

**President, PM grieved**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressed their deep grief over the death of former Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Yasturul Haq. In their separately issued statements, the president and prime minister expressed their condolences over the passing of former Naval chief. They lauded the late Yasturul Haq's unforgettable services for the defence and security of the country.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Ameen Khan Gandapur witnessing the MoU signing ceremony between KP government and Bank of Khyber for implementation of Ehsas Apna Ghar Scheme.

# PHC grants protective bails to 14 PTI's leaders

**Humayun Khan**  
PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has granted protective bail to several leaders and members of the National Assembly from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, including Asad Qaiser, Shaukat Yousafzai, Shibli Faraz, and others. The court has also directed the federal government to provide details of the cases registered against them, on Wednesday.  
The PTI leaders had filed a petition seeking protective bail in multiple cases registered against

# Billion dollars' investment from Saudi Arabia being actualized: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday said a number of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia this year for billion dollars of investment have been actualized, boosting the national economy and creating job opportunities in the country.  
The Minister revealed the information in a news conference following the successful visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Saudi Arabia where he attended the One Water Summit and held meetings with the global leaders including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman and President of France Emmanuel Macron.  
He said PM Shehbaz

# Sindh Cabinet abolishes deceased quota, reforms educational boards

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah chaired a cabinet meeting held at CM House here Wednesday where several important decisions, including the establishment of the Directorate of Inclusive Education to tackle the issue of mainstream public and private schools denying admission to mild autism, abolishing the provision of jobs on the Deceased Quota as per Supreme Court order, establishment of the Sindh Peoples Rural Civic Services Company to ensure clean water and sanitation for the rural population, revising the criteria for the appointment of vice-chancellors and formation of a committee to address shortcomings in educational boards were discussed in detail.  
Attended by all provincial ministers, Advisors, Special Assistants, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah,

PSCM Agha Wasif and the concerned secretaries, the meeting took important decisions.  
The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPD) apprised the cabinet that the major issue was a denial of the mainstream Public and Private Schools to admit mild autistic, slow learner and borderline children in their schools. These children are compelled to go to special schools, which is a clear violation of the prevailing laws.  
The chief minister, with the unanimous nod of the cabinet, and keeping in view the law and establishing inclusive education, approved the creation of the Establishment Directorate of Inclusive Education under DEPDP to implement a joint strategy/policy developed by DEPDP and the School Education Department.  
The Directorate of

Inclusive Education aims to address the denial of admission for mild autism in mainstream public and private schools.  
The cabinet was told that the Supreme Court had passed an order on 26.09.2024, whereby the Apex Court held recruitment against Deceased Quota inter-alia under Rule 11-A of the Sindh Civil Servants (Appointment, Promotion and Transfer) Rules, 1974 are declared to be discriminatory and ultra-vires under Articles 3, 4, 5 (2), 18, 25(1) and 27 of the Constitution.  
Given the orders of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, the cabinet approved the deletion of Rule 11-A from the Sindh Civil Servants (Appointment, Promotion & Transfer) Rules, 1974.  
The Sindh cabinet approved the establishment of "Sindh Peoples Rural Civic Services" under the Sindh Transformational

Accelerated Rural Services (STARS) initiative. This aims to provide clean water and sanitation to 61 per cent of Sindh's population living in rural areas, where 70 per cent lack access to clean water and 65 per cent lack proper sanitation.  
Murad Shah said that with a 2.5 per cent annual population growth, urgent action is needed to prevent rural schemes from collapsing.  
He added that the World Bank has committed \$400 million for this initiative, which will operate in eight districts including Tharparkar, Umerkot, and Mirpurkhas.  
The strategy includes a monthly contribution of Rs 1000 from households for maintenance and emphasises community engagement for behavioural change. The expected benefits are improved health outcomes, economic growth, and sustainable rural development,

along with community empowerment and gender-inclusive governance.  
To address issues and shortcomings in the functioning of the Educational Boards, the University & Boards department suggested certain amendments in the Sindh Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education Ordinance, 1972.  
The cabinet constituted a committee with the Minister of Education Syed Sardar Shah, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah and Secretary U&B to sit together and give recommendations for improving the functions of educational boards.  
The cabinet was told that in response to the advertisement, a large number of applications were received. Three hundred (300) have applied for Chairmen, 119 for secretaries, 140 controllers of examination and 69 for audit officers.

To ensure transparency and merit-based appointments, it was unanimously agreed upon by all stakeholders to conduct interviews through the search committee in which the chief minister would induct two experts [in the committee].  
The cabinet outlined the updated criteria for appointing Vice Chancellors (VCs) across various universities. The details include:  
General Universities: A VC must be an eminent academic eligible for a full professorship or a public sector administrator (BPS-21+) with four years of experience and a relevant Master's degree. A PhD in the relevant field is preferred. Appointments made by the Chief Minister will be for four years, extendable by another term. The maximum age for applicants is 62 years.  
Specialized Universities

such as Engineering Universities VC must hold a PhD in engineering and meet HEC professor criteria. Medical Universities VC candidates must be either full professors with a postgraduate fellowship or PhD or senior public sector administrators (BPS-21+) with an MBBS and Master's. Law Universities VC candidates must have an LL.M or equivalent qualifications as eminent academics or judicial professionals.  
IBA Universities VC should be a PhD-qualified professor or senior administrator (BPS-21+) with a Master's in a relevant field is required. Veterinary Universities to have VC with a PhD in Veterinary/Animal Sciences or senior administrative qualifications (BPS-21+) with relevant degrees are needed.  
The amendments to the Public Sector Universities

Acts were approved to standardise these criteria, ensuring leadership with strong academic and administrative backgrounds. The approved draft law referred to the assembly for legislation.  
In recognition and distinct honour of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's enduring legacy in promoting democracy, federalism and social justice, the cabinet decided to establish a new autonomous institution namely Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Institute for Democracy and Federalism (SBBIDF).  
The current three Benazir Bhutto Chairs at the University of Karachi, University of Sindh, Jamshoro and SALU, Khairpur are to be integrated with the new Institute. The cabinet also approved Rs.300 million for the institute during the financial year 2024-25.

time, which he described as an invaluable asset.  
He added, "Only those who set ambitious goals and strive for them bring about positive societal change."  
Emphasizing the significance of ethics and character, Dr. Saif noted, "A strong moral foundation, combined with knowledge, is essential for the growth of nations. Youth must channel their energies into productive activities to contribute meaningfully to society."

**PM back to Islamabad**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday returned here after winding up his two-day visit to Saudi Arabia where he addressed the One Water Summit. At the Summit, he presented six-point agenda to overcome water-related challenges and highlighted the climate change-induced challenges faced by the developing countries.

# 5 khwarij terrorists eliminated, 2 injured in IBO at Lakki Marwat

**F.P. Report**  
RAWALPINDI: Security Forces killed five khwarij terrorists while others two injured in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) at Lakki Marwat District on Wednesday, on reported presence of khwarij.  
"During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged khwarij location and resultantly, five khwarij were sent to hell, while two Khwarij also got injured," said an Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR) news release.  
"Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other Kharji found in the area, as security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country," it further said.  
**PM appreciates security forces for successful anti-terror operation in Lakki Marwat**  
Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday paid tribute to the security forces for successful anti-terrorism operation while eliminating five Khawarij

# Israeli forces advance in Khan Younis area, 20 killed across enclave

CAIRO (Reuters): Israeli tanks pushed into northern parts of the Khan Younis area in the south of the Gaza Strip on Wednesday and Palestinian medics said Israeli airstrikes had killed at least 20 people across the enclave.  
Residents said tanks advanced one day after the Israeli military issued new evacuation orders, saying there had been rocket launches from the area.  
With shells falling near residential areas, families left leave their homes and headed westwards towards the humanitarian-designated area of Al-Mawasi nearby.  
Medics said 11 people were killed in three airstrikes on areas in central Gaza, including six children and one medic. Five of the dead had been queuing outside a bakery, they said.  
A further nine Palestinians were killed by tank fire in Rafah, near the border with Egypt, medics said.  
Israel's military did not immediately comment on the medics' reports.  
Israeli forces fired on the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza for the fifth successive day, hospital director Hussam Abu Safiya said, adding that three of his medical staff had been wounded, one critically, on Tuesday night.  
"Drones are dropping bombs filled with shrapnel that injure and anyone that dares to move," said Abu Safiya. "This situation is extremely urgent."  
Residents in three towns - Jabalia, Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun - said Israeli forces had blown up dozens of houses.  
Palestinians say Israel's army is trying to drive people out of the northern edge of Gaza with forced evacuations and bombardments to create a buffer zone.

# APC to discuss peace in KP today

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday said that an All Parties Conference (APC), would be convened on December 5, here at the Governor House to discuss peace situation in KP, natural resources, challenges and opportunities.  
Addressing a press conference here, he informed that the leaders of some 16 political parties have given consent to attend the APC.  
The Governor said that he personally invited all parties' leadership, adding that political leaders were concerned over the deteriorating situation in Kurram, as neither the provincial cabinet nor the assembly had addressed the issue.  
He said that the main objective of convening the APC was to discuss the current situation in Kurram with political allies and find an amicable and lasting solution to it.  
Kundi appreciated all politicians who accompanied him to Kohat to participate in a Jirga over Kurram situation.  
He deplored the apathy of KP government to address the provincial

# Saif emphasizes merit for national progress

**E.P. Report**  
PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information & Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has stressed that successful societies are those that recognize and utilize the talents of their individuals.  
He highlighted the importance of addressing national challenges by understanding their roots and dynamics.  
Addressing the "Future Leaders Expo 2024," Barrister Dr. Saif emphasized the critical role of youth in national development, focusing on nurturing their talents and guiding them in the right direction.  
He stated, "Merit must be prioritized; societies that ignore merit can never truly progress."  
Dr. Saif underlined that investing in one's potential is vital, urging young people to focus on their personal growth and avoid wasting

# APC to discuss peace in KP today

The Governor noted that the federal government could promulgate the governor rule in the province to address the issues.  
He emphasized that maintaining peace and order was the prime responsibility of the CM but unfortunately he had only one point agenda to hold protests.  
Kundi also criticized the provincial government for passing resolutions against institutions in the assembly, while neglecting to call a cabinet or assembly meeting to discuss the ongoing crisis in Kurram.  
Referring to PTI's recent protest call in Islamabad, Kundi said that the party workers were again deceived in Islamabad after the CM KP and Bushra Bibi were escaped from the scene and left the people to face the music.  
He also expressed concerns that most of PTI's leadership from Punjab had taken refuge in Peshawar.  
The Governor criticized arrest of Pashtun by Islamabad police rather the political leaders who he said were actually responsible for the violent protests.

