

Terrorists may target protest
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Counter Terrorism Authority (Nacta) on Saturday issued a threat alert warning that the "Fitna al-Khawarij", also known as TTP, may target the PTI "do or die" protest scheduled for today in Islamabad. The top counter-terrorism body warned that the TTP militants can carry out terror attacks in major cities on the country.

The
Frontier Post

19,696 illegal citizens held

RIYADH: Saudi authorities arrested 19,696 people in one week for breaching residency, work and border security regulations, the Saudi Press Agency reported on Saturday. According to an official report, a total of 11,336 people were arrested for violations of residency laws, while 5,176 were held over illegal border crossing attempts, and a further 3,184 for labor-related issues. — Arab News



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ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi addressing ICT police to boost their morale in Police Lines.

Govt can't allow any protest, Naqvi tells Gohar
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday said that the government cannot allow anyone to hold protest or sit-in in light of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) order.

He was speaking to PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar on telephone to discuss the situation in the wake of party's protest call for tomorrow. "We are bound to follow the orders of IHC and therefore cannot allow any rally, protest or sit-in," Naqvi told PTI chairman.

The interior minister also briefed Barrister Gohar about the engagements of the eighty member high-level delegation led by the President of Belarus from 24th to 27th November. He said Belarusian President will arrive in Pakistan on Monday and the delegation will remain in Islamabad until Wednesday. Barrister Gohar said that he would inform the interior minister after consulting the party leaders.

Earlier, Naqvi has warned that no one would be allowed to disrupt law and order in the federal capital. The interior minister visited the Police Lines early in the morning to boost the morale of the police force and commend their dedication and spirit to serve.

Addressing the police force, he stressed that Islamabad must be secured at any cost as Belarus president would be in Pakistan on Nov 24 and 25. "We are standing shoulder to shoulder with the police force and will always do so," the minister affirmed. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has called for a protest in Islamabad on Nov 24 for the release of party founder Imran Khan.

2 martyred in Bajaur blasts
F.P. Report

KHAR: At least two people including a policeman were killed in two separate blasts in Mamund tehsil of Bajaur district on Saturday. Bajaur District Police Officer (DPO) Waqas Rafeeq confirmed the blasts, saying that both the explosions took place in Tehsil Mamund.

"The first bomb went off in the Eirab area, killing a citizen, identified as Malik Asghar, while the second explosion occurred in the jurisdiction of Loi Police Station, Mena Khwar, in which a policeman was killed," the DPO said.

Adding that the martyred cop was identified as Ehsanullah.

cials and human rights groups. The independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) urged authorities this month to pay "urgent attention" to the "alarming frequency of clashes" in the region, warning that the situation has escalated to "the proportions of a humanitarian crisis."

KP delegation engages in dialogue to restore peace
F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information, Barrister Dr. Saif stated that, on the directives of the Chief Minister, a government delegation is engaged in dialogue with local leaders and tribal elders in District Kurram to restore peace and stability. He highlighted that detailed and constructive meetings were held today with Shia community leaders, during which critical issues were discussed in depth. In the next phase, meetings will be conducted with Sunni community leaders.

The Advisor emphasized that the government's top priority is to facilitate a ceasefire between both parties and establish lasting peace. He said that the Chief Minister has issued clear instructions to resolve all issues through dialogue and negotiations, ensuring long-term stability in the region. He further added that the government delegation is making every possible effort to end tensions in the district, and all matters are being addressed amicably. He has dismissed reports of firing on the government delegation's helicopter in Parachinar as baseless and has clarified that no such incident has taken place during the visit of the delegation. Barrister Dr. Saif, has also dismissed reports of firing on the government delegation's helicopter in Parachinar as baseless. He confirmed that the delegation is completely safe, and peace negotiations are progressing successfully. Barrister Dr. Saif stated that, on the directives of the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the government delegation is engaged in dialogue with local leaders and tribal elders in District Kurram to restore peace and stability. He highlighted that, in the first phase, detailed and constructive meetings were held with Shia community leaders, during which critical issues were discussed in depth. In the next phase, meetings will be conducted with Sunni community leaders.

Several hundred people demonstrated against the violence on Friday in Lahore and Karachi. In Parachinar, the main town of Kurram district, thousands participated in a sit-in, while hundreds attended the funerals of the victims of Thursday's attack. The latest violence drew condemnation from offi-

Muslim votes matter: DMV Imams urge political action for global justice

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: In the weeks following the US election, mosques across the DMV area have resonated with a powerful and unified message: "Muslim Votes Matter." During the past two Friday sermons, local Imams passionately addressed their congregations, emphasizing the significance of Muslim participation in shaping American policies, both domestic and foreign.

The Imams highlighted the role Muslims played in recent elections, pointing out the growing recognition of their voting power. "Your votes have already started to shape the narrative," one Imam declared, citing close races where Muslim voters tipped the bal-

ance. "This is proof that our voices matter—not just in securing our rights here but in influencing foreign policies that affect our brothers and sisters abroad."

Drawing examples from global crises, the Imams spoke about Gaza, Kashmir, the plight of Uighur Muslims in China, and conflicts in Ethiopia and Sudan. They reminded the congregation that these struggles are not distant from their responsibilities as American Muslims. "When you see atrocities in the lands you or your ancestors migrated from, it is your duty to speak up," the Imam urged. "Raise these issues with your local representatives. Remind them that you supported their campaigns, and you expect them to champion justice and change."

The sermons were a call to action, urging Muslims to leverage their growing political influence to advocate for global human rights. The message was clear: Muslim votes in America are not just a statement of presence but a potential force for shaping US foreign policy. "If we are silent, nothing changes," the Imam concluded. "But if we unite, if we speak, if we vote, we can help bring justice to the oppressed everywhere."

It is also pertinent to mention here that the recent concert of Jennifer Lopez in Saudi Arabia also came in the discussion and the Imam said that no country has the right to dictate us about Islam because the Quran is enough to teach Muslims everything about Islam.

Tarar rules out talks rumours with PTI

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture, Attaullah Tarar, on Saturday stated categorically that no negotiations are being held at any level with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

Addressing a news conference, Tarar said that Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, following Islamabad High Court (IHC) orders, contacted PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar to convey that protests or sit-ins in the federal capital were illegal.

Tarar warned that those participating in violent protests would be arrested and held accountable for any damage, as the government would not tolerate actions jeopardizing public safety. The minister said protests are illegal and disrupting public life will have consequences, stressing the government's commitment to law and order.

He said that PTI aims to create divisions between friendly countries. It's baffling that a protest is called on the same day a friendly country seeks to enhance cooperation with Pakistan, he maintained. He stated that PTI and the country's enemies share the same goal of hindering economic progress. He mentioned that Belarus is Pakistan's close ally, and preparations have been finalized to wel-

come the president of Belarus in Islamabad.

He noted that similar protests and sit-ins occurred during the 2014 visit of the Chinese president and the SCO summit. He said Belarus and Pakistan are planning to jointly manufacture tractors. "While the administration prepares to welcome Belarusian guests, it is also ensuring citizen security. Can the system function effectively under such conditions?", he questioned.

He warned that officers involved in political activities will face strict action. He said the investment is flowing into Pakistan, the economy is growing, inflation has dropped from 32% last year to 6.9% this year, and foreign remittances totalled \$8.8 billion in the first quarter. The economy is improving due to lower interest rates, and these figures cannot be disputed.

He said Pakistan's stock market is the second-best performing in the world, and its growth reflects improvements in economic indicators. "37 people were killed in Kurram Agency, but the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister did not visit to console the people. How could the Chief Minister forget Parachinar's pain?", the minister stated adding that said Pakistan Army soldiers are sacrificing to protect the people, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police need better training



against terrorism.

He said that the province must focus more on law and order, as terrorism persists, even around Adiala Jail. Responding to a question, he said PTI is divided into the Aleema, Nooreen, and Bushra Bibi groups. He called it a melodrama between "Nand" and "Bhabhi". The country they once sought gifts from is now speaking against them, the minister said and condemned PTI members for the disgraceful protest at the Prophet's (PBUH) Mosque, questioning if they remembered Sharia when raising slogans there.

In response to another question, he said PTI has continually caused chaos and tried to harm relations with friendly countries. Bushra Bibi doesn't even know how to spell "international relations", the minister remarked. "PWD was closed due to corruption, while we are advancing toward digitization and billions of rupees have been saved through anti-smuggling efforts", the minister underlined.

Negotiations will begin after Imran's release

F.P. Report



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur said on Saturday talks with the government would begin after the release of PTI founder Imran Khan, and assured that they would reach D-Chowk at all costs.

In a chat with media, CM Gandapur emphasised that he would follow Imran Khan's orders at all costs. He said his authority lied with Imran Khan and he would act as instructed.

He further stated that they would remain in Islamabad until the release of Imran Khan and other prisoners, and the approval of their demands. Gandapur criticised the federal and Punjab governments for their actions, accusing them of acting out of panic by

closing motorways and highways. He insisted that PTI's protest would be peaceful, and it was the government that was causing roadblocks causing difficulties for the public.

Meanwhile, chairing a meeting to discuss the situation in Kurram via a video link, KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has vowed to utilise all available options to restore peace in valance-hit Kurram district.

The chief minister said that the incident of armed attack on vehicles was "extremely regrettable and condemnable". The CM shared the grief of the bereaved families.

During the meeting, the government's delegation — who visited the tribal elders in the day — presented its initial report to the CM. "The legitimate demands of the parties must be fulfilled," the chief minister said, adding that ceasefire was inevitable for heading towards a solution to the conflict. He urged the tribal elders to cooperate with the government's delegation and the local administration. The CM said that he himself was monitoring the situation in the area. The government was making efforts to resolve the conflict.

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Parachinar fire spreading, but Gandapur sleeping: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari said on Saturday that the fire in Parachinar was now spreading to the streets, while Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Gandapur was sleeping on the issue.

Addressing a press conference at DGPR, she said the KP CM was only focused on one dream, how to launch an attack on the federal government with the help of provincial government employees.

She regretted that Gandapur had never held any meeting regarding law and order in KP. She said the federal government would help the provincial government to solve its problems if the latter would become active first. Gandapur was more concerned with how to distribute billions of rupees among protesters than the safety of his people.

They should be ashamed

of spewing venom against the very country from which they have been doing business with diamonds.

The provincial information minister said, "We cannot leave Islamabad at the mercy of these goons. Maintaining peace and order is the responsibility of both the provinces and the federal government, and we will fulfill this responsibility. Anyone who tries to take the law into their own hands will be treated like the Khawarij."

She added that the Islamabad High Court had clearly stated that no one would be allowed to disrupt the situation, and they should be given a designated place for protests.

Azma said, "Imran Khan is in jail for corruption and theft cases. Nawaz Sharif did a lot for him, but betrayal is Imran's nature."

In response to questions, Azma Bokhari said Punjab

is a province where development is taking place rapidly, and developmental projects are being completed swiftly. However, disruptive elements are preventing peace even in Punjab. She stated, "They want to neither do any work themselves nor allow others to do it."

She added, "We know exactly how to deal with these troublemakers. If necessary, any province has the right to call the army or rangers to maintain peace and order. We have never heard of interim bail being granted for a year and a half in any case. It is unheard of that a case is registered in one province and bail is granted in another."

Azma Bokhari also criticised the PTI for exploiting innocent children under the guise of its youth wing, stating that these children are left abandoned with no one to care for them.

Police arrest over 9,400 during crackdown

LAHORE (APP): In a sweeping crackdown on illegal weapons, the Lahore Police arrested 9,445 individuals for possessing illegal firearms, 194 for displaying weapons and 536 for resorting to firing into the air this year so far.

According to the Lahore Police spokesman, these operations led to confiscation of a substantial arsenal, including 129 kalashnikovs, 559 rifles, 324 guns, 8,492 pistols and over 46,000 bullets.

CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana reiterated a zero-tolerance policy towards aerial firing, illegal weapon possession and display of firearm, vowing that strict indiscriminate action would be taken against those violating the law.

The CCPO also instructed law-enforcement agencies to intensify their operations against illegal arms dealers and individuals involved in promoting firearms on social media. He emphasized the need for robust legal measures against those encouraging such activities and urged officers to employ their professional expertise to ensure public safety and foster a secure society.

Smog: 17 people arrested

LAHORE (APP): Thirty-eight cases were registered and 17 people were arrested during a crackdown on those causing smog across Punjab, including Lahore.

According to a police spokesman, fine was imposed on 598 individuals and 126 were issued warnings. Sixteen violations of crop residue burning, 500 of vehicles emitting high smoke, two of brick-kilns and one of other places were reported. Totally 2995 accused were arrested and 3,608 cases were registered in anti-smog crackdown this year.

A total of Rs. 0.95 million fine was imposed on 37,928 people. Warning was issued to 6,887 people; 1,958 violations were reported for crop residue burning, 30,538 for vehicles emitting excessive smoke, 347 for industrial activity, 1357 for brick kilns and 327 for other places.

In the last 24 hours, 5,896 excessive smoke emitting vehicles were challaned, 744 vehicles were impounded in police stations while five fitness certificates were suspended.

This year, 830,394 vehicles emitting excessive smoke were challaned, 16,812 were impounded and fitness certificates of 10,059 vehicles were suspended.

Fake officer arrested

LAHORE (APP): A man posing as a representative of the district administration was arrested during inspection in Wagah Tehsil on Friday night.

The individual was arrested at a marriage farmhouse while conducting unauthorised checks. He had previously targeted other farmhouses and marriage halls, even resuming his illegal activities after being released on bail.

Assistant Commissioner Wagah Zone Muhammad Amir Butt acted swiftly upon receiving information and arrested the suspect on-the-spot. The blackmailer was handed over to the police, and legal proceedings initiated against him.



LAHORE: Passengers crowd at railway station due to closure of local transport in the City. —APP Photo

Ethiopian envoy praises Sindh Governor's initiatives

KARACHI (APP): Their discussions focused on strengthening bilateral ties between Pakistan and Ethiopia, enhancing trade, investment, and fostering exchanges of delegations.

The governor emphasized the attractive investment opportunities in Sindh and encouraged Ethiopian investors to benefit from profitable sectors in the province. He highlighted the increased exchanges facilitated by Ethiopian Airlines, which

has furthered the bilateral relationship, contributing to job creation and poverty alleviation in the region.

The Ethiopian Ambassador lauded the "Bell of Hope," ration drive, and IT courses under the governor's initiative, calling them exemplary projects that can serve as a model for other regions. He expressed confidence that these initiatives would bring about positive change in the lives of the people.

Tractor delivery deadline set March 31

LAHORE (APP): Tractor delivery deadline has been set March 31 for farmers who stood successful in green tractor balloting scheme.

According to the agriculture department sources here on Saturday, by the end of coming March, 9,500 tractors would be delivered to farmers who stood successful in balloting.

Under green tractor programme, a subsidy of Rs 1 million was being given on each tractor, the sources said and added that receiving process of allotment letters of green tractors had been successfully completed.

The sources said that as per the direction of the Punjab chief minister tractors would be provided on first come first serve basis. Farmers could submit price of tractor in any branch of the Bank of Punjab.

The sources said the last date to submit dues by farmers was December 5, adding that allotment of farmers could be cancelled who failed to submit their payment by the fixed date. Green tractors delivery process would start soon and tractors would be delivered to farmers from their nearest dealers.

Administration seal 37 shops for violation

LAHORE (APP): 37 shops have been sealed in Lahore for violating official business operating hours as part of the ongoing efforts to combat smog. The district administration remained active until late at night to enforce the orders for markets to close at 8 pm and restaurants to close at 10 pm. The crackdown continues across all tehsils without discrimination.

In Model town, 10 shops were sealed for non-compliance. Similarly, in Allama Iqbal town, 9 shops were sealed. In Raiwind, 4 shops were sealed and took action against Al-Kabir developers for illegal land development using heavy machinery. One individual was arrested on-site and a case was registered following a prior warning issued to the developers.

In the Wagah zone, 5 shops were sealed, while in Saddar, 2 restaurants were sealed for breaching the restrictions.

In Shalimar Town, 7 shops were sealed. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Syed Musa Raza urged the public to take precautions during the ongoing smog, advising citizens to avoid unnecessary travel, wear masks and protect vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, and those with health issues from the harmful effects of air pollution.

He stressed that public health remains a top priority and called on the business community to cooperate in reducing the impact of smog and air pollution. Strict action will be taken against violators, with no exceptions. For any information or complaints, citizens can contact the DC Office Control Room at 0307-0002345 via WhatsApp or through the office's social media platforms.



LAHORE: People cross railway tracks incorrectly, risking serious accidents. —APP Photo

Convicts to be shifted to jails in their home districts

LAHORE (APP): Under the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab Home Department has introduced a groundbreaking prison reform policy.

Convicted prisoners will now be relocated to jails in their respective home districts to ease the burden on central prisons and address the difficulties faced by prisoners' families.

A high-powered committee has been formed to devise a detailed mechanism for implementing the policy. The committee, which includes senior officials such as the Deputy Secretary (Prisons) of the Home Department, DIG Prisons Sargodha Region, DIG

Prisons DG Khan Region, and other key representatives, has been tasked with submitting its recommendations within seven days.

Spokesperson for Home Department Punjab told the media on Saturday that previously, prisoners serving sentences of over five years were housed in central jails, often far from their families. This arrangement caused significant financial and logistical challenges for families traveling long distances to meet their loved ones.

Prompted by numerous complaints from affected families, Secretary Home Punjab Noorul Amin Mengal took the initiative to propose this transformative policy change and

constituted a committee. The reform is expected to alleviate overcrowding in central jails and enhance security in district jails, which have been upgraded to accommodate additional inmates.

It was noted that death row inmates are already being housed in their respective district jails, and now similar provisions will be extended to those serving sentences of more than five years.

District jails have also been equipped with industrial facilities, enabling prisoners to engage in labor as part of their sentences. This policy shift not only improves living conditions for inmates but also ensures greater convenience for families wishing to meet them.

NSICT&R, first govt cancer hospital to offer modern facilities

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazir announced that the Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cancer Treatment and Research (NSICT&R) will be Pakistan's first public sector cancer hospital, offering cutting-edge facilities such as radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and endoscopy.

Chairing a meeting of the Health Advisory Committee at the Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education on Saturday, they promised the government would do everything to improving healthcare infrastructure.

Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Khawaja Salman Rafique stated that the Infrastructure Development Authority of Punjab (IDAP) has been tasked with making the institute operational at the earliest. "A 12-month target has been set for the completion of the hospital's first phase. The Punjab government prior-

itizes every effort that improves public life," he said. He also noted that the hospital's expansion will proceed in phases with the installation of modern medical equipment.

Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Khawaja Imran Nazir highlighted the broader scope of the project, calling it "not just for Punjab but for all of Pakistan." He assured that no cancer patient would be denied treatment and described the institute as a state-of-the-art facility providing high-quality, modern medical care. "This will be the first public sector cancer hospital of its kind, following the Chief Minister's strict directives for its swift completion," he added.

The meeting reviewed progress on the institute's construction, updates to the hospital's master plan, and the procurement of advanced medical machinery. A detailed plan for the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment for cancer treatment was discussed. Emphasis

was placed on establishing Punjab's largest bone marrow transplant unit. Proposals were made to increase bed capacity in the Cancer Care Hospital. A hospice center for Level 4 cancer patients was recommended. Plans were outlined to appoint highly qualified cancer specialists. The hospital aims to become Asia's most advanced cancer treatment center, offering comprehensive care under one roof. Prominent attendees included Health Secretary Azmat Mahmood, Special Secretary Syed Wajid Ali Shah, and CEO of IDAP Captain (Retired) Shamir. Vice Chancellor of King Edward Medical University Prof. Dr. Mahmood Ayaz, Vice Chancellor of University of Child Health Sciences Prof. Masood Sadiq, and other medical experts also participated.

Adviser on Health Major General (Retired) Dr. Azhar Mahmood Kayani, Secretary of Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department Nadia Saqib, and other officials joined via video link.



LAHORE: Corporation staff removes encroachments at Empress Road. —APP Photo

Mayor urges students to excel in modern fields

PESHAWAR (APP): Mayor of the city, Haji Zubair Ali on Saturday urged students to concentrate on their studies to excel in modern fields of information technology, environmental sciences and artificial intelligence.

He was addressing a ceremony held at Municipal Inter College Boys Wazir Bagh and distributed prizes among position holders in midterm examinations. He emphasized the collective responsibility of the government, institutions, parents and students in prioritizing education.

He also urged parents to actively participate in their children's education, ensuring they are well-informed about their progress.

Later, the Mayor inspected ongoing renovation work at school. He directed the display of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal portraits in classrooms.

The ceremony honored students who secured first, second and third positions in the midterm examinations from Prep to 11th grade with cash prizes and shields.

Principal Khalid Rehman commended the Mayor's efforts in renovating the school and providing other facilities.



PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Member of National Assembly Shandana Gulzar addressing a press conference.

VSO team visits City to overview ongoing education programs

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation led by global head of Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) International Education Joyce Laker visited here to strengthen partnerships and overview ongoing education programs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The delegation's members interacted with school children, education champions, community elders as well as government officials and education experts about the key successes, challenges and problems being faced by the children of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said a press release issued here Saturday.

They also met with the Secretary Elementary & Secondary Education, Masood Ahmad where Joyce Laker reassured the VSO's commitment to supporting the provincial education sector, particularly in the marginalized areas.

The Secretary said that education is a global issue; we cannot ignore the rights of the children. Access to basic education is the right of every child and we need to work together to contribute towards the global cause of education.

Secretary education told the participants that teacher's deficiency is the major issue we are facing and with the support of VSO and other partner organizations; we need to engage volunteer teachers for various subjects to overcome the issue of lack of teachers in schools.

He also acknowledged the contribution of VSO and PRDS for ongoing projects, especially support in enrollment campaign.

The participants were told that PRDS aims to provide access to comprehensive, equitable and quality education for refugees and other children affected by various crises in the country. Under the MYR program, PRDS distributed 1596 computer tablets among the teachers, similarly bags and other education materials were also provided to the enrolled students.

The delegation also visited various project sites, including early childhood education centers, community learning centers, and formal schools being supported by VSO-ECW funded MYR program, to witness the successful models and ongoing and completed initiatives.

The delegation included country representative VSO Pakistan, Seher Afsheen, CEO Participatory Rural Development Society, Arjumand Shah, program manager MYRP, Tariq Hayat Yousafzai and others.

During a visit to Peshawar University, chairman department of Social Work, Shakeel Ahmad said that KP youth are enthusiastic to work as volunteers, but they need opportunities to polish their capabilities and skills.

VSO head appreciated the efforts of the social work department and said that VSO's work in Pakistan focuses on improving access to quality education, particularly for marginalized children and youth.

She said that through a range of programs, VSO supports the development of early childhood education, community-based learning, and teacher training.

Meanwhile during visit to Allama Iqbal Open University Peshawar, Deputy Regional Directress Nafeesa Bibi briefed the participants about the joint venture of the university, VSO and PRDS and said that under the project they awarded scholarship to more than 1200 girls including madaris students, who couldn't complete their matriculation due to various reasons including lack of access to school, financial and cultural barriers.



PESHAWAR: A man selling handmade decoration gun along roadside.

Wali alleges PTI for sabotaging ties with brotherly countries

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial spokesperson of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Ikhtiar Wali Khan on Saturday alleged Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf for sabotaging relations with brotherly countries of Pakistan as Bushra Bibi, wife of the founder of PTI has delivered controversial remarks.

"PTI does not let any opportunity to defame Pakistan", Wali said adding that the whole world is acknowledging the efforts of Pakistan to improve the economy which was hard for PTI to digest.

Addressing a press conference, he claimed the entire province was in deep social and economic turmoil due to mismanagement.

