

Bushra, Gandapur booked
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Ex-first lady Bushra Bibi, KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and other PTI leaders have been booked in seven new cases in Attock following recent violent protests. As per details, Bushra Bibi, Opposition Leader in NA, Omar Ayub, Arif Alvi and other PTI lawmakers have been booked in seven different cases at three police stations in Attock, Punjab.



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RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif sees off President of Belarus, Aleksandra Lukashenko at PAF Nur Khan Airbase.

Sit-in will continue until call of Imran: Gandapur

CM reviews law, order situation in Kurram

F.P. Report

MANSEHRA / PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur said on Wednesday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) sit-in is a movement that is ongoing and will continue until the call of the founder [to call it off].

Gandapur was addressing a news conference here along with Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub. He said that the PTI is a peaceful party. "We talk about the rule of law, protection of the constitution, true freedom and democracy in the country. Unfortunately, for the last two and a half years, our party has been subjected to oppression."

Gandapur said cases were fabricated against [the PTI leadership]. "Our mandate was stolen. Our leader is in jail in concocted cases. Our voters were tortured. We demand our rights but we are not allowed to protest peacefully." The chief minister said a cruel tradition has been set which is unprecedented in history. "We do not get justice from courts. We have only one choice, to protest without permission."

He said "whenever we demanded to hold rally in Islamabad we were tortured." "I want to make it clear, the sit-in is ongoing. It will continue as it is launched on the call of [Imran] Khan. He had said that the sit-in will continue until he say so. I want to tell the whole of Pakistan that our sit-in is continuing."

The chief minister said that they [police] shot at our workers. "Hundreds of our people have been shot, the data of our martyrs is being compiled. The data of our workers who are arrested is also being collected." "I was also targeted. I was fired upon. Bushra Bibi, who was with me, was also fired upon," he continued.

He said "we were going peacefully. The question is why were we shot at? Whenever we got hold of a policeman or security force official, we let him go. Every family here has a member who is in police, Rangers, FC or army." He was all praise the PTI activists and said they have been fighting a war for our coming generations. Today the PTI founder is in jail for us. He is sacrificing for our real freedom. He said when a chief minister could not

get justice, how common people can get justice. He assured the families of arrested workers that he would secure their release. "I salute my workers. We stand with the families of those arrested." It may be recalled that Gandapur reached Mansehra along with Bushra Bibi and party General Secretary Omar Ayub from Islamabad late night when a grand operation was launched to disperse activists who were on a sit-in on the call of Imran Khan.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister, chaired a high-level meeting to review the latest law and order situation in Kurram district. The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Home, Muhammad Abid Majeed, and other senior officials.

While briefing the chair on the subject matter, concerned authorities informed that a 10-day ceasefire has been agreed between the warring parties in Kurram, and negotiations to amicably resolve the dispute are underway, adding that troops of lawn enforcing agencies are being deployed at key locations to maintain law and order, while assessment of damages caused to properties during clashes is being carried in the area.

It was further informed that a security plan and standard operating procedures (SOPs) have been issued to ensure the safe movement of residents in the district. Talking on this occasion the Chief Minister hailed the ceasefire agreement and expressed hope that this temporary truce would pave the way for lasting peace in the region. He emphasized the importance of resolving conflicts through dialogue in accordance with Pashtun traditions.

He directed the concerned officials to expedite the assessment of financial losses to provide prompt compensation to the affected individuals further directing them to ensure the provision of financial assistance to the families of those who lost their lives in the conflict should be disbursed without delay. "Restoration of sustainable peace in the region is the provincial government's top priority," the Chief Minister affirmed, adding that all available options will be utilized to achieve this end.

No weapons used during D-Chowk operation: Daniyal

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry on Wednesday refuted PTI's allegations for widespread killings at D-Chowk last night, stressing that the operation was unarmed and intended to prevent casualties.

In a press conference, Daniyal accused Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of attempting to incite deaths to disrupt the visits of foreign dignitaries. "PTI is spreading misleading propaganda regarding the deaths of its workers," he claimed. He categorically said that no protesters were killed by gunfire. Instead of making them responsible for the deaths that occurred while fleeing in a hurry, PTI sought to politicize deaths but was peacefully managed by the interior minister. "The call for this violent protest has proven to be the final nail in the coffin of PTI's violent politics," the minister said.

PTI spread fake news,

accusing the government of the killings, and shared it on social media to deceive the international community. A video was made after going to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Hospital and it was said that there were bodies here. They had planned to come and find the bodies.

Despite requests from their protesters not to leave, former First Lady Bushra Bibi and Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (CM-KP) Ali Amin Khan Gandapur were at the forefront in fleeing from D-Chowk. He said the sit-in was poorly planned, with the intention of disrupting government operations. PTI workers continued firing under the instructions of Ali Amin Gandapur and Bushra Bibi. PTI protesters also attacked police personnel, resulting in the deaths of six security officers.

"No political party has the right to harm people," he warned. The government showed restraint, while they brought people with them by inciting them, Daniyal Chaudhry said. He stated

that a total of 900 hardened criminals were arrested, including proclaimed offenders, wanted criminals, and 37 Afghan nationals carrying weapons provided by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

Most of the protesters were brought to Islamabad with a payment of Rs 5,000 per day. They engaged in street firing with the weapons, destroyed nearly 100 (CCTV) cameras, and set fire to 12 or 13 police vehicles, turning it into another May 9. He stated that the government was aware of the number of smugglers among the protesters and their activities. A strict policy was being devised by interior ministry to prevent such actions.

"No one will be allowed to disturb peace or hinder economic progress," the minister said. "The country and nation will never forget the violence of November 26-27, particularly the families of the martyrs who were victims of PTI miscreants, as well as the destruction of government property and media houses," he added.

No firing opened on PTI protesters: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar, has categorically rejected claims of firing on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protesters, asserting that no such action was taken and that no fatalities occurred among the demonstrators.

Speaking during a visit to D-Chowk and Jinnah Avenue overnight, Tarar accused the PTI leadership of spreading "baseless propaganda" to deflect from the embarrassment of their failed protest. He stated that while the protesters were dispersed, there was no involvement of state forces in the alleged violence.

Pointing to the deserted vehicles left behind by the protesters, the Information Minister said they damaged public property. He said it is beyond understanding as to what was the aim of their protest. The Minister criticized the PTI leadership, saying that making big claims and then fleeing the protest site is their hallmark. He said that both Bushra Bibi and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur fled together in the same vehicle.

Saif demands facilities to PTI founder

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Spokesman for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and Adviser to Chief Minister on Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif has asked the authorities to provide some better facilities to PTI founder Imran Khan, in case the immediate release not possible.

Speaking to media, he emphasised ongoing efforts to resolve the current political crisis. He clarified that while he does not act as a messenger for Imran Khan, he conveys proposals and gathers his input on key matters.

Answering a question regarding his meeting with the founder of PTI in the Adiala Jail, Saif said that he informed the Imran Khan about different suggestions and got his point of view, he said, during the consultations, the government offer to allow a sit-in at Sangjani area was also discussed. He revealed that Imran Khan had given nod to relocate the protest from D-Chowk to Sangjani, suburbs of Islamabad, but unfortunately his decision was not implemented. Saif stopped short telling the name of the person who obstructed the implementation of this decision.

Saif said that our basic demand is the release of Imran Khan but if the immediate fulfillment of this demand is not possible then at least some better facilities should be provided to the founder PTI, as right now he is being held in a small cell for more than 36 hours.

The Frontier Post

Police foil terrorists' attack
F.P. Report

DERA GHAZI KHAN: The police in Dera Ghazi Khan once again thwarted the nefarious plans of Khariji terrorists, successfully repelling their attack on the Lakhaani border checkpoint. Khariji terrorists launched a sudden attack late at night on the Lakhaani border post under Wahwa Police Station in Dera Ghazi Khan. However, the police forced the terrorists to retreat.

PM for firm decisions to end mayhems, sit-ins

— says we will break that hand which harms the country

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressed his zero tolerance for any future violent onslaught and sit-ins by a group of miscreants in Islamabad and resolved to take stern decisions to put an end to repeated string of violent chaos and damages to the country's economy.

Addressing a meeting of the federal cabinet, the prime minister without mentioning the name of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led recent onslaught on the federal capital, said that repeated attacks by a clique of miscreants had forced them to rethink. With the collective deliberations, they had to take strict measures, to quell such scenes in future as they could no longer put all their resources and energies into it, leading to economic destruction, he observed.

"They should have only one option before them; that is progress and prosperity o Pakistan. As a Prime Minister, chief executive, as members of the cabinet and parliamentarians, they will not let that coterie of anarchy to inflict further harm on country's economy," he maintained. The prime minister said that once again an assault was mounted on Islamabad, but on previous night, all the law enforcement agencies had collectively and with good strategy dispersed the protest and provided relief to the public.

As a result of such riot, Islamabad in particularly and the country in generally, witnessed huge economic losses as businesses were closed, traders

were raising hue and cry, owners of the factories were in distress; daily wagers found it hard to get one time meal while the patients were stranded, he added. In twin cities, the prime minister said the life was paralyzed. In the larger context, the economic losses were manifolds, the country's stock exchange market which had crossed the historic mark of 99,000 points few days back, lost 4,000 points in one day due to chaos.

These miscreants had become the permanent enemies of Pakistan's progress. But after restoration of peace, the PSE rallied and crossed the earlier figure, he said, adding the trend in business was like a flight of a soaring bird and investments poured in where the peace and opportunities existed. The prime minister regretted that such like dangerous trend of upheaval and attacks was set by a party of troublemakers as it was not visible prior to the year 2014, because none of the political parties had ever thought of mounting attacks on the federal capital.

During 2014, Chinese President Xi's visit to Pakistan was postponed due to 126 days sit in by the same figures and their leadership created mess and used foul language, which was still haunting their minds, he added. The prime minister also referred to the launching of protest on the eve of SCO heads of government summit in Islamabad, which had prompted concerns among a number of heads of close friendly countries about their visit to host Pakistan.

He also criticized staging of

protest by the same party during a visit by the delegation of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The prime minister said the mischief makers had also injured and killed security personnel during the recent attack. No patriotic or even a resident of the country could imagine to harm the country for personal interests and could go to such extreme of damaging the country.

He opined that the law and constitution ensured right for a peaceful protest. About the recent visit of President of Belarus, the prime minister said that they were taking decisions to enhance bilateral ties and cooperation between the two countries and on the other hand, there were scenes of battles.

A number of Rangers and police personnel were martyred whereas dozens others were injured, he added. The prime minister said that they could no longer waste their energies to tackle these spectacles on daily basis and stressed to ponder as to why the country was still mired in foreign debts even after passage of 77 years.

He also viewed that if the culprits of 9th May riots were given exemplary punishment by the courts, such like spectacles would not have happened. The prime minister also appreciated the Islamabad, Punjab, Sindh police force and other law enforcement agencies for quelling the fresh wave of attack and particularly thanked the chief of army staff for his cooperation with regard to law and order situation.

(Continued on Back Page)

ATC rejects Imran's bail pleas in May 9 cases

F.P. Report

LAHORE: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Lahore has rejected bail petitions of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, who remains incarcerated at the Adiala jail since August last year, in eight cases related to May 9 violence, including the Jinnah House attack. ATC Judge Manzoor Ali Gul announced the reserved judgment, dismissing the bail pleas of the ousted prime minister.

The cases included charges related to the Jinnah House and Askari Tower attacks, arson and vandalism at Shadman police station, and the burning of police vehicles at Rahat Bakery Chowk and

Zaman Park.

Earlier this month, Rawalpindi ATC approved a five-day physical remand of Imran in a vandalism case. The development came during the hearing of a case held at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail where the former prime minister has been incarcerated for more than a year now.

Imran was arrested in the vandalism case hours after the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday approved his bail in the new Toshakhana case involving the alleged illegal sale of state gifts. The May 9, 2023 events refer to the violent protests broke out in several parts of the country following the arrest of the PTI founder and saw

attacks on public properties including military installations including Corps Commander House Lahore also known as Jinnah House.

Last week, the federal government released "exclusive" CCTV footage of the May 9, 2023, violent protests, showing the alleged former ruling party's protesters vandalising and torching government and military installations. Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, who played some video and audio messages of PTI leaders at a press conference in Islamabad, demanded that courts ensure "swift justice" following the "undeniable evidence" against the former ruling party.



RAWALPINDI: General Zhang Youxia, Vice Chairman of Central Military Commission of People's Republic of China, along with a high-level delegation, called on Chief of Army Staff, General Asim Munir at GHQ.

COAS, China's CMC Vice Chairman discuss security

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir met with Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) of the People's Republic of China, General Zhang Youxia, who visited General Headquarters in Rawalpindi today along with a high-level delegation.

The army chief thanked Chinese leadership for standing firmly with Pakistan, irrespective of changes in the international and regional environment. He was accorded a warm reception, including a guard of honour presented by a smartly turned-out

contingent of the Pakistan Army.

The distinguished guest held a one-on-one meeting with General Syed Asim Munir, followed by delegation-level discussions. The engagements focused on matters of mutual interest, regional security dynamics, measures for regional stability, and enhancing bilateral defence cooperation.

General Asim Munir underscored the enduring and all-weather nature of Pakistan-China relations, emphasizing their foundation of mutual trust and cooperation. He affirmed that this historic partnership has withstood the test of

time and is poised to grow further.

On the occasion, Vice Chairman Zhang Youxia expressed China's deep appreciation for Pakistan's steadfast commitment to their strategic partnership. He commended the Pakistan Army's resolve and professionalism in its ongoing counter-terrorism efforts and reiterated China's determination to further strengthen this enduring relationship.

Earlier, upon his arrival at GHQ, General Zhang Youxia laid a floral wreath at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada, paying homage to Pakistan's martyrs.

Belarusian President winds up visit

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko on Wednesday departed after completing a three-day official visit to Pakistan. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif saw off the Belarusian president at the airport, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

During the visit, the two leaders comprehensively reviewed the full range of bilateral relations and reaffirmed their mutual commitment to deepening friendly ties between the two countries across political, trade, economic, cultural, social, and other areas.

Normalcy returns to Islamabad

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Following a large-scale operation against protestors, normalcy is gradually returning to the federal capital on Wednesday with business activities resuming and educational institutions expected to reopen tomorrow.

The district administration's cleanup efforts are underway, and containers blocking various roads in the city have been removed. The roads that had been closed due to the protests are now accessible again, said an official. The cleanup operations, including the removal of containers from key locations such as the Red Zone, are ongoing under the directives of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Memon, who has instructed assistant commissioners to clear their respective areas.

He emphasized that all available resources are being utilized to clear the roads swiftly, aiming to have them open for citizens by morning. He has also directed that cleanup efforts on all city roads be completed by then. "We aim to reopen the roads for citizens at earliest," DC Memon stated, underscoring the administration's commitment to resolving the issue swiftly.



KARACHI: Workers installing a solar powered CCTV camera near the civic center. —APP Photo

Qatar ambassador, Sindh governor discuss investment

KARACHI (PPI): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori held a meeting with Ambassador of Qatar, Ali Mubarak Al-Khater, at the Governor House in Karachi. The meeting focused on matters of mutual interest and fostering stronger bilateral ties.

According to a statement issued from Governor House, during the visit, the Ambassador praised the Governor's Initiative and expressed Qatar's desire to strengthen relations further with Pakistan, particularly in economic collaboration.

The Governor House hosted a formal ceremony where a guard of honor was presented to the Qatari Ambassador. Accompanied by Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, the Ambassador toured various sections of the Governor House, including the Quaid-e-Azam's room.

As a gesture of goodwill, the Ambassador planted a sapling on the Governor House lawn, where both the Pakistani and Qatari flags were raised, and national anthems were played. The Consul General of Qatar was also present at the occasion, and

the Ambassador recorded his remarks in the guest book.

The meeting between Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori and the Qatari Ambassador underscores the commitment to strengthening Pakistan-Qatar relations and exploring opportunities for mutual growth.

Talking to the media alongside the Ambassador, Tessori highlighted the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Qatar, stating, "Qatar has always supported Pakistan during challenging times, and the Pakistani nation holds immense affection for Qatar." He shared that the Ambassador conveyed Qatar's keen interest in large-scale investments in Pakistan, particularly in Karachi.

The governor elaborated on Qatar's plans for two types of investments: government-to-government projects and joint ventures with local investors. He emphasized that Qatar's interest is particularly crucial given Pakistan's current economic challenges, adding, "Army Chief General Hafiz Asim Munir has introduced the SIFC initiative, a one-window opera-

tion ensuring a hassle-free process for investors. We are committed to providing a conducive environment and guarantees for Qatari investors to achieve substantial returns."

Tessori revealed that the Ambassador assured him of local Qatari investors' readiness to invest in Pakistan. He stated, "I will provide detailed insights into sectors that can yield immediate results for investments, ensuring that this partnership benefits both nations significantly."

Addressing a question regarding recent political developments, the governor remarked, "The opposition's protests have not yielded any results. Their actions only brought embarrassment to themselves and the country, especially at a time when Pakistan is on the verge of economic recovery."

He further criticized those who abandoned their supporters during trying times, stating, "Despite their negligence, I am willing to arrange bail for the young detainees in jails because they are our children, and they deserve a chance to rebuild their lives."

24,266 Hajj applications received under govt scheme

LAHORE (APP): The number of Hajj applications under the government scheme have reached 24,266.

Punjab Religious Affairs Department sources told APP that the collection of Hajj applications under the government scheme has accelerated, Hajj applications are being received in designated branches of 15 banks in the country.

They further informed APP that the first installment of Hajj expenses of Rs.2 lakh will be deposited with the application, while another Rs.4 lakh will have to be deposited within 10 days of the draw. According to the sources, 4,000 applications were received only on Tuesday, bringing the total number of Hajj applications to 24,266. The collection of Hajj applications will continue till December 3, and the draw for the government Hajj scheme will be held on December 6.

Bushra Bibi's tarnishing women's politics: Governor

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan has said that performance of women in various fields including business and politics is commendable but Bushra Bibi is tarnishing women's politics.

Talking to a delegation of the Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry Lahore Division at the Governor's House here on Wednesday, he said women have an important role in the development and progress of the country and they have become an important part of the society not only in their families but also in their professional careers.

"The Women's Chamber Lahore Division is playing an important role in highlighting the business capabilities of women and ensuring their representation in business sector, the Governor said.

He further said that the establishment of Women Chambers in remote districts would contribute to women

empowerment.

The Governor Punjab said improvement in the country's economy and the interest of foreign investors bodes well for a prosperous Pakistan.

Commenting on the killing of Rangers and police personnel by miscreants during the Islamabad protest, he said that peaceful protests are the right of every political party, but violent incidents against law enforcement agencies under the guise of protests are in no way right. He said that loss of precious lives of Rangers and police personnel by miscreants during the PTI protest is very sad and condemnable.

Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that there is no issue that cannot be resolved through mutual negotiations. He said that the PPP believes in promoting politics of reconciliation. He said the Governor's House will provide all possible support to the Women's Chamber of

Commerce and Industry, adding, "We all have to play a positive role together to address the challenges facing the country."

The delegation apprised the Governor of the aims and objectives of the Women Chamber and WRCI (Women Resource Center and Incubation). The delegation comprised Founder Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Lahore Division Dr. Shehla Javed Akram, Co-Founder Ms. Qaisra Sheikh, President Falahat Imran, Senior Vice President Faiza Nabil, Shaista Khawar and other members of the Executive Committee.

Lahore ranks second in pollution

LAHORE (APP): The intensity of smog in the provincial capital on Wednesday decreased, while moving Lahore to the second ranking among the most polluted cities in the world.

The overall air pollution rate in the 'City of Gardens' was recorded with an average AQI of 290, while New Delhi was in third place with an average AQI of 246.

The highest pollution rate in Lahore was recorded at 671 in Sundar Estate, 465 in Cantt and 382 in Defence Phase 5 Commercial, 299 around Ghazi Road and 280 in Johar Town. According to the Meteorological Department, there is currently no chance of rain in the city.

Furthermore, the Punjab government has further relaxed the restrictions after the intensity of smog decreased. The Punjab government has allowed heavy traffic to enter the district from Monday to Thursday, while heavy traffic will not be allowed to enter from Friday to Sunday.

NADRA mobile vans to provide services

LAHORE (APP): The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has issued a schedule for installing mobile registration vans in different areas of Lahore.

NADRA's mobile van will be installed in Kamahan, Mughalpur, Droghawala and Saddar Cantt to provide people with various services. A van will also be installed in Township, Medina Colony, Round City, Green Town. These vans will be available in different areas till Nov 29.

NADRA has issued a schedule for convenience of citizens so that they can register their identity documents. The timing of the mobile registration van will be from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Police arrest 24,000 POs in 2024

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Police have arrested over 24,000 proclaimed offenders (POs) and 9,900 target offenders so far this year. This was disclosed by the spokesman Lahore Police in a statement issued on Wednesday.

According to spokesman, operations against criminals have been carried out across multiple divisions. In the Cantonment Division, 5,131 POs were arrested, while 2,139 were apprehended in the Civil Lines area; in the City Division, 5,858 POs were caught followed by 3,260 in Iqbal Town; 4,032 in Sadar and 3,994 in Model Town.

Furthermore, he reported that target offenders have also been arrested by the Lahore police. The arrests include 1,684 target offenders in the Cantt Division, 702 in Civil Lines, 3,289 in the City Division, 1,572 in Iqbal Town, 1,564 in Sadar and 1,102 in the Model Town Division, he added.

CM orders establishing tier-four data centre at Nawaz Sharif IT City

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that Pakistan's first Tier-Four Data Centre will be established at the Nawaz Sharif IT City.

Presided over a special meeting to review progress being on the CBD Nawaz Sharif IT City project here on Wednesday, she approved in principle the establishment of Tier-Four Data Centre. Pakistan's institution would establish the first Tier-Four Data Centre in collaboration with China, she added.

