

ASI injured in Quetta blast  
F.P. Report

QUETTA: An Assistant Sub Inspector of Police was injured Friday in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast near Brewery Chowk on the western bypass in Quetta. The blast targeted a Madadgar 15 police vehicle on patrol. The explosion caused significant damage to the vehicle, but other officers inside the vehicle were unharmed.

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Two polio cases diagnosed  
F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The battle against polio continues in Pakistan as two new cases have been reported, raising the total number of polio-infected children this year to 52. The latest victims are a one-and-a-half-year-old boy and a three-year-old girl from Daraz Nanda tehsil in Dera Ismail Khan. Despite ongoing vaccination drives, this development highlights the persistent challenge in eradicating the virus.

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# PM boasts timeless ties with S Arabia

## — Says venom against Saudi Arabia unforgivable crime; nation to break such hand

TAUNSA (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday, recounting Saudi Arabia's unconditional financial and diplomatic support to Pakistan, warned that any venom-spitting against such a brotherly country was an unforgivable crime and called for the national unity to counter such anti-state elements.

The prime minister, addressing the inauguration of the Restoration of Kachhi Canal damaged by 2022 floods, said whether it was the Kashmir issue, the United Nations or the UN Security Council, Saudi Arabia always acted as Pakistan's advocate and benefactor, as the Kingdom also bailed out Pakistan recently to seek IMF program.

"Despite this, such venom-spitting is an unforgivable crime. I as the prime minister of Pakistan want to announce that the nation will break any hand trying to undermine the Pakistan-Saudi friendship. This is not a joke. The allegation is beyond understanding. The largest national interest is being "slaughtered" to serve the short-term political interest," he remarked after inaugurating the project that will irrigate over 715,000 acres of land in Balochistan and revive life in the area turned barren after the floods.

The prime minister told the ceremony also attended by federal ministers Attaullah Tarar, Ahsan Iqbal, Awais Leghari and Dr Musaddik Malik, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, and Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti, that during the last 77 years, Saudi Arabia attached no strings or preconditions to its support to Pakistan and the current leadership had also asked its administration to invest in Pakistan as MOUs worth billions of dollars had already been signed.

Commenting on a statement by the

spouse of PTI founder regarding Saudi Arabia, he said: "There can be no animosity to Pakistan bigger than this" and explained that such people were naive to the magnitude of the damage through their "venomous" words. Prime Minister Shehbaz recalled the Kingdom's support to Pakistan after it carried out the nuclear tests in 1998 in the form of a free-of-charge oil facility as well as financial support.

He told the gathering that the feasibility study of the Kachhi Canal Project was started in 1998 during Nawaz Sharif's tenure and was completed in his second tenure after suffering a lot during Pervez Musharraf time. He appreciated the WAPDA and Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal and their respective team for accomplishing the repair project and assured the federal government's all-out support for the second phase.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also appreciated the Balochistan chief minister for reviving the merit-based order and launching the solarisation of tube-wells. Similarly, he also spoke highly for the Punjab Chief Minister for launching the project of a cancer hospital, free tractor scheme for farmers to bring about the agricultural revolution and other initiatives in the education and health sectors.

Earlier, in her address, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said the canal project would bring about prosperity in Balochistan besides enhancing closeness among the provinces. She said the credit for all mega public welfare projects like motorways, scholarships to youth, modern transport facilities including Orange Line, Metro or Speedo buses and student bikes went to the PML-N governments.

She said that having removed the

risks of defaults, the PML-N government successfully revived the economy as the stock exchange was breaking records, inflation was down to 7% and remittances were on the rise.

Coming to the PTI's call for the march, the Punjab chief minister said the people were not paying heed to their calls which were flopping one after the other. Criticising the statement by PTI founder's spouse regarding Saudi Arabia, she said it wasn't mere terrorism disrupting the progress rather the acts of attacking the other province by KP chief minister were also "very dangerous and beyond understanding."

Balochistan CM Balochistan Sarfaraz Bugti said Punjab always welcomed not only the people from Balochistan but all ethnicities for employment or education and those carrying out the targeted killings in his province were the terrorists killing Pakistanis.

He told the prime minister that the next 100-kilometer second phase of the canal needed no lined canal as it would require huge funds for construction as well as repair. He said the project could be completed within three to four months if the federal government extended support. Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal said that the federal government was prioritising Balochistan's uplift through an enhanced allocation of funds and share in the development portfolio. However, those who were disrupting peace in the province were not friends but foes of Balochistan and agents of foreign forces desiring to fight a proxy war like Afghanistan. He said the government was pursuing the agenda to employ youth and provide connectivity with Balochistan.

(Continued on Back Page)

## Court issues arrest warrant for Bushra Bibi

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: A Rawalpindi accountability court issued a non-bailable arrest warrant on Friday for former first lady Bushra Bibi over her continuous absence in court hearings in the £190 million graft case.

Accountability Judge Nasir Javed Rana presided over the hearing on Friday at Adiala Jail. Bushra Bibi did not attend the hearing, having requested an exemption on medical grounds. The hearing was adjourned to November 26 while the judge issued her non-bailable arrest warrant over continued non-attendance.

The warrant, addressed to NAB Deputy Director Mian Umar Nadeem, said she was "deliberately not appearing in before the court" and thus the watchdog was required and authorised to arrest and produce her before the court on the next hearing.

She was released from Adiala Jail on October 24, a day after being granted bail in a new Toshakhana case against her and Imran, ending nearly nine months of her detention. The former first lady was taken into custody on January 31 after an Islamabad accountability court sentenced her and Imran to 14 years in jail in the Toshakhana reference.

The Peshawar High Court on Tuesday extended her protective bail till December 23 and directed law enforcement agencies not to arrest her till then in any of the cases. Separately, Imran's release order was issued today in the new Toshakhana case after he was granted bail by the IHC on Wednesday, according to his lawyer Khalid Yousaf Chaudry. The release order directed that Imran be released if he was not wanted in any other case.

He said the release order was also deposited with the Adiala Jail administration. However, the PTI founder was not released from Adiala Jail as he still needs to secure bail in nearly two dozen other cases. He was also arrested late on Wednesday night by Rawalpindi police on terrorism charges related to a September protest.

## Bushra Bibi statement misquoted by media: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has stated that the media is taking Bushra Bibi's statements out of context. Bushra Bibi never said that General Bajwa was called by Saudi Arabia or Mohammed Bin Salman to discuss Shariah law.

"Mohammed Bin Salman and Imran Khan has excellent relations, which the Federal Government is trying to harm and destroy" Barrister stated. He added that the Federal Government, did not care about the relations between the two Islamic countries and even harming overseas Pakistanis working in Saudi Arabia.

Barrister Dr. Saif clarified that the purpose of misrepresenting Bushra Bibi's statement was to divert attention from the protest, as the fake government was terrified of the protest and would do anything to shift the focus. He urged the public not to paid attention to the baseless propaganda of the Federal

Government and to prepare for the protest.

Meanwhile, Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information & Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has strongly criticized the statements of Mohsin Naqvi and Khawaja Asif, accusing the PML-N of exploiting the tragic incidents for political gain. He stated that while the entire nation mourns the Parachinar tragedy, the illegitimate federal government is busy playing politics.

Barrister Dr. Saif emphasized that controlling terrorism is the federal government's primary responsibility, yet it remains in a state of negligence. He questioned how foreign SIM cards continue to be used openly in Pakistan, asking if the federal government has turned a blind eye to this serious issue. He further pointed out that preventing the infiltration of terrorists and their resources at the borders is the duty of federal investigative agencies and customs authorities, but they are failing to fulfill their responsibilities.

Barrister Dr. Saif highlighted that the federal government deployed multiple platoons of the Frontier Constabulary (FC) in Islamabad to suppress PTI protests, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa urgently needs these forces to combat terrorism. He criticized the federal government for using security forces for political purposes instead of addressing national security concerns.

He accused the PML-N of not only ruining the economy but also posing a significant threat to national security. He described the federal government's efforts against terrorism as a mere joke, highlighting their ineffectiveness and lack of commitment.

Dr. Saif further alleged that the federal government is employing every tactic to financially weaken Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while the provincial government remains on the front line in the fight against terrorism. He pointed out that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has allocated Rs. 7 billion to enhance police capabilities, whereas the federal government remains a mere spectator.

## Death toll in Kurram attack climbs to 42

F.P. Report

KURRAM: The death toll of firing incident on passengers convey here Friday mounted to 42 as four more victims expired at local hospital, police said. The dead also include a woman and a child after assailants opened fire on passenger vehicles in Ochat area of Kurram district on Thursday.

The convoy of 200 vehicles travelling from Parachinar to Peshawar was targeted at Char Khel and Mandori areas of the district. Police expanded circle of investigation. The bodies were shifted to Parachinar for burial.

Meanwhile, the United States has strongly condemned the devastating attack in Kurram, which claimed the lives of dozens of innocent Pakistanis and

left many others critically injured.

The tragic assault, has shaken the nation and prompted widespread condemnation from both domestic and international leaders. In a statement issued by the U.S. government on Friday, the officials extended their deepest sympathies and condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the attack. They also conveyed their hopes for a swift and full recovery for the victims who remain in critical condition following the violence.

"We stand with the Government of Pakistan and the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in this heart-breaking moment," the U.S. statement read. "The Pakistani people deserve to live free from harm, danger

and threat, and to feel protected and secure in their daily lives. The United States will remain a steadfast partner as Pakistan works to ensure the safety and security of all its citizens."

The Kurram attack, which targeted civilians in the region, highlights the ongoing challenges faced by Pakistan in combating violence and extremism. Pakistan's leadership has also condemned the attack, pledging to bring the perpetrators to justice and enhance security measures across the country.

The United States has long been a key ally to Pakistan, providing both military and economic assistance to help combat terrorism and bolster the nation's security infrastructure.



TAUNSA BARRAGE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif pressing the button to open gates for flow of water from Indus River into Kacchi Canal.

## ATC declares Gandapur as PO

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) has declared Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur a proclaimed offender.

The decision pertains to a case registered against him at Islamabad's I-9 Police Station under anti-terrorism laws. In a written order issued by ATC Judge Tahir Abbas Supra, the court stated that the case against Gandapur has been separated from the cases against other accused. Non-bailable arrest warrants were issued for co-accused Raja Rashid Hafeez, Wasif Qayyum, Raja Khurm Nawaz, Faisal Javed, and Umar Tanvir.

The lawyers for these absconding accuseds Sardar Masroof, Murtaza Tori, and Zahid Bashir Daróhad filed applications for exemption from attendance, which were rejected by the court. Their bail bonds were also cancelled. The court adjourned the hearing until November 28th.

The case against PTI leader Ali Amin Gandapur, Faisal Javed, Raja Khurm, and Wasif Qayyum was registered at the I-9 police station under anti-terrorism provisions. This development follows remarks made three days prior by the Islamabad District and Sessions Courts in a separate case involving alcohol and weapons seizure. The court had then directed police to submit a constructive report on Gandapur's arrest warrant, noting that the court could not indefinitely wait for the accused.

## PTI protest: Motorways to remain closed

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Authorities have announced the closure of different sections of motorways in wake of maintenance work from Nov 22.

The announcement comes as the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is set to hold a protest rally on Nov 24 in Islamabad, demanding release of its party founder and workers, and reversal of recently approved constitutional amendments.

"The general public has hereby informed that due to road maintenance, ...motorways will remain closed starting from 8:00 PM on November 22, 2024," reads a public notice issued by the National Highways and Motorways Police (NH&MP).

Following motorways will remain closed from 8:00pm on Friday until further orders: M-1: Islamabad to Peshawar; M-2: Islamabad to Lahore; M-3: Lahore to Abdul Hakeem; M-4: Pindi Bhattian to Multan; M-14 Hakla to Yarik; M-11 Lahore to Sialkot. The NH&MP has advised people to refrain from unnecessary travel in order to avoid inconvenience.

Meanwhile, the Punjab government imposed Section 144 across the province for three days ahead of PTI's protest. A notification in this regard was also issued by the Home Department.

## COAS resolves to hunt down enemies of peace

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir assured that Pakistan Army in collaboration with Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) will relentlessly hunt down the enemies of peace to ensure lasting stability and security.

Army chief made the remarks during his visit to Peshawar on Friday, as a follow up of the National Apex Committee meeting held on 19 November 2024 and prelude to Provincial Apex Committee Meeting to be held soon.

During the visit, COAS was provided a comprehensive briefing on the prevail-

ing security situation and the progress of ongoing counter-terrorism operations in the region. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and field commanders were also present at the occasion.

Paying profound tribute to the martyrs and Ghazis, Gen Asim Munir emphasized the unparalleled sacrifices being rendered for the defense of the motherland. He remarked that these sacrifices serve as a cornerstone of national resilience, inspiring and unwavering dedication of the Armed Forces and of Law Enforcement Agencies.

COAS commended the

high morale, operational readiness, and unyielding commitment of the troops in effectively countering all forms of threats. He reiterated the Army's firm resolve to dismantle hostile terrorist networks and eradicate the illegal spectrum undermining national security.

Highlighting the collective determination of the nation and its security forces to combat terrorism, COAS stressed that thwarting the nefarious designs of inimical elements remains a top priority. Upon his arrival, COAS was received by the Corps Commander Peshawar.

## Seven Khawarijs killed in Bannu, Balochistan IBOs

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: In a successful intelligence-based operation in Bannu district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on November 22, security forces neutralized three terrorists and injured two others.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operation targeted a terrorist hideout following credible information about their presence. The weapons, ammunition and explosives were recovered from the slain terrorists, who were involved in numerous attacks against security forces and innocent civilians. The ISPR stated that clearance operations are ongoing to eliminate any remaining threats in the area.

In Awaran district, an intelligence-based operation led to the killing of two high-value terrorists identified as Niaz alias Ghuman and Zarif alias Shah Jahan during an intense exchange of fire. In a separate operation in Dera Bugti district, another terrorist was eliminated. The security forces also killed another terrorist during a similar operation in Kech district. The ISPR confirmed that the neutralized terrorists were involved in numerous attacks on security forces and the killing of innocent civilians.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday paid tribute to the security forces for successful intelligence-based anti-terrorist operations in Awaran, Dera Bugti and Kech areas of

Balochistan.

The president and prime minister, in their separately issued statements, appreciated the bravery of the security forces who killed four terrorists in the operations including three most-wanted terrorists. "We will not allow the terrorists to disrupt the peace and development process in Balochistan. We will not let them succeed in their evil designs," the president said and reiterated the nation's resolve for continuous anti-terror operations.

The prime minister, reiterating his government's undeterred resolve to wipe out terrorism, said, "The entire nation feels proud of its security forces. We will continue to thwart the nefarious designs of the enemies of humanity."

## PM setup body to resolve issues between PML-N, PPP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday constituted a committee to ensure cooperation in political and other matters, and to resolve the issues between Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

The members of the committee include Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister

Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, and Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema.

Other members include Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Engineer Amir Muqam, Prime Minister's Advisor Rana Sanaullah, Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Malik Ahmad Khan, Senior Minister of Punjab Marriyum Aurangzeb, Khawaja Saad Rafique,

Jaffer Khan Mandokhel, and Bashir Ahmed Memon.

According to a press release issued by the PM Office, the prime minister has tasked the committee with the responsibility of political cooperation and resolving issues after detailed consultations with the Pakistan Peoples Party. The committee will engage in discussions with the members designated by the Pakistan Peoples Party to determine the future course of action.

## SC rejects petition seeking direct vote for minorities in general polls

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has rejected a petition seeking direct vote for minorities in general elections saying that all citizens were equal according to the Constitution and there was no precedent in world democracies of separate voting on the basis of religion.

Former Minister for Minorities and Convener of World Minorities Alliance J Salik, in his petition, had pleaded the apex Court that minorities in Pakistan should be given an opportunity to elect their representatives to the parliament through a direct vote in general elections.

The counsel for the petitioner argued before the Court that there were 60 seats in the National Assembly for women while 10 for minorities but all the 70 seats are filled by the parliamentary parties through proportionate representation depriving minorities to elect their representatives through a direct vote.

The Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court, however rejected

the petition. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, during the proceedings, remarked that fundamental rights are for all the citizens equally and separate voting for minorities may pave way to discrimination.

Only the parliament has the authority to legislate if any such change is required. Justice Jamal Mandokhail objected to the term 'minority' and said that it should be replaced with non-Muslim as none is minority and all citizens are equal before the law and under the Constitution.









PESHAWAR: Metropolitan staffers busy in removing encroachments during operation at Ghanta Ghar bazaar. — INP photo

## Progress of nation depends on role of public servants: Gul



**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Director General, Pakistan Provincial Services Academy (PPSA)/NIPA/PARD Peshawar Capt. (Retd.) Usman Gul here Friday said that progress and prosperity of the nation depends on the role of public servants.

He said that professional trainings of public servants equip them with bet-

ter skills and competencies to serve the nation.

He was addressing on the eve of graduation ceremony of the 41st Mid-Career Management Course - Domain Specific. 18 Officers from Balochistan, Gilgit Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa graduated from the 04-week domain specific training.

In addition, faculty member of the three training institutes and 84 pro-

bationary officers of 93rd Pre-Service PMS Course from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were also present. The Director General added that all the three training institutes viz, NIPA, PPSA and PARD Peshawar have been imparting quality trainings to the public servants to prepare them for the gigantic challenges of modern era.

He said that contents of the professional trainings

are aligned with modern training tools and techniques and the training modules are constantly updated in the light of the feedback received from the trainee officers and professionals from the public and private sectors.

He urged the graduating officers to constantly focus on their skills and use ICT tools to ensure effective public service delivery.

He called upon them to take prudent decisions on the basis of reliable and authentic data because their decisions impact lives of millions of the people. He also urged them to be impartial and sympathetic while dealing with the people.

He appreciated the untiring efforts of the faculty, staff and administration for successfully conducting the course.

Chief Instructor MCMC Domain Specific Abdul Sattar presented the course report on the occasion.

At the end, he congratulated the graduating officers and awarded course completion certificates.

## NCEG holds symposium on empowering next generation

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The National Centre of Excellence in Geology (NCEG) at the University of Peshawar hosted a one-day symposium titled "Empowering the Next Generation for a Resilient Future," addressing the pressing need for climate resilience, sustainable development, and disaster management strategies.

The symposium was organized in collaboration with several prestigious institutions, including the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Aga Khan Agency for Habitat Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Disaster Management Authority, and Rescue 1122 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The event brought together renowned experts, academicians, and professionals to discuss the challenges and solutions for building climate-resilient infrastructure and communities. Prof. Dr. Laiqat Ali,

Director of NCEG, inaugurated the symposium by highlighting the centre's academic and research activities and appreciating the collaborative efforts of the event's sponsors. He presented the Key objectives of the Symposium. He emphasized the importance of the symposium in addressing climate change and disaster preparedness through education and innovation.

Ms. Nusrat Naseeb, CEO of Aga Khan Agency for Habitat Pakistan, highlighted the agency's significant work in disaster relief and resilience-building in Northern Pakistan and the coastal areas, including the establishment of the first school in Gwadar, Balochistan. She praised NCEG's role in advancing climate change research and fostering community resilience.

Prof. Dr. Qasim Jan, Former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Peshawar, and Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad as a chief guest underscored the urgent need for water conservation in Pakistan,

stressing the responsibility of the youth in protecting the country's precious water resources. His presentation on the environmental challenges facing Pakistan served as a wake-up call for urgent action.

The symposium featured presentations from prominent experts, Prof. Dr. Amjad Ur Rahman, Climate Change Advisor, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who discussed the building of climate-resilient infrastructure and communities. Dr. Saad Khan, NCEG, who shared valuable lessons learned from the 2005 Kashmir Earthquake and its implications for geohazards assessment. Prof. Dr. Shahid Azam, University of Regina, Canada, who presented on sustainable development and the protection of soils. Professors from the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Peshawar also contributed their insights on geohazards and climate change.

The event was moderated by Col. Sami Malik, Co-ordination Lead at the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat

Pakistan. It saw an enthusiastic participation from a large number of students, academics, and professionals from various institutions.

In his closing remarks, Prof. Dr. Qasim Jan commended the collective efforts of the agencies working toward climate change mitigation and resilience in Pakistan. He also expressed gratitude to all the participants, speakers, and organizers for making the symposium a success.

Prof. Dr. Mumtaz Shah, Chairman of the Department of Earth Sciences at Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, presented the vote of thanks to the audience, acknowledging the valuable contributions of the speakers and the efforts of all those involved in organizing the event.

The symposium concluded with the distribution of shields by the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat Pakistan to the key speakers and participants, recognizing their contributions to the event.

## PGH to enhance collaboration with journalists through upcoming MoU

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The CEO of Peshawar General Hospital, Professor Dr. Malik Javed Iqbal, emphasized the significant role of the private sector in providing public health facilities. He stated that private hospitals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are delivering high-quality medical services to the public. Ensuring affordable healthcare for the middle class remains one of their top priorities.

