

Mian Aslam declared as PO
F.P. Report

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Thursday declared Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Mian Aslam Iqbal as proclaimed offender (PO) and issued his perpetual arrest warrants in the Askari Tower attack case. ATC Judge Manzer Ali Gill passed the orders on an application filed by the Gulberg police for this purpose.



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ISLAMABAD: In recognition of his services in identifying Sales Tax fraud, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif presenting a shield to FBR officer, Aijaz Hussain.

Government procurements PM for ensuring third party validation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the relevant authorities to ensure third party validation including quality insurance in all the government procurements.

Chairing a meeting held here to review good governance and public procurements, the prime minister also directed to bring reforms in Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) and purge the authority of any type of influence. "Procurement of services and purchasing in all government institutions in a transparent way is the top priority of the government," the prime minister said adding that ensuring transparency in the government institutions' procurement would help building the foreign investors' confidence on Pakistan.

The prime minister directed to establish a committee, separate from the procurement agency, to address complaints related to the procurement process. He also stressed to appoint qualified, professional, and experienced experts at PPRA on merit. The prime minister instructed all government departments to use e-Procurement (e-PADS) besides establishing special procurement cells in government departments for purchasing and acquiring services.

Transparency in government affairs is essential for national development, he said. During the meeting, the prime minister was informed that the review of the PPRA Ordinance and related rules and regulations had been completed, and the amendments would soon be presented to the federal cabinet for approval. The aim of these amendments is to ensure transparency in the procurement process and to align them with contemporary requirements, the meeting was told.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Economic Affairs

Ahad Khan Cheema, Petroleum Minister Dr Musadik Malik, Minister of State for Information Technology Shaza Fatima Khawaja, PPRA Board members, World Bank Country Director and other relevant high officials attended the meeting.

Shehbaz announces Rs5m award for FBR officer to identify massive sales tax fraud: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif oannounced a Rs5 million award and gave away a commendatory shield to an FBR officer Ijaz Hussain who identified a sales tax fraud worth trillions of rupees.

The prime minister, talking to the officer, who called on him at the PM House, appreciated his dutiffulness and honesty. The act of the FBR officer is the outcome of the prime minister's ongoing drive for FBR reforms and curbing the tax evasion, according to a PM Office press release.

In the meeting, the prime minister said that there was no dearth of dutiful and competent officers but they needed to be acknowledged. Expressing satisfaction over the positive outcomes of FBR reforms, the prime minister called for tightening the noose around the tax-evaders and their facilitators and strictly punishing them. He instructed the FBR to thoroughly investigate the identified tax fraud and take the perpetrators to the task by engaging an highly capable legal team. In the briefing, it was told that the credentials of an 80 years old lady was used for the sales tax fraud which was pointed out by Ijaz Hussain on March 4, this year.

It was told that under the sales tax fraud, Rs370 million were also transferred initially which was being recovered as a main culprit has already been arrested. Prime Minister Shehbaz directed to identify and punish the FBR officers who facilitated this tax fraud. He said the government was striving to widen the tax base and the measures like the FBR reforms and digitisation would also help prevent such offences.

Afghanistan urged to take action against terror groups

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has once again called upon Afghanistan to take action against terror groups operating from Afghan soil. At her weekly news briefing in Islamabadon Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan on several occasions have shared with

Afghan authorities concrete evidence regarding the terror groups. She hoped the Afghan authorities will consider terrorism as a serious threat not just to the region but to their own security and fulfill their obligations under various international agreements including Doha agreement. The spokesperson regretted the result of last night's vote at the UN Security Council and its inability to reach consensus on the resolution calling for ceasefire in Gaza.

She reiterated Pakistan's call for an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire, unhindered access to humanitarian assistance and full support to UN Relief and Works Agency and its mandated humanitarian activities. Alluding to the plight of children in Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the spokesperson urged the international community to stand up for their rights and demand an end to their sufferings.

She said Pakistan will continue to extend political, moral and diplomatic support to their Kashmiri brothers and sisters for the just and peaceful settlement of Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions.

Imran's jail statement reflects growing anxiety: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Thursday said that the PTI founder's statement from jail, seeking release to delay protests, reflected his growing anxiety and frustration.

In a striking comment on the PTI founder's statement, Attaullah Tarar said that the statement, "If you release me from jail, I will postpone the protest," was an admission of the prisoner's frustration and panic. Tarar stated that it has been proven that the call for chaos on November 24 was aimed at securing a 'deal.' He remarked that the person who once vowed never to engage in a deal was now incessantly shouting 'deal, deal' and was set on waging war against the federation. Tarar stated, "The only deal you'll get is with the law, which you have violated."

Saif flays govt's actions ahead of Nov 24 protest

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Saif, the Information Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has sharply criticized the government's handling of the political situation in the lead-up to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protest scheduled for November 24.

In a statement, Saif accused the government of losing control due to its aggressive crackdown on PTI workers, labeling the government as "fake" and claiming that its actions are a sign of desperation. Saif highlighted the inconsistency in the government's approach, noting that while they claim not to have enough support for a protest of 50 people, they are simultaneously rounding up PTI workers in a wide-scale effort.

"Containers from all over Pakistan have been delivered to Islamabad for the 50 people," Saif remarked, suggesting that the government's response is exaggerated and disproportionate.

The Advisor also pointed out the extensive security measures being put in place, stating that forces from Punjab, Sindh, and Kashmir have been deployed in Islamabad in a bid to suppress the PTI's protest. According to Saif, the government's fear is palpable as it resorts to "high tactics" and is breaking records of fascism in its attempts to prevent PTI from reaching

Islamabad. He added that the government's actions are trampling the constitution and the law, all in the name of their hatred for Imran Khan.

Despite these efforts, Saif remained confident that PTI would successfully reach Islamabad and press its demands. He emphasized that PTI leaders, office bearers, workers, and supporters across the nation are united in their demand for the release of political prisoners, including Imran Khan. Saif also dismissed rumors of internal divisions within PTI, suggesting that such news is being exaggerated by the government in a bid to create unrest within the party.

"The news of PTI differences may be the wish of the fake government, but this is not the truth," he said. He expressed optimism about the growing enthusiasm among PTI's youth for the upcoming protest, insisting that the party remains united. In a final comment, Saif mocked the government for holding press conferences instead of addressing the country's real issues. "Instead of entertaining themselves, they should prepare to make their government a reality," he said, adding that the government's growing concerns about PTI's popularity signal that it is losing control.

Meanwhile, Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information & Public

Relations Barrister Dr. Saif, while addressing a seminar held at the Archive Library Hall in connection with Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness has termed the organization of such events a positive step, emphasizing the lack of health awareness in Pakistan. He stated that these events play a crucial role in addressing health issues and benefiting society. Barrister Dr. Saif highlighted the importance of disease prevention in the healthcare sector, emphasizing the significant role of pharmacists.

He stressed that neither individual nor collective progress is possible without good health. The KP government, he added, is taking serious steps in the health sector, as the primary difference between developed and developing countries lies in their healthcare systems. Drawing comparisons, he stated that countries like the UK and other European nations strictly adhere to health precautions, which is the key to their progress. He reiterated the KP government's commitment to address health challenges through practical measures.

Dr. Saif assured pharmacists that the government is dedicated to safeguard their rights and resolving their issues. He pledged to engage with the Chief Secretary, Health Secretary, and, if needed, bring the matter to the cabinet or assembly for resolution.

The Frontier Post

Proceedings against KP CM
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Islamabad has begun the process of declaring Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur a proclaimed offender in a case registered at the I-9 police station. The hearing of the case against PTI leaders took place in the ATC in Islamabad, with Judge Tahir Mehmood Supra presiding over the proceedings.

33 killed in attack on passenger vehicles in Kurram

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: At least 33 people were killed and 19 others injured when unidentified gunmen opened fire on the carvan of 200 passengers vehicles traveling from Parachinar to Peshawar in Kurram district on Thursday.

Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Adviser to the Chief KP Minister in a press statement here Thursday night confirmed the killing of 33 passengers and 19 others in the deadly attack on the passengers vehicles' caravan. He said that first policemen were attacked and later the caravan of 200 passengers vehicles were ambushed from both sides.

Police said the attack occurred at Ochat area of Lower Kurram. The outlaws hiding in mountains targeted the vehicles with automatic weapons. Barrister Saif said the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were monitoring the situation and Regional Police Officer, Deputy Commissioner and DPO were present at the crime scene.

The casualty figure may raise as conditions of several injured are stated to be critical. Rescue teams shifted the injured to a nearby hospital for medical treatment. Security forces have cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to apprehend the attackers. Bartister Saif expressed solidarity with the victims families. He condemned the attack, adding culprits would be held accountable.

President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday strongly condemned the incident of firing took place in Kurram district targeting the passenger vehicles. The president, in a statement, expressed grief over the loss of precious lives in the incident and called it a coward and inhumane act.

He instructed the authorities concerned to take perpetrators of the attack on innocent citizens to the task.

President Zardari prayed to Allah Almighty for peace for the departed souls and strength for the bereaved families to bear the loss. He also prayed for early recovery of the injured and emphasised the best possible medical treatment to them.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also condemned the firing incident in Kurram district, killing at least 33 people. In his statement, the prime minister expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of lives, labeling the attack as a cowardly act. He urged the authorities to ensure swift action against those responsible for this heinous crime.

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi condemned the incident and expressed grief over the loss of innocent lives. He prayed for the early recovery of the injured people.

Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, has strongly condemned the armed attack on passenger vehicles in the Uchaat area of Kurram district. Expressing deep sorrow over the tragic loss of lives in this heinous incident, the chief minister has tasked a delegation comprising the provincial law minister, the local MNA, MPA, and the Chief Secretary to visit Kurram, assess the ground realities, and submit a detailed report.

Furthermore, the chief minister has instructed the reactivation of a previously held tribal jirga to help stabilize the situation in the area. Mr. Gandapur emphasized that the provincial government, police, and all relevant institutions are making concerted efforts to improve law and order in the region.

As part of these measures, he directed the concerned authorities to expedite the establishment of a Provincial Highways Police to ensure the safety of all major routes across the province. Extending heartfelt condolences to the families of those killed in the attack, the chief minister prayed for the deceased and patience for the bereaved families. He also announced financial assistance for the victims' families. He termed the targeting of innocent civilians as deeply tragic and reprehensible, and vowed that those responsible for the incident would not escape justice. He assured that all necessary steps would be taken to bring the perpetrators to account.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, strongly condemned the attack on the passenger vehicles in Lower Kurram district on Thursday and expressed his deep sorrow over the loss of more than 30 precious lives.

He prayed for the elevation of the deceased's ranks and offered his heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the grieving families, wishing them patience and strength. Governor Kundi described the firing as an extremely heinous act and expressed grave concern over the incident, especially considering it occurred despite the presence of a convoy.

He emphasized that the ruthless perpetrators, responsible for shedding the blood of innocent passengers, should receive no leniency. The Governor further said that the security situation in the province was worsening with each passing day, and such incidents are deeply alarming. He called for immediate measures to address the deteriorating law and order conditions in the region.

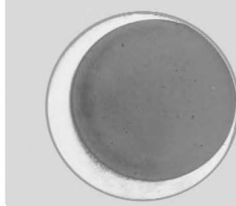


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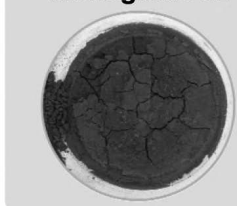
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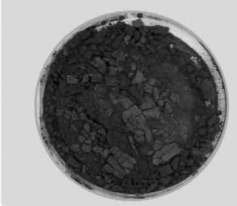
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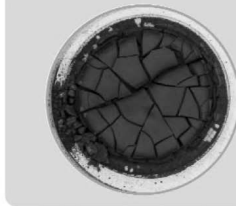
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Monograde 32



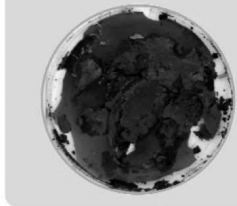
COMPETITOR A
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Monograde 46



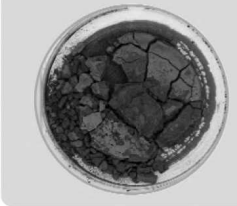
COMPETITOR B
1,508 Hrs
Monograde 46



COMPETITOR C
1,844 Hrs
Monograde 46



COMPETITOR D
2,684 Hrs
Monograde 46



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Punjab CM orders building of 5,000 new classrooms

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has ordered to construct 5,000 new classrooms under the Public Schools Reorganisation Programme (PSRP).

While chairing a special meeting of the School Education Department to review its various projects and their related issues, she added, "Modern labs will be established to increase learning capacity of students."

She agreed to a proposal to establish revolving funds for the construction and maintenance of schools.

The Chief Minister reviewed a proposal to launch a mobile bus library project in government schools in order to promote study culture among students."

She added, "Uniforms should be properly enforced in government schools."

The authorities concerned presented a report on the ongoing school meal program in three districts of South Punjab. She directed the rele-

vant authorities to establish a formal learning center for out-of-school children in Punjab.

The CM was briefed, "More than 13.2 million milk packs have been distributed in 3,527 schools under the school meal programme." She was appraised, "Enrollment of more than 38,000 new students has also been completed since the start of the programme." Maryam Nawaz was updated, "A daily report on the provision of milk packs to students is presented on the dashboard." She was also appraised, "After introduction of the school meal programme, children are also tested for calcium."

The CM was briefed, "34pc increase in schools enrollment has been observed under the Public School Reorganization Program. More than 121,000 new students have been enrolled in 5,675 schools of the province." She was appraised, "Special Mentoring Unit has con-

firmed 60pc of the new admissions." She was updated, "164pc increase in the attendance of teachers in schools have also been observed after the start of the programme." She was briefed, "Seven training sessions for the teachers in each divisional head-quarter have been completed under PSRP Phase-I."

The CM was appraised, "Teachers will teach children in remote villages through smart class technology." They said, "Children will be taught through smart board connected with solar technology." They added, "The number of out-of-school children is highest in the suburban areas of cities." They flashed, "95pc of parents of out-of-school children want to teach their children." Maryam Nawaz Sharif appreciated the efforts of Provincial Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat and his team for making the school meal programme and other initiatives a success.

Sindh government taken several steps for welfare of people



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway is not just a matter for the Sindh government but for the entire country.

The motorway is essential for the country's economy as it supports businesses nationwide. The federal government should prioritize the Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway project and begin work as soon as possible so that the entire

nation can benefit.

He made these remarks while speaking to a delegation of the Court Reporters Association in Karachi. The delegation, which included Liaquat Ali Rana, Amin Anwar, Asghar Umar, Azam Zahrani, Sajid Awan, Shahid Hussain, Zafar Soomro, and others, met with Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon.

Talking to journalists, Sindh Senior Minister

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Sindh government has taken several steps for the welfare and professional development of journalists. He also highlighted the important role of court reporters in maintaining transparency and accountability within the judicial system.

He told the delegation that fitness certificates are being issued for old buses, but there are only two inspectors in Karachi, which is insufficient to cover all the vehicles.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that each department has a specific role, and if each department performs its responsibilities efficiently, many problems can be resolved. He also noted that the Red Line BRT project includes the pipeline of the K-4 water project along with other utilities, which has caused some delays. Despite several challenges, work on the BRT project is progressing rapidly. He further mentioned that work on the BRT was halted during the caretaker government, resulting in delays and difficulties for the public.

He said that Karachi needs 15,000 buses to meet the growing demand for public transport. The Sindh government is actively purchasing double-decker buses along with other

Memon calls on water management

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that Sindh's concerns over water management are not unfounded. Water is a common right for everyone, and starting any project without consensus is not an appropriate approach.

In response to the statement by Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, stated that the 1991 Water Accord mandates the fair distribution of water among all provinces, including Sindh. Azma Bukhari should first understand the ground realities before making a statement.

He stated that we want prosperity across Pakistan and the development of the agricultural sector. Small farmers need maximum support and facilities, and Sindh's stance on the water issue is very clear.

buses. The People's Bus Service has been launched in Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Shaheed Benazirabad, Larkana, and Sukkur. The Sindh government is working to provide services like the People's Bus Service in every city of the province.

He said that to reduce traffic pressure on Karachi's roads, illegal bus stands have been relocated outside the city.

A command and control center has been established to monitor the People's Bus Service, where every activity in the bus service will be tracked, and complaints will be addressed in a timely manner.

Children rights to be protected: Ombudsman

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ombudsman, Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has called upon all segments of the society to redouble their efforts for protecting the rights of the children in the country.

In a message released here today on the eve of the World Children's Day, being observed on November 20th every year, he underlined the need to work together for creating a society where children can thrive, learn and grow without fear of violence, discrimination or marginalization, adding that it is our collective responsibility to ensure that our children are safeguarded from all kinds of exploitation, abuse and neglect.

Following is the text of



his message issued on the occasion : "The Federal Ombudsman Office has taken several initiatives for the welfare of children in the country which includes, a pilot research study to address the plight of street children, providing them with access to education, healthcare, and social services.

Pakistan has made significant strides in promoting the child rights,

including the establishment of the National Commission for Children (NCC) and the introduction of child-friendly laws and policies.

The office of Ombudsman is working on the issue of Cyber-crimes against Children and a full-fledged office of the Grievance Commissioner for Children has been established in this Secretariat to receive, hear and redress the children complaints. A dedicated helpline 1056 is also available to lodge the complaints by or on behalf of children against federal government departments.

It has launched a nationwide awareness campaign to educate parents, teachers, and community leaders about the importance of protecting child rights. We appeal to all stakeholders to join hands in this noble endeavor.

"Together, we can build a brighter future for Pakistani children, where their rights are respected, protected, and promoted."

Tractors delivery to start soon

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahoo said on Thursday that coming March 31st had been set as tractor delivery deadline to farmers who stood successful in green tractor balloting scheme. He said this while presiding over a meeting which reviewed timelines for green tractor programme here at Agriculture House. He said that by coming March 31, 9,500 tractors would be delivered to farmers who stood successful in balloting. He said that under green tractor programme, a subsidy of Rs 1 million was being given on each tractor. Receiving process of allotment letters of green tractors had been successfully completed, he said.

Sikh yatrees visit Punjab Safe Cities Authority

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of Sikh pilgrims on Thursday visited the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) offices.

The delegation included Sikh pilgrims from the USA, Canada and the UK.

Operations Commander Muhammad Shafiq welcomed the delegation and took them on a tour of various departments of the project.

The pilgrims commended the outstanding security measures at Sikh religious sites. They expressed their thoughts, "The Sikh community has immense love for Pakistanis."

The hospitality of Lahoris has truly touched our hearts. We are deeply grateful for the respect and honor we have received in Pakistan."

They added, "The respect and affection we have experienced here in Pakistan will remain in our hearts. We thank the Punjab government for the excellent maintenance of our Gurdwaras."

Ban on parks, zoos, playgrounds lifted

LAHORE (APP): Following the recent reduction in smog and air pollution in Lahore on Thursday, the Punjab government further relaxed the imposed restrictions.

Recreational places across Punjab have been opened, DG Environment Dr. Inman Hamid Sheikh has also issued a notification in this regard, according to which parks, zoos, playgrounds, outdoor sports have been allowed. All recreational places have been allowed to remain open till 8 pm, in addition to this, all kinds of festivals and exhibitions have also been allowed.

According to the notification, recreational places have been allowed to open from Friday, markets in Lahore, Multan, Faisalabad, Gujranwala will close at 8pm, markets will also close at 8pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

The decision will apply to shops, shopping malls, markets, pharmacies, tandoors, departmental and grocery stores, including basic necessities stores, will remain open. Furthermore, in addition to this, bakeries have also been allowed to operate after 8pm.

LDA seals buildings

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA), during its on-going vigorous daily operation against illegal commercial buildings and properties with outstanding commercial fees, sealed another 182 properties here in the city on Thursday.

On the instructions of LDA Director General Tahir Farooq, the teams raised in different locations including Gulberg, Model Town Extension, Sabzazar, Johar Town, New Muslim Town, and Canal Road. In Gulberg and Model Town Extension, 35 properties were sealed, 35 properties in Sabzazar, and another 35 in New Muslim Town and Canal Road.



Expression of Interest for Hiring Architect Consultant

The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) intends to hire the services of a well-established firm offering expertise and consultancy in the field of architecture and related matters. The firm should have at least 20 years of extensive experience and is expected to provide services in matters related to plan, design, architecture drawings, supervision, bill of quantities, cost estimates and tender documents. The firm must have qualified engineers with valid registration with PCATP/PEC. Interested firms should submit their Expression of Interest (Eoi) along with their profile and related documents at the following address up to 5th December 2024:

Engr. Khalid Haider,
Director/Regional Secretary,
FPCCI Peshawar Office
Office No. 4, 2nd Floor, Al-Fatah Medicines Centre,
Near Bank of Punjab, Main G.T Road, Peshawar
Tel: 091-9225362-63 Mob: 0345-9199716

Tender Documents can be obtained from FPCCI Peshawar office on any working day/hours against PO/DD of Rs. 3,000/- (non-refundable) favoring Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) Applications received after due date will not be entertained/considered. FPCCI reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications in accordance with relevant clauses of PPRA's rules of Government of Pakistan.

Secretary General
Federation of Pakistan Chambers
of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI)



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Applications are invited from interested parties for allotment of plots of A1 and A categories measuring 24000 sft and 12000 sft respectively at Industrial park, Peshawar for establishment of Cold Storage (s). Application can be submitted online at www.kpsidb.gov.pk along with a copy CNIC and 25% down payment in the shape of Demand Draft/ CDR in the name of Industrial Park, Peshawar, SIDB. Following documents along with copy of online application form will be required to be submitted in the office of Incharge, Industrial Park, Peshawar, SIDB for processing of case for allotment of plot:

- Copy of CNIC/ NICOP,
- Business plan/ pre-feasibility report,
- Demand Draft/ CDR to be submitted in original,
- Bank statement/ account maintenance certificate,
- In case of other than sole proprietorship:
 - Partnership deed duly signed by all partners of the firm and registration certificate with Registrar of firms,
 - Public Limited Company, Memorandum and Articles of Association and list of Directors on form 29 certified by SECP, or,
 - Private Limited Company, Certificate of Incorporation and list of Directors on form 29 certified by SECP.
- NTN Certificate (not mandatory for overseas Pakistanis and applicants from PATA and Merged Areas),
- Undertaking that the applicant is not declared default by any Bank/ financial institution/ Government Organization etc.

Plots categories and price:

Categories	Size in Square foot	Size in Marla	Land lease price (PKR)	Non-refundable application fee (PKR)	25% down payment in PKR (refundable)	Total Initial Payable amount in PKR
Rate per square foot is Rs. 1028.831/-						
Category- A1	24,000	88	24,692,000	24,000	6,173,000	6,197,000
Category-A	12,000	44	12,346,000	12,000	3,086,500	3,098,500

Payment Plan:

#	Down Payment	Schedule
1	25% of the total developed plot price	At the time of application submission.
2	25% of the total developed plot price	At the time of letter of acceptance.
3	25% of the total developed plot price	After six months of letter of acceptance.
4	25% of the total developed plot price	After twelve months of letter of acceptance.