It was apprised in the meeting that universities of China, England and other countries will establish their campuses at the Nawaz Sharif IT City. Campuses of Tang, Xurt and Baifang Institute of Vocational Education would be established at the Nawaz Sharif IT City.

Buckinghamshire University and Imperial College London are also willing to set up their campuses. Artificial Intelligence and Information Technology

University will be set up at the Nawaz Sharif IT City in collaboration with the International Universities.

The chief minister assigned the CBD a target to establish more international university campuses at the Nawaz Sharif IT Centre. She directed all stakeholders to ensure completion of Nawaz Sharif IT City Twin Towers at the earliest.

CM thanks people for rejecting mischief-makers: Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Maryam Nawaz Sharif has expressed her gratitude to the people of Punjab for not supporting the mischief-makers and disruptor, thanking them for their continued resilience and unity.

In a message issued here on Wednesday, she acknowledged the sacrifices made by the people of Punjab, who remained steadfast despite the challenges posed by elements seeking to create unrest.

The CM issued instructions to open the roads

across the province, ensuring smooth transportation and public mobility. She emphasized the importance of facilitating the daily routines of the citizens, who had been facing significant disruptions.

CM Maryam Nawaz took decisive steps to stabilize the supply of essential goods. She directed the administration to ensure the uninterrupted availability of food and other necessities.

She directed the strict monitoring and control of prices for essential items, stressing that no one should exploit the situation for personal gain.

Reflecting on the hardship caused to the public by the ongoing disruptions, Maryam Nawaz expressed deep concern over the difficulties faced by ordinary citizens.

She conveyed her sincere apologies for the inconvenience, stating, "I am truly saddened by the suffering the people have had to endure due to these disturbances."

Court adjourns hearing of PA illegal recruitment case till Dec 11

LAHORE (APP): An anti-corruption court on Wednesday adjourned the hearing of the Punjab Assembly illegal recruitment case till December 11.

Anti-Corruption Court Judge Sardar Muhammad Iqbal Dogar conducted the proceedings, where the accused, who are currently on bail, appeared to mark their attendance. However, former chief minister Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi was absent from the

hearing, while co-accused Muhammad Khan Bhatti could not be produced due to security concerns amid the prevailing law and order situation.

During the proceedings, a counsel representing Parvez Elahi submitted an exemption request, citing his client's health condition and medical advice to rest. The court accepted the request and postponed the hearing.

The case, registered by the Anti-Corruption

Establishment (ACE) Punjab, accuses Parvez Elahi of making illegal appointments and accepting bribes to influence the recruitment process during his tenure as chief minister. According to ACE, qualified candidates were bypassed in favor of unqualified individuals who had not even taken the required exams.

The court will now resume proceedings on December 11.

GDC Konkar Gadap hosts inspiring STEAM exhibition



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Government Degree College (GDC) Konkar Gadap organized a vibrant STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) Exhibition, showcasing the innovative and creative talents of its students. The event featured a wide array of student-produced models, reflecting their ingenuity

and understanding of STEAM disciplines.

The exhibition was graced by the esteemed presence of the Director General (DG) of Colleges, Prof. Dr. Navaid Rabb Siddiqui, who appreciated the remarkable efforts of the students and faculty. During his visit, the DG engaged with the students, inquiring about their projects and commending their

creativity and problem-solving skills.

The Principal of GDC Konkar Gadap, in her speech, emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary education and applauded the students for their dedication and hard work. She also encouraged them to continue exploring their ideas and contribute to society through innovation.

The event provided a platform for students to present models addressing real-world challenges in areas such as renewable energy, environmental conservation, and modern technology. The STEAM exhibition not only highlighted the students' academic potential but also their passion for creating impactful solutions.

GDC Konkar Gadap continues to inspire young minds, fostering a spirit of inquiry and innovation, and this exhibition stands as a testament to their commitment to holistic education.



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
LOCAL GOVT. & RDD KURRAM

CORRIGENDUM/ADDENDUM

In Advertisement No. INF (P) 2975/24, INF (P) 2982/24, INF (P) 2984/24 and INF (P) 2983/24 published in the News Paper Tribune Islamabad, Ausaf Peshawar on 09/11/2024, Change/addendum in dates has been made.

Due to E-Bidding Server Maintenance/updating the tender on the following date are rescheduled.

S#	Name of Schemes	Tender Date	New Tender Date
1.	Construction of Protection walls and Solarization of Masajid / Imam Bargah at District Kurram.	27-11-2024	17-12-2024
2.	Construction of PCC Street, Hand Pumps, Solarization and Beatification work at Lower Kurram	28-11-2024	18-12-2024
3.	Construction of PCC Street / Culvert / Drain / Jirga hall / Protection wall at District Kurram	29-11-2024	19-12-2024
4.	Construction of Ladies Park at Upper Kurram	03-12-2024	20-12-2024

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
LG & RDD KURRAM

INF (P) 3167/24



پیمان حنفی

بسم اللہ الرحمن الرحیم
مکتوبہ میں مذکور پیمان کے تحت لکھی گئی بات کو درست اور اپنی مرضی سے
ذیل پیمان کے تحت پیمان کے تحت لکھی گئی بات کو درست اور اپنی مرضی سے
پیمان بخر غلام نبی جگر سن عارف کی والدہ محترمہ
02/31/2021 کو طوطہ جی ہن اور حنفی کے درمیان میں
کئی نکتہ کا کوئی بات لکھی گئی ہے۔ 1۔ محرم پر پیمان 2۔ محرم پر۔
3۔ محرم پر پیمان 4۔ محرم پر پیمان 5۔ محرم پر پیمان 6۔ محرم پر
پیمان 7۔ محرم پر پیمان 8۔ محرم پر پیمان 9۔ محرم پر پیمان
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RTS Commission holds proceedings on public complaints

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Right to Public Services (RTS) Commission held hearing proceedings on complaints from five citizens on Wednesday. Commissioner Muhammad Asim Imam and Commissioner Zakir Hussain Afridi listened to the grievances of the applicants.

In Haripur, Asim Shah raised concerns about delays in demarcating land boundaries. The Commission instructed the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Haripur to resolve the issue within one month and report back to the Commission.

Afzal Shah from Malakand approached the Commission regarding the issuance of a driving license for his son, who is set to travel abroad for employment. The Commission directed the Secretary of Transport to ensure the issuance of the license without delay.

Mubashir Ali from Swabi requested online verification services for driving licenses, highlighting difficulties due to the lack of this facility. The Commission issued directives to the District Police Officer (DPO) Swabi to resolve this matter promptly.

Bilawal Zeb from Peshawar lodged a complaint about unaddressed sanitation issues and clogged drains. The Commission instructed the Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP) to prioritize resolving the matter immediately.

The RTS Commission emphasized its commitment to resolving citizens' grievances and ensuring timely public services. Citizens are encouraged to approach the Commission in case of any delays or issues in the provision of notified services.

Afghanistan U-19 victory over Pakistan to lift tri-nation series

Usman Khan scored over 300 runs in 5 matches

Shahid Afridi

PESHAWAR: Afghanistan U-19 won the three nation series by defeating Pakistan U-19 team by 21 runs in the final. In the final of the ongoing Tri-nation tournament at the ICC Cricket Academy, Pakistan U-19 had to face defeat by Afghanistan. Usman Khan, the opener representing the green shirts for the first time, played well and scored 314 runs in the series.

Batting first after winning the toss Afghanistan scored 250 runs for the loss of nine wickets.

Barkat Ibrahimzai was star of Afghanistan batting scoring 79 runs facing 90 deliveries and hitting 6 fours and 3 sixes. He was supported by Nazifullah Amiri (56).

Ali Raza and Abdul Subhan took three wickets each.

In reply, Pakistan team failed to achieve the desired target and the entire team returned to the pavilion after scoring 229 runs in 48 overs.

Haoonn Arshad played a quick fire 70 runs innings of just 59 balls but rest of the batsmen could capitalize. The young players of both the countries gave their best performance in the series.

Faisal Khan Shinozada of Afghanistan dominated the batting table and scored 367 runs at an average of 91.75 in five matches, including two centuries. The best innings was 156 runs. Shahzeb khan of Pakistan scored one century and three fifties at an average of 82.50 and Scored 330 runs. His best innings was 109 runs.

Usman khan a left-handed batsman, scored 314 runs in five matches at an average of 78.50, which included a century and three half-centuries. The best innings was 102. Afghanistan's Mahboob Khan was fourth, who scored 213 runs and averaged 53.25.

The best innings was 141 runs. He scored these runs with the help of a century and a half-century. At the fifth place was Uzairullah Nizai of Afghanistan who scored 176 runs at an average of 44. The best innings was 70 runs.

For Pakistan, the opening duo of Shah zaib Khan and Usman Khan has been in great form and have scored runs consistently. Left-handed Usman has amassed 314 runs from four matches at an average of 78.50, which included one century and three half-centuries.

His fellow southpaw Shahzaib has accumulated 330 runs at an average of 82.50, which also includes one century and three half-centuries from five matches. Both the batters have also provided two century-run partnerships while opening, including an unbeaten 192-run stand against UAE on 13 November.

Along with the batting, Afghani bowlers were also on top. Naseer Khan took twelve wickets in the series and played an important role in the victory of Afghanistan.

The best bowling was 41 runs and three wickets. The third place was Pakistan's Ali Raza who took 9 wickets. The best bowling was 57 runs and four wickets. At the fourth place was Khan Satingzai for Afghanistan, who dismissed eight players. The best bowling was 48 runs and three wickets. At the fifth place, Nuristani Umar Zai of Afghanistan also dismissed seven players. The best bowling was 34 runs and two wickets.

Newly appointed DG Information assumes office

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The newly appointed Director General of Information and Public Relations, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Saleem Khan formally assumed charge of his office.

After taking on his new responsibilities, DG Saleem Khan was congratulated by information officers, who expressed their complete confidence in his leadership.

During discussions with the officers, the DG emphasized the need for significant improvements in the Directorate's performance. He reaffirmed his commitment to providing accurate and timely information to the public by utilizing all available resources effectively.

Highlighting the importance of teamwork, Mr. Saleem Khan assured the officers that employees' issues would be addressed on a priority basis. Later, the DG and the information officers pledged to work collectively towards the Directorate's development and to better serve the public.

PPP's strategic political transformation, transition to upcoming generations

Murtaza Rafiq Bhutto

I have been journaling the stories of Peoples party's government since last 12 years. Witnessed a lot of changes & deviations inside provincial politics after the martyrdom of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

To learn the circumstantial deviations, it is really important to recall the history and the beginning environments of Pakistan Peoples Party.

Referencing a book "Constitutional & political history of Pakistan" - In the Pakistan that was left over after 1971, the PPP emerged as a major party with a nationwide following. Its initial pretensions were socialist in nature since it had amongst its ranks socialist and left-leaning political workers. Its intellectual mentor was a former civil servant, J.A. Rahim, who was deeply influenced by the methods of communist parties in China and the Soviet Union. The slogans adopted by the party and the display of its banners and flags were on the same lines as the communist parties in China, the Soviet Union, and North Korea. But Bhutto, who came from a feudalists of Sindh, ultimately inducted other feudalists of Sindh and southern Punjab into his party. This inherent contradiction between the feudalist and left-leaning politicians had to come to a head with the result that, by 1976, the socialist left had either been weeded out or had become ineffective and inconsequential.

Moving on to Z.A Bhutto's Speech on the occasion of constitution enforced on 14th August 1973, Bhutto said that the days of palace intrigues and coups were ended and that venom and violence in politics must stop.

Later, Even J.A. Rahim was ousted. Feudalist from other political parties joined the PPP and by 1977, when general elections were called, the party had changed completely.

Another factor that hurt the PPP was Bhutto's dependence on bureaucratic channels rather than party cadre. All party offices being filled through nominations. The heads of security forces and bureaucrats around him became very powerful and party leaders and workers were side-lined. A time came when party workers could only reach Bhutto through the bureaucrats around him. The structure of PPP was thus weakened.

By October 1974, for all practical purposes, the stronger personalities from bhutto's old team, Rahim, Khar, Khurshid Hasan Meer, and Mubashir were gone. Mumtaz had been sidelined to a non-political portfolio. Hayat Sherpao was assassinated in February 1975, and Rafi Raza was no longer in his old very close position to Bhutto as Special Assistant. Ramay had been removed from Punjab. The place of these people had been taken by Aziz Ahmad, Vaqar Ahmed, Ghulam Ishaq khan, Ghulam Jilani Khan, Saeed Ahmad, Masood Mahmood, Yahya Bakhtiar, and Kausar Niazi. Under Bhutto's deft guidance, the power of the new team increased and by the end of 1974, tables had been completely turned on the old team or what remained of it. Still later, when Khar enquired from Bhutto as to why he had opted for the team comprising civil and military establishments, his reply was frank and straightforward.

Bhutto said that to come into power one needed a special team, but to retain power one needed another kind of team.

After the Martyrdom of Z.A Bhutto, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had no choice but to face the challenges occurred due to the politics of his respective father. Loyalists of Z.A Bhutto turned into rivals of his daughter. The splits were not remained limited to outside the family, but it also happened inside the family. She created her own path in politics and I believe she was the only leader who understood the value of a common person, A worker class, A leaders that came from the grass roots and by god willing she made her own team. Despite the fact that her governments could not completed the constitutional term, even today, I do not think there is anyone who denies the achievements, deliverance, and policies she made were not in a favour of public specifically, liberation & tolerance in the society for working women's. Who knew that the People of Pakistan are going to lose their beloved leaders who were loyal to their homeland. the way Bhutto's dynastic politics were targeted is unprecedented in the world's history. We all witnessed what happened afterwards the hanging of Mohtarma's father, martyrdom of brave leader and brother, the fate was written that she will embrace the martyrdom wholeheartedly.

After Mohtarma, the initial days of PPP government were harsh where on one side, we have been witnessing the popular "Pakistan Khappay" narrative of President Zardari. Whereas, on the other side, there were members that expressed their grievances with the leadership & we have witnessed unhappy faces in political surroundings in early days of PPP government.

Moving on, the government continued despite the hurdles in their way. Some new faces have been introduced in the politics and raised swiftly. Internal rifts occurred, political personalities were divided into groups, some of them left the PPP & joined other political forces. Whereas, some stayed & faced the consequences of divisions inside the party.

In current circumstances, similar situations are right in front of the PPP's top leadership. Some of the workers are seen unhappy, and the divisions are quite visible in media & political surroundings. These divisions have affected the politics & democratic environment especially in Karachi. Despite, knowing the fact that some of the prominent political figures' contribution are undeniable in strengthening the political party, tug of war between groups continued. This particular issue raised with the political rise of Saeed Ghani & Murtaza Wahab. Workers were forced to either join the Ghani group or Wahab group.

If we talk about the politics of Saeed Ghani, he is no doubt deeply rooted in political grounds. It is really difficult for me to compare both personalities. Whereas, if we talk about Murtaza Wahab I must say he made his way up on his own. Contradictions between groups occurred when Murtaza Wahab successfully captured a place in Karachi's politics. Political leadership along with Chief Minister were preferring Wahab over

Paintings, fashion show attracts crowds



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A two-day paintings and fashion exhibition kicked off at the lone cultural venue - Nishtar Hall - on Wednesday. Jointly organised by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA), Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women's University (SBBWU), Peshawar, the Department of Archaeology and Museums and the Bank of Khyber, the exhibition featured over 100 pieces of paintings and models of fashion design created by students. The exhibition was part of the Dosti Peshawar Women's Literature Festival that is going on until November 29 at the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women's University Peshawar.

KPCTA Director Umar Arshad Khan, who was the chief guest, inaugurated the exhibition. Tashfeen Zia, Dr Hamida, Sameera Gul, Sania Siraj, Dr Zarmena Baloch and Fariha Sami and a large number of teachers and student, and lovers of arts and fashion attended the event. The exhibition showcased over 100 paintings created by students, including themes such as lotus flowers and cultural colours along with various other artistic concepts.

The students of fashion design displayed models of their designs, which were well responded.

On this occasion, Umar Arshad praised the paintings of lotus flowers and related themes, saying that they were painted in an exceptional manner. He explained that the lotus flower, which grows in muddy waters, symbolizes resilience, and the paintings convey the message that, like the lotus, one should never lose hope despite challenges. He added that Nishtar Hall, Peshawar, had once again become a hub for cultural activities. Later, shields were presented to the participating teachers and students.

Health Dept issues advisory to combat chikungunya spread

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Department of Health has issued an advisory to curb the spread of Chikungunya following the identification of cases in Peshawar and Mansehra.

In line with the guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) of National Institute of Health (NIH), Director Public Health Dr. Irshad Roghani has directed all District Health Officers (DHOs), Medical Superintendents (MSs), and Teaching Institutions (MTIs) to implement precautionary measures to prevent the spread of this viral infection.

The advisory reads that to ensure efficient monitoring and identify potential cases among close contacts of affected individuals contact tracing must be ensured.

It urged the authorities to educate the public on Chikungunya prevention and control measures, including mosquito eradication efforts. It also reads that in areas reporting positive cases, aggressive anti-mosquito campaigns must be undertaken to minimize the virus's spread.

To cope with the spread of this disease the advisory suggest that local municipal administrations, environmental bodies, and community organizations are encouraged to work collectively in disease prevention.

Similarly All health institutions, including MTIs and primary health centers, are instructed to gear up for handling potential Chikungunya cases.

Dr. Roghani has warned the public about the dangers of Chikungunya, a mosquito-borne viral disease. Preventive measures include wearing long-sleeved clothing, using mosquito repellents, covering

ing water containers, and eliminating stagnant water to reduce breeding grounds. Special emphasis was placed on the use of mosquito nets, particularly for children and the elderly.

He further added that Chikungunya symptoms include high fever, severe joint pain, rashes, fatigue, and headaches. Dr. Roghani advised individuals experiencing these symptoms to immediately consult a healthcare professional. The Department of Health remains committed to safeguarding public health and urges everyone to cooperate in combating this disease.

Vantage Classic Automotive Car Show tomorrow: DG Sports

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Vintage and Classic Automotive Car Show under the auspices of the Directorate General of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, will be held at Peshawar Sports Complex Tomorrow (Friday, November 29th), from 2 pm to 5 pm, wherein, more than 300 vehicles from 1935 to 1980 and other models from all over the country will participate.

These views were expressed by Director General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Abdul Nasir, while talking to the media at his office in Peshawar on Wednesday.

He was accompanied by Director Operation Naimat ullah Marwat and Deputy Director Operation Jamshed Baloch.

He said that the show is being organized under the leadership of Secretary Sports Matiullah on the special instructions of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur and Provincial Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jahan. Similarly, in the same show, Mercedes, Jaguar, Ford, Chevrolet, Mini, VW, Land Rover, and Smith classic cars from 1935 to 1980 will showcased while antique and classic car enthusiasts from different cities of the country will also participate with their cars. The aim of the show is to provide entertainment opportunities to car enthusiasts as well as citizens in the province. He added that the show will be a unique entertainment event for the aspirants.



In brief

Arts Council presents drama F.P. Report

LARKANA: The third stage of Larkana Theater Festival performed by Arts Council of Pakistan while Muzaffar Baloch directed the improvisational stage drama Mehndi Rata Hath, written by Muzaffar Baloch, whose assistant director was Asif Junejo, on Wednesday. On this occasion, secretary Muhammad Hanif Shahag, Shams Parimi, Abdul Nabi Saryu, Amjad Gul Soomro. And Barkat Gad said in his joint statement that Muzaffar Baloch is the best storyteller while today's drama 'Mehndi Rata Hath' has a high quality message, for which we congratulate Muzaffar Baloch and his entire team. He further said that our effort has been to show the best program to the people of Larkana district and its backward areas. Sanuri Falak, Asif Junjo, and Amjad Gul Soomro made the audience laugh with their acting. This girl likes someone else, but the father reluctantly marries the girl with a non-man, when the whole affair is revealed, the sister dies. And the boy divorces his wife. President of the Arts Council of Pakistan Larkana Muhammad Ismail Jatoti also praised the improvisational stage play Mehndi Rata Hath while a large number of people came to see the play.

Noshki lawyers boycott courts F.P. Report

NOSHKI: The lawyers in Noshki on Wednesday boycotted proceedings of the local courts in protest over lodging FIR against President, High Court Bar Association, Turbat, Mehrab Gichki and other lawyers. The boycott, called by the Noshki Bar Association, disrupted proceedings in session, civil, and judicial courts. The FIR accuses Gichki and others of delivering incendiary speeches during a seminar in Turbat. The Noshki Bar Association has demanded the immediate withdrawal of the FIR, calling it unjust and urging authorities to address their concerns.

Winter school kits distributed F.P. Report

MIRPUR: United Kingdom (UK)-based world NGO Muslim Hands International Mirpur chapter here Wednesday distributed winter school kits among the deserving students of the state-run Primary schools to ensure them stay warm and prepared for their comfortable studies period during just started winter season. The event was attended among others by the Deputy District education Officer Mirpur and local councilors, who lauded this noble gesture of the world fame NGO founded by a Nottingham-based Pakistan-origin British philanthropist Lakhte Husnain, since 1993, for this great initiative. The Muslim Hands Mirpur AJK media wing head Qamar Atta Raja told APP at the sideline of the grand event that with the generous support of a local donor, his organization was able to provide essential winter logistics to help deserving students stay comfortable during course of their studies during winter. "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to every individual involved in ensuring this sympathetic gesture of facilitating deserving humanity possible", he added. Qamar resolved the firm determination of the Muslim Hands International of continuing facilitating deserving students, belonging to poor, downtrodden classes of the society, with identical material form, to enable them to continue their learning journey during all seasons.



QUETTA: A view of passengers sitting on the roof top of vehicle while travelling in city area may cause any incident, needs attention of authorities concerned.

Arrangements finalized for polio eradication drive

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: All arrangements have been finalized to carry out a seven days long polio eradication campaign in Khyber to be scheduled on December 16, 2024.