Dr. Malik expressed these views during a discussion with a delegation from the Peshawar Press Club and the Khyber Union of Journalists. The delegation included

Peshawar Press Club President Arshad Aziz Malik, Khyber Union of Journalists President Kashifuddin Syed, Peshawar Press Club General Secretary Irfan Musa Zai, and Khyber Union of Journalists General Secretary Irshad Ali.

On this occasion, the Director of Peshawar General Hospital, Dr. Momin Afridi, provided a detailed briefing about the hospital, highlighting its critical role in serving the public and meeting their healthcare needs. He mentioned that all essential life-saving and health facilities are available under one roof, and the hospital offers services at

discounted rates, keeping in mind the financial constraints of the community.

Dr. Malik Javed thanked the delegation for visiting the hospital and observing the advancements in healthcare services for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He acknowledged the media's vital role in highlighting efforts to improve healthcare services and also discussed the hospital's future projects in detail.

Peshawar Press Club President Arshad Aziz Malik and Khyber Union of Journalists President Kashifuddin Syed commended the hospital administration for providing world-class healthcare services and assured their

full support to the administration.

During the event, it was also announced that a memorandum of understanding (MoU) would soon be signed between the Khyber Union of Journalists, the Peshawar Press Club, and Peshawar General Hospital. The purpose of the MoU is to provide essential support and relief to the journalist community.

In this regard, Dr. Malik Javed directed the hospital spokesperson, Romaisa Ahmad, to collaborate with the representatives of the Khyber Union of Journalists and the Peshawar Press Club to finalize the MoU promptly.

## Police arrest five suspects, seize rifles and pistols



**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Pishtakhra police on Friday arrested five accused persons and recovered weapons from their possession.

As per detail, under the directives of SP Cantt Division, Atizaz Arif, SHO Police Station Pishtakhra, Umar Afridi, along with his team, has continued his crackdown against anti-social elements in various areas of Peshawar. Operations were conducted along Ring Road near Omar Gul Road, Pawaky, Hazar Boz Gali, and adjacent areas, resulting in the arrest of several individuals involved in criminal activities.

During the raids, police recovered one rifle, six pistols, and multiple rounds of ammunition from the arrested suspects.

The arrested suspects, identified as Alamzeb,

Hanif Khan, Kaiser Khan, Muzamil, and Mustafa, are suspected of being involved in various criminal offenses. Cases have been registered against them, and investigations

are underway to determine their further involvement in illegal activities.

This operation is part of ongoing efforts to maintain law and order in the

city. SP Cantt Division Atizaz Arif has emphasized that such actions will continue in order to suppress criminal activities and ensure the safety and security of the public.

## Court grants remand of Customs Officer in murder case

**Humayun Khan**

PESHAWAR: A Judicial Magistrate Peshawar has granted a one-day physical remand of Customs Officer Irfan Ullah, accused of murdering a man in front of his children, on Friday.

The accused was produced before the court, where the investigation officer revealed that Irfan Ullah is a grade 19 officer at the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

The accused allegedly killed Abdul Rahman, the father of the children, on the main road over a dispute related to a vehicle transaction.

A video of the incident went viral on social media. Police arrested the accused the previous day, recovering the murder weapon from the crime scene, the prosecution stated.

The investigation officer requested the court to grant physical remand of the accused for further investigation. The court accepted the request and granted a one-day physical remand of the accused.

## Int'l Day of Persons with Disabilities Paraplegic Center to observe Day on Dec 3

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The Paraplegic Center Peshawar has decided to observe the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3. A special ceremony will be held on this occasion, featuring a variety of colorful programs, including entertaining skits, poetry recitals, and indoor games.

The event will be attended by students and faculty members from various universities and colleges in Peshawar, as well

as representatives from medical institutions. The Chief Minister and the Provincial Health Minister will also be invited as guests of honor. To ensure the success of the event, five committees have been formed to oversee the arrangements.

Moreover, four categories have been established for the stalls to be set up by educational and medical institutions. The organizers who demonstrate exceptional performance in managing the event will be awarded prizes.

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities is observed globally on December 3. The purpose of this day is to highlight the issues faced by people with disabilities worldwide and to emphasize their potential contributions to society. By hosting this event, the Paraplegic Center Peshawar aims to promote awareness about the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities and to encourage their integration into mainstream society.

## Govt, UNICEF celebrate world children day

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: In a significant step towards ensuring the protection and welfare of children in the province, Social Welfare Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with UNICEF on Wednesday celebrated the World Children's day with the street children here.

This event was truly special in the sense that it focused on the issues of street children and how their lives are affected by working and living on the streets in Peshawar city. It was an acknowledgement of their experiences and challenges while living and working on the streets.

The Chief Guest on the occasion was Minister for Social Welfare, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Syed Qasim Ali Shah while Secretary Social Welfare Department KP, Syed Nazar Hussain Shah, Director Social Welfare Department (MDs), Obaid ur Rahman, Commissioner Peshawar, Riaz Mehud, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Sarmad Saleem, M. Radek C/O UNICEF, Wasam Program Manager, UNICEF and Sohail Ahmad child Protection Specialist UNICEF.

Department of Social Welfare, KPCPWC and UNICEF organized this event, which on the one side highlighted the importance of the global commitment to make this

world a better place for every child, and, on the other side presented the true-face of hardships in which this huge number of children are earning their living from the streets in an age in which they should enjoy their childhood through education, cultural activities and making friends and friendships.

In his opening remarks, Secretary, Social Welfare, Department said hosting the event for street children was aimed to showcase their active participation in various project interventions, including life skills training, peer support networks, recreational and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) activities. Additionally, the were invited to share their experiences with the government and stakeholders so that their problems and challenges could be addressed by establishing clear policies, and reducing the risks of rights exploitation faced by them while working on the streets.

The event also presented a theatre highlighting the lived experiences of street children and what needs to be done to transform their lives. The event also presented the art and creative work of the street children which they had developed during the project interventions managed by Social Welfare

Department in support of UNICEF.

Speaking on the occasion, Sohail Ahmad, Child Protection Specialist from UNICEF said that a strategy should be calked out to provide all basic services to these children and their families and link them with child protection and social protection services for proper rehabilitation and psychosocial support. In his remarks, Radek, C/O UNICEF also appreciated the efforts of social welfare department for organizing the event on the occasion of World Children's Day and recommending to the international obligations and children's rights as given in the Child Rights Convention.

He also advocated to the government for reviewing its policy and strategy to the street children and all marginalized groups in the province and how to ensure they are mainstreamed in the society sooner than later. The Minister for Social Welfare in his closing remarks, expressed his concerns on the conditions in which these children are living and how its impacts their lives.

He said, this is not the true face of a civilized nation and a caring society. These children, often driven to the streets by poverty, family breakdown, or displacement, face numerous challenges and vulnerabilities on daily basis.



PESHAWAR: Member National Assembly from Pakistan People's Party Sajid Tori addressing a press conference regarding Parachinar incident.





## In brief

### Two friends shot dead in Swabi F.P. Report

SWABI: At close friends were killed and another injured when their alleged rivals fired at them inside a general store in Swabi district on Friday morning. Police said two friends named Jawad and Fawad and owner of the shop, Umair were fired at by the assailants inside the shop, which police said was a likely result of an old rivalry between the deceased and attackers. As a result, Jawad and Fawad were killed while the shop owner, Umair, was injured. Rescue 1122 workers shifted the bodies and the injured to DHQ Hospital. Police said the assailants managed to flee the area, adding that an old rivalry between the attackers and the deceased, Fawad and his family, was the motive behind the incident.

### Rescue 1122 hold first aid training F.P. Report

BUNER: Rescue 1122 conducted a comprehensive First Aid, BLS, and Fire Safety training session at University of Buner in which students and staff participated, on Friday. The first training led by Nizamullah Khan, under the directions of Director General Rescue 1122 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Ayaz Muhammad, and Regional Director North Arshad Iqbal, and supervision of District Emergency Officer Engineer Kashif Khan Yousafzai. The training encompassed hands-on sessions included CPR, wound treatment, bleeding control, bone fractures, cardiac and respiratory emergencies, fire chemistry, firefighting, fire prevention. Vice Chancellor UOB Dr. Saiful Islam, thanked District Emergency Officer Engineer Kashif Khan Yousafzai and his team, emphasizing the university's commitment to ongoing rescue training for its students.

### Two killed, three injured F.P. Report

NASEERABAD: A violent clash over a land dispute in the Munjushuru area of Naseerabad, Balochistan, left two men dead and three others injured on Friday. According to police, the incident occurred when two rival groups exchanged gunfire over the disputed land. The deceased were identified as Wadera Muhammad Alam and Muntaz Munju. Three others sustained injuries in the clash and were rushed to District Headquarters Hospital Dera Murad Jamali for treatment. The victims' bodies were handed over to their families after medico-legal formalities, while the injured were receiving medical care. The incident has plunged the victims' homes into mourning. Authorities at the Munjushura Police Station have initiated further investigations into the matter.

### Judicial probe demanded F.P. Report

QUETTA: Nisar Yagdar Sarangzai, a provincial leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), today demanded judicial probe into Quetta Safe City Project scam. In a statement, Sarangzai revealed that Rs7 billion were allocated to the firm for installing surveillance cameras across Quetta. He also urged authorities to blacklist the firm responsible for installing substandard cameras under the project. "Many of these cameras are reportedly non-functional." He emphasized that the project aimed to enhance crime control in the city, but its failure to deliver has left the goal unachieved.

## KP Youth Affairs Dept commits for empowerment via 'learn to lead'

### F.P. Report

MARDAN: District Youth Affairs Office Mardan organized an event, "Learn to Lead" in collaboration with "The Blood Heroes Team" at GPGC Mardan. It was a powerful and inspiring gathering aimed at empowering the youth to step up and embrace leadership roles in their communities. The event brought together community leaders who shared their knowledge, experience, and vision for boosting leadership qualities among youth of the region.

Distinguished guests who graced the occasion included principal of GPGC Mardan Muhammad Ibrar encouraged participants to develop a centered around growth and take initiative in their personal and professional lives. SP City Shafi Ur Rehman, who spoke on the importance of integrity and responsibility in leadership.

Dr. Gulalai Arshad, Founder and Director of The Blood Hero (TBH), who highlighted the significance of selfless service, voluntarism, and the role of youth in shaping a healthier society through blood donation and social responsibility. Hilal Uddin, Provincial Representative of TBH KPK, stressed on the value of teamwork and collective action in achieving greater social impact.

Fawad Jan, Provincial Core Adviser, the Blood Hero (TBH), who shared

his expertise on strategic thinking and decision-making that are crucial in effective leadership. Provincial General Secretary Waleed Ahmad inspired the audience with his thoughts on perseverance and the importance of staying true to one's values while leading others.

**DRC empowerment to ensure speedy justice:** In an effort to strengthen the Dispute Resolution Councils (DRC) of Mardan Division, a consultative workshop was held today attended by DRC representatives from Mardan, Nowshera, Charsadda and Swabi at Police Lines Mardan organized by Peace & Justice Network (PJN) in collaboration with UNDP Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police.

This activity was held through the EU-funded "Deliver Justice Project" aimed at making justice more accessible and inclusive in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. DRCs are an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) forum established under the KP Police Act 2017 and provide alternative dispute resolution services at the police station, subdivision, and district level.

A statutory forum, the DRC provides services to the masses at the grass root level enabling citizens to benefit from out of court services for dispute resolution. During the opening session of the workshop on

strengthening.

**Ashraf Khan services praised:** Ashraf Khan needs no introduction; he is counted among the senior journalists of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he had been associated with journalism for the past four decades. Senior journalist Ashraf Khan has been serving as Bureau Chief in Mardan for a long time for Geo News and Daily Peshawar Aaj, Daily Jang Rawalpindi, Ashraf Khan is one of the shining stars in the sky of journalism who has left no stone unturned in highlighting the problems of Mardan through his pen.

You have always supported the oppressed and have raised the voice of truth without hesitation, You are an excellent journalist as well as a compassionate and compassionate human being, You are the epitome of principles, always performing your professional duties in the best possible manner.

Respected Ashraf Khan is a valuable asset of the country and the nation and in view of his journalistic services, in a prestigious ceremony held at the Press Club, President of Mardan Press Club M. Bashir Adil and other officials awarded Ashraf Khan for his excellent journalistic services. Awarded first position and cash award, not only the press club but the whole of Mardan is proud and proud of Ashraf Khan, the senior journalist colleague.

## KUST conducts carrier awareness session

### Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) ream conducts awareness session at Unique Institute of Technology, Public Relations Officer Rashid Ishaq along with his team comprising Murad, Amna, and Maryam to enlighten students about the diverse academic disci-

plines offered by the university, as well as the career opportunities and scope associated with each field.

The interactive session garnered enthusiastic participation from college staff, Principal, and students. The session also highlighted the recent initiative just taken entitled youth development center, where it intends to guide

youths on their career prospects.

Vice chancellor KUST Professor Dr. Muhammad Naseer Uddin and Registrar Dr. Imran Ali widely appreciated team efforts, with praise for conducting such valuable sessions that bridge the gap between students' aspirations and higher education opportunities.

## Admn to do its best to protect rights of children



### F.P. Report

KOHAT: Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram has said that the district administration will do all its best to protect the rights of the children. He was addressing a special ceremony on the eve of the Universal Children Day held at Nishtar Special Education Center KDA on Friday.

The ceremony, beside others, was also attended by the District Officer Social Welfare Amjad

Khan Afridi, Medical Superintendent DHQ Hospital, Principal Nishtar Special Education Center, Chief of Karwan Amal Saleem Altaf Advocate and authorities concerned.

Addressing the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Kohat assured all possible help and cooperation for the rights of children on behalf of the district administration. He also highlighted the government's commitment to protect their rights and privileges in

detail.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner Kohat also paid a detailed visit to various sectors of KDA Kohat to inspect the ongoing work there under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project (KPCIP) and reviewed the progress made so far on the ongoing work under the said project. He gave necessary directions to the authorities concerned to ensure quality work and its timely completion.

## Scientific exhibition held at Govt Girls College

### F.P. Report

LARKANA: A scientific exhibition was organized in the Government Girls Degree College of Larkana, in which projects related to science, technology, engineering, art and craft made by students were showcased, on Friday.

On this occasion, the special guests were Deputy Commissioner Larkana Dr. Sharjeel Noor Channa, Vice Chancellor University of Larkana Prof. Muhammad Usman kereo, Director Regional Colleges Larkana Prof.

Altaf Hussain Abro, Additional Director Inspection Colleges Larkana Region Ajaz Ali Jamali, College Principal Prof. Nafis Ansari and others. The guests visited the exhibition where the students presented their hand-made models.

Speaking to the media, the Deputy Commissioner and other guests said that after the college level, district level, regional level and then provincial level, this kind of exhibition will be organized by the college education department, the aim of which is to highlight

the skills of the students. They said that by putting up such an exhibition, the students will get maximum benefit.

**Regional ombudsman proceeds 13 pleas:** Regional Director Provincial Ombudsman of Sindh Larkana Division, Ali Akbar Jagirani, reached at Qamber and gave instructions to District Accounts Officer Qamber Shahdadkot. Do not face any kind of trouble, he expressed such ideas during an open conversation in the finance department office of Qamber district.

## Govt committed provision of early passports to citizens F.P. Report

ZHOB: Assistant Director Regional Passport Office (RPO) Zhob Yousuf Rasheed has said that a passport is an important travel document, which is provided to Pakistani citizens by the Directorate General of Immigration - the Ministry of Interior. The Zhob regional passport office in Zhob is delivering its services in a very efficient manner. Efforts are underway to ensure timely provision of passports to citizens. He expressed these views while talking to journalist Rafiullah Mandokhel here on Friday.

The Regional Passport Officer Yousuf Rasheed, who worked on the key positions at the passport office in different parts of the country, including the federal capital Islamabad, further said that as per the instructions and policy of the Directorate General of Immigration and Passports (DGI&P), special arrangements have been made for the citizens, especially senior citizens and women, and obtaining a passport has been made easiest, providing a smooth and hassle-free environment to the applicants.

"In order to address concerns and resolve issues promptly, the government has introduced another category, 'Fast Track', in addition to 'Urgent', for the citizens traveling abroad in emergencies. The decision has made smooth obtaining a passport," he added.

Meanwhile, social and public circles of Zhob have lauded the outstanding services and best performance of the Assistant Director Regional Passport Office, Yousuf Rasheed, saying that since he took charge of his office, the grievances of the applicants have significantly been addressed. A statement said that the passport officer is honest and capable and performing his duty in an efficient manner with professionalism and courtesy. His professional attitude, helpful performance, and quality of services are appreciable. They expressed hope that the officer would continue to serve with the same dedication and enthusiasm also in the future.

## Presidential Ord aimed at public welfare F.P. Report

KOTLI: President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, has said that the Presidential Ordinance was introduced in the public's interest to alleviate the challenges caused by frequent road closures, unnecessary rallies, and protests.

According to a statement issued today, he emphasized that such disruptions cause considerable inconvenience for the public, particularly affecting students, employees, and patients who struggle to reach schools, offices, and hospitals in a timely manner.

Chaudhry recalled a previous incident in Kotli, where a government minister, Malik Zafar Iqbal, was unable to attend a rally due to the same type of protest, which prevented his convoy from reaching the venue. Addressing the 5th Convocation of the University of Kotli as the chief guest, Chaudhry congratulated the graduates for achieving an important milestone in their academic careers. He also praised the students who earned gold medals for their outstanding performance, noting that they had made their families and teachers proud.

As Chancellor of Azad Jammu and Kashmir universities, Chaudhry expressed his honor in presiding over the convocation ceremony and highlighted the university's efforts to build a mosque on a five-kanal plot of land for the spiritual benefit of students and staff. The mosque's construction costs are being covered by the Aastana Alia Ghulaha Sharif. Additionally, Chaudhry inaugurated the new building of the Faculty of Basic and Applied Sciences at the University of Kotli.

## GGDC Takht Bhai shines in annual declamation contest



### F.P. Report

TAKHT BHAI: A talented student of Government Girls Degree College Takht Bhai, District Mardan, Hina Khalid has honored Tehsil Takht Bhai and especially her college by securing second position in the annual declamation contest organized by the National Accountability Bureau, Peshawar under the awareness campaign against the menace of corruption here in the metropolitan city.

The annual speech competitions aimed at raising awareness against the menace of corruption concluded at NAB Peshawar. These competitions were held at school, college, and university levels in both Urdu and English languages in which students from across the province participated. Hina Khalid, a skilled third-semester BS English student from Government Girls Degree College Takht Bhai, secured second position at the college level in the Urdu speech competition throughout the province.

Speaking to the media, Hina Khalid credited her success to the hard work and

guidance of her college Principal Professor Bibi Salma, and three lecturers: Nasaha Khan, Asma Ali, and Sarah Nawaz. She expressed sadness over the absence of the Principal and Lecturer Nasaha Khan on this joyous occasion due to their personal engagements saying she deeply wished they could have been present to share in the moment.

Appreciating NAB's efforts, she said that such speech competitions help students showcase their talents. She emphasized that speaking on a topic in front of an audience is not easy, but opportunities like these boost students' confidence. Hina Khalid highlighted that extracurricular activities, especially speeches, enhance students' communication skills, enabling them to achieve success in their respective fields, thereby bringing pride to their parents and educational institutions.

She also urged parents not to deprive their daughters of education and to equip them with knowledge so they can contribute to the nation's development, support their families, and secure a better future for themselves.

## Farmers trained to ensure maximum cultivation

### F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: A seminar has been arranged for wheat farmers in which Dr. Javid Ahmad Director Vet Punjab was chief speaker of the event, on Friday.

The program was presided over by Deputy Director Agriculture Extension Toba Tek Singh Dr. Noshair Khan. Director Pest Waring Faisalabad Israr Arshad and former Deputy District Chairman Toba Tek Singh Khalid Sardar, farmers representative organizations and a large number of progressive farmers participated in the program.

Addressing the program, Chief Guest Director Vet Punjab Dr. Javid Ahmad emphasized on the farmers that by following the recommendations given by FFC agricultural experts in the seminar, they can increase their average wheat production. He said that balanced use of fertilizers is extremely important to achieve the goal of wheat self-sufficiency. He further informed that Pakistan's wheat production target for

this year has been set at 33.58 million tons, which is almost 10% higher than last year.

On this occasion Liaquat Ali Wahla, in-charge of Farm Advisory Center of FFC, Sheikhupura, said that through the balanced use of fertilizers, it is possible to increase the average yield of wheat in Pakistan by more than 50%. He emphasized to the farmers that wheat production can be increased significantly by adopting modern technology and balanced use of fertilizers in the light of soil analysis.

He said that FFC has produced more than 3.7 million tons of fertilizer in Pakistan and is also actively involved in the practical training of farmers through a team of agricultural experts across the country.

