

Ishaq Dar arrives in Cairo

CAIRO: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar arrived here on Tuesday to attend the 11th Summit of the Developing Eight (D-8) countries scheduled to be held on December 19. As the deputy prime minister landed at Cairo International Airport, he was received by Charge d'affaires Dr. Raza Shahid and Additional Secretary Ambassador Ahmed Amjad Ali. — Agencies



@thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXI

No. 325

Regd. No. 241

JAMADI US SANNI 14 1446 -- WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18 2024

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Ambassador of UAE to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Alzaabi, cutting cake to celebrate the 53rd National Day of UAE.

PHC extends KP CM protective bail

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has extended the protective bail of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur till 16th January, 2025 and stopped arrested in any of the registered cases against him, on Tuesday.

PHC's divisional comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Waqar Ahmad heard the petition seeking details of the cases registered against Ali Amin Gandapur. The petitioners' lawyers, Alam Khan Adeenzai argued that the petitioner had filed a petition seeking details of the cases registered against him in connection with the protest at D-Chowk.

The lawyers stated that Gandapur wanted to appear before the relevant courts but was not being provided with the necessary details. They requested the court to direct the authorities to provide the details of the cases registered against him.

Deputy Attorney General Hazrat Syed and NAB Prosecutor Hashmat Jehangir appeared before the court. They informed the court that Gandapur had filed a petition seeking details of the cases registered against him. They stated that 32 cases had been registered against Gandapur in Islamabad, while 33 cases had been registered against him in Punjab.

PHC extended the protective bail of Gandapur till 16th January, 2025. The court also directed that Gandapur should not be arrested in any of the registered cases against him. Additionally, the court issued a notice to NAB to provide details of the cases registered against Gandapur.

The chief minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Gandapur stated that he was waiting for instructions from PTI Chairman Imran Khan regarding the civil disobedience movement. He also mentioned that he was not allowed to meet Imran Khan at Adiala Jail due to clearance issues.

This he claimed while talking to media personnel at PHC after hearing and stated that he told the jail authorities that he was the representative of the entire province and did not require any clearance.

PHC grants protective& transit bails to 13 PTI leaders: The similar divisional bench granted protective and transit bails to 13 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders include Senator Shibli Faraz, renowned lawyer Qazi Anwar, and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Abdul Qayyum.

Additionally, several other PTI leaders, such as MNAs Anwar Taj, Salim Rahman, and Sajid Khan, as well as PTI Punjab leaders Mabbia Tahir, Omar Tanveer, Malik Timur Masood, Malik Fahad Masood, Malik Saad Ali, and Raja Azhar Mahmood, have also been granted protective bail. PTI leaders filed petitions seeking protective bail and details of the cases registered against them. The lawyers argued that the leaders were facing threats of arrest and wanted to appear before the courts to clear their names.

President for boosting bilateral ties with UAE

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), describing the relationship as a bond rooted in "faith, trust, and mutual respect."

The president was addressing a reception in Islamabad held to mark the UAE's 53rd National Day, "Eid Al Etihad". Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, UAE's Ambassador to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Alzaabi, members of the diplomatic community and government officials attended the event.

Addressing the occasion, the president said that Pakistan wanted to enhance cooperation with the UAE in key sectors, such as information technology, renewable energy, agriculture, and tourism. He invited UAE businesses to explore opportunities in Pakistan's economy, including the Pakistan Stock Exchange, renewable energy, and other promising

sectors as it offered an investment-friendly environment.

The president highlighted that Pak-UAE relations had flourished into a trust-worthy strategic partnership, encompassing political, economic, and social dimensions, adding the UAE was one of Pakistan's most significant economic partners and one of the largest investors in the country. "The recent signing of multiple agreements in diverse sectors, including maritime, logistics, and aviation, reflects the UAE's unwavering support and confidence in Pakistan's economic potential," the President said, expressing optimism for deepened bilateral cooperation.

Highlighting the historic ties between the two nations, the president noted that Pakistan was the first country to establish diplomatic representation in the UAE even before its formal formation. He also expressed gratitude for the UAE's consistent support during Pakistan's difficult times.

The president appreci-

ed the contributions of the 1.8 million-strong Pakistani diaspora in the UAE, who continue to play a vital role in the development of both countries. "This people-to-people connection exemplifies the mutual trust and goodwill between our countries," he added. The president extended heartfelt congratulations to UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and the people of the UAE on the country's national day.

He said that the UAE, since its unification, had made remarkable progress, emerging as a global hub for trade, investment, and tourism and credited the visionary leadership of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan for laying the foundation of the UAE's prosperity and its enduring relationship with Pakistan. The president lauded the UAE's achievements in diverse fields and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to fostering stronger ties with the UAE.

Two policemen killed in Shangla terrorist attacks

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Unidentified terrorists attacked the Gananagar police checkpoint in Tehsil Chakesar, resulting in the martyrdom of two police officers, including Sub-Inspector Muhammad Hassan and Constable Nisar Ahmed, and injuries to three others.

In a separate incident, three police personnel were injured in an attack on a police checkpoint in Muslim Kandao, Puran. According to details, two different terrorist attacks in Shangla led to the martyrdom of Sub-Inspector Muhammad Hassan and Constable Nisar Ahmed. In the Gananagar checkpoint attack, Munshi Arshad Iqbal, Constable Arshad Khan, and Constable Riffat

Khan sustained injuries.

The attack occurred on Tuesday night at 10:15 PM when unknown terrorists launched an assault on the police checkpoint using hand grenades and rocket launchers, accompanied by indiscriminate gunfire. The police officers retaliated, and the exchange of fire continued for half an hour. During this time, announcements were made through loudspeakers in the local village of Gananagar, prompting villagers to rush to the checkpoint armed with available weapons.

The terrorists, fearing the arrival of the villagers, managed to flee. Once the situation stabilized, local elders transported the injured officers to the District Headquarters Hospital in Battagram.

District Police Officer (DPO) Muhammad Imran Khan, along with additional police personnel, also arrived at the scene.

However, Sub-Inspector Muhammad Hassan and Constable Nisar Ahmed succumbed to their injuries at the hospital. The three injured officers were later transferred to Saidu Sharif Hospital, where they are receiving treatment and are reported to be out of danger. Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a police checkpoint in Shangla district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which resulted in the martyrdom of two police personnel, including an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI).

Saif, jirga discuss peace in Kurram

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Dr. Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information and Public Relations, met with representatives from the Kurram Grand Jirga to discuss the ongoing challenges facing the District, the developments of the Jirga, and the broader peace process.

During the meeting, Dr. Saif underscored the critical need for the removal of heavy weaponry in Kurram to pave the way for lasting peace. He called for the elimination of anti-aircraft weapons, missiles, RPGs, and other heavy artillery, stressing that such measures are essential to ensure

stability in the area. Dr. Saif also emphasized that dismantling bunkers is a prerequisite for achieving a peaceful environment.

He further pointed out that the main roads in the region could not be opened to public traffic until the return of heavy weapons and the destruction of bunkers are addressed.

While acknowledging existing concerns over the weapons surrender process, Dr. Saif expressed optimism that a resolution would be reached soon.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to peace, Dr. Saif stated that ensuring security in Kurram is a top priority. He urged the Grand Jirga to

seek a permanent solution to these issues, with a focus on safeguarding future generations. The Advisor stressed that both parties must come to a mutual agreement regarding the return of heavy weapons and the demolition of bunkers to secure key routes.

In addition to peace efforts, Dr. Saif assured that the provincial government would continue to guarantee the steady delivery of life-saving medical supplies and essential foodstuffs to the people of Kurram. He mentioned that a significant shipment of medicines had been sent to the region via Chief Minister's helicopter earlier that day.

Seminaries' registration: Fazl blames government

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Tuesday blamed the government for hampering the registration of seminaries.

Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, a visibly agitated Maulana said 26th constitutional amendment was passed with consensus and it's the spirit of cooperation which helped sort out issues. "Dialogue and negotiations are integral part of politics," he said.

He said it had become crystal clear that legislation was done in the country at the behest of the International Monetary Fund. "Today I want to go into history of religious seminaries," he said. He said questions were raised about seminaries in 2004. These questions, he said, related to monetary system (sources of funding), syllabus and organisational structure.

He said a legislation was undertaken after the stakeholders convinced the government about the transparent system of seminaries.

However, issues persisted and finally an agreement was reached in 2010 according to which any complaint against the seminaries would be taken up with a regulatory authority. He said the government again raised questions about registration of seminaries under Societies Act of 1860 and insisted that they should affiliate themselves with the federal education department after the passage of 18th amendment.

PM applauds record current account surplus

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday expressed satisfaction over achieving a record current account surplus in November. "For the first time in 10 years, Pakistan's current account surplus reaching US\$729 million in November 2024 is extremely encouraging for the national economy," the prime minister said in a press statement issued by the PM House.

He highlighted that cut in the policy rate by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), gradual decline in inflation rate and increase in the current account surplus were clear evidence of the government's positive economic policies. "Pakistan's position in the international economic market will strengthen with record increase in the current account surplus," the prime minister added.

He noted that the increase in current account surplus would also increase the local and foreign investor's confidence in Pakistan's economy. PM Shehbaz also extended appreciation to Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik and the government's economic team for their tireless efforts.

**Cut in interest rate to help boost investment in Pakistan:** Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said the central bank's announcement of cut in the interest rate by 2% to 13% will help boost investment in the country and stimulate the economic growth.

"Taking advantage of the good news on economic front, we should first promote domestic investment, as a result the foreign investment will automatically come to the country," the prime minister said while chairing a cabinet meeting here. The meeting began with the recitation of Fateha for the eternal peace of Siddiq-ul-Farooq and a policeman who was martyred in Karak during a terrorist attack on polio workers' team.

Addressing the persistent challenge of

polio eradication, the prime minister regretted that while the polio virus had been nearly eradicated worldwide, Pakistan still faced obstacles in becoming a polio-free country. He stressed the need to overcome these challenges and reaffirmed the government's commitment to eliminating the disease.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of Pakistani lives in the recent boat capsizing incident near Greece. Welcoming the recent positive indicators, the prime minister noted that the policy rate had been reduced by 2% to 13%, which would provide relief to businesses and investors. He described this as a "welcoming sign" for the economy, expressing optimism that it would encourage investment and stimulate growth.

He further highlighted that the inflation rate had dropped to its lowest level since 2018, a significant development for the economy. Shehbaz Sharif emphasized the importance of promoting local investment and announced that the government had completed a home-grown economic plan, which will be formally unveiled in a special event soon.

**PM Shehbaz to represent Pakistan at D-8 Summit in Egypt:** Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif will undertake an official visit to Egypt from Wednesday to Friday to participate in the Eleventh Summit of the Developing Eight (D-8) countries being held in Cairo.

According to Foreign Office, preceding the Summit, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar will attend the 21st Session of the D-8 Council of Ministers on Wednesday. The theme of the 11th D-8 Summit is "Investing in Youth and Supporting SMEs: Shaping Tomorrow's Economy." The Prime Minister will express Pakistan's strong commitment to the ideals of D-8, underscore the importance of fostering partnerships for mutual benefit and prosperity, and promoting cooperation in agriculture, food security and tourism.



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PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Ameen Khan Gandapur being briefed about the features of Food Testing Laboratory.

## Industrial growth rate plunges to 0.2%

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Finance and Inter-Provincial Coordination Muzzammil Aslam said that the Pakistan's industrial development has been frozen due to the current government's poor policies, and the industrial growth rate was a mere 0.2% in

October, based on data issued by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

Mr. Aslam criticized the government's claim of economic recovery, pointing out that the 0.6% industrial growth in the first four months of the current year is being touted as a success. In contrast, during Imran Khan's government, industrial growth was at 12%, exports were boom-

ing, and employment was at its peak.

The advisor on Finance said that the country's economy is currently stagnant, with unemployment at an all-time high, and people are being forced to leave the country.

Reduced consumption of electricity and gas is also a clear indication of the economic downturn, he added.

## KP-CTA to organize five-day Hunar Fest

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture & Tourism Authority (KPCTA) is organizing a five-day Hunar Festival from 27th to 31 December 2024 here at Destination Heritage at Peshawar Cantonment. Beside the Department of Archeology and Museums Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Destination Heritage Peshawar and Skill Zone have also extended support in holding of the festival which will continue till December 31, 2024 at Destination Heritage, Peshawar Cantonment.

Artisans from all provinces of the country will erect and decorate their handicraft stalls while the artwork of students has also been included in the fair.

Apart from this, traditional food, cottage industry, magic show and folk music will also be part of the fair.

Craftsmen from different provinces of the country will decorate their handicraft stalls in the craft fair, while the artwork of students has also been included in the fair. Apart from this, traditional food, small industry, magic show and folk music will also be part of the fair.

## Committee discuss Police Training School in D I Khan

PESHAWAR (APP): The first meeting of committee constituted by provincial cabinet to establish Police Training School in D I Khan held its meeting here Tuesday.

The meeting that was chaired by Local Government Minister, Arshad Ayub was also attended by CM aide on Anti-Corruption, Musaddiq Abbasi, Additional Secretary Hone, Qasim Jadoon, Additional Deputy Commissioner Dera and concerned officials.

On the occasion, the meeting was briefed about measures to establish police training school in Dera and to acquire land for the purpose.

Chairing the meeting, provincial minister directed to follow prescribed rules and procedure and took decisions with consent of all concerned departments. He said that the nine acre land on which constructions have already been made is property of livestock department adding that home and police authorities should provide alternate land to livestock department to reduce losses.

He said that all the decisions taken in this connection would be presented to provincial cabinet and final plan would be devised after consultation with KP Chief Minister.

He said that all the demands and suggestions for establishment of police training school should be forwarded to the committee for proper consideration.

# Tordher emphasizes on digitization of public service provision

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Industries and Commerce Abdul Karim Tordher has emphasized on the complete digitization of the process of providing public services so the people could be provided ease in registration and other service obligations regarding this sector.

He expressed these views while presiding over a performance review meeting of the Directorate of Industries and Commerce here at the Civil Secretariat on Tuesday.

Besides, the Director General (DG) Industries Hasan Abid, Deputy Secretary Industries Aizazullah and other officers also attended the meeting. The meeting reviewed the progress towards achieving the targets assigned for bringing improvement in the professional performance of the department.

The Special Assistant was informed that the data of 854 godowns in the province has been reported and powers for their registration at the local level have been delegated.

It was told that a Bill to declare brick kiln business as an industry has also been approved and awareness campaigns are being conducted



at the district level to include them in the stream of registration.

Similarly, the data of 885 stone crushers has also been obtained across the province, while under the Boilers Act, 167 boilers have been inspected from July to November 2024 and Revenue from them, amounting to Rs.3.436 million has been collected.

Speaking on the occasion, the Special Assistant said that Industries is an important sector in terms of public services and in every district it is providing its services to the public through its local structure, so it needs to be developed on modern lines according to new dimensions and trends in order to maintain its importance and bring further improvement in their services.

The Special Assistant said that amendments should be made in the

proposed rules regarding the registration of crushing plants to classify them according to their production capacity.

The Special Assistant was also briefed on the proposed amendments to various old laws relating to the industry. He was informed that the Law Department had been approached to review whether the issue of corporate social responsibility falls within the federal or provincial jurisdiction and the reply will be received soon.

The Special Assistant directed the Directorate General of Industries and Commerce to provide facilities and services to the people under the public agenda of the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and intensify efforts to achieve the given goals as soon as possible in this regard.

## IPS Director earns Ph.D. in Marketing Management Sciences

Sajjad Muhammad Khan

PESHAWAR: Bilal Afridi, the Director of the Institute of Professional Studies (IPS), has achieved a significant academic milestone by successfully defending his Ph.D. thesis in Marketing Management Sciences from Qurtuba University. This outstanding achievement has earned Mr. Afridi the esteemed title of "Doctor," and he will now be known as Dr. Bilal Afridi. The academic community, friends, and family have extended their heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Bilal Afridi on this remarkable accomplishment.



knowledge in the field of Marketing Management Sciences. His Ph.D. thesis, which was successfully defended at

Afridi reflects the strong academic standards and research culture of Qurtuba University. The university's commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and research has created an environment that fosters intellectual growth, creativity, and critical thinking. The university's faculty, staff, and students have played a significant role in supporting Dr. Afridi's academic journey, and their contributions are duly acknowledged.

As the Director of the Institute of Professional Studies (IPS), Dr. Bilal Afridi has pledged to further expand IPS in the field of education. He aims to equip every citizen with the adornment of knowledge, providing them with the skills, expertise, and competencies required to succeed in an increasingly complex and competitive world. Under his leadership, IPS is likely to experience significant growth and development, emerging as a leading institution for professional education and

training. Dr. Bilal Afridi's achievement serves as an inspiration to his students, colleagues, and the wider academic community. His commitment to academic excellence, research, and innovation demonstrates the importance of lifelong learning, intellectual curiosity, and critical thinking. As a role model, Dr. Afridi is likely to motivate others to pursue their academic and professional goals with passion, dedication, and perseverance. In conclusion, the achievement of Dr. Bilal Afridi is a significant milestone in his academic and professional journey. His Ph.D. in Marketing Management Sciences demonstrates his expertise, dedication, and commitment to advancing knowledge in his field. As the Director of IPS, Dr. Afridi is well-positioned to make a positive impact on the institution, its students, and the wider community. We wish him continued success in his future endeavors.



ment. People from various walks of life have praised his dedication, hard work, and commitment to academic excellence. They have also prayed for his bright future, wishing him continued success in his academic and professional pursuits. Dr. Bilal Afridi's achievement is a testament to his expertise and dedication to advancing

Qurtuba University, demonstrates his in-depth understanding of marketing management principles and practices. The thesis has contributed significantly to the existing body of knowledge in the field, providing new insights and perspectives for scholars and practitioners. The achievement of Dr. Bilal



PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi chairing the meeting about shifting of fish market from historical Ghanta Ghar area. Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Mehsud is also present.

## Ehtesham takes notice of reports on medicine shortage

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Health Ihtesham Ali has taken notice of the reports circulating on social media regarding a shortage of medicines in Upper Kurram. Addressing the matter, he confirmed that medicines worth Rs. 12.4 million have been dispatched to Kurram today, bringing the total supply to over Rs. 30 million so far.

He further stated that medicines were distributed by the District Health Officer (DHO) Upper Kurram today as well. Renowned humanitarian Faisal Edhi has also arrived in Parachinar with an air ambulance to support the relief efforts.

The Health Advisor reassured the public that the government is fully aware of the challenging situation in Upper and Lower Kurram and is extending all possible sup-

port. He clarified that after reviewing the reports, it was confirmed that the supply of medicines has not been stopped or disrupted. He emphasized that facts are being misrepresented on social media.

Ihtesham Ali personally contacted the Medical Superintendents of Parachinar and Sadda, as well as the DHOs of Upper and Lower Kurram, and confirmed that no deaths have been reported due to a shortage of medi-

cines. Due to road closures, medicines are being delivered via the Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur's helicopter.

The Health Advisor explained that delays in clearing and accessing medicines at airports are unavoidable but being managed efficiently. Today, the third consignment of medicines and essential vaccines was successfully delivered to Upper Kurram and Sadda.







## In brief

### Plantation sites inspects Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat conducted a detailed inspection of the proposed sites allocated for the upcoming Spring Plantation Drive along-with the authorities concerned of the Forest Department. He sought the opinions of the relevant authorities on various aspects of the proposed Plantation Plan. On this occasion, he was told that there is a capacity to plant millions of saplings in the proposed areas, but the method of seed broadcasting will be adopted in most of the hilly areas. On the quarry of Commissioner Kohat Division, he was told that the support of the local population for protection of the plants has already been ensured.