In this connection polio eradication committee meeting was held in Khyber House, Peshawar last day, chaired by Deputy Commissioner, Khyber Capt (Retd) Bilal Shahid and was attended by District Police Officer (DPO) Rai Mazhar Iqbal, Additional DC Ihsanullah, district head of health department Dr Faisal, representatives of World Health Organization (WHO) and officials of concern departments.

The committee was apprised of the comprehensive eradication campaign including security measures, awareness drive, challenges, refusal of parents

and other issues. The district administration official urged all the stakeholders to leave no stone unturned to vaccinate children below five years.

He also stressed upon parents to assist the health officials and feed anti-polio vaccines to their children to free the country of the curse, polio as polio is a paralyzing disease that has no cure. According to the health official, the seven days anti-polio drive will be started on December 16, 2024 and will continue on December 22, 2024.

Approximately 945 mobile, transit and fixed teams of health officials have been approved to vaccinate 0.210 million children below five years at their door steps.

As per the media reports so far 55 cases have been detected of poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) in Pakistan, comprising 26 from Baluchistan, 14 from

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 13 from Sindh, and one each from Punjab and Islamabad.

Addl DC visits BISP distribution centre: As part of efforts to facilitate people under Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Awami Agenda Program, Additional Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Bashir on Wednesday visited Benazir Income Support Program Distribution Points in Taimergar.

He inspected facilities and distribution process in BISP distribution point and visited its various sections. He was told that payments to deserving people at campsite instead of the shops. He directed provision of related facilities to people at campsite and availability of staff to guide and assist public. He also warned action against staff found guilty of making deductions from the allocated money.

Scholarships among female students distributed

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM) under the Higher Education Need Based Scholarship Program, cheques were distributed among the male and female students, on Wednesday.

Vice Chancellor AWKUM Professor Dr. Zahir Shah was the chief guest while PS to Vice Chancellor Murad Ali, Deputy Director of Admission Shah Nasir Bacha were also present and cheques of Rs. 50 lakh were distributed among 300 students. He said that our first priority is to provide scholarship to every third student of Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan.

In this regard an endowment fund has also been launched for this purpose, under which orphans, disabled and minority students male and female will be provided free education in Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan.

VC further said that currently every fifth student of the Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan is on scholarship, which means that Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan has the honor of providing more scholarships in the province.

Commission hears complaints of five citizens F.P. Report

HARIPUR: The Right to Public Services (RTS) Commission conducted hearings on complaints from five citizens. Commissioner Muhammad Asim Imam and Commissioner Zakir Hussain Afridi listened to the grievances of the applicants.

In Haripur, Asim Shah raised concerns about delays in demarcating land boundaries. The Commission instructed the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Haripur to resolve the issue within one month and report back to the Commission. Afzal Shah from Malakand approached the Commission regarding the issuance of a driving license for his son, who is set to travel abroad for employment. The Commission directed the Secretary of Transport to ensure the issuance of the license without delay.

Mubashir Ali from Swabi requested online verification services for driving licenses, highlighting difficulties due to the lack of this facility. The Commission issued directives to the District Police Officer (DPO) Swabi to resolve this matter promptly.

Bilawal Zeb from Peshawar lodged a complaint about unaddressed sanitation issues and clogged drains. The Commission instructed the Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP) to prioritize resolving the matter immediately. The RTS Commission emphasized its commitment to resolving citizens' grievances and ensuring timely public services. Citizens are encouraged to approach the Commission in case of any delays or issues in the provision of notified services.

Cnder-construction bridge over Panjkora River Residents demand release of funds

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Residents of Kandaro, Khaima and Balambat have demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to release funds for the under-construction bridge connecting Timergara and Kandaro over the Panjkora River. Talking to local journalists at Timergara here on the area elders complained that the Timergara Kandaro bridge was not completed despite the passage of five years.

They said the KP government had approved Rs 620 million for the project in 2019. They said that initially Rs 20 million were released which were spent on ground survey and initial work, but due to lack of funds work on the project was not started. The residents pointed out that people of Kandaro crossed the river through a dangerous chair lift on daily basis. The elders said the construction of bridge would ease traffic jams on the main Timergara Chitral road as vehicles bound for Bajaur, Maidan, Samarbagh and Binshahi would use this route.

Dinner hosted: The Jamiat Lawyers' Forum (JLF), on Tuesday hosted a dinner in respect of former provincial minister for finance Muzafar Syed advocate at Timergara. The JLF members and the JUI-F workers were in attendance.

A function in this regard was addressed by the JUI-F district chief Sirajud Din, Maulana Muhammad Huzaifa, Maulana Nabi Shah and Muzafar Syed, who had joined the JUI-F a few days ago. Speaking on the occasion, Muzafar Syed expressed his full confidence in the leadership of Maulana Fazl ur Rehman and said that he was the leader of the entire Muslim Ummah. He said that he along with his supporters would participate in the JUI-F proposed 'Israel Murdabad' conference to be held at Peshawar on Dec 8.

The speakers said the JUI-F conference at Peshawar would set a new direction of regional politics. They condemned the Muslim rulers for keeping silence on the situation in Gaza. The speakers asked the party workers to participate in the JUI-F proposed Israel Muradabad conference on Dec 8.

Meanwhile, the JUI-F provincial deputy chief Maulana Abdul Haseeb Haqqani while talking to local journalists at Timergara said that thousands of the party workers would participate in the proposed conference. He said the party had finalized its preparations for the conference which would be addressed by the JUI-F chief Maulana Fazl ur Rehman, provincial chief Maulana Atta ur Rehman and other leaders.

CCTV installation training for youth



QUETTA: Secretary Information of National Party, former senator, Kabir Ahmed Shai addressing a press conference.

Jirga convened in Pishin

F.P. Report

PISHIN: A grand jirga was convened in Pishin city of Balochistan, bringing together key stakeholders to discuss regional issues and pathways to peace.

According to a report on Wednesday, A Grand Jirga was held in Pishin District of Balochistan, attended by governor Balochistan Jafar Mandokhel, chief minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti, and commander Balochistan corps lieutenant General Rahat Naseem Ahmed Khan. During the jirga, participants met with community elders and representatives from various segments, including women, to discuss the region's pressing issues.

The Governor Balochistan while speaking on the occasion emphasized the jirga's aim of addressing the people's grievances and ensuring swift solutions. Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti reiterated the government's dual strategy for achieving peace, combining dialogue and necessary force to restore stability in Balochistan.

Commander of Balochistan Corps reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to safeguarding the province, stressing the importance of unity in preserving the motherland's integrity. Tribal Elders commended law enforcement agencies for their vital contributions to peace and pledged full cooperation to strengthen

provincial stability. The gathering underscored a collaborative approach among government officials, tribal leaders, and security forces to foster peace and development in the region.

Balochistan, the largest province of Pakistan, has long faced challenges related to security, governance, and socio-economic development. The region's tribal structure and traditions have historically played a significant role in resolving disputes and maintaining order. The jirga system, a centuries-old tribal assembly, is a respected forum for addressing community grievances and fostering reconciliation.

In recent years, Balochistan has witnessed insurgencies, sectarian violence, and other socio-political issues. These challenges have necessitated collaborative efforts by the government, tribal leaders, and law enforcement agencies to restore peace and stability. Grand jirgas, such as the one held in Pishin, are part of a broader strategy to bridge gaps between the government and local communities, ensuring that traditional methods of dialogue are leveraged alongside modern governance. The involvement of key stakeholders, including provincial leaders and security forces, reflects a renewed commitment to addressing the root causes of unrest while respecting the region's cultural heritage.

Bugti gifts pink scooties to empower women F.P. Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, today expressed his admiration for the significant contributions of female Deputy Commissioners (DCs) in the province, hailing their exceptional administrative services.

He said this while gifting pink scooties to the student of FG Girls College Quetta, Tahira Arif and a female police constable as part of the government's ongoing efforts to empower women in Balochistan. The Chief Minister emphasized that empowering women remained a priority for the provincial government, noting that steps to enhance women's participation in various sectors had already been set in motion. He revealed that a policy for the "pink scooty scheme" would be framed soon, aimed at offering female government employees and students access to transport and further opportunities for advancement. Bugti further highlighted the appointment of five female Deputy Commissioners in different districts of Balochistan, recognizing their remarkable leadership and administrative skills.

Hidayat defends PhD thesis at KKKKUK

F.P. Report

KARAK: Hidayat Khan successfully defended his PhD thesis titled "Factors Affecting Customer Intention Towards Islamic Banking: A Case Study of KP" at Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak (KKKUK).

This research delved into the critical factors influencing customer adoption of Islamic banking services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. His findings provide valuable insights into the potential of Islamic banking in the region and offer recommendations for enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.



His Supervisor was Dr. Faqir Sajjad Ul Hassan, Assistant Professor, Management Sciences. External Examiners were Dr. Muhammad Fahad Siddiqui, Assistant Professor, University of Agriculture Peshawar and Dr. Farhat Ullah, Assistant Professor, IBA Gomal University.

Internal Examiner was Dr. Roman Ullah, Lecturer, Department of Management Sciences, KKKUK. This significant achievement marks a milestone in KKKUK academic journey and contributes to the growing body of knowledge in the field of Islamic banking and finance.

Arrangements for anti-polio drive discussed

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A meeting regarding the five-day anti-polio campaign starting from December 16 under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Dir lower Muhammad Arif Khan was held here on Wednesday.

At the meeting, District Police Officer Salim Abbas Kalachi, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Bashir Khan, District Health Officer Dr. Nisar Khan, M. SD, HQ Hospital Temargar Dr. Ali Asghar, All Assistant Commissioners, Dr. Noor Hameed, Dr. Asfandiar, District Khatib Maulana Azizul Haq, District Administrator Afghan Refugees Humayun Khan, Representative Local Government Zakaria Khan (Focal Person Polio) Representative District Education Officer male and female participated.

N. Staff Officer gave a detailed briefing to the forum regarding the preparations for the five-day anti-polio campaign starting from 16 to 20 December 2024. The Deputy Commissioner made a detailed review of the various indicators of the anti-polio campaign, the polio micron plan and the given targets. He instructed the officials concerned that during the polio campaign, field monitoring will be

done to ensure the presence of all the field staff.

Tehsil Area Officer, Area In-charge and UCs ensure MOs monitoring and quality campaign besides ensuring attendance of all stakeholders in the pack meeting. Drop the polio officer who is performing less than the desired indicators from the polio campaign. Appreciation certificate should be given to the polio workers who show good performance. He also directed for compiling a report on children who missed vaccination on the 4th and 5th day of polio.

During the polio campaign, fool-proof security cover should be ensured for the polio workers, police and levies personnel will be present in the morning assembly of all polio workers. He also directed for updating the polio micro plan according to seasonal migration. Report any field issue in a timely manner so that it is resolved as soon as possible.

A total of 332,570 children will be administered anti-polio drops during the five-day anti-polio campaign starting from December 16 in Dir Lower. 73 fix teams, 59 transit teams, 1310 mobile teams, making a total strength of 1442 polio teams have been formed to make the campaign successful.

Anti-polio campaign from Dec 16

F.P. Report

KASUR: Deputy Commissioner Captain (R), Aurangzeb Haider Khan has announced to start a comprehensive anti-polio campaign on December 16. The DC was chairing a meeting of Kasur District Polio Control Committee here Wednesday to review the polio eradication program.

According to DC office sources, the campaign, aims to administer polio drops to 751,828 children under five years of age, with the goal of achieving 100 percent coverage. To ensure the campaign's success, 126 Union Council Monitoring Officers (UCMOs) and 578 area in-charges will be appointed. Additionally, 2,785 mobile teams, 131 fixed teams, and 74 transit teams will be deployed to administer polio drops to children. Aurangzeb emphasized that eradicating polio is a national duty, urging people from all walks of life to play their part in eliminating the disease.



Gangsters block aid distribution in south Gaza

GAZA (BBC): Amid severe food shortages in Gaza, increasingly violent thefts by criminal gangs are now the main obstacle to distributing supplies in the south, aid workers and locals say. They allege that armed men operate within plain sight of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in a restricted zone by the border.

The BBC has learnt that Hamas - sensing an opportunity to regain its faltering control - has reactivated a special security force to combat theft and banditry. After gangsters robbed nearly 100 UN lorries, injuring many of the Palestinian drivers, on 16 November - one of the worst single losses of aid during the war - a number of alleged looters were then killed in an ambush. A notorious Gazan criminal family then blocked the main Salah al-Din Road leading from Israel's Kerem Shalom crossing point for two days last week.

Witnesses said iron barriers were erected and lorries trying to access the aid distribution point were fired at. "Law and order have broken down in the area around the Kerem Shalom crossing, which remains the main entry point of goods, and gangs are filling the power vacuum," says Sam Rose, deputy director of Unrwa, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, in Gaza. "It's inevitable after 13 months of intense conflict - things fall apart." As the rainy winter weather begins, humanitarian officials say solving the worsening situation is critical to meet the huge, deepening needs of most of Gaza's 2.3 million population - now displaced to the centre and south.

"It is tactical, systematic, criminal looting," says Georgios Petropoulos, head of the UN's humanitarian office, Ocha, in Gaza. He says this is leading to "ultra-violence" in all directions - "from the looters towards the truckers, from the IDF towards the police, and from the police towards the looters". There has been increased lawlessness in Gaza since Israel began targeting police officers early this year, citing their role in Hamas governance. "Hamas's security control dropped to under 20%," the former head of Hamas police investigations told the BBC, adding: "We are working on a plan to restore control to 60% within a month." Some displaced Gazans in the south welcome the new Hamas efforts against criminal gangs.

"Killing the thieves who stole aid is a step in the right direction," exclaims one man, Mohammed Abu Jared. However, others see them as a cynical attempt to take control of lucrative black markets. "Hamas is killing its competitors in stealing aid," says Mohammed Diab, an activist in Deir al-Balah. "A big mafia



has finished off a small mafia." Many see Hamas's attempts to take a lead against the criminality as the direct consequence of Israel's failure to agree on a post-war plan in Gaza. There are currently no alternatives to replace the Islamist movement and armed group which Israeli leaders pledged to destroy after last year's deadly 7 October attacks.

The chaos comes at a time when aid entering the Palestinian territory has dropped to some of the lowest levels since the start of the war. While the threat of famine is greatest in besieged parts of the north where Israel is conducting a new, intense military offensive, in the south there are also major shortages of food, medicines and other goods. "Prices of basic commodities are sky-rocketing - a bag of flour costs more than \$200 (£160), a single egg \$15 - or else goods are simply not available," Sam Rose of Unrwa says.

Every day in the past week, Umm Ahmed has stood with her children in a huge queue outside a bakery in Khan Younis in southern Gaza, where ultimately some loaves are given out. "My children are very hungry every day. We can't afford the basics. It's constant suffering. No food, no water, no cleaning products, nothing," she says. "We don't want much, just to live a decent life. We need food. We need goods to come in and be distributed fairly. That's all we're asking for." The US has been pressing for Israel to allow more aid lorries into Gaza. However, Israeli officials say that the main reason that their goal of 350 a day has not been reached is the inability of the UN and other international aid agencies to bring enough lorries to the crossings.

Aid workers reject that. They are urgently calling for many entry restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities to be lifted, and for more crossing points to be opened and secured so they can collect and dis-

tribute supplies. They say the breakdown in public order needs to be addressed and that Israel, as an occupying power, is obliged to provide protection and security. The BBC was told that thefts often happen in clear sight of Israeli soldiers or surveillance drones - but that the army fails to intervene.

Stolen goods are apparently being stored outside or in warehouses in areas under Israeli military control. The IDF did not respond to BBC requests for comment on how it combats organised looting and smuggling. It has previously insisted that it takes countermeasures and works to facilitate the entry of aid. Early in the war, as food became increasingly scarce, desperate Gazans were sometimes seen stealing from incoming aid lorries. Soon, cigarette smuggling became a huge business with gangs holding up convoys at gunpoint after they arrived from Egypt's Rafah crossing and, after this shut in May, Kerem Shalom. A cigarette packet can sell for exorbitant amounts in Gaza: while a packet of 20 cost about 20 shekels (\$5.40) before the war, now a single cigarette can cost 180 shekels (\$48.60). Cigarettes are being found within the frames of wooden aid pallets and inside closed food cans, indicating that there is a regional racket involved in smuggling. For the past six weeks, the Israeli authorities have banned commercial imports, arguing that these benefit Hamas.

This has added to the decrease in the supply of food, which is in turn driving the rise in armed looting. Stolen goods, from flour to winter shelters, sent as international donations and meant to be given as free handouts to needy people can only be bought at extortionate prices on Gaza's black market. Meanwhile, months' worth of donated supplies are being held back in Egypt due to hold-ups in aid delivery.

Sudan in danger of becoming a failed state

KHARTOUM (BBC): War-stricken Sudan is in danger of becoming another failed state because civil society is disintegrating amid a proliferation of armed groups, the head of a leading international aid agency has told the BBC.

As well as the two main warring parties in Sudan - the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) - there are many smaller "ethnic armies" looting and going "berserk" on civilians, Jan Egeland, head of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), said. "The parties are tearing down their own houses, they are massacring their own people," he said. For 19 months, there has been a brutal power struggle between the army and the RSF, that has forced more than 10 million people to flee their homes and pushed the country to the brink of starvation.

"All that I saw confirms that this is indeed the biggest humanitarian emergency on our watch, the biggest hunger crisis, the biggest displacement crisis," Mr Egeland said, following a trip to Sudan. In September, the UN World Health Organization (WHO) said starvation in Sudan was "almost everywhere". Soup kitchens have been forced to close because they were underfunded. Egeland said the lack of humanitarian response meant remaining sources of aid were simply "delaying deaths instead of preventing them".

"Most of Sudan is starving, it's starving," he said, adding that starvation has been used as a method of warfare. Some food security specialists fear that as many as 2.5 million people could die from hunger by the end of this year. Mr Egeland warned that the world was "failing Sudan completely" by not doing enough. He told the BBC if Europe wanted to avoid a refugee crisis, it needed to invest in "aid, protection and peace in this corner of the world".

"It's an underfunded operation, even though it's the world's biggest emergency," he said. Thousands of people have been killed since a civil war broke out. Rights groups have also expressed fears that there may be ethnic cleansing and genocide in Sudan. Despite this, peace talks between the RSF and the army have been fruitless. "The war will stop when these warlords feel they have more to lose by continuing fighting, than by doing the sensible thing," Egeland said.

Trump proves he is serious on tariffs

WASHINGTON (BBC): Is Donald Trump serious about tariffs? This has been the question hanging over not just world markets but the whole world of economics. The popular wisdom had become that he wasn't really that serious, and the key bit of evidence for that was his nomination of hedge fund investor Scott Bessent as his Treasury Secretary, someone seen as a moderate when it came to tariffs compared with others whose names were floated for the role.

The answer overnight, though, was pretty brutal. Yes, he is serious, and in the most unexpected way. By choosing to target Mexico and Canada as well as China, he is confirming threats made on the campaign trail that appeared the most fanciful. For starters he is willing to blow up the Mexico-Canada-America trade deal that he signed in his first term on day one of his second term. What does a Trump free trade deal even mean now, if the new White House is willing to put tariffs on your country anyway? And importantly, the rationale for these moves is not mainly or even much about trade or economic policy. These tariffs are about getting Mexico, Canada and China to alter their policies on crackdowns over migration and illicit drugs.

Trump is using tariffs as a weapon of diplomacy, even coercion, on topics entirely unrelated to global trade. Are the leaders of G20 nations with their own domestic audiences really going to roll over in order to give the new president a win? They could choose to wait out the inevitable impact of Trump applying a 25% increase on the cost of two-fifths of US imports on US consumers and inflation.

Namibia may elect its first-ever female president in elections

OSHAKATI, Namibia (AP): Namibia's Vice President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah could become the country's first female president if she wins the presidential election Wednesday. At least 1.4 million people, or about half of the population, have registered to vote in the elections, with 15 political parties running for president and seats in the National Assembly.

Results from special early polls held for Namibia's foreign missions, seamen and security services announced by the Electoral Commission of Namibia this month indicate Nandi-Ndaitwah and her party, the South West Africa People's Organization, or SWAPO, are in the lead. SWAPO has governed the southwest African country since its independence from South Africa's apartheid minority government in 1990. But in 2019, the party lost its two-thirds majority in the National Assembly for the first time since 1994. Its dismal electoral performance has been widely attributed to allegations of corruption and money laundering in the Namibian fishing industry. Two cabinet ministers were arrested, and businessmen connected to the ministers were also convicted and imprisoned.

Political analyst Henning Melber, a professor at the University of Pretoria and the University of the Free State, believes SWAPO and Nandi-Ndaitwah must take the 2019 election results as a warning even though they appear favored to win the elections. Melber said the party needs to attract support from younger voters who do not feel a link to the party's history of liberation struggles - a challenge also shared by Africa's other former liberation movements, such as South Africa's African National Congress. "It looks like there is no way back to regain such dominance. The process of erosion of legitimacy as a former liberation movement has advanced too much," he said. He added that the "born-frees" - a term for children born after their country's liberation - will not vote based on emotions like the older generations did, but will do so based on delivery and governance.

Nandi-Ndaitwah, 72, has promised to create more jobs and tackle the 20% unemployment rate for young people and graduates. She has pledged to spend approximately 85 billion Namibian dollars (\$4.7 billion) over the next five years to create more than 500,000 jobs, a goal that her critics call unrealistic. Issues affecting women, including reproductive rights, equal pay and healthcare, are also likely to rank high for voters. If she becomes president, Nandi-Ndaitwah would follow in the footsteps of Liberia's Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who made history when she became the continent's first elected female

president in 2005, as well as Malawi's Joyce Banda and Samba Pranza of the Central African Republic. Erika Thomas, a political science lecturer at the University of Namibia, said should Nandi-Ndaitwah be elected as president of Namibia, she must strive to be independent, transparent and accountable. "She must also try to push for policies and legislation frameworks for women participation and to bring more women into the political structures," Thomas said. SWAPO will face competition from the Independent Patriots for Change, led by former dentist Panduleni Itula, and university professor Job Amupanda's Affirmative Repositioning party. Political parties contesting the elections wrapped up their campaigns with final rallies this weekend.

