

Flights called off, delayed
F.P. Report

KARACHI: More than a dozen international and domestic flights have been cancelled or delayed at Karachi Airport due to technical and operational reasons. According to flight schedule, Karachi to Dubai Emirates flight EK-609 has been cancelled while IranAir flight IR-813 from Karachi to Tehran was also suspended.



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RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif receiving President of Belarus, Ateksandr Lukashenko at PAF Nur Khan Air Base.

No return sans Imran's release: Bushra Bibi

PTI's KP convoy enters Islamabad

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The main convoy of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf led by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur crossed the limit of Islamabad.

Earlier, it was reported that main convoy from Peshawar, led by Bushra Bibi, wife of Imran Khan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, reached Hazro Interchange on Sunday night en route to Islamabad for protest. The convoy reached Hasanabdal via Attock. When the convoy entered Punjab, police fired tear gas shells at the Attock Bridge, Chhich Interchange and Ghazi Barotha Canal.

Latest news emerges that Bushra Bibi leads a convoy in a container whereas Gandapur and Omar Ayub are staying put in Haripur. Bushra Bibi said she would lead from the front and would not return without Imran Khan's release. Police also fired tear gas at the participants of the convoy coming from Haripur, led by Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub, at Attock Bridge. The participants set fire to the greenbelt around it and a vehicle parked on Ghazi Bridge.

Later, police also fired tear gas when the convoy reached Taxila checkpoint. But, police had to retreat due to the advance of the PTI workers. The PTI convoy led by Taimur Masood from Taxila also joined Omar Ayub's convoy at the checkpoint. Later, Gandapur and Bushra Bibi addressed the party workers and said the protest would continue till the release of Imran Khan.

Barrister Gohar meets Imran

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan on Monday declared the protest call "final" after meeting party's founder Imran Khan in Adiala Jail.

Barrister Gohar, along with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government spokesman Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, held an hour-and-a-half-long meeting with Imran Khan at Adiala Jail for consultation on the protest call in Islamabad. Later, speaking informally to a journalist while travelling in his car, Barrister Gohar said "it is a final call. It will not be called off." The journalist asked about negotiations [with government], to which he said "we will tell you about it soon. Yes, they are going on."

Earlier on Sunday, the district administration sealed major routes to Islamabad. Key roads leading to the capital were blocked with containers, including Srinagar Highway at Zero Point and Expressway near Khanna Pul. It may be recalled that police had earlier said that the road leading to Islamabad airport was open. But, later they denied access to the airport and Faizabad to Islamabad route was also cut off, leaving commuters stranded.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Waqas Akram denied the news of conflict between Gandapur and Bushra Bibi and confirmed that the former first lady was also part of the PTI protest convoy from Peshawar, and traveling by a separate vehicle. In a post on social media website X, he wrote that the convoy, led by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, had already set off towards Islamabad.

He added that Bushra Bibi, travelling alongside party workers, could not leave workers alone at this crucial moment. "She emphasised that if the PTI expected families to join

the workers in the protest, then Imran Khan's family would be the first to lead by example," said Akram. According to Akram, she expressed the confidence that under Imran Khan's leadership, the goals of the march would be successfully achieved.

Additional convoys from other regions were expected to join Gandapur in Swabi, after which the combined convoys had to head towards Islamabad. As the convoys moved toward the capital, security had been heightened in Islamabad in preparation for the protest. Educational institutions in Islamabad and Rawalpindi will remain closed today (Monday) due to protests organised by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

The decision to close the schools and universities was made in light of the current situation, and it applied to all educational institutions in the federal capital and Rawalpindi. According to a notification of the International Islamic University, Islamabad, the institution will remain closed on Monday.

(Continued on Back Page)

Belarus President arrives in Islamabad

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko on Monday arrived in Islamabad on his three-day official visit to Pakistan at the invitation of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

The Belarus President arrived at the Nur Khan Airbase, Rawalpindi where he was received by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif along with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Ishaq Dar, Minister for Interior, Senator Mohsin Naqvi, Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar, and other senior officials. Children dressed in traditional attire presented bouquets of flowers to the President of Belarus.

During his visit, President Lukashenko will hold extensive talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and discuss areas of bilateral cooperation and engagement. Moreover, several agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) will also be signed during the visit. Belarusian President's visit reflects the strong and growing partnership between Pakistan and Belarus.

Meanwhile PM Shehbaz Sharif in his post on X said Pakistan and Belarus enjoy strong fraternal relations and "we will work together to further strengthen these ties". "Delighted to welcome my dear friend Aleksandr Lukashenko, President of Republic of Belarus to Islamabad. Looking forward to our discussions during this important visit," he added.

Imran, Bushra Bibi, others booked

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Cases have been registered against former prime minister Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi, former president Dr Arif Alvi, and other PTI leaders over alleged violent protests on Nov 24.

According to sources, the first case was filed at the Taxila police station under anti-terrorism laws. The case named opposition leader Omar Ayub, KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Aleema Khan, Azam Swati, Taimoor Masood, Shehryar Riaz, and over 300 local leaders and workers.

The FIR stated that protesters damaged government motorcycles and vehicles, abducted and tortured a police driver, and then released him. It also claimed that Imran Khan instructed party leaders to launch a march on Islamabad from Adiala Jail. Case included charges of obstructing government work, violating Section 144, and damaging both public and private property, as well as blocking roads by gathering large crowds.

The Frontier Post

Turkiye man kills seven

ISTABUL (AFP): A 33-year-old Turkish man shot dead seven people in Istanbul, including his parents, his wife and his 10-year-old son, before taking his own life, the authorities reported on Monday. The man, who was found dead in his car shortly after the shooting, is also accused of wounding two other family members, one of them seriously, the Istanbul governor's office said in a statement.

Pak-Belarus trade ties strengthens with key agreements

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Belarus on Monday signed eight memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and key trade agreements, aimed at strengthening bilateral trade and economic ties. They were signed during the Pakistan-Belarus Business Forum.

Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Belarusian Minister for Energy Aleksei Kushnarenko, witnessed the signing of these documents between the two sides. The signed agreements include distribution agreement, five-year cooperation agreement between JCS Bellakt and Nutrifood & Pharmaceuticals and a Supply agreement for Cooperation between JSC Minsk Motor Plant and Shahzad Trade Links for product supply in 2025.

The Memorandum of Intentions also between JSC Belshina and Shahzad Trade Links for tire sales in the Pakistani market and veterinary drug supply. Contract agreement between JSC BelVitinipharm and Mustafa Brothers. The Logistics Cooperation MoU between RUE Beltamozhservice and the National Logistic Corporation and Pharmaceutical Cooperation MoU between RUE Belmedpreparaty and Bio Medical System for pharmacy registration and supply also signed.

Meanwhile on the occasion, metal Supply contract between JSC Belsvetmet and Raas International Trading for 2025 and agricultural machinery Cooperation MoU was also signed between JSC Tractor Works and Green Corporate Initiative. Addressing the forum, Jam Kamal Khan underscored the need for enhancing bilateral trade between Pakistan and Belarus through trade diversification, emphasizing the untapped potential in sectors such as food, pharma, textiles, logistics, and energy.

He highlighted that the current trade volume does not reflect the economic capabilities of the two coun-

tries. Prior to the forum, a productive sideline meeting between Jam Kamal Khan and Aleksei Kushnarenko set the tone for the day. During the meeting, the two ministers discussed avenues for bilateral cooperation and agreed to establish working groups for energy and industrial collaboration.

They also decided to participate in two upcoming events: the FoodAg on Processing conference in Lahore in February 2025 and the Russian Industrial Forum in Belarus in June 2025. Jam Kamal Khan extended a formal invitation to Kushnarenko to attend the FoodAg event.

Addressing the forum, Minister Aleksei Kushnarenko emphasized the strong demand for Belarusian products, such as agricultural machinery, industrial goods, and dairy products, in Pakistan. He noted a reciprocal interest in Pakistani light industrial goods and food products in Belarus.

"The existing cooperation potential allows us to set and achieve ambitious goals for advancing economic, trade, and humanitarian ties between our countries," Kushnarenko said. He expressed confidence in the forum fostering new joint ventures in trade, industrial production, agriculture, healthcare, and education. Jam Kamal Khan lauded the growing relationship between Pakistan and Belarus, citing the complementarity of their economies.

He emphasized the need to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to enable meaningful market access. "This forum reflects the shared commitment to advancing our trade and investment ties," he said. The minister also highlighted the longstanding diplomatic relationship between the two countries, including high-level visits and mutual participation in international forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Kamal acknowledged Belarusian tractors as a household name in Pakistan, symbolizing durability and strength. He called for expanding this cooperation to other sectors, including agricultural machinery and the

automotive industry. Furthermore, he highlighted Pakistan's potential as a trade and transit hub, given its large population and rich natural resources.

With the signing of these agreements and the discussions at the business forum, both sides expressed optimism about achieving new heights in bilateral trade and investment. The ministers reiterated their commitment to sustaining the momentum by exploring additional opportunities and overcoming existing challenges. This forum marks another step forward in the journey of strengthening Pak-Belarus ties, showcasing a mutual vision for economic growth and regional connectivity.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met his Belarusian counterpart Maxim Ryzhenkov here, wherein two sides underlined the importance of bilateral relations and reaffirmed their commitment to promote mutually beneficial cooperation.

In the meeting, the two foreign ministers discussed bilateral and regional issues and the agenda and the programme of the visit of President Lukashenko to Pakistan, who is scheduled to arrive here later in the day, according to a Foreign Office press release. The two sides expressed satisfaction over the momentum of bilateral exchanges and high-level visits between Pakistan and Belarus and expressed the hope that President Lukashenko's visit would further boost bilateral relations.

The ministers also discussed key regional and global developments, including the situation in the Middle East. They expressed their support for a peaceful resolution of conflicts and underlined the need for a coordinated approach to address the humanitarian situation in Gaza. The two sides emphasized the importance of enhanced cooperation in international and regional organizations to advance mutual interest and jointly address global challenges.

Nation rejected politics of 'chaos, anarchy': Tarar

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Monday called out the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf for pursuing the politics of "chaos and anarchy", citing its violent conspiracy of May 9 arson.

Talking to the media at the Nur Khan Airbase, the minister said the people of Pakistan wanted the politics of progress and welfare which is manifested by the people-friendly initiatives of the government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He said the national economy is taking off with the Pakistan Stock Exchange crossing the historical milestone of 100,000 points, and inflation plummeting to 6.9 per cent from 32 per cent, while foreign exchange reserves are swelling with a significant increase in exports, and also remittances that jumped to \$8.8 billion in the first quarter.

He said two major commodities including electricity and petrol are cheaper than previous years, while interest rate and KIBOR stood at 15 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively. "This shows the economy is progressing and attracting foreign investment," he added.

The minister said a high-level delegation from Belarus has already arrived in Pakistan the other day, while its President Alexander Lukashenko has just arrived in Islamabad. He said this is a historical visit for the bilateral relations of the two countries that enjoyed three decades of diplomatic ties. Tarar called the two countries' friendship and partnership "exemplary" while lauding the sentiments of the President for the people of Pakistan.

The visit of the President of a friendly country to Pakistan is welcoming development, he said, adding a number of business-to-business Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) would be signed during the visit to enhance the cooperation in multiple areas which would eventually benefit the masses.

He said the defence cooperation between Pakistan and Belarus is exemplary, while cooperation in other areas such as agriculture, agro processing, pharmaceutical, and textile will see an increase in the coming days. He said today Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar had welcomed the Foreign Minister of Belarus and both had discussed matters of mutual interest.

The minister said the current visit is the follow-up to a productive meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Alexander Lukashenko at the Astana during the SCO Summit. He said the Belarusian President had visited Pakistan during the tenure of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif who also visited Belarus on official visit. He said a warm welcome has been accorded to the President on behalf of the government and the people of Pakistan.

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PTI misleading youth: PPP

F.P. Report

GHALANAI: Provincial president PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Mohammad Ali Shah Bacha has said that PTI is misleading the youth in the name of change, which could not be brought out through chanting merely slogans. Addressing a public meeting a public meeting at Machni (Shahalam Salay) Tehsil Yakagund, district Mohmand, he further said that the PTI leadership is hatching conspiracy to weaken Pakhtuns and deprived them of development. However, he said PPP will foil all such conspiracies. Besides, the parliamentary leader of PPP in KP Assembly Ahmad Karim Kundi, Malik Tehmash Khan, Dr Janbaz Afridi, Kiramatullah Chagharmati, Barrister Ali Zeb, Janjirz Mohmand, Dr Alamzeb, Malik Amjad Khan, Fazal Hadi and others.

He said that in the name of the provision of justice, PTI has unleashed injustice on the country and misusing the provincial resources on staging rallies and public meetings to destabilize the country. The PPP stalwart said that federal government has released a huge amount of Rs.42 billion for the development of KP, but it paying no heed to the development and roads in the tribal district Mohmand are in dilapidated conditions.

He further said that another hefty amount of Rs.5 billion have been released from Mohmand Dam for the development of district, but not a single penny from it could be spent on the people of the district. The provincial chief PPP said that PTI during its last 11 years in power has pushed the province a century back. He said that PPP is the political parties of martyrs and has rendered unprecedented sacrifices for the country. He said that PPP during its government passed the 18th Constitutional Amendment to guarantee the provincial autonomy in true sense and given a consensus NFC Award to increase the resources of the provinces in the federal divisible pool.

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Cop martyred, 70 others hurt by Tehreek-e-Fasad: Azma

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Provincial Information Minister Azma Bokhari has condemned actions of "Tehreek-e-Fasad", accusing the group of martyring a police officer and severely injuring 70 other officers.

At a press conference at the DGPR, she said, "Bushra Bibi, this is not a jungle where you can act like a "Sultana Daku" to free your husband." Azma Bokhari said that Bushra Bibi was inciting Pashtuns to attack the state, leading armed mobs, and adding a religious veneer to their aggression with chants of "Allah-ho-Akbar". She criticized her for posing as a guardian of Islamic values while lacking even basic knowledge, such as properly reciting "Durood Sharif".

Azma Bokhari asserted that the PTI and its armed factions were seeking casualties to advance their disruptive political agenda. "Life continues as normal

across Punjab. Not even a bird has stirred here," she said and emphasized that commercial and social activities remain uninterrupted in the province.

Azma Bokhari condemned continued violence by "Tehreek-e-Fasad" on the second day of unrest, which included torching police vehicles and attacking officers. "These attacks led to martyrdom of officer Mubashir and severe injuries to 70 others, including constable Wajid, who was shot in the neck and legs. A Frontier Corps officer was also shot in the leg," she added and highlighted a tweet by a PTI-affiliated poet that mentioned the martyrdom of police officers and capture of seven others.

She alleged that Gandapur had requested 1,500 plain-clothes police officers, a tactic she described as provocative. Azma Bokhari remarked, "I do not believe the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would resort to violence or

harm anyone; this behavior is the sole characteristic of the Taliban and PTI."

She argued that PTI seeks to provoke the state into using force against them, while knowing the state would never do so. If even one of their members gets a scratch, they will create an uproar domestically and internationally, she stated. Expressing concern for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azma Bokhari lamented their suffering under such a leadership. She noted stark contrast between the crowds Gandapur attracts and lack of support for Bushra Bibi. She also criticized silence of leaders like Aleema Khan, who have disappeared from public view. She questioned why the children of these leaders such as Ibrahim, Qasim, Suleman, and Tyrian do not join the protests. When they face harm themselves, only then they and others will begin to remember basic rights, she remarked.



KARACHI: A view of labours busy in work on Karimabad Underpass. —INP Photo

CM Murad demands timeline for delayed city projects

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over a review meeting of three important projects of the city - Karimabad Underpass, Korangi Causeway Bridge and Malir Expressway directed the local government department to submit him a date completion plan.

“Why is this ordinate delay being faced in completing the projects when the allocated funds have been released well in time?” he questioned the local government department. He directed them to submit to him date wise completion plan for the three projects.

The meeting was held at CM House on Monday and was attended by Minister Local Govt Saeed Ghani, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, PSCM Agha Wasif,

Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi, Secretary Local Govt Khalid Hyder Shah, Projects PDs Niaz Soomro, Zulfiqar Abro, Member P&D Sikandar.

The Karimabad Underpass project has been initiated by the Sindh government through KDA.

During the briefing, the CM was told that the underpass is a Rs3.8 billion project. The length of the underpass is 1080 meters of which 300 meters have been completed. Out of 212 precast Griders, 151 have been completed and overall the physical progress of the project is 35 per cent.

The chief minister directed the local government department to provide a proper and effective drainage system to the underpass so that rainwater

may not accumulate in it.

To a question, CM Shah was told that a Roundabout in front of Meena Bazaar and Bazaar-e-Faisla was being developed to regulate the traffic movement. The chief minister directed Minister Local Government Saeed Ghani and Mayor Karachi to expedite the construction work, which was causing problems in the flow of traffic.

Briefing the CM about the construction of the Bridge at Korangi Causeway, it was disclosed that the project had been launched for Rs6.4 billion. The project is scheduled to be completed on 31 January 25, which may not be met. At this, the CM directed Minister Local Govt Saeed Ghani to personally monitor the progress of the

bridge so that it could be completed in time.

The CM was told that out of 400 Piles, 300 have been completed and out of 600 Girders 504 completed. The overall progress of the project is 30 per cent.

The CM was told that the Malir Expressway was a 38.889 km project from Jam Sadiq to Kathore Bridge. The construction of the first segment from Jam Sadiq Bridge to Shah Faisal will be completed by December 25, 2024. At this, the CM directed the local government department to reconstruct the road from Shah Faisal to Airport.

“I want you to submit detailed date-wise completion dates of all three projects and then I won’t tolerate any delay,” he said categorically.

CM, ADB official discuss development projects

LAHORE (APP): Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif met with Country Director for Pakistan Resident Mission of Asian Development Bank, Dr. Emma Xiaoqin Fan, to discuss ongoing development projects, strengthening of the economy, providing cooperation for improving basic infrastructure along with enhancing cooperation in agriculture, health, education, environmental cooperation and digital development.

Matters pertaining to the ‘Jalapur Irrigation Project’ and ‘Clean Energy’ came under discussion. Country Director Asian Development Bank Dr. Emma Xiaoqin Fan, appreciated steps being taken by the Punjab government for women empowerment and other public welfare initiatives.

The Chief Minister appreciated financial and technical support of Asian Development Bank in various projects of Punjab. She said, “ADB’s is playing a pivotal role in prosperity of the people and restoration of the national economy.”

She added, “The Punjab government is moving forward under a comprehensive plan to attain socio-economic development. Collaboration with the Asian Development Bank will further strengthen development objectives in Punjab.”

Dr. Emma Xiaoqin Fan said, “Asian Development Bank is keen to further expand its cooperation with Pakistan, especially Punjab. Punjab’s climate policy will prove to be beneficial for the environment and national economy.”

Govt committed to safeguarding women’s rights : CM : Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that the protection of women is a top priority for the Punjab government, which remains fully committed to safeguarding their rights and ensuring their well-being.

In her message on International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women being celebrated on Monday, the CM said the honor of mothers, sisters and daughters is a part of our social traditions and religious values. “Women are my red line, violence or cruelty against them

is absolutely not tolerable” she said.

The CM said that Islam gave orders to give women complete respect and rights, adding that the honor and respect of women, including daughters and sisters, is the Sunnah of our beloved Holy Prophet (PBUH). In the Holy Quran and Sunnah, it is not only forbidden to raise hand on women but also to be gentle towards them.

The chief minister said that those who commit violence against women are cowards and criminals and they will be dealt with an iron hand, adding that Punjab has the honor of establishing a virtual women’s police station for the first time. She said women in trouble can file complaints with the virtual police station. She underscored that women can get immediate police help in an emergency by pressing the panic button.

CM Maryam Nawaz said that the police helpline for women is also fully functional, adding that a violence-free, safe and equal society for women guarantees progress.

Punjab govt eases restrictions

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government announced relaxation in smog-related restrictions, allowing construction activities in the city and three other districts.

The new measures, which aim to balance air quality concerns with economic and developmental needs, were outlined in a notification issued by Dr Imran Hamid Sheikh, the Director General of Environment, here on Monday. Under the updated rules, construction work is now permitted in Lahore, Gujranwala, Multan and Faisalabad.

Brick kilns that use zig-zag technology will also be allowed to operate. Additionally, both public and private offices will now be allowed to function with 100% staff attendance.

The new guidelines also include changes to traffic regulations. Heavy vehicles will be allowed to enter the designated districts from Monday to Thursday but will face restrictions on Friday to Sunday during which they will be prohibited from entering. Other existing restrictions remain in place, including the mandatory closure of shops, markets and shopping malls by 8:00pm.

However, restaurants can continue offering both indoor and outdoor dining until 10:00pm. Furthermore, the notification specifies that barbecue activities will not be allowed unless equipped with proper hood systems.

Police continue checking at entry, exit points

LAHORE (APP): In an ongoing effort to maintain peace and security, Lahore Police has carried out extensive snap-checking and barricades at the city’s entry and exit points, effectively screening suspicious individuals and vehicles.

This was stated by the spokesman for Lahore Police in a statement issued today. He added that over 154,000 cars and other vehicles along with more than 865,000 motorcycles have been thoroughly checked this year.

The spokesman added that action has been taken

against 463 vehicles without proper documentation and over 16,000 motorcycles. During the checks, 82 motorcycles were found to be applied for registration, 8 were using non-standard number plates and 172 vehicles were impounded under Section 550 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana emphasized that strict checking of vehicles, motorcycles and suspicious individuals is being carried out at various checkpoints across the city, including both inter-

nal and external routes. He urged officers to closely monitor the performance of forces in the field and their crime control efforts.

He further instructed officers to remain vigilant, especially in high-risk areas, ensuring thorough checks and effective patrolling.

The CCPO also reminded police officers and staff to diligently perform their duties to protect citizens’ lives and property adding that all available resources are being utilized to maintain law and order in the city.

MD ESEF KP distributes free uniforms

FP Report

PESHAWAR : Khawaja Faheem Sajjad - MD (ESEF - KP) distributed free uniforms among students of community schools of District Malakand today as the uniforms were voluntarily managed and sponsored by ESEF and community elders and individual philanthropists. The gathering was participated by the officers from District Administration Malakand ,Community Elders and other respectables of the locality. The MD appreciated the inspirational gesture of the community and vol-

unteers of ESEF employees of District Malakand , he also distributed shields among best community teachers of the District as token of encouragement for their un-tiring efforts for promotion of Non-Formal Education and for enrolling " Out Of School Children ".The MD sensitized the community teachers , DPO and the community for further participation for covering the OOSC in District Malakand in his speech.