INF P3079/24

GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA COMMUNIUCATION & WORKS DEPARTMENT

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

SINGLE STAGE SINGLE ENVELOPE E-BIDDING SYSTEM

The C&W H/Way Division D.I.Khan Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites electronic bids from the eligible Firms/Contractors in accordance with KPRA Procurement Rules 2014, amended upto 15.09.2021 on Single Stage Single Envelop procedure for the following works:-

S#	Name of work	Required Category of PEC	Bid Security i/c Stamp Duty	Tender Fee @ 0.03%	Period of Completion	Last date and time of submission of E-Bids	Date & Time of Opening of Financial Bid
I	Sugarcane Cess Fund						
1	Package-I (Construction & Rehabilitation of BTR from CRBC Chowk (via CRBC Minor to Zaffar Abad Road) 4-Kms)	C-4	2028920	29850	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM
2	Package-II (i) Construction & Rehabilitation of BTR from Dhakki Crossing to Dhakki Village Road (UC Bilot Sharif) 2-Kms (ii) Construction & Rehabilitation of BTR from Multan Road near Baloch Hotel Village Arra (2.5-Kms) (iii) Construction & Rehabilitation of BTR from Multan Road to Ejaz Abad (1-Km)	C-4	2031080	29900	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM
II	District Development Initiatives in DIKhan ADP No.938/240319 (2024-25)						
3	Package-I (i) Construction & Rehabilitation of BTR from Chashma Road to Mati Faqir (1-Km) (ii) Construction & Rehabilitation of BTR from Kala Gornh to Rangpur (2-Kms)	C-4	1514280	22150	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM
4	Package-II (i) Construction & Rehabilitation of BTR Mandhra (1-Km) (ii)Construction & Rehabilitation of BTR of village Jabbar Wala (1-Km)	C-4	1507480	22020	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM
5	Package-III (i) Construction & Rehabilitation of BTR village Gulham Wala (1-Km) (ii) Construction & Rehabilitation of BTR of Shehzada Yarik (1-Km)	C-5	1164220	16900	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM
6	Package-IV (i) Construction & Rehabilitation of BTR Jahz Chowk Kacheri Road (0.5-Km) (ii) Construction & Rehabilitation of BTR from Dinpur Road to Basti Dirkhana (1-Km) (iii) Construction BTR of village Rah Shah Kot Awan (1-Km)	C-4	1402206	20450	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM
7	Package-V (i) Construction of various PCC Streets in UC-II (ii) Construction of various PCC Streets in UC-5	C-4	2240000	33000	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM
8	Package-VI (i) Construction of various PCC Streets in UC DD-1 (ii) Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Dewala	C-4	2440000	36000	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM
9	Package-VII (i) Construction of various PCC Streets in UC DD-1 (Phase-II) (ii)Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Lachra (iii)Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Bighwani	C-4	2440000	36000	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM
10	Package-VIII (i) Construction of various PCC Streets in UC DD-2 (ii)Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Hissam	C-4	1740000	25500	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM
11	Package-IX (i) Construction of various PCC Streets in UC DD-2 (Phase-II) (ii)Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Kotla Saidan (iii) Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Bilot Sharif	C-4	1940000	28500	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM
12	Package-X (i) Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Muryali (ii)Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Ratta Kulachi (iii) Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Ketch	C-4	2540000	37500	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM
13	Package-XI (i) Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Dewala (Phase-II) (ii)Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Mandhran (Phase-II) (iii)Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Kirri Khaisore	C-4	2440000	36000	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM
14	Package-XII (i) Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Mandhran (ii)Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Kot Jai	C-4	1640000	24000	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM
15	Package-XIII (i) Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Laar (ii)Construction of various PCC Streets in UC Paharpur	C-4	1440000	21000	18-Months	09/12/2024 at 12:00 PM	09/12/2024 at 12:30 PM

- Bid solicitation documents and instructions to Bidders can be obtained from the office on any working day or downloaded from C&W web site (www.cwd.gkp.pk) before the submission date / time.
- The bidders should submit their E-bids as per KPRA Notification No. SOR(14)/Vol:1-24/2021-22 dated 10.05.2022.
- Complete detail of Bid Security in shape of CDR i.e. Bank Name, CDR Number(s) and Date(s) must be submitted electronically alongwith E-bid on the E-bidding System.
- All bidders are required to be registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority under Finance Act, 2013 No.XXI of 2013.
- As per KPRA Rules 10% Performance Bank Guarantee on Bid Cost should be submitted by successful bidder within 28-days after receipt of the Letter of Acceptance.
- The expenditure is no case is allowed to exceed the approved cost and there shall be no substitution/addition / deletion/alteration in the scope of the schemes without prior approval of the Competent Authority.
- Venue of bids opening is office of the Executive Engineer C&W H/Way Division DIKhan

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

INF (P) 3079/24

C&W H/Way Division D.I.Khan. Phone # 0966-9280558



PESHAWAR: President City University Sabur Sethi giving shield to Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Choudhry during the 13th Convocation of CUSIT.

PHC halts finance director’s appointment

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice S M Atique Shah and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah has halted the appointment of a new finance director at the Pakistan Institute of Prosthetic and Orthotactics (PIPO), on Thursday.

The counsel Khalid Rehman advocate argued that the petitioner Riyaz Ali serving as current finance director filed the petition against advertisement for appointment of Finance Director at Pakistan Institute of Prosthetic and Orthotactics by Managing Director.

The counsel further added that Riyaz Ali was appointed as finance director in 2021 under a regular procedure, but was given a contract instead of a permanent position.

The managing director of Pakistan Institute of Prosthetic and Orthotactics did not have the authority to advertise for the position, as this power lies with the board of directors or the chairman in emergency situations. The advertisement for the position was illegal and unlawful, the lawyers stated.

PHC divisional bench comprising of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah halted final appointment of Director Finance at Pakistan Institute of Prosthetic and Orthotactics while observing that the institute may continue the process and issued notices to the respondents.

RTI held workshop on Intersection of Climate Policy & Journalism

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Mrs. Farah Hamid Khan, Chief Information Commissioner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has said that Right to Information (RTI) empowers journalists to access authentic data for investigative reporting on climate-related issues.

It enables them to report more effectively for the best citizen interest, which ultimately helps in sensitizing public office holders for transparent utilization of public funds.

This was stated by Mrs. Farah Hamid Khan, Chief Information Commissioner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission (KPIC) held while imparting a session on RTI to journalists in a workshop titled 'Intersection of Climate Policy & Journalism: Empowering Journalists for Informed Reporting', arranged by Transparency International-



Severe air pollution: Causes, impacts, and sustainable solutions for a healthier future

Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad, PhD (Environmental Engineering)

LAHORE, one of Pakistan's largest cities, frequently experiences severe air pollution, especially during the winter when smog levels are at their highest. Lahore is once again experiencing hazardous levels of air pollution. The city is shrouded in thick smog, which reduces visibility and poses significant health risks to its residents. Lahore's air quality is among the worst in the world due to a toxic mixture of industrial pollutants, vehicle emissions, and seasonal crop burning. The city's AQI (Air Quality Index) has risen above safe limits, raising significant concerns among the public and health officials. Due to high pollution levels, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases are at their peaks. Health experts warn of long-term damage to those exposed to this toxic air daily, and hospital admissions for lung conditions such as bronchitis and asthma have increased.

Children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing conditions are especially vulnerable, as the fine particulate matter (PM2.5) in the air can penetrate deep into the lungs and even enter the bloodstream, exacerbating health problems. The major causes of air pollution in Lahore included; Vehicular Emissions; rapid urbanization has led to an increase in the number of vehicles, which contributes significantly to air pollution. Many of these vehicles are older, lacking modern emission controls and standards. Industrial Emissions; factories around Lahore, particularly brick kilns, emit significant amounts of pollutants, including sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, and nitrogen oxides into the atmosphere, that degrade air quality. Crop burning; farmers in Lahore division and surrounding regions often burn crop residues, especially in the fall, releasing large amounts of particulate matter and greenhouse gases that drifts into worsening the city's smog. Construction dust; continuous development in Lahore generates considerable dust, which adds to the particulate matter in the air and worsens visibility and air quality. Weather Patterns; in winter, temperature inversions trap pollutants close to the ground, worsening air quality. A comprehensive strategy is needed to deal with this air pollution problem. Possible solutions to combat severe air pollution in Lahore and other regions of Punjab province are as follows;

1. Expanding and promoting eco-friendly public transport options can reduce the number of vehicles on the roads. Investment in electric buses and trains, along with incentives for carpooling, could also reduce traffic emissions.
2. Enforcing strict emissions standards for vehicles and implementing regular inspection programs would help control vehicular pollution. Shifting to electric or hybrid vehicles could also make a significant impact. Implementing and enforcing Euro-6 standards could significantly reduce pollutants from vehicles. Encouraging electric vehicles by offering incentives would also help in the long term.
3. Stronger regulation of factories and industries in and around Lahore, especially during winter, would limit the release of harmful emissions. Incentivizing industries to use cleaner technologies can also contribute to reducing pollution levels.
4. Converting traditional brick kilns to environmentally friendly zigzag technology can reduce emissions by up to 60%. Government support and incentives could accelerate this shift, helping both the environment and the economy.
5. Introducing alternative methods for crop residue management, such as using residue for biofuel or composting, could significantly reduce agricultural burning. Authorities can work with farmers to offer alternatives to burning crop residue, such as machinery that can safely and sustainably manage agricultural waste. Providing subsidies or incentives for alternative practices can help alleviate this pollution source.
6. Planting trees can absorb carbon dioxide and provide fresh oxygen, helping to offset some of the pollution. Expanding green zones within the city would also help reduce air temperatures and improve overall air quality.
7. Educating residents on the risks of pollution and promoting lifestyle changes, like reducing waste burning, carpooling, reducing energy consumption, and avoiding unnecessary outdoor activity on high-pollution days, can help reduce exposure.
8. Establishing more air quality monitoring stations and providing real-time data to the public can help people take preventive measures. Alert systems for high-pollution days would allow schools and workplaces to make informed decisions, minimizing exposure.

The severe air pollution crisis in Lahore requires a collective, coordinated response from the government, industries, and citizens. The positive impact on public health and quality of life is worth the effort, but reducing air pollution requires dedication. Through regulation action, community engagement, and sustainable practices, Lahore can reclaim cleaner skies and healthier air for future generations.

13th convocation of City University of Science and Information Technology held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The City University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar, held its Thirteenth Convocation Ceremony here on Thursday.

The event marked the academic achievements of 1,158 graduating students from various disciplines, including Architecture, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, English, Management Sciences, and others.

Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr. Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. He addressed the ceremony and distributed degrees and gold medals among the graduates. Notably, 29 students were awarded gold medals in recognition of their exceptional academic performances in their respective fields.

In his address, the Chief Secretary congratulated the graduating students and their parents, urging the graduates to contribute positively to society. Highlighting the achievements of City University, he commended the institution for its rapid progress and its pivotal role in promoting research in higher education.

"The hard work of the dedicated faculty and the excellent educational environment at City University are truly commendable. The provincial government is committed to providing a conducive educational environment, as it is the cornerstone of development," Chief Secretary remarked. He further assured the university and researchers of the provincial government's full support in advancing research initiatives.

President City University, Muhammad Saboor Sethi, and Vice Chancellor Engineer Dr. Nasrullah Khan also addressed the ceremony, emphasizing the university's dedication to academic excellence and research.

RMI Media Cricket League PPC Markhor Clinch Victory

Minister for Sports distributes prizes

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: PPC Markhor triumphed in the RMI Media Cricket League organized by Peshawar Press Club by defeating PPC Zalmi by six wickets in the final match.

Provincial Minister for Sports Syed Fakhar Jehan graced the occasion as the chief guest and distributed prizes among the winning players. Accompanying him were DG Sports Abdul Nasir, President Peshawar Press Club Arshad Aziz Malik, President Khyber Union of Journalists Kashifuddin Syed, Secretary General AIPS Asia Amjad Aziz Malik, PIMS Education System Director Ismail Khan, COO RMI Col (R) Tariq Khan, Secretary Peshawar Press Club Irfan Musa Zai, and Chairman Sports Committee Abid Khan, along with other prominent personalities and a large number of journalists.

The final match of the Media Cricket League held in collaboration with RMI and DHA Peshawar saw PPC Zalmi batting first. They scored 101 runs for the loss of three wickets in the allotted overs with Hamidullah scoring 41 and Zawar contributing 23 runs as standout batsmen. For PPC Markhor Arshad Yousafzai, Irshad Maidani, and Rizwan Zaman each took one wicket.

In response PPC Markhor successfully chased the target with the loss of four wickets. Ajmal's stellar performance with the bat scoring 49 runs earned him the Man of the Match award. From PPC Zalmi, Ismat Shah, Tayyab and Hamidullah each claimed a wicket.

Addressing the gathering Chief Guest Syed Fakhar Jehan expressed his pleasure in witnessing the active participation of journalists in such events emphasizing the importance of recreational activities for professionals to excel in their respective fields.

He highlighted the government's commitment to reviving sports in the province and announced extensive preparations for the Quaid-e-Azam Games with trials being conducted at various venues.

At the conclusion of the event the Provincial Minister distributed awards among the players. Wahid Khan was declared the tournament's best bowler while Shah Faisal was recognized as the best batsman. The Minister also announced a grant of Rs 0.5 million for the Peshawar Press Club and cash prizes of Rs. 50,000 each for the winner and runner-up teams, handing over the cheques to the Press Club President and team representatives.

A total of 18 teams comprising 300 journalists participated in the tournament showcasing the vibrant sportsmanship within the journalistic community.

Khuli kachehri held in KP Energy Department, public issues resolved on spot

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In light of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's ongoing policy of bringing transparency in the administrative institutional affairs and prompt resolution of public problems, the Energy & Power Department organized an online E-Khuli kachehri under the chairmanship of Secretary Power Nisar Ahmed, wherein the people actively participated and presented their problems.

The Instructions were issued on the spot for their immediate solution by high-up authorities.

In this context, all the officers of the department including Special Secretary Irfan Wazir, Additional Secretaries Shah Fahad and Abdul Huseeb, heads of subsidiary organizations PEDO, KPOGCL, Electric Inspectorate and KP Transmission and Grid Company also participated in khuli kachehri.

Meanwhile, during the Khuli kachehri, the attention of the authorities was drawn towards some of the problems faced by the 38 contract employees of PEDO's Shishi powerhouse who served 18 to 20 years but still facing non-permanent issues.

However, Secretary Energy Nisar Ahmad assured to present the issue of contract employees in the PEDO's policy board meeting soon.

Similarly, few employees of KPOGCL also complained about their employment problems and verification of educational data, the Secretary Energy asked the CEO of the organization to prepare a plan of action and submit a report in order to resolve the employees' problems.

Moreover, a person from Swabi district proposed to establish a local office of the Electric Inspectorate in Swabi for immediate solution to the problems of overbilling in electricity bills.

While talking on this occasion, Secretary Energy Nisar Ahmed said that organizing e-Khali Kachhri for immediate solution of public problems in government institutions is a good initiative of the present provincial government.

It will close the gap between institutions and people he added.

Furthermore, he urged all the officers of the department to follow the exemplary measures of the present government seriously such as Awam ka Ikhtiar, task management system, file tracking system, Pakistan Citizen Portal and speedy disposal of court cases he concluded.

The murder of the Father of Pashto

Syed Sabir Shah Sabir

NOVEMBER 21st, marks a tragic anniversary. On this date in 1965 Babaye Pashto (The Father of Pashto) Nasrullah Khan Nasr was brutally murdered in the evening at his Dar-ul-Tasneef (house of compilation) located in the upper story behind Picture House Cinema in the Baboo Haider Road Jangi muhlla Peshawar. Nasrullah Khan was a man who single-handedly revived and enriched the Pashto language with his scholarly and creative works despite lacking resources.

He authored and compiled two camel-loads of Pashto books, distributing them for free to schools and colleges across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at that time. He was the one who made Pashto an official and courtly language in the princely state of Amb. In 1948, notable Pashto writers from both sides of the Durand Line honored him with the title of "Babaye Pashto" at a ceremony in Peshawar Museum. Writers like Samandar Khan Samandar, Hamza Baba, Abdul Khaliq Khaleeq, Qosar Afridi, Khadim Mohmand, and Ustad Benawa were present at the event.

Nasrullah Khan united Pashto writers from both sides and devoted his life to Pashto, which ultimately became the cause of his death. On November 21st, 1965, he was murdered for his love and dedication to the Pashto language.

The next day, on November 22nd, his funeral procession was carried from his home in Tehkal before the evening prayers. Sadly, despite his stature as "The Father of Pashto," only one writer, Abdul Khaliq Khaleeq, attended his funeral. The same writers and poets who praised him in literary gatherings failed to attend his last rites.

In the six decades since his death, no government or cultural organization in either side of Pashtun territories has held a formal event in his honor.

His monumental contributions, tireless efforts, and tragic demise have not been documented or celebrated adequately. While there were some seminars held under the Khalil Olasi Adabi Jirga during my time, and the "Sabir Da Rahna Movement" later organized a grand tribute, including events in Peshawar's Paradise Hotel and Spring Carnival Hotel, such efforts remain rare. Faqir Hussain Sahar, a former director of Radio Pakistan, wrote a book titled Babaye Pashto in Urdu, but such initiatives are few and far between.

Even today, many modern poets and Facebook-era enthusiasts do not recognize Nasrullah Khan Nasr, a man who sacrificed marriage and personal joys to dedicate himself entirely to serving the Pashto language. He feared that such responsibilities might divert his focus from preserving and enriching Pashto's history and heritage.

Nasrullah Khan Nasr, we remain humbled by your dedication to Pashto and Pashtun culture. You are remembered with respect and reverence.



In brief

Seminar arranged F.P. Report

SWABI: Medical Teaching Institute Swabi on Thursday arranged a seminar to aware people about perils of excessive use of antibiotics. The event was arranged to mark Anti-Microbial Resistance Week that was aimed to inform people harmful effects of antibiotic use. Guest Speaker, Dr. Amjad Mehboob said that Pakistan is third in the list of countries where antibiotics were being used unnecessarily and without any prescription. He said that thousands of deaths were being reported worldwide due to complications reported by excessive use of antimicrobial agents. Medical Director of the hospital stressed upon doctors to prescribe appropriate medicines according to severity of disease adding that many lives could be saved by apprising people about side effects of antimicrobials that are being used by patients frequently. Hospital Dean, Dr. Shams-ur-Rehman termed the seminar an excellent efforts to control frequent use of antibiotics and also suggested holding of such events regularly.

Terror bid foiled in S Waziristan F.P. Report

WANA: Security forces foiled an infiltration attempt by over 30 militants near the Pak-Afghan border, resulting in a deadly exchange of gunfire, according to official sources. The militants were reportedly trying to cross into Pakistan from Afghanistan when they were spotted by security forces. Acting swiftly, the forces encircled the group and opened fire, leading to a fierce confrontation. Sources confirmed that more than seven militants were killed in the clash, while the remaining fled back into Afghan territory. During a subsequent search operation, the body of one militant was recovered. The deceased was identified as an Afghan national, according to officials. The incident underscores ongoing tensions and challenges along the Pak-Afghan border, with security forces remaining vigilant to prevent cross-border militant activity.

DPO suspends two cops F.P. Report

KOHAT: District Police Officer, Kohat Umar Khan on Wednesday while taking action on public complaints, suspended two police officers posted at Cantt Police Station. He also directed the DSP City to conduct a departmental inquiry against both the police officials following their suspension. The DPO said corruption or negligence in performance by police officers will not be tolerated under any circumstances. He said the process of punishment and reward will continue in the police department, adding that a prompt and strict action will be taken on genuine complaints lodged by the general public.

6 gamblers arrested F.P. Report

ATTOCK: At least six gamblers were booked besides recovering bet money. Mobile Phones from their possession and arrested during raids at their gambling dens in Fateh Jang Police attack on Thursday. Spokesman of police informed that in a crackdown against the anti social elements, a few persons are engaged in gambling in an open place near Mithu Khan Dam, on which the Fateh Jang police immediately formed a raiding party and raided the spot and arrested 6 gamblers identified as Muhammad Shaukat, Muhammad Akram, Muhammad Ilyas, Amir Mehmood, Taqeer and Maqsood Hussain.



HYDERABAD: A doctor examining patient during one window medical camp.

HEC organizes moot at Bannu's Varsity

F.P. Report

BANNU: Higher Education Commission Islamabad, Bannu University of Science and Technology, Bannu Rafa University Islamabad and Multimedia University Malaysia, a joint international two-day conference was officially launched. The parliamentary leader of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi's brother Ahmed Karim Kundi was on this occasion, the constitutional legal expert Kifayatullah Khan, Bannu University Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Aurangzeb Khan, Vice Chancellor Rafa International University Prof. Dr. Anas Ahmed, Vice Chancellor Agriculture Prof. Dr. Daud Jan, former Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Lutfullah Kaka Khel also participated in the international conference.

The President of University of Malaysia, Mudilla Hum, participated online on this occasion, IT Director of University of Science and Technology

Bannu, Dr. Nasir Gul, Dr. Khairullah Khan, Dr. Umar Farooq, Dr. Wahab Khan, Dr. Ehsan Rabi, Majid Khan, Conference Administrative Affairs Coordinator Dr. Siddiq Dawar, Women Campus Project Director Eng. Iqbal and other faculty participated in the opening session, students of Jamia Bannu Rafa University Islamabad Multimedia University presented research papers.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that the world has become a global village in which globalization is facing the challenges of non-standard manpower and poverty alleviation, can be used and can fully cope with the modern demands of the world.

At this time, the world has gone far ahead of us. Now our youth will have to focus on using modern technology to meet this target. We can achieve success in our real goals when we prepare the youth according to the market, then we can meet the demands of the modern era.

Meanwhile, Vice-Chancellor University of Science and Technology Bannu Professor Dr. Aurangzeb Khan has said that Jamia Bannu is playing an important role in bringing an educational revolution in the southern districts and ending the educational backwardness of the region.

According to the mission of providing facilities, the new generation here will be adapted to the requirements of the modern age. He is expressing these thoughts while addressing the two-day international conference organized in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission. Wahab Khan and other officers were also present.

On this occasion, the committee of administrative affairs of the conference also inspected the common stalls. Dekar can face the new challenges, he said that steps are being taken for higher education for thousands of students here in Jamia Bannu.

Health Week inaugurated at THQ hospital Hazro

F.P. Report

ATTOCK: To make the citizens aware of adopting a healthy lifestyle and disease diagnosis, a 'Health Week' was inaugurated in the THQ Hospital Hazro. District Monitoring Committee and former provincial Minister Jahangir Khanzada said that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is taking revolutionary steps to provide medical facilities to the people.

He directed the health department to take special steps to create massive awareness about 'Health Week' so that maximum citizens could benefit from these facilities. He said that screening camps would be providing various types of facilities during the week including clinical history and basic examination, initial examination of the patients to check their health status, liver health examination, and liver health would be accessed through screening for fibrosis.

Member District Monitoring Committee and former provincial Minister Jahangir Khanzada said that The government is trying to provide relief to the people. Health Week has been organized by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in the entire

Punjab to provide better health facilities to the people. Khanzada praised the revolutionary measures being implemented under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. Meanwhile, Member of the National Assembly and Convener of the District Coordination Committee Sheikh Aftab Ahmed has said that measures are being taken for the welfare of special persons under the vision of the Chief Minister of Punjab. For the first time in history, stipends have been issued for special persons on a permanent basis. It's a testament to the government's commitment to ensuring dignity and equality for all.

Sheikh Aftab Ahmed participated as a Chief Guest in the ceremony of distribution of courage cards to the disabled under the program of the Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz in Attock and distributed Rs10,500 cash and courage cards to the disabled people.

SALU organizes seminar

F.P. Report

KHAIRPUR: Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU), Department of Zoology in collaboration with Sukkur Blood and Drug Donating Society, organized an enlightening seminar titled "Impact of Consanguinity (Cousin Marriage) in Our Society". The event, held under the patronage of the esteemed Vice Chancellor, Meritorious Prof. Dr. Muhammad Yousuf Khushik, was chaired by Prof. Dr. Mushtaq Ali Jakhani, Dean, Faculty of Science SALU Khairpur.

The seminar aimed to raise awareness about the critical issue of genetic disorders associated with the cousin marriages. Dr. Javed Ahmed Ujjan, Chairman of the Department of Zoology, opened the seminar by highlighting the significant impact of consanguineous marriages (marriages between close relatives

such as cousin marriages) on genetic disorders including thalassemia, cystic fibrosis, Down syndrome, and visual and hearing impairments.

According to Dr. Ujjan, 71% of consanguineous marriages (66% of the Pakistani sample) take place in Sindh, followed by Balochistan (70%), Punjab (65%), and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) (58%). The percentage varies between 72% and 78% among socioeconomically disadvantaged groups and in rural areas (71%). Most of the population belongs to the lower socioeconomic strata, family units are large and therefore cannot afford to pay for the treatment and management of their thalassemic child, Dr. Ujjan said.