Elections in southern Africa this year have delivered ground-breaking changes to the region's political landscape, with the ANC in South Africa losing its 30-year parliamentary majority and Botswana's Democratic Party getting unseated after 58 years in power. In Mauritius, considered one of the most stable democracies in Africa, the opposition won recent elections by a landslide. Disputed election results in Mozambique, which saw the ruling Frelimo party declared the winner, have led to ongoing protests that have seen at least 30 people killed.

Russian defence system hit in Atacms strike

KURSK (BBC): Russia has made a rare admission, saying that a key air defence system and an air base in the Kursk region were hit by Ukraine with US-supplied Atacms missiles. The defence ministry statement, which threatened retaliation, came a day after Ukraine said it had hit targets in the region.

Meanwhile Ukraine's air force said Russia launched a record 188 drones in a single attack, damaging critical infrastructure. Tensions have been high since the US reportedly allowed Ukraine to use Atacms missiles on targets inside Russia last week, in response to Russia deploying North Korean troops. The week culminated with Russia's use of the powerful new intermediate-range Oreshnik ballistic missile on the Ukrainian city of Dnipro.

The first reported strikes by Atacms on Russian territory were reported, when Russia said falling fragments caused a fire at a military facility. But strike on an S-400 air-defence mis-

sile battalion at Lotarevka northwest of Kursk could be seen as more serious. The S-400 is considered the closest Russian equivalent of the US Patriot missile system. The Defence Ministry said three of the five Atacms missiles were shot down but two reached the target, damaging a radar system and causing casualties.

It also said a second strike on the Khalino (Kursk East) air base caused "insignificant damage" after one of the eight missiles fired by Ukraine got through air defences. "The Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation is in control of the situation and retaliatory measures are being prepared," the statement added. It shared photos of what it said was debris from the air base attack. Russian military bloggers reported the Khalino attack. Also footage posted to social media - which documented bright flashes in the sky above the border region - claimed to show the moment Atacms missiles

were intercepted by Russian air defences elsewhere in the Kursk region. BBC Verify corroborated that the footage was genuine and filmed in Kursk city, but could not establish whether the US-supplied missiles were the source of the flashes.

A record 188 drones and four Iskander missiles attacked Ukraine overnight, the country's air force said. It said 76 of them had been shot down while another 95 had been "lost track of", and that critical infrastructure and residential buildings had been hit. Some 70% of the power of the western Ternopil region was cut, its governor said. Meanwhile the exiled Russian investigative news website Agentstvo has claimed that Ukraine is now losing territory at the fastest rate since the early days of the full-scale invasion. However, Russian gains in eastern Ukraine are still extremely slow compared to the rapid advances of February and March 2022, when its forces came close to the capital Kyiv.

Georgian parliament bats away protests to set presidential vote

TBILISI: Georgian lawmakers have agreed to select a new president in a parliamentary vote on December 14. The parliament set the date in a session, amid a boycott by the opposition, which says last month's elections were rigged. The installation of a new president promises to cement the grip of the ruling Georgian Dream party that was declared victor.

The date was selected under new rules pushed through by Georgian Dream in 2017, which are criticised as designed to ensure a loyalist's victory. For the first time, the president will be chosen by an electoral college instead of a popular vote. The new leader's inauguration for a five-year term, instead of the current six years, will take place on December 29, according to the parliamentary decree agreed.

Antigovernment protests called by incumbent President Salome Zourabichvili persist in Tbilisi with opposition parties continuing to dispute the results of the October 26 parliamentary elections. The pro-Western head of state's six-year term ends next month. Opposition lawmakers have refused to take their

seats in the new parliament, which convened for its first session. Zourabichvili has declared the new legislature "unconstitutional" and is seeking to annul the election results. European election observers said the balloting took place in a "divisive" atmosphere marked by instances of bribery, double voting and violence. According to the official results, Georgian Dream took 54 percent of the vote, handing it a fifth term since 2012. The party denies allegations of electoral fraud.

Under the new process, a 300-member electoral college made up of all 150 MPs and representatives from local and regional authorities will choose the new president in an open ballot and without prior debate in the parliamentary chamber. The role of president is largely ceremonial but has influence, especially regarding Georgia's international image. Candidates must be nominated by at least 30 members of the selection body, which Georgian Dream will have control over because it holds a majority both in the national parliament and in regional and local councils. To win in

the first round, a candidate must secure two-thirds of the votes. If this threshold is not met, a second round will be held on the same day in which a simple majority is enough. The powers of the next president will also be reduced under the constitutional reform.

The president will remain the head of state, the commander-in-chief and Georgia's official representative on the world stage but will no longer be entitled to conduct negotiations with foreign countries or declare martial law without the prime minister's approval. Constitutional law experts said decisions taken by the new parliament are invalid because there has been no ruling yet on Zourabichvili's legal effort to have the results of the October elections annulled. Many Georgians viewed the election as a referendum on the country's bid to join the European Union. Critics have accused Georgian Dream - established by Bidzina Ivanishvili, a billionaire who made his fortune in Russia - of becoming increasingly authoritarian and tilted towards Moscow. - Aljazeera

White Florida woman sentenced to 25 years in prison

FLORIDA (AP): A white Florida woman who fatally shot a Black neighbor through her front door during an ongoing dispute over the neighbor's boisterous children was sentenced to 25 years in prison for her manslaughter conviction.

Susan Lorincz, 60, was convicted in August of killing Ajike "A.J." Owens, 35, by firing a single shot from her .380-caliber handgun in June 2023. She had faced a maximum of 30 years behind bars. Circuit Judge Robert Hodges opted for a slightly lesser term amid evidence that Lorincz had been abused as a child and had mental health problems. "The shooting was completely unnecessary in this case," Hodges said during an afternoon hearing. "The shooting, I find, was based more in anger than in fear."

The shooting was the culmination of a long-running argument between

the two neighbors over Owens' children playing in a grassy area near both of their houses in Ocala, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) northwest of Orlando. Prosecutors said Owens had come to Lorincz's home after her children complained that she had thrown roller skates and an umbrella at them, which Lorincz denied. Trial testimony showed Owens, a mother of four young children, was pounding on Lorincz's door and yelling, leading Lorincz to claim self-defense in shooting her neighbor. Lorincz told detectives in a videotaped interview that she feared for her life. She also said she had been harassed for most of the three years she had lived in the neighborhood. Jurors who heard the trial evidence did not agree that the shooting was in self-defense. In a statement to the judge, Lorincz apologized to Owens'

family but said she was "literally terrified" of Owens the night of the shooting.

"I so wish I could go back and change things so she was still here," Lorincz said. "I never intended to kill anyone." Owens' family pushed for the maximum prison sentence after Lorincz was convicted by an all-white jury. Owens' mother, Pamela Dias, said in court that she now is the sole caregiver of her daughter's four children and that they are deeply traumatized by the killing. "We're hurting with a pain that will never, never go away," Dias said. "There's a hole in our heart that will never mend. Susan destroyed our family." Lorincz's attorney, Assistant Public Defender Amanda Sizemore, sought a more lenient sentence, an unspecified term below the 11.5 years in prison that is the lowest for her crime under state guide-

lines. Sizemore said in court documents that there were several reasons to justify a downward departure, including a mental disorder and claims that Owens was the aggressor and under "extreme duress" during the confrontation.

The judge said such a departure was not warranted, especially considering the impact of their mother's violent death on her children. "They'll live their whole lives without their mother, which I think is a very significant harm inflicted by Ms. Lorincz," Hodges said. There were protests in the Black community in Ocala when prosecutors took weeks to charge Lorincz with manslaughter, a lesser count than second-degree murder, which carries a potential life prison sentence. Marion County, which includes Ocala, has a Black population of about 12%, according to census figures.

Five survivors found day after Red Sea tourist boat sinking

CAIRO (BBC): Egyptian rescuers found four bodies and five survivors during a Red Sea search operation after a tourist boat carrying 44 people sank. A total of 33 people have been rescued so far but seven were still missing. The victims' identities have not yet been disclosed by authorities. The BBC understands two of the missing are British nationals.

The four-deck modern vessel had been carrying 31 passengers and 13 crew when it is understood to have been hit by a large wave near Marsa Alam, causing it to capsize. The boat sent distress calls at 05:30 local time (03:30 GMT), local authorities said. The vessel sank within five to seven minutes, according to Red Sea governor Maj-Gen Amr Hanafi. He said some peo-

ple had been unable to escape from their cabins. A total of 28 people were rescued by military personnel and a passing tourist boat in the hours after the vessel capsized. The governor had earlier said other survivors were found in the Wadi el-Gemal area, south of Marsa Alam. The 44m (144ft) Sea Story yacht had departed a port near Marsa Alam for a five-day diving trip that was supposed to finish further north at the town of Hurghada.

It is believed to have been hit by rough winds. The Egyptian Meteorological Authority warned of high waves on the Red Sea and advised against maritime activity. Wind speeds were between 37-43 mph (60-70 kmph) and wave heights were three to four metres (10-13ft) high. According to the local coun-

cil in Marsa Alam, the crew of the Sea Story are Egyptian while the tourists on board were from Belgium, Britain, China, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland and the US. Among the missing are two Polish tourists and one from Finland, according to those nations' foreign ministries.

A UK Foreign Office spokesperson said they were providing "support to a number of British nationals and their families following an incident in Egypt". The Chinese embassy in Egypt said two of its nationals were "in good health" after being rescued. Marsa Alam is a popular destination for tourists on Egypt's southern Red Sea coast. It is surrounded by diving spots, including renowned coral reefs. The Red Sea gover-

norate said the boat was owned by an Egyptian national, and had received a one-year validity certificate in March 2024 when it was inspected by maritime safety. Hanafi said there were no technical faults at the time of the incident. He also visited Marsa Alam to see the people rescued, and said they were all in good health, and no-one had needed admission to hospital. The passengers are being taken to a tourist hotel in the area, he added.

The BBC has contacted Sea Story's Egypt-based owner and operator, Dive Pro Liveaboard. Its website says the vessel was built in 2022. It has four decks and 18 cabins that can accommodate up to 36 passengers. Last year, three Britons died off the coast of Marsa Alam after their dive boat caught fire.

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Lebanon ceasefire is vital to ending Middle East violence

THREE generations of Lebanese know the pain and suffering resulting from Israeli invasions of their country. Equally, three generations of Israelis know the cost – if not the futility – of invading Lebanon. The invasion of 1982 was intended to beat back Palestinian militant groups, install a pro-Israel government and provide “40 years of peace”. Instead, it birthed Hezbollah. In the 42 years since, Israeli soldiers have entered Lebanon twice more – in 2006, and again this year – to try to eliminate the threat of Hezbollah.

This year's invasion is already three weeks longer than the last. It has been far more injurious to Lebanese civilians, too; more than 3,000 have been killed since October, while nearly a quarter of the country has been displaced. And while Israeli forces have killed several senior Hezbollah commanders as well as the group's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah remains a political force in Lebanon. Tuesday's news of a ceasefire, therefore, is not the product of an overwhelming Israeli victory. It has emerged, more likely, out of a growing realisation in both sides that a victory scenario does not exist.

Hezbollah, for its part, has already drawn the ire of many Lebanese for dragging them to war and holding the political system in the country hostage. Despite the heavy price Lebanon has paid, Hezbollah had remained stubborn in rejecting solutions for the country's many troubles. Also, its attacks have made little material difference in Gaza, where Israeli forces have killed more than 44,000 Palestinians and brought the enclave to complete ruin.

And yet, Israel cannot afford to wage a war on two fronts forever. Hezbollah may be both injured and embarrassed, but it is not defeated. Meanwhile, discontent is growing among many Israelis – their government appears no closer to freeing the remaining hostages in Gaza and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seems uninterested in a ceasefire deal there, and has used a televised speech to say the ceasefire in Lebanon will allow it to refocus on its operations in Gaza.

The proposed 60-day ceasefire in Lebanon, brokered by the US, would see Israeli forces withdraw from southern Lebanon, while Hezbollah commits to withdrawing its forces north of the Litani River. The Lebanese Army will deploy in southern Lebanon alongside the existing UN peacekeeping force, restoring state control to an area that was previously almost exclusively the domain of Hezbollah. That would be a good thing for Lebanese sovereignty, though it is undercut somewhat by Israel's insistence that it be allowed to bomb Lebanon unilaterally if it perceives a threat in the future.

The deal is, in broad strokes, a restoration of the terms set out by UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which encapsulated the ceasefire terms that ended the 2006 war. The events of the past year – in Israel, Gaza and Lebanon – have left the world in fear that things will never again be the same in the Middle East. In light of this, a return to a status quo of sorts, at least in southern Lebanon, would give some hope that the wider spiral of violence can yet subside.

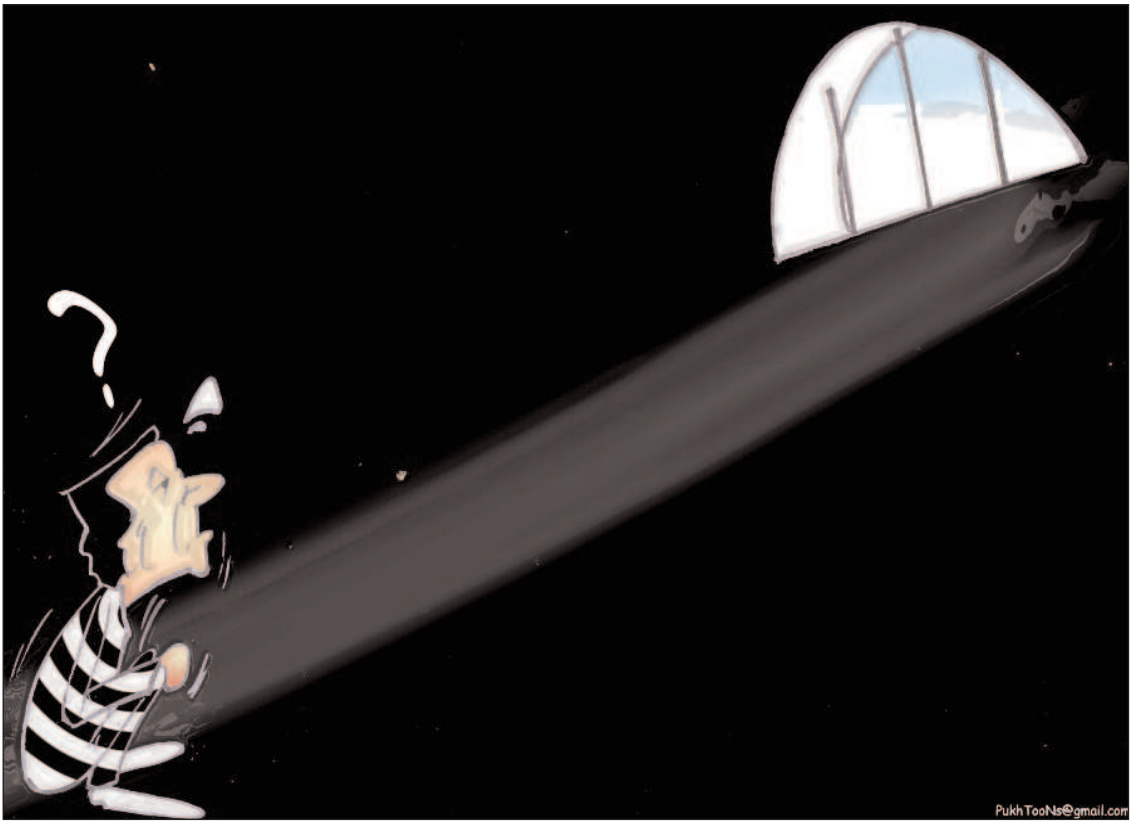
There are plenty of spoilers that could blow up this deal. Itamar Ben-Gvir, a far-right Israeli minister, has been vocal in his opposition, arguing that Israel should not withdraw until Hezbollah is destroyed. A statement from Israeli army spokesman Col Avichay Adraee telling Lebanese civilians that they are prohibited from entering villages under Israeli eviction orders or areas near Israeli troops strikes another discordant tone. One can only imagine the reaction if Hezbollah were to issue a similar edict to displaced Israeli northerners wanting to return to their homes.

On the Lebanese side, there is virtually “zero trust” that Israel will stick to the terms, one official told The National. In the absence of any trust, many things can go wrong. This is why the diplomatic efforts seen thus far must be maintained. A sustained commitment from Washington to an American-led committee that will oversee the development of a permanent ceasefire – especially during the current US political transition – is vital. Similarly important are the moves taking place in Lebanon to elect a president and restore some kind of political stability.

If this ceasefire can be made to hold while diplomats work to untangle the knots in Israel's other conflicts, then eventually there will be reason to trust again. There is nothing to be gained by Israel, Lebanon or Hezbollah by allowing this moment of cautious optimism to be squandered.

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Outgoing president must use US laws to rein in Israel

Ray Hanania

WHEN an elected American official has to worry about getting reelected, they often restrain themselves and avoid pursuing controversial policies. But when the reelection option is no longer available and they are in what is termed a lame duck period of office, the elected official can do whatever they want within their powers without worrying about voter consequences or their critics.

That is the situation Joe Biden is currently in as he prepares to relinquish the powerful office of president of the United States. He is effectively more powerful today than he was on the first day of his presidency.

As president, Biden can take actions that do not require approval from Congress, including major foreign policy moves. These include negotiating agreements and recognizing foreign governments. As the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, he can also take many military actions, such as ordering military operations or unit deployments, though long-term actions would require eventual congressional approval under the US War Powers Act.

We have already seen Biden exercise these powers with respect to the Ukraine-Russia war. Biden this month removed restrictions that had been placed on Ukraine's use of US-supplied long-range missiles, allowing them to be fired into Russia and not simply used against troops

that had entered Ukrainian territory. This decision changes the war's dynamics, giving Ukraine's armed forces the ability to launch offensive assaults to counter Russia's bombings of its cities and other targets. Ukraine's other major weapons suppliers in NATO, including the UK and France, now appear to have followed suit and removed restrictions on the arms they supply or are at least considering doing so.

Why can Biden not do the same thing with Israel and stop the flow of US weaponry and funding that is fueling Tel Aviv's genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza?

During the past year, the majority of people injured or killed in Gaza have been civilians. Although it is estimated that more than 44,000 Palestinians have been killed, there is no way of knowing the precise number because Israel prohibits foreign journalists from entering the Strip.

There is more than enough justification for Biden to do now what his administration failed to do when Israel began its war on Gaza last October. All he has to do is apply the American laws that prohibit the supplying of weapons to foreign nations that engage in the killing of civilians and genocide.

There are five laws that restrict how foreign countries can use US money and weapons. However, until now, the outgoing administration has refused to enforce

them. The Leahy Law prohibits the US government from using any funds to assist foreign security force units when credible information exists that implicates that unit in the commission of gross human rights violations. The Foreign Assistance Act prohibits the allocation of financial assistance to any foreign government that “engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.”

The Arms Export Control Act states that foreign nations that receive US military aid can only use the weapons for legitimate self-defense and internal security.

The War Crimes Act forbids breaches of the Geneva Conventions, which define the rules of warfare and prohibit the mistreatment of noncombatants and civilians, such as willful killings, torture or inhuman treatment, willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, and unlawful deportation or transfer. These are all methods routinely used by Israel to enforce its illegal occupation of Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

And the Genocide Convention Implementation Act was enacted in 1987 and establishes genocide as a specific crime. It provides for criminal penalties for individuals who commit or incite others to commit genocide.

Each of these five laws give Biden the power to take action against Israel and end the ferocity of its military assault against Gaza and Lebanon.

What does Biden have to lose? The election is over. His party lost. The outgoing administration has eight weeks to make up for its grievous failure of the last 13 months and try to stop the killing of civilians.

Even if this action does not end the war or if Israel continues the carnage, at least it could help to restore a moral foundation to the administration's legacy. Does it really want to be known as the administration that stood by as Israel killed more than 44,000 Palestinian civilians and thousands more Lebanese civilians?

But the White House is hostage to Netanyahu, who needs the genocide to continue in order to derail the three corruption cases against him. It was these charges that pushed Netanyahu to form a coalition with the most extremist elements in Israeli society and extend his time in power.

As a consequence, Netanyahu has no compelling reason to end the genocide and he will most likely continue the violence. He may even expand it to include Iran and any other regional nation that refuses to surrender to Israel's hegemony. When the details of Israel's atrocities become public – and one day they will – the US will be harshly judged for not acting. Unless it acts now. It is the right thing to do.

Israel and the evangelical conundrum

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was ecstatic with Donald Trump's US election victory. Trump's new administration will be heavily served by evangelicals, from his pick for secretary of defense to the ambassador to Israel. Netanyahu sees this as the opportunity of a lifetime to realize his dream of a “Greater Israel,” kicking the Palestinians off their land and taking over all of historical Palestine. However, things might not turn out the way he and his messianic government imagine. And the evangelicals might not be the allies to Israel that Netanyahu wishes.

The messianic extremists in Netanyahu's government would be happy to annex the West Bank. Already, there has been talk of resettling in Gaza. Trump might agree to the West Bank's annexation in the same way he agreed to the annexation of the Golan Heights in his first term. He could do that to please his base of evangelicals, who are driven by Christian nationalism, not by a love of Israel or the Jews.