STEAM exhibition set for Nov 27

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Principal Government Degree College Konkhar Gadap Karachi Professor Sameera Younus Khan has said that STEAM Exhibition 2024, will be held on Wednesday ,27th November 2024 at Government Degree College Konkhar Gadap Karachi.

Director General of Colleges will be the chief guest and Regional Director of colleges Karachi, Professor Fakir Muhammad Lakho will be the guest of honour.

Giving details she said the event aims to promote science & technology, engineering, arts and mathematics among students, showcasing their innovative ideas and projects.

Minister welcomes US Sikh pilgrims

LAHORE (APP): A beautiful and memorable event was organised by the President of the American Punjabi Society, Gary Sikka Singh, at a private hotel in Lahore, with the special participation of Punjab’s Minister for Minorities Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora.

A group of 135 Sikh pilgrims, who had arrived from America to participate in the celebrations of Baba Guru Nanak’s birthday also attended the event.

Ramesh Singh Arora, welcoming the Sikh community to Pakistan, said, “We welcome our Sikh brothers to the holy land of Pakistan. Pakistan is the second home for Sikhs, and we invite Sikhs from all over the world to come here.

This year, a visa-free facility was provided for participants from 126 countries, including the US, the UK, and Canada, for the celebrations of Baba Guru Nanak’s birth anniversary,” adding that over 50,000 Sikh pilgrims from India and other countries participated in the celebrations. The minister also expressed gratitude for the beautification of Nankana Sahib and the excellent security arrangements, thanking the DG of PHA and the Home Secretary of Punjab for their efforts.

Revolutionary initiative launched to tackle air pollution

LAHORE (APP): Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb announced a groundbreaking initiative under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif’s leadership to combat air pollution in Punjab.

As part of this effort, 30 advanced air quality monitors are being installed across various cities in the province, with Lahore’s monitoring capacity increasing to eight units.

The new monitors in Lahore are strategically placed at THQ Kahna, Jiya Bhagga Police Station, Shahdara Teaching Hospital, Punjab University, and Wildlife Park, Raiwind. Other cities benefiting from this initiative include Rawalpindi (3 monitors),

Faisalabad, Sheikhupura, and Sialkot (1 monitor each), as well as Multan, Gujranwala, and Bahawalpur (2 monitors each). Sargodha (2 monitors) and Dera Ghazi Khan (1 monitor) are expected to activate their systems by the end of this month. These devices are linked to the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) central control room for real-time monitoring.

The Senior Minister highlighted that the collected air quality data will be integrated with the global Air Quality Index (AQI) system, providing accurate and reliable information to the public and researchers. This system is designed to facilitate timely actions against

pollution and improve environmental conditions.

“This initiative is a revolutionary step to safeguard human lives,” said Marriyum Aurangzeb. “It will provide transparent data to the public and ensure an effective solution to air pollution challenges. This program is not only a significant step toward environmental conservation but also an example of utilizing digital technology to enhance governance and improve public service delivery.

This initiative is a revolutionary step to safeguard human lives,” said the minister. “It will provide transparent data to the public and ensure an effective solution to air pollution challenges.”

PA Speaker highlights journalism's role in nation-building

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan has urged media professionals to perform their duties with sincerity and honesty, recognizing the significance of their responsibilities.

He said that journalists can guide both the government and the opposition through fact-based and constructive criticism, adding that the role of journalism in the success of any developed nation cannot be denied and that the struggles of journalists will always be remembered.

He expressed these views during the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected President of the Punjab Assembly Press Gallery Committee, Khawaja Nasir, and Secretary Adnan Sheikh. The dignified ceremony was held at the cafeteria of the Punjab Assembly’s Old Building on Monday.

Members of the Press Gallery Committee, Provincial Minister for Information, Azma Zahid Bukhari, MPAs Raheela Khadim and Uzma Kardar, Secretary General of the Punjab Assembly Chaudhry Amer Habib, Staff Officer to Speaker

Amad Hussain Bhalli and Spokesperson Rao Majid Ali and President of the Lahore Press Club Arshad Ansari, and other senior journalists were also present.

During his address, PA Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan stated that the purpose of any political party or movement should be the welfare of the people. However, a single individual and his party have held the entire nation hostage. Referring to the events of May 9, he remarked that these were not ordinary allegations but direct attacks on the nation’s armed forces and institutions. He further stated that the Chief Minister of a province collaborated with rioters to attack the federation. These individuals are engaged in discrediting opposition politicians and the judiciary on social media.

He criticized how an important day of national independence, a source of joy for the entire nation, was tarnished by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) through protests. Referring to the damage caused to the economy and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

(CPEC), he commended the Chinese government for continuing investments in Pakistan despite the challenges of terrorism, while PTI deliberately undermined the CPEC initiative.

The speaker urged the government to take strict measures to restrain such elements, emphasizing that the armed forces are a source of pride for any nation, yet baseless allegations are being hurled against them. He reiterated that political stability and a strong government are essential for economic progress. While the Constitution grants every citizen the right to peaceful protest, it does not permit acts that jeopardize national security, he added.

Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan stated that the existence of a particular individual is tied to creating chaos and that he seeks to perpetuate an atmosphere of unrest in the country.

He emphasised that peaceful protest is the right of every citizen. However, the rights of individuals who create unrest in the country should be suspended, regardless of whether they are members of any assembly.

Winter vacations announced

LAHORE (INP): Punjab has announced winter vacations in public and private school across the province.

As per details, Secretary of Schools Punjab Khalid Nazir Wattoo stated that schools will remain closed during winter holidays for 20 days from December 20, 2024 till January 10, 2025.

The announcement came at the time when Lahore High Court (LHC) ordered to provide pick-and-drop services to schoolchildren after winter break, in a move to counter the increasing smog threat.

The directions were given by LHC Justice Shahid Karim in a three-page written order he issued on Monday on petitions related to smog prevention. The court ordered that children must commute to schools using transport provided by the school administration.

Schools failing to comply with these orders will face sealing, the LHC bench warned. It also remarked that no school should issue written disclaimers absolving themselves of responsibility for students’ transportation.

The written order further stated that the Punjab government informed the court about steps being taken to address the smog issue and a number of people have been arrested for stubble burning. The department was also told to maintain a comprehensive database of public and private buses.

Earlier, the Punjab government has further relaxed smog restrictions and allowed construction work in four districts, including Lahore.

Women actively participating in IT courses: Tessori

KARACHI (PPI): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori emphasized the need for effective measures and raising voices against all forms of violence against women.

In a statement today on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Mr Tessori stated, “Today, we must pledge to take concrete actions against every injustice faced by women and work collectively to address this grave global

issue. Enhancing international cooperation in this regard is imperative.”

He further shared that under the Governor’s Initiative, women are actively participating in IT courses hosted at the Governor House. Efforts are continuously being made to empower them and improve their living standards. Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori reiterated his commitment to a society where women can thrive without fear and with equal opportunities.

Tessori highlighted that stringent measures are being implemented in the province to combat physical, emotional, sexual, and economic violence against women. He stressed that eliminating violence against women is a shared responsibility and crucial for societal progress.

He assured that comprehensive legislation is being enacted to safeguard women’s rights and provide them with dignified opportunities in society, which remains a top priority.

Polio Cases Surge to 55 in 2024: Dr Hanif Tayyab

KARACHI (PPI): Dr. Haji Mohammad Hanif Tayyab, Chairman of the Rotary Ulama Committee for Polio Eradication and Chief Patron of Al-Mustafa Welfare Society, expressed concern over the alarming rise in polio cases in Pakistan, with 55 reported so far in 2024, compared to just 6 cases in 2023. This increase is a serious cause for concern, and it calls for immediate attention.

According to a statement from Al-Mustafa Welfare Society, Dr. Tayyab stated that, according to the National Emergency Operation Center, of the 55 reported cases, 26 are from Balochistan, 14 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 13 from Sindh, and one each from Punjab and

Islamabad. He emphasized that while the situation is worrying, it must be acknowledged that Pakistan had previously reported thousands of polio cases. However, due to the tireless efforts of the government, social organizations, religious leaders, and scholars, the country is now on the brink of eradicating polio.

Dr. Tayyab urged both the federal and provincial governments to collaborate with social institutions and create a joint strategy to address the issue and investigate why there has been such a rise in cases this year.

In this regard, he recommended that the federal and provincial governments organize conventions with religious schol-

ars to discuss how polio vaccination efforts can be strengthened and what obstacles polio workers are facing. He stressed that only through collective efforts will Pakistan and Afghanistan be able to rid themselves of polio.

Dr. Tayyab further noted that during the Islamabad conference, scholars from all sects of Islam had declared the polio vaccine as permissible under Islam. However, negative propaganda continues to prevent some parents from allowing their children to receive the vaccine, and this remains the greatest barrier to eradicating polio. He emphasized that a child disabled by polio is incurable, and the only protection against the disease is vaccination.

Country future is bright, says DG NAB



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Character building of young generation, predominantly students is a must for establishing a corruption-free society. We must inculcate high moral values as well as abhorrence for corruption in the minds of youth from the very beginning. These views were expressed by Director

General NAB, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mr Waqar Ahmed Chohan on the occasion of concluding session of provincial level poster/painting and essay writing competitions for school, college and university level students on anti corruption themes in NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. DG NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stressed upon the students that they

should adopt high moral values such as self-discipline, truthfulness, honesty, punctuality, fairness in dealings and respect for elders. He said that students essays and paintings highly inspired him and their enthusiasm, talent and spirit reflect that the future of the country is bright and is in safe hands. Earlier, students in their

thoughts provoking speeches urged upon all segments of the society to play their role in elimination of corruption from the society. They also highlighted the importance of character building to establish a corruption-free society. DG NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mr Waqar Ahmed Chohan distributed cash prizes/merit certificates among the winners of the contests.

Rabid dog unleashes panic in Peshawar suburban villages

PESHAWAR (APP): A rabid dog spread wave of panic and fear in the suburban localities of Peshawar on Kohat road by attacking dozens of people including children and elderly persons. Most of the victims of a black color rabid dog were mauled on upper portion of the neck including head and face, informed Rehman Mirza Khel, a teacher from Adizai village on Kohat road. Talking to APP, Rehman said a few days earlier he took his ailing son to a doctor at Mattani area. Upon reaching Mattani, Rehman said he heard announcements from loudspeakers of mosques cautioning people that a rabid dog has arrived in the area and attacking passer-bys.

People were asked to take precautionary measures by getting inside, taking children indoor and closing the doors of houses. "Panicked over the announcements, I took back my ailing son to home without consultation by doctor," Rehman recalled. A few days later, Rehman added, he heard people sharing news about biting of a fellow villager by a rabid dog. My own uncle, Gul Wali, was attacked by the dog on his hand, cutting off his finger, Rehman informed. The dog unleashed fear in localities including Adizai, Koh-e-Daman, Darazai, Pasi Parhat Baba and all the victims were attacked by black color dog. The fear was so sever that people stopped sending

their children to school for protecting them from dog attack. Rehman said in retaliation to attack, people started killing black dogs in the area and about 15 to 16 dogs were killed, but bites continued. He said targeting of head and face raised apprehensions that it might be some wild animal not a stray dog. Rehman also raised the issue in a Whatsapp group titled as 'Wildlife of Pakistan' to get expert opinion about nature of the animal. While examining pictures of dog victims, Dr Sundas Zahid, a PhD scholar in Zoology opined that the wounds are not looking because of animal attack. "These bruises does not look as animal attack and

giving the impression that these are clear cut wound which may be because of human conflict, Dr Sundas observed. However, Rehman said in a recent incident of attack on a dweller of an Afghan refugees camp, a black dog by killed by people and now no report is received of a new attack. He also informed that due to large number of dog bite victims, the anti-rabies treatment was arranged by different hospitals including a health facility in Mattani, Lady Reading Hospital and Syed Medical Complex. MNA of the area, Shandana Gulzar also arranged anti-bite injections for the victims at Hujra of her home in Badabair area.



PESHAWAR: Laborer is busy dyeing the fabric threads used in making Afghan carpets at Sethi Town.

Governor expresses condolences over martyrdom of cop in protest

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday expressed his heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the family of the martyred police officer Mubashir Bilal during PTI march at Hakla. The brutal killing of the police officer by protesting demonstrators is condemnable, said Governor Faisal Karim Kundi. He said that a group of violent protesters killed the police officer while he was performing his duty is unforgettable. Governor Kundi expressed solidarity with the grieving family of the martyred police officer, Mubashir Bilal.

The martyrdom of the police officer proved the malicious intentions of the violent protesters, Faisal Karim Kundi added. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi was briefed on Monday that teams from the Red Crescent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and merged districts have been mobilized to assist the affectees of the Kurram conflict. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi had issued directives for the provision of tents to the affected families in Kurram. In addition, he has

instructed the Chairman of the Red Crescent Merged Districts, Imran Wazir, has prepared an initial report on the damages and the required assistance. According to the preliminary report from the Red Crescent, 250 families from Bagan and 175 families from Alizai have been displaced due to the conflict. According to Chairman PRCS Malik Habib Orakzai, 915 TDPs have been provided with food and drinking water over the past two days.

Following the Governor's instructions, a delegation from the Red Crescent Merged Districts will meet with representatives of the affected communities to assess further needs. The Governor has also directed the Red Crescent to ensure the delivery of food and other essential supplies to the displaced individuals. The biggest obstacle to the relief operations has been road blockages, which have hampered the delivery of aid, report added. However, further relief supplies are prepared and awaiting the clearance of blocked roads for distribution.

KPCTA set to hold Vintage & Classic Car show on 30th

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) has decided to organise the 15th Annual Vintage and Classic Car show for the enthusiasts of ancient cars and people of Peshawar on November 30. The event would take place at the Peshawar Services Club and would feature over 50 vehicles, including models from 1935 to 1980, along with other vintage cars.

Being organised by the KPCTA in collaboration with Classic Land Rover, the show would bring together car enthusiasts from various cities, including Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar and elsewhere in the country, who would showcase their vintage and classic cars. The 15th Annual Vintage and Classic Car show would be held at Peshawar Services Club, where more than 50 vintage cars, including models

from 1935 to 1980 and other classic vehicles, would be displayed. The event would also feature a rally starting from Peshawar and travel through Faisalabad, Rahimyar Khan, Moro, Thar desert and would reach Karachi. The Vintage and Classic Car show rally would also pass through the historic Balahisar Fort in Peshawar and later leave for to Hund Swabi, where a 4x4 Jeep race would be held.

Among the classic cars to be displayed are Mercedes, Jaguar, Ford, Chevrolet, Mini, VW, Land Rover, 4x4 Jeeps, motorcycles, and other vintage vehicles. Car enthusiasts from across the country would bring their prized classic cars to be a part of this event. During the car show, traditional cultural performances, including Khattak dance and a rubab music shows, would also be held to add a festive atmosphere to the event.

KMU successfully conducts 2nd Prof MBBS E-Exam

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Medical University (KMU), the leading medical education institution in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), has achieved a landmark milestone by successfully conducting the 2nd Professional MBBS examination through an innovative intra-net-based system. This transformative initiative is a step forward in modernizing medical education and strengthening assessment standards across the region. According to details across the province partici-

pated in the said exam in four E-exam centers including KMU Center Peshawar where 726 students of KMC, KGMC, PIMC, JMC and MCM appeared. In Rehman Medical College center 98 students, in Northwest School of Medicine 148, in Gomal Medical College, D.I. Khan108 students and at Khyber Institute of Medical Sciences, Kohat 121 students participated in the said MBBS 2nd prof exam. It is worth mentioning that KMU's e-exam platform brings numerous advantages to medical education which include efficiency on the top. Students focus on one question at a time, ensuring better concentration, with results delivered promptly. Secondly this system ensure accessibility which allows students to take exams at any designated center, reducing logistical challenges. Thirdly this system ensures environmental Sustainability by reducing paper usage, the initiative promotes eco-friendly practices. Lastly his new system safeguards 100% transparency as the digital format ensures fairness and minimizes errors. Speaking on the occasion,

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq expressed pride in the successful implementation of the e-exam system. He emphasized that this groundbreaking effort highlights KMU's commitment to advancing medical education not only within KP but also as a benchmark for institutions across Pakistan. "This success was the result of teamwork and dedication. Departments including IHPE&R, Exams, IT, Registrar, Academics, Finance, Procurement, Audit, Admin, P&D, and all Heads of Departments played a pivotal role.



PESHAWAR: A view of illegal birds market in front of Metropolitan Office near Bacha Khan Chowk which needs attention of the authorities concerned. — INP photo

KP's streets and sewers in disrepair: A sanitation problems authorities can't Ignore

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar, which once known as the city of flowers, was currently confronted to the monster challenge of poor sanitation due to unplanned construction and an outdated sewerage system, affecting almost all sectors including water, environment, health and education enormously. The fragrance of Guli Dawoodi roses that attracted visitors to Peshawar's mughal era gardens and parks in November-December was hardly seen due to an encroachment, pollution and poor sanitation services. Wazir Bagh, Shalimar Gardens and Jinnah parks where children played hide and seek around Gule Dawodi were marred by encroachment and poor sewage services at Peshawar. Besides others, urbanization was causing sev-

eral governance challenges in big cities including housing, employment, sanitation and sewerage system that demands proactive approach realizing seriousness of problems, which are growing difficult with each passing day making the lives of mega city dwellers including Peshawar very difficult. A visitor might have been unnerved after inhaling the garbage smell of an outdated drainage channels while moving in Peshawar's interior areas including Kohati, Gunj, Khalasa, Hazarkhwani, Lateefabad and Faqirabad. "The sanitation services in these areas are very poor with bad smell emanating from uncovered drainage channels and water leakage pipes since long that has exposed residents to different health ailments, which need to

be addressed on priority basis," said Suliman Khan, a resident of Ganj Peshawar while talking to APP. Although the provincial governments are spending huge funds to address sanitation problems posed by population growth, but still a lot of work was required to provide safe drinking water and immediate replacement of leakage water pipes to avert life threatening health hazards. He said the situation was still grim due to significant movement of people from rural areas of KP towards major cities including Peshawar. The sanitation workers said their problems and labour work has become hard due to increased urbanization in provincial metropolises as people were continuously migrating to various localities of the city for better economic and social services, putting

pressure on sanitation services. Various other challenges including shortage of sanitary workers, vehicles, equipment and waste dumping sites have also aggravated the issue in Peshawar. The excessive population has not only increased workload on sanitation workers but also increased their problems due to low wages. The unplanned infrastructure in major cities including Peshawar, Mardan, DI Khan, Nowshera, Bannu and Abbottabad was incompatible to the mass urbanization leading to further overburdening the task of sanitation staff. Professor Dr Muhammad Naeem, former Chairman Economics Department at University of Peshawar said that sanitation services of most of our cities including Peshawar were unfit to

absorb the increasing load of migrants and the rusted water pipes required immediate replacement. The urban share of the country's population has increased by about 33 million between 1951 to 2017 which means that 14.5 million people migrated from villages to cities with nearly 750,000 per year increase, thus exerted extra pressure on education, healthcare and sanitation services in Peshawar and other cities of Pakistan. Underscoring the need of proper planning and diversion of financial resources to sanitation services in the wake of population explosion, he opined that capacity building of sanitary staff at local or municipality level could help operate and maintain sewerage systems viz a viz installation of wastewater treatment plants to combat sanitation challenges.

Ikhtair Wali Khan, PMLN KP spokesman said that PTI leadership were concentrating on agitation politics while problem of poor sanitation remained unresolved. He said that rusted water pipes in interior city have exposed Peshawarties to various health problems. He said that poor sanitation increases risks of fatal diseases including cholera, diarrhea, typhoid and polio. In next fifteen years, he said about 55 percent of population would shift to urban areas, and the lack of inadequate sanitation conditions can have significant impacts on Govt hospitals that was already overburdened. "Sanitation services mostly in informal settlements are mostly affected due to construction of unplanned large buildings and other infrastructure in Peshawar due to overpop-

ulation," sources in Water and Sanitation Services Company (WSSP). Work on 12-year Municipal Services Program of USD 44.6 million were completed underwhich nearly 20 lakh residents of Peshawar were provided access to clean drinking water, waste management, and improved sanitation services. Under the project, 140 clean drinking water facilities serving 448,000 people, replacement of 25,700 meters of old and rusted water mains, ensuring clean, reliable water supply in 21 union councils, rehabilitated sewerage and drainage lines, which improve sanitation for two million people besides improved municipal waste management services, including 575 vehicles, and that an establishment of a repair and maintenance workshop for waste manage-

ment equipment were achieved benefiting nearly two million residents of Peshawar. Under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Clean and Green initiative, he said that improving sanitation services in major cities, proper disposal of solid waste and providing green spaces for citizens was being focused. This initiative includes the construction of modern waste treatment plants, expansion of sewerage systems, and provision of public toilets in high-density areas. The sanitation awareness campaign has been launched aims to provide every urban household an access to basic sanitation and clean water. The experts underlined the proactive role of media, civil society and religious scholars for creating mass awareness for improved sanitation services.



In brief

Violence in Kurram flayed F.P. Report

ATTOCK: The lawyers of Pindi Gheb Bar Association went on a complete strike on the incident of terrorism in Parachinar. The Pindi Gheb Bar Association observed a full-day suspension of judicial work on Saturday in protest against the incident. Lawyers of Bar Association Pindi Gheb, Sheikh Aftab Ahmed Advocate, Malik Zainul Abedin Advocate, Asif Zia Advocate, Malik Qaiser Mushtaq Advocate, Sardar Abid Advocate and other lawyers have said while talking to the media that they strongly condemn the terrorist incident on passengers' convoy in Parachinar. The lawyers of Pindi Gheb Bar Association said that The government should take immediate legal and strict action against the elements involved in the attack by terrorists in Para chinari. They expressed their grief over the loss of precious lives due to the terrorist attack on passenger buses going from Parachinar to Peshawar and termed it a national tragedy. They said that the lawyers of Bar Association Pindi Gheb have gone on a complete strike due to the terrorist incident in Parachinar. We are not appearing in the courts today. We are expressing solidarity with these brothers of ours and share their grief equally, they added. The lawyers of Pindi Gheb Bar Association have said that the attack of terrorists on unwashed citizens in Parachinar is a heartbreaking tragedy. The roads of Parachinar should be secured on a permanent basis. The enemies of peace in the country have attacked a convoy of innocent citizens, an act that amounts to sheer brutality. The tragedy was the result of a designed conspiracy to further deepen divisions in society. They said that an Army operation is necessary to establish peace in the area. The government should conduct a full inquiry into the Parachinar incident and the elements involved in the incident should be severely punished, they added.