There are no established management practices and blood transfusions remain the cornerstone of care. Regarding prevention pro-

grams, he said there isn't a single federal program to combat thalassemia. However, he added that some initiatives have been taken at the provincial level, with legislation authorizing premarital screening in Sindh.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), and Balochistan; however, implementation is still a problem.

Dr. Majeeda Ruk, the seminar's focal person, underlined that cousin marriage is deeply rooted in certain cultures and persists due to economic, psychological, and traditional factors. She emphasized that consanguinity increases the likelihood of hundreds of genetic diseases that burden society genetically, socially and economically. Guest speakers Dr. Afroz Shaikh and Mr. Rashid Ali provided insightful discussions on the negative effects of consanguinity.

Two story home burnt to ashes

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: A two-story house in Alpuri Payan, located about one kilometer from the district headquarters, was completely gutted by a fire caused by an electrical short circuit. The incident resulted in a total loss of household items worth millions, including cash and jewelry.

According to details, the fire broke out in the house of Sher Ali. Fortunately, no casualties were reported, as the family was away attending a relative's funeral at the time. Due to the lack of road access, fire brigade vehicles could not reach the site.

Later, the rescue team successfully laid a long pipeline to completely douse the flames. Sher Ali, who was residing in the house rent-free due to financial constraints, said they were unaware of how the fire started. He expressed gratitude that there was no loss of life, though all their household items, including bedding, utensils, women's jewelry, and cash, were destroyed.

PTI workers mobilizing: Meanwhile, provincial Minister Meena along with PTI local leadership mobilizing public for 24th November protest to be held at Islamabad. They claimed that thousands of party workers from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will participate in the strike.

The speakers blamed PMLN led government for crackdown against party's workers and initiating fabricated cases. They claimed that the strike will lead them to establish Rule of Law in the country.

Hashish recovered

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Police arrested alleged drug dealer and recovered 4000 grams (4kg) hashish from his possession. The accused has been found involved in more than a dozen cases of serious nature, proclaimed offender and absconder, on Thursday.

SSP Larkana said that the arrested accused is a habitual criminal who has committed various crimes before. While the attempt to supply drugs in the limits of Ali Goharabad Police Station was foiled, cases have been registered against the arrested accused at Police Station Ali Goharabad and Hydari.

Meanwhile 2 device holders arrested for deducting BISP stipend, case registered in details. In spite of the orders of Larkana Division DIG (Police) Nasir Aftab Pathan, the two device holders Mansoor Lashari and Khalilur Rehman Bappar, who were running dowers, were arrested by the Ratodero police for deducting money from Benazir Income Support Program in Ratodero.

World Diabetic Day observed at SMBBU: Diabetic Day was celebrated by the Department of Diabetic and Endocrinology under the management of Shaheed Ms. Benazir Shmuto Medical University (SMBBU), Larkana.

A seminar was organized by the department today on the occasion of World Diabetic Day and diabetes awareness walk. A large number of citizens and patients also participated in the seminar, after which the seminar was presided over by Prof. Hakim Ali Abaro.

World Philosophy Day observed

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The University of Malakand on Thursday arranged a seminar on 'Iqbal's Teachings for Youth' to observe World Philosophy Day, which is marked on the third Thursday of November each year. The UoM, Directorate of Students Societies and its Youth Development Center in collaboration with the MUSLIM Institute, Islamabad organized the event to pay tributes to Late Allama Muhammad Iqbal, a prominent philosopher of the sub-continent.

Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali, Chairman, MUSLIM Institute, a research institute to promote peace in Muslim world, was chief guest of the event. Speaking on the occasion he highlighted the relevance of Allama Iqbal's Philosophy in shaping the youth as dynamic leaders and critical thinkers. He emphasized the need for reconnection with Iqbal's vision to foster unity and self-reliance among the younger generation. The speaker paid rich tributes to the 'Poet of East Dr Iqbal' and said that he kindled spirit in youth and taught them to dream big.

The UoM, vice chancellor Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad, Prof Dr Atta ur Rehman, Pro-VC Dr Mohammad

Yousaf, Provost Dr Maqsood ur Rehman Eshrat, Director Students Societies, Dr Muhammad Usman, Director ORIC, Mr Miraj ul Hamid, Public Relations Officer along with faculty members and students of different disciplines attended the event.

The VC presented souvenirs to the guest speaker and distributed gifts among the organizers as a token of appreciation and pledged to draw wisdom from the teachings of Allama Iqbal and foster a spirit of intellectual growth and leadership skills among the young minds.

SDO assures redressal of drinking water issued at Rabat: TIMERGARA: Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) Public Health Department Lower Dir Malik Basheer Khan stated that the issue of clean drinking water in Rabat will be addressed on a priority basis. He was speaking to the residents of Rabat during his visit to inspect the water supply scheme.

SDO visited on the invitation of the Chairman of Youth welfare organization Kotkay Rabat, Syed Haroon Bacha, and other dignitaries, including Dr. Jamal Shah, Deedar Syed Bacha, Saeed Bacha, Syed Sagfiteen Shah Bacha, Azghar Syed Pacha, Usman Syed Pacha, Dr. Sajjad, Malik Hameed, Munawar

Syed, and Maulana Ghani Rahman.

Malik Basheer Khan emphasized that water is a basic necessity, and urged people to avoid wasting clean drinking water unnecessarily. He assured the provision of an electricity transformer for the Rabat Kotkay water supply scheme, along with the construction and repair of a water tank. He directed residents without water supply connections to contact the office to have their connections installed.

XEN to crackdown against electricity thieves: Executive Engineer (XEN) WAPDA Lower Dir, Asad Ali, declared that electricity theft is a national crime and urged the public to refrain from such practices.

Speaking to media representatives, he reiterated that electricity theft is a punishable offense and will not be tolerated. He advised consumers with pending electricity dues to clear them immediately, warning that their connections would otherwise be disconnected. XEN Asad Ali highlighted his efforts to provide better facilities to electricity consumers and minimize load shedding, emphasizing the necessity of public cooperation. He assured that his office doors are always open for consumers to address any complaints and resolve issues.

Overseas delegation commits to uplift trade

F.P. Report

MARDAN: On the special invitation of Zahir Shah, Provincial General Secretary of Markazi Tanzeem-e-Tajiran and Group Leader of Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chairman, Overseas Business Forum UK Muhammad Farooq Khan, Malik Muhammad Afzal, Muhammad Faisal Saburi, Amjad Khan and others visit MCCCI and met with the representatives of various sectors.

President of Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Abbas Saleem Rehman, Senior Vice President Noman Faqir Saraf, Vice President Haji Waheed Gul, President of Mardan Press Club M. Bashir Adil, General Secretary Akhonzada Fazal

Haq, Senior Journalist Musrat Khan Aasi, and other representatives. Members of the executive committee, industrialists, businessmen, and owners of wedding halls participated in large numbers.

Provincial General Secretary of central organization of traders and group leader of the Mardan Chamber Zahir Shah and the officials warmly welcomed the guests and said that this country and especially Khyber

Pukhtunkhwa (KP) has been blessed by Allah Almighty with natural resources, minerals and beauty which has many opportunities to introduce, for which the business community of this area needs facilities to promote the business and tourism of this area, but it is unfortunate that no attention is being given to it.

Overseas Business Forum UK Chairman Muhammad Farooq Khan said to the participants that the purpose of our visit is to promote business and tourism in Pakistan and especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and to solve the problems faced so that products and tourism of both countries are promoted and the business environment can be stabilized.

He further said that for the promotion of business, various trade fairs will also be organized soon in which the business community of Mardan Chamber will be fully represented where business meetings and business opportunities will be available on the basis of joint venture.

Rights of farmers to be protected: Tareen

Saqib Mushtaq

RAHIM YAR KHAN: Safeguarding the economic rights of farmers and strengthening the agricultural economy is a top priority. Farmers play a pivotal role in the stability of the national economy," Jahangir Khan Tareen emphasized these points while addressing farmers at the inauguration of the 2024-25 crushing season at JDW Sugar Mill Unit 1 in Rahim Yar Khan today.

The event was attended by Ali Khan Tareen, the management of JDW Sugar Mills, and a large number of farmers. Jahangir Tareen highlighted that JDW Sugar Mills have officially commenced crushing operations.



"We have consistently provided farmers with the full price for sugarcane and ensured timely payments. God willing, we will continue to provide all possible facilities to sugarcane farmers," he said.

Following the address, Jahangir Tareen, accompa-

nied by Ali Tareen, inspected various sections of the sugar mills and interacted with farmers. The farmers expressed their gratitude to Jahangir Tareen and Ali Tareen for setting the sugarcane price at Rs. 400 per maund and ensuring timely payments.

Propagandist to face failure on every front: Mir Hassan

F.P. Report

HUB: People have become conscious and it is a miserable act that people are leaving you. The people who came to our side were fed up with your anti-people activities. You had lured and coerced the honorable and innocent people for your personal interests only. Today, you are a victim of evil deeds.

These views were expressed by the senior central leader of Pakistan People's Party, spokesperson of President Asif Ali Zardari and Provincial Advisor for Industries and Crafts Balochistan Mir Ali Hassan Zehri while responding to Aslam Bhutani's statement published earlier. Today people have risen against you and you have been left alone.

He said in the statement that you are spreading propaganda on social media that you are joining the Peoples Party and you are giving a negative statement that there is no such thing.

One thing is correct here that there is no such thing because Pakistan Peoples Party is a people-friendly party and there is no room for anti-people and self-interested elements in this party. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri further said that Aslam Bhutani Sahib, you have spoken nonsense about using unseen forces and changing people's loyalties through our leader, President Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, which has nothing to do with reality. President Asif Ali Zardari's style of politics and policy of reconciliation is recognized internationally. Aslam

Bhutani's accusation against him is proof of mental retardation.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that those who are coming towards us are our people-friendly projects and they are coming after seeing the love of the people. He said that Aslam Bhutani has always accused big people to shine his petty and negative politics, but this tactic of his will not be successful now. President Asif Ali Zardari knows very well what his past was and he kept coming to power through backdoors, but this cannot happen now.

Anti-people elements have no place in Pakistan Peoples Party. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that the sun of development of love has risen and the rapid development and prosperity of love has begun.



Spain’s royals return to flood disaster zone for first time

BARCELONA (AP): Spain’s royal couple returned to the area devastated by last month’s catastrophic flooding for the first time since enraged survivors pelted them and top elected officials with mud on their first visit to the disaster zone.

King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia visited the town of Chiva along with a central government minister and the regional leader of eastern Valencia, whom many citizens have slammed for bungling the flood response. No mud flew this time as Felipe and Letizia shook hands with people at the beginning of their tour of the village. Other spectators took photos.

Chiva, a hilltop town some 30 kilometers (20 miles) to the west of Valencia city, was ripped apart by a crushing wall of water that overflowed a normally dry gorge on the night of Oct. 29. Two of the four bridges spanning the gorge were demolished and several houses were washed away. The royals, Spain’s prime minister and Valencia’s leader had attempted to visit a hard-hit neighborhood of Valencia’s southern outskirts on Nov. 3 just a few days after the floods. But they had to cut it short when angry locals tossed mud and other objects on their arrival in Paiporta. The royals withstood the vitriol for half an hour and spoke to several furious residents, but they eventually had to cancel the visit and postpone a subsequent stop planned for later that day in Chiva.

The floods claimed a confirmed 227 lives and destroyed thousands of homes and vehicles. The cleanup effort continues three weeks on. Meanwhile, Spain will grant residency and work permits to about 300,000 migrants living in the country illegally each year for the next three years, the country’s migration minister said.

The policy will take effect next May and aims to expand the country’s aging workforce. Spain has remained largely open to receiving migrants



even as other European nations seek to tighten their borders to illegal crossings and asylum seekers. Spain needs around 250,000 registered foreign workers a year to maintain its welfare state, Migration Minister Elma Saiz said in an interview. She contended that the legalization policy is not aimed solely at “cultural wealth and respect for human rights, it’s also prosperity.” “Today, we can say Spain is a better country,” Saiz told national broadcaster Radio Nacional de España.

Spain’s Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has often described his government’s migration policies as a means to combat the country’s low birthrate. The new policy, approved by Sánchez’s leftist minority coalition government, simplifies administrative procedures for short and long-term visas and provides migrants with additional labor protections. It extends a visa previously offered to job-seekers for three months to one year. In August, Sánchez visited three West African nations in an effort to address irregular migration to Spain’s Canary Islands.

The archipelago off the coast of

Africa is seen by many as a step toward continental Europe with young men from Mali, Senegal, Mauritania and elsewhere embarking on dangerous sea voyages there seeking better job opportunities abroad or fleeing violence and political instability at home.

By mid-November, some 54,000 migrants had reached Spain this year by sea or land, according to the country’s Interior Ministry. The exact number of foreigners living in Spain illegally is not clear. Many such migrants make a living in Spain’s underground economy as fruit pickers, caretakers, delivery drivers, or other low-paid but essential jobs often passed over by Spaniards. Without legal protections, they can be vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Saiz said the new policy would help prevent such abuse and “serve to combat mafias, fraud and the violation of rights.” Spain’s economy is among the fastest-growing in the European Union this year, boosted in part by a strong rebound in tourism after the pandemic. In 2023, Spain issued 1.3 million visas to foreigners, according to the government.

Son of Norway’s crown princess arrested

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP): The eldest son of Norway’s Crown Princess Mette-Marit has been arrested again, this time on suspicion of rape, police said. Marius Borg Høiby is the stepson of the heir to the Norwegian throne, Crown Prince Haakon, and the son of Mette-Marit from a previous relationship. He has no royal title or official duties.

Borg Høiby was arrested in Oslo on a preliminary charge of having had “sexual intercourse with someone who is unconscious or for other reasons unable to resist the act.” A preliminary charge comes before a formal charge and allows authorities to detain suspects during an investigation. Police did not say when the alleged rape occurred, but only that “the victim must have been unable to resist the act.” Norwegian media said Borg Høiby denied the accusation. Hege Salomon, the lawyer for the woman who was allegedly raped, said “she is having a hard time.” She told Norwegian broadcaster NRK that police, not the woman, had brought the case. The woman was not identified.

The royal palace had no comment, the news agency NTB said. On Aug. 4, police officers responded to a disturbance in downtown Oslo and briefly detained Borg Høiby. He faced preliminary charges of bodily harm and criminal damage and was released. Details were unclear but police said there was “a relationship between the suspect and the victim.” More preliminary charges have since been filed against Borg Høiby, including violating several restraining orders and driving without a valid driver’s license. In all, the cases involve four women and one man. The case was top news in Norway, where the royals are popular.

Borg Høiby, 27, lives with the royal couple and has two children, Princess Ingrid Alexandra and Prince Sverre Magnus. Norway’s future queen made headlines in 2001 when she married Haakon because she was a single mother who had lived a freewheeling life with a companion who had been convicted on drug charges.

Second teen charged in forest fire

NEW JERSEY (AP): A second teenager was charged with intentionally setting a wildfire in a New Jersey suburb of Philadelphia as “significant” rainfall was expected to help douse a stubborn wildfire burning on the New Jersey-New York border.

Many parts of the Northeast have been under red flag alerts, with firefighters responding to hundreds of brush fires in tinder-dry and windy conditions. Officials have said numerous prolonged rain storms are needed in parts of New England as well as New Jersey and New York, which are the driest in between 120 to 150 years.

And on the West Coast, weeks of dry conditions that raised wildfire risks were erased by a powerful storm known as a bomb cyclone that battered Washington, Oregon and Northern California with strong winds and heavy rain. Northwest of Los Angeles, crews were still mopping up a major blaze burning for two weeks that destroyed 240 structures. The Mountain Fire, which erupted Nov. 6 in Ventura County, was about 98% contained.

Police in Evesham Township said they have arrested a 14-year-old from Marlton in connection with an Oct. 30 wildfire that burned about 52 acres (21 hectares). On Nov. 7, they charged another youth, also from Marlton, with setting that same fire. The latest arrest was made and announced. Both are charged with aggravated arson, and causing or risking widespread injury or damage.

Both have been taken to a juvenile detention center as detectives investigate whether they might have been responsible for a second wildfire in Evesham a week later that burned a larger area, about 375 acres (152 hectares).

US defense chief regrets China’s decision

VIENTIANE, Laos (AP): US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin expressed regret that his Chinese counterpart chose not to hold talks with him during meetings of Southeast Asian defense chiefs in Laos, calling it a setback for the entire region.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is holding security talks in Vientiane at a time of increasing maritime disputes with China and as the transition to a new US president approaches. The decision by Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun “is a setback for the whole region,” Austin said after the first day of meetings.

“It’s unfortunate. It affects the region because the region really wants to see us, two significant players in the region, two significant powers, talk to each other, and that reassures the entire region,” he said. There was no immediate comment from China on its decision not to meet with Austin. Austin just wrapped up meetings in Australia with officials there and with Japan’s defense minister. They pledged to support ASEAN and expressed their “serious concern about destabilizing actions in the East and South China Seas, including dangerous conduct by the People’s Republic of China against Philippines and other coastal state vessels.” In addition to the United States and China, other nations attending the two-day ASEAN meetings from outside Southeast Asia include Japan, South Korea, India and Australia.

Along with the Philippines, ASEAN members Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei have competing claims with China in the South China Sea, which Beijing claims almost entirely as its own territory. Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos are the other ASEAN members. Opening the talks, Laotian Defense Minister Chansamone Chanyalath said he hoped for productive meetings that would “become a standard for us to continue ASEAN’s cooperation in defense, including how to handle, thwart, and manage security challenges in the present and in the future.” As China has grown more assertive in pushing its territorial claims in recent years, ASEAN members and Beijing have been negotiating a code of conduct to govern behavior in the sea, but progress has been slow. Officials have agreed to try to complete the code by 2026, but talks have been hampered by thorny issues, including disagreements over whether the pact should be binding. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who has called for more urgency in the code of conduct negotiations, complained at a meeting of ASEAN leaders last month that his country “continues to be subject to harassment and intimidation” by China’s actions, which he said violated international law. Chinese and Philippine vessels have clashed repeatedly this year, and Vietnam in October charged that Chinese forces assaulted its fishermen in disputed areas in the South China Sea. China has also sent patrol vessels to areas that Indonesia and

Malaysia claim as their exclusive economic zones.

At the meeting of ASEAN leaders last month, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington was “very concerned about China’s increasingly dangerous and unlawful activities in the South China Sea which have injured people, harm vessels from ASEAN nations and contradict commitments to peaceful resolutions of disputes.” He pledged that the US would “continue to support freedom of navigation, and freedom of overflight in the Indo Pacific.” In response, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said US and other non-regional militaries present in the sea were the main source of instability. “The increasing military deployment and activities in the South China Sea by the US and a few other non-regional countries, stoking confrontation and creating tensions, are the greatest source of instability for peace and stability in the South China Sea,” Mao said. It is not clear how the incoming administration of US President-elect Donald Trump will address the South China Sea situation.

After Austin’s meetings in Australia, the Defense Department said the US, Australia and Japan had agreed to expand joint drills and announced a defense consultation body among the three countries’ forces to strengthen their cooperation. When asked while in the Philippines about whether the strong US defense support would continue for the country under Trump, Austin said he would not speculate.

Although Austin failed to hold talks with Chinese Defense Minister Dong, Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani was expected to meet with Dong and express concerns about Beijing’s military activities, Japan’s NHK public television reported. Japan has protested that a Chinese military aircraft violated its airspace briefly in August, and in September expressed “serious concerns” after a Chinese aircraft carrier and two destroyers sailed between two Japanese islands.

The meetings are also likely to touch on tensions in the Korean Peninsula, the Russia-Ukraine war, and wars in the Middle East. They are also expected to discuss other issues, including natural disasters, cybersecurity and terrorism. Another thorny regional issue is the civil war and humanitarian crisis in ASEAN member Myanmar. The group’s credibility has been severely tested by the war in Myanmar, where the army ousted an elected government in 2021, and fighting has continued with pro-democracy guerrillas and ethnic rebels. More than a year into an offensive initiated by three militias and joined by other resistance groups, observers estimate the military controls less than half the country. Myanmar military rulers have been barred from ASEAN meetings since late 2021, but this year the country has been represented by high-level bureaucrats, including at the summit in October.

Merkel, in memoir, recalls tricks for dealing with Trump

BERLIN (Reuters): Angela Merkel sought advice from the pope on dealing with Donald Trump when he was first elected US president, hoping to find ways of convincing a man she saw as having a property developer’s winner-or-loser mentality not to quit the Paris climate accords.

In her memoir, extracts of which were published in German weekly Die Zeit, the long-serving German chancellor detailed her difficulties in dealing with Trump, who, she said, appeared to her fascinated by Russian President Vladimir Putin and other authoritarian leaders.

“He saw everything from the perspective of the property developer he was before entering politics,” she wrote. “Each parcel of land could only be sold once, and if he didn’t get it someone else did. That’s how he saw the world.” Pope Francis, when Merkel asked him, in general terms, for advice on dealing with people “with fundamentally different views”, immediately understood she was referring to Trump and his desire to quit the climate accords, she wrote.

“Bend, bend, bend, but make sure it doesn’t break,” he told Merkel, according to her account. When Trump first took office in

2017, Merkel was one of the world’s longest-serving elected leaders and the most influential in the European Union by far after having shaped Germany and the continent’s response to the euro zone debt crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia’s initial 2014 invasion of Ukraine.

As much of the world fretted over Trump’s presidency, Merkel’s unruffled demeanour and her frequent invocations of values like freedom and human rights led to some dubbing her the true “leader of the free world” - a moniker traditionally reserved for US presidents. Written before Trump’s reelection, the book expresses the “heartfelt hope” that Vice President Kamala Harris would defeat her rival. Her memoir, entitled “Freedom: Memories 1954-2021” will be published in more than 30 countries on Nov. 26. She will launch the book in the US a week later at a Washington event with former President Barack Obama, with whom she forged a close political relationship.

Germany’s first female leader was still popular with voters at the end of 16 years in office, but her legacy has come under greater scrutiny, with some blaming

the huge bets on Russian energy made by her governments for both Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and Germany’s current economic doldrums. Merkel herself has expressed no regret about her Russia policies and kept a low profile since leaving office. In the published extracts of her memoir, she discusses her many encounters with Putin, describing how he struck her as a man desperate to be taken seriously.

“I experienced him as someone who didn’t want to be disrespected, ready to lash out at all times,” she wrote. “You might find that childish and contemptible, you might shake your head at that. But it meant Russia never vanished from the map.” At one point she appears to suggest that Putin’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine was timed to follow her departure from office. “You won’t always be Chancellor, and then they’ll join NATO,” he said of Ukraine. “And I want to prevent that.” Some Central and Eastern European leaders, she added, had been guilty of wishful thinking: “They seem to want the country to just disappear, to not exist. I couldn’t blame them... But Russia, heavily nuclear armed, did exist.”

Japan says it will watch China’s military activity

TOKYO (AP): Japanese officials said they are closely watching to see if China keeps its promise to prevent further violations of Japan’s airspace after explaining that an incursion by a Chinese military aircraft nearly three months ago was unintentional and caused by turbulence.

Tokyo protested and sought an explanation from Beijing after a Chinese Y-9 reconnaissance plane briefly entered Japanese airspace off the southern main island of Kyushu on Aug. 26, prompting Japan’s

military to scramble fighter jets and warn the plane. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said China acknowledged the airspace violation and assured Japan that it would make efforts to prevent a recurrence.

“We take note of China’s explanation, and we will closely watch Chinese military activity from now on,” Hayashi said. China said the airspace violation occurred when the plane’s pilot took emergency measures in response to turbulence in the area and was not intentional, Japan’s

Foreign Ministry said. Japanese officials did not disclose further details, such as when China provided the explanation, citing the protocol of diplomatic exchanges. Even though aircraft can encounter turbulence, such a significant deviation from a flight route is unthinkable, Japanese officials said. NHK public television reported that Japanese defense officials said they still find the airspace violation unacceptable because it was a serious breach of territorial sovereignty.

Belarus targets hundreds for showing solidarity with Ukraine

TALLINN, Estonia (AP): Hundreds of people in Belarus who have shown solidarity with Ukraine have been arrested in a sweeping crackdown under authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko, a key ally of Russia in the war, human rights activists said.

