

**Two hurt in bomb blast**  
**F.P. Report**  
WANA: A vehicle has been targeted with a remote-controlled bomb on Karikot road at Wana, South Waziristan, while attacking the vehicle of Peace Committee member Saifur Rehman, on Tuesday. The traveler named Saif-ur-Rehman remained unharmed, but his two security guards were injured. The vehicle was completely destroyed in the blast.

# Pak-Belarus agree to promote bilateral ties

**Saqib Mushtaq**  
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Belarus on Tuesday, expressing satisfaction at the current positive trajectory of bilateral relations, agreed to maintain the momentum through regular high-level engagement and institutional cooperation.  
The bilateral relations were discussed during the delegation-level talks between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko, who is currently on a three-day official visit to Pakistan. The talks are reflective of the excellent bilateral relations between Pakistan and Belarus, according to a PM Office press release.  
The two sides discussed the full spectrum of bilateral relations as well as important regional and global developments. The two leaders reaf-



firmed the shared commitment of both countries to the deepening of their political dialogue, strengthening inter-parliamentary exchanges and, in particular, enhancing bilateral trade and economic cooperation.  
Prime Minister Shehbaz and President Lukashenko also witnessed the exchange of several important agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) aimed at fostering closer collaboration between Pakistan and Belarus in key sectors. The agreements and MOUs encompassed cooperation in environmental protection, disaster management, halal trade, audit institutions, financial intelligence-sharing, vocational education and science & technology.  
One of the key outcomes of the meeting was the signing of the "Roadmap for Comprehensive Cooperation between Pakistan and Belarus for 2025-2027," which out-

lines a strategic framework for enhancing economic ties through high-level meetings, inter-governmental commissions, and targeted collaborative initiatives. In the talks, both sides emphasised the importance of regional economic integration and connectivity, and agreed to improve the legal frameworks needed to facilitate bilateral economic collaboration.  
The Belarusian president appreciated the efforts by Prime Minister Shehbaz to take the bilateral relations to new dimensions and expressed his country's full cooperation in this regard. He also invited PM Shehbaz to visit Belarus as it would further expand the relationship.  
Accepting the invitation, the prime minister said that during his visit, the MoUs will be formalized into agreements. He also issued instructions to the ministers concerned to take necessary steps in this regard as soon as possible. Later, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko witnessed exchange of some 15 different memorandums of understanding, treaties and agreements intended to augment bilateral cooperation in different sectors.  
The MoUs and Agreements signed between Belarus and Pakistan included roadmap for cooperation between Belarus and Pakistan, MoU between the Ministry of Commerce Pakistan and Ministry of Anti-Monopoly Regulation of Belarus on Electronic Commerce Cooperation, Agreement on Science and Technology Cooperation between National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, MoU in field of accreditation

between Pakistan National Accreditation Council of Pakistan and Republican Unitary Enterprise Belarus, and MoU on cooperation between the Committee of State Control of Belarus and Office of the Audit General of Pakistan.  
It also included MoU between department of Financial Monitoring of the state control committee of Republic of Belarus and Financial Monitoring Unit Government of Pakistan, MoU between Pakistan Customs, FBR and State Customs Committee of Belarus, Agreement between National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and Pakistan Academy of Sciences, Agreement between Govt. of Pakistan and Govt of Belarus on International Road Transport, MoU on cooperation in the field of Environmental protection between Ministry of Natural Resources Belarus and Ministry of Climate change Pakistan, MoU between Ministry of Emergency Situations of Belarus and NDMA Pakistan in fields of prevention and elimination of emergencies, MoU between NAVTTC Pakistan and Educational Institution of Belarus, Treaty between Republic of Belarus and Republic of Pakistan on extradition, MoU on cooperation between DRAP, Ministry of National Health Services Pakistan and Republican Unitary Enterprise Belarus for expertise and Tests in health services, and MoU for cooperation in Halal Trade between Pakistan Halal Authority Ministry of Science and technology and Belarusian Halal Standardisation and Certification Center of Belarus.  
Meanwhile, Pakistan and Belarus agreed on the early realization of bilateral accords to enhance cooperation in trade, agriculture, food, defence and technology to monetize the decades-old political bilateral relations. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko, addressing a joint press stakeout following their bilateral meeting and delegation-level talks, said that both sides had reached an agreement to solidify the understanding reached between the two leaders and convert them into agreements by February next year.

(Continued on Back Page)

## State showing great restraint against PTI rioters: Tarar

**F.P. Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday said that the state was showing great restraint against the protesters from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.  
Talking to media, the minister said that the spouse of founder of PTI Bushra Bibi had come with a plan to fuel violence and get the protesters killed in clashes with the law enforcement agencies so that they could take advantage of the situation. "Mercenaries have been brought to the front and they want to use children of the poor people", he remarked.  
He said that it seemed the PTI leadership wanted to achieve the objectives of May 9 arson again. He asked who should be held responsible for the blood of martyrs of police and rangers. The minister stated that the protesters wanted to sabotage the visit of the President of Belarus who was in Pakistan. He made it clear that no body would be allowed to disrupt the peace of the capital city.

**Sharjeel flays attack on Rangers men**  
**F.P. Report**  
KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has condemned the miscreants' vehicle attack on Rangers personnel in Islamabad and the martyrdom of 4 personnel.  
In a statement, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon said that miscreants have trampled on the rule of law, an unforgivable attack has been carried out on law enforcement agencies.



ISLAMABAD: Bushra Bibi and PTI supporters attending a rally demanding release of Imran Khan.

## No negotiations with PTI, says govt

**F.P. Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi says the government has decided to hold no negotiations with the PTI protesters. Speaking to the media in Islamabad along with Information Minister Atta Tarar, Naqvi stated, "Everyone has witnessed the peaceful behavior of those protesting, and now there will be no negotiations with them."  
Mohsin Naqvi further said, "They are armed with weapons and catapults, and the responsibility for any loss of life or property lies with one woman. We are concerned about the citizens of Islamabad. Those arrested will not be granted bail, and anyone who reaches D-Chowk will be arrested." Speaking on the occasion, Information Minister Atta Tarar stated that PTI used poor children as a shield. He urged the opposition to not test the state's patience. He also said that Bushra Bibi should show courage and lead from the front, as firing a bullet is the easiest thing to do.  
Tarar further mentioned that Afghan miscreants had been placed at the forefront, and this was not a peaceful protest. "Shells have been

fired at police officers. The state is not weak; we will maintain our authority." When asked about the ban on the party, Atta Tarar replied, "There is a procedure for banning a party, and it will be carried out when the time comes."  
Meanwhile, the Pakistan government has called in the military to handle the unrest during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protests in Islamabad, with the Ministry of Interior issuing an official notification.  
According to sources, the military has been summoned under Article 245 of the constitution, and it has been made clear that those breaking the law would face strict actions. The notification also granted the army, powers to impose curfew in any area to maintain law and order. Security forces have been given clear instructions to "shoot any one spreading chaos on the spot."  
Meanwhile, army convoys were seen moving on various roads in Islamabad. As the PTI procession left Chungi Number 26 towards D Chowk on Monday, heightened security measures were placed in the red zone. Extra Rangers per-

sonnel were positioned in the red zone and media was moved away from the "sensitive area."  
Reuters adds: One police officer was shot and killed and at least 119 others were injured, and 22 police vehicles were torched in clashes just outside Islamabad and elsewhere in the Punjab province, provincial police chief Usman Anwar said. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif told media that the government sought talks with leaders of Khan's PTI party to calm the situation. "It was a sincere attempt I must say but it didn't yield any results," he said.  
Khan's party accused the government of using excessive violence to block the protesters and said hundreds of workers and leaders had been arrested. "They are even firing live bullets," one of Khan's aides, Shaukat Yousafzai, told media.  
Footage showed police firing teargas canisters at Khan's supporters, who were pelting them with stones and bricks. The videos showed vehicles and trees ablaze along the main march just outside Islamabad as the protesters at some places pushed shipment containers to make their way.

# The Frontier Post

**Girl among three injured**  
**F.P. Report**  
PESHAWAR: At least three people including a young girl were injured when a blast occurred inside their house in Shaheed Abad area here on Tuesday. Police said the incident occurred at the house on one, Irshad in Shaheed Abad where three of his family members including his young daughter were injured as result of a blast.



RAWAPINDI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff, General Asim Munir carrying coffin of Martyred Rangers official after funeral prayer.

## Funeral prayers of martyred jawans held

**F.P. Report**  
RAWALPINDI: Funeral prayers of Naik Muhammad Ramzan Shaheed (age; 47 years, resident of District Karak), Sepoy Gulfam Khan Shaheed (age; 29 years, resident of District Rawalpindi) and Sepoy Shah Nawaz Shaheed (age; 33 years, resident of District Sibi) who embraced Shahadat during ongoing protest were offered at Chaklala Garrison, Rawalpindi.  
Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister, Interior Minister, Minister of Information, General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M) Chief of Army Staff, Senior serving Military and Civil Officials attended the funeral.  
"Pakistan cannot afford any chaos and bloodshed for achieving vested political purposes. These acts of violence are unacceptable and highly condemnable which are bordering the limits of restraint by the Law Enforcement Agencies. The entire nation pays homage to the martyred Rangers soldiers and all those police officials who have embraced shahadat and those who are injured during these riots", PM said. The bodies of Shuhada have been taken to their native home town where they will be laid to rest with full military honour.

## Three more terrorists killed

**F.P. Report**  
RAWALPINDI: Movement of a group of khwarij, who were trying to infiltrate through Pakistan-Afghanistan border, was picked up by the security forces in general area Hassan Khel, North Waziristan District. Own troops effectively engaged and thwarted their attempt to infiltrate. Resultantly, three Khwarij were sent to hell.  
Pakistan has consistently been asking Interim Afghan Government to ensure effective border management on their side of the border. Interim Afghan Government is expected to fulfil its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil by Khwarij for perpetuating acts of terrorism against Pakistan. Security Forces of Pakistan are determined and remain committed to secure its borders and eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country.

## Court grants remand of Imran

**F.P. Report**  
RAWALPINDI: An anti-terrorism court has extended physical remand of PTI founder Imran Khan by six days in the case related to inciting workers to violence.  
Judge Amjad Ali Shah directed the authorities to produce the former prime minister before the court on Dec 2. Public Prosecutor Zaheer Shah argued that Khan's lack of cooperation was hindering the investigation.

## Bushra Bibi spearheads PTI convoys to D-Chowk

**F.P. Report**  
ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activists, led by party founder Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi, on Tuesday reached D-Chowk after removing obstacles on the way.  
Speaking to a charged gathering, Bushra Bibi reiterated that she would lead the movement for Imran Khan's release from the front. She said she would be the last woman to leave the venue, Ali Amin Gandapur also motivated the gathering near D-Chowk to stay put till achieving the objective. Sheikh Waqas Akram denied PTI workers' involvement in killing Rangers and police personnel.

Educational institutions in Rawalpindi and Islamabad will remain closed on the third consecutive day on Wednesday. Earlier, the caravans reached Zero Point on the main Islamabad-Srinagar Highway where they clashed with law-enforcement officials when they were stopped from marching further.  
Police fired tear gas shells on marchers to disperse them. The protesters, in retaliation, pelted police personnel with stones. The boundaries of Red Zone begin beyond Zero Point, where military personnel have been deployed. Earlier, PTI leader Arbab Naseem, who was with the convoy from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, told a foreign media outlet that when the workers tried to remove obstacles at Zero Point, police started tear gas shelling.  
He also expressed the hope that they would reach D-Chowk later in the day. As PTI's main convoy, led by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, entered Islamabad, the first round of talks between the government and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) ended without a breakthrough.  
Earlier, it was reported that the KP CM led the main convoy towards its entry

## Gohar appeals to workers to remain peaceful

**F.P. Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan appealed to the party workers and supporters to remain peaceful during the protest in Islamabad. Taking to social networking site X, Gohar said that he appealed to all the PTI workers and supporters to remain calm in their struggle. Barrister Gohar said that he wanted to tell you all that they were very hopeful for the early release of the PTI founder. "We demand the government to refrain from filing cases against innocent people," the PTI chairman said.

into Islamabad with a mission to reach D-Chowk. As the convoy entered the precincts of the capital, security had been heightened to deal with any untoward incident. Earlier, it was reported that main convoy from Peshawar had reached Hazro Interchange on Sunday night en route to Islamabad for protest.  
The convoy reached Hasanabad via Attock. When the convoy entered Punjab, police fired tear gas shells at the Attock Bridge, Chhich Interchange and Ghazi Barotha Canal. In a video message during her tough journey towards the capital, Bushra Bibi said, "My brothers, as long as Imran is not with us, we will not end this march," she said while addressing supporters at a stop near the Hazara Interchange. "I will stay there till my last breath, and all of you have to support me. This is not just about my husband but about the country and its leader."  
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 green-belt 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 joined Omar Ayub's convoy at the checkpoint. Earlier on

## US urges Pakistan to respect human rights

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States has urged Pakistani authorities to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the PTI protesters' right to demonstrate peacefully, US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Tuesday.  
As the PTI convoys from various parts of the country are enroute Islamabad to demand the release of its incarcerated founder Imran Khan, the federal government has vowed to not let them reach their desired destination in the capital, D-Chowk. Containers and barbed wires have been strategically placed to impede PTI supporters, while heavy police deployments indicate that the authorities are determined to use force, if need be.  
In the State Department briefing earlier on Tuesday, Miller was asked to comment on the PTI supporters' protest as well as their reported clashes with the police. "In Pakistan and around the world, we support freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association," the spokesperson said. "We call on protesters to demonstrate peacefully and refrain from violence, and at the same time, we call on Pakistani authorities to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to ensure respect for Pakistan's laws and constitution, as they work to maintain law and order."  
The statement comes after clampdown on PTI's 'do or die' protest in the federal capital. The protest, which the government is determined to foil with force, was originally scheduled to be staged on November 24, but the convoys took a breather after PTI leaders said they were in "a hurry" to reach the federal capital, as workers and supporters from across the country attempted to defy arrests, baton charges and tear gas to participate in the agitation.  
Amid the movement of PTI convoys throughout on Tuesday, the Punjab government and police announced that a constable was killed at the hands of "miscreants" at Hakla interchange.  
Last week, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) had ruled that PTI's planned protest was unlawful and directed the federal government to take all necessary measures to maintain law and order in Islamabad without disrupting public life, particularly with the Belarusian president's arrival in the capital for a three-day official visit.





**LAHORE:** A large number of people in queue to get railway ticket due to shortage of transportation.

## Islamabad admin denies fuel shortage reports

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad's district administration on Tuesday dismissed the reports of fuel shortage in the city due to road closures and called the news regarding it "fabricated and baseless."

A spokesperson for the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration said that there is enough stock at petrol stations to meet demand and residents should not be concerned about any disruption in supply.

"The petrol stations in Islamabad are well-stocked, and the reserves are enough to last for at least five to six days," the spokesperson said and added, "There is no truth to claims of an impending fuel crisis." The district administration further assured that the supply of petroleum products remains stable and the situation is under control.

## 174 properties sealed over fee default

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA), during its on-going daily operation against commercial fee defaulters, sealed another 174 properties here on different locations of the city on Tuesday.

In the operation, properties in areas like Allama Iqbal Town, New Muslim Town, Gujjar Pura, Gulberg, Garden Town, Johar Town, and Faisal Town were sealed. In Allama Iqbal Town alone, more than 29 properties were sealed due to illegal commercial use and unpaid commercial fees. Additionally, 35 properties were sealed in New Muslim Town and Gujjar Pura, while 36 properties were sealed in Gulberg Scheme, Garden Town, and Faisal Town. A total of 74 properties in Khayaban-e-Firdousi Johar Town were also sealed. Among the sealed properties were schools, pharmacies, offices, cafes, bakeries, restaurants, grocery stores, salons, shops, and others. These properties had received multiple notices prior to the operation.

The operation was carried out under the supervision of Chief Town Planner I, Asad ul Zaman, and Chief Town Planner II, Azhar Ali. Authorities have vowed to continue taking strict and impartial action against illegal commercial buildings and defaulters of commercial fees.

# Dialogue only way to resolve political issues: Sheikh

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Tuesday said that dialogue is the only way to resolve political issues with Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI).

The leaders and workers of PTI should avoid clashes with law enforcement personnel who are discharging duties to maintain law and order in the federal capital, he said while talking to a private television channel.

In the past, he said PTI

launched protest demonstrations and halted the visit of the President of a friendly country to Pakistan. He said that a high level delegation has arrived in the capital to enhance trade and business relations with Pakistan.

In reply to a question about talks offers to PTI leadership, he said major political parties of this country had offered talks to PTI leaders on many occasions but they refused to sit with the government. PTI should work

for national and public interest and avoid spreading violence in the country through protest demonstrations, he said.

The government is making all out efforts to create job opportunities and strengthen the economy to change the life style of the poor people, he stated and added that political instability being created by PTI leadership is not in favor of the country.

He said PTI should play a role in the peace and prosperity of Pakistan.

# Fertilizer available at low prices across Punjab: CM

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that for the first time, there is an abundance of fertilizer in Punjab in the Rabi season, and prices have also come down.

Chairing a special meeting on agriculture here on Tuesday, she said 30 percent more stock of DAP fertilizer is available in Punjab, and 17 percent reduction in its price during the wheat season has been observed for the first time.

The CM said that 125 percent more stock of urea

fertilizer than required is available, and 25 percent reduction in its price has been observed in the province. She said that the wheat cultivation target of 16.5 million acres across Punjab has been set and 82 percent of the target has been completed. She added wheat cultivation target will be completed across the province by December 10. She highlighted wheat cultivation on 326,000 acres of government land across Punjab has been set.

The CM said 40,000

agriculture graduate interns are available to assist farmers in the field across the province, adding that applications have been invited for free grant of 1,000 green tractors and 1,000 land levelers for wheat farmers under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's scheme.

CM Maryam Nawaz directed authorities concerned to improve wheat storage capacity across the province. She appreciated the Agriculture Minister and his team for their efforts in this regard.

# Saleem acknowledges private healthcare contributions

## F.P. Report

KARACHI : Director General Public Relations, Information Department, Government of Sindh Muhammad Saleem Khan has said that private sector organizations engaged in providing healthcare facilities to patients are rendering commendable services for which they must be recognized by every quarter of our society.

This he said during a visit of Sundas Foundation, an organization engaged in providing state-of-the-art health care facilities to the patients suffering from various blood diseases.

Irfan Mahar, Faisal Hameed and other office bearers of Sundas Foundation were also present on the occasion.

Director General Information said that the services of Sundas Foundation without any discrimination of caste, creed and religion are laudable. "Their free of cost blood transfusion and blood diseases treatment services are remarkable," He added.

He said that Sindh Government was attaching top priority to provision of health care facilities to common men throughout the province. "Cyber knife of JPMC, NICVD Centers, Autism Centre, Artificial organs facility, Infectious Disease Hospital NIPA, Abdul Qadir Institute of Gambat are few examples of the unprecedented endeavors of Provincial Government in Health sector, he opined.

He further said that not only the patients from Sindh but other provinces and countries are benefited from these facilities.

He appreciated the initiative of services of Sundas Foundation in Sindh and said this would provide patients with blood diseases a center for treatment.

Director General Sindh Information lauded the role of founder of Foundation and reputed writer Munoo Bhai for making this institute a reality. His vision has led to the establishment of Karachi Centre, he remarked. Later, Director General PRs visited various sections of the center and asked the mothers of the patients about the facilities being provided to them at the center.

# Sindh committed to transforming police into a technology-driven force: CM

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has reiterated his government's commitment to transforming the Sindh Police into an efficient and technology-driven force to enhance public safety.

Addressing the participants of the 51st Specialised Training Program and the 27th Initial Command Course for Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASPs) at the CM House, Mr Shah said that the Sindh Police, established in 1843, is the oldest police organisation in the subcontinent and is undergoing significant modernisation to tackle contemporary law enforcement challenges. "With a sanctioned strength of 162,000 personnel, Sindh Police is the second-largest force in Pakistan, dedicated to crime prevention, detection, and maintaining law and order," he said.

Mr Shah discussed several key initiatives aimed at enhancing the police force's capacity and efficiency. One important project in Sindh, he mentioned, was the Smart Surveillance System (S4 Project), which involves installing surveillance cameras at 40 toll plazas across the province. "This system is intended to provide real-time monitoring at critical entry and

exit points, improving response times and situational awareness while streamlining police operations using advanced intelligence tools..." he said.

According to the CM, the Karachi Safe City Project is designed to significantly enhance the Sindh Police's capabilities, ensuring greater public safety in Pakistan's largest city.

Discussing the government's focused efforts against crime, Mr Shah mentioned the Sindh Habitual Offenders Monitoring Act, 2022, which allows for the electronic tagging of habitual criminals involved in street crimes such as robbery, extortion, and vehicle theft. He explained that GPS-enabled anklets and bracelets will enable real-time monitoring of offenders, promoting safer neighbourhoods across the province.

To support police personnel and their families, the Sindh government has introduced a health insurance program valued at Rs 4.961 billion. "An enhanced Shaheed (Martyr) Package has been implemented, increasing compensation from Rs. 10 million to Rs. 23 million, ensuring continued salary payments until the age of retirement, and providing two government jobs for the family of the

deceased," the CM said.

Talking about budget allocations for the police department, Mr. Shah stated that significant funds have been earmarked to strengthen key departments within the police force. "The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) has received Rs 2.7 billion, the Special Branch Rs 1.2 billion, and the Investigation Branch Rs 600 million for investigation costs," he said and added that incentives for Investigating Officers (IOs) who secure convictions have been included. Around Rs 6 billion has been allocated for police stations, with Station House Officers (SHOs) now granted Drawing and Disbursing Officer (DDO) powers.

Mr Shah said that his government is investing in training programs for police officers, prosecutors, and judges to ensure the effective implementation of laws and policies. He added that capacity-building initiatives are underway to prepare personnel for modern challenges and to maintain law and order. The Sindh government's comprehensive approach reflects a commitment to transforming the Sindh Police into a modern, efficient, and technology-driven force, the CM said.