Husband shoots dead his wife

MATIARI (INP): An unemployed husband shot dead his wife on Monday, who had passed the public service exam and became a lecturer in Matiari. According to a private news channel, the incident happened in the Bakhar Jamali area of New Saeedabad tehsil of Matiari. Police said that the woman was identified as Rabia Afshan who was a mother of three, had passed the Sindh Public Service Commission exam two months ago and was working as a lecturer. According to the police, the reason for the murder is not yet known, and the search for the accused is ongoing.

Heavy fire damages school

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): A massive fire broke out in Falcon Public School located in Lamiyani area of Hattian Bala in Azad Kashmir on Monday morning. The fire engulfed the entire school which was erupted as the classes were about to start. An electric short-circuit was blamed for the blaze. All the students were evacuated while adjacent buildings were also at risk due to the heavy school fire. Soon after the incident, Rescue 1122 vehicles reached Lamiyani area and started efforts to bring the fire under-control. The school building was completely destroyed as a result of the inferno. Local people also tried on their own to control the fire but their efforts became useless.



LANDI KOTAL: Leaders and workers of ANP holding placards during a rally against clashes in Kurram. — F.P. photo

Committee concerned over Kurram clashes

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: The recent events in Kurram district are very sorrowful and it is the continuation of tragic violent and cruel events of 2007. Instead of apologizing to the losses of the Ahl-e-Sunnah-wal-Jamaat in Parachinar and giving its compensation to the affectees, these war crimes are being propagated.

These views were expressed by Malik Attaullah, Malik Sawab Gul and Haji Ilyas Khan of Parachinar Reformer Committee Kohat, while addressing a press conference at Kohat Press Club. They said that for a long time, Anjuman-e-Hussainia is misusing the Member-o-Mehrab in the entire Kurram district. The Ahl-e-Sunnah has strongly condemned the Baggan incident and announced its disassociation from it. Despite it, under the guise of protest, not only government properties were burnt, but the national flag of Pakistan was also insulted, they said. Similarly Jama-e-Masjid of Osmania Market in Parachinar was also stonned which is clear terrorism adding that all this has been happened under the patronage of Anjuman-e-Hussainia, they assumed.

They added that a specific terrorist group namely Zenabioon which has been



wanted by the government agencies for a long time in various war crimes has been given complete freedom to kill the people of Ahl-e-Sunnah. The elderly, a white-bearded elderly man was kidnapped and killed in Parachinar and his head was hanged on the crossroads, they said with sorrow.

They said, after burning the properties and killing the citizens, the roiters also trampled the Chador-o-Chardiwari of Pakhtun traditions by abduction of the women. They went on to say that even before this, the Tori nation notorious role is very clear on different occasions and the government silence on it is equivalent to covering up the war crimes of the Tori Bangash tribes.

They argued, despite the repeated agreements to establish peace in the area, after 2007, once again the government's writ seems to be very weak. They added, it is the responsibility of law enforcement agencies to protect the national and private properties of the

Ahle-Sunnah-wal-Jamaat in Parachinar and it must focus on its prime responsibility.

They regretted that the people are being mentally held hostage under the guise of religion and the incident of Kacha Pakka in Kohat is also a part of this sequence saying that it has been tried to influence the Kurram district worst situation to the other areas. In Kacha Pakka women were beaten up, insulting slogans were raised, cars were burnt and even one of the Jirga Member Pir Shah Nawaz's car was fired upon.

They strongly demanded of the government to fulfill its responsibility and ensure protection to the Ahl-e-Sunnah and combat the Zenabioon and its patronizers involved in the crimes by bringing them to justice. The responsables of burning of government properties may also be brought to the court of law and all those who are involved in the stoning of Jama-e-Masjid of Osmania Market Al-Farooq Hotel, they further demanded.

AC assures implementation SC verdict

F.P. Report

BANNU: Assistant Commissioner Bannu's visit waqf land for the cemetery, assured that encroachment on TMA-owned property will be stopped while the decision of the Supreme Court will be taken immediately, on Monday.

Assistant Commissioner directed Malik Hazrat Khan, Malik Mehboob Ali Khan, Malik Naem Khan, Malik Zakir Khan, Tahsinullah Khan, Sher Nawaz Khan, Malik Sajid Kamal Khan and other leaders of the Sokri tribes were called to appear in this regard. Naem Khan, Malik Hazrat Khan, Sir Latif Khan told the Assistant Commissioner that the Kachhari Gate Burlab road near Bannu city has been dedicated for the cemetery since the establishment of Pakistan i.e. since 1941 from the Civil Court to the High Court. Whose decisions are on record, but now notices have also been issued to the builders on the occupied land.

It is actually Muslim waqf land, which is dedicated to the cemetery. He said that the original owners of the land, whose parents This land was dedicated for the burial of the dead, they have also confirmed the dedication. In such circumstances, we hope that the district administration will recognize the right of the Sokri tribes and declare the said land as waqf and demolish the constructions built on it.

4 cops, three protestors injured

F.P. Report

SWABI: At least seven people including four policemen were injured during the protest on Motorway in Swabi district on Monday. Director Emergency, Bacha Khan Medical Complex, Dr Raziq Shah said seven injured including four policemen who sustained injuries during skirmishes that took place between protestors and police, were brought to the hospital.

He said the injured under treatment at Surgical Emergency Ward. The injured policemen were identified as Mustajab, Khizar Iqbal, Sadaqat and Zulqarnain while the civilians included Bakht Biland, Waris and Razi Mand. Dr Shah said he himself was monitoring the condition of all the injured.

Parents Day held

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Garrison Cadet College Kohat recently hosted a vibrant Parents' Day event that was attended by a large number of students, their parents, and serving officers, said a college press release on Monday.

Founded in 1990, Garrison Cadet College Kohat has built a strong reputation across Pakistan. Its students excel in diverse fields, making the institution a prominent name in education. The college welcomes students from all regions of Pakistan and maintains high academic standards.

ANP hold rally against unrest in Tirrah, Kurram

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL, BUNER, SHANGLA: Under the banner of Awami National Party (ANP) Khyber, a protest rally was held at Bacha Khan Chawk, Landi Kotal on Monday against unrest in Tirrah Valley and Kurram district.

Led by ANP district head Shah Hussain Shinwari, the rally was attended by Khudai Khedmatgar organization, Khyber chief Fazal Rehman Afridi, Tehsil Chairman Haji Shah Khalid and a number of the party workers and members of civil society.

Addressing on the occasion Shah Hussain Shinwari, Haji Shah Khalid and others expressed their deep concern over the unrest activities and poor law and order situation in Tirah and Kurram that caused loss of precious human lives and asked for restoration of durable peace in the areas. The government had failed to adopt concrete initiatives to reinstate lasting peace in the merged tribal region and restarting militancy in Tirah and other areas proved its inefficiency, they blamed. They maintained that Pakhtun blood was shed under a planned strategy that was unfair to them. The speakers urged people from different walks of life to stay united to compete, the prevailed turmoil.

They sympathized with affected families in Tirah and Kurram and demanded of the government to follow necessary actions to avoid such terrorism acts in future. Similarly, volunteers of ANP in Jamrud also held a demonstration in front of the press club against the poor security situation in Tirah and Kurram and demanded of the government to restrain all those elements that deliberately imposed war on Pakhtuns. It is to be stated here that in recent mishaps in Tirah and fight between two tribes in Kurram claimed more than 60 lives and more than 70 injuries.

Meanwhile, the Awami National Party Buner district chapter on Monday has protested in front of the Buner Press Club against the killing of more than a hundred innocent people on the Para Chinari Road and the looting and torture of the people of Buner at gunpoint in the robbery on the Surkaway Road.

The leadership in their speeches have demand from the provincial government and the concerned RPOs and Commissioners for the immediate arrest of the elements involved in the incidents for the sake of justice and restoration peace.

During the protest the participants were raised slogans against the killing of innocent passengers at Parachinar road and looting of innocent Buneris on gun point at Surkaway road. They also raised slogans against terrorism and road robbery.

ANP District President Karim Babak, Senior Vice President Haji Rauf Khan, General Secretary Qaisar Wali Khan, Mirza Gul Jahan, Wali Rehman, Afsar

Khan if Sultanwas, Mian Syed Laeeq Bacha, Farooq Khan, Shah Jahan, Sardar Jahan, Aziz Khan and Social Media Head Asghar Khan have addressed.

The speakers ran rampant on the Parachinar road killing more than a hundred people including women and children in vehicles and seriously injuring even more people including women and children. They strongly condemned looting dozens of Buneris riding in dozens of vehicles in the Mardan Rustam Surkaway hilly range. They held responsible the KP government and the concerned RPOs and Commissioner and have demanded the restoration of peace and the immediate arrest of the involved elements. They criticized KP Chief Minister for leading protest attacking on the federation from the resources of the province for the release of No 804 prisoners and criticized him for leading the Islamabad protest to attack the federation by ignoring the Para Chinari incident. They called the Chief Minister Gandapur as the bad luck of the KP province and asked the people to support the Awami National Party in move for the accountability of the Chief Minister and against terrorism and lawlessness and on the Pakhtun land. They announced protest in front of the IGP office for taking notice of the incident when the RPO failed to arrest the dacoits. When they announced set in, everyone raised their hands and reiterated their determination to carry this announcement to its logical conclusion.

Moreover, Awami National Party (ANP) protested in Shangla while condemning the growing incidents of unrest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly the recent Kurram Parachinar incident, on Monday.

ANP Provincial Leader Mutawakkil Khan Advocate addressed the protesters, stating that the ANP would not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the restoration of peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and to counter terrorism. He criticized the provincial and federal governments for their failure to restore peace in the province, alleging that they were more focused on saving their governments rather than addressing the deteriorating law and order situation.

The protesters demanded peace and protection for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They chanted slogans, including "Give peace to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, give protection to the Pashtuns."

The protest was attended by a large number of ANP workers and supporters, including senior leaders Muhammad Naem Khan Advocate, Haq Nawaz Khan Advocate, Sultan Roham Khan Advocate, and Anwar Ali Ghurbandi. The purpose of the protest was to condemn the growing unrest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and to demand peace and protection for the people of the province.



ABBOTTABAD: DIG Hazara Division, Tahir Ayub Khan giving away appreciation certificate to DPO Mansehra, Shafi Ullah.

State Bank starts probe into fake currency case

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: After the alleged fake currency scandal of Rs. 200 million in National Bank Main Branch Hafizabad, State Bank of Pakistan sealed the National Bank Main Branch Hafizabad and started investigation.

According to the sources, another private bank which used to provide currency to National Bank main branch Hafizabad, this cast staff is said to be involved in providing fake cash, after which National Bank of Pakistan has instructed all its branches to be very careful and observe all SOPs while receiving cash from other

Arshad Mehind nominated as PPP lawyer wing vice president. Former President Bar and Pakistan People's Party leader Muhammad Arshad Mehind advocate has been nominated as Vice President of People's Lawyers Forum Central Punjab. In this regard, President People's Lawyers

Forum Central Punjab, Member Punjab Bar Council Raheel Kamran Cheema issued a formal notification.

It is pertinent to mention that Muhammad Arshad Mehind Advocate is one of the senior lawyers of the district and he is the only politician of the district who has been associated with the Pakistan People's Party since 1975.

Muhammad Arshad Mehind Advocate is highly regarded in education, literary and legal circles. Education, literary and legal personalities including local leaders of the People's Party have congratulated Muhammad Arshad Mehind for being appointed as the Vice President of the People's Lawyers Forum Central Punjab.

Peace committee meeting held: District Peace Committee meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad. District administration officers including District Police Officer, local religious scholars and other members of the committee

attended. In the meeting, a special prayer was also offered for the martyrs while strongly condemning the tragic incident in Parachinar.

Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq said that the efforts of religious scholars of all sects and other civil society leaders for the establishment of peace and order throughout the district have always been exemplary and it is hoped that they will continue to do so in the coming days as well. People belonging to all walks of life will ensure the establishment of peace and order in the district by giving proof of mutual tolerance, brotherhood, patience and religious harmony.

The DC said that the Ulemas of all sects, other leading persons, district administration, police and other law enforcement agencies should cooperate with each other to ensure the establishment of law and order throughout the district and like in the past here to maintain law and order situation and atmosphere.

Sunni Tehreek hold rally

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Pakistan Sunni Tehreek organized a protest rally to express solidarity with the Palestinian people and against Israeli aggression. Slogans were raised against the cruel behavior of Israel against Palestine, on Monday.

On this occasion, co-leaders Maulana Ali Nawaz Qasmi, Maulana Shamsuddin Sarohi, Hafiz Imamuddin Chandio and others said that Islam is a Muslim country with the power of unity and solidarity. The enemy can defeat the forces, the Palestinian and Kashmiri people have been killed in millions due to the indifference of the United Nations, while jus-

tice is far from visible.

Calling for a meeting of the OIC, they spoke for the Muslims, they have become united by voicing the atrocities committed by Israel and India on the people for the genocide in Palestine and Kashmir at the international level, while the role of the United Nations has become controversial at the international level, done and the problem of Palestine and Kashmir is being destroyed by hand, they said that international organizations and human rights organizations should raise their voices in favor of the Muslims of Palestine.

ACP presents inspirational drama: The first stage played by Larkana

Theater Festival was presented by Arts Council of Pakistan, wherein large number of people were there to watch the drama "Harei Hik Jehra". The performances of the Sindhi Improvisation stage drama were similar.

M. Musrat Naz, Riyaz Mahiser, Khalid Bhutto, Sajjad Soomro Sanuri Falak and Amjad Gul Soomro showed the essence of acting. The author of this story was Shamim Abbasi. The drama was directed by Musrat Naaz. The director was Riyaz Maheser. The theme of the drama was a poor girl whose honor is not being protected. But they look at that girl with good eyes.



GAZA: An injured girl stands amid the rubble of a house destroyed in an Israeli attack at the Bureij refugee camp.

Philippines boosts security after VP's threat against president

MANILA (Reuters) Philippine security agencies stepped up safety protocols after Vice President Sara Duterte said she would have President Ferdinand Marcos Jr assassinated if she herself were killed.

In a dramatic sign of a widening rift between the two most powerful political families in the Southeast Asian nation, Duterte told an early morning press conference that she had spoken to an assassin and instructed him to kill Marcos, his wife, and the speaker of the Philippine House, if she were to be killed. "I have talked to a person. I said, if I get killed, go kill BBM (Marcos), (first lady) Liza Araneta, and (Speaker) Martin Romualdez. No joke. No joke," Duterte said in the profanity-laden briefing. "I said, do not stop until you kill them, and then he said yes."

She was responding to an online commenter urging her to stay safe, saying she was in enemy territory as she was at the lower chamber of Congress overnight with her chief of staff. Duterte did not cite any alleged threat against herself. The Presidential Security Command said it had heightened and strengthened security protocols. "We are also closely coordinating with law

enforcement agencies to detect, deter and defend against any and all threats to the president and the first family," it said in a statement.

Police Chief Rommel Francisco Marbil said he had ordered an immediate investigation, adding that "any direct or indirect threat to his life must be addressed with the highest level of urgency". The Presidential Communications Office said any threat to the life of the president must always be taken seriously.

However, Duterte told reporters: "Thinking and talking about it is different from actually doing it," adding there was already a threat to her life. "When that happens, there will be an investigation on my death. The investigation on their deaths will be next." Her strong comments probably will not dent her political support, said Jean Encinas-Franco, a political science professor at the University of the Philippines. "If anything, this type of rhetoric brings her even closer to what her father's supporters liked about him." The daughter of Marcos' predecessor as president, Duterte resigned from the Marcos cabinet in June while remaining vice president, signalling the collapse of a formidable political alliance that helped her and Marcos, son and namesake of the

late authoritarian leader, to secure their 2022 electoral victories by wide margins. Speaker Romualdez, a cousin of Marcos, has slashed the vice presidential office's budget by nearly two-thirds.

Duterte's outburst is the latest in a series of startling signs of the feud at the top of Philippine politics. In October, she accused Marcos of incompetence and said she had imagined cutting the president's head off. The two families are at odds over issues including foreign policy and former President Rodrigo Duterte's deadly war on drugs. In the Philippines, the vice president is elected separately from the president and has no official duties. Many vice presidents have pursued social development activities, while some have been appointed to cabinet posts.

The country is gearing up for mid-term elections in May, seen as a litmus test of Marcos' popularity and a chance for him to consolidate power and groom a successor before his single six-year term ends in 2028. Past political violence in the Philippines has included the assassination of Benigno Aquino, a senator who staunchly opposed the rule the elder Marcos, as he exited his plane upon arrival home from political exile in 1983.

Key Trump pick calls for end to escalation in Ukraine

WASHINGTON (AFP): US President-elect Donald Trump's top security advisor called for an end to the escalation of the war between Ukraine and Russia, and for both parties to come to the negotiating table.

"We need to bring this to a responsible end. We need to restore deterrence, restore peace, and get ahead of this escalation ladder, rather than responding to it," said Mike Waltz, Trump's pick for the influential role of US national security advisor (NSA). In recent days, Washington has authorized Kyiv to use US-supplied missiles to strike targets in Russian territory and agreed to supply it with landmines, prompting Moscow to respond with the use of an experimental medium-range ballistic missile.

Waltz, a noted foreign policy hawk and former US special forces officer, has been critical of Russia but has, like Trump, opposed increasing aid to Ukraine. "President Trump has been very clear about the need to end this conflict," he told US media outlet Fox News. "We need to be discussing is who's at that table, whether it's an agreement, an armistice, how to get both sides to the table and then what's the framework of a deal?"

Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, with the United States and others coming to Kyiv's aid in its fight to hold its territory in the east of the country. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has in the past ruled out ceding any territory to Russia, and told Fox News that Ukraine would lose the war if Washington pulls funding. President Joe Biden's administration has promised a smooth transition to Trump, who has pledged major shake-ups on both foreign and domestic policy. Waltz said he had met Biden's NSA Jake Sullivan and warned adversaries abroad against thinking they could gain an advantage in the months before Trump takes office in January. "For our adversaries out there that think this is a time of opportunity that they can play one administration off the other. They're wrong... we are hand in glove."

Waltz also lauded "the strength and the grit" of Israel in its offensive against Hamas, which has killed at least 44,211 people in Gaza, the majority civilians, according to local authorities. The war was triggered by the assault on Israel by Hamas militants on October 7, 2023, a cross-border raid that resulted in the deaths of 1,206 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures. "Now is a moment to craft some type of arrangement that doesn't just put a pause for future October 7th's (but) truly brings stability to the Middle East," said Waltz.

Haiti wonders what's next as gang violence surges

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP): When Kenyan police arrived in Haiti as part of a UN-backed mission earlier this year to tackle gang violence, hopes were high. Coordinated gang attacks on prisons, police stations and the main international airport had crippled the country's capital and forced the prime minister to resign, plunging Haiti into an unprecedented crisis.

But the crisis has only deepened since the international policing contingent arrived. The main international airport closed for the second time this year after gangs opened fire on commercial flights in mid-November, striking a flight attendant. Gunmen also are attacking once-peaceful communities to try and seize control of the entire capital, taking advantage of political infighting that led to the abrupt dismissal of the prime minister earlier this month. Now, a new prime minister is tasked with turning around a nation that sees no escape from its troubles as Haitians wonder: How did the country reach this point? Bloody coups, brutal dictatorships and gangs created by Haiti's political and economic elite have long defined the country's history, but experts say the current crisis is the worst they've seen.

"I'm very bleak about the future," said Robert Fatton, a Haitian politics expert at the University of Virginia. "The whole situation is really collapsing." The government is anemic, the UN-backed mission that supports Haiti's understaffed police department lacks funding and personnel, and gangs now control 85% of the capital. Then, another blow. Doctors Without Borders announced it was suspending critical care in

Port-au-Prince as it accused police of targeting its staff and patients, including threats of rape and death. It's the first time the aid group has stopped working with new patients since it began operating in Haiti more than 30 years ago. "Every day that we cannot resume activities is a tragedy, as we are one of the few providers of a wide range of medical services that have remained open during this extremely difficult year," said Christophe Garnier, mission director in Haiti. Lionel Lizarre, deputy spokesman for Haiti's National Police, did not return messages for comment. Neither did officials with Kenya's mission when asked about the surge in gang violence. In a recent statement, the Kenyan-led mission said it was "cognizant of the road ahead that is fraught with challenges." But it noted that ongoing joint patrols and operations have secured certain communities and forced gangs to change the way they operate. André François Giroux, Canada's ambassador to Haiti, told The Associated Press that his country and others have been trying to bolster the Kenyan-led mission. "They've done miracles, I think, considering all the challenges that we've been facing," he said. "What we have to keep in mind is that it's still very much in deployment mode," Giroux said. "There are not even 400 on the ground right now."

A spokesman for Haiti's new prime minister, Alix Didier Filis-Aimé, did not return messages for comment. In a statement, his administration said authorities were strengthening security along the capital's main roads and had formed a special security council.

"The prime minister renews his commitment to find lasting solutions to current problems," it said. The statement was issued just days after gangs launched a pre-dawn attack around an upper-class community in Haiti's capital, forcing residents armed with machetes and guns to fight side-by-side with police to repel gunmen. At least 28 gang members were killed, but not before some reached an area near an upscale hotel long considered safe. "It tells you that there is no functioning authority in Haiti," Fatton said. A main concern in the ongoing crisis is the temporary closure of the main international airport in Port-au-Prince. It means critical aid is not reaching those who need it the most in a country where nearly 6,000 people are starving and nearly half of the more than 11 million inhabitants are experiencing crisis levels of hunger or worse. Gang violence also has left more than 700,000 people homeless in recent years. "We are deeply concerned about the isolation of Port-au-Prince from the rest of Haiti and the world," said Laurent Uwumuremyi, Mercy Corps' country director for Haiti. The aid group helps people including more than 15,000 living in makeshift shelters, but persistent gang violence has prevented workers from reaching a growing number of them in the capital and beyond. Basic goods also are dwindling as the suspension of flights has delayed imports of critical supplies.

"Before, there were some neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince that we considered safe that the gangs had never reached, but now they are threatening to take over the control of the entire capital," Uwumuremyi said.

Japan holds first memorial for 'all workers' at Sado gold mines

SADO, Japan (AP): Japan held a memorial ceremony near the Sado Island Gold Mines, listed this summer as a UNESCO World Heritage site after the country moved past years of historical disputes with South Korea and reluctantly acknowledged the mines' dark history. However, it has not offered an apology.