However, the pertinent question is: what comes after? If Israel were to annex the West Bank, what would it do with the Palestinians? It is important to note that Israel is the

only country in the world that has not defined its borders at the UN. It has left the door open for an annexed land. However, if it annexed the Occupied Territories, even with Trump's blessing, that does not mean he would agree to the Israeli extremists' ultimate goal: ethnic cleansing.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich this week reiterated his call for Israel to occupy the Gaza Strip and reduce the Palestinian population there “by half within two years.” But ethnic cleansing was much easier to hide in 1948 and 1967 than it is today. Now, with the rise of social and independent media, it would be difficult to hide something as big as ethnic cleansing.

On the other hand, Israel is already facing scrutiny from the international community. It has been accused of genocide by the UN's special rapporteur on Palestine. Pope Francis alluded to a possible genocide. There is a genocide case in front of the International Court of Justice. The International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and his former defense chief. Hence, it is unlikely that the world would allow another wave of ethnic cleansing. Arab countries also know that each wave is a problem for

generations to come.

However, annexation could be a way to coopt the progressive left, depending on how Trump presents it. Many on the progressive left do not talk about a Palestinian state. They talk about decolonizing Palestine, about it being free from the river to the sea. Hence, annexation might be accepted if it was presented as allowing everybody who lives there, regardless of their ethnicity or religion, to live in dignity, have equal rights and be free from oppression.

Trump's major domestic battle is likely to be over the deportation of immigrants. So, he will not want to open another front with the progressives regarding Palestine. The Palestinian cause could be a way for him to please his base and appease the opposition at the same time. Also, Trump does not share the world-view of Netanyahu, who advocates striking Iran and changing the regime in Tehran. He campaigned on an antiwar platform. Even in June 2019, when the Iranians shut down an American drone, he refrained from hitting Iran. Israel underestimates Trump's isolationist streak. He would not want to wage another war in the region for Israel's sake.

Trump knows very well that the population transfer that Netanyahu dreams of

could be a trigger for a regional war. Evicting 3 million Palestinians to Jordan would cause an existential threat to the Hashemite kingdom. In this case, Hamas could be revived and a front extending from Iran to Iraq to Jordan and possibly Syria would open. Will Trump want to run this risk? In addition, the US would be the subject of scrutiny both internationally and domestically if it allowed another wave of ethnic cleansing.

There is another factor that Netanyahu is not really paying attention to: Project 2025. Trump intends to increase the executive power of the president. This would basically mean less pressure from Congress. Several times in the past, from George H.W. Bush to Barack Obama, when the president tried to impose anything on Israel, they were chastised by the significantly pro-Israel Congress. If Trump is able to sideline Congress, he would be able to put more pressure on Israel to prevent any evictions from the West Bank.

Annexation might be the objective of this messianic Israeli government that is blinded by ideology. However, its members should be careful what they wish for. Trump might agree to it and, if he does so, it might not be exactly how Netanyahu imagined it.

— Arab News

Leveraging late-mover advantages

YU ZHEN and CUI JIE

THE structure of global industry chains is becoming more localized, regionalized and diversified. During earlier readjustments of the global supply chains, late-developing economies were seen to take over industries relocated from developed economies through cheap labor and high demand created by demographic dividends. The United States, Japan, Singapore, the Republic of Korea, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Taiwan island are all beneficiaries of the earlier rounds of industry chain restructuring wherein they overtook more advanced economies.

Amid heightened uncertainties for the global economy, the restructuring of global supply chains is often accompanied by international competition. International trade and economic rules have a significant impact on late-developing economies' participation in the global supply chain. Trade protectionism and geopolitical conflicts increase the risks associated with late-developing economies' absorbing industries transferred from developed economies, threatening the steady restructuring of global supply chains.

Despite their large number, the small and medium-sized enterprises in China are sensitive to the economic environment and vulnerable to risks. As a result, the country's industry chain faces high risk of disruption. Meanwhile, the country has not yet built a unified national market. More efforts are required to eliminate local protectionism and market fragmentation, and to remove regulations and practices that hinder market integration and fair competition.

In addition, in order to take the lead in the transformation of the global industry chain, countries are proactively taking part in the reshaping of global governance rules, and are

building a domestic consumption system, provide more quality products to consumers and stimulate new demand. It should also develop strategic industries, remove obstacles in domestic circulation, promote cooperation among regional industry chains and optimize its industry layout.

The country should integrate domestic and overseas markets, open its doors wider to attract more foreign investment, improve the quality of global trade and ensure the security of the industry chain. The transformation of the consumer market is an important prerequisite for promoting global industry chain restructuring.

Late-developing economies that receive industry transfers are often in a stage of rapid development with an expanding consumer market, which is beneficial to enhancing the resilience and security of the local industry chain.

In the third round of global industry chain restructuring, the ROK seized the opportunity created by the burgeoning personal computer market, and took the lead in producing personal computers on a large scale. It successfully nurtured globally competitive brands and took over the semiconductor industry transferred from Japan.

Third, China needs to advance institutional opening-up and shorten the negative list for foreign investment to create a better business environment. It should align with high-standard international trade rules and explore opening-up experiences that can be copied across the country. The country should proactively take part in regional trade agreements and integrate into the global economic governance system by leveraging the pioneering role of free trade zones.

It is important for the country to seek common interests with other countries to promote bilateral and multilateral cooperation, use regional economic

China's voice in the multilateral trade system is still weak. It is not proficient in practicing global trade rules, and needs to elevate the level of regional trade agreements it signs with other countries. It also needs to push its higher-level opening-up. China must thus seize the opportunities presented by the global industry chain restructuring to realize its upgrading through technological advancements and ensure industry chain security by expanding domestic consumption. It is also imperative for the country to proactively participate in making new global governance rules, thereby overtaking advanced countries by fully exploiting its late-mover advantages.

implementing policies to enhance the autonomy of their own industry chains, further strengthening regionalism and the localization of trade and investment and fueling the restructuring of the global industry chain.

China's voice in the multilateral trade system is still weak. It is not proficient in practicing global trade rules, and needs to elevate the level of regional trade agreements it signs with other countries. It also needs to push its higher-level opening-up.

China must thus seize the opportunities presented by the global industry chain restructuring to realize its upgrading through technological advancements and ensure industry chain security by expanding domestic consumption. It is also imperative for the country to proactively participate in making new global governance rules, thereby overtaking advanced countries by fully exploiting its late-mover advantages.

First, China needs to establish its technological innovation system and improve research and development policies to promote industrial upgrading. It also needs to build an industrial innovation system by stimulating enterprise vitality, nurturing leading enterprises and boosting innovation synergy.

Meanwhile, the country should give stronger support to research and development efforts and invest more resources in promoting the integration of talents and enterprises to spur their creativity. In the second round of global industry restructuring, Japan seized the opportunity provided by the US' technology transfer to introduce advanced technologies and secure semiconductor technology patents, which fueled the development of its semiconductor industry.

Second, China needs to

cooperation mechanisms and engage in international affairs more proactively. In this way, China will play a bigger role in global affairs and promote the building of a new international order.

Late-developing economies can have a greater say in the global industry chain restructuring by proactively participating in the forging of regional trade pacts, and enhancing exchange and cooperation between member states and neighboring countries.

For example, negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which were initiated in 2012 by the 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, took into account the different conditions of each party and accommodated the interests of all. This has paved the way for the restructuring of the regional industry chain and ensured the sustainable development of local industries.

As the world governance system is being reformed to adapt to an increasingly divided global political landscape and to address complicated international issues, all economies are seeking to build a system of rules that meets their own development needs. At the same time, countries are paying greater attention to national security and striving to gain the lead in the restructuring of the global industry chain while ensuring the security of local industry chains.

China should leverage its late-mover advantages to achieve industrial upgrading and ensure industrial security through promoting technological advancements, boosting domestic consumption and playing a bigger role in global governance, thus contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions to the development of the global industry chain.

— China Daily

Will China step up if Trump takes a step back on climate change?

THE WhatsApp message was from the chief negotiator of one of the most powerful countries at the COP climate gathering. Could I stop by for a chat, he asked.

As his team hunched over computers eating takeaway pizza, he raged about the obstructionist behaviour of many of the other teams at the conference.

So far, so normal. Others had been saying versions of this all week – that this was the worst COP ever; that negotiating texts, which are meant to get smaller as deadlines approached, were in fact ballooning; that COP in its current form might be dead in the water...

Looming over it all was the prospect of US president-elect Donald Trump withdrawing the US from the COP process when he takes office for a second time. He has called climate action a "scam" and, at his victory celebration in West Palm Beach earlier this month, vowed to boost US oil production beyond its current record levels, saying, "We have more liquid gold than any country in the world".

But there was one positive: China.

"It's the only bright spot in all of this is," the chief negotiator told me. Not only was its negotiating style markedly different to previous years, but he also observed that, as he puts it, "China could be stepping forward."

Another sign that this may be the case came at the start of the conference, when China made public details of its climate funding. Traditionally, China has released minimal information about its climate policies and plans, so it came as a surprise when, for the first time, officials said they have paid developing countries more than \$24 billion for climate action since 2016.

"That's serious money, almost nobody else is at that level," one COP insider told me.

It is a "notable signal", says Li Shuo, a director of China Climate Hub, "as it's the first time that the Chinese government has laid out a clear figure in terms of how much they have been providing."

If these are indeed signs that China plans to take a more central role in the future, just as the US is stepping back, it would mark a tectonic shift in the COP process.

How that tectonic shift could look

Historically, Western countries – particularly the US and EU – have provided the momentum, cheered on by smaller climate-vulnerable nations. The difference in the way

the talks play out if China steps forward will be marked.

Jonathan Pershing, program director of environment at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, has been to every COP and understands better than most the behind-the-scenes bartering, bullying and brinkmanship that makes or breaks deals at summits. He says that China won't lead from the front, like the US and Europe.

"They're more cautious players than that. It may be that they're leading with Chinese characteristics, which is what they might say themselves."

(This echoes how Deng Xiaoping, president in the early 1980s, described his economic reforms, which catapulted the country's economic growth into double figures: "socialism with Chinese characteristics".)

It is classed as a developing country in the context of UN climate talks, despite being the world's second biggest economy, the result of a peculiarity in the COP rules. (This is linked to its economic status in 1992 when the talks process began.) It has also long resisted pressure from developed countries to change its status, meaning it doesn't have to contribute to the pot that rich countries have agreed to pay to poorer ones. Yet this year some experts noticed a change in the wording used by Chinese negotiators. "What's so interesting is the language the Chinese used," says Professor Michael Jacobs, an expert on climate politics at Sheffield University. "They described it as 'provided and mobilised' - that's the term developed countries use for their payments." Language matters at climate conferences. Negotiators can spend days discussing whether something "should" or "will" happen.

Pershing suggests that China is likely to help drive the COP process forward by discreetly intervening to unblock disputes. Most of this effort will take place behind closed doors, he believes, but is likely to include urging developing and developed countries to increase their ambition – and the flow of cash.

However China may not be entirely helpful on some of the challenges that slow the process, such as instances when countries use COP as a stage to champion their own interests.

One of the biggest blockers in Baku was said to be Saudi Arabia, which heads up a group of fossil fuel producing countries that want to slow the transition to renewables. As a big consumer of fossil fuels, China has often thrown its weight behind them in the past, such as by resisting the UK's effort to get agreement to phase out coal at COP26 in Glasgow.

A new "unusually cooperative" style

There have been some other occasions in this year's talks that indicate how China's approach is already shifting.

In the past, it tended to

Justin Rowlett

focus on its own interests and as such, it played a dual role in these talks. Sometimes it has aligned with the US and Europe, for example on ambitious targets to boost renewable power or on the reduction of methane, a potent greenhouse gas. On other issues, meanwhile, it has slowed progress.

One such example was COP15, held in Copenhagen in 2009. There had been high hopes that an agreement would be reached to commit countries to deep cuts in carbon emissions. But the conference nearly collapsed when China fought against US pressure to submit to a regime of international monitoring. The final non-binding deal was generally considered a failure.

This year was different, the chief negotiator I

Negotiators can spend days discussing whether something "should" or "will" happen. So, the Chinese echoing the language of the rich world is significant, Prof Jacobs argues.

"They used to calibrate everything against what the US did," he says. When Trump took office in 2016, China stood back from the talks in response. This time is different, according to Prof Jacobs.

"This looks to me like a claim of leadership."

What's in it for the East?

None of this is driven by "altruism" on China's part," Prof Jacobs continues.

According to Li Shuo, the shifting economics of renewables explains why China is likely to be a bigger player.

"The green transformation is very much being led by China - not neces-

sarily the government, but its private sector and companies". These companies lead the rest of the world by what Li Shuo says is a "very significant margin". Eight out of every ten solar panels are made in China, and it controls some two-thirds of wind turbine production. It is reckoned to produce at least three-quarters of the world's lithium batteries and more than 60% of the global market for electric vehicles.

Earlier this year, Chinese President Xi Jinping said that solar panels, EVs and batteries are the "new trio" at the heart of the Chinese economy.

It is the huge investments China has made in renewable technologies and the massive economies of scale that it has created that have also driven down renewable costs year after year - the challenge it faces now is finding new markets to sell it into.

The developing world is where the demand is set to boom. These countries will account for two-thirds of the renewable market within 10 years, according to a recent report by a group of economists tasked by the UN

with calculating the costs of the energy transition.

Pakistan imported 13 gigawatts (GW) of solar panels in the first six months of this year alone, according to research by Bloomberg NEF. To put that in context, the UK has 17GW of installed solar.

Shipping clean tech to emerging economies dovetails with another of China's policies: its "Belt and Road Initiative," an effort to develop new trade routes, including roads, railways, ports and airports, to connect with the rest of the world.

China has spent more than a trillion dollars on the project, according to the World Economic Forum. Last week, President Xi opened a new port on the coast of Peru.

Which begins to explain why, as Prof Jacobs sees it, while the US may withdraw, China looks like it might be stepping up. "It now sees its best interest as encouraging other countries to also cut their emissions by using Chinese technologies and equipment."

Ultimately, though, regardless of whether this plays, out, there is cause for hope, according to some well-placed observers. Camilla Born, who has been part of the UK's negotiating team and helped run COP26 in Glasgow, believes that the future talks will be determined by the new economics of energy, not the politics of meetings.

"This isn't just about an idea of how to deal with climate change anymore," she argues. "This is about investments, about money - it's people's jobs, it's new technologies. The conversations are different."

It is, after all, the biggest revolution in energy since the start of the industrial revolution. And regardless of which superpower takes the lead, or if the US is out of the game for four years, it's unlikely that anyone will want to miss out on such a vast market.

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Safe and sound

ONG TEE KEAT

addressed concertedly. In this context, there has been a prevalent myth claiming that it is wise for ASEAN to straddle in the geopolitical contest between China and the US by betting on Washington for providing the security shield, while economically, ASEAN has to embrace Beijing.

This is a myopic choice constrained by a zero-sum mentality. Obviously when ASEAN embarked on the China-initiated Belt and Road Initiative, it didn't mean the bloc has since been drawn into the orbit of Chinese neighborhood diplomacy at the expense of others. In the same vein, now that China and ASEAN are each other's top trading partner, it's conceivable that the existing multidimensional and multilateral cooperation may spill over to the security dimension. Again, such collaboration is not meant to target others. Instead, it can yield "positive sum" outcomes if those concerned are able to look beyond the narrow interpretation of "security cooperation". After all, security is not synonymous with fostering military pacts between the so-called like-minded countries with a specific third party in their crosshairs. Much less in deploying troops and military installations on foreign soil of sovereignty.

In reality, we are not short of exigencies and insecurities that warrant security cooperation, notably between ASEAN and China. Nontraditional security concerns, ranging from climate change, food and energy security to transborder terrorism and human trafficking appear more pressing than any others.

While exploring security cooperation to address these non-traditional security challenges, the existing disputes on overlapping territorial claims over parts of the South China Sea between China and a few claimant states from ASEAN remain a challenge to the enduring China-ASEAN neighborly partnership. In the collective effort to nurture the prevailing China-ASEAN partnership in the interest of good neighborliness, more emphasis should be attached to the building of mutual trust and confidence. The dividends of common prosperity and the desire for coexistence accrued from inclusive economic development across the region act as a good security stabilizer to keep the volatility of security dynamics in check. Plainly put, prosperity and peace which bring about the desired security further reinforce the conducive environment for development.

ASEAN, as a regional bloc dedicated to promoting economic cooperation and regional peace, has its collective aspirations and concerns to prioritize. Under the prevailing non-interference principle, all member states share the understanding that

domestic issues should be solved on their own without any outside intervention, and that each member state should have sufficient state strength to handle these issues.

In the prevailing face-off between China and the Philippines, external powers are visibly involved and the target is none other than China. Any misjudgment or mishandling of the military stand-off on the high seas would invariably flare up into conflict, leaving the regional peace and partnership in tatters.

The external powers, notably the United States and its allies, are not stakeholders involved in the disputes, thus having no locus standi to meddle in them. The saber-rattling of their warships in the disputed areas in the name of upholding "freedom of navigation" is absolutely unnecessary, unconstructive and provocative in nature, as "freedom of navigation" has never been an issue in the South China Sea for civilian vessels for ages. It's an overstatement to say that the overlapping territorial claims have thrown the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea into jeopardy. The self-proclaimed role of Washington in policing the Southeast Asian waters merely provides opportunities and justifications for the US fleet of naval warships to flex their military muscles on the doorstep of China. This only serves to up the ante in the inconclusive disputes, rendering them more intractable. It's not a secret that the entire US-led security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region is part of its "Indo-Pacific" strategy targeting China, albeit on the pretext of serving the interests of "Indo-Pacific" security. The US-led alliances such as the Quadrilateral dialogue (among the US, India, Japan and Australia) and AUKUS (a security pact among Australia, the United Kingdom and the US), fostered in the name of common defense interests, are conspicuously blatant moves in defiance of ASEAN security. After all, Washington's underlying goal lies in upholding its faltering global primacy and hegemony in the region, even if it has to be done at the expense of regional stability. On the issue of managing disputes, inclusive engagement through dialogues and negotiations is the only viable option, but it must strictly be confined to the stakeholders.

Noting that all along ASEAN has never been a military bloc, and China not a conventional security provider from the global perspective, if all the ideals of the Global Security Initiative were to be translated into action in the Southeast Asian context, perhaps the low-hanging fruits lie in the arising non-conventional security concerns such as insecurities posed by climate change, food and energy crises.

Trump's trade threats put the world on a precipice

GLOBAL chaos delivered via social media is back. Between 2017 and 2021, Donald Trump had the world on a precipice, bracing for his next move, gaming out whether his bluster was a bluff, an overture to a deal or a break with history, as he sowed mayhem to push adversaries off balance.

Those days are here again, nearly eight weeks before his second term begins.

The president-elect's online threats Monday of new trade wars with Canada, Mexico and China turned the United States back into an agent of instability, which can pitch a foreign friend or foe into a crisis in an instant.

Trump said America's two Western Hemisphere neighbors would be punished if they didn't stop the flow of undocumented migration and fentanyl across their borders. And he demanded China stop shipments of the drug as well.

His first major global brouhaha since winning reelection posed the following questions that will help define the character of his second term.

Is Trump serious about massive tariff hikes that could increase prices for US consumers as soon as he begins a second presidency, which was won partly because voters were so frustrated with inflation and costs of housing and groceries?

Or is the president-elect indulging his view that life and politics is one big real estate deal? And is he set-

ting out an extreme position to create leverage for agreements that might be modest but polish his dealmaker's brand?

There's a third possibility — that Trump feels liberated by his election victory and is determined to drive his America First project further than a first term in which his most volatile instincts were often restrained by establishment aides.

Many of Trump's voters deeply disdain the political, economic, trading and diplomatic systems that they believe have hurt them financially and serve US and global elites. They want their MAGA hero to tear them down, without much idea what would replace them.

Trump could, therefore, simply be creating headlines to show supporters that he's already fighting for their interests. Or he could have something more sweeping in mind. The second path could take America and the world into risky territory. The idea that he might go for broke could drag the US into trade wars that wreck the economy and spark dangerous stand-offs in a world that is far more volatile since he left office four years ago.

"There are plenty of examples (of) Trump's verbal threats forcing and compelling action on the part of other parties, particularly when it comes to foreign countries," Pete Seat, a former spokesman in President George W. Bush's White House, said on "CNN News Central" on Tuesday. "The real question

is what will happen in these next two months?" If all three nations make meaningful moves, Seat said, "Trump may back off on this. Otherwise, we're all going to see price increases."

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member attacked by Russia. Would the president-elect really blow apart the most successful military alliance in history — or is he just trying to wring more defense spending from some of Europe's lagging powers?

In other words, does Trump have in mind a presidency driven by spectacle and brinkmanship that succeeds, like his first, in delivering mostly incremental change? Or is he really, as some of his fans want, trying to tear everything down?

Trump's sudden warning on Monday of 25% tariffs

on Canadian and Mexican imports, with a further 10% hike above existing tariffs on Chinese goods, was the latest sign that the president-elect plans to quickly

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throw his muscle around. It caused a scramble in Ottawa, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau jumped on the phone with Trump for what he insisted was a "good call." Within hours, Trump had got the attention of new Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, as she warned of like-for-like retaliation of Trump tariffs after January 20.

The president-elect's gambit has created an immediate yard stick to judge whether his second presidency will be an attempt to push through far deeper disruption. There's no guarantee

that Canada, Mexico and China will back down immediately.

Still, deaths from overdoses of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are falling. And Trump's prom-

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ises to impose hardline immigration policies are likely to deter many migrants from approaching the US southern border. Therefore, Trump could create an illusion of change to cover a decision to back down if he needs to.

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SCCI demands prompt steps to resolve issues

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan demanded uninterrupted electricity, gas supply to businesses and industries, abolishment of 2 percent provincial cess on export and elimination of double/unjust taxes forthwith.

He made these demands during a meeting with Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Capt (retired) Sarmad Saleem Ikram at the DC office while leading a delegation of an 85-members delegation of businessmen.