## 'Overseas Pakistanis are valuable asset'

LAHORE (APP): The General Secretary of the Pakistan Muslim League (N) for International Affairs, Chaudhry Noor-ul-Hassan Tanveer, hosted dinner for Vice Chairperson of the Punjab Overseas Pakistanis Commission, Barrister Amjad Malik, and other overseas Pakistanis.

Overseas Pakistanis who attended from around the world included Sajid Zafar Cheema from Sharjah, Senior Vice President Mahmood Dogar and Rana Shahbaz from Saudi Arabia, Barrister Amjad Malik from the UK, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan from Malaysia, Shehzad Dogar from Abu Dhabi, Haji Mohammad Hanif from France, Rana Abrar Hussain from Japan, Mohammad Hassan Toor, Umar Shafiq, Manwar Dogar, and Bashir Ahmad from Sharjah, among others. The overseas community welcomed the Vice Chairman of the Overseas Pakistanis Commission Punjab.

Noor-ul-Hassan Tanveer welcomed Barrister Amjad Malik's appointment and said that the workers who stood by the party during difficult times are an asset to the party. Later, prayers were offered for the departed souls of Barrister Amjad Malik's uncle, Javed Malik, and Chaudhry Noor Tanveer's brother.

Barrister Amjad Malik said that overseas Pakistanis were a valuable asset. "Overseas Pakistanis will be elected to overseas seats in the district committees and advisory council," he added. Chaudhry Noor-ul-Hassan Tanveer said that workers who supported the party during tough times were its greatest asset.

Elephant Madhubala shifted to Safari Park

KARACHI (INP): Madhubala, a 16-year-old elephant in Pakistan, who was in solitary confinement at Karachi Zoo, was shifted to Safari Park on Tuesday.

The elephant was moved in a container from Karachi Zoo to Safari Park and she will soon be reunited with her family members Sonia and Malika after a long wait of 15 years. The container carrying Madhubala elephant was lifted via crane from the truck.

The shifting of Madhubala was supervised by Four Paws. Before shifting the training of the elephant's entering and exiting the container was completed, the Four Paws said.

With the arrival of the Madhubala elephant at Safari Park, the number of elephants will be three. Madhubala is one of four African elephants treated in Karachi by an eight-member team from the global animal welfare group Four Paws in 2022.

The elephant was suffering for years from a dental infection and pain caused by a broken tusk. The Four Paws also relocated Kaavan – an elephant dubbed the world's loneliest – to Cambodia from Islamabad in 2020.

# JI denounces govt's 200 billion rupee electricity levy

KARACHI (PPI): The General Secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami Sindh, Muhammad Yousuf, has condemned the government's recent decision to impose an additional financial burden of over 200 billion rupees on electricity consumers after the rise in solar energy use.

In a statement today, Yousuf argued that this move reflects the government's failure to provide relief to the public, instead exacerbating the already dire situation of the common people, who are already grappling with crippling inflation and sky-high electricity rates.

Yousuf pointed out that the government's decision to transfer the additional costs of the electricity grid onto consumers who do not use solar energy will only increase the financial strain on the public. He described this as "a tragedy" for people already struggling under the weight of economic instability.

"The current political and economic crisis in the country is at its worst. Political instability and soaring inflation have already left people at their wit's end, and now, the government continues to add new burdens on the public every other day," Yousuf said.

He also criticized the government's energy policies, claiming that the additional costs of power generation were being unfairly passed onto consumers while private electricity companies continued to profit from capacity payments. According to Yousuf, the government's failure to address these issues only further deepens the economic distress faced by the public.

"The government's priority appears to be maintaining its lavish spending,

while the basic needs of the people—such as access to electricity, water, and food—are being sidelined. This situation is unacceptable, and the government must act to reduce financial pressures on the masses," he added.

The Jamaat-e-Islami leader called for immediate reforms in the energy and economic sectors, urging the government to reconsider its policies and redirect resources to improve the living standards of ordinary citizens. Yousuf stressed that providing access to basic services like electricity and water is the fundamental responsibility of any welfare state.

The statement concluded with a call for action, urging the government to prioritize the welfare of the people and take immediate steps to ease the financial burdens faced by the public.



**KARACHI:** A view of the Female Elephant, Madhubala, stepping cautiously out of the crate in the new zoo captivity free environment after its shifting from Karachi Zoological Garden, to Safari Park.

# LESCO detects 544 power pilferers in 24 hours

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a total of 544 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) during its anti-power theft campaign in the last 24 hours.

The LESCO spokesman told media here Tuesday that the company has also submitted FIR applications against electricity thieves, out of which 212 FIRs have been registered in respective police stations, while 37 accused have been arrested by the respective police.

Grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are being conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division and the LESCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider is supervising these operations. The LESCO chief vowed that the operations would continue without discrimination until the complete end of electricity theft. The electricity pilferers as well as the LESCO officers and employees who facilitate them are also

being brought to justice.

During last 24 hours of the anti-power theft campaign, the spokesman added, large commercial consumers were found involved in electricity theft. Among the seized connections, 16 commercial, 03 agricultural, 03 Industrial and 522 domestic, and all of them were also disconnected and charged with detection units. All these connections were disconnected and charged with a total of 349,259 units as detection bill amounting to Rs 15,216 million.

**LESCO resolves 1,101 complaints last day:** Customers hearings are being conducted in LESCO region daily, while during the last day, a total of 1,101 complaints of various types were received and all the complaints were redressed on the spot.

The series of public/customers hearings (open katchehry) are continued in all the eight circles of Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) to address the customers' complaints regarding over-billing and other issues.

The LESCO Chief

Executive Officer Engineer Shahid Haider told media here Tuesday that the company is continuing with this practice following the special instructions of the Ministry of Power Division, with the aim of solving the problems faced by the LESCO consumers in electricity bills and other matters immediately.

He added that special customers' hearings are being conducted across the LESCO region and the public is also being informed about this in advance through the media and banners installed in the relevant LESCO offices.

All the SDOs (Sub-Divisional Officers) along with their respective teams are ensuring regular holding of the public hearing in their sub-divisions on a daily basis. While SEs (Superintending Engineers), and X-Ens (Executive Engineers) are personally investigating the customers complaints.

In the LESCO public hearings last day, a total of 1,101 complaints of various types were received and all of them were redressed on the spot, he mentioned.



**KARACHI:** Group photo taken on the occasion of the reception given by the staff to Wasim, in-charge of Sindh Government Qatar Hospital, on his return after performing Umrah.





# Former Minister Atif challenges Anti-Corruption’s notice

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Member National Assembly and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Atif Khan has challenged a notice issued by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Anti-Corruption Establishment in the Peshawar High Court. The notice directs Atif Khan to respond to the inquiry into the Malm Jabba land scandal.

According to the writ petition filed by Atif Khan's lawyers, Shumail Ahmad

Butt, Bilal Tangi and Najam-us-Saleheen, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had already investigated the matter and found no evidence of wrongdoing. The petition argues that the Anti-Corruption Department's notice is an attempt to harass Atif Khan for political reasons.

The petition states that Atif Khan is a renowned politician and a member of the National Assembly. He has been served with a notice by the Anti-

Corruption Establishment, directing him to respond to the inquiry into the Malm Jabba scandal. However, the petition argues that the notice is based on mala fide intentions and is an attempt to defame Atif Khan.

The petition also challenges the Anti-Corruption Department's inquiry into the Fazal Garden housing scheme in Mardan. According to the petition, the land was purchased by Atif Khan's ancestors in 1964 and was not converted into a housing scheme by

him. The petition argues that the inquiry is baseless and is an attempt to harass Atif Khan.

**Prayer of the Petition**  
The petition requests the court to declare the Anti-Corruption Department's notice null and void. It also requests the court to direct the Anti-Corruption Department to stop harassing Atif Khan and to refrain from taking any coercive action against him. The provincial government has been made respondent in the petition.



PESHAWAR: Residents of Pajagi Road holding protesting in favour of their demands.

## RTI training held for Women Facilitation Desks’ staff

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Women engagement into governance is crucial for the betterment of society. By using Right to Information (RTI) women can get equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of life. It is a tool that empowers them to get their basic rights. This was stated by Mr. Sayed Saadat Jahan, Deputy Director Communication,

KP Information Commission (KPIC) while imparting training on RTI, arranged for the newly appointed female staff of the facilitation desks. The training was arranged in collaboration with GIZ & SRSP at the Human Resource Development Centre of SRSP Office for the women facilitators of the districts of Kohat, Swat, Mohmand and Khyber.

Citizen engagement is considered to be a key feature to improving public service delivery which is one of the core objectives of RTI. For this purpose, Khuli Kacheri (Open Court) and establishment of facilitation desks in the offices of the Deputy Commissioners is a platform being implemented as an offline redressal mechanism to forward complaints on

governance. Mr. Saadat impressed upon the need for a complaint management system and increased visibility of women in government affairs. In the training session, Mr. Jahan also guided the staff on filing RTI requests to institutions, and lodging complaints to KPIC in case of noncompliance by public entities to citizens requests.

## 2nd DOSTI women literature festival starts at SBBWU

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 2nd edition of the DOSTI Peshawar Women Literature Festival (DPWLF) was inaugurated here on Tuesday at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (SBBWU), bringing together women writers, artists, and intellectuals from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Organized by Dosti Welfare Organization and SBBWU, in collaboration with NCHD and other esteemed partners, the festival celebrated the literary and cultural contributions of women in Pakistan.

Rakhsanda Naz, Ombudsperson KP for the protection of women against harassment at the work place, stressed on spreading awareness of women and enlightened female participants and students about their legal rights.

Guest of honour Mohammad Rafique Khan Mohmand Director Social welfare, special education and women empowerment KP praised women coming from FATA and regions far from the city to get education and to serve and appreciated their efforts.

Dr Altaf Qader expressed the importance



of literature festival in promoting art and literature.

The ceremony commenced with the opening remarks of Dr Hamida Bibi the chief organizer of Dosti Peshawar women literature festival and head of the department of History and Pakistan Studies SBBWU.

She emphasized on the university's commitment to promoting women's voices in literature and leadership.

During the event a tribute was paid to the successful and prominent women from various walks of life including Haleema, Fouzia Taj, Naheed Afridi, Uzma Mukaram, Syeda Attia Parveen and many others.

Key events of the festi-

val included a panel discussion on "Khawateen Adab aur "Agahi : ek naye door ka aghaz," featuring notable speakers like Dr Bismena, Fouzia Taj, Shaheen Amin and Shamshad Nazli.

A book launch by poet Bushra Farrukh, and cultural exhibits were also held to celebrate the region's diversity.

Special addresses by Altaf Qadri, Co-founder, highlighted the festival's transformative impact.

The event concluded with a shield distribution ceremony and a vote of thanks by Dr Hamida Bibi.

Chief Guest Tashfeen Haider Director General,

Culture and Tourism Authority in his speech highlighted role of women in every field and its impactful results in development of the society and State.

He also thanked the organizing team Dr Hamida Bibi, Tahfeen Zia, Dr Sumaira Gul, Sania Siraj and Dr Zarmina Baloch for their efforts in conducting this event.

The DOSTI Peshawar Women Literature Festival has set a remarkable benchmark for celebrating women's contributions to literature, paving the way for a more inclusive literary and cultural future in Pakistan.

## US, KP govt launch USAID supported ‘Strategic Partnership Framework’



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The U.S. Consul General in Peshawar Mr. Shante Moore and the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Chief Economist Arifullah Awan on Tuesday officially launched the USAID-supported Strategic Partnership Framework (SPF) for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), developed in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Planning and Development Department (P&DD) Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,

marking a milestone in fostering a sustainable and inclusive economic environment in the region.

The SPF will improve coordination between public and private sectors, development partners, and academia to enhance economic growth and attract private sector investment, with a strong focus on supporting the small and medium enterprises as drivers of innovation and employment in the province.

In his keynote address, Consul General Moore reaffirmed the U.S. government's unwavering commitment to advancing inclusive economic

development in Pakistan, with a special emphasis on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He highlighted the enduring partnership between the U.S. government and Pakistan in promoting sustainable growth and empowering local economies.

"This Strategic Partnership Framework is a testament to the transformative potential of collaboration.

By uniting diverse stakeholders, it aligns seamlessly with the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's vision for a resilient and inclusive economy.

The U.S. government, through USAID, takes

immense pride in supporting this initiative, which not only strengthens the SME sector but also lays the groundwork for a robust and self-sustaining economic environment in the region," said CG Moore.

The event brought together officials from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, representatives from the private sector, and academic institutions, underscoring the shared vision of a resilient economy. The framework also emphasizes the importance of local capacity building and private sector engagement to create a dynamic and adaptable economic landscape.

## PTI agitation mars livestock sector in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The ongoing protests, demonstrations and agitation politics by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have severely disrupted various sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including livestock and poultry.

In the wake of road blockages and closures of motorways due to violent protest demonstrations by the PTI workers, the province witnessed a sharp rise in the prices of animals and poultry, compounding the difficulties faced by the general public.

Misal Khan, a retired government employee, shared his frustrations with the situation at the Lala Kala cattle market in Peshawar and said, "I came from Nowshera to buy a buffalo for my son's wedding, but the prices are beyond what I can afford. A buffalo is being sold for Rs 3 lakh to Rs 4 lakh, compared to Rs 250,000 before the PTI protests," he said. The price hike is attributed to shortages of livestock, including buffalo, cows, and oxen, resulting from the blockade of roads and highways among provinces.

The poultry sector has also been severely impacted, with chicken prices soaring in the province where one two kilogram a live chicken are being sold at Rs1200 these days. The shortage of chickens coming from neighboring districts such as Manshera, Batagram, and Abbottabad, as well as from Punjab, has exacerbated the problems.

He noted that these price hikes are particularly affecting middle-class families who are already burdened with rising living costs in KP.

Mosa Khan, an inter-provincial livestock dealer at the same market, revealed that he had invested around Rs 2 million to transport cattle from Qasur, Punjab, to meet the demand for marriage season livestock in KP. However, due to the ongoing PTI protests and agitation, his shipment had not arrived, leading to significant financial losses. The prolonged protests have resulted in a scarcity of animals, driving prices even higher.

Arbab Usman Khan, an administrator of the Lala Kala cattle market, confirmed the shortage of animals, attributing the rise in prices to limited livestock availability. He added that the closure of roads has disrupted the supply chain, further driving up costs for both domestic and imported animals.



He predicted that if the protests of PTI continued, prices would continue to rise, potentially delaying wedding ceremonies and other events reliant on livestock for traditional rituals.

Local businesses especially of Chappli Kabab are also feeling the pinch. Haji Arif Khan, owner of a well-known Chappli Kabab house in Peshawar, lamented the shortage of meat in the market. "Our business was thriving during the marriage season, but now we're struggling these days due to the lack of meat supply. The prices

of dairy products and other ingredients have also risen," he said. Arif Khan feared that if the protests persist, many laborers may lose their jobs, further deepening the economic woes of the region.

Political experts have weighed in on the impact of PTI's agitations and protest demonstration in the federal capital. Professor Dr ZA Hilali, former Chairman of the Political Science Department at the University of Peshawar, criticized the reliance on agitation politics, which he said has historically undermined democratic governance in Pakistan.

He noted that such political unrest, characterized by long marches and sit-ins, detracted from the stability necessary for economic growth and prosperity in Pakistan. He pointed to Pakistan's troubled political history, where agitation movements have often resulted in military interventions and the overthrow of democratically elected governments.

He said democracy thrives on continuity and respect for electoral mandates and not on disrupting the political process through street protests. He pointed to past instances, such as the 1977 general elections and the 2014 PTI sit-in, where political

unrest had severely destabilized the country's governance.

Political leaders have also weighed in on the situation. Ikhtiar Wali Khan, PMLN's KP Information Secretary, accused PTI of indulging in "aimless agitation politics," which he argued would only exacerbate the suffering of the people.

He argued that PTI's actions were a diversionary tactic, intended to deflect attention from governance failures in KP, particularly in relation to the Billion Trees Project and the ongoing issues with the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in Peshawar.

Former KP Minister Wajid Ali Khan echoed this sentiment, calling PTI's agitation a "political gimmick." He contended that PTI's rhetoric had increasingly targeted state institutions, damaging Pakistan's political and economic stability.

He emphasized that the people of KP, who are heavily reliant on the transport and tourism sectors, would bear the brunt of the road blockages and protests.

The experts agreed that Pakistan's future lies in political maturity and constructive engagement, rather than disruptive protests. They stressed that the country's leaders, both in government and opposition, must prioritize the collective well-being of the people, fostering a tolerant and stable political environment that will enable Pakistan to achieve its true potential.

The experts expressed the hope that PTI would withdraw its protest and fought PTI founder cases in courts, which was a dignified solution to get relief in democratic system.

## Session held to aware pregnant women about gestational diabetes

PESHAWAR (APP): Mercy Teaching Hospital Peshawar on Tuesday organized a diabetes awareness session for orientation of pregnant women with gestational diabetes.

The session was aimed to educate patients on

effective management of gestational diabetes through lifestyle modifications, dietary adjustments and medical screening.

Dr. Humaima, a renowned diabetic educator delivered an insightful lecture on gestational dia-

betes. She delved into the causes, potential complications and management strategies of this condition.

She emphasized the crucial importance of early diagnosis and consistent monitoring to safeguard the health of

both the mother and baby. Iqra, a skilled nutritionist presented dietary modifications for gestational diabetes.

She highlighted significance of meal planning emphasizing the role of a balanced diet in controlling blood sugar levels.





## In brief

## Bomb defused on Bypass

QUETTA (PPI): A bomb was successfully defused by the Bomb Disposal Squad staff near Kharkhasa Cross on the Western Bypass in Quetta on Tuesday. According to a report, the unexploded device was carefully neutralized by the squad in the area, preventing potential harm. Quetta, the provincial capital of Balochistan, has witnessed multiple security threats and incidents in recent years due to ongoing conflict and insurgent activities in the region. The Western Bypass area, which serves as a significant route connecting various parts of the city, has been a frequent site for such threats. The prompt response and expertise of the squad are essential in mitigating the risks posed by such devices, ensuring the safety of civilians and security personnel alike.

## Two drug pushers arrested F.P. Report

HARIPUR: The police here on Tuesday arrested two drug peddlers and recovered charas from their possessions. Under the directions of District Police Officer (DPO), Farhan Khan, the operation against drug pushers had been continued in the district, the police spokesman said. A police team led by SHO, Police Station Hattar, Sajid Nawaz netted Shakeel and recovered 3.615 kg hashish from his custody. The police also arrested Satana Gul with 876 grams hashish. The police registered cases against the accused and launched investigations.

## Girl crushed to death under train

CHICHAWATNI (INP): A girl on Tuesday killed as a train ran over her near Harappa Toll Plaza. The police said a girl namely Khadija 4 years was playing on the railway track near Harappa Toll Plaza, when the train hit and injured her critically. She succumbed to her injuries on the way to hospital. The police registered a case and handed over the body to the family.

## PTI plans to spread chaos F.P. Report

QUETTA: Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Human Rights, Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri, termed PTI's protest as a conspiracy to push the country towards chaos once again. In her newspaper statement, she completely rejected the call of dharna and protest by PTI in Islamabad and said that PTI has once again done the crime of creating chaos in the country and inciting innocent people against the country. What is the intention which is not in the interest of the country in any way? She said that the nation has rejected the call of riots in the name of protest. Instead of maintaining peace, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is busy attacking the federal government with armed groups, which is worsening the law and order situation. Senator said that PTI chief Imran Khan and his followers have no sense of innocent lives. On the one hand, they are active in attacking Islamabad, but on the other hand, the silence of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and PTI on the killing of innocents in Kuram is significant. Why are they not talking about this? She further said that PTI and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government value their leadership more than human lives. Every protest of Tehreek-e-Insaaf takes place under a well-thought-out plan precisely when it happens on the arrival of a friendly head of state.

# KP govt fails to ensure education policy

## F.P. Report

MARDAN: The lofty claims of the provincial government regarding the promotion of education and the improvement of educational institutions have proven to be an illusion. On one hand, the provincial government asserts that educational development is the cornerstone of its agenda and that no compromises will be made in this regard. However, the reality of these claims can be gauged by observing the dilapidated and crumbling state of the Government Primary School in Gunjai. The school building has become severely run-down, with its roofs leaking extensively due to seepage and various parts of the deteriorating concrete ceiling falling regularly, posing a significant threat of major accidents at any time.

Despite repeated efforts by the school staff and local elders to bring this matter to the attention of the provincial government and the education department, no substantial measures have been taken to address the issue. Haji Imtiaz, the elected councilor from VC Takar Gunjai, has called on the provincial government and senior officials of the education department to issue immediate orders for the complete reconstruction

of the Government Primary School Gunjai building and to ensure the students are relocated to a safe structure.

**DC lauds media role for good governance, transparency:** Deputy Commissioner Mardan said that media is the fourth pillar of the state. It is the eyes and ears of the government and the administration. He expressed these views here on Tuesday while talking to journalists during a visit to the Mardan Press Club along with DPO and ADC Finance.

The media should identify the problems. We will find solutions together. Press Club President Bashir Adil and General Secretary Fazal Haq Akhunzada along with the club's cabinet and members welcomed the Deputy Commissioner. DC said that Mardan is the second largest district of the province and has political and economic importance.

After taking charge, he got acquainted with local issues. "I have the courage to bear criticism. You bring up the problems and administration will take all necessary steps to solve them", he added. He informed a systematic campaign against illegal encroachments will be launched, but before that, we are identifying the encroachments. He

said that a special cleanliness campaign is going on through WSCC and TMAs in the District.

Similarly, action is also being taken against sub-standard Gur, adulterated milk and fake doctors. Traffic is also a serious issue, which will be solved on a permanent basis in collaboration with the police and excise. A crackdown is underway against drugs, especially ice, under the leadership of DPO. He assured that problems faced by journalists will also be solved on priority basis adding Mardan journalists have a positive mindset which is encouraging.

We will take Mardan on the path of development together making Mardan a model district. He said that temporarily registration of rickshaws will soon be started at the police station level.