At these mines, hundreds of Koreans were forced to labor under abusive and brutal conditions during World War II, historians say. Japanese officials at ceremony time paid tribute for the first to "all workers" including Korean laborers who died at the mines, without acknowledging they were forced laborers - part of what critics call a persistent policy of whitewashing Japan's history of sexual and labor exploitation before and during the war.

The ceremony, supposed to further mend wounds, renewed tensions between the two sides. South Korea boycotted memorial service citing unspecified disagreements with Tokyo over the event. "As a resident, I must say (their absence) is very disappointing after all the preparations we made," said Sado Mayor Ryugo Watanabe. "I wish we could have held the memorial with South Korean atten-

dees."

The Associated Press explains the Sado mines, their history and the controversy. The 16th-century mines on the island of Sado, about the size of the Pacific island of Guam, off the western coast of Niigata prefecture, operated for nearly 400 years, beginning in 1601, and were once the world's largest gold producer. They closed in 1989. During the Edo period, from 1603 to 1868, the mines supplied gold currency to the ruling Tokugawa Shogunate.

Today, the site has been developed into a tourist facility and hiking site where visitors can learn about the changes in mining technology and production methods while looking at the remains of mine shafts and ore dressing facilities. Critics say the Japanese government only highlights the glory of the mines and covers up its use of Korean victims of forced labor and their ordeals. The mines were registered as a cultural heritage site in July after Japan agreed to include an exhibit on the conditions of Korean forced laborers and add a memorial service annually after repeated protests from the South Korean government. A few signs have since been erect-

ed, indicating former sites of South Korean laborers' dormitories. A city-operated museum in the area also added a section about Korean laborers, but a private museum attached to the main UNESCO site doesn't mention them at all.

At the UNESCO World Heritage Committee July meeting, the Japanese delegate said Tokyo had installed new exhibition material to explain the "severe conditions of (the Korean laborers) work and to remember their hardship." Japan also acknowledged that Koreans were made to do more dangerous tasks in the mine shaft, which caused some to die. Those who survived also developed lung diseases and other health problems. Many of them were given meager food rations and nearly no days off and were caught by police if they escaped, historians say. But the Japanese government has refused to admit they were "forced labor." South Korea had earlier opposed the listing of the site for UNESCO World Heritage on the grounds that the Korean forced laborers used at the mines were missing from the exhibition. South Korea eventually supported the listing after consultations with Japan and

Tokyo's pledge to improve the historical background of the exhibit and to hold a memorial that also includes Koreans.

Historians say Japan used hundreds of thousands of Korean laborers, including those forcibly brought from the Korean Peninsula, at Japanese mines and factories to make up for labor shortages because most working-age Japanese men had been sent to battlefronts across Asia and the Pacific. About 1,500 Koreans were forced to work at the Sado mines, according to Yasuto Takeuchi, an expert on Japan's wartime history, citing wartime Japanese documents. The South Korean government has said it expects Japan to keep its pledge to be truthful to history and to show both sides of the Sado mines.

"The controversy surrounding the Sado mines exhibit underscores a deeper problem" of Japan's failure to face up to its wartime responsibility and its growing "denialism" of its wartime atrocities, Takeuchi said. All workers who died at the Sado mines were honored. That includes hundreds of Korean laborers who worked there during Japan's 1910-1945 colonization of the Korean Peninsula.

Poland's PiS party picks Nawrocki for presidency

WARSAW (Reuters): Poland's main opposition party, the nationalist Law and Justice (PiS), picked historian Karol Nawrocki as its candidate for next year's presidential election, hoping to hold onto the presidency after losing control of parliament.

A pro-European coalition headed by Prime Minister Donald Tusk defeated PiS in a parliamentary election last year, but Tusk's centrist government has not been able to pass major reforms with PiS ally Andrzej Duda as president. That situation could continue if a PiS-aligned candidate wins again.

Nawrocki, 41, the head of Poland's Institute of National Remembrance, was a key figure in PiS efforts to promote patriotism through teaching history that critics said whitewashed the difficult parts of Poland's past. He will face Tusk's presidential candidate, progressive Warsaw mayor Rafal Trzaskowski, in the race, which could prove crucial in the government's push to undo a PiS court overhaul that the European Union said subverted democratic norms.

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP): Republican senators pushed back against criticism from Democrats that Tulsi Gabbard, Donald Trump's pick to lead US intelligence services, is "compromised" by her comments supportive of Russia and secret meetings, as a congresswoman, with Syria's president, a close ally of the Kremlin and Iran.

Sen. Tammy Duckworth, an Illinois Democrat and veteran of combat missions in Iraq, said she had concerns about Tulsi Gabbard, Trump's choice to be director of national intelligence. "I think she's compromised," Duckworth said on CNN's "State of the Union," citing Gabbard's 2017 trip to Syria, where she held talks with Syrian President Bashar Assad. Gabbard was a Democratic House member from Hawaii at the time.

"The US intelligence community has identified her as having troubling relationships with America's foes. And so my worry is that she couldn't pass a background check," Duckworth said. Gabbard, who said last month she is joining the Republican Party, has served in the Army National Guard for more than two decades. She

was deployed to Iraq and Kuwait and, according to the Hawaii National Guard, received a Combat Medical Badge in 2005 for "participation in combat operations under enemy hostile fire in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III." Duckworth's comments drew immediate backlash from Republicans.

"For her to say ridiculous and outright dangerous words like that is wrong," Sen. Markwayne Mullin, a Republican from Oklahoma, said on CNN, challenging Duckworth to retract her words. "That's the most dangerous thing she could say - is that a United States lieutenant colonel in the United States Army is compromised and is an asset of Russia." In recent days, other Democrats have accused Gabbard without evidence of being a "Russian asset." Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a Massachusetts Democrat, has claimed, without offering details, that Gabbard is in Russian President Vladimir "Putin's pocket." Mullin and others say the criticism from Democrats is rooted in the fact that Gabbard left their party and has become a Trump ally. Democrats say they worry that Gabbard's selection as national intelligence chief endangers ties with allies

and gives Russia a win. Rep. Adam Schiff, a California Democrat just elected to the Senate, said he would not describe Gabbard as a Russian asset, but said she had "very questionable judgment."

"The problem is if our foreign allies don't trust the head of our intelligence agencies, they'll stop sharing information with us," Schiff said on NBC's "Meet the Press." Gabbard in 2022 endorsed one of Russia's justifications for invading Ukraine: the existence of dozens of US-funded biolabs working on some of the world's nastiest pathogens. The labs are part of an international effort to control outbreaks and stop bioweapons, but Moscow claimed Ukraine was using them to create deadly bioweapons. Gabbard said she just voiced concerns about protecting the labs. Gabbard also has suggested that Russia had legitimate security concerns in deciding to invade Ukraine, given its desire to join NATO. Republican Sen. Eric Schmitt of Missouri said he thought it was "totally ridiculous" that Gabbard was being cast as a Russian asset for having different political views. "It's insulting. It's a slur, quite frankly."

Belarus grants asylum to fugitive Polish judge wanted on spying allegations

TALLINN (AP): Belarus has granted asylum to a former Polish judge who faced espionage charges at home following his defection in May to the Kremlin-allied country. A decree published by Alexander Lukashenko, Belarus' autocratic president, described Tomasz Szymdyt as being "prosecuted for political reasons" in Poland. The country is an EU and NATO member that has lent vocal support to Ukraine in its war against Russian aggression.

Szymdyt's defection to Belarus in May trained the focus on Poland as a key target for Russian intelligence activity and ignited a bitter political row over the circumstances of his rapid ascent through the ranks of the Polish justice

system. Poland's prosecutors and special services launched an investigation the same month after Belarus media reported that Szymdyt arrived in the country and asked for protection. Warsaw responded days later by putting Szymdyt on a wanted list, a step toward an international arrest warrant on spying allegations that would restrict his ability to travel internationally.

Polish officials have been working to determine how harmful Szymdyt's knowledge of any classified information might be to the interests of Warsaw and its Western allies. Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk has publicly called him a traitor. Szymdyt fled to Belarus after resigning

from his post as a judge at the Warsaw Administrative Court, saying in a public statement that he was doing so in protest against Poland's "harmful and unjust" policy toward Belarus and Russia. A short time later, he appeared at a press conference in Belarus, praising Lukashenko's regime and presenting himself as a victim of repression.

A Polish court later that month lifted Szymdyt's immunity, allowing him to be tried in absentia for spying allegations that he has denied. Szymdyt was notorious in Poland for having engaged in a 2019 online smear campaign against other judges that was sponsored by the Justice Ministry under the previous

right-wing government. Three years later, he appeared to switch sides, appearing in a TV documentary to expose what he said was unethical behavior by judges close to the ruling party. Szymdyt's defection came as a shock in Poland, which has a history of distrust of Russia.

Belarus has been one of the Kremlin's few close allies since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and Lukashenko has relied on Moscow's subsidies and support. In return, he has allowed Moscow to use Belarusian territory to send troops and weapons into the neighboring state, and to deploy tactical nuclear weapons on Belarusian soil.

Russia says US using Taiwan to stir crisis in Asia

MOSCOW (Reuters): The United States is using Taiwan to provoke a serious crisis in Asia, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko told TASS news agency in remarks published, reiterating Moscow's backing of China's stance on Taiwan.

"We see that Washington, in violation of the 'one China' principle that it recognises, is strengthening military-political contacts with Taipei under the slogan of maintaining the 'status quo', and increasing arms supplies," Rudenko told the state news agency. "The goal of such obvious US interference in the region's affairs is to provoke the PRC (People's Republic of

China) and generate a crisis in Asia to suit its own selfish interests."

The report did not cite any specific contacts that Rudenko was referring to. China views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, a claim that Taiwan's government rejects. The US is Taiwan's most important international backer and arms supplier, despite the lack of formal diplomatic recognition. The US State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Rudenko's remarks outside office hours. In September, President Joe Biden approved \$567 million in military support for Taiwan. Russia responded that it was standing along-

side China on Asian issues, including criticism of the US drive to extend its influence and "deliberate attempts" to inflame the situation around Taiwan. China and Russia declared a "no limits" partnership in February 2022 when President Vladimir Putin visited Beijing shortly before launching a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, triggering the deadliest land war in Europe since World War Two. In May this year, Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged a "new era" of partnership between the two most powerful rivals of the United States, which they cast as an aggressive Cold War hegemon sowing chaos across the world.

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Cop29: A done deal but it needs to be built on

OVER the past two weeks, much of the world's attention has been on Baku, Azerbaijan, the venue for this year's UN climate conference, known as Cop29. Leaders, policymakers and environmentalists, among others, have been following the talks in progress – though, not without apprehension, given the impasse between various countries over the issue of climate financing.

Getting nearly 200 countries, of different sizes, economies and climate vulnerabilities to agree on how much money the advanced nations should provide the lower-income ones to support their financing needs has been an onerous task for the past 15 years. Delegates representing the most disadvantaged nations in Baku even staged walkouts during the negotiating process. Further, in light of the current geopolitical climate, efforts to shore up global diplomacy proved inadequate.

It is notable therefore that a deal was eventually struck on Saturday night, with the developed world pledging \$300 billion annually over the next decade. Even as an agreement of this figure is notable – and may well have been considered a victory if only the climate challenge were not as enormous and global in scope – the urgent nature of the crisis remains unchanged. The developing world says that at least \$1.3 trillion is needed every year, a long way off from the sum pledged in Baku.

Countries, particularly those on the frontlines of the climate crisis, sorely need funds to transform their economies, build climate-resilient infrastructure and develop agriculture that is better able to withstand extreme temperatures and floods. As things stand, coping with climate disasters takes too large a chunk out of the gross domestic product of smaller nations. It is a fact that the world is equipped with the technological innovations, the know-how and the personnel to create an impact. What is required, however, is finance. But as Mariam Almheiri, head of the International Affairs Office of the Presidential Court, explained in these pages last week: "The gulf between available climate finance and actual needs is staggering."

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who earlier declared that "failure is not an option" in Azerbaijan, conceded that he had hoped for a more ambitious outcome on Saturday. But he added that the agreement "provides a base on which to build". Indeed, in the run-up to the next climate conference, Cop30 in Brazil, it is important that countries continue to engage with each other, deepen partnerships and increase their financial commitment.

Some countries have moved the needle on climate finance. At last year's Cop28 in Dubai, for instance, the UAE pledged \$100 million to a disaster fund and launched Alterra, a \$30 billion climate investment fund. Much more, of course, is needed. As experts have reiterated, international public-private partnerships must bear some of the burden of a crisis that affects us all.

The agreement struck in Baku may not be enough for those most vulnerable to rising temperatures to cope with the effects of climate change while simultaneously boosting the prosperity levels of their citizens. Yet the process for further negotiations has gone to the next phase. The onus is on all parties to build on that momentum.

A menacing message to the West

VLAGIMIR Putin's hypersonic missile carried a simple message to the West over Ukraine: back off, and if you don't, Russia reserves the right to hit US and British military facilities.

Russia fired a new intermediate-range hypersonic ballistic missile known as "Oreshnik", or Hazel Tree, at Ukraine on Thursday in what Putin said was a direct response to strikes on Russia by Ukrainian forces with US and British missiles.

In a special statement from the Kremlin just after 8 pm in Moscow that day, the Russian president said the war was escalating towards a global conflict, though he avoided any nuclear rhetoric. Putin has also refrained, so far, from actually striking the West, a step that could lead to a direct confrontation between Russia and the NATO alliance – and a confrontation that US President Joe Biden said in March 2022 would be World War III.

In his statement, the Kremlin chief gave the West notice that Russia reserved the right to strike at the military installations of countries that let Ukraine use their missiles to hit Russia – so far only the United States and Britain, according to a Reuters report.

A Russian source who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation said Putin had hinted that he wanted to steer clear of escalation, though the odds of Russia using nuclear weapons remained pretty high.

President Biden dropped his opposition to Ukraine firing US missiles at targets deep inside Russia in response to North Korea's entry to the war, a shift in US policy that took on added urgency following Donald Trump's Nov.5 election win, sources familiar with the matter told Reuters on Thursday.

Russian officials cast the move by Biden as a reckless decision by a lame-duck outgoing administration aimed at creating a serious crisis for Trump to resolve when he is inaugurated as president in January. That puts Putin in a difficult position: if he escalates now, he could stoke just such a crisis. But if he doesn't, then the West could interpret him as weak and keep pushing through clear Russian red lines. When Putin warned in September that Russia would update its nuclear doctrine to allow potentially a nuclear response to the use of conventional Western missiles to strike Russia, US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said it was not the first time he had "rattled the nuclear sabre". The day Ukraine fired US-made ATACMS missiles deep into Russian territory, Putin approved the lowering of the nuclear threshold flagged two months earlier, the Reuters report adds. After Putin lowered the threshold, the Pentagon said that the United States had not changed its nuclear posture – or observed a change in Russia's nuclear posture.

When asked what the main message of Putin's statement was, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday that the key thing was that Russia will react to "reckless actions" from Western countries which take part in strikes on Russia. Besides warning that US and British military facilities could be targeted, Putin said Washington's plans to deploy short- and intermediate-range missiles in Europe and Asia could prompt Moscow to do the same – bringing its firepower within closer striking range of the West. Kremlin spokesman Peskov said Russia was not technically obliged to warn Washington about the strike, because the missile was intermediate-range rather than intercontinental, but he said Moscow had informed the US 30 minutes beforehand anyway.

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The roadmap to a just peace in Palestine

Dr. Ramzy Baroud

A major problem in American thinking relating to the Middle East is the utter rejection of the notion that Palestinian rights are fundamental, if even relevant at all, to the coveted peace and stability.

In the years before the Trump administration's so-called deal of the century was officially revealed on Jan. 28, 2020, successive US administrations had attempted to "stabilize" the Middle East at the expense of the Palestinians. Earlier plans, or deals, rested on the premise of total marginalization of the Palestinian people and their cause. They included the Rogers Plan of 1969 and the Second Rogers Plan the following year, which culminated in the Camp David Accords of 1978.

When all such plans failed to subdue the Palestinians, Israel and the US began investing in an alternative Palestinian leadership that would be compliant with Tel Aviv's will, often in exchange for money and a minimal share of power. The outcome was the Oslo Accords of the mid-1990s, which initially segmented the Palestinians politically, yielding competing classes, but ultimately failed to defeat their quest for freedom.

Numerous other initiatives and plans, mostly proposed by the US and other Western entities, tried to conclude the Palestinian struggle in favor of Israel without having to deal with the inconveniences of pressuring it to respect international law. They all failed.

The 2020 deal was

another failed attempt. It was centered on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's previously thwarted economic peace of 2009. For Israel, this new attempt was meant to be a win-win scenario: ending Israel's regional isolation, amassing wealth, making the Israeli military occupation permanent and avoiding any accountability under international law, thus permanently defeating the Palestinians.

The ongoing Israeli war and genocide in Gaza, the destabilization of the whole region and the ongoing Palestinian steadfastness and resistance are the final proof that there can never be real peace in the Middle East without justice for the Palestinians and other victims of Israeli brutality. No matter how many US-Western deals and initiatives are proposed in the future, this fact will not be altered.

The same applies to those operating in a less official capacity but who are still committed to the same perusal of creative "solutions" to the so-called conflict. Such notions may suggest that the lack of a solution reflects a lack of imagination and resolve or a dearth of legal texts that make a just end to the conflict impossible. However, a solution is readily available. Indeed, the solution to military occupation, apartheid and genocide is ending military occupation, dismantling the racist apartheid regime and holding Israeli war criminals accountable for their extermination of Palestinians.

Not only do we have

attempts, theft of natural resources and so on.

In September, international consensus was achieved again, as the UN General Assembly passed a resolution demanding Israel end "its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" within 12 months.

This is a mere footnote in the massive body of international law regarding the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Yet more is regularly being added to the already clear discourse, including last week's issuing of arrest warrants by the International Criminal Court for top Israeli leaders, including Netanyahu.

With such clarity in mind, why then should Palestinians, Arabs and the international community entertain or engage in any new deals, plans or solutions that operate outside the realms of international law and standards?

The issue is obviously not the lack of a roadmap to a just peace, but the lack of interest or will to implement it, specifically on the part of the US and a few of its Western allies.

It is their relentless backing of Israel and financing of its war machine that makes a just solution in Palestine unattainable, at least for now.

As far as Palestinians are concerned, there can only be one acceptable deal: one that is predicated on the full implementation of international law, including the Palestinian people's right of return and right to self-determination. The continued US-Israeli attempts to circumvent this fact will never impede Palestinians from carrying on with their struggle for freedom.

World must pressure Israel over Netanyahu arrest warrant

Yousef M Aljamal

SOME 185 days after they were requested by prosecutor Karim Khan, the International Criminal Court last week issued warrants for the arrest of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, ex-Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and Mohammed Deif, a Hamas commander.

Many ask, will this make any difference? Will Israel end its genocide in Gaza? The answer is almost certainly "no." Netanyahu, now a war crimes suspect at large, is very unlikely to adopt a course correction and neither are his Cabinet colleagues. Israeli officials will conjure up fresh excuses and lines of attack for public relations purposes. Already, Netanyahu has abused the fight against antisemitism by referring to a "modern Dreyfus trial," in reference to an infamous incident from the 1890s, in which a Jewish French officer was falsely accused and convicted of treason before eventually being acquitted.

At best, one or two around the Israeli Cabinet table might twitch at the thought they could be next. But many other Israelis in politics, the armed forces and security services should fear further warrants. No doubt, many would like to be able to travel freely, to see loved ones in other countries. Netanyahu is now 75, but younger military commanders may have years to endure any sanction.

Undoubtedly, a failure by the International Criminal Court to agree to the arrest warrants would have been catastrophic for international law and the rules-based order. At least the court can now say that it does go after the friends of the big powers. It is not only

the UK would arrest Netanyahu. Back in May 2023, when the court issued an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin of Russia, British ministers fell over themselves to welcome the historic decision, including Keir Starmer when he was opposition leader. Starmer has not personally commented on the new warrants.

And who was shocked that the far-right Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban invited Netanyahu to come and visit his country?

What was also startling was that much of the media coverage focused on the Israeli reaction and those of its allies, not the crimes themselves. Those states that welcomed the court's decision were rarely mentioned.

Absent from most coverage were the victims. Typically, they were not even cited as Palestinians. Readers and viewers might have been left wondering exactly what these war crimes and crimes against humanity were.

The voice of the Palestinians, those who have lost loved ones and are at this moment being starved to death, were missing.

Many in the media ignored the human rights community's near-universal condemnation of Israel. It is hard to find a single human rights group that has not detailed and condemned the war crimes of which Netanyahu and Gallant are accused.

What should happen now? International Criminal Court member states should be reviewing their entire relationship with Israel. Those with any moral integrity should, if they have not done so already, introduce a full arms ban and cease any military and

On the flip side, there are states prepared to trash international law and the rules-based system led by the US. Some American politicians even threatened sanctions against historic allies like the UK and France if they were to help the International Criminal Court. Others referred to America's so-called Hague Invasion Act, which permits the US to use all means necessary to free Americans or its allies detained on the court's orders. Britain led the pack of those that gave equivocal responses. Ministers said they would respect the decision and abide by their legal obligations, but they would not be caught on camera saying the UK would arrest Netanyahu. Back in May 2023, when the court issued an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin of Russia, British ministers fell over themselves to welcome the historic decision, including Keir Starmer when he was opposition leader. Starmer has not personally commented on the new warrants. And who was shocked that the far-right Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban invited Netanyahu to come and visit his country?

for African leaders. This matters. It sends a message to wannabe war criminals.

However powerful your friends may be, they cannot protect you from the international judicial system.

State members of the court must honor their obligations and with gusto. This is a legal obligation, not a request. If any of the accused land in one of the 124 member states, they must be arrested and dispatched to The Hague. Some states have made clear they would do this. These include Italy and the Netherlands.

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security cooperation with Israel.

All states should demand that Israel hands the accused over to the court. It should be a condition of future relations with Israel that this happens.

But there are still questions for the court. Why have there been no warrants over the building of illegal Israeli settlements, which are clear violations of the Rome Statute? This should have been addressed years ago and, particularly following the July advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which made the authoritative determination that the occupation was unlawful and the settlements had to go, the International Criminal Court should be questioned as to why action has not been taken.

There is no dispute of fact. The settlements exist, are being expanded and are in occupied territory.

Khan made it clear back in May that these warrants would almost certainly not be the last. Is he considering requesting arrest warrants for other Israeli and Hamas leaders? Israel has assassinated most Hamas leaders. But given the scale of atrocities that Palestinians are suffering every day, it is inconceivable that more Israeli figures will not be charged.