He asserted that the KPK chief minister instead of focusing on resolving the public issues took his route towards Capital for releasing his party founder.

He criticized CM KPK for not taking an interest in resolving the KP's law and order situation. "Kurram and Parachinar are burning into fires and claimed the lives of more than a hundred innocent people and also resulted in monetary loss.

Similarly, he shifted his total focus on the upcoming protest as "orders have been issued to all deputy commissioners of the province to set up desks for PTT's social media team in their offices and provide them with transport, food and all facilities for the November 24 protest."

Wali said that previously teachers were threatened and suspended for not supporting the protest, now being blackmailed to join the protest for their jobs' restoration. He also maintained Afghan refugee camps were also being mobilized for the purpose.

While focusing on the health issue in KP, he noted, "Entire KP province is in the grips of dengue due to bad health policies", due to the lack of proper health facilities people there were forced to go to other provinces for the treatments of their beloved ones. He also focused.

The PML-N leader said that thousands of schools in KP are out of basic facilities for children.

PTI says Islamabad march to be taken out at all costs

PESHAWAR (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership said that Islamabad march would be taken out today (Sunday). The PTI also announced peaceful sit-in at D-Chowk.

"We will break all barriers and reach D-Chowk," said Waqas Sheikh, the PTI Central Information Secretary.

He said, "The Constitution grants the right to peaceful protest. We will not surrender under any circumstances, on November 24, the entire nation will take to the streets."

The meeting, chaired by PTI Chairman Barrister Gauhar, was held at the Chief Minister's House in Peshawar.

The participants included Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, former President Arif Alvi, Shibli Faraz, Information Secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram, and other senior leaders. During the meeting, a final decision was made to proceed with the Islamabad march.

The PTI leadership resolved that the protest would take place at all costs, the sit-in would be staged at D-Chowk, and all obstacles would be overcome to reach the destination, emphasizing there would be no retreat this time.



PESHAWAR: Mayor Haji Zubair Ali giving prize to a position holder student in Municipal Inter College Boys Wazir Bagh.

ANP to observe black day against Kurram massacre

PESHAWAR (INP): Awami National Party (ANP) on Saturday announced to observe a "Black Day" across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on November 25 against increasing incidents of terrorism in the province especially the tragic incident of Kurram.

In a statement issued, ANP Provincial President Mian Iftikhar Hussain said the party would stage protests at district headquarters across the province, with demonstrations taking place in front of press clubs at 2 PM. The protests aim to express solidarity with the families of victims, including those affected by the Kurram massacre.

Highlighting the deteriorating situation in Kurram following the incident, he urged residents to remain calm during these challenging times.

He emphasized the importance of peace and called for collective efforts to end the ongoing violence adding that the role of local elders was crucial in resolving tensions and restoring peace in Kurram.

Iftikhar reaffirmed ANP's stance against terrorism and extremism, stating that the party had always struggled for peace and would continue to do so. He called on ANP workers and leaders, as well as members of all communities, to participate actively in the protests and demonstrate their commitment to peace.

Team sent to review security situation

PESHAWAR (APP): The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has sent a high level delegation to Kurram with an aim to improve security situation in the area.

The delegation comprises law minister, Chief Secretary, Commissioner Kohat, Deputy IGP Kohat and other high level officials.

The delegation would take measures to improve security situation and also make efforts to utilize area jirga for the purpose.

Provincial Law minister, Aftab Alam has said that recommendations of would be forwarded to Chief Minister. He said that all the concerned departments are making tireless efforts to improve law and order situation in Kurram.

Part of the ongoing "Drug-Free Peshawar" campaign, the district administration has taken 1,226 drug addicts into custody, said a statement issued by the office of the Commissioner of Peshawar Division.

It revealed that among those held, 32 individuals tested positive for HIV/AIDS, while 40 were diagnosed with Hepatitis B and C.

The campaign was being conducted under the leadership of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur and supervised by Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsood. It said that eight private rehabilitation centers have been engaged to provide treatment for the addicts.

The apprehended addicts were being shifted to these centers based on their available resources and capacity.

The rehabilitation centers were reportedly providing quality treatment and facilities for the addicts, with regular visits by administrative officials to monitor the standard of care, food, and accommodation.

Additionally, operations were ongoing in various parts of the city to locate and take into custody the remaining addicts.

The campaign was part of the provincial government's efforts to create a healthier and drug-free environment in Peshawar.

1,226 addicts held in drug-free Peshawar drive

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KhUJ, PPC condemn violence against journalists in Kurram

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Union of Journalists (KhUJ) and Peshawar Press Club (PPC) have strongly condemned the death of journalist Janan in Kurram massacre and the arson attack on the house of a local journalist Rehan during the ongoing unrest in Kurram district.

Both the bodies have demanded the immediate arrest and strict punishment of those responsible, warning of province-wide protests if action was not taken.

In a joint statement issued here Saturday, KhUJ President Kashifuddin Syed, PPC President Arshad Aziz Malik, General Secretary Irfan Musa Zai, and KhUJ General Secretary Irshad Ali expressed deep concern over these incidents.

They revealed that in Bagan village, Kurram, the house of a local journalist Rehan was set ablaze by an angry mob, destroying all belongings inside.

The statement called on authorities to arrest the perpetrators and ensure they were punished according to the law. They also highlighted the increasing attacks on journalists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, emphasizing the growing risks faced by media personnel while performing their duties.

The joint statement warned that if action was not taken against those involved in journalist Janan's murder and the attack on Rehan's house, the KhUJ and PPC would be carry out protest rallies across KP.

What is methanol and how does it affect the body?

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Travellers are being warned of the dangers of methanol poisoning after six tourists to Laos have died.

Methanol is an industrial chemical found in antifreeze and windshield washer fluid.

It's not meant for human consumption and is highly toxic.

Drinking even small amounts can be damaging. A few shots of bootleg spirit containing it can be lethal.

It looks and tastes like alcohol, and the first effects are similar - it can make you feel intoxicated and sick.

Initially, people might not realise anything is wrong. The harm happens hours later as the body attempts to clear it from the body by breaking it down in the liver.

This metabolism creates toxic by-products called formaldehyde, formate and formic acid.

These build up, attacking nerves and organs which can lead to blindness, coma and death.

Dr Christopher Morris, a senior lecturer at Newcastle University, said: "Formate, which is the main toxin produced, acts in a similar way to cyanide and stops energy production in cells, and the brain seems to be very vulnerable to this.

"This leads to certain parts of the brain being damaged. The eyes are also directly affected and this can cause blindness which is found in many people exposed to high levels of methanol."

Of the victims so far, five of the six have been women.

Toxicity from methanol is related to the dose you get and how your body handles it.



PESHAWAR: Director Inam Mateen inaugurating Sports Arena at Allied School Gulbarg Campus. — F.P. photo

Sohail launches digitalization initiative for C&W Deptt

PESHAWAR (APP): Special Assistant for Communications and Works (C&W), Sohail Afridi launched the digitalization initiative of the C&W Department on Saturday, which includes the implementation of the Asset Management System and the Human Resource Information Management System (HRIMS).

The event was attended by the Secretary of C&W, Chief Engineers, and other senior officials.

Sohail Afridi emphasized that the Asset Management System aims to digitize records related to the department's machinery, financial accounts, and provincial assets, ensuring transparency and accurate data management, according to a Press release. The initiative is expected to reduce fraud and discrepancies.

Afridi also highlighted the importance of the HRIMS, which will streamline administrative processes such as postings, transfers, leave applications, and seniority lists.



PESHAWAR: Vendor selling and displaying traditional sweet item to attract customer at Hashnagri area.



In brief

Illegally cut timber recovered F.P. Report

KOHAT: Forest Department Orakzai and District Forest Officer (DFO) Patrol Squad here Saturday recovered illegally cut timber from two pickups and a tractor trolley from Orakzai Upper. According to details, the illegally cut timber was recovered during operation led by DFO Orakzai, Jan Alam and Assistant DFO Kohat Circle Noman Wazir. The vehicles carrying timber was en route to Hungu for sale. The smugglers were also arrested on the spot and handed over the concerned authorities for legal action. Forest department has warned strict action against logging and said that those involved in timber smuggling would be dealt indiscriminately.

Kurram massacre flayed F.P. Report

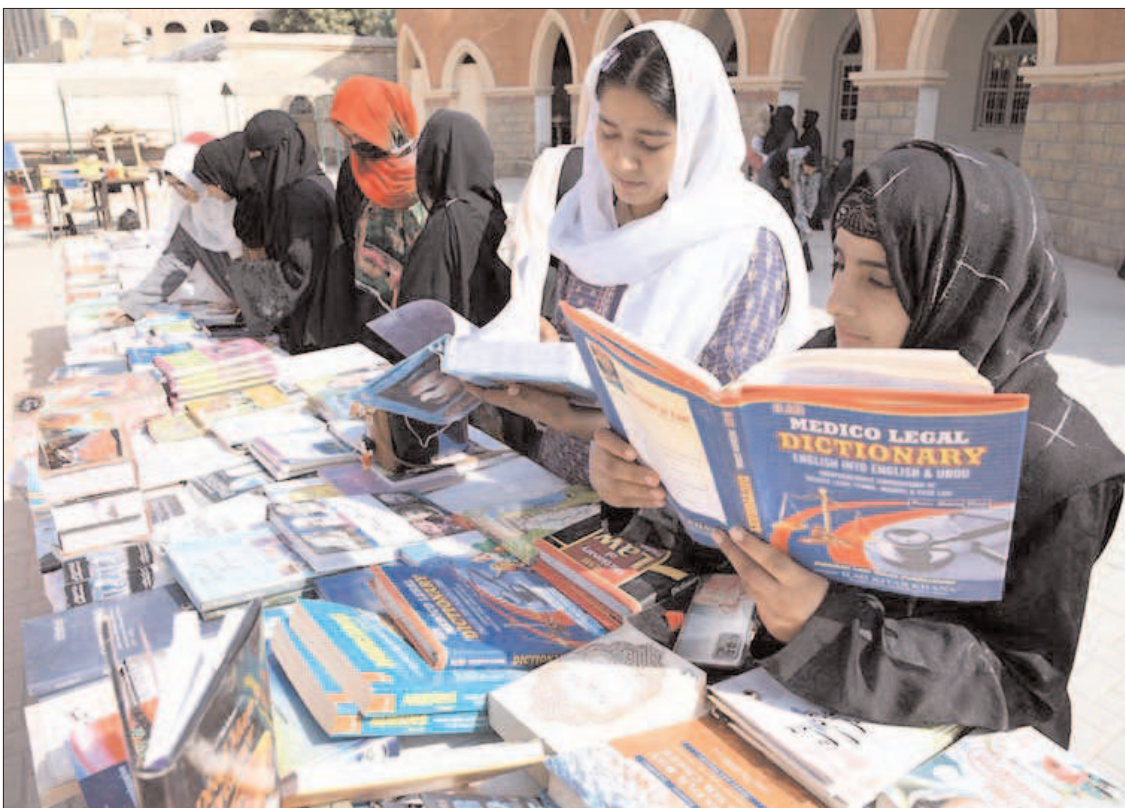
TIMERGARA: President Central Muslim League Malakand Division Abdul Ghaffar Mansoor strongly condemned the firing on passenger vehicles in Kurram district. He termed the attack on unarmed passengers as an act of extreme cowardice and inhumanity. He expressed profound grief over the martyrdom of more than 50 innocent children, women, and men. In light of the growing wave of terrorism in the country, he demanded that the Government of Pakistan immediately initiate a national dialogue involving all stakeholders and political parties to take effective measures against terrorism. He also urged all political parties to set aside their personal interests and work for the stability of the country. He warned that the nation could not afford further discord as it would benefit enemy nations. Meanwhile, collective efforts are needed to teach children social and moral values. Parents, teachers, and society must work together for character building to lay the foundation for a better and secure future for the next generation.

14 students hurt in accident F.P. Report

MALAKAND: A devastating road accident occurred in Haryan Kot, Malakand on Saturday morning, when a school van carrying students collided with a pole, leaving at least 14 children severely injured. According to rescue sources, a tragic incident occurred in Haryan Kot, Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, when a school van collided with a pole, injuring multiple students, private news channel reported. Rescue teams swiftly responded to the scene, providing medical assistance and transporting the injured students to a nearby hospital. An investigation into the cause of the accident is underway. Hospital sources have confirmed that all injured students from the Haryan Kot, Malakand school van accident are now out of danger.

Man kills sister

SHIKAPUR (INP): A merciless brother killed his sister Bashiran Bibi by strangling her throat in village Saifuddin Shar of Shikapur in the name of 'honour'. Police sources said that the accused murdered his sister after accusing her of developing illicit relations with a man. The murderer later fled away from the scene after committing the crime. Soon after receiving the report, a police team reached the crime scene and shifted the dead body of the woman to a local hospital for completion of necessary procedure.



LARKANA: Students having a glance at the books displayed at book stall during two-day book fair organized by National Book Foundation at Government Girls Degree College.

Police arrest key suspects in Haris murder case

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Following the directives of District Police Officer (DPO) Umar Tufail PSP, Abbottabad police continued their aggressive crackdown on criminal elements in the district.

In a significant development, police recently arrested suspects involved in the murder of 26-year-old Haris and the wounding of two other young men in the Mir Alam Town area, within the jurisdiction of Sikanderabad Police Station.

The arrested individuals were including Shahzad Tanoli son of Abdul Rashid, a resident of Mir Alam Town, and Faizan son of Zareen, a resident of Chitta, have been charged under sections 302 (murder), 324 (attempted murder), and 34 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). Investigations are ongoing. Abbottabad police have ramped up their efforts to

curb criminal activities. SHO Ahsan Shakoor of Kothiala Police Station conducted a search-and-strike operation in the Kothiala area and surrounding regions.

During the operation, a house-to-house search was carried out with the assistance of female police officers. The operation resulted in the recovery of three pistols and one rifle, leading to the registration of cases against the suspects involved.

Meanwhile, two real brothers were killed on Saturday by their rivals, who ambushed them and opened fire as a result of an ongoing feud.

According to police sources, Muhammad Ilyas, the son of Wali Asghar, a resident of Doetar Dehmtor, filed an FIR stating that on the night between Friday and Saturday, his two sons, Fahad and Owais, residents of Dehmtor Doetar within the jurisdiction of the

Nawan Shehr Police Station, had just closed their milk shop at Bani Chowk and were returning home.

As they approached a location near Takiya on the Dehmtor Bypass Road, the accused—comprising Aurangzeb, son of Sher Muhammad Khan, along with his sons Amir, Noman, Suleman, and Usman—set up an ambush by blocking the road with their dumper truck and a parked vehicle. They exited their car and opened fire with firearms, killing the two brothers.

The motive for the enmity between the accused and the victims stems from a previous murder conflict. The complainant stated that the accused had previously threatened the victims with death over a minor argument. The Nawan Shehr Police Station has registered a case under sections 302/34 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and is actively working to apprehend the accused.

Talal condemns false allegation of Bushra Bibi

F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Senator Talal Chaudhry has strongly condemned the allegation by Bushra BiBi against Saudi Arabia. Addressing the media person here on Saturday, Senator Talal Chaudhry said that Bushra Bibi made false allegations against Pakistan's friends which was an old tactic of PTI.

He said Bushra Bibi has

conspired to make Pakistanis unemployed abroad. "Earlier, Pakistanis in Saudi Arabia had become unemployed and imprisoned due to failed policies of PTI. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif appealed to the Saudi leadership and obtained forgiveness in the past", the minister expressed adding that sometimes they blame America and sometimes Saudi Arabia, these people have dominated Pakistan for four years.

Those who received gifts, watches, and jewellery from Saudi Arabia have once again proven that they are benefactors and forgetful of kindness, he added. He said that in the past PTI had made a narrative of cypher, now some females wanted to hold the party leadership and thus blaming the friends of Pakistan. Senator Talal said that the government and law enforcement agencies are ready to take action against the protesters.

NPGP aims at assisting poverty-hit rural communities

F.P. Report

ZHOB: The Balochistan Rural Support Program (BRSP), in collaboration with the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Security (PASS) Division with the financial support of the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) under the National Poverty Graduation Program (NPGP), distributed among over five thousand assets to Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) beneficiaries in Zhob district alone - a densely populated and poverty-hit district of Balochistan. It is aimed at eradicating poverty and financially supporting the marginalized

communities. Thousands of beneficiaries were also trained on the business sector and were provided with interest-free loans.

In addition, under the above-mentioned project, beneficiaries also got hand-on trainings on health, sanitation, gender activism, climate change, interest-free loans, and financial literacy in various union councils of the district. They anticipate that the initiatives will positively influence the communities.

Moreover, youth activities were also organized, in which football, volleyball, cricket, and badminton competitions were organized. BRSP officials told journalist Rafiullah Mandokhel.

Meanwhile, the district's social and public circles have lauded the program and its theme, terming it beneficial for the communities living below the poverty line as the program has made significant strides in improving the livelihoods of rural communities through asset distribution and other development initiatives.

"BRSP has been implementing NPGP with the financial support of IFAD and the government of Pakistan since 2020 on various poverty-alleviation initiatives to improve the livelihoods of those living in extreme poverty in Balochistan, including Zhob district.



SARGODHA: Action against encroachments, Municipal workers remove unauthorized setups at Noori Gate.

Rs20m scam surfaces in Health Dept

F.P. Report

THATTA: A scandal has surfaced in Thatta, where a stock of medicine worth Rs20 million has gone missing from the warehouse of MERF-Medical Emergency Resilience Foundation, an NGO managing health facilities in the district.

Eight health facilities, including Civil Hospital Makli, were handed over to MERF in 2015 as part of a public-private initiative. Malik Adam, Regional Programme Manager of MERF, accused four employees of involvement in the pilferage and misappropriation of medicine stock. The accused employees have been suspended, and a preliminary inquiry report has been sent to the provincial health department, recommending stern legal action.

The scandal came to light due to persistent drug shortages at Civil Hospital Makli and other health facilities. Civil society members have criticized the suspension of low-ranked employees, calling it a ploy to protect the real culprits. They are demanding a thorough investigation into the scandal.

Scholar defends PhD thesis

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Mr. Shahid Khan successfully defended his PhD thesis with titled: Study for fractional order problems using peicewise power law type differential operators. He was supervised by Dr. Kamal Shah and Dr. Salman Zeb. The scholar has published valuable articles in the prestigious journal of Mathematics.

The external examiners Dr. Muhammad Numan Associate professor in Department of Mathematics COMSATS University Islamabad Attock Campus, and Dr. Gul Rahmat Associate Professor in Department of Mathematics Islsmia College University Peshawar appreciated the research work of the scholar.

Further, Dr. Muhammad Zeb and Dr. Sohail Ahmad Associate Professors Department of Mathematics COMSATS University Islamabad attended the PhD Public defence of Mr. Shahid Khan. Also, the Chairman Department of Mathematics Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad appreciated the scholar for his contribution and congratulated him for achieving the milestone.

Two women shot dead in Swabi

F.P. Report

SWABI: Two women were killed in separate incidents of violence occurred in different areas of the district.

According to report lodge in Chota Lahor Police Station, a woman who came to Gujarano Dhok was shot dead by accused Hamid Ali. Reason behind the killing was stated to be a family dispute. In another incident that occurred in Chota Lahor, a 43-year-old woman was shot dead by her in laws.

Doctors appear before police in HIV case inquiry

F.P. Report

MULTAN: Senior doctors of Nishtar Hospital Multan including the medical superintendent appeared before SSP (Operations) Kamran Amir Khan here on Saturday, in line with an inquiry into the HIV infection case wherein some patients had contracted HIV during dialysis at the hospital.

Earlier in the day, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz visited Nishtar Hospital Multan and personally inquired into the incident. She had issued orders to suspend officials in the light of departmental inquiry on Friday last and notifications of suspension of seven officials including MS Nishtar Hospital Dr. Kazim were issued the same day by Punjab secretary specialised healthcare and medical education. Others suspended included head of Nephrology Department, some other doctors and a head nurse.

Two police officials, when contacted, told APP on condition of anonymity that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had ordered CPO Multan to conduct inquiry and 10-11 officials of Nishtar Hospital and Medical University were summoned on Saturday.

They included MS Nishtar Dr. Kazim, Nephrology head Dr. Ghulam Abbas,

Dr. Maliha, Dr. Poonum, Dr. Alamgir, Dr. Qadeer, head nurse Naheed Parveen, Professor of Medicine NMU Dr Abrar Ahmed, AMS Purchase Nishtar Hospital Dr Jawad Ahmed Khan, and Dr Abdul Khaliq, Assistant Professor ward no 7, dialysis unit. Police sources expressed ignorance about what happened inside the office during inquiry proceedings, adding that it was the preliminary stage of inquiry.

WASA utilises Japanese machinery: Managing Director WASA Khalid Raza Khan said on Saturday that advanced Japanese machinery had significantly improved the efficiency of sewerage cleaning operations in Multan. "Modern technology and a dedicated workforce are enabling us to address sewerage complaints swiftly and effectively," he remarked while reviewing ongoing efforts across the city.

Following specialised training by Japanese experts, sewerage subdivision teams have begun using modern cameras and equipment to clean pipelines thoroughly. A detailed performance report, including pre- and post-cleaning assessments, is submitted to the MD after every operation to ensure transparency and

effectiveness.

Over the weekend, teams equipped with state-of-the-art machinery carried out extensive cleaning in key areas, including Basti Khudadad, Wazir Town near Taqwa Mosque, Bismillah Chowk, New Muncerabad, Chah Kodaywala at Husnain Chowk, New Shah Shams Colony, Canal Road Main Line, Sunbul Colony, Loha Market, Kari Daud Khan, Chungi No. 14, Shaheenabad, Bilal Nagar, Al-Haram Colony (Bhanay Wali Gali), Umar Colony, Peer Colony, Arshad Town near Abu Bakar Mosque, Peer Road, Zakariya Town (Street No. 36), Shalimar (Street No. 17), Police Shaheed Road (Lodhi Colony), Z Block in Shah Rukn-e-Alam Colony, and Nishtar Road. Dozens of clogged manholes were cleared during the operation.

Khalid Raza Khan has instructed Deputy Directors to intensify the cleaning drive and ensure the safety of workers. "Our goal is to maintain a robust sewerage system that meets the needs of every resident, and we will continue to enhance these operations," he affirmed. Meanwhile, repair work on damaged manholes is also in progress, ensuring a sustainable improvement in sewerage infrastructure citywide, he concluded.

BBA condemns midnight looting on highway

F.P. Report

BUNER: Buner Bar Association (BBA) condemned looting of residents of Buner district on gun point at midnight on Buner-Mardan highway while police denied to act against alleged dacoits, on Saturday.

BBA president Mian Naem-u-din advocate termed the incident as a shame for Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which has been failed in security of the citizens and indulged in agitations against state due to which the Parachinar road incident and looting on Buner-Mardan Highway incident happened.

Advocate Mian Naem-u-Din condemned both incidents adding on Peshawar Parachinar road 42 precious lives lost while on Mardan Buner road hundreds Buneris deprived of cash valuable and also beaten up by armed men. He told the BBA had early morning issued its press release, condemned both incidents and demanded of the KP government and concerned DPOs action against the killers and looters.

BBA argued DPOs of Buner, Swabi and Mardan initiating inquiries and information-based action against the road robbers. He demanded of the elected public representatives from Buner developing pressures

for early arresting the robbers and recovering the looted amount and valuables of the people of Buner as soon as possible.

It is worthy to mention that last night armed dacoits looted dozens of vehicles on Buner-Mardan highway while also took away Computerized National Identity Cards from passengers and told them it (CNICs) to be delivered to the victims. The victims approached nearest police post but they denied actions as they (policemen) neither unauthorized to act nor able to register First Information Report. There are three police posts on the route but to no veil.