The delegation consisted on SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice president Shehryar Khan, former president of the chamber Haji Muhammad

Afzal, executive committee members Junaid Altaf, Hassan Zahideen, Abbas Fuad Azeem, Aftab Iqbal, Nadeem Rauf, former senior vice president Imran Khan Mohmand, Affaf Ali Khan, Syed Ejaz Ali Shah, along with a large number traders and shopkeepers attached with various businesses.

Traders apprehensions regarding unannounced electricity, gas loadshedding, imposition of 2 percent provincial cess on export, enforcement of entry and out tax on goods laden vehicles, collection of property and warehouses taxes by Excise and taxation department, traffic congestion and mushroom growth of car parking lots in city, difficult in entry of 40-foot long container in

industrialist estate Hayatabad owing to closure of roads were conveyed in the meeting.

The meeting was also attended by Senior Superintendent of Police, operations, Kashif Zulfikar and relevant officials/officers of the town committee.

Fazal Moqem emphasized pragmatic steps for prompt resolution of all issues.

He said the business community wanted to pay all taxes but unjust and additional taxes are unacceptable.

The Deputy Commissioner listened to the traders all problems keenly and assured their quick resolution by effectively taking up with relevant authorities.

Senior officials said the

government and administration are taking proactive measures for ease of doing business.

He, however, stressed the need for regular meetings and coordination/liaison between administration and the business community to promptly resolve all problems.

Earlier, a meeting between SCCI Fazal Moqem and Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Sarmad Saleem was also held regarding traffic congestion and growing parking lots and other related issues in the city, which was also attended by traffic officials.

The meeting informed that a comprehensive roadmap would be implemented soon to address traffic issues in the city.



PESHAWAR: Delegation of traders led by Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan meeting with Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Capt (retired) Sarmad Saleem Ikram.

SNGPL supplying gas with adequate pressure

F.P. Report

LAHORE: SNGPL shall continue to supply gas to the consumers during the winters particularly in the peak demand hours.

All efforts are being undertaken in the matter. Moreover, gas is being supplied with adequate pressure and currently there is no issue of low pressure in any area. In case of gas pressure complaints faced by our esteemed consumers, please immediately call at 1199 for immediate rectification of the issue.

Every effort is being undertaken to resolve the issues faced by consumers on priority basis.

US, China and UK top 3 destinations of exports

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States remained the top export destination of Pakistani products during the first four months of the current financial year 2024-25, followed by China and the United Kingdom.

Total exports to the US during July-October 2024-25 were recorded at US \$2037.270 million against the exports of US \$1862.086 million during July-October 2023-24, showing an increase of 9.40 percent, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

This was followed by China, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US \$813.441 million against the exports of US \$952.441 million last year, showing a decrease of 14.59 percent.

UK was the third top export destination, where Pakistan exported products worth US \$761.393 million during the month under review against the exports of US \$690.576 million, SBP data revealed.

Among other countries, Pakistani exports to UAE stood at US \$737.432 million against US \$624.432 million last year while the exports to Germany were recorded at US \$579.141 million against US \$487.832 million last year, data said.

PSX turns around to bullish trend, gains 4,695 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 4,695.09 points more points, a positive change of 4.96 percent, closing at 99,269.25 points as compared to 94,574.16 points on the last trading day.

A total of 1,057,104,968 shares were traded during the day as compared to 1,116,324,649 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs39,556 billion against Rs43,291 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 453 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 356 of them recorded gains and 52 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 45 companies remained

unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Bank of Punjab with 114,966,225 shares at Rs7.85 per share, Hascol Petrol with 106,286,630 shares at Rs12.59 per share and K-Electric Limited with 91,200,956 shares at Rs5.15 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs348.78 per share price, closing at Rs19,368.13, whereas the runner-up was Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited with Rs175.25 rise in its per share price to Rs7,988.75.

Rafhan Services Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs50.29 per share closing at Rs827.72 followed by Sapphire Textile Mills Limited with

Rs26.35 decline to close at Rs1,151.64.

Gold prices up Rs1,600 per tola

The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs1,600 and was sold at Rs275,900 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs274,300, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also went up by Rs1,372 to Rs236,540 from Rs235,168 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold increased to Rs216,828 from Rs215,571.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs3,400 and Rs2,914.95, respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$16 to \$2,647 from \$2,631, Association reported.

Pakistan exports seafood worth \$116m in 4 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned \$116.115 million by exporting 54,539 metric tonnes of fish and fish preparations during the first four months of fiscal year 2024-25, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

As compared to the exports of \$123.965 million during fiscal year 2023-24, the fish exports during the period under review witnessed a decline of 6.33 percent, according to PBS data.

In terms of quantity, the exports of fish and fish preparations decreased by 0.04 percent during the period when compared to exports of 54,562 metric tonnes during the last fiscal year.

On a year-on-year basis, the seafood exports increased by 12.78 percent to \$46,009 million in October 2024 as compared to the exports of \$40.797 million in October 2023.

In terms of quantity, the exports witnessed a 27.93 percent increase by going up from 16,724 metric

tonnes last October to 21,395 metric tonnes during October 2024.

On a month-on-month basis, the seafood exports inclined by 31.45 percent when compared to the exports of \$35.000 million in September 2024, according to the PBS data.

In terms of quantity, fish exports increased by 35.57 percent in October 2024 compared to the exports of 15,781 metric tonnes in July-October (2023-24), according to latest PBS data.

Asian markets mixed as traders eye fresh trade tensions

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets were mixed Wednesday as traders tried to gauge the economic outlook after Donald Trump picked a tough-negotiating hawk as his trade envoy the day after saying he would hit China, Canada and Mexico with hefty tariffs.

The stuttering performance followed a broadly negative day on Tuesday and came despite another record-breaking lead from Wall Street.

While he still has just under two months to go before taking office, Trump signalled Monday that he was ready to reopen his hardball playbook with America's key trading partners if they do not stop illegal immigration and drug smuggling.

The threat to impose the levies on his first day reignited trade war fears at a time when central bankers are fighting to bring inflation under control, with several observers warning prices could begin to spike again.

Investors were also trying to ascertain the ramifications of the decision to name as trade envoy Jamie Greer, who served as chief of staff to US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer during the first Trump administration.

"Jamieson played a key role during my First Term in imposing Tariffs on China and others to combat unfair Trade practices," the president-elect said, noting Greer's experience pushing through a trade deal with Mexico and Canada.

National Australia Bank's Rodrigo Catril said:

"President Trump is serious about using tariffs as a form of leverage."

Monday's announcements "were linked to drugs and illegal immigration, but we must assume there is another layer of tariffs that should be coming on countries running trade surpluses with the US", he said.

He added that Trump was aiming for a "trade decoupling" and that "the question is whether he wants a mild decoupling or a severe one. Another observation is that we should expect retaliation, implying a negative impact on global trade".

All three main indexes on Wall Street ended on a positive note, with the S&P 500 and Dow hitting record highs.

Minutes from the Federal Reserve's November policy meeting, where it cut interest rates, showed officials would take a gradual approach when considering future reductions as the job market remained solid.

If data comes in about as expected, "it would likely be appropriate to move gradually toward a more neutral stance of policy over time", the minutes said.

While economists had been expecting another cut in December, bets on that have been scaled back in light of Trump's election amid worries his pledges to cut tax and impose tariffs would lead to another spike in prices.

Traders are keenly awaiting the release later Wednesday of the Fed's preferred gauge of inflation as well as figures on jobless claims and economic growth.

PPL management visit to BME stall at Karachi Expo Centre

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Bolan Mining Enterprise (BME), a joint venture of Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) and the Government of Balochistan, showcased its prominence in the mining sector by hosting a stall at the 12th International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS 2024) at the Karachi Expo Centre.

The stall attracted notable attention, including a visit by Mr. Imran Abbasy, MD & CEO of PPL, and Mr. Sikandar Ali Memon, COO of PPL. Welcomed by Mr. Zeeshan Asghar (Head BME/BLZ) and his team, the leadership was briefed on BME's milestones, includ-



ing its innovative projects and contributions to harnessing Balochistan's mineral wealth for Pakistan's economic growth. MD PPL praised BME's efforts, and dedication to transforming natural resources into

national assets exemplifies innovation and sustainability.

The BME stall highlighted its expertise in Barite production, sustainable resource management, and welfare projects,

drawing interest from national and international delegates. This participation reinforced BME's role as a key player in the mining sector and its commitment to expanding global partnerships.

FPCCI, CCIs hails Tashkent, Lahore direct flight starting from tomorrow

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) from different regions on Wednesday declared the direct flight from Tashkent (Uzbekistan) to Lahore on November 29th as significant for the bilateral economic ties between the two brotherly countries.

The national airline of Uzbekistan, 'Uzbek Airways,' will land at Lahore Airport from Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, on Friday, November 29 at 9:00 a.m. and will start its direct flight operation, and this weekly flight operation is likely to be increased in the coming months.

The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and other business bodies have hailed the commencement of a direct air link between Pakistan and Uzbekistan on November 29 as it would help to enhance bilateral economic

cooperation.

It would prove to be useful in forging bilateral business and economic integration with the Central state of the Central Asian region, Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states, President of, Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Atif Ikram Sheikh, said while talking to APP here.

President FPCCI said one flight in a week from Tashkent, the industrial hub of Central Asian States, to Lahore, would help enhance economic and trade activities and regional economic integration.

Atif Kkram said the Uzbekistan embassy in Islamabad deserved appreciation for playing a significant role in the launch of a direct air link between Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

President's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, from different cities and regions of the countries agreed that the direct flight link was a useful develop-

ment and would help improve bilateral economic relations between the two countries.

President of, Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), Muhammad Jawed Bilwani told APP that the business community of Karachi anticipates that this step would have a positive impact on trilateral as well as bilateral trade relations with Uzbekistan and Central Asia.

Talking to APP, President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mian Abuzar Shad, said Uzbekistan is an important country in the Central Asian region and the direct flights between Tashkent and Lahore would strengthen business relations between the two countries and all the credit in that regard goes to embassies of both countries in Islamabad and Tashkent.

Talking to APP, the President of the Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI), Rana

Muhammad Siddique Khan hailed the direct flight between Pakistan and Uzbekistan and said that the role of the business community of Gujranwala is significant in increasing bilateral trade between Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

President GCCCI said that Pakistan and Central Asian states, especially Uzbekistan, have a common economic and trade future and only through the concept of shared economic prosperity can economic development come to our region.

Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry, traders and the business community are already doing business in Uzbekistan in different sectors, and this direct flight operation benefited the business community of Gujranwala.

President of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Rehan Naseem Bharara, said besides trade relations, the direct flight link would



In brief

Vicario out for 'months' with broken ankle

LONDON (AFP): Tottenham goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario faces "months" on the sidelines after breaking his ankle in Saturday's 4-0 win at Manchester City. Spurs boss Ange Postecoglou said. The Italy international needed treatment after a first-half collision with City winger Savinho at the Etihad but was able to finish the game. The 28-year-old, who had surgery on Monday, has been a virtual ever-present since he signed for Tottenham in 2023 but Postecoglou will now have to turn to veteran back-up Fraser Forster. "It's not going to be weeks, it'll be months," Postecoglou said on Wednesday, adding he did not want to give a time-line. "I think once we're past the rehab stage and he starts getting out (onto the training pitch), we'll have a clearer idea." Postecoglou, speaking on the eve of his team's Europa League clash against Claudio Ranieri's Roma, said the severity of Vicario's injury come as a shock. "We saw he'd picked up the injury during the game," he said. "We saw him at half-time, but there was no doubt about him continuing. "You digest that and then, post-game, he was sore but, you're kind of like, 'He's just played 60 minutes with a sore ankle, but we'll take it up and go again'. "Externally people now realise, it's a testament to him as a person. He's as tough as nails and tough as they come." Postecoglou believes his team are making progress in his second season in charge -- they are sixth in the Premier League and riding high in the Europa League table. "I keep saying that we're a better side than we were last year and we want to keep improving and if we keep improving, the areas where there are gaps, we will slowly overcome," he said.

Murphy beats Ding

YORK (Agencies): Shaun Murphy beat three-time winner Ding Junhui 6-5 in a final-frame decider to move into the quarter-finals of the UK Championship in York. While Ding constructed a sparkling break of 129 in the opening frame, both players appeared far from their best until the closing stages of the contest. In a see-saw affair Ding trailed 2-1 and led 3-2 before Murphy reeled off three consecutive frames, with a superb run of 135 in the eighth frame his first break over 50 in the contest. Ding responded with successive centuries to force an 11th frame but Murphy held his nerve, compiling a break of 65 on his way to victory. He will now play world number 20 Barry Hawkins, who defeated fellow Englishman David Gilbert 6-5 in an equally hard-fought encounter. Hawkins, who has already beaten eight-time champion Ronnie O'Sullivan, opened up in fine style with a superbly crafted break of 144. However, he was then always playing catch up with Gilbert enjoying runs of 100, 88 and 102 and seemingly on the cusp of the last eight at 5-4 up. Both players spurned opportunities to win a nervy 10th frame before Hawkins levelled the match, and a missed red to the right middle pocket proved costly for Gilbert in the last frame.

Pakistan team moves in T20 Blind Cricket WC semis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan blind cricket team has stormed into the semifinals of the 4th T20 Blind Cricket World Cup after a resounding 10-wicket victory against Nepal at Ghani Institute Cricket Ground.

Ahmed, Shahnawaz ruled out of ODI series

ISLAMABAD (APP): Fast bowlers Ahmed Daniyal and Shahnawaz Dahani have been ruled out of the ongoing One-Day International series against Zimbabwe and will return to Pakistan on Wednesday.

Ahmed sustained a hamstring injury, while Shahnawaz suffered a left ankle injury during Sunday's training session said a press release. Initial scans and clinical assessments confirmed their respective injuries.

Upon their return to Lahore, both players will report to the National Cricket Academy, where they will undergo rehabilitation and follow the prescribed protocols to ensure a safe return to competitive cricket.

The duo have been replaced by Abbas Afridi and Jahandad Khan, who will arrive in Bulawayo in time to be available for selection in Thursday's series decider. The two are part of the Pakistan team for the T20I series, which will also be played in Bulawayo on December 1, 3 and 5.

Meanwhile, Ahmed Daniyal has been replaced by Aamir Jamal in the three T20I series. Aamir is a member of the ODI squad and featured in both the ODIs.

Pakistan T20I squad: Salman Ali Agha (captain), Aamir Jamal, Arafat Minhas, Haris Rauf, Haseebullah Khan, Jahandad Khan, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Hasnain, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Omair bin Yousuf, Qasim Akram, Sahibzada Farhan, Sufyan Moqim, Tayyab Tahir and Usman Khan.

Pakistan's Haroon Khan impressed with figures of 2/5. Naeematullah was named player of the match by Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) Chairman Syed Sultan Shah.

According to details provided here by the PBCC on Wednesday, in other matches, Sri Lanka secured their third win, defeating South Africa by 53 runs. Suranga Sampat starred with 56 off 33 balls, helping Sri Lanka post 217/6. South Africa managed 164/9 in reply. Sri Lankan captain Chandana Deshpriya and

Saman Tushara each took two wickets.

At Bagh-e-Jinnah Ground, Bangladesh defeated Afghanistan by eight wickets. Afghanistan, batting first, scored 149 in 18.2 overs, with captain Abbasin scoring 30. Bangladesh chased down the target in 12 overs, thanks to Arif Hussain's unbeaten 89 off 44 balls.

The first phase of the Blind Cricket World Cup in Lahore has come to an end. After a rest day on November 28, the second phase will commence in Multan on November 29.

Bumrah recaptures top spot in ICC Men's Test Bowling Rankings

ISLAMABAD (APP): India fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah has regained the top spot in the ICC Men's Test Bowling Rankings after leading his team to a resounding 295-run victory over Australia in the first match of their ICC World Test Championship series in Perth.

Bumrah's hauls of five for 30 and three for 42 have helped him overtake Josh Hazlewood and Kagiso Rabada and reach a career-best 883 rating points, the highest rating points tally ever by an India seam bowler.

Spinners Ravichandran Ashwin (904) and Ravindra Jadeja (899) are the only bowlers from India to record higher points tallies. This is the third time that Bumrah has been top of the rankings this year. He was top ranked for two one-month stretches each starting in February and October.

India's huge victory in the first of five Tests is reflected in gains for several other players including centuries Yashasvi Jaiswal and Virat Kohli. Opener Jaiswal has overtaken Harry Brook and Kane Williamson to reach a career-best second position after top-scoring in Perth with 161 in the second innings while Kohli's unbeaten 100 has lifted him nine spots to 13th position after being outside the top 20 batters for the first time in 10 years.

KL Rahul has advanced from 60th to 49th position and Nitish Kumar Reddy has entered the batting rankings in 74th position while Mohammad Siraj has moved up three spots to 25th position in the bowling rankings. Australia batter Travis Head is back in the top 10 after notching a fighting 89 in the second innings while

Alex Carey (up one place to 39th among batters) and Mitchell Marsh (up 10 places to 68th among bowlers) are among others to progress after their performances in Perth. Steve Smith, who could only manage zero and 17, has slid down to seventh place, his lowest position since December 2014.

Players from the West Indies too have gained in the latest weekly update after their 201-run victory in the first Test against Bangladesh at North Sound. Batter Alick Athanaze has moved up 18 places to 62nd position after scores of 90 and 42 while Justin Greaves (up 43 places to 81st) and Mikyle Louis (up 25 places to joint-86th) have also gained.

West Indies seamers Jayden Seales (up three places to a career-best 11th), Kemar Roach (up four places to 17th) and Alzarri Joseph (up three places to 29th) have all been rewarded for their efforts in Antigua.

For Bangladesh, Liton Das and Mominul Haque have inched up a slot each to 32nd and 47th positions, respectively, in the batting rankings while fast bowler Taskin Ahmed's second innings haul of six for 64 has lifted him from 67th to 51st position. In the ODI bowling rankings, Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan has regained the top spot after Shaheen Shah Afridi was rested by Pakistan for their Zimbabwe tour.

Pakistan opener Saim Ayub's 62-ball 113 not out has lifted him 80 places to 90th position in the ODI batting rankings. India's victory in the Perth Test sees the two-time finalists once again reach the top of the ICC World Test Championship table with 61.11 percentage points.



FAISALABAD: Players in action in hockey match played between Chiniot and Jhang teams during the "Khelta Punjab Games 2024" at Hockey Stadium. —APP Photo

Azan's knock puts Sialkot in driving seat

ISLAMABAD (APP): Promising opener Azan Awaiz played a career-best knock to put Sialkot in a commanding position against Peshawar at the close of play on day two of the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy triangular stage match at the Abbottabad Cricket Stadium on Wednesday.

Resuming at the overnight score of 38 not out with Sialkot on 74 for no loss in reply to Peshawar's 171, the 20-year-old left-handed batter remained unbeaten on 161 as Sialkot reached 319 for six. This has given Sialkot a lead of 148 runs with four wickets in hand.

Azan, a former Pakistan U19 batter playing in just his sixth first-class match, has so far faced 312 balls in his fluent knock, laced with 23 boundaries. He reached his century off 198 balls, hitting 14 fours along the way. His previous highest score was 130, achieved against Dera Murad Jamali earlier this month.

Azan anchored two crucial partnerships that shifted the momentum in Sialkot's favor. After a solid 78-run opening stand with Ashir Mehmood (31), Azan stitched together a 140-run third-wicket partnership with Mohsin Riaz. Mohsin contributed a well-made 64 off 122 balls, hitting eight fours and a six before his dismissal.

Abdul Rehman was the other notable Sialkot batter, scoring 28 and contributing 48 runs for the second wicket with Azan. For Peshawar, Mohammad Amir Khan was the stand-out bowler, finishing with figures of 34-4-116-4.

Scores in brief (Day 2 of 4): Peshawar 171 all out, 46.1 overs (Ubaiddullah 35, Zubair Khan 23, Mohammad Amir Khan 21, Abuzar Tariq 20; Mohammad Ali 4-35, Awaiz Ali 4-73, Shoaib Akhtar 2-50). Sialkot 319-6, 102 overs (Azan Awaiz 161 not out, Mohsin Riaz 64, Ashir Mehmood 31, Abdul Rehman 28; Mohammad Amir Khan 4-116).

the tail for the home side after Josko Gvardiol's slack backpass allowed Moussa in to round Ederson and fire in from a narrow angle.

Guardiola held his head in his hands in response and worse was to come when Ederson failed to deal with Jordan Lotomba's near-post effort and the ball fell kindly for Gimenez to make it 3-2.

More kamikaze defending gifted Feyenoord an equaliser as Rico Lewis played Paixao inside. He eased around the onrushing Ederson and crossed for Hancko to head into an unguarded net. "It is a remarkable result for us," said Feyenoord coach Brian Priske. "At 3-0 down and in some phases of the game we were dominated by Man City, who for me are the best team in the world.

"But we were able to take three key moments to perfection and get the three goals and come away with the draw." City have now conceded two or more goals in six consecutive games for the first time since 1963. There was still time for more drama as Grealish's shot came back off the crossbar in City's search for a late winner. Instead, they had to settle for a point that will feel just as damaging as the previous five defeats for a side so used to winning.

Ben Stokes opted out of IPL to prolong England career

LONDON (Agencies): Captain Ben Stokes opted out of the Indian Premier League auction in order to prolong his England career.

In not taking part in the 'mega-auction' held last weekend, the 33-year-old faces being banned from the tournament for the next two seasons under new competition rules.

Speaking before leading England in the first Test against New Zealand in Christchurch on Thursday (22:00 GMT, Wednesday), Stokes told BBC Sport: "There's no hiding behind the fact that I'm at the back-end of my career.

"It's about looking at what I've got ahead and making the decision that is right for me to be able to prolong my career as long as possible. I want to be wearing this England shirt for as long as I can."

Stokes has been sold for more than £1m in three IPL auctions and was named the tournament's most valuable player for his spell with Rising Pune Supergiant in 2017. But his more recent career has been plagued by a left-knee issue and he missed four England Tests after sustaining a hamstring injury in August.