Stop taking advantage of the grandparents

Birjees Hussain

I think families can often take advantage of each other. I think that the biggest culprits are children who get married and have children of their own. They have children but seem to want to not have them around them. They don't want to look after them and often pass them off onto aunts, nieces and their own parents.

It's obvious that they don't even want to pay for babysitting services. Instead they ask their parents. Yes grandparents love their children and their children's children. But do they want to be their full-time babysitter? Probably not. So one grandmother says that she charges her two daughters for her babysitting services, because that's what she's doing! And I am delighted to say that she made £25K in one year providing what can only be described as a combination of day-care services when the daughters are at work and babysitting services when the daughters wanted a night out.

The infuriating thing is the gall of the daughters

who accused her of being selfish! My question is, as was the grandmother's, why on earth would she do it for free? If she wasn't around they'd have to pay someone, right? Doing it once or twice in a blue moon is one thing and the grandparents charging for it might have been considered a bit much, but this was a regular occurrence for this grandmother. Who is actually selfish here?

The way I see it, the daughters tried to take advantage of their mother's love for her grandchildren. They wanted something for nothing!

There is such a thing in the West called giving your children pocket money. Now pocket money comes in two guises. One is the parents giving children a weekly or monthly allowance, for practical reasons such as buying lunch, bus fare and making emergency calls and, of course, so that they can buy their magazines, personal products and anything else they need.

Then there is money

that's often given to children for doing chores around the house. Clean the garden, get paid. Mow the lawn, get paid. Take out the rubbish at night and get paid. Clean your own room, get paid.

Hang on. Clean your own room, get paid? Does that sound fair to you? But that is what parents do to encourage their children to clean up the messes they make in their own rooms. In the West, it's often very difficult to get children to make their beds, tidy up, wipe down surfaces and vacuum their floors. Parents tell them to do it a million times but children try to get out of it so many times to the point that parents end up doing it themselves.

Now that ends up setting a bad precedence in which case, parents resort to a form of bribery. Clean your room and I'll pay you and that does the trick. Children want to go out with friends and buy themselves stuff and the only way to do that is to get paid from somewhere, even if it means their own parents.

Why is it that children do not lend the same courtesy to their own parents? They forget that they never did their bit around the house that they lived in unless they got paid for it, even if it was to clean up their own messes.

The other elephant in the room is that notion that when children have children they automatically assume that their parents will take care of them, for free. What kind of selfish thought process is this?

The other question I have for any parent intending to 'use' their own parents as babysitters on a regular basis, how would they feel if their own children were to start using them in the same way? I guarantee they'd either say no or charge them for it as well. I am glad the grandmother took a stand. In fact, I am of the strong belief that parents today are more than happy to get their children out of the house for a few hours no matter how young they are! As long as the kid is out of their hair, he's someone else's problem.

UNESCO is failing victims of Japan’s historical colonial exploitation

ON November 24, 2024, Japan held a memorial service at its UNESCO site, the Sado Gold Mines, in Niigata to commemorate labourers who worked in it. South Korean officials who were invited boycotted the event. Instead, on the following day, they held their own ceremony remembering Koreans who worked the mines as forced labourers under Japanese colonial rule.

The Sado Gold Mines, which were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site on July 27, have become yet another battleground over the history of Japanese colonial exploitation of Koreans and efforts to whitewash it. Japan has long resisted recognising the wartime discrimination and forced labour endured by Koreans and other foreign workers, including at industrial sites listed as World Heritage in 2015 under the title “Sites of Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution”.

In both instances, Japan has argued that wartime history is irrelevant to the heritage value of these sites.

Though it promised UNESCO to tell the “full history”, the version Japan presents is distorted by colonial apologetics, refusing to recognise Koreans workers mobilised during the war as victims of foreign forced labour.

What’s particularly troubling is the tolerance of this revisionism by both UNESCO and the current South Korean government, which seem willing to overlook the erasure of Korean victims for the sake of fostering better diplomatic relations.

When Japan’s Meiji industrial sites were inscribed in 2015, the country initially agreed to present the history of “a large number of Koreans and others” who were “brought against their will and forced to work under harsh conditions”.

But shortly after, then-Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida downplayed the concession, stating that “forced to work” did not mean “forced labour”. The argument hinged on the legal fiction that Koreans, as subjects of the Japanese Empire, could be legally conscripted for wartime labour under certain conditions.

Since the opening of an information centre in Tokyo in 2020, meant to educate the public on this history, Japan has instead promoted a whitewashed narrative. It claims that Korean and Japanese labourers worked together in harmony, but pointedly avoids the term “Koreans”, while systematically referring to Koreans as “workers from the Korean Peninsula”.

This subtle erasure denies Korean nationality and echoes the colonial term “hantoujin” (peninsula people), which was used to strip Koreans of their identity during colonial rule. At that time, Koreans as

Nikolai Johnsen

Japan’s approach to the Sado Gold Mines, where at least 1,519 Koreans worked as forced labourers under inhumane conditions during World War II, follows a similar path. In its supplementary information to UNESCO, Japan consistently refers to “workers from the Korean Peninsula” without acknowledging the forced nature of their labour. It even suggests the work environment was “non-discriminatory”, blatantly ignoring historical evidence.

During the World Heritage inscription ceremony,

However, the exhibition – entitled “The Life of Mine Workers Including Those from the Korean Peninsula” – fails to acknowledge the forced and inhumane conditions Korean labourers faced. By grouping their experiences with Japanese workers, Japan effectively denies the conditions of foreign forced labour and the documented experiences of victims. Similarly, the memorial held on November 24 failed to acknowledge Korean forced labour.

Rather than offering a moment of recognition, the memorial service risks further entrenching a revisionist narrative

tions with South Korea. Yet, the current South Korean government has demonstrated that prioritising diplomatic relations takes precedence over addressing historical wrongs and colonial trauma. In a bid to sell the Sado inscription as a diplomatic win, South Korea’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs even altered the words “all workers” to “Korean workers” in a summary of the official Japanese statement at UNESCO released to the Korean public.

This short-sighted approach risks further undermining South Korea-Japan relations in the long run. Public support for the current South Korean government is extraordinarily low and the next government may have to undo much of this work to regain public trust.

As global discussions increasingly focus on decolonisation and inclusive narratives, it is alarming to see UNESCO tolerate Japan’s neglect of Korean victims’ voices. While it issued a statement in 2021 urging Japan to honour its commitment to recognise the history of Korean and other forced labour at the Meiji industrial sites, it has yet to indicate any intention of revoking the sites’ World Heritage status for non-compliance.

Despite this unresolved issue, UNESCO inscribed the Sado Gold Mines, thus undermining its own credibility and reinforcing historical revisionism.

It should have withheld the Sado Gold Mines’ inscription until Japan corrected the historical erasure at previously designated sites.

All of these developments highlight the importance of understanding East Asia’s modern history on the world stage.

If we are serious about decolonisation, we must approach these histories with a broader, transregional perspective, recognising patterns of colonial legacies beyond the Euro-American context.

By raising awareness of different forms of imperialism and their enduring effect, we can empower people worldwide to better recognise and challenge the colonial crimes and exploitation that are unfolding in front of us in other parts of the world today.

Resolving India’s population woes requires political maturity

Sitaraman Shankar

POPULATION growth in India is on a downward trajectory. Economist Shamika Ravi, a member of the Economic Advisory Council to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, recently commented on X that fertility rates in more than three-quarters of India’s states are now below what is required to maintain population levels.

For the world’s most populous country, with a population over 1.45 billion, this should be an occasion for celebration, especially given its overburdened infrastructure and scarcity of resources.

But many of the country’s leaders don’t seem pleased with this state of affairs.

Chief ministers of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, two progressive and relatively prosperous states in the south of the country, have been calling on their constituents to have more children. The central government, led by Modi and his right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), meanwhile, appears hellbent on parliamentary reforms that would reduce the representation of states that managed to curtail their population growth while awarding states that continue to grow with more seats.

If all this appears illogical, it’s worth remembering that what makes short-term sense politically often does not make sense in any other way.

So why are some Indian leaders not happy with the country’s apparent success in bringing population growth under control, and why are they actively trying to incentivise Indians to have more children?

For one, the decline in population growth is not uniform across the country. Some of India’s most populous and poorest states are still growing rapidly, increasing the strain on the richer states that are forced to subsidise them. Second, with a revamp of the Parliament of India that would give more seats to states with larger populations looming on the horizon, richer states that are less populous – and have been much more successful in implementing population control strategies – are worried about their future representative power at the centre. Third, the decline in the fertility rate means the country’s much-touted “demographic dividend” – strong economic growth due to a large proportion of the population being of working age – will peter out.

Government data shows that the three major Indian states still growing at high rates are Uttar Pradesh (UP), Bihar and Jharkhand, all in the north. UP, which already has more people than Brazil, has a fertility rate of 2.4, while Bihar’s is at 3.0 and Jharkhand’s is 2.3 – all higher than the Indian average of 2.0 and above the replacement rate of 2.1. However, in rich southern states, which are home to some of India’s most prosperous and productive cities, like tech powerhouse Bangalore and car-making hub Chennai, fertility rates stand at 1.7-1.8, well below the current India average and the replacement rate.

In response to these numbers, Tamil Nadu’s Chief Minister MK Stalin (named after the late Soviet dictator) and Andhra Pradesh’s Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu have made calls that fly in the face of years of careful government-sponsored family planning schemes.

Andhra Pradesh has abolished a law disqualifying people with more than two children from contesting local body elections. Naidu has gone as far as to state that having larger families is a “responsibility” and a “service to society”.

Stalin, concerned about the south’s potential loss of parliamentary seats in the upcoming parliamentary reform exercise, went a step further and asked “Why shouldn’t we aim for 16 children?” While this was a reference to a Tamil language adage, hopefully not to be taken literally, it is likely the beginning of a campaign to put pressure on the central BJP government to abandon the planned parliamentary reforms.

The BJP wants to revamp the Parliament by a process called “delimitation”, which will assign seats to each state according to population figures from a new census that is to be conducted sometime in the next couple of years. The southern states are furious, arguing that the exercise will punish them for their good track record in keeping population growth in check. There also appears to be a cynical side to this reform effort, as it will likely benefit Modi’s BJP politically. Some calculations show that the north of the country, which is the stronghold of Modi’s right-wing party, will likely gain some 30 seats in Parliament, roughly the same amount the south will lose if the existing seats were to be redistributed according to the data that will be gathered in the upcoming census. If Parliament is expanded in line with the country’s population growth, the north will gain more than 150 seats and the south a mere 35.

So either way, it is in the BJP’s interests to try and push delimitation through. Even now, winning UP is usually enough to win the national election. If the state has even more seats, and the BJP holds onto its support base there, it could be in power for a very, very long time. Gifting more seats to UP due to its growing population may seem smart for the BJP and even fair on paper, but it is, in fact, a bad idea that could further hurt

an already polarised country. It would disincentivise states from controlling their populations and focusing on improving living conditions for their people, while giving rich, progressive states more reason to feel sidelined by the central government.

The BJP-led central government should follow the lead of earlier administrations – including one of its own – by kicking the delimitation can down the road and continuing to allow the population numbers from 1971 to be used as a basis for parliamentary seat calculations. This will allow the northern states time to catch up on population control.

Or, if it has to go ahead with delimitation based on population – the fundamental tenets of democracy link population numbers with power, after all – it needs to work out a formula to compensate the southern states, perhaps with additional seats based on their social progress. The central government’s data shows that the southern states rank higher to much higher on its Social Progress Index (SPI) than the big northern ones. The SPI incorporates a range of indicators including nutrition, medical care, education and access to water and sanitation.

There is already an obvious, short-term solution to the diminishing demographic dividend problem: moving people from where they are in excess to where they are actually needed and can be catered for. This is already happening – migrants from Bihar are present in large numbers in Stalin’s Tamil Nadu, for instance. Such a strategy would keep real wages down, and push locals of rich states into higher-paying jobs, while providing some relief to states that are struggling to provide a decent standard of living for their massive populations.

Of course, taking this high road would require a lot of political maturity.

Southern states should avoid political grandstanding, guard against a backlash against migrants whose culture and language may be alien to them and band together to formulate a bargaining strategy on delimitation. In the same way, the BJP needs to demonstrate significant political maturity and put India’s long-term interests ahead of short-term gains for the party, and abandon or at least postpone delimitation for the benefit of the whole nation.

The best solutions are to be found in getting politicians to behave apolitically and look at the long-term future of the country, not their own immediate gains. This is a bit like asking an obese man to stick to the diet the doctor ordered when he can sniff the fragrance from a nearby feast; hard on him, but the consequences of making the wrong choice would be profound.

—Aljazeera

The IMF and the World Bank must be abolished to save the planet

AS yet another United Nations Climate Change Conference fails to produce a strong commitment to urgent climate action, the climate crisis is on course to get much worse.

While its effects, such as unprecedented flooding, devastating droughts, storm surges, biodiversity loss and more intense hurricanes appear novel in the eyes of many in the Global North, these disasters have caused immeasurable destruction for decades across the Global South, especially the Caribbean.

Extreme weather events not only threaten the economic viability of these societies, but also call into question the role of the most powerful international economic institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Intervention by these bodies has consistently worsened the economic situation of climate-stricken communities. This is why the World Bank and the IMF need to be abolished to save the planet and human lives.

Caribbean island nations know this reality all too well. On July 1, Hurricane Beryl slammed into Grenada.

Two of its island territories, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, were flattened, as Beryl damaged or destroyed nearly 100 percent of homes and devastated infrastructure. At least six people were killed.

The neighbouring island nation of St Vincent and the Grenadines also suffered widespread destruction due to the hurricane. Across the two countries, as many as 80,000 people were affected, with 20,000 people made homeless and 11 killed.

Jamaica was not spared either. The hurricane killed at least four people and affected 160,000. Farming communities suffered devastating losses.

It has been now almost five months since the hurricane swept through the Caribbean and these communities are still struggling to recover. This is because these island nations have been taken hostage by disastrous deals with the IMF and the World Bank.

Instead of helping a region that is at the epicentre of climate disasters, these two institutions force its nations into borrowing arrangements that prioritise austerity and objectives of global capital, rather than immediate and longer-term relief and recovery.

As a result, communities suffer under increased public debt and reduced investment in supporting the social infrastructure necessary to respond to climate disasters and mitigate the effects of climate change.

In addition, instead of offering unconditional relief and recovery funding on terms required to truly meet the needs of people, these entities have explicitly supported debt-related financial tools like catastrophe insurance or bonds, debt swaps, and now “disaster clauses” integrated into debt contracts. A disaster or hurricane clause adds to the contractual terms of a debt instrument the ability of a borrower to defer payments of interest and principal in the event of a qualifying natural disaster.

The clause sets out the kinds of preconditions for specific events or triggers that would permit the borrower to temporarily defer repayments of interest, principal, or both for a period of one to two years. This mechanism does not reduce or eliminate debt.

While it purports to offer “relief”, it brings further misery and onerous costs to climate-devastated governments and communities. Take for example the disaster clause, which has been

praised and advocated by Caribbean economist and current climate finance adviser of the Inter-American Development Bank, Avinash Persaud, one of the architects of the “Bridgetown Initiative” for the reform of the international financial system.

Keston K Perry

principal in subsequent years. In Jamaica’s case, a catastrophe bond could not be used because the hurricane did not meet the so-called “air pressure” parameter, which means investors’ funds remain safe. A catastrophe bond is a high-yield debt instrument arranged by the World Bank and designed to raise money for insurance corporations in the event of a natural disaster. These investors profit as much as 15 percent returns on these instruments when they fail to pay out. If a payout was triggered, bondholders could have paid as much as \$150m. These thresholds do not follow scientific evidence or consider the

debt instrument arranged by the World Bank and designed to raise money for insurance corporations in the event of a natural disaster. These investors profit as much as 15 percent returns on these instruments when they fail to pay out. If a payout was triggered, bondholders could have paid as much as \$150m. These thresholds do not follow scientific evidence or consider the

recovery loans from the IMF and the World Bank, therefore increasing debt burdens even further. The long-term effect of these arrangements can be seen in Barbuda, Sint Maarten and Dominica, which were devastated by Category 5 Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. My recent visits to these islands, which have not fully recovered, show that debt-related financial

complicated nature and unpredictability of these disasters. That is because they are determined by financial analysts who pursue higher returns for investors.

Without sufficient resources for recovery and relief efforts, Jamaica and Grenada may be forced to request

instruments are not just wholly inadequate, but utterly unjust. They cannot ensure the social, economic and environmental recovery of communities.

In Dominica, for example, debt has mushroomed after the hurricane disaster as climate financing to help it “recover” came in the form of loans. As a result, the nation of 70,000 people is having to pay \$30m per year just to service debt. As one Dominican taxi driver put it to me: “The true hurricane started after the hurricane passed.”

The hardship that the IMF and the World Bank heap on climate-devastated communities falls in line with the legacies and realities of colonialism.

The logic of their mechanisms can be traced back to the insurance system, capital markets, and financial instruments that fuelled the transatlantic slave trade. During that time, enslaved Africans were viewed as chattel and nonhuman property, ships owned by enslavers were insured by major brokers, and slave-produced commodities received investment from colonial governments and financial corporations.

These all aimed to



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan presents a souvenir to Belarusian Minister Alexey Kushnarenko during Pakistan-Belarus Business Forum 2024.

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Court Notice

In the Court of Javeria Sartaj Khan Additional District Judge II /Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Camp Court Totalay Buner. Appeal No.4/13 Institution 24/1/2023/5/7/2024 Date of hearing. 29/11/2024. Mohamad Quresh VS Asad Ali Khan etc. Notice to no. 10/1. Ajmal Khan. 10/2. Amal Khan. 10/3. Yasir Khan resident of Totalai. 11. Altaf Ali. 12. Hamdan sons of Mirza Gul .16. Siraj Mohamad. 21. Sheren s/o Torabaz Khan. 22/4. Bacha Husain. 22/5. Akhtar Husain resident of Dagai Khadukhel district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 29/11/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

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PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 281 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 281.55 points more points, a positive change of 0.29 percent, closing at 98,079.78 points as compared to 97,798.23 points on the last trading day.

A total of 640,258,528 shares were traded during the day as compared to 1,249,092,089 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 25.623 billion against Rs.45,475 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 460 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 220 of them recorded gains and 185 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 55 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Hascol Petrol with 64,823,622 shares at Rs 12.35 per share, Cnergycio PK with 48,065,578 shares at Rs 4.71 per share and Fauji Foods Limited with 40,919,425 shares at Rs.12.26 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maxi-

mum increase of Rs.117.14 per share price, closing at Rs 19,132.14, whereas the runner-up was Pakistan Services Limited with Rs 46.11 rise in its per share price to Rs 941.47.

PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 95.96 per share closing at Rs 902.28 followed by Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited with Rs 59.95 decline to close at Rs7,954.55.

Rupee remains unchanged against dollar
The Rupee on Monday remained unchanged against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs277.75.

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

The price of Euro decreased by Rs 1.08 to close at Rs 290.27 against the last day's closing of Rs 291.35, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.79, whereas

a decrease of 55 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 348.81 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 349.36.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal remained stagnant to close at Rs 75.62 and Rs 73.97 respectively.

Gold prices dip Rs.4,300 per tola

The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased further by Rs 4,300 and was sold at Rs 278,400 on Monday against its sale at Rs 182,700, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also went down by Rs.3,657 to Rs.238,683 from Rs. 242,370 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold decreased to Rs 218,793 from Rs 222,172.

The price of per tola gold declined by Rs 50 to Rs 3,400 whereas that of ten gram silver went down by Rs 42.87 to Rs 2,914.95. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$43 to \$2,672 from \$2,715, the Association reported.

FBR holds tax awareness session at Superior College



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), through its Taxpayers Services Wing, organized a tax awareness session on the topic of "Tax Culture in Pakistan" at Superior College Islamabad. The session was attended by the Principal of the college Nadeem Ahamd, Vice Principal Ms. Shahla Saeed and Director Mr. Yasir Awan along with other faculty members and students of the college.

During the session, Second Secretary (Tax Education) Zafar Iqbal Khan gave a detailed briefing on Pakistan's current tax system.

He highlighted the various measures being taken by Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to enhance transparency and efficiency of the revenue system.

In his briefing, he urged on filing tax returns in time and impressed upon the students to become Tax Ambassadors by spreading awareness about tax

responsibilities in their communities.

The session concluded with a detailed question & answer session, where the participants asked questions from FBR team for their information.

This initiative is part of FBR's ongoing efforts to foster a better understanding of the tax system among youth and promote a culture of tax compliance in Pakistan. At the end of the session, souvenirs were also exchanged from both sides.

SCCI concerned over sluggish trade activities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry expressed grave concern over prevailing 'slow-down' in economic and trade activities due to the current political unrest and said that it would further damage the economy and businesses.

It was urged by the federal government and relevant authorities to resolve all issues through negotiations to maintain law and order as well as smoothly flourish economic, trade and business operations and prevent further deteriorat-

ing the economy.

In a joint statement issued by president SCCI Fazal Moqem Khan, Senior Vice President Abdul Jalil Jan and Vice president Shehryar Khan said a complete lockdown situation prevailed due to political protest/sit-ins that had halted business and trade activities throughout the country.

On the other hand, office bearers said online-business has also suffered due to slow-down of internet services.

They said business, trade and export have already declined in the prevailing

situations and protest/sit-ins would further paralyzed them, which was not in the best interest of people and the country.

Office bearers asserted that the government and relevant institutions must sort out solutions to all issues through peace and table talks, because turbulence and anarchy were unaffordable for the country.

Fazal Moqem stressed that a peaceful atmosphere is vital for economic stability and growth as it is crucial for improving business, trade and export that would lead the nation on path sustainable prosperity and

progress.

SCCI chief said country's economy still unstable situation and closure of business, trade and economic activities was tantamount to further push economy to standstill situation.

Fazal Moqem urged the government and protesters to adopt a path of dialogue for the best interest of the economy and country and avoid creating anarchy and instability.

He emphasised that all issues need to be addressed through mutual consensus to prevent the country and economy from further damages and crisis.

Vitalz 99 Batch gathered in their alma mater Cadet College Sanghar

F.P. Report

KARACHI: On the completion of 25 years Vitalz 99 Batch gathered in their alma mater Cadet College Sanghar, this is the first program of its nature to be celebrated in CSS. The former students of Vitalz 99 Batch reconnected with their roots and expressed admiration to their teachers and institution.

Commandant/Principal Cadet College Sanghar Commodore Zeeshan Ali SI (M) and Adjutant Lt.Cdr. Shoaib Goraya (PN) accompanied by other members of faculty gave a hospitable reception to the Vitalz 99 Batch.