# APC to discuss peace in KP today

issues and pointed out that when people were being killed in Kurram the CM and his cabinet members were concentrating on violent protests.  
He deplored that except KP nobody from Punjab and Sindh turned up to the PTI's protest's call.  
He questioned the provincial government's priorities, pointing out that millions of rupees had been released in the name of martyrs, but no tangible relief had been provided to the people of Kurram.  
Kundi said that no relief was provided to the displaced families in Kurram by KP government even tents, food and necessary aid was provided by the Red Crescent.  
Giving brief of the APC, he said that a jirga would be formed to urge the federal government to prioritize peace and development for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.  
He said that the APC would also evaluate the provincial government's performance and warned that if the provincial government continued to fail in fulfilling its responsibilities, the federal government would be requested to take needful step.

# APC to discuss peace in KP today

President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday paid tribute to the security forces for their successful operation against Fitnat-ul-Khawarij in Lakki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.  
The president praised the security forces for killing five terrorists and injuring two others during the operation, according to a President House press release.  
He expressed national resolve to continue operation against terrorists until complete eradication of terrorism.



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# Nov 26 protest badly failed despite using of KP Govt machinery: Kundi

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi here Wednesday said that Pakistan Tahrir e Insaaf (APP)'s Nov 26 has been miserably failed despite use of official machinery of the Provincial Government.

Addressing a press conference here at Governor House, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said that people of Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan have totally rejected the agitation politics of Pakistan Tahrir e Insaaf due to its negative politicking and kept distance of it.

He claimed that the machinery of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government was used in collection and transportation of people for Nov 26 flopped protest.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor

said that PTI workers were again deceived at Islamabad after the CM KP and Bushra Bibi were escaped.

He said that KP CM was seemed in frustration and stress after Bushra Bibi became a defective CM.

The Governor said that CM has claimed to release PTI founder but later run-away from Islamabad and left the supporters alone in cold weather at Islamabad.

He said that pashtoons should not be linked with PTI and that participation of limited numbers of Pashtoons did not means that entire Pashtoons were supporting the party that deceived people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the name of change.

He said that law abiding pashtoon workers and labourers at Islamabad should be facilitated rather than harassed.

## Governor meets Khattak Ittehad delegation

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A delegation of Khattak Ittehad from District Karak, led by President Mudassir Ayub, met Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House.

The delegation briefed the Governor on various regional and public issues, including prolonged electricity load-shedding, the deteriorating condition of roads in Banda Daud Shah, inadequacies in healthcare facilities, and the proper utilization of mineral resources, among other concerns.

The Khattak Ittehad delegation also extended an invitation to the Governor to visit Karak.

"Regardless of political differences, everyone must work together with unity and cooperation to resolve the province's issues," said Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.

He further mentioned that an All-Parties Conference (APC) has been convened to discuss the current law and order situation and provincial resources.

"The APC will collectively devise a unanimous strategy to address the province's overall challenges, including maintaining peace and security," he added.

## Tordher, Fakhar discuss Swabi sports projects

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Industries and Commerce Abdul Karim Tordher on Wednesday called on Provincial Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jihan at his office in Peshawar and discussed with him the developmental projects matters related to the sports sector in Swabi district.

The meeting was attended by Director Development Sports Rashida Ghaznavi, Director Works Ahmed Zeb and District Sports Officer Swabi Ibrahim Mohmand.

The meeting reviewed the approval of 9 new sports projects, proposed in Swabi, while the matter

of further raising the boundary wall of Tehsil Playground Lahore and establishing an open-air gym in it were also discussed.

On this occasion, the Provincial Sports Minister directed the department officials to visit the said Tehsil Lahore Ground and prepare PC-1 regarding the necessary development work there.

He further directed that the concerned officials of the department should visit the other 8 proposed sites in the district and complete all the necessary requirements for the approval of sports schemes there and send them to the concerned authorities for further action.

Meanwhile, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jihan

presided over a meeting to review the status of online applications received for the provincial government flagship project "Ehsaas Naujawan" interest-free loans Scheme here at his office in Peshawar.

Director Youth Affairs Dr. Noman Mujahid, Senior Vice President Bank of Khyber Asad Kakakhel attended.

On this occasion, the forum thoroughly discussed the quality of the proposals received online by the bank from the apparent applicants.

Similarly, the minister directed the BoK team to strictly adhere to merit while encouraging innovative ideas, particularly those focusing on businesses that generate maximum employment opportunities.

Further more, the minister instructed the bank

team to organize innovative ideas camps in various universities to identify and finance viable projects.

The sports minister directed the BOK team to start the disbursement process at earliest as first tranche to the programme will be released by first week of this month.

He said the same project aim is to give employability to the youth of the province and it is a mega project which is initiated by the government under the leadership of chief minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as per the vision of our leader Imran Khan.

He said that transparency will be followed in this project and merit based clusters would be benefitted for starting and financing the businesses by youth of the province.



PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Industries and Commerce Abdul Karim Tordher and Provincial Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jihan discussing sports projects for Swabi.

## KMU conducts successful e-exam for various faculty positions

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar successfully conducted e-examination for 37 vacant positions of Lecturer and Demonstrator in the teaching cadre under the supervision of its HR section. This examination, held under the direct supervision of Registrar KMU, Inam Ullah Khan Wazir, were attended by a total of 1,266 eligible male and female candidates.

The candidates highly appreciated the transparent and efficient process of the e-examination, considering it a significant step toward fair recruitment.

Speaking on the occasion, Inamullah Khan Wazir lauded the tireless efforts of the university's administrative staff in ensuring the transparent conduct of the exam and extended his gratitude to them. He emphasized, "At KMU, the recruitment process is based purely on merit to ensure that only the most competent candi-



dates are selected."

He further stated that all recruitments at KMU are conducted solely on the basis of merit and capability, which is why the university continues to achieve new milestones of growth and excellence.

He reaffirmed that KMU, under the vision of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq and the provincial government, adheres to the principle of "best person for the best job" and is

committed to taking all necessary measures in this regard.

The candidates who participated in the examination praised KMU's adoption of modern, unbiased recruitment practices and commended the professionalism and efficiency displayed during the e-exam.

It is worth mentioning that this initiative reflects KMU's commitment to maintaining high adminis-

trative standards and implementing merit-based recruitment policies.

On one hand, it provides skilled and competent youth with merit-based opportunities without favoritism, and on the other hand, KMU's ability to conduct computer-based examination using its own resources ensures immediate and transparent results while saving millions of rupees during the recruitment process.

## Smuggling bid foiled

PESHAWAR (INP): The police on Wednesday foiled a smuggling attempt involving non-custom-paid foreign medicines worth millions of rupees.

Acting on a tip-off, SP Faqirabad Division Syed Talal Ahmad Shah super-

vised an operation led by SHO Paharpura Police Station Javed Marwat.

The operation successfully intercepted an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of non-custom-paid foreign medicines worth millions of rupees. The medicines

were being transported via a car.

The seized medicines have been handed over to Inspector Ziaullah from the concerned department for further legal action.

According to details, under the supervision of SP

Syed Talal Ahmad Shah, SHO Javed Marwat acted promptly on intelligence reports and foiled the smuggling attempt. The foreign medicines were confiscated and will now undergo necessary legal procedures.



PESHAWAR: Medicines are being despatched for Kurram on the special directives of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Ameen Khan Gandapur.

## KMC inaugurates first Anti-Rape Cell in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An Anti-Rape Cell was inaugurated at the Department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, Khyber Medical College (KMC), Peshawar, on Wednesday. The first of its kind in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the third such initiative in the country, this cell is a collaborative effort of Khyber Medical College Peshawar, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Legal Aid Society.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Prof. Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb, Dean of Khyber Medical College (KMC); Prof. Dr. Hakeem Afridi, Chairman of the Forensic Department; Justice (Retd.) Arif Hussain Khilji, Chief Legal Advisor of the Legal Aid Society; Dr. Rubina Ali, UNFPA Assistant Country Representative; Ms. Mah Jabeen, Program Coordinator; Muhammad Zakria; Saleh Rama; and other dignitaries.

Prof. Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb, reiterated the institution's dedication to supporting victims of sexual violence.

"KMC and Khyber Teaching Hospital have always been leaders in



forensic services, research, and training. This Anti-Rape Cell reflects our ongoing commitment to providing skilled and compassionate assistance to victims," he stated.

Prof. Dr. Hakeem Afridi, stressed the importance of expanding the Anti-Rape Crisis Cell (ARCC) model to divisional levels across the province. "Our department has handled over 300 rape cases before the establishment of this cell. This new initiative will further enhance accessibility and support for victims," he added.

Ms. Darkhane Ijaz, Senior Manager of the Legal Aid Society, emphasized the cell's significance, stating that it is the third such facility in the country following Karachi and Islamabad.

"This cell will provide medico-legal, police, and legal assistance under one roof, reducing delays and ensuring a safe and supportive environment for victims," she said.

Dr. Rubina Ali, Assistant Country Representative of UNFPA, highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts. "This initiative aligns with the

Prevention of Rape (Investigation and Prosecution) Act, 2021, and is a significant step towards ensuring timely and fair justice for victims in our society," she remarked.

Justice (retired) Arif Hussain Khilji, concluded the ceremony with a call to action. "We must collectively work towards eradicating sexual violence and fostering a culture of accountability. This Anti-Rape Cell is a crucial step in building a safe and responsible society in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," he asserted.

## Hamza Foundation arranges blood donation camp in Iqra University

PESHAWAR (APP): Hamza Foundation Welfare Thalassemia Hospital on Wednesday arranged a blood donation camp in Iqra National University.

Blood donation camp was arranged to aware students about benefits of blood donation, and the

miseries of patients suffering from various blood related disorders.

More than 73 students volunteered to donate blood and appreciated efforts of the foundation to help patients suffering from fatal blood related disorders.

On the occasion,

founder of Hamza Foundation, Ejaz Ali Khan told that about 1504 patients of blood disorders are registered with the foundation and getting free medical treatment from the last two decades.

He said that thalassemia is a genetic disease that could be eliminated by

joint efforts of society. He told that about 70 percent of blood donations were being used for the treatment of thalassemia patients in the country.

He also highlighted the significance of pre-marriage blood screening to reduce cases of thalassemia in the society.

## ICRC observes International Day for persons with disabilities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) observed the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) under the theme, "Amplifying the Leadership of Persons with Disabilities for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future."

This theme highlights the vital significance of their active involvement in decision-making processes that impact their lives and communities. Since 2012, the ICRC has been observing IDPD to promote the social inclusion of persons with disabilities and highlight the challenges they face in society.