At least 1,671 Belarusians were detained for their anti-war stance or for expressing solidarity with Ukraine, and at least 200 of them have been given prison sentences ranging from one to 25 years on charges of “extremism and “conspiracy against the state,” according to a report by the Viasna human rights center. In addition to the arrests, convictions and prison sentences, the report alleged that people were tortured, held in inhumane conditions and given fines, with some subjected to forced psychiatric treatment.

At least 12 Ukrainians in Belarus have been convicted on charges of “extremism” and purported links to Ukrainian security agencies, and given prison terms, said Ihor Kyzym, a Ukrainian diplomat who previously served as that country’s ambassador to Belarus. Those sentenced include a 16-year-old student,

a Ukrainian official and people who have relatives in Belarus, he said earlier this week. Belarus shares a 1,084-kilometer (670-mile) border with Ukraine, and the two countries have longstanding cultural and historic ties. Many in southern Belarus have relatives across the frontier. Lukashenko, who has ruled Belarus with an iron hand for more than 30 years, has relied on Moscow’s subsidies and support. He allowed the Kremlin to use his country’s territory to invade Ukraine in February 2022, as well as to deploy some of Russia’s tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus. Belarusian authorities have intensified their crackdown on dissent ahead of a presidential election in January in which Lukashenko is seeking a seventh term.

Its Interior Ministry launched anti-riot drills, a signal from the government that it won’t tolerate any protests. Authorities responded to massive protests following the widely disputed 2020 election of Lukashenko with a wide-ranging crackdown in which about 65,000 people were arrested. Major opposition figures were either imprisoned or fled the country. Human rights activists say Belarus is holding about

1,300 political prisoners, with many of them denied adequate medical care and contact with their families. The crackdown has escalated in recent weeks, with hundreds arrested in raids targeting relatives and friends of political prisoners and participants in online chats organized by residents of apartment buildings in various cities.

At the same time, Lukashenko has pardoned some political prisoners in an apparent signal that he’s open for dialogue with the US and the European Union, which imposed sanctions because of his crackdowns on dissent. Lukashenko’s office announced that another group of 32 political prisoners have been freed, adding to the 146 who were pardoned since July. Those freed had health problems, wrote petitions for pardons and said they repented. “There have been contradictory signals from the government, with repressions intensifying, and at the same time small numbers of little-known people granted pardon,” said Viasna’s Pavel Sapelka. “Just in November, more than 200 people have been arrested and several dozen activists have been convicted and sentenced to long prison terms.”

Lula cuts G20 discussion short on Ukraine, irking Europeans

RIO DE JANEIRO (Reuters): European delegates at the G20 summit in Brazil were unhappy with President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva’s decision to end talks and issue the group’s final statement a day early to curtail prickly discussion on the war in Ukraine, sources said.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said he regretted that the G20 communique did not underscore Russia’s responsibility in starting the Ukraine war, particularly on the 1,000th day of its full-scale invasion. “It is too little when the G20 cannot find the words to make it clear Russia is responsible,” he said at the end of the two-day summit of the Group of 20 major economies in Rio de Janeiro.

Wording on Ukraine has been thorny at G20 meetings since the war began, because Russia and its allies are sitting at the table. Russian President Vladimir Putin did not attend the Rio summit but was represented by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. The communique is usually

issued at the end of the summit, but Lula decided to approve the text while wrapping up plenary session - at a moment the leaders of France, Germany and the United States were not in the room, diplomats said. “The communique was closed by President Lula. It fell short of the position we could have had,” French President Emmanuel Macron told reporters, adding that the text would have benefited from being more explicit on the war.

“This does not change anything in France’s position: it is a war of aggression launched by Russia against Ukraine and our priority today is to obtain a lasting peace,” Macron added. A European official called Lula’s maneuver “brutal” but his country decided to respect the prerogative of the summit host to decide when to issue the joint statement. Brazil hastened approval of the communique to avoid the risk of the summit ending without a final declaration, even though the Europeans were asking for

stronger language on Russia’s role in the war, three Brazilian diplomats who were present at the talks told Reuters. Brazil’s Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Sherpas had reached agreement on the final statement after intense negotiations, but that afternoon France and Germany began to put pressure on Brazil to reopen the text in light of major Russian air strikes on Ukraine, Brazil refused.

French diplomats could have asked to delay approval of the text until Macron was in the room, but did not, to the relief of the Brazilians. “To reopen the text would have jeopardized the entire effort of a week of negotiations,” a Brazilian official told Reuters. Germany’s leader Scholz saw the disagreement over the G20 text as a sign of the times in a changing world. “It is becoming clear how much geopolitical tensions are also having an impact on the G20,” he said. “The wind blowing in international relations is getting rougher.”

Xi urges ‘strategic’ ties in talks with Scholz

BEIJING (AFP): Chinese leader Xi Jinping called for Beijing and Berlin to develop ties with a “strategic” and “long-term” perspective as he met with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Rio de Janeiro, state media said.

“China and Germany are both major countries with significant influence,” Xi told Scholz on the sidelines of the G20 summit, according to Beijing’s state news agency Xinhua. “The two countries need to view and develop bilateral relations from a long-term and strategic perspective,” Xi said. Scholz last met Xi in April in Beijing, where he pressed China’s president to use his influence on Russia to end the war in Ukraine.

After the meeting Scholz told reporters he had pressed home to Xi

that the alleged deployment of North Korean soldiers by Russia risks worsening the conflict. Scholz said that the reported presence of North Korean troops fighting for Russia “is a further escalation,” adding: it was “something which should worry everyone in Asia.”

A German government source in Berlin last week told AFP the two leaders would discuss the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, China-Germany relations and conditions for global fair trade. Chinese state media said Xi had expressed a desire to “consolidate the China-Germany comprehensive strategic partnership.” And he said Beijing was “willing to continue writing the story of mutual cooperation, and make our world a

peaceful, harmonious and prosperous family,” Xinhua reported. China was the largest trading partner last year for Germany, Europe’s biggest economy, which is expected to shrink for a second year in a row. German industry has been hit by elevated energy prices in the wake of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and by rising competition from Chinese manufacturers.

The challenges have been particularly acute for Germany’s car manufacturers, who have made huge profits in China but now face local competition, particularly in the growing market for electric vehicles. Xi told Scholz that China would “continue to provide broad market opportunities for German companies,” state media said.

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Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

*USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Trump's science-denying fanatics are bad enough

WE now face, on all fronts, a war not just against the living planet and the common good, but against material reality. Power in the United States will soon be shared between people who believe they will ascend to sit at the right hand of God, perhaps after a cleansing apocalypse; and people who believe their consciousness will be uploaded on to machines in a great Singularity. The Christian rapture and the tech rapture are essentially the same belief. Both are examples of "substance dualism": the idea that the mind or soul can exist in a realm separate from the body. This idea often drives a desire to escape from the grubby immanence of life on Earth. Once the rapture is achieved, there will be no need for a living planet. But while it is easy to point to the counter-qualified, science-denying fanatics Donald Trump is appointing to high office, the war against reality is everywhere. You can see it in the British government's carbon capture and storage scheme, a new fossil fuel project that will greatly raise emissions but is dressed up as a climate solution. And it informs every aspect of this week's Cop29 climate talks in Azerbaijan.

Here, as everywhere, the living planet is forgotten while capital extends its frontiers. The one thing Cop29 has achieved so far - and it may well be the only thing - is an attempt to rush through new rules for carbon markets, enabling countries and businesses to trade carbon credits - which amount, in effect, to permission to carry on polluting. In theory, you could justify a role for such markets, if they were used only to counteract emissions that are otherwise impossible to reduce (each credit purchased is meant to represent a tonne of carbon dioxide that has been reduced or removed from the atmosphere). But they're routinely used as a first resort: a substitute for decarbonisation at home. The living world has become a dump for policy failure.

Essential as ecological carbon stores are, trading them against fossil fuel emissions, which is how these markets operate, cannot possibly work. The carbon that current ecosystems can absorb in one year is pitched against the burning of fossil carbon accumulated by ancient ecosystems over many years. Nowhere is this magical thinking more apparent than in soil carbon markets, a great new adventure for commodity traders selling both kinds of carbon market products: official "credits" and voluntary carbon offsets. Every form of wishful thinking, over-claiming and outright fraud that has blighted the carbon market so far is magnified when it comes to soil.

We should do all we can to protect and restore soil carbon. About 80% of the organic carbon on the land surface of the planet is held in soil. It's essential for soil health. There should be strong rules and incentives for good soil management. But there is no realistic way in which carbon trading can help. Here are the reasons why. First, tradable increments of soil carbon are impossible to measure. Because soil depths can vary greatly even within one field, there is currently no accurate, affordable means of estimating soil volume. Nor do we have a good-enough test, across a field or a farm, for bulk density - the amount of soil packed into a given volume. So, even if you could produce a reliable measure of carbon per cubic metre of soil, if you don't know how much soil you have, you can't calculate the impact of any changes you make.

A reliable measure of soil carbon per cubic metre is also elusive, as carbon levels can fluctuate massively from one spot to the next. Repeated measurements from thousands of sites across a farm, necessary to show how carbon levels are changing, would be prohibitively expensive. Nor are simulation models, on which the whole market relies, an effective substitute for measurement. So much for the "verification" supposed to underpin this trade. Second, soil is a complex, biological system that seeks equilibrium. With the exception of peat, it reaches equilibrium at a carbon-to-nitrogen ratio of roughly 12:1. This means that if you want to raise soil carbon, in most cases you will also need to raise soil nitrogen. But whether nitrogen is applied in synthetic fertilisers or in animal manure, it's a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, which could counteract any gains in soil carbon. It is also one of the most potent causes of water pollution.

Third, carbon levels in agricultural soils soon saturate. Some promoters of soil carbon credits create the impression that accumulation can continue indefinitely. It can't. There's a limit to how much a given soil can absorb. Fourth, any accumulation is reversible. Soil is a highly dynamic system: you cannot permanently lock carbon into it. Microbes constantly process carbon, sometimes stitching it into the soil, sometimes releasing it: this is an essential property of soil health. With rises in temperature, the carbon sequestration you've paid for can simply evaporate: there's likely to be a massive outgassing of carbon from soils as a direct result of continued heating. Droughts can also hammer soil carbon.

Even under current market standards, in which science takes second place to money, you need to show that carbon storage will last for a minimum of 40 years. There is no way of guaranteeing that carbon accumulation in soil will last that long. But as a new paper in Nature argues: "A CO2 storage period of less than 1,000 years is insufficient for neutralising remaining fossil CO2 emissions." The only form of organic carbon that might last this long - though only under certain conditions - is added biochar (fine-grained charcoal). But biochar is phenomenally expensive: the cheapest source I was able to find costs roughly 26 times as much as agricultural lime, which itself costs too much for many farmers. There's a limited amount of material that can be turned into biochar. While making it, if you get the burn just slightly wrong, the methane, nitrous oxide and black carbon you produce will cancel any carbon savings. There is a kind of substance dualism at work here, too: a concept of soil and soil carbon entirely detached from their earthly realities. This bubble of delusion will burst. If I were a devious financier, I would short the stocks of companies selling these credits. All such approaches are substitutes for action, whose primary purpose is to enable governments to avoid conflict with powerful interests, especially the fossil fuel industry. At a moment of existential crisis, governments everywhere are retreating into a dreamworld, in which impossible contradictions are reconciled. You can send your legions to war with reality, but eventually we all lose.

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'It's impossible to breathe': Life in the world's most polluted city

INSIDE Delhi's first ever clinic dedicated to pollution-related illnesses, Deepak Rajak struggles to catch his breath. The 64-year-old's asthma has worsened in recent days, and his daughter rushed him to the clinic, anxious about his rapidly deteriorating health.

Sitting in the waiting room, Rajak tells CNN he has become "very breathless" and cannot stop coughing. "It's impossible to breathe. I just came by bus, and I felt like I was suffocating," he says.

The specialist clinic at Delhi's Ram Manohar Lohiya (RML) hospital was set up last year to treat the growing number of patients affected by hazardous air pollution, which worsens every winter in the Indian capital. Outside, a throat-searing blanket of toxic smog has settled over the city since late last month, turning day into night, disrupting flights, blocking buildings from view and endangering the lives of millions of people.

As of last week, nowhere else on the planet has air so hazardous to human health, according to global air quality monitors. It's become so bad that Delhi's Chief Minister Atishi, who goes by one name, declared a "medical emergency" as authorities closed schools and urged people to stay home. But that's not an option for Rajak, who relies on his dry-cleaning job to provide for his family.

"What can I do? I have to leave the house to go to work," he says. "If I don't earn money, how will I eat? When I leave the house, my throat gets completely jammed. By evening it feels like I am lifeless." Rajak has already been hospitalized once this year as the smog aggravated his asthma. With no relief in sight from the hazardous pollution, his daughter Kajal Rajak says she fears he will need to be readmitted - an added financial burden when they're already struggling to pay for inhalers and expensive diagnostic tests. Even taking her father to the clinic was dangerous, she says. "You can't see what's in front of you," Kajal says. "We were at the bus stop, and we couldn't even see the bus number, or whether a bus is even coming - that's how hazy it was."

Esha Mitra, Aishwarya S Iyer & Helen Regan

In some parts of Delhi this week, pollution levels exceeded 1,750 on the Air Quality Index, according to IQAir, which tracks global air quality. A reading above 300 is considered hazardous to health. On Wednesday, the reading for the tiniest and most dangerous pollutant, PM2.5, was more than 77 times higher than safe levels set by the

said he tries not to venture outside on polluted days. "You can't do anything (to save yourself from the pollution), even if you are inside the house, pollution goes inside also because the air is very dirty," he told CNN from Delhi's Batra hospital, where he is being treated for asthma.

Shukla said he has been hospitalized three times this

"Many patients who chronically inhale the pollutants, who work near dust areas, they develop COPD," he says. "Their lungs are unhealthy; they develop shortness of breath at quite an early age as compared to the normal population and have an increased risk of lung cancer." Delhi has been struggling with high levels of air pollution for more than two decades.

World Health Organization. CNN has reached out to the Indian Ministry of Forest Environment and Climate Change for comment. When inhaled, PM2.5 travels deep into lung tissue where it can enter the bloodstream, and has been linked to asthma, heart and lung disease, cancer, and other respiratory illnesses, as well as cognitive impairment in children. CNN spoke to about a dozen Delhi residents over the past week - most said they had difficulty breathing because of pollution. Several described feeling suffocated as the noxious air made their eyes burn and throats itch.

"It feels like chili in my eyes," said Mohammad Ibrahim, a longtime auto driver in the city, adding that his chest hurts constantly from working outside in the pollution all day. "When I go home in the evening and wash my hands and face, black stuff comes out of my nose. That never used to happen before," Ibrahim said. Like Rajak, Ibrahim can't afford to stop working, even though his health is at risk. "If I don't go out to work, how will I fill my stomach? How will I pay my rent? I am a poor man," he said. Some vulnerable residents say it has become difficult to survive in Delhi. Retired Indian Air Force member Aditya Kumar Shukla, 64,

year and would move away from the city if he could. "It causes stress, and it is very dangerous, but at this stage where can I go?" he said. "It angers me very much. I want to go out of Delhi but there are no facilities in India, especially for (those with asthma and lung disease)."

At the pollution clinic, Dr. Amit Jindal says he and his colleagues have seen a marked increase in patients with chest and lung problems since pollution levels skyrocketed. He confirmed the increase is directly related to the smog.

Patients are suffering from persistent coughs, chest and lung issues and stinging eyes, but those with existing health issues like Rajak and Shukla, or those who work outside, are more vulnerable, Jindal says. Dr. Gaurav Jain, a pulmonologist at Batra hospital, says even non-smokers are developing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) - a lung condition that restricts airflow and causes breathing problems. "Many patients who chronically inhale the pollutants, who work near dust areas, they develop COPD," he says. "Their lungs are unhealthy; they develop shortness of breath at quite an early age as compared to the normal population and have an increased risk of lung cancer."

Delhi has been struggling with high levels of air pollution for more than two decades. Air quality worsens each year as the summer heat gives way to the cooler months. Windless days mean smog from agricultural waste fires, coal-fired power plants, and traffic hovers over the city's skies. India's pollution authority on Sunday said several parts of Delhi had "severe+" air quality and scrambled to relieve the smog, implementing emergency measures including halting non-essential truck movement and construction work. Officials are also sprinkling roads with water and dust suppressants, and ramping up road sweeping. But experts say these efforts, which are rolled out every year, are merely temporary measures that don't tackle the underlying causes of air pollution.

"In terms of actual action to reduce emissions at source, it has been very limited, and I can fairly confidently say that the intensity of the response by the government to curtail these hazardous pollution levels does not match the intensity of the emergency we face," said environmental analyst Sunil Dahiya. In 2019, the Indian government introduced the National Clean Air Program to improve ambient air quality in cities, and several other committees have been set up at both national and state levels to tackle air pollution. But analysts say governments are focusing more on the emergency response rather than sustained efforts to improve air quality. While stubble burning during the winter harvest season exacerbates pollution levels, to solve the crisis, pollution needs to be tackled year-round, Dahiya said. "We need to work on systematic and comprehensive actions which reduce pollution at source, which means that we have to start talking about how much is being emitted in terms of air pollution from the transportation sector, power sector, industries, waste and in which geography," Dahiya said. At the clinic, Kajal Rajak is anxious about her father's worsening health that leaves him struggling to breathe and walk. She's angry, but she says getting mad won't solve the problem. "The government needs to do something," CNN

Second Trump term: What's next for Israel-Palestine issue?

Imran Khalid

IF anyone was ready to cheer a Donald Trump reelection, it was Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Despite their relationship cooling toward the end of Trump's first term particularly after Netanyahu quickly congratulated Joe Biden on his 2020 win, a gesture Trump took as traitorous, the two share deep ideological ties. This time around, Netanyahu didn't wait. He enthusiastically hailed Trump's "greatest comeback" even before the Nov. 5 results were final. Adding to the chorus, Israel's Defense Minister Israel Katz, eagerly celebrated Trump's potential return as a chance to strike at the "axis of evil led by Iran."

For Netanyahu, a second Trump term promises a renewed alignment on Middle Eastern policy, with both leaders seeing eye to eye on pushing back against all anti-Israel elements. During his campaign, Trump promoted a message of peace, calling for an end to conflicts worldwide. Now, with Israel's recent Gaza offensive following the deadly Oct. 7 Hamas attacks, Trump has indirectly endorsed Israel's intent to "finish the job" against Hamas, though specifics of his plan remain undefined. His longstanding alliance with Netanyahu is likely to influence his approach, especially given Trump's previous support for Israeli claims over Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

Trump has floated ideas for ambitious developments in Gaza but has not articulated a clear strategy for postwar recovery. Meanwhile, ongoing hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah add to the complexities Trump will face when he takes charge of the White House. Though his previous term provides some precedent, such as his stance on Israel-Palestine, United States (US)-Gulf relations, and Iran, Trump's America First philosophy may temper his regional strategy, making it a little difficult to predict the exact course he would take in his second term.

Donald Trump's election as the 47th president is hardly shocking in today's polarized America, with the Democrats stumbling through mishap after mishap. But as he heads back to the Oval Office, expect the return of his signature slogans, "America First" and "Make America Great Again," which might sound reassuring to some but will likely do little for immediate, widespread progress. Trump's foreign policy agenda will resume from where it paused in 2020, with unfinished business involving China, Russia, and the US allies in the European Union (EU) and NATO.

Yet, the landscape is far from what it was. Today, he steps into a world still roiling from active conflicts in Ukraine and Palestine, fueled by Biden's funding and arms deals. Trump, in his Florida victory speech, pledged to "stop war," hinting at cease-fires and peace deals as his next bold moves. Still, let's not get ahead of ourselves. By his January inauguration, the Biden administration may well squeeze in symbolic gestures, maybe a cease-fire attempt or executive orders with limited impact.

In 2018, President Trump made a scurrilous

move to halt US funding for the UN agency for Palestine refugees (UNRWA). While President Biden partially reversed this decision in 2021, the return of Trump to the White House in 2025 raises the specter of renewed antagonism toward international institutions like UNRWA.

This spells trouble for displaced Palestinians who rely heavily on the agency for essential services, including health care and education. With Gaza in the grip of an Israeli assault that has already claimed over 44,000 lives, including 28,000 women and children, the role of UNRWA has never been more vital. The agency is fighting to maintain its operations amid the chaos, but its future is increasingly uncertain. Just last week, Israel compounded the crisis by canceling its cooperation agreement with UNRWA, which had been in place since 1967. Should Trump cut US funding again, it could deliver a devastating blow from which the agency may never recover. The Palestinian leadership and the international community must brace for this possibility.

Betting on a Trump presidency to bring stability to the Middle East seems like a bold but risky wager. Trump's deep ties to Israel and influential figures there offer little promise for a better future for Palestinians or a tangible path toward statehood. Trump's past dealings with Gulf monarchies and strongmen suggest he may revert to a transactional playbook. When the Trump's second era resumes, two key priorities are likely to shape his approach to the region. First, he would almost certainly focus less on long-term peace and more on short-term geopolitical wins, hoping regional players will shoulder responsibilities often held by Washington. Yet, in a region as complex as the Middle East, the stakes remain high, and the outcomes are far from assured.

Trump's vision of regional order in the Middle East has been rooted in the idea of Arab-Israeli normalization, with US support playing a central role. This framework sidelines the Palestinian issue, granting Israel a significant degree of freedom in its actions. Both Trump and Biden, despite their differences, have adhered to elements of this broader strategy, with each president navigating the complexities of the region in their own way. Trump's abrupt withdrawal from Syria and Biden's hasty exit from Afghanistan reflect a common thread: a tendency to retreat from direct US involvement without resolving the underlying issues.

With a second Trump term, the region faces a new layer of unpredictability. Trump's impulsiveness and erratic decision-making could either escalate tensions pushing Israel and Iran toward open conflict or, conversely, provide an opportunity to de-escalate the situation. This volatility reinforces the perception among regional actors that a cautious, balancing approach may remain the most prudent strategy. The region's power players are likely to continue hedging their bets, preparing for a future where the US role remains as unpredictable as ever.

AA

Kyiv can still snatch victory from the jaws of Putin

THE US administration's sudden enthusiasm for authorising Ukraine's use of advanced weaponry seems a classic case of too little, too late. But that is not to say it won't still help to turn the tide of the war decisively in Kyiv's favour.

Joe Biden's belated decision to allow Kyiv to use long-range missiles against military targets in Russia comes after he spent most of the year resisting calls from Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky to use the weapons for their intended purpose - defeating Russian forces. Now, after the Democrats were humiliated in the US elections, Biden has had a change of heart, promising to provide Ukraine with as much military aid as possible before he leaves office. This includes granting permission for Kyiv to deploy the US Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) against targets within Russian territory, as

well as providing anti-personnel landmines.

Biden's previous reluctance to approve the use of Western-supplied long-range missiles beyond Ukrainian borders has been the equivalent of obliging Ukraine's military to fight with one hand tied behind its back. The Russians have been able to attack Ukraine with impunity from the safety of their Russian bases, while the Ukrainians have been limited to attacking only those Russian positions located on Ukrainian soil - at least, so far as the missiles are concerned.

This significant handicap, moreover, has had a tangible impact on the course of the war, with Russian forces taking territory for the first time since Russian president Vladimir Putin launched his so-called "special military operation" against Ukraine in February 2022. The reason Washington is now rushing anti-personnel mines to the front is to prevent the Russians from making a

Con Coughlin

major breakthrough of Ukraine's defensive positions before Biden leaves office. This depressing state of affairs serves as a damning indictment of Biden's constant dithering over US support for Ukraine. But the overdue acceptance that more needs to be done to prevent Putin declaring victory - with the catastrophic implications that would have for the West - means that the Ukrainians might yet have a fighting chance of inflicting a significant defeat against Moscow.