Total 710 cadets currently studying in Cadet College Sanghar also enthusiastically welcomed the alumni gathered from all over Pakistan inside the Iqbal Auditorium.

The distinguished graduates and Principal Commodore Zeeshan Ali SI (M) discussed opportunities to further enhance learning experience in Cadet College Sanghar. Afterwards Principal Cadet College Sanghar presented a memorabilia shield to Vitalz 99 Batch, which was



received by ex-cadet Irfan Nizamani, Hasnain Abbasi, Ali Raza Shah, Zohaib Wassan and Saleem Zia, subsequently on behalf of the entire Vitalz 99 Batch. Ex-cadet Ahsan Nabi Dar extended a souvenir shield to Principal Cadet College Sanghar. Ex-cadets Irfan Nizamani, Faisla Irshad, Maaz Ahemd, Farhan Qureshi, Munir Khushk, Rana Tauseef, Rao Noman, Gohram Bugti and Adil Iftikhar gifted Sindhi cap, Ajrak, Vitalz Logo Cap and Keychain and wrist band respectively.

Ex-cadet Asif Ali and

Zulfiqar Lashari, Shajhan Mari, Zohaib Taqi, Zaheer Zardari, Zohaib Ansari, Attaullah Khoso, Sajjad Kaloi extended Sindhi Cap, Ajrak, Vitalz Logo Cap, Keychain and wrist band to Adjutant Lt.Cdr. Shoaib Goraya (PN). Additionally Director Studies Cadet College Sanghar was gifted Vitalz Logo Cap on behalf of Vitalz 99 Batch presented by Irshad Shar and Naveed Ayub. Ex cadets Dr. Ikram Baig and Rana Khurram were given a Vitalz Logo wristband. Keychains designed with Vitalz 99 Batch Logo were

also distributed among the 710 students present in the Iqbal Auditorium.

A special lunch was organized in honor of Vitalz 99 Batch, followed by a water polo match which was thoroughly enjoyed by the guests. Eventually the alumni were given a tour of their parent institution. The organizers of the event ex-cadets Faisal Ihsad and Parvez Iqbal and their efforts to execute this event were greatly appreciated by all the attendees. In the end the guests were escorted with well wishes for their future.

Standard Chartered Pakistan partners with ConnectHear

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Standard Chartered Pakistan has partnered with ConnectHear to implement Pakistan's first ever virtual sign language interpretation application. This innovative app enables seamless communication for individuals with hearing impairments, providing them with instant access to interpretation services at the tap of a button.

This application will be rolled out across 10 SC branches nationwide, ensuring increased accessibility and financial inclusion for the Bank's clients. Beyond improving client experience, this tool will play a pivotal role in the recruitment and support of hearing-impaired employees, fostering a more inclusive workplace.

Saadya Riaz, Head Wealth and Retail Banking, SC Pakistan commented on the occasion, "This partnership underscores Standard Chartered's unwavering commitment to breaking barriers and ensuring accessibility for all. Through this partnership, we are setting a benchmark for inclusion in financial services while empowering individuals with hearing impairments to participate fully in the economy. This initiative not only aligns with the SBP's mission of financial inclusion but also reflects our dedication to building a diverse and inclusive environment for both clients and employees."

Arhum Ishtiaq, Co-founder and CTO, ConnectHear echoed the sentiment, stating, "This collaboration reinforces our vision of creating a truly inclusive environment where everyone can thrive. With our virtual sign language interpretation technology, we are advancing financial inclusion, empowering both

employees and customers with disabilities to fully participate and benefit from the financial ecosystem, ensuring they are fully supported in their journey with Standard Chartered."

Standard Chartered has a long-standing commitment to removing barriers, increasing accessibility, and creating dialogue to promote financial inclusion for its clients, colleagues, and communities. This partnership is a continuation of the work the Bank has done in recent years on Diversity & Inclusion including making significant progress by launching assistive technology and providing workplace adjustments. The Bank's branches are fully accessible through an inclusive design standard and offers inclusive banking forms.

ConnectHear is South Asia's largest trailblazer in inclusion, dedicated to

bridging the accessibility gap through innovative technology. With a mission to empower individuals and promote inclusivity, ConnectHear offers a range of services, including virtual sign language interpretation, sensitivity training, inclusive job placements and awareness initiatives. By leveraging technology to create an equitable society, ConnectHear continues to set new standards for accessibility, fostering connections that transcend barriers.

We are a leading international banking group, with a presence in 53 of the world's most dynamic markets and serving clients in a further 64. Our purpose is to drive commerce and prosperity through our unique diversity, and our heritage and values are expressed in our brand promise, here for good. Standard Chartered PLC is listed on the London and Hong Kong Stock Exchanges.

13 new records were created in 69 events at 30th Palmolive Sindh Women's Swimming Championship 2024

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Concluding on a high note, the 30th Palmolive Sindh Women's Swimming Championship 2024 set the tone of triumph for its contestants. Surpassing milestones and setting the bar high, Pakistan's young female swimmers emerged victorious as the crowds cheered and celebrated the winners and the new records that were set in the six age groups that were contested.

Sponsored by Colgate-Palmolive (Pakistan) Ltd. and organized by Karachi Women's Swimming Association (KWSA) for 30 years, the Palmolive Sindh Women's Swimming Championship has consistently provided a platform for female participants to hone their talent & encourage healthy competition. Promoting swimming on a national scale, this competition opens the doors to both new and seasoned swimmers, giving them the confidence to represent Pakistan at home and abroad.

Over the course of two days, 13

new records were created in 69 events at the 30th Palmolive Sindh Women's Swimming Championship 2024 - setting challenging swim times for next year's competitors.

The final Prize Distribution Ceremony brought smiles to many, as their achievements brought prestige and honor to the schools and clubs they were representing. The honorable Chief Guest Sania Maskatiya, renowned celebrity graced the occasion and presented medals to the winning swimmers and teams.

The Chief Guest was immensely impressed by the performance of the participants and also applauded KWSA (Karachi Women's Swimming Association) and Colgate Palmolive for their continuous efforts to promote female swimming in Pakistan and Colgate-Palmolive for making this initiative possible through their sponsorship. Mr. Zulfiqar Lakhani, Managing Director of Colgate-Palmolive Pakistan Ltd., also graced the occasion with his presence.

The continued participation of

highly competitive and enthusiastic athletes is the secret behind the success of this two-day swimming event. In all, 250+ children and 16 institutions took part, and set new standards of record-breaking excellence through exceptional sportsmanship, setting the bar high for next year.

The new records created were:

1. Open Age Group 800M Freestyle - Meher Maqbool broke the record

a. Old Record: 10:33:52
b. New Record: 10:12:56

2. Open Age Group 200M Individual Medley - Hareem Malik broke the record

a. Old Record: 2:44:06
b. New Record: 2:42:43

3. Open Age Group 400M Freestyle - Meher Maqbool broke the record

a. Old Record: 5:15:15
b. New Record: 4:59:20

4. Age Group 15-16, 50M Breaststroke - Hareem Malik broke the record

a. Old Record: 38:55
b. New Record: 37:77

5. Age Group 15-16, 200M Backstroke - Meher Maqbool broke the record

a. Old Record: 2:47:43
b. New Record: 2:37:86

6. Age Group 11-12, 200M Individual Medley - Zoya Omair Hafiz broke the record

a. Old Record: 2:58:21
b. New Record: 2:54:13

7. Age Group 15-16, 50M Butterfly - Daniya Bhatia broke the record

a. Old Record: 33:11
b. New Record: 32:16

8. Age Group 15-16, 200M Individual Medley - Hareem Malik broke the record

a. Old Record: 2:47:76
b. New Record: 2:44:81

9. Open Age Group 200M Backstroke - Meher Maqbool broke the record

a. Old Record: 2:42:77
b. New Record: 2:39:20

10. Open Age Group 200M Breaststroke - Hareem Malik broke the record

a. Old Record: 2:58:28
b. New Record: 2:54:13



b. New Record: 2:57:26

11. Age Group 15-16, 100M Backstroke - Meher Maqbool broke the record

a. Old Record: 1:15:29
b. New Record: 1:14:76

12. Age Group 15-16, 100M Breaststroke - Hareem Malik broke the record

a. Old Record: 1:23:69
b. New Record: 1:21:65

13. Open Age Group 100M Butterfly - Daniya Bhatia broke the record

a. Old Record: 1:16:71
b. New Record: 1:14:70

Karachi Grammar School was the overall group champion with 741 points. CAS School followed in the runner's up position with 218 points, and Karachi Club bagged the third position with 129 points.



In brief

Pakistan squad for second ODI revealed

K A R A C H I (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Monday the playing XI for the second ODI between the Green Shirts and Zimbabwe set to be played at the Queen Sports Club. Two changes have been made to the team. Taayyib Tahir will play in place of Haseebullah Khan, and Mohammad Hasnain has been replaced by Abrar Ahmed. The second ODI at Queens Sports Club tomorrow (Tuesday) will mark Abrar's debut in ODI cricket. Moreover, batters Saim Ayub, Abdullah Shafique, and Kamran Ghulam have been retained in the team. Along with skipper and wicketkeeper-batter M Rizwan, the side includes Salman Ali Agha, Irfan Niaz and Amir Jamal. Haris Rauf will lead the pace department as Faisal Akram's spin skills will be in action tomorrow against the hosting side. Zimbabwe lead the three-match ODI series by 1-0, having won the first match by 80 runs using the DLS method. They were restricted by Pakistani bowlers on 205 but the visiting team failed to cement themselves and were 60/6 when the rain started to heavily pour in Bulawayo.

Champions Trophy tour concludes

LAHORE (INP): The global trophy tour of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 came to an end in Pakistan on Monday. The coveted silverware is set to be transported to Afghanistan as part of the trophy tour. Throughout its time in Pakistan, the trophy embarked on an adventurous path, traversing a variety of picturesque cities. It began its journey in the capital, Islamabad, before making its way to the scenic hills of Murree and Nathia Gali. The trophy continued its travels to Abbottabad, Khanpur Dam, Taxila and Karachi. After a whirlwind tour, it has now returned to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Headquarters in Lahore, marking the conclusion of its leg in Pakistan. The next stop for the trophy will be Afghanistan, where it will be on display from November 26 to 28. Following its time in Afghanistan, the Champions Trophy will head to Bangladesh, set to captivate fans from December 10 to 13. From there, the trophy will touch down in South Africa, continuing its international celebration from December 15 to 22. The Champions Trophy will then venture to Australia, enthralling cricket enthusiasts from December 25 to January 5, before heading to New Zealand from January 6 to 11. The journey will continue with a stop in England from January 12 to 14, where fans will have a chance to engage with the trophy. The grand finale of this exciting global trophy tour of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 will take place in India, where the trophy will be showcased from January 15 to 26.

Ivory Coast stumbles to historic low

LAGOS (Reuters): Ivory Coast managed just seven runs in a 264-run defeat to Nigeria in Lagos on Sunday, marking the lowest score ever recorded in a men's Twenty20 Int'l. After winning the toss and opting to bat, Nigeria's Selim Salau scored 112 off 53 balls as the hosts posted 271 in the 2026 T20 World Cup regional qualifier. Ivory Coast's meek reply saw opener Ouattara Mohamed top-score with four runs at the Tafawa Balewa Square Cricket Oval, with Mimi Alex, Maiga Ibrahim and Dje Claude each adding one run to the total.

Pakistan gear up for U19 tri-series final

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan are all set to take on Afghanistan in the final of the U19 tri-series at the ICC Cricket Academy Ground on Tuesday.

The toss will take place at 10am PKT, with the first ball of the final to be bowled at 10:30am PKT, said a press release. In the seven-match series, both finalists have played four matches each, winning three and losing one, while hosts UAE remained winless. The Saad Baig-led Pakistan side defeated Afghanistan by 13 runs in the two sides' last encounter held on 20 November. However, Mahboob Khan-led Afghanistan secured a 100-run victory in their first match against Pakistan on 15 November.

Pakistan registered convincing victories in their two encounters against the hosts, winning by 10 wickets and 191 runs, respectively. For Pakistan, the opening duo of Shahzaib Khan and Usman Khan has been in great form and have scored runs consistently. Left-handed Usman has amassed 306

runs from four matches at an average of 102, which included one century and three half-centuries.

His fellow southpaw Shahzaib has accumulated 277 runs at an average of 92.33, which also includes one century and two half-centuries from four matches. Both the batters have also provided two century-run partnerships while opening, including an unbeaten 192-run stand against UAE on 13 November.

In the bowling unit, pacers Abdul Subhan, Ali Raza and Mohammad Ahmed have picked six wickets each, while Faham-ul-Haq has grabbed five wickets. Left-armed Ahmed is the only bowler to take a five-wicket haul in the event, while Ali's best figures of four for 57 came in a 13-run win against Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Hassan Khan has been ruled out of the final as well as the forthcoming ACC U19 Men's Asia Cup, after the left-arm spinner injured his left ankle during a training session. Hassan's replacement for the Asia Cup will

be made in due course.

Saad Baig talking to PCB Digital on the eve of the tournament, said, "We have performed well in the tournament, and now we look forward to doing well against Afghanistan in the final. The coaches have clearly defined the players' roles, and they have responded positively in crucial situations, which has helped the team win matches in the competition."

"The tri-series has also given the players confidence to perform well in the upcoming Asia Cup."

Pakistan U19 squad for tri-series: Saad Baig (captain, wicket-keeper) (Karachi), Abdul Subhan (Abbottabad), Ali Raza (Sialkot), Faham-ul-Haq (Lahore), Farhan Yousuf (Lahore), Haroon Arshad (Karachi), Mohammad Ahmed (Lahore), Mohammad Huzaifa (Bahawalpur), Mohammad Riazullah (Abbottabad), Naveed Ahmed Khan (Karachi), Shahzaib Khan (Abbottabad), Tayyab Arif (Sialkot), Umar Zaib (Abbottabad) and Usman Khan (FATA).

Vinicius out of Liverpool clash with hamstring injury

MADRID (AFP): Real Madrid forward Vinicius Junior has suffered a hamstring injury, said the Spanish club Monday, ruling him out of the upcoming Champions League match with Liverpool.

"After tests taken today our player Vinicius Junior has been diagnosed by Real Madrid's medical services with a hamstring injury in his left leg," the club said in a statement.

Spanish media reported the Brazilian winger is expected to miss almost a month, which would also keep him out of the Champions League visit to Atalanta on December 10, as well as Wednesday's match at Anfield.

Vinicius played the full 90 minutes of Madrid's 3-0 win at Leganes in La Liga on Sunday, setting up Kylian Mbappe for the opening goal. "The crazy calendar... now to recover," wrote the 24-year-old on social media platform X.

Real Madrid president Florentino Perez railed against European and world football governing bodies UEFA and FIFA respectively on Sunday for their expanding match programmes. The Champions



League this season features eight group matches instead of six and an extra round which some teams will participate in if they finish outside the top eight.

Madrid have various players out injured for long periods, including Dani Carvajal and Eder Militao with severe knee injuries, which Perez blamed on increasing numbers of matches. "This season we could play 82 matches -- there are 63 percent more matches organised by UEFA and FIFA, from 22 to 36," complained Perez.

"There have already been nine cruciate ruptures this season (in La Liga), the same as in the whole of last season. Specialists point to fatigue as the cause." Vinicius has started the

season in superb form, outshining summer arrival Mbappe thus far. The forward, who finished second in the Ballon d'Or voting, has four Champions League goals in four appearances this season as well as eight La Liga strikes in 13 games.

Champions League holders Madrid have started their European campaign in shaky form, with two defeats in their opening four matches. They lost 1-0 at Lille and 3-1 at home against AC Milan in their last outing in the competition, leaving them 18th in the expanded group table.

Liverpool, under new coach Arne Slot, lead both the Champions League table and the Premier League.

Guardiola not for changing despite Man City crisis

M A N C H E S T E R (Agencies): Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola says it is tough for his players to "defend a legacy" and questioned why he should change his tactics despite a run of five successive defeats.

Not since his first season at City in 2016-17, when for a long time it looked possible they would fail to qualify for the Champions League, has Guardiola's team been questioned in the way it is being won.

Scrutiny is intense on City right now, from the age of Guardiola's players and the injuries some of them have suffered, to their transfer business and the form of Erling Haaland.

Yet Guardiola is refusing to contemplate changes to his philosophy and is keen to avoid negative knee-jerk reactions over players who have won four Premier League titles in a row and an historic Treble as recently as 2023. "What should I change?" he said. "We are big believers in the process and the fundamentals we have to do. I think we deserve some patience when we lose games. You are defending a legacy, tradition and success and that is so difficult to handle."

Guardiola searching for answers

Despite the comfort blanket of 18 trophies in his eight full seasons at City, Guardiola reminds journalists every so often at media conferences that if he doesn't deliver results, he risks losing his job just like any other manager. At times, it feels as though Guardiola is saying it



to motivate himself. He did it again on Monday as the search continued for a solution to City's dip in form. Guardiola's demeanor suggests the quest is occupying most of his thoughts.

When he arrived for his news conference to look ahead to Tuesday's Champions League encounter with Dutch side Feyenoord, Guardiola was a bit out of breath. It felt like he didn't really want to be there. But sometimes, a small trigger can change his mood. Asked if he was considering any fundamental changes to his approach - which he clearly will not implement - Guardiola's initial reaction was curt.

"Why?" he asked back. Because of the five defeats, came the response. And so Guardiola explained why it would not be happening.

At times like that, it is best to just sit back and wait for him to finish. There is no pause that allows any intervention.

That single answer lasted seven seconds short of three minutes. In condensed form, Guardiola said he had too many injured players. He needed some of them back and then those players need-

ed to return to form. Good or bad, he said, nothing lasts forever and this period will eventually pass. While the 4-0 defeat by Tottenham looked bad, his side had 26 shots and according to their xG, they should have won. This fact, he feels, demands less change, not more.

Then there was an explanation of the disruption the injuries have caused. No Rodri. No opportunity to pick central defenders Manuel Akanji or John Stones as a holding midfielder instead, with Ruben Dias behind. So the task falls to Ilkay Gundogan, who, Guardiola observes, "is our best guy running into [the opposition] box", not City's own. "It's not because they are soft, lazy or don't want it," Guardiola concluded. "What we have to do is create more and concede less." It sounds simple - but there is uncertainty.

Guardiola cannot be sure what comes next because he has never had to dig his way out of this situation before. He may have had bigger, more individual problems around the club to deal with, but in terms of actually winning football matches, he is in uncharted territory.



PERTH: Jasprit Bumrah joins his team-mates to celebrate a historic 295-run win.

India thrash Australia to win first Test

PERTH (Agencies): India completed a stunning 295-run win over Australia in the first Test in Perth to continue their extraordinary run in the country.

They bowled Australia out for 238 in the final session on day four to take a 1-0 lead in the five-Test series. It means India have now won five and lost only two of their past nine Tests in Australia dating back to their 2018-19 tour.

West Indies are the only other team to have won a Test in Australia in that time. Australia resumed on 12-3 after a devastating new-ball spell from Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj late on day three - and that soon became 17-4 when the latter had Usman Khawaja caught behind off a top-edged pull.

Steve Smith was then superbly set up by Siraj, caught behind for 17 off one that straightened.

Travis Head (89) and Mitchell Marsh (47) counter-attacked but both fell in quick succession in the afternoon session to Bumrah and Nitish Kumar Reddy respectively.

Off-spinner Washington Sundar had Mitchell Starc caught at short leg and bowled Nathan Lyon, before a superb Nitish Rana slower ball deceived Alex Carey to seal the comprehensive win. India must win three of the next four Tests to guarantee their place in a third successive World Test Championship final.

Australia need five wins across this series and a two-Test tour of Sri Lanka

to reach the final. The second Test is a day-night game in Adelaide and starts on 6 December.

Serious questions for Australia

This result will leave serious questions around Australia, with the gap between Tests only likely to extend the post mortem.

They were in the ascendency after bowling India out for 150 within two sessions on the opening day, but fluffed the advantage by being dismissed for 104.

It is a worrying trend for Pat Cummins' side, with the top order folding on five occasions in seven Tests in the past 12 months.

Four of the top six are in particularly worrying form, with Khawaja and Smith having gone 11 Tests without a century, Marsh 10 and

Marnus Labuschagne nine.

Nathan McSweeney managed only 10 runs in two innings on Test debut and there are likely to be questions about whether the Queenslander, who has never opened in first-class cricket, was the right option at the top of the order.

Pundits have also questioned whether Australia were aggressive enough with the ball at times in this Test, while their preparation - a white-ball series against Pakistan - has already been put under the microscope. Australia have won nine of their past 10 Tests in Adelaide, but that defeat was against India.

If they lose again the series and a place in the World Test Championship final look in doubt.

Amir stars as New York Strikers thump Team Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI (Monitoring Desk): Mohammad Amir, in a brilliant display of pace bowling, took three wickets to power New York Strikers to a dominant ten-wicket victory over Team Abu Dhabi in Abu Dhabi T10 League 2024 here on Monday.

New York Strikers' captain Sunil Narine opted to field first and Amir proved the decision right as he castled Phil Salt on the second ball of the innings.

Michael Pepper and Jonny Bairstow were bowled by Khuzaima Tanveer and Akeal Hosein respectively, leaving Team Abu Dhabi reeling at 11-3.

Kyle Mayers played an unbeaten yet cautious knock of 38 runs from 30 balls, being only the second batter to cross the double-figures from his side.

Laurie Evans (12) was the second-highest scorer for Team Abu Dhabi as they were restricted to 73-7.

Mohammad Amir came back later to remove Muhammad Irfan and Allah Mohammad Ghazanfar, returning with bowling figures of 3-7 from his two overs.

In response, New York Strikers successfully chased the 74-run target in 6.2 overs without losing any wickets.

Kusal Perera led the chase with a blistering 56-run knock from 26 balls with the help of six boundaries and four sixes. Evin Lewis played second fiddle to Perera, scoring 17 off 12.

It's worth noting that it was New York Strikers' second victory in the Abu Dhabi T10 League and are now placed fifth in the standings, meanwhile, Team Abu Dhabi are sitting in third, having won two out of their four games.

Team Abu Dhabi Playing XI: Phil Salt (c), Michael Pepper, Jonny Bairstow, Kyle Mayers, Laurie Evans, Kadeem Alleyne, Muhammad Irfan, Allah Mohammad Ghazanfar, Mark Adair, Zeeshan Naseer, Adam Milne, Noor Ahmad.