On this occasion, Nicolas Lambert, the Head of Delegation of ICRC Pakistan, reaffirmed the organization's commitment, stating: "The ICRC has been providing physical rehabilitation services in Pakistan since 1984.

On this special day, I reaffirm the ICRC's dedication to the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Together with our partners, we have supported the rehabilitation of around 7,000 persons with disabili-

ties in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2024 alone till date.

I am particularly proud of the innovative progress we have made in producing assistive equipment locally, using indigenous raw materials while meeting international standards at significantly reduced costs. Beyond rehabilitation, the program emphasizes socioeconomic empowerment, offering education, vocational training, sports activities, and microeconomic initiatives to promote self-reliance and social integration.

The Chief Guest

President of Chamber of Commerce Fazal Moqem Khan said "such events offer young individuals with disabilities a platform to showcase their skills and abilities.

Together we should start working on joint efforts to get increase in quota for person with disabilities, interest free bank loan, and connecting these enterprises with National and International Markets.

Persons with disabilities are equal members of society and deserve the same opportunities to lead fulfilling lives as everyone else. This initiative by the ICRC

in Peshawar marks another significant step toward achieving sustainability in the social inclusion of persons with disabilities."

On this IDPD, the ICRC reiterates the need for collective efforts to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in every facet of society. By amplifying their leadership and ensuring their voices are heard, we can pave the way for a future that is truly inclusive and sustainable for all.

At the end of the event, prizes were distributed among the players and officials of this one-day sports festival.







## In brief

### Welfare Society visits WSSCK F.P. Report

KOHAT: A delegation of KDA Welfare Society led by Dr. Saadullah and Mohammad Saad visited the office of WSSCK Kohat. On this occasion, they met CIU Chief Engineer Mian Mohsin Gul and WSSCK Kohat Deputy General Manager Tahir Afif. The participants of the delegation were given a detailed briefing by CIU staff regarding all ongoing projects of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project. The delegation of KDA Welfare Society discussed the problems faced by the residents regarding the ongoing work on sewerage line and water supply network in KDA Kohat. CIU Chief Engineer Mian Mohsin Gul assured them that the problems faced by the people regarding the projects will be resolved immediately.

### Four killed in separate incidents

SWABI (APP): Four persons were killed in separate incidents of violence in different areas of Swabi, police said on Wednesday. According to police, a man lodged report in Gadood Amazai Police Station that his son, Izhar-ul Haq was attacked and killed by Zamir Khan. Reason behind the incident was stated to be a minor altercation. In another incident, a man Jalal sustained injuries when his own pistol went off accidentally. The injured later succumbed to wounds in the hospital. The incident happened within limits of Marguz Police Station. Meanwhile, in another incident of violence that occurred in limits of Maneri Bala, a man, Saood was shot dead by his rivals. The attackers were identified as Mazhar and Abbas. In a similar incident, a man, Afaq Ahmad was killed by firing of his opponents in Panj Peer area over a family dispute. The culprit, identified as Hassan Mehmood was later arrested by police.

### KUST hosts conference F.P. Report

KOHAT: Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) recently hosted a two-day international conference on Computational Intelligent Systems, bringing together experts in Artificial Intelligence from around the world. The conference, held in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission, featured researchers from developed countries including the United States, United Kingdom, Finland, China, Japan, Malaysia, and North Africa. Chief Organizer Dr. Muhammad Irfan Uddin led the efforts to make the conference a success. The event also provided a platform for young researchers to share their work. Addressing the conference, KUST Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Muhammad Naseer Uddin highlighted the importance of such events in promoting research culture. He praised Dr. Irfan Uddin's efforts in organizing the conference. The conference was attended by Dean Faculty of Physical and Numerical Sciences Dr. Wali Khan Mashwani, Dean Faculty of Management Sciences Dr. Dilawar Khan, heads of departments, and students. The Vice Chancellor distributed shields and certificates among scholars and researchers who presented their work during the conference.

# Commissioner Kohat holds meeting with Grand Jirga

## F.P. Report

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah has in light of the directions of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, along-with the Deputy Commissioners and DPOs of Hangu and Orakzai districts held a detailed joint consultative meeting with the members of Grand Jirga and members of Kohat Division Peace Committee in Hangu on Wednesday.

The meeting unanimously taken certain decisions with the aim to ensuring the establishment of peace and order

in the entire Kohat Region. It was unanimously decided that there will not be any protest on Thal-Kohat Road in future and in case of violation, the police will take strict action against the violators. Similarly, no jalsa or procession will be allowed in Hangu, Kohat and Orakzai on the issue of Kurram.

Commissioner Kohat said that he was in contact with both the sects of the Kurram and the Grand Jirga will ensure that there would be no further ceasefire violations.

Commissioner Kohat further said that the two sides of Kurram and the

Grand Jirga will soon agree on a reasonable ceasefire in Kohat and find a permanent solution to the problem through mutual understanding.

He added, neither side wants unrest but some non-state actors are trying to achieve their nefarious goals by creating misunderstandings among them. Now people are well aware of their negative intentions and they will not fall for their dirty tricks.

It should be noted that arrangements for holding today's Jirga were made by Deputy Commissioner and DPO Hangu.

## Gilani opens hi-tech irrigation system at farm

MULTAN (APP): Senate Chairman Yusuf Raza Gilani stressed the need for adoption of modern agricultural technologies on Wednesday to maximise farm production, saying agriculture was the backbone of national economy and speedy adaptation to contemporary agricultural practices would bring about a positive change in the country's economy.

He expressed these views at an agriculture farm in Muzaffargarh where he inaugurated a Central Pivot Irrigation

System, a modern mechanism that sprinkles water across the 210-acre farm to meet crops' requirements.

Gilani said the new system would increase crop production and prove to be an inspiration among the farming community to replicate the experience and maximise production and income. He said the government was taking concrete steps to give a much needed boost to agriculture and improve farmers' financial standing. The Senate Chairman planted a sapling at the farm and also performed

'Dua'.

Consultant Director Shahid Ahmad Khan and Barrister Mansoor Shah gave a briefing to the Senate chairman about the farm and technological interventions they had introduced so far.

Ahmad Mujtaba Gilani, Malik Manzoor Dumra, Malik Arshad Mahay, former MNA Mahar Irshad Siyal, Malik Bilal Khani, Diwan Taqi, and Naem Khan also accompanied the Senate chairman. Administrative officials of district Muzaffargarh and Kot Addu were present.

## Mandokhail vows fight against corruption

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail on Wednesday said that we must renew our commitment against corruption on International Anti-Corruption Day for removing corrupt elements from our ranks and laying the true foundations of a developed and prosperous Pakistan.

He expressed these views while addressing the participants of a one-day seminar organized by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Balochistan to mark International Anti-Corruption Day at BUTEMS.

On this occasion, Provincial Adviser Muhammad Khan Lehri, Director General National Accountability Bureau Noman Aslam, Vice Chancellor Dr. Hafeez Sheikh, Vice Chancellor Women University Professor Dr. Rubina Mushtaq, former Justice Mehta Kailash Nata Kohli,

former Chief Secretary Munir Ahmed Bandini and Director General Noor Khatran, along with a large number of people from different walks of life and university students were present.

Addressing at the seminar, the Governor said that corruption was a big problem in our society which has been causing many problems for a long time and has affected every aspect of our daily life.

He said that it was a fact that without complete eradication of corruption at all levels, neither a country could develop nor could the people be given their rights.

He said that the government and the National Accountability Bureau, as well as the youth would have to fulfill their responsibilities to eradicate corruption and uphold justice in our country.

"In order to improve the society, it is imperative to make full use of the knowledge and experience of

honest people, experts and researchers present in higher educational institutions, in addition to the youth", he mentioned.

He said that effective steps needed to be taken at both the government and individual levels to get rid of the scourge of corruption because corruption is directly affecting people and entire community.

He said that the steps taken by the National Accountability Bureau would restore public confidence in institutions and would have a positive impact on the performance of institutions.

Earlier, a rally was also taken out under the leadership of the Balochistan Governor regarding the International Anti-Corruption Day.

Later, the Governor distributed commemorative shields among the distinguished guests, organizers and student speakers of the seminar held against corruption.

## DC chairs meeting on anti-polio drive in Sibbi

SIBBI (APP): Deputy Commissioner, Jahanzaib Sheikh has chaired a meeting to review arrangements for the anti-polio campaign which will be started from December, 16 to 22.

Assisted by Sibi, Mansoor Ali Shah, District Health Officer, (DHO), Dr Akbar Solangi, WHO Representative, Dr Rafiq Chalgari and other concerned officials attended the meeting.

Dr Rafiq briefed the deputy commissioner about the drive in the meeting.

He informed that in tehsils Sibi and Lahri, 44089 children would be administered anti-polio drops in the upcoming drive.

Dr Akbar Solangi told the meeting that poliovirus

still existed in the environment, adding no new polio case had been reported in the district as children up to five years were being immunized regularly.

The DHO said 290 teams had been formed to immunise anti-polio drops in the district. The deputy commissioner directed to utilize all available resources to make the campaign successful.



SARGODHA: Students keenly viewing books on stall during Book Fair at University of Sargodha.



KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah addressing joint consultative meeting with the members of Grand Jirga and members of Kohat Division Peace Committee.

## Sargodha University launches its own TV

SARGODHA (APP): The Department of Communication and Media Studies at the University of Sargodha launching its web-based educational platform, UOS TV.

The initiative was formally inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Qaiser Abbas, Vice Chancellor, University of Sargodha, alongside eminent academicians, including Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ramzan, Vice Chancellor, Emerson University Multan, Prof. Dr. Aqif Anwar Ch, Vice Chancellor University of Education Lahore, Prof. Dr. Faheem Aftab, Vice Chancellor, University of Jhang, Prof. Dr. Shazia Bashir, Vice Chancellor, Government College for Women University, Sialkot, Prof. Dr. Uzma Quraishi, Vice Chancellor, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, and Prof. Dr. Mian Ghulam Yasin, Pro Vice Chancellor University of Sargodha.

Speaking at the event, Prof. Dr. Qaiser Abbas highlighted the importance of credible and accessible educational resources in today's rapidly evolving world. He stated, "UOS TV is a crucial step toward addressing the demand for fact-based information and education. This platform reflects the University of Sargodha's commitment to digital transformation, and we aim to expand these initiatives in the coming days." He further emphasized the role of such platforms in empowering students, faculty, and the community by bridging gaps in knowledge dissemination.

