addo - then a mere presidential candidate - had chosen him as a running

mate.

Bawumia's father Alhaji Mumuni had served in Ghana's earliest governments after the country gained independence from Britain in 1957, working closely with revered Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah. But the younger Bawumia had forged a career in economics and banking - serving as the deputy governor of Ghana's central bank. To many commentators and NPP insiders, it made no sense for Akufo-Addo to pick Bawumia over seasoned party members. Akufo-Addo ended up losing the election to John Atta Mills from the National Democratic Congress (NDC) by a tiny margin. Bawumia lost out on the VP job - but his charismatic campaign had silenced the naysayers.

"He fired [up] the NPP campaign. I think no-one else could have done a better job, to be honest, in terms of the support he gave to the NPP," Ghanaian political scientist Dr Clement Sefa-Nyarko told the BBC. Akufo-Addo and Bawumia gave the elections another go in 2012. Again, they lost. The NPP challenged the election results in the Supreme Court, choosing Bawumia as their star witness.

During the proceedings, which were broadcast on national television, Bawumia came across as witty and

unflustered by the relentless, days-long cross-examination. "People were like, who is this guy? He's really the guy to root for," said Dr Sefa-Nyarko, who lectures on African leadership at King's College London. Akufo-Addo decided to keep Bawumia on his ticket and in 2016, on their third shot at power, the NPP won with 51.3% of the vote. Bawumia finally became vice-president. Bawumia's journey to the top began in 1963, when he was born into a large family in the northern city of Tamale. He was the 12th of his father's 18 children.

After completing primary and secondary school in Ghana, Bawumia moved to the UK for undergraduate study and went on to gain a masters in economics from the prestigious Oxford University. To support himself during his studies, he took up jobs as a taxi driver and cleaner. He returned to Ghana in 2000 to work at the central bank, where he worked his way up to become deputy governor. Bawumia campaigned on this economic know-how during his attempts to become VP. Therefore, he faced heavy criticism when Ghana plummeted into its most severe economic crisis in years under his watch. Inflation hit a record 54% in December 2022 and the country was forced to take a \$3bn (£2.3bn)

loan from the International Monetary Fund after government debt soared. In response to the criticism, Bawumia has said the economic management team he headed had no "decision-making powers" and that it merely provided advice to the government. But for many, this wasn't good enough.

"In terms of character, in terms of integrity, people started questioning themselves: 'What is this? How did it end up here? We thought you were the best guy, and look at where we've ended up'," Franklin Cudjoe, a Ghanaian political commentator and head of the Imani Centre for Policy and Education, told the BBC. Along with his role as an economist, Bawumia has also built the reputation of being a digital visionary. Ghana's digital ecosystem has seen "significant growth" especially in areas such as mobile phone connectivity, Charles Abani, head of the United Nations team in Ghana, remarked last month.

This "remarkable digital transformation" was "spearheaded" by Bawumia, news website African Business reported, while Ghanaian newspaper The Chronicle hailed Bawumia's "expertise in global digital transformation". Bawumia said he initiated a partnership between Ghana's government and US-

based company Zipline, which led to the creation of the world's largest vaccine delivery network. He said he reached out to Zipline, which uses drones to fly health products to hard-to-reach clinics, after his father died from a loss of blood. Although this passion for technology is celebrated by some, others are more sceptical.

Mr Cudjoe said Bawumia has been campaigning on digitalisation rather than confronting debates about the government's handling of the economy. "Whether Bawumia was in power or not, digitalisation was bound to happen in this country because we had already started it anyway," Mr Cudjoe said. Dr Sefa-Nyarko said of Bawumia: "What he has been very successful at is to push and also claim all credit for digitalisation outcomes of the current government." Bawumia's personal life has also been a strength in his presidential campaign. His wife of 20 years, Samira, is a former beauty queen who is widely admired for her chic outfits.

The Second Lady is also vocal when it comes to party politics - and has embarked on campaign tours for the NPP. The couple have four children together. They are proud followers of Islam - a religion practised by roughly one in five Ghanaians. Most people in Ghana are Christians but there is not

much evidence that coming from a religious minority will hinder Bawumia's election chances. Dr Sefa-Nyarko said. The NPP has given its "full support" to Bawumia's candidacy, "his Muslim faith notwithstanding", Dr Sefa-Nyarko added.

"This could translate into widespread support across the country as well," Bawumia's geographical identity might be of greater consequence than his religion. The vice-president hails from northern Ghana, which is one of the NDC's strongest political bases. By choosing Bawumia as its presidential candidate, the NPP will be hoping to make inroads in the north, while retaining support in its heartland in the south. Bawumia has been traversing north, south, east and west in what he calls the "possibilities bus", a blue and red campaign vehicle emblazoned with the slogan "it is possible". To some, he is the face of economic mismanagement, but the vice-president retains some of the optimism he held when he was a 44-year-old embarking on an eight-year battle for power. "I have the courage to accept when things do not go as well as planned," he told voters in his manifesto. "But I also have a mindset of possibilities, and faith in ourselves, that we can rise and achieve great things in our lifetime."

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NATO's aggression behind pro-peace veneer

CHINA has increasingly become a scapegoat for some in the West to cover up their failure to resolve the Ukraine crisis, if not an excuse for them to advance certain parties' geopolitical schemes.

NATO and the European Union are ramping up efforts to pressure China to stop its "assistance" to Russia, and help get the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to stop its support to Russia for its "special military operation" in Ukraine.

China's normal and stable diplomatic ties and economic and trade cooperation with any other country, including its two neighbors, are by no means leverage those Western forces can apply to advance their own agenda.

That both North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the EU have stepped up their collusion with and sealed certain forms of security pacts with such Asia-Pacific countries as Japan and the Republic of Korea citing "common threats" from other regional countries should be regarded as a political lever that these forces want to use to press China to do their bidding on the Ukraine crisis.

In an opinion piece, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte wrote: "China bears particular responsibility here, to use its influence in Pyongyang and Moscow to ensure they cease these actions. Beijing cannot pretend to promote peace while turning a blind eye to increasing aggression."

After meeting with the top US diplomat on Wednesday, Rutte said "the Euro-Atlantic and the 'Indo-Pacific' really have to be seen as one theater, and not as two separate ones", and that "our security, therefore, now more and more is global, and we have to look at this as a global issue".

Neither NATO nor the EU, or their common ally across the Atlantic, has provided any substantial evidence to support their claim that China is providing "military assistance" to Russia.

Instead, the whole world sees clearly which party is playing an ugly role in both the Ukraine crisis and the Korean Peninsula issue, along with the Gaza conflict, for its own narrow ends, and which party is upholding a neutral, fair and balanced stance on these issues, tirelessly working for cease-fires and lasting peace.

The haste with which the new NATO chief inherited the mantle of his predecessor in trying to weld together the transatlantic and the "Indo-Pacific" alliance networks using made-in-China welding rods clearly indicates the real motive is not to resolve the conflicts but to make China part of them as "a decisive enabler", "a potential accomplice" and then "a real threat".

These tactics are also an integral part of the decoupling and de-risking moves of some developed economies targeting China, providing the China hawks on the economic front with "evidence" to transform a long-term major trading partner into an enemy at the gate overnight.

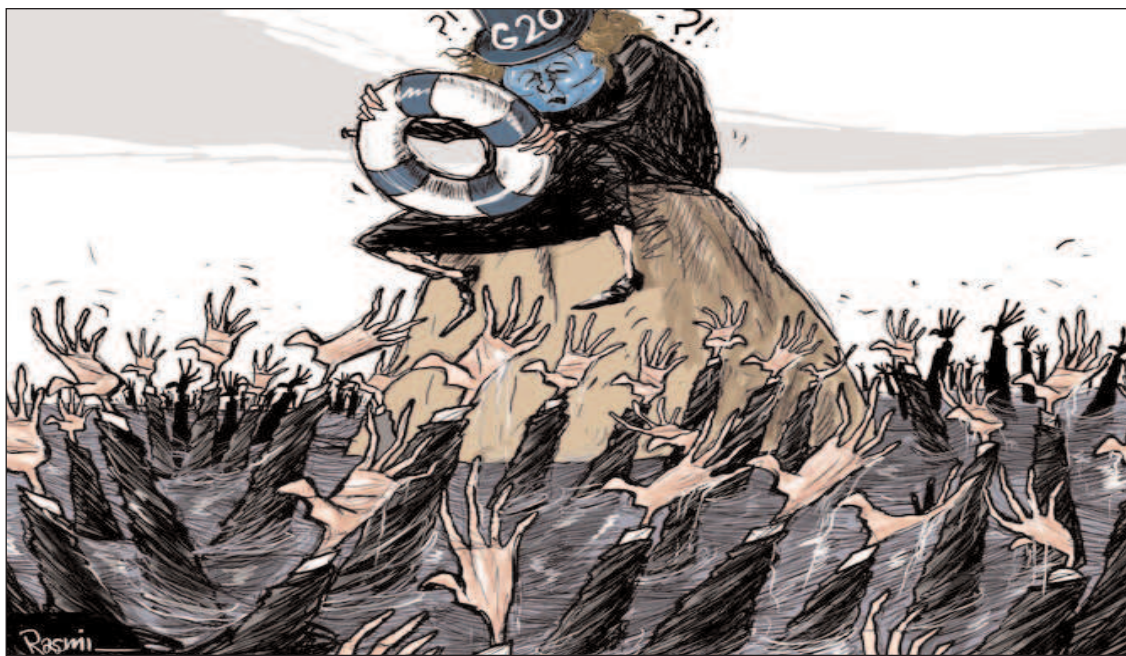
The EU has sanctioned multiple Chinese entities on groundless charges that they are providing support to Russia's military in the Ukraine crisis. And even though its imports of Russia-sourced energy remain sizable and it keeps silent on other countries' fast rising trade with Russia, it attacks China's normal trade with the country.

The Ukraine crisis has been ongoing for 1,000 days. Both parties to the conflict are yet to give up their obsession with winning by force and keep launching large-scale attacks against each other, which have been expanding in recent days. China has no self-interest in the Ukraine crisis, and along with other Global South countries, it has established the Friends for Peace group that calls for no spillover of the battlefield, no escalation of the fighting, and no provocation by any party.

Those Western forces trying to smear China over the Ukraine crisis should realize that, as history has proven time and again, military means will not bring lasting peace, and that all conflicts will, in the final analysis, end at the negotiating table. They should stop their scapegoating tricks and jointly send a strong message for an early cease-fire and a political settlement of the crisis with China and other peace-loving nations.

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With Gaza war, Israel has normalized genocide

Osama Al-Sharif

TO say that the world has failed the Palestinians for decades is an understated fact. To admit that it has turned its back on the people of Gaza is tantamount to complicity in an ongoing massacre, the crime of the century, which is yet to end. Now in its 14th month, Israel's war on Gaza is an unrelenting nightmare that has all the characteristics of genocide, yet few officials or bodies have come out to label it as such.

Israel has denied that its war on Gaza is genocide. It has rejected accusations that it is using starvation as collective punishment, that it is deliberately targeting civilians and resorting to the indiscriminate bombing of hospitals, schools and UN buildings, and that it is using banned weapons like white phosphorus.

But after more than 44,000 fatalities and countless injured and missing persons, several UN officials and human rights organizations have come out to accuse Israel of committing war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and collective punishment against more than 2 million people, almost all of whom are now displaced.

The list of accusations is long. Israel has kidnapped doctors and nurses and some have died in Israeli detention centers in suspicious circumstances. There is mounting evidence that Israel uses torture, including rape, against men, women and children. Israel has killed more than 180 journalists and hundreds of doctors, academics and humanitarian workers.

Still, Israel's horrific onslaught continues unabated in an audacious challenge to the Geneva Conventions, the Genocide Convention, other areas of international humanitarian law, the laws of war, UN Security Council resolutions and the International Court of Justice's provisional ruling from January on Israel's obligations toward the civilian population in Gaza. The list goes on and on.

According to the Genocide Convention, geno-

cide is a crime that can take place in times of war as well as in times of peace. The definition contained in Article II of the convention describes genocide as a crime committed with the intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, in whole or in part.

Israel's indifference to its obligations under the law is directly linked to the shameless support it receives from the US, which continues to supply Israel with lethal weapons while failing to hold it accountable to even its most basic responsibilities as an occupying power. There is no doubt that the US and other countries that continue to send weapons and munitions to Israel are directly complicit in the crimes being committed in Gaza.

A report published by a UN special committee last week said that Israel's war conduct in Gaza "is consistent with the characteristics of genocide," including mass civilian casualties and using starvation as a weapon. The report added: "Through its siege over Gaza, obstruction of humanitarian aid, alongside targeted attacks and killing of civilians and aid workers, despite repeated UN appeals, binding orders from the International Court of Justice and resolutions of the Security Council, Israel is intentionally causing death, starvation and serious injury, using starvation as a method of war and inflicting collective punishment on the Palestinian population."

Outspoken UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territory Francesca Albanese has directly accused Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Last month, she presented a report titled "Genocide as colonial erasure," which concluded that Israel's genocide is founded on "ideological hatred" and "dehumanization," and "enabled through the various organs of the state." She recommended that Israel be unseated from the UN over its conduct. Naturally, she is

accused by Israel and the US of antisemitism.