FAISALABAD: Gypsy family traveling on a donkey cart heading towards their destination.

SAU shines at IEEE ICETAS 2024

F.P. Report

HYDERABAD: Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Tandojam, led by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Fateh Marri, proudly represented Pakistan at the 9th IEEE International Conference on Engineering, Technology, and Applied Sciences (ICETAS) held in Bahrain's Intercontinental Regency.

The conference featured 611 research papers from 47 countries, with a particular focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI), the internet of Things (IoT), and their applications in engineering and agriculture. The ICETAS 2024 conference not only highlighted Bahrain's role in fostering international collaboration but also showcased the growing importance of digital solutions in transforming Pakistan's agricultural sector. The event reinforced the crucial role of academic

institutions in Pakistan in tackling the pressing challenges of food security and sustainability. Through such international collaborations, Pakistan's universities are poised to make meaningful contributions to global agricultural innovations and sustainable practices.

Dr. Fateh Marri delivered a keynote address highlighting the "Status and Potential of Digital Agriculture in Pakistan," emphasizing the significant role digital technologies play in enhancing agricultural practices, securing food sources, and improving livestock management. His speech underscored how such innovations can transform Pakistan's agricultural landscape, positioning the country as a key player in the global digital agriculture movement.

During the event, Dr. Fateh Marri engaged in productive meetings with key

officials, including Prof. Dr. Hasan Almulha, President of the University of Technology Bahrain (UTB), and the Vice President of Gulf University Bahrain. Discussions focused on fostering bilateral cooperation in precision agriculture, food security, and livestock management.

Both institutions agreed to draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) that will be presented for approval to Bahrain's Higher Education Commission and Ministry, opening new avenues for collaborative research. The conference also showcased participation from leading scholars and experts from Greece, Malaysia, New Zealand, the UAE, Bahrain, and Pakistan, who presented cutting-edge research on the integration of AI and machine learning in addressing global challenges in agriculture, engineering, and sustainable development.



Brazil police accuse Bolsonaro and ex-ministers of 2022 coup plot

BRASILIA (Reuters): Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro plotted a coup to overturn the 2022 election along with dozens of ex-ministers and senior aides, federal police said in a formal accusation filed with the country's Supreme Court.

The final police report caps a nearly two-year investigation into Bolsonaro's role in the election-denying movement that culminated in riots by his supporters that swept Brasilia, the capital, in January 2023, just a week after his rival President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva took office. Many protesters at the time said they wanted to create chaos to justify a military coup, which they considered imminent. Earlier this week, police arrested five alleged conspirators suspected of planning to assassinate Lula before he took office.

Investigators found evidence Bolsonaro knew of that alleged plan, according to police sources familiar with the probe. Bolsonaro said on social media that investigators and the Supreme Court judge overseeing the case had been "creative" and done "everything the law does not say," adding that he would have to look more at the formal police accusation. His lawyer told Reuters he would wait to see the report before commenting. The formal police accusations against Bolsonaro are a fresh blow to his plan to run for president in 2026. US President-elect Donald Trump's recent victory had buoyed Bolsonaro allies trying to overturn a court decision that has blocked him from public office for attacking the legitimacy of the 2022 vote. The Supreme Court said it expects to send the police report - the full details of which remain confidential - next week to the country's prosecutor general, who will decide whether to press charges against Bolsonaro and 36 others accused of criminal conspiracy to violently overthrow democracy.

Federal police said they had presented evidence based on search warrants, wiretaps, financial records and plea bargain testimony. They said conspirators divided their efforts between spreading disinformation about the election, inciting the armed forces to join a coup, and operational support for "coup-mongering actions," along with legal support and intelligence. Among the accused are two of Bolsonaro's former defense ministers, including his 2022 running mate, retired General Walter Braga Netto; his former national security adviser, retired General Augusto Heleno; former navy commander Almir Garnier Santos; and former Justice Minister Anderson Torres.

Lawmaker Alexandre Ramagem, who ran the Brazilian spy agency ABIN, and the head of Bolsonaro's



right-wing Liberal Party, Valdemar Costa Neto, were also among the accused named in a federal police statement. Lawyers for Heleno and aides for Ramagem declined to comment. The legal defenses from Braga Netto and Torres said they would wait to officially get the police report before commenting. Representatives for Garnier Santos, Brazil's Defense Ministry, and navy did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The country's army said it does not comment on ongoing processes from other bodies.

Representatives for Costa Neto also did not respond to calls for comment. But Rogerio Marinho, general-secretary of the Liberal Party, said in a statement that the police move over Costa Neto and others represents an "incessant political persecution" against the political wing they represent. Police arrested five people suspected of involvement in the assassination plot targeting Lula, then president-elect, and his running mate Geraldo Alckmin, days before they took office. Lula, speaking at the presidential palace, said he was lucky to be alive. "The attempt to poison me and Alckmin didn't work and here we are," he said. Arrests included a deputy minister in Bolsonaro's cabinet who had in his possession a document outlining the plan that had been printed at the presidential palace.

A police source said investigators confirmed Bolsonaro was at the presidential palace when the document was printed, and they had found evidence on cellphones of conversations between aides suggesting the former president was aware of the plot. Bolsonaro never recognized his October 2022 electoral defeat and he left Brazil for Florida days before Lula's inauguration. He eventually returned to Brazil and surrendered his passport to police investigating his role in the January 2023 capital riots, when supporters stormed and vandalized the Supreme Court, Congress

and the executive presidential palace. When ordering the seizure of Bolsonaro's passport, a judge cited evidence that Bolsonaro in November 2022 had seen and modified a draft decree to overturn electoral results and lock up Supreme Court judges and the Senate leader.

After tweaking the decree, Bolsonaro summoned military commanders and pressured them to support a coup, according to the police account, based on phone records and plea bargain testimony from the ex-president's former aide-de-camp. Former army and air force commanders also told investigators that Bolsonaro was involved in plans to overthrow democracy, according to testimony released by the Supreme Court in March. Federal police finished two separate criminal probes of Bolsonaro and his associates earlier this year formally accusing them of tampering with COVID-19 vaccination cards while in office and of embezzling jewelry gifted by the Saudi government. Bolsonaro has denied wrongdoing in both cases. A person close to Brazil's prosecutor general, Paulo Gonet, said he is likely to consider the result of all three probes targeting the former president before making a decision on presenting charges, without any clear deadline.

Even as his legal woes have mounted, Bolsonaro remains the central figure of a right-wing movement driving Brazilian politics for the past six years. His party is the largest in the lower house of Congress and made strides in municipal elections last month. Brazilian court cases can take years to reach final judgment and even then they are subject to appeals and reversals. Lula was convicted of taking bribes and spent over a year and a half in jail before the Supreme Court threw out the case in 2021, allowing him to run for his third, non-consecutive presidential term in 2022.

UN nuclear chief hails Iran's concrete step

NEW YORK (AFP): UN atomic watchdog chief Rafael Grossi welcomed Iran's "concrete step" on agreeing to cap its stockpile of highly enriched uranium after Tehran implemented preparatory steps to stop adding to its inventory.

"I think this is ... a concrete step in the right direction -- we have a fact which has been verified by us," Grossi told reporters in Vienna. "I attach importance to the fact that for the first time... since the distancing of Iran from its past obligations, they are taking a different direction," he said. But he said he could "not exclude" that Iran's commitment might falter "as a result of further developments".

The comments by Grossi came after Western powers submitted a resolution censuring Iran for its poor cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to its board meeting. Earlier, Grossi said "a lot" of work still needed to be done, while urging countries to "avoid unnecessary escalations, in particular, in a region that has suffered too much". Last week, Grossi travelled to Tehran for talks with President Masoud Pezeshkian and other top officials. During the meeting, Iran agreed to freeze its sensitive stock of near weapons-grade uranium enriched up to 60 percent. According to the IAEA, Tehran is the only non-nuclear weapon state to enrich uranium to 60 percent, a short step from the 90 percent level needed for atomic weapons.

Iran has always denied seeking a nuclear weapon. Tensions between Iran and the agency have repeatedly flared since a 2015 deal curbing Tehran's nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief fell apart. In recent years, Tehran has decreased its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) by ramping up its nuclear activities, deactivating surveillance devices to monitor the nuclear programme and barring UN inspectors.

Town council in Canada at standstill

TORONTO (BBC): A town council in Canada is at a standstill after its newly elected members refused to pledge allegiance to King Charles III as required in the swearing-in ceremony. Stephen Johnson, the mayor-elect of Dawson City in Yukon Territory, and the new council were elected last month. They were to be sworn early this month but that process stalled after they refused to take the oath.

Johnson says the refusal is in solidarity with an indigenous council member who has raised concerns about the Crown's history with Canada's indigenous people. Under Yukon law, a newly elected official must take the oath within 40 days of their election or else their win "shall be considered null". This means Johnson and the rest of council have until 9 December to take the Oath of Allegiance, in which elected officials in Canada - a Commonwealth country and former British colony - swear or affirm they "will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III" and his "heirs and successors according to law".

In the meantime, the new council is not able to govern or make official decisions until the matter is resolved. In an interview with the Canadian Press, Mayor-elect Johnson said the situation had left him stuck. "We can't do anything legally required of us under the Municipal Act," he explained, until the council takes the oath. "It's a bit of a sticky situation." Johnson said he and the other councillors refused the oath in solidarity with fellow councillor Darwyn Lynn, a member of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, who was hesitant to pledge allegiance. "This is being done with no disrespect to His Majesty King Charles," Johnson told the Canadian Press. "And also we're not doing this to go, 'Rah, rah, look at us,' to poke everybody across Canada, to get rid of the Crown."

Museveni's personal doctor but went on to become an opposition leader and has referred to the leader of the East African country, who has been in power since 1986, as a "dictator". He has alleged that previous presidential elections were rigged - a claim denied by the government - and has been arrested on numerous occasions in the past. On one occasion he was shot in the hand; on another he suffered eye injuries after being doused in pepper spray. The authorities have accused him of provoking them, and he has been charged with inciting violence.

Besigye's alleged kidnapping has raised concerns in Kenya, where rights groups have voiced alarm recently after a spate of forced deportations from the country, once regarded as a safe haven for refugees from across the region, and further afield. Kenya's state-funded human rights body, the KNHRC, has expressed concern over Besigye's case.

Belarus opposition fears for former Ukraine volunteer

MINSK (Reuters): Vietnam has extradited a prominent Belarusian opposition figure to Belarus where he faces a heavy prison sentence or possibly the death penalty, according to exiled opponents of President Alexander Lukashenko.

Vasily Veremeychik, 34, is a former member of the Kalinouski regiment, a Belarusian volunteer force that has fought for Ukraine in the war against Russia. He took part in mass protests in 2020 against Lukashenko, a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, after an election that the opposition and the West said was rigged. Veremeychik is also an elected member of an 80-person Belarusian parliament-in-exile working alongside exiled opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya. His return to Belarus is being presented by the authorities there as a major win for the KGB state security apparatus.

State TV showed him being flown into the capital Minsk on an otherwise empty plane and led down the steps by two security men with their faces blurred out, before being driven away in a van. The video was accompanied by pounding, dramatic music.

Standing on the airport tarmac and speaking into the camera, Konstantin Bychek, head of the investigative department of the Belarus KGB, said Veremeychik's case was a warning to people he described as extremists and terrorists. Such people should know that "Belarusian justice will catch up with them at any point on earth", he added.

Reuters has requested comment from the Vietnamese foreign ministry and the Belarusian justice ministry. Franak Viacorka, a senior aide to Tsikhanouskaya, told Reuters that Veremeychik was the first member of the Kalinouski regiment to be captured by the Belarusian authorities and was likely to face a sentence of at least 20 years or possible capital punishment on terrorism charges.

He said Veremeychik had gone to Vietnam, where he had friends and was able to travel without a visa, after being denied entry to European Union countries. Viacorka said this was at the instigation of Lithuania, which he said had banned Veremeychik because he had once served in the Belarusian army. Such bans wrongly targeted "demo-

cratic people, good people" in the Belarus opposition, he said.

Lithuanian Interior Minister Agne Bilotaite said Veremeychik was denied entry to Lithuania by the Migration Department, acting on the advice of Lithuanian counterintelligence, news wire BNS reported. A spokesperson for the Migration Department said he could not comment on an individual case. Human rights group Viasna says 1,273 people are currently jailed in Belarus on politically related charges. Lukashenko, in power since 1994 and running for re-election in January, has this year pardoned a total of 178 people convicted of various forms of "extremism". He denies there are any political prisoners in the country.

Tsikhanouskaya, who fled the country in 2020 after running in the election that Lukashenko was declared to have won, urged countries to halt extraditions to Belarus and help Belarusians acquire legal settlement status. "No one should be handed over to Lukashenko's KGB," she posted on X. "Don't reject Belarusians seeking safety from the regime's terror."

S Korea targets K-pop, K-drama tourism boom

SEOUL (AFP): Deep in South Korea's hinterlands lies a perfect replica of 1900s Seoul: welcome to Sunshine Land, the latest K-drama theme park to cash in on booming K-culture tourism. Fans of K-pop mega group BTS have long flocked to the South to see sites associated with the boy band, from the dorms where they slept as trainees to recent music video shoot locations.

But as the popularity of South Korean drama has soared overseas -- it is the most-viewed non-English content on Netflix, the platform's data shows -- more and more tourists are planning trips around their favourite shows. The idea that foreign tourists would pay good money and drive hundreds of miles out of the capital Seoul to see a K-drama set seemed "crazy" to tour guide Sophy Yoon - until she saw one of her guests break down in tears at Sunshine Land.

"At that moment, it hit me: For me, it was just a studio, but for them, it was something much more," she said. Preserved from the set of popular 2018 historical series "Mr Sunshine", the location in Nonsan, 170 kilometres (106 miles) from Seoul, is replete with painstaking replicas of everything from a turn-of-the-century tram to South Korea's most famous Buddhist bell.

Jennifer Zelinski told AFP she had never left the United States before, but

the Spanish steps in Rome where Audrey Hepburn had ice cream," Yoon said, referring to the 1953 classic movie "Roman Holiday". For South Korea's growing number of K-drama tourists, "every door, every wall has a meaning from a drama that impacted their lives". "I get a lot more requests for specific 'K-drama tours' now," she said.

The rise of South Korea as a global cultural powerhouse "has contributed to the appeal of Korean tourism," said Kwak Jaeyeon, the Hallyu content team director at the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO). South Korea welcomed 1.4 million tourists in September, up 33 percent year-on-year and the highest since the pandemic, with more than a third saying they had decided to come "after being exposed to Korean Wave content", according to a 2023 KTO poll. In Seoul's central Jongno district, tourists like Sookariyapa Kakij are typical. Wearing a hanbok, traditional Korean dress, the 40-year-old had travelled from Thailand specifically to see where her favourite dramas were filmed. "I want to find locations where 'Itaewon Class' was shot," she told AFP, referring to the popular 2020 drama, filmed largely on location in its namesake district of Seoul.

Jennifer Zelinski told AFP she had never left the United States before, but

after she discovered K-drama -- through the 2019 series "Crash Landing on You" -- while stuck at home during the pandemic, she decided to visit South Korea. "I binged the whole show in a week. I barely slept and went through two whole boxes of tissues," she said. This "snowballed" into her watching more and more K-drama, Korean variety shows and listening to K-pop, she said, until finally she "felt like I really wanted to see it in person". "My family and friends were shocked when I said I was travelling to Korea and on my own," said Zelinski, but for her "it just felt right."

The travel industry is racing to catch up: one South Korean tour company on the travel platform Klook said interest in its BTS day tour has "skyrocketed" recently, and they were "completely booked until next February." "We are planning to add additional tours for other K-pop idol groups, including Seventeen and NCT 127," they said. But most of this new type of tourism is concentrated in Seoul, Jeong Ji-youn, a Kyungpook National University professor, told AFP. Tourism in rural areas has tended to focus on more traditional Korean experiences, which is not interesting to younger travellers eager to explore the land of K-pop and K-drama.

Fugitive Zambian MP arrested in Zimbabwe

HARARE (BBC): A fugitive Zambian lawmaker with a bounty on his head has been arrested in Zimbabwe, Zambian authorities have said. Emmanuel "Jay Jay" Banda, who was facing robbery charges, is accused of having escaped from custody in August as he awaited to appear in court.

He is said to have escaped through a window at Chipata Central Hospital in Eastern Province where he had been admitted following his arrest and was being guarded by police and prison officers. The police then issued a bounty of 2m Zambian kwacha (\$72,000; £57,000) for him. He denies the allegations of robbery. At a press conference, the Zambian minister for home affairs said the MP had been arrested earlier this week in Harare.

Jack Mwiimbu said the MP was arrested by Zimbabwean police at a flat he had been renting and would remain there pending extradition formalities. He said the government was keen to know who had facilitated the

MP's escape as well as visits by his wife to Harare. He thanked the Zimbabwean authorities for their co-operation. The opposition Patriotic Front (PF) party, led by former President Edgar Lungu, condemned what he called an "emerging and worrying scenario". Banda, who has been an independent MP since 2021, was previously associated with Lungu, who lost the presidency to Hakainde Hichilema that year.

The PF spokesman, Emmanuel Mwamba, said what was happening was "an abduction" adding that the government should follow "internationally prescribed extradition protocols". "We are urging the Zambian government that they should not join other African countries that are known to go other jurisdictions and pick and extract a citizen they are looking for for committing crimes," he told the BBC. The BBC has asked the Zambian government for a response.

The Zambian police said that Interpol in Harare had confirmed that Banda was in their custody and had

requested extradition documents. It noted that Banda had in a preliminary interview with Interpol denied the charges, "alleging he was being targeted due to his familial ties" with Lungu. This prompted a request for clarification on the charges, which Zambia provided. The Zambian police added that preparations to "finalise and transmit the required documents to [interpol in] Harare are currently underway" and further updates would be given in due course.

In May this year, Banda had been reported missing in unclear circumstances. He resurfaced a day later, saying that he had been abducted. At least three opposition politicians and a civil rights activists were arrested following the case. Two of those who were arrested - Edith Nawakwi, leader of the opposition Forum for Development and Democracy party, and civil rights activist Brener Changala - accused the state of being behind the abductions. The home affairs ministry however denied the state's involvement in the matter.

Gardner: ICC warrants ‘major blow to Israel’s standing’

LONDON (BBC): The announcement of arrest warrants by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for Israel's current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant has triggered a furious response from leading Israelis across the political spectrum. By contrast it has been welcomed by Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and ordinary citizens in Gaza.

Leading Israeli figures across the political spectrum have reacted angrily to the announcement. President Isaac Herzog called it "a dark day for justice and humanity", saying the decision had "chosen the side of terror and evil over democracy and freedom". The prime minister's office called it "an antisemitic decision" and said that Israel "utterly rejects the false and absurd charges", labelling the ICC "a biased and discriminatory political body".

The chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, Yuli Edelstein, called it "a shameful decision by a political body held captive by Islamist interests". Israel's foreign minister said the ICC had lost its legitimacy. Hamas has welcomed the decision, without commenting on the issuing of a warrant for its own military commander, Mohammed Deif. In a statement it said: "We call on all countries around the world to cooperate with the court in bringing the Zionist war criminals, Netanyahu and Gallant and to work

immediately to stop the crimes of genocide against defenceless civilians in the Gaza Strip". Ordinary Palestinians in Gaza have also welcomed the announcement. Muhammad Ali, a 40-year old man displaced from Gaza City and currently in the central area of Deir al-Balah, said: "We have been terrorised, starved, had our homes destroyed, and lost our children, sons, and loved ones. We welcome this decision, and of course, we hope that the decisions of the ICC will be implemented". Munira Al-Shami, whose sister was killed by Israeli forces last month, called the ICC decision "justice for tens of thousands of victims, including my sister Wafa". Meanwhile, some Israeli citizens said the arrests went against Israel's right to defend itself. "Somehow I'm not surprised," Ron Ackerman said, adding he thinks the ICC "is purely antisemitic and it doesn't see what's going on around Israel, only they look at Israel".

Helen Kariv from Jerusalem said: "When I first heard it I said, 'my God, where did they get the idea of arresting the prime minister of the state of Israel and his chief of staff?... We are fighting for survival.'" A total of 124 countries are signatories to the ICC, including the UK, but not the US, Russia, China, nor Israel itself. So this means that technically, if either Netanyahu or Gallant sets foot in any of the signatory countries they must be arrested and handed over to the

court. But international lawyers have expressed doubts over whether either man will ever be brought to The Hague for trial.

The last time Netanyahu travelled outside Israel was in July to the US, a country he could still theoretically visit with impunity. Last year he visited several countries, including the UK in March, many of which are signatories. It is thought unlikely he would want to risk arrest by doing this again and the countries in question would also be reluctant to find themselves put in that position. Hamas has little to fear from the ICC warrant for Ibrahim Al-Masri, aka Mohammed Deif. Israel believes he was killed earlier this year, although this was never confirmed by Hamas. The other two Hamas figures whom the ICC originally planned to prosecute - Yahya Sinwar and Ismail Haniyeh - are both confirmed as dead.

There is no question that announcement is a major blow to Israel's international standing, to the two individuals named and most specifically to Israel's ongoing efforts to present its military campaign in Gaza as a fight between the forces of good and evil. Israelis are appalled that, in their eyes, the world seems to have already forgotten or overlooked the atrocities committed by Hamas on 7 October last year. Palestinians, especially Gazans, feel vindicated that their accusations of Israeli war crimes have now been echoed by an international body with some weight.

Ugandan opposition figure taken to military court after Kenya expulsion

KAMPALA (AFP): Prominent Ugandan opposition figure Kizza Besigye has appeared before a military court in the capital, Kampala, where he has denied charges that include the illegal possession of firearms and negotiating to buy arms abroad.

His appearance comes after his wife said he was kidnapped in neighbouring Kenya and sent back home where he was being held in a military jail. In a post on X, Winnie Byanyima wrote that her 68-year-old husband had been seized in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, during a book launch event - and she demanded the Ugandan government free him.

Besigye was told during the military court hearing, held amid heavy security, that he would remain in custody until 2 December. Besigye - who has contested and lost four presidential elections against President Yoweri Museveni - appeared along with his co-accused, opposition politician Obedi

Lutale, who also denied the charges. The four counts they face include being found with two pistols and ammunition in a hotel in the Kenyan capital and negotiating for arms with foreigners in the Swiss city of Geneva, the Greek capital, Athens, and Nairobi. On his arrival at the Makindye military court - after being incommunicado for days, Besigye waved to the gathered journalists and senior members of his Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) party. As the hearing got under way, Besigye objected to being tried in a court martial, saying that if there were any charges against him, he should be tried in a civilian court.

But he was overruled and the hearing continued. Earlier, his wife, a respected human rights advocate and executive director of UNAids - the joint UN programme set up to eradicate the disease, had said in her tweet: "He is not a soldier. Why is he being held in a military jail?" Besigye used to be

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Has Israel reached its limits in Lebanon?

THE conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, which began in October 2023, entered a new phase on Sept. 17, 2024. The process started with Israel's detonation of thousands of electronic devices used by Hezbollah and continued with the assassination of many of the movement's top leaders, including its secretary-general. Thinking that Hezbollah would be dissolved, Israel launched a ground operation on Lebanese territory on Oct. 1. However, it did not turn out as expected.

Far from being successful in the land operation, Israel suffered serious losses in Lebanon. Combined with its war exhaustion starting from the last year, the latest casualties of Israel led it to consider withdrawing from Lebanon. Israel had the upper hand against Hezbollah with the surprise attacks; assassinations of top commanders, and air domination starting in mid-September. However, Israel's accomplishments misled it to enter Lebanon on the ground. Expecting a dissolution in Hezbollah fronts after eliminating the organization's leadership, Israel faced strong resistance on the field.

