

Child dead, six injured
F.P. Report
GHALANAI: A grenade attack on a house in Mohmand district on Friday left a child dead and six others including women injured. Police said the incident occurred in Char Gali area of tehsil Ambar Utmankhel where a grenade was thrown in a house owned by Maulana Muhammad aka Machine Mulla. The blast left a child dead and injured six others including the women.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a high level meeting regarding law and order situation.

EU lifts ban on PIA flights to Europe

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has officially lifted the suspension on flight operations of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). Nadir Shafi Dar, Director General of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA), also confirmed that Third Country Operator (TCO) authorisation has been issued to Airblue. DG CAA expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister, Aviation Minister, and Secretary Aviation for their unwavering support, which enabled the PCAA to achieve this historic milestone. He commended his entire team for their tireless efforts and dedication to ensuring effective safety oversight. On this momentous occasion, DG CAA extended his heartfelt congratulations to the entire Pakistanist nation, airlines, and the aviation sector.

Additionally, DG CAA specially acknowledged the officials of the European Commission and the European Aviation Safety Agency for their consistent coordination and support throughout the process of lifting the suspension. Defence and Aviation Minister Khawaja Asif Friday confirmed that the European Commission and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) lifted the ban on PIA flights to Europe. Calling it a historic day, the federal minister credited the success to the Ministry of Aviation's focused efforts and adherence to international safety standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization

(ICAO). The defence minister stated, "We are aiming to resume operations as soon as possible. While I cannot provide an exact date, it's only a matter of time." He further explained that PIA, which is in the process of privatisation, needs new aircraft for its fleet before it can restart services to Europe. "PIA is facing a significant shortage of aircraft for these new routes," Asif said, adding that this would also assist in the airline's financial recovery. Regarding privatisation, Asif noted, "Our initial round of privatisation did not receive much response. However, regaining these European routes is a major boost for PIA and will make it more appealing to potential buyers." He also mentioned that while the privatisation transaction may require restructuring, the process would move forward swiftly.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday welcomed the lifting of ban on Pakistan Airline (PIA) flights by the European Commission and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). In a statement issued by the PM Office, the prime minister congratulated Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, aviation ministry, authorities of Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority and PIA management. He highlighted that lifting of the ban will strengthen PIA's reputation and benefit it financially. He said this reflected the success of Pakistan's policies and it will also facilitate air travel for Pakistanis living in Europe.

Iran, Europeans to keep talking as tensions ratchet up

GENEVA (AFP): Iran, Britain, France and Germany agreed to continue diplomatic talks following a discreet meeting on Friday touching on Tehran's nuclear programme, amid surging tensions even before Donald Trump's return to the White House. Following the talks in Geneva, shrouded in an unusual level of secrecy, the parties each took to social media to say the discussions had focused on Iran's nuclear programme and sanctions, and other regional issues. The sides had "agreed to continue diplomatic dialogue in the near future", the German foreign ministry and the high-level diplomats representing France, Britain and Iran said separately on X. Providing a bit more detail, Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs, described Friday's discussions as "candid". "Our preference is the path of dialogue and engagement," he wrote. The stakes were laid bare in a warning from Britain's foreign intelligence chief that Iran's nuclear ambitions posed a

major global security threat, despite its weakened position after setbacks dealt to its Islamist allies Hamas and Hezbollah in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. "Iran's allied militias across the Middle East have suffered serious blows," Secret Intelligence Service chief Richard Moore said in a speech in Paris. "But the regime's nuclear ambitions continue to threaten all of us." Friday's meeting took place in the context of extreme tension in the Middle East between Israel and Iran and its allies. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that Israel would do "everything" to stop Tehran acquiring a nuclear weapon. The West's accusation that Iran is supplying Russia with explosive drones for its war in Ukraine also darkened the backdrop to Friday's talks. And on January 20, Trump, who pursued a policy of "maximum pressure" against Iran during his first term as president of the United States, returns to the White House. Iran hopes to mend relations with Europe,

while also maintaining a firm stance. In an interview with The Guardian newspaper published on Thursday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned that frustration in Tehran over unmet commitments, such as lifting sanctions, was fuelling debate over whether the country should alter its nuclear policy. Friday's talks were overshadowed by the European countries teaming up with the United States to have Iran censured by the UN atomic watchdog for its lack of cooperation on nuclear issues. The chiding from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) provoked a defiant response from Iran, which slammed the move as "politically motivated" and responded by announcing the launch of "new advanced centrifuges" designed to increase its stockpile of enriched uranium. This "is clearly going in the wrong direction", a German foreign ministry spokesman told reporters Friday. "Iran's imperative at the moment should be de-escalation."

COAS reviews Pak-China joint exercise Warrior-VIII

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), visited National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC), Pabbi today and interacted with the participants of Pak - China Joint Exercise Warrior-VIII between Pakistan Army and Peoples' Liberation Army of China.

According to military media wing, COAS was briefed on the scope & conduct of the exercise. COAS also interacted with participants of the exercise. He appreciated the professionalism and high morale of participants being displayed during the Joint Exercise.

Pak - China Joint Exercise Warrior-VIII commenced on 19 November 2024. Three weeks long Exercise in Counter Terrorism domain is 8th in the series of bilateral exercise being conducted annually. Earlier, upon arrival at NCTC Pabbi, COAS was received by Commander Rawalpindi Corps.

CJCS visits forward Naval Base Ormara

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza visited forward Naval Operational Base, Ormara on Friday. Upon arrival, a comprehensive operational brief was presented to him on prevailing threat environment and defence of the area, according to a statement issued by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

General Sahir Shamshad Mirza visited operational assets of Navy including Surface Ships and a Submarine and reviewed operational preparedness and combat readiness of the units in sea. During interactions with troops at Coastal Area and onboard ships, the Chairman expressed satisfaction on operational readiness of deployed elements. General Sahir Shamshad Mirza also appreciated the morale of troops and directed the field units to ensure optimal utilization of latest weapons and equipment with zeal and zest in order to ensure defence of the motherland.

The Frontier Post

Indictment postponed again
F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: The indictment proceedings against PTI founder Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi in the Toshakhana-II case were postponed again on Friday. Special Judge Central Shahrukh Arjumand heard the case at the Judicial Complex here and adjourned the case until December 3. The judge had summoned the accused today for indictment but they were not produced before the court.

PM for efforts to quash PTI's inimical designs of invading Islamabad — constitutes Task Force to identify people involved in chaos, violence

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday urged the country's civil and military leadership to formulate a strategy to avert the repeat of PTI's invasion of Islamabad aimed at sabotaging the hard earned peace and macroeconomic stability. "Pakistan's image has been tarnished all over. This has been the third to fourth invasion against the federal capital during the past eight months by the PTI. There was no concept of such unholy acts and designs before 2014. It started in 2014 with the 126-day long sit-in that damaged the economy and country's image," the prime minister said addressing a high level meeting he chaired on the law and order situation in the country.

The meeting was attended by members of the federal cabinet, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, and other senior government officers and law enforcement agencies. Calling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf as "Tehreek-e-Takheeb (Insurgency Movement), the prime minister censured its leadership for running over the federal capital repeatedly to sabotage the hard earned peace, macroeconomic stability and revival of hefty foreign capital investments into the country.

"The country's economy again witnessed a major blow as according to a guardedly estimate such protests cause Rs190 billion per day loss to the national economy. The impact on the exports, imports, production, services, private businesses, loss of public and private offices is huge," Prime Minister Shehbaz said. He reiterated that a mob from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)

invaded the federal capital with all the public resources of KP provincial government that unleashed gunshots on the law enforcement agencies, injured people and damaged infrastructure in the capital.

"If the country enemies are hell bent on sabotaging the country's peace and prosperity; are we going to lie down like a lame duck and we should allow them to run over everything? This should be the last thing that we should imagine in our remotest imagination. We should make all out efforts to quash such inimical designs intended to harm the nation as these opportunities do not come again," the prime minister said.

The PTI-led regime in KP, he said had no regard for declining inflation from 32% to below 7%, policy rate from 22%-15% and friendly nations interested in investing in Pakistan as the party just wanted to roll back everything. "Federal government's senior leadership, COAS and his entire team are present here. Time and tide wait for none. It's (PTI) not a political party but an abetment and a saboteurs and miscreants' group that should be taken to task as per law.

It's our national duty to expose them and, if not, history will judge us in a very bad light and posterity will not forgive us," the prime minister said. Calling the KP a "beautiful" province with its people very brave, strong and patriots, he called for a focus on the development initiatives for them. He said the recent killings in Parachinar city of KP was a clandestine move to damage country's peace, but it was painful to see the KP government's indifference to the situation.

He noted that the violence by PTI miscreants' clique in Islamabad resulted in the martyrdoms of a police

and four Rangers personnel with dozens of police officers and constables injured. The prime minister repeated that the due to the PTI's 126-day sit-in in 2014, the Chinese President's visit was deferred and was rescheduled seven months later in April 2015, following myriads of efforts. The prime minister also recalled the PTI's attempts to sabotage the SCO conference hosted by Islamabad and undermine the Pakistan-Saudi brotherly relations by baseless propaganda by the party leadership. He said PTI's latest protest failed to impact the Belarusian President's visit as the foreign dignitary successfully completed his three-day visit and also attended the luncheon reception hosted by Nawaz Sharif in Murree.

Mentioning his participation at GHQ in the funeral prayers of the Rangers' personnel who were martyred while containing the saboteurs' violence, the prime minister expressed gratitude to Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, interior secretary, IG Islamabad Police, and LEAs, as well as the chief ministers of Sindh and Punjab for their support to the federal government to cope with the violence. Highlighting the government's achievements at the economic front, he said indicators were improving gradually and macroeconomic stability was being witnessed in the economy as the Pakistan Stock Exchange crossed its highest ever trading volume which was earlier achieved during Nawaz Sharif's government. The participants of the meeting also offered Fateha, led by the COAS, for the security personnel who embraced martyrdom during the PTI protest.

12 more killed in fresh Kurram clashes

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: Firing incidents in various areas of District Kurram have claimed 12 more lives and left 17 injured on the ninth day of ongoing tribal clashes, police said on Friday. Despite a recent ceasefire agreement, violence persists, bringing the total death toll to 122 and the number of injured to 168.

According to the district administration, the main Peshawar-Parachinar highway remains closed for the eighth consecutive day, disrupting daily life and trade activities. The Deputy Commissioner of Kurram, Javedullah Mehsud, confirmed that the road closure has also halted trade at the Kharlachi border with Afghanistan, further exacerbating the economic impact on the region.

Additionally, due to the tense situation, internet and mobile phone services have been suspended, causing severe difficulties for residents, limiting their access to communication and essential services. On Thursday, the death toll in the clashes had reached 107, with five additional fatalities and nine injuries reported despite claims of a ceasefire deal.

A 10-day truce was brokered earlier in the week, but intermittent violence has rendered it ineffective. The recent episode of clashes began eight days ago with ambushes on two separate convoys under police escort, resulting in 52 deaths on November 21. Since then, violence between the warring factions has escalated, with police struggling to maintain control.

The main highway closure has not only disrupted local transportation but also caused a complete suspension of trade with Afghanistan, particularly at the Kharlachi border. Meanwhile, the district

administration is working to enforce the ceasefire. Deputy Commissioner Javedullah Mehsud reported that efforts are underway, with a jirga of elders from Hangu, Orakzai, and Kohat engaging both sides to secure a truce. "The parties have agreed to the ceasefire, and steps are being taken to stop clashes," he said.

Meanwhile, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, visited the residence of Maulana Hamid ul Haq Haqqani, head of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Sami (JUI-S) to extend invitation to participate in an All Parties Conference (APC) for the restoration of peace and the protection of provincial rights.

The APC is scheduled to take place at the Governor House in Peshawar on December 5. JUI-S General Secretary Maulana Syed Yusuf Shah, provincial spokesman Hafiz Abdul Rafi, former MNA Sajid Hussain Turi, and the Deputy General Secretary of the Pakistan Peoples Party, Abrar Saeed Swati were also present on this occasion.

Governor Kundi informed JUI-S leaders about the peace delegation about Kurram and invited them to attend the APC. The invitation was accepted by the JUI-S leadership, who expressed their support for the cause. Speaking to the media, the Governor emphasized the need for better medical treatment for the injured from Kurram, and pledged to fulfill his commitment of transferring them to hospitals in Islamabad and Peshawar.

He also called on political leaders to accompany him to Kurram to offer prayers for the martyrs. Governor Kundi stressed the importance of collective efforts for peace and the acquisition of provincial rights, including water, electricity, gas, and other issues related to the federal government.

IHC suspends journalist Matiullah Jan's remand

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday suspended Journalist Matiullah Jan's two-day physical remand ordered by an anti-terrorism court (ATC).

Islamabad High Court Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Arbab Chhattha appeared alongside Advocate Riasat Ali Azad, President of the Islamabad High Court Bar Association. Advocate Azad highlighted that the FIR did not mention any transaction or purchase and included an affidavit from another journalist, emphasising that the case was based on fabricated allegations. The court suspended the anti-terrorism court's decision, directing that Matiullah Jan be considered under judicial remand.

Meanwhile, Imaan Mazari announced plans to file Matiullah Jan's bail application later on Friday. It must be remembered that Jan was arrested on Thursday in a case pertaining to "terrorism and under influence of drugs (crystal myth)".

Participation of foreign nationals in Pakistan's political activities unacceptable: FO

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch on Friday said participation of foreign nationals in any political activity in Pakistan was illegal and unacceptable. With regards to the participation of Afghan nationals in the protest this week, the spokesperson said "We expect all foreigners in Pakistan to respect Pakistani laws and customs. In her weekly media briefing, the spokesperson told that last week, four Kashmiri civilians were subjected to severe torture at an Indian Army Camp in Chas area of Mughal Maidan, Kishtwar in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), causing significant outrage across IIOJK, the incident is the latest in a series of similar abuses spread over the last several decades. "We express grave concern over this disturbing incident, and demand that the perpetrators of the custodial torture are held accountable," she added. As regards the International Day of

Solidarity with the Palestinian People, she reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering solidarity and support for the people of Palestine in their pursuit of justice, freedom, and dignity. "We also reaffirm our strong support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, based on pre-1967 borders." She said Pakistan welcomed the recent ceasefire agreement in Lebanon and called on all parties to fully uphold and implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701. "We firmly support Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and stability; and stress the urgent need for humanitarian assistance to those affected; the safe return of displaced persons; and facilitating the reconstruction of conflict-affected areas." She said Pakistan believed this ceasefire was a critical step towards de-escalating tensions and preventing a broader conflict in the region. Pakistan hopes that the ceasefire

agreement will set the stage for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza Strip and other occupied Palestinian territories; an end to genocide in Gaza; and humanitarian relief to the Palestinian people. With respect to the visit of President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko, she informed that during his visit to Islamabad, President Lukashenko held extensive talks with the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. "The two sides discussed areas of bilateral cooperation and engagement; and key regional and global developments. The two sides reaffirmed the commitment to promote mutually beneficial cooperation, deepen political dialogue, strengthen inter-parliamentary exchanges, and enhance trade and economic cooperation." She said the two leaders signed several agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) focusing on cooperation in environmental protection, disaster management, halal trade, financial intelligence sharing,

vocational education and science & technology. The spokesperson said that speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, was on an official visit to Moscow, on a special invitation of his Russian counterpart, Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Volodin Vyacheslav Victorovich. The visit aims to further strengthen and expand friendly ties between the governments and the people of the two countries through parliamentary exchanges. An MoU will also be signed between the State Duma and the National Assembly of Pakistan, on expanding parliamentary cooperation and exchanges. In addition, she said Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch participated in the second meeting of the "Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution" held in Brussels, Belgium yesterday. At the forum, the Foreign Secretary reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for the Palestinian cause.

On the occasion, she announced that Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar will undertake an official visit to Mashhad, Iran from 02-03 December 2024 to attend the 28th Meeting of Council of Ministers of Economic Cooperation Organization. In his address at the Meeting, Deputy Prime Minister will reiterate Pakistan's commitment to the ECO Charter and highlight the potential of greater connectivity in the ECO region, through development of road and rail networks; liberalization of visa regimes and simplification of border procedures; and to attain sustainable growth and enhance geo-economic potential of the ECO region. The Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister will also reiterate the Pakistan's concerns over hostilities in the Middle East, endangering the regional peace and security. He will sign the 'Charter for ECO Clean Energy Center' and hold bilateral meetings with participating ministers and other dignitaries on the sidelines of the Ministerial Meeting.

Replying to a question, she made it clear that there was no dialogue taking place between Government of Pakistan and TTP. "The position of Pakistan with regards to the dialogue with TTP is very clear and has been reiterated on several occasions. Second, Pakistan has said on number of occasions that the proposals to initiate talks with TTP, wherever they may come from, are an affront to the families of thousands of victims of terrorism. Thirdly, there is no such proposal on the agenda between Pakistan and China with regards to engagement with TTP," she added. Responding to a question with regards to the Kurram situation, she said the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan had strongly condemned the attacks on civilians, including women and children in Kurram district. They expressed grief over the loss of precious lives. Investigations have been initiated. As the Prime Minister said, those responsible will be held to account. Efforts are also underway to restore peace in Kurram, she added.



ISLAMABAD: Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan, Jemal Beker Abdula in a meeting with Minister of State/Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Digital Media, Fahad Haroon at his office.

Pakistan's initiative to end costly electricity in six months: Laghari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Laghari on Friday that due to the government's initiatives, within the next five to six months Pakistan will be no longer among the countries generating expensive electricity.

While briefing a session on the "Bijli Sahulat Package," he said, "We are hopeful that in the coming months, Pakistan will not be a country generating costly electricity in the region."

The minister highlighted that the government's measures are aimed at making electricity production more competitive. He said that providing relief to the common people remains a top priority. "It is the Prime

Minister's directive to ensure relief for consumers," he added.

Under the Prime Minister's dynamic vision, promoting economic activities is a key priority, and the power sector is playing a crucial role in bolstering the national economy. The minister reiterated that practical steps are being taken to streamline the power sector.

He termed the Electricity Relief Package as a revolutionary step that has achieved a significant milestone in the power sector, contributing to economic stability. "We have initiated reforms not only to streamline the power sector but also to make it profitable," he added.

He underscored the importance of the power sector as the backbone of the country's economy, adding that the government has delivered on its promises to the public. The package, he noted, will provide relief to domestic consumers while simultaneously boosting industrial activities.

He further disclosed that the government has successfully negotiated with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and terminated power purchase agreements with five IPPs, a move expected to save the economy billions of rupees by reducing capacity payments. Negotiations with 11 more IPPs are currently underway, he added.

CM expresses solidarity with Palestinians

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has expressed solidarity with the oppressed Palestinian brothers and sisters.

In her message on International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, she called upon the international community to help end massacre of unarmed innocent Palestinians including children and women.

The CM said: "We pay tribute to the heroic sacrifices of the Palestinian people." She added, "Every citizen of Pakistan equally shares sufferings of Palestinian brethren."

She highlighted, "Pakistan has always been and will continue to be a staunch supporter of the Palestinians' rights." Maryam said Pakistan's policy on Palestine is a true reflection of the principled stance of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Pakistan will always stand by Palestinian brothers and sisters.

Ethiopian Ambassador calls on SAPM Fahd Haroon

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, met with Fahd Haroon, Minister of State/Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Digital Media, at his office today. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange views on the evolving media and digital media landscapes, identifying areas of mutual interest and collaboration.

Discussions encompassed both the opportunities and challenges in the realm of media and digital communication. The positive aspects highlighted included the transformative potential of digital platforms in fostering global connectivity, promoting cultural understanding, and enabling the timely dissemination of accurate information. Both sides acknowledged the increasing role of media in shaping perceptions and its power as a tool for public diplomacy and nation-build-

ing.

At the same time, challenges such as combating misinformation and addressing the digital divide were recognized as pressing issues. The importance of maintaining the integrity of information and safeguarding against the misuse of digital tools was underscored.

Fahd Haroon and H.E. Jemal Beker shared perspectives on addressing these challenges effectively through collaboration, innovation, and strategic initiatives. They emphasized the value of consistent engagement to ensure both nations benefit from advancements in the media and digital sectors.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both sides reaffirming their commitment to working together on shared objectives and strengthening bilateral ties in the media and digital media sectors. As a gesture of goodwill and mutual respect, both sides also exchanged mementos, reflecting the warmth and trust that marked the interaction.



Schedule of Bank Charges

UBL Schedule of Bank Charges, January to June 2025, has been issued. Please visit www.ubldigital.com or contact your nearest UBL branch.

**PAF ACADEMY ASGHAR KHAN**
OPEN TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited for supply of following stores for Sports Ground Maintenance at PAF Academy Asghar Khan, Raisalpur:

S. No	NOUN	QTY	REMARKS
1	Procurement of Fertilizer	As Req	For detailed specifications/ scope of work any other query please contact on No Ext - 813-7911 Mobile No- 03239413949
2	Fine Dhaka Grass	As Req	
3	Mud	As Req	
4	Paint	As Req	
5	Plants	As Req	
6	Crush / Sand / Cement	As Req	
7	Artificial Grass	As Req	
8	Sports Items	As Req	

1. General terms and conditions are mentioned in Tender Form (F-528A), which can be obtained free of cost from any PAF Base Logistics Squadron or PAF Base, Raisalpur on any working day.

2. The Firm must be General Sales Tax (GST) registered.

3. Quotation should be valid for minimum of 90 days, and the envelopes should be marked with the "Tender opening time and date".

4. Warranty conditions should be distinctively and elaborately mentioned in the quotation.

5. Tender will be opened at 1100 hrs on **17-12-2024**.

6. Delivery of stores will be F.O.R PAF Academy Asghar Khan, Raisalpur within 15 days of receipt of formal order.

7. Payment will be made through cheque after deduction of 5.5% Income Tax, receipt, inspection and acceptance of stores in accordance with the ordered specifications.

8. The Officer Commanding reserves the right to accept or reject any part or the entire Tender on technical grounds.

Note: "Rates should be quoted as per single stage-two envelopes procedure i.e separate envelopes of Commercial & Technical Quotations".

FOR SPECIFICATION AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT PAF ACADEMY, ASGHAR KHAN RISALPUR

TEL: (EXT- 813-7911, Mobile No: 03239413949)

CM orders start of work on K-IV augmentation from Jan 2025

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over a meeting to launch the K-IV Augmentation project, directed the Energy Department to issue tenders for the installation of a 132 kw grid station and the laying of transmission lines and instructed the local government department to begin the procurement process for the civil works associated with the project.

At the outset, the CM said that he had called the concerned ministers and secretaries so that the decision being made in the meeting could be implemented well in time. "We have to meet the deadline of December 2025 as I have set it for completion of the K-IV Augmentation project," he said and added whatever bottleneck may emerge, he would remove them.

Mr. Shah stated that the Augmentation of the K-IV project consists of two major components: civil work and the establishment of a grid station, along with the installation of a transmission line. He instructed the relevant ministers to oversee their respective areas of work.