This seminar is also a link in the same chain. He further informed that FFC farmers for more than last 4 years is providing facilities and has provided agricultural facilities to more than 10 lakh farmers and more than 600,000 free analyzes of soil and water have been done. Hassan Raza, agrono-

mist of FFC, said that to remove the lack of nutrients, organic fertilizers must be used as well as chemical fertilizers. He also highlighted the role of major components and minor components. He said that there has been a severe deficiency of phosphorus, potassium, nitrogen, zinc and boron in the lands of Toba Tek Singh.

Deficiency of phosphorus and nitrogen has been found in 100% of the areas. While the deficiency of potassium, zinc and boron is 75, 85 and 70% respectively. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Director Agriculture Extension Toba Tek Singh Dr. Noshair Khan emphasized on the farmers that by adopting modern technology and balanced use of fertilizers in the light of soil analysis, the production of wheat can increase significantly.

He said that by following the recommendations of FFC, if there is an increase of one man per acre, the country's economy will benefit by one trillion rupees. He also thanked FFC for organizing such an excellent program.

## Coastal communities facing especially fishermen's plight

### F.P. Report

SUJAWAL: The fishing communities along the coastline of Sujawal, Thatta, and Badin districts are facing numerous challenges, despite claims of development in the region. Fishermen from various villages in Taluka Jati, Sujawal, expressed frustration over the indifferent attitude of government authorities and civil society towards their plight.

They pointed out that substantial aid and funding for fishermen communities are being received by government departments and NGOs, but none of these organizations have taken concrete steps to improve the lives of fisher folk. The coastal areas of Sujawal and Thatta have suffered significantly due to natural disasters, including the 1999 cyclone, 2003 heavy rains, and 2010 flash floods. The region continues to bear the harsh consequences of climate change, with no meaningful rehabilitation efforts by the government.

While acknowledging the efforts of the Pakistan Fisher Folk Forum and its founder, the late Syed Muhammad Ali Shah, in raising awareness among fishermen, the coastal inhabitants emphasized that these efforts alone are

insufficient to bring about meaningful change for the marginalized community.

A local activist Wali Muhammad Temro, said that several lakes of fresh water had been destroyed in the wake of persistent natural disasters, mainly heavy rains and water scarcity that led to shrinking livelihood opportunities for the fishermen. "The famous natural lakes of the past - Chaubhati, Til, Chann Bhelo, Karr, Kalkaan Channi and many others - vanished in the sea and today there is no sign of their existence". He said and added that the coastal areas possess a large number of expert fishermen who spent majority of their time fishing in high seas.

Pir Muhammad Malah believed that overfishing and destruction of fish species had been a long-standing challenge for fishermen during the past two decades. Nawaz Sheikh, a senior columnist and researcher, said that water scarcity in the Indus River and sea intrusion compelled thousands of fishermen families in Ketri Bunder, Jati Shah Bunder and Kharochan to abandon their ancestral job of fishing and resort to some other work to make ends meet.

Haji Zahid Ishaque Somro a social activist and writer deplored the scheme

of six canals and called it a devastating Plan for the fisher folk of Sindh. He further said that the scheme of 6 canals would exacerbate water shortage in the coastal region. Noor Muhammad Themore, Ghani Malah and Ibrahim Dandal said that the ecology of the coastal areas was also at stake and the government as well as civil society should take measures for the preservation and rehabilitation of coastal ecology.

## 5 profiteers arrested F.P. Report

SARGODHA: The price control magistrates arrested five shopkeepers accused of profiteering from various parts of the city, here on Friday.

According to official sources, the magistrates inspected various points including Mari-Jhal Chakian, Khushab road and its surroundings and arrested five shopkeepers including Muhammad Fayyaz, Shakeel, Zulfiqar, Muhammad Akhtar and Ramzan for overcharging and imposed hefty fines on various shopkeepers. Cases were registered against the accused.





# Trump convinced Republicans to overlook his misconduct

WASHINGTON (AP): In the two weeks since Donald Trump won the presidency, he's tried to demonstrate his dominance by naming loyalists for top administration positions, even though many lack expertise and some face sexual misconduct accusations. It often seems like he's daring Congress to oppose his decisions.

But, Trump's attempt to act with impunity showed a crack as Matt Gaetz, his choice for attorney general, withdrew from consideration. Trump had named Gaetz, a Florida congressman, to be the country's top law enforcement official even though he was widely disliked by his colleagues, has little legal experience and was accused of having sex with an underage girl, an allegation he denied. After being plagued by investigations during his first presidency, Trump wanted a devoted ally in charge of the Justice Department during his second.

However, it was never obvious that Gaetz could win enough support from lawmakers to get confirmed as attorney general. Trump chose for a replacement Pam Bondi, a former Florida attorney general who defended him during his first impeachment trial and supported his false claims of voter fraud. Now the question is whether Gaetz was uniquely unpalatable, or if Trump's other picks might exceed his party's willingness to overlook concerns that would have sunk nominees in a prior political era.

The next test will likely be Pete Hegseth, who Trump wants to lead the Pentagon despite an allegation of sexual assault that he's denied. So far, Republicans are rallying around Hegseth, an Army veteran and former Fox News host. Sen. Thom Tillis, a North Carolina Republican who serves on the Senate Judiciary Committee, said the controversy over Gaetz would have little bearing on Trump's other choices. He said they would be considered "one at a time." Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a Connecticut Democrat, suggested otherwise, claiming "the dominoes are falling."

"The drip drip of evidence and truth is going to eventually doom some others," he said. Trump's election victory was a sign that there may not be many red lines left in American politics. He won the presi-

dential race despite authoritarian, racist and misogynist rhetoric, not to mention years of lies about election fraud and his role in sparking the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol. He was also criminally convicted of falsifying business records to pay hush money, and he was found liable for sexual abuse in a civil case.

Empowered by voters who looked past his misconduct and saw him as a powerful agent of change, Trump has shown no deference to Washington norms while working to fill his second administration. The transition team hasn't pursued federal background checks for Trump's personnel choices. While some of his selections have extensive experience in the areas they've been chosen to lead, others are personal friends and Fox News personalities who have impressed and flattered Trump over the years. Several have faced allegations involving sexual misconduct. Hegseth is facing the most scrutiny after Gaetz. Once Trump announced Hegseth as his nominee for Pentagon chief, allegations emerged that he sexually assaulted a woman in California in 2017.

The woman said he took her phone, blocked the door to the hotel room and refused to let her leave, according to a police report made public this week. Hegseth told police at the time that the encounter had been consensual and denied any wrongdoing, the report said. However, he paid the woman a confidential settlement in 2023. Hegseth's lawyer said the payment was made to head off the threat of a baseless lawsuit. Trump's choice for secretary of health and human Services, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., has faced allegations of misconduct too. A woman who babysat for him and his second wife told Vanity Fair magazine that Kennedy groped her in the late 1990s, when she was 23. Kennedy did not deny the allegation and texted an apology to the woman after the article was published. That isn't the only hurdle for Kennedy; he's spent years spreading misinformation and conspiracy theories about vaccines, raising fears about making him a top health official in the new administration.

Linda McMahon, chosen by Trump to be education secretary, is

fighting a lawsuit connected to her former company, World Wrestling Entertainment. She's accused of knowingly enabling sexual exploitation of children by an employee as early as the 1980s, and she denies the allegations. Tulsi Gabbard is another person who could face a difficult confirmation battle, but for very different reasons. The former Democratic representative from Hawaii has been a vocal Trump ally, and he chose her to be national intelligence director. But there's grave concern by lawmakers and national security officials over Gabbard's history of echoing Russian propaganda. Critics said she would endanger relationships with US allies. Gaetz was investigated by federal law enforcement for sex trafficking, but the case was closed without charges and Republicans have blocked the release of a related report from the House Ethics Committee.

However, some allegations leaked out, including that Gaetz paid women for sex. One of the women testified to the committee that she saw Gaetz having sex with a 17-year-old girl, according to a lawyer for the woman. As Gaetz met with senators this week, it became clear that he would face stubborn resistance from lawmakers who were concerned about his behavior and believed he was unqualified to run the Justice Department. "While the momentum was strong, it is clear that my confirmation was unfairly becoming a distraction," Gaetz wrote on social media when announcing his withdrawal.

Sen. Mike Braun, an Indiana Republican, said he believed there were four to six members of the caucus who would have voted against Gaetz, likely dooming his nomination, and "the math got too hard." He said some of the issues and allegations around Gaetz were "maybe beyond the pale." "I think there were just too many things, it was like a leaky dike, and you know, it broke," Braun said. Trump thanked Gaetz in a post on Truth Social, his social media website, without addressing the substance of the allegations against him. "He was doing very well but, at the same time, did not want to be a distraction for the Administration, for which he has much respect," Trump wrote.

## Musk outlines plans for mass cuts as Trump 'efficiency' czar

WASHINGTON (AFP): Elon Musk outlined plans for his new role as "efficiency" czar -- signaling an assault on federal spending and staffing that would be backed by President-elect Donald Trump's executive powers and a conservative Supreme Court.

Writing in the Wall Street Journal, the world's richest man said he was taking aim at hundreds of billions of dollars in government spending -- including funding for public broadcasting and international aid -- as well as at bureaucracy that represents, according to him, an "existential threat" to US democracy. The Tesla and SpaceX CEO, who also owns the X social media platform, said that he and Vivek Ramaswamy, a fellow businessman and Trump loyalist, would work to slash federal regulations and make major administrative changes.

"We are entrepreneurs, not politicians. We will serve as outside volunteers, not federal officials or employees," Musk and Ramaswamy wrote in their most detailed remarks since Trump named them heads of a new so-called Department of Government Efficiency. They said DOGE -- expected to function more as an advisory group rather than a formal department -- will prepare a list of regulations which Trump could invalidate unilaterally. "When the president nullifies thousands of such regulations, critics will allege executive overreach. In fact, it will be correcting the executive overreach of thousands of regulations promulgated by administrative fiat that were never authorized by Congress," they said.

Musk and Ramaswamy added that a reduction in regulations would pave the way for "mass head-count reductions across the federal bureaucracy," and said DOGE would aim to cut more than \$500 billion in government expenditures. "With a decisive electoral mandate and a 6-3 conservative majority on the Supreme Court, DOGE has a historic opportunity for structural reductions in the federal government," they said.

Moves to gut programs will almost certainly face political pushback, even from Republicans, and prompt legal challenges. However Musk and Ramaswamy voiced confidence that recent rulings by the conservative-dominated Supreme Court would allow them to push through the ambitious agenda. "With a decisive electoral mandate and a 6-3 conservative majority on the Supreme Court, DOGE has a historic opportunity for structural reductions in the federal government," they said.

They said that DOGE's top goal was to not be needed by July 4, 2026, which was described as an expiration date for the project. Musk become a close ally to Trump during his campaign, reportedly spending over \$100 million to boost his presidential bid and joining him at rallies. However, with Musk's businesses all having varying degrees of interactions with US and foreign governments, his new position also raises concerns about conflict of interest. The South African-born billionaire invited Trump to watch a test flight of his SpaceX company in a sign of ever closer ties between the pair. But their relationship -- defined by combustible personalities and some past policy differences -- could be subject to friction once the reality of political life sets in.

# Kim accuses US of stoking tension, warns of nuke war

SEOUL (Reuters): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has accused the United States of ramping up tension and provocations, saying the Korean peninsula has never faced such risks of nuclear war as now, state media KCNA said.

In a speech at a military exhibition in Pyongyang, Kim said his previous experience of negotiations with Washington only highlighted its "aggressive and hostile" policy against Pyongyang, KCNA said. "Never before have the warring parties on the Korean peninsula faced such a dangerous and acute confrontation that it could escalate into the most destructive thermonuclear war," Kim said, according to KCNA.

"We have already gone as far as we can on negotiating with the United States, but what we became certain of from the result is not the superpower's willingness to coexist, but its thorough stance of power and aggressive and hostile policy toward us that can never change." During US President-elect Donald Trump's first term, he and Kim held three unprecedented meetings in Singapore, Hanoi, and at the Korean border in 2018



and 2019. But their diplomacy failed to achieve any concrete outcome due to differences between US calls for North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons and Kim's demands for sanctions relief.

Trump has long touted his ties with Kim, saying last month that the two countries "would've had a nuclear war with millions of people killed" but he stopped it thanks to their relationship. North Korean state media has not yet publicly mentioned Trump's reelection. Kim, in the speech, called for developing and upgrading weaponry into "ultra-modern ones" and vowed to continue advancing defence capabilities to bolster the

country's strategic position, KCNA said.

The event, called the Defence Development Exhibition, featured strategic and tactical weapons. Kim's latest speech came amid international criticism over increasingly deepening military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow, with North Korea having sent more than 10,000 troops to Russia to support its war against Ukraine. Last week, Kim urged the country's military to improve capabilities for fighting a war, blaming the United States and its allies for stoking tension to "the worst phase in history" and calling the Korean peninsula "the world's biggest hotspot."

# Putin touts Russia's new missile

MOSCOW (AP): The new ballistic missile fired by Russia struck a military-industrial facility in the central Ukrainian city of Dnipro, but its real mission was delivering a deadly new message to NATO. Hours after strike touched off a debate over whether the Ukrainian plant was hit by an intercontinental ballistic missile, President Vladimir Putin made a rare and surprise appearance on Russian television to clear up the mystery.

He described it as a new, intermediate-range ballistic missile that raced to its target at 10 times the speed of sound. "Modern air defense systems that exist in the world and anti-missile defenses created by the Americans in Europe can't intercept such missiles," Putin declared in an icy and menacing tone. The attack marked the first time that such a missile was used in the war - or in any conflict. The dramatic events came in a week of soaring tensions as Ukraine struck targets in Russia with American-made longer-range missiles after the US eased restrictions on their use and Putin responded by lowering the threshold for using Moscow's nuclear arsenal.

Putin said the missile was called "Oreshnik," which in Russian means "hazelnut tree," and that this first combat test of it "has gone successfully." He said in July that Russia would start producing intermediate-range missiles to "mirror" US plans to deploy such weapons. In his speech, he said Russia developed Oreshnik in response to the US development and deployment of missiles with a similar range. Intermediate-range missiles, or IRBMs, can fly between 500 to 5,500 kilometers (310 to 3,400 miles). Ukrainian military officials said the missile was launched from the Russian region of Astrakhan on the Caspian Sea, 800 kilometers (500 miles) to the east.

While Russia has launched cruise missiles at Ukraine from even longer ranges, the new intermediate range missile marked the first such use of this kind of ground-launched ballistic missile, which can carry a much heavier conventional payload and could also be fitted with multiple

nuclear warheads. Putin boasted that the missile, the latest in Russia's arsenal of hypersonic weapons, reaches its target at speeds of Mach 10, rendering Western missile defenses useless. Matthew Savill, director of military sciences at the Royal United Services Institute, noted that the missile used has a range "way beyond any of that seen in this conflict so far and possibly the first ever use in combat."

He said the missile was capable of releasing multiple warheads at extremely high speeds, even though they are less accurate than cruise missiles or short-range ballistic missiles. Video of the strike showed six fiery trails followed by powerful explosions -- an apparent sign of the multiple warheads being used. The authenticity of the videos couldn't be independently confirmed.

As for Putin's claim that the Western systems could not intercept the missile, Savill said "these are quite hard to defend against" even for advanced US Patriot systems. "You're dropping multiple independently targetable warheads, MIRVs, at extremely high speed, so even Patriot will struggle to basically intercept those," he said. Putin has described use of the Oreshnik as a response to Ukrainian strikes on Russian military facilities in Bryansk and Kursk regions earlier this week with Western-supplied weapons.

One of those strikes killed and wounded an unspecified number of Russian servicemen, which the Kremlin leader said added "elements of a global character" to the conflict. Putin has warned previously that use of the Western weapons would mean that Russia and NATO are at war. "We believe that we have the right to use our weapons against military facilities of the countries that allow to use their weapons against our facilities," he said. "And in case of escalation of aggressive actions we will respond resolutely in a mirror way." If Russia launches more strikes on Ukraine with the new missile, it will warn of its use in advance to allow civilians to reach safety as a "humanitarian" gesture, Putin said, adding

that Moscow isn't worried about tipping off the enemy since it cannot stop the attack

"I would recommend the ruling elites of the countries that are hatching plans to use their military contingents against Russia to seriously think about it," Putin said. Savill said the new missile is sending a fear-inducing signal from Russia that "we've got stuff that outrages you." The larger message to the West is that "we're happy to enter into a competition around intermediate-range ballistic missiles. P.S. These could be nuclear tipped. Do you really want to take that risk?" Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy secretary of Russia's Security Council that is chaired by Putin, stepped up the rhetoric by posting a video of the missile attack on Ukraine and chastising the West. "So, that's what you wanted? Well, you've damn well got it! A hypersonic ballistic missile attack," he posted on X.

What was the response of Ukraine and the West? In a speech to the nation, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy denounced the attack and accused Moscow of using Ukraine as a testing ground for its new weapon. "Today, our insane neighbor has once again shown what they truly are, and how they despise dignity, freedom, and human life itself. And how terrified they are," he said. Two US officials, who were not authorized to comment publicly about the sensitive matter and thus spoke on condition of anonymity said Russia only has a few of this type of experimental missile in its possession and it is not a capability that is expected to be regularly deployed against Ukraine. U.K. Defense Secretary John Healey told lawmakers that the war was at "a serious moment," and "the front line is now less stable than at any time" since the conflict began. "We have seen in recent weeks a very clear escalation from Putin and his forces," he said. "They have stepped up attacks on the energy system in Ukraine ahead of winter, they have stepped up attacks on civilian centers killing children, they have deployed at least 10,000 North Korean troops to the battle front line."

# Inside South Korean weapons factory that could supply Kyiv

SEOUL (AFP): At the outskirts of a South Korean industrial city, workers at a sprawling weapons factory were conducting final-stage testing for a newly built surface-to-air defence system that could, eventually, head to Ukraine.

Longstanding domestic policy bars Seoul from sending weapons into active conflict zones, but ever since its spy agency accused the nuclear-armed North last month of sending thousands of soldiers to help Moscow fight Kyiv, South Korea has warned it might change course. If so, likely top of the list for Ukraine would be the "Cheongung" -- or Sky Arrow -- air defence system, a domestically-produced Iron Dome-style interception shield that AFP saw during an exclusive tour of the Hanwha Aerospace factory in the southern city of

Changwon.

As the melody of Beethoven's Fur Elise played on repeat over the in-house speaker, veteran welders worked on huge cylinders that will become part of the interceptor system, which is defensive in nature -- although Hanwha also produces an attack-focused variant. "The Cheongung system can be thought of as similar to the US Patriot missile system," said senior manager Jung Sung-young at Hanwha Aerospace, South Korea's largest defence contractor. Ukraine is reliant on Western air defence systems, particularly Patriots, to protect itself from Russian missile barrages -- and has been calling for more deliveries. Washington said in June it would prioritise deliveries to Kyiv, ahead of other countries that have placed orders.

But were South Korea, which remains technically at war with the nuclear-armed North and has maintained production of weaponry long ignored by Western arms industries, to get involved, it could potentially make a huge difference, experts say. "As a divided nation, we have systematically established and implemented standards at the national level, from the development of these weapon systems to quality control," said Jung.

"The quality, capability and manufacturing supply chain of our products is sufficiently competitive compared to those of other countries," he added. Whether -- or how -- South Korea decides to help Ukraine directly depends on "the level of North Korean involvement", President Yoon Suk Yeol said earlier this month,

adding Seoul was "not ruling out the possibility of providing weapons." If South Korea were to supply arms, the initial batch would be defensive in nature, Yoon said.

To fend off the steady barrage of missiles that have targeted Ukraine's energy infrastructure and civilian areas, Kyiv urgently needs more air defences, Han Kwon-hee of the Korea Association of Defence Industry told AFP. "Counteroffensives require stability in the rear zones, which is why Kyiv has also conducted drone attacks within Russia, including Moscow," Han explained. "They will help Ukraine hold off Russia's offensives by intercepting drones and missiles flying deep into their territory," he said -- a huge boost for Kyiv, alongside the recent US move to let it use

long-range American missiles against targets inside Russia. The South has remained combat-ready since its 1950-53 war with the North ended in a truce, and while Hanwha Aerospace, South Korea's largest defence contractor, was once seen by analysts as retrograde for its focus on land weapons, it is now in high demand.

AFP saw a wide range of weaponry moving along assembly lines at the company's sprawling Changwon factory, from infantry armoured vehicles to surface-to-air missile systems designed to intercept incoming missiles. The heightened geopolitical tensions in Europe have heavily benefited the South Korean company, which saw its on-year operating profit soar over 450 percent in the latest quarter to \$343.3 million. It has

signed major arms deals with countries such as Poland and Romania, including the export of K9 Howitzers and Chunmoo missile systems. Seoul has long harboured ambitions to join the ranks of the world's top arms exporters -- aiming to be the fourth-largest, behind the US, Russia and France -- something that is now possible, industry research indicates.