While Israel continues its ground offensive in southern Lebanon, its casualties are significantly increasing. Israeli Army Radio referred to last month as "black October" because of high casualties. Israel's main objective was to secure its borders by pushing Hezbollah north of the Litani River, but this goal is still a long way off. The deepest point at which Israeli forces have been able to advance is the outskirts of the town of Khiam, about 6 kilometers from the border.

Hezbollah also continued to hit Israel with missiles and drones during the invasion. The ongoing Hezbollah attacks on Israeli territory have undermined one of Tel Aviv's major pretexts for the occupation. Israel had claimed that the ground operation was needed for displaced people to return to their homes on Israel's northern border. With the attacks of Hezbollah, far from the return of those in the north, the war has moved much further inland. To cover up the questionable ground operation, Israel increased the number of massive daily airstrikes on towns and cities.

After Israel's ground operation in Lebanon, international pressure on Israel has increased significantly. Many Western countries, which did not react sufficiently to the massacre in Gaza, put pressure on Israel for its escalatory behavior in Lebanon. For instance, France called for an arms sales ban on Israel to avoid regional escalation. Israel's attacks on the peacekeeping force, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), have also put it in a difficult position internationally. Israel, which suffers military losses every day in Gaza and southern Lebanon, carries out its operations also at a heavy cost. Since the outbreak of the war, Israel has lost more than 890 soldiers, and 11,000 Israeli soldiers have been wounded, according to Yair Lapid, Israeli opposition leader. Additionally, hundreds of military vehicles have been destroyed or damaged in the attacks.

In addition to military losses and a tense political environment, one of the most difficult challenges for the Netanyahu government is the state of the economy. Israel's military expenditures are increasing while the economic growth rate is slowing down. The cost of the war to Israel is more than 67 billion dollars, even without including Israel's ground offensive in Lebanon. The Netanyahu government is in a difficult situation in terms of domestic politics. It has been cornered with demands to resolve the hostage crisis and reach a cease-fire. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is under pressure not only for the failure of Oct. 7 but also for not paying enough attention to the Israeli hostages and deliberately undermining the cease-fire for his political gain.

Letter to UN

ON Nov. 3, a group of 52 countries led by Türkiye sent a letter to the UN calling for an arms embargo on Israel. The letter also urges the UN Security Council to act in the face of flagrant violations of its own resolutions. In addition to Türkiye, the signatories include China, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Palestine, and Brazil, as well as the Arab League and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

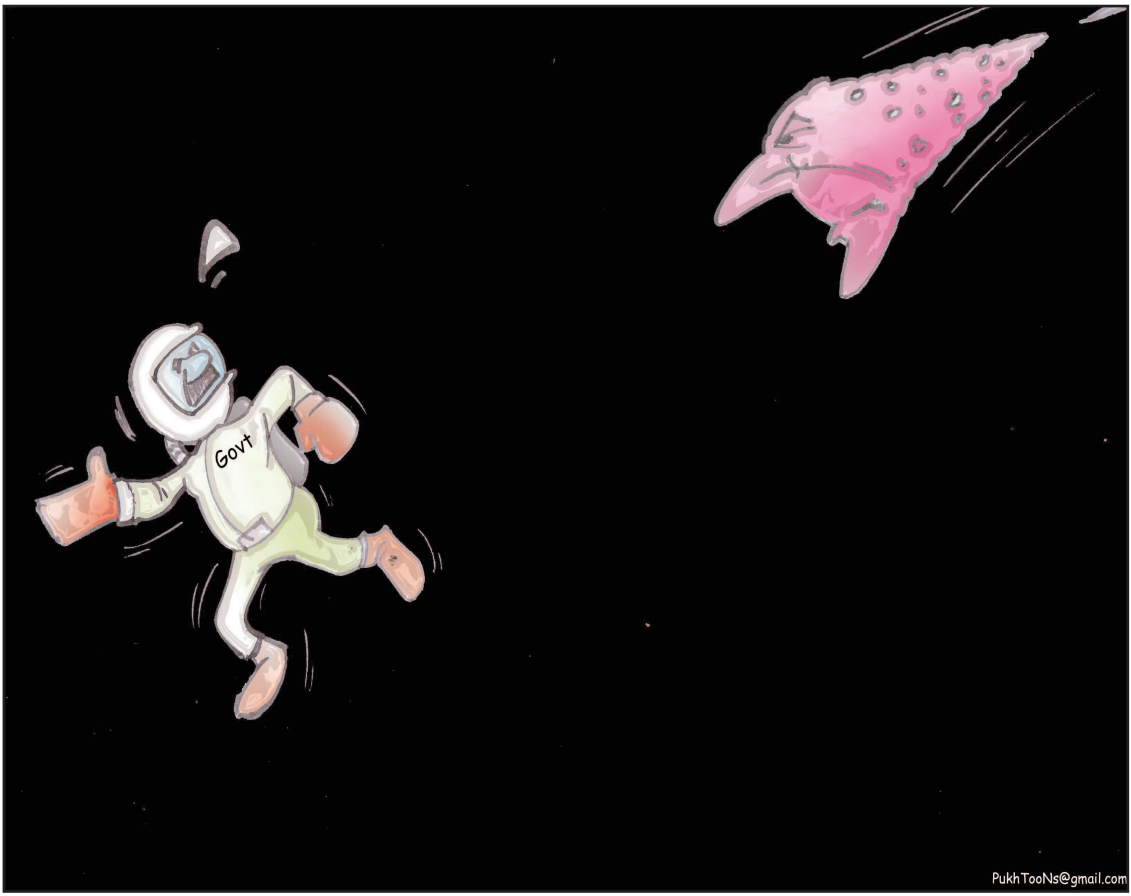
The establishment of arms embargoes or sanction regimes by the UN requires that a resolution be adopted by the UN Security Council with a majority of 9 of its 15 members, including the five permanent members - the United States, China, the UK, France, and Russia. As of November, nine arms embargoes are in force (Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Lebanon, Sudan, South Sudan, and Yemen) on the basis of Security Council resolutions, as well as 14 sanction regimes.

For a resolution to be adopted by the council, one of its members must submit a text on which a vote then takes place. In the current instance, any of the three countries that currently sit on the council (China and Russia as permanent members and Algeria as elected members) and that have signed the letter calling for an arms embargo on Israel could theoretically draft a resolution and then put it to a vote. It is clear to everyone, though, that such a text would not be passed. At the very least, the US would resort to its prerogative as a permanent council member to veto any draft resolution seeking sanctions on Israel. Since Oct. 7, 2023, the US has vetoed two Security Council draft texts on Israel: one proposed by Brazil calling for "humanitarian pauses" in Gaza (Oct. 18, 2023), and one sponsored by the United Arab Emirates calling for an "immediate ceasefire" in Gaza (Dec. 8, 2023).

In both cases, the US veto was expected, and the text was put to the vote mainly to demonstrate that the US would oppose what was sought by a large number of countries. What is interesting in both the Israel-Palestine and the Russia-Ukraine conflicts is how powerless the UN seems to be. Russia and Israel both blatantly violate international law without being constrained by UN bodies. Nonetheless, while the Security Council has indeed been paralyzed in both cases, the combined actions of the UN secretary-general, General Assembly, International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) do converge towards the identification of recurrent and undeniable violations of international law. The fact that the UN Security Council does not endorse this does not change the veracity of what all other UN bodies assert.

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Russia's economy spoiling

Jason Corcoran

AS President Vladimir Putin doubles down on military spending, Russia's economy is curdling, leaving Muscovites feeling the squeeze at the checkout. Butter - a simple staple - has turned into a luxury, with prices soaring by almost 30% in 2024 amid galloping inflation and interest rates at 20-year highs. This isn't just theory - people are now stealing butter to resell on the black market, and supermarkets have resorted to anti-theft casings typically reserved for caviar or fine whiskey. Prices are skyrocketing on other basics, too: potatoes are up 56%, eggs are once again in short supply, and the ruble has plunged to a one-year low, further eroding the purchasing power of ordinary Russians.

This is more than just a budget crunch. It is a stark symbol of an economy buckling under the weight of Putin's war-driven spending spree. The Kremlin's solution? Importing overpriced essentials from Iran, India, and Turkey, while Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Patrushev "monitors" prices with no plans to cap them. Meanwhile, inflation is being driven not by standard market dynamics but by relentless wartime spending that is pushing the economy to the brink.

My mother-in-law learned this firsthand on a recent visit to Dublin. Last month, she was shocked to find that Brest-Litovsk butter in Moscow now costs 250 rubles (\$2.47) - nearly the same price as premium Kerrygold in Ireland. Butter prices in Russia have skyrocketed, sparking a wave of supermarket thefts as inflation accelerates amid the highest interest rates in 20 years. Some Muscovites are turning to armed robbery to obtain such a basic good as prices soar beyond the reach of many. Surveillance footage dated Oct. 29 from a Pyaterochka supermarket on Leningradskoye highway captured two men attempting to steal 25 packs of butter. As they tried to escape, a scuffle broke out at the store's exit: one robber struck a store assistant repeatedly, while the other threatened her with a knife.

According to reports on Telegram, thieves aren't stealing butter for personal use but to resell it. Dozens of these packages have been spotted for sale at metro stalls or listed on dedicated social media

channels. Prices have risen partly due to the shutdown of Health & Nutrition factories, which were seized from French multinational Danone by associates of Chechen warlord Ramzan Kadyrov. In response, the authorities are turning to imports from Turkey, Iran, India, and Latin America, but these goods are coming in at exorbitant prices for consumers. Imports come at exorbitant prices, compounding inflation, while the Kremlin keeps funneling funds to military spending instead of investing in domestic agriculture or price controls.

Putin has frequently bragged about the resilience of Russia's economy and claimed Russia could have both "butter and guns" after he appointed an economist, Andrei Belousov, in May to run the Defence Ministry. The "Guns or Butter" concept refers to the economic trade-offs between a nation's military and civilian spending. It highlights that governments have limited resources and must choose between the two. The Kremlin has repeatedly chosen guns, prioritizing spending on arms, troops, and infrastructure for a protracted war, with increasingly less left for "butter" - the goods and services that support daily life. Late last year, Russia was hit by a deficit of eggs and chickens as sanctions exacerbated supply chain disruptions and rising animal feed costs. Putin's initial confidence that the war would end quickly, with limited impact on domestic life, has proven completely misguided. Waves of sanctions may have failed to topple the economy, but they've undeniably raised costs for regular Russians by disrupting supply chains and damaging domestic production.

With inflation already out of control, Central Bank Governor Elvira Nabiullina has warned that "drastic" policy changes may be needed, raising rates to an unprecedented 21% last month. But war and sanctions have severed the ruble's link to interest rates, and even high borrowing costs are failing to stabilize the currency. Putin has leaned on Nabiullina to keep the economy afloat, but fissures are forming. After nearly three years of military Keynesianism, the Central Bank is forecasting growth to halve from 3.9% to 2.5% in 2024, while the World Bank and IMF proj-

ect just 1.7% and 1.3%. That is assuming these figures can even be trusted, given that one of Putin's first decrees after the war began was to restrict access to economic data - a move widely seen as an attempt to obscure the true state of the economy.

Meanwhile, sanctions targeting Russia's oil and gas sector - crucial for financing the war in Ukraine - are finally beginning to bite after misfiring for almost three years. Recent measures aimed at Russia's shadow tanker fleet, which has been covertly moving sanctioned crude, have disrupted shipments and squeezed revenue streams. On Oct. 28, Bloomberg News also reported that Russian gas producer Novatek has halted production at its flagship Arctic LNG-2 project. The situation is worsening for natural gas behemoth Gazprom, which posted a \$6.8 billion loss in 2023 - its first since 1999 - and is reliant on short-term borrowing that could strain Russia's financial sector. With reserves dwindling and no foreign capital, a bailout may not be possible. Russia's \$2 trillion economy has defied predictions of collapse since the Ukraine invasion, even outpacing the US and most major European economies despite heavy sanctions. Nabiullina has kept it afloat - almost miraculously - but cracks are deepening: dysfunction is mounting, and the specter of stagflation, where stagnant growth meets spiraling inflation, looms larger.

Reportedly, Nabiullina tried to resign after the 2022 invasion but was ordered by Putin to stay. Her sense of isolation grew last month when her top deputy and closest advisor, Ksenia Yudaeva, left for a post at the International Monetary Fund, leaving Nabiullina to navigate Russia's economy largely alone amid increasing calls by many oligarchs and industrialists for her to go. High interest rates are squeezing Russian companies, forcing them to cut expansion plans to cover rising maintenance costs and meet wage demands. Debt-laden firms without state-subsidized loans are on the brink of bankruptcy as refinancing becomes nearly impossible. Previous crashes indicate that real estate often signals broader economic downturns, and Russia's sector is showing troubling

signs. Real estate giant Samolet Group could become one of the first casualties of soaring interest rates. The country's largest developer by land holdings now faces a potential state bailout after its bonds and shares plunged in value. In the residential sector, the end of the Kremlin's mortgage subsidy program in July led to some loans quadrupling to over 20%, triggering a collapse in new-build and second-hand apartment sales in major cities as buyers were priced out of the market. On the other hand, the rental market is booming as those shut out of homeownership scramble for accommodation. Meanwhile, over 200 shopping malls in Russia risk bankruptcy due to soaring debt after the recent rate hike. Kommersant reported on Nov.1. The Union of Shopping Centres has appealed to Economic Minister Maxim Reshetnikov for preferential loan support.

Putin's barefaced commitment to prioritizing military strength over domestic needs shows no sign of wavering. Next year, Russia will increase its military spending by 27% to a record 13.5 trillion rubles (\$133,387,141,500) compared to this year, according to draft budget documents. In total, the Kremlin plans to allocate 40% of its 2025 budget to defense and internal security, surpassing total spending on education, healthcare, social services, and the economy. Nearly 30% will go directly to the military - a level unseen since Soviet times. With rising expenses and declining revenues, Russia is now posting an annual fiscal deficit of nearly 2% of its Gross Domestic Product. Even more worrying, Russia has been draining its rainy-day National Welfare Fund to about half of its pre-war total.

A Donald Trump-brokered peace deal could offer Putin's economy a lifeline by potentially easing sanctions, freeing up trade, and attracting foreign investment - allowing the Kremlin to shift resources from defense spending to stabilizing the economy. For ordinary Russians struggling with inflation and sky-high butter prices, such relief cannot come fast enough. Still, with Trump's track record on sanctions and election promises, any real benefit remains very uncertain.

The Moscow Times

World War III now Trump's to lose

Mark Toth & Jonathan Sweet

PRESIDENT-elect Donald Trump's true defining moment is coming. Future historians likely will not judge him based on his two impeachments, felony convictions or his ever-present hyperbole, but rather whether or not he wins World War III.

So far, the tea leaves are troubling. Many of Trump's key advisors remain in deep denial, as evinced by Vice President-elect J.D. Vance and Tulsi Gabbard, Trump's choice for director of national intelligence. They see his primary role come January 20 as preventing a third global war. They apparently cannot see that we are already in the midst of it. Negotiations with Russia would be futile. History tells us that Russian President Vladimir Putin's words are meaningless. Anything short of a complete withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine and the restoration of their 1991 borders would be a victory for the Kremlin.

The defeat of Russian forces is the best outcome, and precision deep-strike weapons are a vital part of that outcome. Now is the time to invoke General Ulysses S. Grant - to close with and destroy the enemy, applying relentless pressure until they capitulate. Speed is of the essence. Russia fatigue is real in the US. Nevertheless, Russian intrigue is very real, and it is not going to go away. Nor is Putin's war against the West, and in particular his war against Washington.

Putin is fighting to win. And it is clear as day that the Kremlin is betting on Trump becoming his unwitting partner. Consider Putin's actions since Trump was elected. He has continued to escalate the war in Ukraine, including doubling down on Russian military strikes against civilian targets and infrastructure ahead of winter. Russian and North Korean forces are in the early stages of a counteroffensive in the Kursk Oblast and Putin is continuing his grinding World War I-like onslaught in the Donbas against teetering Ukrainian positions along the Kupiansk-Kharkiv axis. Moscow is also demonstrating, either as distraction or as the opening of a third front, that it might begin a counteroffensive in Zaporizhzhia to the south. One of Putin's early goals was to strip Ukraine of its entire Black Sea coastline, including seizing Ukraine's vital commercial seaport in Odesa. This would threaten Moldova and help secure Moscow's grip on Georgia, where the Russian navy is building a new naval port for its Black Sea Fleet Headquarters after it was forced to vacate Crimea.

Trump may be tired of "Russia, Russia, Russia," but that is the stark reality he will face after he returns to the White House. Russia is not going away, but rather Russia is coming for him and our way of life. Rightly, many in Trump's sphere see China as our pacing military and economic threat. Men like Rep. Mike Waltz, Sen. Marco Rubio and former Rep. John Ratcliffe who are respectively being put forward as Trump's national security advisor, secretary of State and CIA director, acknowledge that Beijing represents a clear and present danger. They also are all on record as arguing that the US cannot afford to give Putin a win in Ukraine and eastern Europe. If Trump does that, it would be tantamount to giving Chinese President Xi Jinping a strategic win - and it would only embolden and strengthen the rapidly coalescing "Axis of Evil" partnership between Russia, China, Iran and North Korea.

Naively, however, some in

Trump's circle believe he is facing an either-or situation between China and Russia. Their argument is that to defeat Xi and his designs on the Indo-Pacific, Trump must make peace with Putin. Nothing is further from reality. Presently, a badly weakened Russia represents a significant military and economic drag on China. Both economies are reeling due to collapsing fundamentals and under the weight of massive military expenditures.

The Russian ruble is imploding. It is now trading at less than one US penny on international exchanges. Inflation in Moscow is spiraling out of control. CNN reports that "butter, some meats, and onions are about 25 percent more expensive than a year ago," and that "some supermarkets have taken to keeping butter in locked cabinets." China is unlikely to hit its annual GDP growth target of 5 percent after reporting only 4.6 percent annualized GDP in the third quarter. And now, Beijing is being forced to invest \$1.4 trillion domestically "to revive the economy, authorizing local governments to refinance crushing debts that have left some cities unable to pay their bills."

Meanwhile, in Ukraine, Russia is down for the count. Putin is increasingly under siege at home, in eastern Europe and in the Caucasus. There is no reason for Trump to give Putin the opportunity to survive and fight another round. He would risk losing World War III. Moldovans recently voted in a referendum to approve entry into the European Union. Moscow is now confronted with dealing with "a potential coup in Abkhazia, a breakaway part of Georgia, whose Russia-sanctioned government has been hit by mass protests." And large street protests demanding new elections continue in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia.

Putin is signaling he is under pressure. His public changing of Russia's nuclear doctrine on Tuesday said as much. After President Biden greenlit the limited use of US made ATACMS in Kursk, Putin signed a decree declaring that any "conventional attack on Russia by any nation that is supported by a nuclear power" could result in a nuclear strike on Kyiv and/or that power or NATO. Putin knows he cannot win a nuclear exchange, nor is Xi about to allow him to drag China into a nuclear conflagration. This means Putin is holding a losing hand, and he knows it. All he can do is to try and use Washington's fear of nukes as a bluff, and hope that Trump is just as naive as Biden has been.

But make no mistake, Ukraine is also nearing its breaking point. Biden's "just enough" military strategy has left Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and his generals badly exposed. Ukraine, without sufficient weapons, munitions or combined arms capabilities, could collapse in the Donbas if nothing is done. Putin knows this, which explains why he is willing to go "all in." He is not seeking to negotiate with Trump come January. Rather he is seeking a de facto capitulation by Washington, Brussels and Kyiv. A Trump loss in Ukraine would be far more calamitous than Biden's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2022. It would embolden and tell Moscow, Beijing, Tehran and Pyongyang that they can win World War III. This global war will soon be Trump's to lose - or he can boldly win it. Trump already holds the winning hand, so long as he is wise enough not to fold.

The Hill

Supporting Ukraine against Russia is not a distraction from China

Mark N. Katz

and supporting Russia diplomatically.

If all this Chinese support were to end, and Beijing to insist that Putin end his war against Kyiv, the Russian military effort against Ukraine would become far more difficult for Putin to sustain than it now is. China, however, is not going to do this. Beijing, it is true, benefits from the US and other Western states on the one hand and Russia on the other hand focusing on each other and not on China.

Yet if the incoming Trump administration is willing to end the war on terms that are grossly unfavorable to Ukraine, Putin is not likely to suddenly join with Trump in containing Beijing. Instead, Russia, China, North Korea and others might conclude that

if Trump is no longer willing to arm Ukraine, then he will not be willing to arm other states under attack - much less send American troops to defend them. Weitz and his co-author Matthew Kroenig of the Atlantic Council laid out the logic of why this axis might think this way in their Economist essay where they wrote, "American generals testify that the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan contributed to Vladimir Putin's decision to invade Ukraine."

Why wouldn't a Trump administration decision to reduce or end American support for Ukraine not have a similar impact on not just Russia, but China, North Korea, and Iran as well?

The desire to focus more on China by reducing

Washington's focus on Russia and other adversaries is understandable but unrealistic. Focusing less on Russia and others is only going to encourage them in their aggression - as well as provide China with a powerful incentive to support them in it.

US willingness to end the Russia-Ukraine war on terms unfavorable to Ukraine, then, will not allow the US to focus more on China. Instead, the US may end up in the far more difficult situation of having to respond to simultaneous aggression on the part of Russia, China, North Korea and Iran.

Putin in particular might calculate that if the US was not willing to continue supporting a large country like Ukraine that has been willing to defend itself, maybe it won't do much to defend a smaller European country that is less able to do so -

even if it is a NATO member. Indeed, Putin might decide that the best way to break up NATO is to attack a member that America and others are simply not prepared to undertake losses themselves for. Just as discouraging, some of America's authoritarian as well as illiberal democratic allies may decide that they would be better off siding with one of these adversaries against America and its other allies, or simply taking advantage of increased conflict elsewhere to pursue their own aggressive aims.

While the incoming administration might want to focus on the threat from China, the fact that the US faces several threats means that it cannot ignore any of them - or the prospect that doing so will only encourage others, including China.

Good riddance to Biden’s incompetent Ukraine policies

Keith Naughton

FOR all the failings of the Biden administration, none is more clear-cut than the disaster that is its national security policy. The trail of misjudgments, failed negotiations and rank incompetence has no parallel in American history. Team Biden conducting national security policy is like watching a troop of baboons fly an airplane: You know it's going to hit a mountain, you just don't know when. It all starts with deterrence, which the new breed of Democratic foreign policy boffins considers a relic.

Deterrence is instilling fear in your opponent, preventing or at least significantly reducing the risk of aggression. It is part of game theory, the study of how multiple actors may act to maximize benefit in a given scenario. The goal may be to "win" or to reach a stable equilibrium, depending on the situation - a geopolitical poker game.

Understanding and applying game theory is fundamental to geopolitics, particularly in times of potential and real conflict. It is not a relic, and the multi-year Biden policy fiasco in Ukraine proves it. Deterrence gets a bad rap from the Cold War doctrine of "mutual-assured-destruction." American and Soviet policy was to launch a full-scale nuclear response in the face of a nuclear attack. On its surface, that's crazy-nuking the planet to cinders based on a theory is nonsense. But it worked.

Since the end of World War II, Europe had the longest run of peace between its great powers in history - over 70 years, far beyond its previous record of 43 years (1871 to 1914). That ended with the Obama administration and its dismissal of deterrence in favor of "proportionate

response" and economic sanctions. Why did Russian President Vladimir Putin invade Ukraine? For the same reason wars are always started - Putin thought he could get away with it. And he was partly correct. The first reaction from Team Biden was to give up and run away. It was only resoluteness by Ukraine's leader, Volodymyr Zelensky, that forced the West's hand.