The Department of Communication and Media Studies has positioned itself as a leader among Pakistani universities with its dynamic digital platforms, including Radio FM 98.2, UOS TV, and other active digital mediums. These platforms serve as hubs for promoting research, fostering innovation, and nurturing entrepreneurial skills, contributing significantly to academic and societal development.

The launch of UOS TV underscores the University's vision of leveraging technology to enhance education and its mission to create a future-ready academic ecosystem. The platform is expected to set new standards in educational broadcasting and inspire other institutions across the country to follow suit.

## PVMC team visits Agricultural University

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): A delegation of the Pakistan Veterinary Medical Council (PVMC) visited the Agricultural University Dera Ismail Khan here on Wednesday.

According to the university's spokesman, the purpose of the visit was to resolve the registration related issues faced by Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) students.

Professor Dr Akram, President of the Pakistan Veterinary Medical Council, Dr Habib Rehman, President of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Veterinary Medical Council, Professor Dr Arshad and Dr Sardar Kizar Khan attended the ceremony in this regard as special guests.

## Dir chamber of commerce demands land for office

### F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Lower Dir chamber of commerce and industries on Wednesday demanded of the district administration to allocate the state land for construction of the chamber's office at Timergara.

The demand was made by the CCI Lower Dir president Shuiab Jan, senior vice president Inayat Khan and group leader Noor Alam Bacha in a meeting with deputy commissioner Muhammad Arif Khan at his office.

The chamber's leaders also demanded practical steps for the establishment of small industries in the area. They said the establishment of small industries would help boost local economy and revenue generation providing job opportunities to local youths.

They said the government should also initiate measures for the promotion of domestic industry. The DC said the administration would fully support the local chamber of commerce and industries in resolving its issues.

Meanwhile the administration during a crackdown sealed several unregistered LPG distribution points at Timergara city.

The assistant commissioner Zaid Safi in this regard visited the city and sealed several LPG distribution points for having no valid documents. The official also seized the computerized national identity cards of the distributors.

The AC checked prices and gauge of petrol and diesel at various filling stations in the city and collected CNICs of the owners having no Fork K, legal documents and fire extinguishers.

The additional deputy commissioner Bashir Khan, meanwhile, chaired a meeting regarding the Pesco defaulters residing in official residences in the district.

The meeting was attended by police officers, district security offi-

cer Pervez Khan, executive engineer Pesco Muhammad Zeb Khan, superintendent district court Zubir Shah, SDO Pesco and others. The meeting directed all the Pesco defaulters to pay their bills. It was decided that the power connections of government residences would be cut off in case of failure to clear the bills.

KILLER ARRESTED: The Talash police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested the killer identified as Iqar who had shot dead his uncle.

A police official told local journalists that the accused Iqar had killed his uncle Asfandiar, a resident of Khadang village in Talash over a petty issue. The accused had gone underground.

A police team led by SHO Shah Faisal Khan arrested the accused and recovered the weapon used during the crime. A case was registered and further investigations are in progress, the official added.

## Journalists work as eyes, ears of society: DC

### F.P. Report

KOHAT: Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram has said that journalism is not an ordinary job but it is a name of the great struggle and cause adding that Journalism works as eyes and ears for the society.

He called upon the journalists to always stand with the right and truth. He assured that the administration will fully support this great mission in all means.

He expressed these views while briefing the journalists of Kohat Press Club and Social Media representatives on the 6 Months performance of the district administration. He on this occasion, also discussed the problems and difficulties faced by the local media and issued orders for its immediate solution.

Deputy Commissioner said that up-till now, 11 Kuli Katcheries were held under the supervision of the district administration under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda" in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner eulogized the positive role of the journalists of Kohat in the context of the recent tense situation of the Kurram district in the entire Kohat region. He added, the local journalists always avoid provocation and promoted positive journalism.

DC Kohat expressed his anger over some unconfirmed news and rumors on social media and warned, in future, a formal FIR will be registered against those responsible for such news and rumors. On this occasion, he also announced the holding of a Seminar for the media at the Press Club.

Quran, he added. He also highlighted in detail the actions and achievements of the Chief Minister's Program "Awami Agenda" in the district.

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## Bugti orders CMIT to review wheat stocks

QUETTA (APP): Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Wednesday directed the Chief Minister's Inspection Team (CMIT) to review the wheat stocks available in the depot of the Food Department and submit a comprehensive report within two weeks.

The chief minister directed the Secretary Food to provide full cooperation during the inspection.

A meeting held here under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Balochistan decided to review the wheat storage.

Provincial Minister for Finance Mir Shoaib Noshervani, Provincial Minister for Food Haji Noor Muhammad Dummar, Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan, Principal Secretary to CM Babar Khan, Secretary Food Muzaffar Zeeshan Lehri, Director General Food Department Jalal Khan and other officials concerns participated



in the meeting.

During the meeting, the Food Department officials briefed the participants on the available stocks of wheat in the government warehouses and requested the chief minister to give the approval of plan to sell the wheat purchased during the previous years before the new crop arrived in the market which in being cultivated.

The Department was of the view that the price of wheat may fall further when the new bumper crop of wheat produced so the procured wheat should be sold in the open market by fulfillment of legal formal-

ities in view of concerns about spoilage of the commodity.

The chief minister expressed his displeasure over the lack of adequate storage arrangements for wheat procurement and said that when the department does not have sufficient capacity for safe storage, why so much wheat is procured which to be spoils.

The Chief Minister of Balochistan ordered the CMIT to review the available stocks of wheat in the warehouses of the Food Department and submit a comprehensive report within ten days and decision would be taken on merit in the view of CMIT's recommendations.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that the wastage of public resources was not tolerable, adding that the help of the farmers can be done by providing fertilizer and other support and wasting of resources in the name of wheat procurement should be stopped further.





LONDON: King Charles III and Queen Camilla formally bid farewell to the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and his wife Sheikha Jawaher as they leave Buckingham Palace.

## Venezuela presidential election UN human rights watchdog opens investigation

MIAMI (AP): The top United Nations human rights watchdog on Tuesday ordered Venezuela to avoid destroying tally sheets and other electoral material as it investigates allegations that President Nicolás Maduro stole this summer's election.

The U.N. Human Rights Council announced the opening of the probe in a letter to several Latin American jurists who in October petitioned the U.N. agency to take action in the face of what is said was widespread evidence

of electoral fraud that violates the political rights of millions of Venezuelans.

Maduro claimed he won the July contest by a large margin and is preparing to start a third, six-year term in January.

But electoral authorities have so far refused to publish voting records to back such claims, as they have in the past, amid calls by the U.S., European Union and even leftist allies from Brazil, Colombia and Mexico to do so.

Meanwhile, the opposition has published online what appear to be authen-

tic tallies from 80% of polling machines showing that its candidate, Edmundo González, won by a more than 2-to-1 margin. The October petition, made on behalf of a regular Venezuelan citizen, alleges that Maduro officials committed multiple human rights violations by restricting the ability of millions of Venezuelans abroad, publishing false results and blocking any challenges in court.

Paulo Abrao, a Brazilian attorney who was among those behind the complaint, said the decision

comes as a crucial time, as the Maduro government is seeking to "normalize its nebulous electoral process" in the hopes the rest of the world will move on amid so many other pressing international crises.

"We cannot allow that to happen," said Abrao, the former head of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. "Now there is a formal case being processed in an international body with binding force. Venezuela has the obligation to comply with the decision."

## Biden meets African leaders in Angola to advance Lobito railway project

LOBITO, Angola, Dec 4 (Reuters) - U.S. President Joe Biden met African leaders in the Angolan port of Lobito on Wednesday to advance a plan to extend a railway that could channel critical minerals from Congo and Zambia to the West via Lobito, and counter Chinese clout in the region.

As things stand, China is the main foreign player in Democratic Republic of Congo's mining sector, which exports minerals considered critical for batteries and other industrial components key to transitioning away from fossil fuels.

The United States has provided a \$550 million loan to support the Lobito venture, which involves refurbishing an existing railway through Angola and extending it into Congo's mining heartland as part of the first phase.

No date has been given for its completion yet, while a second phase that would link Lobito to Zambia via a new railway line is still at the preparation stage, with an aim to break ground in 2026 according to Washington.

The presidents of Angola, Congo and Zambia and the vice president of Tanzania joined Biden for a summit in Lobito on the last day of his first and only trip to Africa as president.

Biden and Congo's Felix Tshisekedi affirmed their commitment to promoting investment and

peace to allow the central African nation to make the most of its vast mineral wealth, according to a note from the White House issued after the two met.

Biden and Zambian counterpart Hakainde Hichilema also met to discuss the Zambian component of the Lobito project and other issues.

"This corridor is of vital importance to opening up our countries, to opening up our regions, the continent, and truly the global economy," Hichilema said. "This project is a huge opportunity for investment, for trade."

"The presidents underscored their conviction," a White House statement said, "that countries should not be held back from investing in their development by the need to service unsustainably high debt, and together committed to continue advocating for reform."

In June, Zambia's international bondholders voted through their part of a \$13.4 billion debt restructuring deal, making Zambia the first to complete a full-blown rework under the G20-led "Common Framework" architecture.

THE CHINA FACTOR

The Lobito Atlantic Railway concession, awarded in 2022 to a consortium of Western companies, has been presented as a win against China, as Washington is increasingly concerned about the Chinese grip on critical minerals, includ-

ing Congo's vast reserves of copper and cobalt.

The second phase of the project envisions extending the Lobito corridor railway through Zambia and connecting it to Tanzania's Indian Ocean port of Dar es Salaam.

The U.S. has funded feasibility studies for the second phase, but critics say it could offer China a rival route eastwards, undermining the entire project from Washington's perspective.

After Donald Trump is sworn in as U.S. president in January, Washington is expected to take a harsher line with China and some officials have questioned whether U.S. support for the eastern route will continue.

Trump will likely back at least parts of the Lobito project and remain a close partner to Angola when he returns to the White House, according to two officials who served under the previous 2017-21 Trump administration.

The details relating to the funding and construction of the second phase of the project are still in question.

The Lobito project is backed by global commodities trader Trafigura, Portuguese construction group Mota-Engil (MOTA.LS), opens new tab and railway operator Vecturis. There is no date yet for its completion.

A senior U.S. official said on Tuesday that the

Lobito project could be completed by the end of the decade, without providing further details.

The U.S. Development Finance Corporation has provided the \$550 million loan to refurbish the 1,300-km (800-mile) rail network from Lobito to Congo.

U.S. officials announced fresh financing for the first phase of the venture this week through the Development Finance Corporation worth \$600 million for projects including solar, minerals and telecommunications.