It has already sold 155mm artillery shells to Washington -- but with a "final user" agreement in place meaning the United States would be the military that uses the munitions. Experts have said this allows the United States to then provide their own shells to Kyiv. Hanwha's other weapons offer that could shift the balance of war in Ukraine is its Chunmoo guided missile system, experts said.



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## Does the EU have any ability to restrain Israel?

THE war in Ukraine, for all its perils, has been a watershed moment for pan-European foreign policy. The EU, a supranational grouping of 27 countries, spanning Ireland in the West to Cyprus in the East, has rarely been so united, even though a couple of members remain sceptical of support for Ukraine. In its 32 years, the bloc has advanced its cause of “ever closer union” in governance, law, regulation and trade. Apart perhaps from the creation of a European defence force, a unified foreign policy is viewed by many eurocrats as the final frontier in manifesting a “geopolitical Europe” that could rival the likes of China or America on the world stage.

Israel's wars in the Middle East, which began after Hamas's attack on October 7 last year, have tested the EU's ability to get there. Josep Borrell, the bloc's departing foreign affairs chief, appeared exasperated on Monday after most of its foreign ministers rejected his proposal to suspend political dialogue with Israel. Mr Borrell has called for such measures in response to numerous allegations of war crimes and human rights violations by Israel in Gaza and Lebanon. “I have no more words,” he said after the vote.

EU member states are staunchly divided on the war. Some, like Germany and the Netherlands, have largely defended Israel's actions. This is explained, in part, by historical factors: in Berlin, enduring guilt over the Holocaust has made criticism of Israel a red line in German politics.

But the rise of right-wing politics and euroscepticism in some member states has played a role, too. Some European foreign ministers feel that EU institutions are overstepping by speaking on the continent's behalf in a complex conflict outside the region. And some, such as Dutch Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp, argue it is more constructive to maintain dialogue with Israel.

They are at odds with the EU itself, whose leadership has called repeatedly for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Other member states, like Spain and Ireland, have gone further by mooting unilateral arms embargos and trade boycotts.

Some EU officials have quietly suggested Mr Borrell's proposal was never expected to succeed but was rather intended to force European capitals to make their positions on Israel clearer. In France, for instance, President Emmanuel Macron's government has been accused of oscillating between support for and criticism of Israel. While the EU is an international actor in its own right, its heavy reliance on unanimity means it can easily be hamstrung by a lack of clarity among its members.

The stakes for Europe go beyond bloc unity. Israeli air strikes on northern Lebanese villages in the past fortnight occurred less than 200km from EU territory, and the displacement of more than a million people in Lebanon has raised fears in European frontier states of yet another refugee crisis.

Europe's reputation as a force for global diplomacy is on the line, too. Alongside the UN, the US and Russia, the EU is a member of the Quartet, a diplomatic group formed in Madrid in 2002 to mediate the Palestine-Israel peace process. The group's last meeting was in 2021, after which its progress stalled. Since the war in Ukraine and October 7, its irrelevance has been cemented, although last month Russian President Vladimir Putin suggested it should be revived.

Without a clear and coherent voice on Israel among European capitals, it is difficult to see how that could happen. In the meantime, Mr Borrell may be right: there is very little left to say.

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## Don't break the news: Why the media needs to go back to basics

Sholto Byrnes

(@elonmusk) November 6, 2024

IS it possible for major news organisations to report impartially on major events? In the recent US presidential election, many didn't even try. On some American TV networks, hosts and guests choked back tears as the result became known, while the editor of one UK newspaper wrote to staff offering counselling to any poor lambs too upset by Donald Trump's victory in – let's remind ourselves – a free and fair democratic vote.

Another more recent example concerns the violence in Amsterdam around a football match between the Dutch team Ajax and the Israeli team Maccabi Tel Aviv early this month.

This newspaper reported – correctly – that there had been “incitement on both sides”. But much of the initial reporting, particularly by some prominent western media outlets, was very one-sided, emphasising the attacks on Israelis while minimising the burning of Palestinian flags and the grotesque chants making fun of the hideous slaughter in Gaza. False news was also spread, when a video was said to show Israeli fans being chased and beaten by locals and pro-Palestinian fans, whereas in fact it showed the very opposite.

I have no doubt that a desire to tell a story that fitted the western narrative of a “pogrom” trumped a proper investigation of what happened, and any notion of fairness went out the window. Both these instances do us all a grave disservice. For starters, the principle of fairness is worth a lot in and of itself. But highly partisan, as opposed to impartial, reporting also has two very bad consequences.

First, many news consumers

will not be properly informed, to the point that they are not actually aware of what is going on in different parts of the world, and they will continually be surprised by events.

Outsiders were astonished that Ferdinand Marcos Jr could be elected president of the Philippines in 2022, for instance. “He was the son of a dictator; he couldn't be elected; he shouldn't be elected” was the view of Many international media outlets and they were then dismayed when he was voted in. Naturally, some blamed “disinformation” for his victory.

But perhaps they hadn't been collecting the right information themselves. I wasn't at all surprised that he won. In my own, admittedly unscientific, survey, every single Filipino I asked over a period of years expressed support for the iron-fisted Rodrigo Duterte in 2016 and then his successor, Mr Marcos, six years later. The people I spoke to were all intelligent, but not high-income or highly educated.

Is it possible that the correspondents who thought a Marcos could never return to power had been spending a little too much time in an elite bubble?

There are plenty of other examples in South-East Asia, including what kind of reformers Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and former Indonesian president Joko Widodo are and were (clue: not so hot on the progressive issues that animate many international commentators as they hoped the pair would be).

Ignorance and lack of context inform much of the coverage of the Ukraine conflict and China, to very bad effects.

How can you begin to understand the Chinese perspective on its rightful future place in the world – that is, assuming you actually want to try – if you never provide the background of the “century of humiliation”? It may be convenient to leave out what Russia believed to be western promises not to expand Nato to its borders, or the strictly unconstitutional transfer of power in Kyiv in 2014, if you want to paint Russian President Vladimir Putin as an unprovoked aggressor, but don't pretend you're giving readers or viewers the full story. As a result, too many news consumers have a shallow and partial understanding both of world events and other nations and peoples.

Second, trust in legacy media is already at a terrible low – in fact it's at a record low in the US, according to a recent Gallup survey. Consumers are still attached to the ideal of impartiality, as a report by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism unsurprisingly found. But if they don't feel they're getting it, people have an alternative they can turn to now – social media – and they are.

I found a telling post on X shortly after the Amsterdam reporting, on the lines of “this is the second time they've lied to us in a week”. That “they” could contain multitudes, but it's a fair guess it includes the mainstream media. The author, I believe, meant that “they lied” that Kamala Harris was going to win the US election, and that “they” also “lied” about what happened in the Dutch capital. That sentiment may well be widely common.

You are the media now — Elon Musk

Elon Musk is already boasting “you are the media now” to his followers on X, and there's no doubt that a lot of useful information is published on the platform he owns as well as others, but we all know that there's precious little filter or obligation to be fact-based. Likewise, there can be a value to “citizen journalism”, but if it is ranked equal to legacy media, that suggests the training, expertise and experience of great reporters is worth little – an idea that should be rebutted. After all, you wouldn't get a “citizen plumber” to come and unblock your toilet, would you?

International media organisations desperately need to win back trust, and my view is that can only be done by making the effort to be impartial and provide fair context. If viewers and readers are (in many cases, correctly) suspicious that various agendas are constantly being pushed, they will turn away. I think the “truth” is worth fighting for – and it is very dangerous in a world that increasingly seems like it's on the brink if common ground, on what the truth is, disappears.

Isn't it obvious?” you may say. But ask yourself this: is a newspaper that has offered its staff counselling because Mr Trump was re-elected really likely to report fairly on his second term in office? And don't we all deserve that fair reporting? Leave the partisan polemics to the commentators and talking heads.

Legacy media needs its reporters to leave their prejudices at the door. Only then will these organisations stand a chance of being able to fulfil the BBC's motto – enabling nation “to speak peace unto nation”.

## AI era can benefit from lessons of the nuclear arms race

Mohammed A. Alqarni

EVERY so often, news emerges of an advanced AI model outperforming its predecessor, restarting debates about the trajectory of AI. These incremental improvements, while impressive, also reignite discussions about the prospect of artificial general intelligence or AGI – a hypothetical AI that could match or exceed human cognitive abilities across the board.

This potential technological leap brings to mind another transformative innovation of the 20th century: nuclear power. Both promise unprecedented capabilities but carry risks that could reshape or even end human civilization as we know it.

The development of AI, like nuclear technology, offers remarkable opportunities and grave dangers. It could solve humanity's most significant challenges or become our ultimate undoing. The nuclear arms race taught us the perils of unchecked technological advancement. Are we heeding those lessons in the AI era?

The creation of nuclear weapons introduced the concept of mutually assured destruction. With AGI, we face not only existential risks of extinction but also the prospect of extreme suffering and a world where human life loses meaning.

Imagine a future where superintelligent systems surpass human creativity, taking over all jobs. The very fabric of human purpose could unravel.

Should it be developed, controlling AGI would be akin to maintaining perfect safety in a nuclear reactor – theoretically possible but practically fraught with challenges. While we have managed nuclear technology for decades, AGI presents

on AI safety – and fast. We must prioritize robust international frameworks for AI development and deployment, increased funding for AI safety research, public education on the potential impacts of AGI, and ethical guidelines that all AI researchers and companies must adhere to. It is a tough ask.

However, as we consider these weighty issues, it is crucial to recognize the current limitations of AI technology.

The large language models that have captured the public imagination, while impressive, are fundamentally pattern recognition and prediction systems. They lack true understanding, reasoning capabilities, or the ability to learn and adapt in the way human intelligence does.

While these systems show remarkable capabilities, there's an ongoing debate in the AI community about whether they represent a path toward AGI or if fundamentally different approaches will be needed.

In fact, many experts believe that achieving AGI may require additional scientific breakthroughs that are not currently available. We may need new insights into the nature of consciousness, cognition, and intelligence – breakthroughs potentially as profound as those that ushered in the nuclear age.

This perspective offers both reassurance and a call to action.

Reassurance comes from understanding that AGI is not an inevitability based on our current trajectory. We have time to carefully consider the ethical implications, develop robust safety measures, and create international frameworks for responsible AI development.

However, the call to action is to use this time

**The timeline for AGI remains uncertain and hotly debated. While some “optimistic” predictions suggest it could arrive within years, many experts believe it is still decades away, if achievable at all. Regardless, the stakes are too high to be complacent. Do we have the equivalent of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards for AI development? Our current methods for assessing AI capabilities seem woefully inadequate for truly understanding the potential risks and impacts of more advanced systems. The open nature of scientific research accelerated both nuclear and AI development. But while open-source software has proven its value, transitioning from tools to autonomous agents introduces unprecedented dangers. Releasing powerful AI systems into the wild could have unforeseen consequences. The Cuban Missile Crisis brought the world to the brink but also ushered in an era of arms control treaties.**

unique difficulties.

Unlike static nuclear weapons, AGI could learn, self-modify, and interact unpredictably. A nuclear incident, however catastrophic, allows for recovery. An AGI breakthrough might offer no such luxury.

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The Cuban Missile Crisis brought the world to the brink but also ushered in an era of arms control treaties. We need similar global cooperation

wisely, investing in foundational research not just in AI but also in cognitive science, neuroscience, and philosophy of mind.

As we navigate the future of AI, let us approach it with a balance of excitement and caution. We should harness the immense potential of current AI technologies to solve pressing global challenges while simultaneously preparing for a future that may include more advanced forms of AI.

By fostering global cooperation, ethical guidelines, and a commitment to human-centric AI development, we can work towards a future where AI enhances rather than endangers human flourishing.

The parallels with nuclear technology remind us of the power of human ingenuity and the importance of responsible innovation.

Just as we have learned to harness nuclear power for beneficial purposes while avoiding global catastrophe so far, we have an opportunity to shape the future of AI in a way that amplifies human potential rather than diminishing it.

The path forward requires vigilance, collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to the betterment of humanity. In this endeavor, our human wisdom and values are the most critical components of all.



# Trump suffers first defeat but as always doubles down for the next fight

**FOR Donald Trump, every defeat is just the catalyst for his next battle.**

No sooner had the president-elect suffered his first big reversal since winning reelection – when his scandal-tainted pick for attorney general, Matt Gaetz, withdrew Thursday after days of steadily worsening scrutiny over alleged sexual misconduct – Trump doubled down.

In Gaetz's place, Trump chose Florida's former attorney general, Pam Bondi, another ultra-loyal MAGA warrior who is one of the most outspoken proponents of his theory that US justice was weaponized against him.

Gaetz – who denies wrongdoing – may be gone, but Trump's craving for the Department of Justice to act like his personal team of lawyers rather than an independent guardian of the law is showing all signs of remaining intact.

On the face of it, Gaetz's withdrawal was an embarrassing defeat as he lost a tussle with Republican senators who didn't relish the dilemma that would have come with a vote either for Gaetz or against Trump. Sources told CNN that the president-elect wanted Gaetz because he shared his desire to purge 'deep state' adversaries in the DOJ and was completely loyal. But Trump forgot another necessary quality – that his pick not create any discomfort for the senators he needs to keep on his side even as they look at their own next election battles.

The Gaetz disaster suggests that despite his big election win, some laws of political gravity still apply to Trump.

There was a sense of hubris from Trump in picking possibly the least qualified, most controversial and disliked potential attorney general nominee in modern history. His selection of other Cabinet picks – who seem, by normal standards, deeply unqualified – also looks like the kind of classic overreach and misreading of a mandate that can get new presidents into trouble.

The haphazard decision making and lack of vetting that led to the Gaetz selection – sources said Trump settled on him while flying to and from Washington last week – hardly suggests his second term

will be much more disciplined than his first. And picking a candidate whose main qualifications seemed the certainty he'd delight Trump's base and horrify elites underscores the president-elect's impulsiveness.

Yet Trump's omnipotence in the GOP – and his party's refusal to convict him in two impeachment trials – means that it would be unwise to see Gaetz's downfall as a harbinger of the new Senate GOP majority's willingness to curb an all-powerful new president. With constitutional honor satisfied, and feeling an obligation to their party leader, some senators might even be more disposed to back Trump's other provocative picks.

And the loss of Gaetz – whom Trump said Thursday has a "wonderful future" – is likely to have no impact on the goals of a second presidency that Trump has promised to devote to retribution.

White House administrations always reflect the person at the top.

This may explain why two-and-a-half weeks into his transition, several of Trump's Cabinet picks are embroiled in allegations of sexual misconduct, ethics or legal controversy.

Former Fox News anchor Pete Hegseth, Trump's pick for the Department of Defense, is facing fresh revelations about an alleged sexual assault of a woman in California seven years ago. Like Gaetz, Hegseth was not prosecuted over the allegation and denies he did anything wrong. His lawyer has said, however, that while the Iraq and Afghanistan combat veteran regards the encounter as consensual, he entered into a settlement agreement with his accuser that included an undisclosed payment and a confidentiality clause.

In yet another cloud gathering around a Trump Cabinet pick, CNN reported Thursday on a lawsuit that alleges that Linda McMahon, who the president-elect wants to lead the Department of Education, knowingly enabled the sexual exploitation of children by a World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) employee as early as the 1980s. McMahon denies the allegations.

There is also fresh scrutiny of allegations

**Stephen Collinson**

that Trump's pick to lead the Department of Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., groped a part-time babysitter who worked for him between 1998 and 1999. The woman, Eliza Cooney, recently spoke to USA Today and said she wished "we were electing people with fewer skeletons in their closet." In a podcast interview over the summer, Kennedy declined to acknowledge the allegations first raised by Vanity Fair but then said he'd had a "very rambunctious youth" and had not been a "church boy." When asked directly whether he denied sexually assaulting Cooney, Kennedy repeated, "I'm not going to comment on it."

In any normal administration, such a wave of scandal surrounding multiple picks would be seen as evidence of a transition in disarray.

But Trump's political career has never followed conventional patterns. Chaos is endemic, and it's where the president-elect thrives in a cloak of impunity. Trump's own history of legal struggles and sexual misconduct allegations, all of which he's denied, may mean that such vulnerabilities in others don't represent the same impediment to advancement as they might for another president.

Last year, for example, a Manhattan federal jury found in a civil case that Trump sexually abused the writer E. Jean Carroll in a department store in 1996 and awarded her damages for battery and defamation. Shortly before the 2016 election, Trump boasted on a leaked "Access Hollywood" tape that famous people like him could grab women by the genitals and "they let you do it." And earlier this year, Trump was convicted of a felony in a case arising out of a hush money payment he made to an adult film star. He denies wrongdoing in all cases. None of it stopped him from winning a historic second term earlier this month.

After the "Me Too" movement exposed years of abuse of women in showbiz, the media, politics and business, Trump's capacity to defy such allegations is rare for such a public person. And his defiance may have factored into his

Cabinet picks and commitment to stick with them despite some allegations having already been public or new information that subsequently became available.

Allegations against Trump have long been disregarded by his voters, many of whom believe he has been subject to witch hunts by Democratic prosecutors. Social conservatives, meanwhile, sometimes rationalize questions about his personal ethics or behavior that give them doubt by pointing to the Supreme Court majority he built.

But the collapse of Gaetz for attorney general suggests that Trump's Teflon hide is not transferable and that his MAGA apprentices lack his capacity to face down almost any scandal and survive. The next person to test this gauntlet may be Hegseth, who held multiple meetings with senators Thursday.

While they are proponents of Trump's smash mouth, stunt politics, neither Gaetz nor Hegseth possess his power or political aura to intimidate wavering Republicans into complicity. And Gaetz is notoriously unpopular on Capitol Hill.

Trump called Gaetz Thursday morning and told him he didn't have the votes to win confirmation, CNN's Kristen Holmes reported, according to a source with direct knowledge of the call. The president-elect didn't tell Gaetz to drop out, this source said. But Gaetz had been facing the pressure of a congressional showdown over a House Ethics Committee report into his alleged sexual misconduct and drug abuse.

He withdrew moments after CNN's Paula Reid and Sarah Ferris reported that the woman who said she had sex with Gaetz while a minor told the Ethics Committee she had two sexual encounters with him at one party in 2017, according to sources familiar with her testimony. The woman, who was 17 at the time, testified that the second encounter included another adult woman.

Gaetz offered the classic sentiments of a Cabinet pick defeated in a confirmation fight by writing on X that his plight was "unfairly becoming a distraction to the critical work of the T r u m p / V a n c e Transition."

The end of his battle for one of the most critical jobs in the Cabinet quickly increased the heat around some of Trump's other controversial Cabinet picks, including Hegseth, former Democratic Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, who was chosen to be director of national intelligence, and Kennedy.

Political ramifications of the failed Gaetz confirmation drive – which collapsed two months before he could be officially nominated by the new president – are intriguing but still hard to gauge.

This is unlikely, however, to dent the president-elect's prowess among his most loyal supporters. And the storm and stress of Trumpism is certain to produce a myriad of political earthquakes and scandals before and after the inauguration, so the Gaetz chapter will likely end up being regarded as a tiny blip in a longer melodrama. Plenty of presidents get a Cabinet pick knocked back and do just fine.

On Capitol Hill, there was a sense of relief among Senate Republicans that there would be no vote on the nomination early next year. Some may have been dreading a vote against Trump that might invite primary challenges. Others, like Maine Sen. Susan Collins or North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis, may also have worried that a vote to confirm Gaetz would have hurt them statewide in their 2026 reelection races.

Gaetz's withdrawal, however, is not a great look for Vice President-elect JD Vance, the Ohio senator whom Trump designated to lobby his colleagues with Gaetz in tow this week.

And true to form, in picking Bondi, Trump has selected another person who will alarm DC's establishment and will be equally dedicated to doing the boss' work in defenestrating the DOJ. Bondi has had her own controversies – she once denied that a \$25,000 charitable donation Trump sent her was in any way connected to her decision not to pursue action against Trump University. But she's got one thing that Gaetz lacked – she's likely to be far more confirmable in next year's Republican-led Senate.

— CNN

# In Gaza dreams die, but hope remains

**“I can't keep calm. I've been chosen for Chevening.”**

It's a little blue poster that Chevening awardees like to be photographed with. I also followed the trend. After all, I, too, was a Chevening scholarship recipient. Or almost was.

Earlier this year, I was selected for the prestigious Chevening Scholarship given out by the British government. I would have had the opportunity to pursue a one-year master's degree in Clinical Neuropsychiatry at King's College London, in the autumn. It would have been a dream come true.

But with the Rafah border crossing closed, I was unable to leave. I am trapped in Gaza, enduring the horrors of the genocide. My dream has been shattered, but hope remains alive. I graduated from Al-Quds University's Faculty of Medicine in July 2022 and officially registered as a doctor just two weeks before this genocidal war started. I wanted to study abroad to improve my qualifications, but the Chevening Scholarship was not merely an academic opportunity. For me, it represented freedom. It would have been allowed me to travel outside Gaza for the first time in my life, to see new places and experience new cultures, to meet new people and build an international network.