DC further informed we are working on making the slaughterhouse functional and shifting the bus stand, which will reduce the traffic problem to a great extent. Action will be taken against illegal housing societies and illegal profiteering and hoarding, while cheap markets will be established. On this occasion, shields were presented to the Deputy Commissioner and DPO by the club officials.

## 12 scholars defend M. Phil thesis at KUST

## Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: In a proud moment for Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST), twelve M. Phil scholars from the Department of Chemistry successfully defended their theses, marking a significant achievement for the Institution.

The event, held at the university's campus, was attended by external examiners from various universities who witnessed the scholars' impressive presentations. Dr. Iqbal Khan, Chairman of the Department of Chemistry, congratulated the scholars on their accomplishment, attributing the department's success to his commitment to providing students with a comprehensive research environment and state-of-the-art facilities.

Vice Chancellor of KUST, Professor Dr. Muhammad Naseer Uddin, also praised the successful scholars, acknowledging their hard work and dedication to academic excellence. He further added, this achievement is a testa-

ment to KUST's commitment to providing quality education and fostering academic excellence. The university continues to make strides in research and development, producing talented scholars who are making a mark in their respective fields.

**Kohat departments to observe Anti-Corruption Week:** In order to review preparations for holding Anti-Corruption Week from December 2nd to 9th in Kohat district, a special meeting was held with the Deputy Commissioner Abdul Akram Chitrali in the chair at his Camp Office here on Tuesday.

The meeting reviewed preparations for Anti-Corruption Week in detail and certain important decisions were taken in this regard. The meeting beside the Additional Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Waqas and Regional Officer Information Irshad Afridi, was also attended by the principals of different Colleges and authorities concerned.

On this occasion all the departments and institutions were assigned their

duties and directed to share their proposed programs with the Deputy Commissioner Office at the earliest. During the Anti-Corruption Week, a grand seminar will be held in the District Council Hall on the menace of corruption and will be followed by a walk which will be participated by the people from different walks of life in large numbers.

Similarly, all the departments will display Banners at their offices with slogans against the scourge of corruption. Furthermore, the educational institutions will also organize special programs on corruption. The Deputy Commissioner said that corruption is a menace and its elimination is our religious and national obligation. He directed that a special awareness session up to 5 minutes in the morning assembly on corruption should be started on a daily basis in all educational institutions across the district so that corruption should be considered as a hateful act and clean and clear society can be formed.

## Anti-encroachment operation in D I Khan

## F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The district administration has conducted an anti-encroachment operation in old-vegetable market area to clear the area for timely execution of flyover project.

According to district administration, Assistant Commissioner Faseeh Ishaq Abbasi led the operation which was conducted under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Sarah Rehman following the instructions of Commissioner Commissioner Dera Division Syed Abdul Jabbar Shah.

During the operation, the temporary encroachments

were removed from the front of three shops, owned by Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) and were rented to private parties.

Moreover, the cages set outside several other shops were also removed. However, some of the shopkeepers were given timeline on their request so that they remove the encroachments by themselves in the specific time period. Similarly, a wall near District Headquarters Teaching Hospital on Circular Road was demolished and constructed again few feet back for widening the road.

AC Headquarters Faseeh Ishaq Abbasi told the media that obstacles were being

cleared at Tank Adda and the old vegetable market to pave the way for the construction of the two flyover projects aimed at reducing traffic congestion.

He also stated that encroachment issue in the city's four main bazaars would also be addressed soon. Furthermore, the AC said, the warnings have also been issued to the traders from Inamia Gate to Topanwala Chowk for the removal of encroachments. In this regard, a meeting of traders has been called in the Assistant Commissioner's office where the business community would be taken into confidence regarding the operation, he said.

## Tank admn to hold Khuli Kachehri today

## F.P. Report

TANK: The district administration will hold an open court (Khuli Kachehri) to resolve the problems of residents at their doorsteps here on Wednesday.

According to the district administration, the initiative has been taken as part of the Chief Minister's public service agenda to

address public complaints on the spot and provide them better services.

It says that Deputy Commissioner Tanvir Khan is committed to extending relief to citizens and as part of the efforts the open court will take place on November 27(Wednesday) at 11 AM at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Tank, where citizens will have the chance to pre-

sent their issues directly to the authorities.

The citizens have been invited to raise their concerns regarding issues such as obtaining national identity cards, gas supply problems, passport issues, repairs to Tank City roads, drinking water supply, and difficulties in acquiring driving licenses, weapon licenses, and domicile certificates.



QUETTA: Chairman of All Pakistan Goods Transport Association, Mir Nawab Mengal addressing a press conference.

## Strike over alleged extrajudicial killing called

## F.P. Report

QUETTA (PPI): The Haq Du Tehreek (HDT) Gwadar has announced a citywide shutter-down strike in Gwadar on November 27 to protest the alleged extrajudicial killing of Bashir Abdul Ghani, a resident of Pasni.

Addressing a press conference at the Quetta Press Club on Tuesday, HDT leader Abdul Hafeez Kiyazai demanded a judicial investigation into the incident and called for those responsible to be brought to justice.

Kiyazai said Bashir Abdul Ghani had been in the custody of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Gwadar since July 30, 2024. He was sent to lockup on judicial remand after being presented before the Sessions Judge of Gwadar. However, on November 22, 2024, reports emerged that Ghani had been killed in what authorities described as an attempted escape from custody.

Terming the explanation dubious, Kiyazai alleged that the killing was an act of extrajudicial execution. He appealed to the Chief Justice of Pakistan to initiate a judicial inquiry into the matter and ensure that the perpetrators are held accountable. "The killing of Bashir Abdul Ghani is not just an attack on an individual but a violation of fundamental human rights," Kiyazai asserted. "We demand justice for the deceased and accountability for those responsible."

The HDT leader reiterated that the shutter-down strike aims to highlight the issue and pressure authorities into taking action. Markets and businesses in Gwadar are expected to remain closed on Nov 27 in response to the call for protest. The incident has sparked widespread condemnation from various civil rights groups and activists, who have also urged the judiciary to take immediate notice of the case.

## Customs officer killed, another hurt

## Syed Waliullah Shah

CHAGAI (PPI): A staff member of the Collectorate of Customs Balochistan was killed, and another sustained injuries after unidentified smugglers opened fire during an anti-smuggling operation in the Khazanki area of Chagai district on Tuesday.

According to Levies force report today, the Customs team was conducting an operation against smugglers in the area when they came under attack. Asghar Khan, son of Musa Khan, a member of the Customs staff, was killed on the spot, while another staff member, Waheed Khan, sustained injuries.

The deceased's body and the injured official were shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital Chagai for medico-legal procedures and medical treatment, respectively. Following the incident, the Quick Response Force (QRF) of the Levies in Chagai launched a search operation to apprehend those responsible for the attack. A Levies spokesperson confirmed that efforts were underway to track down the culprits. This incident highlights the ongoing challenges faced by law enforcement agencies in combating smuggling activities in Balochistan.

## Youth urged to focus on modern education

## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The vice chancellor, University of Malakand (UoM), Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad has asked students to focus on modern education and technology instead of certificates and degrees so that they can serve the nation and their families as well. He was addressing a certificate distribution function at the National Institute of Education in Timergara as chief guest here.

A total of 32 students of BS Zoology, Political Science and English literature were awarded degrees on the occasion. The function was also addressed by the managing director of the institute Prof Abdullah Jan, Principal Akbar Hussain and others.

The UoM Vice Chancellor said that youth should realize the current challenges and be prepared for coping with them. He asked youth to play their active role in bringing a positive change in society. He appreciated the stan-

dard and quality of education imparted to students by the private institutes affiliated with the University of Malakand, and said the varsity never compromised on quality of education.

Meanwhile shields, trophies and cash prizes were also distributed among position holder students of the Panjkora Public High School during a separate function chaired by managing director of the Afaq. The school principal Salar Khan, MD Ikramullah and renowned educationist Faridullah Khan also spoke on the occasion. The speakers appreciated the role of the private sector in promoting quality education.

**ANP protest:** The Awami National Party (ANP) Lower Dir chapter staged a protest rally on the call of party provincial president Mian Iftikhar Hussain against the Kurram's Shia Sunni armed conflict and killings of more than 80 people. Dozens of the ANP workers

led by their district leaders turned up to attend the demonstration. They chanted slogans against the government for its failure to overcome the situation in Parachinar.

The ANP district president and former MPA Haji Bahadar Khan, senior vice president Malik Sajjad Yousafzai, Malik Aftab, Mian Hazrat Hussain and others addressed the rally. The speakers alleged that both the federal and provincial governments had failed to provide protection to its citizens in parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They said that Pukhtoon were being targeted under a planned conspiracy as the gunmen had turned the belt into a war zone.

The speakers criticized the Shia and Sunni warring sects and asked them to resolve their issues through a grand jirga. They said that Barrister Saif and former General Faiz Hameed were responsible for the lawlessness in the region as innocent people were killed to get US Dollars.

## TMC prepares for classes in 2024 academic year

## F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: Principal Timergara Medical College Professor Dr. Samiullah, has stated that classes are expected to commence this year at the college. He mentioned that all arrangements and preparations have reached their final stages.

While speaking to media representatives, Professor Dr. Samiullah said that all employees of Timergara Medical College have been directed to report to their duties, and efforts are underway to ensure the commencement of classes for students this year. He added that a team from

KMU (Khyber Medical University) will soon visit Timergara Medical College and Timergara Teaching Hospital.

Following this visit, positive progress is expected regarding the initiation of classes. Dr. Samiullah emphasized that Timergara Medical College is a significant project for the development and prosperity of the region. He urged everyone to contribute to its success. He highlighted that their top priority is to start classes for students and establish the teaching process at the college.

**Admin commits for prisoners facilitation:**

Efforts are rapidly underway to provide basic facilities and necessities to prisoners at District Jail Timergara. A school and a handicraft center will soon be established in the jail, which will bring positive changes to the lives of inmates.

Speaking to media representatives, Superintendent of District Jail Timergara, Muhammad Ayub Bacha, stated that with the onset of winter, arrangements have been made for warm water for the prisoners, and clean drinking water is being provided at a fast pace. Warm clothing has also been distributed among the prisoners.

## KPRA seals wedding hall over tax evasion

## Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: As the monitoring and enforcement drive of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) continues across the province, a team from KPRA Mardan and Malakand Region sealed a noted wedding hall in Hakimabad area of Nowshera.

The KPRA said on Tuesday that on the directives of Director General KPRA, Fauzia Iqbal, and Collector Sales Tax on Services, Maqsood Hassan, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) is carrying out its province-wide monitoring and enforcement campaign.

Teams of KPRA are visiting wedding halls and restaurants across the province to improve tax compliance at the onset of winter and wedding season in the region.

As part of the drive, the KPRA Mardan and Malakand Region team sealed a noted wedding hall in Hakimabad, Nowshera, for non-payment of Sales Tax on Services. The operation was led by Assistant Collector Kamal Zada, Inspector Abdul Waheed, Inspector Shehzad Ali Khan, and Audit Officer Diyar Khan.

Additional Collector for Mardan and Malakand Region, Baseer Ali Rehman, emphasized that

tax evasion and non-compliance will not be tolerated under any circumstances. He warned that strict action will be taken against all individuals and entities involved in tax evasion, in accordance with KPRA laws, rules and regulations. Rehman also urged businesses in the services sector to ensure timely payment of taxes to avoid legal consequences. The wedding hall administration had been issued notices under KPRA rules and regulations, and multiple visits were conducted by the KPRA inspectors. However, the administration failed to cooperate, leading to the enforcement action in line with the law.

## DC Abbottabad launches open door policy

## F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: In a bid to promote good governance and improve public service, Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Snaullah Khan on Tuesday has launched an Open Door Policy on the instructions of the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This initiative aims to provide a direct platform for citizens

to present their issues and concerns.

Under the new policy, the Deputy Commissioner meets with the public on daily basis, listens to their grievances, and takes immediate action to address their problems.

The goal is to strengthen the communication between government institutions and the public, ensuring that issues are

resolved in a timely manner. The Deputy Commissioner's office has been made fully accessible to citizens, allowing them to meet directly with officials. The initiative has been widely praised by the local population, who report that their issues are being resolved quickly and that their trust in government institutions has grown.





## Russia reportedly captures a Briton fighting for Ukraine

MOSCOW (AP): Russia's military captured a British national fighting with Ukrainian troops who have occupied part of Russia's Kursk region, according to reports, as Moscow began daylight drone attacks on civilian areas of Ukraine and its ground forces accelerated gains along parts of the front line.

The Briton was identified by state news agency Tass and other media as James Scott Rhys Anderson. Tass quoted him as saying that he had served as a signalman in the British army for four years and then joined the International Legion of Ukraine, formed early on in Russia's nearly 3-year-old war against its neighbor. On the battlefield, Ukrainian forces are straining to hold at bay a push by Russia's bigger army at places in the eastern Donetsk region. Russian forces recently have gained ground at "a significantly quicker rate" than they did in the whole of last year, according to the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank.

The Russians have detected and are exploiting weaknesses in the Ukrainian defenses, it said in an analysis. The war surpassed 1,000 days last week, and the milestone coincided with a significant escalation in hostilities. Meanwhile, Ukraine's air force said Russia is adapting its drone tactics, as it fired 145 Shahed drones at Ukraine.

Russia has started launching drones during the day, whereas in the past most drone attacks occurred during the night, the air force said. Andrii Kovalenko, the head of the National Security Council's Counter-disinformation Center, said earlier this month that the Russians were looking to conserve their stocks of more destructive but more expensive missiles and also terrorize civilians. The air force said it stopped almost all the drones before they struck.

But a morning missile attack on downtown Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city in the northeast, injured at least 23 people, according to Mayor Ihor Terekhov. He said the attack on a densely populated residential area was carried out by a modified surface-to-air S-400 missile. A Russian ballistic missile also struck the southern Ukraine city of Odesa in the middle of the day, injuring 10 people as it landed in the downtown area, officials said. Ukraine, meantime, continued its attacks on logistical targets inside Russia that support the Kremlin's war effort. Ukrainian drones set off explosions and a

fire at an oil depot in Russia's Kaluga region overnight, about 200 kilometers (120 miles) from the border, a military intelligence official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the rules of his job do not allow him to be quoted by name. Russia made no comment about the alleged strike. It was not possible to independently verify Ukraine's claim. The father of the British man says he was told by a Ukrainian commander of his capture. The captured Briton reportedly served as an instructor for Ukrainian troops and was deployed to the Kursk region against his will. Tass published a video of the man saying in English that he doesn't want to be "here."

The report couldn't be independently verified, but if confirmed it could be one of the first publicly known case of a Western national captured on Russian soil while fighting for Ukraine. The U.K. Embassy in Moscow said officials were "supporting the family of a British man following reports of his detention" but provided no further details.

The Russian Defense Ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The soldier's father, Scott Anderson, told Britain's Daily Mail newspaper that his son's Ukrainian commander had informed him that the young man had been captured. Scott Anderson said his son had served in the British military for four years, then briefly worked as a police custody officer before going to Ukraine to fight. He said he tried to convince his son not to join the Ukrainian military, and now he fears for his safety. "I'm hoping he'll be used as a bargaining chip, but my son told me they torture their prisoners and I'm so frightened he'll be tortured," he told the newspaper.

The International Legion for Defense of Ukraine was created at the request of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy shortly after Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. The Legion is a unit of Ukraine's Ground Forces that consists mostly of foreign volunteers. Apart from the Legion, Ukraine recruits foreigners to other units of its army, filling squads, companies, or even battalions. Early on in the war, Ukraine's authorities said over 20,000 people from 52 countries came to Ukraine to help it defend itself against Russia's aggression. Ever since, the numbers of foreign fighters in the ranks of the Ukrainian military have been classified.

## Audios reveal Brazilian officers pressured Bolsonaro

SAO PAULO (AP): A trove of leaked audio recordings from late 2022 reveal high-ranking members of Brazil's army discussing efforts to pressure then-President Jair Bolsonaro to carry out a coup and remain in power.

The 53 audios, obtained by the Federal Police and accessed by The Associated Press, provide a rare chance to hear military members expressing in their own voices their desire to keep leftist Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva from taking office. Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who oversees the police's sprawling investigation, quoted some of those audios in his ruling last week ordering the arrest of five people for plotting the assassination of then-President-elect Lula in 2022 and then attempting to oust him from power on Jan. 8, 2023, when Bolsonaro supporters destroyed government buildings in capital Brasilia.

Audios from one former army officer - who was not among those de Moraes ordered arrested last week - are particularly supportive of a coup, and weren't referenced in de Moraes' order. Col. Roberto Raimundo Crisculi, a for-

mer subcommander of the army's special forces, told retired Brig. Gen. Mario Fernandes, who was then second in command at the general secretary of the presidency, that the far-right leader had a clear choice after Lula won his third, non-consecutive term. "It will be either a civil war now or civil war later. We have a justification now for civil war; people are on the streets, we have massive support," Crisculi said in one of the audios. "Let's do this now. Speak to 01." 01 is a common reference to Brazil's president.

Neither the former president nor his ministers are heard speaking in the recordings. The audios are not directly related to the Nov. 21 formal accusation by Brazil's police that Bolsonaro and 36 others attempted to stage a coup. The Brazilian army did not respond to a request for comment about the Federal Police investigation. Bolsonaro frequently cast doubt on the election results without providing any evidence and never conceded. He left for the United States days before Lula's inauguration on Jan. 1, 2023 and stayed there for months, keeping a low pro-

file. The top electoral court has ruled Bolsonaro ineligible to run for president until 2030 for abuse of power, and he is also the target of several investigations for a slew of potential crimes. Other audios are less explicit in their wording about the urgent need for a coup. In a voice message to Gen. Fernandes, Col. Reginaldo Vieira de Abreu used an expression frequently repeated by Bolsonaro to argue the country's constitution should be ignored. "We are at war, they are winning. It is almost over and they haven't fired a single shot. It is because of our incompetence," he said. In an audio from Dec. 8, Bolsonaro's aide-de-camp, Lt. Col. Mauro Cid, is heard telling Gen. Fernandes that time was running out to keep his boss in office. "On the 12th... It would have to be before the 12th, right?" Cid said, referencing the day that the electoral court would certify Lula's victory. "I will speak to the president. The thing is his personality sometimes. He waits, waits, waits, waits to see where it is going. To see who supports him. But sometimes time is short, right? We can't wait much longer."

## Modi's party returns to power in India's richest state

NEW DELHI (BBC): Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has won a landslide majority in India's richest state of Maharashtra. The BJP and its allies won 233 out of 288 seats, which is above the halfway mark needed to form a government.

Maharashtra, which has India's financial hub of Mumbai as its capital, is one of the most politically crucial states in the country. The BJP, however, has faced defeat in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand, where main opposition Congress and its allies won 56 seats out of 81 seats. This was the first regional election in Maharashtra since the crucial parliamentary polls earlier this year, in which Modi returned for a historic third term but lost his majority, having to depend on regional allies to form a government.

Maharashtra was one of the states where the BJP suffered a setback and opposition parties won two-thirds of the parliamentary seats. Modi's party currently runs the incumbent government in Maharashtra along with breakaway factions of two regional parties, the Shiv Sena and the National Congress Party (NCP). Political analysts say the BJP's retention of the state will give a much-needed boost to the party, which also won regional elections in the northern state of Haryana last month.

"This result has taken us by surprise. We knew we would win but never expected such an overwhelming result," BJP spokesperson Pravin Darekar told reporters in Mumbai. The outcome will also decide the fate of regional heavyweights, many of whom switched parties overnight in both states. In Maharashtra, Modi led his party's campaign from the front, announcing several welfare schemes, many of which were aimed at farmers.

The state is a major agricultural belt and producer of crops like onions, soybean and cotton. The opposition also made similar promises, including waiver of farm loans and financial assistance for women and senior citizens. Critics have pointed out that the competing poll promises would mean the new government would face a serious fiscal challenge in delivering them, or risk facing voters' anger.

The state has undergone significant political turmoil in recent years. The BJP-led coalition stayed in power after some lawmakers from the Shiv Sena and the NCP broke away from their parties and joined the government.

Meanwhile, Jharkhand, where seven chief ministers have ruled since the state's formation in 2000, has also witnessed political upheaval in recent months after its chief minister Hemant Soren was arrested in February on corruption charges, which he denied. After his release in June, Soren soon hit the road, trying to capitalise on sympathy votes.

While the BJP called Soren corrupt, he alleged that the federal government was unfairly targeting a tribal chief minister. Tribal communities make up nearly 9% of India's population and remain one of the country's most marginalised groups.



NEW DELHI: Police detain a Congress party supporter during a protest against Indian billionaire Gautam Adani and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi after Adani was indicted by US prosecutors for bribery and fraud.

## India's Opp protests against billionaire facing fraud charges

NEW DELHI (AP): Hundreds of supporters of India's main opposition party protested against billionaire Gautam Adani, who was recently indicted in the US for alleged fraud and bribery, and accused the government of protecting the Indian coal magnate whose companies' shares have plunged since the charges last week.

Activists belonging to the Congress party demonstrated near Parliament in New Delhi to demand the immediate arrest of Adani, who is seen as close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Some held up placards reading "Modi and Adani are one" and "Modi's friendship is costing the nation." Several were detained by police.

Also, opposition parties attempted to raise the Adani allegations in Parliament, but the session was adjourned over disruptions. They called for a joint committee to investigate his companies, which include agriculture, renewable energy, coal and infrastructure. Adani, 62, one of Asia's richest men, was thrust into the spotlight last week when US prosecutors in New York charged him and seven of his associates with securities fraud and conspiracy to commit securities and wire fraud, alleging that Adani duped investors in a massive

solar project in India by concealing that it was being facilitated by bribes.

The indictment outlines an alleged scheme to pay about \$265 million in bribes to government officials in India. The government has not officially commented on the charges, which the Adani group has denied as baseless. The group's CFO said the indictment was linked to one contract of Adani Green, its renewable energy arm, that comprised 10% of its business, adding that none of the group's other companies was accused of wrongdoing. Ishita Sadha, part of the Congress party's youth wing, said the allegations were embarrassing for India. "Modi is keeping Adani safe," she said.