Biden pledged lasting U.S. engagement with Africa on the continent's own terms as he met with his Angolan counterpart Joao Lourenco in Luanda on Tuesday. Biden's trip delivered on a promise to visit Africa, but came only weeks before his presidency ends.

Despite his repeated pledges to be "all in on Africa", U.S. influence in Africa has declined during his term in office. Washington has lost a military base in the Sahel region and made little progress breaking China's commercial domination in minerals seen as critical to national security.

Angola has long nurtured close ties with China and Russia but has recently moved closer to the West. It aims to expand its collaboration with the United States on security and military initiatives, Lourenco said during Biden's visit on Tuesday.



## Namibia will have its first female leader after VP wins presidential election

WINDHOEK, Namibia (AP): Namibia elected its first female leader as Vice President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah was declared the winner Tuesday of a presidential election last week that was tarnished by technical glitches that caused a three-day extension to allow votes to be cast, and rejected as illegal by opposition parties.

The 72-year-old Nandi-Ndaitwah won with 57% of the vote, defying predictions that she might be forced into a runoff.

Her ruling SWAPO party also retained its parliamentary majority, although by a very thin margin, and extended its 34-year hold on power since the southern African country gained independence from apartheid South Africa in 1990.



Namibia, a sparsely populated country of around 3 million on the southwestern coast of Africa, has a reputation for being one of the continent's more stable democracies and the problems around the election have caused consternation.

Last Wednesday's vote was marred by shortages of ballot papers and other problems that led election officials to extend voting until Saturday. Opposition parties have said the extension is unconstitutional, and some have pledged to join together in a legal appeal to have the election invalidated.

The Electoral Commission of Namibia, which ran the election, rejected opposition calls for a redo of the vote.

It has undermined Nandi-Ndaitwah's place in history. She is set to become her country's fifth president since independence and a rare female leader in Africa. She was a member of Namibia's underground independence movement in the 1970s and received part of her higher education in the then-Soviet Union.

She was promoted to vice president in February after President Hage Geingob died while in

office. Nangolo Mbumba, who became president after Geingob's death, didn't run in the election.

The ruling SWAPO party won 51 seats in the parliamentary vote, only just passing the 49 it needed to keep its majority and narrowly avoiding becoming another long-ruling party to be rejected in southern Africa this year. It was SWAPO's worst parliamentary election result.

A mood of change has swept across the region, with parties that led their countries out of white minority or colonial rule in neighboring South Africa and Botswana both losing their long-held political dominance.

South Africa's African National Congress, which freed the country from the racist system of apartheid, lost its 30-year majority in an election in May and had to form a coalition.

Botswana's ruling party was stunningly removed in a landslide in October after governing for 58 years since independence from Britain.

Mozambique's long-ruling Frelimo has been accused of rigging an October election and has faced weeks of violent protests against its rule.

SWAPO faced similar challenges as those countries, with frustration at high unemployment and

economic hardship, especially among young people, driving a desire for era-ending change.

In a brief speech after the results were announced late Tuesday night, Nandi-Ndaitwah said Namibians had voted for peace, stability and youth empowerment.

"We are going to do what we promised you during the campaigns. Thank you for your confidence and trust in us," she said. Nandi-Ndaitwah was also due to address the nation on Wednesday morning.

"SWAPO Wins. Netumbo Wins. Namibia Wins. Now Hard Work," the ruling party posted on its official account on social media site X.

Some opposition parties boycotted the announcement by the Electoral Commission of Namibia at its results center in the capital, Windhoek.

The commission has been roundly criticized for its running of the vote, with many angry Namibians complaining they had to wait hours and sometimes over multiple days for the chance to vote.

Just over 1 million votes were cast out of 1.4 million registered voters, according to the electoral commission.

Panduleni Itula, the leading opposition candidate from the Independent Patriots for Change party, was second in the presidential election with 25% of the vote. His party won the second-largest number of seats in Parliament behind SWAPO.

Itula and his party have led the criticism of the vote and said they will lodge their appeal against the election this week. Other opposition parties said they will join that legal challenge.

Itula has said that thousands of voters may have been prevented from voting as only some polling stations allowed an extension. "This election has violated the very tenets of our Electoral Act. Namibians deserve the right to choose their leaders freely and fairly, not through a rigged process," he said.

Namibia is a former German colony that came under South African control after World War I and its Black majority was later subjected to some of South Africa's apartheid policies. SWAPO was at the forefront of the battle for independence from South Africa.

While the country has swaths of desert running through it, it has diamond and uranium resources and untapped oil and gas off its coast that is being explored by international companies and could make it a major producer of both.

## Crunch time in France as lawmakers look set to oust Barnier's government

PARIS (Reuters): French lawmakers prepared to oust the government with a no-confidence motion on Wednesday, plunging the euro zone's second-biggest economic power deeper into political turmoil.

Barring a last-minute surprise, Prime Minister Michel Barnier's government will be France's first to be forced out by a no-confidence vote in more than 60 years, at a time when the country is struggling to tame a massive budget deficit.

The left and far right combined have more than enough MPs for the no-confidence vote to go through and they made clear as the debate on no-confidence motions started that they wanted Barnier gone.

The result of the vote on these motions was expected around 1900 GMT.

"We have arrived at the moment of truth," far-right National Rally leader Marine Le Pen said, adding that Barnier will be voted down because his austerity budget plans for next year were "dangerous and unfair" and meant "chaos" for France.

And hard left France Unbowled lawmaker Eric Coquerel told Barnier: "You will be the first prime minister to be censured since Georges Pompidou in 1962."

He said a majority of French citizens backed the no-confidence motion and argued that Barnier, appointed by President Emmanuel Macron in September, nearly two months after an inconclusive snap election, had lacked legitimacy from the start.

If the vote does indeed pass, Macron plans to name a new prime minister very quickly, possibly even before the grand reopening of Notre-Dame Cathedral at the weekend, according to sources in Macron's camp, including



parliamentary sources.

That would avoid leaving a hole at the heart of the European Union at a time when Germany is also weakened and in election mode, and weeks before U.S. President-elect Donald Trump re-enters the White House.

But any new prime minister would face the same challenges as Barnier in getting bills, including the 2025 budget, adopted by a divided parliament. There can be no new parliamentary election before July.

In a TV interview on Tuesday, Barnier said he still believed his government could survive the vote. But Jordan Bardella, the RN party president under Le Pen, said such optimism showed the government was "completely out of touch with what is happening in the country".

Senior left-wing lawmakers also confirmed that their camp would vote to oust Barnier.

The current crisis is not without risk for Le Pen, who has for years sought to convince voters she can

offer stability.

"The French will harshly judge the choice you are going to make," Laurent Wauquiez, a lawmaker from the conservative Les Republicains party who backs Macron, told Le Pen in parliament.

Macron, who won a second mandate in 2022, precipitated the crisis by calling the snap parliamentary election in June.

His term as president runs until mid-2027 and he cannot be forced out by parliament, but the RN and the hard left have already been saying he should resign as he faces his biggest crisis since the Yellow Vest popular unrest of 2018-19.

Since Macron called the election, France's CAC 40 (.FCHI), opens new tab benchmark stock market index has dropped nearly 10% and is the heaviest loser among top EU economies. The euro single currency is down nearly 4%.

Political uncertainty is already hitting France's services sector, a monthly survey showed.

"The positive signals ... that were seen over the summer, partly due to the Olympics, are now a thing of the past," Hamburg Commercial Bank economist Tariq Kamal Chaudhry said.

Barnier's draft budget, which triggered his likely downfall, had sought to cut the fiscal deficit, projected to exceed 6% of national output this year, with 60 billion euros (\$63 billion) in tax hikes and spending cuts. It sought to squeeze the deficit down to 5% next year.

Barnier said the consequences of voting him out will be catastrophic for state finances, but Le Pen shrugged that off and said letting that budget go through would have been the worst policy possible.

Instead, she said her party would support an emergency law that rolls over the 2024 budget's tax-and-spend provisions into next year to ensure there is stopgap financing.

But that would mean that savings measures Barnier had planned would fall by the wayside.



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## How to make the ceasefire in Lebanon stick

If peace is more than the mere absence of war, then a true ceasefire must be more than just a pause in the fighting. The truce agreed to a week ago between Israel and Hezbollah contained several vital elements that held out the promise of longer-term stability. Among these were Lebanese troops replacing Hezbollah fighters as the main armed force in the country's south, and steps to elect a president within 60 days. Ceasefire breaches by Israel and Hezbollah are now jeopardising these important aims.

France has reportedly recorded 52 Israeli violations of the truce since the ceasefire began. Lebanon's Health Ministry has said at least nine people were killed in Israeli strikes on two southern villages on Monday evening. The same day, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused Hezbollah of breaking the ceasefire after it fired two projectiles towards Lebanon's Shebaa Farms, near where the borders of Lebanon, Syria and Israel meet.

Since the October 7 attacks last year, the Middle East has been convulsed by violence.

More than 44,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israel's military. Many Israeli hostages remain in captivity and thousands of Israeli civilians are unable to return to their homes in the north.

Yemen remains a crucible of instability and the renewed fighting in Syria threatens to ignite more havoc. Amid this gloomy regional picture, Lebanon's ceasefire was a rare glimmer of light. That optimism is now in doubt.

The key to preserving a truce that was negotiated with the co-operation of the teams of Joe Biden and Donald Trump in the US is to remove the calculus for either side that there is anything to be gained by breaching the ceasefire. Working to ensure Lebanon has an agreed head of state and government, capable armed forces and the ability to protect and support its people is the surest way to do this.

A Lebanon that has all these things would remove any excuse from Israel or Hezbollah to carry on with their ruinous war.

The presence of a renewed Lebanese state would counter the instability caused by outside interference in its affairs, restore a measure of security for northern Israelis and frustrate the desire of militant Israeli settlers to occupy southern Lebanon, and could encourage regional de-escalation and contribute to ending the horrors in Gaza.