The Ukrainians' desperate need to disrupt Russia's military assault by attacking key Russian installations within Russia can be seen from the speed with which Ukrainian forces launched their first ATACMS assault on Russia, firing six long-range missiles at a Russian ammunition depot in the Bryansk region close to Ukraine's northern border. It has been reported

that the Ukrainians fired a British-supplied Storm Shadow long-range missile at a Russian base in Kursk, within the Russian border province partially captured by Ukrainian forces in August. Recapturing Kursk is now one of Putin's top priorities, as he is desperate to overcome the ignominy of becoming the first Kremlin leader to have Russian territory occupied by foreign forces since the Second World War. To this end, the Russians have enlisted the help of 10,000 North Korean troops to liberate the territory from Ukrainian control.

The introduction of North Korean forces to Putin's war effort is said to be one of the factors that finally persuaded Biden to lift restrictions on the use of Western long-range missiles, a decision that could prove vital to the Ukrainians' chances of preventing Moscow from recapturing Kursk. Another impor-

tant consideration for Biden is the impending return to the White House, in January, of Donald Trump - who has promised to end the Ukraine conflict within 24 hours of taking office.

Ukraine featured prominently when the two men met to discuss transition arrangements at the White House last week, with the outgoing president telling Trump that allowing Putin to claim victory in Ukraine could ultimately lead to Washington being dragged into a broader European conflict. As someone who likes to win bragging rights from any deal he negotiates, Trump will want to emerge in a favourable light if he succeeds in brokering a settlement between Moscow and Kyiv. Giving Ukraine the means to go on the offensive and gain a battlefield advantage would certainly help Trump's objectives in securing a deal that justifies the vast sums Western nations have invested in the Ukrainian cause.

Nor should much credence be given to Putin's latest attempt to intimidate the West by raising the spectre of nuclear armageddon. This has been a recurrent Putin ploy since the Russian invasion, especially when the Kremlin finds itself on the defensive. And while Putin's nuclear posturing has certainly succeeded in persuading the risk-averse Biden to be cautious in his support for Ukraine, Putin's blatant acts of intimidation - such as this week's move to lower Russia's threshold for firing nuclear weapons at Ukraine and its allies - is nothing more than bluster. Putin and his army of Kremlin sycophants understand the dire consequences that would befall Russia if just one of its arsenal of tactical nuclear warheads were used against Ukraine. After more than 1,000 days of bitter conflict, the hope that Ukraine, with effective Western support, can yet emerge victorious needs to be kept alive.

Bangladesh’s climate refugees face double threat of displacement, toxic air

AS Afsaruddin pulled a handful of crumpled notes from his pocket to pay for the boat ride across the canal, the bustling traffic of Dhaka on the far side was already gaining momentum. It was early morning, and the air in Korail, the sprawling slum in the heart of the Bangladeshi capital, hung heavy with humidity, mingled with the scent of wild spices and stench of sewage.

Korail, the largest slum in the city of nearly 20 million, occupies an island-like patch of land separated from mainland Dhaka by Gulshan Lake and its canals. The tin-shed houses lining the slum cast their reflections on the lake's surface, alongside the shimmering mirage of luxury high-rises in the nearby affluent Gulshan neighborhood - a stark juxtaposition of wealth and poverty. Within the slum, low-income families live in tight quarters, providing vital services - household help, rickshaw-pulling, sewage work - to the city's wealthier residents.

Asfar, a rickshaw-puller, has called Korail home for the past eight years. Every day, he crosses the canal by boat to retrieve his rickshaw from a "mohajon" - a term for rickshaw business owners - and spends 12-hour shifts ferrying passengers around the city, earning roughly \$20 daily. For many, this is considered a decent income in a city where even mid-level white-collar workers often earn less than \$500 a month and struggle to make ends meet amid rising inflation. However, there is a glaring difference between the two groups: while office workers enjoy

the relative comfort of desk jobs, Asfar endures grueling physical labor, exposed to Dhaka's increasingly toxic air for hours on end. "Every month, I spend around 1,500 taka (\$12) on medicine," he told Anadolu. "I've developed asthma and a severe cough from breathing in this polluted air. Back in my village in Kathuria, Satkhira, the air was so clean and refreshing."

For Asfar, there was no choice but to leave his village. "After Cyclone Aila (in May 2009), the soil became too saline to grow crops. There was no work to sustain us," he sighed, reflecting on the harsh reality that drove him to Dhaka. Bangladesh, a low-lying delta nation crisscrossed by rivers, is among the countries most vulnerable to the impact of climate change. Rising sea levels, increasingly severe cyclones, and erratic rainfall patterns are making life in coastal areas and the country's interior increasingly precarious.

Cyclones have become more frequent in recent decades and have turned people like Asfar into climate refugees. These disasters have also made them victims of another consequence of climate change: the worsening air pollution in unplanned megacities like Dhaka. The capital of the South Asian nation has frequently ranked as one of the world's most polluted cities in recent years, with its air quality index (AQI) reading often exceeding 210. An AQI between 151 and 200 is classified as unhealthy, 201-300 as very unhealthy, and 301-400 as haz-

ardous, posing serious health risks to residents. The AQI is calculated daily, and the leading cities often shift, with India's New Delhi and Pakistan's Lahore frequently topping the list.

However, Dhaka remains one of the few cities that consistently ranks among the top 10, highlighting the severity of its air quality crisis. Dhaka's increasingly toxic air is fueled by a vicious cycle. Every year, hundreds of thousands of climate refugees, like Asfar, migrate to the capital after cyclones or river erosion destroy their homes. They add to the city's already overstretched and poorly planned urban landscape, further straining its fragile ecosystem. "The slums where these refugees often settle significantly contribute to air pollution," Shamir Shehab, founder of the Bangladesh Youth Environmental Initiative, a platform advocating for climate justice, told Anadolu.

He explained that smoke from household cooking stoves and emissions from small-scale industrial workshops in the slums release harmful pollutants, exacerbating air quality issues. Many slum residents work in brick kilns on the city's outskirts, a major source of Dhaka's air pollution, he added. The city's rapid construction boom, fueled by the centralization of nearly all national activities in the capital, drives an unrelenting demand for bricks.

"This demand sustains pollution-heavy brick kilns, creating a vicious cycle of environmental degradation and urban expansion,"

Shehab added. Life for Bangladesh's climate refugees has become somewhat of "an inescapable trap," according to Ahmad Kamruzzaman Majumder, a professor of environmental science at Stamford University in Dhaka. "I wouldn't describe the increasing toxicity in Dhaka's air as a distant effect of climate change - it has become increasingly evident," he told Anadolu. Majumder explained that Dhaka's severe air pollution is the result of a toxic mix of emissions from old vehicles, brick kilns, large-scale construction projects, and the burning of fossil fuels and garbage.

"We often overlook the escalating problem of waste management," he said. "Dhaka's growing population generates enormous amounts of garbage, and the civic authorities still resort to burning it as the cheapest solution, given the lack of expensive recycling facilities." He further explained how changing climate patterns are exacerbating the problem. "Shorter rainy seasons have become more common, reducing the likelihood of smog being cleared away. At the same time, winters are now prolonged but milder, marked by persistent fog and smog rather than the colder temperatures we used to experience," said Majumder. Back on Dhaka's streets, rickshaw puller Asfar is unaware of the larger climate change narratives and their impacts. All he knows is that his worsening asthma has made his job increasingly difficult. "These days, I have to take frequent breaks just to catch my breath. But the air here feels sharp and metallic," he said. "In my village, it smelled of grass and fresh rain."

Starmer’s brand of politics is dying

Allister Heath

The Trump coalition exists in Britain too: to be marshalled, it requires a non-establishment, unconventional leader dedicated to perpetual war against the Blob.

James Kanagasooriam, the pollster, rightly argues that "if Jeremy Clarkson entered politics now - it could be Britain's Trump moment - but far more English and less authoritarian". Social media, YouTube and podcasts, turbocharged by algorithmic targeting, have gained hugely in influence, dethroning the old gatekeepers. Repeated failures and extreme arrogance mean that trust in experts, in professional politicians and traditional, corporate institutions has collapsed.

The public are turning for leadership and inspiration to heterodox, charismatic figures who transcend neat ideological boxes - of which Clarkson is one of Britain's pre-eminent examples. Trump, a former developer and TV star, is obviously the greatest beneficiary to date of this remarkable trend. Boris Johnson in his original incarnation tapped into it beautifully, and Nigel Farage is a current beneficiary.

In North America, Elon Musk, Robert F Kennedy Jr, the podcaster Joe Rogan and the psychologist Jordan Peterson are notable cases. In Argentina, Javier Milei, an economics professor famous for his myriad TV appearances, has become the world's first anarcho-capitalist president.

Crucially, all of these figures are distinct from the Taylor Swifts, Eva Longorias and other showbiz stars whose campaigning for Kamala Harris was so ineffectual. Celebrity per se isn't enough, and neither is being a talented musician or singer: the public craves substance, a commitment to the public interest, a rejection of the current pensée unique and self-sacrifice. Clarkson is in the same category as J?K Rowling, one of the heroes of our times, Martin Lewis, the personal finance guru (who is superhumanly popular on Left and Right) and Marcus Rashford, the Leftist footballer.

The fools who were laughing at Trump and Musk a few weeks ago are sneering at Clarkson today. They never learn. Speaking only to their echo chambers, they don't understand Clarkson's

appeal, just as they cannot fathom why Trump gains from eating McDonald's or why he is treated as a conquering hero by Ultimate Fighting Championship stars and fans. They don't realise that cancel culture is in retreat, that ordinary people are fed up of being looked down upon and told what to do by credentialled elites, and that the Left is slowly being ousted from the commanding heights. Clarkson, who never went to university, is exceptionally popular: his net favourability rating is +17 per cent, according to JL Partners. All the main politicians are in negative territory, with Badenoch at -1 and Farage at -10 leading the pack. Reeves is at -16 and Starmer at an abysmal -22.

Clarkson's authenticity is key. He's pro-freedom, ready to stand up to the mob, a liberating force. The vast majority of the population are not race and class addled, and they appreciate the fact that Clarkson doesn't apologise for being white, a public-school boy and prosperous. He is who he is, and you can take him or leave him. He speaks his mind, and hates what used to be called political correctness.

His wealth and success help, rather than hinder, his popularity: the public realise that he has a lot to lose, like Trump, Rowling and Musk, and they respect him for alienating his luvvie erstwhile friends. We have also become a little more American: most of us admire his success and talent, rather than resent it. Nobody cares whether or not Clarkson originally bought agricultural land to avoid tax. He clearly truly loves farming. Almost everybody would avoid inheritance tax if they could: it is a loathsome form of legalised theft. Labour's decision to double down on support for the almost universally reviled death tax is politically incompetent, and demonstrates their capture by proto-Marxist ideologues. The fact that only a few farms will be destroyed in the first instance is irrelevant: it's the principle that counts, and we are on a slippery slope. I've become something of a pessimist in recent years, but Clarkson's performance fighting for Britain's farmers has filled me with hope again. Change is possible after all. If Clarkson enters politics, Labour should be very afraid indeed.

The Telegraph

Iceland’s shorter working week has been a huge success

María Hjálmtýsdóttir

LIKE to walk around old cemeteries and read the headstones. Here in Iceland, it has been customary to engrave people's job titles below their names and as I age I find myself wondering if mine will say "Teacher". Although I love my work, I kind of hope it will not. Through the centuries, women's headstones have rarely had titles other than "Housewife" or perhaps "Wife of [insert husband's job title]". Although today women in Iceland have all sorts of jobs, we have yet to reach full equality. But an important step on that journey has been the shortening of the 40-hour working week to 36 hours.

This change started in 2019 in response to campaigning by some of our biggest unions and following the success of trials that involved more than 1% of Iceland's working population. As a result, close on 90% of the country's working population now work shorter hours or have the right to shorten their working week. Other countries are considering following Iceland's lead. Germany, Portugal, Spain and the UK have run, or are running, pilot projects. And a year ago, Belgium became the first EU country to legislate a four-day week for anyone who wants it. However, unlike our Icelandic model, anyone signing up to work four days in Belgium has to condense the same number of working hours into fewer days. Maybe that's why fewer than 1% of people have done so.

So how has it worked here? It had previously been more common for women in Iceland to work part-time so as to be able to juggle family and work commitments. Since 2019, this has meant a step towards

greater equality because our shorter working week has also made it possible for people (mostly women) who worked 36 hours as a part-time job to have a full-time job working the same hours. And full-time jobs come with better pay and terms and conditions for working the same hours as before. The change has also given many men who were always stuck at work the flexibility to be more involved with their children's daily lives.

Tumi, my husband, works in a government office. At first, he chose to work until noon every Friday but soon decided instead to have two full Fridays off each month. On his free days, he loves to sleep in, then to make long phone calls to his fellow pigeon fanciers while cleaning the kitchen, before going to the shops in search of interesting books. Moreover, he is home in time to pick up our son from school at 13.40. Since I collect our son the other days, this gives me the freedom every other Friday afternoon to meet friends for a chat, volunteer, or simply to go to the swimming pool alone, which is an absolute gamechanger for a tired teacher who wants to escape burnout. Most of us know that demob happy feeling the day before we take time off to go on holiday. There is a lightness and a sense of freedom. My husband enjoys that feeling twice a month now and I don't have to remember which week it is, because on Thursday afternoons I can see it on his face.

Being a secondary school teacher, this change does not technically apply to me since my job is still deemed to be 40 hours a week. However, only 26 hours a week are

spent actually teaching in a classroom. The rest of the time is taken up with meetings, marking and preparing lessons. We have the freedom to organise those non-teaching hours ourselves, so that means that by working a bit longer some days, I am able to take off the Friday afternoons my husband is off too. Administrators, caretakers, cleaners and kitchen staff at my school belong to other unions and now work a shorter week, and we have changed our schedule so that there are fewer afternoon classes on Friday. The staff are happy and the students have not complained.

Different companies and institutions have different needs and obviously not everyone can close the shop at noon once a week. Some staff have cut their coffee breaks and lunches, and people have had to rethink how work is planned, which meetings could be shorter, which can be online or which decisions can be taken by email instead. Of course, there are always people who want to go back to the way things were before and we have yet to fix all the problems, such as the stress some people experience if they leave the office early but their work keeps piling up.

It has definitely not been simple, and it does not apply to all jobs, but all qualitative and quantitative data indicates that most people who have reduced their hours love it - job satisfaction has increased, stress is reduced and employees feel happier at work. And contrary to fears that productivity and the provision of services would suffer, nothing could be further from the truth. Extensive research has shown that they have remained the same or even improved, sometimes

just by removing longer coffee breaks or prioritising work better.

My friend Bárá works in a big car dealership. She explained to me how staff got together to figure out how to implement a shorter work week without affecting their customers. Office workers can now choose to finish earlier every day, have a half-day off each week, or a whole day off every two weeks, while the mechanics changed their shift patterns but fix just as many cars on time. Bárá tells me that the staff are happy with the changes and none of them, bosses included, would ever go back to the way it was before. And we aren't spending our extra free hours going to the doctor or attending meetings at our children's schools. In Iceland, we have always had the right to do these things without having our pay docked. None of that has changed.

Instead, we are using these precious hours for exercise, haircuts, shopping and meeting friends without the feeling that we are missing out on quality family time. An added bonus for those of us living in Reykjavik is the reduction in the usual Friday rush-hour traffic, which makes getting around the city so much easier and more pleasant.

Changes such as this to the way we work may sound impossible but they can be made if people come together and rethink the way work is done. I am a full-time teacher but yet I am also a mother, wife, daughter, sister and friend, and having a few extra hours every other week when my husband is freed up to do the childcare allows me to better fulfil all these roles. I'm also just this woman who likes to walk around in cemeteries and ponder on the meaning of life. And I can do more of that, too.

Trump’s picks don’t look like America

Zachary B. Wolf

WHILE President Joe Biden bragged about picking the most diverse Cabinet in history, one that he said "looks like America," President-elect Donald Trump is looking for TV experience. While Trump's picks so far mostly lack in racial or gender diversity - there are a handful of women and one Latino, for example, but no Black Americans selected yet - they do reach outside of the normal stable of likely government officials, in keeping with Trump's goal of shaking up Washington.

It shouldn't necessarily be a shock from the former president who likes to see attractive people defend him on TV and who became famous in New York tabloids and a reality show. But it's striking nonetheless to see the number of TV and entertainment personalities Trump is tapping for his second term.

The Cabinet is still taking shape, and key roles like Treasury secretary have not been filled. Plus, not all of his Fox News picks are for Cabinet roles. The latest development is that Trump is reportedly eyeing Dan Bongino, a former Secret Service agent turned right-wing podcaster who left his job hosting a Fox News show in 2023, as Secret Service director. There are others also in contention for the position.

The most notable instance of the made-for-TV Cabinet is Trump's announcement of his choice for defense secretary: Pete Hegseth, a Fox News weekend host with a great physique and hair, whose tattoos drove him from the Army National Guard. Hegseth has big ideas for how to reform the mili-

tary, starting with the firing of some generals, including the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the ending of diversity programs in the military. He also wants women out of combat roles, something that could be contested by Tulsi Gabbard, Trump's pick for the non-Cabinet role of director of national intelligence, who served in a field medical unit during the US war in Iraq and is still an Army reservist.

Dr. Mehmet Oz, who most people know as Dr. Oz, is a cardiothoracic surgeon who turned guest appearances on Oprah Winfrey's show into his own daytime career. He left that to run unsuccessfully for Senate in Pennsylvania in 2022. Days before the announcement of his appointment, he was selling vitamin supplements online. Trump wants Oz to take over the most important agency most Americans may never have heard of: the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS, which oversees health insurance coverage for more than 160 million Americans.

Mike Huckabee was the governor of Arkansas, a position now held by his daughter, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who served as Trump's press secretary during his first term. In between failed bids for the Republican presidential nomination in 2008 and 2016, Huckabee hosted a show on Fox News. More recently, he's had a show on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, a Christian outlet. He'll bring an evangelical worldview to Jerusalem, where Trump moved the US embassy, if confirmed as US ambassador to Israel. Trump's

choice is controversial for anyone who envisions a two-state solution in the Middle East, since Huckabee once said there's "no such thing as a Palestinian."

Long before Sean Duffy was a congressman from Wisconsin, he was a contestant on MTV's "The Real World: Boston," an early part of the reality TV world once also inhabited by Trump. Duffy met his wife, Rachel Campos-Duffy, on the set of a spinoff, "Road Rules: All Stars."

Now, she's a co-host on "Fox & Friends Weekend," where she worked for years with Hegseth. Duffy is leaving his post-Congress role as a co-host on Fox Business now that he's been tapped by Trump to serve as Transportation secretary, in charge of the nation's highway and rail systems, airways and seaports.

Gabbard, a former House representative, left the Democratic Party, but along with Robert F. Kennedy Jr., she's one of two former Democratic presidential candidates among Trump's administration picks. She has appeared hundreds of times on Fox News. More recently, she signed on to do a series of documentary-style videos on Elon Musk's X. As Trump's pick to be director of national intelligence, Gabbard has drawn criticism for her defense of Russia and Syria in the name of her anti-war ideals. Hillary Clinton once said she thought Russians were "grooming" Gabbard to run as a third-party candidate.

Tom Homan, the former acting director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, will be in charge of coordinating immigra-

tion policy for Trump. By serving as "border czar," Homan won't have to face Senate confirmation. Homan was actually the first of Trump's picks to be announced from the Fox News orbit.

Trump has picked Kennedy to be the next Health and Human Services secretary. There's been a steep drop in faith among Republicans in particular in the need for vaccines. Say what you want about Kennedy's interesting-sounding ideas about making American food less processed and healthier. Appreciate the toned body he showed off in shirtless workouts.

But it's impossible to get past the vaccine skeptic part of him that pushes unfounded theories. He wrote a book full of unfounded conspiracy theories attacking Dr. Anthony Fauci and alleging the country's former top infectious disease doctor was in league with Bill Gates and pharmaceutical companies to undermine public health. It was a New York Times bestseller. Which, as CNN's Peter Bergen noted in an interview with Kennedy, totally undermines his claim that he was being silenced - a frequent claim of the stars of anti-mainstream media.

In Trump's first term, Linda McMahon ran Trump's Small Business Administration. She served as his transition co-chair and has now been chosen for the Education secretary role. McMahon is the former CEO of WWE, the empire she co-founded with her husband, Vince McMahon. Trump actually appeared as part of the WWE act years ago, but this year, his tastes seem to run more toward Ultimate Fighting Championship events.

MOVING from the Senate to the secretary of state's office seems like a step up for Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), and perhaps a way to position himself for a presidential run in 2028. Rubio may have good reasons for moving into the Cabinet, but improving his prospects in four years is not one of them. Indeed, the Cabinet has long been a graveyard for presidential contenders.

This sounds surprising, as some of the most notable names in American history - Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams and Martin Van Buren - led the State Department. But that was all during the early days of the republic. The last president to have previously held that position was James Buchanan, right before the Civil War.

And Cabinet membership is not just bad luck in the presidential race. While Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was the Democratic nominee in 2016, she was better known for her other roles, including First Lady and senator. Before her, the last nominee to have held the job was James Blaine, the failed Republican nominee in 1884.

It is not just the secretary of state position that is cursed. Though plenty of former Cabinet members have tried for the White House, there have been only two presidents since Buchanan who previously served as Cabinet members - former Secretary of War William Howard Taft and former Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover. Perhaps it is revealing that the last five men who went

Joshua Spivak

from Cabinet member to president were one-termers.

Cabinet members aren't even popular choices for the vice presidency - there have been only two such selections in the last 84 years. Those include former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and Bob Dole's running mate, former Housing Secretary Jack Kemp. Before that, the last Cabinet member to be nominated as a running mate was Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace in 1940, who was dumped four years later by Franklin D. Roosevelt in favor of Harry Truman.

Why have Cabinet members failed at climbing the ultimate ladder to the presidency? One obvious point is that there are not as many Cabinet secretaries as other high profile positions, such as senators or governors.

More important is how the vice presidents have come to dominate the nomination process. Since 1948, 10 sitting or former vice presidents have won their party's nomination for the presidency. In all of American history before that, only five vice presidents got their party's nomination. This development is particularly bad for Cabinet members, as their campaigns would, to a good degree, be based on the success of the president that they served under. As the second-in-command, the vice president is better able to capture that reflected glory in the eye of primary voters, who are interested in ratifying their earlier choice for president. The Cabinet member, no matter how central a role they

played in the administration, has a harder time proving that they are the president's choice.

Cabinet members are also unable to gain full credit for their achievements - that goes to the president. But an unpopular president will certainly weigh down their own chances.

The limited field of focus of a Cabinet member is also a negative, especially compared to the other likely candidates, governors and senators. Politicians in those jobs are able to take high-profile positions on a full range of policy issues with an independent action that opposes the current president (if from the same party). Cabinet members do not have that luxury and if their own issue is not seen as critical to the election - and foreign policy rarely dominates - then they may be relegated to the backwaters of a presidential discussion.

Rather than being a stepping stone, the Cabinet is usually the capstone of one's career. Past heavyweight politicians - including former presidential nominees like John Kerry - have used a Cabinet appointment to close out their careers, while still feeling like important players in the political scene. Rubio, at only 53 years old and with a significant presidential run in his past, seems to have accepted the secretary of state position with a look to the future. But the track record suggests that there is a good chance that heading a Cabinet department is actually an end to a political career.

The Hill



KARACHI: National Assembly Standing Committee on Industries & Production visiting Toyota Indus Motors Karachi on Thursday.

EBM champions every child's right to happiness

F.P. Report

KARACHI: This World Children's Day, English Biscuit Manufacturers (EBM) shared a heart-warming message from the nation's favorite brand, Peek Freans Sooper. This campaign emphasizes the need for equality in the simple joys that brighten a child's world.

Aligned with this year's global theme, the initiative serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of fairness for children in all aspects of life, both big and small.

Shahzain Munir, Executive Director of EBM, shared a heartfelt message, stating, "Even the simplest acts can shape the lives of our children. This idea is encapsulated in the campaign message,

'Aik Jaisee Bachpan Ki Seedhi Saadi Khushi.' We must reflect on the unconscious biases that persist in our society.

On this World Children's Day, we urge everyone to pledge their part in creating a world where no child is left behind, and every small joy is shared equally."