After the indictment was unsealed last week, the Congress party's Rahul Gandhi said the Modi government was protecting Adani and that the billionaire wouldn't be arrested or investigated. "The prime minister's credibility has been destroyed. The entire country knows they (Adani and Modi) are one. We will expose the entire network," Gandhi told reporters. The main opposition bloc, called INDIA, led by the Congress party, has repeatedly called for investigations into Adani. They have hit out at the tycoon and his perceived links to the government since a US-

based short-selling firm released a report last year accusing the billionaire's companies of stock price manipulation and fraud. Adani denied those claims too, but the report triggered the selling of his companies' stock and an ongoing investigation by the country's market regulator. Market analysts say Adani had just about recovered from the shock from the report when the charges were announced, making it the biggest test yet for the beleaguered billionaire. A day after the indictment, his companies' stocks plunged up to 20%.

Adani's imprint across India's economy runs deep. His group is the country's largest operator of coal mines and largest infrastructure developer, operating several ports and airports, and employs tens of thousands of people. Despite his fossil fuel roots, Adani has ambitions to become the world's largest player in renewable energy by 2030. Analysts say a key factor in his meteoric rise over the years has been his knack for aligning his group's priorities with those of the Modi government. His critics accuse him of crony capitalism and of gaining preferential treatment from the government, including in winning contracts, which the group has denied.

## Germany fears outside hand in deadly Lithuania jet crash

BERLIN (AFP): A DHL cargo plane crashed near the Lithuanian capital's airport, killing one crew member, with Germany raising the possibility of outside involvement in the disaster. While authorities stopped short of linking the tragedy to a recent series of sabotage cases, Lithuanian officials have in past weeks probed alleged acts of incendiary devices being planted on cargo planes.

The plane, which was coming from the German city of Leipzig, crashed about one kilometre (0.6 miles) from Vilnius airport having hit several buildings as it skidded several hundred metres, according to the police and the DHL logistics company. Images from the crash site showed debris from the plane and packages on fire scattered across a residential area cordoned off by the emergency services. "So far, there are no signs or evidence suggesting this was sabotage or a terrorist act," Lithuania's Defence Minister Laurynas Kasčiunas told reporters, adding the probe to establish the cause could take "about a week".

State Security Department chief Darius Jauniskis said that while the Baltic country had seen "an increasingly aggressive Russia and could not rule out the case of terrorism... we cannot make any attributions or point fingers yet".

Echoing that caution, Lithuania's Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte urged people in a social media post to "refrain from jumping to conclusions" during the investigation. But German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said "we must now seriously ask ourselves whether this was an accident or whether it was another hybrid incident".

The term "hybrid" is commonly used to describe attacks that do not use conventional military tactics, such as sabotaging infrastructure or launching cyberattacks. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, European countries have often used the term to describe actions against them that they believe originate from Moscow. Germany's Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said later in Berlin there were "no findings" as yet that indicated there had been an explosive charge on the aircraft that could have caused the crash. According to police, the plane skidded several hundred metres, hitting a residential building which caught fire, along with smaller buildings and a car.

Firefighters said one of the four crew died in the crash. Police said the deceased person was Spanish, and that the three other crew members were Spanish, German and Lithuanian nationals. One was critically injured. The emergency services

said the house hit by the plane was evacuated and its 12 residents moved to safety. "We were woken by an explosion. Through the window, we saw the wave of explosions and a cloud of fire. Like fireworks," Stanislovas Jakimavicius, who lives near the crash site, told AFP.

German logistics company DHL said the aircraft was operated by its partner SwiftAir and had been attempting an "emergency landing" early in the morning. A German transport ministry official said the country's Bureau of Aircraft Accident Investigation "will support the investigation on site". It was not immediately clear what caused the crash. Earlier this month Lithuania carried out arrests as part of a criminal probe into sending incendiary devices on Western-bound planes.

According to Polish and Lithuanian media, the devices, including electric massagers implanted with a flammable substance, were sent from Lithuania to Britain in July and could be behind a lorry fire outside Warsaw. UK anti-terrorism police last month said they were investigating how a parcel burst into flames at a depot earlier this year, after a similar case in Germany blamed on Russia. The Lithuanian president's chief security adviser blamed Moscow for the incidents.

## Russian deserter reveals war secrets of guarding nuclear base

MOSCOW (BBC): On the day of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Anton says the nuclear weapons base he was serving at was put on full combat alert. "Before that, we had only exercises. But on the day the war started, the weapons were fully in place," says the former officer in the Russian nuclear forces. "We were ready to launch the forces into the sea and air and, in theory, carry out a nuclear strike."

I met Anton in a secret location outside Russia. For his own protection, the BBC will not reveal where. We have also changed his name and are not showing his face. Anton was an officer at a top-secret nuclear weapons facility in Russia. He has shown us documents confirming his unit, rank and base. The BBC is unable to independently verify all the events he described, although they do chime with Russian statements at the time. Three days after troops poured over Ukraine's borders, Vladimir Putin announced that Russia's nuclear deterrence forces had been ordered into a "special mode of combat service". Anton says that combat alert was in place on day

one of the war and claims his unit was "shut inside the base".

"All we had was Russian state TV," says the former officer. "I didn't really know what it all meant. I automatically carried out my duties. We weren't fighting in the war, we were just guarding the nuclear weapons." The state of alert was cancelled, he adds, after two to three weeks. Anton's testimony offers an insight into the top-secret inner workings of the nuclear forces in Russia. It is extremely rare for service members to talk to journalists. "There is a very strict selection process there. Everyone is a professional soldier - no conscripts," he explains.

"There are constant checks and lie-detector tests for everyone. The pay is much higher, and the troops aren't sent to war. They're there to either repel, or carry out, a nuclear strike," the former officer says. Life was tightly controlled. "It was my responsibility to ensure the soldiers under me didn't take any phones on to the nuclear base," he explains. "It's a closed society, there are no strangers there. If you want your parents to visit, you need to submit a request to the FSB Security Service

three months in advance." Anton was part of the base's security unit - a rapid-reaction force that guarded the nuclear weapons. "We had constant training exercises. Our reaction time was two minutes," he says, with a hint of pride. Russia has around 4,380 operational nuclear warheads, according to the Federation of American Scientists, but only 1,700 are "deployed" or ready for use. All the Nato member states combined possess a similar number. There are also concerns about whether Putin could choose to deploy "non-strategic", often called tactical, nuclear weapons. These are smaller missiles that generally don't cause widespread radioactive fallout. Their use would nevertheless lead to a dangerous escalation in the war. The Kremlin has been doing all it can to test the West's nerves. Only last week Putin ratified changes to the nuclear doctrine - the official rules dictating how and when Russia can launch nuclear weapons. The doctrine now says Russia can launch if it comes under "massive attack" from conventional missiles by a non-nuclear state but "with the participation or support of a nuclear state". Russian officials say

the updated doctrine "effectively eliminates" the possibility of its defeat on the battlefield. But is Russia's nuclear arsenal fully functional?

Some Western experts have suggested its weapons mostly date from the Soviet era, and might not even work.

The former nuclear forces officer rejected that opinion as a "very simplified view from so-called experts". "There might be some old-fashioned types of weapons in some areas, but the country has an enormous nuclear arsenal, a huge amount of warheads, including constant combat patrol on land, sea and air."

Russia's nuclear weapons were fully operational and battle-ready, he maintained. "The work to maintain the nuclear weapons is carried out constantly, it never stops even for one minute." Shortly after the full-scale war began, Anton said he was given what he describes as a "criminal order" - to hold lectures with his troops using very specific written guidelines. "They said that Ukrainian civilians are combatants and should be destroyed!" he exclaims. "That's a red line for me - it's a war crime. I

said I won't spread this propaganda." Senior officers reprimanded Anton by transferring him to a regular assault brigade in another part of the country. He was told he would be sent to war. These units are often sent in to battle as the "first wave" and a number of Russian deserters have told the BBC that "troublemakers" who object to the war have been used as "cannon fodder".

The Russian embassy in London did not respond to a request for comment. Before he could be sent to the front line, Anton signed a statement refusing to take part in the war and a criminal case was opened against him. He showed us documents confirming his transfer to the assault brigade and details of the criminal case. He then decided to flee the country with the help of a volunteer organisation for deserters.

"If I had run away from the nuclear forces base, then the local FSB Security Service would've reacted decisively and I probably wouldn't have been able to leave the country," he said. But he believes that, because he had been transferred to an ordinary assault brigade, the system of

top-level security clearance failed. Anton said he wanted the world to know that many Russian soldiers were against the war.

The volunteer organisation that helps deserters, "Idite Lesom" ['Go by the Forest', in English, or 'Get Lost'] has told the BBC that the number of deserters seeking help has risen to 350 a month. The risks to those fleeing are growing, too. At least one deserter has been killed after fleeing abroad, and there have been several cases of men being forcibly returned to Russia and put on trial.

Although Anton has left Russia, he says security services are still looking for him there: "I take precautions here, I work off the books and I don't show up in any official systems." He says he has stopped speaking to his friends at the nuclear base because he could put them in danger: "They must take lie-detector tests, and any contact with me could lead to a criminal case." But he is under no illusion about the risk he is himself in by helping other soldiers to flee. "I understand the more I do that, the higher the chances they could try and kill me."



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Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

## Climate fund ends with a \$300b commitment

**T**HE goal of COP29 climate summit at Baku in Azerbaijan went into Sunday overtime to pin down the developed countries to commit themselves to the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), where definite amounts to be contributed was to be fixed. It was evident that it had to be more than \$1 trillion, which is 10 times more than the \$100 billion committed by the developed countries at the Paris summit in 2015.

On Sunday, all that the developed countries were willing to commit was \$300 billion, which is a hugely inadequate amount compared to the actual need of the developing and poorer countries to make the transition to a green economy. The anger and anguish of the developing countries was expressed candidly and vividly by the Indian representative Chandni Raina, when she told the closing session of the summit, "I regret to say that this document is nothing more than an optical illusion. This, in our opinion, will not address the enormity of the challenge we all face. Therefore, we oppose the adoption of this document."

But United Nations climate chief Simon Stiell confessed to the hard negotiations that led to the agreement. He had to explain the tame deal which came at the end of the summit. He said, "It has been a difficult journey, but we've delivered a deal. This deal will keep the clean energy boom growing and protect billions of lives. But like any insurance policy, it only works if the premiums are fully paid in full, and on time." It should be remembered that the earlier commitment to contribute \$100 billion annually was never kept except occasionally. The faint glimmer of hope of raising \$1.3 trillion annually by 2025 was kept glimmering with the suggestion that the amount would be raised through means other governmental aid of developed countries, and that it would come from the public and private sources, and also through the effective activation of trade in carbon credits.

Outgoing American president Joe Biden was optimistic that this was a good if modest beginning. He said, "While there is still substantial work ahead of us to achieve our climate goals, today's outcome puts us one significant step closer. On behalf of the American people and future generations, we must continue to accelerate our work to keep a cleaner, safer, healthier planet within our grasp."

It is indeed necessary to remain hopeful despite the deep disappointment at the outcome of the summit in Baku, but the challenge becomes even more difficult. Tina Stege, Marshall Islands climate envoy said, "We're leaving with a small portion of the funding climate-vulnerable countries urgently need. It isn't really enough, but it's a start."

It is indeed the case that even as the funds committed by the developed countries – \$300 billion – are too small to meet the big challenge of coping with the climate change challenge, the efforts to curb the rise in global temperatures must continue through all the means possible. Climate scientists have warned that the temperature rise must be kept below 1.5 degrees Celsius below the pre-industrial levels, and crossing the red line would lead to an irreversible climate shift which would prove to be disastrous.

The failure to reach the desired goal of settling the financial funding needed from the developed countries would be a dampener on the decision reached at COP28 in Dubai in November 2023 where it was decided to move away from the fossil fuels. With inadequate funding, moving from the dependence on fossil fuels would prove to be more difficult than ever. The demand of the developed countries that developing countries should contribute to the climate fund, though it would be a voluntary effort, could become an alternative source to the challenge of moving towards a green-fuel economy.

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# US hastening the shift to a multipolar world

Osama Al-Sharif

**N**OTHING speaks of the US applying double standards when it comes to respecting international law and UN bodies than its reaction to the International Criminal Court's issuance of arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on war crime charges. The Biden administration was quick to reject the ruling, arguing lack of jurisdiction by the court. President Joe Biden called the decision "outrageous."

But Republican lawmakers were more belligerent, with Sen. Lindsey Graham threatening America's allies, such as Canada, the UK, France and Germany, that if they were to cooperate with the court's ruling, the US would crush their economies.

Others called for a bipartisan resolution sanctioning the court and its prosecutor. Graham said that the US would be next on its list if the International Criminal Court was not sanctioned.

This contrasts with the US and Graham cheering the court when it issued arrest warrants against Russian President Vladimir Putin and former Sudan leader Omar Bashir.

The world has been moving slowly from a unipolar to a multipolar reality for years. But Israel's horrific war on Gaza has accelerated that process. The US has weakened the UN Security Council by exercising its veto power on multiple occasions to derail draft resolutions calling for an unconditional ceasefire in Gaza. The fact that many so-called Western liberal democracies defended

Israel's genocidal war in Gaza, with some remaining unapologetic today, has strained the rules-based order to breaking point.

There are clear indications that Israel's horrific military conduct in Gaza under the guise of self-defense has had significant geopolitical implications that can be seen in the erosion of America's status as the world's sole superpower. This position was achieved following the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

But the world is deeply polarized again. The Global South no longer sees the West as the defender of universal values and the rule of law. Israel has put itself above the law, but what has made its exceptionalism, as a lawbreaker, the norm is America's blind support and blatant partiality even before the war on Gaza.

For years, the US, which had appointed itself as the exclusive broker of a political settlement between Israel and the Palestinians, looked the other way as Israel expanded its illegal settlements in the Occupied Territories, demolished Palestinian homes, killed and imprisoned thousands and imposed an apartheid regime on millions of Palestinians under occupation. Moreover, it used its power in the UNSC to derail any move to hold Israel accountable before the law.

Under the Trump administration, the US went even further by unilaterally recognizing Israel's illegal annexation of East Jerusalem and Syria's Golan Heights. By doing so, the US itself became a rogue state, violating inter-

national law and becoming culpable in Israel's war crimes.

In the coming months and years, it is almost a done deal that the US will give the go-ahead for Israel to annex the West Bank, and maybe Gaza as well, and kill any prospect for a Palestinian state. All this would be illegal under international law and UN resolutions.

In addition to the diverging international response to the war on Gaza, with the US today standing almost alone in its explicit support of Israel's actions, Washington's indifference to the position of its allies has diminished its moral authority and diplomatic influence in certain regions, particularly the Middle East and the Global South.

The war has exposed limitations in the current UN system, particularly the Security Council, potentially accelerating calls for reform to better reflect a multipolar world order. Countries like Brazil, South Africa, Russia, India and Türkiye are echoing such calls.

The US has been losing its global hegemony for a number of reasons, such as the meteoric rise of China as an economic and military power, the birth of new Global South coalitions and blocs, such as BRICS and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the emergence of regional powers like Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Brazil and Indonesia.

Furthermore, the increasing global reach of non-Western cultural influences and media is challenging the dominance of traditional Western soft power. The proliferation of diverse media sources and

social media platforms has challenged traditional Western-dominated narratives about global conflicts, reflecting a more multipolar information landscape.

It is not only America's global dominance that is eroding. The EU is seeing an unprecedented shift in public sentiments toward the far right, which is dominated by euroskeptics, anti-immigration populist figures and Islamophobic policies. These political undercurrents will weaken the bloc's global influence as it faces existential challenges.

In the Middle East, countries are distancing themselves from confrontational American policies, such as Washington's rivalry with China and Russia. This is evident in Saudi Arabia's opening to Moscow and Beijing, while maintaining a close working relationship with the US based on what best serves its national interest. Türkiye and Iran are also keeping all lines open as they forge new alliances based on the shared interests of the neighborhood.

The shift toward a multipolar world is a reality that coincides with the eclipse of US global hegemony and Trump's "America First" policy. As America turns inward, its global dominance will diminish. Moreover, its audacious challenges of the rules-based order will accelerate the drive toward a collapse of the post-Second World War entities that the US helped build.

But the path toward a multipolar world remains fraught with challenges. Unresolved conflicts will test the existing global system, while new ones may pave the way for the birth of fresh alliances and platforms of regional cooperation.

## Israel harming UNRWA could be an own goal

Yousef M Aljamal

**I**F you wondered how Israelis, or at least the Jewish majority and their political representatives, feel about the UN Relief and Works Agency, look no further than Israel's parliament. Late last month, the Knesset voted by a huge majority of 92-10 to ban UNRWA from the country within 90 days. In addition, Israeli legislators also voted to designate this humanitarian aid organization as a terror group, effectively ending any direct interaction between the UN agency and the Israeli state.

I have written recently about a flurry of legislation in Israel, all of which has an unpleasant anti-Palestinian flavor, from trying to bring down the Palestinian Authority to exacerbating the oppression of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Nevertheless, this act against UNRWA could have an immediate and excruciating impact on millions of Palestinian refugees registered with this humanitarian agency, at the worst possible time in their history since the war of 1948.

Make no mistake, this law is very popular with Jewish Israelis who have, for years, been fed by their government with misinformation that presents UNRWA as an enemy of the country, one that unnecessarily prolongs and perpetuates the refugee issue and advances anti-Israeli and even antisemitic propaganda. It is generally portrayed as a tool in the hands of the most extremist Palestinians who are only interested in the destruction of Israel.

Evidently, the participation of a very small number of UNRWA employees in the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks, which the agency itself called "abhorrent" in its investigation of the matter and as a result terminated the employment of nine of them, has caused massive reputational damage. Worse, it opened the door

**Make no mistake, this law is very popular with Jewish Israelis who have, for years, been fed by their government with misinformation that presents UNRWA as an enemy of the country, one that unnecessarily prolongs and perpetuates the refugee issue and advances anti-Israeli and even antisemitic propaganda. It is generally portrayed as a tool in the hands of the most extremist Palestinians who are only interested in the destruction of Israel.**

to its detractors to go on the attack and smear the entire organization and its activities to the absurd extent of labeling the organization as a terrorist group. In doing so, they ignored the fact that UNRWA carried out a full investigation into the issue and handed out the most severe punishment possible to those who were found guilty of participation in the Hamas attacks. There was no excuse for anyone to take part in such an atrocity and by doing so harm the organization that helps supply Palestinians with their most basic needs. Yet, it is worth reminding ourselves that UNRWA employs 13,000 Palestinians in Gaza and that the inexcusable acts of a tiny handful of them cannot and should not reflect on an organization with nearly 30,000 staff across the region. And as long as the organization adheres to the stringent UN code of conduct when its employees go astray, it should not be punished and, importantly, neither should those who benefit from its services and who are facing starvation.

Israel also has a point when it complains about the content of some of the textbooks taught at UNRWA-sponsored schools in the Occupied Territories. Out of very little choice, the curriculum and textbooks taught at UNRWA's schools are those of the "host country" and there are cases of some of the PA's textbooks containing antisemitic and inflammatory language aimed at Israel.

Part of this discussion should have initially taken place between Israel and the PA, as much as among the international community, to persuade the Palestinian leadership that there is no place for such language in their textbooks. There is a logic in

teaching the curriculum of the host country to allow the refugees to be no different to other students, as it enhances their future opportunities, but for the sake of everyone involved the PA must rid its teaching materials of discriminatory language, as UNRWA has been pleading with it for years.

Nevertheless, the Israeli government is not interested in dealing constructively with some of its understandable grievances. In its usual belligerent and populist approach, it exploits the issue to deflect from its own failures. In Benjamin Netanyahu's world, there is always the need for enemies, domestic and external, that he and his government are fighting against to save the realm.

The relentless attacks against this UN humanitarian aid agency have become all too common in Israeli politics since Netanyahu took office and are currently being launched with more venom, mainly because it is an easy target, as UNRWA, being a UN organ, cannot directly reply to these attacks and defend itself. Most significantly, however, UNRWA is not the issue and should never be the main story. More important and pressing is the need to provide nearly 6 million registered Palestinian refugees with humanitarian aid, with an extra sense of commitment and urgency to the people of Gaza, most of whom were refugees to begin with and, over the last 13 months, may have been displaced several times over. Under the most difficult of circumstances, such as bloody conflicts in the Occupied Territories, Lebanon or Syria, it has been UNRWA that has continued to provide millions of Palestinian refugees with healthcare, shelter and social services. The organization was never meant to remain in charge of such a mission for more than 75 years; it is only due to the failure of politicians to end

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that it has become part of the landscape through no fault of its own. In an ideal world, following a peace agreement, all services provided by UNRWA would have been transferred to the government of an independent Palestinian state or the host countries, enabling a smoother transition. Legislation aside, which in the case of the current Israeli government reflects a need for instant gratification, regardless of the fact that, in most cases, such a need leads to long-term harm. This particular piece of legislation is damaging for both Israel and the Palestinians.

For instance, in Jerusalem, if the ban goes ahead, UNRWA would have to close its headquarters in the eastern part of the city that has been annexed by Israel, disabling its activities there. In the refugee camp of Shuafat, the only one in the annexed Jerusalem side of Israel's West Bank separation wall, more than 16,500 people would instantly be left with no health and education services. In this case, it would become Israel's responsibility to provide such services. The choice for Israel would be either to become the humanitarian aid provider or to leave the refugees with no health, education or any other social services.

The debate should never have revolved around UNRWA. The discussion should concentrate on who is best positioned to ensure that Palestinian refugees receive the services they are entitled to and to improve them year after year. So far, no one has come up with a more viable alternative to UNRWA and this piece of performative Israeli legislation is playing politics with the welfare of millions of people and should not be allowed.

## Trump can do a business deal

John Milligan-Whyte

**H**OW can China achieve a breakthrough deal with the next US administration after Donald Trump assumes office on Jan 20 despite the wide expectation he would implement highly disruptive domestic and foreign policies?