### 14-year boy shot killed F.P. Report

LARKANA: Unknown armed men shot dead a 14-year-old boy, Asadullah Mugheri at Ladies jail road and escaped from the crime scene, in the premises of Civil Lines Police Station. The police reached the spot and handed over the body of the deceased boy to the heirs after necessary action. On the other hand, the heirs of the deceased boy named Lal Khatoon, cried and said that we had come here from our village to get medicine, but the accused Ali Bakhsh Mugheri, Sikandar Mugheri and Ali Sher Mugheri, residents of village Dar Muhammad Mugheri, shot and killed my son, while there is an old dispute with the accused, but we are not involved in it. Meanwhile, a program was organized by the social organization Green Sindh Foundation (FSF) in Larkana to pay tribute to those martyred at Army Public School Peshawar at the city's Girls Sch Larkana. On this occasion, Green Sindh Foundation Chairman Zulfikar Ali Magso, school principal Tehmina Lashari, Rukhsana Lakho and others said that the sacrifices made by the martyrs of Pakistan and the martyrs of Army Public School Peshawar for the country and nation are not to be forgotten.

### Security reviewed F.P. Report

BANNU: Security and other arrangements and the first day progress of the five days ongoing anti-polio drive was reviewed at separate meetings in Lakki Marwat and Bannu. Local deputy commissioner Zeeshan Abdullah chaired a meeting at his office to discuss issues, immunization refusal by parents and other relevant matters with stakeholders. Bitanni subdivision assistant commissioner Sultan Nooruddin Ahmer and additional AC Azmat Afridi and officials of health and police departments and partners' organisations were in attendance. Zeeshan directed the relevant authorities to address issues faced by polio workers and pursue people especially parents not to link vaccination of their kids with demands. He asked the officials of his administration to fully cooperate with health authorities so that immunisation of the targeted population against the crippling disease could be achieved. A police official said that they had deployed 1550 policemen to guard polio workers engaged in kids' administration with oral polio vaccine. He said that DPO personally supervising the security arrangements and he had issued special instructions to cops to strictly adhere to standard operating procedures (SOPs), wear bulletproof vests and helmets and be vigilant during duty hours.



SHANGLA: Funeral prayers of martyred police officias being offered at Police Lines. — F.P. photo

## Science Fair at Lodhran School

Saqib Mushtaq

LOHHRAN: Tareen Education Foundation organised the 8th Science Fair at Lodhran Public School. A total of 350 students from 70 government schools participated in the event, showcasing their science projects.

The event was graced by the founder of Tareen Education Foundation, Jahangir Khan Tareen, as the Chief Guest. He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Lodhran Syed Waseem Hassan Shah, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Asad Budh, CEO Education Lodhran Madam Meher Jabeen, Principal Lodhran Public School Rao Rashid Anwar, Principal Khanawal Public School Rashid Jameel, and other distinguished guests. The participants received praise for their innovative ideas and dedication.

CEO of Tareen Education Foundation, Akbar Khan, provided a detailed briefing to Jahangir Khan Tareen and the accompanying guests regarding the projects and their significance.

While addressing the ceremony, Jahangir Khan Tareen stated: "Lodhran is my home, and Lodhran's children are like my own."



Although I have stepped away from politics, I have not and will not leave the people of Lodhran. My son, Ali Khan Tareen, will also continue to play his role in the welfare of Lodhran. Transforming Lodhran's schools to match the standards of Lahore and Islamabad, with access to science, information technology, and modern educational facilities, is my mission. I urge all students to work hard, as it is the key to success."

Jahangir Khan Tareen also announced a special package of PKR 15 million for the provision of modern educational facilities in middle and high schools across Lodhran. Deputy Commissioner Lodhran, Syed Waseem Hassan Shah, lauded the efforts of

Tareen Education Foundation, emphasizing the importance of such fairs: "These initiatives, organized in collaboration with the district government, play a crucial role in providing quality education to Lodhran's students. Science competitions like these will greatly encourage scientific learning among students." Speaking on the occasion, Tareen Education Foundation's CEO, Akbar Khan, added that such exhibitions will further develop students' interest in science and innovation. The event concluded with the distribution of prizes among students and teachers from schools that achieved top positions in the science fair.

## KP governor vows to uplift Dera region

F.P. Report

DI KHAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday said that tangible measures were being taken for the uplift of Dera Ismail Khan region. He expressed these views on the second day of his visit during meetings with various public delegations from various areas at Kundi Model Farm here.

He said that residents of the district had been complaining all along about low gas pressure which made their life miserable. But now, five new TBSSs were being installed, which will improve gas supply in DI Khan, he added.

Similarly, he added that authorities of SNGPL had assured that gas load shedding would be kept to a minimum during the winter season. The governor further mentioned that the installation of gas pipelines in two new adjacent areas of the city was ongoing and people of those areas would have the gas supply soon.

## SRSP informs district admn about progress

F.P. Report

KOHAT: A team of Sarhad Rural Support Program here Tuesday informed Deputy Commissioner about the welfare oriented initiatives and the progress being made on various development projects.

The team was led by District Coordinator SRSP Kifayat Khattak. The team highlighted the major achievements including distribution of special livelihood packages provided employment opportunities to about 680 beneficiaries. The initiatives included provision of goats, small poultry animals and kitchen gardening kits and steps for beneficiaries' guidance enabling them to achieve self-reliance.

Referring to the mega project of Chashma Lift Canal project, the governor said that work on the project would soon begin, which would not only bring a green revolution in Dera Ismail Khan but across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, enabling the region to meet the country's food requirements. Tenders for the four-lane road project between Dera Ismail Khan and Dera Ghazi Khan via Ramak had also been completed, and work would begin soon.

Giving details, he said the project includes the construction of bypasses, which would significantly improve the economic conditions of the local population. The governor also highlighted the modernization of the Regional Passport Office and the establishment of passport counters at NADRA offices of Prova and Paharpur tehsils to facilitate its residents. The governor said that efforts were being made to resolve issues of the residents and its employees related to Federal departments.

ing civil society organizations to elevate public awareness, and collaborating with academic institutions to educate the younger generation about environmental stewardship. The group emphasized empowering women and youth to assume leadership roles in community

## School for children with hearing, speech impairment upgraded

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Provincial Minister for Zakat and Ushr, Social Welfare and Special Education and Women Empowerment department Syed Qasim Ali Shah, along with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa secretary social welfare Syed Nazar Hussain Shah during a function on Tuesday inaugurated the construction and upgradation of government institute for children with hearing and speech impairment Timergara from primary to high level.

Deputy Commissioner Lower Dir Muhammad Arif Khan, director social welfare Rafiq Khan Mohmand, district officer social welfare Muhammad Zeb, teachers and area elders were also present on the occasion. The district officer Social Welfare briefed the minister about the facilities being provided to special children. He said the social welfare department was running eight handicraft centers, a special education school in Timergara and a special education complex in Kharkani Ouch, and a drug rehabilitation center in Balambat in the district.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that the provincial government was trying to serve the suffering humanity as per the vision of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "Of course, there are shortcomings and problems, but if there is a vision to move forward and solve the problems, then Allah Almighty will definitely help us", he said. He announced plans to provide transport for the school of special children. The minister said the school had been upgraded up to grade tenth. The minister said that a joint action plan would be developed with the elected representatives of Lower Dir for the social welfare project and it would be sent to the chief minister for approval. He said that children were the future of the country and the government would take practical steps for their betterment. "Special children deserve our special attention. Whatever needs there are, we will fulfill them without any politics", the minister added.

Later, Syed Qasim Ali Shah along with MPA Humayun Khan also inaugurated the Special Education Complex at Chakdara wherein they inspected various sections of the complex. Syed Qasim Ali Shah appreciated the efforts of the district administration and the Social Welfare Department.

**Event on climate change and its effects held:** The Pakistan Youth Leadership Initiative (PYLI) on Tuesday organized an event focused on youth-led climate initiatives at the Timergara campus of Abdul Wali Khan University. This event was collaborated by the Sustainable Peace and Development Organization (SPADO) and the British Council Pakistan.

Over 300 male and female youths attended the event who completed more than 50 projects aimed at addressing climate change. These projects were categorized into five thematic areas; tree planting, water conservation, renewable energy, solid waste management, and climate education. The exhibition featured models and artwork that depicted the significant impacts of climate change on human life, drawing considerable interest from attendees.

Key speakers at the event included Project Manager (SPADO) Hammad Khan, Campus Deputy Coordinator Professor Muhammad Nadeem, Professor Hamad Khan, District Coordinator Kamran Khan, Youth Engagement Officer Jawad Khan, SPADO Trainer Izhar-ul-Haq Durrani and Nayab Khaliq. They addressed the audience and presented certificates and shields to the participants and top Youth achievers for their contributions.

The speakers underscored the pressing challenges posed by climate change, particularly in Pakistan, highlighting issues such as glacial melt and increased flooding due to erratic weather patterns. They emphasized the critical role of individual responsibility in combating these effects through proactive measures like tree planting and water conservation. The event not only showcased youth initiatives but also aimed to inspire further action within local communities to address climate challenges effectively.

**Scholars defends PhD and MPhil theses:** Mr Muhammad Riaz successfully defended his PHD thesis titled 'Qualitative and Computational Analysis of Classical and Fractional Order Mathematical Models of COVID-19' at the University of Malakand here on Tuesday. He was supervised by Dr Kamal Shah, Associate Professor of Mathematics at the University of Malakand and Dr Aman Ullah, Department of Mathematics, University of Malakand. Mr. Riaz has published valuable articles in reputed journals like Scientific Report journal.

His external examiners were Prof Dr Abdus Saboor from the Kohat University of Science and technology and Dr Hassan Khan from the Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. Dr Imtiaz Ahmad, Chairman Department of Mathematics, UoM and the examiners appreciated the research work of the scholar Mr. Muhammad Riaz.

Another scholar Rizwan Ullah, from the University of Malakand's Department of Mathematics, also successfully defended his M. Phil thesis, with Title: "Natural convective heat transfer with MHD fluid flow inside a cavity with thermal radiation", garnering praise from esteemed examiners and faculty members.

## Polio eradication campaign with full swing

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Five-Day Anti-polio campaign also started in district Hafizabad, Deputy Commissioner inaugurated the campaign to administer polio drops to children at Basic Health Unit Chak Chatha which will be continued till 20 December.

Chief Executive Officer Health Dr. Zaheer Ahmad, Representative of WHO Dr. Touqeer Ahmad, DHO Dr. Faiq Ali Tarar and other concerned officers were also present on this occasion. Health department was constituted 998 polio teams including 915 mobile polio teams, 49 fixed teams and 34 transit teams to administer polio drops door to door, Railway Station Bus stands market, hospitals and other public places in the district.

Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq directed the officers of health department to ensure administering anti-polio drops to hundred percent target children to below five-year-old in the district. Strict departmental action will be initiated against those officials who would

be found show lethargic attitude during the campaign, he warned.

DC appealed the local ulema, journalists, social workers, traders, paramedics, teachers and civil society to play their pivotal role to give drops of polio vaccine to children for avoiding children from crimping polio disease. Chief Executive Officer Health Hafizabad Dr. Zaheer Ahmad informed that special arrangement were made to monitor performance of polio workers and to ensure administer drops of polio vaccine to hundred percent target children in the district.

**DG stress on population control:** Director General Population Welfare Department, Punjab, Madam Suman Rai urged the need of changing attitude and thinking to overcome increasing population. She stated this while addressing a meeting of population officers, social mobilizers and other employees at Hafizabad.

District Officer Population Muhammad Atif Ali, Tehsil Officer Saida Mushtaq also attended the meeting. She said that government is taking

solid steps to make the Population Programme successful and result-oriented. She advised that people should be kept appropriate interval in birth of children but people were increasing birth of children without any planning and in view of their resources whereas unbridled increase in population would be caused social and economic problems in future.

She also said that interval between birth of children was necessary for the health of mother and children. The social mobilizers to create awareness among society regarding birth control in rural and far-flung areas to make measures taken by the government to overcome unbridled increase in population. She further said that population welfare centres were working at district, tehsil, and Markaz level to provide guidance to couples about birth control and to maintain health of mother and child. I am visiting all district to review performance of population welfare department under the vision and directions of Chief Minister's Coordinator for Population Saira Afzal Tarar, she added.

## Interfaith leaders collaborate to address climate change

F.P. Report

MALAKAND: A transformative three-day training workshop concluded in Malakand, uniting faith leaders from Muslim, Christian, Sikh, and Hindu communities to confront the urgent challenges of climate change. Supported by the US Consulate General in Peshawar and implemented by the Center for Social Education and Development (CSED), the event provided a dynamic platform for fostering interfaith collaboration and mobilizing local communities to mitigate environmental degradation.

The workshop attracted diverse attendees, including prominent public figures, academicians, and media professionals, who joined the faith leaders in crafting actionable strategies to combat climate challenges.

The discussions emphasized the importance of building robust partnerships with local government officials, civil society organizations, and academic institutions. Participants underscored the need to involve youth and women in community mobilization efforts, recognizing their pivotal roles in driving sustainable and inclusive change.

One participant remarked, "Climate change impacts everyone, regardless of faith or background. As religious leaders, we are uniquely responsible for uniting our communities in collective action to protect our environment for future generations."

Throughout the workshop, attendees identified key strategies to enhance collaboration and resilience. These included partnering with local governments to implement environmentally sustainable policies, engag-



ing civil society organizations to elevate public awareness, and collaborating with academic institutions to educate the younger generation about environmental stewardship. The group emphasized empowering women and youth to assume leadership roles in community

adaptation initiatives, ensuring inclusivity and equitable participation. An academican at the event commented youth and women are the backbone of any sustainable movement. By empowering them, we can make our fight against climate change more robust and far-reaching."

The essential role of the media was also highlighted as a catalyst for amplifying environmental issues and fostering interfaith cooperation. Journalists at the workshop pledged to utilize their platforms to disseminate the workshop's key messages and inspire actionable responses from the wider public. A media representative noted, "The media can inspire action and hold stakeholders accountable. By covering such initiatives, we build a narrative of hope and resilience in the face of climate challenges."

Participants concluded the workshop by formulating actionable plans tailored to the specific needs of their local contexts. These plans will serve as comprehensive blueprints for addressing deforestation, water scarcity, and disaster preparedness in Malakand and other

regions within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A representative from CSED stated, "This workshop is a testament to the strength of interfaith collaboration. The solutions we have crafted today will mitigate climate change's impacts and strengthen community bonds across different faiths."

The event culminated with a shared commitment by all participants to work collaboratively to safeguard the environment. The spirit of unity and determination evident throughout the workshop serves as a beacon of hope for addressing climate change in an inclusive and impactful manner. Organizers thanked the US Consulate General in Peshawar for supporting this critical initiative, recognizing that such partnerships are essential for driving meaningful environmental action.





GAZA STRIP: Mourners attending funeral of journalist Ahmed al-Louh at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah.

## Trump says it was ‘stupid’ for Biden to let Ukraine use US weapons

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP): President-elect Donald Trump suggested that he may reverse President Joe Biden's recent decision to allow Ukrainian forces to use American long-range weapons to strike deeper into Russian territory.

Trump called the decision made by Biden last month "stupid." He also expressed anger that his incoming administration was not consulted before Biden made the move. With the loosening of the restrictions, Biden gave Ukraine long-sought permission to use the Army Tactical Missile System provided by the US to strike Russian positions hundreds miles from its border.

"I don't think that should have been allowed, not when there's a possibility - certainly not just weeks before I take over," Trump said during at a wide-ranging news conference at his Mar-a-Lago resort. "Why would they do that without asking me what I thought? I wouldn't have had him do that. I think it was a big mistake."

Trump's withering criticism of the Biden administration's move comes as the Democratic administration aims to push every last dollar already designated for Ukraine out the door to help repel Russia's invasion before Trump takes office on Jan. 20, with future aid uncertain. But even as Biden tries to surge weaponry and other aid to Ukraine in his final five weeks in office, the moment under-

scored that it's Trump who holds the most significant influence over how Ukraine can use its US-provided arsenal in the long run. It's a critical piece of leverage he could use to try to follow through on his campaign pledge to bring about a swift end to the conflict.

Asked if he would consider reversing the Biden administration decision, Trump responded: "I might. I think it was a very stupid thing to do." The White House pushed back on Trump's criticism, noting that the decision was made after months of deliberations that started before last month's election.

"All I can assure you is that in the conversations we've had with them since the election, and we've had at various levels, we have articulated to them the logic behind it, the thinking behind it, why we were doing it," White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said of the current administration's coordination with the outgoing administration.

Trump's relationship with Russian leader Vladimir Putin has been scrutinized since his 2016 campaign for president, when he called on Russia to find and make public missing emails deleted by Hillary Clinton, his Democratic opponent. Trump publicly sided with Putin over US intelligence officials on whether Russia had interfered in the 2016 election to help him, and Trump has praised the Russian leader and even called him

"pretty smart" for invading Ukraine. Vice President-elect JD Vance has said that while the US has differences with Russia, it was counterproductive to approach Moscow as an enemy.

Trump reiterated his call on both Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin to negotiate an end to the war, calling the death and despair caused by the conflict "carnage." But Trump also appeared to acknowledge that finding an immediate endgame to the war - something he has previously said he could get done within 24 hours of taking office - could be difficult. "I think the Middle East will be in a good place," Trump said, referring to the conflict in Gaza and an unsettled Syria following the ouster of Bashar al-Assad. "I think actually more difficult is going to be the Russia-Ukraine situation."

Trump declined to say whether he has spoken with Putin since the election. Zelenskyy met with Trump in Paris earlier this month, while the president-elect was visiting France for the reopening of the Notre Dame Cathedral. Zelenskyy and other Ukrainian officials have been making a forceful effort to get Trump to maintain support for Ukraine. But the situation on the ground in Ukraine continues to remain complicated as both sides wrestle for a battlefield advantage that will give them leverage in any negotiations to end the nearly three-year war.

## US hits North Korea and Russia with new sanctions, Treasury says

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The United States hit North Korea and Russia with new sanctions targeting Pyongyang's financial and military support to Moscow as well as its ballistic missile program. The sanctions, which list North Korean banks, generals and other officials, as well as Russian oil shipping companies, are the latest US measure aimed at disrupting North Korea's support to Russia's war in Ukraine.

The North Korean banks targeted include Golden Triangle Bank, one of the biggest banks in the northeastern Rason Special Economic Zone, and Pyongyang-based Korea Mandal Credit Bank, which has representatives throughout China, the Treasury Department said in a statement. South Korea's foreign ministry separately said on Tuesday that it has blacklisted 11 individuals and 15 entities linked to illicit military cooperation between North Korea and Russia. The responses came as 10 countries, including the US, South Korea, Australia, Britain, France and Japan, as well as the European Union, issued a joint state-

ment on Tuesday condemning Pyongyang and Moscow's military ties "in the strongest possible terms".

The statement said North Korea's support for Russia's war against Ukraine was a "dangerous expansion of the conflict" and a "flagrant violation" of United Nations' sanctions. It urged the country to withdraw its troops from Russia. Pyongyang and Moscow have ramped up diplomatic and economic ties in recent years, culminating in Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to North Korea in June when the countries' leaders agreed a mutual defense pact. Military cooperation between the two countries has been met by international alarm, with Washington, Kyiv and Seoul condemning North Korea for sending military equipment and more than 10,000 troops to support Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which began in February 2022.