The timid aid process for Ukraine has hardly restored deterrence. Team Biden has seen Venezuelan dictator Nicolás Maduro thumb his nose and steal another election, Hamas and Israel ignore Team Biden's entreaties, and Iran arm their Houthi proxies and attack Red Sea shipping. Failure at deterrence was bad enough, but their strategy during the war is even worse because it's really no strategy at all. Team Biden just stumbled forward in ad hoc fashion. Petrified of Putin's imagined "red lines," they would spend months debating what weapons to supply and their limitations, only to approve them eventually and unpredictably, seemingly with no consideration as to what was actually happening in the war at that point or what the present needs were.

Their incompetence has lengthened the Ukraine war, made it more dangerous and jeopardized domestic political support - a barely comprehensible trifecta of post-modernist neurotic bumbling. Even worse, a dynamic has developed due to Team Biden's incompetence: Their weakness has encouraged Putin to bluster and bluff. Finding that his nuclear threats caused very public trembling in the West, Putin became quite cavalier about it. But given the parlous state of Russian arms and the diffi-

culty of maintaining nuclear weapons, Putin could hardly assume that any given device would work. A fizzle would be a humiliating disaster. This means that any real nuclear threat would be preceded by a test, which would take time to prepare; those preparations would be clear well before any nuclear strike. Moreover, crossing the nuclear threshold would be a massive gamble that risks Chinese (and other nations') support.

Eventually, even weak-willed bedwetters like Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan figured out Putin's obvious bluffing. This in turn has triggered a dangerous dynamic: Western nations would moot more military aid, Putin would issue nuclear threats, the West would ignore Putin, and the Russians would be humiliated. But public humiliation is truly intolerable to Putin, necessitating a response. The result? Instead of creating a balance of fear or a rough equilibrium (a key goal in proper game theory behavior), Team Biden ignorantly created a cycle of escalation.

What Biden should have done early in the war is make public a simple doctrine: whatever Russia does to Ukraine; Ukraine can do to Russia with American arms. If Russia sends missiles 100 miles into Ukrainian territory, the Ukrainians can do the same into Russian territory. Although this still would have ceded Putin the initiative on the level of violence, it also would have placed responsibility squarely upon him for any destruction wrought on Russian soil. The endless public debate in the West over Putin's possible "red lines" would have disap-

peared. Putin would reveal his red lines by choosing how to prosecute his war.

Without this balance of fear, the Russians have acted with absolute impunity. They have indiscriminately bombed Ukraine, massacred civilians, destroyed energy infrastructure and possibly used poison gas. Meanwhile, the Ukrainians have been prevented from even attacking Russian troop formations on Russian soil preparing to advance on Ukrainian positions. It's pure idiocy. As a result, a political "doom loop" has formed in the West. Russia destroys key vital infrastructure and economic parts of Ukraine, causing the need for more funds to keep Ukraine afloat, raising the costs for the West, which undermines domestic political support for helping Ukraine, which encourages more Russian violence.

The fools in the Biden administration were never able to figure this out. For all the sanctimonious waiting on the left about how President-elect Donald Trump will sell out Ukraine, at least Trump and his national security team understand deterrence. They are not afraid of their own shadows. Trump plays the game of chicken better than any American politician. Even the Ukrainians recognize how awful the simpering Biden national security team has been. Trump hates to lose. His incoming team is hardly interested in starting their tenure giving anything up to anyone. No doubt there is uncertainty about what Trump will do. But given the impotence of the current administration, populated by the world's worst poker players, both Ukraine and America are better off with a hard-nosed Team Trump than a weak, directionless Team Biden.

Can Kemi Badenoch lead UK’s Conservatives out of wilderness?

WHILE global attention has largely been fixated on Donald Trump's recent electoral success, another, quieter political shift unfolded across the Atlantic just days earlier within the UK's Conservative Party. In a tight and consequential race, Kemi Badenoch emerged as the party's new leader, securing 53,806 votes against her opponent Robert Jenrick's 41,388. This close contest, while less sensational on the world stage, marks a critical moment for Britain's political landscape.

Badenoch's election is groundbreaking; she's the first Black leader of a major UK political party, and while her ascent may seem like a milestone in representation, it also signals a shift to a more conservative stance for the party. Badenoch's victory symbolizes a hardening of the party's ideology, with her emphasis on cultural issues and a more traditionally conservative economic agenda likely to resonate with the Tory base. Kemi Badenoch's election underscores the Conservative Party's surprising edge in top-level diversity. While Labour often touts its progressive image, it is the Tories who have been exhibiting inclusivity while selecting its leadership team: Badenoch is their fourth female leader and second from a non-white background, following Rishi Sunak. Labour, meanwhile, has yet to appoint anyone but white men to its highest position.

Badenoch joins a line of female party leaders before her - Margaret Thatcher, Theresa May and Liz Truss - all of whom left indelible marks on British politics, for better or worse. Badenoch now steps into their shadow, carrying the burden of revitalizing a party at a crossroads, amid questions about what this rightward shift means for Britain's future in an increasingly polarized world. In her victory speech, Kemi Badenoch pledged a "renewal" of the Conservative Party, signaling it was "time to get down to business." Her words, simple yet charged, resonated with supporters ready for a fresh start. As the sixth Tory leader in under nine years, but with a fractured base and a need to rebuild trust, Badenoch's challenge is daunting. Leading the Tories from opposition, she faces Sir Keir Starmer's Labour government - united, decisive and ready to govern.

If she endures the turbulent political landscape until the next general election in 2029, Badenoch would

Imran Khalid

make history again - as the second leader from a minority background to contend for Britain's highest executive office. But is she truly the right fit to lead a party which, under its recent leadership, has been accused of sowing division and leaving the economy in disarray? Her predecessors' choices pushed the country out of the European Union, a move that many now view as a self-inflicted wound rather than a patriotic leap forward. Badenoch's leadership will test her ability to mend divisions within a party notorious for infighting since Brexit. The Conservatives, once the stable "party of government," have left a recent legacy of internal chaos and economic missteps. From advocating a break with the European Union to nearly unraveling the economy, the Conservative Party is exhibiting political exhaustion and disillusionment.

To succeed, Badenoch must manage a party splintered between factions. One wing remains firmly anchored to the hard-line right, the post-Brexit coalition that drove Britain's departure from the EU. The other, center-right Conservatives, are a side-lined group who, over decades, built the party's image as a reliable "party of government." Now, they find themselves in exile within their own ranks, yearning for a return to pragmatic politics over populist slogans. Can Badenoch bridge these divisions and restore a coherent, unified vision for the Tories? If she can pull it off, she may indeed bring the renewal she promises, not only to her party but also to Britain's polarized political landscape. Yet for all the skepticism, Badenoch represents something new: a voice from a minority background. Still, the real question is whether Badenoch can redefine what conservatism means in today's Britain.

She must balance the hard-line faction that drove Brexit with the centrist Tories who once built the party's reputation. Can she draw these oppositional forces together, or will she become another fleeting figure in the party's rapid succession? As she steps into this role, her impact could reshape not just the party, but Britain's course in the years ahead. Badenoch's leadership marks a turbulent era for Britain's Conservatives, battered after a historic collapse at the polls. Garnering less than 24 percent of the vote, they saw their parliamentary presence dwindle to a mere 121 seats, with voters abandoning them en masse for

Labour, the Liberal Democrats, and Nigel Farage's Reform UK. Thousands more Conservatives simply stayed home - a silent rejection of a party struggling with a divisive identity crisis. Over her 14-week campaign, debates raged around immigration, economic revival and trust - three themes that have haunted the Tories since Brexit.

The party's embrace of populism, anti-EU policies helped Boris Johnson clinch victory in 2019. But Johnson's own fall, followed by successive leadership failures, ultimately left the party's foundations in ruins. And yet, Badenoch's early decisions suggest not a retreat from the right, but a doubling down. Her appointment of staunch right-wingers like Chris Philp as shadow home secretary and Priti Patel as shadow foreign secretary signals an alignment with those who believe the party's defeat stemmed from not being conservative enough. Such a view, however, overlooks an inconvenient truth: The bulk of Tory losses came from voters moving toward Labour and the center. Badenoch's approach may galvanize the right, but it risks deepening divides within a party that once commanded a far broader appeal.

Her party's current challenge is daunting: holding a popular centrist administration accountable is a herculean task, made even harder given the Tories' past reliance on anti-migrant and anti-establishment populist rhetoric. This approach, while once politically expedient, now aligns the Conservatives with a troubling global trend where far-right populism has gained traction across many democracies. Supporters envision Badenoch as a game-changer who could steer the Conservatives back to power with a right-wing agenda. But history tempers their optimism.

Margaret Thatcher was the last leader to swing her party back to power in a single election cycle, a feat dating to 1979. More recently, after their crushing 1997 defeat, the Conservatives spent 13 years and cycled through four leaders before David Cameron's centrist shift finally resonated with voters.

Yet, Badenoch's camp may view recent waves of populism in Europe and the US - underscored by Trump's resurgence - as encouraging. This trend may lead them to believe a firm rightward path is the key to reclaiming power, without needing to compromise on centrist ideals. In an era of polarizing politics, they might see this as their best, if precarious, shot at revival.

Bracing for Trump tariffs, Xi makes diplomatic push at global summits

Eduardo Baptista & Lisandra Paraguassu

IN his first global meetings since Donald Trump was reelected to lead the US, Chinese President Xi Jinping went on a diplomatic offensive, hedging against expected new tariffs and preparing to exploit potential future rifts between Washington and its allies. At meeting after meeting, from APEC in Peru to G20 in Brazil over the last week, Xi sought to draw a contrast with Trump's "America First" message, presenting himself as a predictable defender of the multilateral global trade order. Summit organisers, diplomats and negotiators also describe a noticeable shift from previous summits in a more constructive posture by Chinese diplomats, who were less focused on their narrow interests and more involved in building a broader consensus.

The outreach is urgent for Beijing. While better prepared for another Trump White House - with many tech companies far less reliant on US imports - China is also more vulnerable after its economy was hit by a huge property crisis. Much of China's attention has focused on the Global South, with state news agency Xinhua praising the G20 for including the African Union as one of the members. The voice of the Global South needed to be "not merely heard but also translated into tangible influence," Xinhua said.

During his G20 speech on Monday, Xi reiterated China's position on "unilaterally opening our doors wider to the least developed countries," touting China's move to give all such countries "zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines."

By making such overtures, China wants to expand its leading position in parts of the developing world where the US has long lagged due to its inability to match the billion-dollar investments that China's state-led economy has marshalled.

"To position China as a defender of globalisation and a critic of protectionism, this calculated messaging comes at a time when many countries in the Global South fear the potential return of indiscriminate trade and tariff policies from the US, particularly under Trump's influence," said Sunny Cheung, associate fellow for China Studies at Jamestown Foundation, a think tank based in Washington DC. "Xi's remarks aim to present China as a more stable and sensible and most importantly a reciprocal partner in contrast to perceived US unpredictability." Trump has pledged to impose tariffs on Chinese imports in excess of 60%, and a Reuters poll of economists found they expected the US would impose tariffs of nearly 40%, potentially slicing growth in the world's second-biggest economy by up to 1 percentage point.

Former Chinese diplomats privately acknowledge that developing countries won't make up for that loss, but Xi has been betting heavily on the expansion of BRICS and mending fences with Asian neighbours, from India to Japan to Australia. European countries, also threatened by Trump with tariffs, sought to strike a conciliatory tone with Xi at the latest round of meetings. German chancellor Olaf Scholz said Berlin would work for a mediated solution to an EU-China

dispute over Chinese electric vehicles as fast as possible during his meeting Xi.

Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer struck an upbeat tone in the first meeting between the countries' two leaders since 2018, saying he would like to engage with Beijing on areas such as trade, the economy and climate, and have broader engagement on science, technology, health and education. Shen Dingli, a Shanghai-based international relations scholar, said European allies of the US would not "embrace" China if Trump's protectionist policies were aimed at them "but there would be more cooperation". Behind the scenes, diplomats said they also noted a change in China's behaviour at these multinational gatherings, with Beijing officials getting involved in a wider set of issues.

"China traditionally stayed much more discreet and defended only its most essential interests," according to a Brazilian diplomat. "They seem to be realising today that more engagement is required of them. It's not enough to build economic power, diplomacy is important for their own interests and the position they want to have in the world," he added. To be sure, some analysts say the Chinese outreach belies tensions between Beijing and other countries that were not present when Trump first took office, making his return unlikely to bring about a total reordering of the geopolitical landscape. Western countries have long accused China of unfair trade practices, saying its state support for manufacturers, coupled

with depressed domestic demand, is pushing excessive Chinese supply onto global markets.

China's outreach could also be a hard sell in its immediate neighbourhood, where its ships have repeatedly clashed with the Philippines and other neighbors over territorial claims in the South China Sea. Shi Yinong, a professor at Renmin University in Beijing, was skeptical of the notion that Trump's return would give China more leverage when dealing with the EU and other US allies, highlighting the proliferation of conflicts over Ukraine, Taiwan, and elsewhere. "China, of course, likes to improve relations with the EU and its major powers, but without much cost," said Shi. That meant it would not make major concessions on trade, human rights, and territorial disputes "with or without Trump, which in turn makes major and lasting rapprochement impossible," he added.

Shi also said that China's ability to invest and take advantage of costly Global South infrastructure projects was diminished due to its sputtering economy. And even among these like-minded countries there is underlying unease about China's growing clout, other experts say, pointing as an example to Brazil's move to not join Xi's signature Belt and Road Initiative. "Brazil has some concerns about the relationship with China on who is the dominant partner and a desire to not be a satellite and have a more equal, balanced trade relationship with more value added on the Brazilian side," said Robert Evan Ellis, a professor at the US Army War College.

Not so noble: Geopolitics of Nobel Peace Prize

Brahma Chellaney

THE Nobel Prize season ended last month when winners of the six different awards were announced for their outstanding accomplishments in fields ranging from medicine to literature. But over the years, no award has generated more controversy than the Nobel Peace Prize.

This year's Peace Prize to the Japanese atomic bomb survivors' group Nihon Hidankyo came as a surprise, signifying a welcome respite from the award's increasing politicization. The six prizes, each worth 10 million Swedish kronor (\$917,000), are named after Alfred Nobel, a wealthy Swedish industrialist who made his fortune selling cannons and munitions, including the explosives he invented - dynamite and gelignite. The prizes are handed out on Dec. 10, the anniversary of Nobel's 1896 death. While the Peace Prize winner is selected and honored in Norway, the other Nobel awardees are chosen by the Nobel Foundation in Stockholm, where the prizes are handed out.

Alfred Nobel's will stipulated that the Peace Prize should go to "the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies, and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses." But an examination of the 104 Peace Prizes awarded since 1901 shows that this prize has not developed in line with what Nobel laid down. As the official Peace Prize website acknowledges, the parameters for selecting a winner have expanded over the decades to include humanitarian work, democracy and human rights, climate and environmental change and other issues.

Worse still, the Peace Prize committee in Oslo has increasingly allowed geopolitical considerations to guide the selection of an awardee. In fact, the Nobel Peace Prize has become more about geopolitics than about peace. Consequently, the prize over the years has gone to a number of undeserving recipients. The prize runs the risk of losing its legitimacy. President Barack Obama had been in office for less than one year when the Norwegian Nobel Committee decided in 2009 to award him the Peace Prize for "his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples" and "his work for a world without nuclear weapons."

The stunning decision was met with criticism in the US, including from some Obama supporters. He received the prize not for his accomplishments but merely for succeeding President George W. Bush, whose invasion of Iraq on false pretenses made him deeply unpopular internationally. Far from being a peacemaker, Obama in office relied, like Bush, on hard power, even as he deplored the ethos of "might makes right." Obama waged serial military campaigns from Somalia and Yemen to Iraq and Syria. His 2011 US-led military campaign removing Libya's Moammar Gadhafi from power created an enduring failed state, while his effort to overthrow Syrian President Bashar Assad helped spawn the terrorist Islamic State organization.

And while championing "a nuclear-free world," Obama led an extensive modernization of the American nuclear arsenal, stoking a new arms race. Another Nobel

Prize recipient, Muhammad Yunus, today presides over rampant human rights abuses in Bangladesh. In August, the 84-year-old Yunus was installed as head of an interim regime by the country's powerful military, which, capitalizing on deadly violent protests, packed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina off to neighboring India before she could formally resign.

Yunus pioneered microcredit, or giving small loans to rural families, for which he and the Grameen Bank that he headed jointly received a Nobel Prize in 2006 - not in economics but for peace, after former President Bill Clinton lobbied for him. While presenting Yunus with the Peace Prize, the head of the Norwegian Nobel Committee said, "In 2002, Bill Clinton put it this way: 'Dr. Yunus is a man who long ago should have won the Nobel Prize and I'll keep saying that until they finally give it to him.' Now Clinton will no longer need to remind us." Underscoring the award's geopolitical agenda, the committee chairman hoped that "this peace prize will represent a possible approach to the Muslim part of the world" given the post-9/11 tendency to "demonize Islam." He added, "It is an important task for the Nobel Committee to try to narrow the gap between the West and Islam."

Bangladesh, with Yunus as the regime's nominal head, is today effectively under military-clerical rule and faces a growing risk of sliding into chaos. The country is wracked by Islamist attacks, including on religious and ethnic minorities; extrajudicial killings; and arbitrary arrests, with the

regime jailing thousands just last month. The Peace Prize has even gone to people who did more to scuttle peace than to promote it. One such awardee was Henry Kissinger, whose disastrous decisions while serving under President Richard Nixon resulted in immense death and destruction across vast regions, including the US carpet-bombing of Cambodia and Laos. North Vietnamese leader Le Duc Tho, who was jointly awarded the prize with Kissinger, declined his half of the spoils, as he did not want to share the award with a war hawk.

The Peace Prize Committee has often demonstrated its geopolitical activism by awarding the prize to Western-backed anti-regime activists in the developing world, from Aung San Suu Kyi to Liu Xiaobo, or by seeking to promote the bridging of regional divides. For example, the 2014 prize was given jointly to a Pakistani Muslim and an Indian Hindu. Against this background, the Peace Prize has become not only increasingly controversial but also, as one author put it, "the world's most reviled award." This year's uncontroversial award to the Japanese organization of survivors of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki may be an effort to restore international faith in the prize.

But for such an effort to succeed, the Peace Prize Committee must no longer give the award to make a geopolitical point. It should stick to Alfred Nobel's mandate that the prize be given for international peace and disarmament - not for human rights promotion, civil rights work, environmental protection, economic opportunities for the poor or antigovernment activism.

NOVEMBER'S election results were and so many rural Democrats who were working hard to help our communities. For context, there are 3,143 counties in America. More than 2,500 of them have fewer than 100,000 residents (Ohio State's stadium seats more people than that) and 48.7 percent of them have fewer than 25,000 people.

I live in a town in the rural county where I was born. I returned after being gone for 26 years and was stunned at my community's decline. In 2016, I ran as a Democrat in my rural district. I narrowly lost in the 2016 Trump landslide. Since then, I have connected with thousands of rural people across the country to better understand why people no longer trust either party and opt to vote for Trump Republicans, and what happened to the once dominant Democratic Party. Donald Trump doubled his rural vote advantage over his Democratic opponent from 15 percent in 2020 to 30 percent in 2024.

As people evaluate what happened to Democrats in this election, it is important to keep in mind this is not just about politics. Republican control of the county commission in my county brought about an end to mental health funding. All elections matter. As a rural Democrat I wanted to share a few insights from the field.

Lack of understanding: So many Democrats and progressives in politics write off rural Americans as "low information Trump voters." The truth is the values of hard work, freedom, fairness, and love of family, community and country abound here. Rural America was once a Democratic stronghold at every level of government,

Turesa Purcell

but over the past 30 years, both parties have abandoned us. Manufacturing and natural resource job losses, lack of infrastructure investment, gas prices over \$3.50 a gallon, skyrocketing food prices, and living in health care, child-care and food deserts have led to anger and frustration. The diseases of despair ravage our families and communities. Democratic neglect enabled Republicans to seize the opportunity to build political power and blame Democrats for all that has gone wrong.

Loss of balanced local news: Large swaths of rural America no longer have access to local news, while right-wing syndicates have bought many of the rural media outlets that remain. According to a report from Northwestern, rural counties are the hardest hit by this disturbing trend. "There are 204 counties with no local news outlet. Of the 3,143 counties in the US, more than half, or 1,766, have either no local news source or only one remaining outlet, typically a weekly newspaper. ... Since 2005, the US has lost 2,900 newspapers." The country is expected to "lose one-third of all its newspapers by the end of next year. There are about 6,000 newspapers remaining, the vast majority of which are weeklies."

Absence of competition in elections: Currently, Trump Republicans control many state and local offices in rural counties. According to recent research, up to 58 percent of offices go unchallenged, and in rural places that number is even higher. Democrats are afraid to put up a yard sign and it is very challenging to get people to run. The lack of representation is alarming. The absence of accountability allows these Trump Republican elected officials

to prove that government doesn't work by refusing to make critical investments that impact economic opportunity, infrastructure, public health, education, public safety, housing, election integrity and climate resilience. One bright spot was the reelection of Democrat Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez in Washington's 3rd District. That race was a rematch of the biggest upset in 2022. Gluesenkamp Perez's win provides an important lesson for the Democratic Party. She showed up and worked on what is most important to the people of her district. She listened to our concerns and acted on them. She worked across the aisle. She prioritized connecting with and getting things done for the people of her district. She has taken on the Democratic establishment. In a recent article she argued "her party needs to stop demonizing others and change the candidates it supports." And she has criticized her party for being too dismissive of working-class voters.

A healthy democracy relies on an informed electorate. It is going to take time to restore the institutions and relationships that will ensure that new lights shine to protect our democracy from the depths of darkness. Rural people are coming together to strengthen our communities, advance democratic values and make government work for all of us. We need to be understood, seen and heard to do our part for the greater good. The Democratic Party must commit itself over the long term to building sustainable power from the ground up, rebuilding democratic infrastructure, establishing and maintaining trusted information sources, and recognizing the need to fight for all people.

Nasir terms IDEAS-24 successful event

— 82 agreements worth billions of rupees signed

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Energy Syed Nasir Shah has termed the recently held International Defence Exhibition and Seminars (IDEAS-2024) a successful event that would prove to be fruitful for country's economic development.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, Nasir Shah said IDEAS-24 was pride for Pakistan and as many as 82 agreements worth billions of rupees were signed for purchase

and sale of defence, war and military equipment.

Shah said that IDEAS 2024 was an important milestone in the defence market for exhibition, sales, joint ventures, outsourcing and technical cooperation.

He said the IDEAS-2024 paved the way for international cooperation, new trade opportunities, and the development of local industry for the development of Pakistan's defense market.

Nasir Shah said that Defence Exhibition, IDEAS-2024 highlights the progress in Pakistan's defence and technical expertise with the best form.

Provincial minister said

that there were immense opportunities for investment and joint ventures in the country. The Pakistani economy is moving towards positive indicators, the minister added.

Pakistan is playing its unique role in establishing peace and fighting terrorism around the world with immense sacrifices, Syed Nasir Shah said.

He said that Pakistan was moving towards development, while a provincial government was trying to attack the capital city of Islamabad through mob by using government equipment and machinery.

He said that on the other hand, a non-political woman from the same party

wants to spoil Pakistan's relations with Saudi Arabia.

Shah said that terrorists had killed innocent passengers in Parachinar and the KP provincial government was preparing to attack Islamabad. He said that the entire leadership of the PTI is following the philosophy of its 'anarchist' founder.

He termed PTI as an Anarchist group which always try unsuccessfully to create chaos and uncertainty in the country.

Nasir Shah said such kind of chaos will not be tolerated in Pakistan and rioters should not be allowed to hold sit-ins and disrupt the law and order situation, Syed Nasir Shah added.