Stokes is due to lead England on the Ashes tour of Australia next winter.

The all-rounder has spoken about his personal struggle during England's 2-1 defeat in Pakistan last month, when he endured a disappointing time on the field after returning from

the hamstring problem. During the second Test, Stokes' house was burgled with his wife Clare and two children at home.

In Christchurch, the city of Stokes' birth, England begin a three-Test series that will take their total number of matches in 2024 to 17. No England team has ever played more in a calendar year. The tourists are handing a debut to 21-year-old Warwickshire left-hander Jacob Bethell, who will bat at number three despite never before batting higher than number four in first-class cricket.

New Zealand, fresh from a breathtaking 3-0 series win in India, welcome prolific batter Kane Williamson back from injury and give a first cap to seamer Nathan Smith, who spent part of last summer with Worcestershire.

Of a green-tinged pitch, Stokes said: "If you saw that pitch in England, you'd be praying to God that you won the toss and could bowl first. "It's amazing in New Zealand. You can look at a wicket and it plays completely different to what it looks like. We'll have to see how we go tomorrow, see what conditions we're faced with as the game goes further, and if we need to adapt to anything we'll try to do that."

New Zealand's win in India means they have an outside chance of reaching the World Test Championship final, having won the inaugural competi-

tion in 2021.

They join India, Australia, South Africa and Sri Lanka in vying for the two spots available, but England sit sixth in the table and are out of contention. "The World Test Championship is a bit confusing. I don't look at it," said Stokes. "Over a long period of time, if you're playing really good cricket, you're getting results that you want, you'll end up finding yourself in the final and in the mix.

"For me and this team it's about taking it game by game, series by series, and if you end up finding yourself in the position where you happen to be in the final, then it's great. I can't really ever remember if I've ever given any real time specifically to thinking about the World Test Championship."

England have not won a Test series in New Zealand in four attempts, dating back to 2008. Their last match in this country, a thrilling one-run defeat in Wellington in 2023, was only the fourth time any team had lost a Test after enforcing the follow-on.

"It's a cool rivalry that we've got," said New Zealand captain Tom Latham. "We've had some great battles over the last five, seven years with England and that was no different a couple of seasons ago when they were out here. "I'm sure it will produce some more thrilling games and both teams are looking forward to getting into it."

Shehar Bano joins National U-19 team for Asia Cup



F.P. Report

LODHARAN: Shehar Bano, player from Tareen Cricket Academy Lodhran, has been selected for the national Under-19

women's cricket team for the Asia Cup. Hailing from Chak No. 48/M in Lodhran, Shehar Bano represents and plays for the Tareen Cricket Academy

team. The owner of Tareen Cricket Academy, Ali Khan Tareen, has congratulated Shehar Bano on her selection for the national Under-19 team.



In brief

IRSA releases 94,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 94,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 48,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1498.78 feet and was 100.78 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 24,100 cusecs and 49,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1160.15 feet, which was 110.15 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 55,100, 45,400, 38,400 and 5,700 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.

Police conduct flag march

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police conducted a flag march on Wednesday to ensure law and order in the federal capital. According to public relations officer, the senior officials, along with the Traffic Police, Dolphin Squad, and Lady Police, participated in the march. The flag march commenced from Express Chowk and passing through various city routes, concluded at Zero Point. The purpose of the flag march is to demonstrate ICT Police's commitment to maintaining law and order and promoting unity and harmony. DIG Syed Ali Raza said, "No one will be allowed to take the law into their own hands, and violators will face legal action." He expressed hope that Islamabad's peace-loving citizens would fully cooperate with the police in ensuring law and order in the federal capital.

Police held drug dealers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Police have arrested three drug dealers and illegal arm holders and recovered illegal weapons from their possession during crackdown here on Wednesday. According to a police spokesman, Civil Lines Police held Umar and recovered 01 pistol of 30 bore from his possession. Similarly, Wah Cantt Police apprehended Habib and recovered 01 pistol of 09 mm from his custody. While, Dharmyal Police, while conducting raid, recovered 1.5 kg drugs from Irfanullah. Police have registered separate cases against the accused and further investigation was in progress. Divisional SPs commended the police teams' swift action and said that crackdown against drug dealers and illegal arm holders will continue without any discrimination. Likewise, Morgah Police arrested two members gang involved in street crimes. The arrested suspects were identified as Faisal and Bilal. Stolen money of Rs. 10,000 and a weapon were also recovered from their possession.

Cold and dry weather to persist: PMD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast cold and dry weather for most parts of the country during the next 24 hours. Smog/fog (in patches) is likely to prevail in isolated plain areas of Punjab and upper Sindh during morning/night. According to the synoptic situation, continental air was prevailing over most parts of the county.

Gilani praises Grand Mufti's contributions to Muslim world

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday expressed gratitude for the Saudi Arabi Grand Mufti's contributions to the Muslim world and his efforts in promoting Islamic values during challenging times.

During a meeting with the Grand Mufti, he highlighted the deep-rooted ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, founded on shared religious values and mutual respect. He underscored the importance of unity within the Muslim Ummah and reiterated the commitment of both nations to jointly address modern challenges.

"Pakistan seeks collaboration with Saudi Arabia in educational and religious sectors," Gilani said, adding that such coopera-

tion would help highlight Islam's message of peace.

He emphasized that fostering peace and stability in the region is a shared responsibility of the Muslim leadership.

The Chairman also praised the Grand Mufti's efforts in promoting tolerance and harmony, advocating for increased exchange of scholars and religious experts to strengthen mutual understanding.

He further commended the Grand Mufti's exemplary role in resolving conflicts and addressing contemporary issues, acknowledging his vital contribution to the unity and guidance of the Muslim Ummah. Gilani proposed accelerating religious education initiatives and facilitating expert delegation

exchanges between the two countries.

He also extended an invitation to the Grand Mufti to visit Pakistan, praising the deep connection between the people of Pakistan and the religious leadership of Saudi Arabia.

"The fatwas issued by the Grand Mufti serve as guidance not only for Saudi Arabia but for the entire Islamic world," Gilani said adding that the Grand Mufti has consistently provided direction on issues of unity and modern challenges facing the Muslim Ummah.

He acknowledged the Grand Mufti's exemplary role in resolving conflicts and addressing pressing issues, stressing that the government and people of Pakistan greatly value his positive contributions.

PPAF disburses Interest-Free Loans to over 25,000 families

ISLAMABAD (APP): As part of its commitment to uplift underprivileged communities, the government has provided interest-free loans to over 25,000 families in October 2024 through the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF).

The initiative, implemented in collaboration with partner organizations, has disbursed loans worth 1.2 billion rupees to ultra-poor households across the country.

According to an official source, the program aims to enhance financial inclu-

sion, create sustainable livelihoods, and empower economically marginalized segments of society.

This effort is expected to improve the economic conditions of beneficiaries by enabling them to earn better incomes, support their families, and achieve self-reliance. The government remains steadfast in its mission to promote financial stability and reduce poverty nationwide.

Interest Free Loan Programme is one of the major components of the National Poverty Graduation Initiative

financed by the Government of Pakistan.

The programme that feeds into PPAF's overall approach for poverty graduation approach provides interest free loans to the target population through the loan centers.

The programme is being implemented in more than 100 districts in provinces/regions including Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces and three regions namely Islamabad Capital Territory, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Project launched for capacity building training of QEC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC), via its flagship World Bank supported project Higher Education Development in Pakistan (HEDP), has focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning in decentralized higher education institutions i.e. Affiliated Colleges (AC) and Affiliating Universities (AU) by establishing quality enhancement units. These tertiary level institutions are often resource starved and need continuous support.

The Quality Enhancement Cells in Affiliated Colleges (QECACs) within the Quality Enhancement Cells (QEC) in affiliating universities aim at supporting the colleges affiliated with them. The QECACs oversee various aspects of the quality of education imparted at affiliated colleges e.g., faculty, evaluation system and curriculum etc. It is the responsibility of these universities to ensure the quality of the education of the programs authorized in their affiliated colleges, said a press released issued here Wednesday.

The QECACs also periodically assess all academic activities being undertaken by colleges and develop self-assessment reports. The reports include assessment of the program

offered in terms of the program objectives, learning outcomes, availability of faculty, requisite content relevance and resources needed.

The HEDP has established 45 functional units (QECACs) across Pakistan within QECs of affiliating universities. HEDP supported these by providing technical and financial support to the universities for QECACs. Likewise, Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs), the existing structures in the universities that were established by HEC, were also revamped by the HEDP to comply with the recently approved Quality Assurance framework of HEC. These QECs are envisioned to be strategic organs facilitating Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to fulfil their mission and subsequent goals having prime responsibility of quality in HEIs as well as in their constituent units and affiliated colleges.

Recently, the HEC revised 'QEC Terms of Reference / Functions', for the Quality Enhancement Cells, established in both private and public sector across the country via its Quality Assurance Agency. The HEDP project facilitated the reorganization and development of 45 QECs as per new framework, which were also duly verified by the third-party validation firm.

In this regard, a series of trainings are planned, and the first cohort of training was held at the National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF), Islamabad. More than 40 representatives from HEIs of Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa attended. The sessions focused on capacity-building of both QECs and the newly established QECACs across Pakistan.

In addition to expert trainers, HEC team including Agha Muhammad Raza, Deputy Director, Quality Assurance Agency HEC, Mr. Shoaib Irshad, Deputy Director, Coordination Division HEC and Dr. Arshad Bashir, Consultant HEDP, led various sessions. The key topics covered included quality assurance in higher education, roles, and responsibilities of QECs, implementing and monitoring QA processes and developing action plans for quality enhancement.

"It is the university that ultimately grants the degree to students, making it critically important for affiliated colleges to enhance the quality of education they provide. This means that affiliated colleges must strive to meet, or even exceed, the standards and benchmarks set by the university.



ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhary addressing a press conference at National Press Club. —APP Photo

IHC rejects DG NADRA's plea against degree cancellation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday rejected the petition of Zulifkar Ahmed, the Director General of NADRA, against cancellation of his equivalent degree by Higher Education Commission (HEC).

The court said that the petition is not as per the merit. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani heard the case and issued six-page written order into the matter.

It said that the court has given several opportunities to the petitioner after arguments on the report of concern university. The petitioner withdrew the power of attorney of his lawyer after the report of American university was presented, it added.

The court said that the petitioner withdrew the lawyer's power of attorney just to gain the time. The court said that it had asked the petitioner to submit the written arguments against the report.

It noted that as per the report the concern college has no record of the petitioner. The said that the concern university didn't verify the documents of the petitioner.

Motorways reopen after maintenance work

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) has reopened all sections of the motorways which were closed on November 22 due to maintenance work.

According to Motorway police Northzone spokesman, Muhammad Saqib, all motorways which fall under the jurisdiction of NHMP including the M-2: Islamabad to Lahore, M-3: Lahore to Abdul Hakeem, M-4: Pindi Bhattian to Multan, M-14: Dera Ismail Khan to Hakla and others were fully operational for commuters.

NHMP asked the people to contact helpline 130 or visit NHMP's official social media platforms for any further information on traffic conditions.

Ahsan Iqbal criticizes CM KP for violating laws

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday criticized the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur for violating laws in the public meeting by using official machinery.

Gandapur had utilized official resources to sabotage peace and business environment in the federal capital, he said while talking to a private televi-

sion channel.

The KP chief minister should utilize the official machinery to maintain law and order situation in the provincial areas, he said.

There is an urgent need to pay attention to the deteriorating situation in Parachinar, he said adding that CM KP should take immediate measures for controlling the law and order situation in some provincial parts.

In reply to a question

about PTI protest demonstration near D-Chowk, he said PTI is responsible for damaging business environment across the country. In the past, he said PTI public gathering had made serious damages to the economic sector.

Commenting on Governor Rule in KP, he said options are available in the constitution and the decision could be made in the larger public interest of the province.

Bilawal to address PPP's 57th Foundation Day

RAWALPINDI (APP): Vice-President Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Punjab Malik Khalid Nawaz Bobi has said that the 57th Foundation Day of PPP would be celebrated on November 30 with zeal and zest.

Talking to APP, he said that Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

would address through video link while the services of founder Chairman Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and former prime minister Muhtarama Benazir Bhutto Shaheed would be remembered.

He said that the founder chairman of the Pakistan People's Party Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was a

genuine leader and statesman whose struggle to provide rights to the people was unprecedented in Pakistan's political history.

Bobi said that Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto were the voices of the poor and they struggled to strengthen democracy in the country.

Metro bus service has restored in twin cities

ISLAMABAD (INP): Metro bus service has been restored in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, after being shut down for four days.

The bus service was closed down due to security concerns raised due to the protest announced by the opposition party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

The district administration had ordered the closure of the service to prevent any untoward incident.

In Rawalpindi part of the bus service, there were also some track restoration work being done, which also caused the closure of the service. In Rawalpindi, Metro bus was not operational from November 28 to December 1. In Islamabad, it remained closed from IJP to Pak Secretariat and from Saddar Station to Faizabad.

However, now the Metro bus service has been fully restored, all the way from Saddar Station to Pak Secretariat.

Internet services partially resumed in Islamabad and Rawalpindi after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf called off its protest in the federal capital following major crackdown.

Internet services were suspended in the twin cities for the last two days on the orders of the Interior Ministry following the protest.

However, the users are complaining about glitches in the services of social media apps.

IESCO notifies power shutdown programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday 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, TDGP, Treat Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Shalimar City, Top City, Muntaz City, F-17/I&II, Nogazi, Fazyaya-I&II, Bajnial-I&II, Lakho Road, NRC, Golra, Pirwadhai, Katarian, Holy Family, F-Block, E-Block, Afandi Colony, Muzammil Town, Al Noor Colony, Service Road,

Dhok Hakmdad, 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, Dharmial, UC Lakhna, Gulshan Saeed, Hyder Road, Tipu Road, Makkah Chowk, CBR, I, Askari 14, Kalyal, Dharmial, 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, Babarakhi, 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, Zabar Shaheed, F-3 Gul Afshan, Mandi Bhalwal, Shamsabad, Akram Shaheed, F-8 Civil Line, Pakhwal, M Riaz Shaheed, Dinah, I, Bakrala, Bhagwal, New Chakiam, Chautala, Dinah, 4 City, Gujar Khan, Mitwa, Ghauri Dhamek, Kalia, Mal Awan, Kantrila, Islampura Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Tharpal, Line Park, Megan, Khairpur, Islamia Chowk, Dera Muslim, Dhadiyal Rural, Malhal Mughal, Bhikri, Darya Jalap, Tuba, PD Khan, Sagarpur, Pipli, 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-I, MH-2, Zeeshan Colony, Haider Road, NLC feeders, DG Khan Cement Factory Grid Station and surrounding areas.



ISLAMABAD: Workers installing the grills on divider of Jinnah Avenue which damaged following PTI protest in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

Taliban flog man 80 times
KABUL (Amu TV): The Taliban publicly flogged a man in the central province of Parwan on Wednesday on charges of "Qazaf," or falsely accusing another person of adultery, in the latest instance of corporal punishment under their rule. In a statement, the Taliban's Supreme Court said the man, identified as Issa Khan, had accused another individual, Abdul Razaq, of adultery but failed to substantiate his claim.

IEA rejects new UN's report
KABUL (Ariana News): Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the UN's latest report on media restrictions was not objective and rejected its findings. UN in Afghanistan stated in its report that after reviewing the media situation from August 15, 2021 to September 30, 2024, there had been 336 cases of violations of human rights of journalists and media workers in the country, including 256 arrests and ill-treatment and 75 instances of threats and intimidation.

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

MoIC holds seminar to chronicle *jihad* history



KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan organized a seminar titled Examining Afghanistan's 20-Year Occupation to preserve and document the history of the Afghan people's jihad. The seminar, chaired by Mawlawi Atiqullah Azizi, Deputy Minister of Culture and Art, aimed to draft research articles and develop strategies for chronicling Afghanistan's jihad history. Mawlawi Azizi emphasized the importance of documenting the sacred

ritifices, and heroism of various segments of Afghan society during the 20-year occupation into a documented and preserved book. Meanwhile, Mawlawi Zabihullah Noorani, General Director of the Directorate for Preserving Jihad Values, described the seminar as a significant opportunity to collect evidence of the horrors of occupation and the heroism of the Afghan people. Mawlawi Zabihullah Noorani stressed the importance of scholarly articles in enriching historical knowledge and advancing the documentation process. Participants shared their suggestions on selecting authors and emphasized the critical role of academic papers in this endeavor, considering the seminar as an essential first step toward writing the history of Afghanistan's jihad.

Opium production in Afghanistan sees 30% increase in 2024: Report

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reports that opium production in Afghanistan is still 93% lower than in 2022, but it has increased by about 30% in 2024. In its latest report, published on Wednesday, the UNODC notes that the level of opium production in Afghanistan has remained low for the second consecutive year. According to the report, opium production in Afghanistan dropped by 93% after the Taliban imposed a ban on poppy cultivation. However, production in 2024 has increased by 30% compared to 2023. The UN report shows that opium production in 2024 reached 433 tons, marking a 30% increase in production volume. Additionally, 12,800 hectares of land were used for poppy cultivation this year, representing a 19% increase in the area cultivated compared to 2023. The value of the opium produced in 2024 is estimated at \$260 million, reflecting a 130% increase from the previous year. Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director of the UNODC, stated that "international efforts must be coordinated to ensure that this reduction does not lead to the production of other dangerous drugs like methamphetamine within Afghanistan or the region." She also emphasized the need to support rural communities dependent on poppy cultivation by investing in infrastructure, agricultural resources, and sustainable livelihoods to provide legal and economic alternatives. The increase in opium production in 2024 is concerning, especially in the context of international efforts to combat drug trafficking and addiction. The rise in opium value also suggests that the country's drug trade remains a major challenge. To effectively reduce opium production, there must be long-term solutions that address both the economic needs of farmers and the broader regional impact of drug production. Investment in legal alternatives and infrastructure could help transition rural communities away from illicit crop cultivation.

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Minister of Railways travels to Turkey



KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Mohammad Ishaq Sahibzada, Deputy Minister of Railways at the Ministry of Public Works, has traveled to Turkey to attend the 34th Regional Meeting of the International Union of Railways (UIC). According to the Ministry of Public Works, the meeting will focus on improving railway and transportation activities, attracting investment, and reviewing the recent achievements of countries in the region. During the meeting, Deputy Minister Sahibzada will deliver a speech about Afghanistan's railway activities, achievements, ongoing projects, regional connectivity, progress, and future plans for the national railway network. The UIC is a global professional association dedicated to enhancing railways and developing rail transportation. Afghanistan became a member of the UIC in 2013.

Alireza appointed as ambassador to Kabul

KABUL (TOLONews): Iran's Foreign Minister has dismissed the ambassador and special representative of the country's president for Afghanistan and appointed Alireza Bigdeli as Iran's ambassador to Afghanistan. Reports indicate that the newly appointed ambassador to Afghanistan has previous experience as Iran's ambassador to Azerbaijan, Cyprus, and Turkey. "Alireza Bigdeli has been appointed as the acting head of Iran's embassy in Afghanistan. The foreign minister, in a decree, appointed Alireza Bigdeli as the acting representative of Iran in Kabul." "The hiring, dismissal, and replacement of officials by agencies and ministries of world countries is a routine practice. If Iran is changing its diplomats, it does not mean that the embassy will collapse. They have their own criteria to consider effectiveness," said Aziz Maarej, a political analyst. Iranian media reports also indicate that the position of special representative of Iran's president for Afghanistan has been abolished, and the special representative will now operate under the Iranian foreign minister's supervision. "With his strong political and diplomatic skills and experience, he was able to play a significant role in expanding relations between the Iran and Afghanistan," said Najib Rahman Shamal, an international relations analyst. The IEA has yet to comment on the appointment of Alireza Bigdeli as the ambassador of Iran's embassy in Afghanistan.

Fazal attends transport and transit conference

KABUL (BNA): The Embassy of Afghanistan in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, has announced the participation of Fazal Mohammad Saber, the Chargé d'Affaires of Afghanistan, in the opening ceremony of the International Transport and Transit Conference and Exhibition (ITTC) 2024 held in Turkmenistan. Fazal Mohammad Saber attended the event at the official invitation of Turkmenistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the sidelines of the conference, he met with officials and representatives of Afghan trade, transport, and logistics companies. During these meetings, discussions focused on transport and transit opportunities in Turkmenistan and the region, regional transport and transit corridors such as the Lapis Lazuli Transit Corridor, bilateral and regional cooperation, logistical collaborations, and the regulations and tariff facilities offered for transit. It is noteworthy that the event attracted 600 representatives from 40 countries, including delegates from the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the International Air Transport Association, the International Maritime Organization, the International Road Transport Union, the United Nations, and financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The participants showcased their latest achievements in transport and transit development.

Herat Regional Hospital's ICU upgraded

HERAT (BNA): Officials from the Herat Department of Public Health have announced that the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of Herat Regional Hospital has been upgraded with new medical equipment provided by Turkey's TIKKA office. Mohammad Ibrahim Anis, Director of Herat Regional Hospital, expressed gratitude to TIKKA officials, emphasizing that these medical tools address critical needs in the ICU. He added that this upgrade will enhance healthcare services and improve the quality of care for patients. The equipment includes echocardiography devices for heart disease, ventilators, five monitoring units, and five standard patient beds, according to Arafat Deniz, Head of the TIKKA office in Herat. Doctors at the hospital highlighted the importance of these new resources, while also calling for further support in procuring medical supplies and medications. It is noteworthy that TIKKA has previously contributed medical equipment to various departments of Herat Regional Hospital.