North Korea's actions, including its most recent test of a long-range ballistic missile and its deepening military support to Russia, undermine the stability of the region and sustain

Putin's war in Ukraine, said Bradley Smith, acting Under Secretary of the US Treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence. "The United States remains committed to disrupting the illicit procurement and facilitation networks that enable these destabilizing activities," he said. The officials sanctioned by both Washington and Seoul include North Korean generals leading tens of thousands of North Korean troops in Russia, including Kim Yong Bok, who has appeared at seven events with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un this year, including special forces exercises.

South Korea separately blacklisted the North's special forces unit known as the Storm Corps, also in Russia fighting against Ukraine, and its chief, Ri Pong Chun. Ukraine said that at least 30 North Korean soldiers had been killed or injured in combat in Russia's Kursk region over the weekend. It said that Moscow began deploying them in the southern region in significant numbers last week to conduct assaults on Ukrainian forces. Ukraine launched a

cross-border incursion into Kursk in August. Kyiv estimates there are 11,000 North Koreans in total, adding to a force of tens of thousands of Russians. Russia has neither confirmed nor denied the presence of North Koreans on its side. The Treasury sanctions freeze the US assets of the designated entities, ban their trade with Americans, and block them from transactions with the US financial system.

The Treasury blacklisted Russia-based foreign trade companies that it said were shipping oil and gas to North Korea. The companies include Vostok Trading, DV Ink, and Novosibirskoblغاز. Treasury said they began shipping "thousands of tons of oil and gas" to North Korea beginning in 2022 and continuing through at least April 2024.

North Korea has likely received more than 1 million barrels of oil from Russia over an eight-month period this year in breach of UN sanctions, according to an analysis of satellite imagery published in November by the British-based Open Source Centre and the BBC.

and other senior officials. He also met with Cambodian alumni of US military training programs. Hun Manet himself is a graduate of the US Military Academy at West Point. The US Defense Department said at the time that Austin's discussions concerned "opportunities to strengthen the US-Cambodia bilateral defense relationship in support of regional peace and security," and other matters. But Washington remains concerned that the upgrading of Cambodia's Ream Naval Base near Sihanoukville will serve Beijing's strategic interests in the region.

### Chechnya ready to ensure wheat supplies to Syria

MOSCOW (Reuters): Chechnya's Kremlin-backed leader Ramzan Kadyrov has said he is ready to step in if necessary and ensure that Syria gets the wheat it needs in what he said was the unlikely event that Russian wheat supplies to the country were disrupted. Russian and Syrian sources told Reuters that Russian wheat supplies to Syria had been suspended due to uncertainty about the new government there after two vessels carrying Russian wheat for Syria failed to reach their destinations. In a message posted on his Telegram channel, Kadyrov said that the two rerouted vessels had been carrying "commercial" wheat and that Russian state-backed supplies to Syria had not been affected.

"Even if for some impossible and incredible reasons this does happen, I, as the head of the Chechen Republic, am ready to take responsibility and ensure the necessary amount of wheat for Syria," Kadyrov wrote. Russia, the world's largest wheat exporter, supplies wheat to Syria through complex financial and logistical arrangements, circumventing Western sanctions imposed on both countries. It is not clear what share of wheat is supplied by the state, Kadyrov did not specify how he would organise and finance wheat supplies to Syria if he had to step in and where the wheat would come from.

But he said he could act, if necessary, via a charitable fund named after his late father which helped to rebuild some mosques and provided humanitarian aid to Syria during ousted President Bashar al-Assad's rule. Russian analysts estimate Russia's exports to Syria at 300,000 tons so far this season, with the country ranking 24th among buyers of Russian wheat. They estimate Syria's total wheat imports at about 2 million tons. Russia is the main supplier of wheat to Syria, and disruption in supplies could cause hunger in the country of over 23 million people. Sources told Reuters the two sides are in contact regarding supplies.

**Taipei mayor calls for reduced tensions**

TAIPEI (Reuters): The mayor of Taiwan's capital told visiting Chinese officials on Tuesday he hoped for peace and wanted less of the "howls of ships and aircraft" around the island, saying dialogue trumps confrontation. China, which views democratically-governed Taiwan as its own territory, sends warplanes and warships near the island on an almost daily basis, and held a new round of mass military activities last week. Addressing the annual Taipei Shanghai City Forum with Shanghai Vice Mayor Hua Yuan in attendance, Taipei Mayor Chiang Wan-an used poetic language to say he wished for peace across the Taiwan Strait. "More dialogue and less confrontation; more olive branches of peace and less sour grapes of conflict. More lights from fishing boats to adorn the sunset; less of the howls of ships and aircraft," Chiang said. "I always say that the more tense and difficult the moment, the more we need to communicate," he added. China has continued to send warplanes and warships into the strait even with the forum taking place, with Taiwan's defence ministry saying on Tuesday morning that in the past 24 hours it had detected 10 military aircraft and seven warships. Chiang is from Taiwan's main opposition party, the Kuomintang, which traditional favours close ties across the Taiwan Strait although it denies being pro-Beijing. He is widely considered a future presidential contender. The forum, first held in 2010, is one of the few high level venues for talks between Chinese and Taiwanese officials after China cut off a regular dialogue mechanism with Taiwan's central government in 2016 following the election of Tsai Ing-wen as president.

## S Korea's acting president moves to reassure allies

SEOUL (Reuters): South Korea's acting president, Han Duck-soo, moved to reassure the country's allies and calm financial markets a day after President Yoon Suk Yeol was impeached and suspended from his duties over a martial law attempt.

Han spoke with US President Joe Biden by phone, the White House and Han's office said. "South Korea will carry out its foreign and security policies without disruption and strive to ensure the South Korea-US alliance is maintained and developed steadfastly," Han said, according to a statement from his office. In a further attempt to stabilise the Asian nation's leadership, the main opposition party announced it would not seek to impeach Han for his involvement in Yoon's Dec. 3 martial law decision.

"Given that the prime minister has already been confirmed as acting president and considering that excessive impeachments could lead to confusion in national governance, we have decided not to proceed with impeachment procedures," Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung told reporters. Prosecutors said Yoon did not appear in response to a summons for questioning in a criminal investigation into his martial law decision, and they promised to issue another order, Yonhap news agency reported.

Yoon and a number of senior officials face potential charges of insurrection, abuse of authority and obstructing people from exercising their rights. The prosecutors' office did not answer phone calls seeking comment. Han, a longtime technocrat picked by the conservative Yoon as prime

minister, was elevated to acting president in accordance with the constitution while Yoon's case moves to the Constitutional Court. Demonstrators seeking Yoon's ouster braved the cold to throng the streets outside the National Assembly building where he was impeached. The crowd was about 200,000, according to police, Yonhap said.

Since Han's role is only acting president, "I hope he will exercise the minimum power to operate the country stably, rather than actively be involved in state affairs," said Jo Sung-woo, a 39-year-old Seoul resident. About 8.5 km (five miles) away, a much smaller number of Yoon supporters demonstrated in the central Seoul area. "I really can't stand to see these illegal lawmakers who were elected by fraudulent elections making evil laws and now this huge opposition party is running wild on their own," said Yim Jeong-sook, 55. Yoon's surprise martial law declaration and the ensuing political crisis spooked markets and South Korea's diplomatic partners, worried over the country's ability to deter nuclear-armed North Korea.

Biden told Han the ironclad US-South Korea alliance remained unchanged and Washington would work with Seoul to further develop and strengthen the alliance as well as trilateral cooperation including neighbour Japan, Han's office said. The White House said in a statement that the US president "expressed his appreciation for the resiliency of democracy and the rule of law in the ROK," using the abbreviation for the country's formal name, the Republic of Korea. Han convened his

cabinet and National Security Council shortly after impeachment vote and vowed to maintain military readiness to prevent any breach of national security.

He spoke by phone with the commander of US Forces Korea, expressing concern about the possibility North Korea could attempt military provocations, such as launching ballistic missiles or cyber attacks, Yonhap said, citing Han's office. South Korea's partners wanted to see a credible and constitutional temporary leadership put in place as soon as possible, said Philip Turner, a former New Zealand ambassador to South Korea. "They will be pleased to see Prime Minister Han take over as acting president," he said. "He is capable, experienced and well respected in foreign capitals."

But even with an acting president in place, international partners face months of uncertainty before a new president can be elected and a new government established, Turner added. The Constitutional Court has up to six months to decide whether to remove or reinstate Yoon. If he is removed or resigns, a new elections will be held within 60 days. South Korean shares rose for a fourth straight session on hopes that the political uncertainty would ease after the impeachment vote in parliament, which followed a failed vote a week earlier.

Democratic Party leader Lee said the most pressing issue is a slump in consumption caused by insufficient domestic demand and the government's reduction of its fiscal role. He called for a National Stability Council for Governance comprising the government and parliament to discuss finance, economy and public livelihoods.

## West accused of pushing Russia to its ‘red lines’

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russian President Vladimir Putin accused the West of pushing Russia to its "red lines" - situations it has publicly made clear it will not tolerate - and said Moscow had been forced to respond.

Putin told a meeting of defence officials that Russia was watching the US development and potential deployment of short and medium-range missiles with concern. He said Russia would lift all of its own voluntary restrictions on the deployment of its own missiles if the US went ahead and deployed such missiles. Putin, who said Russian forces in Ukraine has taken control of 189 settlements so far this year, said Russia's nuclear weapons were there for deterrence.

Meanwhile, Russia's defence minister said that Moscow must be ready to fight the NATO military alliance in Europe in the next decade, as President Vladimir Putin said he believed the Ukraine war was turning in Moscow's favour. Andrei Belousov, Putin's defence chief, cited a NATO summit in July, and military doctrines in the US and other NATO members, as evidence that

Moscow had to prepare for direct conflict with a more assertive NATO in the coming years.

"The activities of the Ministry of Defence are based on ... ensuring full readiness for any scenario in the medium term, including a possible military conflict with NATO in Europe in the next decade," Belousov told an audience including Putin at his ministry. Belousov set out a raft of changes and reforms that he said were needed, "taking into account the nature of future military conflicts". He cited US plans to modernise its nuclear forces, the opening of a US missile defence base in Poland, new NATO combat readiness plans, and plans announced at the NATO summit to deploy US medium-range missiles in Germany in 2026.

He said the US could soon have hypersonic missiles available that could reach Moscow in eight minutes. Putin told the same gathering that the large numbers volunteering for service were turning the tide of the Ukraine war in Moscow's favour, as open-source maps suggest his army is advancing at the fastest pace since 2022. "Russian troops have a firm

grip on the strategic initiative along the entire line of contact. This year alone, 189 population centres have been liberated," he said.

He said roughly 430,000 Russians had signed army contracts this year, up from roughly 300,000 last year. Belousov said Russia had pushed Ukrainian forces out of almost 4,500 sq km (1,737 sq miles) of territory this year, and was taking about 30 sq km (11.5 sq miles) a day. Putin accused the West of pushing Russia to its "red lines" - situations it has publicly made clear it will not tolerate - and said Moscow had been forced to respond. "They (Western leaders) are simply scaring their own population that we are going to attack someone there using the pretext of the mythical Russian threat," said Putin. "The tactic is very simple: they push us to a 'red line', from which we cannot retreat, we start to respond and then they immediately scare their population." He said Russia was watching US development of short- and medium-range missiles with great concern and would lift its own voluntary restrictions on the stationing of such missiles if the US decided to put them into service.

## UN envoy meets Syria's Sharaa, urges inclusive transition

DAMASCUS (Reuters): The UN's Syria envoy urged an inclusive Syrian transition based on a nine-year-old Security Council resolution during a meeting with the commander of Syria's new administration, Ahmed al-Sharaa, the envoy's office said.

Syria's ruling General Command, in a separate statement about meeting with the UN's Geir Pedersen, said they had discussed the need to review Security Council Resolution 2254, saying it needed to be updated to "suit the new reality". The meeting marked one of the most significant international encounters yet for Sharaa, leader of the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) which has emerged as the ruling power in Damascus

since toppling Bashar al-Assad just over one week ago.

Photos of the meeting showed Sharaa, whose group was an al-Qaeda affiliate until it severed ties with the jihadist network in 2016, wearing a blazer and open shirt as he met Pedersen, the UN Syria envoy since 2018. HTS is designated a terrorist group by Western and regional powers, including Turkey, which had long been one of the main international backers of the Syrian opposition. The new administration in Damascus has set out few details on its thinking for the next steps for Syria, which is emerging from more than five decades of iron-fisted rule by the Assad family and nearly 14 years of devastating civil war.

Newly appointed Prime Minister Mohammed al-Bashir, who formerly led an HTS-affiliated government in Idlib province, has said he will remain in office until March. Pedersen briefed Sharaa on the outcome of an international meeting convened in Jordan, the statement from his office said. "The Special Envoy briefed on the outcome of the Aqaba International Meeting ... stressing the need for a credible and inclusive Syrian-owned and led political transition based on the principles of United Nations Security Council resolution 2254 (2015)," a statement from Pedersen's office said.

"The Special Envoy stressed the intention of the United Nations to render all assistance to the Syrian people."

## US Navy ship makes a port call in Cambodia, a top Chinese ally

SIHANOUKVILLE, Cambodia (AP): A US Navy warship arrived in Cambodia, the first such visit in eight years to a nation that is China's close ally in Southeast Asia. Cambodia's government has suggested the port call reflects an upgrade in often-strained relations. The USS Savannah docked at the port of Sihanoukville on the Gulf of Thailand for a five-day visit. The Savannah, classed as a Littoral Combat Ship, carries a crew of 103.

"It's great to be back, returning US presence to here after eight years," the ship's commanding officer, Daniel A. Sledz, said in

brief remarks to reporters. He was given a bouquet of flowers by a Cambodian officer and shook hands with a line of her colleagues. The United States for many years has had rocky relations with Cambodia, criticizing its government for political repression and human rights violations. There is particular concern about its close ties with China, which Washington fears may get exclusive access to a Cambodian naval base on the Gulf of Thailand, not far from where the Savannah docked. Recently, there seem to have been moves to patch up relations.

Cambodia's Ministry of National Defense said last week that the visit was scheduled after a US request for a port call, and would "strengthen and expand the bonds of friendship as well as promote bilateral cooperation" between the two nations. Two days before that, Cambodia's foreign ministry noted "positive momentum of bilateral ties and cooperation" and "the reinvigoration of military-to-military cooperation" between Cambodia and the US US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin visited Cambodia in early June, where he held talks with Prime Minister Hun Manet



**The Frontier Post**

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's

Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

## More Israeli settlements in the Golan Heights

**I**N a video published on Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told viewers his country had “no interest in a conflict with Syria”. On the same day, his government approved a plan that includes doubling the Israeli population in the portion of Syria’s Golan Heights that Israel annexed illegally in 1981. How Mr Netanyahu believes the impossible – that continued annexation and more illegal settlements can somehow go hand in hand with peace – is a mystery to all but the Prime Minister and his supporters.

This plan, announced shortly after senior officials from the Arab world and other leading nations meeting in Aqaba expressed their support for Syria’s territorial integrity, has been rejected by those in the region who want peace to prevail. The UAE’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly condemned Sunday’s announcement, calling it “a deliberate effort to expand the occupation and is in violation and contravention of international law”.

The Golan has been occupied by Israel’s military since 1967 and Israel unilaterally annexed it, in defiance of international law, in 1981. It is now home to around 20,000 Israelis. An equal number of Syrian citizens, mainly from the Druze community, remain there, leading lives necessarily defined by pragmatism.

While some of them have accepted Israeli citizenship, many have not. Nonetheless, to continue living on their ancestral lands they must engage with Israel’s labour market and health sector, while maintaining ties with their kin in Syria and working to avoid accusations of being sympathetic to Israel. Israel’s zeal for settlement, as seen in the West Bank and proposed for war-torn Gaza, puts this community under further pressure.

But Israel’s plan to expand and entrench its occupation of Syrian land also presents a problem for the emergent leadership in the political vacuum of post-Assad Damascus.

Israeli air strikes have destroyed a great deal of Syria’s military infrastructure and Israeli troops have moved further into the Golan by taking up strategic positions – including on Syria’s tallest mountain – in a demilitarised buffer zone abandoned by the Syrian army.

To have foreign troops within artillery range of the capital poses an existential problem for the administration taking shape in Syria. Although Hayat Tahrir Al Sham leader Ahmad Al Shara has said his war-weary nation has no appetite for a new confrontation with Israel, many of his compatriots will be angered by the threat of Israel’s settlement plan that takes advantage of the Syria’s current instability.

Actions speak louder than words. In this case, Israel’s protestations that it wants to live in harmony with Syria are undermined not only by the recent seizure of more land but by this latest plan to consolidate its presence in annexed areas further.

Just as its seizure and settlement of Palestinian territory after 1967 has meant that Israel would live in a state of near-permanent conflict, attempting to put down roots on Syrian land all but guarantees conflict with Damascus for years to come.

Just as there is a need for a ceasefire in Gaza and a two-state solution with Palestine, it is time for Israel to forge a new future with Syria based on respecting international law and the sovereignty of other states.

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## Gaza war may soon end, but the calamity will last years

Yossi Mekelberg

**A**pivotal moment could be close for the 14-month-old war on Gaza, which has claimed the lives of tens of thousands of Palestinians, destroyed almost 80 percent of the enclave and left more than 2 million Gazans internally displaced. There have been many such moments, only for all hopes of a ceasefire to be dashed. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s intransigence and vacillation have been the main impediments preventing a cessation of what the world now sees as a genocidal war against the Palestinians.

What makes this pivotal moment different are several things. President-elect Donald Trump is a month away from his historic inauguration. He has indicated that he wanted the war in Gaza to end before he took office on Jan. 20, a message that was intended for both Netanyahu and the leaders of Hamas. Trump has also threatened to unleash US firepower if the Israeli captives are not released by the time he is sworn in.

Also, the outgoing administration is believed to be exerting severe pressure on the Israeli premier to adopt a deal in a bid to give President Joe Biden some credit for stopping the bloodbath in Gaza.

In addition, internal pressure on Netanyahu has spiked since the end of the war with Hezbollah, which was seen as delivering a victory for Israel. The north is now secure and thousands of Israelis can return home. The sudden collapse of the Assad regime in Syria last week was the icing on the cake. Israel has now neutralized all threats from Syria, having destroyed almost all of the country’s military capabilities.

But perhaps the most pressing factor is former Defense Minister Yoav

Gallant’s claim last month that the Israeli army had achieved all its military objectives in Gaza. Hamas’ top military and political leaders have been terminated and the group’s ability to pose a threat in the future is no more. In the eyes of the Israeli public, Hamas has been defeated and attention must now turn to bringing home the captives.

There are other issues at play. The daily carnage in Gaza is now a liability, with mounting evidence of indefensible war crimes and crimes against humanity. Israel’s allies can no longer justify or excuse what it is doing, such as the targeting of schools, hospitals, designated safe areas, journalists and aid workers, as well as the gruesome images of starving children and bereaved women.

Netanyahu has known for some time that the war has lost its strategic purpose. The killing spree has continued for several reasons: delaying an investigation into the Oct. 7 attacks, breaking the spirit of the Palestinians and forcing Hamas into a humiliating deal.