Gold prices up by Rs2,200/tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased further by Rs.1,857 to Rs.242,370 from Rs.240,513 and was sold at Rs.182,700 on Saturday against its sale at Rs. 280,500, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also went up by Rs.1,857 to Rs.242,370 from Rs.240,513 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold increased to Rs.222,172 from Rs. 220,443.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.3450 and Rs.2,957 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$22 to \$2,715 from \$2,693, the Association reported.

PBBC team meets PBIT management

LAHORE (APP): A delegation from Pakistan British Business Council (PBBC), UK, held a meeting with the top management of Punjab Board of Investment and Trade (PBIT).

The delegation, led by its Chairman John Tucknott, and Chief Executive Rashid Iqbal, held comprehensive discussions with PBIT Chairman Muntaha Ashraf and CEO Jalal Hassan, alongside other senior members of the PBIT management team.

The talks focused on enhancing bilateral trade, promoting skills development, and facilitating the transfer of technology between the two regions. Major collaboration opportunities were identified, particularly in the agribusiness sector for citrus exports, as well as in education and tourism.

PBIT Chairman Muntaha Ashraf assured the PBBC delegation of the PBIT's full support for their initiatives. He emphasized

that Punjab is committed and well-prepared to assist their investment projects, highlighting the province's openness to international collaboration.

Moreover, the Pakistan British Council extended an invitation to Punjab to participate in upcoming Expos in the UK. This invitation aims to showcase Punjab as a leading investment destination on the international stage, further solidifying the relationship between the two regions.

Dow ends at fresh record as weak eurozone data hits euro

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): The Dow rocketed to a fresh record Friday, extending a post-election US equity rally while the euro retreated against the dollar following weak eurozone data.

The blue-chip index piled on one percent to end the day at 44,296.51, narrowly overtaking a record set earlier this month.

Major American indices have been at or near record territory since the US election, with investors betting that President-elect Donald Trump's program of tax cuts and regulatory scale-back would more than offset the drag from expected tariff increases.

"The trading most of this week has been influenced by the growth agenda," said Jack Ablin, chief investment officer at Cresset Capital Management.

Market watchers have been cheered this week by a broadening of the rally beyond the tech names that

dominated earlier in the year.

The dollar also continued to strengthen, reflecting less certainty about additional Federal Reserve interest rate cuts and the US currency's status.

The euro was also battered by a closely watched survey showing contractions in November business activity in the eurozone.

The HCOB Flash Eurozone purchasing managers' index (PMI) published by S&P Global dropped to 48.1 compared to 50.0 in October, the most marked rate of contraction in 10 months. Any reading above 50 indicates growth, while a figure below 50 shows contraction.

"Things could hardly have turned out much worse," said Cyrus de la Rubia, chief economist at Hamburg Commercial Bank.

"The eurozone's manufacturing sector is sinking

deeper into recession, and now the services sector is starting to struggle after two months of marginal growth."

But as the euro fell both Paris and Frankfurt stocks managed to recover their losses and advance.

"The eurozone data has increased the chance of more rate cuts from the ECB next year," said Kathleen Brooks, research director at XTB, as well a cut of 50 basis points next month.

"Investors have been jolted into recalibrating interest rate expectations on the back of this bleak economic news," she added. London managed to gain 1.4 percent despite data showing that retail sales figures for October undershot forecasts, as the pound fell against the dollar.

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

start the country's stuttering economy.

However, Hong Kong and Shanghai sank on a sell-off in tech firms caused by weak earnings from firms including Temu-owner PDD Holdings and internet giant Baidu.

Bitcoin set a new record high above \$99,500 Friday, before easing back slightly.

The leading digital currency is expected to soon burst through \$100,000 as investors grow increasingly hopeful that Trump will pass measures to deregulate the crypto sector.

Bitcoin has soared more than 40 percent since the Republican's election victory this month and has more than doubled since the turn of the year.

The recent surge has also been "driven by news that Trump could set up an official crypto department that would sit in the heart of US government," said XTB's Brooks.

Banks review credit: Adani Group could find funding harder after US indictment

NEW YORK (Reuters): Gautam Adani's conglomerate could find it harder to get funding following a US arrest warrant for its billionaire founder, with some banks considering halting fresh credit to the Indian group due to an alleged \$265 million bribery scheme.

Some global banks are considering temporarily halting fresh credit to the Adani Group after the US indictment but maintaining existing loans, sources told Reuters.

Ratings agency S&P warned in a statement that the group will need regular access to equity and debt markets given its large growth plans, but it might find fewer takers.

"We believe domestic, as well as some international banks and bond market investors, look at Adani entities as a group, and could set group limits on their exposure," it said.

However, S&P added that the rated entities have "no immediate and lumpy" debt maturities.

Senior executives at two of Adani's global lenders said that they have had multiple calls within their respective banks to discuss exposure to the group and what the impact of the indictment would be on its financial position.

Research firm

CreditSights highlighted refinancing for the conglomerate's green energy business, which is at the centre of the allegations, as its biggest near-term concern.

Bonds issued by the Adani Group dropped sharply for a second day on Friday and although the shares of some Adani firms clawed back some of Thursday's losses, the overall market value of all 10 stocks has dropped by \$27.9 billion over two sessions. Adani Green Energy (ADNA.NS), opens new tab, which is at the centre of the US allegations, has lost nearly \$7 billion of its value.

US authorities have charged Adani and seven other people with agreeing to pay bribes to Indian government officials to obtain contracts that could yield \$2 billion of profit over 20 years as well as to develop India's largest solar power project.

Adani Group has said the accusations as well as those levelled by the US Securities and Exchange Commission in a parallel civil case are "baseless and denied" and that it will seek "all possible legal recourse".

Some analysts said the fallout was unlikely to be limited to the Adani group

of companies.

"India's renewable energy sector, a critical pillar for global climate goals, may face reduced international investment as a result of this controversy," said Nimish Maheshwari, an independent analyst who publishes on Smartkarma.

"Investors may demand greater transparency and due diligence, slowing down the pace of project financing."

The Securities and Exchange Board of India, the country's market regulator, is making preliminary checks to see if disclosures made by Adani entities were inadequate and if they breached local market regulations, a SEBI official told Reuters.

SEBI did not respond to a request for comment.

The regulator has completed a separate investigation into the group, but not yet issued orders, after Hindenburg Research in January 2023 alleged improper use of tax havens and stock manipulation, which the group has denied.

Falls in Adani dollar bond prices on Friday included a 2.5c drop on the dollar for 2029 Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone bonds. At 87.8c, they are down more than 5c over the two sessions.

Longer-dated maturities, have fallen around 5c in two days and trade just below 80c.

Adani Transmission and Adani Electricity Mumbai bond prices had similar declines.

Investors are also watching to see if more Adani deals could be scuttled after Kenya cancelled a procurement process worth nearly \$2 billion that had been widely expected to award control of the country's main airport to the group.

It also nixed a 30-year, \$736-million public-private partnership deal that an Adani Group firm signed with the energy ministry last month to construct power transmission lines.

Adani Green also cancelled a scheduled \$600 million US bond sale.

US prosecutors say Adani, his nephew Sagar Adani and others bribed Indian officials to gain business advantages in renewable energy projects in India that benefited Adani Green and a company called Azure Power, which was listed on the New York Stock Exchange until late 2023. They are also accused of making misleading statements to the public, including US investors, despite being made aware of the US investigation in 2023.



PESHAWAR: Vendor busy in filling LPG gas into a cylinder for a customers at Ashraf road.

IDEAS 2024: NADRA showcases biometric solutions

KARACHI (APP): National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has introduced its advanced biometric innovations during its maiden appearance at IDEAS 2024, the biennial defense exhibition currently underway in Karachi.

NADRA's display featured state-of-the-art biometrics registration and verification devices, which have been locally assembled through joint development efforts of NADRA Technologies Limited and National Radio and Telecom Corporation, said a press statement issued by

These include locally assembled all-in-one handheld biometric tablet, mobile enrollment kits, self-enrollment kiosks and a contactless iris camera.

These devices are designed to support modern national ID systems, enhance border control mechanisms, and streamline public service delivery, with a focus on usability, security, durability and affordability.

Industrial, commercial enclave to be built on 500-acre land: Qasim

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh government is planning to construct a new industrial enclave on 500 acres of land located next to the Hyderabad-Tando Muhammad Khan Road to serve as a valuable hub for industry and commerce for the industrialists and traders in Hyderabad as well as for neighboring cities. Additionally, it will offer appealing investment opportunities for foreign investors.

Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar, said this while presiding over a meeting of the Sindh Economic Zone Management Company (SEZMC) on Saturday. He said that this Industrial enclave will bring economic prosperity to Second tier cities and regions and also create thousands of employment opportunities in the province in line with the vision of the Pakistan People's Party.

During the briefing in the meeting, it was informed that a feasibility report and master plan of 500 acres of land at Ganju Takkar on Hyderabad-Tando Muhammad Khan Road near Hyderabad city for the proposed industrial enclave has been prepared and work is underway on other stages before placing the project before the cabinet.

The briefing said that the proposed industrial enclave will provide strong development opportunities for various industries in the province, including textile, hosiery, cement, pharmaceutical, automobile, renewable energy, paper, glass, plastic, leather, jewelry, silk, and engineering.

On this occasion, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar said that President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari are paying close attention to the pro-

motion of economic activities to stabilize the country's economy and increase employment opportunities for the youth.

Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar said that this industrial enclave on 500 acres will also prove to be an excellent business center for Sindh's agricultural economy, factories, cold storage, etc., and due to its proximity to the inter-provincial route of the railway and road, this industrial enclave will also have the potential to succeed.

On this occasion, Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar directed that all necessary steps be completed for the early establishment of the proposed industrial enclave.

The meeting was attended by the Chairman Planning and Development Board Sindh Najam Shah, Secretary Investment Sindh Raja Khurram Shahzad, Chief Executive Officer SEZMC Abdul Azim Aqli, and other directors of the company's board.

Court Notice

In the Court of Jawad Bin Dawood Civil Judge II, Alaga Qazi Buner at Daggar, Suit No. 187/1, Institution 28/9/ 2024. Date of hearing. 12/12/2024. Zareef Khan etc VS Secretary etc . Notice to No. 8.Amerzeb. 9.Jihanzeb. 10.Dilshad Alam sons of Muner Khan. 11.Zakirullah s/o Mst. Bakht Sultana resident of Sultanwas tehsel Gagra 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 12/12/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi Civil Judge I/ Alaga Qazi Buner at Daggar Buner, Suit No. 601/1, Institution 18/12/ 2023. Date of hearing. 19/12/2024. Waqar Alam Khan VS Mohmd Ayub. Notice to No. 12. Amer Rehman s/o Said Rehman resident of Balokhan tehsel Gadezai district Buner. 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 19/12/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In The Court Of Ms Dua Mehreen Civil Judge VI Kohat, Suit no. 84/1 Date of hearing. 04-12-2024. Titled:- Imtiaz Hussain(etc) Vs Faisal Raza(etc), Notice against:- (2)Murtaza Khan Son of Mushtaq Hussain R/o Ustaerzai Bala District Kohat Presently R/o (now in Abroad) (Defendant) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a civil suit against you Defendant in which date of hearing 04-12-2024 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you Defendant is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 04-12-2024 otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law order Issued on 11-11-2024 (Court of C.J VI Kohat)

Huawei aims 100,000 apps on Harmony OS

SHANGHAI (Reuters): China's Huawei, blacklisted by the US, said on Saturday it is targeting 100,000 applications for its Harmony operating system in coming months as it seeks widespread help to achieve self-reliance.

The tech giant has more than 15,000 applications based on Harmony that can meet consumers' basic needs, but the ecosystem requires more personalised and boutique apps. Huawei Chairman Xu Zhijun told a conference on Saturday.

"Based on our analysis, for the Harmony ecosystem to be mature in meeting consumer needs, 100,000 apps is the milestone, and that is the key objective over the next six to 12 months," Xu Zhijun said in a speech posted on the WeChat messaging app.

The ambitious app tar-

get highlights the urgency in developing home-grown technologies as China faces elevated tensions with the US in areas ranging from trade to technology as President-elect Donald Trump threatens to be tougher on China.

Huawei launched its operating system five years ago after US sanctions cut off support for Google's (GOOGL.O), opens new tab Android. The Shenzhen-based company, which sells products ranging from smartphones to laptops, later developed an open-source version of the Harmony system.

Due to the US sanctions, "Huawei has been forced to accelerate developing its own operating system," Xu said. Although much progress has been made, "for any operation system, no matter how advanced it is, it would be of no value if no

one uses it."

Xu expressed hope that developers could work hard to enrich app offerings and called on government agencies, state companies and social organisations to use Harmony as their operating system at work.

He asked consumers to be tolerant of the system's immaturity, saying, "The more people use it, the more quickly it will become mature."

Huawei unveiled Harmony in August 2019, three months after Washington placed it under trade restrictions over alleged security concerns. Huawei denies its equipment poses a risk.

"No way back leads to victory," Xu said. "Huawei will unwaveringly invest in developing the Harmony ecosystem, and strive to make the impossible possible."



In brief

Hawkins defeats O'Sullivan

YORK BARBICAN (Agencies): Eight-time UK champion Ronnie O'Sullivan was knocked out on the opening day of the 2024 event, losing 6-4 against world number 20 Barry Hawkins. O'Sullivan led 3-1 and 4-2 at the York Barbican before Hawkins, who had only won two of the pair's previous 20 meetings, played some superb snooker to complete a shock win. Top seed O'Sullivan started well as he recorded century breaks of 128 and 114 and won three of the opening four frames in a packed arena. Hawkins took the first frame after the mid-session interval, with O'Sullivan then showing his frustration as he hit the table with his first following a missed red into the middle pocket. O'Sullivan then just had to sit and watch as Hawkins scored more than 290 unanswered points and won four frames in a row on his way to clinching a memorable victory. Hawkins led 60-0 in the 10th frame but O'Sullivan got one last chance, although he could not fight back and save the match. "Barry played a good match and deserved his win, so I have to give all the credit to him," said O'Sullivan. "He played well, was solid and took his chances. I'm just enjoying playing, that's the important thing. I try to not look back on it and on to whatever the next event is."

3 arrested in Spain for racist abuse

MADRID (AFP): Three football fans have been arrested in Spain over the racist abuse of Barcelona players Lamine Yamal and Alejandro Balde during last month's Clasico against Real Madrid, Spanish police said Saturday. The two adults and a minor are accused of having "made xenophobic statements that harmed the dignity and moral integrity of the two footballers" during the match which Barcelona won 4-0 in Madrid, police said. The trio were identified using mobile phone and television footage. Videos emerged on social media after the game of racial abuse aimed at the Barcelona players, with 17-year-old Spain star Yamal targeted during a goal celebration after becoming the youngest Clasico scorer. Spanish football is struggling to combat racism in stadiums across the country. Real Madrid striker Vinicius Junior has become a figurehead in the fight against racism and has been targeted on numerous occasions since arriving in Spain in 2018. The Brazilian winger earned worldwide support in May 2023 when he squared off with Valencia supporters after suffering abuse at their Mestalla stadium. In June three Valencia supporters were sentenced to eight months in prison as a result. In January 2023, an effigy in a Vinicius shirt was found hanging from a bridge near the club's training ground alongside a banner saying: "Madrid hates Real."

Kane hits back after England criticism

MUNICH (AFP): Bayern Munich striker Harry Kane hit back at criticism levelled at him, saying he would do his "talking on the pitch" after becoming the fastest to 50 goals in Bundesliga history on Friday. Kane scored a second-half hat-trick in a 3-0 home win over Augsburg which sent Bayern Munich eight points clear on Friday, bringing up his Bundesliga half-century in 43 games. The England captain beat the previous record set by Manchester City's Erling Haaland in 2021, then at Borussia Dortmund, who reached his half century in 50 games.

Saka stars as Arsenal beat Forest to end winless run

LONDON (Agencies): Arsenal got their title challenge back on track by beating Nottingham Forest to secure a first win in five Premier League matches. The Gunners' form has dipped in recent weeks amid a tough fixture schedule and a number of injuries, which meant Mikel Arteta's side were nine points behind leaders Liverpool before kick-off on Saturday. Arsenal dominated from the outset at Emirates Stadium and Bukayo Saka gave them the lead after 15 minutes, exchanging passes with Martin Odegaard before beating two defenders and slamming a strike into the top corner. Thomas Partey, who came on as a half-time substitute, doubled the hosts' lead when he curled in from 20 yards, before youngster Ethan Nwaneri added a third

late on to secure the win. Forest have been the surprise package of the season so far and came into this match with the same number of points (19) as the Gunners. However, they struggled to get a foothold in the game and failed to muster a shot on target - with tame headers from Ryan Yates and Nicolas Dominguez their best opportunities. Arsenal defender Jurrien Timber thought he had put the hosts in front when he tapped in from close range before Saka's opener, but Mikel Merino was offside in the build-up. This match was Arteta's 250th in charge of Arsenal in all competitions - and he will hope victory sparks a run of form that will help his side close the gap on their rivals at the top. Much-changed Arsenal seal much-needed win

Arteta shocked many with his team selection as he made five changes to the team that drew with Chelsea in the Gunners' last league game. However, his side's display proved he got those calls right - and managed to leave key players Declan Rice, Kai Havertz and Gabriel Martinelli on the bench before the Champions League match with Sporting next week. Odegaard was named in the starting XI for the second time in a row after his lengthy injury lay-off and the captain showed supporters exactly what they missed in his absence. The Norway playmaker was the hosts' main creative threat - constantly looking to feed the ball to Saka - and picked up his second assist in as many matches when combining with the England winger for the opener.

Pakistan and Zimbabwe ODI series begins on Sunday

BULAWAYO (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan and Zimbabwe will lock horns in a three-match ODI series followed by as many T20Is at the Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo from 24 November to 5 December. This will be Pakistan's second ODI series this month after they beat Australia 2-1 earlier in November in their own backyard. Former fast bowler and member National Men's Selection Committee, Aqib Javed has been appointed the interim white-ball head coach of the Pakistan team until the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 at home. The ODI series against Zimbabwe will be his first assignment after he joined the team on Friday. Pakistan's ODI squad, led by Mohammad Rizwan, reached Zimbabwe on Wednesday and had three extensive practice sessions in the lead up to the ODI series. In the 15-member squad Arafat Minhass, Babar Azam, Naseem Shah and Shaheen Shah Afridi have been replaced with uncapped duo of Abrar Ahmed and Ahmed Daniyal along with pacer Shah Nawaz Dahani and Tayyab Tahir. Pakistan and Zimbabwe last faced each other in the

50-over format in November 2020 in Rawalpindi where Pakistan beat the visitors 2-1. Pakistan, on their last visit to Zimbabwe whitewashed the Chevrans in a five-match ODI series in July 2018. Mohammad Rizwan, Pakistan's ODI captain: "The ODI series against Zimbabwe is equally important for us as we aim to test out our bench strength and plan towards the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy 2025 at home. With the help of the Almighty, we aim to keep the winning momentum from our last ODI series going. "With the trio of our main players resting up after the Australia series, it will be exciting to see other players putting their hands up and helping the team at various times during the 50-over contests. "Having played against the home team various times, we do expect them to put up challenges for us during the three ODIs but crucially this series will also test out temperament in terms of backing up a historic win in Australia." Pakistan ODI squad: Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Ahmed Daniyal, Faisal Akram, Haris Rauf,

Haseebullah, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Hasnain, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Salman Ali Agha (vice-captain), Shah Nawaz Dahani, Saim Ayub, and Tayyab Tahir. Zimbabwe ODI squad: Craig Ervine (captain), Brian Bennett, Blessing Muzarabani, Brandon Mavuta, Clive Madande, Dion Myers, Faraz Akram, Joylord Gumbie, Richard Ngarava, Sean Williams, Sikandar Raza, Tadiwanashe Marumani, Tashinga Musekiwa, Tinotenda Maposa and Trevor Gwandu. Schedule of matches: (All matches to be played at the Queens Sports Club, Bulawayo) 24 Nov - 1st ODI vs Pakistan (12.30pm Pakistan time start) 26 Nov - 2nd ODI vs Zimbabwe (12.30pm Pakistan time start) 28 Nov - 3rd ODI vs Zimbabwe (12.30pm Pakistan time start) 1 Dec - 1st T20I vs Zimbabwe (4pm Pakistan time start) 3 Dec - 2nd T20I vs Zimbabwe (4pm Pakistan time start) 5 Dec - 3rd T20I vs Zimbabwe (4pm Pakistan time start).

Antetokounmpo stars as Bucks win again in NBA Cup



LAS VEGAS (Agencies): Giannis Antetokounmpo recorded his second triple-double of the season as the Milwaukee Bucks led wire-to-wire to beat the visiting Indiana Pacers. The NBA's two-time Most Valuable Player claimed 37 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists as the Bucks won 129-117 on Friday to improve to a 2-0 record in the NBA Cup. Damian Lillard added 24 points and 13 assists for his third straight double-double, and the result means Milwaukee have won five of their last six since opening the season with a 2-8 record. They had six players in double figures for points, with Antetokounmpo, 29, recording his 47th career triple-double. Jaylen Brown had 31 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Boston Celtics to a 108-96 win at the stubborn Washington Wizards. Jayson Tatum and Jrue Holiday added 16 points each for last season's NBA champions, who have won three straight overall and are 2-1 in the NBA Cup. James Harden had 22 points and nine assists as the Los Angeles Clippers extended their winning streak to four games with a 104-88 victory against the visiting Sacramento Kings. The Clippers were without leading scorer Norman Powell because of a hamstring strain and are now 1-1 in the in-season tournament, which concludes next game with the semi-finals and championship game being played in Las Vegas. Last season's MVP Nikola Jokic returned for the Denver Nuggets after missing three games for the birth of his second child and had a triple-double of 33 points, 17 rebounds and 10 assists. However, that was not enough to stop the Nuggets losing 123-120 at home to the Dallas Mavericks, for whom Naji Marshall scored a career-high 26 points in the absence of Luka Doncic, who will miss at least four games because of a wrist injury. Jared McCain declared to the crowd that he is "the rookie of the year" after scoring a three-pointer in the Philadelphia 76ers' 113-98 win over the visiting Brooklyn Nets. The 20-year-old, who was the 16th overall draft pick in June, scored 30 points as the Sixers halted a five-game losing streak, despite playing without Joel Embiid and Paul George.

Shiffrin extends World Cup record with 99th win

AUSTRIA (Agencies): Mikaela Shiffrin won a record-extending 99th World Cup race with victory in the women's slalom in Austria. Her triumph on Saturday gives the 29-year-old American the chance to reach a century of wins in front of a home crowd next weekend. She is scheduled to race in the giant slalom at the Vermont resort of Killington on 30 November, with the slalom the next day. "I guess there is a bit of pressure around it, but I try to ignore that," said Shiffrin about potentially reaching the milestone in the US. "If it happens, it's wonderful, if it doesn't happen it's kind of nothing to cry about in the grand scheme, but I hope to have a really good performance in front of the home crowd." Shiffrin put in a typically commanding display in Gurgl, holding off two young pretenders to win in a combined time of one minute 40.22 seconds. She held a slender advantage of one-hundredth of a second from the first run, but extended that to 0.55 secs in the second, beating Albanian teenager Lara Coltrui into second place, with Switzerland's Camille Rast third. It was a first World Cup podium for both Coltrui, 18, and Rast, 25. Shiffrin said she was "really nervous" before her final run, but held it together to claim her 62nd World Cup win in the discipline, maintaining her 100% start to the slalom season after winning the opener in Finland last weekend.