I wanted to do a graduate degree in Clinical Neuropsychiatry because of the relevance of this field to the reality in my homeland. My people were scarred by war, displacement and relentless trauma even before this genocide started. Our trauma is ongoing, intergenerational, uninterrupted. I envisioned this degree would help me offer better care to my people. The opportunity held the potential to change lives – not only mine but also the lives of the patients I hoped to serve.

With these hopes and dreams in mind, I started filling out the Chevening application in the first weeks of the war. This was one of the most violent phases of the genocide, and at that point, my family and I had already been displaced three times. Anyone who has undertaken such an endeavour knows it requires not just academic excellence but a lot of effort, too. The applica-

**Abdallah Ramadan**

tion itself demands research, consultations and countless drafts.

I had to work on it while facing myriad challenges as a displaced person – the worst of them was finding a stable internet connection and a quiet place to work. But I persisted. I put my mind to it and kept thinking about a possible bright future while death and suffering surrounded me.

On November 7, three hours before the deadline, I submitted the application. In the following six months, as I waited for a response, I, like the two million other Gaza Palestinians, lived through unimaginable horrors.

I experienced immense pain, losing friends and colleagues, watching my homeland crumble. The oath I had taken as a doctor to save lives felt closer than ever to my heart and soul. I volunteered at Al-Aqsa Hospital's orthopaedic ward, helping treat people injured by bombs in unimaginable ways. I would do shifts at the hospital and then deal with the realities of survival in Gaza: queuing up to get a gallon of water, searching for firewood so my family could cook and trying to keep sane. On April 8, I received the happy news that I had advanced to the interview stage. My thoughts swung between the horror I was living and the audacity to hope for a different future.

On May 7, I sat for my interview. I was fasting for Ramadan and had just finished a long night shift at the hospital, but somehow, I still found the strength to present myself well to the panel.

On June 18, I received the official notification: I had been awarded the scholarship.

I sat for my Chevening interview the day after Israel launched an offensive on Rafah, taking over the only crossing linking Gaza to the outside world. By the time I heard back from the scholarship, I knew that it would be impossible to secure the necessary documents and be able to leave. I still tried. The biggest hurdle in the bureaucratic process was that I had to travel to Cairo for a visa appointment. From June until September, I was haunted by anxiety.

I waited, helpless, as a deadline for my university offer to be confirmed

approached.

I reached out to various authorities and sought help evacuating, but none of my efforts bore fruit. I even contacted the Palestinian embassy in London in a desperate attempt to seek assistance, but by the beginning of September, it became clear that I would not make it. Despite my best efforts, I remained trapped in Gaza, while the opportunity I had worked so hard for slipped away.

In the midst of all this, I continued my work as a doctor. It was both a sacred duty for me and a source of unimaginable heartbreak. I would be stationed at the ER, receiving an unending stream of casualties from the daily bombardment and then move into the operation room to change the dressings of patients with amputations or deep wounds, hoping they would not become infected in the septic conditions of the hospital.

The suffering of our patients got that much worse when we ran out of essential medical supplies. It was then that I had to start cleaning maggots out of the amputation wounds of infants and treat painful war injuries in children without anaesthesia, whose cries I continue to hear in my mind even when I am not in the hospital. Every day, I watch patients suffer and often die due to severe shortages of IV fluids and antibiotics.

The physical and emotional toll is overwhelming. I have been forced to confront death, destruction and grief on a scale that I pray most people will never know.

All of this has put my lost Chevening dream into perspective. I do not have the luxury of grieving personally.

My story is not unique – so many dreams have been shattered in Gaza over the past 400 days.

I share my story not to seek sympathy, but to highlight the reality of Gaza. We all face an uncertain future, but we try not to lose hope.

While I am devastated that I cannot pursue my academic dream, I have not relinquished the hope that someday, perhaps, an opportunity to do so will come again. For now, I remain in Gaza, working as a doctor, bearing witness to the daily suffering of my people, and trying to make a difference in their miserable lives amid the ongoing genocide.

# US decisions in Ukraine risk widening the conflict

**ON April 15, 2022, CNN reported that US Secretary of State Antony Blinken had told Washington's European allies that the US believes the Russia-Ukraine conflict would last till the end of 2022. But there is still no end in sight even as the world marked the 1,000th day of the conflict on Tuesday.**

People are increasingly worried that a severe escalation of the conflict could lead to a wider war or even a nuclear war after US President Joe Biden's decision this week to allow Ukraine to use US-made long-range missiles to strike deep into Russian territory and send anti-personnel landmines to Ukraine. Anti-personnel landmines are banned under an international treaty signed by 164 countries, including Ukraine.

Biden's drastic decision just two months before leaving the White House is seen as highly irresponsible and has been sharply criticized by president-elect Donald Trump's allies for risking "World War III".

Ukraine wasted no time in firing the ATACMS missiles on Tuesday at Russia's military facilities in Bryansk, prompting Russia to announce a strong response. This in turn prompted the United States administration to order the closure of its embassy in Kyiv on Wednesday in anticipation of potential Russian airstrikes. Italy, Spain and Greece have done the same.

Biden's decisions also came shortly after German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called Russian President Vladimir Putin on the phone on Nov 15, a call

that rekindled hopes of a much-needed resumption of diplomacy to help end the Ukraine crisis.

Back in spring 2022, the peace talks between Russia and Ukraine were proceeding well until they were blocked by the US and the United Kingdom.

While it's impossible to go back in time, the conflict might have been avoided in the first place if the US and NATO had not, in their respective replies to Putin in January 2022, ignored Russia's security concerns over NATO's eastward expansion and the West's intention to admit Ukraine into NATO. If the past 1,000 days have proved anything, it is that no disputes can be resolved on the battlefield. Wars can only cause more deaths and destruction. That is not just true for Russia and Ukraine, both of which have suffered heavy casualties, but also for the rest of the world which has become "collateral damage" of the conflict.

The Western powers' "crippling" economic sanctions against Russia, including the closing of airspace to the other side's passenger planes, have failed to end the conflict because more than 140 countries refused to support such unilateral sanctions. Nevertheless, the sanctions have disrupted global economic development and recovery, which were badly needed after three years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The fact that Scholz talked with Putin on the phone shows that some European leaders have realized the failed strategy of shunning diplomacy during the past two years.

Germany and Italy have reiterated that they would not follow the US in lifting the missile ban on Ukraine while the leaders of Hungary and Slovakia have condemned Biden's decisions.

The public sentiment in Ukraine, too, has changed. A Gallup poll released this week showed that on average 52 percent of Ukrainians would like to see their country negotiate an end to the conflict as soon as possible. Only 38 percent believe their country should keep fighting till it emerges victorious, down from the 73 percent in a 2022 survey.

And a report by the European Council on Foreign Relations this summer shows that Europeans, in general, tend to believe that Ukraine will not be able to defeat Russia on the battlefield. Some argue that Biden's latest moves might create a more favorable situation for Ukraine. But Donald Trump promised during his presidential campaign that he would force a freeze in the conflict after assuming office. Anyway, Biden's decisions will jeopardize the lives of more people by risking a wider war.

Any future peace talks between Russia and Ukraine won't be easy given the sharp differences between the two parties, not to mention the interference of the US-led West. But by escalating the conflict through supplying more arms to Ukraine and allowing it to use US-made long-range missiles, the US is not only further hindering diplomacy from playing its peace-broker role but also creating a situation in which more lives would be lost and more assets destroyed on both sides.

— Gulf Today

# Racism in Hollywood

**FANS who have attended early screening's of Riddley Scott's "Gladiator II" have expressed surprise that Palestinian-Egyptian actress May Calamawy, who was tested for a lead role, has been relegated to background shots. In May, "Deadline" revealed that she was cast along Peter Mensah, Derek Jacobi, and Denzil Washington in the sequel to box office hit "Gladiator." That film was released in 2000 and won a five Oscars at the 2001 Academy Awards, including for director Riddley Scott and actor Russell Crowe. The character he played was killed in the original and could not be resurrected.**

Middle East Eye reported that "social media users have criticised the makers" of "Gladiator II" for cutting scenes where Calamawy was featured along with Washington and had a speaking part. While Riddley apologists argued cuts were necessary to shorten the 3.5-hour film to 2.5 hours, Calamawy fans contended this was "due to her Palestinian heritage and public support for Gaza" during Israel's brutal war. Regional film buffs had been enthusiastic about her elevation to a major role after her "breakout" in "Moon Knight" and the "Rami" series. Some critics suggested she had been replaced in "Gladiator II" by Israeli actress Yuval Ronen.

Born in October 1986

in Bahrain, Calamawy's father was Egyptian and mother Palestinian Jordanian. The family travelled to Qatar and Texas for her father's work as a banker. Calamawy attended school in Bahrain and majored in industrial design at university in Boston. In 2015, she moved to the US to study acting at Emerson College in California. Her first major role was in "Djinn," a horror film produced in the United Arab Emirates. After taking a number of roles in films and mini-series, she played the Marvel comic book Egyptian super-heroine the "Scarlet Scarab" and signed on for more films, including "Gladiator II" which raised false expectations.

One angry social media poster, cited by Middle East Eye, charged the film makers of succumbing to the "racism and discrimination against Palestinians in Hollywood just for being Palestinian and needs to be addressed."

Racist discrimination in Palestine began with the notorious 1917 Balfour declaration in which Britain promised to facilitate the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine while referring to native Palestinians, then 94 per cent of the population, as "non-Jewish communities." Since the establishment of Israel, its leaders have repeatedly said Palestinians do not constitute a nation but are Arabs indistinguishable from

**Michael Jansen**

Egyptians and Syrians. This is flagrantly untrue. Palestinians wherever they are consider themselves to be rooted in the land and millennial culture of Palestine. On Monday this week, the BBC interviewed an Israeli official who repeated the falsehood. Israel's Arab citizens are referred to as "Israeli Arabs" – or dismissively, as "Aravim" – rather than Palestinian citizens of Israel which they are.

Expatriate Palestinian public figures who speak about the plight of Palestinians living under occupation are often targeted by Israel and its influential supporters. US supermodels Bella and Gigi Hadid – whose father is Palestinian and mother Dutch – have been criticised by Israel and its lobbyists during advertising campaigns but fashion houses have shrugged off pressures to fire them. This summer the sisters donated \$1 million for Palestinian relief charities. In May, Bella Hadid dared Israel by donning a red keffiyeh designer dress at the Cannes film festival.

Netflix has been blasted for casting Israelis in starring roles in its film about the mother of the founder of Christianity "Mary" which tells her story from her pregnancy through the birth of Jesus and flight to Egypt to escape King Herod's decree to kill all baby boys. Social media posters complained that Israeli actors were playing

in this film while Israel is bombing and killing Palestinians and destroying ancient Christian churches.

Ben & Jerry's ice cream has launched legal action against its parent company Unilever which is accused of trying to stop the Jewish ice cream makers Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield from making statements in support of Palestinians in Gaza. Unilever is also charged with threatening to dismantle the firm's board of directors who support the Palestinian cause. In 2022 Ben & Jerry's decided to stop selling its ice cream in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Unilever has blocked the firm's Palestinian initiatives which the company says are part of its "social mission."

Neo-colonialism, racism and ignorance are the main causes of prejudice and discrimination. Assertive Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims and their defenders have for decades faced prejudice, persecution and boycott. Palestine's most prominent academic Edward Said wrote in his 1981 book "Covering Islam" that anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian attitudes are rooted in the historical competition between Islam and Christian Europe. The 19th century Zionist movement and Israel have exploited this uneasy relationship by falsely claiming Arabs and Muslims pose a threat to the West. Said compared these atti-





# PSATF team engages with HIT at IDEAS 2024

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: A delegation from the Pakistan Southern Africa Trade Federation (PSATF), led by its Founder Chairman Muhammad Rafiq Memon, met with Major General Atique Ahmed, Director General of Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT), at the IDEAS 2024 Defense Exhibition in Karachi. The discussions marked a significant step forward in Pakistan's efforts to capture a larger share of Africa's burgeoning \$3 trillion market.

The meeting, held at the Karachi Expo Center, brought together senior representatives from HIT, including Brigadier Nadeem, DG Technical, and other technical and commercial officers, alongside prominent members of the PSATF delegation.

Accompanying Memon were Zaki Ahmed Shareef, PSATF's Chief Organizer and Head of Foreign Affairs; Kazi Abdul Mukhtadir, former Deputy Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan; Moizuddin, CEO of HTG Petrochemicals; and Ikram Rajput, CEO of Indus Lube Oils.

During the discussions, both parties reaffirmed their commitment to collaborate strategically in promoting Pakistan's sophisticated defense products in the African market. Recognizing the continent's immense potential, the PSATF pledged to develop a comprehensive business proposal to facilitate HIT's entry into this lucrative region.

Memon highlighted Africa's \$3.1 trillion GDP, projected to escalate to \$26 trillion by 2050, as an

untapped opportunity for Pakistan.

Despite this potential, Pakistan's exports to Africa currently stand at a modest \$2 billion, with trade relationships established in only 20 of Africa's 54 countries. The PSATF chairman underscored the urgency of expanding Pakistan's footprint in Africa, particularly in the defense sector, to align with the Look Africa Policy's ambitious \$50 billion export target by 2030.

To further these objectives, Memon proposed leveraging the PSATF Trade and Expo Center in Johannesburg as a platform to showcase Pakistan's defense capabilities to buyers across Southern Africa and neighboring regions. HIT expressed keen interest in this proposal, recognizing the value of utilizing

such a hub to amplify its outreach efforts.

The HIT leadership also agreed to participate in an upcoming trade conference and seminar in Gujranwala, one of Pakistan's largest industrial hubs.

The event, organized by the Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry, will host ambassadors from African nations based in Islamabad, creating opportunities for dialogue and partnerships aimed at boosting bilateral trade.

This collaboration between PSATF and HIT underscores a shared vision of leveraging Pakistan's defense expertise to unlock Africa's economic potential, laying the groundwork for mutually beneficial trade relationships that will position Pakistan as a key player in the region's defense market.



PESHAWAR: SCCI president Fazal Moqem Khan and Director of Baitul Arab Al Mandi and Basha Istanbul Restaurant Abu Bakar exchanging documents after signing an agreement during a ceremony.

## Rupee gains 20 paise against USD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Friday appreciated by 20 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.75 against the previous day's closing of Rs 277.95.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.30 and Rs 278.80 respectively.

The price of Euro decreased by Rs 1.54 to close at Rs 291.35 against the last day's closing of Rs 292.89, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.79, whereas a decrease of Rs 2.04 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 349.36 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 351.40.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 05 and 07 paise to close at Rs 75.62 and Rs 73.94 respectively.

## RCCI urges efforts for solving issue

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has urged for urgent attention on increasing the challenge of smog by collaborating with relevant stakeholders.

President RCCI, Usman Shaikat on Friday underlined the need to counter highly impacting climate issues through massive awareness and initiatives. Addressing a press conference here at the chamber house, along with Dr. Zaigham Abbass, Director Environment Protection Agency, the president highlighted that the wide ranging impact of smog has affected health, logistics, trade and economic cost. He observed that 30 percent of the smog in Pakistan was a result of combustion from the Indian side.

"We need to initiate diplomatic dialogue with Indian authorities", he said.

He noted that smoke emitting vehicles, industrial activities and other man made machinery were among the main smog contributing factors. However, he stressed for a consistent policy to overcome the issue instead of sudden closure of brick kilns, smoke releasing vehicles etc.

"Supply chain closure due to smog has resulted in delaying delivery of consignments. Medicines and other essential goods are being transported due to the issue", he said and urged that relevant stakeholders should chalk out the practicable way forward in this regard.

While highlighting the RCCI's strategy, Usman said that the business community would collaborate with all other relevant authorities to work on deforestation, vehicle inspection, technical intervention like artificial rain, substituting fuel burning, maximizing introducing zig-zag technology for brick kilns etc.

Stressing for urgent steps towards smog, Usman said that smog was not just an environmental problem, but a substantial economic challenge for the country.

# SCCI, Istanbul restaurant sign MoU

## — to facilitate business community

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Baitul Arab Al Mandi and Basha Istanbul Restaurant to facilitate the business community and provision of special concessions to them.

SCCI president Fazal Moqem Khan and Baitul Arab Al Mandi and Basha Istanbul Restaurant Director Abu Bakar signed on the agreement during a ceremony held at chamber house on Friday.

The agreement aims to provide 20 percent concession and facility to members of the chamber.

The signing ceremony was attended by SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice president

Shehryar Khan, Baitul Arab Al Mandi and Basha Istanbul Restaurant Manager Operation Atif Ali, Secretary General of the chamber Muqtasid Ahsan and others.

Fazal Moqem while speaking on the occasion termed the agreement as a milestone toward provision of special discount and facility to the members.

He said the chamber is taking pragmatic steps and joint collaboration with various institutions for provision relief and special concessional packages to the business community at every level.

The SCCI chief said today signing with Baitul Arab Al Mandi and Basha Istanbul Restaurant is part of the efforts to provide facilities and special discounts to the members.

Moqem reiterated his

firm resolve to sustain efforts for facilitation of traders' community.

Senior office bearers Abdul Jalil Jan and Shehryar Khan welcomed the signing of agreement, calling it a major step toward facilitating the business community. They said the chamber cabinet is fully committed to provide relief to the business community at every level.

They said an executive member of the SCCI Junaid Altaf presented a proposal for special concession and facility for the business community, promptly acting upon it, and made this agreement.

Office bearers said the agreement is a first step to provide concessions to the business community and further MoUs will be signed with various organizations in future.

# Weekly inflation up by 0.67 per cent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), went up by 0.67 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on November 21, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 324.11 points as compared to 321.94 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 4.92 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed increase of 0.91 per cent and went up to 318.40 points from

last week's 315.52 points.

The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,732 to 22,888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, increased by 0.85 percent, 0.72 percent, 0.70 percent and 0.61 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 17 (33.33%) items increased, 11 (21.57%) items decreased and 23 (45.10%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included chicken (2.97%), pulse gram (1.70%), LPG (0.80%), pulse masoor (0.62%), rice basmati broken (0.40%), sugar (0.27%), wheat flour (0.25%), pulse mash (0.23%) and rice irrigated (0.22%).

The commodities which recorded major increase in their average prices on week-on-week basis included ladies sandal (55.62%), tomatoes (20.72%), potatoes (3.81%), garlic (3.42%),

eggs (3.16%), vegetable ghee 1kg (2.30%), vegetable ghee 1.73%, mustard oil (1.28%), onions (0.98%) and shirting (0.04%).

On year-on-year basis, the commodities that witnessed decrease included wheat flour (35.49%), chilies powder (20.00%), diesel (13.92%), petrol (11.64%), tea packet (11.07%), rice basmati broken (8.25%), pulse masoor (7.21%), bread (5.99%), electricity charges for q1 (5.07%), sugar (3.67%) and cooking oil 5 litre (2.98%).

The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on year-on-year basis included, ladies sandal (75.09%), pulse gram (70.95%), pulse moong (25.74%), beef (23.79%), onions (21.05%), tomatoes (19.69%), garlic (16.08%), gas charges for Q1 (15.52%), shirting (15.27%), mutton (14.80%) and georgette (13.07%).

# Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where five ships, Jaru Bhum, X-Press Salween, Navios Tempo, Kualalumpur Express and Al-Deebal carrying Container and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively on Thursday.

Meanwhile six more ships, Aqua-1, Corona, OM Singapore, Angelina, Hafnia Phoenix and Iolaos scheduled to load/offload Fuel oil, Palm oil, Yellow Beans, Gasoline and Coal are also arrived at outer anchorage during last 24

hours.

A total of thirteen ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them five ships, X-Press Salween, Jaru Bhum, Navios Tempo, Kualalumpur and Izumo Hermes are left the port on today morning, while five more ships, Milaha Ras Laffan, Hyde Park, Khairpur, Draft-Slayer and ST. Michael's are expected to sail on today.

Cargo volume of 214,776 tonnes, comprising 167,248 tonnes imports cargo and 47,528 tonnes export cargo carried in 4,054 Containers (2,043

TEUs Imports & 2,011 TEUs Export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 15 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them four ships, Han Ren, Aqua-1, Corona and Kaisa-1 & another ship, ONE Maneuver are scheduled to load/offload Rice, Fuel oil, Palm oil, LPG and Container are expected to take berths at MW-1, FOTCO, LCT, EVTL and QICT respectively on today 22nd November, while another containers ship 'MSC Positano' is due to arrive at port on Saturday.

# Tokyo stocks end higher

TOKYO (APP): Tokyo stocks closed higher on Friday, led by solid gains in heavyweight semiconductor-related shares following rises on Wall Street overnight, while buying on dips also supported the market.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei stock index, the 225-issue Nikkei Stock Avera-

ge, ended up 257.68 points, or 0.68 percent, from Thursday at 38,283.85.