The best-case scenario would be the two countries holding discussions to negotiate and sign a concise but comprehensive "package deal" that better aligns with their economic needs and goals and is conducive to the peaceful coexistence of China and the United States. Such a breakthrough deal will be necessary to end the worldwide financial crisis that will be triggered by an escalating trade war, destabilizing the two largest economies which account for 41 percent of the global GDP.

Unlike any other US president, Trump is an excellent business deal-maker who could happily sign a two-page agreement creating a new, mutually beneficial framework for Sino-US relations, if the agreement dramatically stimulates the US economy and creates millions of jobs in the US.

The worst-case scenario is the US intensifying the tariff and trade wars, and triggering confrontation in the high-tech sector, in a

bid to prevent the "Made in China 2025" plan from achieving success.

The worst-case scenario was summarized by former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger: "Unless there is some basis for cooperative action the world will slide into a catastrophe comparable to World War I. Military technologies available today make such a crisis even more difficult to control." In one of his last interviews, Kissinger sadly said a war between the US and China was "probable".

Trump's reelection as US president has now made a catastrophic breakdown in US-China relations "probable". But it has also made a constructive breakthrough possible either through an early agreement between the two countries or later through a sudden breakthrough deal essential for the benefit of the US economy and people.

US trade wars can trigger a financial crisis and stop the functioning of the global credit and capital market. In such a situation, only a breakthrough agreement between the two countries will be able to restore business confidence and reinvigorate the capital and credit markets quickly enough to stop the collapse of the global financial, eco-

nomics and trading systems.

Trump's reelection has created a unique opportunity for achieving a breakthrough in US-China relations, because only Trump can ignore the entrenched hostile views of China in the US' traditional policymaking establishment, think tanks and bureaucracy.

Trump realizes that traditional Sino-US economic relations can no longer meet the US' growth and national security needs. That is why he is likely to make major changes in the US' domestic and foreign policy. The Republican Party's control of both the House of Representatives and Senate can make many of Trump's radical policies clear and present dangers.

However, Trump is a presidential deal maker who can overcome the key problems economist Larry Summers warned of in US policymaking. "Can the United States imagine a viable global economic system in 2050 in which its economy is half the size of the world's largest? Could a political leader acknowledge that reality in a way that permits negotiation over what such a world would look like? While it might be unacceptable to the United States to be so

greatly surpassed in economic scale, does it have the means to stop it? Can China be held down without inviting conflict?"

Trump won a clear mandate because many American voters liked the economic policies he claimed he would implement as US president. The voters elected him to force change.

Since his tariff war and trade policies that demanded unrealistic concessions from China failed during his first term, he has indicated to impose 60-100 percent tariffs on Chinese goods, which he unrealistically believes will force China to accept his demands. The failure of his first term's tariff policies foreshadows the failure of his second term's even more extreme trade war.

The reality that will eventually prevent Trump from achieving his unrealistic demands is that neither the US nor China can win relentless zero-sum game competitions. Given that leaving behind a widely appreciated, successful breakthrough economic deal with China is better than causing a catastrophic economic confrontation, Trump's legacy could be either achieving a breakthrough deal with China or causing the global financial system's collapse.



# Trump’s evasion of January 6 accountability will echo for next four years and generations to come

**SPECIAL** **counsel**  
**Jack Smith set out to**  
**prove in the United**  
**States of America v.**  
**Donald J. Trump that**  
**even presidents are not**  
**above the law.**

Instead, his failed prosecutions ended up making Trump even more powerful as the ebullient president-elect prepares to return to office on January 20.

Smith’s decision to bow to the inevitable and shelve his cases over Trump’s alleged election interference and hoarding of classified documents represented a momentous victory for the 45th and 47th president.

The federal elections case led to a Supreme Court ruling granting a president limited immunity for official acts. This is likely to reinforce Trump’s belief that he will have almost unchecked authority and will therefore reverberate through the next four years and generations to come.

And a president – who refused to accept the will of voters, the bedrock principle of democracy, after he lost an election and then told supporters to “fight like hell” before they invaded the US Capitol – will pay no lasting legal price.

Smith, in his downbeat legalese, sketched the enormity of America’s reality.

“The Department and the country have never faced the circumstance here, where a federal indictment against a private citizen has been returned by a grand jury and a criminal prosecution is already underway when the defendant is elected President.” He added that Justice Department policy means the case cannot go ahead because the Constitution prohibits the indictment or prosecution of sitting presidents. But he also made clear that the outcome is not “based on the merits or strength of the case against the defendant.”

In other words, voters have elected a president under federal criminal indictment even though he is still accused of one of the most serious crimes against democracy in American history. Trump has pleaded not guilty to all charges against him.

And by voting the way they did, Americans effectively exonerated him in the federal cases — on charges that could have landed him in jail. Ironically, the very democracy that Trump had tried to subvert produced his legal deliverance.

The cases were doomed anyway since Trump vowed to fire Smith as soon as he takes office.

But Smith’s move on Monday validated Trump’s high-wire legal and political strategy, which

involved repeated delays, sometimes with the help of conservative judges, and an absolute imperative to win the presidential election — a feat that looked unlikely when he was first charged.

There will be short- and long-term consequences from Trump escaping accountability.

His second term, which he already pledged to devote to “retribution,” has the potential to unfold in an even greater atmosphere of impunity than his first one. After all, Trump enters office for the second time having seen that his method of testing the rule of law to its limits had little downside, aside from the symbolism of his second impeachment by the US House.

“For Donald Trump, his strategy of delay, delay, .....

**There has all along been another profound consideration hanging over the case. Despite the horror of what unfolded on January 6, 2021, and the shock of a president using his vast powers to try to steal an election he lost, a decision to prosecute was always going to rock the nation and its tortured politics. Smith followed the evidence where he thought it led and secured indictments through grand juries who were convinced there was probable cause that criminal activity had occurred in both cases. That is standard prosecutorial practice. But even some legal scholars sympathetic to the idea that Trump should face accountability for trying to overturn an election wondered whether the legal theories on which Smith relied were somewhat novel. But how could they not be? No president before dared to do what Trump tried. And the business of putting a former president on trial was always going to raise a more acute dilemma: Was it really in the national interest to try to bring a former commander in chief into a courtroom trial, given the tumult such a crossing of the historic Rubicon was always destined to cause?**  
.....

delay and then win the election to do away with the litigation, proves to be one of the ultimate success stories,” James Sample, a law professor at Hofstra University, told Julia Chatterley on “First Move” on CNN International. “It’s certainly a win in terms of avoiding accountability, which means it is a loss for the rule of law that it took so long to bring these cases to trial that they never in fact got to trial before the election.”

Smith’s inability to bring the president-elect to account — for the most flagrant attack on the integrity of elections of modern times — will also echo down the ages.

Many Republicans are convinced by now that Trump was unfairly targeted. But some future president, decades from now, might decide to meddle in the result of an election that they lost in the knowledge that a predecessor got away with it.

In Washington, Judge Tanya Chutkan, who was set to preside over the political trial of the century in the federal election interference case, quickly agreed to Smith’s request to dismiss the case without prejudice — meaning that theoretically Trump could face

**Stephen Collinson**

the same charges again when he leaves office. But the chances of a revival of the trial in four years are far-fetched, even if a Democrat is in the White House.

The folding of the federal prosecutions also poses searching questions for Smith and the Justice Department.

Democrats have long complained that Attorney General Merrick Garland waited too long to appoint a special counsel to investigate Trump for his election meddling in 2020. After all, a congressional select committee under the previous Democratic House majority spent months probing the issue. The case might have come to trial had Garland moved more quickly.

ma: Was it really in the national interest to try to bring a former commander in chief into a courtroom trial, given the tumult such a crossing of the historic Rubicon was always destined to cause?

At the same time, however, failing to act against an attempt to steal an election and the alleged unauthorized storage of classified documents would have enshrined an un-American principle that presidents can break the law but every other citizen cannot.

It was not Smith’s job to consider the political implications of his indictments. But charging Trump in two separate cases ahead of the election year, when the president was already a candidate, was always going to stoke partisan uproar. There’s a good

of election interference. “It was a political hijacking, and a low point in the History of our Country that such a thing could have happened, and yet, I persevered, against all odds, and WON. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!” Trump wrote on Truth Social on Monday.

Four years ago, a nation sickened by a once-in-a-century pandemic was being put through another ordeal because of one man’s inability to face up to the fact that he lost the 2020 general election.

So, it’s worth going back to Smith’s original indictment to recall the grave and unprecedented conduct that was charged in the election interference case and for which Trump will now almost certainly not be held accountable.

“The Defendant lost the 2020 presidential election,” Smith wrote. “Despite having lost, the Defendant was determined to remain in power. So, for more than two months following election day on November 3, 2020, the Defendant spread lies that there had been out-come-determinative fraud in the election and that he had actually won. These claims were false, and the Defendant knew that they were false. But the Defendant repeated and widely disseminated them anyway—to make his knowingly false claims appear legitimate, create an intense national atmosphere of mistrust and anger, and erode public faith in the administration of the election.”

Even Trump’s own Justice Department ruled that there was no meaningful fraud in the 2020 election that would have altered the result. Almost all of Trump’s legal challenges failed, and Joe Biden was duly inaugurated, two weeks after his predecessor’s crowd tried to halt the congressional certification of his victory.

Rep. Dan Goldman, a New York Democrat who served as a lead counsel in Trump’s first impeachment trial, said he understood why Smith had followed Justice Department guidance. But he also portrayed Trump’s evasion of a trial as a dark day for America. “I think this is a shame for justice in this country. It establishes that Donald Trump is above the law,” he told CNN’s Boris Sanchez.

Trump will prove that assessment in less than two months on the West Front of the Capitol, when he swears to “preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States” on the ground over which his mob swarmed on January 6, 2021.

— CNN

# Trump will deliver the final death blow to the liberal order

**Somdeep Sen**

**THE liberal world order, with its supposed commitment to the rule of law, human rights and equality for all, met its demise in Gaza.**

There is more than enough evidence confirming the genocidal nature of Israel’s campaign in Gaza. Yet, political leaders in the West have been uncompromising in their support of Israel’s efforts. At the United Nations, the majority of the world has consistently passed resolutions condemning Israel’s actions in Gaza and called for an end to the occupation. Israel has responded by making UN agencies and personnel targets of war. The International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants against Israeli leaders. The United States has rejected the court’s decision and Israel has continued to bombard Gaza. All of this has happened under a Democratic US leadership. With the return of US President-elect Donald Trump, we can expect a fast-track dismantling of whatever is left of this liberal order.

During his first term, Trump had already set the ball rolling: he signed a memorandum preventing foreign NGOs receiving US global health assistance from using their own, non-US funds to promote abortion rights; he pushed through previously blocked arms sales to countries like Bahrain and Saudi Arabia despite their domestic human rights record and war crimes in Yemen; he instituted the infamous “Muslim ban” and oversaw 2000 migrant children being separated from their parents and censored information on climate change on the website of the Environmental Protection Agency. Under Trump, the Department of Justice also declared that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 doesn’t protect LGBTQ people from employment discrimination.

This time around, Trump will feel confident that he has the mandate to go further. From the first day in office, he has promised a return to the restrictive immigration policies of his first term. It’s important to remember that, in 2023, the administration of outgoing US President Joe Biden “outpaced Trump deportation totals for any single year”. But Trump and his allies have claimed that the Democratic administration’s immigration policy is too weak, “treasonous” and “national suicide”.

The president-elect’s incoming border czar Tom Homan has promised a “shock and awe” approach with militarised raids, mass detention and mass deportation of undocumented migrants. Rights groups have argued that such

actions would “tear apart families”, involve racial profiling, lead to xenophobic actions and increase the chances of abuse by “law enforcement during mass roundups”.

Trump pursued staunchly pro-Israel policies in his first term. Biden continued with these policies in the past years. There is no reason to expect Trump’s second term to be any different. Trump has promised to crush protests on US college campuses, deport foreign students who participate in on-campus solidarity activism and set the Palestine solidarity movement back by 25-30 years. He has also urged Israeli leaders to “do what you have to do” in Gaza and Lebanon. His pick for US secretary of state, Marco Rubio, came out as against any ceasefire in Gaza, saying “these people are vicious animals who did horrifying crimes” and need to be destroyed. Rubio has also criticised Canada for accepting Palestinian refugees, who he viewed as “terrorists” presenting a security threat to the US.

Trump 2.0 will also be a devastating assault on gender equality, reproductive freedoms, and trans rights. At home, there will be even more restrictions on access to abortion services. Some human rights organisations also expect an uptick in surveillance and prosecution of abortion service providers and patients. Abroad, Trump’s administration will weaponise aid, like it did the first time, to prevent international NGOs and foreign governments from promoting gender equality programmes and women’s right to abortion. Biden had withdrawn the US from the Trump-sponsored Geneva Consensus Declaration that works to prevent access to abortion globally. Trump is expected to return to it as soon as he returns to the White House.

Trans rights have already been under attack in Republican-run US states. But once back in power, Trump could exclude students from Title IX protections, which would in turn affect “school policies on students’ use of preferred pronouns, bathrooms and locker rooms”.

These moves would be amply facilitated by Trump’s nominee for secretary of education, Linda McMahon, who has criticised diversity, equality and inclusion policies and who chairs the America First Policy Institute that opposes initiatives supporting LGBTQ rights.

Trump will also actively combat climate action as president. During his recent election campaign, he said that he would “unchain the oil and gas

industry” from climate change-related regulations. Pro-oil and pro-gas groups support Trump’s plans. They hope that Trump will quickly reverse Biden-era regulations focused on reducing the emission of greenhouse gases such as methane as well as rules like the Wasteful Emissions Charge, which imposes fines on super emitters that “exceed the EPA’s prescribed threshold” on methane emissions.

Global efforts to fight climate change may also be threatened by Trump. During his first term, he pulled the US out of the Paris Agreement. He may do the same with the COP29 climate deal, even though that would have to wait until he takes office next year. His pick for heading the Environmental Protection Agency, Lee Zeldin, is known as a climate sceptic and is expected to overhaul the agency. Zeldin, a former New York congressman, also has a long anti-environment voting record.

Trump’s friendships on the global stage are also an indication of things to come. He has developed a special bond with leaders who, like him, also have a disdain for democratic checks and balances, international law and human rights.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has celebrated Trump’s victory, calling him a “courageous man” as Trump has claimed that he could end the war in Ukraine “in a day”. India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi likes to emphasise that Trump is a “friend” and will be keen to further grow the already cosy relationship between the US right and Hindu nationalist forces. Hungary’s far-right leader Viktor Orban also has close relations with Trump and wants to guide his policy approach to Europe. Orban himself opposes military aid to Ukraine, and expects that as president, Trump would do the same. This is not to say that a Democratic leadership in the US would not work with illiberal forces on the global stage. But with Trump, there will be no pretences.

Having built an explicitly illiberal political brand, Trump will not feel that is necessary to even pay lip service to the language of democracy, rights and the rule of law. Rather, he will embrace his identity as a deal-maker and “solve” international problems by negotiating with whoever sits across the negotiating table.

This means that the likes of Netanyahu, Orban, Modi and Putin will feel that they have a powerful ally in Washington and that we are entering an era even more permissive of their illiberal politics than before.

# Israel’s UNRWA ban is a spectacular own goal

**IT has been almost a month since the Israeli Knesset voted to bar UNRWA from operating in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territory of Gaza and the West Bank. The Israeli authorities have moved forward with its implementation, despite widespread condemnation from the international community and some of Israel’s allies.**

The United Nations itself has denounced the move saying it will have “devastating consequences” as it is the main agency delivering aid to Gaza. While the UNRWA ban will undoubtedly amplify the suffering of Palestinians, it is also a spectacular own goal for Israel.

That is because it will elevate the two and a half million Palestine refugees in Gaza and the West Bank to a new level of international protection under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) whose preferred solution for protracted refugee situations is voluntary repatriation: the right of return.

This is precisely the opposite of what the Knesset in general, and Israel’s far-right cabinet, in particular, were hoping to achieve when they set out to destroy UNRWA. Intoxicated with their own power and high on their perceived military victory in Gaza, they were labouring

under the misinformed delusion that if they stopped UNRWA from operating, the refugees it serves could be removed from the peace process; their history, identity, rights and historical claims air-brushed out of the discourse.

But Israel is about to learn that 6.8 million people – the number registered with UNRWA – cannot be vapourised so easily, despite political support in Washington and Israeli military might.

Under Article 1D of the 1951 Refugee Convention, once these refugees stop receiving services from UNRWA, they become legally entitled to protection under the Convention, as well as the protection extended by UNHCR. The second sentence of the article makes this explicit. “When such protection or assistance has ceased for any reason, without the position of such persons being definitively settled in accordance with the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, these persons shall ipso facto be entitled to the benefits of this Convention.”

In other words, if the Knesset legislation is implemented and UNRWA is prevented from delivering services, Palestinian refugees – in the absence of a just and lasting solution, which is further away than ever – will then fall under the Refugee Convention and

the mandate of UNHCR. This is confirmed in guidelines issued by UNHCR in 2017, paragraph 29 of which emphasises that “when it is established that

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**In the meantime, UNRWA, to the best of its abilities, will continue to update its refugee registration records. Heroically, the agency removed thousands of hard copies of key registration documents dating back to 1948 from its Gaza headquarters during the current fighting, and also from the West Bank to Amman. Thanks to the dedication of UNRWA staff, the agency’s registration database is now fully digitised and stored in safe cyberspaces around the world.**  
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back to 1948 from its Gaza headquarters during the current fighting, and also from the West Bank to Amman. Thanks to the dedication of UNRWA

staff, the agency’s registration database is now fully digitised and stored in safe cyberspaces around the world. The preservation of this backbone of refugee culture and identity will be a source of collective comfort to a scattered people, facing what the UN rapporteur, Francesca Albanese, describes as “colonial erasure”. Not least because it is

now impossible for Israel to destroy this precious database, which will assume a pivotal significance if refugees decide to claim their right of return, restitution and

compensation from Israel, to which they are entitled under international law as affirmed by UN General Assembly resolution 194. Even if this isn’t feasible immediately, UNRWA’s now fully digitised database is keeping an ongoing account.

Looking to the future, it is an abrogation of humanitarian leadership to say, as the UN





# Minister highlights govt's policy framework

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, here on Tuesday highlighted the government's comprehensive policy framework aimed at enhancing tax revenues through improved documentation and financial transparency.

During a meeting with a delegation of the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) led by Dr. Andreas, Chairman IASB, the minister emphasized the importance of standardizing financial regimes to align with global practices, which he said were crucial

for fostering investor confidence, both domestic and international.

The delegation included Jianqiao Lu, Member IASB, Farukh Rehman, President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP), Rana Usman Khan, Chairman of the Asia-Oceania Accounting Standards Group, Ashfaq Tola, Chairman of the Reforms and Resource Mobilization Commission of Pakistan (RRMC) and senior officers from the Finance Division also attended the meeting.

According to press release issued by finance division, the minister reiter-

ated the government's commitment to ensuring policy continuity to create a conducive environment for sustainable economic growth.

On the occasion, Dr. Andreas acknowledged Pakistan's leadership in adopting international accounting standards and commended the country for being an early follower of global practices.

He expressed appreciation for the support provided by ICAP in advancing these efforts, emphasizing the role of professional organizations in promoting financial transparency and capacity building.

The participants discussed the challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) in Pakistan.

Farukh Rehman and Rana Usman Khan shared insights into how ICAP and the Asia-Oceania Accounting Standards Group are contributing to strengthening financial reporting systems.

The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to further strengthen Pakistan's financial documentation and reporting practices in line with international standards.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with Country Director of World Bank Najj Benhassine and his team at Finance Division.

## 2,300 Chinese firms working in Pakistan, says Zafar Iqbal

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) Vice President Zafar Iqbal said on Tuesday that approximately 2,300 small, medium and large scale Chinese companies are currently working in Pakistan in various sectors including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

During a meeting with the joint chamber's executive body here, he said that Chinese companies have interested in sectors such as electronics, automotive, education exchange programmes, insurance, agriculture, textiles, shoe manufacturing, chemicals, bat-

tery recycling plant and real estate.

Zafar Iqbal said Pakistan's chemical industry, which provides inputs for many other sectors such as textiles, agriculture, food and beverages, leather, paper, pharmaceutical, plastics, printing and sugar, needs to build a global reputation of "Made in Pakistan" from strength to brand.

He added that Pakistan is the 8th largest exporter of textile products in Asia. This sector contributes 9.5 percent to the GDP and provides employment to about 15 million people i.e. 30 percent of the 49 million workforce of the

country.

He said, "We should seek help from All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) and Punjab Board of Investment and Trade (PBIT) for such joint ventures that would help local textile millers upgrade their outdated technology."

The PCJCCI Vice President stressed that Pakistan can benefit from China's growing influence in the field of biochemical industry, which has injected new vitality into the traditional chemical industry and opened up new development directions and insights.

"With the rapid develop-

ment of biotechnology, the biochemical industry has become a new engine of growth for the chemical industry," he said, adding that both countries can cooperate in this field to achieve mutual benefits.

In his concluding remarks, he stressed that PCJCCI aimed to serve as a bridge between business communities of Pakistan and China to explore and expand the opportunities in the commercial and industrial sector.

The government should support various initiatives to open up new vistas of knowledge and technology for the young entrepreneurs and businessmen.

## Belarusian President visit to boost bilateral ties, says Iftikhar Malik

LAHORE (APP): South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik said that President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, current visit to Pakistan marks pivotal step in bolstering bilateral relations and fostering cooperation across various sectors, including trade, investment, and technology.

In a statement issued

here on Tuesday, popular octogenarian trade leader of South Asia welcoming his visit said that delegation will hold series of comprehensive results oriented discussions focused on enhancing economic ties, streamlining trade mechanisms, and exploring joint ventures in agriculture, manufacturing, and information technology. The two sides will underline the vital importance of expanding bilateral trade, which

currently holds untapped potential.

He said the Belarusian delegation, comprising 43 influential business leaders, will hold detailed dialogues with their Pakistani counterparts and several agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) will be inked, aiming to facilitate knowledge exchange and promote direct investment in industries, textile production, machinery manufacturing,

and green energy.