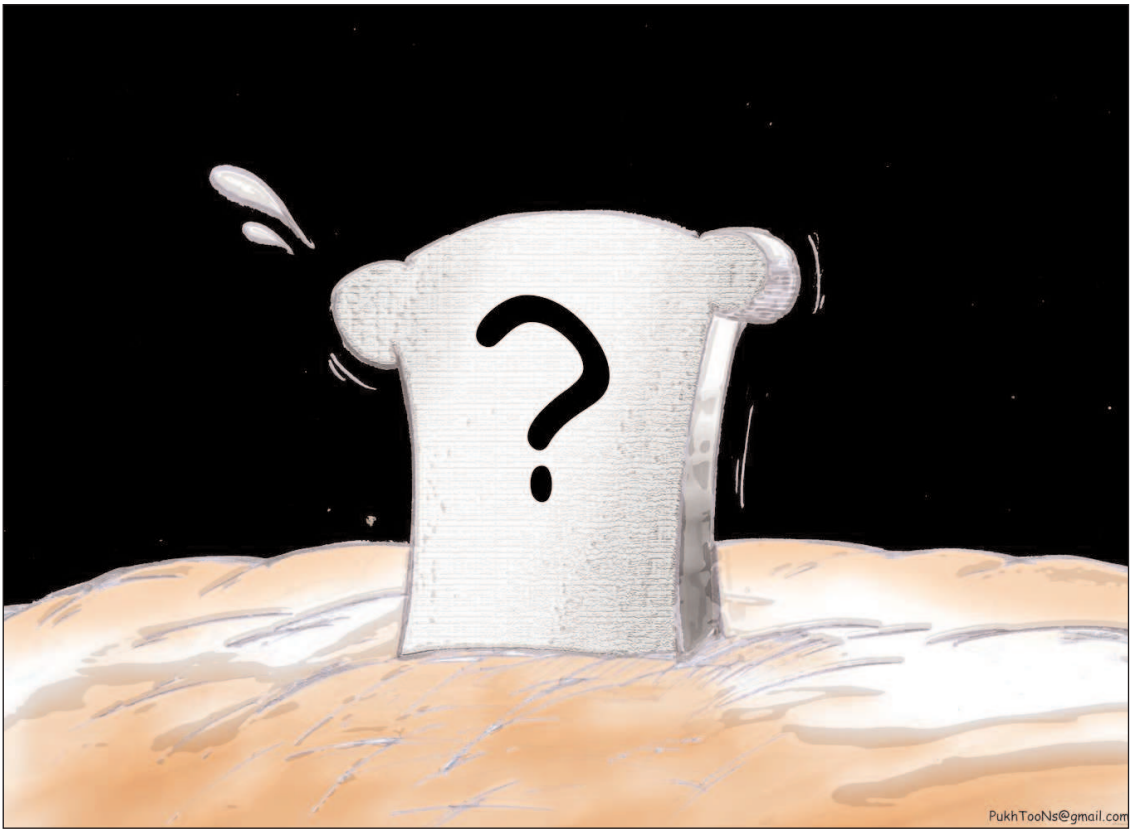
For this to happen, parties must invest not only in the ceasefire but in supporting Lebanon's institutions. There are already signs of international support for such an approach; yesterday, French President Emmanuel Macron arrived in Riyadh for talks with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The reconstruction of Lebanon, where losses caused by Israeli bombardments have been estimated at \$8.5 billion by the World Bank, are on the agenda as is bolstering support for the Lebanese army return to the south of the country. Separately, the importance of having a Lebanese head of state was highlighted on Sunday by Pope Francis who urged the country's politicians to urgently elect a new president.

Lebanon's people cannot afford for this ceasefire to fail. There is much work to be done, including rebuilding parts of the country destroyed by Israeli bombing so that displaced residents can return home. For that work to have any chance of succeeding, breaches of the ceasefire – from whatever quarter – must come to an end.

### Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



## Poverty a key factor in violence against women

Maha Akeel

“Poverty has a female face.”

This statement by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in his address to the Commission on the Status of Women in New York earlier this year disheartened me. I keep remembering it when I see photos and reports of women around the world struggling to make ends meet.

With slow or sliding economic growth in many countries, high unemployment and rising inflation, women tend to be the most affected by job terminations and salary reductions. Furthermore, women in general are paid less than men for doing the same job. According to the International Labour Organization, women worldwide earn an average of just 51 cents for every dollar earned by a man and the economic sectors dominated by women are undervalued, underpaid and, in some cases, unpaid.

At the opening of the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro last month, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva launched the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, which has so far been backed by 87 countries, including Saudi Arabia, and 66 organizations. It aims to feed half a billion people by 2030 through cash transfers and social protection programs; provide school meals to 150 million children; reach another 200 million women and children under the age of six; and provide socioeconomic inclusion programs for another 100 million people, especially women. This is in addition to billions in financing for countries to implement programs such as smallholder and family farming and water access solutions.

This initiative comes at a time when achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of ending poverty and hunger is way off track.

At the G20 Summit, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan noted that increasing tensions, military conflicts and humanitarian crises were significant obstacles to achieving the SDGs, adding: “Development and prosperity cannot be achieved on the ruins of death and destruction.”

Prince Faisal commended Brazil's initiative in launching the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, which aligns with Saudi Arabia's development and humanitarian objectives, as demonstrated by the programs of the King Salman Center for

Relief and Humanitarian Aid and the Saudi Fund for Development. The Kingdom has also made contributions to the programs of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank that support developing countries.

Riyadh is currently hosting the 16th session of the Conference of the Parties of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, known as COP16, under the theme “Our Land. Our

land and boost drought resilience for the benefit of people and the planet.

Among the events taking place at COP16 is Gender Caucus. It will discuss progress and strategies to enhance the role of women in sustainable land use.

Contributing to women's poverty is the fact they have less access to land, natural resources and financial assets than men. They suffer the impacts of climate change more than

MENA region, only 4 percent of women hold land titles.

In addition to legal systems and land governance, inheritance laws and practices tend to block women from owning land. Disinheritance of the surviving spouse still occurs in 96 countries. A woman's right to inherit her husband's property is denied in 102 countries under customary, religious or traditional laws and practices. In addition, 103 countries do not criminalize property dispossession or the grabbing of inheritance.

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification recognizes the importance of including women in the implementation of the convention through engaging them in awareness-raising and the design and implementation of programs, in decision-making processes and in capacity-building, education and public awareness. Even at COP14 held in 2019, only 21 percent of the delegates in attendance were female.

Women are more susceptible to climate shocks due to their lack of asset diversification and access to resources to cope. Direct and indirect gender discrimination prevent women from decision-making spaces, access to credit, information, services and technology.

Meanwhile, as Prince Faisal pointed out, pervasive violence and conflicts lead to more death, destruction and poverty. This also affects women more than men. It is a vicious cycle for women; wars, displacement and poverty intensify the risks of gender-based violence, and violence makes women poorer and more vulnerable.

On Nov. 25, we marked the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the launch of 16 days of activism until Dec. 10, Human Rights Day, to bring attention to the escalation of violence against women and to call for accountability and action from decision-makers.

Poverty increases the risks of violence for women and girls. According to studies, poor girls are 2.5 times more likely to marry in childhood and therefore leave school, while women and girls living in poverty are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, including trafficking, and are more likely to stay in an abusive domestic relationship due to lack of income and resources or legal protection.

To tackle violence against women, we need to eradicate poverty.

**The UN Convention to Combat Desertification recognizes the importance of including women in the implementation of the convention through engaging them in awareness-raising and the design and implementation of programs, in decision-making processes and in capacity-building, education and public awareness. Even at COP14 held in 2019, only 21 percent of the delegates in attendance were female. Women are more susceptible to climate shocks due to their lack of asset diversification and access to resources to cope. Direct and indirect gender discrimination and exclusion prevent women from decision-making spaces, access to credit, information, services and technology. Meanwhile, as Prince Faisal pointed out, pervasive violence and conflicts lead to more death, destruction and poverty. This also affects women more than men. It is a vicious cycle for women; wars, displacement and poverty intensify the risks of gender-based violence, and violence makes women poorer and more vulnerable. On Nov. 25, we marked the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the launch of 16 days of activism until Dec. 10, Human Rights Day, to bring attention to the escalation of violence against women and to call for accountability and action from decision-makers.**

Future.” It is the largest UN land conference to date and the first of these COPs to be held in the Middle East and North Africa, which is one of the regions most affected by the impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought. Important decisions are expected to renew the global commitment to accelerate investment and action to restore

men. And they are more likely to be food insecure.

According to a 2022 UN report, only 15.6 percent of farm ownership is in the hands of women, even in countries where women have the same legal rights as men to own and access land. This is despite women making up about 43 percent of the agricultural labor force worldwide. In the

## Deepening the Franco-Saudi partnership

Khattar Abou Diab

The French flag is fluttering alongside the Saudi flag in Riyadh during French President Emmanuel Macron's ongoing three-day state visit to Saudi Arabia. As the highest level of diplomatic engagement, this visit reflects the strong ties between the two nations and the close rapport between Macron and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

By visiting a nation in the midst of significant change and which is a key player in a volatile region, the French president seeks to solidify France's influence in an area critical to addressing global challenges.

Through a series of meetings with the crown prince, Macron aims to build on his prior experience with the Kingdom, including its pivotal role in brokering a ceasefire in Lebanon, to deepen trust between the two nations and address the pressing crises affecting the region.

plays a key role, as “an example of what the two nations „can accomplish together.”

For both sides, the volatile international situation and ongoing regional crises offer an opportunity to “advance peace and security initiatives within the region and beyond, while tackling global challenges.” On the political agenda, discussions will address urgent issues such as the crises in Gaza, Lebanon, Yemen and Syria, alongside broader regional tensions.

On the Gaza conflict, Paris commends Riyadh's efforts through the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as its initiative to establish an international coalition for the creation of a Palestinian state and the two-state solution. Discussions will center on working with Saudi Arabia to secure a ceasefire in Gaza “as soon as possible,” facilitate the release of hostages, protect civil-

**The goal of revitalizing Franco-Saudi strategic relations is to lay the foundation for “a shared and renewed ambition” over the next decade, guided by a joint action plan aligned with the objectives of the Kingdom's Vision 2030, according to the Elysee. Under the leadership of the crown prince, this vision is steering Saudi Arabia toward economic transformation and increased openness.**

Against the backdrop of global instability, and just weeks ahead of the return of Donald Trump to the US presidency, this visit also provides an opportunity to shape the vision for a unique, multifaceted partnership between Riyadh and Paris.

Sources within the French presidency have described Macron's third visit to Saudi Arabia since taking office at the Elysee Palace as “exceptional,” highlighting its unique context and critical themes. This return to one of France's historic allies comes at a time of significant local transformation since his brief second visit in 2021 and amid heightened regional instability following the events of Oct. 7, 2023.

The goal of revitalizing Franco-Saudi strategic relations is to lay the foundation for “a shared and renewed ambition” over the next decade, guided by a joint action plan aligned with the objectives of the Kingdom's Vision 2030, according to the Elysee. Under the leadership of the crown prince, this vision is steering Saudi Arabia toward economic transformation and increased openness. France aims to leverage this opportunity to reaffirm its support for and active participation in this ambitious initiative.