Murray to coach Djokovic at Australian Open

SYDNEY (Agencies): Andy Murray will coach his long-time former rival Novak Djokovic at the Australian Open in 2025. Britain's three-time Grand Slam champion Murray retired from tennis in August after a 19-year career. Former world number one Murray said he was "looking forward to spending time on the same side of the net as Novak for a change". The pair will work together in the off-season and in the build-up to the Australian Open, which takes place 12-26 January. This will be Murray's first coaching role since retiring from playing. Djokovic, a 24-time Grand Slam champion, has won the Australian Open a record 10 times and beat Murray in four finals in Melbourne. The Serb posted a video on X of clips of the two, jokingly titled: "He never liked retirement anyway." "We played each other since we were boys, 25 years of being rivals, of



pushing each other beyond our limits," Djokovic said. "We had some of the most epic battles in our sport. I thought our story may be over, - turns out it has one final chapter. "It's time for one of my toughest opponents to step into my corner." Djokovic is level with Margaret Court for the most major singles titles by any player. It would be fitting for him to overtake the Australian legend in Melbourne, where he has enjoyed huge success over the years, but he had a dif-

ficult 2024 by his high standards. Djokovic did not win a major title for the first time since 2017, beaten in the Australian Open semi-finals by world number one Jannik Sinner before losing to Carlos Alcaraz in the Wimbledon final. He did, however, clinch a long-awaited Olympic gold in Paris - something he described as his "greatest achievement". Murray and Djokovic have maintained a good friendship throughout their years on tour, having been born just weeks apart and

growing up as junior rivals. Djokovic leads the head-to-head 25-11 but Murray claimed memorable victories over him to win the US Open in 2012 and Wimbledon a year later. "I'm going to be joining Novak's team in the off-season, helping him to prepare for the Australian Open," Murray said. "I'm really excited for it and looking forward to spending time on the same side of the net as Novak for a change, helping him to achieve his goals." Djokovic made changes to his team this year, including parting ways with long-time coach Goran Ivanisevic. The Olympic medal was the only title he won in 2024 and he ended his season early after sustaining an unspecified injury. It is the first season since 2005 in which he has not won an ATP event, and only the fourth since 2008 in which he has not won one of the four Grand Slam titles.

Jaiswal slams unbeaten 90 as India seize control against Australia

PERTH (AFP): Yashasvi Jaiswal hit a composed unbeaten 90 and KL Rahul a stylish 62 Saturday as India built an ominous 218-run lead over Australia to take a stranglehold on the opening Test in Perth. A determined and gritty effort by both men against a world-class attack put the visitors in the driving seat as they look to draw first blood in the five-match series. Jaiswal faced 193 balls while Rahul fended off 153 to steer India to 172 without loss at the close on day two. India have won their last two Border-Gavaskar trophy series in Australia but came into the Perth Stadium clash after a devastating 3-0 home loss to New Zealand. After making a miserly 150 on a lively pitch in their first innings, the pressure was again on. But their response proved admirable. They took a 46-run advantage into the second innings after dismissing the hosts for a meagre 104 at lunch. Dynamic skipper Jasprit Bumrah blitzed 5-30 and Harshit Rana grabbed 3-48. "When Bumrah took wickets I was also desperate to do well," said Rana, who is making his debut. "He sets the tone for us and I delivered." Young gun Jaiswal, just 22 and in his 15th Test, failed to score in his first knock and began tentatively before a boundary off Mitchell Starc settled him. Batting alongside the more experienced Rahul, who was playing in the absence of regular skipper Rohit Sharma, they were resolute against the new ball on a pitch more placid than the treacherous one that greeted the players on Friday. Both ran well between the wicket



and cracked anything loose to the boundary, playing their shots as their confidence grew. With the ball not moving nearly as much, Australia were in dire need of some inspiration, but it failed to come as the partnership flourished. Left-hander Jaiswal brought up his ninth Test half-century off 123 balls, slapping Nathan Lyon for a single. He had a let-off on 52 when attempting a drive off Starc, with the ball flying to Usman Khawaja at second slip, but he failed to take a difficult chance. The elegant Rahul also had a scare, surviving a run-out on 42. He regrouped to reach his 16th half-century in his 54th Test, taking one more ball than Jaiswal, and with those landmarks reached they began playing more freely. 'Problems to solve'

"I think the wicket has changed considerably," said Australia coach Andrew McDonald. "The seam and swing was down compared to yesterday, but KL and Jaiswal played extremely well. "We have some problems to solve ahead of us, there's no doubt," he added. "We're clearly well behind the game at this point. "But that's not to say that tomorrow can't change very quickly. Test cricket ebbs and flows." After an astonishing 17 wickets fell on a chaotic opening day, Australia resumed on 67-7 and put on 37 thanks to a dogged last wicket holdout. They reached three figures courtesy of Starc and Josh Hazlewood, with their 25-run stand the longest of the Australian innings. Bumrah was India's chief destroyer with his 11th five-wicket haul in Tests. Home hopes rested on Alex Carey as he began on 19, but after nudging two from Rana he came up against an irrepressible Bumrah. Coming round the wicket, the Indian captain made Carey play and he nicked to wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant. Lyon (5) did well to hang around for 16 fiery balls before gloving a short one from Rana to Rahul in the slips. That brought Hazlewood to the crease and it seemed only a matter of time before India were batting again. But he and Starc gamely stuck around, bringing up the 100 to huge cheers from the crowd. It was an intelligent innings by Starc, who doggedly faced 112 balls and protected Hazlewood to add crucial extra runs before holing out Rana to Pant on 26.

Berrettini gives Italy edge on Australia in Davis Cup semis



MÁLAGA (AFP): Matteo Berrettini helped defending Davis Cup champions Italy put one foot in the final with a 6-7 (6/8), 6-3, 7-5 win over Australia's Thanasi Kokkinakis on Saturday. World number one Jannik Sinner faces Alex de Minaur, whom he has beaten on all eight occasions they have played, in the second singles rubber aiming to drive home Italy's 1-0 lead in the tie. The winner will face Netherlands in Sunday's final after the Dutch ousted Germany 2-0 on Friday to reach the showpiece for the first time in 104 years of trying. Berrettini was superb in the doubles decider as Italy beat Argentina in the quarter-finals and captain Filippo Volandri rewarded him by selecting him for the opening clash in a repeat of last year's final. Kokkinakis emerged triumphant after an epic battle against Ben Shelton as Australia ousted record

32-time winners USA but fell short this time. Berrettini watched on as Italy won the Davis Cup for the first time in 47 years in 2023, not part of the squad but cheering from the sidelines as he recovered from an ankle injury. This year he has been able to play an important role in Italy's charge towards the final. "Thank you very much for the support, I'm so happy," said Berrettini. "After I lost the first set it wasn't easy to digest that, but when I'm fighting for my country with this crowd... I kept on fighting. "We have to take it step by step and we have the best player in the world (up next)." The Italian was in the ascendancy in the first set, forcing four break points which Kokkinakis was able to fend off. Berrettini opened up two more in the 11th game and took the first when the Australian sent a forehand wide to break for a 6-5

lead, but Kokkinakis saved a set point and hit back to force the tie-break. Against Shelton he emerged triumphant with a 16/14 tie-break win and this time the resilient Kokkinakis saved two more set points before Berrettini slapped a forehand into the net to fall behind. Buoyed, the Australian produced his first break point of the match but Berrettini held for a 2-1 advantage, followed by two holds to love each. The Italian converted his second break point in a long eighth game to take the lead and served it out to love to force a third set. Kokkinakis survived two break points in the first game and no others emerged in an even battle until the 11th game when he conceded two more. Berrettini capitalised on the first and served out the set with an ace to delight thousands of Italian supporters at the Martin Carpena arena.

Noor Zaman bags Int'l Squash C'ship 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. 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 players. 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

IRSA releases 96,500 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 96,500 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 50,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1503.25 feet and was 105.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 23,700 cusecs and 49,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1163.75 feet, which was 113.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 5,900 cusecs and 27,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 49,300, 48,000, 35,100 and 6,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 12,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Police nab seven drug dealers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested seven drug dealers and recovered more than five kilograms drugs from their possession on Saturday. According to a police spokesman, Sadiqabad Police held Umar and recovered 1.4 kg drugs from his possession. Similarly, Naseerabad Police nabbed Irfan and recovered 1.4 kg drugs from his custody. While, Ratta Amral Police recovered 560 grams of hashish from Shahzeb and 620 grams of hashish was also seized from Raheel. Additionally, Waris Khan Police recovered 530 grams of hashish from Imran. Following the operation, Westridge Police recovered 540 grams of hashish from Noman. During action, Gujjar Khan Police recovered 200 grams of hashish from Irshad. Police have registered separate cases and further investigation was in progress. Divisional SPs commended police teams for their swift action said that crackdown will be continued against drug dealers to eradicate the menace of drugs.

Jamiluddin Aali anniversary observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The eighth death anniversary of famous poet, writer and scholar Jamiluddin Aali was observed on Saturday. He was born into a family with a rich literary background in Delhi on January 20, 1925. After the partition, he migrated to Pakistan. Jamiluddin Aali composed several renowned patriotic songs, such as Jeevay Jeevay Pakistan, Hum Maain, Hum Behnain, Hum Baitiyan, and Mera Inam Pakistan. He authored numerous books and travelogues, including Aye Mere Dasht-e-Sukhan, La Hasil, Nai Kiran, and Duniya Mere Aagye. He was honoured with prestigious awards like the Hilal-e-Imtiaz and the pride of performance. He passed away due to a heart attack on November 23, 2015, in Karachi.

Cold, dry weather forecast

ISLAMABAD (INP): Cold and dry weather is forecast for Lahore and other parts of Punjab, according to Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) officials. They reported that continental air is dominating most regions of the country, with a shallow westerly wave expected to influence the upper areas. The forecast predicts predominantly cold and dry conditions across most of the country. However, smog and fog patches are likely to appear in the plains of Punjab and upper Sindh during the early morning and nighttime hours.

Danyal says PTI's political decline exposed before people

ISLAMABAD (APP): Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry, blasted PTI's political decline, saying Bushra Bibi's statement laid bare the party's internal chaos, where members are battling for control in a fractured leadership.

He emphasized that Pakistan's strong relations with Saudi Arabia remain unaffected, with recent

agreements serving as proof that such statements won't alter these vital ties. He condemned PTI for accusing the same countries from which they've accepted gifts, calling it a glaring example of their political bankruptcy. Reconciliation, he said, is Pakistan's strength—not a weakness—and protests must operate within the bounds of the Peaceful Assembly and Public

Order Act, 2024.

Barrister Chaudhry issued a stark warning: any attempt to disrupt Islamabad will be met with the same response as actions against anti-state elements.

Referring to the 9th May incidents, he vowed that PTI's new attempt to sabotage the Belarus President's visit would fail, just as their disruption of the SCO summit did.

He assured that full accountability for 9th May would follow, including blocking the IDs and passports of the responsible individuals. Despite billions spent, PTI's rule has left Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in ruins, with deteriorating infrastructure and lawlessness.

Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry urged the nation to reject PTI's divisive politics and work towards a united, progressive Pakistan.

Fatima criticizes Bushra Bibi's video remarks

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) leader of Balochistan, Fatima Khan Saturday vehemently denounced the scandalous video statement of PTI's Bushra Bibi against Saudi Arabia, labelling it utterly reprehensible, irresponsible and deeply regrettable.

In an exclusive interview with the PTV news channel, Fatima Khan criticised Bushra Bibi's appalling statement,

declaring it utterly unacceptable from someone who had once held the esteemed position of First Lady.

She excoriated Bushra Bibi for her blatant disregard for the sensitivities of Pakistan's fraternal relations with other countries, asserting that such reckless and immature remarks were an affront to the nation's dignity.

Fatima Khan emphasized that the bond

between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan is deep-rooted and unforgettable, expressing her gratitude for the Kingdom's unwavering support during times of crisis.

She highlighted that Saudi Arabia has consistently stood by Pakistan, providing steadfast solidarity and assistance, which has further strengthened the fraternal ties between the two nations.

Government announces drop in airfare for Hajj

ISLAMABAD (INP): The government of Pakistan has announced a massive drop in airfare for pilgrims performing Hajj 2025.

As per details, pilgrims enrolled in the federal government's Hajj program will benefit from financial relief of Rs 1.24 billion following the recent announcement of a relief package that reduces airfares by \$50 per individual.

This adjustment reduced Rs. 14,000 in ticket prices compared to the previous year, lowering the airfare for Hajj 2025 to Rs. 220,000, down from Rs. 234,000 per person last year.

This initiative represents the second consecutive year in which Hajj flight costs have been decreased for pilgrims.

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Saudi Airlines, and various private carriers have consented to this package.

Section 144 enforced in federal capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad authorities have enforced Section 144 across the federal capital to ensure law and order in the city, following the directives of the Islamabad High Court on Saturday.

Police officials have assured that all necessary measures will be taken to implement Section 144 effectively, a public relation officer told APP.

Citizens are urged to refrain from participating in any illegal activities, emphasizing the importance of adhering to the law for collective safety, he said.

Resources are being utilized to safeguard the lives, properties, and assets of residents, with police actively present to maintain law and order in the city, he added.

Authorities have warned that strict action will be taken against those found violating the law to uphold peace and security in Islamabad.

Police conducts flag march

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Police carried out a flag march on the orders of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani in a bid to ensure law and order.

The march was led by SP Security Nasir Khan, passed through key areas including Rawal Road, Murree Road, Mall Road, and Chohar Chowk and culminated at Police Lines Rawalpindi, informed police spokesman.

The prime objective for holding the flag march was to uphold the rule of law and create a sense of safety and security among citizens. Although, the security across Rawalpindi remains on high alert, with Section 144 in place, banning unauthorized gatherings and rallies.

Police officers and jawan have been deployed at all entry and exit points of the city to monitor movement and ensure strict compliance with the law.

City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani emphasized that any individuals disrupting peace or violating the law would face strict legal action. "The safety of citizens' lives and property is our top priority, and it will be ensured at all costs," he stated.



ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary on Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry addressing a press conference at PID media centre.

Wali alleges PTI for sabotaging relations with brotherly countries

ISLAMABAD (APP): Provincial spokesperson of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Ikhtiar Wali Khan on Saturday alleged Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for sabotaging relations with brotherly countries of Pakistan as Bushra Bibi, wife of the founder of PTI has delivered controversial remarks.

"PTI does not let any opportunity to defame Pakistan", Wali said adding that the whole world is acknowledging the efforts of Pakistan to improve the economy which was hard for PTI to digest.

Addressing a press conference, he claimed the entire province was in deep social and economic turmoil due to mismanagement. He asserted that the

KPK chief minister instead of focusing on resolving the public issues took his route towards Capital for releasing his party founder.

He criticized CM KPK for not taking an interest in resolving the KP's law and order situation. "Kurram and Parachinar are burning into fires and claimed the lives of more than a hundred innocent people and also resulted in monetary loss."

Similarly, he shifted his total focus on the upcoming protest as "orders have been issued to all deputy commissioners of the province to set up desks for PTI's social media team in their offices and provide them with transport, food and all facilities for the November 24 protest."

Wali said that previously teachers were threatened and suspended for not supporting the protest, now being blackmailed to join the protest for their jobs' restoration. He also maintained Afghan refugee camps were also being mobilized for the purpose.

While focusing on the health issue in KP, he noted, "Entire KP province is in the grips of dengue due to the lack of proper health facilities people there were forced to go to other provinces for the treatments of their beloved ones. He also focused.

The PML-N leader said that thousands of schools in KP are out of basic facilities for children.

Rana Afzal advises PTI to shun anarchy, work for country's betterment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan Saturday called on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to abandon its "destructive politics" and instead work collaboratively towards the betterment of Pakistan.

In an interview to a private news channel, he emphasized the importance of collective efforts for the country's welfare, rather than pursuing a path of chaos and disruption.

Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan stated that Imran Khan's party's public gatherings would only serve to harm the economy and disrupt the daily lives of ordinary people.

Imran Khan's leadership has been a subject of controversy, with many questioning his political vision and tactics, he criticized.

He criticized that Imran Khan's party is only interested in pursuing a politics of chaos and anarchy, which will ultimately lead to severe consequences.

Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan issued a stern warning that the government will not be intimidated or blackmailed by anyone and will take all necessary preventive measures to ensure the safety and security of both its citizens and the state.

He emphasized that the government is committed to maintaining law and order, adding, we will not hesitate to take decisive action against anyone who attempts to disrupt the peace or threaten national security.



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery in action for the construction of 9th Avenue F-9 underpass and flyover project. —APP Photo

IESCO notifies power shutdown programme

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

According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM. Islamabad Circle, Supermarket, Alipur, Highway, T&T, Zia Masjid, G-6, Filtration Plant, Islamabad Club, F-10/3, G-10/1, I-8/1, I-10/4, Atwar Bazaar, NPF, Shahpur, Pindi Point, Bareen, Upper Topa, Patriata, Pir Sohawa, Lohi Bhair Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Katarian, Holy Family, Bani, C-Block, Shaheed Muhammad Din, Fazahiya, Muslim Town, Dhok Hakmdad, Arya Mohalla, Major Masood, Sarafa Bazaar, Jinnah Road, Alamabad, Quaidabad, Bagh Sardaran, Trench Bhata, Medina Colony, Radio Pak, EME Complex, Jhangi, P&T Wini, Lakho Road, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Feeders,

Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Haider Road, Adamji Road, Bostan Khan Road, Swan Garden-I, Swan, National Park, Morga, Lalkarti, Adiala, Gulshan Fatima, Girja-I, Jhawara, Chakri, Sehla College, Kahuta City-II, Kallor City, New Chuah, Fazal Ahmed Shaheed, Ghazan Khan, Chowk Pindori, Jhatta Hathial, Bahr Kalyat, Nishan Haider, Mahuta, Hamid Jhangi, National Park, Qureshiabad, Ranial, Shahpur, Adiala, Dhok Noor, Major Riaz, Lalazar, Jhawara, Shah Jeevan, Quaid-e-Azam Colony, Dharmial-I, UC Lakhana, Gulshan Saeed, Cantt, Qasim Base Feeders, Attock Circle, Ghauri, Salargah, Ghazi Kohli, Kala Khan, Faisal Hill-I & II, Purmiana, Garhi Afghana, Lala Rukh, Ahmednagar, Islampura, Colonel Sher Khan, Hasan Abdal, Shafi Chauhan, Gulshan Sehat, D-18, D-17, Hazro, Qaziabad, Hattian, GBHP, Shamsabad, Maskinabad, Mari, Shadi Khan, Sarka, Dilawabad, Dardad, Noorpur, Murt, Padi, Kamrial, Galial, Gagan, Anjara, Pindi Ghep, City, Paswal, Sanghui, Pind

Pran Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Abbaspora, F-13 Garmala, Nogra, Shikrila, Puran, F-6 Mashin Mohalla, F-9 Chak Daulat, Hamlet, Gadari, Sohan, New Domeli, Chotala, Mumtaz Shaheed, Gujar Khan, Ward No-8, Ghori Dhamek, Khalia, Chhapar, Sharif, Baba Shaheed, Kantriyala, Kangar Thatti, Qaziyan Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Bahrpur, Line Park, Jamalwal, Manara, Islamia Chowk, Daulatala, Dhedral Rural, Khanpur, Chakral, Darya Jalap, Tuba, PD Khan, Sagarpur, Dulha, DS Bilawal, Dhok Ghazan, Dharabi, Dhular, Mughala, Bhadial, Patwali, Sarpak, Islamia Chowk Feeders, GSO Circle, from 09:00 AM to 04:00 PM, Exchange, I-10 Sector, Furnace, Sir Syed Street, PTN, United Steel, Ahmednagar, KSB, Islampura, Gadwal, I&2, Karnal Sher Khan, Lala Rukh, Hussainabad, Fazal Rubber & Steel, Mong City, Mong Pattan Sher Khan, Mong Kanchan Feeders, 132KV ACL Consumer Grid Station and surrounding areas.



ISLAMABAD: Students taking part in a fashion show titled "Elegance of Flare" held at FG Home economics college.

22 rockets explode in a house

BALKH (Ariana News): Balkh police said 22 rockets exploded in a residential house in the northern Afghan province. The incident occurred in Bist Pikal village in Chaharbulak district when a gas cylinder caught fire, Balkh police said in a statement. According to the statement, the ammunition was illegally stored in the house. The statement added that the incident did not cause any casualties but caused huge financial losses.

Mujahid praises initiatives

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, has commended Kabul Municipality for its active role in urban development and called on provincial mayors to replicate its efforts in transforming their respective cities. In a statement posted on his X account, Mawlawi Mujahid expressed: “We hope that provincial mayors will emulate the commitment of Kabul Municipality in advancing urban development in their areas.”

IOM reports drop in Afghan migration movements

KABUL (TOLONews): The International Organization for Migration (IOM) stated in a recent report that the return rate of Afghans to Afghanistan decreased by 3% in the past week compared to the previous week. According to the report, 76,558 people entered Afghanistan in the past week, while over 53,000 people left Afghanistan for other countries during the same period, showing an 8% decrease. The IOM added, “Both inflows and outflows decreased slightly compared to last week. The total number of inflows was 76,558 this week, representing a three percent decrease, while the total number of outflows was 53,056 movements, representing an eight percent decrease.”

Meanwhile, some activists in the field of migrant rights emphasize enhancing security, improving economic conditions, and signing agreements with neighboring countries to manage the migration crisis in Afghanistan. Ali Reza Karimi, a migrant rights activist, told TOLONews, “To better control the situation in Afghanistan, the migration crisis must be managed through economic improvement, strengthening security, and establishing international agreements and diplomacy with neighboring countries. This can impact stability in the region.”

Mohammad Khan Mohammadzai, another migrant rights activist, stated: “The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs must work to establish infrastructure within the country to reduce migration to other countries.”

Previously, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations reported that over 100,000 Afghan migrants had returned to the country in the past month. Over the past year, Pakistan and Iran have accelerated the expulsion of Afghan migrants. According to the UNHCR, the expulsion of Afghan migrants from Iran has increased by 18% compared to the previous year.

Minister of Industry visits trade market



KABUL (BNA): Alhaj Nooruddin Azizi, Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, visited the Afghanistan-Uzbekistan Joint Free Trade Market, accompanied by his team. During the visit, Minister Azizi engaged with the leadership of the joint market, located in the Afghan-Uzbek center, to discuss key issues requiring immediate attention from both nations. Minister Azizi highlighted the importance of enhancing trade cooperation between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. He emphasized that addressing the challenges faced by traders from both countries remains a top priority, assuring that their concerns would be swiftly addressed.

Over 300 wild birds rescued and released

HERAT (Khaama Press): Local officials of the interim government in Herat province have announced the rescue and release of 318 wild birds of various species collected from the Friday Market in Injil district. According to a statement, the birds were collected on Friday with the collaboration of experts from the Environmental Protection Department and the local police command in Injil district, Herat province. The statement detailed the species of rescued birds as follows: 250 geese, 26 mynas, 18 quails, 15 partridges, 3 falcons, and 6 other mynas. The head of Herat’s Environmental Protection Department emphasized the need to protect rare and endangered wildlife species. He urged the public to cooperate with the department in enforcing environmental laws. He warned that hunting, transporting, trafficking, or trading in wildlife is prohibited, and legal actions will be taken against violators. Previously, there have been reports of illegal hunting and trafficking of rare birds in various provinces across Afghanistan. The illegal hunting and trafficking of rare animals and birds, such as those rescued in Herat, pose a severe threat to Afghanistan’s biodiversity. Provinces like Badakhshan and Herat are particularly vulnerable due to the presence of endangered species, which are being targeted by hunters and smugglers. To preserve these species and protect the environment, authorities need to strengthen enforcement of conservation laws, raise public awareness, and promote sustainable practices.