His ploy about dictating his terms on Hamas appears to have worked. While the conditions of the latest proposed agreement remain vague, it is now believed that Hamas has accepted a partial truce, not an end to the war, while also allowing Israel to stay in control of the crucial Philadelphi Corridor and other parts of the now-partitioned enclave. There will reportedly be a gradual release of the Israeli captives in different phases in return for an easing of all restrictions on the passage of aid into Gaza.

A Hamas source has confirmed that a deal that would gradually end the war could be imminent if Netanyahu does not obstruct it. Trump and Netanyahu discussed such

a deal on Sunday. On Monday, Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz reportedly told Knesset lawmakers that Israel is “closer than ever” to closing a deal with Hamas to free the hostages held in Gaza.

If approved by Netanyahu, the ceasefire – albeit a temporary one that would not stop the war – could pave the way for the release of Israeli captives and Palestinian prisoners, while providing a reprieve for the people of Gaza. The last time a similar pause was reached was back in November 2023, when 105 hostages were released in a week-long truce.

Netanyahu is believed to be ready to present his coalition government with details of the deal this week. Israeli and US sources believe the agreement could be in place before the end of the year.

But what would follow this truce is unknown. Netanyahu’s ability to resume the war would be degraded, even if all the hostages are released. Trump would be in the White House by then and he would not back the resumption of a war that has no benefit for the US or even Israel.

The day-after scenario is also uncertain. Netanyahu has vowed to keep Gaza under permanent Israeli military control. Meanwhile, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has pulled out of an agreement reached in Cairo by Palestinian groups, including Hamas and Fatah, for a joint administration of Gaza. Palestinian sources said that Abbas’ Fatah party had pulled out for fear that the administration committee would become a de facto ruler of Gaza and an alternative to the Palestinian Authority.

Ironically, Netanyahu has rejected the notion of allowing the PA to run Gaza, while his Finance

Minister Bezalel Smotrich is taking steps to consolidate the annexation of the West Bank and push the PA into financial collapse.

Regardless of what Netanyahu has in mind for Gaza, the international community must be ready to act immediately once the war comes to a halt. International aid groups, UN observers and foreign journalists must have full access to the beleaguered enclave to document the horrors that have taken place in Gaza over the past 14 months.

And while the daily barrage may finally come to an end, the reality is that there are 2 million Palestinians who are displaced with no access to shelter, clean water, sanitation, food, health or education. This will be a humanitarian crisis for many years to come.

It is way too early to talk about reconstruction. The priority must be to help the survivors. Israel will attempt to release itself from responsibility toward the victims of its genocidal war. It must not be allowed to do so. The day the war ends must also be the day Israel begins to answer for its war crimes in Gaza.

For Hamas, the end of the war must trigger open and serious discussions on its future and its purpose in Palestinian life and the liberation struggle.

The Oct. 7 attacks have changed the trajectory of the Palestinian fight to end the occupation in a cataclysmic way. The outcome of that fateful day has now become a fork in the road in the decades-old Palestinian saga. While it has exacted an unimaginable cost on the Palestinians, Oct. 7 also awakened the world to their ongoing injustice and suffering. Where to go from here, no one knows. But what is clear is that the fates of Israel and the Palestinians have become more interconnected than ever before.

## Courts a realistic avenue for restricting Israel’s arms supply

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

**A**Dutch court on Friday rejected a bid by a group of pro-Palestinian organizations to halt the country’s arms exports to Israel. The group may appeal the ruling. Another Dutch court had in February ordered the government to halt the delivery of parts for F-35 fighter jets used by Israel in its bombardment of the Gaza Strip. This step, though some might think of it as being symbolic, was of great importance.

The Rights Forum, a human rights organization based in The Hague, teamed up with Oxfam Novib and PAX for Peace to bring the case against the Netherlands government for its arming of Israel during its ongoing genocide in Gaza. The group found that a Dutch company, Fokker, was producing three essential components for F-35 fighter jets. Several other Dutch companies were also producing components.

The appeals court sided with the plaintiff because it saw there was a “clear risk” that the parts the Netherlands was exporting were being used in “serious violations of international humanitarian law.” The Dutch state’s defense was that those parts were needed for Israel to defend itself. The court rejected all its claims.

The Rights Forum followed this lawsuit with another bid to prevent the indirect sale of those parts. This case is still in process. If it wins, then Israel will have no way to circumvent the verdict banning its deliveries. It is important to note that the parts are essential for the F-35’s functioning.

According to Gerard Jonkman, the head of the Rights Forum, its success sets a precedent for human rights groups and opens a new route for taming Israel. He said that human rights groups in Denmark and the UK are also suing their governments. This step also inspires the public. Jonkman thinks that the government does not really represent people’s aspirations. He added that the Dutch public is divided into three categories. About a third are indifferent, while there are twice as many who advocate restricting arms to Israel compared to those who support keeping the supply as it is or increasing it. Hence, by supporting Israel, the government is not complying with the people’s will.

There is increasing momentum regarding arms restrictions. The UK in September announced that it was suspending 30 of its 350 export licenses for arms to Israel. However, human right groups criticized the move as merely symbolic, as it does not include the UK-made parts for the F-35. Spain in November refused to allow two ships carrying weapons bound for Israel to dock in the port of Algeciras, while a Belgian minister supports an EU-wide ban on arms deliveries to Israel. Italy announced in January it had halted arms shipments

in October 2023.

However, those actions are a mere drop in the ocean, as the main weapons provider to Israel is the US. Sixty-nine percent of Israel’s arms imports come from America. Until the US changes its stance and imposes an arms embargo on Israel, the latter will act with impunity. In addition to its ongoing genocide in Gaza and recent indiscriminate bombardment of south Lebanon, Israel last week conducted an incursion into southwest Syria and illegally occupied an area of 400 sq. km.

It is yet to be seen how this move will inspire human rights groups inside the US. The recent elections show that the pro-Israel lobby still has a grip over Congress. The current administration has taken a very pro-Israel stance despite President Joe Biden’s occasional criticism of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and paying of lip service to the Palestinians.

Even when the Biden administration in October gave an ultimatum to Netanyahu regarding Israel’s blocking of aid, it did not follow through on its threat to restrict the supply of weapons. After the 30-day grace period expired, the US decided to keep sending arms, even though various human right organizations insisted that Israel was still preventing aid from reaching Palestinians in Gaza. Ultimately, the entire issue was an election stunt designed to appeal to the left, rather than a genuine intent by the US to tame Israel’s behavior. The incoming Trump administration, judging by the president-elect’s Cabinet picks, may well take an even more pro-Israel stance than its predecessor.

In the Netherlands, the government is quite pro-Israel, which is why the Rights Forum believed it would face an uphill battle. It went to the courts. Its journey can inspire human rights groups in the US. As the route via Congress seems very difficult for now, they might use the courts to impose arms restrictions on Israel. This can be very efficient in the US, which is a country focused on the separation of powers. The courts are not influenced by the pro-Israel lobby as much as the members of Congress, who face regular elections and need donors’ money to fund their expensive and highly competitive campaigns.

According to Jonkman, even those who opposed his organization’s action were quite beneficial to it. Despite their opposition, they brought the issue into the public discourse and contributed to increasing the awareness of Israel’s violations of human rights. The group also raised awareness of the possible avenues to fight this injustice. The more injustice increases, the more people will find avenues to fight it.

## 18th Speakers’ Conference: Strengthening Parliamentary Excellence

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

**C**ONSULTATION, or Shura, is a deeply rooted principle in Islamic teachings that embodies the democratic essence of collective decision-making. It emphasizes seeking collective wisdom, ensuring justice, and fostering unity. The Quran highlights its importance, stating: “And those who have responded to their master and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves, and they spend from what We have provided them” (Surah Ash-Shura, 42:38). This verse underscores the emphasis on dialogue and inclusive governance as fundamental to societal harmony.

The life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provides timeless examples of Shura in practice. During critical moments like the Battle of Uhud and the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, the Prophet actively sought the counsel of his companions, valuing their insights and fostering a culture of collective wisdom. This practice ensured that decisions were not influenced by personal inclinations but guided by shared accountability and

divine direction. It became a cornerstone of governance in the early Islamic state, promoting justice, inclusivity, and trust.

Shura aligns closely with modern principles of parliamentary democracy. In Pakistan, the National Assembly and Parliament serve as contemporary platforms for consultation, where representatives deliberate on matters of national importance. These institutions reflect the spirit of Shura, particularly in their role in legislation, policy-making, and oversight. However, their success hinges on the sincerity, transparency, and commitment to justice of those involved-values that are integral to Islamic governance.

In today’s polarized political climate, democratic institutions often struggle with challenges stemming from partisan ship and erosion of trust. Such issues dilute the essence of consultation, reducing it to a procedural formality rather than a meaningful exchange of ideas. Islam, however, treats Shura as a moral and spiritual obligation. Leaders are held accountable not only to their people but also to Allah,

emphasizing the need for humility, honesty, and a genuine commitment to public welfare.

For Pakistan, a country founded in the name of Islam, embracing the true spirit of Shura is both a moral imperative and a practical necessity. By fostering mutual respect, inclusivity, and purposeful dialogue, the National Assembly can bridge divides, build consensus, and better serve the aspirations of its people. Islamic history offers numerous examples of leaders who, guided by the principles of Shura, upheld justice and ensured the welfare of their communities. These examples remind us that consultation is not merely a procedural step but a path to societal harmony and progress.

The upcoming 18th Speakers’ Conference in Islamabad, from December 18 to 20, 2024, is a modern embodiment of Shura in governance.

This prestigious event, hosted by Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, will gather presiding officers from Pakistan’s national and provincial legislatures. The conference aims to

strengthen democratic processes through dialogue and collaboration, with a focus on shared challenges and legislative advancements. It provides a platform where legislative leaders can share best practices, discuss strategies for strengthening democratic institutions, and coordinate actions on matters of common interest.

Speaker Ayaz Sadiq’s role in arranging this conference cannot be overstated. His efforts ensure that the 18th Speakers’ Conference will not only be a landmark event for Pakistan but also a beacon of hope for parliamentary cooperation. The initiative comes after over a decade of the 17th Speakers’ Conference held in Islamabad on 13th-15th April, 2014, which was also hosted by the Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq.

Attendees of the 18th Speakers’ will include Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, Chairman Senate of Pakistan; Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Punjab; Syed

Awais Qadir Shah, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Sindh; Mr. Babar Saleem Swati, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Capt. (R) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan; Mr. Nazir Ahmad, Speaker of the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly and Chaudhry Latif Akbar, Speaker of the Azad Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly, along with their respective parliamentary delegations. This conference is poised to set a new precedent for parliamentary collaboration in Pakistan, paving the way for a more effective, transparent, and inclusive legislative process.

In Pakistan, the tradition of holding the Speakers’ Conference commenced on 10th July, 1972 with the then Honorable Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan Mr. Fazal Elahi Chaudhry hosted the inaugural meet in Karachi.

This marked a significant step in Pakistan’s parliamentary development, offering a forum for speakers of national and provincial assemblies to discuss challenges, strengthen democratic processes and promote inter-parliamentary cooperation.

tary cooperation.

The 18th Speakers’ Conference is set to build on this legacy with a comprehensive agenda devised through consultations with presiding officers across the country.

Key objectives include institutionalizing the annual conference tradition, standardizing practices and procedures for parliamentary excellence, and fostering collaboration through a concurrent Secretaries’ Conference.

The discussions will address pressing issues such as the review of the 18th Constitutional Amendment, institutional reforms, parliamentary accountability, transparency, and the integration of technology in legislative processes.

In the spirit of Shura, the 18th Speakers’ Conference serves as a reminder of the transformative power of consultation in addressing challenges, fostering unity, and advancing the collective welfare of society. It highlights the enduring relevance of Islamic principles in contemporary governance, offering a pathway to justice, harmony, and progress for Pakistan and its people.



# Americans may have to actually brace for stagflation with Trump tariffs

JAMIE Dimon, head of America's largest bank, JPMorgan Chase — and commonly referred to as the ‘president of Wall Street’ — spent much of this past year warning that there’s an elevated risk that the US experiences 1970s-esque stagflation, which is when economic growth stagnates while inflation heats up.

“I look at the amount of fiscal and monetary stimulus that has taken place over the last five years — it has been so extraordinary; how can you tell me it won’t lead to stagflation?” Dimon said at a conference in May.

His prediction, however, has been pooh-poohed by many leading economic voices; chief among them was Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, who said at a press conference in May, “I don’t see the stag or the ‘flation.”

That, of course, was before President-elect Donald Trump won the election.

Now, Americans may have to actually brace for stagflation — something the nation’s economy hasn’t experienced in over half a century. This time around, though, fueled by tariffs.

Just over a month from now, Trump will have the power to levy tariffs on

other nations at the flick of a pen. And once inaugurated on January 20, he has pledged to immediately impose a 25% tariff on Mexican and Canadian imports and increase tariffs on Chinese goods by an additional 10%.

On the campaign trail, he also promised to levy a 10% to 20% tax on all imports and increase tariffs on Chinese goods by at least 60%.

There are some doubts as to whether Trump will follow through with these plans and, instead, use them as a means to negotiate with other nations. However, if these significant, broad-based tariffs go into effect, it could send the US economy back to one of the most painful periods that took over a decade to resolve.

“I was around for stagflation. It was 10% unemployment. It was high single-digits inflation and very slow growth,” Powell said back in May, referring to when oil prices spiked during the Arab oil embargo in the 1970s.

When the Fed responded to high levels of unemployment in the 1970s by cutting rates to relieve pressure businesses faced, it later had to contend with higher inflation. To tackle high-

Elisabeth Buchwald

er inflation, central bankers raised interest rates. But that ushered in more unemployment.

To break that vicious cycle, the Fed opted to prioritize getting inflation down by aggressively raising interest rates, even if it meant the economy would enter a recession, which it did.

The US economy currently isn’t anywhere near the conditions the Fed faced during much of the 1970s and 1980s. Though it’s risen over the course of this year, at 4.2%, the nation’s unemployment rate is two percentage points lower than the average seen over the last 50 years.

Meanwhile, inflation has cooled significantly over the past two years. It’s now just a touch above the Fed’s 2% target. Getting it down to that exact level has proved to be challenging.

Overall, the economy grew at an annualized rate of 2.8% last quarter, a slightly weaker pace than the prior quarter, but nevertheless impressive considering the Fed raised interest rates to the highest level in over two decades to fight inflation, which peaked at a 40-year high two years ago. (The Fed started lowering rates earlier this year and is expected to continue to cut at its meeting

this week. However, it can take years for the effect to be felt across the economy.)

The path to stagflation The tariffs Trump has floated aren’t inherently inflationary. Michael Feroli, chief US economist at JPMorgan, told CNN.

While they certainly have the power to make many, if not the majority, of goods Americans buy more expensive, that could just be essentially a one-time bump in the prices of goods, similar to a sales tax increase, he said. But higher tariffs can quickly fuel cascades of price increases if Americans expect higher inflation because of them and demand higher wages, which, in turn, could result in businesses continuing to raise prices.

And if new tariffs are imposed in a “haphazard” and “hasty” way such that businesses don’t have ample time to reconfigure their supply chains, it could significantly hamper economic growth by also forcing businesses to pull back on any new investments due to heightened uncertainty, Feroli said.

Stagflation could also materialize if other nations were to respond with retaliatory tariffs on US-produced goods,

likely leading employers to lay off workers as a result, he said.

Though Feroli believes the risk that the US economy experiences stagflation is higher now compared to earlier in the year, it’s not the base case he and the team of economists he works with are predicting at the moment. That’s because they aren’t forecasting inflation jumping by more than a few tenths of a percentage point from current levels, partly because he believes the Trump administration will give US businesses sufficient time to respond to higher tariffs if they’re set in motion.

Wells Fargo economists share a similar view to Feroli.

“These tariff increases, if implemented shortly after Inauguration Day, would impart a modest stagflationary shock to the U.S. economy, boosting our inflation forecasts in the near term, but also dampening our economic growth outlook,” they said in a note last month, published shortly after Election Day. “Should this occur, the probability of a stagflation scenario in our growth model would likely increase.”

“That said, there is tremendous uncertainty about future potential policies,” they cautioned. — CNN

# All work and no play can deplete the ego

WHEN Brian Wilson, one of the most gifted songwriters in American pop, composed *Hang On to Your Ego* in 1966, it’s fair to say that he was not singing about the danger of burnout caused by overwork. However, Wilson was perceptive when he sang: “I know so many people who think they can do it alone / They isolate their heads and stay in their safety zones.”

It is true that the demands of our professional and personal lives are primarily felt internally. Always present, sometimes exhausting, the toll such demands place on us was explored earlier this month by The National in an article about what some psychologists call “ego depletion”.

At its core, this idea suggests that the mental resources we consume to constantly mediate between our desires, interests and reality — defined here as our “ego” — are finite. In simpler terms, our willpower declines as we repeatedly draw on it to complete tasks

Declan McVeigh

fatigued, washed-out version of yourself.

It’s a compelling idea but, in my opinion, an important piece of the contextual puzzle is missing. Counsellors and psychologists have proposed important strategies to mitigate ego depletion on an individual level — self-care, meditation, rest, diet, better time management and so forth. These are all worthy, but to challenge a pervading sense of burnout at a societal level we must consider that many aspects of modern life — including some work practices — are often inimical to our well-being.

An interesting starting point from which to explore this question can be found in a highly influential 1967 study by the English social historian EP Thompson. In *Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism*, Thompson analysed the changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe. He found that before salaried employment, major factories and shift patterns, people largely worked in sync with the natural cycles of agriculture; intense activity during planting and harvest time would be followed by periods where relatively little work would be done. Working at a constant pace for hour upon hour, five or six days a week, therefore, is a relatively recent development; the many stresses and anxieties connected to the modern world of work would suggest that, in biological and evolutionary terms, we’re simply not built for it.

The consequences arising from hours of organising, planning, prioritising, producing and interacting can cascade into many areas of our lives. Unchecked, it can even pose problems for our well-being. “When you come home after you’ve had a hard day, it is tough to be disciplined about goals such as going to the gym or healthy eating,” Dubai-based psychologist Masa Valkanou told The National, “so you often end up making poor, impulsive choices that are against our established goals”. Ego depletion’s appeal as an explanation for why we often make choices that work against our well-being lies in its intuitive character. It makes sense to us that repeatedly using or straining our self-control throughout the day depletes it, opening the way to more impulsive decisions, poor emotional control and an overall sense of being a fatigued, washed-out version of yourself. It’s a compelling idea but, in my opinion, an important piece of the contextual puzzle is missing. Counsellors and psychologists have proposed important strategies to mitigate ego depletion on an individual level — self-care, meditation, rest, diet, better time management and so forth. These are all worthy, but to challenge a pervading sense of burnout at a societal level we must consider that many aspects of modern life — including some work practices — are often inimical to our well-being. An interesting starting point from which to explore this question can be found in a highly influential 1967 study by the English social historian EP Thompson. In *Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism*, Thompson analysed the changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe. He found that before salaried employment, major factories and shift patterns, people largely worked in sync with the natural cycles of agriculture; intense activity during planting and harvest time would be followed by periods where relatively little work would be done. Working at a constant pace for hour upon hour, five or six days a week, therefore, is a relatively recent development; the many stresses and anxieties connected to the modern world of work would suggest that, in biological and evolutionary terms, we’re simply not built for it.

requiring judgment, decision-making or self-control — tasks found most often in the workplace.

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balanced and focused at work “with a noticeable increase in overall morale, with staff appearing less stressed and more balanced”.