Iftikhar Malik said visit will also highlight cultural and educational cooperation, expressing a desire to strengthen people-to-people connections and academic exchanges.

President Lukashenko's visit underscored a shared vision for mutual growth and partnership, reinforcing the importance of strategic collaboration for long-term regional and global stability, he concluded.

## Sindh Bank holds Hajj balloting 2025 for its employees

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Bank hosted a balloting event today at its Head Office to select 4 employees, one each from the Officer Grades and the Support Staff, who will be sponsored by the Bank to perform Hajj in 2025.

The event was presided over by Mr. Muhammad Anwaar, President & CEO of Sindh Bank, and attended by Deputy CEO Syed Assad Ali Shah, Head of HR & Training Mr. Baqir Hussain, and other senior executives.

Following the transparent computerized balloting process, the following employees were selected as principal candidates for the Hajj sponsorship:

Arif Rehman Solangi- OG-I

Ali Raza- OG II

Jahanzaib- OG III



Sajjad Ali- Tea Boy/Messenger

Additionally, the alternate candidates selected were:

Sagheer- OG I

Muratab Ali- OG-II

Saddam Hussain- OG II

Z e e s h a n - T e a Boy/Messenger

Sindh Bank remains committed to the personal

and spiritual well-being of its employees, recognizing the importance of supporting them in fulfilling their religious obligations. The

Bank extends its best wishes to the selected candidates for a meaningful and fulfilling Hajj pilgrimage in the coming year.

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets fell and the dollar rallied Tuesday after Donald Trump warned he would impose huge new tariffs on China, Mexico and Canada on his first day in office, dealing a blow to hopes of a more moderate approach to trade policy.

The former and next president said on his Truth Social account that he would hammer the United States' largest trading partners in response to the illegal drug trade and immigration.

The news dampened optimism that his pick to lead the Treasury, Scott Bessent, could temper the tycoon's assertiveness, with fears now of another trade war with China and warnings that the move -- along with promised tax cuts -- will reignite US inflation.

"On January 20th, as one of my many first Executive

Orders, I will sign all necessary documents to charge Mexico and Canada a 25 percent tariff on ALL products coming into the United States, and its ridiculous Open Borders," he wrote.

In another post, he added that he would hit China with a 10 percent tariff "above any additional Tariffs" on all of its products entering the US, citing Beijing's failure to tackle fentanyl smuggling.

The announcement fuelled a sell-off across most Asian markets, though Hong Kong and Shanghai advanced in early exchanges.

The dollar surged more than one percent against its Canadian equivalent and Mexico's peso as well as the Chinese yuan. However, the yen strengthened thanks to its safe haven status.

"In a striking return to hardline policies,

President-elect Trump has dramatically escalated tensions with a brash promise to impose a sweeping 25 percent tariff on all imports from Canada and Mexico the moment he reassumes office," said SPI Asset Management's Stephen Innes.

He said the declaration "shatters any lingering hopes that... Scott Bessent might usher in an era of moderation."

"Initially hailed as a beacon of stability, Bessent's influence now seems overshadowed by a resurgence of Trump's uncompromising 'America First' doctrine, which starkly excludes even the closest of allies from its protective embrace,"

Asia's struggles came after another up day on Wall Street, where the Dow ended at a second successive record, helped by the choice of Bessent, though

US futures were down Tuesday.

Bitcoin struggled below \$95,000 after dropping to a six-day low of around \$92,600 Monday as the Trump-fuelled rally that had seen it surge around 50 percent to within a whisker of \$100,000 ran out of steam.

Oil prices extended Monday's losses of around three percent that came after an official said Israel's security cabinet was to decide Tuesday on whether to accept a ceasefire in its war with Hezbollah in Lebanon. The stronger dollar was also depressing the commodity.

The United States, European Union and United Nations have all pushed in recent days for a truce in the long-running hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, which flared into all-out war in late September.

## China's Huawei unveils 'milestone' smartphone with homegrown OS

BEIJING (AFP/APP): Chinese tech giant Huawei on Tuesday unveiled its first smartphone equipped with a fully homegrown operating system, a key test in the firm's fight to challenge the dominance of Western juggernauts.

Apple's iOS and Google's Android are currently used in the vast majority of mobile phones, but Huawei is looking to change that with its newest Mate 70 devices, which run on the company's own HarmonyOS Next.

The launch caps a major turnaround in the fortunes of Huawei, which saw its wings clipped by grueling US sanctions in recent years but has since bounced back with soaring sales.

"Today, the long-awaited Mate 70, the most powerful one ever, is here," Richard Yu, chairman of Huawei's Consumer Business Group, told a raucous launch event Tuesday at the firm's

Shenzhen headquarters.

The risks are high -- unlike a previous iteration, based on Android's open-source code, HarmonyOS Next requires a complete rewriting of all apps on the smartphones it powers.

"HarmonyOS Next is the first home-grown operating system, a milestone for China to move away from reliance on Western technologies for software with performance improvement," Gary Ng, a senior economist at Natixis, told AFP.

More than three million have been pre-ordered, according to Huawei's online shopping platform, though that does not require them to be purchased.

It went on sale just after 6:00 pm (1000 GMT) on Tuesday. Around 100 people queued outside a Huawei store in central Beijing an hour before orders opened.

"Innovate on our own"

Second in line was 28-year-old Zhang Nannan, who

switched to a Huawei phone from Apple last year.

Huawei phones take clearer photos and get better signal, he said, while "supporting domestic products" was another draw.

"We must innovate on our own, and cannot let ourselves be disrupted by foreign countries," he said.

Huawei was once China's largest domestic smartphone maker before it became embroiled in a tech war between Washington and Beijing.

The company shipped more than 10.8 million smartphones in the third quarter -- capturing just 16 percent of the Chinese market, according to a recent report by technology research firm Canalis.

In September the firm unveiled the world's first triple-folding phone, the Mate XT, priced at an eye-watering \$2,800 which made it three times the cost of the newest

iPhone.

The Mate 70 has a much lower starting price of \$758, the firm announced Tuesday.

Those who purchase a Mate 70 smartphone will be given the choice to opt out of the fully self-developed operating system, the firm said. Yu said that there are "many application updates" taking place on a daily basis.

"We expect that in two or three months, the application user experience of our HarmonyOS ecosystem will be more mature and more perfect," he added.

"High expectations"

Huawei found itself at the centre of an intense tech rivalry between Beijing and Washington, with US officials warning its equipment could be used to spy on behalf of Chinese authorities -- allegations they deny.

Since 2019, US sanctions have cut Huawei off from global supply chains for technology and US-made compo-

nents, a move that initially hammered its production of smartphones.

That is only set to intensify under US President-elect Donald Trump, who has promised huge tariffs on Chinese imports in response to what he says are Beijing's unfair trade practices.

"Rather than Huawei inspiring the tech industry as a whole, it is the self-reliance trend of the Chinese tech industry that has made Huawei's progress possible," Toby Zhu, a senior analyst at Canalis, told AFP.

The success of Huawei's new generation of smartphone products will be a key gauge of whether that drive has worked, said Zhu.

"This generation of products cannot afford to miss the mark because everyone has high expectations for them," he added.

But it is unclear whether developers overseas will be willing to spend the money

needed to build a completely new version of their apps for the latest smartphones, said Rich Bishop, co-founder and CEO of ApplnChina, a publisher of international software in China.

### Court Notice

In the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi Civil Judge I/ Alaga Qazi Buner at Daggar Buner.Suit No 84/1. Institution 25/3/ 2024. Date of hearing, 8/1/2025. Taj Rasol VS Khan Ghalib..Notice to No.13. Muhsin Ali s/o Sher Bahadur resident of Chanarh tehseel Gagra district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:30 am dated 8/1/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

### US monthly house prices rise strongly in September

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US single-family house prices increased solidly in September, which together with a resurgence in mortgage rates will further reduce affordability for many prospective homeowners.

House prices jumped 0.7% on a month-on-month basis after an upwardly revised 0.4% rise in August, the Federal Housing Finance Agency said on Tuesday. Prices were initially reported to have gained 0.3% in August.

They increased 4.4% in the 12 months through September, matching the upwardly revised rise in August. The gain in annual house prices was previously reported to have been 4.2%.

The pace of increase, however, slowed from the second quarter. House prices rose at a 2.86% annualized rate in the July-September quarter after advancing at a 3.76% pace in the second quarter.

Though the Federal Reserve cut interest rates in September and earlier this month, mortgage rates have risen in tandem with US Treasury yields on strong economic data and investor fears that President-elect Donald Trump's policies, including higher tariffs on imported goods and mass deportations, could reignite inflation. Mortgage rates track the 10-year Treasury note and have erased the total decline seen in September.

The average rate on the popular 30-year fixed-rate mortgage is just below 7%, having dropped to nearly 6% in September.





## In brief

## McIlroy nominated for Player of the Year award

DUBAI (Agencies): Rory McIlroy has been nominated for the PGA Tour Player of the Year award alongside Scottie Scheffler and Xander Schauffele. The Northern Irishman won the Zurich Classic and the Wells Fargo Championship in a strong and consistent year on the circuit that included seven top 10s and only one missed cut in 19 events. The 35-year-old won the DP World Tour's Dubai Desert Classic in January to kick-start a year that he rounded off by claiming the DP World Championship and seal top spot in the Race to Dubai for the sixth time. American Schauffele won the US PGA Championship and The Open - the first two majors of his career. The 31-year-old did not miss a cut in 22 PGA Tour events and recorded 15 top-10 finishes. Scheffler won seven of the 19 Tour events he entered, including his second major at the Masters in April. The American, 28, also claimed gold at the Paris Olympics and was the FedEx Cup winner. The Player of the Year, which is voted for by fellow PGA Tour members, will receive the Jack Nicklaus Award. The four nominees for the Arnold Palmer Award, presented to the rookie of the year, are Nick Dunlap, Max Greyserman, Jake Knapp and Matthieu Pavon.

## Pogba's brother on trial for blackmailing him

PARIS (AFP): Six men linked to France midfielder Paul Pogba, including one of his brothers, went on trial in Paris on Tuesday accused of blackmail, attempted extortion of millions of euros and holding the player at gunpoint. The case at the Paris criminal court has shocked the French football world -- all the more so because the alleged perpetrators include three childhood friends and Pogba's own brother Mathias. Tuesday's trial comes on top of professional woes for Pogba, whose career has struggled since France's spectacular 2018 World Cup win when he scored against Croatia in the Moscow final. He suffered through repeated injuries and patchy form that led to his 2022 departure from Manchester United, returning to Juventus where he remained in and out of treatment. The Turin club this month cancelled his contract following his 18-month suspension until March 2025 for doping. The six defendants in Paris are accused of attempting to squeeze 13 million euros (\$13.5 million) out of Pogba. All, including Mathias, and one defendant who has been remanded in custody, were present in court as the trial opened. Paul Pogba himself was not present and his lawyers have said he will not attend the trial. Defence lawyers asked for the trial to be adjourned on procedural grounds with the court due to rule later. Mathias was the one to go public in the case, publishing a video on social media in August 2022 promising revelations about his younger brother that were "likely to be explosive". In a subsequent clip, Mathias accused Paul Pogba of casting an evil spell on his France teammate Kylian Mbappe. Paul Pogba's lawyers and his agent Rafaela Pimenta said in a statement later that the videos "came on top of threats and attempts at extortion". He had already filed criminal complaints in Italy and France in July that year.

# Ayub century helps Pakistan crush Zimbabwe, level series

BULAWAYO (AFP): Saim Ayub struck an unbeaten 113 as Pakistan crushed Zimbabwe by 10 wickets in Bulawayo on Tuesday to level a one-day international series with one match to come.

Zimbabwe were all out for 145 at Queens Sports Club as they sought a second victory over the tourists in three days having won by 80 runs in a rain-shortened tour opener.

Pakistan then atoned for a dismal batting show on Sunday with Ayub and fellow opener Abdullah Shafique (32 not out) reaching their target in 18.2 overs. "We already forgot the first game and we will try to forget this game as well as we are trying to stay in the present and take it one game at a time," man-of-the-match Ayub told reporters.

"In the previous match, the ball was stopping more and the weather was also different. Today, it was slow on one side and better from the other. "You had to be careful and I did not think I could use all my shots. We practice for all kinds of pitches, not just

one kind."

Ayub struck 17 runs and three sixes off 62 balls in a 75-minute stand while Shafique claimed four fours in the southern city. The 22-year-old left-handed Ayub needed 32 balls for his half century and reached his ton off 53 deliveries -- the second fastest in an ODI international by a Pakistani after Shahid Afridi.

He did have one early escape when Richard Ngarava drew a thick outside edge that flew into the vacant second-slip area. Poor Zimbabwe fielding also saved Shafique, whose wayward drive was dropped at backward point by veteran all-rounder Sean Williams. Zimbabwe, seeking a first ODI series win over Pakistan, utilised five bowlers, but none made an impression with Brandon Mavuta, who conceded 47 runs in four overs, particularly expensive.

After winning the toss, Zimbabwe were quickly in trouble with openers Joylord Gumbie (five) and Tadiwanashe Marumani (four) back in the pavilion with less than four overs bowled. Only Dion Myers,

who struck six fours in his 30-ball 33, and Williams, who posted 31 before being trapped leg before by Ayub, impressed for the home team.

Pakistan-born all-rounder Sikandar Raza, often the batting saviour for Zimbabwe, made just 17 before becoming one of three victims of Salman Ali Agha.

Debutant Abrar Ahmed took four wickets and Ali Agha three for Pakistan, who arrived in southern Africa after a 3-0 ODI series loss in Australia.

The Zimbabwe ODI series decider is set for Thursday, followed by three Twenty20 internationals from Sunday, also in Bulawayo. Pakistan then visit South Africa for an all-format tour.

**Brief scores**  
Zimbabwe 145 in 32.3 overs (D. Myers 33, S. Williams 31; A. Ahmed 4-33, S. Agha 3-26) v Pakistan 148-0 in 18.2 overs (S. Ayub 113 not out, A. Shafique 32 not out).  
Result: Pakistan won by 10 wickets.  
Series: Zimbabwe, Pakistan tied 1-1 with one match to play on Thursday.



BULAWAYO: Saim Ayub plays a shot during his unbeaten 113 in a ODI victory over Zimbabwe.

## ICC to decide fate of Pakistan's Champions Trophy on Friday

KARACHI (AFP): The International Cricket Council (ICC) will meet this week to determine the destiny of next year's Champions Trophy after India refused to play in host nation Pakistan, a spokesman said Tuesday.

Earlier this month, the ICC informed the Pakistan Cricket Board that India would not tour Pakistan for the eight-team tournament, leaving the fate of the event hanging in the balance.

The nuclear-armed neighbours have fought

three wars since being carved out of the subcontinent's partition in 1947 and that rivalry is often reflected on the cricket field.

A spokesman for the ICC based in Dubai told AFP they could "confirm an ICC meeting on Friday" where the issue will be on the agenda, without providing further details.

The PCB has already rejected proposals that would allow India to play in a neutral third country, insisting the full schedule from February 19 to March

9 must be staged on their turf. India's cricket board has not commented on the tournament.

Deteriorating political ties mean bitter rivals India and Pakistan have not played a bilateral cricket series for over a decade -- squaring off only in ICC multi-nation events.

Pakistan suffered a years-long drought of matches at home as teams refused to visit after a 2009 attack on the Sri Lankan team bus in Lahore. International play only

fully resumed in 2020.

When Pakistan hosted last year's Asia Cup, India's matches were played outside the country.

But Pakistani cricket chiefs have rejected security fears for the Champions Trophy, pointing to their recent successful hosting of top teams including Australia, England and South Africa. The Champions Trophy will be the first ICC event staged in Pakistan since it co-hosted the 1996 World Cup with India and Sri Lanka.



FAISALABAD: Players in action in Hockey match between Faisalabad and Jhang teams during the "Khelta Punjab Games 2024" at Hockey Stadium.

## Pacers put Sialkot ahead on day 1 in Quaid-e-Azam Trophy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sialkot had a productive day against Peshawar after they closed the first day with 74 runs on the board in 20.3 overs before bowling them out for 171 in the triangular stage of the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy at the Abbottabad Cricket Stadium, Abbottabad.

After Peshawar opted to bat first, only No.4 batter, Ubaidullah (35, 44b, 8x4s) managed to cross 30-run mark as wickets tumbled regularly. Peshawar had lost half their side for 93 runs before the last five wickets added 78 runs combined.

Test fast bowler Mohammad Ali returned figures of 16.1-7-35-4, while he was backed up by former Pakistan U19 pacer Awais Ali who also snapped four wickets for 73 runs in 15 overs. Shoaib Akhtar picked up two wickets.

In turn, Sialkot's opening batters, Azan Awais (38 not out, 63b, 6x4s) and Ashir Mehmood (31 not out, 61b, 5x4s) put on unbeaten 74 runs in 20.3 overs when the stumps were drawn early due to bad light. Sialkot will begin the day two with a 97-run first innings deficit and ten wickets in hand.

Scores in brief (Day 1 of 4): Peshawar 171 all out, 46.1 overs (Ubaidullah 35, Zubair Khan 23, Mohammad Amir Khan 21, Abuzar Tariq 20; Mohammad Ali 4-35, Awais Ali 4-73, Shoaib Akhtar 2-50) Sialkot 74-0, 20.3 overs (Azan Awais 38 not out, Ashir Mehmood 31 not out).

## Ronaldo double takes Al Nassr to brink of AFC Champions League last 16

DOHA (AFP/APP): Cristiano Ronaldo struck twice for Al Nassr as they continued to thrive in the AFC Champions League Elite, with the Saudi champions defeating Al Gharafa 3-1 in Qatar on Monday.

The 39-year-old helped move Al Nassr to the brink of the last 16 in Asia's premier continental club competition, needing just two points from their final three group games. Only Al Shorta, who have two points with four games to play, can deny Ronaldo's side a place in the next round, after Persepolis drew 1-1 at Al Rayyan.

Al Nassr captain Ronaldo had looked destined to endure a hugely frustrating game following a series of missed opportunities in the first half at Al Bayt Stadium.

However, the Portugal star finally opened the scoring little more than 50 seconds into the second half, when he headed home Sultan Al Ghanam's cross from close range.

Al Nassr then doubled their advantage through Angelo Gabriel, a summer signing from Chelsea, on 58 minutes, before the Brazilian turned provider six minutes later to tee up Ronaldo for his second.

The goal took the former Manchester United, Real Madrid and Juventus forward to four goals in this season's rebranded competition before he was replaced on 74 minutes.

Al Gharafa did pull one back through Joselu, a former team-mate of Ronaldo at Madrid.

Yet their hopes of an unlikely late rally disappeared when Seydou Sano was sent off six minutes from the end of normal time for a second bookable

offence.

The win ensures Al Nassr remain unbeaten through five matches in the Western side of the draw, and move second in the 12-team table.

The top eight in the standings go into the last 16 knockout stages along with the top eight from the 12-team East Zone table.

Super-sub Toney - The Riyadh club now sit behind only Saudi Arabian counterparts Al Ahli, who maintained their 100 per cent record thanks to a double from substitute Ivan Toney to see off Asian champions Al Ain 2-1 in the UAE and reach the knockouts for the first time.

The England international was left on the bench for the match at Hazza Bin Zayed Stadium, however having been introduced on 65 minutes, he scored within five minutes. First, he headed home Riyadh Mahrez's deep free-kick.

A late window signing from English Premier League club Brentford in August, Toney struck what proved to be the winner four minutes later.

This time, he met a superb long pass from former Manchester City winger Mahrez to finish past Al Ain goalkeeper Khalid Essa.

Al Ain, who in April defeated Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds to win the title, pulled one back late on through Kaka's sublime volley.

Al Ahli have won all five matches in the rebranded competition and lead the Western standings on 15 points.

Also in that section, Iran's Esteghal were held to a goalless draw by Uzbekistan side Pakhtakor Tashkent in Dubai.

## England 'not quivering' ahead of New Zealand Test challenge

CHRISTCHURCH (AFP/APP): England will be searching for redemption after their series loss in Pakistan when they face a buoyant New Zealand in three Tests starting in Christchurch on Thursday.

Head coach Brendon McCullum says New Zealand wickets will be better suited to England's aggressive brand of cricket, dubbed "Bazball", after his side were crushed in the final two Tests in Pakistan on turning tracks. "We were challenged at times over there in pretty extreme conditions but hopefully we can find (New Zealand) a bit more to our liking," McCullum said.

But England have not won a Test series in New Zealand since 2008. "We're not quivering, we're looking forward to the challenge. We love playing against the best teams and to test ourselves." "That's international sport -- you want to see where you're at and have your game challenged and hopefully come out on top."

New Zealand are full of confidence after a rare 3-0 Test series sweep in India, ending their hosts' 12-year unbeaten streak at home.

"I think there's so much anticipation for this series, with New Zealand pulling off what was in my opinion, the most remarkable performance in New Zealand cricket history," former New Zealand captain McCullum said. Although England were outplayed after winning the first Test in Pakistan to lose the series 2-1, McCullum has largely remained loyal to the squad. The lone new face is Jacob Bethell, a 21-year-old who was Tuesday named to make his debut batting at number three after wicket-keeper Jordan Cox was ruled out with a broken thumb.

Regular number three Ollie Pope takes the gloves and drops down to bat at six, with captain Ben Stokes at seven. First-choice wicketkeeper Jamie Smith is on paternity leave.

New Zealand are riding high after their series triumph in India, achieved without their talisman Kane Williamson who returns from injury to bolster their ranks. A series sweep against England and lifting the inaugural Crowe-Thorp Trophy would also put New Zealand on the cusp of reaching the final of the World Test Championship.

They have the added motivation of giving veteran pace bowler and former captain Tim Southee a memorable send off.

## Salah not distracted by contract talks - Slot

LONDON (Agencies): Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah is not being distracted by contract talks and speculation about his future, says manager Arne Slot.

Salah, whose current contract expires at the end of the season, told reporters he was "disappointed" at not being offered a new deal and is "probably more out than in".

"The only thing I can say is, if I look at my line-ups, Mo is more in than out," said Slot.