The meeting was held at CM House and was attended by provincial ministers Nasir Shah, Saeed Ghani, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary Energy Musadig Malik, Chairman P&D Najma Shah, Secretary Local Govt Khalid Hyder Shah, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoi, Chief Economist P&D Aslam Soomro, CEO Water Board Salahuddin and PD KWSSIP Usman Moazzem.

The K-IV mainstream project, being executed by WAPDA, spans 111 km and has a total right-of-way (ROW) of 650 MGD. The K-IV project includes three reservoirs. The K-IV Augmentation and downstream allied works have commenced with a budget of Rs73613.8 million and are being managed by the Local Government Department and the Karachi Water Board. During the briefing, the chief minister was informed about the three reservoirs and filtration plants: one located at Manghopir Road, another at Taiser Town, and a third at Pipri.

The CM was told that a water transmission line will be constructed from the main Reservoir- 1 to the Y junction, from Reservoir 2 to the Federal Urdu University, and then from the Federal Urdu University to Gul Bai, while a line will also connect Reservoir 3 to Banaras. There is a 2.7 km common corridor for the Karachi Bus Rapid Transit (KBRT) Red Line that will align with the K-IV Augmentation.

Project Director (PD) of K-IV Usman Moazzam told the CM that the pipeline to be laid will have diameters of 96 inches and 72 inches. The total length of the pipeline will be 2.7 km, consisting of 0.95 km of 96-inch pipe and 1.8 km of 72-inch pipe. The 96-inch pipeline starts at Aziz Bhatti Park, transitions to 72

inches near the Federal Urdu University, and then changes direction from the Expo Centre towards Liaquatabad. The CM directed PD Usman Moazzam to begin laying pipelines along the 2.7 km common corridor of the BRT Red Line from Hassan Square to Aziz Bhatti Park.

Chairman of Planning and Development (P&D) Najam Shah informed the CM that negotiations with the World Bank have concluded, and the project is expected to receive approval from the World Bank Board in December 2024. The loan is anticipated to become effective by March 2025; however, a provision for retroactive financing is available. In response to a question, the CM was told that the design for the K-IV Augmentation project was completed under AIIB funding.

Minister of P&D Nasir Shah said that authorisation for KWSSIP-2, including K-IV Augmentation, was issued by the Planning Commission in September 2024, followed by Administrative Approval in October 2024. He also said that the bid documents are ready. The CM expressed concern over the delay in commencing work despite the approval and readiness of designs, instructing the P&D and Local Government ministers to start the project by January 2025.

He assured them that he would arrange for funding.

Minister Nasir Shah said that Expressions of Interest (EOI) were published for hiring a supervision consultant, with submissions received from 16 firms. Requests for Proposals (RFP) were issued to five shortlisted firms in September 2024. Of those, three firms have submitted their technical and financial proposals. The Technical Evaluation Report has been shared with the World Bank for clearance, which is still pending.

In response to a question, Mayor of Karachi Murtaza Wahab told the CM that 18 agencies had been approached for the issuance of NOCs, of which 17 have been granted. NOCs from the NHA, Karachi Circular Railway, and the Provincial Highway Departments are still awaited. The CM instructed the provincial departments to issue the pending NOCs and requested that the Mayor of Karachi communicate with federal agencies for their approval.

The chief minister instructed Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani to initiate the lining of the KB Feeder and to send him a summary for funding. "The Sindh government will provide the necessary funds to ensure the timely completion of the project," he stated.

Minister P&D Nasir Shah informed the CM that six acres of land have been acquired for the establishment of a 132 kV grid station and residential colony. A 30-km transmission line will be laid by the Sindh Transmission and Dispatch Company.

TEHSIL MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION MATT A E-BIDDING NOTICE


Sealed tenders for the following developmental schemes are hereby invited on above/ below system from the approved & registered government contractors / firms who are enlisted with Local Government Elections & Rural Development Department / Local Council Board, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and renewed their licenses for the year 2024-25.

Detail of Schemes is as under: -

S#	Name of Scheme	E/Cost (M)	Earnest Money 2%	Receiving Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
District Development Initiative (DDI) 2024-25					
1	Construction/Up-Gradation/Improvement/Rehabilitation of Masjid/ Madrasa/ Janazgah & Graveyard in Tehsil Matta (PK-10) Package-I	7.50	0.15	17-12-2024 1:45 PM	17-12-2024 2:00 PM
2	Construction/Up-Gradation/Improvement/Rehabilitation of Masjid/ Madrasa/ Janazgah & Graveyard in Tehsil Matta (PK-10) Package-II	7.50	0.15	-do-	-do-
3	Construction/Up-Gradation/Improvement/Rehabilitation of Masjid/ Madrasa/ Janazgah & Graveyard in Tehsil Matta (PK-10) Package-III	7.50	0.15	-do-	-do-
4	Construction/Up-Gradation/Improvement/Rehabilitation of Masjid/ Madrasa/ Janazgah & Graveyard in Tehsil Matta (PK-10) Package-IV	7.50	0.15	-do-	-do-
5	Construction of PCC Roads and Protection wall/Retaining wall at Tehsil Matta (PK-10) Package-I	8.00	0.16	-do-	-do-
6	Construction of PCC Roads and Protection wall/Retaining wall at Tehsil Matta (PK-10) Package-II	8.0	0.16	-do-	-do-
7	Construction of PCC Roads and Protection wall/Retaining wall at Tehsil Matta (PK-10) Package-III	8.0	0.16	-do-	-do-
8	Construction of PCC Roads and Protection wall/Retaining wall at Tehsil Matta (PK-10) Package-IV	8.0	0.16	-do-	-do-
9	Construction of PCC Roads and Protection wall/Retaining wall at Tehsil Matta (PK-10) Package-V	7.0	0.14	-do-	-do-
10	Construction of PCC Roads and Protection wall/Retaining wall at Tehsil Matta (PK-10) Package-VI	6.0	0.12	-do-	-do-
11	Construction of PCC Roads and Protection wall/Retaining wall at Tehsil Matta (PK-10) Package-VII	5.0	0.1	-do-	-do-
12	Construction of PCC Roads and Protection wall/Retaining wall at Tehsil Matta (PK-10) Package-VIII	5.0	0.1	-do-	-do-
13	Construction of Culverts/Protection Wall at Tehsil Matta (PK-10) Package-I	5.0	0.1	-do-	-do-
14	Construction of Culverts/Protection Wall at Tehsil Matta (PK-10) Package-II	5.0	0.1	-do-	-do-
15	Development works (cutting/levelling) in roads, play grounds, Janazgah & Graveyards at Tehsil Matta (PK-10)	5.0	0.1	-do-	-do-
30% PFC Share for the Year					
1	Beautification work at Matta Bypass & Babe Matta	2.89	0.0578	-do-	-do-
2	Boring & Installation of Hand Pumps/ Pressure Pumps at Tehsil Matta Package-I	5.00	0.1	-do-	-do-
3	Boring & Installation of Hand Pumps/ Pressure Pumps at Tehsil Matta Package- II	5.00	0.1	-do-	-do-
4	Boring & Installation of Hand Pumps/ Pressure Pumps at Tehsil Matta Package-III	4.45	0.089	-do-	-do-
5	PCC Roads/ Retaining Wall at Tehsil Matta Package-I	8.00	0.16	-do-	-do-
6	PCC Roads/ Retaining Wall at Tehsil Matta Package-II	8.00	0.16	-do-	-do-
7	PCC Roads/ Retaining Wall at Tehsil Matta Package-III	8.00	0.16	-do-	-do-
8	Construction of Culverts/ Retaining wall & Protection wall at Tehsil Matta	4.90	0.098	-do-	-do-
TERMS AND CONDITIONS					

1) Sealed Tender based on **MRS-2024** Contractors followed the new provincial Government rules under the Notification No. MRS Cell/C&W/6-1/D&S/2019-20 Dated 01-10-2019 keeping in view the mentioned notification the contractors shall quote their rates (ONLINE) as Above/Below. 2) Tender forms will be received till **1:45 pm** and opening of tender will be at **2:00 pm** on dated **17/12/2024** at office of TMA Matta.3) All the bidding will be through E-bidding system. Tender form and BOQ can be filled and downloaded by the original- contractor available on the official website of LCB (www.lcbpk.gov.pk) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after one day of publishing of NIT in newspaper.4) Complete bid (Original) must reach to the TMA Matta on or before the fixed date/time. 5) The following documents must be attached with bids: i) Enlistment and Renewal Copy in Local Council Board for the Year 2024-25 ii) Photocopy of CNIC. iii) Power of Attorney (if applicable). iv) Valid Photocopy of Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) 6) Tender documents of bidders if found with bogus/false documents will be rejected and their registration shall stands cancelled/blacklisted in addition of forfeiture of earnest money and security amount (if any) 7) No tenders are acceptable through Fax/by hand. Sealed bids sent through registered mail/couriers service should reach up to the specified time and date, and will be opened in presence of bidders/representatives. 8) The contractors quoting their bids up to a limit of 10% below Engineer estimate shall submit bid security @ 2% only of Engineer Estimate. 9) The contractors quoting their bids more than 10% below up to 20% below on Engineers' Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer's Estimated cost in addition to 2% bid security, if the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security, then it will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. 10) Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer's Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineers' Estimate along with detailed rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and / or required amount of additional security, then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non responsive bid shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. 11) In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is, in view of the Procuring Entity, not convincing, the Head of the Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons thereof. 12) The procuring entity may offer the contract to next lowest bidder after due diligence in the context of financial difference between such two bids or may advertise procurement opportunity afresh. 13) In case the bid becomes a tie, the contractor shall be decided through a free toss which shall be binding and final. 14) The time limit of each work shall be as per work order issued to successful bidder and the contractor will have to start the work within 15 Days' time period after the issuance of Work order failing which the Contract will be cancelled and security/additional security (if any) will be forfeited. 15) The successful contractor will execute an agreement with the department within 15 days in which all amendments must be included so far. 16) All federal and provincial duties/stamp duty and taxes including sales tax %/all be recoverable as per directives of the government issued from time to time. 17) TMA Matta may reject any or all bids after communicating the reasons for rejection at any time prior to the award of contractor. 18) Any addition made in terms & conditions in the NIT advertised in the newspaper will be implemented as per KPMPRA Rules. 19) The contractor who offered their bids online but do not send the hard copies or incomplete/ defective documents will be debarred from tendering process of TMA Matta, in the future and their case will also be sent to the competent forum for blacklisting. 20) All bidders are required to be registered with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority, established under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act, 2013(Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Act No. XXI of 2013), for works consulting & non-consulting services as listed in Schedule-U of the Act ibid. 21) Work order will be issued, subjected to the availability of the funds.

INF(P)3213/24
Tehsil Officer (I&S),
Tehsil Municipal Administration Matta
Tehsil Municipal Officer,
Tehsil Municipal Administration Matta

**University of Engineering & Technology, Peshawar**
TENDER NOTICE

University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Peshawar intends to hire the services and goods for its project titled "Climate Proofing: Risk Assessment and Climate Proofing of Projects". Sealed Tenders/Bids are required from reputed firms registered with Income Tax/Sales Tax and KPRA authorities (where applicable) who are on Active Taxpayers List (ATL) of FBR/KPRA etc. to submit Tenders/Quotations for the supply of the following items:

S.No.	Item	Quantity
1.	Computer/Laptop	02
2.	Printer	02

Detail of items, terms & conditions can be obtained from the office of the Director, National Institute of Urban Infrastructure Planning (NIUIP) UET Peshawar, near Peshawar Institute of Cardiology Phase V Hayatabad, Peshawar on any working day upon payment of Rs.300/- per set (non-refundable). For any query, please contact on Phone No. 091-9217166.

Interested firms fulfilling the required conditions may send their quotations along with 2% Call Deposit/Bank Draft in favor of "Director NIUIP" in sealed envelopes latest at **10:30 AM on Tuesday, 17th December 2024**. The tenders will be opened on the same day i.e. **17th December 2024 at 11:00 AM** in the office of the Director NIUIP, UET Peshawar in the presence of bidders who would like to be present at the time of opening of Tenders/quotations. The University reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, in accordance with the provision of KPMPRA Rules.

Director National Institute of Urban Infrastructure Planning, UET Peshawar
Mailing Address: National Institute of Urban Infrastructure Planning Near Peshawar Institute of Cardiology Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar Email: dniuiip@uetpeshawar.edu.pk
Ph: 091-9217166

Vintage Classic Automotive Festival held



PESHAWAR: A dazzling display of vintage, classic, and gleaming cars took center stage at the Peshawar Sports Complex under the auspices of the Directorate General of Sports, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The event featured over 300 vehicles, including iconic models such as Mercedes, BMW, Jaguar, Ford, Chevrolet, Mini, VW, and Land Rover. Enthusiasts from various cities across the country participated, showcasing their prized vintage cars.

The event was officially inaugurated by Director General Sports Abdul Nasir accompanied by Director Operations Naimatullah Marwat, Deputy Director Azizullah Jan and Deputy Director Operations Jamshed Baloch. Speaking at the occasion they emphasized that the show was organized under the special directives of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur and Provincial



Minister for Sports Syed Fakhar Jahan with Secretary Sports Matiullah at the helm.

The aim of the show was to provide entertainment opportunities for the public while catering to the passion of automobile enthusiasts in the province. The event drew keen interest from both adults and children alike. Families visiting the car show expressed their delight stating that it was a treat to witness such beautiful and historic cars up close and

hoped for more such events in the future.

The car show featured various models of BMW, Ferrari, Mercedes, Harley-Davidson, and more. Among the standout attractions, Mini Cooper, Volkswagen Beetle (commonly known as Foxy) and classic Mercedes models captured the public's attention. Visitors enthusiastically took selfies alongside the gleaming vehicles adding to the lively and engaging atmosphere of the event.

Joint review meeting of UN Portfolio held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Joint Review Meeting of the United Nations portfolio was held today, under the co-chairmanship of Mr. Ikramullah Khan, Additional Chief Secretary of the Planning and Development Department, and Mr. Mohamed Yahya, the UN Resident Coordinator.

During the meeting, various UN projects in

the Province were reviewed, highlighting the significant contributions made towards development. Mr. Ikramullah Khan expressed appreciation for the immense support provided by the United Nations, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and reaffirmed the government's ongoing commitment to welcoming and fostering such partnerships.

Mr. Yahya, UNRCO, also acknowledged the strong support extended by the provincial government, emphasizing the positive outcomes of the collaborative efforts between the UN and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government in advancing development initiatives.

The meeting was given detailed presentation to assess progress on the UN-supported projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

SMBR visits Service Delivery Center Shami Road

PESHAWAR (APP): Senior Member Board of Revenue (SMBR), Intiaz Hussain Shah has said that revenue record of 199 villages of provincial metropolis has been computerized and work is underway on the remaining four.

He said this during his visit to Service Delivery Center Shami Road here on Friday. He said that government is providing all revenue related services to people at a single facility.

He also inaugurated work to increase counters and construct a separate counter and office for women visiting the service delivery center. He also met with visitors and listened to their problems.

On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar highlighted the services and facilities being provided to people in the center.

International Humanitarian Law training concludes

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Directorate General Law & Human Rights, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) conducted 2 days training workshop for District Attorneys and human rights professionals.

The training workshop was inaugurated by Ghulam Ali, Director General Law and Human Rights, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The workshop was designed and dedicated to promote international humanitarian law and legal education.

Its primary objective was to enhance and develop the understanding and application of humanitarian law in District Attorneys, Lawyers, Civil Society Organizations and Human Rights profession-

als. It also aimed to foster collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations in promoting and protecting human rights across the province.

In his opening remarks, the Director General Law & Human Rights emphasized the critical importance of human rights education in the development of a just, tolerant and equitable society. "This workshop represents a significant step forward in KP Government commitment to uphold and advance fundamental human rights in the province. By equipping legal and HR professionals with the necessary tools, knowledge and skills regarding protection of human rights," said the Director General.

DG elaborated that it is also important to remember that the principles of humanitarian law are not

just legal mandates; they are reflections of our shared humanity. They remind us of our collective responsibility to protect and preserve human dignity, even in the most trying circumstances. He emphasized that as District Attorneys and human rights professionals, you have the power to make a significant impact in this realm. Your work can save lives, bring perpetrators to justice, and provide solace to those who have suffered.

The ICRC, renowned for its humanitarian efforts worldwide, has generously sponsored this workshop. The organization's representative, Imam highlighted the importance of continued education and training in the field of humanitarian law. "We are honoured to support this initiative, which aligns perfectly with our mission to pro-

mote humanitarian principles and strengthen legal frameworks that protect human values and dignity," stated the ICRC representative.

The workshop features a series of comprehensive sessions covering a range of topics, including introduction to International Humanitarian Law, mechanisms for the Protection of Rights specially in conflict zones and other troubled spots.

Participants also engaged in interactive discussions, group activities, and expert-led presentations designed to deepen their understanding and practical application of humanitarian law. The workshop marks the beginning of a series of collaborative efforts between Directorate General Law and human rights and the ICRC to promote human rights education and awareness.

Beekeeping in KP faces setback

PESHAWAR (APP): The protest demonstrations and roadblocks instigated by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have inflicted severe socioeconomic impact on the beekeepers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The disruption of key transportation routes, particularly the closure of the Peshawar-Islamabad Motorway due to PTI agitation, has left many local beekeepers, including those in Nowshera, Charsadda, and Peshawar, stranded and unable to conduct vital activities such as transporting their hives boxes to other areas for optimal honey production.

Hussain Khan, a young beekeeper from Nowshera, shared his plight while working on his beehives under the shade of a shisham tree near the Kabul River after he was stranded for the last five days there.

"The PTI protest has badly affected our business. Last Sunday, I was unable to shift my bee colonies to bees flora rich Punjab province due to the motorway closure," said the 24-year-old, who has been in the beekeeping business since the untimely death of his father from cancer.

For Hussain, the journey into beekeeping started as a way to support his family, including his brother's household, after the family tragedy. "I started with just 30 bee boxes, and by the grace of Allah, my business grew to 120 boxes within two years. But now, the protests have negatively impacted my hard work," Khan lamented, estimating a loss of about Rs 100,000 due to the transportation bottleneck.

The situation has been compounded by the unavailability of adequate bee flora in Nowshera, which prompted Hussain's decision to move his colonies to Punjab, a more favorable location. However, the roadblocks have left him unable to make the necessary shift, causing considerable setbacks in honey production.

The uncalled for disruptions caused by PTI's political protests have rippled throughout KP's beekeeping community.

Sher Zaman, the General Secretary of the All Pakistan Beekeepers Association, called attention to the widespread damage.

"The protests have not only harmed individual beekeepers but also exporters and honey traders. With thousands of beekeepers in KP, this is a significant blow to the local economy," Zaman remarked.

He estimated that up to 10,000 honey farms are operating in the province, and the losses could push over 100,000 individuals linked to beekeeping into financial distress if the agitation situation was not addressed.

Beekeeping is an important industry in KP, contributing to the province agricultural economy, with Pakistani honey—known for its high quality and low sugar content—seeing consistent demand, particularly from Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Zaman emphasized the urgent need for government intervention, particularly in the form of compensation and interest-free loans to support struggling beekeepers.

Dr. Mumtaz Malik, former Chief Conservator of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department, stressed the importance of preserving wild bee populations, such as the Apis Dorsata (wild bee), which is a key contributor to honey production in the region. "Wild bees are an essential source of high-quality honey. Their habitat, which typically includes tall trees and buildings in reserved forests, is threatened by climate change and natural disasters like floods besides protest demonstrations," Dr. Malik explained.

He recommended implementing a strategy to protect wild bee species and suggested issuing identification cards for beekeepers to help them navigate changes in their operational areas due to climate shifts.

Dr. Mumtaz Malik called for strengthening the capacity of beekeepers to respond to these challenges, such as providing training on supporting the cultivation of bee-friendly plants. Iftikhar Khalil, former Director of Non-Timber Forest Products in KP, pointed out the untapped economic potential of Pakistan's honey industry and stated that poor policies of PTI has negatively impacted beekeeping industry in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Despite KP's capacity to produce upto 8,000 metric tons of honey annually from approximately 300,000 colonies, he said the impact of the PTI protests on the industry is deeply concerning.

Iftikhar Khalil also emphasized that with proper financial support and mitigation strategies, beekeeping could help alleviate some of the region's economic struggles. The experts said that PTI protests have undoubtedly put the beekeeping industry in a precarious position in KP.

For beekeepers like Hussain Khan, whose dreams were built on hard work and resilience, the political agitation is an additional burden they cannot afford.

As the situation unfolds, the call for KP government intervention grows louder, with the potential for economic recovery hinging on timely support for the beekeeping community in KP.

Entry Of buses, vans banned On BRT route

PESHAWAR (APP): The district administration has banned the entry of buses and vans onto the BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) route to address traffic-related issues. The decision was made during a meeting attended by the Deputy Commissioner and other officials from relevant departments to discuss traffic congestion and problems related to rickshaws and loaders in the city.

The committee extensively discussed measures to tackle Peshawar's traffic issues and decided to prohibit buses and vans from entering the BRT route.

The entry of rickshaws has been banned on other key roads, including Khyber Road, University Road from Tehkal to Islamia College, and main Saddar Road from the State Bank to Balour plaza. These steps are part of an effort to manage and reduce traffic problems in Peshawar.

CGPA, WCCI hold dialogue

PESHAWAR (APP): The Centre for Governance and Public Accountability (CGPA) in collaboration with Women Chambers of Commerce and Industries (WCCI) Mardan hosted Public-Private Dialogue (PPD) under Supporting Private Sector to Keep Critical Civic Space Open in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa project.



PESHAWAR: Director General of Information and Public Relations, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Saleem Khan is being presenting bouquet of flowers on assuming the charge of his office.

Women's literature festival concludes

PESHAWAR (APP) The fourth day of the Women's Literature Festival at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women's University here (SBBWU) featured a vibrant lineup of events held across multiple venues, focusing on women's empowerment, intellectual growth, and cultural collaboration.

The day commenced with a session on financial literacy led by Waqar Ali Khan, Chief Manager of the State Bank, and his team. Held in the main auditorium, the session emphasized strategies for financial empowerment and highlighted opportunities for women in the banking sector, urging greater female participation in economic activities.

In another venue, a session on the Drug-Free Peshawar initiative was held, with Sayed Fayaz Ali Shah as the chief guest.

Shah provided an overview of the initiative's objectives and progress, commending the efforts of the Commissioner of Peshawar.

Students from SBBWU performed a compelling play highlighting the dan-

gers of drug addiction, which received widespread acclaim for its impactful and educational message.

At the DVC Hall, Khalid Taimur Akram, Executive Director of the Pakistan Research Center for a Community with Shared Future (PRCCSF) and an expert in South Asian and Eurasian affairs, served as session chair and delivered a keynote speech emphasizing the importance of regional collaboration.

A highlight of the session was the inauguration of his book, with copies presented to venue in-charges and festival organizers. Akram explained the theme of his book, focusing on the role of literature and research in fostering cultural and geopolitical connections.