Even Japan, an economic powerhouse famous for its rigorous work culture, is questioning some old assumptions. Earlier this month, Tokyo’s municipal government said that from next April its employees could have three days off a week. Another policy will allow the parents of young children to exchange part of their salary for the right to leave work early. Both policies are aimed at improving well-being, productivity and tackling the country’s falling birth rate.

“I know so many people who think they can do it alone,” Wilson sang. And it is true that we can all take individual steps to — as he might say — hang on to our ego. However, working towards a society that recognises that free time is not just a nice bonus but a requirement for success is more important than ever. — The National

# Can Europe rise to the challenge of a new Syria?

EUROPEANS like to regard the fall of the Berlin Wall as the foundational moment of a bloc that faces the world as one union. Syria has just provided the world with a moment that could resonate on the same level for it and its neighbours.

So how then are Europeans rising to the challenge of adapting to what will be a fast-evolving and many-sided new era? The immediate feel of the European response could be described as “stuck”. Even the UK, which left the EU to pursue a nimbler role in world affairs, is only gingerly rolling out its response. But the impact of what happens in Syria is second only in Europe to that in the Middle East.

The UK’s hang-ups revolve around the 2013 period when the British Parliament took a decision of genuine global importance. Former US presidential candidate John Kerry said in his memoirs that Barack Obama was willing to establish chemical weapons use in Syria as a red line. This was to be achieved by authorising retaliation against Bashar Al Assad’s government — until British MPs voted to stay out of it.

Washington had assumed Britain would support the US and, as in the case of Libya a few years before, was also happy to have the full involvement of the French. Then the British pulled the plug. Mr Obama cited resistance in Congress

and stepped back from the stage. Coming a few years after deciding to rely on the UK and France in Libya — describing them as the tip of the spear (Mr Obama’s phrase was “leading from behind”) — the 2013 Syria decision was a turning point for US prestige.

As we have seen during the past two weeks, Mr Al Assad’s government was

Damien McElroy

too involved now dogs Foreign Office officials.

Add to this the return of Johnathan Powell, the new national security adviser to British Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Mr Powell was another powerful figure who captured UK headlines a decade ago. Now the country’s approach to Hayat Tahrir Al Sham will be overseen by him. The UK’s

Damascus. These discussions are highly technical with a tentative caution overlaid in the rules that will be set down for officials. A new EU special envoy charged with competent handling of the brief is a priority for many of the ministers around the table.

For a region that itself was forged in the crucible of the wide-reaching effects

Europeans fear will reach Iran. Here too the thinking has been to hold on for far too long to the idea that an “E3 approach” — led by France, Germany and the UK — that is dominated by the legacy of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as the Iran nuclear deal.

That too is something that belongs to the Obama/Kerry era. The JCPOA was concluded in 2015 but the first Donald Trump administration pulled Washington out of it three years later. China and Russia have gradually withdrawn all co-operation within the wider-format contact group that supported the goals set out in the deal and its authorising UN Security Council Resolution, 2231.

What is left is the E3 which at least brings the UK together with France and Germany in diplomatic lockstep on Iran. With their unflinching devotion to the idea that the framework can prevent a nuclear-armed Iran, the trio are upholding a principled position.

What they are not positioned for what is what’s to come, either from the events in Syria that are unfolding rapidly or the likely strategy to be pursued when Mr Trump returns to office on January 20.

Engagement with those actors who are at the heart of this new era is necessary but it is not a sufficient condition for maintaining influence in the changes now proceeding from the fall of Mr Al Assad’s government.

The UK’s hang-ups revolve around the 2013 period when the British Parliament took a decision of genuine global importance. Former US presidential candidate John Kerry said in his memoirs that Barack Obama was willing to establish chemical weapons use in Syria as a red line. This was to be achieved by authorising retaliation against Bashar Al Assad’s government — until British MPs voted to stay out of it. Washington had assumed Britain would support the US and, as in the case of Libya a few years before, was also happy to have the full involvement of the French. Then the British pulled the plug. Mr Obama cited resistance in Congress

always vulnerable to a rebel offensive. In the void left by the US there was a sudden rush to change the battlefield calculus by Iran-backed militias. There was also an emboldened need to secure the Russian foothold in Syria.

Not least because he was the primary force behind that UK vote in 2013, then opposition leader Ed Miliband is today one of the most powerful members of the UK Cabinet. The vote 11 years ago hangs over the British reaction to the collapse of the Assad administration. The whiff of it not being Britain’s place to get

engagement terms — which he is determined to pursue — will be closely scrutinised.

Foreign Office officials have conducted an intense round of role-play scenarios on the strands emerging in Syria and are confident their emerging gameplan has been well stress-tested. The first contacts with HTS on the ground are underway. Nonetheless, the wariness in Whitehall is high that the UK can be a meaningful player in Syria.

Over in Brussels, European foreign affairs ministers spent Monday discussing a set of rules to govern their approach to

of a government’s collapse, these calm and collected discussions are far removed from the heat of the events taking place in Syria. Given the coincidence of the time of year, it is not hard to see in the fate of Mr Al Assad and his wife Asma an escape from the end that befell the Romania dictator-couple Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu in December 1989.

The European gatherings hold tight to processes, targets and eventual outcomes that prioritise normalisation.

At the back of all this is the coming storm the

# Powering growth through policies, reforms

China’s economy has remained stable overall this year, with major macroeconomic indicators meeting expectations and its fundamentals holding steady. But the challenges it faces, particularly low growth of demand, have become increasingly apparent. Supply currently outpaces demand, with external demand stronger than domestic demand, highlighting an imbalance in economic dynamics.

Industrial production and exports have significantly contributed to economic growth this year. From January to October, industrial output grew by 5.8 percent year-on-year, exceeding GDP growth for the same period. The export growth of 6.7 percent (in yuan terms) during this time was fueled by global trade recovery, inventory replenishment, and

enterprises accelerating shipments ahead of expected tariff hikes. However, with slowing global trade and increasing restrictions, the pace of export growth is likely to decelerate, amplifying the pressure on domestic demand.

To address these challenges, boosting effective domestic demand and rebalancing supply and demand are essential. These steps will not only resolve imbalances but also improve market expectations, bolster social confidence and support sustained economic recovery.

Insufficient demand stems from systemic, cyclical and structural factors. For example, China’s economic growth relied heavily on investment and exports for the past few decades. And in times of external shocks or economic downturns, debt-driven

investment projects were used to stimulate growth.

While effective in addressing infrastructure gaps, this approach has seen diminishing returns as local government debt rises and investment efficiency declines. Investment increases supply capacity, but as global capacity normalizes, the mismatch with relatively low domestic demand becomes more evident.

Also, the deep adjustments in the property market have led to a significant reduction in demand. At its 2021 peak, the real estate market saw 1.8 billion square meters of property being sold for 18.2 trillion yuan (\$2.51 trillion). But in 2023, property sales plummeted to 1.12 billion square meters for 11.6 trillion yuan. And in the first 10 months of this year,

property sales declined by 20.9 percent — at this pace of decline, annual sales are projected to shrink further to just 9.2 trillion yuan. This decline has created a wide gap in demand that emerging industries such as electric vehicles and renewable energy, though growing rapidly, cannot immediately fill.

The COVID-19 pandemic and declining real estate prices have eroded household wealth, reducing consumption. Rising corporate leverage has weakened investment capacity, while lower fiscal and land sale revenues have constrained local governments’ activities, including investment and purchase activity. Addressing these balance sheet challenges depends on broader economic recovery and

Wang Yiming

asset price stabilization, both of which require time.

To ensure sustained recovery, China must combine immediate policy measures with deeper structural reforms.

To begin, it needs to strengthen countercyclical measures.

In fact, the government has implemented policies to help boost economic recovery, including cutting reserve requirement ratios and interest rates. Additionally, the recent approval of a 6-trillion-yuan local government debt-swap program is aimed at reducing interest burdens and freeing up funds for development. But enhanced coordination across departments is essential to ensure policies are both targeted and effective.

Expanding domestic demand should focus on boosting consumption. Currently, commodity consumption is relatively saturated, so efforts should be made to actively expand service consumption.

Initiatives such as birth subsidies and extending public services to migrant populations can stimulate household spending. Expanding access to high-end healthcare, tourism and eldercare services can also cater to diverse consumer needs.

To promote the stabilization and recovery of the real estate market, on the supply side, stricter control over new construction, optimizing existing stock and improving housing quality are important. Also important is boosting loan support for “white-listed” projects with clear guidelines and

accountability measures to ease bank financing concerns. On the demand side, policies should be introduced to support the purchase of unsold inventory for affordable housing by enabling the use of special-purpose bonds, enhancing re-lending mechanisms and establishing clear price evaluation mechanisms to ensure effective implementation.

Besides, reforms need to be implemented to support private sector development by ensuring fair access to markets, enforcing intellectual property rights and resolving issues such as delayed payments to businesses.

And to enhance economic efficiency and regional financial autonomy, a unified national market should be built and the fiscal relationship between central and

local governments be adjusted, including by shifting the collection of consumption taxes to local governments and allowing them to set flexible tax rates within defined limits.

The difficulties facing China’s economy today reflect the pains of transition. However, these challenges also present opportunities to transform growth models and adjust economic structures. By focusing on rebalancing supply and demand, stabilizing key sectors and pursuing comprehensive reforms, China can lay the foundation for a new cycle of sustainable growth.

Economic resilience and adaptability will be critical as China navigates this period of adjustment, turning challenges into a springboard for long-term prosperity.

— China Daily





**PESHAWAR:** President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqem Khan presiding over a seminar organized by SCCI in collaboration with TDAP.

## PSX turns bearish, loses 1,308 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 1,308.72 points, a negative change of 1.13 percent, closing at 114,860.69 points as compared to 116,169.41 points on the last trading day.

A total of 1,252,980,316 shares were traded during the day as compared to 1,470,661,659 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs62.722 billion against Rs66.628 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 470 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 134 of them recorded gains and 297 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 39 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom 151,921,663

shares at Rs1.88 per share, Pak Elektron with 107,502,606 shares at Rs38.11 per share and Cnergyco PK with 58,285,174 shares at Rs7.08 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs180.02 per share price, closing at Rs21,000.02, whereas the runner-up was Philip Morris (Pakistan) Limited with Rs29.78 rise in its per share price to Rs789.88

Mari Petroleum Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs89.97 per share closing at Rs809.76 followed by Nestle Pakistan Limited with Rs74.88 decline to close at Rs7,511.48.

**Rupee sheds 10 piasa against dollar**

Pakistani rupee on Tuesday depreciated by 10 piasa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.27 against

the previous day's closing of Rs278.17.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs277.80 and Rs279.30 respectively.

The price of Euro decreased by 14 piasa to close at Rs292.14 against the last day's closing of Rs292.28, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen came down by 01 piasa and closed at Rs1.80, whereas an increase of Rs 2 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs353.44 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs351.44.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal surged by 03 and 04 piasa to close at Rs75.76 and Rs74.06, respectively.

## Tanveer chairs meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Tuesday chaired the Fertilizer Review Committee (FRC) meeting to discuss the demand and supply of urea for the Rabi season 2024-25.

The committee was informed that the demand for urea during the current season was expected to increase by 16.4 percent, said a news release.

Rana Tanveer directed immediate measures to ensure the provision of fertilizer to farmers at the prescribed rates.

He also highlighted the significant role played by the Punjab Government's Kisan Card Package in increasing urea demand.

He instructed the authorities concerned to operate fertilizer production units at full capacity to maintain a balance between demand and supply.

The meeting discussed various options regarding the import of fertilizer to ensure its timely availability for farmers.

The minister emphasized that strict action would be taken against hoarding and profiteering of fertilizer, making it clear that no one would be allowed to compromise farmers' interests. The meeting was attended by senior officials of the ministry and representatives of relevant organizations.

## Pak-China collaborating on projects

ISLAMABAD (INP): As 2024 draws to a close, China and Pakistan continue to enhance a successful partnership aiming to enhance Pakistan's renewable energy capacity.

The two countries have been collaborating on several solar power projects, primarily under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Expressing his gratitude to the SBP, the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), and the government, he acknowledged their collective efforts in controlling inflation, stabilizing foreign exchange reserves, and improving the overall business climate.

He emphasized that this monetary easing would

# SCCI demands setup of lab for testing of honey

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan demanded of the government to establish a 'state-of the art' laboratory for testing of Honey in Peshawar and industrial unit for packaging and processing to facilitate the exporters.

Besides, he called for the provision of assistance to honey exporters for obtaining certification, reduction in fees along with simplifying the registration process.

Fazal Moqem made these demands during a seminar titled: "Highlighting impediments and problems in export and way forward and Development Honey sector" organized by SCCI in collaboration with Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) here at the chamber house.

The moot attended by SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice presi-

dent Shehryar Khan, former presidents Malik Niaz Ahmad, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, members of the executive committee Aftab Iqbal, Nadeem Rauf, Ashfaq Ahmad, Secretary General Muqtasid Ahsan, and Hamoodur Rehman, Bilal Hussain, Naem Qasmi, Mansoor Ahmad, Smeda Junaid Khan, TDAP officials, honey dealers and exporters.

Moqem said SCCI is striving for provision of best facilities to honey exporters and shopkeepers.

In the current fiscal year, he informed the chamber has included handmade carpet, honey, furniture, precious stones, jewelry and industrial mining in its Annual Development Program and efforts are afoot for development of these sectors and holding today's event for Honey exporters is the first step toward this effort, he added.

The SCCI wished to further work together with

stakeholders of the honey sector, Moqem said, and stressed the need of taking pragmatic steps to provide access to honey exporters to international markets for promotion of export of this important sector.

The chamber president assured honey exporters and shopkeepers that they will take steps on priority grounds for addressing their all issues and urged TDAP to organise awareness sessions/ training workshops regarding registration, provision of license, packaging and quality control.

TDAP officials during the session agreed with the proposals of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem and businessmen and exporters attached to the honey sector and pledged full support to exporters and shopkeepers for promotion of the honey sector.

Earlier, the seminar was addressed by Muhammad

Khalid Rafiq from Honeybee Research Institute Islamabad, Muhammad Younas from Agriculture Research Institute Tarnab Farm Peshawar, Smeda Provincial Chief Rashid Aman, and Deputy Director TDAP Ayaz Muhammad and highlighted hurdles and issues in promotion of the honey sector.

Director General TDAP Muhammad Athar Khokar and Commercial Consular in Pakistani Consulate in Jeddah Sadia Khan also addressed this important session online link.

It is noted here that the proposal of this event will be sent to the government of Pakistan, besides the participants were informed the honey traders about registration procedure on the Pakistan trade portal.

At the end, Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan distributed certificates among the participants of the event.

## Economic stability on horizon, says Khurram

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor on Economic and Financial Reforms, Khurram Shahzad Tuesday said that the government's consistent and stable policies were driving Pakistan towards economic stability.

Talking to a private news channel, he stated that the economic indicators were showing significant surge as inflation had dropped to its lowest single-digit level in 6.5 years.

He said that the policy rate had been reduced from 22 percent to 13 percent which would not only spur economic activity but also boosted investors' confidence.

These positive developments have led to an appreciation of the currency and a surge in the stock market, which is now reaching unprecedented heights, he added.

He further said that exports had increased by 13 percent over the past five months, while imports had grown by only 3 percent.

He attributed this to the business sector's growing reliance on local markets and raw materials, which he described as a promising shift towards self-sufficiency.

He said that inflation could stabilize between 5 percent and 7 percent over the next six months.

## Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was report at the port where seven ships, Cussler, Limco Logger, Amis Queen, Sea Fortune, Hafnia Excellence, Al-Diab-II and Al-Deebel scheduled to load/offload Container, Rice, Canola, Gas oil, LPG and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Grain Terminal, Engro Vopak Terminal, FOTCO oil Terminal, Sui Southern Gas Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile six more ships, Jaru Bhum, Maersk Hartford, Dolphin-19, Stnikolai, Hafnia Providence and Al-Areeshcarriving Container, Palm oil, Mogas and LNG are also arrived at outer anchorage during last 24 hours.

A total of eleven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Cussler, Anikitos, Al-Diab-II and Sea Fortune are expected to sail on today.

Cargo volume of 178,395 tonnes, comprising 127,070 tonnes imports cargo and 51,325 tonnes export cargo carried in 2,960 Containers (1,475 TEUs Imports & 1,485 TEUs Export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 25 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them four ships, Saga, Maya Gas, Al-Areesh and Maersk Hartford & another ship 'MSC Positano' carrying Palm oil, LPG, LNG and Containers are expected to take berths at LCT, SSGC, PGPC and QICT respectively on today, while two more ships, Lotus-A and Maersk Cape Town due to arrive at outer anchorage.

## Machinery imports surge by 15.21% in 4 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of the overall machinery group experienced a substantial increase of 15.21 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year (July-October) compared to 2023-24.

The growth in machinery imports would help elevate productivity and spur technological advancements in essential sectors, leading to economic expansion and progress in infrastructure development.

The total imports of the machinery group during the four months of the FY 2024-25 stood at \$2,707.736 million against the imports of \$2,350.217

million of the corresponding period the last year, according to official data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

The import of agriculture sector machinery and equipment surged by 70.92 percent from \$23.178 million to \$39.616 million; textile machinery 42.34 percent from \$46.839 million to \$66.671 million; power-generating machinery 40.83 percent from \$132.893 million to \$187.152 million; construction and mining machinery 50.31 percent from \$25.891 million to \$38.917 million; electrical machinery and apparatus 39.70 percent

from \$751.827 million to \$1,050.284 million; and other apparatus 32.89 percent from \$136.864 million to \$188.721 million.

However, during the period under review, the import of office machinery including data processing equipment declined by 7.69 percent from \$166.759 million to \$153.942 million; mobile phones by 10.46 percent from \$469.969 million to \$420.799 million; telecoms-related equipment 0.44 percent from \$606.833 million to \$609.520 million and other machinery 5.77 percent from \$595.977 million to \$561.634 million.

## Locally made phones meet 94% of Pakistan's demand

ISLAMABAD (INP): Local mobile manufacturing in Pakistan, bolstered by Chinese mobile companies, is thriving and now meets 94% of the country's demand.

This growth is attributed to the government's strategic regulatory initiatives aimed at sustaining sectoral expansion and innovation.

Chairman of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Retired Maj. Gen. Hafeez Ur Rehman HI (M), presented PTA's Annual Report 2024 to Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, highlighting recent developments in the IT and telecom sectors.

He emphasized the Authority's commitment to foster technological advancements, implement

online safety measures, safeguard consumer rights, and promote fair competition.

According to the report, the telecom sector generated record revenue of Rs955 billion in FY 2023-24, a 17% increase over FY 2022-23, despite economic challenges. Cellular mobile services now reach 91% of the population, while 4G services cover 81%.

Total telecom subscribers reached 196 million by September 2024, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday.

The number of broadband subscribers rose to 142.3 million from 127.6 million in June 2023.

Average mobile internet speeds improved by 28%, increasing from 15.65 Mbps to 20.02 Mbps.

Data usage grew by 24.2%, reaching 25,141 terabytes in FY 2023-24, while broadband penetration increased to 58.4% compared to 53.6% in 2023.

"During FY 2023-24, 29.6 million mobile devices were locally manufactured, meeting 94% of the country's demand," the report stated. The local manufacturing/assembly has also created 60,000 jobs for the locals.

According to the PTA website, during the first 10 months of 2024, Pakistan locally manufactured or assembled 22.59 million mobile devices.