Challenges exist for disabled women artisans in Bamyan



BAMYAN (TOLONews): Several women artisans with disabilities in the city of Bamyan, who are engaged in handicraft production, have expressed concerns about the lack of suitable workspaces and declining markets for their handmade products. These women say their meager income is not even enough to heat their booths. Fatima, one of these women, has been working in a small booth in one of Bamyan’s alleys for more than two years, producing handicrafts to support her six-member family. However, due to the lack of proper market access and sufficient workspace, she faces significant challenges. “I am the breadwinner of my household, with five daughters. The eldest is thirteen years old. In these conditions, providing food is very difficult,” said Fatima. Some of these women are calling on the caretaker government and aid organizations to assist them in marketing their handicraft products and providing them with appropriate workspaces. “My daughters sew these, and I bring their crafts here to sell. For two years, we’ve also set up an online page, and we distribute fabrics to other women who sew,” said Masoumeh, an artisan. “We lack many facilities. If we had some electrical tools and a better place to work, it would be much easier. The current location is very troublesome for us,” said Marzia, another artisan. However, the head of the Disabled Association announced plans to establish a dedicated center for women with disabilities soon. Sayed Abdul Raziq Danish, head of the Bamyan Disabled Association, said: “For those who are currently working and the others who are at home, we have planned a specific marketplace for them like an arts market where organizations can assist them through this platform.” According to statistics, over 5,000 people with disabilities are currently registered in Bamyan, of whom more than 1,500 are women with disabilities.

Decree issued by IEA Supreme Leader

KABUL (BNA): The esteemed Amir al-Mu’minin, the Supreme Leader of IEA has issued a decree mandating a change in the terminology used for Human Resources Departments across governmental entities. According to Decree No. (268/215), dated 30/4/1446, it has been instructed: “Henceforth, Human Resources Departments, Directorates, and Management Offices shall be referred to as the Departments, Directorates, and Management Offices of Personnel Affairs.”

Consequently, all official correspondence and documentation involving the respective departments must adopt this new terminology moving forward.

2024 marks deadliest year for aid workers

KABUL (TOLONews): The death toll of humanitarian workers in 2024 has become the “deadliest on record,” with 281 killed globally, the UN Humanitarian Affairs Office, OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Afghanistan), reported. According to OCHA, the “grim milestone” has surpassed previous records. OCHA has emphasized the necessity of protecting aid workers and added that threats against humanitarian personnel have been reported in regions such as Afghanistan, Gaza, Ukraine, South Sudan, and Yemen. Jens Laerke, spokesperson of OCHA, said: “Threats to aid workers extend beyond Gaza”, he noted, explaining that there are “high levels of violence, kidnappings, injuries, harassment, and arbitrary detention reported in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Sudan, Ukraine, and Yemen, among other countries.”

“Noting that with 2024 not yet over, the death toll has already surpassed last year’s record of 280 deaths,” he said. The violence against aid workers also reflects a broader pattern of civilian harm in conflict zones. According to this report, “The war in Gaza has driven the surge in casualties, with at least 333 humanitarian personnel killed since October 7, 2023. Most were staff members of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).”

According to the latest entry in the Aid Worker Security Database, 10 national staff were killed in Gaza this month alone.

Afghanistan, Iran discuss strengthening railway and trade cooperation



KABUL (BNA): The Deputy Minister for Railways of the Ministry of Public Works, Mawlawi Mohammad Ishaq Sahibzada, held productive meetings in Iran with the Governor of Mashhad and several Iranian and Afghan business representatives. These discussions took place at the Khorasan Razavi Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture. According to the Ministry’s media office, the meeting with the Governor of Mashhad focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation in railway transportation, increasing trade exchanges, and addressing logistical challenges. The Governor welcomed the initiative to expand collaborations and assured full support in areas such as customs facilitation and commissariat operations, reflecting Iran’s commitment to fostering regional economic ties. Furthermore, a joint session at the Khorasan Razavi Chamber of Commerce brought together Afghan and Iranian traders to discuss trade and transport opportunities, address existing challenges, and explore strategies to attract investments. Emphasis was placed on raising the volume of transit activities and strengthening the commercial linkages between the two nations. During these discussions, Mawlawi Sahibzada reiterated Afghanistan’s commitment to supporting business communities and stressed the importance of providing additional facilities to bolster trade and transport activities. In conclusion, both Afghan and Iranian officials highlighted the strategic importance of expanding their railway networks and establishing joint economic corridors. These initiatives are expected to significantly enhance trade connectivity and regional cooperation.

Uzbekistan-Afghanistan trade hits \$900m

KABUL (TOLONews): Uzbekistan’s state media has reported the country’s foreign trade volume, stating that in the first ten months of the current calendar year, Uzbekistan conducted trade with Afghanistan worth nearly \$900 million. According to the report, Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Afghanistan, France, and Kyrgyzstan were Uzbekistan’s key export partners during this period. During the mentioned timeframe, Uzbekistan exported goods worth \$855.9 million to Afghanistan and imported goods worth \$28.3 million from Afghanistan. “Uzbekistan is a very good partner for us in the region. We import most of our goods from this country, and our transit routes also heavily rely on it. There is no doubt that we mainly import food items like wheat and flour from there. Sometimes we also bring in fuel and, in general, most of our essential goods come from Uzbekistan,” said Khan Jan Alokozay, a member of the board of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, commenting on trade with Uzbekistan. The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation stated that Afghanistan currently has good transport relations with Uzbekistan, with up to 650 Afghan freight vehicles operating daily in various cities of Uzbekistan. “Currently, about 650 Afghan trucks export and import goods daily in various cities of Uzbekistan. Hundreds of Uzbek trucks also travel to Afghanistan, facilitating transit. This indicates significant improvements in this sector, which positively impacts trade and transit,” said Imamuddin Ahmadi, spokesperson for the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation. Some traders have called for more facilities in transport and commercial visas with Uzbekistan. “Our request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs leadership, which always supports traders and facilitates our work, is to ensure easier access to visas for all countries. We need visas to boost our exports and imports with other countries,” said Omid Haidari, a trader. Uzbekistan, a Central Asian country, conducts the most trade with Afghanistan. Recently, Uzbekistan signed a ten-year agreement with the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum to explore and extract gas from the “Tuti Madan” area in Jowzjan province, valued at nearly \$1 billion.

Plans underway to expand tourism sector

KABUL (BNA): The Deputy Minister of Information and Culture has announced efforts to expand the tourism sector across Afghanistan, emphasizing its importance during a coordination meeting with the Union of Tourism Companies. According to Bakhtar Agency, the meeting, chaired by Mawlawi Qudratullah Jamal, Deputy Minister for Tourism, Finance, and Administration at the Ministry of Information and Culture, was aimed at addressing challenges and creating facilities for tourism companies. Meanwhile, representatives of the Union of Tourism Companies shared their concerns and suggestions with ministry officials. Mawlawi Qudratullah Jamal reiterated the ministry’s commitment to promoting the tourism industry nationwide, ensuring its operations are standardized and digitized, and providing the necessary support to tourism companies. He also highlighted the significant role of tourism companies in attracting foreign tourists to Afghanistan, which is vital for the sector’s growth.

Minister attends exhibition



KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Najibullah Hayat Haqqani, Acting Minister of Communications and Information Technology, accompanied by his delegation, visited a technology exhibition in China showcasing a variety of technological advancements. According to a statement from the Ministry, Mawlawi Hayat Haqqani and his team, who attended the International Internet Conference, explored the exhibition on the third day of the event. The exhibition, which featured participation from ministers of several countries, provided insights into the latest technology, equipment, and tools. Representatives from the host country, China, presented detailed information on the showcased products. In his speech at the conference, the Acting Minister emphasized the critical role of the internet and technology in today’s world. He highlighted the importance of cooperation between developed and developing countries to ensure better access to technology and infrastructure. He also underlined the necessity for responsible use of artificial intelligence and called for efforts to alleviate the digital isolation faced by less developed nations. The International Internet Conference, held in Wuzhen, China, from November 19 to 22, 2024, displayed a wide range of technology-related advancements, focusing on the future of global connectivity.

Saffron harvest brings jobs to women

HERAT (TOLONews): With the start of the saffron harvest season, thousands of women in Herat have found temporary job opportunities. According to the Afghanistan Saffron Union, nearly 50,000 people, 95% of whom are women, are employed during this season. “Women perform 95% of the work on saffron because this plant requires precision and patience. Tasks such as separating the flowers and processing them are mostly done by women,” stated Mohammad Ibrahim Adel, head of the Afghanistan Saffron Union. “80% of the work, from picking to drying saffron, is carried out by women. Since it requires delicacy, women perform the work more precisely,” Abdul Shakoor Ahrari, a saffron farmer. Some women say that this job opportunity has helped them support their families. “I’ve been working here for five to six days. Whatever we earn, we take home for our children,” said Riza Gul, a resident of Herat. “I have five orphaned children. I work here every day to meet their needs,” said Nazanin, another resident of Herat. Officials stated that saffron flower processing is also almost entirely handled by women and girls. Many of these women and girls, who are deprived of education and regular employment, have found temporary work opportunities here. “Unemployment is very hard. When we come here, we talk to other girls and bring some income to our families,” said Elnaz, an employee at a saffron processing company. The saffron flower harvest season in Herat usually lasts 20 days to a month. However, saffron processing has provided extended work opportunities for women.



ISLAMABAD: Rangers personnel standing next to containers placed due to PTI protest.

Security forces kill three Khwarij terrorists in KP

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The security forces killed three Khwarij terrorists while three others injured in two separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

"An intelligence based operation was conducted by Security Forces in general area Bara, Khyber District. During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location, resultantly two Khwarij, Haqyar Afridi@ Khyberay and Gulla Jan, were sent to hell," said an Inter Services Public Relations news release.

Three each Khwarij terrorists killed, injured in 2 separate engagements in KPK: ISPRIn another incident, movement of group of khwarij, who were trying to infiltrate through Pakistan-Afghanistan border, was picked up by the security forces in South Waziristan District. Own troops effectively engaged and thwarted their attempt to infiltrate. Resultantly, one kharij was sent to hell, while three khwarij got injured, it further said.

"Pakistan has consistently been asking Interim Afghan Government to ensure effective border management on their side of the border. Interim

Afghan Government is expected to fulfil its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil by Khwarij for perpetuating acts of terrorism against Pakistan," the news release further said. Security Forces of Pakistan are determined and remain committed to secure its border and eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday paid tribute to the security forces for conducting successful operations near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border in South Waziristan and district Khyber.

The president and the prime minister, in separate statements, lauded the security forces for killing two Khawarij in Khyber, one in South Waziristan and arresting three others. President Zardari expressed his resolve to thwart any attempt of the terrorists to disrupt peace and security in Pakistan, reaffirming the commitment to continue operations until elimination of the menace of terrorism. Pakistan's cuisine

PM Shehbaz said the entire nation stood with the brave soldiers of the security forces in war against terrorism. He said the govern-

ment was committed to eliminate terrorism and Khawarij from the country.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi lauded the security forces for their successful operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Saturday, resulting in the elimination of three terrorists. In a statement issued on Thursday, the minister commended the swift and decisive actions of the security forces, which thwarted the nefarious plans of the militants. "We salute the security forces for bringing three extremist terrorists to a shameful end. Their prompt response has safeguarded the nation from potential harm," said Naqvi.

He further emphasized the nation's unwavering pride in its brave security personnel and reiterated the government's firm stance against terrorism. "We will not allow extremist terrorists to find refuge anywhere in Pakistan," he declared, adding, "With the support of the nation, we will continue to eradicate terrorism from its roots." The operations, conducted in a challenging environment, reflect the commitment of the security forces to ensuring peace and stability in the region.

Bushra Bibi to skip PTI's protest

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Bushra Bibi, the wife of PTI founder Imran Khan, will not participate in the much-important protest call scheduled in Islamabad tomorrow. It was confirmed by her spokesperson Mashal Yousafzai on Saturday. She said that the former first lady wouldn't participate in Nov 24 protest call of the party as she wasn't feeling well.

The sources said that Bushra Bibi was active in the party affairs since November 1 while also chairing several meetings in Peshawar. She also chaired meetings regarding the preparations of party's protest call in Islamabad for the release of Imran Khan. The sources said that the PTI founder has sent her a message to stay away from the political activities.

Earlier, Bushra Bibi faced legal troubles after the video statement controversy. Five cases have been filed against her under the Telegraph Act of 1885. A case was registered at the Jamal Khan Police Station, Dera Ghazi Khan on the complaint of a man named Ghulam Yaseen. The FIR stated that Bushra Bibi's statement on a private channel appeared to be a conspiracy aimed at damaging relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arab.

The complainant argued that her video statement was an affront to the sentiments of the Pakistani people and part of a deliberate plot, urging legal action against her. Additionally, another case has been registered against Bushra Bibi in Rajanpur under the same Telegraph Act of 1885, following a complaint filed by a person named Hakim at the Muhammad Pur Gamwala Police Station.

Furthermore, in the Layyah district, a case was registered under Section 129 of the Telegraph Act by Sohail Ashfaq at the City Police Station. Later, two more cases were instituted against Bushra Bibi in Gujranwala and Multan. It is important to note that in her statement, Bushra Bibi claimed that when Imran Khan walked barefoot in Madinah, former army chief Bajwa received calls saying, "Who are these religious extremists you are bringing?"

Sindh's stance on water issue clear: Murad

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said that not even a drop of province's water share will be given to anyone. Talking to media men in Karachi on Saturday, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said if anyone keeps an eye on Sindh's water share, PPP will be on the frontline to tackle it because Sindh's stance on the water issue is clear.

He said Benazir Bhutto Shaheed had staged a sit-in against Kalabagh Dam project. The Chief Minister said the water accord was not right but it should be implemented despite some are giving it the wrong impression. Murad Ali Shah said a meeting of CCI should be called and if necessary he will write a letter to Prime Minister.

Murad said the PPP will restore the students' unions and that is why they have also appointed an advisor. "Our position is clear that the project of six canals is not approved," Murad Ali Shah said. He said the Pakistan People's Party will never compromise on Sindh's water and earlier they had opposed the Kalabagh Dam even during the reign of Benazir Bhutto.

PTI protest: Mobile services' suspension likely

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: With the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) deciding to go ahead with its November 24 "do-or-die" protest, the government is likely to suspend mobile services across the country Sunday night, interior ministry sources told media on Saturday.

The development comes in the midst of strict security measures being taken by the incumbent government to tackle the former ruling party's protest. The development regarding mobile services' suspension comes after sources told media on Thursday that the government had decided to "partially" suspend in Islamabad and other areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

Meanwhile, all sections of motorways and the GT Road at key points have been closed in Punjab, the publication reported on Saturday. All key sections of GT Road including Muridke to Jhelum and Chenab River Bridge in Gujrat, have completely been blocked by placing containers on both sides.

Barriers have also been set up at critical points such as Sadhoke Check-post, Nandipur Check-post, Jhelum, Kamoke, Shahdara, Mandi Bahauddin, Narowal, Hafizabad, and Sheikhupura, causing massive traffic jams, and leaving commuters stranded for hours. Heavy police deployments, especially around the Chenab River bridges, exhibit seriousness of the situation.

"Motorway closed for 2 days at 6 different locations due to repair work [...] Motorway M1 from Islamabad to Peshawar, Motorway M2 from Lahore to Islamabad will be closed, Motorway M3 from Lahore to Abdul Hakeem, Motorway M4 from Pindi Bhatian to Multan will be closed. The Lahore-Sialkot Motorway M-11 was also closed for all types of traffic, the Islamabad-Dera Ismail Khan Motorway M-14 was closed from Hakla to York," read a notification.

Meanwhile, as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) prepares for its planned protest on November 24, authorities have implemented extensive security and transportation restrictions across major cities, causing significant disruption for residents and commuters.

In the capital city Islamabad, security measures were enforced early in the morning, with all major entry and exit points of the city being sealed. All the roads leading into the capital city were shut off, particularly those

from the neighboring cities of Rawalpindi and other surrounding regions. Container blockades have been set up along key thoroughfares like Iran Avenue and Margalla Road to prevent access to crucial parts of the city, including the Parliament House and the central business districts.

The Expressway, a major route connecting Islamabad with Rawalpindi, and Zero Point were also closed as authorities braced for the PTI protests. In a move to prevent any public transport from becoming part of the demonstration, the local administration ordered a complete suspension of the metro bus service for the day. The Metro Bus service, which typically operates between various points in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, including routes from the Secretariat to IJP Road, will remain completely closed. Additionally, bus terminals within Islamabad have been shut down, and all intercity transport operations, including services to Rawalpindi, were suspended. This has severely impacted those relying on public transport to travel to and from the capital city.

In Lahore, similar security measures have been implemented. The local administration has shut down key motorways leading out of the city, including those connecting Lahore to Islamabad and other cities. Specifically, the motorway routes from Lahore to Islamabad and from Lahore to Multan have been blocked. This includes sections of the M-3 and M-4 motorways, along with the M-11, which links Lahore to Sialkot.

One of the major choke points, the Babu Sabu Interchange, was also sealed off using containers and barriers, and a heavy police force was stationed at the location to maintain control. This step was taken to prevent any large gatherings or attempts to march into the city as part of the planned protest. Additionally, all bus terminals located along the blocked roads were also shut down, further complicating travel within the city and to other destinations.

The Lahore Ring Road, another key route connecting various parts of the city, was closed for traffic, intensifying the congestion in the city center. Commuters and businesses were left struggling as roads remained gridlocked for hours, with authorities urging people to avoid traveling unless absolutely necessary.

In response to the potential scale of the protests, the government has mobilised significant security forces. A total of 30,000 additional police officers have been dispatched from various provinces, including 19,000 from Punjab, 5,000 from Sindh, and 1,000 from Azad Kashmir. These reinforcements have been deployed to assist the local police in controlling crowds and ensuring law and order.

In addition to the police force, approximately 5,000 personnel from the Frontier Corps (FC) and Rangers have also been deployed to Islamabad. These paramilitary forces are expected to play a crucial role in managing any violent outbreaks or public disorder. The federal government has granted these forces powers under the Anti-Terrorism Act, allowing them to take direct action if necessary to ensure peace and stability in the capital.

Given the rising tensions, the federal government has issued a notification regarding the deployment of Rangers and Frontier Corps (FC) personnel in the capital. These forces will assist the local police in maintaining control and preventing any potential violence. The decision was made after the Islamabad Commissioner sent a formal request to the Ministry of Interior, outlining the need for additional security measures.

The presence of the Rangers and FC was a clear signal that the government is taking no chances regarding the PTI's protest, especially after previous demonstrations that escalated into violent confrontations. The use of paramilitary forces is expected to help prevent any breakdown in law and order, ensuring the safety of both protesters and ordinary citizens.

The extensive security measures have led to considerable inconvenience for the general public. Commuters who rely on public transportation, including buses and the metro service, are particularly affected by the shutdowns. The blockade of key roads in Lahore and Islamabad has also severely hindered business activities, with many shops and businesses either closing early or remaining closed for the entire day. Travelers from other cities, including Rawalpindi and Multan, have reported being stranded due to the closure of major motorways. This has led to a significant buildup of traffic on the remaining open roads, further exacerbating the already challenging situation.

KP's Rs 3.17b medicine procurement under fire

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has paid Rs. 3.172 billion to various pharmaceutical companies during 2023 and 2024 to ensure the supply of quality medicines across the province. According to the Directorate General of Health Services, medicines worth Rs. 948 million have been received at the central warehouse, while Rs. 2.224 billion worth of medicines have been distributed to various districts. All necessary documentation, including delivery challans, stock register copies, inspection reports, and confirmation letters, is on record.

The report further reveals that Rs. 970 million were paid as liabilities for

previous procurements. Additionally, drug testing laboratory reports have verified the quality and efficacy of the medicines supplied.

Records also indicate irregularities in the Medicine Coordination Committee (MCC) process since 2015, allegedly controlled by a specific group under the influence of the DG Drug and Deputy Secretary Drug. In 2023, when the responsibility shifted to a former DG Health, the group launched a smear campaign, accusing him of procurement irregularities amounting to Rs. 44 billion to tarnish his reputation.

Partial and biased inquiries against the former DG Health, led by Dr. Saleem and Asghar Ali,

were initiated without providing him an opportunity to present his defense. Notably, Asghar Ali, a non-civil servant with a pending case in the Supreme Court, prepared a one-sided report, which was forwarded to senior authorities. Despite the former DG raising concerns about the inquiry's partiality with the Chief Secretary, no action was taken. This inquiry is currently challenged in the Peshawar High Court.

Sources also reveal that a blacklisted company has been reintroduced into the MCC process, and the inquiry committee has selectively focused on the 2023-2024 procurement records, ignoring earlier years, raising further questions about transparency.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi, presiding over a meeting on jail reforms.

Immigrant rights groups brace for second Trump term

WASHINGTON: As Donald Trump prepares for his return to the White House on January 20, immigrant rights groups are bracing in anticipation of a crackdown promised by the president-elect and his allies.

With hardliners like Stephen Miller and Tom Homan selected for key positions related to immigration, humanitarian groups in both the United States and Mexico say they are determined to press forward with their work, but have no illusions about the challenges ahead. "I'm expecting it to be exponentially worse than the first term," Erika Pinheiro, director of the immigrant rights group Al Otro Lado, told Al Jazeera. "I think political persecution is going to be super-

charged," she added, saying she believes rights groups will face spurious legal challenges meant to take up time and resources.

Interviews, campaign speeches and policies floated by Trump and his advisers suggest an ambition to fundamentally reshape the US immigration landscape, with a blitz campaign of mass deportations as well as potential attacks on longstanding rights such as birthright citizenship. While rights groups say they are prepared to challenge such efforts, they also concede that a second Trump administration will be bolstered by a popular election victory and Republican majorities in Congress, along with experience gained from battles on immigration dur-

ing Trump's first term in office.

Several immigrant rights groups that spoke with Al Jazeera said that not all of Trump's plans for a second term are clear, but all agreed that one effort, in particular, would be front and centre come January: a campaign to round up and deport large numbers of undocumented people living in the United States. Advisers such as Miller, an architect of policies such as the 'Muslim Ban' and a 'zero-tolerance policy for criminal illegal entry' - which intentionally separated migrant parents from their children during Trump's first term - have suggested that the number of undocumented people could be in the millions. — Aljazeera

IMF okays third review of S Lanka's \$2.9b bailout

NEW YORK: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved the third review of Sri Lanka's \$2.9bn bailout but warned that the South Asian island nation's economy remains vulnerable. The global lender said on Saturday that it would release about \$333m, bringing total funding to \$1.3bn, to the crisis-hit nation. Signs of an economic recovery were emerging, it said.

Sri Lanka still needs to complete a \$12.5bn bondholder debt restructuring and a \$10bn debt rework with bilateral creditors including Japan, China and India to take the programme forward, the IMF said.

The IMF bailout secured in March last year helped stabilise economic conditions after the cash-strapped country plunged into its worst financial crisis in more than seven decades in 2022. Reporting from the capital, Colombo, Al Jazeera's Minelle Fernandez said the IMF seemed happy with the pace the government has been keeping and the economy "has stabilised from those dark days of 2022 with no money for fuel, food, medicine, energy".

Sri Lanka went to the IMF for a rescue package after defaulting on its \$46bn external debt in April 2022. The shortage of foreign exchange, which left the country unable to finance even the most essential imports of food and fuel, led to months of mass street protests and forced then-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to resign.

"Keeping things stable in order to shore up reserves, in order to make sure there's a stable supply of basic necessities, all of those things will be facilitated by this cash infusion that the Sri Lankan government gets," according to Fernandez.

Staying in line with tax revenue requirements and continuing reforms of state-owned enterprises will remain crucial to hitting a primary surplus target of 2.3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) next year, said IMF senior mission chief Peter Breuer, wrapping up a delegation visit in Colombo. — Aljazeera