Professor Li Hauling from the Communication University of China, Beijing, also delivered an online address during the session.

She highlighted the importance of cultural collaborations between Pakistan and China and praised the efforts of SBBWU's Regional

Connectivity Center in strengthening ties with the Communication University of China.

Meanwhile, another engaging session featured Norga Kombha, a lawyer, Assistant Professor in Law at Jordan University College in Tanzania, and a PhD Fellow in Environmental Law at Wuhan University, China.

She delivered a presentation on The Power of Women's Voices in Visual Arts: From Tradition to Transformation, exploring the evolving role of women in African society.

Her presentation inspired female students by encouraging them to overcome challenges and strive for their goals, underscoring the transformative power of women's contributions to society.

At a separate venue, the head of Karwan-e-Hawa, Madam Bushra Farukh, hosted a book launch ceremony featuring ten new publications by various authors.

The writers presented their works, celebrating the power of literature as a medium for societal change and creative

expression.

Another major event was a panel discussion titled The Importance of Books in the Digital Age, held in the university's seminar room.

The panel featured Dr Farhat Amin, Dr Rehana Masood, and Dr Noreen Naz, with Dr Fatima serving as the session chair and Haseeba Shafi as the moderator.

The discussion highlighted the enduring relevance of books in the face of rapid advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital technologies.

Panelists addressed concerns about the decline of traditional reading habits while emphasizing the cognitive and scientific benefits of reading.

The session included an interactive segment where the audience shared personal experiences, poetry, and reflections on the transformative power of books. The day concluded with a closing ceremony at the main stage, where shields and certificates were distributed to participants and volunteers in recognition of their contributions.



PESHAWAR: Secretary Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Syed Fayaz Ali Shah and Chief Manager State Bank Waqali Ali Khan along with others participating in Drug Free Peshawar Walk.



In brief

Public support demanded F.P. Report

BANNU: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Bannu has asked the people from all walks of life to play an effective role in eliminating the menace of drugs from society. This he said while speaking at a seminar held on the premises of the University of Science and Technology in Bannu on Friday. The seminar was arranged on the directives of the provincial government to prevent use of drugs and sensitize students about its hazardous effects. Students, faculty members, parents, educationists and area elders were in attendance. RPO stressed the need for collective efforts to eliminate the use of drugs and cleanse educational institutions of it. He said that awareness sessions in schools, colleges and universities were part of the drive to highlight devastating effects of drug use on human health and free campuses from the menace completely. He said that the regional police had launched an anti-drug awareness drive in the educational institutions with the aims and objectives to tell students that besides bringing humiliation the drug use would also destroy their future. "Under the supervision of District Police Officer Ziauddin Ahmed the police were actively engaged in an offensive against drug barons in the area", he claimed. He called upon students to protect themselves, their friends and relatives from the menace and focus on education to counter future challenges effectively.

Funeral prayer offered F.P. Report

KALAYAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister on Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Afridi advocate along with Chairman DDAC Kohat Shafi Jan and Daud Shah Afridi visited the grave of martyred worker of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Shaheed Muhammad Ilyas Orakzai from Kohat the other day. They prayed for his eternal peace and highest place in the Janat-ul-Firdous. Later, Aftab Alam, Shafi Jan and Daud Afridi also went to the residence of Shaheed Ilyas Orakzai and met his family members and other relatives and expressed their deep sorrow and grief over the tragic death of Shaheed Ilyas Orakzai. PTI leaders assured their full support to the heirs of the martyr on behalf of the party and the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They while expressing their heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family, prayed that Allah Almighty may Shower His Special Blessings and raise the place of Shaheed Ilyas, grant patience and fortitude to the bereaved family and ease their difficulties.

Police arrests PO in encounter F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Police on Friday claimed to have arrested a proclaimed offender in injured condition after exchange of fire in Tajori area of Lakki Marwat district. A police official said that DPO Rahim Hussain dispatched a police party to Kattukhel adda area the other night when he received credible information about the presence of a bandits' gang headed by a notorious proclaimed offender Waliullah with an intention of looting people. He said that the policemen came under firing attack by the armed suspects when they reached the venue. "An effective response and retaliation of attack by police triggered a gun battle which continued for some time", he maintained.



FAISALABAD: Activists holding party flag during celebrate PPP's Foundation Day.

Strengthening of women's empowerment stressed

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The Centre for Governance and Public Accountability (CGPA) in collaboration with women chambers of commerce and industries (WCCI Mardan Division) successfully hosted the Public-Private Dialogue (PPD), as part of the "Supporting Private Sector to Keep Critical Civic Space Open in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" project. Funded by the Centre for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), the event brought together key stakeholders to foster inclusive and participatory democracy in the region by empowering women-led businesses and chambers of commerce.

The dialogue addressed strategies and initiatives designed to support women entrepreneurs and small businesses across KP. Project Manager Mr. Khalfan Khattak highlighted CGPA's commitment to strengthening women's chambers of commerce by creating an enabling environment for participatory democracy and reliable opportunities for women-led businesses.

Speaking at the event, Ms. Mahvish Ayub, Head of Strategy at the National Incubation Center (NIC)

Peshawar, emphasized the importance of strengthening women's businesses in the province. She highlighted the vital role NIC Peshawar has played in enhancing capacity building and outreach for women entrepreneurs.

"NIC Peshawar is committed to empowering women entrepreneurs by providing them with the tools and resources they need to succeed," said Ms. Ayub. "Through strategic partnerships and tailored capacity-building initiatives, we aim to create a sustainable ecosystem that supports the growth of women-led businesses and fosters long-term economic empowerment."

Ms. Ayub also underscored the significance of collaboration between private and public sectors to address challenges and unlock opportunities for women in business. She encouraged women entrepreneurs to leverage NIC Peshawar's initiatives to scale their ventures and achieve greater impact.

Speaking on the occasion Mr. Rashid Aman, Provincial Chief of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), discussed the critical needs of start-ups and SMEs, identi-

fying gaps in policy and regulatory frameworks that hinder their growth. He emphasized the necessity of a robust regulatory framework to nurture entrepreneurship and drive sustainable economic development in the province.

Ms. Ambareen Huti, Founding President of WCCI Mardan Division, spoke about the vital role of women chambers in revenue generation at the district level. She outlined the barriers women-led businesses face and the importance of targeted support mechanisms to help overcome these challenges, enabling more women to participate in economic activities with the support of both elected and public administration.

Providing insights into the processes and benefits of business registration, Mr. Ashfaq Masood, Commissioner Inland Revenue, detailed the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) procedures and domain in tax collection. He explained the current FBR policy and steps to streamline the registration process, emphasizing the benefits it offers women entrepreneurs in accessing markets and financial resources both at federal and provincial level.

Car lifter gang busted by police in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Talash police claimed to have busted a car lifter gang and recovered a stolen car from their possession here the other day. Briefing local journalists, the newly posted station house officer, Shah Faisal Khan said that a car owned by Safiullah went missing from his house at Sia Bagh on Oct 24. He said the district police officer Salim Abbas Kulachi entrusted the case to him under the supervision of DSP Iqbal Nasim.

The SHO said that police traced the stolen car through CCTV cameras and mobile data. He said the car was recovered and two accused, Suliman and Shabir, were arrested. The arrested accused during interrogation confessed that

they had bought the car from Imran and Ikramullah at a motor car bargain center in Swat. The Talash police arrested both the accused Imran and Ikramullah, residents of Ouch, who confessed that they had taken the car from a garage at Sia Bagh and took it to Swat via Tisso and Laram top. The car owner and his family expressed pleasure on the recovery of the car and appreciated the Talash police for its prompt action.

Meanwhile the DPO Salim Abbas Kulachi awarded police officers including inspector Ayub Khan, Muhammad Shuiab, Muhammad Sadiq, Hazrat Umar, Raj Wali, Shehzad Khan, Suhrab Khan and Wiqas Ahmad with appreciation certificates for their

brilliant performance during a function held at the DPO office.

Medical college: The Dir qaumi Pasoon chief Malik Jehan Alam along with its president Malik Shah Nasim on Friday visited the Timergara Medical College and held a meeting with the newly posted Principal Prof Dr Samiullah at his office. The visiting area elders congratulated him on his appointment as the TMC principal. The meeting discussed various issues faced by the college. Prof Dr Samiullah said that efforts were afoot to launch classes at the facility from this year. He said that all arrangements had been made for the classes. The Principal said the KMu authorities would decide classes.

State's land auction schedules on December 2

F.P. Report

HAFAIZABAD: District Administration Hafizabad has issued schedule to auction more than 35 acres state land situated at different places in the district.

Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq said that auctioning of the land would be held at conference room of the ADCG office on 2 December at 11 A.M. He said that people desired to participate in the auction could deposit security fee according to the schedule and terms and conditions before fixed date and time. He said that transparent auction of state land would be ensured.

Agri census to be launch on 16th Dec: ADCR Tanveer Yaseen has said that 7th agriculture census would be launched from December, 16 in the district Hafizabad and computerized and digital record of farmers, agriculture land crops, cattle and agricultural machinery would be prepared.

He said that 3-day training of staff of concerned departments was started at government high school Hafizabad. He visited training centre and directed the all officials and officers to collect factual data of farmers. He appealed the farmers to cooperate with census teams and provide correct all particulars to census staff.

Benevolent board approves 654 financial aid cases: District Benevolent Board Hafizabad have accorded approval to release Rs.18937470/- against 654 cases of educational scholarship, marriage grant, funeral grant and monthly grant for children and heirs of in-service and retired government employees.

This approval was given in the meeting of the board held under chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq. ADCG Hammadullah, Chief Executive Officer Education Hafizabad Madam Nazia Shahzadi and other members of the Board attended the meeting.

Addressing the meeting DC said that approval of all applications has been approved received in the office so far. District benevolent fund board is committed to provide maximum relief to in-service and retired employees, added.

PJN, UNDP organize workshop to strengthen DRCs

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: A divisional consultative workshop was held in Swat to develop an action plan for strengthening Dispute Resolution Councils (DRCs) in Malakand Division. The workshop was organized by the Peace & Justice Network (PJN) in collaboration with the UNDP Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police.

The workshop brought together diverse stakeholders, including representatives from DRCs, judiciary, law enforcement, civil society, local government, and community leaders. The primary objective was to create a comprehensive action plan to empower DRCs as an effective mechanism for resolving disputes and improving access to justice across the region.



Speakers emphasized the crucial role of DRCs in promoting peace and justice in local communities. They highlighted the need to address existing gaps, such as inadequate resources, limited training for members, lack of inclusivity, and insufficient public awareness, to make DRCs more efficient, accessible, and responsive to community needs.

The workshop outcomes included actionable recommendations to enhance legal and procedural frameworks governing DRCs, increase inclusivity, and provide technical and operational training to DRC members. The initiative aligns with the broader goal of achieving Sustainable Development Goal Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions in Pakistan.

Students of GDC Gul Abad Dir donate blood

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Hamza Foundation Welfare Thalassemia Center and Blood Transfusion Services Peshawar KP (Regd Welfare Org), has arranged one day Blood Donation camp at GDC Gul abad ,with the help and support of Dr.Sultan ud din sahib (Blood in charge) of the said College

On this occasion Resource Mobilization officers of Hamza Foundation Mr. Ateeq ur Rehman and Mr. Ibrarullah jan delivered lectures to the Students and worthy teaching staff of the said University about different welfare activities of the organization, especially free of cost treatment providing to 1504 registered poor and underprivileged Thalassemia, Hemophilia patients of Hamza Foundation and they also delivered motivational speech to the students about the importance of Blood donation.

It was very successful



blood donation camp. 73 healthy volunteer students donated their blood for saving precious lives of 1504 registered poor and underprivileged Thalassemia , Hemophilia kids and other blood disorder disease

patients of Hamza Foundation. RMOs of Hamza Foundation presented shield of HF to Dr.Sultan ud din appreciation certificates among the students of GDC Gul abad.

JUIF, GDA claims for stolen mandate in Sindh

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazal (JUIF) Ameer Maulana Fazlur Rehman met with Central General Secretary Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) Dr. Safdar Ali Abbasi, former Moazzam Ali Abbasi, Barrister Kazim Abbasi and others. The ceremony was held during the welcome given by Safdar Ali Abbasi. Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that he has old and good relations with the Abbasi family.

JUIF said that there were 52 articles in the 26th amendment which were reduced to 22. There were some points in the amendment which were against human rights but JUI was able to solve such points effectively. Maulana Fazlur

Rahman further said that JUI is involved in the fight for human rights and is advancing its struggle in a democratic way, while JUI is a strong and popular party in the country and its candidates are at every level.

On this occasion, the Central General Secretary of GDA Dr. Safdar Ali Abbasi said that we always welcome Maulana Fazlur Rehman from the bottom of our hearts. We do not accept fake elections in any way, he said that the elections that were held were bogus and fake, especially in Sindh province, the candidates of JUI and GDA were defeated.

Provincial General of Sindh Secretary Maulana Rashid Mahmood Soomro said in his address that Muazzam Ali Abbasi is my

brother, he said that we do not recognize the general elections and we will continue our fight with the Election Commission if Kashmore Kandhkot Shikarpur and Thull constituencies are reopened. If the JUI candidates were to win with a majority, he said that we do not recognize the 2024 general election. A large number of leaders of various political and social organizations, activists and activists of nationalist parties participated in the event.

Bhutta-Khohra dispute: The Bhutta-Khohra dispute over the ownership of 3200 acres of agricultural land in Ketu Muntaz Bhutto near Nodero has been going on for the past 12 years, in which 24 people have been killed and 10 injured on both sides so far.

Promoting girls' education in KP: Role of E&SED

Sheikh Fakhar-e-Alam

In recent years, the global community has recognized the importance of education as a fundamental human right and a cornerstone for sustainable development. Among the various challenges faced by education systems worldwide, the issue of girls' education remains particularly critical. As Malala Yousafzai stated, "One child, one teacher, one pen, and one book can change the world." In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan, the need to promote girls' education is inevitable.

The journey towards promoting girls' education in KP has been confronted with obstacles, yet it is a story of resilience, advocacy, and hope. Historically, societal norms and cultural attitudes have often marginalized girls, limiting their access to education. According to various surveys and the latest reports, around 4.9 million children, particularly girls, are out of school in KP. This issue is exacerbated by factors such as early marriage, poverty and inadequate female role models in education. As a result, many fami-

lies prioritize boys' education over girls', perpetuating a cycle of inequality.

Under the visionary leadership of Mr. Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, Honourable Chief Minister KP and his dynamic team member Minister of Education Mr. Faisal Khan Tarakai, the Elementary and Secondary Education Department (E&SED) plays a pivotal role in addressing this challenge, particularly in reducing the number of out-of-school children (OOSC). By fostering an environment that values girls' education, the incumbent KP government has discouraged this discrimination and inequality by introducing female-friendly policies that encourage girls' education.

Mr Masood Ahmed, Secretary to Govt of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for E&SE has also expressed his opinion on various official platforms and occasions that girls' education is not merely a fundamental human right but also a crucial element for the social, economic, and cultural development of KP and beyond.

The Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) said "Seeking knowledge is an obli-

gation upon every Muslim." (Sunan Ibn Majah). The E&SE department has developed a comprehensive policy framework to address gender disparities in education. This includes the establishment of gender-responsive policies such as creating an inclusive environment for girls. Policies and documents such as the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Sector Plan emphasize the need for equitable access to education and eliminating barriers preventing girls from attending school. Recognizing the importance of community involvement, E&SED has initiated programs to engage parents and local leaders in promoting girls' education. It also encourages communities to recognize the value of educating girls by conducting awareness campaigns.

E&SED has made significant strides in improving school infrastructure, particularly in rural areas where many out-of-school girls reside. The construction of new schools at 70:30 ratio for females and males respectively, introducing Girls stipend program for merged districts and piloting safe transportation facilities program for

females have been critical creating conducive environment for learning. To counter the economic barriers that often hinder girls' education, E&SED has introduced scholarship programs as incentives for families to send their daughters to school. Additionally, programs that provide stipends to girls who regularly attend school have shown promising results in improving retention rates. These efforts are vital in reassuring parents that their daughters can pursue education safely and comfortably.

The quality of education is heavily influenced by teachers' competence. E&SED has prioritized training female teachers and incorporated gender sensitization into teacher training programs. In addition to enhancing the quality of teaching, this approach also develops female role models for young girls, encouraging them to pursue education and confront challenging stereotypes surrounding gender roles.

Addressing the issue of out-of-school children in KP is integral part of the efforts towards promoting girls' education. E&SED conducts targeted enrolment drives, especially in

regions with high OOSC ratios. These initiatives focus on identifying and enrolling girls who have never attended school or dropped out. By reaching out to marginalized communities, E&SED aims at reducing the educational barriers that are being faced by many girls.

To accommodate the needs of girls who may be unable to attend traditional schools due to familial responsibilities or other constraints, E&SED has introduced flexible education models. This include Second shift schools, ALP centres, community schools and home-based education programs, which provide alternative pathways for girls to receive education.

E&SED employs robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of educational initiatives. By collecting data on enrolment, retention, and learning outcomes, the department can assess the impact of its programs and make informed decisions for future interventions.

Every girl who steps into the classroom symbolizes a shift in societal norms and an investment in the future. Promoting girls' education in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa is a multifaceted challenge that requires collective efforts of government, local communities and international developmental partners. By nurturing educated women leaders, increasing awareness, and valuing education for girls, KP can build stronger, more resilient communities that actively seek progress and development and foster a culture that prioritizes knowledge, innovation and equality.

As KP keeps its journey continue toward educational equity, the commitment of our incumbent government to ensure that every girl has the opportunity to learn, thrive, and contribute to society remains paramount. By implementing targeted policies, engaging communities, and providing necessary resources, E&SED is working towards a future where every girl in KP has the opportunity to learn, grow and contribute to society. To ensure lasting change, all stakeholders must remain committed to the noble cause, recognizing that investing in girls' education is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity for sustainable development.



BEIRUT: A man sitting on the rubble of a destroyed house in Baalbek, eastern Lebanon.

Macron calls killings of West African troops by French massacre

DAKAR (AP): French President Emmanuel Macron for the first time recognized the killing of West African soldiers by the French Army in 1944 as a massacre in a letter addressed to the Senegalese authorities. Macron's move, on the eve of the 80th anniversary of the World War II killings in Thiaroye - a fishing village on the outskirts of the Senegalese capital of Dakar - comes as France's influence is declining in the region, with Paris losing its sway in the former French colonies in West Africa.

Between 35 and 400 West African soldiers who fought for the French Army in the Battle of France in 1940 were killed on Dec. 1, 1944 by French soldiers after what the French described as a mutiny over unpaid wages. The West Africans were members of the unit called Tirailleurs Senegalais, a corps of colonial infantry in the French Army. According to historians, there were disputes over unpaid wages in the days before the massacre but on Dec. 1, French troops rounded up the West

African soldiers, mostly unarmed, and shot and killed them.

Senegalese President Bassirou Diomaye Faye said he received the letter, which was seen by The Associated Press. Speaking to reporters, Faye said Macron's step should "open the door" so that the "whole truth about this painful event of Thiaroye" can finally come out. "We have long sought closure on this story and we believe that, this time, France's commitment will be full, frank and collaborative," he added.

"France must recognize that on that day, the confrontation between soldiers and riflemen who demanded their full legitimate wages be paid, triggered a chain of events that resulted in a massacre," read Macron's letter. "It is also important to establish, as far as possible, the causes and facts that led to this tragedy," Macron added. "I have asked my services to inform me of the progress of the work of the Committee for the Restoration of the Facts, which your government has decided to set up, under the direc-

tion of Professor Mamadou Diouf, whose eminence and qualities are recognized by all." The letter comes weeks after the Senegalese legislative elections, in which the ruling party PASTEF secured a definite majority. The win granted newly elected President Faye a clear mandate to carry out ambitious reforms promised during the campaign, which include more economic independence from foreign companies, including French ones, which are heavily invested in the country.

France still has around 350 troops in its former colony, mainly in a supportive role. Asked about the presence of French forces, Faye alluded that it would not be something the Senegalese would want. "Historically, France enslaved, colonized and stayed here," he said. "Obviously, I think that when you reverse the roles a little, you will have a hard time conceiving that another army, China, Russia, Senegal, or any other country could have a military base in France."

Bangladeshi court denies bail to Hindu leader

DHAKA (AP): A prominent Bangladeshi Hindu leader who has been leading rallies demanding security for Hindus in the overwhelmingly Muslim nation was ordered detained on charges of sedition. The magistrate court of Kazi Shariful Islam denied bail to Krishna Das Prabhu and ordered him detained pending further proceedings.

One lawyer was killed and scores were injured after clashes broke out following court order. As police attempted to transport the Hindu leader to jail, hundreds of his supporters surrounded the van carrying him, forcing it to stop for over an hour before security officials fired teargas to disperse the crowd. Protesters threw stones at police during a brief confrontation, before the way was cleared and Prabhu was taken to jail. As the tension grew, live TV showed dozens of Muslims joining the security officials, chasing Hindu protesters and throwing stones at them. The United News of Bangladesh news agency quoted a police official as saying that lawyer Saiful Islam Alif was hacked to death during the melee. Some reports blamed the Hindu protesters for the killing, but details were sketchy.

Hindus and members of other minority groups say they have faced more attacks than ever since former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country amid a mass uprising in August and an interim government took over. The government says the threat to Hindus has been exaggerated. Around 91% of Bangladesh's population is Muslim, with Hindus making up almost all of the rest. Prabhu, also known as Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, faces charges of sedition filed in October after he led a

huge rally in Chattogram in which he was accused of disrespecting Bangladesh's national flag.

He was arrested in Dhaka's main airport while traveling to Chattogram in southeastern Bangladesh. Kushal Baran Chakrabarty, who was accompanying Prabhu at the time of his arrest, said that several detectives took the Hindu leader to a police car at the airport.

"Chinmoy Prabhu gave his phone to me as he was forcefully taken to the police car. The police detectives jostled with us to forcefully take his phone and they took it away. We then followed the police car that headed for the headquarters of the Detective Branch at Minto Road in Dhaka," he said. "We stayed outside the Detective Branch's office." The Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council, an umbrella organization of the country's minority groups, denounced the arrest of Prabhu in a statement and demanded his release. India's Ministry of External Affairs expressed "deep concern" in a statement.

"This incident follows the multiple attacks on Hindus and other minorities by extremist elements in Bangladesh. There are several documented cases of arson and looting of minorities' homes and business establishments, as well as theft and vandalism and desecration of deities and temples," the statement said. It also condemned attacks on peaceful protests by Hindus.

"We urge Bangladesh authorities to ensure the safety and security of Hindus and all minorities, including their right of freedom of peaceful assembly and expression," the ministry wrote. Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs criticized the reaction

by India, saying that the issue was the "internal affairs" of Bangladesh. "It is with utter dismay and deep sense of hurt that the government of Bangladesh notes that the arrest of Chinmoy Krishna Das has been misconstrued by certain quarters since Chinmoy Krishna Das has been arrested on specific charges," its statement said.