Of these, 13.86 million were smartphones, while 8.73 million were Second Generation Mobile (2G) or GSM phones.

0.71). Machinery and Equipment (-0.31) and Furniture (-2.39).

The production in July-October 2024-25 as compared to July-October 2023-24 has increased in Food, Tobacco, Textile, Wearing apparel, Coke & Petroleum Products, Automobiles and Other Transport Equipment while it decreased in Rubber Products, Non Metallic Mineral Products, Electrical Equipment, Machinery and Equipment, Iron & Steel Products, and Furniture.

## Industrial growth declined

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) in the country witnessed a negative growth of 0.64 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The LSM however grew by 0.02 percent on year-on-year basis (YoY) in October 2024 when compared to the same month of last year and 111.60 percent on month-on-month (MoM) basis when compared to

September 2024.

The provisional quantum indices of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) for October 2024, with the base year 2015-16, have been developed based on the latest data supplied by the source agencies.

The main contributors towards overall growth of -0.64% are, Food (0.28), Tobacco (0.41), Textile (0.45) Garments (2.44), Petroleum Products (0.09), Automobiles (0.69), Cement (-0.76), Iron & Steel Products (-0.63), Electrical Equipment (-

0.71), Machinery and Equipment (-0.31) and Furniture (-2.39).

The production in July-October 2024-25 as compared to July-October 2023-24 has increased in Food, Tobacco, Textile, Wearing apparel, Coke & Petroleum Products, Automobiles and Other Transport Equipment while it decreased in Rubber Products, Non Metallic Mineral Products, Electrical Equipment, Machinery and Equipment, Iron & Steel Products, and Furniture.

Our 300 MW facility served as a model of efficiency, producing clean electricity to power thousands of households and reducing the country's reliance on fossil fuels."

## Ahsan hails SBP to reduce interest rate

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member Central Core Committee UBG (FPCCI) and former President ICCI, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and Tuesday hailed the State Bank's decision to reduce the interest rate by 200 basis points, stating that this success is the result of the continuous efforts of the business community and the concrete steps taken under the leadership of UBG Patron-in-Chief, S.M. Tanveer.

He made these remarks during a meeting yesterday with Raja Sajjad Akhtar, Group Leader of Jhelum Chamber of Commerce, and Johar Ali Raki, Group Leader of Gilgit-Baltistan Chamber of Commerce, said a press release issued here.

During the meeting,

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari paid tribute to the visionary leadership of S.M. Tanveer, highlighting that his selfless services have not only united the business community but also played a pivotal role in influencing critical economic decisions at the governmental level, said a press release issued.

He stated that S.M. Tanveer has always highlighted the issues faced by the business community and taken practical steps to resolve them, benefiting both the business sector and the economy at large.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari emphasized that the business community is the backbone of the economy, and UBG will continue to play an active role in addressing their concerns. He urged the government to

further reduce the interest rate to revive the economy, create more investment opportunities, and provide relief to the common citizens.

He noted that lower interest rates are essential for investment and industrial growth in the current economic scenario.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari added that under S.M. Tanveer's leadership, significant progress has been made in resolving the challenges faced by traders. He praised the efforts of UBG and the unity of the business community, calling it the key to economic improvement.

He further affirmed that UBG will continue to raise its voice on every platform to protect the rights of traders.

## Iftikhar hails reduction in SBP's policy rate

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former President of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik on Tuesday welcomed 200 basis points reduction in monetary policy rate by the State Bank of Pakistan.

Hailing the decision, he termed it as a timely and positive step toward boosting economic growth, supporting trade and revitalizing Pakistan's industrial sector, said a news release.

Expressing his gratitude to the SBP, the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), and the government, he acknowledged their collective efforts in controlling inflation, stabilizing foreign exchange reserves, and improving the overall business climate.

He emphasized that this monetary easing would

provide much-needed relief to businesses and industries struggling with high borrowing costs.

"This decision will stimulate investment, reduce the cost of doing business, and create an enabling environment for growth," said Iftikhar Ali Malik.

"It will boost the confidence of local and foreign investors, drive job creation, and ensure sustainable economic development in Pakistan".

Highlighting the broader economic impact, he said that this decision would ease financial pressure on manufacturers, exporters and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), enabling them to access cheaper credit and expand operations.

He said it would lead to enhanced production

capacity, increased exports, and improved competitiveness of Pakistani products in global markets.

Maintaining price stability and boosting economic activity is the hallmark of a sound economic strategy, he added.

He urged the government to continue adopting business-friendly policies and to provide further support to the industrial sector, which remains the backbone of the economy.

He reiterated his belief that the reduction in interest rates would encourage private sector investment and fast-track Pakistan's path to economic recovery.

"This harmonious approach will pave the way for Pakistan's long-term economic revival and prosperity," Iftikhar Ali Malik remarked.

## Markets drop as Fed gears up for interest rate decision

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Most Asian markets fell Tuesday as attention turned to the Federal Reserve's upcoming policy decision, with traders hoping for guidance on its interest rate plans as president-elect Donald Trump prepares to take office.

The decision, which is expected to see officials lower borrowing costs again, comes in a busy week for central banks, with announcements in Japan and Britain also due.

Investors are keeping tabs on Beijing after Chinese leaders' latest measures to kickstart the economy fell short of expectations, with weak retail sales data Monday reinforcing the need for more support.

The Fed is widely expected to lower rates for the third meeting in a row Wednesday as it looks to guide the world's top economy to a soft landing, though its statement will be pored over for clues about next year's outlook.

Investors have started

paring their bets on how many times it will cut over the next 12 months owing to still-sticky inflation, a strong labour market and uncertainty about Trump, who has pledged to slash taxes and impose tariffs on imports.

Stefan Hofrichter, head of global economics and strategy at Allianz GI, said the US economy had defied warnings of a recession and growth was expected to power ahead, adding the firm's "base case scenario remains a 'soft landing' for the US and world economies". However, he added: "The wild card is what happens after Donald Trump takes office as US president. The lavish spending he's proposed could boost US growth in the short term.

"But the impact of the higher tariffs he's mooted for US trading partners may also dampen the outlook for Europe. We need to wait to see the extent to which his election campaign promises become policy."

Wall Street ended mostly

on the front foot, with a surge in tech giants helping the Nasdaq to a record high, but Asia was unable to pick up the baton.

Tokyo, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, Seoul, Taipei, Manila, Mumbai, Bangkok and Jakarta all fell, though Sydney and Wellington rose.

Bitcoin hit another record high of \$107,791 on continued optimism that Trump will introduce measures to deregulate the cryptocurrency market.

The Fed rate decision will be followed Thursday by announcements in Japan and Britain.

Opinion is split on whether the Bank of Japan will unveil a third hike of the year -- having lifted in March for the first time in 17 years -- as officials in Tokyo look to shift the country away from years of ultra-loose policies.

Still, while the BoJ and Fed are on course to bring their rates closer together, the yen is struggling to strengthen and is stuck around 154 per dollar.





In brief

Shadab fined for CoC breach

RAWALPINDI (Monitoring Desk): Panthers skipper Shadab Khan has been fined 10 percent of his match fee for a level 1 breach of the PCB Code of Conduct for Players and Players Support Personnel on Monday as his team took on Dolphins in 13th match of the Champions T20 Cup. Shadab was found guilty of violating the Article 2.4 of the PCB Code of Conduct, which reads as: "any repeated failure to comply with the instruction or directive of an Umpire during a Match." The incident occurred before the start of play when Shadab Khan conducted batting practice on the pitches square, which is a breach of the playing conditions and the advisory issued by the ground authority. Shadab had also received a warning for the same breach in Lake City Panthers' previous game by the match officials. The charges were levelled by umpires Faisal Khan Aafreedi and Muhammad Asif while match referee Kamran Chaudhary imposed the fine.

Afridi becomes grandfather again

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan cricket team captain Shahid Afridi has become a grandfather once again. His second daughter Aqsa has given birth to a beautiful baby girl bringing immense joy to the Afridi family. The arrival of Afridi's granddaughter marks another beautiful and significant moment for the family. Afridi expressed his happiness on social media. He shared pictures and congratulated his daughter Aqsa and son-in-law Naseer on the arrival of their daughter. On this special occasion, Afridi expressed his gratitude to Allah writing, "Alhamdulillah, Allah has blessed Aqsa and Naseer with a beautiful blessing." His message reflects the deep joy and gratitude felt by the Afridi family. Afridi's fans and social media users have posted congratulatory messages on the arrival of his granddaughter. The news has sparked a wave of well-wishes and positive messages from all over. This is a memorable and special moment for Shahid Afridi and his entire family. The arrival of his granddaughter marks another beautiful chapter in their lives, and Afridi's emotional post reflects the happiness and love surrounding the event.

Hazlewood likely to miss rest of series

BRISBANE (AFP): Australia pace spearhead Josh Hazlewood is likely to miss the rest of the Test series against India after injuring his right calf during his warm-up before play in Brisbane on Tuesday. Hazlewood, who missed the second Test in Adelaide with a side strain, bowled just one over before leaving the field on the fourth day of the third Test at the Gabba. With the series locked at 1-1 and the Test seemingly on course for a draw, the 33-year-old's latest injury is a major blow to the hosts. "Josh Hazlewood has sustained a right-sided calf strain which will prevent him from playing any further part in the Test match against India in Brisbane," a Cricket Australia statement said. "He sustained the injury during the warm-up this morning and after bowling one over was unable to continue. "He is likely to miss the remainder of the Test series. A squad replacement will be made in due course." Australia's bowling coach Daniel Vettori said Hazlewood was despondent after suffering the injury.

# Quaid-e-Azam Games, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa players win 44 medals

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The brilliant performance of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa players in the Quaid-e-Azam Games continues as KP has won more medals in various competitions played yesterday. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa players won 12 gold, 16 silver and 16 bronze medals.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa men's volleyball team defeated Punjab by 3-0 to win the gold medal. In the men's badminton competition, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa won gold medal by defeating Punjab by 3-0 while the women's team won the bronze medal.

In the squash event, women won the gold while men won the silver medal. In judo competitions, men won 4 gold, two silver and six bronze medals while women also won one gold and two silver medals. In



karate competitions, men and women won one gold, one silver and two bronze medals. In athletics competitions, women won gold in javelin throw and silver in 100-meter hurdles race.

Men won gold in javelin throw, gold in 400 relay, gold and bronze medals in 400-meter flat race, silver

medals in 100 and 200-meter races, and bronze medals in 110-meter hurdles and 1500-meter race. KP won one silver and two bronze medals in weightlifting competitions. KP wrestlers managed to win 6 silver and 2 bronze medals in wrestling.

The men's hockey team

also qualified for the final by defeating Punjab with 3 to 5 goals, while the women's hockey team defeated Baluchistan by 0-7 to reach the semi-finals. In boxing, they won one silver and two bronze medals. In men's football and hockey, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa qualified for the final.

## PCB confirms 87 local players renewal categories for PSL

LAHORE (INP): Three Test cricketers – Hasan Ali (Karachi Kings), Mohammad Amir (Quetta Gladiators) and Saim Ayub (Peshawar Zalmi) along with international cricketer Usama Mir (Multan Sultans) have been promoted to Platinum category from Diamond category as PCB confirms 87 local players renewal categories for the 10th edition of HBL PSL.

Imad Wasim, Naseem Shah, Shadab Khan (Islamabad United), Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Shaheen Shah Afridi (Lahore Qalandars), Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Rizwan (Multan Sultans), Babar Azam (Peshawar

Zalmi) are retained in Platinum category.

A total of 16 players are part of Diamond category, which include Quetta Gladiators' and Multan Sultans four players each, three players from Karachi Kings, Islamabad United and Peshawar Zalmi's two players each, while Lahore Qalandars have one player in this category.

Furthermore, 30 players are part of Gold category which include Peshawar Zalmi's seven players in this category. Karachi Kings, Lahore Qalandars and Quetta Gladiators have five players, while Islamabad United and Multan Sultans have four

players in Gold category.

In the 16 players selected in Silver category, four Gladiators' and Qalandars players are part of this category, while Peshawar Zalmi have three players in this category. Kings and Sultans have two players each in Silver category, while United have one player in this category.

In the Emerging category, among the 12 players selected, three players each are part of Islamabad United and Peshawar Zalmi. Karachi Kings, Multan Sultans have two players, while Lahore Qalandars and Quetta Gladiators have one player each.

## Spurs fail in appeal to reduce Bentancur ban for Son comments

LONDON (AFP): Tottenham's appeal to reduce Rodrigo Bentancur's seven-match ban for an alleged racist remark he made about teammate Son Heung-min has been dismissed, the Football Association said on Tuesday.

The Uruguay midfielder was given the suspension, which relates to domestic games, by an independent commission on November 18 and Spurs indicated they would appeal.

The FA has now confirmed an appeal board has dismissed Tottenham's challenge and Bentancur will serve the remainder of his ban, missing matches against Manchester United in the League Cup and Liverpool in the Premier League.

"This appeal was dismissed following a hearing, and the seven-match suspension remains as ordered by the regulatory commission," the governing body said in a statement.

Bentancur was charged with misconduct in September over a television interview he gave in his home country in June, with the reference to South Korea star Son's race making it an aggravated breach.

The midfielder was asked during the interview to show the shirt of a Spurs player, and replied: "Sonny's? It could be Sonny's cousin too as they all look the same."

The standard minimum ban where such a breach is established is six matches, but Spurs said they felt the sanction was "severe" when confirming their intention to appeal.

Bentancur apologised on Instagram to Son for his remarks and Son accepted that apology in a statement on the same platform.

Bentancur was also fined £100,000 (\$127,000).

## Hasan's half-century helps Nurpur Lions upstage ABL Stallions

RAWALPINDI (APP): Hard-hitting opener Hasan Nawaz smashed a fiery half century while Khushdil Shah produced an all-round show as Nurpur Lions beat ABL Stallions by three wickets in the Bahria Town Champions T20 Cup at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi on Tuesday.

Hasan has been impressing most of the cricket experts with his clean hitting and that was on show as he led the chase for Nurpur Lions. The winners overhauled the 169-run target for the loss of seven wickets with an over to spare. ABL Stallions were all out off the final delivery for 168.

Despite the defeat the ABL Stallions were still top of the five-team table with eight points in six games, winning four and losing two games. Nurpur Lions are now third on the table, behind UMT Markhors (second) with six points. They have won three and lost three matches.

Lake City Panthers also have six points but are fourth with an inferior net run-rate to Lions. Engro

Dolphins have yet to open their account after losing all their five matches.

Hasan launched an attack right from the word go and despite losing his opening partner, Imam-ul-Haq for four in the second over, he did not relent. He added 41 for the second wicket with Shahzaib Khan (six). Another 43 were added between Hasan and Mohammad Taha (21 off 18 balls with two sixes).

ABL Stallions mentor Shoaib Malik then derailed the chase with wickets of Hasan in the 15th over, leaving 47 to defend in the last five overs. Shoaib also accounted for Khushdil Shah for 10, but Rohail Nazir kept his cool with an innings of 26 not out off 12 balls spiced with three fours and a six to seal the win.

Earlier, sent into bat, Hussain Talat once again came to his team's rescue as he hit a 29-ball 43 with the help of five boundaries and a six. He added 42 for the fifth wicket with Shoaib who made a 16-ball 22 with a boundary and a six.

The two were given a good platform by Maaz

Sadaqat, who made 34 off 27 balls with three fours and a six.

Maaz and young Shamil Hussain put on a brisk 46 run opening stand by just 5.2 overs. Shamil's run-a-ball 18 had one six. Ubaid Shah gave a final flurry to the innings, smashing two sixes and a four in his six-ball 17.

ABL Stallions lost three wickets in the last over, including two run outs. Fast bowler Musa Khan was the best of the bowlers with 3-32. Khushdil Shah took 2-30 while Shahid Aziz finished with 2-35.

Scores in brief: Nurpur Lions beat ABL Stallions by three wickets.

ABL Stallions 168 all out in 20 overs (Hussain Talat 43, Maaz Sadaqat 34, Shoaib Malik 22, Shamil Hussain 18; Musa Khan 3-32, Khushdil Shah 2-30, Shahid Aziz 2-35)

Nurpur Lions 169-7 in 19 overs (Hasan Nawaz 74, Rohail Nazir 26 not out, Mohammad Taha 21; Maaz Sadaqat 2-16, Shoaib Malik 2-26)

Player of the match – Hasan Nawaz (Nurpur Lions)



RAWALPINDI: Stallions batsman Muhammad Haris in action during the Bahria Town Pakistan Champions T20 Cup 2024-25 at Pindi Cricket Stadium.

## Ronaldo confirms wants to take reins of Brazilian football

BRASÍLIA (AFP): Brazil legend Ronaldo has confirmed he wants to become president of the country's football governing body to address a "deep crisis" the sport is facing nationally.

"I have hundreds of motivations, but I think the biggest of them is really to restore international respect to Brazilian football," he said in an interview on Monday with the Globoesporte website.

Ronaldo said he wanted to be an "alternative for significant change" as candidate for the job of running the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF).

"O Fenomeno" ("The Phenomenon"), as the 48-year-old became known over the course of his 1993-2011 career, said he wants to use the CBF presidency to help Brazil's national team to regain its glory as five-time world champions.

"The Selecao has to recover its prestige. I'll do everything so that the players understand the historic importance of playing for

the national team," he said.

Ronaldo scored both goals when Brazil beat Germany in the 2002 World Cup final in Japan, and was twice winner of the Ballon d'Or. To lodge his CBF candidacy, he needs the support of Brazilian regional clubs and federations.

To get those, he promised to travel "all around Brazil" and share the "incredible plans" he has for the sport. The date of the next CBF election has not yet been set, but should happen between March 2025 and March 2026, according to Brazilian media.

"Much deeper problem"

Current CBF chief Ednaldo Rodrigues has been criticized for slotting in temporary coaches for the national team after Tite's 2022 exit while waiting for Carlo Ancelotti to arrive -- something that did not happen when the Italian decided late last year to extend his contract as manager of Real Madrid.

Currently coached by

Dorival Junior, the Selecao are fifth in South America qualifying for the 2026 World Cup tournament, seven points behind leaders Argentina.

"My problem is not Ednaldo. The problem is much deeper. My goal is to bring the people closer to the Selecao. Today, the people are indifferent when the Selecao plays," Ronaldo told Globoesporte. "I am an alternative of significant change for Brazilian football, which is going through a deep crisis," he said. Ronaldo, a former star for Barcelona, Inter Milan and Real Madrid, already has leadership experience.

In 2018, he took majority control of Spain's Real Valladolid, and in 2021 did the same for Cruzeiro, the Brazilian club where he started his career. He sold his Cruzeiro stake in April this year. In his interview, Ronaldo said he was in talks to "very soon" sell his Valladolid stake to avoid "any obstacle" to his CBF candidacy.

# SA all out for 64 as England secure dominant Test win

BLOEMFONTEIN (Agencies): England secured a first Test win since 2014 with a crushing 286-run victory over South Africa in Bloemfontein.

Set an improbable 351 to win, the Proteas crumbled to 64 all out, which is their lowest total in women's Tests. Seamer Lauren Bell was the standout for England, taking 4-27, while spinner Sophie Ecclestone finished with 2-7.

England started the day with a lead of 145 and were bowled out for 281 shortly before tea, with captain Heather Knight providing the backbone of the innings with a composed 90.

Faced with a tricky 20-minute spell before the interval, Bell took the key scalp of Laura Wolvaardt for four and fellow seamer Lauren Filer trapped Anneke Bosch in front for the same score.