Human Rights Watch last week accused the Israeli authorities of causing the forced displacement of Palestinian people in Gaza to an extent that constitutes war crimes and crimes against humanity. Israel's response was that the organization was using rhetoric that is "completely false and detached from reality."

In March, 12 of Israel's most prominent human rights organizations signed an open letter accusing the country of failing to comply with the International Court of Justice's provisional ruling that it should facilitate access to humanitarian aid in Gaza.

Organizations like the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF and the World Health Organization have repeatedly highlighted the dire humanitarian situation. Human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have called for investigations into potential war crimes.

Even Pope Francis is reportedly calling for an investigation to determine if Israel's attacks in Gaza constitute genocide, according to excerpts released on Sunday from an upcoming book ahead of the Catholic Church's jubilee year in 2025.

When Karim Khan, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, asked the court in May to issue warrants to arrest Israeli leaders Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including extermination, Israel and the US moved quickly to hinder the court's compliance. Khan and the court's judges were openly threatened by US lawmakers.

More than six months after Khan requested those warrants to be issued, the judges remain silent. Meanwhile, Khan, who also warned against the intimidation of court officials, now faces a probe into alleged sexual misconduct.

Soon after he was selected as the next majority leader of the US Senate, John Thune last week issued an outrageous and threatening statement: "If the ICC and its prosecutor do not reverse their outrageous and unlawful actions to pursue arrest warrants against Israeli officials, the Senate should immediately pass sanctions legislation, as the House has already done on a bipartisan basis."

It is now a fact that Israel's impunity for its crimes in Gaza and America's complete and unconditional support of its genocide have become a litmus test of the validity of the rules-based order, the UN and all international conventions and laws.

Israel and the US are against any investigation into the Gaza war, now or ever. One wonders how Israel will manage the devastated Strip once the war ends. Will it allow independent journalists and human rights observers into Gaza? For how long does it believe it can deny access to both?

It is inconceivable that the world can return to business as usual once the war ends. The International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court will become symbols of a colossal miscarriage of justice. The UN, which Netanyahu has dubbed a "swamp of antisemitic bile," will become irrelevant.

The persistent lack of accountability for Israeli violations, including attacks on civilians, destruction of infrastructure and the imposition of collective punishment, has created a climate of impunity. This emboldens Israel to carry out further violations as it undermines the rule of law.

What is perhaps the most horrifying reality is that Israel has managed to normalize the most heinous act by any state: genocide.

If Israel is allowed to get away with war crimes and genocide in Gaza, the rules-based order will become meaningless and void. What replaces it will be chaos and mayhem. Gaza is now the biggest challenge to the post-Second World War US-led order.

Facing genocide while disabled

Yousef M Aljamal

THE genocide in Gaza is a mass disabling event.

More than 400 days of Israeli air strikes and constant ground invasions on heavily populated areas have left more than 22,500 people who have sustained life-changing injuries. Hundreds of people with existing disabilities have been killed or remain under the rubble. Ninety percent of Gaza's population has been displaced, some as many as 20 times.

The destruction of infrastructure hinders the mobility of people with all types of disabilities, making it extremely difficult for them to flee when ordered by the Israeli military.

Just as the Israeli army is destroying the healthcare system of the Strip, it has also decimated the system of care that used to exist for people with disabilities, killing many professionals who worked in the field. On May 13, Hashem Ghazal, the founder of the Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children and also known as the "spiritual father of deaf people in Gaza", was killed in an Israeli air strike along with his wife.

I grew up in Gaza in the Nuseirat refugee camp. As a child, I knew many people who had been permanently disabled as a result of Israeli violence. Before the war, nearly 50,000 people in Gaza were registered as living with a disability.

While I am no longer in Gaza, this September I was able to speak on the phone and WhatsApp with several Palestinians with disabilities who have been displaced. Here are some of their stories:

Azmi Aljamal is nine years old. On October 15, 2023, he was pulled from under the rubble of his family home, which was targeted with two missiles that killed his mother, grandparents, uncle, two aunts, two siblings and three of his cousins. Azmi had fallen from the third floor and was badly

injured. He is now in a wheelchair and needs surgery to repair his foot but can't leave the country to get it.

Azmi's family was displaced from Nuseirat to Rafah, and then back to Nuseirat, when the Israeli army invaded Rafah. His father Mousa told me "He needs special care, for instance, he needs a particular type of diaper, he is on a specific diet and needs vitamins which are not available." His family struggled to get him ointment to cure his burns. Whenever there is a bombing nearby, his father carries Azmi and tries to provide him with some protection. Azmi's dream is to walk again by himself.

Mahmoud Adnan Shokor is 31 years old and lives in the Nuseirat refugee camp. After falling from a construction site in 2018, he became paraplegic and developed speech difficulties. He uses a wheelchair and relies on his family's help for everyday tasks. On November 4, Israel bombed his family home, injuring his mother and killing his cousin. His surviving family members and neighbours pulled Mahmoud out from under the rubble. In the past, he received treatment in Egypt. Now Mahmoud's medical condition is worsening. His mother told me: "He cries every day, and when it is time to escape and bombing is close, he cannot run for his life."

has at a camp for the displaced. In the sweltering heat, she bakes bread using a clay oven in her tent and sells some of it.

For Amina, daily tasks are even harder than before. Unable to walk, she has to drag herself through the dust of the camp. She needs a wheelchair, but it's impossible to get one. The food situation is another constant worry. Amina's weak digestive system rejects most dishes, causing bouts of vomiting and diarrhoea.

These are just a few stories among thousands. As Israel's war on Gaza continues unabated, Palestinians with disabilities perhaps bear the biggest brunt of it.

Everyone I talked to was dealing with extreme hardship and unable to get the care they needed.

But even under the most extreme conditions, the lengths that people were willing to go to protect their loved ones are astounding.

I have heard so many stories of family members risking their lives to care for one another. Their courage should motivate us all to continue our struggle to bring to an end this horrific genocide. We need to do everything we can to pressure political leaders to impose an arms embargo on Israel and push for a permanent ceasefire.

The world must heed the pleas for help of all Palestinians, including those with disabilities.

Their sacrifice, our freedom: A debt we ought to honor

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

ISLAMABAD'S serene Margalla Hills are a magnet for nature lovers, fitness enthusiasts, and families. Each morning and evening, trails near these lush hills teem with activity as people of all ages embrace jogging, walking, and hiking. The sight of vehicles lined along Margalla Road paints a vibrant picture of a community drawn to the hills' tranquility and scenic beauty. However, as the sun dips below the horizon and darkness envelops the forested area, a strange unease creeps in. Even the bravest among us—whether a bodybuilder or self-styled Hercules—might hesitate to tread these paths on winter nights. An unshakable, primal fear seems to reside in the heart of anyone contemplating the forest in solitude.

But this fear pales in comparison to the dangers faced by our defenders on the borders and in troubled areas. These individuals, bound by their oath to protect the homeland, are perpetually at risk. The notion of courage in the face of adversity finds its ultimate manifestation in these defenders who stand firm against external and internal threats. Unlike the hypothetical dangers imag-

ined in a quiet forest, the risks for our armed forces and security personnel are devastatingly real.

In times of war, a soldier engages the enemy with the hope of survival, relying on strategy, comradeship, and training. There exists at least a sliver of hope that one might return home, victorious or wounded, but alive. However, the menace of suicide bombers leaves no room for such hopes. When a defender encounters this faceless, merciless threat, the only certainty is the deafening sound of an explosion and the shattering reality of martyrdom. These attacks strike at the core of human resolve, leaving no choice but sacrifice in the line of duty.

The gravity of this sacrifice often escapes the collective consciousness of those who live under the blanket of security. Among these martyrs are countless young men, often between the ages of 25 and 35. These were individuals with dreams and aspirations—dreams of a family, a home, or a fulfilling career. They had every reason to live, yet they chose to dedicate their lives to a greater cause. They embraced the ultimate sacrifice to ensure that the rest of us could pursue our dreams without

fear.

It is easy to forget the magnitude of their sacrifice amid the comfort of everyday life. Yet, it is imperative to recognize and honor their contributions. Their selflessness is a debt that can never be repaid, but it must not be taken for granted. These defenders represent the very spirit of resilience and unity, serving as a reminder of the price of peace and security.

As a nation, it is our moral duty to value their sacrifices. Respecting these martyrs is not limited to ceremonial gestures or public statements; it demands tangible actions that support their families and uphold their legacy. Ensuring proper care for their loved ones, providing educational and career opportunities to their children, and fostering a culture that celebrates their heroism are critical steps in this regard.

The stories of these young defenders should inspire the next generation to appreciate the freedoms they enjoy. Their bravery underlines the privilege of living in a secure environment—a privilege made possible only through their sacrifices. At the same time, it is crucial to reflect on our role as citizens in safe-

guarding the values they fought to protect. This means adhering to the rule of law, promoting harmony, and contributing to the nation's progress in every possible way.

As we walk the trails of Margalla Hills, basking in the peace they offer, let us spare a moment to acknowledge the unseen sacrifices that make such tranquility possible. Behind the picturesque landscape and calm surroundings lies a harsh reality—the constant vigilance of those who keep threats at bay. Their courage and commitment ensure that the forests of fear remain confined to our imagination, allowing life to flourish in its myriad forms.

The defenders of our homeland stand as sentinels of peace, a barrier between chaos and order. Their sacrifices are not just acts of duty but profound expressions of love for their country and its people. Let us honor them not just with words but through actions that reflect our gratitude and commitment to preserving the ideals they held dear. Their youth and dreams may have been cut short, but their legacy endures in the safety and freedom we enjoy. Respecting their sacrifice is the least we can do to ensure it was not in vain.

On genocide, Trump will be no different from Biden

If a Pulitzer Prize was handed out for the (unintentionally) funniest, stitch-inducing headline drafted by a “major” news organisation in 2024, then The New York Times – which craves such frivolous baubles – would win it without question.

Here’s the “award-winning” headline, published last week in the aftermath of US President-elect Donald Trump’s diplomatic selections that, according to the Times, will “help shape President-elect Trump’s strategy” on the Middle East.

“Trump’s Middle East Picks Signal Staunch Pro-Israel Policy,” the Times wrote.

It is just so comical, isn’t it?

An identical headline could have been recycled verbatim after every Democrat or Republican president-elect made public his “Middle East picks” since Israel’s engineered inception in 1948.

The headline’s implicit suggestion is that, somehow, for some puzzling reason, there may have been a scintilla of doubt that Trump was not going to adopt a “Staunch Pro-Israel Policy” like all his deferential predecessors.

Sure, Trump played nicey-nicey with a bunch of gullible Arab “leaders” (pawns) in swing-state Michigan during the presidential election campaign to curry fleeting favour with a “community” he would immediately abandon once he scored 270 electoral votes.

The headline’s second underlying inference is that any US president-elect – Democrat or Republican – would consider, let alone be capable of, embracing anything other than a “Staunch Pro-Israel Policy”.

Finally, and perhaps most absurdly, in its ongoing and signature efforts to normalise a fascist president-elect, the Times’s uproarious headline and sub-headline imply that Trump, who will soon occupy the Oval Office for a second time, has a nuanced understanding of the Middle East that will translate into a well-defined “policy” and “strategy” for the region.

My goodness – the sequel.

This may be a revela-

tion to the Times, but I don’t think that Trump can even distinguish between Iran and Iraq on a map.

But, as we know, a nuanced understanding of the Middle East is not necessarily a prerequisite in the White House or the State Department, when it comes to electing or appointing people to take carriage of America’s “policy” or “strategy” for that troubled part of the world.

Do the discredited names George W Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice and the late Donald Rumsfeld and Colin Powell spring

Andrew Mitrovica

Bank.

Biden, Blinken and United Nations Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield have pursued the same “kill first, think later” “policy” or “strategy” – take your pick – that the “shock and awe” gang employed with such disastrous and inhumane consequences.

You would have reasonably thought that the calamitous invasion of Iraq would have given Biden, Blinken and Thomas-Greenfield pause.

You would be wrong.

The headline’s second underlying inference is that any US president-elect – Democrat or Republican – would consider, let alone be capable of, embracing anything other than a “Staunch Pro-Israel Policy”. Finally, and perhaps most absurdly, in its ongoing and signature efforts to normalise a fascist president-elect, the Times’s uproarious headline and sub-headline imply that Trump, who will soon occupy the Oval Office for a second time, has a nuanced understanding of the Middle East that will translate into a well-defined “policy” and “strategy” for the region. My goodness – the sequel. This may be a revelation to the Times, but I don’t think that Trump can even distinguish between Iran and Iraq on a map. But, as we know, a nuanced understanding of the Middle East is not necessarily a prerequisite in the White House or the State Department, when it comes to electing or appointing people to take carriage of America’s “policy” or “strategy” for that troubled part of the world. Do the discredited names George W Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice and the late Donald Rumsfeld and Colin Powell spring to anyone’s mind – particularly at the complicit New York Times? Lest we forget. Predictably, Joe Biden and Antony Blinken followed the “shock and awe” gang’s ruinous footprints by giving the indicted prime minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, all the money, arms, and “strategic” cover he required to commit genocide in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. Biden, Blinken and United Nations Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield have pursued the same “kill first, think later” “policy” or “strategy” – take your pick – that the “shock and awe” gang employed with such disastrous and inhumane consequences. You would have reasonably thought that the calamitous invasion of Iraq would have given Biden, Blinken and Thomas-Greenfield pause. You would be wrong. Instead, true to “kill first, think later” form, Biden, Blinken and Thomas-Greenfield have enabled a genocide – that has already claimed the lives of more than 43,000 Palestinians, mostly children and women – with the patina of faux seriousness that Trump and halting company lack and that is so valued by the learned cognoscenti at the Times, CNN and MSNBC.