Bangladesh also said that India's statement misrepresents facts and contradicts the spirit of friendship and understanding between the neighboring countries. Also, India's statement does not reflect the harmony that exists among the peoples of all faiths and the commitment and the efforts of the government and the people in this regard, said the statement by Bangladesh. Prabhu faces charges of sedition filed in October after he led a huge rally in Chattogram in which he was accused of disrespecting Bangladesh's national flag. Dhaka-based leading Prothom Alo daily reported that Prabhu would be produced before a court, and that two other people have been arrested in the case.

The Hindu leader was brought before the magistrate court of Kazi Shariful Islam in southeastern city of Chattogram, the United News of Bangladesh agency reported. The court was packed and dozens of lawyers stood for him to seek bail. Since August, Prabhu has led several large rallies demanding safety for the Hindus, as the interim government led by Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus said reports of attacks have been exaggerated. Many in the interim government see the rallies by Hindus as a threat to stability and a ploy to rehabilitate Hasina and her Awami League party.

3 Americans imprisoned in China for years released

WASHINGTON (AP): Three American citizens who had been detained for years in China were released, a State Department spokesperson said. They are Mark Swidan, Kai Li and John Leung. The three Americans were back in the United States, having returned through Lackland Air Force Base, part of Joint Base San Antonio in Texas, an administration official confirmed.

The official declined to provide further information, citing privacy concerns. Li, 62, who is from Long Island, New York, was detained in 2016 and sentenced to 10 years in 2018 on espionage charges his family says are baseless. Swidan, a Texas businessman in his 40s, had been detained since 2012 and was sentenced to death with a reprieve in 2019 after being convicted on drug-related charges that a United Nations working group said had no evidential basis. Li and Swidan were considered "wrongfully detained" by the State Department. Leung, an American in his 70s who also has permanent residency in the Chinese territory of Hong Kong, was sentenced to life in prison last year after being found guilty of espionage by a court in east-

ern China. Leung, who was detained in 2021, had been a member of a pro-Beijing group in the United States and had been pictured with senior Chinese officials, according to Hong Kong and Chinese news outlets. Their release was part of a prisoner swap for Xu Yanjun, an officer of China's Ministry of State Security, and Ji Chaoqun, a Chinese national, a US government official said. Xu was arrested after an alleged attempt to steal technology from GE Aviation, an American aircraft engine supplier. Ji was accused of spying for the Chinese government.

Biden told reporters that he has spoken with the three Americans. "I'm really happy they're home," Biden said. The White House has not said who, if anyone, was being freed in exchange for the US citizens. The Chinese Foreign Ministry said that three Chinese citizens "who were wrongly detained by the US" had safely returned to China. The senior official as well as another US official said the release had been in the works for months. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said he had worked closely over the years with Li's son, Harrison Li, "to speak

directly to the highest levels of the Chinese and US governments to advocate for Mr. Li's release and safe return to his family in Huntington, New York."

"Even when it felt like there was no hope, we never stopped believing that one day Mr. Li would return home," he said in a statement. "I look forward to welcoming Mr. Li back home to New York very soon." For the families of all three freed Americans, "this Thanksgiving there is so much to be thankful for," he added. The news was first reported by Politico.

The announcement follows the surprise release in September of American pastor David Lin, who like Li and Swidan, had been classified by the State Department as wrongfully detained. He had been jailed in China since 2006 after being sentenced to life in prison on charges of contract fraud.

The Dui Hua Foundation, which monitors prisoner rights in China, estimates there are about 200 American detainees, more than in any other foreign country, including Americans who are imprisoned as well as those who are prevented from

China says it will defeat secessionism

BEIJING/TAIPEI (Reuters): China's military vowed to defeat all attempts at secessionism and urged the United States not to send the wrong signals on Taiwan independence, ahead of a trip by Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te to Hawaii as part of a Pacific tour.

China claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory and says Lai is a "separatist". Lai says only Taiwan's people can decide their future and has repeatedly offered talks with Beijing that have been rebuffed. China is likely to launch military drills in the coming days near Taiwan, using Lai's upcoming trip to the Pacific and scheduled stopovers in the United States as a pretext, according to assessments by Taiwan and regional security officials.

Asked at a monthly news briefing in Beijing about Lai's visit to Hawaii and whether there could be a military response from China, Chinese Defence Ministry spokesperson Wu Qian said the United States should refrain from sending any wrong signals to the forces of "Taiwan independence". "The Chinese People's Liberation Army shoulders the sacred mission of safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and will resolutely defeat all secessionist attempts for 'Taiwan independence' and thwart all interference by external forces," he added.

A few hours after Wu had spoken, Taiwan's defence ministry said it had detected Chinese warplanes and warships carrying out a "joint combat readiness" patrol around the island, which China tends to do once or twice a month. The ministry said it had spotted 19 Chinese aircraft, including J-16 fighters, flying to the north, southwest and east of Taiwan. Earlier, Taiwan's air force command said that for a two-hour period aircraft, ships and missile systems had carried out in an "overall air defence battle plan exercise".

The drill was to "strengthen the overall effectiveness of air defence operations and to test the response and engagement procedures of the air defence forces", it added. "In the face of changes in the enemy situation, we will continue to enhance defence resilience through various practical training to anticipate potential threats and challenges and ensure air defence security," the command said. The defence ministry told Reuters separately that it was a regular drill carried out quarterly.

Reuters correspondents in the northern Taipei suburbs reported seeing and hearing fighter jets in the skies as dawn broke. Lai will leave for his overseas trip, his first outside of Taiwan since assuming office in May, and is making official visits to Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Palau, three of the 12 countries to maintain formal ties with Taipei. Taiwan's official Central News Agency said Lai would also spend two nights in Hawaii and one night in Guam, meeting with members of the overseas Taiwan community and having closed-door meetings with think tanks. Taiwan presidents typically make use of what are officially only stopovers in the United States to meet friendly US politicians and give speeches as part of visits to far-flung allies in the Pacific, Latin America or the Caribbean.

Former British soldier convicted of spying for Iran

LONDON (AP): A former British soldier whose audacious escape from a London prison spurred a dayslong search was convicted of spying for Iran. Daniel Khalife, 23, was found guilty by a jury in Woolwich Crown Court on violations of Britain's Official Secrets Act and Terrorism Act by collecting information useful to an enemy - Iran. He was cleared of a charge of planting fake bombs in his military barracks.

Prosecutors said Khalife played a "cynical game" by claiming he wanted to be a spy after he had delivered a large amount of restricted and classified material to the Iranian intelligence service, including the names of special forces officers.

Khalife testified that he had been in touch with people in the Iranian government but that it was all part of a ploy to ultimately work as a double agent for Britain, a scheme he developed from watching the TV show "Homeland." "I wanted to utilize my background to further our national security," he told jurors.

Defense lawyer Gul Nawaz Hussein said Khalife's aspirations to be a James Bond figure were naïve, stupid and bordered on slapstick. He said his client was more "Scooby Doo" than "007." Despite what seemed like amateurish bumbling, Cmdr. Dominic Murphy, head of counter terrorism at the Metropolitan Police, said Khalife presented a danger. "He's the ultimate Walter Mitty character who was having a significant impact in the real world," Murphy said, referring to the fictional character in a James Thurber short story about a meek profeader who daydreams of daring escapades.

"We know very well the threat that Iranians pose to the U.K.'s national security," Murphy said, noting that 20 plots, including assassination plans, had been disrupted by U.K. authorities. Khalife's court case had not received much attention until he escaped from a London prison in September 2023 and went on the run for three days.

Khalife was working in the kitchen in Wandsworth Prison, in south London, when he strapped himself to the bottom of a delivery truck and got a lift to freedom. He was ultimately nabbed on a canal path after a massive search. The escape from the Victorian-era prison exposed much

broader weaknesses with the nation's aging and overcrowded correctional system. An inquiry is currently underway into how Khalife was able to escape and whether others helped. During his trial, Khalife pleaded guilty to the escape, but continued to contest the spying charges.

Justice Bobbie Cheema-Grubb said Khalife faces "a long custodial sentence" when he is sentenced after the New Year. Khalife joined the Army at 16 and was assigned to the Royal Corps of Signals, a communications unit that is deployed with battlefield troops, as well as special forces and intelligence squads. He was told he could not join the intelligence service because his mother is from Iran.

At 17, he reached out to a man connected with Iranian intelligence and began passing along information, prosecutors said. He was given NATO secret security clearance when he took part in a joint exercise at Fort Cavazos in Texas in early 2021. British security officials were not aware of Khalife's contacts with the Iranians until he contacted MI6, the U.K.'s foreign intelligence service, to offer to work as a double agent. He reached out to MI6 anonymously, saying he had earned the trust of his Iranian handlers and that they had rewarded him by leaving \$2,000 cash (\$1,578 pounds) in a dog poo bag in a north London park. Khalife said most of the material he provided to his Iranian handlers was information he made up or data available online and didn't expose military secrets.

But prosecutors said some of the army documents were genuine and they used evidence from Khalife's mobile phones, notes he wrote to himself and surveillance footage to show he gathered and shared classified information. They also found he traveled to Turkey to meet a contact. "He surreptitiously sought out and obtained copies of secret and sensitive information which he knew were protected and passed these on to individuals he believed to be acting on behalf of the Iranian state," said Bethan David of the Crown Prosecution Service. "The sharing of the information could have exposed military personnel to serious harm, or a risk to life, and prejudiced the safety and security of the United Kingdom."

ICC prosecutor requests warrant for head of Myanmar's mily regime

THE HAGUE (AP): The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor asked judges to issue an arrest warrant for the head of Myanmar's military regime for crimes committed against the country's Rohingya Muslim minority.

Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, who seized power from elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021, is accused of crimes against humanity for the persecution of the Rohingya. Nearly a million people were forced into neighboring Bangladesh to escape what has been called an ethnic cleansing campaign involving mass rapes, killings and the torching of homes.

From a refugee camp in Bangladesh, the court's top prosecutor, Karim Khan, said in a statement that he intended to request more warrants for Myanmar's leaders soon. "In doing so, we will be demonstrating, together with all of our partners, that the Rohingya have not been forgotten. That they, like all people around the world, are entitled to the protection of the law," the British barrister said. The allegations stem from a counterinsurgency campaign that Myanmar's military began in August 2017 in response to an insurgent attack. Min Aung Hlaing, who heads the Myanmar Defense Services, is said to

have directed the armed forces of Myanmar, known as the Tatmadaw, as well as the national police to attack Rohingya civilians. Khan was in Bangladesh where he met with members of the displaced Rohingya population. About 1 million of the predominantly Muslim Rohingya live in Bangladesh as refugees from Myanmar, including about 740,000 who fled in 2017.

Rohingya face widespread discrimination in Buddhist-majority Myanmar, with most denied citizenship. Myanmar's government refuses to recognize the Rohingya as one of the country's 135 lawful ethnic minorities, instead calling them Bengalis, with the implication that their native land is in Bangladesh and they are illegally settled in Myanmar. Human rights groups applauded the decision to seek a warrant. The dire situation of the Rohingya has received less attention as the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza have grabbed headlines. "The ICC prosecutor's decision to seek a warrant against Sr. Gen. Min Aung Hlaing comes amid renewed atrocities against Rohingya civilians that echo those suffered seven years ago. The ICC's action is an important step toward breaking the cycle of abuses and impunity," said Maria Elena Vignoli, senior

international justice counsel at Human Rights Watch. Zin Mar Aung, foreign minister for Myanmar's opposition National Unity Government, established by elected lawmakers barred from taking their seats in 2021, said on the social media platform X that ICC judges should "swiftly issue the warrant" and that governments should "act and enforce this warrant to uphold justice and international law." She posted that the ICC action "represents a critical moment in Myanmar history."

Myanmar's military regime issued a short statement rejecting the proceedings, noting it was not party to the ICC and insisting the country's leadership practiced a policy of "peaceful coexistence." Khan's request now goes to a panel of three judges who will weigh the evidence provided and determine if a warrant should be issued. There is no deadline for a decision. A request for an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin took less than three weeks in 2023. However, warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his former defense minister and Hamas' military chief took more than six months to be issued. Rohingya refugees in sprawling camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district welcomed the news.

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China's role in globalization

As the debate around globalization and deglobalization heats up again after the 2024 US presidential election, the world seems to stand at a crossroads. Emerging economies and developing countries widely advocate for open trade and economic globalization, highlighting the merits of the free flow of commodities and capital, as well as their strong impetus to world economic growth. In contrast, some developed countries are more inward-looking, talking more about "losses" from globalization and adopting more tariffs and trade restrictions in the name of protecting domestic industries and jobs. To seek answers, the world is now looking more to the East. The global economy is facing more challenges than before: intensified geopolitical conflicts, increasing trade friction, the slowdowns and downturns of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and fluctuations in the global financial market. Many people around the world are asking themselves the same question: Is global governance still viable?

In 2016, the world witnessed a sharp turn to deglobalization triggered by the United States. It comes with a conspicuous feature -- to act in a selective and utilitarian way. Such backlash immediately leads to an "earthquake" at the national, regional and international levels, disrupting the existing global governance institutions, development, trade, investment, and even people-to-people exchanges. The global economy, trade and investment are among the first to suffer. In the past few years, the United States launched trade wars against the European Union, Canada, China and some other countries and imposed tariffs on goods imported into the United States. The Global Trade Alert report released by the British Center for Economic Policy Research (CEPR) in July 2017 showed that the United States introduced a cumulative total of 1,191 trade and investment restrictions after the financial crisis, 462 more than the second-ranking country, India.

Moreover, the United States' deglobalization policy is widely considered a defining challenge to global governance, marked by its "goodbyes" to international organizations. Since 2016, the United States has withdrawn from a number of international organizations and multilateral international agreements, including the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Global Compact on Migration, and the Paris Agreement, to name just a few. The withdrawals have triggered widespread concerns that the global community is more fragmented and divided than ever. As UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres pointed out at the closing of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, "The United Nations, and the multilateral system itself, is only as effective as Member States' commitment to it." The backlash erodes people's confidence in the future. The United States' protectionist measures cause turmoil in global trade patterns, block the free flow of international goods and raise prices instead of lowering them. People in the United States have no choice but to make a living under the pressure of skyrocketing prices for goods. Adam Posen, president of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, noted that "The US approach to tariffs and protectionism risks undermining the very economic openness that once made the country a leader in global commerce."

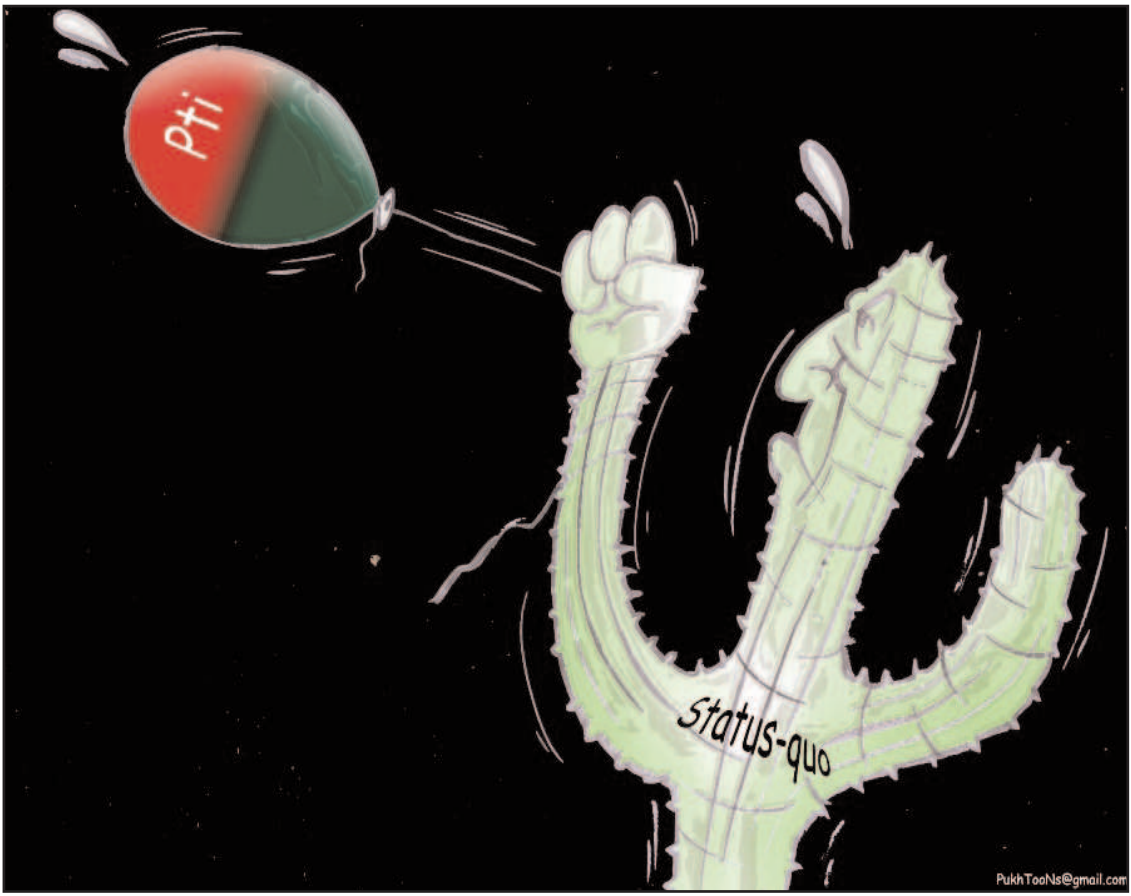
China has long been defined and appreciated as a firm supporter of globalization. At the 2017 World Economic Forum in Davos, Chinese President Xi Jinping said, "Pursuing protectionism is like locking oneself in a dark room. While wind and rain may be kept outside, that dark room will also block light and air." This comparison resonated with global audiences, positioning China as a champion of open trade and signaling its commitment to it. With its growing development and rising international stature, China is now playing a constructive role in addressing global challenges through expanding cooperation and partnerships. Since the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013, China has fostered a network of economic cooperation, connecting Asia with Africa, Europe, and beyond through joint efforts of all partner countries. To China's partner countries, the BRI represents a chance for infrastructure investment and economic growth. The Global Development Initiative (GDI), proposed by Xi in 2021, has won support from more than 100 countries, and more than 80 countries have joined the Group of Friends of the GDI.

China's role in global economic governance, especially in the G20, has become increasingly important. The G20 is defined as the premium forum for global economic governance. The 2016 G20 Hangzhou Summit placed development issues in a prominent position in the global macro-policy framework for the first time, marking a milestone in China's participation in the global governance system. Eight years on, the legacy of the G20 Hangzhou Summit continues to shine. At the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro this year, China advocated a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, again emerging as a champion of multilateralism and globalization. International economists and politicians have taken note of the contrasting approaches of the United States and China. Pascal Lamy, former director-general of the World Trade Organization (WTO), said that "China's approach to globalization, despite its challenges, aligns more with the trends of economic interdependence that have shaped the 21st century." Lamy and some others also argue that China's proactive strategy allows it to participate more constructively in global governance and enhance its influence on the world stage.

China's approach offers a compelling response to complaints about the "losses" of globalization: The solution lies in a more inclusive globalization that benefits everyone, rather than deglobalization, which only deepens divisions. As pointed out by Harold James, professor of history and international affairs at Princeton University, "History suggests the path to taming inflation is through more international trade, not less." After all, shutting the door to the world means isolating oneself. In the age of globalization, no country can do without interdependency and inter-connectivity. History has proven it and will prove it time and again.

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Ukraine relying on drones

Nick Paton Walsh & Kosta Gak

THE Russian assault, caught in grainy feeds from multiple drones, is relentless and daily. Aging armored vehicles race across a pockmarked field. Then, in broad daylight, one tank is stopped by Ukrainian attack drones. Yet two vehicles make it to the treeline and drop off Russian troops to shelter in the scant winter foliage. Minutes later, more drones strike the lone dismounts.

Another tank, partially damaged in its first run, continues through the treeline ahead. It breaks into the next open field, with some troops apparently clinging still to its battered exterior. The sight and its bloodshed are perversely intimate in the live detail, even though the horror we are watching is about 10 miles away.

Once the tank is halfway across the next field, the swarm of single-use drones strikes it again and it slows to a smoking halt. However much of each assault they kill, the Ukrainians complain, the few Russians who advance are immediately reinforced by another 10.

Ukraine cannot match Moscow's numbers, or a tolerance for casualties that Western officials claim is resulting in up to 1,200 dead or injured daily across the frontlines. Kyiv's manpower crisis has been palpable in Pokrovsk for weeks, soldiers around the eastern front told CNN, and Moscow's savage tactics are seeing persistent success.

"The situation is very critical," said East, the call-sign of a commander of a drone unit with Ukraine's 15th National Guard working around Pokrovsk. "We lack infantry to fight and hold out for some time while the drones do their work. That's why we often see situations where the enemy uncontrollably penetrates vulnerable areas." Troops in Pokrovsk told CNN of manpower shortages so acute they feared Russia could make a significant breakthrough and complained of having to use drones to strike advancing Russian units because they lacked infantry to confront them.

One commander said Selydove, a key town outside of Pokrovsk taken by Russia in October, was defended with only six Ukrainian positions, which he assessed meant about 60 troops were involved in the

operation. They were quickly encircled, outnumbered and retreated with significant casualties. It is rare to hear Ukrainian troops disparage commanders and starkly assess the frontline to reporters, but multiple soldiers around Pokrovsk presented a stark assessment of the current

defending another village, mostly without infantry support, encircled by Russian troops. The footage shows a Russian soldier hiding nearby and the unit firing a drone - usually sent kilometers toward the front - just 30 meters (98 feet) away to hit the approaching Russians.

"Freezing this war is a double-edged sword," Kotia said. "Do we give up the land my friends died for, or to continue taking it back and lose even more friends. If these two old men (Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin) start measuring d*cks, Ukraine will be the middle of it all. That won't be pleasant." East, the drone commander, said he was assigned to the area in August.

Russian offensive and their own prospects in the area over the coming months.

The upcoming presidency of Donald Trump causes some anxiety: troops were keen to not offend the incoming US commander in chief and also concerned about the fate of their fight. "I will hold back, as I talk straight," said one soldier. Another feared a January peace initiative after Trump's inauguration might be too late. "I cannot say exactly how much time we have, if there is any time at all," said Kashei, a call-sign, a reconnaissance sniper from the 15th National Guard. "Now they are pushing their troops to the frontline as much as possible. And then at one point they will all go for an assault. They can go very far. In one day, let's say."

"The enemy is advancing because there are no people defending on the ground," he continued. "Nobody wants to sit there. There is a very high chance that they will not come back." The drone crew slip through their video library of the past weeks' costly and chaotic withdrawals. There is the moment when three Ukrainian troops walk into a factory in Selydove a month earlier, advised it is under Ukrainian control, only for one of them to be shot down by Russians occupying the building.