He passionately added, "We dream of a Pakistan where every child's potential is realized and nurtured—a society that thrives on inclusivity and shared progress."

EBM has championed initiatives for decades under its sustainability pillar, #NourishForEquity, with a focus on universal access to education, promoting systematic behavior change, advancing gender diversity, creating

livelihood, ensuring financial inclusion for women, and empowering youth.

In collaboration with partners such as the Rashidabad Memorial Welfare Organisation for Rashida Butt Academy in Swabi, Green Crescent Trust, Development in Literacy, and The Citizen Foundation, EBM has launched impactful efforts like the "Anthem for Education" campaign to spotlight Pakistan's alarming 26 million out-of-school children. To date, EBM has supported the education of 35,000 children and remains steadfast in its mission to reach 100,000 children by 2030.

Let's unite to make every child feel seen, valued, and loved. Today and every day, let's put happiness first.

Palmolive Sindh Women's Swimming C'ship from tomorrow

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Anticipation is building as the 30th Palmolive Sindh Women's Swimming Championship approaches, set to showcase one of the most significant female sporting events in Pakistan.

Karachi Women's Swimming Association (KWSA) has been organizing this annual swimming championship in partnership with Colgate Palmolive Pakistan since 1991, a period of 30+ years. This swimming championship serves as a premier platform for discovering emerging talent in Sindh, the best of which go on to the national level.

For Karachi Women's Swimming Association, this 30th edition is a testament to decades of dedication and hard work in promoting women's swimming across Pakistan. It reflects their ongoing commitment to nurturing young swimmers, providing them with the tools and opportunities to excel both locally and internationally.

This event serves as an exciting milestone for the young female athletes who are taking part in the championship. It symbolizes not just a competition, but an opportunity to make history, set records, and inspire future generations of swimmers.

This unique platform offers them a chance to showcase their talents, build their confidence, and aim for the highest levels of achievement in national and international swimming events, empowering them on the world stage. Many of the event's past standout performers have gone on to win medals at prestigious tournaments, including the South Asian Swimming Championships, and the Islamic Women's Games. These athletes have also represented Pakistan at the World Swimming Championships, consistently raising the national flag and making the country proud.

By empowering female athletes with the same competitive opportunities as their male counterparts, Palmolive continues to affirm its role as a socially responsible brand.

Open to female swimmers from across Sindh, the 30th Palmolive Sindh Women's Swimming Championship 2024 will be held on November 23-24, 2024, at the Karachi Club. Over 300 participants are expected from various schools, clubs, and individual entries, including Karachi Grammar School, Beaconhouse School System, Karachi Club, Karachi Gymkhana, Karachi American School, The City School, Links, Bayview Academy, DHA Sports Club Moin Khan, The CAS School, The Intellect School, The Ivy School, and Haque Academy, among others. The competition will feature all official FINA events.

The Opening Ceremony will take place at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, November 23, 2024, with the medal presentation scheduled for Sunday, November 24, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. The Closing Ceremony will be open to the public.

NA body on Industries and Production visits Toyota Indus

F.P. Report

KARACHI: National Assembly Standing Committee on Industries & Production chaired meeting under the chair of Syed Hafeezuddin Member National Assembly at Toyota Indus Motors Karachi on Thursday, where the CEO of Toyota Indus Motors, Ali Asghar Jamali briefed the Committee regarding manufacturing and production processes of the vehicles at Toyota Indus Motors.

The CEO Toyota Indus apprised the committee that the auto sector contributes 2.8% of the country's GDP being the fastest growing country.

Moreover, he appealed to the committee to work

on the local steel manufacturing units in Pakistan that would not only boost the Pakistan economy but also would support auto industry in Pakistan. The members were also informed regarding that 1 billion rupees have been spent on different social work by Toyota under corporate social responsibility.

Abdul Hakeem Baloch, the member of the committee and the National Assembly, advised the CEO of Toyota Indus that the local community of the area should be given due right in the employment opportunities.

The members visited the assembling and manufacturing plants of the Toyota, where they were briefed regarding the overall process of manufacturing

and assembling the vehicles and spare parts.

The Committee later held meetings with K-Electric, SSGC, and Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation officials. Syed Salahuddin Ahmed, CEO of KWSC, was directed to solve the water supply issue of the Steel Town and Gulshan Hadeed on priority and humanitarian grounds as the residents of the areas were suffering serious problems of water supply. The official representing SSGC informed the committee that the Pakistan Steel Mill was a defaulter of 130 million rupees.

The Chairman of the Committee directed SSGC to solve the issue of residents' gas supply. The

Committee expressed displeasure and serious concerns over the absence of the CEO of K-Electric for the second time.

The Chairman, while expressing his serious concerns over the absence of CEO, said that the Committee would move privilege motion against him in the National Assembly as the people of Karachi were being victimized and deprived of 40 billion rupees of COVID-19 subsidy. The Members of Committee Ms. Naz Baloch, Dr. Mehreen (on Zoom), Abdul Hakeem Baloch, Dr. Mahesh Kumar and MNA Iqbal Khan expressed their serious concerns over the cruelty of K-Electric in the name of slabs and the water hydrants issue in Karachi.

Turkish manufacturers at center of Pakistan's defense exhibition

KARACHI (AA): Turkish companies are at the center of Pakistan's premier defense exhibition, which is currently taking place in the country's commercial capital Karachi, with visitors showing keen interest in the variety of modern military hardware displayed.

Large groups thronged Thursday the Turkish companies' stalls at the sprawling Expo Center, exploring their interest in modern weaponry ranging from cutting-edge drones to supersonic missiles, as well as artificial intelligence and cybersecurity solutions.

With a contingent of around 30 companies, Türkiye has the largest representation in the biannual four-day fair "IDEAS 2024," which will conclude on Friday.

The 12th edition of the exhibition has become a major event in Pakistan's booming defense industry since 2002.

STM (Savunma Teknolojileri Mühendislik ve Ticaret A.Ş.) is displaying models of its "drone family," which includes the Kargu, Togan, and Boyga, unnamed aerial vehicles that loiter for munition, surveillance, and mortar drop, respectively.

Another standout at the fair is the STM500 special operations and attack submarine, which can operate



in both shallow and blue waters and has a crew capacity of 22 and a maximum speed of up to 18 nautical miles.

Havelsan, another well-known Turkish Armed Forces company that excels in the defense and civil industries with advanced software solutions, showcased a number of its products as part of its digital troops concept. Among them is Caka, a submersible-kamikaze unmanned surface vehicle in the research and development stage.

The company is already engaged in several defense projects with the Pakistani Navy, including Agosta 90B class modernization and PN MILGEM class

corvette's main integrator. Meteksan — one of the largest defense industry companies in Türkiye — showcased radar systems, perimeter surveillance systems, laser and electro-optic systems, and communication systems.

The company also displayed underwater acoustic systems and simulators.

Roketsan showcased a variety of cruise and supersonic missiles, mainly Cakir, which is equipped with an inertial navigation system and can be launched from various platforms in the air, on land, or at sea.

The first delivery of Cakir is slated for 2025, while several delivery contracts with Far Eastern

countries have been inked for 2026, a company official said.

Missiles from the MAM munition family, which can be fired from both fighter jets and UAVs, and UAV-230, an air-to-surface ballistic missile, are also on display at the defense fair.

Medium-range weapons like sniper and infantry rifles also remained the center of attraction at the stall of Makine Ve Kimya Endustrisi.

The company also displayed artillery ammunition with a range from 9mm to 155mm.

Other companies' stalls, including ASFAD, Makin ve Kimya Endustrisim, Tualcom, and Tisas, are also well-attended.

PPL honored with Corporate Philanthropy Award



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) has once again reaffirmed its commitment to responsible business practices by being recognized as one of the largest corporate donors in Pakistan for 2022 by the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP).

This marks the 19th consecutive year that PPL has been honored among the top corporate givers, with its annual Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributions amounting to an impressive Rs. 3.7 billion for the financial year 2023-

24.

The award was presented by the Minister of State for Finance, Revenue, and Power, Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik, to PPL's General Manager of Shared Services, Syed Mahmood ul Hassan, during a prestigious ceremony organized by PCP in Islamabad.

The event was attended by prominent business leaders, civil society representatives, bilateral donors, and members of the media.

For over seven decades, PPL has been at the forefront of community upliftment, offering free-of-cost, high-quality services in

education, healthcare, livelihood generation, infrastructure development, and disaster relief.

Operating in both remote regions and major urban centers across the country, the company collaborates with reputable partners to design and implement need-based CSR initiatives that deliver long-term, sustainable development solutions.

This award underscores PPL's unwavering dedication to transforming the lives of underserved communities and its pivotal role in fostering positive social impact nationwide.

BoK celebrates Women Entrepreneurship Day

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Bank of Khyber (BoK) celebrated Women Entrepreneurship Day 2024 at its pioneering women-centric branch in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The event highlighted the bank's commitment to promoting financial literacy and providing opportunities for women entrepreneurs, alongside offering tailored financial services

to meet their unique needs. It brought together women entrepreneurs, professionals from various fields, and members from our team under one roof to mark the day's importance.

In line with BoK's commitment to women's empowerment, a series of impactful activities aimed at promoting women entrepreneurs were held including an Awareness

Session at Women University, Mardan, to inspire young women toward entrepreneurial careers; sessions with Entrepreneurs at CGPA's platform, promoting networking and idea exchange; Participation in Lahore Women Gala to showcase and support women-led projects & businesses; Hosting an Exclusive Seminar at BoK Head Office, for entrepreneurs from diverse fields to share their experiences and insights, and a Comprehensive Social Media Campaign aimed at highlighting stories and achievements of women entrepreneurs.

BoK remains dedicated to promoting financial inclusion and ensuring that women have the resources and opportunities to thrive. The bank plans to continue hosting similar activities to broaden its impact and support for women empowerment throughout the region.



Webinar on Roshan Digital Account for Pakistani diaspora held



F.P. Report

OTTAWA: The Pakistan High Commission, Ottawa in collaboration with the Bank of Punjab and State Bank of Pakistan hosted a comprehensive webinar here, to engage with the vibrant Pakistani diaspora across Canada.

This initiative aimed to provide valuable insights into the benefits and opportunities offered by the Roshan Digital Account (RDA), a flagship program by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) in collaboration with commercial banks in Pakistan.

The panelists who attended the session included Mr. Shah Faisal Kakar, Acting High Commissioner; Syed Ali Raza, Head of PRI, State Bank of Pakistan; Mr.

Nofel Daud, Chief Digital Officer, Bank of Punjab; Mr. Salman Saeed, Head of Home Remittances, RDA & FDA Division; Mr. Ishtiaq Ahmed Akil, Consul General, Montreal; Mr. Khalil Ahmed Bajwa, Consul General, Toronto; Mr. Ghulam Hussain, Acting Consul General, Vancouver; and Mr. Altamash Janjua, Trade and Investment Counsellor, Canada.

The webinar highlighted the integral role of the Canadian Pakistani community, which comprises over half a million individuals contributing significantly to diverse sectors such as finance, technology, healthcare, and economic development.

Their professional success has driven a robust

demand for financial products that facilitate seamless connectivity with Pakistan's banking and financial systems. Key highlights of the webinar included: (a) Roshan Digital Account (RDA): A digital platform enabling overseas Pakistanis to remotely open and operate personal bank accounts in Pakistan.

This initiative simplifies fund transfers, supports investment in Pakistan's real estate and stock markets, and provides tax benefits. (b) Impact of Remittances: During the fiscal year 2023-2024, Pakistan received remittances of over \$30.2 billion globally, with \$504.8 million originating from Canada. RDA has played a pivotal role, enabling over

735,000 accounts across 175 countries, transferring \$8.9 billion and repatriating \$1.67 billion.

The session provided attendees with detailed insights into the program's features, addressing community queries and showcasing the immense trust and enthusiasm of overseas Pakistanis in contributing to their homeland's economic growth.

During the question-and-answer session, queries from the Pakistani community were responded by Mr. Salman Saeed. The Pakistan Mission expressed gratitude to the community for their unwavering commitment to Pakistan and reiterated its dedication to strengthening this bond through continuous engagement and support.



In brief

Nazir Junior passes away

LAHORE (APP): Former test cricketer turned umpire Mohammad Nazir (Junior) passed away after protracted illness at a local hospital here on Thursday. He was 78. Nazir Junior represented Pakistan in 14 test matches and four ODIs between 1969 and 1984 and claimed 39 wickets. He was the first spinner to claim seven wickets for 99 runs in his debut test against New Zealand in 1969. He turned to umpiring after retiring from professional cricket. He officiated in 15 ODIs and five test matches as an umpire. Nazir Junior was revered for his cricketing acumen and contributions towards nurturing raw talent. Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi and the cricketing fraternity have expressed deep sorrow and grief over the sad demise of the former cricketer and umpire. Mohsin Naqvi paid rich tributes to Nazir Junior's services to Pakistan cricket.

Fatawu to miss season

LONDON (AFP): Leicester winger Abdul Fatawu will miss the rest of the season after suffering an anterior cruciate ligament injury on Ghana duty. The 20-year-old underwent surgery on Wednesday in a major blow to Leicester's hopes of avoiding relegation from the Premier League. Fatawu had made an impressive start to the season, but his campaign has come to premature end following the injury he sustained against Angola during the international break. He helped the Foxes win promotion from the Championship last season and had played 11 times in the league this term, with Leicester sitting three points above the relegation zone. "It's not good, it's a serious injury. He's had an ACL injury which is going to rule him out for the rest of the season," Leicester boss Steve Cooper told reporters on Thursday. "It's a real blow, first and foremost for him. He's a young player and having an ACL injury can be quite common, it's part of football, but it's still a serious injury. "For it to happen at a young age is a blow for him and a blow for us. It's difficult news. "He's obviously a big talent and a young player who's exciting. Every player his age has lots to learn but there is so much to be excited about with him."

Brownlee retires aged 36

LONDON (Agencies): Double Olympic triathlon champion Alistair Brownlee has announced his retirement from the sport at the age of 36. Brownlee won gold at London 2012 before defending his title in Rio four years later. A world champion in 2009 and 2011, Brownlee is the only triathlete ever to be crowned junior world champion, U23 world champion, European champion and Olympic champion. "Triathlon has profoundly shaped my life. I have dedicated nearly half of it to being a professional athlete, fulfilling my childhood dream and achieving far more than I ever dared to imagine," Brownlee wrote on X. "I look forward to embracing a slightly slower pace of life, yet not too slow. "There's an exciting array of events, challenges and adventures awaiting me — things I've always wanted to have a crack at but haven't had the chance to pursue." World Triathlon president Antonio Arimany paid tribute to Brownlee, saying his legacy.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani player Nasir Iqbal vs Egypt Ibrahim in action during 24 CAS Serena Hotels International Squash Champion 2024 1st semifinal match at Pakistan Sports complex. —INP Photo

Syed named ICC Champions Trophy tournament director

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Thursday announced appointment of Sumair Ahmad Syed, Chief Operating Officer of the PCB, as the Tournament Director for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 scheduled to take place in Pakistan. PCB Chair Mohsin Naqvi said, "Sumair is an exceptionally organised professional with a wealth of administrative expertise. Coupled with his unwavering passion for cricket, I am confident he will deliver an unforgettable ICC Champions Trophy 2025 for players, officials and fans alike. "The ICC Champions Trophy 2025 promises to showcase Pakistan's abili-

ty to host world-class cricketing events, welcoming players and fans from around the globe to experience the country's passion for the game and renowned hospitality. "This tournament marks a historic milestone as the biggest sporting event in Pakistan's recent history. With Sumair leading the way, the global cricket community can rest assured that the event will meet the highest standards of excellence synonymous with Pakistan." Tournament Director Sumair Ahmad Syed said, "I am deeply honored and excited to take on this significant responsibility for a tournament that holds immense importance for the Pakistan Cricket

Board, our fans and supporters. Preparations are already well underway, with stadium upgrades nearing completion and crucial discussions ongoing with the International Cricket Council. "Our experienced events team, which has successfully planned and executed nine multi-team HBL Pakistan Super Leagues, including last five in Pakistan, will play a vital role in ensuring the tournament's success. "I am committed to working closely with them as well as the International Cricket Council, leaving no stone unturned to exceed the benchmarks set by previous ICC Champions Trophy editions."

Australia defeat USA to reach Davis Cup semis

MÁLAGA (AFP): Australia defeated record 28-time Davis Cup winners the United States in a decisive doubles rubber on Thursday to reach the semi-finals with a hard-fought 2-1 victory. World number four Taylor Fritz had pulled the US level in the tie by beating Alex de Minaur 6-3, 6-4 in the second singles rubber before Matthew Ebden and Jordan Thompson scored a 6-4, 6-4 win over Ben Shelton and Tommy Paul. In the opening clash Australia's Thanasi Kokkinakis edged Shelton 6-1, 4-6, 7-6 (16/14) with a gripping tie-break triumph. The match-up was the most played in Davis Cup history with this their 48th meeting, with the first back in 1905. Australia, who have lifted the trophy 28 times, second only to the USA, last won the tournament in 2003 and finished as runners-up in the last two editions. With Fritz leading the charge for a strong US squad, the Americans were hoping for a first title since 2007 and he breezed past De Minaur in 71 minutes.

However Kokkinakis' tie-break heroics and Australia's doubles team won them an even quarter-final clash in Malaga. "We had to rush out here and get the job done for our country and we love nothing more than those pressure moments," said veteran Ebden, 36. "It's so fun to play together and get the win for our country."

World number 77 Kokkinakis saved four match points and spurned six of his own before eventually prevailing when Davis Cup debutant Shelton, ranked 21st, went long to end the thrilling tie-break, the joint sixth longest in the competition's history. "I don't know if I've been that pumped up in my life. I wanted that one bad, I wanted to help my team," said the Australian.

"(The tie-break) was tough, we were both serving well, I think I only got tight on one shot... he was serving incredibly, I can't even speak, I'm happy."

"Super proud" Fritz, who finished as runner-up in the ATP Finals last week and reached his first Grand Slam final at the US Open in September in a superb season for him, was too strong for De Minaur to handle. A single break in the second game was enough for him to take the first set against the world number nine, whom he also beat in Turin. De Minaur improved in the second but the relentless Fritz powered to victory. "I'm maybe a little bit more nervy just because it's Davis Cup, it's a team event, but I feel like I handled it well," said Fritz.

"I played a lot of big points well today." US captain Bryan opted for two singles players in Shelton and Tommy Paul over his doubles specialists. Australia broke for a 2-1 lead when Paul mishit a forehand which flew far too long, and it was enough. Ebden won gold at the Paris Olympics in doubles as well as triumphing at the Australian Open this year, and he and Thompson held to love to finish the set. The second set was a similarly tight affair until Lleyton Hewitt's duo converted their fourth break point in the ninth game, for a 5-4 lead which they served out.

Nasir, Noor qualifies for Int'l Squash Championship final

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Nasir Iqbal and Noor Zaman have moved in the final of the Chief of the Air Staff-Serena Hotels International Squash Championship here at Mushaf Squash Complex on Thursday. In the first semifinal, Nasir defeated No 1 Seed Ibrahim Elkabbani from Egypt with a game score of 11-9, 8-11, 11-4 and

11-4. The match lasted for 48 minutes. Meanwhile, in the second semifinal, Noor beat his country mate Muhammad Ashab Irfan by 11-7, 11-9 and 11-9. The match lasted for 33 minutes. Squash legend Qamar Zaman Vice President Pakistan Squash Federation graced the semifinals as Chief Guest. The Championship Final

would be played on Friday. The championship is being organized by Pakistan Squash Federation in collaboration with Serena Hotels. Apart from nine Pakistanis, a group of 15 world ranking players from Egypt, England, Hong Kong-China, Ireland, Kuwait, Malaysia and Netherland are participating in the extravaganza.

Ahmad, Bilal Asim move in Tennis C'ship semis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Two Pakistani players Ahmad Nael Qureshi and Bilal Asim, have qualified for the boys singles semifinals of ITF Pakistan PPL-Syed Dilawar Abbas World Junior Tennis Championship here at the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) Tennis Complex on Thursday. Ahmad showcased an impressive performance, defeating Minwoo Kim of Korea 6-1,6-2 to secure his spot. Meanwhile, Bilal Asim advanced to the semi-final after receiving a walkover as Muhammad Talha Khan withdrew from their match due to a shoul-

der injury. In Boys Singles quarterfinals, Ahmad Nael Qureshi (PAK) beat Minwoo Kim (KOR) 6-1,6-2; Bilal Asim got a walk over against M.Talha Khan; Xiuyuan Guo (CHN) beat Abubakar Talha (PAK) 6-3,7-5;Sion Ji (KOR) beat Youngchae OH(KOR) 6-1,6-0. In Girls Singles quarterfinals, Karolina Ligai (KAZ) beat Yeon Joo Cha(KOR) 6-4,6-1; Hinata Wada (JPN) beqt A Hyun Jo (KOR) 6-3,2-6,6-1; Dinara De Silva (SRI) beat So Yuna(KOR) 6-4,1-6,6-4; Chaeirn Lee (KOR) beat Elizaveta Privalova(RUS) 6-4,6-3.

In Boys Doubles semifinals, Muhammad Haider All Rizwan(PAK), Abubakar Talha (PAK) beat Yota Nishikori(JPN), Youngchae Oh(KOR) 6-3,3-6(10-7); Ahmad Nael Qureshi, Bilal Asim beqt Pudit (THA), Teetawat(THA) 6-3,6-4. This 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.

Pakistan, Sri Lanka match ends in a draw

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sonal Dinusha and Pavan Rathnayake ended the two four-day matches series with sparkling centuries as Pakistan Shaheens and Sri Lanka A match ended in a draw at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Thursday. Dinusha returned unbeaten on 116 and Rathnayake remained 100 not out as Sri Lanka 'A', resuming their second innings at 157 for four, declared their second innings at 260 for four to set Pakistan Shaheens a target of 284 in 60 overs. When the match ended, Pakistan Shaheens were 156 for three in 45 overs.

Dinusha, who had scored 85 not in the first innings, had started the day at 51 and added another 65 runs on the final day to finish at 116 not out. His fourth first-class century in 41st match came off 141 balls and included nine fours. Overall, he faced 184 balls and hit 10 fours. Rathnayake had started this morning at 64 and finished on 100 not out, his seventh first-class century in 38 matches. He faced 198 balls and hit eight fours. The two batters had come together when Sri Lanka 'A' were tottering at 46 for four. Their 214 runs unbeaten fifth-wicket stand came off 369 balls and not only steered the ship to safety but also allowed Sri Lanka 'A' to set the home team a stiff 284 runs target in 60 overs.

When the match was called off, Pakistan Shaheens had recovered from 67 for three to 156 for three. Mohammad Suleman was the top-scorer with 66 not out (121b, 3x4, 1x6), while Haider Ali scored 43 not out (68b, 3x4, 1x6) as the two batters put on 89 runs for the unfinished fourth wicket. Ali Zaryab contributed 31.

The two sides will now feature in a three-match 50-over series to be played at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on 25, 27 and 29 November. Scores in brief (day 4 of 4): Sri Lanka 'A' 310 all-out, 79 overs (Sonal Dinusha 85 not out, Wanuja Sahan 63, Isitha Wijesundara 51, Pavan Rathnayake 35, Ahan Wickramasinghe 30, Dinura Kalupahana 30, Khurram Shahzad 6-30, Ahmed Safi Abdullah 2-100) and 260-4d, 76 overs (Sonal Dinusha 116 not out, Pavan Rathnayake 100 not out; Ahmed Bashir 2-65).

Pakistan Shaheens 287 all out, 98 overs (Abdul Faseeh 59, Mohammad Suleman 40, Ahmed Safi Abdullah 39, Haider Ali 35, Ali Zaryab 32, Hussain Talat 25; Wanuja Sahan 5-74) and 156-3, 45 overs (Mohammad Suleman 66 not out, Haider Ali 43 not out, Ali Zaryab 31).