The turning point came after the break when England appealed for a catch at short leg off Annerie Dercksen, with the on-field umpire initially unmoved. But the decision was then overturned after a consultation with the third umpire, despite the fact the decision review system (DRS) is not in place for the match.

South Africa were visibly unhappy with the decision and from there they collapsed by losing their final seven wickets for just 42 runs, with Marizanne Kapp's 21 the only notable contribution. The dismal batting effort overshadowed the brilliant bowling effort of spinner Nonkululeko Mlaba, who took 6-67 to finish with 10 in the match. The victory ensures England head to January's Ashes in Australia with plenty of confidence having also won both pre-



ceding white-ball series on this tour.

No DRS dominates discussion

While the margin of victory was eventually very comfortable for England, the lack of DRS cast an unfortunate shadow over the match in general. The preceding white-ball series both had the system in place for the first time in women's bilateral internationals in South Africa

but because of the costs involved, Cricket South Africa said they were prioritising its use in the shorter formats only, external

There are always going to be mistakes made by human error but it meant that those decisions were amplified further in Bloemfontein, including an appeal for lbw against Tammy Beaumont from the second ball of the match which looked plumb

to her at chest height, but umpires Kerrin Klaaste and Lauren Agenbag - both officiating in their first Tests - had a discussion after England's convincing appeal. There was also no UltraEdge to determine whether Dercksen had hit it, though the slow motion replay made it look likely and therefore it was probably the correct decision, yet it was the inconsistency of the process that was questioned. Dercksen's wicket left the score 22-3 and led to a visibly-annoyed South Africa's capitulation.

South Africa imploded after Knight finds form

England started the day in a comfortable position but Knight pressed home their advantage with a patient 90 from 191 balls in the face of a much-improved bowling performance from the hosts. With injuries to seamers

Kapp and Hlubi thwarting South Africa, Mlaba stepped up to bowl with impressive control and guile for 26 overs and was rewarded by becoming her country's first bowler to take 10 wickets in a women's Test.

She had Nat Sciver-Brunt dropped on 19 but fought back to bowl the first-innings century for 37, before adding Amy Jones, Charlie Dean, Sophie Ecclestone and Ryana MacDonald-Gay to her tally as England tried to score quick runs with a declaration looming. A mini collapse of 4-12 at the end of England's innings was a slight blemish but Knight's return to form is another tick for the side with a challenging Ashes series on the horizon, as she struck 10 fours in the innings before missing a sweep off Mlaba and being pinned on the back leg.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 78,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 78,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 39,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1474.82 feet and was 76.82 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 18,300 cusecs and 36,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1139.25 feet, which was 89.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 4,300 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 44,900, 32,200, 34,000 and 3,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 1,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Police arrest 11 law breakers

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police on Tuesday arrested law breakers for supplying drugs and liquor, possessing illegal arms and vehicle theft cases. According to a police spokesman, the Ratta Amral Police held accused Adeel and Taimur Ahmed with 560 grams and 660 grams of hashish respectively, while the Taxila Police recovered 610 grams of hashish from accused Bilal. Similarly, the Wah Cantt Police nabbed accused Hamza with 550 grams of hashish and Fahad Faisal with 520 grams of hashish. Meanwhile, the Gujjar Khan Police arrested two accused Abdul Rehman and Ahmed Aamir with 10 liters of liquor, while the Wah Cantt Police held Umair on the recovery a 30-bore pistol along with ammunition. The Waris Khan Police arrested the accused Dilawar for being involved in street crimes. A mobile phone and Rs 3,000 snatched from victims and the weapons used in the criminal activities were also recovered from the accused. The Wah Saddar Police nabbed a couple wanted in the vehicle theft case. Accused Nadeem and his wife Maryam, who were domestic servants, had stolen their owner's vehicle in 2021.

### NPU delegation visits Safe City Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from the Naval Provost Unit (NPU) of Naval Police Headquarters visited Safe City Islamabad on Tuesday. The Deputy Director Technical Safe City welcomed the delegation, according to the public relations officer. He said that the delegation visited the command and control center, the data hub unit, modern technology-equipped cameras and the police operations center hall. The delegation received a comprehensive briefing on the procedures and advantages of this project. Furthermore, the Naval Police delegation was informed that Safe City Islamabad was playing a significant role in various departments through modern techniques, including the Police Operations Center, Emergency Control Center, Data Hub Unit, Dispatch Control Center, E-Challan System, and the "Pucar-15" helpline. The delegation was also apprised of the functionality and benefits of the Safe City cameras in the city. They were told that the modern cameras of Safe City were playing a crucial role in ensuring the safety of the city, preventing crimes and safeguarding the lives and property of citizens.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq welcoming Dr. Abdullah bin Mohammed Bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh Chairman Shura Council of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on his arrival at Islamabad Airport.

## Senator Irfan, Uzbekistan's envoy discuss fostering bilateral ties in diverse fields

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Senator Irfan Siddiqui called on Uzbekistan's Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev here on Tuesday and discussed strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries in diverse fields. Senator Siddiqui, during a visit to the Embassy of Uzbekistan along with Senator Sarmad Ali, expressed his appreciation for the growing relationship between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

He highlighted the strategic importance of fostering deeper ties between the two nations, particularly in terms of economic cooperation, trade, and cultural exchanges. Uzbek Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev acknowledged Pakistan's vital role in the region and commending its efforts to ensure peace and stability. He expressed optimism about the future of Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations and discussed various initiatives that could enhance collaboration,

including joint ventures in areas such as energy, agriculture, education, and tourism. Senator Sarmad Ali also contributed to the discussions by focusing on the potential avenues of cooperation. He focused on shared goals and mutual interests, emphasizing the need for a continued dialogue and collaboration. Khalid Taimur Akram, an international relations expert expressed his insight on international diplomacy and regional integration.



## Foolproof security to be ensured during Christmas: SSP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Muhammad Arsalan Shahzeb met a delegation of the Christian community on Tuesday to discuss security measures regarding Christmas. According to police spokesperson, the meeting was attended by DSP Security, along with key representatives from the Christian community, including Pastor Alliance Initiative Chairman Malik Kamran Naz, Vice Chairman Aneek Parvaiz, General Secretary Yeshua Masih, Shahid Khokhar, Advisory Board Member

Bishop Farukh Javed, and Bishop Wareem Masih. SSP Shahzeb assured the delegation that the Islamabad Police is taking all necessary steps to ensure the safety of the Christian community and their religious events. He emphasized that comprehensive security will continue to be provided for programs held at their places of worship. Shahzeb stated that the purpose of the meeting was to reassure the Christian community that Islamabad Police is always available for their security and considers itself accountable for their

protection. He added that all churches in Islamabad are being provided with foolproof security. Additionally, SSP acknowledged the Christian community's cooperation with Islamabad Police and expressed hope for continued collaboration in the future. The Christian community delegation thanked Shahzeb for addressing their concerns and ensuring full support for their security needs. They reaffirmed their commitment to standing with Islamabad Police at every level.

## Abbasi warns PTI for using 'Pashtoon Card'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Tuesday cautioned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former Speaker of the National Assembly Asad Qaiser against exploiting the 'Pashtoon Card' to disrupt national peace. Speaking on a Point of Order in the National Assembly, Abbasi said that Pakistan's enemies have historically sought to destabilize the country by inciting ethnic and provincial divides. He urged PTI to avoid using such tactics for political power. "If PTI has faced political setbacks due to PML-N's actions, they should respond politically and accept the challenge rather than resorting to divisive narratives," Abbasi added. Challenging PTI's claims, he stated, "If any innocent Pashtoon has been detained at the Rawalpindi Police Station, I will take full responsibility. However, PTI's leadership abandoned its workers and even Bushra Bibi, the wife of PTI's founder, on November 26." Abbasi reiterated the importance of fostering national harmony and addressing political differences through democratic and constructive means.

## 300 kites seized, seller arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police seized 300 kites and three strings during a raid on Tuesday and arrested a kite seller, identified as Muqet. According to a police spokesman, the Taxila Police conducted the operation as part of a crackdown on illegal kite flying. A case has been registered against the accused, and further investigations are underway. SP Potohar Nasir Nawaz praised the police team for their efforts, emphasizing that kite flying is a dangerous activity. He assured that the crackdown on those involved in such activities will be continued.

## Saudi parliamentary delegation arrives in Islamabad for official visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dr Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, the Chairman of Saudi Arabia's Shura Council, arrived in Islamabad with a senior parliamentary delegation. Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, warmly welcomed the distinguished guest at Islamabad International Airport. On this occasion, children presented bouquets to the Chairman of the Shura Council as a gesture of hospitality. Expressing delight over the visit, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq stated that Pakistan holds its long-standing brotherly relations

with Saudi Arabia in the highest regard. He emphasized that both countries have stood by each other through every challenging time. The speaker further expressed confidence that the visit of the Chairman of Saudi Arabia's Shura Council will serve as a milestone in promoting bilateral parliamentary relations. In response, Dr Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh conveyed his pleasure at visiting Pakistan and expressed gratitude to the Speaker of the National Assembly for the warm welcome. He shared that he has always

received sincerity and love from the people during every visit to Pakistan. Dr Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh is visiting Pakistan at the invitation of Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. During his stay, the Chairman of the Saudi Shura Council will hold separate meetings with the President of Pakistan, the prime minister, the chairman of the Senate, and other political leaders. The visit is being accorded significant importance and is expected further to strengthen parliamentary ties between the two brotherly nations.

## Talented students to be sent abroad on scholarships: Sikandar

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat, announcing the resumption of laptop scheme in colleges across the province, Tuesday said that intelligent and talented students would be sent abroad on scholarships. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was taking every positive step for the development of education sector, he said addressing a special ceremony held at Waqar-un-Nisa College to distribute shields and certificates of appreciation among college heads showing excellent performance in the admission campaign in Rawalpindi Division. The minister said that a significant number out of the 3,000 students admitted to MBBS this year got admission on scholarships. For the first time in the history of Punjab, he added, no corruption or influence was involved in posting and transfer of officials, rather merit was being kept in view in that regard. Women were given the responsibility of college directors in four divisions, he remarked. Secretary Higher Education Dr. Farrukh Naveed, Additional Secretary Azam Khan,

Director Public Instruction (Colleges) Punjab Dr Syed Ansar, Director Colleges Rawalpindi Professor Fatima, former director Professor Sher Ahmed Satti, heads of girls and boys colleges and other senior officials were present in the ceremony. Minister Rana Sikandar said that the dream of development could not be realized without education. "We want to empower women. Our women have a lot of talent," he added. The minister said the government was pursuing a policy of increasing the number of scholarships for the talented students in public colleges and providing more facilities to the educational institutions. After the successful experience of MDCAT and ECAT, more programmes were being initiated so that parents could educate their children easily, he added. He urged the teachers to work hard to get the trust of citizens restored in government institutions, assuring that the government would fully back them in that regard. Secretary Higher Education Dr. Farrukh Naveed, in his remarks, praised the principals and staff of the Directorate Colleges for

supporting government policies, especially increasing admissions in government colleges. He hoped that all-out efforts would be made in helping the students give excellent results so that admissions could be doubled next year. DPI Colleges Dr Syed Ansar appreciated the heads who achieved the targets in the admission campaign. Professor Sher Ahmed Satti, who is retiring from the post of director, said that due to the special efforts of the college principles, teachers and DDEs of the four districts, the admission campaign was successful and assured the newly appointed Director Professor Fatima of his full support. The provincial minister on the occasion raised the slogans of Pakistan Zindabad. Some 24 colleges that met the target of 100 percent admissions were awarded shields and certificates of appreciation, while 18 colleges that achieved the target of 90 to 99 percent and 24 colleges that achieved 80 to 89 percent admissions, as well as the Superintendent of the Directorate, were given certificates of appreciation.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate change Romina Khurshid gives away a plant to country Director for Pakistan, South Asia Region.

## Romina lauds World Bank for fostering more resilient future for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Country Director for Pakistan, South Asia Region, Najy Benhassine called on Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam and discussed various matters of bilateral interest and cooperation for building Pakistan's climate resilience through various measures on Tuesday. In the high-level meeting between two sides focused on discussing the country's increasing climate vulnerability and the urgent need for enhanced cooperation to address the challenges posed by climate change. Both sides agreed to work jointly to invest in various climate-vulnerable sectors, particularly agriculture, water, energy, floodwater management, and disaster risk reduction, to make these sectors climate-resilient. This meeting also focused on addressing Pakistan's growing climate-related challenges, which include extreme weather

events such as floods, heat waves and droughts. Pakistan is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change despite contributing a minimal share to global emissions. The PM's Climate aide Romina Khurshid Alam highlighted during the meeting that Pakistan is among the most vulnerable countries to the exacerbating fallouts of climate change, despite its minimal contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions. "While the country continues to face extreme weather events such as devastating floods, heat waves, droughts, desertification, groundwater depletion, crop failures and unpredictable rainfall patterns, which have significant economic, social, and environmental consequences, Pakistan is doing everything possible with its resources and existing capacity to cope with the impacts of climate change," Romina Khurshid Alam said.

She also recalled that in 2022, Pakistan experienced one of the worst flood disasters in its history, with millions displaced, crops destroyed, and critical infrastructure damaged. This has emphasized the urgent need for flood resilience and disaster risk reduction measures. While highlighting the worsening droughts, expanding desertification and growing water scarcity in many parts of the country, PM's climate aide emphasised that with the country's dependence on glaciers and rivers for water, Pakistan is experiencing acute water shortages, further exacerbating challenges in agriculture, which is a mainstay of the country's economy. Extreme temperatures, especially in the southern and eastern regions, have been leading to loss of life, increased health risks, and disruption to daily life, Romina Khurshid Alam added. The World Bank official acknowledged the country's

escalating climate vulnerability and offered technical and financial support to help the country build resilience against climate-related risks. He also discussed viable strategies to strengthen Pakistan's climate risk management systems, focusing on several key areas including water, agriculture, energy, and food security. Meanwhile, the World Bank official also emphasised with the PM's climate aide Romina Khurshid Alam the significance of developing and implementing comprehensive climate risk management strategies to be implemented at national, provincial and district levels. This would help the country to better prepare for and effectively respond to natural disasters mitigate their economic, social, and environmental impacts and protect the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable communities. The World Bank's country director Najy Benhassine also

offered close work at all levels with the climate change and environmental coordination ministry and provided both technical expertise and financial support to enhance Pakistan's coping capacity to deal with the climate risks. This could involve funding for infrastructure projects, climate-resilient agricultural practices, and disaster preparedness plans, he added. The Bank's official reiterated its commitment to supporting Pakistan's climate finance needs, which could involve facilitating access to international climate funds to finance projects that build resilience to climate change. During the meeting, there was also a focus on engaging the private sector in climate risk management, particularly in sectors like agriculture, energy, and infrastructure, where sustainable investments could play a significant role in long-term resilience.

The meeting also discussed at length the strengthening of Pakistan's institutional framework and policies to ensure that climate risk management is integrated into development planning at all levels. PM's Coordinator Romina Khurshid Alam expressed deep appreciation for the World Bank's generous support and offer for deepening collaboration and cooperation with the ministry and emphasised that combating climate change is crucial to the country's development agenda. "The meeting marked a pivotal step in solidifying a partnership between Pakistan and the World Bank to address the climate crisis. Both parties remain committed to continued collaboration to enhance Pakistan's climate resilience, with an emphasis on long-term sustainability and reducing the vulnerability of the country's most at-risk populations," she remarked.



Five key projects completed

URUZGAN (BNA): The Uruzgan Higher Education Institute has announced the completion of five significant infrastructure projects worth 47 million Afghanis. The completed projects include a central conference hall designed to host significant academic and administrative gatherings, a solar power system to ensure sustainable energy supply, a modern water supply network, a well-equipped computer lab, and a designated parking area for vehicles.

Taliban flog 5 women, men

KABUL (Amu TV): As corporal punishments continue by the Taliban, two women and three men were flogged in the central province of Parwan on charges of "adultery and illicit relationships," according to a Taliban statement. The statement said the individuals were lashed between 30 and 39 times each in a sports stadium in Charikar, the provincial capital. In addition to the flogging, the accused were sentenced to prison terms ranging from two to six years.

Ministry: Afghanistan eyes clean energy self-sufficiency

KABUL (TOLONews): Matiullah Abid, spokesperson for the Ministry of Energy and Water, told TOLONews that some neighboring and regional countries are interested in investing in clean energy production in Afghanistan. Abid said that the ministry has a five-year plan to achieve self-sufficiency in energy production, and with its implementation, Afghanistan will become self-reliant in clean energy production. "The Ministry of Energy and Water has prepared a five-year plan, and if this plan is implemented, the country will achieve self-sufficiency," said the spokesperson for the Ministry of

Energy and Water.

Afghanistan is a reservoir for energy production from various sources such as solar, wind, and water. If investments are made in this sector, citizens' electricity needs will be addressed.

"The reason behind Afghanistan's lack of self-sufficiency is our reliance on electricity imports. Imported electricity is cheaper, and donors have always questioned why we don't buy cheaper power from neighbors instead of producing domestic electricity at a higher cost," said Amanullah Ghalib, the former head of the Breshna company.

Investment in solar ener-

gy production and other electricity generation sources is one of the key demands of industrialists and citizens of the country.

"Afghanistan is rich in energy resources, both renewable and non-renewable. Renewable resources such as water, wind, solar, and agriculture are accessible, and if managed properly, this process can yield better results," said Abdul Zohur Madbar, an economic affairs analyst.

This comes as Afghanistan currently produces only 20% of its energy needs domestically, while 80% of its electricity is imported from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran.

Kabulis demand early solution to smog

KABUL (Pajhwok): The residents of Kabul are complaining about high-level smog triggered by air pollution and are urging the government to take strong strides to mitigate it. However, officials say efforts are underway to address the issue.

Mohammad Arif, a resident of Kabul, told Pajhwok Afghan News that with the onset of winter, the air in Kabul had become highly polluted.

He attributed the pollution to a lack of public awareness, the use of low-quality fuels, power shortages, and the use of coal.

He added that polluted air had confronted people with numerous health problems, including respiratory diseases. He called on the government to find a solution to these issues.

Another resident of Kabul, Sohrab, said extreme air pollution caused smog recently in Kabul.

He explained that during morning and evening, polluted air makes it difficult for people to see things clearly.

He urged the government to focus on lowering the price of firewood so that people could use it, which would help reduce air pollution.

Samim, another inhabitant of Kabul, said that during winter season, the environment of the city becomes highly polluted due to smog.

He added that people become sick as a result of smog and polluted air, and this should be prevented.

Several other residents of Kabul also made similar complaints and called for a solution to this problem.

On the other hand, Kabul Municipality representative Nematullah Barakzai told Pajhwok that to prevent air pollution in the city, the municipality has started nighttime patrols from December 1 this year.

He said that according to municipal rules and regulations, the Municipality is monitoring high-rise buildings and public baths in Kabul to ensure they have air filtration systems in place to filter smoke during operation.

He added that this year, no one will be allowed to use coal for heating without operating air filtration systems.

Meanwhile, Director of Monitoring and Inspection at the National Environmental Protection Agency, Ahmad Faisal Briyali, said that they are continuously monitoring high-rise buildings, vehicles, baths, and factories that produce smoke.

He also urged the public to use gas and electricity as much as possible.

According to United Nations data, 98 percent of the global population breathes polluted air, which results in the death of at least 6.7 million people annually.