Another scene involves a Ukrainian drone unit

Recruitment brings its own issues. The defense of Selydove, one commander said, was bolstered by 300 fresh recruits, sent to the frontline directly and expected to undergo basic training in the trenches. Errors by command are increasing, several soldiers said, sharing an episode in which a unit of Ukrainian soldiers was attacked by drones on the frontline, after two Ukrainian commanders mistakenly failed to identify them.

Mistakes are commonplace in the chaos and horror of a battlefield, yet this openness and candor is rare from troops who a year earlier would have spoken with fierce pride about Ukraine's summer counteroffensive in Russia's Kursk region. "I have no people. I'm f**king alone. I'm f**king tired," said Kotia, a call-sign, another reconnaissance sniper from the 15th National Guard. "I love my job, but we need other young people to love this job too. Our country is awake, but people in it are not. Guys are dying here. This is trash."

The prospect of peace talks beginning when Trump takes power in January provided little consolation. "Freezing this war is a double-edged sword," Kotia said. "Do we give up the land my friends died for, or to continue taking it back and lose even more friends. If these two old

men (Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin) start measuring d*cks, Ukraine will be the middle of it all. That won't be pleasant." East, the drone commander, said he was assigned to the area in August. "During this time, we have never gone to the training grounds or replenished our personnel," he said. The Russians "are constantly staffed, constantly trained, there are certain rotations, replenishment of personnel. We constantly hear about it from intercepts, that they have replacements and rotations."

The intensity of the Russian assault against Pokrovsk is felt in multiple directions. One Russian push heads to its south, around the smaller town of Kurakhove, where the remaining Ukrainian troops risk being cut off by a Russian "pincer" movement to the south and north. Other Russian assault units are pushing fast towards Pokrovsk itself, with infantry units, sometimes only a few Russians strong, probing into villages and looking for holes in Ukraine's increasingly porous defenses. One commander told CNN that troops around Pokrovsk had been ordered to shoot unidentified persons on sight, in fear of Russian reconnaissance groups advancing.

The brutality of the Russian assault also batters morale. A drone video circulating shows a small house on the edges of Petrivka, a village close to Pokrovsk, on November 13. The footage shows a local in an orange shirt, guiding advancing Russian troops to a basement where Ukrainian soldiers were hiding. One by one, the Ukrainians are led out into the daylight and forced at gunpoint to lie face down. The video then shows one soldier apparently fire at the prone Ukrainians, the leg of one twitching after the gunfire. The Ukrainian prosecutor general said on Tuesday it had launched an investigation into the incident as "a war crime combined with premeditated murder," adding: "In violation of international humanitarian law, the occupiers shot the Ukrainian prisoners with automatic weapons. The killing of prisoners of war is a gross violation of the Geneva Conventions and is classified as a grave international crime."

CNN

How should West respond to Russia's missile threats?

Ruth Deyermond

SINCE the start of this month, global anxiety about the prospect of nuclear war has risen to levels not seen since the end of the Cold War. But despite the headlines, in reality, the risk of nuclear war still seems very low in reality and, importantly, has not increased despite the recent posturing of the Kremlin.

In mid-November, the Biden administration finally approved Ukraine's use of its ATACMS (Army Tactical Missile System) against targets inside Russia. This was followed shortly afterward by Britain's approval of similar use for its Storm Shadow missiles. President Vladimir Putin responded quickly and dramatically. First, he announced a revised Russia's nuclear doctrine. Then, Moscow used a nuclear-capable hypersonic Oreshnik missile against Ukraine and followed up with a statement asserting their right to strike the military installations of those states allowing Ukraine to use their weapons to attack Russia.

The world responded with alarm. The day's news around the globe was dominated by huge headlines about nuclear strikes and images of ICBMs. Many people in the West were understandably frightened. Russian TV reported all this with relish. But Putin's threats and the use of an apparently new missile do not suggest that escalation to nuclear use is likely. On the contrary, they are a strong indication that it is unlikely. The Russian response seems to show that Biden has finally called Putin's nuclear bluff over yet another so-called red line.

Since the start of Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Biden administration has been deeply concerned about the risk of escalation, in particular the possibility that US assistance to Kyiv could trigger a nuclear response by the Kremlin. As a result, the White House has been very cautious in what it has permitted Kyiv to do with US-supplied arms - much too cautious for many critics inside and outside Ukraine. For months, it resisted calls to allow the use of long-range missiles against targets inside Russia that are used to devastate Ukrainian cities.

Given this, the White House's decision to reverse this ban indicates a high degree of confidence that Russia will not respond with any kind of nuclear weapon against Ukraine or any NATO state. One reason for this may be the restraining influence of China, which has not approved of the Kremlin's nuclear threats and on which Russia is now so economically and politically dependent. But beyond this, it looks as if, just as in crisis periods of the Cold War, the terrifying character of nuclear war is helping deterrence to work. Given the stakes involved with nuclear weapons both the US and Russia have extremely strong incentives to communicate clearly with each other, even in circumstances where one

side is trying to use nuclear threats to compel the other, as Putin has been doing.

From early in the war, Washington has made the consequences of Russian nuclear use clear to the Kremlin. The details are necessarily secret. But the Biden administration warned publicly in 2022 of the "catastrophic consequences" for Russia if any kind of nuclear weapon was used. The need to avoid potentially fatal misperception explains why Russia warned the US in advance of the Oreshnik missile strike and its non-nuclear character. Both states want transparent communication in situations, such as the launch of a hypersonic missile, where misunderstanding could lead to a rapid escalation, and perhaps triggering an accidental nuclear war.

Putin's response this week to greater US resolve has been to use doctrines, missiles, and media to signal his anger that his bluff has been called. That anger is in itself dangerous and should be taken seriously, but it doesn't indicate that the nuclear risk has grown. That seems likely to be why the Russian media are so interested in Western reporting of Putin's latest actions. Since nuclear threats are now proving less effective in deterring the White House, there seems to be an attempt to re-establish the power to coerce the US, Britain, and other Western states by generating public panic that will put pressure on governments.

Finally, part of the anxiety of the last two weeks seems to be linked to the idea evident in some quarters that the threat from Russia is connected solely to the West's assistance to Ukraine. It would be a mistake for the West to believe that Russia's hostility would reduce or disappear if the West limited or withdrew its support to Ukraine. Western policymakers and citizens need to understand that the Russian government's hostility to the West is not going to decrease if the US and Britain think again about long-range missiles. The idea that the West, and particularly the nefarious "Anglo-Saxons", are the enemy is now fundamental to Putin's presidency. The characterization of the West as an existential threat to Russia is one of its main ideological props. As long as Putin remains president it is very hard to see that changing because there is little for him to replace it with. The only thing that Western governments and citizens can do is decide how they protect themselves, and their allies, from that hostility.

As frightening as it is, the refusal to give in to nuclear blackmail is an essential part of that. After a thirty-year break, it seems clear that Cold War-style deterrence is back for now. Whether it will still function after Donald Trump's return to the White House in January, when US policy is expected to take a sharp pivot towards a more Kremlin-friendly approach, is less clear.

The Moscow Times

Trump's planned recess appointments are likely to be ruled unconstitutional

Charles A. Stevenson

THE Trump transition team may think it has a game plan to install controversial nominees in Cabinet jobs, but the conservative Supreme Court is likely to block it. The regular order would be for the Senate to take up the nominees on inauguration day and quickly confirm them. Several of Donald Trump's picks, however, are already under fire for lack of qualifications or questionable personal behaviors.

They can't be blocked by a Senate filibuster, but they could be delayed by holds and extended debate. As we learned when Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-Ala.) blocked hundreds of military nominations, it takes three days to confirm any individual nomination when a senator objects. While president, Trump expressed enthusiasm for recess appointments, not least because the interim office holders followed his

wishes while auditioning for permanent appointments. But Congress passed a law in the 1990s limiting how long such temporary officials could hold office, and they lacked the full administrative authority of Senate-confirmed officials.

Recess appointees, however, have full authority only until the end of the Congress - in this case until January 2027. Presidents have clashed with Congress many times over recess appointments, ultimately leading to the 2014 case NLRB v. Canning, when the Supreme Court ruled that a three-day recess of the Senate did not qualify as enough time to justify such appointments. The court presumed that something like 10 days would be necessary.

That appears to be the Trump transition plan: Get Congress to adjourn for 10 days so that the president can appoint controversial nominees. The newly cho-

sen Senate majority leader, John Thune (R-S.D.), promised that this option was "on the table," but "my preference is going to be to grind it out the way we normally do it."

Such a recess early in the new administration would delay and complicate its agenda. No other nominees could be confirmed. No emergency money could be approved for deportation of undocumented foreigners. No action could be taken to finish appropriations bills for the fiscal year that started in October.

The new Congress itself couldn't finish the work of organizing its committees and choosing new members. To ensure passage of a 10-day recess, the Trump people have signaled that they would use an obscure passage in the Constitution that no president has ever tried. Article II, section 3 says: "he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene

both Houses, or either of them, and in Case of Disagreement between them, with Respect to the Time of Adjournment, he may adjourn them to such Time as he shall think proper." While presidents have often called Congress into session to deal with wars and national emergencies, no one has ever prorogued the legislature as this passage allows.

It probably wouldn't happen that way, because Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) could get the House to pass a 10-day recess and the Senate could agree. Motions to adjourn are not debatable, so there could not be a Senate filibuster. Presidential action is a fallback and looks to be Constitutional. The nominees could start work immediately - but all their actions could be invalidated by a subsequent Supreme Court ruling.

The Trump team probably doesn't realize that conservative justices believe that use of recess appointments to avoid Senate advice and consent is a perversion of the constitutional order. In the NLRB v. Canning case, Justice Antonin Scalia, while agreeing with the decision that three days was insufficient to trigger recess appointments, issued a concurring opinion that declared:

"I would hold that the recess-appointment power is limited to vacancies that arise during the recess in which they are filled, and I would hold that the appointments at issue here - which undisputedly filled pre-recess vacancies - are invalid for that reason as well as for the reason that they were made during the session. The Court's contrary conclusion is inconsistent with the Constitution's text and structure, and it further undermines the balance the

Framers struck between Presidential and Senatorial power. Historical practice also fails to support the majority's conclusion on this issue... For the reasons just given, it is clear that the Constitution authorizes the President to fill unilaterally only those vacancies that arise during a recess, not every vacancy that happens to exist during a recess." What's enormously significant here is that Scalia was joined in his opinion by the court's most conservative members at the time: Justice Clarence Thomas, Justice Samuel Alito and Chief Justice John Roberts.

To remain consistent, they would have to oppose recess appointments to fill vacancies existing before the recess. If the Senate insists on its constitutional right to vote on nominees, this question will never arise. But if it does, look for the court to say no.

The Hill

Don't panic this Thanksgiving: You can survive political disagreements

Kenneth Barish

MANY of us anticipate this upcoming post-election Thanksgiving holiday with dread, worried that angry political arguments will tear our families apart. We can't talk to each other, we don't want to and we don't know how. We seem to no longer think of the opposing party as people we disagree with. We think, instead, that they are bad people. Our political opinions are dominated by deeply felt grievances, on both the left and the right. We now see only extremism on the other side.

There is an antidote to this malignant disintegration. Based on more than 40 years as a child and family therapist, helping families communicate with greater openness and empathy, I will offer some advice. Successful discussion of any important disagreement is based on a simple premise: We need to listen to each other. But listening is difficult, especially in most political discussions, when we are not really listening - we are waiting for an opportunity to present our arguments and defend our side.

Listening is first an attitude, then a skill. To listen more constructively, we need to take the time to learn about the people we disagree with - the stresses, anxieties and grievances they experi-

ence, the injustices they see, the values they try to live by and the stories that inspire them. When we make an effort to learn about someone's life beyond politics, we will almost always find some common experience or shared value, something we can understand and affirm, even with people whose political opinions are antithetical to our own. When we listen in this way, we take several steps away from repetitive and unproductive argument toward a new form of conversation: We have begun a dialogue.

It is helpful to understand the difference between a dialogue and a debate. The purpose of a debate is to win an argument, based on the assumption that there is a right answer (and I have it). In a dialogue, we acknowledge that someone else's thinking may improve our own and a novel solution may emerge. We are looking to discover new possibilities, not trying to change someone's mind. Political arguments are typically framed as a forced choice between opposing opinions.

In a dialogue, however, it is far more important to understand someone's concerns and then, in response, to express our concerns. A conversation about concerns is

very different from one about opinions. We debate opinions; we discuss concerns.

When we talk about issues in this way, we may find that, although we disagree about the causes of problems or what to do about them, we often share concerns.

Even when we don't, most concerns are likely to be understandable, something we might share in other circumstances. We also need to consider someone else's ideas with greater charity and regard our own with more humility. Humility requires us to accept that there are facts we do not know and perspectives we may not have considered about any policy or political problem. Charity and humility are antidotes to certainty and too frequently absent from political arguments.

Our best discussions then move away from ideology toward pragmatism, which is about what works and what doesn't. The language of pragmatism is conditional, not absolute. To change an ideological statement - a statement of conviction or belief - into a pragmatic question, we can ask, "in what cases, under what conditions, to what extent?" Pragmatic arguments also reduce our tendency

toward personal attacks, making disagreements about how to solve a problem, not who you are. These shifts - from debate to dialogue; from opinions to concerns; from certainty to humility; and from ideology to pragmatic solutions - allow for much more successful discussions in families and political opponents alike.

Constructive political conversations, of course, are not always possible. Dialogue requires both a willingness and a degree of discipline that are difficult to sustain. In politics, sometimes we do need to argue and debate. And even when dialogue works, despite its many benefits, it is only a first step. Still, we can begin with a small change. Brief moments of empathy and recognition of someone's concerns convey a willingness to listen that almost always leads to some softening of our defensiveness and the harshness of our judgments, on both sides.

Small changes can set in motion a positive cycle of listening and understanding - listening begets listening, empathy begets empathy and the next conversation will be a little bit easier. As citizens, we cannot do much to change how politicians speak, except with our votes. But we can change how we listen and speak with each other.

The Los Angeles Times

Türkiye and S Arabia's growing partnership

Esra Karatas Alpay

TÜRKIYE and Saudi Arabia are on track to achieve a historic milestone this year, surpassing \$8 billion in bilateral trade, with ambitious plans to reach \$10 billion by 2025. The announcement was made by Turkish Trade Minister Ömer Bolat during the Türkiye-Saudi Arabia Business Forum in Istanbul, hosted by the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK). The forum hosted Saudi Arabian Commerce Minister Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi and over 500 business leaders from both countries, marking a significant moment in deepening economic ties.

Speaking at the forum, Bolat emphasized the growing strength of economic relations between Türkiye and Saudi Arabia. "Our economic relationship is almost flawless and growing stronger. This year, we'll reach a record-breaking \$8 billion in trade, and we're setting our sights on \$10 billion by 2025," he stated, noting that this remarkable growth aligns with a broader strategy to increase Türkiye's trade with Islamic countries, which has already tripled since 2002 to 30% of Türkiye's foreign trade today.

Bolat noted that his first official foreign visit as trade minister was to Saudi Arabia, where he formed a close working relationship with his counterpart Al-Qasabi. "In the past year and a half, Minister Al-Qasabi has worked tirelessly to remove obstacles to our relationship," Bolat said. "As someone who has witnessed his dedication, I extend my gratitude on behalf of myself and my country."

Al-Qasabi, who had also addressed the forum, highlighted the reputation of Turkish products among Saudi consumers and businesses, underscoring that Türkiye holds a "special place" in the Saudi market. Known for their high quality, Turkish products have been in high demand as they have set a benchmark in the international market. Al-Qasabi added that Riyadh sees Türkiye as both a "fraternal country" and a "strategic partner." The two nations have laid substantial groundwork to foster economic collaboration.

Bolat noted that Turkish construction companies are key players in Saudi Arabia's ambitious Vision 2030 projects, executing projects worth \$30 billion across 420 initiatives in the kingdom. In 2024 alone, Turkish firms secured construction contracts worth \$2.3 billion, with expectations to surpass \$3 billion

by the end of the year. The scale of this collaboration reflects the vision that the two countries share for Saudi Arabia's transformative projects, including the futuristic Neom megacity, Diriyah Gate, and the Red Sea Project - initiatives with a combined investment value of \$3.3 trillion.

Türkiye's close economic ties extend beyond construction and include strong trade channels through customs and travel agreements. "We have customs

he told us, underscoring the importance of mutual investments and the development of joint business models in third countries. "Our strong economic potential, strategic location, and forward-looking visions provide opportunities to deepen these relations further," he said.

Olpak also praised recent agreements signed at the forum, noting that the 10 new accords in construction, energy, tourism, technology, and health will add significant momentum to the cooperation between

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union agreements with the EU, free trade agreements with 23 countries, and preferential trade agreements with three others," Bolat explained. "With nearly 100 weekly flights between our countries, Turkish and Saudi citizens travel for business, Hajj, Umrah, and leisure, facilitating ever-growing connections." In 2023 and 2024, close to 1 million Saudi tourists visited Türkiye and the numbers are expected to grow even further.

Bolat also highlighted Türkiye's active role in sectors that align with the pillars of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, such as digital transformation and the green economy. "The high-quality services provided by Turkish companies, supported by advanced technologies and green economy practices, reaffirm that we are moving in the right direction," he said. Bolat expressed Türkiye's readiness to support Saudi Arabia to achieve world-class standards in its recent bids to host the World Expo 2030 and the FIFA World Cup 2034, adding that Türkiye was "fully confident in Saudi Arabia's ability to deliver."

In an interview, DEİK President Nail Olpak emphasized that trade between Türkiye and Saudi Arabia has shown robust growth, with trade volume reaching \$6.4 billion by September of this year. "This figure has the potential to exceed \$10 billion,"

the two countries. "Saudi Arabia's 2030 Vision provides incredible opportunities for Turkish investors," he explained, pointing to Riyadh's legal reforms concerning investment, allowing for customs exemptions, streamlined procedures to start a business, and advantages in foreign employment. "We expect the interest of Saudi companies in Türkiye to increase steadily," says Olpak.

Trade Minister Bolat conveyed his anticipation of finalizing the free trade agreement between Türkiye and the Gulf Cooperation Council as soon as possible. He expressed optimism that the agreement will catalyze even more robust economic ties. "This forum and the successful projects already underway showcase the shared vision of our countries. We aim to keep building on this momentum, with plans to meet again soon in Saudi Arabia," Bolat said.

With strong diplomatic efforts and a shared economic vision, the Türkiye-Saudi Arabia Business Forum underscored the commitment of both nations to pursue ever-closer collaboration in a range of sectors, ensuring that both economies thrive in the years to come. *Opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Anadolu's editorial policy.

The lame-duck Congress will be a disaster for Team Trump

Brian Darling

IT seems like every two years, members of Congress who retired or have been let go by their constituents get one last chance to legislate. A good government policy would be to not schedule lame duck sessions of Congress at all. We have new members of the House and Senate elected to serve starting on Jan. 3, 2025, and the elected members should be the ones to fund the government and pass new legislation. Furthermore, any new legislation that sabotages the incoming Trump administration should be abandoned.

Lame duck refers to a Congress being in session between a November congressional election and the following Jan. 3 when new members are sworn in. All the members of the House are sitting members, yet not all of them are elected to legislate in a new Congress. The Senate is a bit different, because it is considered a continuing body, yet at least one third of the seats in the Senate are in the same position occupied by a sitting member who is not neces-

sarily the one who will be sworn in a new Congress. Congress is having this session primarily because they failed to pass the regular appropriations measures to fund the government for fiscal 2025 that started on Oct. 1, 2024, with a current continuing resolution expiring on Dec. 20, 2024.

Republicans should resist any attempts to do anything more than a short-term one-sentence continuing resolution that ends on Jan. 20, 2025. Donald Trump's inauguration day. Anything more will allow the Biden administration and Senate Democrats to handcuff an incoming Trump administration, in addition to a new Republican-controlled Senate, from implementing the will of the American people as expressed on Election Day. The danger for the American people, and a new Trump administration, is that a Democratic-controlled Senate and White House craft an appropriations measure that continues the liberal priorities soundly rejected recently by the voters.

Congress has made a habit of

not getting enough work done on appropriations before an Election Day. The Congressional Research Service put out a report this fall documenting that "a total of 49 regular and 25 continuing resolutions were enacted during the 10 other lame duck sessions held in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2004, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2020, and 2022."

The "other" lame duck sessions when they did avoid appropriations measures occurred in 1994, 1998, 2008 and 2012. That is a staggering record of dysfunction and incompetence by both parties. With Congress making lame duck sessions routine, they tend to push other important legislative matters to a lame duck session. Items expected to be addressed aside from the spending bill are disaster relief, the National Defense Authorization Act and a farm bill. Lame duck sessions are unusually active. Roll Call notes that "the last lame duck in 2022 saw 148 items signed into law, which totaled just over 4,000 pages of legislative text" with the bulk of

the legislative language coming from appropriations and the National Defense Authorization Act. It seems wrong for a Congress that includes so many fired members to pass that many bills that affect the American people.

Another bad outcome of a lame duck session of Congress is that current Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) has tried to use the lame duck to load up the federal bench with as many new lifetime appointments as he can get. The longer Congress dithers in passing appropriations measures and other legislation, the longer Schumer has to confirm President Biden's nominees. Republicans should not be scared to walk away from the table and not pass anything in a lame duck if it runs contrary to the incoming Trump administration's agenda. This includes appropriations by Dec. 20 which would cause a partial government shutdown. Maybe a government shutdown is just what the people want right now. It is time for Congress to get back to implementing what they want and one thing they don't want is a continuation of the Biden agenda.

EU must resolve thorny issue of visa liberalization

Dr. Valeria Giannotta

THE visa issue between Türkiye and the EU is increasingly heating up. For some time now, Turkish citizens' discontent has been growing to the extent that recently some of them staged protests in front of Italian diplomatic offices in Türkiye demanding their right to study in Italy. Indeed, as the new academic year started months ago, students who won scholarships or have been regularly enrolled in Italian universities are still waiting for their visas to be issued, sparking a wave of general frustration over the current status quo.

All of this necessarily leads to broader observations that, while not disregarding considerations of internal adjustment or mismanagement, bring the issue back to the level of relations between Türkiye, Italy, and the EU. Indeed, the issue of visa liberalization for Turkish citizens to the Schengen area has been on European desks for quite some time. This was a topic widely debated between Ankara and Brussels and was included as a condition of some transnational cooperation agreements.

Back in 2013, in the spirit of the EU's "positive agenda" towards Ankara, the dialogue on visa liberalization for Turkish citizens started with the signing of a readmission agreement in the field of migration. However, visa liberal-

ization remained a pending condition in the framework of the so-called "Refugees agreement," which was signed in 2016 in order to contain the risk of a new wave of migration toward Europe. Nevertheless, when necessary, the EU dusts off the promises by acknowledging Türkiye as a "valuable partner" for its key role in addressing regional and global challenges.

Actually, the volatility of the European promises is dramatically evident: over time, efforts to facilitate visa procedures have paradoxically shifted into greater constraints and difficulties for Turks. In this intricate framework, it is certainly appropriate to consider irregular migration as a big international challenge pushing European governments to adopt more rigid approaches in their border control attempts.