The broader Topix index, meanwhile, finished 13.72 points, or 0.51 percent, higher at 2,696.53.

Stocks were in positive territory throughout the day, led by heavyweight semiconductor issues, following gains on all three

major US indexes overnight after US chip giant Nvidia Corp.'s earnings report was digested without any major volatility, analysts said.

The market was also supported by buybacks in oversold sectors after the benchmark Nikkei briefly fell below the 38,000 yen line the previous day.

# Minister vows to increase ports' efficiency and boost trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday reaffirmed the government's strong commitment to strengthening seaports' efficiency, boosting trade and ensuring sustainable economic development in the country.

He expressed this resolve while chairing a consultative meeting on enhancing the efficiency of Karachi ports by improving hinterland connectivity.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Secretary Planning Awaiz Manzoor Sumra, Member Infrastructure Waqas Anwar, CEO of the Public Private Partnership Authority, besides senior representatives from the Ministries of Maritime Affairs, Communications, Railways, Aviation Division and Commerce Division, a news release said.

During the meeting, Member Infrastructure

Waqas Anwar presented a detailed briefing on improving port efficiency, providing a progress update from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs regarding a committee constituted by the Prime Minister's Office to address cross-cutting issues at Karachi Port.

He highlighted that Pakistan's merchandise trade as a percentage of GDP stood at 26 percent, significantly lower than the global average of 44 percent. "From 2015 to 2020, Pakistan's ports handled over 3 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) of container traffic annually, with approximately two-thirds managed at Karachi's three terminals and the remainder at Port Qasim."

He pointed out that rail access to Karachi Port was underutilized, with nearly all cargo transported via road, leading to congestion and environmental challenges. "Existing rail facilities are insufficient for effi-

cient goods transfer due to their limited capacity for loading and unloading operations."

Karachi Port faces significant road congestion due to ban on trucks movement from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., affecting traffic flow into and out of port areas. Port Qasim, on the other hand, benefits from better road connectivity (N-5 and M-9 via Eastern Bypass) but may face road access congestion by 2030 if rail connectivity is not improved.

To address these challenges, the Member Infrastructure proposed short and long-term measures.

The short-term measures include implementing 24/7 port operations while scheduling freight truck movements to reduce congestion. Freight trucks would use port gates only during pre-arranged schedules.

For long-term solutions, it was recommended to develop an elevated

expressway as a priority project to ease road congestion.

Simultaneous investments in rail infrastructure were also proposed to enhance up-country freight transport efficiency and reduce overall transportation costs. Both projects should progress concurrently to maximize long-term benefits.

After detailed discussions, Ahsan Iqbal emphasized the importance of resolving these challenges for national economic growth, directing the formation of a committee comprising representatives from the Ministry of Planning, Port Qasim Authority, Ministry of Maritime Affairs, National Highway Authority (NHA) and Ministry of Railways.

The committee has been tasked with reviewing the issues comprehensively and presenting a consensus-based solution within two weeks.

# SBP to issue Rs.55 commemorative coin

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: On the auspicious occasion of 555th Jayanti of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the Federal Government has been pleased to issue a commemorative coin of Rs.55 denomination with following metal composition, shape and dimensions:

**Metal composition:** Nickel-Brass, Cu 79%, Zn 20% & Ni 1%  
**Dimension:** 30.0 mm  
**Weight:** 13.5 grams

**OBVERSE:** On the obverse side the waxing crescent moon and five-pointed star facing North-West in rising position, is in the center. Along with periphery on the top of crescent star is inscribed in

wording "ISLAMIC JAMHURIA PAKISTAN" in Urdu Script. Below the crescent and on the top of two springs of wheat with arms curved upward, there is the year of issuance 2024. The face value of coin in numeral "55" in bold letters and RUPIA in Urdu script are written on the right and left sides of crescent star respectively.

**REVERSE:** On the reverse side of the coin, picture of monument of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji is shown in the center. The wording "555th Birthday Celebrations" is written on the top of the monument and "SRI GURU NANAK DEV JI" is written at the bottom of the

monument whereas "1469-2024" is written along with the periphery at the bottom of the coin depicting the span of birthday celebrations.

State of Pakistan is heir to diverse religious denominations; Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji, founder of Sikh faith tradition, is one of the finest son to blossom out of the land now constituting Pakistan. Sikhi is a world-wide religion with millions of adherents, the holiest shrines are located in Pakistan.

The coin is being issued through the exchange counters of all the field offices of SBP Banking Services Corporation from November 22, 2024.

# Most markets track Wall Street gains, bitcoin closes

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Most markets gained Friday after a bounce on Wall Street, while bitcoin continued its march higher to move within touching distance of the \$100,000 mark.

Rising geopolitical tensions lifted the atmosphere and lifted oil again after Russia hit Ukraine with a new-generation intermediate-range missile and sent a warning to the West.

The gains in equities followed a retreat in most regional bourses Thursday after a forecast-topping earnings report from chip giant Nvidia still fell short of investors' hopes and sparked worries that a tech-fuelled surge in markets may have run its course.

However, all three main indexes on Wall Street ended on a positive note with observers saying traders had dialled back their gloom over Nvidia as they digested pledges by the firm over production of its keenly anticipated Blackwell line-up.

Investors also took heart from comments by Chicago

Federal Reserve chief Austan Goolsbee, who said he saw interest rates coming down more as the US central bank makes progress in bringing inflation down to its two percent target.

He pointed out that regarding the jobs market and prices "things are getting close to where we want to settle", adding that "it follows that we will probably need to move rates to where we think they should settle, too".

"If we look out over the next year or so, it feels to me like rates will end up a fair bit lower than where they are today," he said.

The remarks helped temper recent worries that the Fed will have to scale back its rate plans if US President-elect Donald Trump pushes through his promised tax cuts and import tariffs, which some warn could reignite inflation.

The gains in New York filtered through to Asia.

Tokyo climbed as the government prepared to announce a \$140 billion stimulus package to kick-

start the country's stuttering economy, while Sydney, Seoul, Singapore, Wellington, Mumbai, Bangkok, Taipei and Jakarta also rose.

However, Hong Kong and Shanghai sank on a sell-off in tech firms caused by weak earnings from firms including PDD and Baidu. Manila also slipped. London and Paris opened higher while Frankfurt also advanced even after data showed Germany's economy grew less than initially thought in the third quarter.

Bitcoin, meanwhile, set a new record high of \$99,505.44.

While it later eased back slightly, there is a broad expectation that it will soon burst through \$100,000 as investors grow increasingly hopeful that Trump will pass measures to deregulate the crypto sector.

Bets on an easier environment for digital units in a Trump White House have seen bitcoin soar more than 40 percent since his election victory this month, while it has more than doubled since the turn of the year.

## Court Notice

In the Court of district Judge / Zilla Qazi Buner at Daggar Buner. Appeal Monitoring No. 12/CR. Institution 22/1/ 2024. Date of hearing. 7/12/2024. Abdul Haleem etc VS Bakht Rozay etc. Notice to No.2/1. Gul Diyar s/o Mst Bakht Rawana (late) resident of Naway Kalay Asherzi Buner at present abroad. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 7/12/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

## Court Notice

In the Court of Jawad Bin Dawood Civil Judge II, Alaga Qazi Buner at Daggar. Suit No. 80/ Institution 22/1/ 2020. Date of hearing. 29/11/2024. Mst Aysha VS Wazer Khan. Notice to No.3. Sher Khan. 4. Sedad Khan sons. 5. Mst Sahib Zara d/o Ajon Khan of Jowar. 1. 6. Mukhtar Ahmed. 17. Abdur Razaq sons of Abdul Malik Khan of Leganay. 18. Fatma. 19. Sheren Zar. 20. Karema daughters of Ajon Khan resident of Jowar teshel Gadezai district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 29/11/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.





# Azhar Ali appointed PCB's head of youth development



LAHORE (ESPNCricinfo): Former Pakistan captain Azhar Ali has been appointed head of youth development at the PCB. The newly created role was filled, according to the PCB, after a recruitment process and Azhar will perform it in addition to his current role as a member of the selection committee for the men's national team.

While light on specific details of what the role entails, a PCB statement said Azhar would be "tasked with shaping the future of Pakistan cricket by designing and implementing comprehensive youth cricket strategies, establishing robust grassroots cricket structures and talent pathways, collaborating with regional cricket

associations to strengthen age-group programmes, educating emerging cricketers under the PCB's Pathways Programme, and organising seminars and clinics to build awareness of off-field development essentials for aspiring players".

Azhar is one of the more obvious examples of a success story through the player pathway programme in Pakistan.

He made his first-class debut in 2002, and was part of Pakistan's Under-19 World Cup squad that year. He went on to hone his game in the UK before returning to Pakistan, making his Test debut in 2010, and became a Pakistan great, scoring 7142 Test runs at an average of 42.26, and briefly captained both Pakistan's Test and ODI

sides.

"I am honoured and excited to take on this important role," Azhar told the PCB's website. "Having risen through the age-group ranks and played extensive club and domestic cricket, I understand the critical role grassroots development plays in shaping future stars."

"Significant strides have already been made in this area and I look forward to working with my colleagues to elevate our youth development programme further. Our goal is to identify promising talent and equip them with the tools to excel at the highest level."

Pakistan's U-19 side is currently involved in a triangular series in the UAE, with Afghanistan as the third side.



PERTH: Jasprit Bumrah trapped Steven Smith lbw first ball during the first Test between Indian and Australia in Perth on Friday.

# Captain Bumrah makes his own rules to spark India to life

PERTH (Cricinfo): The didgeridoo is a wind instrument made by hollowing out the limbs or even the trunks of trees. It produces a low-pitched, soulful, resonant hum. This alone makes it captivating enough but the indigenous Australian people believe this long, wooden flute, which may perhaps be the oldest instrument known to mankind, connects them to the invisible forces that shape our world. It certainly felt like it on the morning of the first Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test. Perth Stadium - whose walls are adorned with 17 verses of indigenous Noongar prose - practically shook in tune with the music.

When all this was happening, Yashasvi Jaiswal had found himself a little spot over on the other side of the ground and was taking some last-minute throwdowns, except it went way longer than that and if it hadn't been time for the national anthems, he might have kept going.

"This is the toughest challenge," Jasprit Bumrah had said leading up to the game. "So I give this message to everyone: if you come and perform in this country then your cricket level will go up."

"This is where you make your name for yourself on one of the biggest stages in the world to play cricket," bowling coach Morne Morkel had said. "I think that's one of the driving forces in this group of young guys to come up here and play good, solid cricket, score five-, six-hundred runs in a series, take 19-20 wickets, and put yourself on that stage. It's a fantastic carrot to dangle in front of Indian players."

KL Rahul certainly took this whole opening-the batting business really seriously, but he seemed equally preoccupied with something else as well

during the first half-hour of play. Gardening. He kicked the dirt off his batting crease. He marked and re-marked his guard. He patted the grass by the side of the pitch. He patted the good-length area of the pitch. He wanted to stay connected with the game. He wanted to stay plugged in. He wanted to get in that zone.

On Friday, at Perth Stadium, if you weren't in the zone, you didn't exist. Bumrah was among the first to be back out there at the change of innings. And he was letting them fly. His genius has distorted reality before and just then it seemed like he was fine working with 150 on the board. It can be the dark that makes his light shine brighter.

The pace was up. At the pre-match press conference, he picked up on the words "medium-fast" and forgot about everything else that followed including the next one - "all-rounder". The question was actually about Nitish Kumar Reddy, but he fired back "150 daala main ne, fast bowler bol sakte ho" [I bowl 150kph, call me a fast bowler please]. Misplaced indignation aside, there's a chance he's underselling himself there.

Bumrah created four wicket-taking opportunities with his first 12 deliveries on tour.

He was doing almost the same thing in the nets, but there were no stakes there.

Nathan McSweeney was the only casualty during this period of play, out lbw to a good-length ball curved into his front pad. He could have been dismissed earlier when a back-of-a-length ball zipped past his outside edge.

Marnus Labuschagne's score - 2 off 43- could easily have lost its curiosity value if Virat Kohli had been able to take a catch that he offered from the second

ball he faced. This one was angled in and held its line.

Bumrah was bowling fast - yeah, so fast bowler makes sense - but he brings people alive. A record crowd for a Test match day in Perth - 31,302 - including a very quiet Indian contingent until their captain was on a hat-trick. Then they began chanting his name. He makes the batting crease - which is usually wide open space - claustrophobic. He has his own gravity. Everybody at the ground was drawn to him when he was at the top of his mark. He makes his own rules. Pitches aren't 22 yards long when he's bowling.

It's about time cricket finds something else to describe him. Mitchell Starc pretty much said there's nobody like him: "He's obviously got a fair bit of hyperextension in that elbow and does things a lot of actions won't let you do. So there's no surprise he's been a fantastic bowler across formats for a long time and again his skills were on show today as to how good he is. I'm sure there's something in that release point that's significant to his action. It's something that a lot of people can't do. I'm certainly not going to go and try it."

India's batters did the best they could. The score at lunch - 51 for 4 - and immediately afterwards, when Mitchell Marsh was taking wickets - 73 for 6 - may not have looked nice but they were facing a relentless bowling attack that was able to generate, on average, 0.8 degrees of seam movement.

That's a lot. Three of the four Tests played at Perth Stadium before this one offered much less in terms of deviation after pitching: 0.65, 0.56, 0.62.

India matched their hosts with the ball. They too were able to gain 0.8 degrees of seam on aver-

age, and Harshit Rana, playing only his 11th first-class match, got almost twice that (1.36 degrees) when he dismantled Travis Head. The whole team got around him, which was good because he looked like he was ready to run straight out of the stadium. To be 22 years old and able to conjure that kind of magic on debut.

Rana and Reddy were both told on match eve that they would be playing. Twenty-four hours later, both of them have played a significant part in India turning their fortunes around in about as dramatic a manner as there could be.

"We got to know just before one day," Reddy said after the day's play. "We were a little excited as well. Obviously nervousness as well was there. We were having dinner and we were just keeping ourselves the way we were last week. We wanted to continue that. We wanted to take no pressure. So we had a cycle ride as well last evening and it was good."

Australia were expecting to face a very different bowling attack. They practiced hard for left-arm spin. Ravindra Jadeja got on the pitch only at lunch, to do some running drills. They have had enough run-ins with R Ashwin to be wary of him no matter the conditions. He was at the indoor nets, experimenting with legspin. They thought at least one of them would play. So did almost everybody else.

India went in with a team designed to give them depth. An uncapped batting allrounder at No. 8. An uncapped bowling allrounder at No. 9. Washington Sundar, he of the no-look six from three years ago, as the lone spinner, a senior fast bowler who hasn't had a good time of late, and him. The biggest him in the world of cricket right now.

## Quaid-e-Azam Trophy

# Lahore Whites, Peshawar, Sialkot qualify for triangular stage

ISLAMABAD (APP): Lahore Whites, Peshawar and Sialkot have qualified for the triangular stage of the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2024-25, after the completion of the five rounds and 45 matches of the 18-team first-class tournament.

Lahore Whites, Peshawar and Sialkot have qualified from Group A, B and C, respectively for the triangular stage.

The single-league triangular stage of the Trophy is set to begin on November 25 with Peshawar and Sialkot taking on each other followed by Lahore Whites facing Peshawar from December 1 at the Abbottabad Cricket Stadium.

The third and last fixture of the triangular stage will be played between Lahore

Whites and Sialkot from December 27 to 30, while the final is set to be staged from January 2 to 6 2025. The venue for the last triangular fixture and the final will be announced in due course.

Peshawar qualified for the triangular stage on the back of heroic bowling effort on day four against Rawalpindi to win by only 26 runs at the Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi.

Requiring 241 runs to win the game and qualify for next stage, Rawalpindi began their day from overnight score of 19-2 and were bundled out for 214 in 64.3 overs as Umar Amin's 129-ball 65-run effort went in vain. He partnered with Taimur Khan (42, 70b, 5x4s, 1x6) to take

Rawalpindi from 97-5 to 172-6 before they slipped to 196-9. Peshawar's Maaz Sadaqat and Niaz Khan picked up three wickets each in six and 13.3 overs, respectively. Skipper Sajid Khan snapped two scalps.

Sialkot, who topped the Group C, beat Karachi Blues by eight wickets at Mirpur Cricket Stadium, Mirpur.

Sialkot chased the 99-run target in 18.5 overs. Earlier, Sialkot wrapped up the Karachi Blues innings for 224 after they began from overnight score of 220-9. Test fast bowler Mohammad Ali completed his ninth first-class five-for taking his tally of match wickets to nine.

Elsewhere, Faisalabad beat Islamabad by 247 runs at National Ground

Islamabad. Faisalabad took only 2.5 overs to snap the remaining three Islamabad wickets, who had resumed from overnight score of 136-7, bundling them out for 148 in 40.5 overs. Faisalabad's Asad Raza and Shehzad Gul picked up four wickets each taking their match tally to eight and seven wickets, respectively.

At Diamond Cricket Ground, Abbottabad beat Hyderabad by 249 runs. Hyderabad were bundled out for 95 in 27.4 overs chasing 345 as Aftab Ahmed picked 5-34 in 6.4 overs.

Bahawalpur romped to a 198-run win over Karachi Whites who were dismissed for a mere 102 in pursuit of 301 runs. Bahawalpur's Mehran Sanwal snapped 5-22 in 6.3 overs.

# Noor Zaman bags Int'l Squash Championship title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani duo of Ahmad Nael Qureshi and Bilal Asim clinched the boys' doubles title of the ITF Pakistan PPL-Syed Dilawar Abbas World Junior Tennis Championship Leg-2 here at the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) Tennis Complex on Friday. In the boys' doubles final, Ahmad and Bilal beat

Abubakar Talha and Haider Ali Rizwan by 6-4, 6-3.

In the girls doubles final, So Yuna (KOR), Yeon Joo Cha (KOR) defeated A Hyun Jo (KOR), Chaerin Lee (KOR) by 6-2, 6-3.

In boys singles semifinals, Sion Ji (KOR) beat Ahmad Nael Qureshi by 6-4, 6-4 and Xiuyuan Guo (CHN) outplayed Bilal

Asim by 6-3, 6-3.

In girls singles semifinals, Karolina Ligai (KAZ) beat Chaerin Lee (KOR) by 7-5, 6-3 and Dinara De Silva (SRI) beat Hinata Wada (JPN) by 4-6, 6-4, 6-1.

The boys and girls singles final will be played on Saturday.

The event has brought together 80 junior players from around the globe,

including 50 boys and 30 girls representing countries including Pakistan, Japan, China, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Canada, Korea, Germany, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Singapore, USA, Belarus, and Russia. Miss Zunaira Fayaz was the chief guest at the semifinals. She interacted with the players and wished them good luck in the competition.

# Pakistan qualify for final of U19 tri-series

ISLAMABAD (APP): Half-centuries by Farhan Yousuf, Haroon Arshad, Shahzaib Khan and Usman Khan helped Pakistan beat UAE by 191 runs in the fifth match of the U19 tri-series tournament at the ICC Cricket Academy Ground in Dubai on Friday.

The win also confirms Pakistan's place in the final, scheduled against Afghanistan U19 on Tuesday, 26 November at the same venue.

The match will begin at 09.30am local time, said a press release.

This was Pakistan's second successive win over UAE in the tournament, after beating them

by 10 wickets in the opening match. The Saad Baig-led side also defeated Afghanistan in their previous encounter by 13 runs but faced a defeat against Afghanistan earlier in the tournament.

After opting to bat first, Pakistan scored 314 for five in 50 overs - their best score in the series. The left-handed opening pair of Shahzaib Khan and Usman Khan continued their fine form, knitting a 96-run partnership for the first wicket.

Usman (50, 64b, 7x4s) and Shahzaib (71, 84b, 5x4s, 2x6s) made fluent half-centuries. Following the duo's departure, Farhan Yousaf (63, 50b, 3x4s, 4x4s) and Haroon

Arshad (54, 34b, 4x4s, 2x6s) added 75 runs for the fourth wicket.

Faham-ul-Haq chipped in with 37 off 48 balls, which included one four and two sixes.

For UAE, Noorullah Ayubi and Uddish Suri bagged two wickets apiece.

In turn, UAE were beset by a top-order collapse as they were reduced to 52 for five in 16 overs. At that stage, Ayaan Misbah (17, 46b, 1x4) and Suri (32 not out, 61b, 4x4s) added a 21-run partnership for the sixth wicket before Misbah got out to Umar Zaib in the 26th over.

UAE were eventually dismissed for 123 in the

37th over. Naveed Ahmed Khan bagged three wickets, while Umar ended up with figures of four for 51.

The last group match of the tri-series will be played between Afghanistan and UAE on Sunday, November 24.

Scores in brief: Pakistan 314-5, 50 overs (Shahzaib Khan 71, Farhan Yousaf 63, Haroon Arshad 54, Usman Khan 50, Faham-ul-Haq 37, Muhammad Riazullah 23 not out; Noorullah Ayubi 2-53, Uddish Suri 2-54).