"I don't think he's distracted at all. I haven't seen that after the United game [in September] where he had some comments, I haven't seen it after a post you told me about, he just kept on scoring."

"If you would have been at the Axa [training ground] today, I don't think any player spoke about it, at least not when I was there."

The 32-year-old is Liverpool's top scorer this season with 12 goals in all competitions, with his double in Sunday's win at Southampton moving the

Reds eight points clear at the top of the Premier League.

The Merseyside club face Real Madrid in the Champions League on Wednesday before hosting Premier League champions Manchester City on Sunday.

Slot added: "Players are focused on the short term and that is Madrid and that is City."

"There is no distraction for him, the players and definitely not for me."

As well as Salah, defender Trent Alexander-Arnold and club captain Virgil van Dijk are also out of contract at the end of the season.

A club source told BBC Sport that contact between Liverpool and Salah's agent, Ramy Abbas Issa, is ongoing and has been positive.

Speaking on Sky Sports' Monday Night Football, former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher said Salah was "selfish" for commenting publicly about his future.

Asked about Carragher's comments, Slot said: "I focus a bit more on what else he said."

He said he was one of the five best players Liverpool have ever had and I completely agree with him, which is not an easy thing because we have had so many great players at this club.

"I don't think it distracts Mo at all - maybe even brings the best out of him. Like I have said already a few times, my main focus is the next game. I talked to Mo about what I expect from him like I do all the other players. He is in a good place at the moment."

Speaking at the same news conference Reds defender Andy Robertson said the speculation is "nothing the players can get involved in".

He said: "All I can say is Mo is the ultimate professional. That goes for all three of the players - Mo, Trent Alexander-Arnold and Virgil van Dijk - who are all in a similar position."

"They are so focused on the next game, on training and have been leaders this year. For us in the changing room, if they can do that, we can do that and not get distracted."



SARGODHA: A view of basketball match playing between District Sargodha and District Mianwali during the Inter Division Basketball Tournament at Sports Gymnasium.





## In brief

## Aleem condemns attack on Police

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment, and Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan, on Tuesday expressed profound grief over the tragic loss of Rangers personnel in an incident on Srinagar Highway. The incident claimed the lives of several Rangers personnel, including Punjab Police, Constable Mubashir, while injuring over a hundred law enforcement officials, said a press release. The minister condemned the event as a national loss, expressing heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyrs. Aleem Khan said, "My heart is deeply saddened to hear about the martyrdom of security forces' Jawans. This is a great loss for the nation, and we stand with the bereaved families during this difficult time." He also prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the martyrs and a swift recovery for the injured. He said, "May the Almighty forgive the deceased and grant strength to their loved ones, and may the injured recover swiftly from this ordeal."

## IRSA releases 94,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 94,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 46,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1499.89 feet and was 101.89 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 21,900 cusecs and 49,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1161.05 feet, which was 111.05 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 55,000, 45,400, 39,000 and 5,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

## RWMC cleanliness drive continues

RAWALPINDI (APP): Waste Management Company (RWMC) continuously ensured the city's cleanliness despite ongoing protests and road closures in the twin cities. According to the RWMC spokesman, the movement of vehicles was severely affected due to the closure of roads, however, the RWMC workers continued their cleanliness drive and were lifting the garbage by handcarts to provide a hygienic environment to the residents during this troubling time. He informed that RWMC workers removed hundreds of tons of waste in Rawalpindi and the Murree areas. RWMC has appealed to the citizens not to throw garbage and plastic bags in nullahs and drains, which cause obstruction, adding that RWMC would utilize all resources to keep the city environment friendly. In case of any complaint, citizens were asked to register their complaints on helpline number 1139, which would be resolved immediately.

## Gilani calls for enhanced Pak-Saudi Arabia cooperation in trade sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Tuesday emphasized the need to strengthen trade ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in key sectors such as textiles, agriculture, and technology to achieve shared prosperity. During his official visit to Saudi Arabia, he accompanied by his delegation, held separate meetings with the Speaker of the Saudi Shura Council and the Saudi Arabia-Pakistan Friendship Group, according to a news release. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Chairman Senate, is currently in Saudi Arabia on an official visit on the invitation of Dr. Abdullah ibn Muhammad Al ash-Sheikh, Speaker of the Shura Council and Saudi-Pakistan Friendship group.

The visit aims to strengthen Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations, focusing on economic cooperation, legislative collaboration, and regional stability. During high-level meetings, Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani proposed the establishment of a parliamentary friendship committee between the Senate and the Shura Council to promote regular dialogue and joint initiatives, particularly on economic and security matters.

He also expressed gratitude for Saudi Arabia's humanitarian support during Pakistan's crises and for facilitating the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimage for Pakistani citizens. Highlighting shared religious and cultural ties, the chairman Senate proposed closer cooperation between the two legislative bodies to address regional challenges, including peace in Palestine and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

He informed the Saudi side about the brutal use of force by the Indian army to suppress the voices. Violation of human rights has become a norm in IIOJK. The situation demands the global community to take notice of the situation. He further said that Israeli forces have made the lives of the Palestinians miserable. Crimes against humanity are being committed in Gaza, he said and added that Pakistan wants an amicable solution to these

issues as per aspirations of the people in accordance with the UN resolutions and the international laws.

Chairman Senate reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to deepening ties with Saudi Arabia and strengthening the bond between both nations. Senate Chairman Gilani expressed deep gratitude for the warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation, recalling his previous visits to Saudi Arabia in 2008 and 2011, which further solidified the friendship between the two countries.

He also acknowledged the recent visit of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to Pakistan and reiterated his commitment to strengthening bilateral relations. He commended the leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in driving Saudi Vision 2030 and emphasized Pakistan's readiness to contribute to this ambitious vision, particularly in areas such as infrastructure development and technology.

As his visit continued, Gilani reiterated Pakistan's unwavering commitment to further strengthening the Saudi-Pakistan partnership across all sectors, including trade, security, and regional collaboration.



ISLAMABAD: People face problems to traveling in city due to container placed for PTI protest. —INP Photo

## PPPP expresses grief over Srinagar Highway tragedy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Syed Nayyar Bukhari, Secretary General of Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), on Tuesday expressed deep sorrow and regret over the tragic martyrdom of Rangers and Police personnel on Srinagar Highway.

In a statement from the party secretariat, Bukhari expressed solidarity with the families and colleagues of the martyred soldiers, highlighting that their sacrifice in protecting citizens' lives and property will

always be remembered.

Nayyar Bukhari condemned the attack on the Rangers, terming it an unforgivable act of terrorism. He urged the authorities to track down the perpetrators who drove their vehicle into the Rangers and bring them to justice without delay.

Nayyar Bukhari demanded the immediate arrest and prosecution of the criminals behind this heinous act. He urged strict measures to prevent such attacks in the future.

He criticized the misuse of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's resources and authority, stating that the province's resources are being recklessly exploited to spread unrest and chaos.

Nayyar Bukhari also offered prayers for the elevation of the ranks of the martyred Rangers personnel and prayed for patience and strength for their grieving families. He reaffirmed his party's commitment to standing against terrorism and protecting the lives of citizens.

## PEC to launch free 'Generative AI Training' for engineers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) is set to launch a free online training program on Generative Artificial Intelligence to equip engineers with cutting-edge skills in artificial intelligence.

The program, developed in collaboration with PakAngels Silicon Valley USA, iCode Guru, and Aspire Pakistan, will commence on December 1, 2024, with registrations already underway.

According to the PEC, the six-week training course offers participants an opportunity to gain international certification with a traceable QR code. The program focuses on introducing engineers to generative AI technology, its applications, and practical model-building techniques.

The training is tailored for engineers registered with PEC, engineering managers, university engineering faculty and students, and corporate spon-

sorship partners.

The course covers topics such as an introduction to generative AI, an overview of generative models, and hands-on model-building exercises.

The program emphasizes the significance of early adoption of AI technologies, offering participants several advantages, including automating time-consuming tasks to enhance efficiency, expanding capabilities beyond traditional engineering methods, developing complex software without requiring programming knowledge, staying competitive in a rapidly evolving job market, and gaining leadership skills in the AI domain.

The training is being organized considering that the global market for generative AI is expected to reach \$1.3 trillion by 2032. By 2030, 40 percent of tasks are predicted to be automated through AI-powered

solutions, and AI could contribute \$4.4 trillion annually to global productivity. By 2028, 70 percent of companies will adopt AI models to stay competitive.

Engineers participating in the course will learn to solve complex problems using AI models to analyze data and run simulations, generate creative designs and innovative solutions, access AI-powered insights across various disciplines, and develop sophisticated engineering software without writing code.

The interested participants can register through the official PEC website at [www.pec.org.pk/ai-training](http://www.pec.org.pk/ai-training), scan the QR code provided on the flyer, or contact [ai.training@pec.org.pk](mailto:ai.training@pec.org.pk) for assistance.

This initiative underscores PEC's commitment to fostering technological advancements in Pakistan's engineering sector and preparing professionals for a future driven by AI.



ISLAMABAD: Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives addressing National Curriculum Summit 2024 at Allama Iqbal Open University. —APP Photo

## Daniyal condemns martyrdom of police constable

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry, on Tuesday condemned the martyrdom of a Punjab Police constable and the attack on Rangers personnel on Srinagar Highway by PTI miscreants.

In a statement, Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry paid tribute to the martyrs and extended his condolences to the grieving families. Vowing to take strict action against the culprits, Chaudhry stated that the government would ensure the perpetrators of the attack are brought to justice.

"The nation salutes the bravery of the martyrs who gave their lives in the recent attack, which was aimed at sabotaging the visit of the President of Belarus," Chaudhry said. "He reaffirmed the government's commitment to preventing anti-state elements from succeeding in their malicious designs. "Those behind these attacks will be held accountable, and the sacrifices of the martyrs will not go in vain," he added.

"The nation salutes the bravery of the martyrs who gave their lives in the recent attack, which was aimed at sabotaging the visit of the President of Belarus," Chaudhry said. "He reaffirmed the government's commitment to preventing anti-state elements from succeeding in their malicious designs. "Those behind these attacks will be held accountable, and the sacrifices of the martyrs will not go in vain," he added.

## Muqam condemns attack on Rangers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam strongly condemned the attack on Rangers and police personnel on Srinagar Highway by miscreants.

Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs paid tribute to four martyred Rangers personnel and police constable Mubashir, said a press release.

Amir Muqam expressed heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the families of the martyrs.

Engineer Amir Muqam prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured personnel.

Nation salutes the martyred personnel, Amir Muqam.

Federal Minister paid tribute to police constable Mubashir, who was martyred in the violence of protesters near Hakla. Protesters who resorted to violence will be brought to justice, Engineer Amir Muqam.

## Ahsan vows educational reforms to meet 21st-century needs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal expressed a strong commitment on Tuesday to reform Pakistan's memorization-based education system and develop a world-class curriculum during the current tenure of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government.

"With the support of all stakeholders and experts, we will develop a curriculum that aligns with 21st-century requirements," he said while addressing the National Curriculum Summit titled "Empowering the Future by Reviewing Existing Curricula to Integrate Skill and Technology," organized by the National Curriculum Council (NCC) and the Inter-Board Coordination Commission (IBCC).

The minister said the government was pursuing a goal of equipping the country's youth with modern education, enabling them to compete internationally

and contribute to national development. Ahsan Iqbal also expressed a desire to establish a state-of-the-art Teachers' Training Center to improve education quality and produce skilled professionals who meet contemporary needs. The Ministry of Education has already been tasked with this initiative.

He said the PML-N government had initiated this project during its previous tenure but was unable to complete it due to political instability. The center, in collaboration with provincial education departments, is expected to be the best in South Asia, providing students with high-quality education focused on enhancing critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving and teamwork. "It will be a paradigm shift from memorization-based education," Iqbal said, adding that the initiative would also reform the existing examination system.

Ahsan Iqbal stressed that memorization-based education was outdated in the

modern era, where innovation and creativity were essential for development.

He said the country could not achieve progress and prosperity without improving education standards and developing human resources. "Today's era is not about muscle power; it's about brain power. Nations with superior brain power will succeed. The first step toward national progress is improving the education system."

Commenting on the debate about whether the medium of imparting education should be Urdu or English, the minister suggested a blend of both, which he termed "Urdish." He proposed using Urdu for the conceptual part of education and English for achieving global competence. "There should be blended learning. We need to transition from robotic learning to conceptual learning." "Educational power guarantees progress and prosperity for any nation and society," he remarked.

## IESCO notifies power shutdown programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Thursday 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, Bhara Kahu. I&II, Athal, Shahpur, Ghauri Garden, New Marvi, Tamir, Pindorian, UC Road, Marvi, Orchard Scheme, CDA Pump, Aabpara, F-10/2, G-9/M, International School, I-11/2, G-11/4, F-11 Tower, T&T, Sunny Bank, Cecil, Nimble, Upper Topa, TDCC, Treat Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Lakho Road, NRC, Golra, Pirwadhai, Katarian, Holy Family, F-Block, E-Block, Afandi Colony, Muzammil Town, Al Noor Colony, Service Road, Dhok Hakmad, Committee Chowk, Major Masood, Jamia Masjid,

Gowalmandi, Amin Town, Asghar Mall, MH, Ameer Hamza Colony, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Topi Pump, Tipu Road, Morgah, Fuji Foundation, Mehboob Shaheed, Mohra Nagyal, Wilayat Complex, X-Layer, AOWHS, Dhamial.I, UC Lakhna, Gulshan Saeed, Hyder Road, Tipu Road, Makkah Chowk, CBR.I, Askari 14, Kalyal.

Dhamial, Qureshiabad, Cantt, Rajar, RCCI-II, V, Kahota City.I, Dubiran, Ghazan Khan, Chowk Pindori, Pind Jatla, Karnab Kaswal, Nishan Haider, CB Khan. II, Mandra-II Feeders, Attock Circle, Mushtaq Hussain, Jalala, Behlot, Shahia, Rashid Minhas, AWC Housing, Munirabad, Shafi Chauhan, Pathar, Gar, Babarakh, Kohsar Valley, Valley, Hameed Kamra Rural, Mansar, Ghor Ghashti, 3 Mela, Shadi Khan, PM Housing Colony, Chhaji Mar, Qutbal, Nara, Dharnal, Galial, Fateh Jang, Laniwala, Amanpur Feeders, Jhelum Circle, F-5 Jeddah, Zebar Shaheed,

F-3 Gul Afshan, Mandi Bhalwal, Shamsabad, Akram Shaheed, F-8 Civil Line, Pakhwal, M Riaz Shaheed, Dinah.1 Bakrala, Bhagwal, New Chakiam, Chautala, Dinah.4 City, Gujar Khan, Mitwa, Ghauri Dhamek, Kalia, Mal Awan, Kantrila, Islampur Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Tharpal, Line Park, Megan, Khairpur, Islamia Chowk, Dera Muslim, Dhadiyal Rural, Malhal Mughal, Bhikri, Darya Jalap, Tuba, PD Khan, Sagarpur, Pipi, Dharnal, Sukho, Tala Gang City, Aqwal, Bilalabad, Darut, Mail, Wanhar feeders, GSO Circle, from 06:30 am to 18:30 pm, RCCI-I, III, IV feeders, from 09:00 am to 04:00 pm, USA - A, B&C Old USA Embassy, RA Bazaar, AWT, Mall Road, AFIC, Tench Bhata, MH-3, Qasim Market, CMH-2, Sprint Mall, GHQ, Kayani Road, Army Flats, MH-1, CMH-1, MH-2, Zeeshan Colony, Haider Road, NLC feeders, DG Khan Cement Factory Grid Station and surrounding areas.



ISLAMABAD: CDA staffers busy in cleaning the Srinagar Highway in Federal Capital. —APP Photo



Violence against journalists

KABUL (Amu TV): The United Nations released a detailed report Tuesday painting a grim picture of media freedom in Afghanistan, documenting extensive censorship, restrictions on access to information, and targeted repression of journalists and media workers, particularly women, under the Taliban's de facto government. The 26-page report, published by the UNAMA and the UN Human Rights Office, covers the period from August 15, 2021 to September 30, 2024.

CSTO to approve plan

KABUL (Amu TV): The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) has announced that the plan to strengthen the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan will be approved in the next two days. Azerbaijani media reported on Tuesday, November 26, that the CSTO is set to approve this plan on November 28. The report was based on statements from Imangali Tasmagambetov, the Secretary-General of the CSTO.

# \$174 million worth of trade with Russia

KABUL (TOLONews): Afghanistan's Ministry of Industry and Commerce reported that from the beginning of Hamal to the end of Aqrab this year (solar year), trade between Afghanistan and Russia has reached \$174 million.

According to Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, the ministry's spokesperson, \$2.2 million of this amount pertains to Afghan exports, including raisins, minerals, dried figs, and onions.

"Most major export items include raisins, minerals, fruit juice, cucumbers, talc, non-alcoholic beverages, figs, and onions. Imports primarily consist of barbed wire, malt water, and various oil and gas products," he said.

Although efforts have been made over the past three years to increase

exports and facilitate trade, Afghanistan's trade balance with regional and global countries remains uneven.

Russia is one of the countries that annually exports goods worth over \$300 million to Afghanistan, but Afghanistan's exports to Russia are very limited in comparison.

The Russian president's special representative for Afghanistan recently met with Afghanistan's acting foreign minister to discuss expanding economic, trade, investment, and transit cooperation.

"He said a high-ranking delegation from his country will soon visit Kabul, and senior officials from the Islamic Emirate will hold discussions on expanding cooperation in various sectors," said Hafiz Zia Ahmad Takal, the deputy spokesperson for the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Chamber of Commerce and Investment emphasized that several contracts for importing oil, gas, and wheat from Russia have been signed but require implementation.

"Economic relations with Russia are highly important for us during these crisis-ridden times when we are isolated from the world. Strengthening ties with Russia is in our interest," said Khanjan Alokozai, a board member of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment.

Since the return of the Islamic Emirate to power, Russia has been one of the countries that has expanded its economic and trade relations with Afghanistan. Officials of the Islamic Emirate have also actively participated in various economic meetings in Russia.

## Ministry secures rights for 20,000 women

KABUL (BNA): The spokesman for the Ministry of Vice and Virtue, and Hearing Complaints has stated that over the past three years, the ministry has ensured the basic rights of approximately 20,000 women.

Mawlawi Saif-al-Islam Khaibar, spokesman for the Ministry, published a brief report on the ministry's achievements regarding the prevention of violence against women and the fulfillment of their basic rights.

He wrote on his X account that in the past three years, the inheritance, dowry, and other basic rights of about 20,000 women, which were taken from them due to incorrect cultural practices and baseless honor-based beliefs, have been ensured.

Mawlawi Khaibar also added that in the past six months alone, 1,000 cases have been registered and resolved.

He further mentioned that in this period, 5,000 forced marriages have been prevented, where women were either compelled to marry against their will or were forced into marriage in exchange for money, or young girls were married off to elderly men. In the past six months, 500 such incidents have been recorded and prevented.

The spokesperson also noted that efforts to prevent domestic violence against women, including degrading attitudes, mental and physical abuse, deprivation of religious rights, and the prevention of humiliating behaviors based on incorrect customs, have been the result of the ministry's ongoing efforts. In the past six months, 1,000 such cases have been registered and resolved.

# Iranian ambassador bids farewell to Muttaqi



KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced a farewell meeting between Hassan Kazeemi Qomi, the Ambassador and Special Representative of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate.

According to Hafiz Zia Ahmad Takal, Deputy Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who shared the update on his X account, the meeting took place in Kabul on Tuesday. The two sides discussed bilateral relations and regional developments during the meeting.

Mawlawi Amir Khan

Muttaqi commended Ambassador Qomi's efforts during his tenure in Afghanistan and expressed the Ministry's readiness to collaborate with the incoming Iranian ambassador to further strengthen bilateral ties.

## Cultural heritage preservation highlighted



KABUL (BNA): Mullah Khairullah Khairkhwa, the Acting Minister of Information and Culture, met with representatives of the contractors involved in the extraction of copper at the Mes Aynak mine in Logar province.

During the meeting, Liu Jun, President of MCCT, commended the Ministry of Information and Culture for its professional efforts in preserving Afghanistan's historical and cultural heritage. He also requested close collaboration between a joint delegation from the Ministries of Information and Culture and Mines to oversee and support the copper extraction process.

Mullah Khairullah Khairkhwa stressed the importance of preserving the historical artifacts at Mes Aynak, describing it as a priority for both Afghanistan and China.

He further highlighted that the Ministry of Information and Culture, along with its technical team, is actively present at the Mes Aynak project site to ensure the safeguarding of Afghanistan's rich cultural heritage.

## Iran to expel 2.5 million illegal Afghan migrants

KABUL (Khaama Press): Ahmad Masoumifar, the head of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs representative office, has warned that by the end of this year, 2.5 million undocumented Afghan migrants will be expelled from Iran.

According to the state-run news agency IRNA, the reduction in the entry of illegal Afghan migrants into Iran has been significant.

He emphasized that the deportation of unauthorized nationals does not require an agreement with any country and that, based on decisions made within the Iranian system, Afghan nationals without legal documentation must leave Iran.

The Iranian official also stated, "If their return is voluntary, that is preferred; otherwise, the relevant authorities will take action."

The report mentioned that the de facto administration also understands this situation and it is natural for them not to defend individuals who have entered Iran illegally and remained there.

In recent months, the process of expelling Afghan migrants from Iran has intensified.

According to statistics from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, currently, 4.5 million Afghan migrants, both with legal migration documents, long-term visas, or no legal documentation, are living in Iran.

The Iranian government's decision to expel undocumented Afghan migrants has sparked significant concerns about the well-being of those affected. Many fear the hardship they will face upon their return to Afghanistan, which remains in a state of instability and economic difficulty.

While Iran justifies these measures on the basis of maintaining national security and managing migration flows, the issue also raises questions about regional cooperation and the role of international organizations in supporting vulnerable populations.

## Saffron growers face obstacles despite high yield

KABUL (TOLONews): Saffron exporting companies in Herat state that despite increased yield this year, challenges such as restrictions on money transfers and the lack of operational air corridors remain significant obstacles to exports.