On the other hand, in Türkiye, demand to study abroad saw a sharp increase, and Italy is among the top destinations for Turkish students. Hence, consular offices have been subjected to stringent pressure given the exponential number of applications as well as regarding Schengen entry visas for various reasons, including tourism. While student visas generally fall into the category of national visas, the others are granted to Turks

within the framework of the European Schengen agreement, which sets a series of rules of engagement pivoting on the guarantee that the beneficiaries would not present a migratory risk to Europe." As it is well known, Italy and Türkiye are friends, allies, and strategic partners in several respects. Historically, relations have always been good and constructive. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan have adopted a positive and sympathetic approach towards each other with substantial points of agreement in several areas. Bilaterally, there is a synergy between the two counterparts: they are in open contact in diplomacy, the business and economic worlds of the two countries hit important landmarks, and cooperation in the touristic, cultural, and educational sectors is very significant. The high and deep level of bilateral relations reflects the mutual interest in facilitating contacts and establishing closer ties.

The visa issue and the treatment of Turkish citizens could certainly undermine the spirit of solidarity and trust with the EU. The risk is that in the long run, the current regime and discontent may cause a clear fracture between Türkiye and European countries, including

Italy. However, European governments are aware of the significance of students for their future relations with Türkiye. Thus, there is room to believe that a more effective system will be adopted in the management of requests, in line with the required criteria and investigations.

Actually, while an improvement in the management of visa applications at a national level is certainly feasible, European visa liberalization remains desirable. This is the only option Europe has to keep its commitment towards Türkiye and the Turkish people, especially towards the young people who have started to feel a certain sense of marginalization.

What appears dystopian is that the EU has applied a more liberalized approach towards some third countries out of the negotiation with the EU, while Türkiye, which is an EU candidate country, has been excluded. In violation of the principle of reciprocity, Turkish citizens are relegated to a sort of permanent waiting room that certainly does not elevate relations to a condition of equality. As the status quo is no longer sustainable, a liberalized visa regime could honor the current synergy between Türkiye and the EU and alleviate the frictions that could erupt into a political crisis. Indeed, there is room for criticism in any sincere friendship, but what matters is a fair commitment to each other with a win-win perspective.

China stays course regardless of US election outcome

Yi Xin

AFTER Donald Trump beat Kamala Harris in recent US presidential election, a question has been frequently raised: What will be the impact of the Trump comeback on the already volatile China-US relations? A review of Trump's statements during the campaign indicates that the president-elect might push for further economic decoupling from China.

The Biden administration has imposed high tariffs on Chinese products, particularly in the electric vehicle and photovoltaic sectors. The new administration may go further as Trump views higher tariffs as an effective tool to curb China's technological and economic advancement, proposing tariffs as high as 60 percent on Chinese products. The Trump administration unilaterally initiated a trade war against China in 2018, a politically motivated and disruptive policy. However, more than five years on, it has become evident that the Trump

administration underestimated China's resilience. The United States continues to import from China despite the high tariffs, as Chinese exports to the United States are largely irreplaceable. This trade war has only served to increase America's own import costs and exacerbate inflation, resulting in ordinary Americans paying more for their daily shopping.

Will Trump succeed in holding back China this time? The answer is a resounding "No." In face of another four years of Trump, China will stay its course and continue to do what is right for the country. The recently concluded third plenary session of the 20th Communist Party of China Central Committee has charted the roadmap for China's future development, a path that China remains committed to.

China will further deepen reforms in a more systematic and

integrated manner, enhance the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and strive for Chinese modernization. The third plenary session has set that the timetable-proposed reforms are to be completed by 2029, leading to a high-standard socialist market economy by 2035. Moreover, China has no strategy to overtake or displace the United States, nor any intention to overthrow the existing order or dominate the world. It would be a strategic miscalculation to assume that a strong country is inevitably driven to seek hegemony. China's success does not imply a failure for the United States.

The world is changing rapidly with geopolitical conflicts spilling over and economic globalization facing headwinds. Yet, China remains steadfast in its pursuit of unity, openness and cooperation. Major-country confrontation and

conflict would be a disaster for all. No matter how the international landscape evolves, China stays committed to building itself into a modern socialist country in all respects and advancing national rejuvenation on all fronts. China's development is propelled by its immense internal driving force, which cannot be contained by any external force. The so-called tech war has only served to awaken the Chinese people, galvanizing them to build industrial, economic and financial systems that will not be held back by others.

To quote a Chinese poem about the toughness of the bamboo, "It is strong and firm though struck and beaten without rest; careless of the wind from north or south, east or west." China will continue on its course towards Chinese modernization by opening more doors, building more bridges, and reaching out to share the benefits of reform and development with the rest of the world.

New bridges in Europe

Gábor Csizmazia

REPUBLICANS are outspoken about certain geopolitical realities that suggest a shift in American attention away from Europe. Meanwhile, transatlantic relations are politicized, contributing to a divide across Europe itself, particularly under a Trump presidency. Governments in East-Central Europe have certain comparative advantages through defense spending at home and political ties to the White House. These are valuable, as they can help in easing transatlantic tensions under a second Trump term.

American internationalism faces challenges often attributed to Republicans. Indeed, conservatives are more outspoken when it comes to reshifting attention from Europe to East Asia [1] or the burdens of defense from the US to Europe. [2] These views reflect the reality that American geopolitics is primarily focused on the Indo-Pacific, particularly in the age of renewed great power competition. The latter idea has become ubiquitous, but its origins [3] were in the first Donald Trump presidency. The novelty of Trump's foreign policy was that it brought a realist and often nationalist hammer to liberal and often idealist beliefs about international relations. Since Europe has been home for the latter, it is wary of a second Trump presidency.

While Donald Trump does use harsh language against Europeans, most of his complaints reflect frustrations that are decades old. The fact is that transatlantic relations are politi-

cized: Western European leaders love to hate Republican presidents, while Democrats tend to overlook East-Central European leaders in the European Union (EU). In a certain sense, Donald Rumsfeld's division of "old and new Europe" [4] remains relevant, especially under a Trump presidency. Donald Trump made his most important foreign policy speech in Warsaw, where he talked about defending the West [5] in 2017. As always, it was deemed controversial [6], but it also provided the basis for the Trump administration's Europe strategy [7], which primarily focused on East-Central Europe. [8]

Trump's foreign policy will continue to carry a big stick in many forms. Washington's onshore balancing remains relevant in Europe, where the political value of allies may be a function of their respective defense investments. East-Central Europeans have an advantage here, as most outperform [9] their Western allies in terms of defense spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). These efforts can be turned into political gains. For example, in its final year, the first Trump presidency tried to decrease US troop numbers in Germany: while many saw this as an attempt to withdraw from Europe, it was aimed at repositioning some of those forces as new deployments to Poland. People in the Republican Party acknowledge [10] East-Central European merits in defense invest-

ment and call for similar American rewarding measures for the future.

Such a transactional approach is tailored to intergovernmental relations in Europe. This means that Europe is not synonymous with the EU. European ideas of federalism emphasize the importance of taking government competencies from the national or state level to the supranational or federal level. Meanwhile, Donald Trump is an advocate of the nation-state, which remains the key actor in issues like defense and energy sectors where the US will likely seek deals in Europe. Furthermore, Trump also favors good personal ties to national leaders: Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban [11] and Polish President Andrzej Duda [12] met with the president-elect even months before his nomination. These contacts are important since they have survived the political rollercoaster of recent years.

Of course, the hard realities of great power competition remain, Ukraine's fate in the face of Russian aggression or Europe's relationship with China carries the potential of a further deteriorating security environment. The transatlantic alliance is likely to suffer frictions on these issues. Still, East-Central European allies may use their comparative advantages to help cooler heads prevail in Washington and Brussels, respectively. In other words, they can try to form bridges for transatlantic security and political discourse during Trump's second term in office.



‘Efficient banking sector pivotal for Pakistan growth’

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Innovation, financial inclusion, SME lending and forward-thinking banking regulations are key to boosting the efficiency of Pakistan's banks, according to a new analysis by CERP and Alchemy Technologies, supported by the Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA).

At the launch of Banking on our Banks: Aligning Growth with Development held in Karachi today, industry stakeholders highlighted the vital role of the banking sector in driving growth and development. While the sector has shown great improvements, it is important to move beyond measuring

profitability and growth as the only relevant performance indicators for evaluating the competitiveness of our banks.

The growing performance disparity with regional counterparts, overdependence on specific economic sectors, regulatory constraints, and limited incentives for people to use formal banking channels create an environment that hinders innovation, limiting the growth potential of Pakistan's banks.

Mr Jameel Ahmad, Governor State Bank of Pakistan, as the chief guest, stated, "Our banking sector is well positioned in terms of solvency, asset quality, and profitability to contribute to the economic growth and

development of Pakistan by embracing technology and fostering innovation. While remaining focused on governance and risk management, we can enhance the capacity and resilience of our banking sector to serve all segments of the economy."

Opening the event, Mr Zafar Masud, Chairman PBA said, "It is important to recognise that Pakistan's banks operate in a challenging environment, with 52% of the undocumented economy and many sectors actively avoiding the tax net. Despite these challenges, the banking sector continues to contribute generously to the national exchequer and fiscal deficit, with a willingness to do even more through

income-based taxes than the taxes on balance sheet like the ADR. This level of commitment is rare, especially in emerging economies like ours, and deserves recognition and applause."

Banks are incentivized to lend within well-trodden paths, prioritizing uncompetitive sectors like energy, agriculture, logistics and textiles while ignoring industries with long-term potential. Absence of competition discourages new product development and the ability to take bets on newer sectors. Cumbersome approval processes and predictable returns make innovation a losing bet not just at the regulator but also within banking boardrooms.

"The truth is that changing rules doesn't change behaviour, incentives do. With the right data and solutions, we can build a unified banking ecosystem ready to fuel Pakistan's economic recovery," said Maroof A. Syed, President and CEO of CERP.

The event also included panel discussions where the joint analysis was debated by Maheen Rahman, CEO, InfraZamin Pakistan, Ahmed Khan Bozai, Vice Chairman, PBA & Citi Country Officer, Citibank N. A., Pakistan, Asif Ali Qureshi, CEO, UBL Funds and Mutaheer Khan, Co-Founder, Data Darbar and a way forward was charted out by Shahid Mustafa, Co-Founder,

Tameer Microfinance Bank & CEO, Pakistan Microfinance Investment Company (PMIC), Khurshid Kotwal Vice President, The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan and Atif Muhammad Ali, Chief Commercial Officer, Engro Fertilizers Ltd.

The event discussions highlighted regulatory challenges, the high costs associated with digitalization and the resulting overreliance on unprofitable sectors. However, with well-implemented and strategic reforms, these issues can be addressed, reducing frictional costs and enhancing banks' long-term competitiveness.

"We need market-driven incentives, robust reg-

ulatory frameworks, forward-looking boards and a sandbox approach to experimentation. Otherwise, banks will continue to prioritize comfort lending over bold decisions necessary for economic transformation," said Jawwad Farid, CEO at Alchemy Technologies and Professor of Practice at IBA.

To foster sustained growth, participation in the formal economy has to be incentivized. In order for banks to help small businesses to thrive, regulatory frameworks have to reconsider tax strategies. Banks, too, need to evolve their boards to be more diverse and supportive of new visions. All three sectors

need each other to drive the reforms necessary to make Pakistan's economy competitive and complex enough to withstand global challenges.

The event concluded with Mr. Muneer Kamal, CEO and Secretary General PBA, expressing his appreciation for CERP and Alchemy Technologies for spearheading this important dialogue. He also reaffirmed the sector's commitment to stimulating economic activity and emphasized that PBA's ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and the SBP on key development areas will eventually drive sustainable progress and promote long-term growth for Pakistan.

PAJCCI raises concern over alteration in Green Channel parameters

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Senior Vice President Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi has claimed that sudden amendments in Green Channel parameters has caused congestion and jamming of thousands of import bound containers, inflicting huge financial losses on business community of the country.

In a press statement issued here on Friday,

Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi who is also holding the office of Executive Member Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), said the decision is providing monetary benefits to shipping companies and terminal operators, but is much detrimental for importers.

The import consignments carrying medical devices, pulses, medicine, food items etc can become affected due to delay in clearance of containers that have been

held after changes in Green Channel parameters, Zia warned.

He said due to unannounced changes in Risk Management System (RMS) by Customs Department has caused drastic reduction in clearance through Green Channels, dipping from 47 percent to 26 percent.

Such a plunge in clearance has caused delay in clearance of containers carrying import goods, Zia reiterated.

He said earlier changes

in Green Channel parameters were made after prior announcement for information of business community.

Apart of it, he continued, in order to avoid delay in consignment clearance, increase in number of staff was made. Now by avoiding such practices, the containers are held which are inflicting financial losses on importers in shape of different penalties due to delay and weakening the economy.

Pakistan dedicated to expanding trade relations with Ethiopia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan said that Pakistan was dedicated to expanding trade relations with Ethiopia and the broader African market.

He said this during a meeting with Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan Ambassador, Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, under the "Look Africa Policy".

The discussions focused on bilateral cooperation to ensure the success of the upcoming Single Country Exhibition in Addis Ababa, scheduled for May 2025, said a press release issued here on Friday.

The minister observed that series of seminar

before the exhibition, involving the business communities of both nations to maximize engagement and cooperation are being organized in Pakistan. Jam Kamal Khan underscored that the Ministry of Commerce, along with the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, is actively preparing for the event, which aims to connect Pakistani traders with Ethiopian counterparts and unlock access to Africa's vast market of 1.4 billion people.

Jam Kamal reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the "Look Africa and Engage Africa Policy," stressing Ethiopia's strategic importance as a gate-

way to the continent and a hub of consistent economic growth.

He highlighted Ethiopia's impressive economic statistics, including its GDP growth rate of 8.4 percent and the strength of its aviation industry, with 140 fleets under Ethiopian Airlines.

Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula provided key insights into Ethiopia's economic advancements and bilateral cooperation.

He informed that Ethiopia is exporting wheat to international markets and currently operates four weekly flights for Pakistan, with plans to launch direct flights from Lahore and Islamabad soon.

The Ambassador lauded the growing ties between Ethiopia and Pakistan, pointing to recent agreements in trade, business, aviation, and science and technology.

He also highlighted Ethiopia's, 'Home Grown Economic Reforms', fostering an investor-friendly environment by addressing macroeconomic challenges and enhancing productivity.

Both sides expressed optimism that the Single Country Exhibition in Addis Ababa would not only strengthen trade between Pakistan and Ethiopia but also serve as a platform for Pakistani traders to engage with the broader African market.



PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Fazl Muqem Khan presenting chamber shield to Muzamil Aslam, Advisor to Chief Minister.

KP govt to reduce cess on export to 1 percent: Muzamil

F.P. Report

P E S H A W A R : Implementing recommendations of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa decided to bring down 2 percent cess on export to 1 percent.

In light of the SCCI proposals, a summary was prepared which will be presented in the next meeting of the provincial cabinet for formal assent, this was disclosed by Advisor to Chief Minister of Finance and Inter-provincial coordination Muzamil Aslam while speaking to members during this visit to the chamber house.

Meeting was attended by SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, former president Haji Muhammad Afzal, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, executive committee members Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, Aftab Iqbal, Nadeem Rauf, Muhammad Ashfaq and Industrialist Association

Peshawar President Ayub Khan Zakori, Khalid Sultan Khawaja, Mazharul Haq, Atif Rasheed Khawaja, Affaf Ali Khan, Zarak Khan, Imtiaz Ali Ahmad, Zafar Khattak, Asif Khan, Fazal Adnan, Qurat Ul Ain, along with traders attached with gemstone, carpet, pak-Afghan business, exporters and importers.

In the meeting, Fazal Muqem conveyed concerns of business community regarding imposition of 2 percent provincial cess on export, property tax on warehouses, shops and offices by E&T deptt, making withholding agents by KPRA, non-implementation of provincial industrial policy 2020, issues relating to inter-provincial coordination, and suspension of PIA Peshawar to Karachi flights.

SCCI chief said the export process had adversely affected after imposition of 2 percent provincial cess on export.

He feared export from KP would completely end, if the cess couldn't be abolished.

Calling collection of property tax by E&T deptt as double taxation, Moqem demanded immediate abolishment of all unnecessary and irrational taxes.

He also expressed concerns over the collection of professional tax from the business community.

The chamber president raised the issue of gas and electricity, stating that non-availability of gas and electricity to business and industries is a violation of article 158 of the constitution because KP is surplus in production of gas and electricity.

He demanded implementation of provincial industrial policy 2020 with true letter and spirit. He called for SCCI representation in DRCS of Labour deptt, ESSI, KPRA, KPEZDMC, Food Deptt and other relevant authority while consultation

should be made with SCCI and business community regarding matters relating to IPC.

Muzamil Aslam, while responding to various queries of the participants on the occasion clarified that cess funds would be utilized on promotion of economic activities and infrastructure development in eh province.

He assured removal for all hurdles in provision of soft loans to the business community through the Bank of Khyber.

He also promised that issues relating KPRA and IPC would be resolved on priority basis.

Similarly, he promised to raise business community issues at various forums at the federal level.

He said policies would be implemented in consultation with the chamber and business community.

He sought the business community's support to achieve the set revenue and economic growth targets in the province.

Pakistan's exports to US increase 9.39% in four months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's export of goods and services to the United States (US) witnessed an increase of 9.39 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to the exports of the corresponding months of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

The overall exports to the US were recorded at US \$2.037 billion during July-October (2024-25) against exports of US \$1.862 billion during July-October (2023-24), SBP

data revealed.

On a year-to-year basis, the exports to the US also surged to \$575.889 million in October 2024 against the export of \$485.786 million in October 2023.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to the US witnessed an increase of 12.58 percent during October 2024 as compared to the exports of \$511.525 million in September 2024, the SBP data revealed.

Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of

8.64 percent in the first four months, from US \$9.671 billion to US \$10.507 billion, the SBP data revealed.

On the other hand, the imports from the US into the country during the months under review were recorded at US \$739.163 million against US \$589.239 million last year, showing an increase of 24.44 percent in July-October (2024-25).

On a year-on-year basis, the imports for the US also increased to US \$180.407 million in October 2024,

against the export of US \$117.462 million in October 2023.

On a month-on-month basis, the imports from the US into the country witnessed a nominal decrease of 4.08 percent during October 2024, as compared to the imports of US \$188.095 million during September 2024, according to the data.

The overall imports into the country witnessed an increase of 12.96 per cent, from \$16.671 billion to US \$18.832 billion, according to the data.

Meezan Bank named best bank in Pakistan for fourth time

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Meezan Bank has once again been honored with the prestigious title of Best Bank of Pakistan at the Pakistan Banking Awards, marking the fourth time the institution has achieved this distinction. This remarkable achievement solidifies Meezan Bank's position as the country's premier banking institution, renowned for its commitment to excellence and Shariah-compliant banking solutions.

The award reflects Meezan Bank's consistent dedication to providing superior financial services, fostering innovation, and maintaining customer-centric values. The recognition comes as a testament to the trust and support of its customers, the dedication of its employees, and the vision of its leadership. Expressing gratitude for this milestone, a spokesper-

son for Meezan Bank stated:

"Alhamdulillah, we are thankful to Allah SWT for His countless blessings and the unwavering support of our customers, staff, and all those who have contributed to this success. This recognition motivates us to con-

tinue serving with the highest standards of service."

As the first and largest Islamic bank in Pakistan, Meezan Bank has consistently been a trailblazer in the industry, offering a comprehensive range of Shariah-compliant products and services. The bank's

focus on innovation, ethical banking practices, and operational excellence has garnered widespread acclaim. Meezan Bank remains committed to upholding its values and further enhancing its service delivery to meet the evolving needs of its customers.



NORTH BERGEN, N.J./RALEIGH, N.C./LONDON (Reuters): As retailers reopened their U.S. stores after the American Thanksgiving holiday, some locations found small clusters of early Black Friday shoppers waiting outside stores for exclusive merchandise, such as Taylor Swift's new \$39.99 Eras Tour book sold only at Target stores.

But several East Coast big-box store locations and shopping malls were relatively quiet before 9 a.m. Eastern on Black Friday. Hoss Moss, a 58-year-old chef from New Jersey, stood outside a Target store for the first time in 15 years to buy the Taylor Swift Eras Tour book for his teenage daughter.

"Black Friday is just not what it used to be," he said. "Grocery prices are expensive and ... even clothing is not at a price you would get before." He said his family of four plans to spend \$2,000 to \$3,000 on gifts this year, mostly at Macy's (M.N), opens new tab and Lululemon.

In the U.S., Walmart (WMT.N), opens new tab which operates 4,700 U.S. stores, this year is offering a variety of deals on Samsung TVs, Dyson vacuum cleaners, Lego and Hot Wheels

toys, Levi's jeans, and air fryers, although its pre-Black Friday discounts began on Nov. 11.

Cristal Lopez was browsing the aisles of a North Bergen, New Jersey, Walmart Supercenter, which was relatively empty at 7 a.m. Walmart employees were milling about, organizing merchandise and getting ready for the day.

Pushing a full cart of items of clothing and a couple of sling tote bags, Lopez said she was looking for holiday clothes for her two kids. She said she will spend about \$1,000 to \$2,000 total - same as last year - buying mostly clothing. "I find the prices pretty much same as last year," she said, adding that she still had some shopping to do to finish her holiday list.

Shoppers are expected to buy more merchandise using mobile phones and laptops on Black Friday. U.S. shoppers are expected to spend \$10.8 billion online, up nearly 10% from a year ago, according to projections from Adobe Analytics, which keeps track of devices that use Adobe's software to help power more than 1 trillion visits to U.S. retail sites.

People looking to upgrade their TVs are expected to find the best deals on Black

Friday, with discounts peaking at 24% off listed price, according to Adobe's analysis of online prices.

Still, the U.S. retail trade group the National Retail Federation expects roughly 85.6 million shoppers to visit stores this year, up from 76 million last year. Shoppers have only 26 days between Thanksgiving and Christmas, against a more leisurely 31 days last year.

Evelyn Contre, 49, waited in a 20-person line at a Lululemon (LULU.O), opens new tab store with her two daughters. Contre had already browsed the websites of Abercrombie & Fitch (ANF.N) and Lululemon on Thursday for Black Friday deals before heading into Crabtree Valley Mall in Raleigh, North Carolina, on Friday.

Adding pressure for retailers is inflation-fatigued shoppers' reluctance to splurge unless they get good deals.

Target cut prices by \$100 on products such as a 75-inch Westinghouse TV and Nintendo Switch gaming console, and took more than 50% off Barbie dolls, Keurig coffee machines and KitchenAid mixers, deals which started on Thanksgiving and run through Saturday.

Name Correction

According to my CNIC / Nadra records and all my educational certificates / degree my real / correct name is SYED BADSHAH s/o SYED GUL JAMAL, street # 03 Bagh Colony Shamsi Road Mardan. Where as in all my office documents / records my name is mentioned as SAID BADSHAH s/o SYED GUL JAMAL. Please correct it in all my office record / documents as SYED BADSHAH s/o SYED GUL JAMAL.