TVET-A signs MoUs with 20 service institutions



KABUL (BNA): The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVET-A) signed cooperation agreements on Tuesday with 20 service institutions, aimed at fostering economic development, ensuring food security, and providing job opportunities for Afghan youth.

According to Bakhtar News Agency, Fazl Rahman Fazl, Deputy Head of TVET-A, highlighted the objectives of these agreements, which include improving nutrition for vulnerable populations, enhancing local economies, and promoting entrepreneurship. The agreements, totaling over \$1.08 million,

are part of a \$2.5 million initiative funded by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The projects will be implemented in Helmand, Daikundi, Khost, Bamyan, and Kandahar over five months.

Currently, TVET-A operates 164 short-term vocational training centers

across Afghanistan. These centers have trained 3,891 individuals in various fields, equipping them with professional skills and enabling them to find employment.

The new partnerships are expected to bolster these efforts and expand opportunities for Afghan communities.

Strengthening healthcare system discussed



KABUL (BNA): Acting Minister of Public Health, Mawlawi Noor Jalal Jalali, met with Dr. Tajudeen Oyewale, UNICEF Representative in Afghanistan, and his delegation.

According to a statement from the Ministry of Public Health, the meeting, attended by several provincial directors, discussed the

evaluation of services provided by implementing organizations, improving the quality of healthcare services, timely delivery of medicines to hospitals, and strengthening Afghanistan's healthcare system.

Mawlawi Noor Jalal Jalali stressed the importance of joint standardized monitoring, evaluation, and

transparency in services provided by implementing organizations across the provinces.

He urged UNICEF officials to ensure the timely delivery of essential medical equipment and medicines to hospitals and to pay greater attention to enhancing the quality of healthcare services.

Over \$2.8b invested in telecommunication sector

KABUL (TOLONews): Officials from the ATRA (Afghanistan Telecom Regulatory Authority) said that more than \$2.8 billion has been invested in Afghanistan's telecommunications sector.

At a ceremony introducing a new internet package by the Roshan telecommunications company, Atta Mohammad Yari, the technical deputy of this authority, stated that 25.9 million people in Afghanistan use telecommunications services, and this sector has created job opportunities for about 118,000 people.

"More than \$2.8 billion has been invested in the telecommunications sector,

and in the past year alone, \$187 million has been invested. We are gradually witnessing the expansion of investments in this sector," he said.

Yari also mentioned that 33.9 million SIM cards have been distributed to citizens across the country so far.

Regarding the expansion of fiber optics in Afghanistan, he said: "Fiber optics is an infrastructure that is highly effective for land-based communications and economic development in many countries. Currently, Afghanistan has been connected to 9,138 kilometers of fiber optic cables, and

this service is available in major cities."

Meanwhile, Roshan Telecommunications Company introduced a new internet package called Alpha Prime.

This package will be offered to customers with new features.

Abdul Aziz Niazi, Senior Deputy of Communications and Marketing at Roshan, spoke about the features of this package: "This package includes unlimited minutes to the Roshan network, minutes to other networks, and most importantly, unlimited WhatsApp—a feature that no other company has offered so far."

14-year-old Ismaili teenager shot dead

WAKHAN (Khaama Press): Local sources in Badakhshan report that militants executed a 14-year-old Ismaili teenager by shooting him in the Wakhan district.

Sources on Tuesday, stated that the Taliban militants shot the teenager two days ago in the village of "Degargand" in the Wakhan district of Badakhshan.

The boy, named Islamuddin, was a seventh-grade student. A Taliban official from the group's security command in Badakhshan confirmed the killing, stating that the shooting was a mistake. He added that two individuals had been arrested in connection with the incident.

This follows a troubling

pattern of violence, as just two weeks ago, the hanging body of a middle-aged man from the Ismaili community was found in the Baharak district of Badakhshan.

Moreover, last week, Taliban militants executed a man in the city of Faizabad in front of his daughter.

Since their takeover of

Afghanistan, the Taliban has increasingly targeted religious minorities and former military personnel, raising concerns about the security and rights of vulnerable groups in the country. The recent killings highlight the ongoing human rights violations faced by these communities under the Taliban's rule.

Local industrialists urged the caretaker government to address their challenges.

Hayatullah Aka Khel, a booth representative, said: "It is essential to participate in international exhibitions and introduce our products to the world, so they become aware of what we produce."

"Such exhibitions should be held more frequently in Nangarhar. Traders will come, contracts will be signed, production will increase, and job opportunities will be created for people," said Abdul Hamid

Safi, another exhibitor.

"The government must support industrialists in key areas such as land and electricity so they can establish manufacturing factories here," said Matiullah, a booth representative from Nangarhar.

Local officials stated that all facilities are available for investment in Nangarhar, and domestic investors should seize this opportunity.

"We call on our respected traders to attract the attention of investors who have invested abroad so they can invest here in

Afghanistan."

Mohammad Tahir Mubariz, Nangarhar's deputy police chief, said: "We assure you that we will protect your lives, property, honor, markets, and products with our own lives," said Azizullah Mustafa, the deputy governor of Nangarhar.

Meanwhile, some domestic producers claim they are nearing self-sufficiency but cite challenges such as imports of similar goods, lack of raw materials, and electricity shortages as serious obstacles to their operations.

Fuel prices rise in Herat as winter approaches



HERAT (Ariana News): With Afghanistan's harsh

winter starting to settle in, residents of western Herat

province have voiced concerns of the rise in prices of

fuel, especially wood and coal.

Herat's temperatures have dropped considerably in the past week, with Tuesday's mercury reaching a high of only 7 degrees Celsius and a low of -1 degrees.

Residents say that they are struggling to heat their homes as they are unable to afford the high price of wood and coal.

With irregular supplies of electricity into the homes of Afghans across the country, most people rely on coal and wood-burning stoves to heat their homes.

One wood seller,

Mohammad Azam said there has been a drop in wood deliveries from provinces.

"This year, the delivery of wood from the provinces has decreased by 90 percent. What comes is smuggled and on small vehicles through bad roads. That is why the prices have increased a lot," says Mohammad Azam.

Ghulam Hazrat, another wood seller says: "I chop about half a ton of wood for 100 afghanis (USD\$1.43). I chop a ton or a ton and a half a day, but it is not enough to meet the needs of my family."

Unemployment and poverty have reduced people's purchasing power. Many families cannot afford to buy basic necessities.

Abdul Jabbar, a resident of Herat, says: "I swear we cannot afford this year. You see how much 7 kgs of coal costs. There is also no electricity."

Herat Municipality says they are trying to keep prices stable during the winter.

Abdul Hadi Noori, a spokesman for the Herat Municipality, says: "If prices have gone up in some areas, the reason is

hoarding. The municipality's team and the commission have started working and are monitoring the market."

WFP warns of winter hardships

Millions of families across the country are being forced to make impossible choices between keeping their children warm or providing enough food, the World Food Programme (WFP) warned this week.

The organization reports that millions of families in Afghanistan, already struggling with food insecurity, are now having to make this difficult decision.

"Millions of families are enduring the cold of winter without sufficient food, and many are facing the heart-wrenching dilemma of choosing between feeding their children and keeping them warm," WFP stated.

International aid agencies had warned that this winter would be particularly difficult for the people of Afghanistan, especially given the shortfall in funding for essential aid.

The WFP recently reported that in Afghanistan's urban areas one in three families was unable to meet their basic living expenses.





PESHAWAR: Rescue workers shifting an injured person in Kurram incident to Lady Reading Hospital.

## KP govt launches five mobile food testing labs

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In another significant step towards providing safe and healthy food items to people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the provincial government has launched five more state-of-the-art mobile food testing laboratories here on Tuesday. The launching ceremony was held at the Chief Minister's House, Peshawar, with the Chief Minister

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, as chief guest. Members of the provincial cabinet, members of provincial assembly, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development Ikramullah Khan, senior officials of the Food Department, and representatives of international partner organizations also attended the event.

During the briefing, it was told that these food testing laboratories would provide free of cost testing services for food items in the densely populated districts of the province adding that Seven mobile food testing laboratories under the Halal Food Authority are already offering free food testing services at the divisional headquarters level. It was further informed that ensuring the availability of healthy, clean, and adulteration-free food items is one of the key components of the Chief Minister's 99-point Awami agenda.

Apprising the participants, it was told that newly

launched Mobile Food Testing Labs established at a cost of 90 million rupees, are equipped with modern tools, including milk analyzers, arsenic kits for water, refractometers, moisture analyzers, digital refractometers, pH meters, and TDS meters. Through these laboratories, citizens will have access to free quality testing of milk, water, spices, tea, salt, honey, ice cream, juices, and 24 other food items at their doorsteps. These mobile food testing laboratories have the capability to conduct immediate tests of food items and provide instant results through thermal printers adding that reports and other relevant data from these inspections is instantly shared with high ups through an online dashboard. Additionally, these laboratories can also function as portable checkpoints.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, the Chief Minister said the objective of increasing the number of mobile food testing laboratories is to eradicate food adulteration and ensure the provision of quality food to the public. The Chief Minister announced that by June next year, mobile food testing laboratories would be expanded to all districts of the province and later to the tehsil level. He highlighted that food adulteration is a serious issue and strict measures will be taken for its effective prevention. He lamented that despite being Muslims, people engage in food adulteration,

whereas Islamic teachings strictly prohibit such practices. He urged that as Muslims, we must reform ourselves and adhere strictly to Islamic teachings.

The Chief Minister further stated that the provincial government is committed to ensuring the provision of clean, safe, and adulteration-free food items to citizens. He praised the performance of the Halal Food Authority and emphasized enhancing the institution's capacity to further improve the food safety regime. He noted that the addition of five more mobile laboratories will help make the food safety system more effective and efficient. These laboratories will not only ensure the availability of clean and safe food but also prevent undue harassment of businesses.

The Chief Minister instructed that the static food testing laboratory in Peshawar be made operational within one month and assured that the provincial government would provide all necessary resources for this purpose. Once this laboratory becomes operational, all food items in the province will be registered, and no food items will be sold without registration and an NOC from the food testing lab. On this occasion, the Chief Minister also announced the regularization of contract employees of the Halal Food Authority. Provincial Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru also addressed the ceremony.

## SC seeks masses' comments

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Rules Committee of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan has Invited experts and general public to give their input in improving the rules and procedures of appointment of Judges to the top Courts of Pakistan.

Chairman, Rules Committee, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail has expressed gratitude to all members of the Rules Committee for their efforts in drafting the proposed rules of procedure for the appointment of Judges to the Supreme Court, the Federal Shariat Court, and the High Courts. He also appreciated the officers of the Secretariat of the Commission in assisting the Committee.

The chairperson has also extended thanks to all those who submitted their valuable suggestions and proposals to the Committee. The proposed Judicial Commission of Pakistan (Appointment of Judges) Rules, 2024 have been posted on the official website of the Supreme Court for public comments and feedback.

Feedback and suggestions from the general public are encouraged and will be placed before the Commission for consideration at its forthcoming meeting scheduled for the 21st of December, 2024. All comments and feedback should be submitted by the 20th of the current month at the email address: jcrules@scp.gov.pk.

## Israeli attacks kill dozens across Gaza

GAZA: Dozens of people have been killed in Israeli attacks across Gaza in the past day, including 10 when fighter jets bombed a residential building in Gaza City, amid reports of ceasefire talks inching closer to an agreement.

The attack in Gaza City on Tuesday hit the Tabatibi family home in the Daraj neighbourhood. Footage showed fires burning in the aftermath of the attack as rescue workers searched for survivors amid the rubble. Local media reported that the family had fled the house, which was located in the eastern part of Gaza City.

Al Jazeera's Tareq Abu Azzoum, reporting from Deir el-Balah in central Gaza, said the house was targeted without any prior warning. "Civil Defence workers confirmed that the vast majority of bodies were shredded to pieces," Abu Azzoum said. Further north in the town of Beit Lahiyah, which has been under Israeli siege since early October, at least 15 people were killed by an air strike that hit a house, medics said.

"We've just received confirmed reports that 15 Palestinians were killed in Beit Lahiyah where they were sheltering in a house," said Al Jazeera's Hind Khoudary, reporting from Deir el-Balah, adding that other people were trapped under the rubble. Earlier, Al Jazeera's correspondents in Gaza also reported fighting in Rafah's al-Jnaina neighbourhood as well as Israeli helicopters shooting east of southern Gaza City. In Rafah, Israeli tanks pushed towards the western area of al-Mawasi, forcing dozens of families to flee northwards towards Khan Younis, residents said. — Aljazeera

## Martyrdom of Shaheed Bibi Event to be held at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh: Sharjeel

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Senior Minister of Sindh, Sharjeel Inam Memon, has stated that December is the month of the martyrdom of Shaheed Bibi. The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) observes this month with great devotion and respect, organizing various events throughout. The main event will be held at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, where millions of PPP workers and devotees participate.

He also expressed deep sorrow over the boat tragedy in Greece and demanded that the federal government take strict action against those involved in human trafficking without delay.

Addressing a press conference in Karachi, Sindh Senior Minister & Minister for Information, Transport & Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the Transport Department has implemented new SOPs for motor vehicle inspectors and vehicle fitness, effective from December 1. The purpose of these measures is to ensure environmental protection and prevent the loss of precious human lives in traffic accidents. He emphasized that it is the government's responsibility to formulate policies that prioritize the safety of human lives, ultimately benefiting the public.

He stated that under the new SOPs for Motor Vehicle Inspectors (MVIs) and Motor Vehicle Fitness Certificates, fitness certificates with barcodes will be issued to prevent the issuance of fake certificates. This measure will make it impossible to produce counterfeit certificates. Motor Vehicle Inspectors are being further empowered, and old fitness certificates will now be rejected across Sindh, with new certificates issued in their place.

He added that support is being sought from the Sindh Police, Traffic Police, and Motorway and Highway Police to ensure road safety and vehicle fitness compliance. Additionally, an awareness campaign will be launched to promote road safety.

He said that Chinese investors recently visited Pakistan and held meetings with President Asif Ali Zardari, the Chief Minister of Sindh, and other officials. They signed MoUs with various departments and private business groups. Today, there is good news from them—they intend to bring more buses under the EV taxi initiative and the public-private partnership model.



He noted that such a project would bring foreign investment, boost foreign exchange, and create new employment opportunities. "Our first priority is to provide employment to the people," he emphasized. Under the vision of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the introduction of e-taxis will not only generate job opportunities but also offer affordable, high-quality, and comfortable travel facilities to the public.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that more delegations of Chinese investors have arrived in Karachi, expressing their interest in working across various sectors, including energy, construction, and trading. He emphasized that the Sindh government is the only government in Pakistan actively inviting investors from around the world and providing them with necessary facilities.

He further highlighted that Pakistan ranks sixth globally in public-private partnerships due to the efforts of Sindh province. "Today, our successful model is being recognized worldwide," he added. He said that the public should not lose hope, as it is the government's responsibility to take actions that build public confidence. He noted that a significant amount of propaganda is being spread on social media, with campaigns being launched against the country's institutions and the government.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the reduction of the interest rate by 2 percent is a positive step by the federal government, which will benefit the entire country, including the business community, and encourage the establishment of more industries. He emphasized that Sindh province is the best location in Pakistan for industries, offering special economic zones. He particularly highlighted the Dhabaji Special Economic Zone, which is ideally

located near the port. He added that industries set up there will enjoy a ten-year tax exemption and zero duty on machinery, making it the most attractive site in the country for industrial development.

He said that the Pakistan People's Party has always worked for the development of the country. President Asif Ali Zardari initiated the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and the PPP-led Sindh government continues to create similar opportunities. He added that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will soon launch significant programs for the youth of Sindh, which will greatly benefit them. Providing employment opportunities for the youth remains Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's top priority. Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the first phase of the Malir Expressway is being launched to benefit the citizens of Karachi. This project will help reduce traffic congestion and address transport issues in the city. He highlighted that the Sindh government has invested billions of rupees in the Malir Expressway to resolve Karachi's longstanding problems.

He further noted that Karachi faces immense pressure, which continues to exacerbate its challenges. Work is progressing rapidly on the K-4 project, including the water supply initiatives from Hub Dam and Dhabaji. Additionally, billions of rupees are being spent on the construction of two Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects in the transport sector.

He said that significant attention is being given to the polio eradication efforts. First Lady Asifa Bhutto Zardari and Ms. Faryal Talpur inaugurated the polio campaign in Shaheed Benazirabad yesterday, while the Chief Minister of Sindh is personally monitoring the progress of the campaign. In response to a question, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the PPP seeks to move forward through understanding and dialogue. He acknowledged that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are the best, but unfortunately, the government and its leader there are playing a deplorable role. He pointed out that the PTI government was in power in KP at the time of the Army Public School tragedy and during the Bannu jail break. He emphasized that today, KP needs to focus on fighting terrorists, not its federal government. The KP government has failed to protect its citizens, he added.

## Pakistan Navy ATR joins excercise Miavi Balina

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy ATR Aircraft from the 29 Anti-Submarine Warfare Squadron participated in Exercise MAVI BALINA-2024 at Dalaman, Türkiye.

Exercise MAVI BALINA-2024 is a Turkish-led multinational Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) exercise, involving over 30 platforms, including ships, submarines, aircraft, and UAVs. The exercise was conducted in the Eastern Mediterranean and aimed at practicing submarine operations and ASW procedures. Naval and air force assets from Türkiye, NATO, the USA, Pakistan, Greece, and Special Operations Forces (SOF) teams from Türkiye and Azerbaijan participated in this multilateral exercise.



Pakistan Navy is a regular participant in Exercise MAVI BALINA. The interaction between Pakistan and other participating navies during the Harbour Phase included mutual visits, tabletop discussions, and planning sessions. The extensive Sea Phase culminated in detailed analysis sessions.

Pakistan Navy's active participation in Exercise MAVI BALINA-2024

underscores its unwavering commitment to fostering relations between the two brotherly countries, Pakistan and Türkiye, and strengthening bonds with leading navies. These collaborative engagements enhance interoperability, provide mutual training opportunities, and contribute to resilience in safeguarding shared interests and promoting peace across the region.

## Imran, Bushra Bibi's interim bails extended

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad District and Sessions Court has extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the Toshakhana 2.0 case until January 7.

The District and Sessions Court of Islamabad extended the interim bails of the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Imran Khan, and Bushra Bibi in the case until January 7, 2024. The hearing of bail petitions was conducted by Additional Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Mujoka. During the hearing, junior

lawyers appeared on behalf of the accused. The junior lawyer informed the court that the senior counsel was busy with another case in Central Jail Adiala and could not attend today.

The Islamabad District and Sessions Court extended the interim bails of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi until January 7, 2024, and adjourned the hearing. Earlier last week, a trial court had indicted PTI founder Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi in a case related to alleged violation of the state gift repository - Toshakhana - rules during the former's term as the prime minister to acquire a precious jewelry set.

Special Judge Central Shahrukh Arjumand read out the charge-sheet against the former PM and his wife in a courtroom inside Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, where Imran has been detained for over one year. Both the PTI founding chairman and his wife - who were present in the court - denied the allegations. The court later adjourned till December 18. At the next hearing, the prosecution - the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) - will present the first four of its 28 witnesses. The Toshakhana 2.0 case involves allegations against Imran Khan, the PTI founder, and his wife Bushra Bibi.

ملکی ترقی و خوشحالی کے  
بیج بوتے کسان  
ان ہی کے دم سے ہے سرسبز و شاداب  
پاکستان

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18  
دسمبر

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