Bilateral coordination will focus on key projects and events hosted by Saudi Arabia, such as the 2030 World Expo and the 2029 Asian Winter Games, creating opportunities for both nations to collaborate and invest in these ambitious initiatives.

Paris aims to solidify “France's position as a key and reliable partner for Saudi Arabia,” supporting the Kingdom's vision for economic diversification as well as its cultural and tourism ambitions.

It considers the pioneering development project in AIUla, in which France

ians and ultimately chart a path toward a political resolution to the war. Paris also views the ceasefire in Lebanon as a potential lever to support a ceasefire in Gaza.

Undoubtedly, the Lebanese crisis will be a focal point of the discussions. The focus will be on facilitating the election of a president to end the leadership vacuum and ensuring the formation of a stable government. Both nations are expected to align their efforts within the framework of the five-member committee — alongside the US, Egypt and Qatar — to address Lebanon's ongoing constitutional crisis.

France seeks to work closely with Saudi Arabia, as the Elysee sources have noted, “to reinforce the ceasefire, provide support to the Lebanese army and focus on advancing the reconstruction process.”

On a broader level, the talks between the crown prince and President Macron will focus on promoting “regional stability.” Talks between the two leaders will focus on enhancing “cooperation in key strategic areas,” such as defense, security, energy transition and connectivity.

This trip is unlikely to yield any major arms contracts, despite the notable presence of senior defense officials in the French delegation tied to key projects such as the Rafale fighter jet, surveillance satellites and A400M military transport aircraft.

The discussions will go beyond these sectors, according to an Elysee source, who noted: “Talks will also explore future investment opportunities in areas such as fintech, cyberspace and artificial intelligence, especially with France set to host the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit next February.”

Macron's packed schedule highlights the importance of this visit at a crucial time for both partners.

## Trump to travel to Paris for Notre Dame Cathedral reopening

Alayna Treene and Kristen Holmes

President-elect Donald Trump is planning to visit Paris later this week to attend the reopening of Notre Dame Cathedral on December 7, his first overseas trip since his election in November to a second term in office.

Trump's team has been in discussions for days with French President Emmanuel Macron's office regarding the visit, and the US president-elect was invited by the French government to attend the reopening, sources familiar with the plans told CNN. “President Emmanuel

Macron has done a wonderful job ensuring that Notre Dame has been restored to its full level of glory, and even more so,” Trump posted on his Truth Social platform Monday. “It will be a very special day for all!”

Trump and Macron worked together closely throughout the first Trump administration, with their relationship being described as somewhat of a “bromance,” despite at times appearing openly hostile toward one another.

Macron was the first foreign leader to congratulate Trump after he became just

the second US president to win a nonconsecutive term, writing on X: “Congratulations, President @realDonaldTrump. Ready to work together as we did for four years. With your convictions and mine. With respect and ambition. For more peace and prosperity.” Later that evening, Trump and Macron spoke by phone, Macron's office said.

As soon as the invitation was received, Trump told his team he wanted to attend as he has long held a fascination with Notre

Dame, which was severely damaged by a fire in 2019. At the time, Trump had watched footage of the fire burning while aboard Air Force One, commenting on social media: “So horrible to watch the massive fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Perhaps flying water tankers could be used to put it out. Must act quickly!”

The reopening ceremony this weekend is expected to draw some 50 heads of state and government, Paris' Police Chief Laurent Nunez told The Associated

Press.

CNN recently reported that Macron was planning to invite Trump and Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, who the president-elect has tapped for a role in his administration, to Paris for a summit on artificial intelligence in early February.

The trip will take place after Trump on Saturday announced he had selected his son-in-law Jared Kushner's father, real estate developer Charles Kushner, to serve as the next US ambassador to France. Charles Kushner was par-

doned by Trump in 2020 after pleading guilty in 2005 to 16 counts of tax evasion, one count of retaliating against a federal witness and another count of lying to the Federal Election Commission. He was sentenced to two years in prison.

Trump's Paris visit also comes just days after another world leader, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, flew to Florida and dined with him at Mar-a-Lago. Trudeau was the first G7 leader to meet with Trump in person since Election Day.



# Lebanon faces threats to its existence

Eyad Abu Shakra

The latest speech made by new Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem was extremely important for several reasons, in terms of both its timing and content. Broadcast on Saturday, it was Qassem's first speech since the ceasefire agreement in Lebanon, which was brokered by the US and France, with Washington playing the leading role.

It was natural, indeed necessary, for the party to address its "sectarian" community, the broader national community and the regional community, given that its "unity of the arenas" was among the pretexts for this war.

Given the significant losses sustained by Hezbollah, many Lebanese keenly sought to find signs that a different approach would be taken by its leadership or that it would undertake a serious assessment and draw lessons for the future.

It was clear that the new secretary-general wanted his speech to serve two goals: to speak to the popular base and announce positions and commitments relating to both domestic and international actors. The sharp contrast between the segments of the speech addressed to these different audiences was stark, but it was to be expected after a costly military gamble that Qassem implicitly acknowledged and that the political and military commentators affiliated with the party and its base openly admitted.

Boosting morale after a real catastrophe struck dozens of cities, towns and villages from the far south of Lebanon to the far north (including the southern suburb of Beirut known as Dahiyeh, which is Hezbollah's nerve center and where decisions are

made) was undoubtedly a core objective of the speech.

Another major priority was reaffirming the principles that the party's literature has emphasized for decades, for which sacrifices were made and slogans and narratives woven together and recited by party members, sometimes without any skepticism or even thinking.

To ensure that the speech served these major func-

ferocious battle. Secondly, the American and Western support for Israel. Thirdly, the losses that Israel has sustained over the past year as a result of the party's strikes, including the displacement of hundreds of thousands from northern Israel, while stressing that the resistance's endurance left Israel without any other options.

Regarding the second half of this segment, the narrative of principles, the

agreed to." The agreement "did not violate Lebanon's sovereignty, and we agreed to it with our heads held high and insisting on our right to defend ourselves."

All of the above is understandable. It is meant to keep the party and its base content, but other Lebanese communities have different opinions. The most amusing reflection of this disagreement was the viral clip of Lebanese Forces MP

***One television broadcaster popular with Yazbeck's community did not miss the opportunity to unpack Fadlallah's claims with a report on the war through figures. The report addressed the realities of the territories controlled by both Israeli and Hezbollah forces, the extent of the destruction and the number of dead, wounded, prisoners, displaced and missing, including political and military leaders. Despite this, I believe the Lebanese should turn the page on the experiences and pains of the past year and look forward to the future. Returning to the discourse of treason accusations will not resolve political disputes and obstinate denial cannot build a nation. Attempts to monopolize solutions, just like attempts to monopolize patriotism, are the most effective way to accelerate political, economic, security and institutional collapse.***

tions, the secretary-general emphasized that "a major victory greater than that of July 2006" had been achieved. "We won because we prevented the enemy from destroying Hezbollah; we won because we prevented it from ending the resistance or weakening it to a point where it couldn't act," he added.

He also highlighted three elements. Firstly, the length of the "Israeli assault" (implying that Israel could not decide the conflict quickly) and the party's resilience in the face of this

key points were: reiterating Hezbollah's commitment to its special relationship with the Iranian leadership and its regional allies; and continuing support for Palestine, albeit "in different ways."

He also emphasized that the ceasefire agreement is not "a new treaty," or "an agreement requiring the signature of foreign countries." Instead, it is a set of "measures" regarding the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which "the party had already

Ghayath Yazbeck's bewildered body language as he stood behind Hezbollah MP Hassan Fadlallah as he made an "absurd" statement about the party's "victory" and its continued commitment to the "trinity of the army, the people and the resistance."

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The "60-day period" that ended the bloodshed and stopped the destruction machine might not work miracles, but it offers an opportunity to pause and reflect, to bury the victims, rebuild what was destroyed and catch our breath.

Lighting a candle is a thousand times better than cursing the darkness. A good start might be to respect the terms of the ceasefire agreement until Jan. 9, the date of the proposed parliamentary election of a consensus president who can at least maintain the symbolic existence of the state.

In a region like the Middle East, where victories and defeats are like betrayal or a point of view, mistakes are very costly.

Our world is currently without a compass. Established democracies are reeling under the blows of racist populism and ruthless greed. Human values, even in the most advanced societies, are on the verge of being sidelined and disappearing in the face of the terrifying, rampant force of technology.

# Israel's selective justice encouraging lawbreaking settlers

Yossi Mekelberg

The appointment of Israel Katz as Israeli defense minister last month, after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had dismissed Yoav Gallant for questioning him, was greeted in Israel with something between astonishment and ridicule.

One Israeli commentator remarked that "Katz has zero defense credentials, zero credibility with the military top brass and zero experience in managing such a huge and complex system." For Netanyahu, in this most paranoid phase of his political life, these are exactly the credentials, or lack of them, that he was looking for. Someone who is no real threat to him, who is full of self-importance and whose ego exceeds his talents, meaning he will not dare to challenge the decisions coming from the prime minister's office as long as he carries this coveted title.

Yet, already in his very short time in the most powerful government department, Katz has proven his ability to cause damage by taking a most controversial decision: to no longer use administrative detention — detention without trial — against settlers in the West Bank.

In principle, Katz should have been applauded for abolishing administrative detentions. After all, international law allows a state to use administrative detention only in emergencies and only if a fair hearing can be provided, in which the detainee can challenge the allegations against them. But here comes the twist in the tail: Katz thinks the Israeli security forces should refrain from applying this objectionable practice as a matter of law and principle, but only where Israelis are concerned, not Palestinians.

In a week when arrest warrants were issued against Netanyahu and Gallant for war crimes and Israel's reputation for upholding human rights and international law is at an all-time low, what on earth prompted Katz to provide further credibility to those who level against Israel the charge that it is imposing a system of apartheid, at least in the Occupied Territories, if not beyond?

A look at the numbers of those whom Israel holds in administrative detention without trial reveals a staggeringly discriminatory situation. At the beginning of November, out of 3,451 suspects being detained without trial, only eight were Israelis, while the rest were Palestinian.

Addressing the rise and rise of settler terrorism in recent months and years should be a priority and should have been the case for a long time. Since the sixth and most far-right Netanyahu government came to power in December 2022, those who engage in these abhorrent activities know they can rely on the protection of their representatives in government.

For the security forces, administrative arrests are "efficient" and reduce the risk of revealing sources, but for any democracy it means the slippery slope of undermining a person's basic right to adequate legal representation and a fair trial. From the ratio of settlers to Palestinians on the receiving end of this measure, it becomes clear how reluctant the Shin Bet is to administratively detain settlers, while being indiscriminate with the practice

when it comes to Palestinians. If there is strong enough evidence, suspects should be charged and, if not, their freedom must be sacrosanct, except for very extreme cases and without ethnic, religious or gender discrimination.