UAE 123 all out, 36.5 overs (Uddish Suri 32 not out, Noorullah Ayubi 28; Umar Zaib 4-51, Naveed Ahmed Khan 3-17, Faham-ul-Haq 2-20).

# Noor Zaman bags Int'l Squash Championship title

ISLAMABAD (APP): World No 82 Noor Zaman grabbed the Chief of the Air Staff-Serena Hotels International Squash Championship title here at the Mushaf Squash Complex on Friday.

He defeated his country fellow World No 85 Nasir Iqbal with a game score of 11-8, 12-10 and 11-9 in the final.

The match lasted for 27 minutes.

Pakistan Squash Federation in collaboration with Serena Hotels, has organized the Chief of the Air Staff-Serena Hotels International Squash Championship. Apart from nine Pakistanis, 15 world ranking players from Egypt, England, Hong Kong-

China, Ireland, Kuwait, Malaysia and Netherland also participated in the championship.

The final of championship was followed by the closing ceremony. Air Marshal Shakil Ghazanfar Deputy Chief of Air Staff (Personnel) graced the ceremony as Chief Guest and presented trophies and souvenirs to the play-

ers. Air Marshal Kazim Hammad Senior Vice President PSF, Amjad Ali Gill, Joint Secretary Ministry of IPC, squash Legend Qamar Zaman, VP PSF Adnan Asad, Chief Operating Officer Serena Hotels Peter Martin along with number of players, officials and squash lovers attended the ceremony.





## In brief

## Inspection conducted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Member of National Assembly (MNA), Tahira Aurangzeb, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi and Rawalpindi Food Authority here on Friday conducted raids and inspected different food outlets in Commercial Market area. According to a district administration spokesman, during the inspection, a food point was sealed due to extremely poor cleanliness arrangements. One food point was imposed fine amounting to Rs 30,000, he added. He informed that the authority was taking action in accordance with the law against the rules violators and fines were being imposed. During inspection, notices were also issued, the spokesman said. The elements playing with the health and lives of the citizens do not deserve any concession, Tahira Aurangzeb said. Punjab Food Authority is doing a very good job and making efforts to ensure provision of quality food to the citizens including milk, meat and other edibles in the open market, Tahira Aurangzeb said.

## 96,400 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 96,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 48,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1504.32 feet and was 106.32 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 23,200 cusecs and 49,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1164.65 feet, which was 114.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 4,700 cusecs and 27,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 55,100, 50,600, 36,700 and 6,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 12,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

## Journalists visit Tahafuz Centre

RAWALPINDI (APP): A delegation of foreign journalists and representatives of non-governmental organizations on Friday visited the Tahafuz Centre Rawalpindi. Assistant Superintendent of Police Dania Rana briefed the delegation about the working of the Tahafuz Centre, a news release said. It was told that the Tahafuz Centre Rawalpindi was the first one established in Pakistan to protect the rights of transgenders and such centres had now been set up across Punjab. ASP Dania said in addition to legal issues, the transgenders also approached the Tahafuz Centre for solution to other problems. The Centre was also working for education, vocational training, treatment and counseling of the transgenders. The Tahafuz Centre, she said, also "takes care of the rights of other deprived sections of the society, including women, abandoned children and special persons". The delegation appreciated the services being provided by the Tahafuz Centre for marginalized segments, particularly transgenders. Earlier on its arrival at the Center, the delegation was received by ASP Dania Rana, the In-charge of the Tahafuz Center and Victim Support Officer.

## Schools in Capital to be centralized

ISLAMABAD (APP): Under the 'Smart Islamabad' project, all schools in the federal capital, including those in both rural and urban areas, will be centralized and provided with internet connectivity and other resources to enhance the quality of education.

"The Ministry of Education is actively collaborating with the Ministry of Information Technology on this initiative," said an official from the Ministry of Information Technology.

He further explained that the centralized education system would improve educational standards in the capital without requiring additional resources.

Under the 'Smart Islamabad' initiative, the

Ministry of Information Technology will soon introduce the 'One Patient, One Identity' system in the federal capital. This system will store a patient's complete medical record, making it accessible across all hospitals in the area, including basic health units.

"This will eliminate the need for patients to revisit the hospital where they initially received treatment. Instead, they can visit any hospital in the federal capital, where doctors can access their medical records using the identity issued under the 'One Patient, One Identity' system," he added.

The official also said that separate police facilitation centers would be estab-

lished across the city to serve the public, with the Inspector General of Police, Islamabad, actively working on the project.

"These centers will refer complaints to relevant police stations for resolution. Currently, one center is operational, with work on four more in progress."

The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is contributing to the project, which will soon provide Islamabad residents access to 150 services, including document attestation, certificate issuance, and token tax payments.

Islamabad will serve as the pilot project for this initiative, which aligns with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision of digitalization.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal chairing a review meeting to assess progress of PSDP projects for 2024-25.

## 10 outlaws held; arms recovered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police apprehended 10 outlaws involved in different criminal activities including drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons recovered drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession.

A public relation officer told APP that, the Islamabad Police Shalimar, Sumbal, Koral, Bhara Kahu, Nilore, Sumbal and Sihala police teams took legal action against accused involved in possessing illegal weapons and drug peddling activities.

He said the police team also arrested 7 accused namely Zakariya, Sarfraz, Ayaz, Bilal Tariq, Zubair Qayyum, Adnan Aziz and Aqsa Norin and recovered three 30 bore pistols, two rifles, one dagger, 1,060-grams hashish and 300-grams ice from their possession.

Moreover, 2 absconders were also arrested from various areas of the city during the last 24 hours.

SSP Operation Muhammad Arslan Shah Zaib said that the Islamabad Police is actively working to ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property in the federal capital, emphasizing that no elements will be allowed to disrupt citizens' peace. Protecting the lives, property and dignity of citizens is the Islamabad Police's top priority.

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.

## Calligraphy workshop organized

RAWALPINDI (APP): Workshop was organized at the Punjab Arts Council in collaboration with the Iranian Cultural Center. Renowned Iranian calligrapher Saeed Reza Kamrani, along with Khawaja Muhammad Hussain, Shabbir Ahmed Zia, and Muhammad Azeem Iqbal, trained young calligraphers during the workshop.

The event was attended by a considerable number of students from the Arts Council, Rawalpindi Women University, Fatima Jinnah University, National College of Arts, and Rawalpindi Medical University.

The workshop concluded with a certificate distribution ceremony, Director General of the Iranian Cultural Center in Rawalpindi, Dr. Mehdi Taheri on the occasion stated that Pakistan and Iran are two brotherly Islamic countries with closely aligned cultures.

He expressed that the calligraphy workshop brought the people of both nations closer and announced plans for more cultural activities in collaboration with the Punjab Arts Council in the near future.

Naheed Manzoor, Resident Director Punjab Arts Council, highlighted that the council was tirelessly working for the promotion of the art of calligraphy.

She emphasized the dedication of today's youth to learning calligraphy, calling it commendable.

## Performance of Ministry lauded

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly Standing Committee on Parliamentary Affairs on Friday commended the performance of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs during its meeting chaired by Rana Iradat Sharif Khan.

The Committee recommended further improvements in the mechanism to ensure faster resolution of public grievances.

The Prime Minister's Public Affairs and Grievances Wing briefed the Committee on its opera-

tions. The Wing focuses on addressing concerns of non-digitally enabled citizens and Pakistan's diaspora, aiming to provide relief and resolve their issues efficiently.

The Committee urged the Ministry to enhance the Wing's visibility through advertising campaigns, ensuring that more people can access and benefit from its services.

Extending condolences to the victims of the recent tragic gun attack on a passenger van in Parachinar,

which claimed 42 lives, the committee offered prayers for the departed souls.

The meeting was attended by Members of the National Assembly, including Shaikh Aftab Ahmed, Raja Qamar-ul-Islam, Ch. Mahmood Bashir Virk, Malik Shah, Nikhat Shakeel Khan, Mujahid Ali, Ali Muhammad, Hameed Hussain, Khurram Shahzad Virk, and Shahida Begum.

Senior officers of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs were also present.

## ANF recovers over 11 kg drugs; arrests 10 accused

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations managed to arrest 10 accused and recovered over 11 kg drugs worth over Rs 2.2 million, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Friday.

He informed that in an operation, ANF recovered 1.2 kg hashish and arrested two suspects near a university in Gujarat.

550 grams hashish was recovered from a suspect held near KKH Road, Peshawar.

200 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of a suspect rounded up near a university in

Islamabad. 225 intoxicated tablets were recovered from two suspects rounded up near Sawan Bridge, Rawalpindi University.

The arrested suspects confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions.

In another operation, 618 grams heroin was recovered from the trolley bag of a passenger going to Jeddah at Peshawar International Airport.

In an operation at Peshawar Airport, 59 ice-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of a passenger going to Doha.

570 grams ice hidden in

pipes was recovered from a parcel sent to New Zealand from a courier office in Sialkot.

In 8th operation, 376 grams heroin hidden in two boxes of ladies' clothes was recovered from a parcel sent to the UK through a courier office in Lahore.

In 9th operation, 7.2 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects arrested near Sher Shah Toll Plaza Multan.

Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.

## 'Margalla Viewpoint master plan approved'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) said on Friday that the master plan for the eco-restoration of the Margalla Viewpoint project has been unanimously approved by the 5th Implementation Committee.

This significant development marks a milestone in the efforts to transform the Margalla Hills into a thriving ecosystem and a popular tourist destination.

According to IWMB spokesperson, the master plan, prepared by architect Imrana Tiwana collaborating with Architect DB Studio based in Islamabad, is the result of meticulous planning and collaboration

amongst all stakeholders.

The plan envisions a green space that not only restores the natural beauty of the Margalla Hills but also provides a unique recreational space for residents and tourists.

Key Features of the Master Plan includes promenades and walking Trails, reflecting pool and Eco-display area, open air amphitheatre, play area for children, sitting areas for elders, prayer area, visitor information centre, office spaces and parking areas.

To a query, the IWMB spokesperson told APP that the removal of debris from the demolished mega restaurants has been completed, and lantana clear-

ance and rewilding of the area will commence with the onset of the next rains.

He said WWF Pakistan will initiate fundraising efforts for the project, with work expected to begin soon. The master plan and completed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be submitted to the Environment Protection Agency for approval.

"The approval of the master plan marks a significant milestone in our efforts to restore the Margalla Hills ecosystem. We are committed to creating a thriving green space that benefits both the environment and the community," said IWMB's Chairperson.

## Search operations conducted to net criminals

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi District Police here on Friday carried out search operations in the jurisdiction of Race Course, R.A Bazar, and Taxila police stations to net the criminals.

According to a police spokesman, the search operations were conducted in order to maintain law and order and flush out suspects following the directions of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani.

Police spokesman informed, senior police officers and police personnel including women police took part in the search operations.

Police checked 92 houses, 46 shops, three hotels, tenants and nearly 185 indi-

viduals during the search operations.

The spokesman said that police were fully prepared to shield the lives and prop-

erty of the public and combing and search operations were being done to flush out the suspects and hardcore criminals.

## Weapon smuggler held during successful action

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested a weapon smuggler and a significant cache of illegal weapons was seized during operation here on Friday.

According to police spokesman, Mandra police during course of action held an arm smuggler who was identified as Saud Akbar.

Police confiscated eight pistols and several magazines from their possession.

A case has been registered against the accused and further investigation is under process.

SP Saddar Muhammad Nabil Khokhar praised the Mandra police for their effective action and emphasized the importance of continuing efforts to combat illegal weapon possession and trafficking.

He made it clear that it is prime duty of police to protect the lives and properties of people.



### Man flogged by Taliban

KABUL (Amu TV): Taliban publicly flogged a man and a woman in the eastern province of Khost on charges of “moral corruption,” according to a statement released by the Taliban’s Supreme Court. The individuals, whose identities were not disclosed, each received 39 lashes in a public ceremony held on the court premises. Local Taliban officials, including district leaders and police commanders, as well as community members, attended the event, the statement said.

## The Frontier Post

# AFGHANISTAN

Jamadi-ul-Awwal 20 1446 — Saturday, November 23, 2024

### Iran pledges \$6b investment

KABUL (TOLONews): Seyed Hossein Mirshafi, advisor and representative of Iran’s Minister of Roads and Urban Development in infrastructure development and special projects, stated that his country is ready to invest \$6 billion in Afghanistan’s transportation infrastructure. The advisor and representative of Iran’s Minister of Roads and Urban Development further added that transportation cooperation with Afghanistan could strengthen the economic ties between two countries.

## Gunmen kill 12 in Baghlan province

BAGHLAN (Khaama Press): Sources have reported that 12 people lost their lives in a shooting carried out by unidentified armed assailants in Nahrin District, Baghlan Province.

According to these sources, the incident occurred last night in Ziarat Shahr Kohna, located in Nahrin District. The attack has caused significant concern among the local population, who are already grappling with ongoing insecurity.

These individuals were reportedly at the Sayed Padshah Shrine in the old city of Nahrin, “engaged in prayer when they were killed.”

Images on social media show the bodies of the victims inside what is described as a shrine. It remains unclear who—whether an individual or group—was responsible for carrying out this attack.

Incidents like the Nahrin attack reflect a disturbing trend of increasing violence against civilians in Afghanistan. Amid the fragile security situation, such attacks leave communities in a state of constant fear and vulnerability.

The lack of accountability and the absence of an effective response only embolden perpetrators, exacerbating the cycle of violence.

These tragedies occur against the backdrop of widespread poverty and humanitarian crises. With millions facing food insecurity and unemployment, Afghan civilians are caught in a dire situation where violence compounds their struggle for survival.

The inability to access basic resources or rebuild their lives after such incidents leaves them perpetually marginalized.

## IEA allocated land for industrial parks: Azizi

KABUL (TOLONews): By the order of the Islamic Emirate’s leader, 160,000 jeribs of land have been allocated to industrial parks across the country.

Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, Nooruddin Azizi, speaking at the inauguration of a hygiene products factory in Parwan built at a cost of nearly \$3 million, stated that 98% of production factories in the country have become operational in the past three years. Currently, 5,000 small and large factories are active nationwide.

“During a recent trip with Sheikh Sahib, 160,000 jeribs of land were allocated for industrial parks,” said the acting minister.

“Currently, more than 30 small and large companies are active in Parwan province, providing direct employment to around 1,000 people,” said Raza Mohammad Yaser, the head of industry and commerce in Parwan.

Parwan’s local officials highlighted the favorable investment opportunities in the province, urging domestic investors to consider Parwan for their ventures.

“I assure you that all necessary facilities for investment are available here. We will not allow anyone to pressure our traders or hinder their investment opportunities,” said Mohammad Idris Anwari, the governor of Parwan.

Mohammad Siddiq Mokhes, the head of Parwan Intelligence, stressed: “Do not invest in neighboring countries; come and invest in your own country.”

Traders and the Chamber of Craftsmen



and Shopkeepers called on the caretaker government to support production factories and focus on constructing standard cold storage facilities.

“If the collected funds are used to support the private sector though it falls under the Ministry of Agriculture we recommend the construction of standard cold storage facilities,” said Shireen Agha Sakhi, the head of the Craftsmen and Shopkeepers Association.

Azizullah Aziz, the head of the hygiene products factory in Parwan, said: “In the first phase, \$30 million has been invested in this factory, and we are working to increase this amount with plans to produce several other products.”

The factory officials stated that due to the high quality of work, Chinese engineers have been hired, and the facility has directly created jobs for 300 people and indirectly for 1,200 others in Parwan province.

### Hunting of rare animals, birds banned

BADAKHSHAN (TOLONews): The Badakhshan Directorate of Environmental Protection has announced a complete ban on hunting wild animals, birds, and rare species in the province.

Officials of the directorate emphasize that individuals involved in hunting these animals will be dealt with according to the law.

Due to the presence of rare animals such as the Marco Polo sheep and snow leopard, Badakhshan has always attracted both domestic and international tourists.

“Hunting wildlife and birds is entirely prohibited. This decision has been made based on the directive of the leadership of the Islamic Emirate, and no one is allowed to hunt,” stated Faiz Ur Rahman Ebrahimi, the head of Badakhshan’s Environmental Protection Department.

Some residents of Badakhshan have supported this decision and pledged their cooperation.

“The hunting ban will help preserve rare animals and attract more tourists to Badakhshan,” stated Sayed Mohebullah Sadat, a resident of Badakhshan.

“We welcome this action by the Islamic Emirate and call for strict measures against illegal hunters,” stated Rasoul Mirzayi, another resident of the province.

Recently, residents of a village in the Shaki district of Badakhshan hunted a brown bear and took photos with its carcass. This act sparked reactions, leading to the arrest of two individuals in connection with the incident.

### Residents of Kabul face power shortages

KABUL (Amu TV): As winter draws near, residents of Kabul are grappling with prolonged power outages, leaving many frustrated by the lack of electricity during both the day and night.

The outages have compounded other challenges, including water shortages, as the city braces for colder temperatures.

Mustafa, an eighth-grader, spends his evenings studying under dim light, holding on to the hope of a brighter future despite the Taliban’s restrictions.

“Because we don’t have electricity at night and our exam is on Thursday, I don’t know how to prepare or how to get good scores,” he said, reflecting the struggles faced by students during their annual exams amid freezing conditions and persistent outages.

In the northern area of Sar-e-Kotal of Kabul’s Police District 17, as in much of the city, power is available for only three to four hours a day. Residents expressed outrage over high electricity bills despite the limited service.

“The cost of electricity is high, but we hardly have any power. In 24 hours, we don’t even get five hours of proper electricity,” one resident said.

### Electricity shortages disrupt daily life

Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS), the Taliban-controlled electricity provider, acknowledged a shortfall of 227 megawatts of power in Kabul, with supply levels dropping below 80 percent. Residents report that the erratic electricity supply has not only left homes in the dark but also disrupted water systems that depend on electric pumps.

The lack of power is one of the most pressing challenges for Kabul residents as they navigate daily life in increasingly difficult conditions.

### A stalled regional project

Hopes for an improved energy supply had once rested on the CASA-1000 project, an ambitious regional initiative aimed at transferring electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, progress on the project stalled after the Taliban seized power in 2021, leading the World Bank to suspend its support.

## Islamic Emirate seeks climate cooperation at COP 29

KABUL (TOLONews): Matiul Haq Khalis, the head of the Islamic Emirate delegation at the COP 29 summit, held meetings on the sidelines with representatives from the United Nations Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN), the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the UK Foreign Office, and delegations from Bangladesh and Qatar.

According to the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), the Islamic Emirate delegation emphasized during the meeting with the UN Climate Technology Centre and Network that Afghanistan needs to identify and adopt climate-resilient technologies.

In the same meeting, Matiul Haq Khalis, NEPA head, also requested technical and financial cooperation for Afghanistan. He discussed the suspended projects of the Green Climate Fund in Afghanistan with its representatives, urging them to restart work on the halted projects.

Discussions with the UK Foreign Office focused on restarting environmental projects, addressing the adverse effects of climate change, and ensuring the depoliticization of aid in this field.

The delegation also met with officials from the



Global Environment Facility (GEF) and urged them to approve Afghanistan’s proposed projects related to climate change.

The National Environmental Protection Agency stated in a press release: “During this meeting, discussions were held about Afghanistan’s proposed and ongoing environmental projects, and the officials of the Global Environment Facility were requested to approve Afghanistan’s proposals.”

According to the ministry’s press release, on November 20, Matiul Haq Khalis met with Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Qatar’s

Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and sought technical cooperation and capacity-building programs in the field of environmental protection.

Qatar’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change stated in the meeting that Qatar plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% as part of its 2025–2030 agenda.

The Islamic Emirate delegation emphasized regional cooperation under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network in their meeting with the

Bangladesh delegation.

Afghanistan is among the countries that do not contribute to greenhouse gas emissions but has suffered the most from their effects.

The annual UN Climate Change Conference began on November 11 this year in Baku, Azerbaijan’s capital, with representatives from 198 member countries, some heads of state, representatives of the private sector, multilateral and bilateral financial institutions, civil society organizations, and the media in attendance. The conference is set to conclude today.

## World Television Day: TV’s impact in Afghanistan

KABUL (TOLONews): November 21 marks World Television Day. Television broadcasting in Afghanistan began in 1978 (1357 Solar Year), and since then, television has played a significant role in providing entertainment and information to the country’s people.

Twenty-three years after the start of national television broadcasts, the era of media growth began in the country, with the number of private television channels increasing one after another.

Faqir Miwand, the former senior advisor to the Ministry of Information and Culture, said: “Do you remember the old days when Sharp Japanese color

televisions were set up in Pul-e-Bagh-e-Omomi, Zarnegar Park, Shahr-e-Naw, Karte Naw, and Amina Fidavey High School? Television broadcasts would start every evening after six. Friends and our dear ones, especially the younger generation, would come to watch television. Some of them even said they wanted to see the people inside the television because it was a new culture and phenomenon.”