Name Correction

In the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi Civil Judge I/Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar Buner. Suit No 346/1. Institution 30/11/2024. Date of hearing. 3/12/2024. Mst Taslem etc. VS Shamsher etc. Notice to No. 1. Shamsher s/o Abdullah Khan (late) resident of Rega teshel Gagra Buner at present abroad. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 3/12/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.



In brief

Athletics C'ship 2024 opens

MULTAN (APP): The 52nd National Athletics Championship 2024 commenced at Multan's Ayub Stadium on Friday. The world's javelin superman from Paris Olympics 2024, Arshad Nadeem, led the athletes' parade holding national flag high and fluttering to formally open the national games. The stadium, adorned with national flags and green-and-white balloons, presented a vibrant scene of unity and enthusiasm. Spectators paid tribute to national heroes, while the spectacular parade of 13 teams, national songs, made the ceremony unforgettable. Athletics teams of Army, Navy, Air Force, Police, Wapda, Higher Education Commission and others are participating in the 52nd national games that will conclude on Dec 2. Athletes will demonstrate their skill and prowess in short jump, long jump, javelin throw, 800m race, hammer throw, and others. Paris Olympics 2024 gold medalist's presence served as a great source of inspiration and motivation for the youth. The four-day championship will feature 600 athletes showcasing their skills, reflecting Pakistan's passion for sports. The javelin heavyweight told media, he was happy to see vast playing grounds with athletics tracks and facilities in Multan. He hailed the organizers for holding a grand athletics competition saying that such mega events solidify the national cohesion. He said, it will be helpful in identifying and grooming new talent in the athletics sphere.

Leclerc on top for Ferrari

DOHA (AFP): Charles Leclerc demonstrated Ferrari's potential for wrecking McLaren's bid for a first title in 26 years when he topped the times ahead of Lando Norris in Friday's opening practice at the Qatar Grand Prix. The determined Ferrari driver clocked a best lap in 1min 21.953sec late in the session to finish 0.4 seconds clear of nearest rival Norris and his team-mate Oscar Piastri who are bidding to seal McLaren's first constructors' championship success since 1998. Carlos Sainz was fourth in the second Ferrari ahead of RB's Yuki Tsunoda, Sauber's Valtteri Bottas and Aston Martin's Lance Stroll as the team's familiarised with the circuit and conditions ahead of sprint qualifying later on Friday. Mercedes' George Russell, winner of last weekend's Las Vegas Grand Prix, was eighth ahead of Williams' Alex Albon and seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton in the second Mercedes. Newly-crowned four-time world champion Max Verstappen was down in 11th as Red Bull failed to show the pace they will need to mount a last-gasp bid to defend their teams' title this weekend. His Red Bull team-mate Sergio Perez was 18th. After a bright, warm sunset day at the Losail International Circuit, the two Alpines were first out on track, but it was RB's Yuki Tsunoda who set the early pace swapping times with Verstappen. The champion grumbled about his helmet, which was allowing too much air to flow inside, but that did nothing to slow his progress as he trimmed the best time to 1:23.885 before Leclerc improved to 1:23.702. After a brief off-circuit excursion, Gasly recovered to request that Alpine checked the front of his car, having clattered over a kerb at Turn 13 before Sainz endorsed Ferrari's promising pace by going top in 1:23.068.

ICC directs Pakistan, India to find 'solution' amid Champions Trophy deadlock

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): A crucial International Cricket Council (ICC) board meeting convened to discuss the future of the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy was adjourned just 15 minutes after it began on Friday. It was agreed that Pakistan and India, in collaboration with the ICC, would work towards identifying an acceptable and workable solution for the tournament's hosting arrangements. The meeting was called in the wake of India's refusal to play in Pakistan, followed by Pakistan's firm stance rejecting a hybrid model and warning that it would reciprocate by boycotting future events in India if the situation persisted. Sources within the ICC revealed that initial consultations during the brief meeting resulted in a consensus for Pakistan and India to explore a mutually agreeable plan, potentially involving two or three other member boards as facilitators. The process is expected to conclude within 24 to 48 hours.

The 2025 ICC Champions Trophy is scheduled to be hosted in Pakistan, but India's decision not to travel to Pakistan to play its matches in the country has thrown the event into uncertainty. Pakistan, maintaining a resolute position, has reiterated that a hybrid model — where matches would be split across two venues — is not an acceptable option. During the short ICC meeting and earlier interactions with the governing body's leadership, Pakistan reaffirmed its stance, demanding that all the boards should be treated equally. Sources added that both Pakistan and India are expected to consult their respective governments before finalizing any arrangements. An ICC spokesperson confirmed the discussions, stating, "The board held a brief meeting today, and all members are committed to resolving the Champions Trophy issue amicably. Further meetings are planned in the coming days." Additional meetings on the Champions Trophy's future are expected to continue over the weekend.

Meanwhile, BCCI vice-president Rajiv Shukla stated that the board is in discussions with the PCB and that the ICC is also working to find a solution to the matter. "As far as our position is concerned, we will do what our government tells us to do," he told reporters. Earlier, India's foreign office spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal, stated that the BCCI had cited security concerns over travelling to Pakistan. "The BCCI has issued a statement. They have said that there are security concerns there, and therefore, it is unlikely that the team will be going," Jaiswal said during a weekly press briefing on Friday. This statement contradicts the BCCI's earlier, albeit indirect, claim that the decision not to visit Pakistan was due to government restrictions, as the government's official stance refers back to the BCCI's statement. However, as of Friday evening, there was no public statement from the BCCI.

Pakistan, South Africa win matches in Blind Cricket WC

MULTAN (APP): Pakistan and South Africa defeated their rivals registering convincing 9-wicket victories over Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, respectively in the ongoing Blind Cricket World Cup in Multan on Friday. Pakistan met Sri Lanka at Multan Cricket Stadium and scored its fourth consecutive victory in the tournament after the visitors scored a total of 122 for the loss of seven wickets in 20 overs after winning the toss with major contributions from Thushara 28 off 37 balls and Soranga 26 off 29 balls. Babar Ali and Naimatullah grabbed two

wickets each conceding six and 27 runs respectively. Pakistan Blind cricket teams raced to the target and surpassed it in just 6.2 overs after losing one wicket only, thanks to a blazing fast 71 off 29 balls by Naimatullah who remained unbeaten. Second match between South Africa and Afghanistan was played at DHA Cricket Ground where Afghanistan won the toss and piled up 171 for the loss of seven wickets. Afghanistan captain Abaseen was the major scorer with 63 off 52 balls while Daran contributed 30 off 22 balls. In reply, South

Africa surpassed the target in 11.4 overs for the loss of one wicket, winning the game by nine wickets by virtue of major contributions from Lesedi Lesufi, 75 runs off 44 balls and Mathapo, 60 runs off 33 balls. Today, Nepal won a walkover due to India's absence while Sri Lanka would get more points on Saturday, Nov 30, due to the same reason. Pakistan would play against Afghanistan and South Africa against Bangladesh on Nov 30. Two semifinals would be played on Dec 1 while final will be played on Dec 3 in Multan.



DURBAN: Temba Bavuma celebrates his hundred.

SA bowlers strike after Sri Lanka set big target

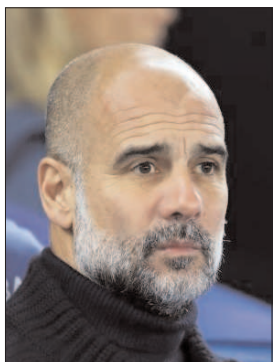
DURBAN (AFP): Tristan Stubbs and Temba Bavuma hit centuries to put South Africa in an impregnable position before their bowlers dismissed five Sri Lankan batsmen on the third day of the first Test at Kingsmead on Friday. Stubbs (122) and Bavuma (113) ground down the Sri Lankan bowlers in a fourth wicket stand of 249 before South Africa declared their second innings at tea after scoring 366 for five. Set a massive 516 to win, Sri Lanka were 103 for five at the close. Although it was an improvement on their record low of 42 all out in the first innings, the Sri Lankan batsmen again struggled against South Africa's fast bowlers. Kagiso Rabada and first innings destroyer Marco Jansen took two wickets apiece and Gerald Coetzee claimed one. Resuming at 132 for two on Friday

morning, Stubbs and Bavuma removed any hopes the tourists may have had of playing their way back into the match. They played largely risk-free cricket in adding 101 in 33 overs before lunch. The left-armed Vishwa Fernando was the best of the Sri Lankan bowlers and created the only chance of the morning, when Stubbs was dropped on 33 by Angelo Mathews at slip. On a second successive day of bright sunshine, the pitch played easier than on the first two days, although there remained some assistance for the seam bowlers. There was more toil for the bowlers after lunch as the batsmen moved methodically to their centuries — Stubbs' third in six Tests and Bavuma's third in 60 matches. Stubbs was eventually dismissed 20 minutes before tea when he was bowled by Vishwa Fernando, exposing his leg stump as he attempted a

flick to leg. With tea due, Bavuma declared the innings closed when he was leg before wicket to Asitha Fernando. The experienced Dimuth Karunaratne fell early to Rabada for the second time in the match, again edging a drive at a ball bowled from around the wicket. He was caught at third slip by Stubbs for four. Patham Nissanka showed positive intent in scoring 23 off 31 balls before falling leg before wicket to Coetzee almost immediately after gloving a catch to wicketkeeper Kyle Verreynne off what proved to be a Rabada no-ball. Jansen, who took seven for 13 in the first innings, followed up with the wickets of Angelo Mathews (25) and Kamindu Mendis (10) before nightwatchman Prabath Jayasuriya fell to a reflex catch at short leg off Rabada after scoring a single. Dinesh Chandimal was unbeaten on 29.

Guardiola will not 'run' from Man City rebuild

MANCHESTER (AFP): Pep Guardiola says he is braced for the challenge of turning around Manchester City's fortunes after the worst run of his managerial career ahead of a daunting trip to runaway Premier League leaders Liverpool. City are without a win in six games, with five consecutive defeats followed by a 3-3 Champions League draw against Feyenoord on Tuesday, when City blew a 3-0 lead in the final 15 minutes.



Defeat at Anfield on Sunday would leave the Premier League champions 11 points behind Arne Slot's men. Guardiola's angst was clear in midweek as he appeared on camera after the Feyenoord game with a number of self-inflicted scratches on his face. The 53-year-old recently extended his contract at the Etihad until 2027 and said the chance to overcome a rare period of adversity played a part in that decision. "The moment I feel I'm not positive for the club, another one will come. It has to be (the case). But I want an opportunity to try to do it," Guardiola said at his pre-match press conference on Friday. "I don't want to run away. I want to be there, I want to rebuild the team in reasons that we have, for the desperation to win, for the absence of important players. "The best test to prove how stable we are is Anfield because we cannot expect they will not have that moment and momentum and that is when we have to stand up as a team." Guardiola, though, disagreed that City's squad is in need of an overhaul in the transfer market. Ballon d'Or winner Rodri has been ruled out for the rest of the season with a serious knee injury, while Guardiola has had to cope without a number of other key players. "You have to now change everything -- I don't completely agree with that. We cannot forget three months ago we were champions of the Premier League," he said. "The squad is really good, but we don't have the squad. It's not just Rodri, nominated the best player (in the world), it's many, many, many other players. So that is more difficult. "We don't have six, seven important players. We have played two weeks, three weeks without four central defenders, two holding midfielders. But step by step, the players come back a little bit and hopefully we can be together for a long time."

Champions Trophy Afridi supports PCB's stance against hybrid model

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan cricket captain Shahid Afridi has voiced his strong support for the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) as it stands firm on its decision to host the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 entirely within Pakistan despite India's demand for adopting a hybrid model. The ninth edition of the Champions Trophy is slated to take place in the February-March window of 2025, but India's participation remains shrouded in uncertainty. The International Cricket Council (ICC) on November 10 communicated to the PCB that the Indian government is currently unwilling to permit their cricket team to travel to Pakistan for the tournament. In response, the PCB took proactive measures by sending a formal letter to the ICC, reflecting the concerns of the Pakistani government regarding India's withdrawal. Furthermore, the PCB

has decisively rejected the notion of a hybrid model for the Champions Trophy 2025. They reaffirmed their unwavering resolve to host the entire tournament within Pakistan as planned. The PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday once again reiterated the cricket board's stance against the hybrid model. "We're still clear in our stance that it's not acceptable that we play cricket in India, and they don't play cricket here. Whatever will happen, will happen on the basis of equality. We've told the ICC very clearly, and what happens next we'll let you know," Naqvi stated. Shahid Afridi took to his official X (formerly Twitter) account and backed Naqvi's stance in hosting the tournament completely in Pakistan. Meanwhile, he also urged the ICC to assert its authority against India. "By intertwining politics with sports, the BCCI

has placed international cricket in a precarious position," Afridi posted. "Fully support the PCB's stance against the hybrid model — especially since Pakistan (despite security concerns) has toured India five times, including a bilateral white-ball series, post-26/11. It's time for the ICC and its Board of Directors to uphold fairness and assert their authority." For the unversed, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has scheduled a crucial board meeting for November 29. The primary agenda will be to explore the future of the Champions Trophy 2025, which is slated to take place in Pakistan during the February-March window next year. The board members will weigh various options, including the possibility of implementing a hybrid model, relocating the event entirely to a neutral venue, or postponing the tournament.

NA body directs NC to submit report on PFF electoral progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly's Standing Committee on Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) has directed the Normalization Committee (NC) of Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) to submit a comprehensive report on the electoral progress of PFF. The Committee which met on Friday here at IPC Ministry, under the Chairmanship of Member National Assembly (MNA) Muhammad Sana Ullah Khan Mastikhel was briefed on PFF, as well as discussions on Pakistan Kabaddi Federations (PKF).

The Chairman PFF NC briefed the Committee regarding the ongoing electoral process aimed at restoring the democratic electoral structure of football governance in Pakistan. He provided an update the district, provincial and federation-level election process. During the briefing, the Chairman, NC apprised the Committee that NC was mandated to complete the PFF's electoral process, spanning from 2021 to its culmination by December 15, 2024.

He also outlined the progress of district-level elections and the subsequent steps for provincial and federation-level elections. However, the IPC Committee expressed dissatisfaction with the provided briefing, as the said briefing was not provided to the Committee members in advance. Consequently, Chairman NC was directed to submit a comprehensive report on PFF's electoral progress in both hard and soft copies within seven days. The Committee stressed the importance of transparency, adherence to deadlines, and ensuring a fair and inclusive electoral process to safeguard the future of football in Pakistan. The meeting was adjourned, with the expectation that the NC will meet its obligations and facilitating free and fair elections.



MULTAN: Men's Athletes running a 100-meter race during the 52nd National Athletics Championship 2024 Opening ceremony at Ayub Stadium. —APP Photo

Five feared dead in road mishap

KABUL (Amu.tv): A vehicle carrying five people plunged into the Kokcha River in Afghanistan's northeastern Badakhshan province, and all passengers are believed to have drowned, according to local Taliban officials. The Taliban-run Bakhtar News Agency reported that while the vehicle has been retrieved from the water, the bodies of the passengers have not yet been found.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Jamadi-ul-Awwal 27 1446 — Saturday, November 30, 2024

Bangladesh trumps Afghanistan in first match

DUBAI (Ariana News): Afghanistan's under-19 national cricket team lost to Bangladesh in their first match in the ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup 2024 on Friday in Dubai. Chasing Bangladesh's 229-run target, Afghan young cricketers scored 183 runs by losing all their players and lost the game by 45 runs. The country's under-19 cricket team will face Sri Lanka's under-19 team next Sunday in its second game in this tournament.

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

China seeks stronger ties with Islamic Emirate



KABUL (TOLONews): China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has outlined details of the nine-day visit of its Special Representative for Afghanistan, Yue Xiaoyong, in a statement. According to the statement, Yue Xiaoyong engaged in deep discussions about China's relations with the caretaker government and practical cooperation in various fields during his visit to Afghanistan.

The statement reads: "During his visit to Afghanistan, Special Envoy Yue had in-depth exchanges with senior officials of the Afghan Interim Government on China-Afghanistan relations and practical cooperation in various fields." "China aims to strengthen its strategic political and economic ties with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan," said Sadiq Shinwari, a political and military affairs expert.

During his trip, Yue Xiaoyong also visited Turkmenistan and Pakistan, where he met with foreign ministry officials from both countries and discussed Afghanistan-related issues. The question now is how effective China's efforts will be in addressing Afghanistan's current crisis. "China is one of the five countries with veto power in the United Nations and has maintained very good relations with

Afghanistan's current government over the past three and a half years. I hope these relations will revolve around safeguarding the national interests of both sides," said Mohammad Zalmai Afghanyar, a political affairs expert. China and Russia are among the countries close to Afghanistan's caretaker government and have repeatedly emphasized their support for Afghanistan in achieving peace and stability.



Iran ready to cooperate in combating counter-narcotics: Qomi

KABUL (TOLONews): Hassan Kazemi Qomi, Iran's special representative and ambassador in Kabul, stated in the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Counter-Narcotics that Iran is prepared to assist Afghanistan in this area.

Qomi added that the issue of drug trafficking is directly linked to political stability, economic conditions, and infrastructure development in Afghanistan. He emphasized that addressing these issues through a comprehensive approach is the only way to achieve sustainable results.

He said: "Iran will actively participate in advancing regional projects in Afghanistan and is ready to cooperate." "The aim of this committee is to create coordination to establish alternative livelihoods for Afghans so that we can take firm steps to combat this international and regional phenomenon," said Sayed Akbar Sial Wardak, a political analyst. The online meeting of the UN Working Group on Counter-Narcotics, which followed recommendations from the third Doha meeting, was held yesterday with the participation of representatives from the United Nations, Iran, Russia, Pakistan, Qatar, and the United States.

The Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs also announced in a statement that the meeting discussed strategies to address the needs of the Afghan people and deliberated on the functioning of the UN Working Group on Counter-Narcotics. The Qatari Foreign Ministry's statement read: "The meeting discussed a road-map for addressing the needs of the Afghan people."

"A large gathering of the involved countries must take place, especially those capable of providing financial assistance to Afghanistan. Cooperation is needed in the economic, agricultural, and political sectors," said Janat Faheem Chakari, a political analyst.

Yesterday, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) announced that this working group was formed based on an independent assessment submitted to the UN Security Council. UNAMA described the first meeting of the Working Group on Counter-Narcotics as part of efforts to engage more effectively with the interim government officials of Afghanistan on critical issues concerning the Afghan people.



Turkish investors express interest in Afghanistan: Azizi

KABUL (TOLONews): Nooruddin Azizi, the acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, has stated that Turkish businesspeople are eager to invest in Afghanistan's agriculture and mining sectors.

Azizi, who is currently visiting Turkey, aims to not only expand trade relations with the country but also attract more investments to Afghanistan.

On the sidelines of the Istanbul Halal Exhibition, he met with Afghan investors and businesspeople residing in Turkey, encouraging them to invest within Afghanistan. The acting Minister of Industry and Commerce said: "Our primary agenda with them was to invite them to Afghanistan to invest there. Some companies already have interactions with Afghanistan, and for those who don't, I am confident that this exchange will benefit both of them and their companies as they invest in Afghanistan."

Mohammad Azim, the acting consul general of Afghanistan in Istanbul, stated: "Our request is for them to return to the homeland and actively contribute to the country's development and improvement. We also ask the honorable minister to create more ease and facilities for the traders." The acting minister further added that the Istanbul Halal Exhibition has provided a platform to market Afghanistan's domestic products in global markets. Nooruddin Azizi said: "Turkish companies are keenly interested in contributing to Afghanistan's development and investing in agriculture and mining sectors. They are planning a collective move to come to Afghanistan for investment."

Meanwhile, some businesspeople and economic experts believe that increasing exports to Turkey and encouraging Turkish investments in Afghanistan could significantly boost job opportunities for Afghan citizens. Mahboobullah Mohammadi, a businessman, said: "Turkey is one of the key countries for exporting technology in various sectors to Afghanistan. Afghanistan, in turn, can supply essential products such as dried fruits, fresh fruits, minerals, and gemstones, which can be exported to European markets via Turkey."

Sayed Masood, an economic expert, stated: "The Turks, being mediators between East and West and holding a significant economic influence, have the potential to play a major role in Afghanistan. Their economic power allows them to invest in Afghanistan with ease."

It is worth noting that yesterday, the acting Minister of Industry and Commerce also met with Turkey's Minister of Trade and Azerbaijan's Deputy Minister of Economy, discussing trade development and addressing challenges in the area.

UNAMA forms working group on counter-narcotics



KABUL (TOLONews): The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) held the first meeting of its working group on combating narcotics Yesterday (Thursday).

In a statement, UNAMA said that this initiative is part of efforts to engage "more effectively" with the de facto government on critical issues affecting the Afghan people. The statement added that the formation of this working group stems from recommendations presented in the 2023 independent assessment to the United Nations Security Council.

"The establishment of the thematic working group follows the recommendations of the independent assessment submitted to the Security Council (S/2023/856) to pursue a more coherent, coordinated, and structured engagement process with Afghanistan's de facto authorities, for the benefit of the Afghan people," according to a statement from UNAMA. UNAMA did not provide further details about the participants of the meeting.

"Counter-narcotics is an issue of critical importance for Afghanistan, impacting both rural communities and regional peace and stability," said Roza Otunbayeva, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNAMA, "The commission established by the United Nations to combat narcotics should coordinate and align with the Islamic system in Afghanistan to eradicate narcotics from Afghanistan and elsewhere," said Hashim Alkozaï, a political analyst.

"The issue of narcotics is an international problem and must be addressed internationally. The international community should have supported our farmers over the past three years by providing alternatives to their cultivation," said Salim Paighir, a political analyst.

Previously, according to recent United Nations findings, opium production in Afghanistan increased by 30% in 2024 compared to the previous year, a claim dismissed by the Islamic Emirate as baseless.

Afghanistan's Humanitarian needs outpace aid: OCHA



KABUL (TOLONews): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has reported in a recent update that three years on since the Islamic Emirate takeover, 23.7 million people, including 9.2 million children, remain in need of humanitarian assistance.

The report emphasizes that the need for humanitarian assistance continues to grow, while the provision of aid faces numerous challenges. OCHA stated in the report that for the current year, it has requested \$3.1 billion for humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. However, only \$1.15 billion of this amount has been secured so far.

The report also highlights major issues that complicate addressing the consequences of four decades of war. These include high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition, natural disasters, climate change, unexploded ordnance from past wars, and restrictions on humanitarian aid. "If aid organizations cooperate with the people and government of Afghanistan under the current circumstances, it will have two benefits: first, it will facilitate access to the people, and second, it can contribute to the country's economic growth," said Shams-Ur-Rahman Ahmadzai, an economic analyst.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Economy has emphasized the continuation of international community support and says the Islamic Emirate is working to promote economic growth and reduce poverty through strengthening infrastructure projects. "Alongside global humanitarian aid, the Islamic Emirate is striving to bolster infrastructure and job-creation projects to pave the way for Afghanistan to achieve self-sufficiency," said Abdul Latif Nazari, the Deputy Minister of Economy.