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So, why anyone, anywhere, would be “shocked” that Trump has chosen an evangelical Christian and wannabe rampaging Israeli settler, Mike Huckabee, to be America’s next ambassador to Israel is a silly mystery to me.

Why anyone, anywhere would be “shocked” that pro-Israel zealots like Senator Marco Rubio and Representative Elise Stefanik would be appointed secretary of state and UN ambassador respectively is also a silly mystery to me.

Like Biden, Blinken, and Thomas-Greenfield, Huckabee and Stefanik represent the slightly more blunt and profane continuum of America’s defining “kill first, think later” attitude towards the Middle East.

That is why Democrats’ and the cognoscenti’s fuming “outrage” over Trump’s “scandalous” cabinet and other high-profile administration choices has been largely reserved – surprise, surprise – for his “controversial” picks for attorney general and defence secretary.

The methodical, more than yearlong destruction of Gaza and the West Bank is stale news.

Biden, Blinken and Thomas-Greenfield gave Israel the “green light” to kill as many Palestinians as it wants to for as long as it wants to and Trump, Rubio, Huckabee and Stefanik will do precisely the same.

On genocide: the new White House gang is the same as the old White House gang.

Hold on. There’s still hope. The Arab leaders (pawns) who met with Trump towards the end of the campaign – in rebuff of Kamala Harris – have sent him a letter asking the president-elect “to apply [his] political influence in demanding an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon and Palestine” with a view towards negotiating “a lasting peace”.

Of course, a letter – assuming Trump bothers to read it – is bound to change Washington’s ingrained view that Palestinians are always the perpetrators and never the victims, and that their lives are as disposable as they are inconsequential.

Yes, a pretty-please-worded letter should finally do the elusive trick.

Rehabilitation robots awaiting large-scale use

Giuseppe Carbone

THANKS to the rapid development of technology, robotic devices are transforming healthcare, showing promise especially in rehabilitation. Robotic rehabilitation devices offer targeted, repetitive movement therapy, helping patients to recover from stroke, injuries or surgery. However, despite remarkable innovations, widespread adoption of robotics in healthcare remains elusive. To bring these tools from laboratories to mainstream healthcare, increased research funding and strategic policy shifts are essential.

Robotic rehabilitation devices vary in design and function, from exoskeletons for limb support to smaller end-effectors aiding wrist and finger movements. These devices offer personalized, high-precision exercises, allowing patients to perform repetitive, controlled motions crucial for recovery. They also give real-time feedback, track progress and, unlike human therapists, never tire. For patients recovering from conditions such as a stroke or spinal cord injuries, robotic devices have the potential to accelerate their rehabilitation process and reduce dependency on healthcare workers.

In China and other parts of Asia, universities such as Tsinghua University and Beijing Institute of Technology are exploring advanced robotic systems to serve specific rehabilitation needs. Yet these promising technologies are largely confined to research centers, with access limited to elite healthcare facilities.

The question is: What will it take to see robotic rehabilitation on a larger scale, making it accessible for ordinary patients? And what is holding back large-scale adoption?

Despite their potential, robotic rehabilitation devices face significant barriers. The key challenges include high costs, technological limitations, lack of regulatory frameworks, and limited evidence of long-term benefits.

Robotic devices are often prohibitively expensive, with costs driven by complex components, materials and sensors. Hospitals and clinics may hesitate to invest in such devices, especially because traditional physiotherapy, while less efficient, is effective and affordable. For instance, a basic exoskeleton can cost upwards of tens of thousands of dollars, making it

financially unfeasible for most facilities and out-of-reach of patients. Without funding support or financial incentives, the market is unlikely to grow at a pace that would allow cost reductions through economies of scale.

Rehabilitation needs vary widely from patient to patient, complicating device design. For example, robots must accommodate different body sizes and movement ranges, requiring frequent and precise adjustments. Control systems struggle to account for human biomechanics, limiting the robot’s ability to adjust movements dynamically. Innovations like shape memory alloy actuators, which allow variable stiffness for customized support, are promising but still in the early stage of development. Technical challenges related to durability and usability further hinder the chances of their adoption.

Although initial studies indicate that robotic rehabilitation can improve motor skills, the data often come from small trials. For large-scale adoption, healthcare providers and insurance companies require strong, large-scale evidence to prove it yields long-term benefits. Robust data are also needed to establish standard treatment protocols, which are currently lacking, making it difficult for hospitals to justify investment in these devices.

Besides, robotic rehabilitation devices require specialized training, but healthcare curriculums rarely include robotics in therapy training. Therapists not familiar with these tools may mistrust their efficacy or feel uncomfortable operating them, hindering patient acceptance. This gap between innovation and application hinders mainstream adoption, particularly when caregivers and patients question the technology’s value.

One way to accelerate the adoption process of robotic rehabilitation is to allocate more funds to dedicated research. Europe is leading the charge, recognizing that without sustained financial support, even promising technologies risk hitting the wall at the prototype stage. European initiatives such as the “Agewell” project, coordinated by this author at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca’s CESTER Laboratory in Romania, are pushing the boundaries of what robotic rehabilitation can achieve. Agewell is focused on creating

adaptive robotic solutions to aid stroke patients to regain daily life skills, directly tackling the challenges associated with aging populations.

To move robotic rehabilitation from labs to everyday use, we must address both technological and economic barriers.

To begin with, cost reduction is essential. Mass production of standardized components and shifts toward cost-effective materials, like flexible robotics, could make devices more affordable. Also necessary is exploring bio-inspired designs to increase functionality without driving up costs.

Artificial intelligence (AI) can play a significant role in making rehabilitation robots smarter and more adaptive. AI allows devices to analyze real-time patient data and adjust exercise intensity, frequency, and support levels. By customizing therapy, AI minimizes the need for manual adjustments, easing the burden on therapists. A robotic device that continuously learns and tailors itself to each patient’s progress could maximize rehabilitation outcomes, even in high-demand settings.

To bridge the knowledge gap, robotic rehabilitation should become an integral part of medical and physiotherapy training. Certification programs and continuing education courses can equip healthcare workers with the skills to operate and maintain these devices, giving therapists confidence in their use and patients confidence in their effectiveness.

Tele-rehabilitation offers new possibilities for remote care, especially in regions with limited access to physical therapy services. Robotic devices that patients can use at home, under the remote guidance of a therapist, could bring professional rehabilitation to rural and underserved areas. Tele-rehabilitation also supports continuity of care, as patients can continue therapy from home, enhancing outcomes and reducing hospital readmissions.

Government-backed initiatives can dramatically increase the availability of robotic devices. Subsidies, tax incentives, and regulatory support could make it financially feasible for healthcare centers to adopt robotic rehabilitation. Policies that promote the use of medical robotics in public healthcare settings would improve accessibility, especially in countries with large populations and varying levels of healthcare access, like China.

Trump’s return: A bold vision to reshape the Middle East

ONE of the biggest mistakes in dealing with President-elect Donald Trump is underestimating his capabilities. The fact that he lacks academic jargon, analyst-style phrasing or the polished demeanor of traditional politicians does not diminish his knowledge or awareness of the issues at hand.

Trump faced ridicule from his opponents, both domestically during the electoral process and from foreign commentators seeking to tarnish his reputation. Trump is not a Yale graduate like Bill Clinton or someone with 50 years of political experience like Joe Biden. Yet, his actions during his four years as president were arguably more successful in addressing key events.

For instance, when he threatened to cancel or improve the comprehensive nuclear agreement with Iran, he was told it was an international deal he could not withdraw from. But he withdrew the US from it entirely, altering the course of the region’s history and saving it from the dangers of that flawed agreement.

Trump may not be as intellectually renowned as Henry Kissinger or as humble as Jimmy Carter, but his background in business, investment and real estate gives him an edge in a capitalist country like the US, which values hard work, competition and success.

Trump demonstrated his leadership abilities, most notably in winning

Abdulrahman Al-Rashed

Trump maintained

the relationship as he envisioned and even his successor, Biden, initially backtracked on his promises and eventually followed Trump’s approach.

When the president-elect claims he can solve critical crises like those in Ukraine, Gaza and Lebanon, among others, we should take him seriously.

Trump’s Republican Party will control both houses of Congress and he has already initiated communications before officially assuming office on Jan. 20.

The final point worth noting is not how Trump sees the world, but how the world sees Trump. Internationally, he is perceived as having a strong personality, being quick to act and as a leader who follows through on his words. This image forces America’s adversaries to think twice before engaging in major confrontations with him. Most would likely prefer to negotiate agreements and political deals, knowing he possesses the willpower and tools, such as congressional support, to back his decisions.

It seems clear that Trump intends to reshape the Middle East and we will witness this through agreements and sanctions rather than wars. Indeed, as he often points out, he governed for four years without engaging in a single war, but he was relentless in enforcing sanctions. For this reason, the region must prepare and adapt to the upcoming changes.

Israeli government in a rush to legislate against Palestinians

LET’S put it bluntly: the Israeli government is on a mission to destroy any chance of a peace agreement with the Palestinians based on a two-state solution. It is not concealing this or apologetic about it.

One of the instruments it uses for this purpose is the enactment of legislation hostile to the Palestinian Authority and Palestinians in general. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s far-right coalition has embarked on this mission with both a great appetite and a sense of urgency, suggesting that its members believe this is their great, and perhaps only, opportunity to fulfill their dream of a “Greater Israel,” which requires the annexation of the West Bank, while they are also recklessly advancing the cause of annexing at least part of the Gaza Strip, if not all of it.

With its solid majority in the Knesset, the government appears to be in a hurry to pass legislation that dramatically alters the legal relations between Israel and the Occupied Territories. Much of it is directed at weakening the Palestinian Authority, in addition to harassing and intimidating Palestinians and making them feel insecure and subject to total Israeli control. One of the leading culprits in this hostile legislation is Simcha Rothman, who is little-known abroad but in Israel is infamous for being one of the major driving forces behind the attacks on the country’s judiciary that

began with the formation of the current administration two years ago.

Rothman, a member of the extreme-right Religious Zionism party, also chairs the Knesset’s influential Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, where he orchestrates his anti-democratic and anti-Palestinian legislation. For instance, he has tabled a bill setting out to deny the PA the right to petition to Israel’s Supreme Court, a bill that the Knesset plenum recently passed with a big majority in a preliminary reading.

This legislation followed an unprecedented move by the PA of filing a petition to Israel’s High Court of Justice, requesting it to overturn two laws that allow victims of Palestinian terrorism and their families to seek financial damages from the PA. First, the Knesset legislated to allow the families of the victims to sue the PA, subjecting the governing body of the Palestinians to Israeli law, but then deprived it of the basic right that anyone else has to appeal.

Mind you, Palestinian victims of Jewish terrorism, for instance in the West Bank, do not have similar legal standing to sue the Israeli government and, in any case, one might ask: can the PA or any Palestinian expect justice from an Israeli court? It is actually the cooperation between the security forces of Israel and the PA that has saved many Israeli lives since the 1990s.

Yossi Mekelberg

Rothman and others in the government are continuing to abuse their power, as previously demonstrated by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich’s decision to withhold the tax revenues that Israel collects for the PA, which are its financial oxygen and anchored in treaties with Israel, in a move that is no more than a ploy to bring about the collapse of the PA.

And if you ask yourself why, it is because, in their zeal and myopia, they want to provoke a power vacuum in the belief that the resulting chaos would work to their advantage. For the settler movement, the destruction of the PA would mean the end of one of the last remaining vestiges of the Oslo Accords, which in turn would open the path for Israel to annex the West Bank. The most extreme among them are already fantasizing about ethnic cleansing there, similar to what is allegedly already taking place in Gaza.

But this is not the full story. Earlier this month, the Knesset passed another law, one that allows the government to deport family members of those convicted of terrorism offenses. This includes Israeli citizens, although no one could imagine it being applied to anyone but the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

The law allows for the deportation of family members of those who had advance knowledge of a terrorist act and either failed to

report the matter to the police or “expressed support or identification” with such an act. It is hard to imagine how on earth the legislature of a country claiming to be a democracy could enact such an Orwellian piece of legislation whereby first-degree relatives — in other words the parents, siblings or children — of those committing an unlawful act could be expelled by the interior minister for up to 20 years, without any due process of culpability, which many legal experts claim is plainly unconstitutional. This truly draconian legislation imposes severe punishments on people, without trial and without the authorities having the burden of proof.