Measles vaccination drive to begin next year

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan has announced that the necessary budget for implementing the measles vaccination campaign for the next year has been secured. Noor Jalal Jalali, the acting head of the Ministry of Public Health, held an online meeting with representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO), Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), UNICEF, and other vaccination partners. The Ministry emphasized that the nationwide measles vaccination campaign will begin next year across the country. Previously, the World Health Organization expressed concern over the increase in measles cases in Afghanistan, noting that the number of cases this year has surpassed the previous year's figures. According to WHO statistics, at least 160 deaths related to measles have been reported in Afghanistan in 2024. Humanitarian organizations have repeatedly expressed concern over the lack of access to healthcare services for Afghan citizens, especially in rural areas. The WHO reported that, as of the start of 2024, a total of 36,618 measles cases have been registered in Afghanistan. While the government's efforts to address the measles outbreak through vaccination are promising, addressing the larger issue of healthcare access—particularly in remote areas—remains a significant challenge. The success of the vaccination campaign will depend not only on local government efforts but also on continued international support and collaboration with organizations like World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF to ensure that vaccines reach every corner of Afghanistan.

Chief of Army Staff expresses sympathy for victims of accident

KABUL (BNA): The Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of IEA expressed solidarity with the families affected by the recent traffic incident in Badakhshan, reiterating that the National Islamic Army will always stand by its people with all available resources. According to the Ministry of Defense, Hafiz Mohammad Fasihuddin "Fitrat," the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, visited the site of the tragic accident on the Baharak-Fayzabad road in Badakhshan. The incident resulted in a vehicle plunging into the Kokcha River, claiming the lives of six passengers. During the visit, he extended his condolences to the victims' families. Fitrat praised the prompt response and relentless efforts of National Islamic Army personnel in recovering the victims' bodies. He reaffirmed the army's commitment to supporting the people in all circumstances with utmost dedication. Additionally, the Chief of Staff urged drivers to strictly adhere to traffic regulations to prevent such incidents.



8 million textbooks to be printed: Islamic Emirate

KHOST (TOLONews): Officials from the Ministry of Education have announced the printing of eight million textbooks to address the challenges faced by students in the country. Habibullah Agha, acting Minister of Education, during a meeting with the head of education and tribal elders of Khost province, stated that the Islamic Emirate is committed to the pursuit of modern sciences. The acting Minister of Education said that some groups are spreading negative propaganda, claiming that the officials of the Islamic Emirate have neglected the education sector. He further mentioned efforts to promote balanced education in the country and also spoke about changes to the curriculum. Habibullah Agha said: "This is enemy propaganda; do not listen to or heed it. You can see for yourselves how we are focused on modern sciences. Modern sciences are essential for our lives." Meanwhile, some teachers say that to strengthen the curriculum, certain religious and modern science subjects should be added to the syllabus. "Alongside the addition of religious topics, scientific subjects like biology and other fields have also been expanded, which makes us happy, and we support these efforts," said Homayoun Pazhman, a teacher. "If the Islamic Emirate takes responsibility in this regard and strengthens the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, it will help Afghanistan stand on its own feet in all aspects," Mohammad Naeem Sajid, a teacher, told TOLONews. Previously, some students from public schools had complained about a shortage of textbooks.



Russia sends 1,200 tons of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan

KABUL (TOLONews): Russia has sent 1,200 tons of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan in the past 12 months. The Russian news agency TASS reported that the Secretary of the Russian Security Council, during a meeting with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, stated that part of this aid has been delivered to Afghanistan through the World Food Program (WFP). The deputy spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate said that the meeting also addressed strengthening economic, trade, and transit relations, as well as Russian humanitarian aid and investments in Afghanistan. Hamdullah Fitrat, Deputy Spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, said: "Both countries discussed investment in the transit sector, broad cooperation, and a joint trade forum. In this forum, special committees will be designated for various sectors." Some economic analysts believe that strengthening economic ties with Russia and attracting its aid and investments could be beneficial for Afghanistan's economic growth and development. Abdul Basir Turki, an economic analyst, said: "The Islamic Emirate must work harder to seize this opportunity and create a favorable environment for Russian investment to achieve mutual engagement." Qutbuddin Yaqubi, another economic analyst, said: "Russia can play a significant role in Afghanistan's economy by developing infrastructure, investing in the energy sector, and connecting Afghanistan's trade routes with the region." Previously, the Russian President's Special Representative for Afghanistan, during a meeting with the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, expressed Moscow's desire to expand economic and trade relations with Afghanistan.

450 recovered addicts rejoin families in Kandahar province

K A N D A H A R (TOLONews): 450 individuals addicted to drugs in Kandahar province have returned to their families after receiving treatment. Among them are doctors, teachers, and even students. Rahim, a 33-year-old who was previously a nurse, said that the dark and heavy smoke of drugs had taken all the joys of life from him. "I had become addicted to drugs, but after treatment, I regained my health. Now I will return to society with two professions: nursing and motorcycle repair, and meet the needs of my family," said Rahimullah, a treated patient. At the drug addiction treatment center, all patients receive training in professions such as car repair, making electrical appliances, and plumbing. "I was previously a senior officer in the 205th Atal Corps. I became addicted to drugs, but now I am treated and will return to my family with the profession of tailoring," said Abdul Qayoum, another treated patient. They say that with the skills they have learned, they will now contribute to meeting the living expenses of their families. Currently, 1,500 individuals are undergoing treatment at this rehabilitation center. According to officials, many of these individuals turned to drugs due to unemployment and psychological pressures. Abdul Shukor Shakib, the head of the addiction treatment center in Kandahar, told TOLONews: "God willing, we will provide work tools to those who have recovered and completed professional training. They will continue their activities, and this process will remain sustainable." Mohammad Azizi, a representative of Kandahar's Public Health Directorate, said: "Many of the addicts include educated individuals, but we treat them." Officials at the addiction treatment center in Kandahar also said that in addition to distributing work tools, they will create employment opportunities for those who have recovered.





ISLAMABAD: A view of burnt container at Jinnah Avenue during PTI protest.

SC refuses to take suo moto notice in PTI protests

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court has refused to take suo moto notice of reports of killings in the protest of PTI continued for a couple of days in Islamabad.

The five-member Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, was hearing miscellaneous petitions regarding climate change and the PTI Chairman's petition regarding the merger of Federally Administered Tribal Areas into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. On the request of the Counsel for Chairman PTI Advocate Babar Awan the Court disposed of the petition.

Babar Awan pleaded before the court that FATA is already merged in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and there is no need for any action in this regard. Meanwhile, Advocate General for KP, who was present in the hearing through video link, pleaded before the court to take suo moto notice of the use of force and killings, as the Constitutional Bench has the authority to do so. The Court however rejected the plea observing that the matter is not before the court. Justice Musarrat Hilali admonished the Advocate General KP for attempting to indulge the court in political affairs.

Present situation is due to Feb 6 polls: Fazl

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Jamiat Ul-ema-e-Islam (JUI) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has expressed that the present political situation of the country is due to the Feb 8 elections. Talking to the media, the JUI chief said the real basis of the problem is vote theft as elections should be held in accordance with the constitution.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman said there's no doubt that a worker is sincere with the leadership and giving the workers the right line is the job of the leadership. "I don't want to bring the internal affairs of any party into discussion," he said. "I condemn the violent incidents in Islamabad," he remarked.

"There is no government in Pakistan at the moment, there must be a serious government in the country." The JUI-F head said if the government wanted to jail you but you wanted a release, then the result was nothing but anarchy. If there is any dialogue, a way out will surely come, the JUI chief said the PTI should be allowed to hold a rally. The situation in the country will be out of control if things are not handled with maturity, he cautioned.

IGP confirms arrest of 954 protesters

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, announced that 954 protesters have been arrested over the past three days, with 610 arrested yesterday alone.

Addressing a press conference along with the chief commissioner Islamabad, the IGP reported the confiscation of over 200 vehicles and 39 various types of weapons, including Kalashnikovs, 12-bore guns, and other firearms during PTI protest. "We have all the video evidence showing armed protesters advancing with masks on their faces," he said.

He further disclosed that 52 out of 71 injured individuals were law enforcement personnel. "Protesters used large fans to blow tear gas fumes back towards our forces," he explained. Weapons were seized in large numbers from arrested protesters, emphasizing the gravity of the situation.

Meanwhile, petrol pumps were closed due to potential threats of damage, confirmed the Chief Commissioner of Islamabad. The IGP reiterated a zero-tolerance policy toward acts of terrorism, stating, "We will not tolerate any terrorist activities under any circumstances."

Aseefa Bhutto attends Global Women's Forum

F.P. Report

DUBAI: Ms Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, First Lady of Pakistan and Member of the National Assembly, attended the Global Women's Forum, being held in Dubai on 26 November 2024. The forum was organised by Dubai Women Establishment.

The inaugural session of the Forum was attended by His Highness Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE; Her Highness Emine Erdogan, First Lady of Türkiye and Her Highness Louise Araneta Marcos, First Lady of Philippine.

The event attracted approximately 6,000 dignitaries and advocates for women's empowerment and gender balance. Her excellency, Aseefa Bhutto



Zardari also participated in the panel discussion, highlighting the positive contributions of women in Pakistan.

On the sideline of the Forum, Her Excellency Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, First Lady of Pakistan held a Bilateral meeting with Her Excellency Sheikh Latifa Bint Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum,

Chairperson of Dubai Culture & Arts Authority, Member for the Dubai Council and Member of the Executive Council of Dubai. During the two day forum, Her Excellency Aseefa Bhutto Zardari also had interaction with H.E. Mona Ghanem Al Marri Chairperson of the Board & Managing Director Dubai Women Establishment.

PNS Zulfikar conducts exercise with Korean Ship

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship PNS ZULFIQUAR conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Republic of Korea Navy Ship WANG GEON in the North Arabian Sea. Both ships operated under the task forces of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), CTF-150 and CTF-151, respectively.

The exercise included tactical maneuvers and communication drills, aimed at enhancing operational interoperability and fostering professional ties between the two navies. CTF-150 and CTF-151 focus on deterring illicit maritime activities such as drug trafficking and piracy,



which threaten security in international waters.

The successful conduct of this joint exercise underscores the commitment of both navies and their respective Task Forces to upholding maritime security, supporting lawful activities at sea, and promoting stability and cooperation in

this strategically vital region. Pakistan and the Republic of Korea consistently contribute ships and aircraft to maritime security efforts under the CMF banner. This collaboration is particularly valuable for building mutual understanding and operational synergy.

Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire takes effect

BEIRUT (AFP): A ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah came into effect on Wednesday after both sides accepted an agreement brokered by the US and France, a rare victory for diplomacy in a region traumatised by two devastating conflicts for over a year.

At least 55 people were killed on Monday in Israeli attacks on Lebanon, bringing the death toll since October 2023 to 3,823, the Lebanese Health Ministry said. A total of 160 others were wounded over the past 24 hours, raising the number of injuries to 15,859. In the hours leading up to the ceasefire, Israeli airstrikes on the Lebanese capital Beirut and its southern suburbs, as well as the southern and eastern provinces of the country, had intensified, resulting in dozens of deaths and injuries.

While the ceasefire largely held on Wednesday morning, Israel said it identified Hezbollah operatives returning to areas near the border and had opened fire to prevent them from coming closer. Lebanon's army, tasked with helping ensure the ceasefire holds, said in a statement on Wednesday it was preparing to deploy to the south of the country. The military also asked that

residents of border villages delay returning home until the Israeli military, which has fought against Hezbollah on several occasions and pushed around six kilometres into Lebanese territory, withdraws.

The agreement, which promises to end a conflict across the Israeli-Lebanese border that has killed thousands of people since it was ignited by Israel's invasion of Gaza last year, is touted as a major achievement for the US in the waning days of President Joe Biden's administration. "Force must give way to dialogue and negotiation. This has now been achieved in Lebanon, and it must happen as soon as possible in the Gaza Strip," French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot told franceinfo radio.

Bursts of gunfire could be heard across Lebanon's capital Beirut after the ceasefire took effect at 0200 GMT. It was not immediately clear if the shooting was celebratory, as gunfire had also been used to alert residents who may have missed evacuation warnings issued by Israel's military. Later, cars and vans piled high with mattresses, suitcases and even furniture streamed

through the southern port city of Tyre, which was heavily bombed in the final days before the ceasefire, heading further south.

Some cars waved Lebanese flags, others honked, and one woman could be seen flashing the victory sign with her fingers. Many of the villages the people were likely returning to have been destroyed. But displaced families renting out alternative housing have been under financial pressure and hoped to avoid paying another month of rent, some of them told Reuters.

Some displaced people said they were still nervous about returning. Hussam Arrout, a father of four who said he was displaced from Beirut's southern suburbs and was originally from the southern border village of Mays al-Jabal, said he was itching to get to his ancestral home. "The Israelis haven't withdrawn in full, they're still on the edge. So we decided to wait until the army announces that we can go in. Then we'll turn the cars on immediately and go to the village," he said. Biden spoke at the White House on Tuesday shortly after Israel's security cabinet approved the agreement in a 10-1 vote.

PM for firm decisions

(Continued from Page 1)

He said that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the terrorists and insurgency was on the rise while in Kurram, dozens of people were killed, but instead focusing on the law and order situation there, the provincial government had left the residents in the lurch and led an armed attack on Islamabad. The prime minister said that the provincial government of KPK did not pay heed to the hardships of the poor people but instead indulged in foul language and hurled threats against the federal government.

The recent mayhem had caused Rs190 billion daily damages to the country's economy adversely affecting country's exports and imports, he said, adding for the personal interests, their leadership was damaging the country's interests which 'is a bigger crime and will not be forgiven'.

He said that today's meeting had only one point agenda that was to discuss the situation seriously emerging after repeated assaults by a party as they could no longer sap their energy and resources in confronting them.

He further stressed that the government would not let certain situation in future to happen under any condition. It would not happen; not under their watch and time. "We will steer Pakistan out of the challenges," he added. In a veiled manner, he said it pained them (PTI) that Pakistan was saved from default. He prime minister credited the coalition parties in the federation who with sincere and joint efforts, arrested the galloping inflation and price hike.

The coalition parties had put their political interests at stake to save the country. In the last eight months, the economy was on path of

recovery. "No one is empowered to create such a miracle but owing to joint efforts," he added. The prime minister recollected that the PTI leadership could not defy the 2018 historic rigging and Imran Niazi at that time had promised him to form an inquiry committee but it could not hold its meetings.

The prime minister said with personal centered statement, an attempt was made to harm fraternal ties with a brotherly country. The prime minister termed the political manoeuvres by the particular party as 'a Fitna' as there was no room for chaos in politics and likened these to worst kind of fascism of Nazis. The directive of Islamabad High Court was torn into pieces as a person was hell bent to sacrifice the country for the sake of his vested interests, he further added. "We will break that hand which harms the country," he added.

PTI's current protest was not less than May 9 riots: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that there is a time for differences and protests, but calling for demonstrations on sensitive occasions is not a good tradition. During the protest, the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Bushra Bibi mobilized the entire government machinery, with police effectively held hostage. Police, Rangers, and FC personnel were martyred. PTI sought casualties to exploit for political purposes. However, the Interior Minister remained active and, through a well-planned strategy, prevented PTI's objectives from being realized.

Speaking to the media outside the NAB court in Karachi, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, remarked that Bushra Bibi was even more extreme than Imran Khan in her actions, doing everything possible to incite violence. Bushra Bibi and Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur stood on the container, declaring they would take Imran Khan with them. However, when the police took action, both CM Gandapur and Bushra Bibi were the first to flee.

He urged the public not to heed those who incite violence for political gain, emphasizing that PTI attempted to indoctrinate innocent people with terrorism. He compared this protest call to the events of May 9, stating that PTI intended to orchestrate similar incidents. Such actions, he said, should serve as a wake-up call for everyone.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam



Memon stated that while they respect Bushra Bibi, her role has been negative. He emphasized that no country permits armed groups to attack police and security forces or to set fire to government property. Those who took up arms, he stressed, must be brought to justice.

He stated that while protest is everyone's right, protesters should not be armed with weapons or tear gas guns. The purpose of a protest is not to hold the country or the federal capital hostage with armed groups. He warned that if such actions are tolerated, armed groups could emerge anywhere in the future.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that they, too, have been attending court proceedings for years, and PTI members should also seek relief through legal channels. He recalled that their leaders, President Asif Ali Zardari and Ms. Faryal Talpur, were imprisoned, yet despite having a government in Sindh, they never resorted to such actions. He emphasized that even during long marches, when their path was blocked and they faced violence, the PPP leadership firmly instructed them never to attack the state or misbehave

with anyone under any circumstances.

He stated that the statements of MNAs from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are publicly known, revealing that the Chief Minister of KP provided them with government funds to fill vehicles for the protest. He criticized the misuse of government machinery, highlighting how Ali Amin Gandapur openly boasted about having the resources to mobilize. Referring to Gandapur's recent actions, he remarked that such individuals are unfit to govern.

He stated that PTI was not inherently a bad party, but its leader ruined it. He criticized Imran Khan for speaking about revolution while his own children and relatives live comfortably abroad. "What kind of revolution is this," he asked, "where their children enjoy life in cold countries while the children of the nation endure hardship and violence?"

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that protests have been organized during significant events, such as the visit of the Chinese President, negotiations with the IMF, and now the visit of the President of Belarus. He alleged that India and Israel funded PTI's election campaigns and that the late Arshad Sharif had named those who provided the funds. He claimed that those behind PTI's funding aim to incite protests in Pakistan during critical moments. He stressed that in politics, national interests must take precedence over personal gains. Referring to the protest on November 24, he noted it could have been held on November 30 instead, but it was deliberately timed to project a negative image of Pakistan internationally.

PHC reserves verdict against Civil Judges' interviews

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Fazal Subhan has reserved its judgment on a petition filed by two candidates, Salman and Irfan, challenging the interviews conducted for the appointment of civil judges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Wednesday.

The petitioners, argued that they had objections to the chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission (KPPSC), who conducted the interviews. They claimed that the KPPSC had announced 84 vacancies for civil judges, but only 22 candidates were able to pass the written test. Out of these 22 candidates, only 10 were able to pass the interview.

The petitioners alleged that the interview process was not transparent and that candidates were failed for not speaking English fluently. However, Justice Ijaz Anwar remarked that English is not only useful for judges but also for lawyers. He advised the petitioners to work hard and try again next time. PHC observed that the process of appointing judges should be difficult to ensure that only capable individuals

are selected.

The petitioners' lawyer, Afrasiab Wazir advocate argued that the Sindh High Court had ordered that interviews for judicial appointments should be video recorded. He requested the court to issue a similar order in this case.

Justice Ijaz Anwar agreed that video recording of interviews is a good practice, which can help to ensure transparency and fairness in the selection process. After hearing the arguments, PHC reserved its judgment and announced that it would issue a suitable order in the case.

Court dismisses Bahria town owner plea seeking cancellation of FIR: Peshawar High Court has dismissed a writ petition filed by the owner of Bahria Town, seeking the cancellation of a First Information Report (FIR) registered against him. The court's decision was announced in a written verdict authored by Chief Justice Peshawar High Court, Justice Ishfaq Ibrahim, on Wednesday.

The petition has challenged the registration of FIR against him by the Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) Muthra. The TMA had registered the FIR, alleging that Bahria Town had launched a private housing

scheme without obtaining the necessary No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the authorities.

During the hearing of the petition, the counsel for the petitioner argued that the FIR was registered in violation of the court's order, which had restrained the TMA from taking any action against Bahria Town. The counsel further argued that the FIR was based on mala fide intentions and was an attempt to harass the petitioner.

On the other hand, the counsel for the TMA argued that the FIR was registered in accordance with the law and that Bahria Town had launched the private housing scheme without obtaining the necessary NOC. The counsel added that the petitioner had obtained a stay order from the court, which had restrained the TMA from taking any action against Bahria Town. In its written verdict, PHC held that the petitioner had failed to make out a case for the cancellation of the FIR. The court observed that the registration of the FIR was in accordance with the law and that Bahria Town. The court held that the petitioner could raise his objections before the trial court at the time of framing of charges.

Kundi calls APC for peace in Kurram

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday expressed concerns over the deteriorating security situations in the province especially in Kurram district and announced to visit Parachinar to look into the matter.

Addressing press conference here at Governor House, soon after performing Umrah, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that the current major issue in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is law and order that destabilized the whole system. Governor Kundi highlighted the deteriorating security situation in Kurram District, where around 150 people have lost their lives and more than 200 have been injured due to ongoing violence since October.

Governor Kundi expressed concerns over the lack of attention from the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying that while the Chief Executive is preoccupied with issues in Islamabad, the situation in Kurram remains dire. He said, "I will personally visit Kurram to assess the situation and work towards restoring

peace there." Kundi also called for unity among the province's political leadership, stressing that when they come together, solutions to issues can be found.

He invited the Chief Minister to join him in Kurram to play a role in controlling the situation. "When the political leadership unites, the way forward becomes clear," he added. In an effort to address the ongoing crisis, the Governor announced plans to hold an All-Party Conference at the Governor House in the first week of December.

He extended an invitation to the Chief Minister, as well as to all political parties, to participate in this conference, which he believes could help find a resolution to the security challenges in the province. Governor Kundi also discussed humanitarian efforts in Kurram, mentioning that the Red Crescent is actively assisting the victims of the violence. However, he expressed disappointment with the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), which had requested assistance but claimed to have no resources to offer.

The Governor emphasized the

need for full implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) to address security concerns nationwide. He also criticized the recent unrest in Islamabad, saying that such incidents of chaos have undermined national security.

On the security situation, Kundi raised questions about the recent incidents involving the Chief Minister's security, where 1,500 Frontier Reserve Police (FRPs) were deployed, but still, containers were set on fire. He questioned whether this was a planned escape or a failure in security measures. Further, Governor Kundi urged the federal government to fulfill its financial commitments to the merged districts, saying a promise of 100 billion rupees for the areas. He stressed that the provincial government would continue to fight the case of province right at national level. Regarding the recent protests, the Governor mentioned that both law enforcement and protestors had casualties, but questioned the validity of claims from the opposition about their losses, saying that no funerals or memorial services had been seen.