The European Union has also emphasized the importance of independent media in Afghanistan’s progress and assured its support for independent media in the country.

“Responsible and independent audio-visual media is crucial for nation’s progress. The EU reaffirms that TV as the largest audio-visual medium is important for education & development. The EU supports independent journalism for a well-informed public in Afghanistan,” stated the EU.

Coinciding with this day, some journalists in the country have called for the establishment of a public media law and timely access to information.

“November 21 is being commemorated while the lack of a media law and the absence of access to information are challenges journalists are grappling with.

We urge the Islamic Emirate to assist television networks and resolve the current issues,” stated Shah Aqa Sadat, a journalist.

“Television acts as a bridge between the government and the people in political, economic, and cultural spheres. The Islamic Emirate should cooperate in facilitating access to information,” stated Safiullah Mantaq, another journalist.

The UN designated November 21 as World Television Day on December 17, 1996, to raise awareness about television’s impact on covering conflicts, peace, security, and major economic events.

## China, Turkmenistan emphasize need for stability in Afghanistan

ASHGABAT (Amu TV): Senior officials from China and Turkmenistan reaffirmed their commitment to promoting stability in Afghanistan during a bilateral meeting, Turkmenistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

The meeting, held between Turkmen Deputy Foreign Minister Vepa Hajiyeve and China’s Special Representative for Afghanistan Yue Xiaoyong, highlighted the importance of multilateral platforms in fostering Afghanistan’s sustainable reconstruction and improving its socio-economic conditions.

According to the statement, the two sides also discussed preparations for the fifth meeting of foreign ministers from Afghanistan’s neighboring countries, which is scheduled to take place in



Turkmenistan.

“They reaffirmed that Turkmenistan and China will continue their comprehensive support for Afghanistan’s economic reconstruction based on the principles of friendship and good neighborliness,” the statement said.

### Regional diplomacy

Yue Xiaoyong’s visit to Turkmenistan follows his

recent trip to Pakistan, where he held extensive talks with Amna Baloch, Pakistan’s Deputy Foreign Minister, and Ahmad Naseem Waraich, the country’s Deputy Foreign Minister for Afghanistan and West Asia.

During those discussions, both sides emphasized the critical role of neighboring countries in

ensuring a peaceful and stable Afghanistan, according to Pakistan’s Foreign Ministry.

China and Turkmenistan’s diplomatic efforts are part of a broader regional push to address the challenges in Afghanistan, including economic hardship and security concerns following the Taliban’s return to power in 2021.

## Taliban threaten to shut down women-only cafes

HERAT (Amu TV): Women running women-only cafes in Herat say the Taliban have threatened to close their establishments, dealing another blow to their efforts to maintain financial independence and create safe spaces for women.

The cafes, primarily operated by students and female entrepreneurs, serve as a vital source of income and a rare refuge in a city where opportunities for women are increasingly scarce under Taliban rule.

According to sources, Taliban officials from the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice have raided the cafes over the past three days, warning owners to cease operations immediately.

Currently, five women-only cafes are active in Herat. Some cafe owners say these businesses became their lifeline after universities were closed to women.

“I spent years working to get into university, but after the closures, I lost everything I had worked for,” said one cafe owner. “I invested in this cafe as a last hope to support myself and other women, but now the Taliban are trying to take even this away.”

### Escalating restrictions on women

Women in Herat say the Taliban are systematically tightening restrictions,

leaving few avenues for social interaction or economic survival.

“The cafes were the only places we could gather with friends,” said Nargis, a Herat resident. “On Monday, while we were at a cafe, Taliban officials came in and aggressively ordered the owners to shut down, saying women aren’t allowed to work. We’re exhausted by this relentless oppression.”

In western Afghanistan, women say the Taliban’s enforcement of new morality laws has intensified restrictions.

According to several women, Taliban officials deny entry to government offices for women not wearing a full burqa and forbid employees from providing services to women without a male guardian or wearing a burqa.

“The restrictions are unbearable,” said Sara, a resident of Badghis Province. “Even in offices like passport services or courtrooms, they won’t assist you, even if you’re fully covered. Instead of solving people’s problems, they just create more.”

### Global silence on Taliban policies

Over the past three years, the Taliban have issued about 80 edicts restricting women’s freedoms, barring them from education, employment, and public spaces.

## IE making progress with ‘prudence’, says Kabir

GHAZNI (TOLONews): The Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, stated during a public gathering in Ghazni that the Islamic Emirate is striving for the country’s progress in political and economic sectors.

Mawlawi Abdul Kabir stressed that the caretaker government is undertaking this task with prudence. The Political Deputy also stated: “The Islamic Emirate is working for the development of the country in political and economic areas. Just as the Islamic Emirate, with the collaboration of this devout and brave Muslim nation, achieved success with Allah’s help on the military front over 20 years, similarly, you have witnessed over the past three years that it is progressing with success and prudence in political and economic fields.”

In addition to attending this public gathering, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir visited the 203 Mansoori Army Corps during his trip to the province. The Ministry of Defense said in a statement that the Political Deputy Prime Minister, during this visit, urged the Islamic Emirate’s defense forces to prioritize the strengthening of the Sharia-based system and serving the



nation.

“Every step the Islamic Emirate takes towards the prosperity and development of the homeland, or any step to reduce the level of poverty, the international community evaluates the Islamic Emirate’s activities based on these efforts. Naturally, they make decisions, increase engagement, and ultimately recognize it officially,” said Salim Paigir, a political analyst.

Before visiting Ghazni, the Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs had traveled to Bamyan. The Arg, during Mawlawi Abdul Kabir’s visit to Bamyan, stated that the trip aimed to address the residents’ challenges.



# Israel says to end ‘administrative detention’ for West Bank settlers

JERUSALEM (AFP): Israeli authorities will stop holding Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank under administrative detention, or incarceration without trial, the defense ministry announced Friday.

The practice allows for detainees to be held for long periods without being charged or appear in court, and is often used against Palestinians who Israel deems security threats. Defense Minister Israel Katz said it was “inappropriate” for Israel to employ administrative detention against settlers who “face severe Palestinian terror threats and unjustified international sanctions.”

But, according to settlement watchdog Peace Now, it is one of only few effective tools that Israeli authorities to prevent settler attacks against Palestinians, which have surged in the West Bank over the past year. Katz said in a statement issued by his office that prosecution or “other preventive measures” would be used to deal with criminal acts in the West Bank.

B’Tselem, an Israeli rights group, said authorities use administrative detention “extensively and routinely” to hold thousands of Palestinians for lengthy periods of time. The Palestinian Prisoners Club advocacy group said in August that 3,432 Palestinians were held in administrative detention.

Israeli daily Haaretz reported on Friday that eight settlers were held

under the same practice in November. Yonatan Mizrahi, director of settlement watch for Peace Now, said that although administrative detention was mostly used in the West Bank to detain Palestinians, it was one of the few effective tools for temporarily removing the threat of settler violence through detention.

“The cancellation of administrative detention orders for settlers alone is a cynical... move that whitewashes and normalizes escalating Jewish terrorism under the cover of war,” the group said in a statement, referring to a spike in settler attacks throughout the Israel-Hamas conflict over the past 13 months. Western governments, including Israel’s ally and military backer the United States, have recently imposed sanctions on Israeli settlers and settler organizations over ties to violence against Palestinians.

On Monday, US authorities announced sanctions against Amana, a movement that backs settlement development, and others who have “ties to violent actors in the West Bank.” “Amana is a key part of the Israeli extremist settlement movement and maintains ties to various persons previously sanctioned by the US government and its partners for perpetrating violence in the West Bank,” the US Treasury said. Excluding Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, the West Bank — which Israel has occupied since 1967 — is

home to three million Palestinians as well as about 490,000 Israelis living in settlements that are illegal under international law.

Meanwhile, a Syria war monitor said on Friday that Israeli strikes on the city of Palmyra this week killed 92 pro-Iran fighters, after a United Nations representative said they were likely the deadliest to date.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Wednesday’s attack targeted three sites in Palmyra, with one hitting a meeting of pro-Iranian groups that also involved commanders from Iraq’s Al-Nujaba group and Lebanon’s Hezbollah.

The toll has risen to “92 dead: 61 Syrian pro-Iran fighters,” 11 of them working for Hezbollah, “and 27 foreign nationals mostly from Al-Nujaba, plus four from Hezbollah,” the Observatory said. The Britain-based war monitor, which relies on a network of sources inside Syria, had previously reported 82 dead, while the Syria defense ministry on Wednesday said 36 people were killed.

The UN deputy special envoy to Syria, Najat Rochdi, told the Security Council on Thursday that the raid was “likely the deadliest Israeli strike in Syria to date.” The Observatory said the strikes also targeted “a weapons depot near the industrial area” in Palmyra, a modern city adjacent to globally renowned Greco-Roman ruins.



QUETTA: Security officials inspecting the site after bomb blast near police vehicle.

## Commodore Ateeq of Pak Navy promoted



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Commodore Ateequr Rehman Abid has been promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral with immediate effect. Rear Admiral Ateequr Rehman Abid got commission in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1995. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Naval Academy, Karachi, Naval War College, USA, and Royal College of Defence Studies, UK.

The Flag Officer has completed various professional courses from national and international institutes. He has done International Security and Strategic Leadership Studies Course from UK, Naval Staff Course from USA, Pakistan Navy Staff Course from PN War College Lahore and National Security and War Course from National Defence University, Islamabad.

The Admiral has an illustrious career covering vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments. His major command appointments include Commanding Officer PNS MUJAHID, Commanding Officer PNS TARIQ, Commander 18th Destroyer Squadron, Captain Training at Headquarters FOST, Director Operations at HQ PMSA, Chief Staff Officer to Commander Pakistan Fleet and Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Developmental Plans) at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. In recognition of his meritorious service, the Admiral was awarded Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military).

## Kh Asif denounces Bushra Bibi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Defense Minister Khawaja Asif Friday launched a scathing critique of Bushra Bibi and PTI founder Imran Khan, accusing them of exploiting religious and political norms for ‘personal and political gains.’

“If Bushra Bibi considers herself synonymous with Sharia, then only God can protect us,” Khawaja Asif said while addressing a press conference in the federal capital. He termed the claims as an affront to religion, further alleging, “Such acts to save a sinking political ship reflect the lowest levels of desperation.”

The PML-N stalwart also addressed PTI’s internal conflicts, calling the rivalry between family members over political inheritance “the ugliest face of dynastic politics.” Referring to the ‘feud’ to take over the party, he remarked, “Tug of war is on between a Bushra Bibi and Khan’s sisters—a disgraceful chapter in Pakistan’s political history.” Khawaja Asif also criticized the PTI’s alleged misuse of diplomatic ties, highlighting the Saudi Arabia watch controversy and the misappropriation of gifts from the Toshakhana.

## KP showcases climate resilience at COP29

BAKU (APP): The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa showcased its climate resilience strategies and ambitious plans to harness carbon markets at a high-profile side event at COP29, held at the Pakistan Pavilion in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The event brought together leading policymakers, climate finance experts, and international development partners to discuss Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province’s unique challenges and opportunities in addressing climate change, says an official statement. The event commenced with a detailed presentation by Additional Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ikramullah Khan, who highlighted province’s acute climate vulnerabilities, including the increasing frequency of floods, landslides, and deforestation impacts.

Despite these challenges, he emphasized the immense potential of the province to lead the way in carbon sequestration through innovative projects. The presentation underscored Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s natural resources and its strategic focus on developing a climate finance pipeline to tap into global carbon markets.

Junaid Dyar, the Project

Director for the Billion Tree Tsunami project, provided an overview of afforestation initiatives of the Province. He outlined the project’s significant achievements in restoring degraded ecosystems, enhancing biodiversity, and creating opportunities for generating carbon credits. The event also included a high-profile panel discussion. The panel discussion was moderated by Hasaan Khawar, the Team Leader for the FCDO-funded SEED Programme, which is supporting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in developing a climate finance transactions pipeline.

Shahid Zaman, Secretary Forest and Climate Change for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa elaborated how the province is planning to use its wide forest base to tap into the carbon markets. Nick Haslam, an international climate finance expert, outlined strategies for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to secure global climate financing by building institutional capacity and engaging the private sector.

Kashmali Khan, representing Adam Smith International, highlighted the importance of international collaborations and knowledge-sharing to drive innovation in climate initia-

tives. Muzammil Aslam, Finance Advisor Finance to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, emphasized the economic potential of climate initiatives, noting that the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami project is expected to generate 10 million jobs across Pakistan, with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province playing a pivotal role in this achievement.

He also highlighted Province’s success in leveraging public-private partnerships (PPPs) to implement renewable energy projects, eco-tourism zones, and afforestation programs and emphasized that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be co-investing with any interested international investor. MNA Faisal Amin Khan, the Climate Change Lead at the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Office, gave concluding remarks and dedicated the event to the forest workers who lost their lives while fighting forest fires. He acknowledged their sacrifices as a testament to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s commitment to environmental conservation. Faisal Amin Khan also reaffirmed the government’s dedication to climate resilience, announcing that next year Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will present the results of the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami project.

## PHC petitioned to enforce Lawyers’ Welfare Law 2023

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A writ petition has been filed in the Peshawar High Court (PHC) seeking the enforcement of Lawyers’ Constitutional Rights and Welfare Law 2023 in its original form. The petition, filed by Ali Iqbal Qazalbash advocate, seeking to ensure the implementation of all provisions of the law, including the establishment of courts and the provision of a martyrs’ package for lawyers.

The petition seeking protection of lawyers from harassment, intimidation, and disrespect during court proceedings. Provision of medical facilities to lawyers and their dependents.

The Federal Government, Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan Bar

Council, Peshawar High Court, Peshawar Bar Council and Inspector General Police, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa made respondents in the writ petition.

It worthy to mention that the petition highlights the lack of implementation of the Lawyers’ Constitutional Rights and Welfare Law 2023, despite its enactment. The petitioners argue that the law aims to protect the rights and welfare of lawyers, but its provisions have not been enforced.

Meanwhile, Judicial Magistrate Peshawar Dawlat Khan has dismissed the bail applications of two accused named Tahir Hussain and Muhammad Idris in a case involving the embezzlement of Rs. 6.6 million from a lawyer, Syed Imran Ullah advocate.

According to the prosecution Tahir Hussain, a resident of Dheri Baghbanan,

and Muhammad Idris, a resident of Ghauri Town, Islamabad are alleged to have deceived the complainant, Syed Imran Ullah Shah advocate, by taking Rs. 6.6 million from him on the pretext of business investment. The accused allegedly failed to return the amount, leading to the registration of a case against them at the Eastern police station.

The prosecution argued that the accused are habitual offenders involved in cheating and embezzling money from people. The prosecution also stated that Muhammad Idris was nominated in the case under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The Judicial Magistrate dismissed the bail applications of both accused, Tahir Hussain and Muhammad Idris after conclusion of arguments.

## Over 500 PTI activists arrested in Lahore

F.P. Report

LAHORE: As the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) gears up for its rally in Islamabad, law enforcement agencies have intensified a widespread crackdown to arrest party activists in Lahore.

According to police sources, entry and exit points in Shahdara have been declared sensitive, with containers likely to be placed in the area to control movement in case of a protest or march towards Islamabad.

The sources say that special police squads are being deployed at the entry and exit routes. Authorities have also completed coordination between Islamabad and Punjab districts to monitor and curb potential unrest. In Lahore, police have been conducting raids on homes, offices, and outhouses linked to PTI supporters, arresting over 500 activists so far from

various areas, including Millat Park, Hanjarwal, Mansoor, Quid-e-Azam Industrial Estate, and Green Town.

Raids have also been conducted in Shahdara Town, Shahdara, Badami Bagh, and Tajpura. Police sources say that the arrests are being carried out based on lists of individuals suspected of involvement in activities that could disrupt law and order. From Iqbal Town division alone, 65 individuals were detained on concerns of disturbing law and order, while 14 arrests were made last night from Green Town and Township.

The Punjab government has imposed Section 144 across the province from November 23 to 25, banning all protests, gatherings, processions, rallies, and sit-ins. The decision, announced through an official notification, aims to maintain law and order in the region. Authorities have

stated that the ban is being implemented in light of potential unrest and public gatherings during this period. The move comes as a precautionary measure to prevent disturbances and ensure the safety of citizens and property.

Imran will not make any deal or go abroad: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and senior lawyer, Babar Awan asserted that PTI founder Imran Khan would not make any deal or go abroad as they had won with the public vote.

Talking to media outside Islamabad High Court (IHC), he stressed that the November 24 protest call was the final protest and every citizen had the due right to take to the streets for their demands. Awan agitated the government employees for halting the PTI party from entering Islamabad; he suggested them to mind their own business.

## LHC issues new order for schools amid smog

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday directed the schools’ administration to provide pick-and-drop services to students after winter break, in a move to counter the increasing smog threat.

LHC Justice Shahid Karim passed the orders during a hearing on petitions related to smog prevention on Friday. The court ordered that children must commute to schools using transport provided by the school administration. Schools failing to comply with these orders will face sealing, the LHC bench warned. It also remarked that no school should issue written disclaimers absolving themselves of responsibility for students’ transportation.

Justice Shahid Karim directed the transport authorities to formulate a vehicle fitness policy within 15 days. He further instructed that all vehicles should undergo inspections every three months, and fitness certificates must be issued by the transport department. The department was also told to maintain a comprehensive database of public and private buses.

Later, the heading was adjourned until Tuesday for further proceedings on petitions moved by citizens and others. Earlier, the Punjab government announced opening of parks, zoos, playgrounds, and museums, resuming all outdoor activities amid a drop in smog levels across the province. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a notification in this regard to resume all of the outdoor activities and operation of shops, markets and shopping plazas.

“In light of the recent improvement in Air Quality Index, all outdoor activities including public & private parks, zoos, playgrounds, historical places, monuments, museums, joy, play lands, outdoor sports events, exhibitions and festivals shall be resumed from 22-11-2024 (Friday) in the whole province till 8:00pm” the notification stated.



ISLAMABAD: Large numbers of passengers standing at a bus station at Faizabad as authorities announced strict security plans for November 24 PTI protest.

## PM boasts timeless

(Continued from Page 1)

He told the gathering that during the previous government, all projects in Gwadar were put to a halt and were revived by the PML-N government including the completion of port dredging to convert it back to the deep sea port costing Rs4 billion.

Ahsan Iqbal said the government had formulated a five-year development program to be unveiled by the prime minister on November 28. Minister for Water Resources Musaddik Malik said the prime minister was pursuing a vision to prioritise employment and reducing inflation. He said the Kachhi Canal was not mere a project to irrigate land but an initiative to revive life in the desert and usher in a new era of prosperity. Lt. Gen. (Retd) Sajjad Ghani said as per the prime minister’s directives, the initial phase of the Kachhi canal had been completed in 45 days to irrigate around 715,000 acres of land in Balochistan.

PM directs implementation as IT ministry presents action plan on \$25b IT exports: The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication presented a detailed action plan to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif aimed at boosting the country’s IT exports to \$25 billion in five years.

The prime minister, who

had tasked the IT ministry with the said target, chaired a review meeting here and appreciated the action plan, and instructed to ensure its implementation, according to a PM Office press release.

The action plan featured measures to bring reforms in different IT-related sectors and address the issues. In his remarks, the prime minister said that there was no dearth of capable manpower and resources. The effective use of resources and skill training of the manpower could take the IT exports even beyond the targeted \$25 billion.

He asked all the relevant departments for collaborative efforts to address the challenges in the IT sector reforms and informed the participants that he would personally oversee the implementation process. The prime minister instructed the Higher Education Commission to devise an action plan for youth’s education and skill training of international standards.

Calling for implementing the proposals to meet the Gulf countries’ demand for IT experts, he asked the IT ministry to define the targets and their timelines to enhance exports. In this regard, he also directed to constitute a committee to ensure the implementation of the reforms and carry out necessary collaboration with different departments.

In the briefing, the prime minister was told that his decision to prioritise the IT sector led to a 34% increase in IT exports during the last four months. It was informed that Pakistan’s IT ranking improved from 79 to 40, e-governance ranking by 14 points, and 2500 new IT companies were registered.

The participants were informed that for the next five years, a \$15 billion target has been set for IT sector exports, \$10 billion for digitization, and \$1 billion for telecom exports. The meeting was briefed on the Labor Management System aimed at capacity building of the workforce in collaboration with the educational institutions, using the demand data of the industries.

As the IT ministry briefed about the proposed project for the facilitation of youth particularly the freelancers in remittances, the prime minister appreciated the measures regarding the international patent gateways and instructed for an immediate implementation.

The prime minister expressed satisfaction with the action plan on IT exports and lauded the IT minister and her team. Federal Economic Affairs Minister Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister of State for Information Technology Shaza Fatima Khawaja and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.