Another piece of legislation suggested by a Likud member would enable the Israel Prison Service to deny visiting rights to high-security prisoners affiliated to “terrorist organizations that hold Israeli captives.” Without belittling the seriousness of the acts that some of these prisoners committed that earned them a prison sentence in the first place, the extreme ideology of organizations they are affiliated to or the inhuman treatment of their hostages, prisoners have the right of visitation enshrined in international law. And this right is also a measure that keeps prisons relatively calm.

However, for Israel’s right-wing legislators, it is not about international law, human rights, morality or even expediency, but a con-

— Arab News

In the Court of district Judge Zilla Azizi Buner at Daggara Buner. Civil Appeal Meslinisic No 23/14. Institution 10/2/2024. Date of hearing 4/12/2024. Mast Bakhti Khud VS Abdul Karim etc. Notice to No.1/5. Mohamad Ibrahim. 1/6. Mohamad Ashfaq sons of Abdul Karim old name Gul Karim (late) resident of Daggara Kalay Kozda Hujra tahsil Daggara district Buner at present abroad . Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 4/12/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court



In brief

Champions Trophy displayed in Nathia Gali

ISLAMABAD (APP): The ICC Champions Trophy was exhibited in Nathia Gali on Tuesday, drawing a significant number of cricket enthusiasts eager to see the prestigious prize. Before reaching Nathia Gali, the trophy's journey included a vibrant showcase in Abbottabad, where it was displayed at prominent locations such as the Army Public School, Abbottabad Medical College, Thandiani and the Abbottabad Cricket Stadium. At each venue, large crowds gathered to witness the iconic symbol of cricket glory. The ICC Champions Trophy is on a global tour before the tournament officially kicks off in Pakistan on January 27, 2025. Its upcoming stops include Afghanistan from November 26 to 28, Bangladesh from December 10 to 13, South Africa from December 15 to 22, and Australia from December 25 to January 5. Further destinations include New Zealand from January 6 to 11, England from January 12 to 14, and India from January 15 to 26, ensuring a global celebration of cricket leading up to the event.

Britain miss out on BJK Cup final

MÁLAGA (Agencies): Great Britain's long wait to win the Billie Jean King Cup continues after Slovakia staged an impressive fightback to reach the final. British number two Emma Raducanu put her team in early command with a 6-4 6-4 victory over Viktoria Hrnackova at the start of Tuesday's semi-final. Katie Boulter, Britain's leading singles player, then missed the opportunity to secure victory by losing 2-6 6-4 6-4 to Slovakian number one Rebecca Sramkova. It meant British hopes of reaching the final for the first time since 1981 - when the competition was known as the Federation Cup - rested on a deciding doubles match. But Heather Watson and Olivia Nicholls, who were called upon for the first time this week, lost 6-2 6-2 to Hrnackova and Tereza Mihalikova.

S Arabia unveils King Salman Stadium

RIYADH (Web Desk): Saudi Arabia recently unveiled its design plans for the King Salman Stadium, a giant, 92,000-capacity facility, which will be constructed in Riyadh as the showpiece of the 2034 Fifa Men's World Cup. The Saudi Ministry of Sports unveiled a promotional video made with computer-generated imagery to offer a first look at the state-of-the-art stadium which is scheduled to be completed in the fourth quarter of 2029, according to Sports Business Journal. The stadium is set to serve as the main base of the Saudi national football team and will be part of the sports complex featuring an indoor sports hall, an Olympic-sized pool, and other facilities. Although not officially confirmed by Fifa, Saudi Arabia is almost certain to win the vote to host the 2034 Fifa World Cup, having been the only country to formally submit a bid before the deadline in late 2023. The King Salman Stadium in Riyadh, designed by leading architectural firm Populous, is poised to redefine global sports and entertainment infrastructure. The stadium is a flagship project of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 initiative, aimed at transforming the nation into a global hub for sports and culture. Populous is also designing Prince Mohammed bin Salman Stadium.

India pull out of Blind T20 WC 2024 in Pakistan

KARACHI (Web Desk): The Indian blind cricket team has withdrawn from the upcoming T20 World Cup 2024, scheduled to be held in Pakistan, after its Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) denied permission to cross the border, Indian media reported on Tuesday.

Shailendra Yadav, General Secretary of the Indian Blind Cricket Association (IBCA), has confirmed the development to an Indian media outlet, saying that the Indian team will not travel to Pakistan for the global event, which will be held from November 23 to December 3.

Speaking to the media outlet, Yadav shared that the blind cricket team received a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the Sports Ministry but was awaiting the government's approval.

However, as per the latest development, the MEA has denied granting per-

mission to the blind team to participate in the upcoming world cup.

"We were waiting for the last 25 days to get permission from the government to go to Pakistan. Now we can't wait any longer as the tournament is about to begin," Yadav said.

"When I talked with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on the phone then they told us that we won't be getting any permission to go to Pakistan and we can cancel our tournament."

"They also told us that we will be getting an official letter of denial as well. However, we haven't got any official letter yet but on the basis of our conversation with MEA we've decided not to go to Pakistan and we will not participate in the Blind T20 World Cup."

He expressed disappointment over the decision but affirmed that the cricketing association would abide by the MEA's

directives. "Along with us, England, Australia and New Zealand are also not coming. Hence, India will become the fourth team which will not take part in this tournament," he claimed.

Despite India's refusal, the Blind T20 World Cup 2024 will proceed as per the schedule.

"All other teams are coming to Pakistan for the World Cup. If one team doesn't show up, it won't affect our preparations," Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) chairman Syed Sultan Shah had stated.

The development came amid reports, suggesting that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has formally informed the International Cricket Council (ICC) that it will not send its national men's team to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy, citing the directives of the federal government.

Dream team bag Federal Basketball Tournament title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dream team clinched the Federal Female Club Basketball Tournament title here at the Hamidi Hall of Pakistan Sports Complex on Tuesday.

Dream team defeated Warriors Club by 30-20 in the final to win the tournament which was organized by Right to Play in collaboration with Alliance Française and held under the supervision of the Federal Basketball Association.

Maria Soratgar was a standout player for the winning team, scoring 10 points, while Humna Roohi contributed 8 points. Noor Fatima was the top scorer for Warriors

Club, with 10 points.

The French Ambassador, Nicolaos Galey, and his wife, Camelia Galey, were the chief guests at the closing ceremony. Also in attendance were Ouj E Zahoor, General Secretary of the Federal Basketball Association, Ali Khayam, Country Director for Right to Play, and other dignitaries.

Camelia Galey, a former professional basketball player in Algeria and France, played an active role in the event. Not only did she kick-start the tournament, but also offered coaching tips to the participants during the competition.

Speaking at the event, Ambassador Galey highlighted the significance of the tournament, saying, "This event allows us to promote the spirit of the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games here in Pakistan. It is essential for us to contribute to the organization of a women's tournament. Gender equality and the promotion of women's rights are priorities for French diplomacy. Social equality and inclusion are equally important."

A total of eight teams from different areas of Islamabad participated in the tournament, which was held under the theme 'Equal Playing Field'.



ISLAMABAD: Players of Net Warriors and Islamabadians teams struggling to get hold on ball during Girls Basketball Tournament at Sports Complex.

World Junior Tennis C'ship Leg-2 continues

ISLAMABAD (APP): The ITF Pakistan PPL-Syed Dilawar Abbas World Junior Tennis Championship Leg-2 sponsored by Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) continued here at the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) Tennis Complex on Tuesday.

The event has brought together 80 junior players from around the globe, including 50 boys and 30 girls representing countries such as Pakistan, Japan, China, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Canada, Korea, Germany, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Singapore, USA, Belarus, and Russia.

Earlier in the opening ceremony Tariq Mehmood Murtaza Chairman of Islamabad Tennis Association, inaugurated the Championships. The ceremony was also attended by Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi President PTF, Col. (R) Zia-ud-Din Tufail Secretary, PTF, Majid Bashir President ITA, Tufail Cheema Secretary ITA, Ali Noon, Chief Corporate Services PPL (Sponsor), Muhammad Arif Qureshi Supervisor

of International Tennis Federation (ITF) London and other distinguished officials of Islamabad Tennis Association.

Tariq Mehmood interacted with the participants, especially the foreign players. They also thanked the Islamabad Police for the provision of foolproof security coverage.

In Boys Singles 1st Round, Sion Ji (KOR) beat Yota Nishikori (JPN) 6-4, 6-2; Youngchae Oh (KOR) beat Hamza Roman (PAK) 4-6, 6-4, 7-6(4); Yeonmu Jung (KOR) beat Mohammed Ali (CAN) 6-2, 6-3; Abubakar Talha (PAK) beat Andrew Kaavinda Wijemanne (SRI) 6-0, 6-3; Minwoo Kim (KOR) beat Teetawat Tavacheongsri (THA) 6-1, 7-6(5).

In Girls Singles 2nd Round, Dinara De Silva (SRI) beat Chaewon Moon (KOR) 6-2, 6-2; A Hyun 30 (KOR) beat Phitchayapak Srimuk (THA) 6-4, 6-4; Chaerin Lee (KOR) beat Paramsee Tadkaew (THA) 4-6, 6-3, 7-5; So Yuna (KOR) beat Palina Huretskaya

(RUS) 6-0, 6-1.

In Boys Doubles 1st Round, Bilal Asim (PAK), Ahmad Nael Qureshi (PAK) beat Patham Lacsakulporn (THA), Ariyaphol Leekul (THA) 6-2, 6-2; Pudit Phapatsirikul (THA), Teetawat Tavachongsri (THA) beat Minwoo Kim (KOR), Ho Jun Park (KOR) 2-6 6-4(12-10); Muhammad Haider All Rizwan (PAK), Abu Bakar Talha (PAK) beat Sion Ji (KOR), Yeonmu Jung (KOR) 6-4, 5-7 [10-5]; Aahil Kaleel (SRI), Louis Eliah Knesse (GER) beat Tchegoun Derosa (USA), Muhammad Talha (PAK) 6-3, 6-3.

Ahtesham Humayun (PAK), Hamza Roman (PAK) beat Abdul Basith Cader (SRI), Methika (SRI) 6-1, 6-2; Yota Nishikori (JPN), Youngchae Oh (KOR) beat Chanapat Pisutharnonth (THA), Danthal Takong (THA) 6-0, 6-4.

In Girls Doubles 1st Round, Tanisha Kantam (SGP), Leyla-Esther Knesse (GER) beat Fatima Raja (PAK), Zainab Raja (PAK) 6-0, 6-0.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani player Nasir Iqbal and Yassin Shaddy Tamimi are playing a match at Pakistan sports Complex during ongoing International Squash Champion 2024.

Federer pays tribute to Nadal for 'epic career'

MADRID (Agencies): Roger Federer says Rafael Nadal "made the whole tennis world proud" during his "epic career" as he paid tribute to his former rival before his retirement.

Nadal, a 22-time Grand Slam champion, will bring an end to his illustrious career aged 38 after representing Spain at the Davis Cup Finals in Malaga this week.

Federer, who retired in 2022 with 20 Grand Slams, won 16 matches and lost 24 - including an epic final at Wimbledon in 2008 - in the 40 times he faced Nadal.

"As you get ready to graduate from tennis, I've got a few things to share before I maybe get emotional," wrote 43-year-old Federer on Instagram.

"Let's start with the obvious: you beat me - a lot. More than I managed to beat you. You challenged me in ways no-one else could."

"On clay, it felt like I was stepping into your backyard, and you made me work harder than I ever thought I could just to hold my ground."

Federer added that Nadal made him "reimagine" his game, to the extent that the Swiss changed the size of his racquet head.

A 37-year-old Federer triumphed in the pair's final encounter, in 2019 at Wimbledon, but it was a 17-year-old Nadal who won their first meeting, in 2004.

"I thought I was on top of the world. And I was - until two months later, when you walked on the court in Miami in your red sleeveless shirt, showing off those biceps, and you beat me convincingly."

"All that buzz I'd been hearing about you about this amazing young player from Mallorca, a generational talent, probably going to win a major someday - it wasn't just hype."

"We were both at the start of our journey and it's one we ended up taking together. Twenty years later, Rafa, I have to say: What an incredible run you've had. Including 14 French Opens - historic!"

"You made Spain proud... you made the whole tennis world proud."

Federer teamed up with Nadal for the final match of his career when the pair - affectionately nicknamed 'Fedal' - played together in the doubles for Europe against the Rest of the World at the Laver Cup.

Both players were in tears as Federer bowed out of the game.

"Sharing the court with you that night, and sharing those tears, will forever be one of the most special moments of my career."

He added: "Rafa, I know you're focused on the last stretch of your epic career."

"We will talk when it's done. For now, I just want to congratulate your family and team, who all played a massive role in your success."

"And I want you to know that your old friend is always cheering for you, and will be cheering just as loud for everything you do next."

Pakistani trio moves in Int'l Squash C'ship quarterfinals

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Nasir Iqbal, M Ashab Irfan and Noor Zaman have moved in the quarterfinals of the Chief of the Air Staff-Serena Hotels International Squash Championship here at Mushaf Squash Complex on Tuesday.