4 matches played KARACHI (APP): Four more matches were played during the Karachi Metropolitan Football Cup 2024, across different venues on Thursday, being organized by the Department of Culture and Sports of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC). The first match was between Saddar Town and North Karachi Town at Kakri Ground, Lyari. The second match at Madhur Ground was between Malir and Chinese Town. The third match took place at the KMC Football Stadium, where Ibrahim Haidri Town faced Moring Mir Bahr Town and the fourth match at Muhammadi Football Ground in Malir saw the teams from Gulberg Town and Gulshan Town compete. The KMC Metropolitan Cup Football Tournament 2024 has attracted significant interest from football enthusiasts in Karachi, with large crowds enjoying the matches and giving players a hearty round of applause for their excellent performances. The tournament features 24 teams, 23 of which represent town administrations, while one team is from KMC itself. The winning team will receive a trophy along with a cash prize of Rs 1 million, while the runner-up will get Rs 500,000, and the third-place team will earn Rs 250,000 in cash. The matches are being held at football grounds across all seven districts of Karachi, with the semi-finals and final being played under floodlights.

Kohli looking ‘ominous’ ahead of Australia Test series, India warn

PERTH (AFP): Stand-in skipper Jasprit Bumrah insisted Thursday that India were carrying no baggage from their Test whitewash by New Zealand and warned Australia that star batsman Virat Kohli was looking "ominous".

India head into the first of five Tests against Australia on Friday in Perth on the back of their first home series loss in 12 years. But speedster Bumrah, who will captain the side after Rohit Sharma stayed home following the birth of his second child, said they were only looking forward. "The beauty about cricket is even if you win, you start from zero, and even if you lose you start from zero," he told reporters.

"So that's how I look at the game. "Obviously, yes, we were disappointed and we were down that we had a tough series (against New Zealand). "But we are not carrying any baggages. We come with a fresh mindset, different opposition and you learn from the changes that have happened in our team."

With Rohit over, KL Rahul or Abhimanyu Easwaran are in line to open alongside Yashvi Jaiswal, while there are doubts over number three Shubman Gill who has hurt his thumb. Their bowling line-up is also unclear. Bumrah said India had settled on who would partner him in the

attack, but he would wait until the toss to reveal all.

Kohli is certain to play, but will pad up under increasing scrutiny after managing only two Test centuries in the last five years and averaging just 15 against New Zealand.

Despite signs that one of the world's greatest batsmen may be past his best at 36, Bumrah cautioned that Kohli should never be written off. Kohli has a stellar record in Australia, averaging 54.08. "He is one of the greats of the game," said Bumrah. "He's the utmost professional that we have in our team. He's got a lot of success."

"Okay, one or two series here and there can go up and down, but the confidence that he has at this moment, I have no doubts. "He's looking to contribute. And the way I've seen him at training ... the signs are ominous."

With Bumrah taking the armband, the first Test will have two fast bowlers captaining their teams, with Pat Cummins in charge of Australia. Bumrah said he was determined to do the job his way. "I love responsibility. I wanted to do the tough job since I was a child," he said.

"I've never followed a copybook plan... I've never followed a model and I go with my instincts and that's how I've always played my cricket. "I have a lot of faith in my instincts and gut," he added.



KARACHI: A Pakistan fan poses with the Champions Trophy.



In brief

ANF recovers 1.3 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in an operation managed to recover over 1.3 kg drugs worth more than Rs 13.9 million, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Thursday. He informed that in an operation at Jinnah International Airport Karachi, 1396 grams cocaine was recovered from a Brazilian woman, arrived at Karachi Airport from Brazil on a foreign flight. Upon search, cocaine was recovered from the woman's undergarments. The accused had put the drugs in liquid form in plastic bags and hidden them in her undergarments. A case has been registered against the accused under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigation has been initiated. The use of modern and innovative methods for drug smuggling is no less than a challenge for ANF. Despite this, ANF is determined to fight drug smuggling.

10 outlaws arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police apprehended 10 outlaws involved in different criminal activities recovered weapons with ammunition from their possession on Thursday. A public relation officer told APP that, the Islamabad Police Secretariat and Khanna police stations teams took legal action against accused involved in possessing illegal weapons. He said the police team also arrested 02 accused's namely Abdu Rafi and Umar Abbasi and recovered one 30 bore pistol and dagger from their possession. Moreover, 08 absconders were also arrested from various areas of the city during the last 24 hours. SSP Operations said that the ICT Police is actively working to ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property in the federal capital, emphasizing that no elements will be allowed to disrupt citizens' peace. Protecting the lives, property, and dignity of citizens is the Islamabad Police's top priority. Citizens are urged to report any suspicious activities to the relevant police station, emergency helpline "Pukar-15" to help make the city crime-free through cooperation between the police and the public.

26 outlaws arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police apprehended 26 outlaws involved in different criminal activities including drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons recovered heroin and weapons with ammunition from their possession on Thursday. A public relation officer told APP that the ICT Police Lohi Bher, Shams Colony and Sabzi Mandi police stations teams took legal action against accused involved in possessing illegal weapons and drug peddling. He said the police team arrested accused's namely Bilal Khan, Muhammad Ali Raza, Muhammad Sohail and Babar Shah and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition, one Knife and 362 gram heroin from their possession. Moreover 22 absconders were also arrested from various areas of the city during the last 24 hours. SSP Operations/Investigations Muhammad Arslan Shah Zaib said that the ICT Police is actively working to ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property in the federal capital, emphasizing that no elements will be allowed to disrupt citizens' peace. Protecting the lives, property, and dignity of citizens is the Islamabad Police's top priority.

Mohsin Naqvi, UK's Hamish Falconer discuss strengthening Pak-UK relations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday met with Hamish Falconer, the UK's Deputy Foreign Minister for Pakistan and Afghanistan, to discuss enhancing bilateral ties and areas of mutual interest. The meeting, held in Islamabad, was attended by British High Commissioner Jane Marriott and Pakistan's High Commissioner to the UK, Dr. Muhammad Faisal. Discussions centered on fostering closer collaboration and implementing

joint measures to bolster Pak-UK relations.

Minister Naqvi expressed warm wishes to Falconer and reaffirmed his commitment to further solidifying the historic friendship between the two nations.

He emphasized the importance of transitioning from mutual cooperation to a sustainable economic partnership, citing the UK as a "strong and excellent friend of Pakistan."

The leaders highlighted the need for greater bilateral and regional synergy

while addressing contemporary challenges.

Naqvi underscored Pakistan's dedication to ensuring the rights and safety of minority communities, calling their protection a top priority.

He also stressed the necessity of coordinated efforts to counter baseless rumors and propaganda on social media platforms.

Falconer's visit is expected to infuse new warmth into Pak-UK relations and pave the way for enhanced cooperation in diverse fields.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Hamish Falconer.

IRSA releases 96,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 96,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 49,600 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1505.41 feet and was 107.41 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 22,900 cusecs and 49,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1165.60 feet, which was 115.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 5,900 cusecs and 27,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 50,000, 50,200, 36,700 and 6,000 cusecs respectively.

Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 12,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

SCP summons IGPs, Home Secretaries in missing children case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan has expressed serious displeasure over the reports on the state of missing children and directed all provinces to submit a detailed report that how many children have been abducted and how many are being recovered.

The Court summoned Inspectors General of Police and Home Secretaries of all the four provinces for next hearing to be held on 28 this month.

The six member Constitutional Bench of the SCP, headed by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan and comprising Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan was hearing a petition regarding missing children in Pakistan.

The petitioner informed the Court that the Committee for missing children constituted by the SCP has done nothing yet.

Justice Jamal

Mandokhail, while referring to the abduction of a 10 years old kid Muhammad Mussawir in Quetta a week ago, expressed disappointment over the failure of the law enforcement agencies despite continued protests in the city.

Justice Musarrat Hilali questioned the report submitted by the government of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and remarked that open boarders cannot be an excuse and law enforcement must be ensured at any cost.

Justice Hasan Azhar pointed out children begging on traffic signals while Justice Amin regretted travelling of Pakistani citizens abroad for begging.

The petition of missing children was pending in the supreme court since 2018, however some called today's proceedings and summoning of the IGPs and Home Secretaries of the four provinces the first suo motu of the Constitutional bench.

Shaza calls for collaborative efforts for Child Online Protection

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Thursday emphasized the need for strong collaboration at national and international levels to address the growing challenge of child online protection.

"We must unite our efforts to combat online threats and safeguard our children's future. Every child deserves a safe and secure digital world where they can learn, grow, and thrive," the minister said while addressing the Youth Safety Summit Pakistan, hosted by TikTok in collaboration with the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). The event aimed to foster a safer digital environment for the youth.

She said that Australia has enacted legislation to regulate children's use of social media, while the United States has approved laws focused on online child protection.

The minister highlighted the importance of raising awareness about responsible social media content creation and reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring the digital safety of Pakistan's youth.

"In today's digital world, online threats are rapidly increasing, putting internet users—especially children and young people—at greater risk. Due to their curiosity and innocence, children are particularly vulnerable to online dangers. As we advance technologically, it is imperative to address these concerns to protect our youth,"

Shaza Fatima said.

She highlighted the government's efforts to enhance cybersecurity and improve Pakistan's digital ecosystem. "Our country is proud of its growing cybersecurity infrastructure, increasing teledensity, expanding broadband penetration, and flourishing IT freelancing sector, all of which are largely driven by our youth," she added.

The minister stressed that ensuring a safer cyberspace for children requires collective efforts from the public and private sectors, academia, research institutions, and civic innovators. She pointed out that broadband penetration in Pakistan has surged to around 57%, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the shift of education and business activities online. To counter the accompanying rise in online threats, the government has implemented strong policy, regulatory, and technical measures. "I commend PTA and TikTok for organizing this crucial summit and their remarkable efforts in promoting digital literacy. The ongoing Digital Literacy Program is reaching 100 government schools across Pakistan, including 40 schools in Sindh and Gilgit-Baltistan, benefiting 150,000 individuals," she said.

Shaza Fatima also highlighted PTA and TikTok's development of guidebooks and short awareness videos aimed at educating the public about online safety. The minister said that PTA has established a dedicated committee on Child Online Protection

(COP), working on national and international collaborations. She lauded PTA's efforts, which were recognized globally with the prestigious SAMENA Awards 2023-2024 in the Child Online Protection category and acknowledged at the ITU's 21st Council Working Group on COP meeting.

She further highlighted Pakistan's improved ranking in the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI), attributing the success to initiatives led by the Ministry of IT, PTA, FIA, and other stakeholders, particularly in child online protection. The minister emphasized the country's strong IT talent pool, which includes over 600,000 professionals and 75,000 new graduates annually. She highlighted comprehensive government training initiatives targeting 200,000 youth in emerging technologies to build a future-ready workforce.

The Ministry of IT and Telecommunication is also advancing digital literacy, promoting STEM education, and providing training in e-learning, AI, cybersecurity, and data science. Furthermore, the ministry is committed to establishing research centers, such as the National Center for Cyber Security (NCCS) and the National Center of Artificial Intelligence, to align education with global demands for in-demand skills.

The minister reiterated the government's dedication to equipping the youth with the tools and knowledge necessary for a safer and prosperous digital future.

PHA for awareness about plantation

RAWALPINDI (APP): Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA), Rawalpindi is making efforts to create awareness about plantation, said Director General (DG), PHA, Ahmed Hasan Ranjha.

The DG during a visit to PHA Gorakhpur Nursery said that the nursery which covers an area of 1000 kanals land near Adiala Road is producing a large number of plants and playing a key role in keeping Rawalpindi city green. The nursery is providing seasonal flowers and plants to the parks, green belts and the citizens.

The DG said that Gorakhpur Nursery is playing an important role in keeping the city green by producing a large number of plants.

He said that the objectives of plantation are also being fulfilled from Gorakhpur nursery.

The flowers and plants raised in this nursery are available for the government and private sectors to keep the city green, said Ahmed Hassan Ranjha.

The DG said that awareness campaign is also being run to achieve the target of enhanced plantation in the city and home gardening and through this initiative of the authority, horticulture is growing rapidly in Rawalpindi city.

Gorakhpur Nursery is one of the largest nurseries in Punjab which covers an area of 1000 kanals and continues to play an important and key role in maintaining the beauty of Rawalpindi city.

Ahmad Hasan Ranjha said that Gorakhpur Nursery is helping the authority to achieve the goals of plantation drive in Rawalpindi Division and playing a significant role for creating a healthy environment.

The DG said that on the directives of the CM Punjab, all possible steps were being taken to provide green, clean and healthy environment to the people.

TAPI project crucial for meeting energy needs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum, Dr Musadik Malik, emphasized Pakistan's determination to complete the

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project, calling it crucial for meeting the country's energy needs.

In a meeting on Thursday with Turkmenistan's Ambassador to Pakistan,

Atadjan Movlamov, the Minister expressed gratitude for Turkmenistan's unwavering commitment to the TAPI initiative.

The ambassador invited Dr. Musadik Malik to visit Turkmenistan, which the Minister warmly appreciated.

During the meeting, Ambassador Movlamov commended Pakistan's recent economic progress and highlighted an

improvement in the country's financial situation.

He noted growing international investor interest in Pakistan, attributing the credit to Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and his team's efforts.

Both sides reaffirmed their dedication to strengthening bilateral ties and agreed to explore opportunities for collaboration in energy, trade, and investment.

COMSATS holds 35th, 36th convocation ceremony

ISLAMABAD (APP): COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) celebrated its 35th and 36th convocation at the Convention Centre on Thursday, honouring 2,629 graduates.

According to the press release, this group included 76 PhDs, 775 MS degrees and 2,193 BS degrees.

The ceremony featured two sessions with 1,261 graduates including 29 PhDs in the morning and 1,368 graduates including 47 PhDs in the evening.

Professor Dr. Sajid Qamar, Rector of CUI congratulated the graduates and their families, expressing appreciation for the faculty's dedication.

He emphasized the importance of knowledge and urged graduates to embody the teachings of the Holy Quran in their lives, promoting truthfulness and integrity.

Incharge of Islamabad Campus, Professor Dr. Sohail Asghar, encouraged graduates to carry forward the legacy of CUI with pride and to face future challenges with determination.

The ceremony featured the presentation of degrees across various disciplines including Bioinformatics, Physics, Economics and Business Administration.

The Minister of Science and Technology, Dr. Khalid

Maqbool Siddiqui served as the Chief Guest for the morning session, awarding 34 Gold Medals, 33 Silver Medals and 24 Bronze Medals to high-achieving students.

In the evening session, Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria addressed the graduates, highlighting the importance of focusing on industry, innovation and technology in higher education.

COMSATS University Islamabad established in 1998, is recognized for its contributions to research and education in Pakistan and has expanded to seven campuses nationwide.

CDA for revamping rural health centers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital

Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Thursday called for an ambitious revamping plan aimed at improving Rural Health Centers (RHCs) and Basic Health Units (BHUs).

The CDA chairman while chairing a meeting directed the implementation of steps aimed at introducing "one patient, one ID" system.

He instructed the development of a comprehensive

business model for BHUs and RHCs for generating essential revenue resources for the uplift and maintenance of these

health related infrastructure.

The Executive Director of Capital Hospital briefed the meeting on new health initiatives to improve health facilities at the hospital.

He stated that the process of hiring specialists and doctors was under process, bio metric attendance for all CDA employees as well as electronic medical record and online leave record system for CDA employees being ensured.

He informed that many IT based interventions have been introduced to stop pilferage of medicine and streamlining the over-

all procurement processes for more transparency.

Chairman CDA instructed to explore the option for solarization if the CDA Hospital. He directed to take steps to outsource janitorial services and repair/maintenance work. Randhawa stressed the importance of equipping health facilities with modern tools and resources to better meet community needs.

He expressed his commitment to overseeing the management and execution of these initiatives, ensuring a more integrated and efficient health infrastructure for the citizens of Islamabad.

PTDC announces photographic competition

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) has announced a photographic competition to commemorate International Mountain Day 2024, to be observed on December 11.

According to an official source, this day will be marked under this year's theme, "Mountain Solutions for a Sustainable Future: Innovation, Adaptation, and Youth," which highlights the importance of preserving mountainous landscapes and promoting sustainable development.

This initiative aims at engaging youth, inspire innovation, and raise awareness about the role of mountains in fostering a sustainable future. The event is part of

ongoing efforts to celebrate Pakistan's natural heritage and encourage responsible tourism.

The photographers and nature enthusiasts are encouraged to participate in this unique opportunity to showcase their talent while supporting a meaningful cause.

The competition invites both amateur and professional photographers to capture the beauty of mountains while reflecting the spirit of sustainability.

In the amateur category, the top three prizes are Rs. 30,000, Rs. 15,000, and Rs. 10,000, respectively. Meanwhile, the professional category offers prizes of Rs. 50,000, Rs. 30,000, and Rs. 20,000 for first, second, and third place winners.

The entries must be submitted by December 02 through the provided online portal, and selected photographs will be exhibited at the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) on International Mountain Day.

The competition will engage photographers to showcase their creativity by capturing mountain-related elements such as culture and heritage, mountain people and their lifestyles, Pakistan's mountainous landscapes, adventure sports, and the flora and fauna of mountain areas.

The intending participants can visit www.tourism.gov.pk for more information. The event encourages responsible tourism with the m395otto "Leave Nothing but Footprints."

Minister hosts meeting

KABUL(BNA): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce has reported a meeting between the Acting Minister of this Ministry and the acting ambassador of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Tehran. According to a press release from the ministry, Nooruddin Azizi, the Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, met yesterday in Kabul with Mawlawi Fazl Mohammad Haqqani, the ambassador of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Iran.

150 foreigners imprisoned

KABUL (TOLONews): Mohammad Yousuf Mestari, the acting head of the Prisons Administration of the Islamic Emirate, told TOLONews that currently, nearly 150 foreigners are imprisoned in the country. The acting head of the Prisons Administration said that among them, ten prisoners are Iranian citizens. Mestari told TOLONews: "We have close to 150 foreign prisoners. Naturally, most of them are from neighboring countries."

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

Water crisis negatively impacted ties between nations

KABUL (Ariana News): Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, said on Thursday that the ongoing water crisis in the country has not only made neighboring countries face the problem of water scarcity, but it has also had a negative impact on political and economic relations between Afghanistan and these countries.

Speaking at a seminar held by the Ministry of Energy and Water, Baradar said that although water is a renewable natural resource, the shortage of water due to climate change, the increase in the level of water pollution, the growing demand of the people and its excessive consumption affects the country.

He expressed regret that although Afghanistan has vast water resources, effective and professional management has not been carried out in this area.

"It is now the responsibility of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to fulfill its national duty for the optimal management of the country's water resource," Baradar said.

"With firm determination, we aim to use all available means to ensure sustainable development in water management."

Last month, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also warned that Afghanistan is experiencing a severe water crisis, and if no action is taken, Kabul's



underground water resources could be depleted by 2030. In a message on X, UNICEF reported that Roza Otunbayeva, head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and Tajudeen Oyewale, head of UNICEF Afghanistan, visited a Kabul district to assess the city's water supply network. Both officials expressed concern over the worsening water shortage problem in the capital. "Water is life," UNICEF stated, emphasizing that rapid urbanization and climate change are accelerating the depletion of groundwater in Kabul.

"If we don't act now, we cannot stop this process." The rapid population growth, unplanned construction of high-rise buildings, urban development without proper planning, and the excessive use of underground water resources are major factors contributing to the decline in both the quantity and quality of groundwater in

Kabul. Although Kabul has faced water shortages for years, the crisis has become more severe in recent times. However, the Islamic Emirate is making concerted efforts to resolve the problem and thwart the crisis. Three weeks ago, the office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, said in a statement that plans to construct a total of 355 water reservoirs across the country were being implemented.

According to the statement, of the 355 dams, a number of them have already been completed and inaugurated while others are under construction.

Of these reservoirs, 138 are being constructed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock; 117 by the Ministry of Water and Energy; and 100 by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. All of these dams are being funded by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the statement

read. The reservoirs are being constructed in numerous provinces to manage rainwater, prevent flooding, strengthen groundwater levels and for use by communities.

Iran's water share Late last year, Iranian Energy Minister Ali Akbar Mehriban warned that if Afghanistan does not ensure Tehran receives its rightful amount of water from Helmand River, Iran will use legal and international means to resolve the problem. Mehriban stressed that Helmand River water is Iran's indisputable right, and that Iran takes the matter seriously.

"Water right is Iran's right and it is necessary to release it. Ensuring water rights is not optional, but it is mandatory based on the international treaty of 1351. Pursuing this matter is Iran's absolute right and we will not fail in this regard. The recent rains should cause the release of our water, and if not, we will take serious action based on international laws," stressed Mehriban.

At the time, the Islamic Emirate said it was committed to providing Iran with water from the Helmand River but due to drought, there is not enough water in the river to give Iran its share. The Helmand River Water Treaty was signed between Afghanistan and Iran in 1973, according to which Iran has the right to receive 850 million cubic meters of water from Afghanistan annually.

Transportation with Afghanistan discussed

KABUL (TOLONews): The acting Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation and Cenk Unal, the Turkish ambassador to Afghanistan, have discussed the activation of the Lapis Lazuli Corridor.

The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation in a statement quoted the Turkish ambassador as saying that efforts are underway to facilitate more convenient ground transportation between Afghanistan and Turkey.

Imamuddin Ahmadi, spokesperson for the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, said about the meeting: "Recently, a meeting regarding the reopening of the Lapis Lazuli Corridor was held in Turkey. The results of that meeting must be followed up, and the groundwork for transportation through this route must be prepared."

The trade and transit agreement for the Lapis Lazuli Corridor was signed in 2017 by representatives from Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Georgia. However, the

route has yet to be utilized.

The Lapis Lazuli transit route begins at the ports of Torghundi in Herat and Aqina in Faryab, passes through the Turkmenbashi port in Turkmenistan, the city of Baku in Azerbaijan, the Tbilisi region of Georgia, and Istanbul in Turkey, eventually reaching European borders. Using the Lapis Lazuli route will reduce Afghanistan's dependency on neighboring countries and transform it into a major transit hub in the region.

Mirwais Hajizada, a trader, emphasized the importance of this route: "This route should be activated now or next year, instead of waiting five or ten years. It is essential for traders to be able to export their goods, as the Lapis Lazuli route is a reliable one." Transit and customs facilities, development of transportation infrastructure among the countries along the Lapis Lazuli Corridor, improvement of transport services in these countries, and resolving issues

at water and dry ports are among the points included in the Lapis Lazuli trade and transit agreement.

Meanwhile, the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment views the Lapis Lazuli route as crucial for developing commercial and transit relations. It states that this corridor is the shortest and most cost-effective transit route for Afghanistan and Asia's commercial goods. The chamber adds that most goods transported along this route will use railways, benefiting all regional countries.

Khan Jan Alokozay, a board member of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said: "The importance of this route is extraordinary. It is close, and we can easily reach Europe through it." The Lapis Lazuli project is considered one of the most important trade development initiatives for Afghanistan and the region, ensuring that Afghan goods reach Europe safely, quickly, and at reasonable costs.

Trade at SCO forum

KABUL(BNA): Mawlawi Bilal Karimi, the Islamic Emirate Ambassador to China, has urged Chinese companies to explore investment opportunities in Afghanistan during the 2024 Digital Technology and Mechanized Agriculture Forum organized by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization(SCO) in Henan Province, China.

In a press release issued by the Afghanistan Embassy in China, it was noted that Ambassador Karimi actively participated in the forum and engaged in discussions with ambassadors from various countries and government officials from Henan Province.

Ambassador Karimi emphasized Afghanistan's emerging investment opportunities, inviting Chinese companies, particularly those from Henan, to invest in sectors such as agriculture, mechanization, digital technology, construction, healthcare, and trade. He also highlighted the potential for exporting Afghanistan's agricultural and industrial products to Chinese markets, particularly Henan Province.

Meanwhile, Henan province officials assured their support and pledged to encourage local companies to invest in these priority sectors. The discussions further delved into enhancing trade and transit relations through initiatives like the Wakhan Corridor, the Belt and Road Initiative, and revitalizing Afghanistan's observer.