According to the officials of these companies, banking issues caused by sanctions and restrictions have made the process of exporting saffron to various countries difficult.

Exporters have urged the caretaker government to take necessary measures to facilitate saffron exports.

"The air corridor has not yet been reopened in a way that allows us to export our saffron to countries around the world," said Jalil Ahmad Karimi, the head of a saffron exporting company.

"Seventy percent of the companies exporting saffron face these problems. Two or three companies have resolved the issues, but others are still struggling with them," said Najibullah Rehmati, a saffron exporter.

Officials of the Afghanistan Saffron Association also point out that the lack of registration of exporting companies with customs authorities in destination countries due to sanctions is a serious challenge.

"We have always raised the issues of our companies with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. These issues are mostly financial; when saffron is sold, they cannot transfer the money properly due to banking restrictions," said Mohammad Ibrahim Adel, head of the Afghan Saffron Association.

Meanwhile, local officials in Herat report that saffron production in the province has reached about 40 tons this year, marking a 30% increase compared to last year. The Herat Chamber of Commerce and Investment also stated that they have facilitated export and financial services for exporting companies.

Younes Qazizada, head of the Herat Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said: "In terms of facilitating financial transfers, private and government banks have created certain conditions in cooperation with the chamber.

Currently, there are no problems regarding exports and liquidity," said Mohammad Younus Qazizada, Chamber of Commerce and Investment. According to the Afghanistan Saffron Association, out of the total 30 tons of saffron produced in the country last year, 29 tons and 580 kilograms were exported.

This amount of saffron, valued at nearly 40 million dollars, was exported to the United States, Europe, China, India, Saudi Arabia, and Oman.

## '144,000 E-ID cards distributed in a month'

KABUL (TOLONews): The National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) announced that nearly 144,000 electronic ID cards were distributed across Afghanistan in the past month.

According to the spokesperson for the NSIA, these ID cards were issued through 79 distribution centers and "Asan Khedmat" service sites in provinces such as Kabul, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Balkh, and Herat.

"A total of 144,000 electronic ID cards have been distributed across all distribution centers. Statistics show that the highest number of IDs, around 43,000, were issued in Kabul. We currently operate 79 distribution centers, one of which is active in the United Arab Emirates," stated Mohammad Haleem Rafe, the spokesperson for the NSIA.

Some residents of Kabul have expressed appreciation for the facilities provided to obtain electronic IDs but have called for further improvements.

"Every Afghan citizen should have an ID card because personal identity is very important. Therefore, more facilities should be made available," said Sulaiman, a resident of Kabul.

"My request to the Islamic Emirate is to establish more centers so that people can easily obtain their ID cards," said Tawfiq Ullah, another resident of Kabul.

Officials from the NSIA have emphasized their commitment to providing timely and balanced services to citizens.

They stated that electronic ID distribution centers have been expanded to remote areas and districts to enable residents of those regions to access their IDs more easily.

## 'Russia supports Kabul's integration'



KABUL (Khaama Press): Russian state media reported that Moscow supports the integration of Kabul into regional structures, following the controversial visit of Sergei Shoigu, the country's National Security Advisor, to Kabul and his discussions with Taliban officials.

The TASS news agency reported on Tuesday quoting Sergei Shoigu, who stated, "We intend to develop bilateral cooperation between Russia and Afghanistan in many areas."

Although Shoigu described his visit as focusing on economic, transport, and energy issues, he subtly emphasized the organization of "intra-Afghan" negotiations, noting that Moscow is ready to create favorable conditions for political dialogue.

TASS reported him saying, "I confirm that we are ready to establish constructive political dialogue between our countries [Russia and Afghanistan], especially to expedite the resolution of internal issues in Afghanistan."

Shoigu made an unexpected and highly publicized visit to Kabul, where he held talks with senior officials, including the deputies of the Taliban Prime Minister.

Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, asked Moscow to assist the current regime in countering the pressures from the United States and the West.

Shoigu's visit highlights Russia's growing interest in Afghanistan, particularly in the context of regional security and economic cooperation. Russia seems keen to play a more active role in Afghanistan's political and economic landscape, seeking to help the Taliban navigate international pressures.

This visit also underscores the broader geopolitical dynamics at play, where Afghanistan's relations with major powers like Russia are increasingly important amid the current regime isolation from the West. Moscow's willingness to engage in political dialogue could shift the regional balance, especially if it helps ease Afghanistan's diplomatic challenges.

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## Ambassador meets with CEO of Oman charitable organization



KABUL (BNA): The Afghanistan Embassy in Oman has reported a meeting between the Acting Ambassador of Afghanistan and Mohammed bin Hamoud Al Dhahli, the CEO of the Oman Charitable Organization.

According to a statement from the embassy's press office, Hafiz Omar, the Acting Ambassador of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Oman, held discussions with Mohammed bin Hamoud Al Dhahli regarding ongoing and future projects.

During the meeting, Hafiz Omar expressed appreciation for the charitable projects announced by the Sultanate of Oman for Afghanistan during the Paris and Tokyo conferences.

He also requested further collaboration in implementing new initiatives in Afghanistan.

In response, Mohammed bin Hamoud Al Dhahli reaffirmed the Oman Charitable Organization's commitment to fulfilling previous obligations and emphasized the organization's intent to continue its cooperation with Afghanistan.

## RC warns of adverse effects of climate change

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Khaama Press podcast talks about climate change in Afghanistan and its effects. Najibullah Sadid, an expert in water management, discusses the problems caused by climate change in the country.

In its latest report, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has warned about the "adverse" impacts of climate change in Afghanistan. According to international experts quoted in the report, the average temperature in Afghanistan is expected to rise by 2 degrees Celsius by 2050.

This report, which was released on Tuesday, November 26, reveals that Afghanistan is among the top 10 countries that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. It also highlights that the country has minimal resources to combat these changes.

The ICRC, citing international experts, reports that Afghanistan's average temperature may rise by 1.8 to 1.9 degrees Celsius by 2050, which would be considered the most critical scenario for the region. This would lead to "adverse consequences" for the country.

The increase in temperature is attributed to the reduction of glaciers and snow coverage in the Hindu Kush and Pamir mountains, which are vital water sources. One of the most serious consequences of this is the scarcity of fresh water.

The report also mentions that climate change in Afghanistan has intensified humanitarian challenges. Decades of conflict and violence in the country have weakened its capacity to cope with the effects of climate change.

The combination of Afghanistan's vulnerability to climate change and its lack of resources to address it creates a dire situation for the country. The increase in temperature and loss of glaciers threaten the availability of freshwater, which is essential for the survival of the population.

Addressing climate change in Afghanistan will require both local and international efforts. Strengthening the country's resilience to these environmental changes, improving water management systems, and providing humanitarian aid will be crucial steps to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change on the Afghan population.

## UN calls on Taliban to protect media freedom

KABUL/GENEVA (Amu TV): The United Nations in a report on Tuesday urged the Taliban to ensure the safety and freedom of journalists and media workers, citing an increasingly restrictive environment characterized by censorship, intimidation, and limited access to information.

The report released by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the UN Human Rights Office, document widespread challenges faced by the country's media sector from August 2021 to September 2024.

"For any country, a free press is not a choice but a necessity," said Roza Otunbayeva, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

"Journalists and media workers in Afghanistan often face unclear rules, intimidation, and arbitrary detention for perceived criticism."



# WB vows to assist Pakistan in addressing economic challenges

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a significant move, the World Bank has assured assisting Pakistan in addressing economic challenges and achieving its developmental objectives.

The pledge came at a meeting between Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb and Country Director of the World Bank, Najy Benhassine and his team at the Finance Division on Wednesday.

The meeting was also attended by the Secretary Finance and senior officers of the Finance Division. During the meeting, the Finance Minister highlighted the importance of collaboration with the World Bank to sup-

port Pakistan's economic reforms and development agenda. He appreciated the World Bank's financial and technical assistance across various sectors.

The Finance Minister reiterated the government's commitment to fiscal discipline, sustainable growth, and efficient resource utilization. The discussions focused on the establishment of a robust and transparent tax policy framework to enhance revenue mobilization and improve compliance while ensuring equitable taxation.

The World Bank team also offered technical assistance to streamline the budget-making process, adopting modern practices to improve transparency and accountability in public financial management, an effective

debt management mechanism to ensure fiscal sustainability and reduce risks. Issues related to Agricultural Income Tax Regime and GST harmonisation in coordination with provinces and enhanced focus on active role of National Tax Council also came under discussion.

The Finance Minister expressed gratitude for the World Bank's support and vowed that the government's resolve would be implemented reforms aimed at sustainable economic progress. On the occasion, the WB Country Director lauded the government's reform initiatives and assured continued support from the World Bank in key areas identified during the discussions.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi visiting at Jinnah Avenue ahead of PTI protest.

## Protest intensifies over abduction of Musawir

### F.P. Report

QUETTA: Central Joint Secretary of the Awami National Party (ANP) and member of the protest sit-in committee, Sardar Rasheed Khan Nasar, announced today that the future course of action regarding the non-recovery of Muhammad Musawir Kakar, a 10-year-old boy abducted from Quetta, would be decided in a committee meeting scheduled for November 29.

Speaking to the media at a protest sit-in staged at Serena Chowk in the city, he reiterated the party's commitment to intensifying efforts for the safe recovery of Kakar, whose abduction has sparked widespread concern.

Calling on the public to join the sit-in, Sardar Nasar assured that the demonstrations would continue alongside negotiations with the authorities. "Our demand is simple: the immediate recovery of Muhammad Musawir Kakar. Until that happens, we will not relent," he stated.

The protest has gained momentum as more supporters rally for justice, urging authorities to expedite their efforts to locate the abducted individual. The abduction and non-recovery of Muhammad Musawir Kakar, a 10-year-old boy from Quetta, has triggered widespread protests and calls for justice. Musawir was reportedly abducted earlier this month, sparking outrage among local communities and activists in Balochistan. Protestors, including civil society members and political leaders, have criticized the authorities for their failure to ensure safety and accountability.

## Israeli strike kills 10 at Gaza school

GAZA CITY (Reuters): An Israeli air strike killed at least 10 Palestinians at a school sheltering displaced families in Gaza City, medics said on Tuesday.

They said that dozens of people were also wounded in the Israeli strike that hit the Al-Hurreya School in the Zeitoun neighborhood, one of the oldest suburbs of Gaza City. Earlier, the Gaza health ministry said in a statement that more than 44,249 Palestinians have been killed and 104,746 injured in Israel's military offensive on Gaza since Oct. 7, 2023.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military issued new evacuation orders to residents in areas of an eastern Gaza City suburb, setting off a new wave of displacement, and a Gaza hospital director was injured in an Israeli drone attack, Palestinian medics said.

The new orders for the Shejaia suburb posted by the Israeli army spokesperson on X on Saturday night were blamed on Palestinian militants firing rockets from that heavily built-up district in the north of the Gaza Strip. "For your safety, you must evacuate immediately to the south," the military's post said. The rocket volley on Saturday was claimed by Hamas' armed wing, which said it had targeted an Israeli army base over the border.

Footage circulated on social and Palestinian media, which Reuters could not immediately verify, showed residents leaving Shejaia on donkey carts and rickshaws, with others, including children carrying backpacks, walking.

# Maritime Security Workshop commences

## F.P. Report

LAHORE: Seventh edition of the Maritime Security Workshop (MARSEW-7) commenced at Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore. The workshop was inaugurated by Commandant of Pakistan Navy War College, Rear Admiral Azhar Mahmood.

MARSEW is a national-level forum organized under the auspices of the Pakistan Navy, with the theme "Secure Seas, Prosperous Pakistan." The workshop aims to enhance knowledge and understanding of maritime security, geopolitical dynamics in the broader Indian Ocean region, and the Blue Economy, while also exploring Pakistan's untapped maritime potential. It seeks to highlight the challenges and opportunities in Pakistan's maritime sector and its critical role in supporting the national economy.

This forum provides a shared platform for participants from the public and private sectors, including senators, parliamentarians,



senior bureaucrats, maritime industry professionals, business leaders, academia, think tanks, and media representatives, to deliberate on pressing national maritime issues. A total of 38 participants from the public, private, and military sectors are taking part in MARSEW-7.

In his welcome address, Rear Admiral Azhar Mahmood outlined the purpose of the workshop, emphasizing the need for Pakistan's intelligentsia to shift its strategic focus towards the sea. He highlighted the developments in the broader Indian Ocean region and their implications for Pakistan's national security. The Commandant also addressed the wide-ranging challenges faced by the Pakistan Navy and its unwavering commitment to

safeguarding the nation's maritime interests.

The workshop is structured in two phases: the first phase comprises academic sessions at the War College, while the second phase includes a field tour to various naval commands and coastal installations along the Makran Coast. Participants will also visit Gwadar Port to witness ongoing development projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Since its inception in 2017, the Maritime Security Workshop has been held annually at Pakistan Navy War College. It plays a vital role in fostering an integrated approach to developing Pakistan's maritime sector and advancing the Blue Economy.

# ATC extends remand of cop in police lines blast

## Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar has extended physical remand of Wali Muhammad for 15 days for his alleged involvement in the Police Lines blast case, on Tuesday.

According to details, the accused, Wali Muhammad has allegedly facilitated the suicide bomber who carried out the attack on the Police Lines in Peshawar, resulting in the martyrdom of over 80 police personnel and injuring over 200 others.

The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) Peshawar Investigation Officer, requested the court to extend the physical remand of the accused, stating that further investigation was required to uncover the

facts of the case. The prosecution argued that the accused had provided significant information during the previous remand period, but more time was needed to complete the investigation. ATC extended the physical remand of the accused, Wali Muhammad, by 15 days after conclusion of arguments and adjourned further hearing.

**PHC defers hearing on KPBC plea:** Peshawar High Court (PHC) has deferred the hearing of a petition regarding the deteriorating security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa till 4th December. The petition was filed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council, seeking the court's intervention to address the worsening law and order situation in the province.

The petition was filed by the Vice Chairman of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council, Sadique Ali Momand, who contended that the province was facing a grave security crisis. He argued that judges were being attacked, and people were being killed within court premises, which was unacceptable.

During the previous hearing, PHC had issued notices to the provincial and federal governments, seeking their response to the petition. The court had also directed the formation of a high-level committee to address the security concerns in the province. During the current hearing, Additional Advocate General Inam Yousafzai appeared on behalf of the provincial government.

# Pak-Belarus agree

## (Continued from Page 1)

Earlier, both leaders witnessed the exchange of important agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), encompassing cooperation in environmental protection, disaster management, halal trade, audit institutions, financial intelligence sharing, vocational education and science & technology. One of the key outcomes of the meeting was the signing of the "Roadmap for Comprehensive Cooperation between Pakistan and Belarus for 2025-2027," which outlines a strategic framework for enhancing economic ties through high-level meetings, inter-governmental commissions, and targeted collaborative initiatives.

Talking to the media, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif referred to the closeness between Pakistan and Belarus and said that in their "productive" bilateral meeting and the delegation-level talks, they discussed the cooperation in multiple sectors including commerce, tourism, defence, food and others.

He lauded President Lukashenko's commitment to turning the bilateral understandings into practical agreements and actions. The prime minister told the media that the two sides would sit together later in the day to finalise the

roadmap for cooperation in agriculture, joint ventures, mining and minerals, IT and possibilities for heavy machinery manufacturing. This will follow another discussion in Minsk to finalize and make arrangements for agreements to be signed in February next year by him and President Lukashenko to convert them into concert actions.

The prime minister said that their meeting also featured a discussion on the heart-wrenching situation in Gaza where 45,000 people had been killed while the ceasefire could not yet take place despite the UN resolutions and the ruling by the International Court of Justice. Expressing gratitude to the Belarusian president for the Kashmir cause, he said global peace would remain a far cry until the issues were resolved.

In his remarks, President Lukashenko said both sides discussed the ways to realize the MoUs signed by two sides and also appreciated Prime Minister Shehbaz's vision and approach to turning the bilateral understanding into actions. He said Pakistan and Belarus had decades-old political and diplomatic relations which necessitated to monetise these ties for the benefit of the two peoples and utilise immense potential. He expressed his country's willingness to share technology with Pakistan in dif-

ferent areas of expertise and also assured support to work on the agreed areas of cooperation.

Moreover, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko held a bilateral meeting wherein the two sides reiterated the resolve to further strengthen bilateral trade and commerce ties as well as mutually beneficial cooperation.

The prime minister, who warmly welcomed the Belarusian president at the PM House, said that Pakistan greatly valued its relationship with Belarus. He expressed the hope that President Lukashenko's visit would help open up new avenues for bilateral cooperation and partnership. The meeting featured discussion on political relations, trade and investment, defence cooperation and regional issues.

Both leaders expressed satisfaction over the positive trajectory of Pakistan-Belarus ties in all spheres during the last decade. Prime Minister Shehbaz apprised the Belarusian president of his government's economic revival policy aimed at export-oriented growth and attracting investment from friendly countries. President Lukashenko thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz for the warm reception and hospitality.

# Kurram clashes' death toll rises to 99 after govt-brokered truce broken

## F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: The death toll from the recent violence that has plagued the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram district rose to 99 on Tuesday after the government-brokered seven-day truce was broken.

The police, in a statement, said that overnight firing between rival tribes left 10 dead and 21 others wounded, taking the toll to 99 deaths, as violence escalated. An uptick in violence began last Thursday when two separate convoys travelling under police escort were ambushed, sparking two days of gun battles.

At least 82 people were killed and 156 more wounded before the provincial government delegation — led by Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif — brokered the ceasefire on Sunday night. But late Monday Kurram deputy commissioner Javedullah Mehsud told AFP "reports of tribal clashes and gunfire continue to emerge from several areas". A security official stationed in Kurram who asked not to be named confirmed "clashes are ongoing"

in at least three areas. "There are significant disagreements over the exchange of prisoners and bodies," he said. "According to my information, both communities are currently holding over 18 individuals hostage, including eight women."

The educational institutions in the violence-hit districts have been closed for five days, while all roads — including Peshawar-Parachinar Central Highway — remain closed for sixth straight day. Furthermore, the trade with Afghanistan at Kharlachi comes to halt due to closure of main highway. Internet and mobile services are also suspended in the district. It is pertinent to mention here that tribal and family feuds are common in the area.

Meanwhile, Chief Secretary (CS) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary has underscored the critical importance of restoring peace and stability in Kurram district reiterating the government's strong commitment to ensuring the rule of law. He was addressing a Grand Peace Jirga that was convened at

Commissioner House Kohat to deliberate on prevailing situation in Kurram district and devise a roadmap for enduring peace.

The Jirga was attended by leading religious figures of Sunni and Shia sect. The Chief Secretary emphasized that consultative process with local elders was integral to craft a sustainable peace framework. He assured participants that the government would implement their suggestions and recommendations effectively.

He condemned the violence stating that such acts of inhumanity must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. Anti-state and anti-social elements responsible for unrest in Kurram district would be brought to justice, he said. Commissioner Kohat Division, Syed Mutasim Billah Shah announced that all future meetings of Peace Jirga would continue in Kohat ensuring an ongoing consultation process to address pressing concerns and reinforce communal harmony.

# Trump vows big tariffs on Mexico and China

WASHINGTON (AFP): US President-elect Donald Trump said he intended to impose sweeping tariffs on goods from Mexico, Canada and China, prompting a swift warning from Beijing that "no one will win a trade war."

In a series of posts to his Truth Social account, Trump vowed to hit some of the United States' largest trading partners with duties on all goods entering the country. "On January 20th, as one of my many first Executive Orders, I will sign all necessary documents to charge Mexico and Canada a 25 per cent tariff on all products coming into the United States," he wrote.

In another post, Trump said he would also be slapping China with a 10pc tariff, "above any additional Tariffs", in response to what he said was its failure to tackle fentanyl smuggling. Tariffs are a key part of Trump's economic agenda, with the Republican vowing wide-ranging duties on allies and adversaries alike while he was on the campaign trail.

Both China and Canada issued swift responses, each calling their trade relationships with the United States "mutually beneficial". "No one will win a trade war," Liu Pengyu, a spokesman for China's embassy in the United States, told AFP by email, defending Beijing's efforts

to curb fentanyl smuggling. "China believes that China-US economic and trade cooperation is mutually beneficial in nature," Liu added.

Canada said it was "essential" to US energy supplies and insisted the relationship benefits American workers. "We will of course continue to discuss these issues with the incoming administration," said the statement from Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland. Trump's first term in the White House was marked by an aggressive and protectionist trade agenda that also targeted China, Mexico and Canada, as well as Europe.

While in the White House, Trump launched an all-out trade war with China, imposing significant tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars of Chinese goods. At the time he cited unfair trade practices, intellectual property theft and the trade deficit as justifications. China responded with retaliatory tariffs on American products, particularly affecting US farmers.

The US, Mexico and Canada are tied to a three-decade-old free trade agreement, now called the USMCA, that was renegotiated under Trump after he complained that the US businesses, especially automakers, were losing out. "Mexico and Canada remain heavily dependent

on the US market so their ability to walk away from President-elect Trump's threats remains limited," Wendy Cutler, vice president at the Asia Society Policy Institute, and former US trade official, told AFP.

By citing the fentanyl crisis and illegal immigration, Trump appeared to be using national security concerns as a means to break that deal, something that is usually allowed under the rules set by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or in trade deals. But most countries and the WTO treat national security exceptions as something to be used sparingly, not as a routine tool of trade policy. Trump in 2018 cited national security justifications to impose tariffs on steel and aluminium imports that targeted close allies like Canada, Mexico and the European Union.

This led to retaliatory measures from the trading partners. Many economists have warned that tariffs would hurt growth and push up inflation since they are primarily paid by importers bringing the goods into the US, who often pass those costs on to consumers. But those in Trump's inner circle have insisted that the tariffs are a useful bargaining chip for the US to push its trading partners to agree to more favourable terms, and to bring back manufacturing jobs from overseas.



DUBAI: MNA and First Lady of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Aseefa Bhutto Zardari is participating in the International Women's Forum in Dubai.