Nasir will face Seif Elshanawy of Egypt while Ashab is up against Rowan Dammings of The Netherlands and Noor would play Perry Malik of England in the quarterfinals on Wednesday.

Meanwhile Ibrahim Elkabbani of Egypt will face Darren Pragsum of Malaysia in the quarterfinal.

In the 2nd round matches played on Tuesday, Ibrahim Elkabbani (Egy) beat Duncan Lee (Mas) 11-9, 14-12, 13-11 (41 Min), Darren Pragsum (Mas) beat Tayyab Aslam (Pak) 9-11, 11-6, 11-3, 11-6 (30 Min), Seif Elshanawy (Egy) beat Hafiz Zhafri (Mas) 11-9, 11-8, 11-8 (24 Min), Nasir Iqbal (Pak) beat Yasin Shodhy (Egy) 11-4, 11-8, 8-11, 8-11, 11-7 (48 Min), M Ashab Irfan (Pak) beat (WC) Abdullah Nawaz (Pak) 10-12, 11-8, 11-5, 11-9 (45 Min), Rowan Dammings (Ned) beat (WC) Farhan Mehboob (Pak) 11-4, 11-9, 11-9 (27 Min), Perry Malik (Eng) beat Ammar Altamimi

(Kuw) 11-7, 11-9, 11-8 (33 Min), Noor Zaman (Pak) beat Hazem Hossam (Egy) 12-10, 11-9, 10-12, 11-9 (38 Min).

The Chief of the Air Staff-Serena Hotels International Squash Championship is being organized by the Pakistan Squash Federation in collaboration with Serena Hotels.

The tournament carries a prize money of US\$15,000. Apart from nine Pakistani players, a group of 15 world ranking players from Egypt, England, Hong Kong-China, Ireland, Kuwait, Malaysia and Netherland are participating in the championship.

Shahid Aslam gets picked as Pakistan batting coach

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has appointed Shahid Aslam, former first-class cricketer, as the Pakistan men cricket team's batting coach just few days ahead of the Zimbabwe tour.

The PCB spokesperson on Tuesday confirmed Aslam will serve as the full-time batting coach with the national squad.

Moreover, the spokesperson said soon spin bowling coach would also be appointed for Pakistan as the board management was on the hunt for one.

The development has come as Pakistan are reeling from more dismal than prideful performances in cricket. The recently-con-

cluded T20 international series against Australia, that Pakistan lost 3-0, has particularly been hurtful for its memories are freshly etched into minds.

Earlier, sources privy to the development said newly-appointed interim white-ball head coach Aqib Javed had recommended Aslam for the post. Aslam has spent a number of years working as a support staff member for the Green Shirts. The white-ball tour of Zimbabwe will be his first assignment, before a full-fledged tour of South Africa.

The first ODI match between Pakistan and Zimbabwe will be played on November 24 (Sunday).

Pakistan's ODI Squad for Zimbabwe: Aamir

Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Ahmed Daniyal, Faisal Akram, Haris Rauf, Haseebullah (WK), Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Hasnain, Mohammad Rizwan (WK), Muhammad Irfan Khan, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Shah Nawaz Dahani and Tayyab Tahir.

Pakistan's Zimbabwe itinerary

November 24: First ODI, Bulawayo
November 26: Second ODI, Bulawayo
November 28: Third ODI, Bulawayo
December 1: First T20I, Bulawayo
December 3: Second T20I, Bulawayo
December 5: Third T20I, Bulawayo.

Int'l kabaddi festival held at Kartarpur

LAHORE (APP): The "Baba Guru Nanak International Kabaddi Festival 2024" was held with great enthusiasm at PMU Kartarpur, jointly organized by the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and Pakistan Kabaddi Federation. The event saw a large turnout of Sikh pilgrims from across the world, with many pilgrims from India also attending to witness this unique sporting event.

The festival was attended by prominent figures, including Chaudhry Shafay Hussain, Chairman of the Pakistan Kabaddi Federation and Provincial Minister for Industry and Commerce, Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs and Chairman of Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Sohail Burth, Provincial Minister for Law Punjab, Bilal Akbar, Provincial Minister for Transport Punjab, Saifullah Khokhar, Additional Secretary Shrines, Abu Bakar Aftab Qureshi, CEO of Kartarpur, and other distinguished personalities.

Chaudhry Shafay Hussain congratulated Pakistan Kabaddi Federation for the success-

ful organization of the International Kabaddi Festival. He emphasized that such cultural events play a vital role in strengthening ties between Pakistan and India. Congratulating the winning team, he said that Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji taught the values of peace, love, and humanity, and his teachings are a beacon for not only the Sikh community but for people of all faiths. He added that for the first time, Kabaddi has been introduced as a festival in Kartarpur, and the tournament will be held annually in the future, with further improvements to the grounds.

Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora congratulated the government of Pakistan for supporting the global promotion of Kabaddi. He stated that organizing such events not only advances the sports sector but also sends a message of love and unity between the people of both nations. He stressed that the foundation for annual Kabaddi matches has been laid today, as such events can improve relations between the two countries.

Sohail Burth, Bilal Akbar, Abu Bakar Aftab Qureshi, and other leaders also spoke, expressing that

politics should not interfere in sports. They mentioned that efforts were made to invite an Indian team to the festival, but unfortunately, like the cricket team, the Kabaddi team was not allowed to participate. However, they assured that they will continue to work towards including an Indian team in future events, as sports play a key role in improving relations and strengthening the bond of friendship with Sikh brothers.

An exciting Kabaddi match was held between Bandehsha Royal Belgium Kabaddi Club and Royal King Kabaddi Club, with the Royal Belgium Kabaddi Club emerging victorious. Chaudhry Shafay Hussain presented the winning team with the trophy, while the winning team was awarded a cash prize of Rs600,000, and the runner-up team received Rs400,000.

The event was also attended by Commissioner Gujranwala Division Naveed Haider Shirazi, RPO Muhammad Tayyab, Deputy Commissioner Narawal Syed Hassan Raza, DPO Narawal, General Secretary of Pakistan Kabaddi Federation Muhammad Sarwar Rana, and other officials.



In brief

ANF recovers over 210 kg drug

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover over 210 kg drugs worth Rs 140 million and arrested 11 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Tuesday. He informed that in an operation, 800 grams hashish and 200 grams ice were recovered from an accused arrested near a university in Stalkot. The arrested accused confessed to selling drugs to the students of educational institutions. In another operation, 2.5 kg ice was recovered from the trolley bag of a passenger going to Bahrain at Lahore Airport. 52 kg heroin and 9 kg ice hidden in a vacant house in Kali Attaullah area of Chaman were recovered. In fourth operation, 19.2 kg opium and 31.2 kg hashish hidden in two vehicles near Jaranwala Road, Sheikhupura were recovered. During the operation, 5 suspects were also arrested on the spot. 38.4 kg hashish and 1.2 kg opium were recovered from an accused held near Pasrur Bypass, Stalkot. 26 kg heroin was recovered from Dera Ghazi Khan road near Loralai and 24 kg hashish was recovered from an accused rounded up on Daska Road in Stalkot. 2.5 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of the accused netted near a hotel on Torkham border. In 9th operation, 1 kg opium and 2.4 kg hashish were recovered near a check post on Narowal Road, Sheikhupura, Muridke. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

IRSA releases 100,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 100,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 54,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1507.53 feet and was 109.53 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 25,300 cusecs and 49,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1167.45 feet, which was 117.45 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 5,700 cusecs and 28,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 59,200, 49,100, 37,700 and 5,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 15,800 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Nine held for carrying illegal arms

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested nine illegal arms holders and recovered arms and ammunition from their possession during a crackdown. According to police spokesman, Sadiqabad, Naseerabad, Race Course, Wah Cantt, Mandra, Jatli and Chakri police rounded up nine illegal arm holders namely Ijaz, Abbas, Suleman, Ubaidullah, Waheed, Imran, Zia Mehboob, Sajid and Basharat and recovered eight pistols 30 bore, a 9mm pistol and ammunition from their possession. Police have registered separate cases against the accused and further investigation was in progress. SSP Operations commended police teams and instructed to take strict action against those carrying illegal weapons.

Marri stresses importance of dialogue to solve national challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): A prominent leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Shazia Marri Tuesday urged the government and opposition to resolve their differences through dialogue, criticizing PTI's destructive politics that has disturbed citizens and damaged state property.

Shazia Marri stressed the importance of peaceful dialogue in tackling national challenges during an exclusive interview with a private news channel.

Shazia Marri mentioned that while her party wholeheartedly supports peaceful protests as a fundamental democratic right, these protests should never be allowed to turn destructive. She also highlights the importance of balancing the right to free speech and assembly with the need to maintain public order and safety.

Marri also strongly criticized PTI protests, stating that they consistently disturb citizens and harm the country, emphasizing that this should not be tolerated at any cost.

Shazia Marri also expressed optimism about Pakistan's direction, emphasizing that the country is moving in the right direction. Responding to a query, Shazia Marri also highlighted Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's support for the 26th amendment, emphasizing his interest in collaborating with the government.

NA panel slams mismanagement in Hajj affairs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly Standing Committee on Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony raised serious concerns over the management of Hajj and Zaireen, pointing to mismanagement, corruption, and nepotism as major issues.

The committee chaired by Malik Muhammad Aamir Dogar expressed deep concern over the Hajj operations and Zaireen management, highlighting issues of mismanagement, corruption, and nepotism. Dogar stressed the need for proper arrangements to assist religious tourists both domestically and internationally.

He urged the ministry to establish a framework for Zaireen and present a schedule of visits for both sides at the next Committee meeting. The chair directed the Secretary Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) to complete the composition of the Ziarat Management Committee (ZMC) and write a letter to the Speaker for the required nomination of one Honorable Member of the National Assembly as per rules.

The secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony briefed the Committee on the ministry's operations, performance, and challenges.

The committee directed the Secretary to promptly address the issue of Pakistani beggars in Saudi Arabia in coordination with the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development.

At the outset of the meeting, Committee members congratulated Chairman Malik Muhammad Aamir Dogar and pledged their full support. The Chairman thanked them for their confidence and expressed hope that, through collective efforts, the Committee would effectively oversee the executive. The Committee deferred consideration on "The National Commission for Minorities Bill, 2024" due to the absence of its mover.

The meeting was attended by the Members of National Assembly (MNAs) Sardar Muhammad Yousaf Zaman, Chaudhry Armgan Subhani, Syed Imran Ahmad Shah, Seema Mohi ud Din Jameeli, Shahnaz Saleem Malik, Asiya Naz Tanoli, Dr. Nelson Azeem, Mussarat Rafique Mahesar, Ms. Shagufta Juman, Samina Khalid Ghurki, Ahmed Saleem Siddiqui, Muhammad Bashir Khan, Mujahid Al. The meeting was also attended by the Secretary and senior officers from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony.

IESCO notifies power shutdown programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, Chhata Bakhtawar, New Marvi, Navy, Zia Masjid, Highway, Koral, PHA Flats, Orchard Scheme, CDA Pump, Abpara, Madinah Market, G-9/3, I-9/4, I-11/1, I-10-1, Warda Humna, Railway Road, Bhara Kaho, Bhara Kaho.II, Pindi Point, Dhalla, Upertupah, Bari Imam, Bhara Kaho.I, Athal, Shahpur Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, 6th Road, A Block, Muzmal Town, Jannah Camp, Farooq Azam, APHS, Zafaral Haq, Dhok Khaba, Fawara Chowk, Sarafa Bazar, Jinnah Road, Rajahabad, Muslimabad, Asghar Mall, Azizabad, NLC, Kayani Road, MH, MH.2, Zeeshan Colony, Ameer Hamza Colony, Shams Colony, Noon Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Hyder Road, Jahangir Road, Rahimabad, NPF.I, Model Town, Murree Brewery, AOWHS, Humayun.I, Khasala, Dharmiyal, UC Lakhana, Jhawara, Rajar, Old Rawat, Lahtrad.II, Doberan, New Chuah, Fazal Ahmad Shaheed, Panjar, Chowk Pandori, PAECHS, Bengali, Raman, Gagan, Mandra, Dharmiyal.I, Gulshan Saeed, Zaraj.I & II, Zeta.I, IST, Dhok Awan, Mohra Nagyal Feeders, Attock Circle, Margalla, Nawaz Shaheed, Jalala, Nisar Shaheed, Museum, Garhi Afghana, Pur Miana, Hassan Abdal, Islampur, Shahullah Ditta, Sarai Kharboza, Hazro, GBHP, Qaziabad, Hattian, Shamsabad, Maskinabad, People Colony, Shadi Khan, Sarka, Dhok Fateh, Kachhari, Attock Cantt, Gharib Wall, Hafizabad, Sajjad Shaheed, Fateh Jang City.II, Nara, Kamrial, Khore, Fateh Jang, Lani Wala, Chub Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Abbas Pura, Sanaullah Shaheed, New Cantt Jhelum, CMH Jhelum, Kariala, Kohar, F-8 Civil Line, Pakhwal, Chamala, M.Riaz Shaheed, Mangala Cantt, Dinah, Sanghui, Mumtaz Shaheed, Karoli, Hayat Sir Road, Main Bazar, Behlot, Sohawah Kachheri, Baba Shaheed, Galiana, RTM Mill, KTM Mill, Qazila, Islampur Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Bhoun, Line Park, Jamalwal, Khair Pur, Main Bazar, Jand Awan, Dhudial City, Dharogi Rajgan, Pinwal, Dandot, Dalwal, Ahmed Abad, Katchery, Dullaha, Neela, Dhurnal, Moorat, Jhatla, Pera Fathial, Thoa Mehran Khan, Khuian feeders, GSO Circle From 06:30 AM to 06:30 PM, RCCI-I,III,IV Feeders, From 09:00 AM to 04:00 PM, Baloch, Jindal, Paljari, Tangi Gali, GHQ, Kayani Road, Army Flats, MH-I, CMH-I, MH-II, Zeeshan Colony, Hyder Road, NLC, Galiana, EC Mill, RT Mill, Mandira, Samot, LTC, Dhirkot, Chaman Kot, Ringla, Dana Express, Dhila, Sohawa, Manhasa, Nimbal, Birut Kazmi, Dhirkot-II feeders and surrounding areas.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in a meeting with Minister/Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at Foreign, Commonwealth & Development, United Kingdom Mr. Hamish Falconer along with delegation at Parliament House.