Balkh residents ask govt to reconstruct road



MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): Residents and drivers in northern Balkh province have asked the government to reconstruct the Airgank road that connects Mazar-i-Sharif with Kunduz province.

Drivers said destroyed parts of the Airgank road should be reconstructed as it would to reduce travel time and fare. The transit highway connects Sher Khan, Hairatan and Aqina ports. On the other hand, officials accept the road is in a dilapidated condition and assure that the road will be repaired.

The MoD repaired some damaged parts of this road last year, but this is not enough and there is a serious need for basic construction, some drivers said.

Abdul Qahar, a driver, explained they faced problems and could not easily reach their destinations particularly in winter.

"This 27 kilometers road from Chahardara to

Khulom district is destroyed, vehicles cannot travel on this road in winter season, although the Islamic Emirate rebuilt some parts of the road last year, but we want it reconstructed from Pul-i-Khumri to Samangan," he added.

According to Jamshed, another driver, since the IEA takeover, the security situation along the road has improved. "The Airgank road is short, but it is damaged. We want the IEA to repair the road because it connects Sher Khan and Hairatan customs."

Hamayoon, a resident, said: "Six months ago, some parts of the Airgank Road were blocked by the 209 Al-Fath Corps. But even now this road is damaged, car tyres get punctured and it is not possible to travel fast".

On the other hand, officials of northern Kunduz province say they have talked with officials of the Ministry of Public Works

regarding the reconstruction of the highway and they have promised to cooperate fully with them.

Deputy Governor Habibul Rahman Sohaib explained about 30 kilometers road in Chahardara district had been damaged and its reconstruction work would be launched as soon as possible.

"This is an important transit route, it connects not only two zones, but Sher Khan, Haratan and Aqena ports with each other. We are planning to build it in Chahadra district, where the road is still about 30 km long. In this regard, we have discussed with MoPW and they have promised to cooperate with us".

Meanwhile, due to insecurity, Mazar-Kunduz line vehicles used to travel through Baghlan and Samangan provinces, but now drivers are using Airgank Kotal as an alternative route, which is shorter.

4 foreign tourists convert to Islam

KANDAHAR(BNA): Local officials in Kandahar have announced that four foreign tourists have embraced Islam over the past few months during their visits to the province.

According to Mawlawi Mohammad Huzayfa, the custodian of the Sacred Cloak in Kandahar, the individuals, two from Thailand and two others from Slovakia and Slovenia, converted to Islam after exploring historical sites and attractions in the province. Their decision followed a period of study and engagement with Islamic teachings.

Museum gets 20 artifact

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Defense of the Islamic Emirate has handed over nearly 200 historical artifacts, which had been kept at the ministry for many years, to the National Museum.

Officials at the Ministry of Defense stated that these artifacts, which date back 300 years, include metal utensils, wooden containers, samovars, military equipment, and other items.

Jamaluddin Haqjo, Deputy Commander of the Support Brigade at the Ministry of Defense, told TOLONews: "These artifacts were stored inside containers. They were discovered during a clearing process we conducted."

Meanwhile, officials at the National Museum praised the transfer of historical and ancient artifacts from the Ministry of Defense to the museum.

Sibghatullah Abed, the director of the National Museum, told TOLONews: "The Islamic Emirate is committed. The Ministry of Defense, the Intelligence Directorate, and the Ministry of Interior have always handed over historical artifacts to us that were either seized from smugglers or discovered during the Republic era."

Ministry's licensing initiative aims to auditing



KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Finance has introduced the country's first-ever licensing process for auditing firms and professional training institutions, marking a significant step toward strengthening financial accountability and professional capacity.

According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance, Afghanistan has faced a long-standing shortage of

qualified accountants, which has created numerous challenges for corporate financial operations. To address this gap and enhance the quality of financial management, the Treasury Department of the Ministry has initiated the registration and licensing process for auditing firms and professional training institutions in accordance with established international standards.

The Ministry noted that this initiative is expected to professionalize the operations of auditing firms, curb tax evasion, and contribute to increased revenue for both public and private enterprises. Furthermore, it aims to ensure greater transparency in financial and taxation processes while empowering companies to develop robust systems and frameworks for financial management.

UNHCR reports 18% increase in deportation



KABUL (TOLONews): The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported an 18% increase in the deportation of Afghan migrants from Iran compared to last year.

According to the organization's statistics, Iran has deported nearly 560,000 Afghan migrants in the first nine months of this year.

The report stated that the average number of Afghan migrants deported from Iran is 2,040 people per day.

Based on estimations provided by UNHCR's border monitoring partners, during nine months in 2024, an estimated 559,000 (undocumented Afghans were deported from Iran through Islam

Qala and Zaranj crossing points. This represents a daily average of 2,040 individuals. The deportation figures for undocumented Afghans are approximately 18 percent higher compared to an estimated 472,000 deportees during the same period in 2023."

Meanwhile, some Pakistani media outlets have reported that a trilateral meeting between the caretaker government of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the UNHCR will soon be held regarding the situation of Afghan migrants.

A number of Afghan migrants in Pakistan and Iran have spoken about the increasing challenges faced by Afghan citizens.

Mohammad Reza Sazesh, an Afghan migrant in Pakistan, said about the challenges: "There are many migrants here, but the facilities are inadequate. Visa extensions, residence, and living conditions lack educational opportunities. We demand better conditions for migrants in Pakistan."

"Establishing a transparent legal framework, ensuring human rights and security, access to basic services, facilitating resettlement and voluntary return, supporting host communities, and implementing empowerment programs for refugees require sincere cooperation and practical steps to improve the situation of refugees," Ali Reza Karimi, a migrant rights activist, told TOLONews.

On the 6th of Sunbula (August 27) this year, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation proposed a trilateral meeting with the United Nations and the Pakistani government to Islamabad to address the challenges facing Afghan migrants.

Vaccinate children against deadly measles, families urged



KABUL (Pajhwok): The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) reports an increase in suspected measles cases in the country this year.

Meanwhile, doctors describe the disease as deadly and urge families to ensure their children receive measles vaccine without any delay.

According to doctors, measles is a highly contagious

disease that primarily affects children. The measles virus is transmitted either through airborne particles from sneezing and coughing or through direct contact with nasal and oral secretions from infected individuals.

Symptoms of the disease include fever, cough, runny nose, pneumonia, red eyes, loss of appetite, skin rashes, sore

throat, and white spots inside the mouth.

6,000 cases of measles recorded this year: MoPH Dr. Sharafat Zaman, a spokesman for MoPH, said, "In the first eleven months of this year, 10,250 measles tests were conducted, of which approximately 6,000 cases were confirmed positive."

He added, "As measles is a contagious viral disease, the incidence of this disease sometimes spikes in Afghanistan."

Without revealing the number of cases last year, he said that this year, the number of suspected cases had increased compared to the previous year.

He explained, "This year, around six thousand cases have been recorded. In the coming months, we plan to conduct a national measles vaccination campaign. By doing so, we will be able to prevent further spread of the disease."

Dr. Sharafat urged citizens to

take their children to health centers if they notice symptoms of measles and to isolate infected children from healthy ones.

He also added that although supplementary vaccination campaigns have been conducted in the past, "In 2025, we also plan to vaccinate 16 million children under the age of ten."

He added that measles vaccination is provided daily at all health centers as part of the national immunization program. Doctors: Avoid self-medication for children suffering from measles.

Dr. Saifullah Abasin, a specialist trainer at the Indira Gandhi Children's Health Institute in Kabul, told Pajhwok Afghan News that measles was a viral disease that spread from infected individuals to healthy ones and primarily affected children. "If left untreated or if complications arise, it can lead to death, particularly among

children under the age of five".

The source explained that measles could affect individuals at any time of the year. Dr. Abasin said, "When a child has a fever or any other illness, they should be properly nourished and given fluids to prevent the severity of the disease."

However, many children suffer from malnutrition as their immune system weakens and they lose body fluids."

Dr. Abasin pointed out harmful practices where families often wrap children in blankets when they are sick. He said, "We often see cases in hospital where a child is wrapped in two or three blankets, which causes excessive sweating, loss of energy, and can lead to other illnesses such as pneumonia, neurological problems, or ear infections."

He emphasized that when a child is infected with measles, efforts should be made to isolate them from other healthy

children at home, as the disease spreads rapidly.

Regarding measles vaccination, Dr. Abasin noted that in every clinic, in addition to other vaccines, measles vaccine is also available, and children should be vaccinated on time.

He added, "If a mother receives vaccines on time before pregnancy, measles will not easily affect the child, and she can pass immunity to her child." He added that many parents either think vaccines are not beneficial or forget to vaccinate their children, which contributes to the rise in measles cases.

Dr. Abasin said, "Children with mild symptoms receive medication, but if there are complications, we admit them to the hospital. We admit 8 to 10 patients daily."

Meanwhile, Asifa, a resident of Kapisa province, whose one-and-a-half-year-old daughter is currently hospitalized at the

Indira Gandhi Children's hospital due to measles, shared her experience.

"My daughter has had a high fever and has been very sick. I took her to the clinic twice, but no medicine worked, and they did not even realize it was measles. Now I brought her here, and she has been admitted. I don't know how many days she will remain hospitalized."

She expressed satisfaction with the services at the hospital, but asked doctors to pay more attention to such children.

Similarly, Sher Ahmad, a resident of Parwan province, whose child also suffered from measles, shared his concern. "My child's body developed red rashes, and he became very restless. I brought him to the hospital, and the doctors admitted him."

He also called for more attention from doctors towards measles patients.



KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf being briefed at a stall during IDEAS 2024.

Naval Chief visits IDEAS 2024

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, visited the ongoing International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) 2024 at Expo Centre, Karachi.

During his visit, Admiral Naveed Ashraf interacted with foreign military officials, industry representatives, and exhibitors; engaging in discussions on advancements in naval technology, global security trends, and potential areas for future collaboration. He also commended the innovative solutions on display and highlighted the importance of international partnerships in bolstering regional security. Admiral Naveed Ashraf's visit to IDEAS 2024 underscores the Pakistan Navy's commitment to enhancing its capabilities and fostering cooperation with global partners.

CJCSC visits IDEAS-24, holds wide-ranging talks with officials of different countries: General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, NI (M), Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) on Thursday visited the 12th International Defence Exhibition and

Seminar (IDEAS-24) and held wide-ranging talks on the sidelines.

The CJCSC held separate meetings with numerous officials including Defence Ministers, Commanders of Armed Forces and other important officials from different countries, including Türkiye, Azerbaijan, South Africa, Argentina, Malaysia, UAE, Cambodia, Kingdom of Eswatini, Gambia, Brunei, Maldives and Malawi, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

During the aforementioned meetings, key aspects of the defense and security relationship were discussed. All parties reflected on various areas of bilateral security and cooperation, especially in the defense production. The dignitaries expressed a strong interest in deepening their engagement with Pakistan's defense sector. The CJCSC also gave a keynote speech at a seminar, titled "Pakistan's Defence Production and Potential: Challenges and Way forward".

The Chairman JCSC emphasized that Pakistan's defence industry is the

force behind equipping the battle-hardened Armed Forces of Pakistan. He further said that through superior R&D and using innovative and cost-effective solutions, Pakistan's defence industries are not only fulfilling country's essential defence requirements but also exploring avenues of collaboration in the international defence market.

He noted that the platform of IDEAS is an ideal opportunity for publicizing Pakistan's well-developed Defence Industrial Complex to the international community. The Chairman JCSC also visited Pakistan Pavilion and lauded the efforts of Tri-Services in showcasing Pakistan's indigenous defence related equipment manufactured at par with global standards.

He also appreciated the efforts of DEPO for organising the event and thanked all foreign companies for their participation. The 12th International Defence Exhibition and Seminar-24 (IDEAS-24) was organised at Expo Center Karachi from November 19 to 22, 2024 under the auspices of the Defence Export Promotion Organization (DEPO).

Must prioritise Pakistan over politics: COAS

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir has said that "nothing, including politics," was above Pakistan and urged people to prioritise their country over "personal interests," the media reported.

The army chief visited an ongoing defence exhibition in Karachi a day ago, where he also engaged in meaningful interactions with foreign military officials and defence delegates present at the event. Separately, addressing the business community in Karachi on Wednesday, Gen Munir said "nothing, including politics, is more important than the country", emphasising the public must "prioritise Pakistan over personal interests".

"Remember, we have no identity apart from Pakistan," he said, noting that the state was like a mother and "its value should be asked from the people of Libya, Iraq and Palestine". "No matter what the challenges, no one can harm us if we all stand united," COAS Munir asserted. The army chief also spoke about Pakistan's economic situation, expressing "complete faith in Pakistan's bright and stable future".

"Today, all indicators of Pakistan's economy are positive, and by next year, God willing, they will further improve," he said. Gen Munir highlighted that the country's economy had improved since last year. "The clouds of hopelessness, [which] loomed a year ago, have now vanished," he said, stressing that hopelessness was forbidden for Muslims.

PTI trying to get safe exit: Khawaja Asif

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif says it is not possible for PTI founder Imran Khan to get relief at this time. He was talking to journalists in the Parliament House on Thursday. "The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is trying hard to get a safe exit from its Nov 24 protest call," senior PML-N leader said.

He added that political and military leadership were working together for the development of the country. According to defence minister, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur is in contact with the establishment from the day one. "CM Gandapur is in continuous contact with the establishment with the consent of Imran Khan," said the veteran politician.

Khawaja Asif said that no one would be allowed to launch an attack on the federation. He added that PTI founder is an agent of Jewish lobby. The defence minister was of the view that armed forces were rendering sacrifices for our safety.

Earlier, former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser outlined the PTI's strategy for the November 24 protest. Speaking to media in Swabi, Asad Qaiser stated that the party has formulated a strategy for the protest. Political workers from Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda, and Nowshera will travel to Islamabad from Swabi, while workers from other districts will march towards Islamabad via different routes.

ICC issues arrest warrants for Netanyahu, Gallant

THE HAGUE (Reuters): The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants on Thursday for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his former defense minister and Hamas officials, accusing them of war crimes and crimes against humanity over the war in Gaza and the October 2023 attacks that triggered Israel's offensive in the Palestinian territory.

The decision turns Netanyahu and the others into internationally wanted suspects and is likely to further isolate them and complicate efforts to negotiate a ceasefire to end the 13-month conflict. But its practical implications could be limited since Israel and its major ally, the United States, are not members of the court and several of the Hamas officials have been subsequently killed in the conflict.

Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders have condemned ICC Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan's

request for warrants as disgraceful and antisemitic. US President Joe Biden also blasted the prosecutor and expressed support for Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas. Hamas also slammed the request. "The Chamber considered that there are reasonable grounds to believe that both individuals intentionally and knowingly deprived the civilian population in Gaza of objects indispensable to their survival, including food, water, and medicine and medical supplies, as well as fuel and electricity," the three-judge panel wrote in its unanimous decision to issue warrants for Netanyahu and his former defense minister, Yoav Gallant.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry said in September that it had submitted two legal briefs challenging the ICC's jurisdiction and arguing that the court did not provide Israel the opportunity to investigate the allegations itself before

requesting the warrants. "No other democracy with an independent and respected legal system like that which exists in Israel has been treated in this prejudicial manner by the Prosecutor," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Oren Marmorstein wrote on X. He said Israel remained "steadfast in its commitment to the rule of law and justice" and would continue to protect its citizens against militancy.

The ICC is a court of last resort that only prosecutes cases when domestic law enforcement authorities cannot or will not investigate. Israel is not a member state of the court. The country has struggled to investigate itself in the past, rights groups say. Despite the warrants, none of the suspects is likely to face judges in The Hague any time soon. The court itself has no police to enforce warrants, instead relying on cooperation from its member states.

Israeli attacks on Gaza kill 88, including children

GAZA: Israel has unleashed a series of air attacks on the Gaza Strip that killed nearly 90 people, including many children in their sleep, as its main ally the United States once again vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution demanding a ceasefire. At least 66 people were killed in an attack early on Thursday that hit a residential neighbourhood in Beit Lahiya, in Gaza's besieged north, Palestinian health officials said.

Hussam Abu Safia, the director of the nearby Kamal Adwan Hospital, told Al Jazeera most of the victims "were asleep when they were killed". "A very large number of casualties has arrived, and there are still many bodies hanging on the walls, ceilings. It's mostly children and women," he said in a voice message. Abu Safia said hospital staff rushed to the site, retrieving bodies, collecting remains and rescuing trapped people.

"We are already operating with the bare minimum resources, that is why most of our staff are now busy rescuing the injured ... due to the lack of ambulances

and resources," the paediatrician added. "The situation is honestly very dire. We cannot cope with this massive number of injured and casualties that have arrived to Kamal Adwan Hospital." Separately on Thursday, at least 22 people, including 10 children, were killed in Israeli bombardment of Gaza City's Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood, a civil defence spokesman said.

More than 13 months of Israeli attacks on Gaza have killed some 44,000 people, including more than 17,000 children, and wounded 104,000. With aid largely cut off, many in the densely populated territory are now facing the threat of starvation. Israel launched its ferocious military campaign after an estimated 1,139 people, mostly civilians, were killed in an attack led by the Palestinian armed group Hamas on October 7 last year, with some 250 people taken captive. About 100 of them were released after a truce and prisoner swap deal a year ago but negotiations have largely stalled since then.

Thursday's overnight

attacks took place hours after a Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and the release of the captives failed to pass when permanent member, the US, cast a lone No vote in the 15-member body. This was the fourth time that US President Joe Biden's administration has vetoed such a resolution since the start of the war.

Deputy envoy Robert Wood said the US, which provides Israel with at least \$3.8bn in military aid annually, could not back the measure because it was not linked to the immediate release of those held in Gaza. "We made clear throughout negotiations we could not support an unconditional ceasefire that failed to release the hostages," he said. As the latest international attempt to bring an end to the fighting failed, civilians in Gaza continue to bear the brunt, especially in the northern governorate which has been under an Israeli siege for more than six weeks. Israel maintains that it wants to prevent the regrouping of Hamas in the area. — Arab News

Lebanon says 22 killed in Israeli strikes on east

BEIRUT (AFP): Lebanon's health ministry said Israeli strikes on several locations in the eastern Bekaa Valley killed 22 people on Thursday, with state media reporting four family members killed in one village. "Israeli enemy" strikes on five areas in the Baalbek region killed a total of 22 people, the ministry said in separate statements, with the National News Agency reporting that a strike on the village of Maqneh killed at least four members of the same family.

Meanwhile, fierce battles between the Israeli army and Hezbollah erupted in the town of Khiam and on the outskirts of the town of Biyyadah in Lebanon on Thursday. Israeli resumed intense airstrikes in the morning on Beirut's southern suburbs and villages in the Baalbek-Hermel governorate, following a pause that coincided with US envoy Amos Hochstein's 48-hour visit to Beirut before heading to Tel Aviv.

Hezbollah continued its attacks on northern Israel, with rockets reaching

Nahariya. According to medics and doctors with Magen David Adom, these attacks "killed a 30-year-old man due to rocket fire." Lebanon has been hit by large-scale Israeli attacks since Sept. 23.

Israel has been targeting Hezbollah headquarters, civilian homes in southern villages, pursuing displaced persons to their new locations, and destroying entire neighborhoods in Beirut's northern suburbs, the southern border region, towns deep in the south, and villages in Baalbek-Hermel. The attacks have also struck Beirut multiple times. The total death toll since the start of the confrontations has surpassed 3,520, with 14,940 injured. The clashes in the south have been concentrated between the town of Chamaa and the coastal town of Biyyadah, following the capture of Chamaa.

Hezbollah said that its members "repelled a new Israeli force's advance attempt at the southern outskirts of Chamaa toward Biyyadah." A fierce battle also raged in Khiam, amid

reports on Wednesday night suggesting that the town had fallen to the Israeli army. However, Hezbollah reported "ongoing battles on four fronts, employing all types of weapons." Security reports indicated that the Israeli army "is conducting large-scale demolitions in Khiam, blowing up houses and residential buildings during its incursion into the town."

Controlling Khiam is significant, as it is a strategic city located on top of the Al-Hamames Hill, 500 meters above sea level. Khiam is also one of the biggest cities in southern Lebanon in area, which allows the Israeli army to oversee northern Israel on one side and the Golan Heights on the other. An Israeli raid on the Khardali road, which connects Nabatieh to Marjaayoun and is considered a Hezbollah supply road, blocked it completely.

Meanwhile, Israeli warplanes carried out destructive aerial strikes in stages against Beirut's southern suburbs on Thursday morning.

Naqvi rules out dialogue with PTI

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi emphasised that negotiations should be conducted in a personal and respectful manner, as threats are counterproductive to dialogue.

"It is not feasible to negotiate under the shadow of threats," he stated while addressing the media in Islamabad on Thursday. Commenting on the arrival of a Belarusian delegation, the minister said that ensuring their security is a top priority. "We cannot allow any public gatherings or processions to disrupt the delegation's visit. The court's directives will be fully implemented in this regard," he affirmed.

Addressing concerns over protests, Naqvi questioned the timing of such demonstrations. "Why are protests organised on special occasions? We are committed to implementing the Chief Justice's orders while ensuring the safety of Islamabad's citizens," he said.

The minister added that any negotiations must have a clear framework and timeline. "If threats regarding November 24 persist, there will be no room for dialogue," he said, clarifying that the authority to release the PTI founder lies solely with the court. Naqvi also disclosed that 38 individuals had lost their lives in recent violence in Kurram.

Regarding political demonstrations, he reiterated that while protests within provincial boundaries are permissible, such activities cannot be allowed in Islamabad. He further noted that Barrister Gohar and Ali Amin Gandapur had recently met the PTI founder, indicating their willingness to engage in talks.

IHC directs govt to initiate talks with PTI

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court Thursday directed the interior minister to hold peaceful negotiations with PTI regarding their protest call on Nov 24. Following the hearing of a plea to stop the PTI protest on Nov 24, Chief Justice Aamer Farooq issued a five-page verdict.

The court instructed Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to initiate talks with PTI and suggested forming a committee. The minister or another suitable individual should lead the committee and engage PTI leadership. The court said the committee should inform PTI leadership about the sensitivity of the Belarusian President's visit. The court also recommended that the Chief Commissioner of Islamabad be included in the committee. The court expressed confidence that such communication could lead to progress. The court added that if negotiations fail, the Interior Minister must ensure peace in Islamabad per the law.

Govt placed containers on roads

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: In a major move to thwart the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protest scheduled for November 24, the government has started placing containers across Rawalpindi, blocking key roads to prevent the demonstration.

As part of heightened security measures, containers have already been delivered to several critical locations, including Fawara Chowk and Liaquat Road. One container has been positioned near the church on Liaquat Road, while two more containers are blocking access to the Fawara Chowk parking plaza. In response to PTI's call for a protest in Islamabad, both the Punjab and federal governments are taking aggressive steps to ensure law and order.

Additional containers are expected to be deployed along the city's main highways and streets in the coming days. Meanwhile, the Rawalpindi Police have decided to seal 47 locations across the city, setting up police pickets at 34 strategic points in the cantonment and nearby areas.

PHC orders KP CS to respond on Shamshan Ghat land plea

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A two-member bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Waqar Ahmed has directed the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to submit a report within 21 days regarding the provision of land for a Shamshan Ghat (cremation ground) for the Sikh community, on Thursday.

The petitioner Gopal Singh's lawyer argued that the Sikh community in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa lacks a dedicated Shamshan Ghat, forcing them to transport dead bodies to Attock

for funeral rites. Despite previous court directives, the community has yet to receive land for a Shamshan Ghat.

The government has offered 2 Kanals of land in Peshawar and 4 kanals in Nowshera, which is acceptable to the community. The court expressed concern over the delay in providing land for the Shamshan Ghat, despite earlier directives. The Additional Advocate General to furnish a report on the status of land allocation.

PHC's divisional bench ordered the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to

ensure the provision of boundary walls and other necessary facilities for the Shamshan Ghat and submission of a detailed report on the progress made in allocating land within 21 days.

PHC upholds murderer's lifetime imprisonment: A divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Waqar Ahmed has upheld the life imprisonment sentence and fine imposed on convicted murderer involved in a fatal dispute over charity distribution at a shrine, on Thursday.