"Infrastructure projects should focus on agriculture, healthcare, education, transportation, and energy sectors to create positive impacts on employment and improve people's quality of life," said Qutbuddin Yaqubi, another economic affairs expert. Previously, the World Food Programme reported a slight improvement in food security in Afghanistan, but the need for food assistance remains exceptionally high.

Qatar highlights focus on addressing Afghan needs in Doha meeting

KABUL (Amu.tv): The Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that its delegation participated in a virtual meeting of the "Doha Process for the Afghanistan Drug Control Working Group," organized by the United Nations with representatives from multiple countries.

The Qatari Foreign Ministry said that the meeting, held as part of ongoing initiatives under the Doha Process on Thursday, "focused on drafting a roadmap to address the pressing needs of the Afghan people."

Qatar's delegation was led by Faisal bin Abdullah Al Hanzab, special envoy to the foreign minister.

In a separate statement, the Qatari ministry noted that Mr. Al Hanzab held discussions with Andrew McCoubrey, the United Kingdom's special envoy for Afghanistan, on the latest political, security, and humanitarian developments in the country.

Habibullah Ahmadi, head of the office of the



counter-narcotics for the Taliban's Interior Ministry, confirmed to Amu News that Taliban representatives from the ministries of interior, foreign affairs, and agriculture participated in the inaugural session of the working group.

Suhail Shaheen, head of the Taliban's political office in Doha, stated that the group had proposed plans to support Afghanistan's private sector and provide alternative

livelihoods for farmers affected by the drug trade.

However, the absence of women and civil society representatives in the working group drew criticism, mirroring broader concerns about inclusivity in the Taliban-led government and its engagement in international processes.

The meeting marked a continuation of efforts initiated at the third Doha summit, where counter-narcotics was a key agenda

item. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) confirmed the group's establishment as part of follow-up actions from the summit.

While the Taliban have highlighted its counter-narcotics policies as a success, international organizations, including the U.N., have reported a significant increase in opium production in Afghanistan over the past year.

Six countries refer Afghanistan's women's rights violations to ICC

KABUL (Ariana News): Spain, France, Luxembourg, Chile, Costa Rica and Mexico have referred the case of women's rights violations in Afghanistan to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

These six countries called on the ICC prosecutor on Thursday to investigate the ongoing and systematic violations of the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile announced on Thursday that due to the deteriorating conditions and the critical situation for women

and girls in Afghanistan, the case has been referred to the ICC.

According to the report, the ICC prosecutor resumed investigations into Afghanistan in 2022, after they were paused in 2020 at the request of Afghan officials. This resumption emphasizes the urgency of addressing the ongoing human rights abuses in the country.

The six countries involved in the referral have specifically requested the ICC to focus on the situation of Afghan women and girls, who are facing constant and sys-

tematic violations of their rights. They have urged the prosecutor to consider the crimes committed against women and girls since the Islamic Emirate's takeover in August 2021.

However, a number of neighboring countries have said that the international community should not issue orders to the current government of Afghanistan but interact with it.

In an interview with Al-Arabiya TV, Pakistan's First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari said that the international community should have faith in the

Afghan government, and Pakistan, as a neighbor, can encourage the Islamic Emirate to address women's problems and border issues.

IEA, meanwhile, has repeatedly rejected the violation of human rights, especially the rights of women and girls, and considered the concerns in this regard to be baseless.

IEA still considers the handling of citizens' rights as an internal issue of Afghanistan and has asked countries and international organizations not to interfere in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

Free Cleft Lip, Palate Surgeries by Bangladeshi doctors begin in Kabul

KABUL (TOLONews): The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) has announced that, in collaboration with a team of Bangladeshi doctors, patients with cleft lip and palate conditions will be treated in Kabul. According to officials, this operation will continue until December 5.

"They plan to operate on 150 patients. These doctors will stay until December 5, and we have proposed further collaboration in the future because many children in our country suffer from this condition," said Abdul Latif Sabet, Secretary General and Deputy Operational Officer of the Central Red Crescent Hospital. The head of the Bangladeshi medical center pledged their continued cooperation in Afghanistan.

"We are here in Afghanistan. We want to conduct similar programs in other areas and ensure everything is provided for free. We also have additional plans," said Hamza Shaheedul Islam, the head of the Bangladeshi medical center. Some caregivers expressed their happiness over the free treatment of their patients and urged officials to provide more support in the healthcare sector. "I am very happy to have come here and for my grandchild to receive surgery and be healed.

Around 18,000 Afghan children expelled from Iran



HERAT (TOLONews): Based on statistics from the Herat Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs, around 18,000 unsupervised children have been deported from Iran over the past two years.

According to officials from this department, these children, who hail from various provinces of the country, have been forcibly separated from their families and deported under duress.

Mirzad Mohammad Mansoor, the head of Herat's Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs, stated: "Approximately 18,000 children have been deported. We transferred them to different provinces, and they were reunited with their families." Some of these children say their

families remain in Iran, while they are living in difficult circumstances in Afghanistan.

Jalil Ahmad, a 13-year-old boy deported from Iran a month and a half ago, used to work as an apprentice tailor in Tehran. He was arrested by Iranian police and, after spending four days in detention, was deported via the Islam Qala border crossing to Herat.

His family remains in Iran, and he now lives with his grandfather in the city of Herat. Jalil Ahmad, a deported child, said: "My two younger brothers, along with my father and mother, are still in Iran."

Many deported children complain of mistreatment and beatings by Iranian police. Some civil society activists warn that separat-

ing children from their families and mistreating them severely damages their mental and emotional well-being.

Sayed Ashraf Sadat, a civil society activist, said: "The vulnerability caused by this issue has destroyed the lives of countless children, separating thousands of them from their families. This is a significant problem that has persisted for many years, and unfortunately, no proper solution has been found to address it."

According to statistics from local officials in Herat, two to three thousand people are deported from Iran daily and enter Afghanistan via the Islam Qala border crossing. Among these deportees, dozens of orphaned children are present every day.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur addressing during provincial assembly session.

Kundi warns of spillover violence from Afghanistan to Pakistan

E.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Friday warned that the violence from Afghanistan could spread across the country if not addressed properly, and called for a sustainable solution to the situation.

"The fire that started from Afghanistan can spread to other provinces, and it needs to be dealt with effectively," he added. He said this while talking to media after a meeting with Awami National Party (ANP) Chief Aimal Wali Khan here at Wali Bagh to extend invitation to join All Parties Conference (APC) to be held in first week of December at Governor House regarding security issues and province's rights with federation.

Following the meeting, Kundi addressed the media, sharing his concerns about the ongoing security situation in the province. The Governor criticized the provincial government's actions, saying, "Bloodshed continues in the province, while the provincial government is busy setting fires in Islamabad."

He expressed his concerns about the deteriorating law and order situation, and in response, he announced his decision to convene an APC to address the growing security challenges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including in the volatile region of

Kurram. Regarding the political turmoil, Kundi accused the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party of utilizing state resources to facilitate the release of their party's founder and former chairman.

He also mentioned that the leadership of PTI from Punjab had sought refuge in the Chief Minister's House Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Governor also raised concerns about the political fragmentation in the province, saying, "Currently, there are two Chief Ministers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa one, Ali Amin Gandapur, and the other, Bushra Bibi."

He urged the federal government to play an active role in restoring peace and ensuring the rights of the province are protected. On the issue of Governor's Rule, Kundi clarified that no decision had been made yet regarding its implementation, and that no discussions had taken place with him on the matter.

He further pointed out the ongoing conflict in Kurram since October, which has yet to receive attention from the Chief Minister of the province. "Chief Ministers should have personally visited Kurram and brought all political parties on board to address the situation," Kundi remarked.

Responding to questions about the recent First Information Reports (FIRs) filed in Islamabad, the

Governor emphasized that the federal government must ensure these cases reach a logical conclusion. Additionally, Kundi stressed the need for full implementation of the National Action Plan to combat terrorism and maintain peace.

On this occasion, Aimal Wali Khan, President of ANP assured Governor Kundi to join APC and voiced his party's concerns, criticizing PTI's governance over the past 12 years, which he claimed had ruined the province. "PTI's policies have been non-political and undemocratic from the start. Their continuous authoritarian behavior has created more problems," Aimal Wali said.

He also condemned the violent actions of PTI, particularly the May 9 incidents, calling for strict measures against those involved. "Political parties that take the law into their own hands should be banned," Wali added. Wali also highlighted the dire situation in the province, saying, "Fires are burning in villages, and people are dying every day. The resources of our province belong to the Pashtun nation, and they must be rightfully used for our people." Both Kundi and Wali agreed that the solution to the province's issues lies in political unity and the protection of its resources, rather than relying on authoritarian measures like Governor's Rule.

IHC bars authorities from arresting Sher Afzal

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued notices to respondents on a plea seeking details of cases against Sher Afzal Marwat after protest at D-Chowk. IHC's Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir heard Marwat's application.

Marwat, along with his lawyers Riasat Ali Azad and Usama Tariq, appeared before the court. The court served notices on the Ministry of Interior secretary, the Islamabad IGP, and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), and barred police from arresting him in any case. The IHC also directed the interior secretary and other officers to submit a report within a week on details of cases registered against Marwat. The IHC adjourned the hearing of Marwat's plea until next Friday.

Meanwhile, Islamabad police alone spent more than Rs330 million to deal with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-INSaf (PTI) protest.

PHC grants protective bail NA Opp leader, Faisal

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has granted protective bail to opposition leader in the National Assembly Umar Ayub and Member National Assembly Faisal Amin Gandapur while stopped the relevant authorities from arresting them till 19th December, on Friday.

PHC's two-member bench comprising of Justice Waqar Ahmad and Justice Dr. Khurshid Iqbal heard the petition while Alam Khan Adeenazi advocate informed the court that the petitioners are facing several cases registered against them in Islamabad.

The counsel argued that they are unaware of the details of the cases registered against them and fear that they might be arrested before they can appear in court. He requested the court to grant them protective bail to ensure their safety and security. Additional Attorney General, Sana Ullah opposed the petition and argued that the

petitioners didn't appearing before relevant courts while requested for dismissal of the petition.

However, the court granted protective bail to Umar Ayub and Faisal Amin until December 19. Umar Ayub, who was present in the court, informed the bench that he has been directly fired upon and injured, and several FIRs have been registered against him. He requested the court to grant him more time to appear in the relevant courts.

The court also directed the federal government to provide details of the cases registered against Umar Ayub and Faisal Amin. The court ordered the federal government to submit a report on the next hearing.

Meanwhile, the opposition at National Assembly condemned the government's actions against PTI's protestors and said that the opposition will not back down. He claimed that the government has registered fake cases against him and

other opposition leaders, including cases of motorcycle theft.

He also demanded a judicial inquiry into the violence that occurred during the protest in Islamabad, stating that the government's actions were unconstitutional and that the institutions responsible for maintaining law and order had failed in their duties.

Umar Ayub also criticized the government's decision to deploy Rangers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stating that the provincial government had not been consulted and that the move was a violation of the province's autonomy. He further stated that the government's actions are aimed at silencing the opposition and that the opposition will not be intimidated.

The opposition leader demanded that the government take actions against those responsible for the violence in Islamabad and that a judicial inquiry be conducted into the matter.

Bilawal's greets PPP workers on Foundation Day

E.P. Report

KARACHI/ISLAMABAD/LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has warmly congratulated party workers, supporters, and the people of Pakistan on the occasion of PPP's Foundation Day, celebrating 57 years of unwavering dedication to democracy, social justice, and the empowerment of the people.

In a statement issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP highlighted the enduring legacy of Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who founded the PPP on November 30, 1967, with a vision of establishing an egalitarian society rooted in equality, human rights, and economic prosperity. He also paid glowing tribute to the sacrifices of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, who championed democracy with unmatched courage and inspired millions with her relentless dedication.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari emphasized the PPP's pivotal role in shaping Pakistan's history. Under the visionary leadership of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the party gifted the nation its first democratic constitution in 1973, ensuring equal rights and representation for all citizens. It was also Quaid-e-Awam who initiated Pakistan's nuclear program, cementing the country's defense capabilities. The PPP pioneered groundbreaking reforms in land redistribution, labor rights, and education, laying the foundation for social progress. Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, the first woman to lead a Muslim-majority nation, not only strengthened democracy but also empowered women, advanced social welfare, and led efforts in developing cruise missile technology. During President Asif Ali Zardari's first tenure, the PPP government reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to equity by solidifying provincial autonomy through the landmark 18th Amendment and launching the transformative Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), a lifeline that has since uplifted millions of underprivileged citizens.

"The Pakistan Peoples Party has always been the voice of the marginalized, the defender of workers' and peasants' rights, and a staunch advocate for the empowerment of women and minorities. Since its inception, the PPP has remained steadfast in its mission to create a peaceful, progressive, and prosperous Pakistan," said Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

The offensive began on Wednesday, the same day that a fragile ceasefire took effect in neighboring Lebanon between Israel and Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah. By Friday, the militants and their allies had wrested control of more than 50 towns and villages in the north, according to the Britain-based Observatory, in the government's biggest loss of territory in years. They then entered western districts of Aleppo, a city of some two million people that was Syria's pre-war manufacturing hub. "Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS) and allied factions... were able to enter the outskirts of the Al-Hamdaniya and New Aleppo neighborhoods... after carrying out twin suicide attacks with two booby-trapped cars," the war monitor said. HTS, an Islamist alliance led by Al-Qaeda's former Syria branch, shelled a student residence in the city, killing four civilians, state media reported.

Syrian and Russian warplanes launched intense air strikes on the rebel enclave around Idlib, where the militants are based, carrying out 23 raids, according to the Observatory. Army reinforcements have arrived in Aleppo, a Syrian security official told AFP, requesting anonymity to discuss sensitive matters. An army statement said troops had repelled the assault on the city and retaken some positions. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said "more than 14,000 people — nearly half are children — have been displaced" by the violence.

Aleppo resident Sarmad, 51, told AFP he could hear "the sounds of missiles and artillery shelling around the clock." "We're scared that war will break out and we'll be displaced from our homes again," he said. Nasser Hamdo, 36, who works in a pastry shop, said he had been glued to the news since hostilities began. On Thursday, the militants and their allies cut the highway linking Aleppo to the capital Damascus, some 300 kilometers (185 miles) south, the Observatory said.

"We're worried that roads getting blocked could cause fuel prices to soar and prevent goods from reaching the city," Hamdo said. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Friday described the situation in Aleppo as "an infringement on the sovereignty of Syria." He expressed support for "the government of Syria to quickly restore order in this district." Iranian Foreign Minister

Israeli kills 30 more Palestinians in Gaza

Gaza in anarchy, says UN

GENEVA (AFP): The Gaza Strip has descended into anarchy, with hunger soaring, looting rampant and rising numbers of rapes in shelters as public order falls apart, the United Nations said on Friday. Palestinians are suffering "on a scale that has to be seen to be truly grasped," Ajith Sunghay, head of the UN Human Rights Office in the Palestinian territories, said after concluding his latest visit to the devastated Palestinian territory.

"This time I was particularly alarmed by the prevalence of hunger," Sunghay told a media briefing in Geneva, via video-link from Amman. "The breakdown of public order and safety is exacerbating the situation with rampant looting and fighting over scarce resources. "The anarchy in Gaza we warned about months ago is here," he said, calling the situation entirely predictable, foreseeable and preventable.

Sunghay said young women, many displaced multiple times, had stressed the lack of any safe spaces or privacy in their makeshift tents. "Others said that cases of gender-based violence and rape, abuse of children and other violence within the community has increased in shelters as a consequence of the war and the breakdown of law enforcement and public order," he said. Sunghay described the situation in Gaza City as "horrendous," with thousands of displaced people sheltering in "inhumane conditions with severe food shortages and terrible sanitary conditions." He recounted seeing, for the first time, dozens of women and children in the besieged enclave now scavenging in giant landfills. The level of destruction in Gaza "just gets worse and worse," he added. "The common plea by everyone I met was for this to stop. To bring this to an end. Enough." He said the UN was being blocked from taking any aid to the 70,000 people still thought to be living in northern Gaza, due to "repeated impediments or rejections of humanitarian convoys by the Israeli authorities."

"It is so obvious that massive humanitarian aid needs to come in — and it is not." UN Human Rights Office spokesman Jeremy Laurence called for an immediate ceasefire. "The killing must end," he said. "The hostages must be released immediately and unconditionally. Those arbitrarily detained must be released," he added. "And every effort must be made to urgently provide the full quantities of food, medicine and other vital assistance desperately needed in Gaza." Fighters from Palestinian group Hamas launched an attack in Israel on October 7, 2023, that resulted in the deaths of 1,207 people, most of them civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

to hostilities that had escalated sharply in recent months and had overshadowed the Gaza conflict. Israel's campaign in Gaza has killed nearly 44,200 people and displaced nearly all the enclave's population at least once, Gaza officials

say. Vast swathes of the territory are in ruins. The Hamas-led militants who attacked southern Israeli communities 13 months ago, triggering the war, killed some 1,200 people and captured more than 250 hostages, Israel has said.

Militants, allies enter Syria's second city

ALEPPO (AFP): Militants and their Turkish-backed allies reached Syria's second city of Aleppo Friday, as they pressed a lightning offensive against forces of the Iranian and Russian-backed government. The fighting is some of the deadliest in years, with 255 people killed, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Most of the dead have been combatants but the toll also includes 24 civilians, most killed in Russian air strikes.

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nister Abbas Araghchi pledged "continued support for the government, nation and army of Syria," in a phone call with his Syrian counterpart Bassam Al-Sabbagh, according to a statement.

The Idlib area has been subject to a Turkish- and Russian-brokered truce since 2020. The ceasefire has been repeatedly violated but had largely held. An AFP correspondent in the rebel enclave saw militants advancing in tanks as intense exchanges of fire took place in an area just seven kilometers (a little over four miles) from Aleppo. AFP images showed abandoned army tanks and other military vehicles. The correspondent said the militants and their Turkiye-backed allies took orders from a joint operations command.

Analyst Nick Heras, of the New Lines Institute for Strategy and Policy, said the fighters were "trying to preempt the possibility of a Syrian military campaign in the region of Aleppo." According to Heras, the Syrian government and its key backer Russia had been preparing for such a campaign. Russia intervened in Syria in 2015, turning the tide of the civil war which broke out four years earlier in favor of the government, whose forces at the time had lost control of most of country. Other interests are also at stake.

As well as Russia, Syrian President Bashar Assad has been propped up by Iran and allied militant groups, including Lebanon's Hezbollah.

57 years of sacrifices and achievements

Sharjeel Inam Memon Minister for information and transport, government of Sindh

November marks a significant milestone in Pakistan's political history. Fifty-seven years ago, on November 30, 1967, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was founded in Lahore at the residence of the prominent progressive leader Khurshid Hassan Mir. It quickly became a beacon of hope, not only for Pakistan but also for the people of Afro-Asian nations.

Today, 57 years of the enduring relationship between the people of Pakistan and the PPP have been completed. These 57 years symbolize the PPP's sacrifices, made to ensure the people's right to self-determination. They also

represent the party's achievements in transforming Pakistan into a democratic, resilient, and independent nation while addressing the fundamental needs of its citizens.

At the party's founding meeting in 1967, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto presented a foundational document that clearly and convincingly explained the necessity of a new political party in Pakistan. This document emphasized, "In the present circumstances, a new party is essential because, without it, it is impossible to unite enlightened elements."

The document also emphasized that "the foundation of the party should be laid on the principles of justice and equality, not on the outdated doctrines of oppression, tyranny, and plunder. On this new foundation, the people of Pakistan can undoubtedly

find solutions to their internal and external problems." This formed the party's core ideological basis, which remains unchanged to this day.

The document made it clear that the party would have to follow a long and arduous path to achieve its goals. It stressed the need for a transformative shift in thinking, stating, "There is an urgent need for a revolutionary change in our way of thinking. There is no other option now. While the long path is not an easy choice when a shorter one exists, Pakistan's current circumstances demand that we take the longer route."

It further explained that experience has shown that in matters affecting the fate of the people and the nation, the easy, short path often leads to illusions rather than the desired destination.

In line with this founda-

tional document, the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party chose the long path, enduring hardships and sacrifices at every step, even at the cost of their lives. However, their perseverance brought enduring successes for the country and its people. Today, on its Foundation Day, we can proudly say that the PPP's history is one of unwavering commitment and achievement.

No other political party has such a history. Along with political history, there is also a history of the achievements of the PPP. The founding chairman of the PPP, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, made Pakistan the first country in the Islamic world to have nuclear power.

We are proud that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gave Pakistan the unanimous Constitution of 1973. This Constitution not

only established a federal parliamentary democratic system but also strengthened the federation of Pakistan. Shaheed Bhutto raised political awareness among the masses and, for the first time, introduced policies for the welfare of workers and farmers. He rebuilt Pakistan by releasing 90,000 prisoners of war, strengthening national defense, and laying the foundations of Pakistan's neutral foreign policy. He introduced modern infrastructure and implemented revolutionary reforms in health and education. As a global leader, he fought for the rights of the people of Pakistan and the Third World, promoting the unity of Islamic countries and the Non-Aligned Movement. He ultimately sacrificed his life for his mission, believing that "more caravans of lovers will set out."

Shaheed Mohtarma

Benazir Bhutto continued her father's mission, following the same long and difficult path. She too gave her life fighting for Pakistan's stability and the democratic and fundamental rights of its people. She united political parties under the MRD and ARD platforms and led democratic movements against two military dictators, restoring democracy twice. She strengthened Pakistan's defense by initiating the missile program and championed women's rights by establishing the first women's bank and police stations, granting land ownership to women farmers, and improving the economic conditions of poor women. She provided countless jobs to unemployed youth during a global recession and prioritized basic education and health facilities for the underprivileged.

Today, we proudly acknowledge that after Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, President Asif Ali Zardari continued this legacy of sacrifice and achievement. He united Pakistan's political forces, endured long imprisonments, and strengthened the federation by passing the 18th Constitutional Amendment, transferring presidential powers to the Parliament. His leadership ensured that no president can dissolve democratic governments or allow military interventions. He introduced the Benazir Income Support Program for poor women, enhanced Pakistan's relations with China, Russia, and Islamic countries, and promoted a self-reliant economy.

On this Foundation Day, we also celebrate the contributions of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. As Foreign

Minister, he upheld the party's ideological foundation, restored Pakistan's global standing, and highlighted the devastation caused by climate change in poor countries like Pakistan. His advocacy for climate justice led to significant global recognition. Under his leadership, the PPP stood by flood victims, providing immediate aid and undertaking the unprecedented task of building more than 2 million houses for their rehabilitation.

Today, we can proudly declare that the PPP has an enduring and genuine relationship with the people of Pakistan. No other political party has made so many sacrifices or served the people as selflessly. The PPP remains the only true hope for the country and its people.

Happy PPP Foundation Day to everyone!