Salik directs to establish Pakistan House in Karbala

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Tuesday held a meeting with the Pakistani Ambassador to Iraq, Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed to deliberate on measures to facilitate Pakistani pilgrims traveling to Iraq.

The minister emphasized that the Pilgrim Management Policy, approved by the federal cabinet in April 2021, was designed to ensure the provision of maximum facilities for pilgrims. Highlighting progress on bilateral arrangements, he informed that a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Iraqi government has already been forwarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Chaudhry Salik directed the expeditious finalization of the MoU to enhance the welfare of pilgrims. He further instructed the immediate establishment of the Pakistan House in Karbala, as well as a Directorate of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony in Iraq.

Reiterating the government's commitment, the minister said that every effort would be made to address the needs of pilgrims and facilitate their journey. During the meeting, the Pakistani Ambassador suggested increasing the number of community welfare attachés in Iraq to better serve the expatriate and pilgrim community.

Sealed hospital must submit required documents

RAWALPINDI (APP): A sealed private hospital has been given an extended period of ten days to submit the required documents, failing which final legal action will be taken against it. A private hospital in Rawalpindi Cantonment area was sealed on allegations of misusing the lease of the residential land for commercial purposes.

According to the details, the hospital had already been served several notices from time to time by the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB), which were not responded to by the hospital administration, to which the RCB sealed the administrative block of the hospital, and a case in this regard was registered against the said violation of the rules of the RCB with respect to Military Lands and Cantonments (MLC).

The said private hospital, located on the main Murree Road at Marir Chowk, also persuaded the case in court.

During a recent hearing, as per information shared by RCB, the court had provided another opportunity to the hospital to submit all required documents with ten days failing to which RCB would take further legal action.

During the grace period of ten days, the hospital would remain sealed. "The court held the hospital administration responsible and ordered to apply for commercialization, composition within ten days", an RCB spokesman informed APP in a brief interaction. The spokesman further informed that the hospital would be sealed again for further legal action if the court orders were not implemented.

NA speaker highlights importance of resolving Kashmir and Palestine issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Tuesday said that durable global peace cannot be achieved without the resolution of Kashmir and Palestine dispute.

He said this during a meeting with Minister/Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development, United Kingdom, Himesh Falconer along with UK Parliamentary delegation who called on him at the Parliament House.

Ayaz Sadiq expressed concern over the grave human rights violations in these regions, stating that without addressing these issues, regional stability would remain elusive. The Speaker stressed that Parliament of Pakistan represents all political parties and the incumbent Parliament has active opposition that plays a constructive role on matters of national importance.

He affirmed his impartiality as Speaker, ensuring a balanced approach in managing parliamentary proceedings. Ayaz Sadiq has said that Pakistan is committed to fostering regional peace and stability in the region. He also said that Pakistan has long standing and historic ties with the United Kingdom.

The Speaker said that by enhancing and promoting parliamentary and economic cooperation these ties can

be further strengthened. He emphasized that close interaction and cooperation between the parliaments of both countries could play a pivotal role in bolstering bilateral relations. The Speaker mentioned that Pakistan has rendered immense sacrifices in the global war on terror and it has always strived for regional peace.

He also highlighted initiatives of the Parliament, namely the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Secretariat established in 2014, which actively works toward achieving sustainable development goals in Pakistan. Additionally, he mentioned the establishment of a parliamentary caucus to protect the rights of women and children, playing a vital role in addressing discrimination against women and promoting gender equality.

Furthermore, the Speaker underscored Pakistan's minimal contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions while being one of the most affected countries by climate change. He called for greater international collaboration to address this pressing challenge. Parliamentary Whips of various political parties, present during the meeting, also emphasized the importance of Pakistan-UK diplomatic relations.

PML-N Chief Whip, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry highlighted the sig-

nificance of Pak-UK friendly ties. MNA Syeda Shehla Raza expressed deep concern over human rights violations in Kashmir and Palestine. MNA Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar thanked the UK for its aid during the COVID-19 pandemic.

MNA Syed Amin-ul-Haq described Pakistan-UK relations as historic. MNA Noor Alam Khan emphasized Pakistan's sacrifices in the fight against terrorism and urged global acknowledgement of these efforts. Himesh Falconer thanked the Speaker for the warm reception and reaffirmed the UK's commitment to its longstanding ties with Pakistan.

He announced £108 million aid package to tackle climate change induced challenges in Pakistan, highlighting that a partnership on this issue is mutually beneficial. The minister pledged continued UK support for Pakistan in strengthening its democratic institutions and fostering economic and social cooperation.

The UK Parliamentary Delegation, accompanying the UK Minister, comprised British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, Personal Assistant to the Minister, Calum Matthews, Political Counsellor, Zoe Ware, Deputy Political Counsellor, Mark Bailey, and Principal Political Adviser to the High Commissioner, Saqib Riaz.

Senate Body restores 137 teachers; addresses media misinformation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training, following tireless efforts and continuous day-to-day hearings, reinstated 137 teachers of ICT public sector schools who had been previously dismissed.

The teachers were officially notified and regularized on 18th November 2024. Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training met with Senator Bushra Anjum Butt Tuesday at the Parliament House on Tuesday.

Senator Bushra Anjum Butt, emphasized that the committee's primary objective is to facilitate deserving individuals, particularly youth, in overcoming challenges in their educational journey.

However, after the conclusion of the meeting, the chairperson expressed her discontent regarding media misinformation surrounding the issue, particularly claims that the reinstatement of the teachers was solely a Ministry-led initiative.

She clarified that this matter had been stalled for years and only gained momentum over the last six months due to the committee's persistent efforts and daily hearings.

In a statement, Senator Butt observed certain sections of the media for spreading inaccurate information, asserting that it is the responsibility of the media to provide correct and unbiased reports. She also issued a formal ban on the media outlet that has propagated this misleading information, "If information is to be manipulated, then there is no need for it to be reported," Senator Butt lamented.

Key Agenda Items Discussed during the meeting included Private Members Bill on Educational Curriculum moved by Senator Qurat-ul-Ain Marri.

A subcommittee was formed, led by Senator Kamran Murtaza, Senator Khalida Ateeab, and Senator Qurat-ul-Ain Marri, to review the "Federal Supervision of Curricula, Textbooks, and Maintenance of Standards

Education (Amendment) Bill 2024".

The bill will undergo further scrutiny, with special attention given to the viewpoints of the Islamic Council of Ideology, on education on reproductive health to be included in the Curricula.

Senator Butt also advocated for mental health education to be incorporated into the national curriculum, highlighting the importance of addressing issues like depression, anxiety, and demotivation among youth. Additionally, she emphasized the need for comprehensive education on reproductive health as presented in the bill.

Senator Shahadut Awan raised a starred question regarding the number of scholarships offered during the past three years. The committee chairperson instructed the Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to expedite the response.

Senator Bilal Ahmed Khan raised a point of public importance concerning derogatory remarks about

Pashtuns found in O-level textbooks. In response, the committee took immediate action, securing a formal apology from the author.

All copies of the offending textbooks were confiscated, and an official notification was issued to remove them from the market. The books will be reprinted and republished without errors.

On the occasion, a comprehensive briefing was presented by the CEO of Pakistan Education Endowment Fund (PEEF), formerly known as NEST, regarding the organization's performance and the status of scholarships offered to students.

Senator Butt emphasized the need for an official audit report to ensure there has been no fraudulent activity. She also stressed the importance of appointing a permanent CEO to ensure the organization operates effectively and efficiently.

The meeting was attended by Senators Falak Naz, Kamran Murtaza, Khalida Ateeab, Qurat-ul-Ain Marri, and Shahadut Awan, along with representatives from relevant departments.

Nation rejects opposition's call of destabilizing Pakistan: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan on Tuesday said that entire nation had rejected the November 24 protest call of the opposition as the people did not want any hurdle to derail the country's prosperity and development.

Addressing a news conference, Mashhood said that a political party having imported agenda of destabilising Pakistan made attempts in the past of sit-ins during a previous visit by the Chinese prime minister in 2014 and had also given a protest call to disrupt the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit.

He said a mega event of the Prime Minister's University Sports (PMUS) Olympiad would

start from November 21 to 23 in which around 3,000 athletes would participate.

"Protests during nationally significant events do not send a positive message," he said and added that the government would not allow these disgruntled elements to enter the capital and disrupt the daily life.

"With 3,000 participants, the PMYS Olympiad will not only foster a spirit of healthy competition but will also serve as a platform for the youth to engage, excel, and represent their universities with pride."

He added that Ambassadors, international development partners and international sports organisations were also invited to participate in the event.

Chairman PMYP said that Pakistan's position

Crime review meetings held

RAWALPINDI (APP): A crime review meeting was held in chair of Superintendent of Police Sadr Muhammad Nabil Khokhar at the police stations of Gujjar Khan, Jatli, and Mandra, informed police spokesman. The meeting was attended by SDPO Gujjar Khan, SHOs, and investigation officers. During the meetings, the progress of various cases was reviewed, and the officers were given clear instructions to arrest the accused involved in pending investigations. SP Khokhar stressed the importance of issuing challans on time and speeding up the investigation process further. He highlighted the need for an improved patrolling system to tackle the rising issue of motorcycle thefts. The protection of citizens and addressing their concerns were outlined as top priorities, he maintained. Khokhar urged the police officers to treat citizens with respect.

6,900 carats of emeralds sold

PANJSHIR (BNA): Officials from the Panjshir Department of Mines and Petroleum have announced the sale of freshly extracted emeralds from the province. According to the head of the Panjshir Department of Mines and Petroleum, Mawlawi Mohammad Qasim Amiri, 6,909 carats of emeralds, extracted from the Hosse-e-Awal district of Panjshir, were sold for a total value of \$305,910 during the 13th auction round.

Uplift projects approved

KABUL (BNA): The Acting Minister of Higher Education, Sheikh Neda Mohammad Nadim, approved four major foundational projects valued at 30 million Afghanis during an official visit to Ghazni University. These projects include the construction of a general conference and meeting hall, a central library, a research farm for the Faculty of Agriculture, and the expansion and renovation of the university's main mosque.

Project launched to revive Jangal Bagh

JAWZJAN (TOLONews): The irrigation network project for Jangal Bagh in Jowzjan province has been launched at a cost of over four million afghani.

Officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock said this project aims to prevent the drying of trees in Jangal Bagh, one of the largest research and recreational gardens in the province.

This garden, established about 90 years ago on more than 400 acres of land, has lost a significant number of trees in recent years due to water shortages.

"Due to water shortages, many trees in Jangal Bagh have dried up. This project, worth 4.016 million afghani, includes 1,200 meters of skem pipes and 1,200 meters of irrigation canals, implemented by the

Ministry of Agriculture," said Mohammad Amin Akrami, an irrigation specialist at the Ministry of Agriculture.

"Water passage through the canals is very challenging due to elevation differences. The wells dug cannot supply water to higher areas due to the lack of adequate flow," said Zabihullah Abrar, Director of Natural Resources at the Jowzjan Agriculture Directorate.

Several workers involved in the project have urged the Islamic Emirate and aid organizations to implement similar projects. "Now we don't need to go to Iran. Work here is good, and if there are jobs here, we won't need to migrate," said Sher Mohammad, a worker on this project.

"This work is very good. Previously, we worked as

day laborers and might find work for two days, but the rest of the days, we were unemployed. Now every family working here is very happy," said Bismillah, another worker.

Local officials in Jowzjan emphasized that this project will be executed with high quality and will be completed within three months.

"Development projects in various parts of the country bring great joy to us and the people. This project not only develops the nation but also provides job opportunities for the people," said Gul Haider Shafaq, the governor of Jowzjan.