New York Strikers Playing XI: Kusal Perera, Evin Lewis, Kieron Pollard, Matheesha Pathirana, Sunil Narine (c), Donovan Ferreira, Dewald Brevis, Akeal Hosein, Doug Bracewell, Zeeshan Abid, Khuzaima Tanveer.

Shanaya Vawda Wins Bronze at 30th Palmolive Swimming C'ship 2024

F.P. Report

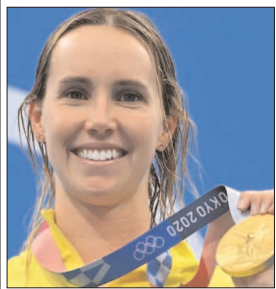
KARACHI: Seven-year-old swimmer Shanaya Vawda clinched the bronze medal in the 8 and Under breaststroke category at the 30th Palmolive Sindh Women's Swimming Championship 2024, held today at Karachi Club.

Shanaya's impressive performance in the competitive event showcased her budding talent and determination, making a significant mark in her young swimming career.

The Palmolive Sindh Women's Swimming Championship is one of the region's premier competitions, offering a platform for young swimmers to demonstrate their skills. Shanaya's achievement is a promising indicator of her potential in the sport, with more success expected as she continues to develop her swimming abilities.



Australia's most successful Olympian retires after glittering career



SYDNEY (Agencies): Australia's most decorated Olympian, Emma McKeon, announced her retirement from all forms of swimming on Monday, bringing an end to a glittering career in which she won 14 medals at three Olympics and 20 at world championships.

The 30-year-old sprinter had signalled her retirement earlier this year at the Paris Olympics after winning a gold, silver and bronze in relays to help Australia to its most successful Summer Games.

"I will definitely miss it ... It's brought me a lot of great relationships and shaped me into the person I am," McKeon said in the statement confirming her

retirement. "But I'm definitely ready for the next part of my life, which I'm excited for. I don't think I've had the time to reflect on everything yet."

McKeon missed out on the London Olympics as a teenager but hit her stride in Rio in 2016 where she won her first gold in the 4x100 metre relay as well as silvers in two other relays and a bronze in the 200m freestyle. In Tokyo in 2021, she won the 100m and 50m freestyle sprint titles which, along with two relay golds and three bronze medals, gave her the biggest medal haul for a single athlete at the delayed Games.

"She was and will continue to be a great role model for younger athletes," said Australia's swimming coach Rohan Taylor. "She always carried herself with dignity, and while we all saw her grace - the public can not truly appreciate how tough she is."

Taylor and McKeon's uncle, Swimming Australia chief executive Rob

Woodhouse, both picked out her triumph in the 100m freestyle in Tokyo, when she finished 0.31 seconds ahead of Hong Kong's Siobhan Haughey, as the highlight of her career.

"The 100m freestyle was one of the greatest races I have ever watched but I have also loved watching her advocate for those coming up through the ranks," said Woodhouse. As well as her six Olympic golds and five world titles, McKeon was also part of relay teams which set eight world records in the pool, three of which still stand.

Reflecting on missing out on the team for the London Games, McKeon said she hoped her story would inspire young athletes to persist with their dreams. "You have ups and you have downs. You just keep going along and you keep ticking the boxes. I can't believe where I'm at right now and how I got here," she added. "I want young kids to know that I was once in the same position they are - dreaming of one day doing something big."



In brief

Mashhood calls for united action to end discrimination

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Prime Minister Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Monday emphasised the need for collective efforts to work to create a world where women and girls are free from violence and fear. In a message on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, he said that despite progress, violence against women remains a major problem, affecting millions of women around the world. Mashhood said that as individuals and as a society, "We must understand our responsibilities to end violence against women." He said committing violence against women in any form was a sheer violation of human rights and dignity, adding "We must raise our voice against attitudes and systems at all levels that promote discrimination against women."

IRSA releases 95,100 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 95,100 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 47,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1501.05 feet and was 103.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 22,800 cusecs and 49,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1161.95 feet, which was 111.95 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 55,400, 46,600, 39,000 and 5,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Husband shoots dead his wife

ISLAMABAD (APP): An unemployed husband shot dead his wife on Monday, who had passed the public service exam and became a lecturer in Matari. According to a private news channel, the incident happened in the Bakhar Jamali area of New Saeedabad tehsil of Matari. Police said that the woman was identified as Rabia Afshan who was a mother of three, had passed the Sindh Public Service Commission exam two months ago and was working as a lecturer. According to the police, the reason for the murder is not yet known, and the search for the accused is ongoing.

Smog, fog expected: PMD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Smog and fog are likely to persist in isolated plain areas of Punjab and upper Sindh during the morning and night, as per the latest forecast from the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD). The synoptic situation indicated that continental air was prevailing across most parts of the country, maintaining a pattern of cold and dry weather. Over the past 24 hours, weather conditions remained dry in most regions, while colder temperatures were observed in the hilly areas. Patches of smog and fog were reported in certain plain areas of Punjab, impacting visibility during early hours.

PM's climate aide, Belarusian Minister meet, agree to work for environmental sustainability

ISLAMABAD (APP): PM's Coordinator on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam and Belarusian Minister for natural resources and environmental protection, Sergey Maslyak have agreed to closely work together to boost cooperation for achieving common environmental sustainability and climate resilience-related goals, with focus on eco-tourism, water conservation, circular economy, green technology transfer, exchange programmes, biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation.

Both sides met on Monday and highlighted and discussed the potential for launching joint projects between Pakistan and Belarus to build up climate change adaptation and resilience against the exacerbating impacts of global warming, particularly floods, heatwave, droughts, groundwater depletion and renewable energy.

The PM's climate aide emphasized that collabora-

tion between the two countries on biodiversity research and innovative wetland preservation techniques by leveraging Belarus's expertise would prove to be of unprecedented value.

Romina Khurshid Alam also called for joint efforts in policy development to align strategies with international standards, aiming to bolster sustainable climate development in Pakistan.

Collaborative initiatives between two countries for enhancing biodiversity conservation would be of paramount importance, aiming at restoring native species in Pakistan, enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem stability, she said and stressed the importance of preserving natural resources for achieving environmental sustainability goals, suggesting that Belarus's innovative approaches could assist Pakistan in managing its diverse climate actions.

Romina Khurshid said that Pakistan would appreciate collaboration with

Belarus on the exchange of academia, exchange of technical know-how, knowledge sharing and capacity building to promote green education and awareness in the field of nature and environmental protection and rational use of natural resources for achieving sustainable development goals, particularly related to climate change, water, sanitation, energy, agriculture, gender equality and women empowerment.

Both the countries discussed development and protection of ecological tourism within protected areas like nature reserves, national parks and nature reservations.

Romina proposed collaboration on mitigation of climate change and adaptation emphasizing the potential for both countries to promote principles of green economy, circular economy and low carbon economy for environmental sustainability enhancing resource management, and creating economic opportunities.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the PM on Climate Change Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam meeting with Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Belarus Sergey Maslyak.

Romina Khurshid advocated for collaborative policy development with international standards and emphasized the importance of international collabora-

tion in shaping environmental policies highlighting the need for improving regulatory frameworks to strengthen environmental governance, ensuring that both

nations can better achieve their sustainability goals.

Sergey Maslyak said Belarus's experience in environmental monitoring can complement Pakistan's

efforts to implement eco-friendly policies and practices. Establishing joint ventures in these areas could further strengthen their partnership.

GB's development top priority of Federal Govt: Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam said that the development and prosperity of Gilgit Baltistan was a top priority of the Federal Government and progress work on all announced projects by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif recently

would be started very soon.

Talking to the Chief Minister of Gilgit Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan in a meeting here on Monday, the minister said that to maintain the law and order situation in GB, Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) would be established very soon. The minister underlined that the incum-

bent regime was committed to launching mega projects for the promotion of tourism and speeding up the local mobility of the citizens.

Federal Secretary Waseem Ajmal was also present in the meeting. CM GB thanked the Federal Minister for taking a personal interest in the development of GB.

Pakistan advocates for global collaboration to tackle shared challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Danesh Kumar on Monday said that Pakistan believed in international cooperation to address common global challenges.

Speaking at the 1st Plenary Session titled "Advancing Global Architecture of Peace, Reconciliation, and Tolerance: Synergy of Governments, Parliaments, and Civil Society" in Cambodia, he said, "Our collective efforts to promote peace and harmony hold great importance in a world divided by conflict and inequality."

Highlighting the roles of various stakeholders,

Senator Danesh Kumar noted that governments, parliaments, and civil society have distinct yet complementary responsibilities in fostering peaceful societies. Senator Danesh Kumar and Misbah Khar, Advisor to the Chairman of the Senate, are representing Pakistan at the conference, according to a news release received here on Monday.

"In Pakistan, our journey toward peace and reconciliation is ongoing. Despite enormous human and economic losses due to terrorism, Pakistan remains committed to unity and understanding. We will continue our efforts to combat terror-

ism and restore social harmony," the Senator said, underscoring Pakistan's stance on peace building.

He urged governments and parliaments worldwide to adopt an inclusive approach to advance tolerance, stressing that education and dialogue are essential for fostering understanding. Calling the session a valuable platform, he said, "This is a great opportunity to reflect on shared goals and responsibilities to ensure a peaceful future for current and future generations."

In a related development, Senator Danesh Kumar and Misbah Khar signed the "Universal

Peace Charter: For People and the Planet" during the event. He highlighted the significance of parliamentary diplomacy in strengthening people-to-people connections and fostering mutual understanding.

The Pakistani delegation also held a meeting with the President of the Cambodian National Assembly, focusing on enhancing institutional cooperation and linkages between the two nations. The President of the Cambodian National Assembly expressed gratitude to the Pakistani delegation for its active participation and strong stance during the conference.

Strengthening police-press bond for public Safety: DIG

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Headquarters, Jawad Tariq, on Monday emphasized the importance of strengthening ties between the police and media to ensure public safety and effective communication during law-and-order situations in the federal capital.

According to a police spokesperson, following special instructions from Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police is actively working to assist representatives of both public and private media organizations during the ongoing law and order situation.

In light of these directives, DIG Headquarters Jawad Tariq instructed Islamabad Police's Public Relations Officer, Taqi Jawad, to ensure complete coordination with all local and international journalists.

Measures have been taken to provide journalists with full access to cover events and implement timely security arrangements to ensure their safety and the protection of their equipment during any violent occurrences, Jawad Tariq added.

Highlighting the role of

Ensuring law & order in capital, top-most priority; IG Rizvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, visited D-Chowk and various duty points on Monday. IG Rizvi met with the officials of Islamabad Police and other law enforcement departments in order to boost their morale while performing duties to maintain the law-and-order situation in the capital, a spokesman told APP.

On the occasion, IG Rizvi has instructed the officials to be highly alert and vigilant to deal with any emerging law and order situation. "We shall take every possible necessary measure to protect the lives and property of citizens as well as private and commercial property and ready to thwart adventurism from any element" IG said while addressing the officials.

Rizvi further said that, all the officials, while performing duties, were putting in their best efforts to maintain the law-and-order situation. He said all the officers have been directed to stay vigilant in their own respective areas and brief the personnel to deal with any law-and-order situation and check all the duties by themselves.

journalists in society, PRO Taqi Jawad acknowledged that journalists play a vital role in every field. Taqi emphasized that the information provided by journalists helps the police improve their performance.

Furthermore, Jawad stated that the partnership between journalists and police serves as a crucial link in keeping citizens informed during law-and-

order situations and in combating crime.

Jawad added that a positive relationship between journalists and the police is essential for maintaining peace and eradicating crime in the city.

The Islamabad Police is committed to providing journalists with the best possible facilities to ensure they can carry out their duties professionally and effectively, PRO added.

COMSTECH, Gourmet announces Industrial Internship Program

ISLAMABAD (APP): The OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), in collaboration with Gourmet Industries, has announced the COMSTECH-Gourmet Industrial Internship Program for its first batch in January 2025.

This program aims to promote innovation, research, and skill development across various industrial sectors, offering participants practical training and exposure to advanced technologies and industrial processes.

According to COMSTECH, the internship is open to applicants from OIC member countries holding a BS/BSc or MS/MSc in relevant fields and under the age of 40.

Hosted by Gourmet Industries, the largest food processing complex in Pakistan, the program offers 10 internships lasting four weeks. The selected candidates will receive

accommodation, meals, and return economy-class air travel.

The objective of the COMSTECH-Gourmet Industrial Internship Program is to foster innovation and research and development (R&D) across diverse industrial sectors, including food processing, engineering, plant operations, recycling, and so forth.

This program aims to provide interns with hands-on experience and exposure to cutting-edge technologies and methodologies, thereby enhancing their practical skills and theoretical knowledge.

By engaging in real-world projects, interns will contribute to the advancement of industrial processes and the development of sustainable solutions, ultimately driving technological innovation and improving operational efficiencies in the fields of human nutrition and value addition.

The program focuses

on key areas including food industry operations such as bakery, dairy, and beverages, plant utilities, recycling through innovative RPET methodologies, shrink-wrap production, sugar mill logistics, and media training in journalism and broadcasting. Participants will gain hands-on experience in supply chain management, production processes, and sustainability practices.

This initiative underscores COMSTECH's mission to empower youth in OIC nations and advance technological development for socio-economic progress.

The applicants must complete the application form and upload the requested documents (CV, Research Proposal, etc.) at <https://form.jotform.com/243101366016444> till November 30. The applicants can contact events@comstech.org for further information.

World 'End violence against Women Day' observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Like other parts of the world the country observed the Elimination of Violence against Women day on Monday. This year the UN has launched the unite campaign, which will run from November 25 to December 10, under the theme 'Every 10 Minutes, a woman is killed. #NoExcuse. Unite to End Violence against Women'.

This campaign highlights that in 2023, every 10 minutes a woman lost her life to violence, and made it a part of their campaign theme. This 2024 campaign Every 10 Minutes, a woman is killed across the world. #NoExcuse. Unite to End Violence against Women will draw attention to the alarming escalation of violence against women to revitalize commitments, call for accountability and action from decision-makers.

Within the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women issued by the UN General Assembly in 1993, defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

IESCO notifies power shutdown programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued power suspension programme for Wednesday (Nov 27) 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, Taramari, China Chowk, Karur, Burma, Aziz Chowk, G-6/3, Shahzad Town, F-10, G-10/M, I-8/3, I-10/2, G-11/2, F-11 Mkz, N.I.H, AQ Khan, Company Bagh, Beirut, Kotli Satyan, Shahdara Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Nust Road, Azharabad, Zircon Heights, 4th Road, B Block, Khurram Colony, KRL, Farooq Azam, Airport, Tamsamabad, Liaquat Bagh, Gulshanabad, Sarafa Bazaar, Jinnah Road, Ali Market, Abu Bakar, People Colony, Askari XI, Officer Colony, Saham, Mohanpura Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Scheme-III, Sir Syed Road, Zaraj-I & II, Zeta.I, IST, Dhok Awan, Mohra Nagyal, Mall Road, Sir

Syed Road, Rahmatabad-I, Dr.Town, Hamak, Scheme-III, Park View, KH Road, Dhok Noor, Kohala, Quaid-e-Azam Colony, RA Bazar, Padial, Hanif Shaheed, Khawaja, Nara Matur, Industrial, Bengali, Syed Kasran, Gagan, Mandra Feeders, Attock Circle, Paswal, Sangjani, Pandparan, Sher Shah Suri, HMC Road, Taxila, Dhirak, Khanabaz, Lalazar, Industrial, Sangjani, Pindparan, Darya Sharif, Gondal, Nar Topa, People Colony, Dilawarabad, Bolinwal, Mithal, Bahtar, Pari, Jhang, Kamrial, Ahmeddal, Khandia, Gul Muhammad, Dhirak, Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Ajmal Shaheed, F-7 Kachary, Sanaullah Shaheed, New Cantt, Jhelum, CMH Jhelum, Kariala, Kohar, F-6 Machine Mohalla, Borin, F-2 Chipboard, Industrial, F-10 Kala Base, Mangla Cantt, Captain Nisar Shaheed, Hasnot, Singhui, Colonel Muhammad Akram, Karoly, Hayat Sir Road, Main Bazaar, Sohawa Kachary, Chappar Sharif, Baba Shaheed, Shah Safir, Karsal, Kangar Thati, Qazian Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Sarpak Sarkal, Kallar Kahar,

Educational institutions in Islamabad to remain closed on Nov 26

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad's district administration on Monday announced that all educational institutions in the federal capital will remain closed tomorrow (Tuesday) due to the prevailing law and order situation in the city.

"It is notified that all the public/private educational institute shall remain closed on November 26 (Tuesday) with the revenue limits of Islamabad Capital Territory", said a notification issued by the district administration. The decision to close schools has been made in light of the prevailing situation, said the spokesman of ICT administration and added that the notification would apply to all educational institutions in the federal capital.

Bhawan, Ara Bazar, Mureed, Adi, Dhadiyal Express, Durgi Rajgan, Rawal, Lalla Town, K.S. Maniz, Jalalpur, Balksar, Lawa, GPO Chowk, Malkwal, Dhok Pathan, Kot Sarang, Thai, Badhyal, Patwali Feeders, GSO Circle, from 09:00 AM to 04:00 PM, Subhanuddin, I-11/1, I-11/2, Nika Kalan, Pindi Gheep, Gharib Wal, Muslim Town, City, Toot Oil, Kharapa, Sector A, F & C, Sang, Mangla Metal, Shahpur Feeders and surrounding areas.

Afghanistan to host moot

KABUL (BNA): The first international conference titled “Green Revolution for Afghanistan’s Self-Sufficiency” is set to be organized by Kabul University at Afghanistan National Agriculture Sciences and Technology University in Kandahar. The event will bring together agricultural experts, policymakers, and industry professionals from Canada, Nigeria, Thailand, India, Pakistan, Qatar, Bangladesh, Egypt, Turkey, and Iran.

Champions Trophy arrived

KABUL (TOLOnews): ACB officials say that the Champions’ Trophy will be brought to Kabul for display. According to the ACB, the trophy will arrive in Kabul from the United Arab Emirates tomorrow, Tuesday, and will be showcased to cricket enthusiasts at various historical sites across the country. The 50-over Champions Trophy tournament is set to begin in February 2025, hosted by Pakistan, with eight participating countries, including Afghanistan’s national team.

Kandahar marble gains global demand

K A N D A H A R (TOLOnews): Several marble factory owners in Kandahar report that their products are in high demand not only in domestic markets but also internationally. They urge the interim government to provide more support for their production efforts.

One of the marble factories, established in the Shur Andam Industrial Park of Kandahar at a cost of \$450,000, processes an average of 80 tons of marble daily from the Shah Wali Kot district.

“We process up to 80 tons of marble here daily and export our products, in addition to serving the domestic market, to countries like the UAE, China, India, Pakistan, and Qatar. There is high demand for our products, and we are working to expand our production capacity,” stated Nasibullah Mohammadi, the manager of the marble production factory in Kandahar.

Workers at the factory highlight the potential of marble, onyx, and granite for creating various decorative products.

“We have the ability to produce a variety of decorative stones and beautiful products, meeting the demands of both domestic and international customers,” said Mohammad Tahir, a factory worker.

“We work with skilled laborers, some with up to 10 years of experience. We face no shortage of skills or expertise,” said Bilal Ahmad, another worker.

“We produce diverse products based on market demand and have received additional orders for production. We ensure the

quality of our products,” said Mohammad Naseem, a factory worker.

The Kandahar Chamber of Mines and Industries aims to increase marble production in the province to reduce the need for similar imports.

“Fortunately, alongside mining in Kandahar, investment has also been made in the processing of mineral resources. We are working to boost our production and minimize the need for imports,” said Sayed Sarwar Amani, the head of Kandahar’s Mines and Industries.

Currently, around 200 factories operate in the Shur Andam Industrial Park. Local officials said that the capacity of production facilities will further increase with the activation of imported electricity in the province.

Passport department generates 175m revenue

FARYAB (BNA): The Passport Department of Faryab Province has generated 175 million Afghanis in revenue by issuing 31,000 passports since the beginning of the current solar year.

According to BNA reports, Mawlawi Sayed Omar Ghafoori, Head of the Faryab Passport Department, stated that in the first eight months of the previous year, the department issued 17,333 passports, generating 152 million Afghanis. However, this year’s issuance of 31,000 passports has resulted in a significant revenue increase, reflecting a 78% rise in applicants compared to the same period last year.

Ghafoori highlighted that a national ID distribution center is currently operational in the province to address the needs of applicants.

He called on the Islamic Emirate’s leadership to establish additional ID issuance centers and administrative units in the province to better manage the growing demand for passports.

UN urges IE to reverse erosion of women rights

KABUL (Ariana News): The United Nations in Afghanistan has called on the Islamic Emirate to take immediate action to end violence against women and girls and to reverse the systematic erosion of women’s rights that fosters such violence.

According to a statement issued by the UN, Afghanistan continues to have high rates of violence against women, which is exacerbated by the ongoing discrimination against women across all areas of life.

“We are at a critical juncture for the women and girls of Afghanistan. We need urgent action for justice to end violence against women and girls in Afghanistan,” said Roza Otunbayeva, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan.

The UN’s statement marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the start of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign.

This global campaign runs from November 25 - International Day for Ending Violence Against Women - to December 10, Human Rights Day.

“The fact that Afghan women and girls have less rights today than generations ago is a devastating reminder of the urgency of their struggle and the need for the international community to double down our efforts to stand with them, investing in their resilience, leadership and empowerment,” said Alison Davidian, the Special Representative for UN Women in Afghanistan.

The Islamic Emirate has however stated on numerous occasions that women’s rights in Afghanistan are ensured in accordance with Sharia.

economic affairs expert.

“Attracting more investments in the field of fiber optic internet and telecommunications can extensively address Afghanistan’s infrastructure needs. Such investments are essential,” said Firdos Behguzeeen, an economic expert.

Previously, the acting Minister of Communications and Information Technology, during his trip to China, called on international organizations to cooperate with Afghanistan in the development of fiber optic networks.

ed in Afghanistan. Now, an additional 488 kilometers of a new project has been approved, which will cover various provinces,” he said.

Some economic experts emphasize the importance of regional cooperation, particularly with Central Asian countries, to connect Afghanistan to fiber optic networks.

“Investment by Central Asian countries and India in this infrastructure project will have significant positive effects on Afghanistan’s economic development,” said Abdul Naseer Rashtia, an eco-

Muttaqi discusses bilateral ties with China’s envoy



KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has reported on a meeting between Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Yue Xiaoyong, Special Envoy of the People’s Republic of China for Afghanistan. The discussions centered on enhancing bilateral relations, expanding economic cooperation, and addressing regional issues.