According to the Jowzjan Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, a major reconstruction of Jangal Bagh will also be undertaken soon.

Over 300 Afghan refugees deported

KABUL (Khaama Press): Officials from the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation have reported that over 300 Afghan refugees were deported from Iran and Pakistan and have returned to Afghanistan.

The Bakhtar News Agency reported on Tuesday, November 19 that 323 Afghan families were deported from Iran and Pakistan and re-entered Afghanistan through various border crossings.

According to the report, the deported refugees returned to Afghanistan through the provinces of Kandahar, Nangarhar, Nimroz, and Herat.

The deportation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan comes as the trend of forced expulsions from neighboring countries, particularly Iran and Pakistan, has seen a significant rise in recent months.

This follows a recent announcement by the United Nations, which revealed that over two million Afghan refugees have been deported from Iran and Pakistan in the past year.

The growing number of deportations has placed immense pressure on Afghanistan, which is already grappling with an economic and humanitarian crisis, leaving many returnees without basic support or resources.

The escalating deportations of Afghan refugees from neighboring countries highlight the deteriorating regional tolerance for hosting displaced populations.

This surge in expulsions has created immense strain on Afghanistan's limited infrastructure and humanitarian resources, exacerbating an already dire situation for returnees who often arrive with little to no support.

Furthermore, the forcible deportation of Afghan refugees has raised concerns among human rights organizations about violations of international refugee conventions.

Many deportees report facing harassment, lack of due process, and inadequate time to prepare for their return, underscoring the urgent need for a coordinated international response to address this growing crisis.

Hanafi calls for action on expired medicines

KABUL (TOLONews): Abdul Salam Hanafi, the Administrative Deputy of the Prime Minister's Office, has expressed concern over the distribution of expired and low-quality medicines and kits by international organizations in Afghanistan. He has called on the World Health Organization (WHO) to prevent such practices.

According to a statement issued by the Arg, Hanafi raised this issue during a meeting with Hanan Hassan Al-Balkhi, the Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean of the World Health Organization (WHO).

"The distribution of expired and low-quality medicines and kits not only creates problems for patients but also damages the credibility of international organizations. This must be prevented," said the Arg.

The Arg further said that the WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean promised to investigate this matter.

During the meeting, Hanafi also requested that Afghanistan's seat at the WHO be assigned to a representative of the Islamic



Emirate.

He emphasized that the Islamic Emirate is fully committed to eradicating polio in Afghanistan.

"We are committed to vaccinating all children, eradicating polio, and ensuring no child contracts the disease," said Hanafi.

Afghanistan and Pakistan remain among the countries where positive cases of polio are still reported, and both nations have yet to fully eradicate the disease.

Other requests raised by the Administrative Deputy of the Islamic Emirate included facilitating visa issuance for Afghan patients, treating addicts and infectious diseases, establishing a specialized hospital for cancer treatment, enhancing the capacity of doctors and technicians, reactivating polio laboratories, and fully equipping them.

Afghanistan has faced extensive challenges in the healthcare sector in recent

years. A lack of resources, weak healthcare infrastructure, and reliance on international aid have left millions of Afghans without access to adequate healthcare services.

With one of the highest maternal and child mortality rates, Afghanistan urgently requires global attention to provide sustainable healthcare services, modern equipment, and improved training for healthcare workers.

Kabul faces worsening power outages amid rising winter concerns

KABUL (TOLONews): These days, residents of various areas in Kabul are complaining about increased power outages and are calling on the interim government to address this issue.

They say that despite the weather not being fully cold yet, they have electricity for only 5 to 6 hours a day, which is insufficient for their needs.

MoD teams repair and reactivate 325 vehicles

KABUL (BNA): The fixed and mobile workshop teams of the Engineering and Fortification Directorate of the Ministry of National Defense have successfully repaired and reactivated 325 various military vehicles.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of National Defense's press office, as a result of the concerted efforts of the fixed and mobile teams, 325 engineering and military vehicles, including those used in central and regional units, have been repaired and made operational.

In the past, the repair of heavy vehicles was conducted by the NMS company. However, with the establishment of fully equipped workshops and the deployment of both fixed and mobile teams, the Engineering and Fortification Directorate is now capable of independently repairing all types of military vehicles.

It is also important to note that the technical teams of the Ministry of National Defense have repaired and reactivated thousands of military vehicles across the central and regional army corps.

"From 4 PM to 9 PM, there is no electricity. Especially during the winter season, electricity is a crucial and essential service for people," said Mohammad Farooq, a Kabul resident.

"The electricity issues are severe. It comes and goes frequently. If we have electricity during the day, it's only for 5 or 6 hours, which is not enough for our needs," said Sohail Khan, another Kabul resident.

Other residents of Kabul say that the country's dire economic situation has made life harder for many families, and having consistent electricity could

alleviate some of these challenges.

"Wood and coal are expensive. It would be better if the government provided 24-hour electricity so we can keep our homes warm," said Fawad, a Kabul resident.

"People cannot afford to buy wood and coal. It would be good if the government addressed the electricity problems," said Faheem, another resident of Kabul.

Meanwhile, officials at Breshna Company attribute the main reason for the outages to maintenance work on the power lines in the capital.

"Breshna is working to provide adequate and reliable electricity for the people. To this end, we have implemented two key programs to ensure more stable electricity during the upcoming winter," said Hikmatullah Maywandi, the spokesperson for Breshna Company.

Previously, the head of Breshna Company stated in an exclusive interview with TOLONews that plans had been prepared to ensure electricity supply for the coming winter and to prevent frequent outages. However, it seems there is still no news of these plans being implemented.

Innovation exhibition highlights creativity



KABUL (TOLONews): Several participants in the second day of Afghanistan's Second National Exhibition of Innovations and Top Inventions have called on officials in the interim government to support them in developing their products.

The exhibition, which opened at Badam Bagh in Kabul, will continue for four days.

Haseebullah, who along with a group of young people built a military vehicle in six months with limited resources and displayed it at the exhibition, told TOLONews: "When Israel attacked Palestine, as it is a Muslim country and they want to destroy Islam, this motivated

us. We said to ourselves that we can create something and support the people of Palestine."

Zia-ul-Haq, another participant from Farah, told TOLONews: "I feel proud that I have built such a device, which, God willing, can help defend our homeland in the future." Participants expressed happiness at having the opportunity to showcase their creations.

Naqibullah, another participant, said: "We can stretch our hands, get water, or wash our hands. This system is designed for laboratories and health centers, and we considered it during the COVID-19 pandemic."

Organizers said the aim of the exhibition is to promote the innovations of young people in the country and urged domestic and international partners to support these creative individuals.

Sayed Mohsen Sadat, head of research and innovation at the Technical and Vocational Education Administration, said: "Compared to yesterday, we had significantly more visitors. So far, we have registered over 2,000 visitors and hope to see even more in the coming days. We expect to achieve great results by the end of this exhibition."

Obaidullah, a visitor, said: "It is a source of joy and pride that such an exhibition has been organized. It would be good if similar exhibitions were held in the future as well. This is beneficial for the future generations of Afghanistan to encourage creativity."

The exhibition features 318 projects from 21 provinces displayed in 80 booths, showcasing innovations in technical fields, robotics, and agricultural tools over four days.

Muttaqi appeals to help strengthen health sector



KABUL (Ariana News): The Islamic Emirate has appealed to the World Health Organization to equip and strengthen Afghanistan's health sector and to support Afghanistan's pharmaceutical production sector.

Dr. Hanan Balkhy, the World Health Organization's director for the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office, met in Kabul this week for talks with Amir Khan Muttaqi, the IEA's foreign minister.

During the meeting, Muttaqi asked the World Health Organization to assist Afghanistan and to help it achieve self-sufficiency in the pharmaceutical production sector.

Balkhy meanwhile said that he was trying to garner support for Afghanistan from leading health experts around the world.

Christopher Elias, head of global development for the Bill Gates Foundation, also attended this meeting and said his organization was trying to take effective measures to eliminate the polio virus in Afghanistan.

Polio cases increase

Elias' comment comes after the WHO stated that the forced repatriation of Afghan nationals from Pakistan was a "major setback" for polio eradication efforts and that it contributed to the regional resurgence of the disease.

Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two polio-endemic nations in the world and so far this year, the two countries have reported 49 and 23 cases respectively; up from only six cases each in 2023.

The latest case in Pakistan was confirmed last week in the southwestern province of Balochistan, which sits on the Afghan border and accounts for half the cases reported in 2024.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has said that Pakistan's crackdown on undocumented foreign nationals has resulted in more than 730,000 Afghan migrants returning to Afghanistan since August 2023.

Boosting Herat-Khaf railway: Officials visit Iran

KABUL (TOLONews): Mohammad Ashraf Haqshenas, spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Works, stated that a delegation led by the deputy for railway from the ministry has traveled to Iran.

Haqshenas said that during this trip, the delegation will discuss cooperation via railways and increasing the volume of transport through the Herat-Khaf railway with Iranian officials.

The spokesperson of the Ministry of Public Works mentioned that the transfer process via the Herat-Khaf railway is proceeding normally, saying: "In this meeting, both sides discussed important issues comprehensively, including increasing transfers through the third section of the Herat-Khaf railway, enhancing the

technical capacity of Afghan railway staff, and exploring joint investment opportunities in the development of railway infrastructure."

Meanwhile, Chamber of Commerce and Investment, considering the importance of this delegation's visit, emphasized attracting greater cooperation from Iran in the field of railways with Afghanistan. The chamber sees railway transport as impactful in reducing costs.

"According to an agreement previously held between Iran and India, facilities should be provided at Chabahar Port, existing issues resolved, and the congestion of ships reduced slightly so that we can transfer export and import goods through Chabahar Port," said Mir Zaman Popal, Administrative and

Financial acting Head of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment.

"Recently, Iran's railway was established. If it is further developed, it will benefit both traders and the region. It is a low-cost corridor that can facilitate exports with Pakistan and India," said Mirwais Haji Zada, a businessman.

Previously, a delegation from the Ministry of Public Works participated in the 81st meeting of the Commonwealth of Independent States Railway Transport Council in Uzbekistan. On the sidelines of this meeting, they also discussed implementing joint railway projects and the transport of commercial goods via railways with railway officials from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

80-year-old freed after being detained for 7 years by son



FARAH (TOLONews): Yar Mohammad, a resident of Pusht-e-

Rod district in Farah province, has been freed after seven years of

imprisonment in a private jail run by his son in the center of the province.

The 80-year-old man, who was released from his son's home imprisonment through the joint efforts of the Office of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice and the security forces of the province, is currently under treatment by the Farah Public Health Directorate due to illnesses and other issues caused during his imprisonment.

Local officials in Farah have stated that Khuda Rahm, the son of this man, has been arrested.

Yar Mohammad was held in an unsuitable environment and in poor conditions in the jail.

Abdul Majeed Mosamam, head of the Farah Office of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, told TOLONews: "After receiving infor-

mation, we went to the location of the area where this man was held. He was in an unsuitable environment and in poor condition. He is now under treatment. The perpetrator has been handed over to the law, and after the intervention of elders, he has expressed remorse and is now released."

Khuda Rahm, the son of Yar Mohammad, who was arrested by security forces, expressed regret and urged others to treat their parents with kindness.

Khuda Rahm said: "Seven years ago, I imprisoned my father in a room located at the corner of the yard. I regret my actions and urge others to treat their parents kindly."

Several residents of Farah have deemed the imprisonment of this man by his son to be contrary to Islamic teachings and parental

rights, urging authorities to take serious and legal action against such individuals.

Mumtaz, one of the residents of Farah, said: "Every child should respect their father because a father has significant rights over their children, and anyone who mistreats their father will face God's displeasure."

Tofan, another resident of Farah, said: "Imprisoning this man by his son is against Islamic teachings and parental rights. I urge officials to take serious and legal action against such individuals."

Previously, similar incidents have been reported in the country, the most notable being the imprisonment of Nikbakht, who spent 25 years of her life in a dark room in her brother's house in the Chahar Qalae-Wazirabad area of Kabul.



KARTARPUR: Indian Sikh Yatrees arriving at Pakistan-India border to attend birth anniversary celebration of Guru Nanak.

PM directs installation of cameras at sugar mills

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), and Intelligence Bureau to take joint action to prevent tax evasion on sugar sale, undocumented sales and price hikes.

A notification to this effect has also been issued. According to a statement issued by the PM Office, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said sugar crushing season is starting and complete GST collection from sugar mills and dealers should be ensured.

The Prime Minister took a decision to install cameras at sugar mills saying this will prevent sugar hoarding and maintain price stability. He said strict legal action will be taken against the sugar mill owners involved in tax evasion and hoarding. The Prime Minister directed that any increase in sugar prices would not be tolerated. He said similar measures should be taken in other sectors such as steel, cigarettes, cement, and beverages.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif emphasizing the significance of cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in different sectors, expressed satisfaction over the implementation of recently signed bilateral MoUs for Saudi investment worth \$2.8 billion in Pakistan.