Hafiz Zia Ahmad Takal, Deputy Spokesman for the Ministry, stated that Mawlawi Muttaqi emphasized the positive trajectory of relations between Afghanistan and China, acknowledging the significant advancements in trade and mutual cooperation.

Special Envoy Mr. Yue Xiaoyong highlighted the importance of respecting Afghanistan’s values and decisions, expressing China’s continued commitment to strengthening ties with the country. He also extended an invitation for the Acting Foreign Minister to participate in the upcoming meeting of foreign ministers from Afghanistan’s

neighboring countries.

In an earlier engagement, Yue Xiaoyong met with Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, where he reiterated China’s support for Afghanistan’s stance in international platforms and underscored Beijing’s intention to deepen and sustain cooperation with Kabul.

Road from Sehat-e-Aama Square to Ariana reopening

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Islamic Emirate has announced the reopening of the connecting road from the Sehat-e-Aama Square to the Ariana Square, after nearly two decades, for public use.

Hamdullah Fitrat, Deputy Spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, stated that all barriers on the connecting road from the Sehat-e-Aama Square have been removed and construction work on a gate in the area is underway.

This road, which begins at the Sehat-e-Aama Square and connects to the Ariana

Square and also to the Presidential Palace, was surrounded by high walls by the US Embassy nearly 20 years ago. Only embassy officials were allowed to use the road.

According to Fitrat, the road will now be used for the movement of important individuals and guests.

“The road from the Sehat-e-Aama Square to the Arg, which had been closed to all kinds of movement for years, has now been reconstructed, and all obstacles have been removed. Currently, construction of a gate is in

progress, and plans are in place to clear major barriers. This road will open access from the airport to the Arg and other government offices,” said the deputy spokesman of the Islamic Emirate.

Some citizens of the country have praised the Islamic Emirate for initiating the reopening of the Sehat-e-Aama Square Road and see this action as beneficial in reducing traffic congestion.

“Traffic is heavy now, and the reopening of this road is a very positive step by the Islamic Emirate,

“said Aman, a resident of Kabul.

“Wherever a road is reopened, such as at the Sehat-e-Aama Square, it is a good initiative. We ask the Islamic Emirate to reopen roads in other parts of Kabul as well,” said Shir Ali, another resident of Kabul.

It is worth mentioning that since the Islamic Emirate’s return to power, many of the roads in the capital, previously closed by the former government, have been reopened to Kabul residents by the Kabul Municipality.

IEA sets up new office to preserve ‘jihadi values’

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Information and Culture announced this week it has established a new administrative office called the Directorate for the Preservation of Jihad Values.

Acting Minister of Information and Culture Khairullah Khairkwa said this directorate is tasked with “keeping alive the values of jihad and its history.” Khairkwa outlined the

directorate’s three main functions: producing audiovisual content, establishing a “jihadi museum,” and documenting historical events.

He stated the museum would collect and archive artifacts from Afghanistan’s conflicts with Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States.

He stressed that jihadi museums will also be built in the capital, and in



provinces, to collect and display works related to jihad.

80% of Pashdan Dam construction completed in Herat

HERAT (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Energy and Water has announced that 80% of the construction work on the Pashdan Dam in Herat province has been completed.

Matuallah Abed, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Energy and Water, stated that this dam has the capacity to irrigate 13,000 acres of agricultural land and is expected to be completed by the end of the current solar year.

“The Pashdan Dam in

Herat province is a significant project in water management. Fortunately, 80% of its construction has been completed. This project will irrigate 13,000 acres of agricultural land, generate 2 megawatts of electricity, and store 54 million cubic meters of water,” said the spokesperson for the Ministry of Energy and Water.

“Water is a valuable resource for sustaining life. Fortunately, Afghanistan has vast water resources.

We have 85 billion cubic meters of water, and if properly managed, we can produce 23,000 megawatts of electricity, 10,000 of which are sufficient for Afghanistan’s needs, and the remaining 13,000 can be exported to other countries,” stated Abdul Zahoor Madbar, an economic expert.

The Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock, considering Afghanistan’s drought conditions, views the construction of water

dams as impactful for the development of agriculture in the country.

Previously, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, described better water management as a national responsibility for competing globally and economic growth.

He said that the Islamic Emirate is determined to use all available means to strive for better water management.

Afghanistan secures electricity imports for 2025 in agreement with Tajikistan

KABUL (BNA): Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) has formally signed an agreement with Tajikistan to secure electricity imports for the year 2025.

According to a statement issued by DABS, the agreement was finalized in Turkey during a meeting between Dr. Abdul Bari Omar, Chief Executive Officer of DABS, and Muhammad Omar Barqi Tojik, Chairman of Tajikistan’s Barqi Tojik. This agreement reflects the ongoing collaboration between the two nations to ensure Afghanistan’s energy needs are met efficiently.

Afghanistan currently relies on electricity imports from neighboring countries, including Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran. However, officials have highlighted a growing interest from both domestic and international investors in the



development of Afghanistan’s energy sector.

It was further emphasized that with stability and effective resource utilization, Afghanistan has the

potential to transition from an electricity importer to a regional electricity exporter in the near future, leveraging the same transmission lines currently used for imports.

EU delivers nearly 400 tons of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The European Union’s Office for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid announced that it has delivered over 390 tons of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan in 2024.

In a statement issued on Sunday, November 24, the office reported that a total of four humanitarian flights were conducted to Afghanistan this year.

According to the EU, the

latest shipment of aid was delivered to Kabul via humanitarian airlift.

The EU delegation emphasized in its statement that humanitarian aid cannot replace “economic development.” The office further stressed the importance of education for all, stating, “We need education for everyone to create sustainable solutions.”

Previously, Veronika Boskovic Pohar, the EU

Chargé d’Affaires for Afghanistan, reaffirmed the union’s commitment to continuing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.

These efforts come amidst Afghanistan’s worsening humanitarian crisis, where millions face food insecurity, lack of healthcare, and displacement. The EU’s continued support is vital but highlights the need for a broader international strategy addressing long-

term development and governance issues.

The EU also called for greater cooperation among global stakeholders to ensure that aid reaches those most in need, while simultaneously urging Afghanistan’s authorities to prioritize inclusive policies, particularly access to education and employment for women and girls, as essential steps toward recovery and stability.



ISLAMABAD: Rangers in riot gear standing guard alongside a road to prevent PTI protest for release of party's founder.

Sharjeel flays KP govt's use of resources in protests

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh's Senior Minister, Sharjeel Inam Memon, stated that there are attempts to create chaos and anarchy in the country. He emphasized that when governments are elected, their responsibility is to serve the people and address the needs of their constituencies. The priority of elected governments should be to fulfill the expectations of the people. As soon as the Pakistan People's Party's Sindh government assumed power, the Chief Minister of Sindh, along with his entire team, received clear instructions from Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and President Asif Ali Zardari to honor the promises made to the people during the elections.

Addressing a press conference in Karachi, Sindh's Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, stated that the public is not concerned about political positioning; they are only worried about having their problems solved in this era of inflation. Businesspeople, farmers, laborers, and people from all walks of life in the country are seeking relief. As soon as the Pakistan People's Party's Sindh government took office, they began issuing Kisan Cards to support farmers.

He stated that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has been clear about water projects, emphasizing that nothing controversial should be undertaken and that issues should be resolved through negotiations. As long as there are objections from any province regarding a project, such a project should not be initiated.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the Sindh government is working to provide free electricity to the people through solarization. Additionally, houses are being constructed for 2.1 million people, and the Pakistan People's Party is working tirelessly to complete this project as soon as possible. In the fields of health and education, the Health Minister, the Education Minister, and their entire teams are striving to provide the best possible facilities to the public and to improve the education sector.

He mentioned that the Sindh government was the first to introduce Electric Vehicle (EV) buses, followed by the launch of the Pink Bus service. Work is currently in progress on the Red Line and Yellow Line BRT projects. The government also plans to introduce EV taxis to provide employment opportunities for the unemployed youth. All departments of the Sindh government are actively making efforts in their respective areas to serve the people.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam

Memon expressed regret that, unfortunately, over 90 martyrs have lost their lives in a province, yet where is their Chief Minister right now? He questioned the current use of the government's machinery and resources, asking whether they are supporting the families of those who were killed or if they are instead focused on planning an attack on the federal capital. Attack on the federal capital is their priority.

He stated that PTI has been in power in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the past 12 years. Yet, can they point to a single successful initiative? Tragic incidents of terrorism have occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including the attack on Army Public School and the break-in at Bannu Jail, but the people have not seen any relief. If employment opportunities existed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, its residents would not have to seek work in Sindh or other provinces. Now, once again, there are attempts to create chaos. The stock market has improved, reaching a positive point, but a disruptive faction is seeking to destabilize the country. Meanwhile, a foreign leader is in the country, and instead of focusing on constructive politics, there are calls for chaos and disorder.

He stated that PTI has not made a single demand that serves the people's interests; their sole objective is to bring Imran Khan back to power. People are no longer responding to their calls because they are tired and frustrated. It is time to stop dragging the public into the politics of chaos. What the people truly want are jobs, healthcare, education, solutions to their problems, and relief from daily hardships. They do not want a politics of chaos, terrorism, or abusive language.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that when the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party, including Honorable Asif Ali Zardari and Honorable Faryal Talpur, were arrested, the party did not engage in any illegal actions in response. Despite having a government in Sindh, they did not use military force or government machinery against the federal capital.

He said that there are families mourning the loss of their loved ones, yet no one from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is willing to visit them. Instead, the government there is inciting people to attack the federal capital. He questioned why the police, who are actively used in Gandapur's rallies, are not being deployed in Parachinar where they are truly needed.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the people completely rejected the call for protest on November 24. No citizen came out

voluntarily to support their protest; instead, their officials used a few vehicles to mobilize a small number of people. He emphasized that the public is aware and has fully rejected the call of the anarchist group.

In response to a question, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that at the behest of the founder of PTI, his wife, Bushra Bibi, made a shameful statement regarding Saudi Arabia. He added that the entire PTI party has shown indifference to this statement. In response to another question, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that a person sitting in jail is seeking to create such chaos that it causes problems in the lives of the people.

In response to another question, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's clear announcement regarding canals reflects the policy of the Sindh government of the Pakistan People's Party. He emphasized that the Sindh government will not compromise on the rights of farmers. Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's statement on canals is the official position of both the Pakistan People's Party and the Sindh government. He further mentioned that the Sindh Chief Minister has written letters to the federal government on this matter and noted that the Sindh government has always taken a strong stance on controversial projects.

In response to a question, he said that the Pakistan People's Party has never opposed talks. The biggest obstacle to dialogue has been PTI and Imran Khan himself. Imran Khan has become the most controversial figure due to his habit of changing his statements daily. The courts will decide on Imran Khan's release. He further stated that the trend of forcing people into submission at gunpoint has never been a part of Pakistan's history. If anyone thinks otherwise, then tomorrow the Taliban could start doing the same things that PTI is doing today.

In response to a question, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the Pakistan People's Party is committed to settling every inch of Pakistan's land. He highlighted that a bumper onion crop has been harvested in Tharparkar and that the latest technology is being utilized to enhance cultivation in the region.

In response to a question, he said that transport lands, whether government or private, will be vacated. He also mentioned that he has not heard of any constitutional amendment. Regarding changes in the ministry, he emphasized that such changes do not affect the performance of the departments. He assured that all ministers are performing their duties with full dedication.

JCP names 9 judges for constitutional benches

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a major development, the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) on Monday named nine judges for the constitutional benches in the Sindh High Court (SHC) by a majority of eleven to four.

The third meeting of the JCP under the 26th Constitutional Amendment was held with Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi in the chair at the top court in Islamabad. The sole agenda of the meeting was formation of constitutional benches with the SHC.

"Following an extensive and thoughtful exchange of views, the commission considered the formation of constitutional benches in SHC and approved names of 9 judges with a majority of 11 to 4 for the period of two months," read a statement issued by the Supreme Court. SHC Justice Muhammad Karim Khan Agha was nominated as head of the constitutional benches.

He was picked as the chairman of the three-member constitutional committee. The committee would be responsible for constituting constitutional benches in the SHC. SC senior puisne judge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar and SHC

Chief Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui opposed the majority decision. CJP Afridi, however, did not vote on the matter.

Justice Muhammad Saleem Jessar, Justice Omar Sial, Justice Yousuf Ali Sayeed, Justice Abdul Mubeen Lakho, Justice Zulfiqar Ali Sangi, Justice Ms. Sana Akram Minhas, Justice Khadim Hussain Soomro, Justice Arbab Ali Hakro and Justice KK Agha were picked for the constitutional committees, read the statement. Earlier this month, the JCP formed a seven-member constitutional bench under Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan in line with the 26th Amendment.

CJP Afridi-led judicial commission constituted the bench in 7-5 split decision, with a majority of the members voting in favour of the constitutional bench. The constitutional bench includes judges from all provinces; Justice Amin-ud-Din and Justice Ayesha Malik from Punjab, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi from Sindh, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan from Balochistan and Justice Musarrat Hilali from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

The meeting was attended by senior puisne judge

Justice Shah, Justice Akhtar, Justice Amin-Uddin, Senator Farooq H Naek, MNA Sheikh Aftab Ahmad, MNA Omar Ayub, Roshan Khursheed Bharucha, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, Senator Shibli Faraz, Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan, and Pakistan Bar Council representative Akhtar Hussain. At the outset of the meeting, Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub objected to the quorum of the commission highlighting the absence of one member.

"This objection was later put to a vote and by majority, the meeting affirmed that the proceedings are in consonance with the Constitution and can continue in the absence of one member," said the statement.

The commission also discussed the establishment of a dedicated secretariat to support and perform its functions and, after thorough consideration, the body authorised the chairman (CJP) to proceed with its rule making and establishment. The judicial commission is mandated to appoint judges to the Supreme Court, high courts, and the Federal Shariat Court (FSC).

Israel says it's moving toward Lebanon truce

JERUSALEM/BEIRUT (Reuters): Israel is moving toward a ceasefire in the war with Hezbollah but there are still issues to address, its government said on Monday, while two senior Lebanese officials voiced guarded optimism of a deal soon even as Israeli strikes pounded Lebanon.

Axios, citing an unnamed senior US official, said Israel and Lebanon had agreed to the terms of a deal, and that Israel's security cabinet was expected to approve the deal on Tuesday. Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Danny Danon, said of a ceasefire: "We haven't finalized it yet, but we are moving forward." Asked for comment, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said it had nothing to say about the report.

Hostilities have intensified in parallel with the diplomatic flurry: Over the weekend, Israel carried out powerful airstrikes, one of which killed at least 29 people in central Beirut — while the Iran-backed Hezbollah unleashed one of its biggest rocket salvos yet on Sunday, firing 250 missiles. In Beirut, Israeli airstrikes levelled more of the Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs on Monday, sending clouds of debris billowing over the Lebanese capital.

Efforts to clinch a truce appeared to advance last week when US mediator Amos Hochstein declared significant progress after talks in Beirut before holding meetings in Israel and then returning to Washington. "We are moving in the direction toward a deal, but there are still some issues to address," Israeli government spokesperson David Mencer said, without elaborating.

Michael Herzog, the Israeli ambassador in Washington, told Israel's GLZ radio an agreement was close and "it could happen within days ... We just need to close the last corners," according to a post on X by GLZ senior anchorman Eli Triger.

In Beirut, Deputy Parliament Speaker Elias Bou Saab said a decisive moment was approaching and expressed cautious optimism. "The balance is slightly tilted toward there being (an agreement), but by a very small degree, because a person like Netanyahu cannot be trusted," he said in a news conference. A second senior Lebanese official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Beirut had not received any new Israeli demands from US mediators, who were describing the atmosphere as positive and saying "things are in progress."

The official told Reuters a ceasefire could be clinched this week. The conflict between Israel and Hezbollah spiralled into full-scale war in September when Israel went on the offensive, pounding wide areas of Lebanon with airstrikes and sending troops into the south. Israel has dealt major blows to Hezbollah, killing its leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and other top commanders and inflicting massive destruction in areas of Lebanon where the group holds sway. Diplomacy has focused on restoring a ceasefire based on UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended a 2006 Hezbollah-Israel war. It requires Hezbollah to pull its fighters back around 30 km (19 miles) from the Israeli border.

IOR facing unprecedented challenges: Naval Chief

F.P. Report

KARACHI: It is a matter of great satisfaction for me to observe the evolution of Maritime Security Workshop (MARSEW) from its humble beginning in 2017 to an event of national significance with the organization of 7th edition of MARSEW at Pakistan Navy War College.

The workshop has provided a shared platform to maritime stake holders for raising awareness about maritime potential of Pakistan and dilate upon ways and means to harness this untapped domain. The Workshop also brings together some of the most insightful minds from the govt, military, academia, media and industry, with a common goal: to deepen our understanding of maritime security in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

As the global maritime landscape evolves, our immediate neighborhood, the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is facing unprecedented challenges including geo-political contesta-



tion and nuclearization. The growth of international trade, the rise of transnational threats and the rapid pace of technological advancements have created both opportunities and risks in the IOR. In this background, securing our maritime domain is not merely a national priority but a necessity, requiring cooperation, innovation, and vigilance.

Besides security challenges in the maritime domain, our rich maritime resources offer great potential for economic prosperity. The country's economic future is inextricably linked

to the sea which serves as mankind's last reservoir for sustenance. Despite the fact that oceans and seas are regarded as the common heritage of mankind, claims and counter claims over seas resources are spawning friction as never witnessed before. The ongoing developments within the IOR have a direct bearing on Pakistan's maritime security. In this context, exploitation of Blue Economy for socio-economic prosperity enabled by secure maritime environment necessitates our focused attention.

I am confident that this Workshop will inspire new perspectives and lead to actionable drive that reinforces our commitment to maritime security and related economic prosperity. Together, let us work towards a secure and stable maritime environment that benefits not only our nation but the global community at large. I wish all the MARSEW participants an insightful interaction and a pleasant stay with their host, Pakistan Navy War College.

WhatsApp, Instagram platforms face disruptions

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: With the government employing measures to stop the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) march to Islamabad, social media users across the country are facing hindrances while accessing the platforms. Although hours have passed, the cause of the outage remains unknown, and no official notification has been issued, raising questions about its timing.

The government had confirmed that they planned on disrupting internet services in areas with security concerns, but there was no comment about social

media platforms. Downtetector.com — which tracks real-time overview of issues and outages of websites and social platforms — showed that users of Pakistan were facing disruptions in accessing WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and other sites.

However, the disruptions were not only restricted to social platforms, but internet was affected as well. Shahjahan Khurram, an Islamabad-based journalist, said that the recent internet disruptions, be it the closure of X, slowed internet speeds across the country, or the banning of virtual private networks, have made life

difficult for Pakistanis. "To survive without the internet and go about your daily activities, whether it be your job or academic activities, in this day and age, seems extremely difficult."

Another citizen of Islamabad, Farhad JarraI said that the government seems to "unveil a new level of innovation" in restricting citizens' access to the internet whenever PTI announces a protest in Islamabad. "This time, not only were major social media platforms blocked, but even VPNs—normally a reliable workaround—were rendered ineffective," he said.



QUETTA: A view of deserted look of busy road due to strike call by traders against kidnapping of a student, Musawir Khan.

No return

(Continued from Page 1)

Meanwhile, the deputy commissioner of Murree announced that all educational institutions in the district would remain closed due to the ongoing circumstances. In Bahawalpur, the Islamia University postponed exams scheduled for Monday and Tuesday. According to the university's spokesperson, the Islamabad police said in a statement. Global internet watchdog NetBlocks said on X, formerly known as

Twitter, that live metrics showed WhatsApp messaging services had been restricted ahead of the protests. A key Khan aid, Ali Amin Gandapur, who is the chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and is expected to lead the largest convoy into Islamabad, called on people to gather near the entrance of the city's red zone, known as "D Chowk".

Islamabad's red zone houses the country's parliament building, important government installations, as well as embassies and foreign institutions' offices. "Khan has called on us to remain there till all our demands are met," he said in a video message on Saturday.

The PTI's demands include the release of all its leaders, including Khan, as well as the resignation of the current government due to what it says was a rigged election this year. Khan has been in jail since August

last year and, since being voted out of power by parliament in 2022, faces a number of charges ranging from corruption to instigation of violence. He and his party deny all the charges.

"These constant protests are destroying the economy and creating instability ... we want the political leadership to sit together and resolve these matters," Muhammad Asif, 35, a resident of Islamabad said in front of a closed market. The last protest in Islamabad by PTI in early October turned violent with one policeman killed, dozens of security personnel injured and protesters arrested. Both sides accused the other of instigating the clashes. Rawalpindi police clashed with PTI workers on IJ Principal Road, arresting around 60 participants after baton-charge. Officials claim 100-150 PTI workers were dispersed at the site.

Meanwhile, PTI leaders allege that 490 workers and leaders have been arrested across Punjab, with 100 reported missing. To stop convoys from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Attock-Khurd border has been fully sealed, with checkpoints set up. Security forces have been equipped with tear gas shells, helmets, and batons. Similarly, access to roads in Jhelum, Faisalabad, and other parts of Punjab has been blocked, paralysing travel between provinces.

Smog crisis eases in Lahore

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The air quality in Lahore has shown signs of improvement as the air quality index (AQI) dropped below 300 on Sunday, continuing to remain in that range on Monday.

The easing conditions mark a positive shift in the metropolis that has been engulfed in smog for almost over a month, moving down to the fourth rank in the rankings of the list of the world's most polluted cities which it previously dominated. The positive change in Lahore's air quality came after a change in the direction of winds.

Currently, India's New Delhi reigns at the top of the world most polluted cities list with a hazardous AQI of 582. Despite noting an improvement in its AQI, the capital of Punjab continues to hold the title of the most polluted city in Pakistan. On Monday, the AQI was recorded at 267 in the provincial capital around 9:30 this morning, registering the fourth worst air quality in the world while the (PM2.5) pollutants in the air amounted to 191.8, which is 38.4 times higher than the World Health Organisation's (WHO) annual air quality guideline value.

The AQI fluctuated between 300 and 450 — considered "hazardous" by Swiss air quality technology firm, IQAir — from Saturday evening to Sunday afternoon. Since then, the AQI has stabilised, hovering between 200 and 300, classified as "very unhealthy". This seasonal battle against air pollution in Punjab is exacerbated by cold, heavy air that traps dust, smoke, and emissions, particularly from farm fires.

However, the recent decline in smog levels allowed authorities in Lahore and Multan to reopen schools last week after a more than week-long closure due to hazardous pollution levels. Students would have to wear face masks and outdoor sports will remain suspended at all educational institutes.