The bilateral ties were discussed as Deputy Interior Minister of Saudi Arabia, who is on an official visit to Pakistan, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here, according to a PM Office press release. Recalling the historic and fraternal relations between the two coun-

tries, the prime minister thanked the Saudi leadership and government for always supporting Pakistan and said both sides were working together to further strengthen Pakistan-Saudi Arabia ties into mutually beneficial economic and investment cooperation.

The prime minister welcomed the Saudi Deputy Interior Minister to Pakistan and wished him a successful visit. He also conveyed his greetings and best wishes to the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud and Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud.

Discussing the situation in Gaza and the broader Middle East, the prime minister recalled the recent Arab-Islamic Summit held in Riyadh, and appreciated the leadership of Saudi Arabia for holding the event and also the stance of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman over the issue of Palestine. Prime Minister Shehbaz applauded the leadership role of Saudi Arabia and the efforts of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in unifying the Ummah to collectively seek an end to violence in Gaza due to Israel's genocidal actions.

Emphasizing the significance of bilateral cooperation in defence and security sectors, he said that the visit of the Saudi deputy interior minister and his delegation would help bring both sides closer in terms of cooperation in the said sensitive areas. Prime Minister Shehbaz also reiterated his invitation to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience as the people of Pakistan were waiting to accord him a very warm welcome.

UK, India to resume stalled free trade talks

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP): Britain and India will resume stalled talks to agree a free-trade deal, the two countries said after their leaders met at the G20 summit in Brazil.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who took power in London in July, hailed his meeting with Indian counterpart Narendra Modi as "very productive" and vowed that a trade pact with Delhi would boost UK growth. "A new trade deal will support jobs and prosperity in the UK — and represent a step forward in our mission to deliver growth and opportunity across the country," he posted on X late Monday.

Hours earlier, Starmer's office confirmed the two countries would relaunch the talks "in the new year" as Britain sought "a new strategic partnership with India". That will include "deepening cooperation in areas like security, education, technology, and climate change," Downing Street said in a statement summarising the meeting of the two leaders.

India's foreign ministry said both leaders had "underlined the importance of resuming the Free Trade Agreement negotiations at an early date". It added they had "expressed confidence in the ability of the negotiating teams, to address the remaining issues to mutual satisfaction, leading to a balanced, mutually beneficial and forward looking Free Trade Agreement".

The two countries have spent nearly three years negotiating what would be a milestone for Britain as it continues to seek alternative markets after its departure from the European Union. The previous Conservative government, ousted by Starmer's Labour party in July, had hit several roadblocks in its talks with Delhi over the trade pact. In exchange for lowering tariffs on British imports such as whisky, India has pushed for more UK work and study visas for its citizens.

200 children killed in Lebanon: UN

NEW YORK: More than 200 children have been killed in Lebanon since Israel launched a military campaign focused on its northern neighbour two months ago, the United Nations agency for children (UNICEF) has said.

An average of three children have been killed every day in Lebanon, UNICEF told reporters on Tuesday, as Israel has intensified its bombing campaign across the country. It warned that as in Gaza, despite the horrific toll on Lebanon's children "those with influence" were failing to mount a meaningful response.

"Despite more than 200 children killed in Lebanon in less than two months, a disconcerting pattern has emerged: their deaths are met with inertia from those able to stop this violence," UNICEF's spokesperson James Elder told reporters.

"For the children of Lebanon, it has become a silent normalisation of horror," he added. Elder listed at least six attacks across Lebanon where children were killed, most of the time along with their families, over just the past 10 days. The UN official noted "chilling similarities" between what is happening to children in Lebanon with those in Gaza, which has been pounded by Israeli air raids for more than a year. — Aljazeera

Bilawal briefed on performance of Sindh govt

Sharjeel says PPP govt taking steps for public welfare

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met with Senior Minister of Sindh Government Sharjeel Inam Memon at Bilawal House Karachi. On the occasion of the meeting, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that along with solving public problems it is also important to further highlight the feeling among the people that the government stands with the common man at every step.

During the meeting, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was briefed by Senior Minister of Sindh Sharjeel Inam Memon on the steps taken to highlight the performance of the provincial government.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon briefed Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari that the provincial information department is performing its duties to highlight the continuity of public service in Sindh. He said that a public transport network is being laid in Sindh, and public problems arising in this regard are also being resolved on priority basis.

Meanwhile, Senior Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sindh, Sharjeel Inam Memon inaugurated the Command and Control Center of People's Bus Service. The Command and Control Center has been established at the office D-43 Block 2, Clifton, of the Sindh Mass Transit Authority. The Command and Control Center will monitor, facilitate, and live-track the operations related to the People's Bus Service.

Talking to the media on the occasion of the inauguration ceremony, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Command and Control Center will provide proper monitoring and timely necessary instructions to the People's Bus Service running across Sindh. This command and control system would monitor the convenience of the passengers of the People's Bus Service and their live videos and will monitor the conduct of the staff. If there is any complaint or the fare is being charged excessively, you can complain. If any item of a passenger gets stolen or missing, it will also be captured on camera.

He said that, for the very first time in Sindh, such a modern command and control system has been established that would monitor all the operations of the People's Bus Service. Along with this, complaint



numbers have also been given on which any complaint related to the service can be made. If anyone has any complaint, it can also be redressed in a timely manner.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that this facility was in developed countries. The Sindh government is providing facilities like that to developed countries in Sindh. Earlier, a card system was introduced for purchasing tickets for the People's Bus Service, which has made it very easy for passengers. Insha Allah, the Sindh government will soon bring more facilities for its people. In response to a question while talking to media,

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon further said that the same group that announced protests on November 24 is the same force that wants anarchy and lawlessness in the country. Improvement in the national economy, gushing business activities notwithstanding, there is a force that wants to bring the wheels of the national economy to a grinding halt. These people want to harm the country's economy. Bushra Bibi has also recently announced that everybody should march towards Islamabad with five thousand men.

The politicians are being blackmailed that anyone who fails to bring 5 thousand men on November 24th will not be given any tickets in the forthcoming elections. It's the same hostage-taking group that is trying to hold the country hostage, and that group wants anarchy and chaos in the country. God forbid horrific incidents like May 9, May 9 was not an ordinary day; it was a tragic tragedy in the history of Pakistan.

Those people want to repeat such incidents and are trying to hold the state hostage. When Ali Amin Gandapur came to Islamabad last time, civil people were throwing tear gas shells on behalf of him through

the resources of the state missionary. I think foolishness for anyone who thinks the state can be forced into doing things by the force of a gun or a bully. Tomorrow, terrorist organizations could do that.

On another question, the Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon replied, The Sindh government has serious reservations on the construction of canals on the Indus River; Sindh is already suffering from a water shortage; our stand on this issue is unwavering. He said in response to a question regarding the ban on VPN that we want our country to progress and the youth to be on

the right path. Everything has good and bad uses. Unfortunately, those who use it badly have also turned good things into bad. PTI people have started digital terrorism on social media at the behest of their leader. They are making things like VPN controversial. Such things should be used positively. Such things must not be controversial and used against institutions.

On the other question, Senior Minister responded that we always talk about freedom of the press. The Pakistan People's Party is the only party in the country that has had the worst media whenever the PPP has been in power, but the PPP has never imposed a ban on any media. During the 2008 government, the Pakistan People's Party's targeted media was subjected to trial. But we have never disturbed anyone nor imposed any kind of ban.

Answering to a question, he said, we are not an ally of the federal government, but we supported the government unconditionally so that the democratic system could move forward. It was decided in the CEC of the Peoples Party that we are ready for talks with every party, then the message came from the PTI that we are not ready for talks with any party. If the Peoples Party too had kept silent, then the members of assembly could not have taken the oath, and it would not have been enforced. Thus, the Peoples Party supported the federal government by putting demands for the sake of Pakistani people. The Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway is directly needed for the whole of Pakistan because this road connects the whole of Pakistan to the port, which was not being given priority by the federation. This is the right of the whole of Pakistan, on which we are taking our stand and on which we are talking about our genuine rights.

Ukraine hits Russia with US ATACMS missiles for first time

KYIV (Reuters): Ukraine used US ATACMS missiles to strike Russian territory on Tuesday, taking advantage of newly granted permission from the outgoing Biden administration on the war's 1,000th day. Russia said its forces shot down five of six of the missiles, which were fired at a military facility in the Bryansk region. Debris of one hit the facility, starting a fire that was swiftly put out and caused no casualties or damage, it said.

Ukraine said it had struck a Russian arms depot around 110 kilometres inside Russia in an attack that caused secondary explosions. The Ukrainian military did not publicly specify what weapons it had used, but a Ukrainian official source and a US official later confirmed it had used ATACMS. President Joe Biden gave approval just this week for Ukraine to use the ATACMS, the longest-range missiles Washington has supplied, for such attacks inside Russia. Moscow has described their potential use as an escalation that would make Washington a direct combatant in the war and prompt its retaliation.

The attack took place as Ukraine marked 1,000 days of war, with weary troops at the front, Kyiv besieged by airstrikes, a fifth of Ukrainian territory in Moscow's hands and doubts about the future of Western support as Donald Trump heads back to the White House. Military experts say using the US missiles to attack positions at such a depth in Russia can help Ukraine defend a pocket of Russian territory it has captured as a bargaining chip, but is not likely to have a decisive impact on the course of the 33-month-old war.

Moscow has said such weapons cannot be used without direct operational support from the United States, and therefore their use would make Washington a direct participant in the war. On Tuesday, President Vladimir Putin signed a new nuclear doctrine apparently intended as a warning to Washington. It lowers the threshold under which Russia might use atomic weapons to include responding to attacks that threaten its territorial integrity.

Washington said the update to the nuclear doctrine was no surprise and cited "more of the same irresponsible rhetoric from Russia". Reports of the Ukrainian attack caused jitters in markets, with share indexes sliding in Europe and safe haven assets rallying. Trump has criticised the scale of US aid to Kyiv and said he will end the war quickly, without saying how. Both sides appear to anticipate his return in two months will be accompanied by a push for peace talks, which are not known to have taken place since the war's early months.

The warring sides have both been escalating in recent weeks in an attempt to secure a stronger position at any negotiations. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says Kyiv must do everything for the war to end diplomatically next year. "At this stage of the war, it is being decided who will prevail. Whether us over the enemy, or the enemy over us Ukrainians ... and Europeans. And everyone in the world who wants to live freely and not be subject to a dictator," he said in an address to parliament today marking 1,000 days of war.

A candle-lit commemoration was

planned for later today. Thousands of Ukrainian citizens have died, over six million live as refugees abroad and the population has fallen by a quarter since Putin ordered the invasion by land, sea and air that began Europe's biggest conflict since World War Two. Military losses have been huge, although casualty figures remain closely guarded secrets. Public Western estimates based on intelligence reports say hundreds of thousands have been wounded or killed on each side.

"In the frozen trenches of the Donetsk region and in the burning steppes of the Kherson region, under shells, hail, and anti-aircraft guns, we are fighting for the right to live," Ukraine's top commander Oleksandr Syrkyi wrote on Telegram. Tragedy has touched families in every corner of Ukraine, where military funerals are commonplace in cities and far-flung villages, and people are exhausted by sleepless nights of air raid sirens and anguish.

In the first year after the invasion, Ukrainian troops pushed Russian forces back from the outskirts of Kyiv and recaptured swathes of territory with surprise military successes against a larger and better-armed foe. But since then, the enemies have settled into relentless trench warfare that has ground eastern Ukrainian cities to dust. Russian forces still occupy a fifth of Ukraine and for the past year, they have steadily gained ground. Kyiv now hopes to gain leverage from a sliver of territory in Russia's Kursk region it captured after launching its first major cross-border assault in August. It says Russia has deployed 50,000 troops there to try to take it back.

Trump's hush money case should be paused

NEW YORK (Reuters): The case in which Donald Trump was convicted on criminal charges stemming from hush money paid to a porn star should be paused in light of his election victory to allow Trump to seek dismissal, New York prosecutors said on Tuesday.

Trump, 78, is hoping to enter office for a second term unencumbered by any of the four criminal cases he has faced and which some said would derail his 2024 candidacy to return to the White House. The Republican Trump was convicted in May of falsifying business records to cover up a \$130,000 payment his former lawyer Michael Cohen made to porn star Stormy Daniels for her silence

before the 2016 election about a sexual encounter she says she had with Trump, who denies it.

The case marked the first time a US president — former or sitting — had been convicted of or charged with a criminal offense. Trump had been scheduled to be sentenced on Nov. 26, but Merchan last week put all proceedings in the case on pause at the request of Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office.

The prosecutors had asked for more time to consider next steps in the case, citing the need to balance the "competing interests" between having the criminal case go forward and protecting the office of the president. Trump pleaded

not guilty in the case, which he has long portrayed as a politically motivated attempt by Bragg, a Democrat, to interfere with his campaign.

His defense lawyers urged Merchan to dismiss the case, arguing that having it loom over him while he was president would cause "unconstitutional impediments" to his ability to govern. Trump's lawyers also argued his conviction should be vacated and the charges dismissed because of the US Supreme Court's ruling in July that presidents cannot be prosecuted over their official acts, and that evidence of their official acts cannot be used in trials over personal behavior.