The Shin Bet, which has the unenviable task of averting terrorism carried out by both sides, objects to Katz's move because of a fear it will make its job more difficult. But the unacceptable number of Palestinian administrative detainees highlights that it has become a tool — one that is too easy to use — that allows suspects to be deprived of their freedom for a very long time without the need to go through the legal process. We should

Gaza and "encourage" half of the Strip's 2.2 million Palestinians to emigrate within two years — a statement that did not receive the international condemnation it deserved, although it should shock any decent human being.

Furthermore, with this chilling statement, Smotrich gave us a clear idea of what this senior Cabinet member must think about also "encouraging" Palestinians to leave the West Bank. Netanyahu actively supports, or at least turns a blind eye to, this fast-deteriorating situation, as long as it helps his narcissistic drive to survive in power.

The settlers, especially those who believe in and practice Israeli supremacy, have long been aware of Netanyahu's weaknesses

***Considering the track record of all Israeli governments since 1967, but especially the current one, which has become a puppet of the settler movement and its representatives in government, we should no longer be surprised that discriminatory policies and legislation — and above all the indifference shown toward settler violence — have reached a new level. Yet, we can still be appalled, protest and demand that it stops. But let's face it: the settler movement will never be satisfied until the West Bank is annexed. And it will probably seek the transfer of Palestinians to neighboring countries. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said last week that Israel should occupy Gaza and "encourage" half of the Strip's 2.2 million Palestinians to emigrate within two years — a statement that did not receive the international condemnation it deserved, although it should shock any decent human being. Furthermore, with this chilling statement, Smotrich gave us a clear idea of what this senior Cabinet member must think about also "encouraging" Palestinians to leave the West Bank.***

also be concerned about how many innocent Palestinians are now incarcerated, yet would not have been had they been able to have their day in court.

What makes this decision even more objectionable is that the government is sending a clear message to the violent elements among the settlers that their terrorist acts will be dealt with softly-softly, with no sense of urgency or duty of care toward the Palestinian population of the West Bank that the Israeli government has responsibility for as the occupying force.

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and hence ceased to respect the law and the authorities.

Only last week, security forces arrested eight Israeli settlers in Hebron for taunting Palestinian locals walking near the Ibrahimi Mosque, using vulgar language and gestures. On the same day, several settlers also became suspected of involvement in an attempted assault on the head of Central Command, Maj. Gen. Avi Bluth, and several other officers who were touring the city. They hurled insults at them regarding administrative orders, called them traitors and enemies of Israel and blocked their way.

By now, the pandering of Israeli society to the settlers, which amounts to at least tacit empowerment of them, has damaged the country's democracy, its international reputation and, above all, the chances of ever reaching a peace agreement with the Palestinians based on a two-state solution. When the government offers preferential treatment to its own lawbreakers, it only encourages them. It is not administrative detention that is needed but effective law enforcement, as well as soul-searching on the part of all Israelis concerning how such a pathological political phenomenon has been allowed to emerge without restraint.

# He who believed in Saudi Arabia and he who did not

Nathalie Goulet

French President Emmanuel Macron is in Saudi Arabia for a two-day state visit. This is a major event that seals the excellence of France's relations with the Kingdom.

The visit is an opportunity for the president and his delegation to witness firsthand the reality of the great changes that have taken place in Saudi society since 2016.

The Vision 2030 modernization plan is a complete success. Macron has also launched a "France 2030" plan and I do not think this is a coincidence.

Fashion designer Elie Saab's Riyadh fashion show with Celine Dion and Jennifer Lopez last month was an extraordinary success and a media thunder-clap that threw contemporary Saudi Arabia into the face of the world.

Who would have imagined such an event 10 years ago?

This leap into modernity is undoubtedly the greatest cultural and societal revolution anywhere in the world in decades.

Everyone knows about economic and military cooperation, but now it is cultural cooperation that bears the French label at the magnificent site of AlUla.

Ambition and quality are necessary to strengthen our relations with the Kingdom, but we also need an understanding of the

challenges of this modernization. There are still important aspects of cooperation to be developed, such as intelligence and the fight against terrorism.

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lion since February 2022), along with 323 extremist channels.

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***Ambition and quality are necessary to strengthen our relations with the Kingdom, but we also need an understanding of the challenges of this modernization. There are still important aspects of cooperation to be developed, such as intelligence and the fight against terrorism. You may not be aware that Riyadh is home to a particularly impressive center for combating cyberterrorism, the Etidal Center, which monitors social networks and websites. At a time when cyberterrorism and hate speech are particularly active and violent, the Etidal Center, notably under contract with the Telegram messenger app, removed 36 million extremist posts in the third quarter of 2024 (129 million since February 2022), along with 323 extremist channels. The technology of this center, which was opened by President Donald Trump in 2018, is a jewel that the French president might visit.***

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ensure a balance between tradition and modernity.

No one forced Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to undertake these reforms and the outcome of Saudi Arabia in 2024 is the fruit of his will and vision alone. His plan was clear and

There is already excellent cooperation between the financial intelligence services in Saudi Arabia and the French Tracfin financial investigation unit, which should be further strengthened.

Saudi Arabia's modernization has been carried out strategically, intentionally and in accordance with parameters designed to

so was its implementation. Moments of cultural transition are the most fragile and it is essential to support them and understand the context, as well as the Kingdom's role on a regional and international level.

The issue of piracy in the Red Sea and the danger posed by the Houthis, who are causing major damage

to the global economy, should make us humbler in our assessment of regional situations.

The Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen's campaign against the Houthi rebels provoked some very hostile reactions. But at the end of the day, who would want a version of Hezbollah on their borders? Because that is what it was all about.

The world is now discovering this threat with the attacks on commercial traffic that have become a regular occurrence, so much so that the EU has launched a naval mission to protect this traffic.

There is so much to say about the relations between Saudi Arabia and France. Let us be proud to be partners of the Kingdom. Let us be efficient, let us be united to give the best of our economic, cultural and military sector without any influence or preconceived ideas, without any preemptive judgments.

The Kingdom, which is the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, is an essential partner and President Macron's visit will be a high point in our bilateral relations. And let us recall the title of this article, which is a reference to a very famous poem by Louis Aragon.

As you can see, supporting Saudi Arabia is a winning bet for the future.

# How to end the scourge of maternal mortality

Anne-Marie Slaughter and Mary-Ann Etiebet

No mother should give her own life to give life to another. Unfortunately, preventing maternal mortality remains a persistent global challenge. The third UN Sustainable Development Goal commits countries to reduce their maternal mortality rate to less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030. At the current pace, the world is projected to fall far short of this target, resulting in more than 1 million additional, overwhelmingly preventable, deaths.

Ending preventable maternal deaths is surprisingly difficult. For starters, many different causes can occur at all stages of pregnancy, making it difficult to determine a policy intervention's success and its ability to effect lasting change. Second, annual

maternal deaths number in the hundreds of thousands — not the millions. Given these circumstances, donors and policymakers prefer to invest in other public health imperatives, where they can have a larger impact and receive more accurate and timely information about outcomes.

But that should not diminish the significance of maternal mortality. The loss of a mother can devastate her family, starting with the other children she may already have. She also likely cared for relatives or elders in her community or played an important economic role as a farmer or trader. Her death could directly and negatively affect 10 to 20 people, or more, spanning multiple generations. Research suggests that children with surviving mothers are more

likely to live past the age of 10 and to stay in school longer.

Activists, practitioners and policymakers have made remarkable progress combating maternal mortality in countries like Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Tanzania. To help other countries replicate this performance, we recently co-chaired "Room 17" — a working group linked to SDG 17 for revitalizing partnerships — as part of the 17 Rooms Initiative. We convened leading maternal health practitioners and experts at the forefront of redesigning global institutions to discuss an "impact hub" approach to the problem.

An impact hub is an organization that connects governmental and non-

governmental actors to pursue a singular, measurable mission, with a focus on scaling up effective solutions rather than starting from scratch. In the case of maternal health, several regional and global organizations, including the Global Financing Facility, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health and AlignMNH, already perform some of these functions.

To complement existing efforts, the working group proposes a global impact hub focused on the goal of zero maternal deaths by 2030. To measure progress toward this goal, the hub would convene maternal health practitioners to develop a reliable clinic-level metric such as "death-

free days." Instead of focusing on the number of deaths, this approach — which has been trialed in Ethiopia and Sierra Leone — emphasizes life, with clinicians and families celebrating a healthy birth for baby and mom.

Using a pay-for-performance scheme tied to this common metric would enable the impact hub to coordinate efforts across multiple partners and donors. It could also provide capacity-building programs and training on tools and interventions that can holistically support maternal health. For example, policymakers could provide targeted digital cash transfers to overcome the financial barriers to delivery care, while implementing strategies to improve prena-

tal and postnatal care and investing in a comprehensive maternal healthcare workforce.

Of course, such efforts must be adapted to local contexts. Communities vary greatly in terms of political and economic fragility, health system resilience, cultural needs and maternal care priorities. Digital cash transfers may have a greater impact in economically fragile contexts, whereas training programs that improve early detection of high-risk pregnancies are most effective in regions with resilient health systems. By linking funding to outcomes rather than prescribed approaches, the impact hub would be able to support a range of solutions.

Moreover, this global

organization would not only pool funding and other resources. It could also spawn a network of national and local impact hubs unified by their commitment to achieving zero maternal deaths by 2030 (and by their willingness to use the same measurement criteria). This would make it easier for development practitioners and funders to navigate the tension between giving communities the autonomy to develop strategies calibrated to local conditions and maintaining the global connectivity required for sharing knowledge, resources and goals.

In addition to scaling up proven solutions, these hubs will also incentivize bottom-up innovation and investment in new approaches. But the global alliance must consider

potential problems, such as a healthcare brain drain, whereby wealthier or more innovative communities attract midwives and other maternal care professionals from poorer ones, as well as the challenges of integrating digital cash transfers into existing health system infrastructure.

The proposed impact hub could foster a genuine global partnership, stretching from local providers to national health systems to international organizations, all committed to ending the scourge of maternal mortality. By connecting the community-oriented work that extraordinary people are doing on the ground to an overarching mission with targeted support and measurable milestones, we may finally be able to embrace the joy of new life without the shadow of death.





## PSX stays bullish, gains 545 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 545.26 more points, a positive change of 0.52 percent, closing at 105,104.34 points as compared to 104,559.07 points on the last trading day.

A total of 1,749,316,877 shares were traded during the day as compared to 1,766,474,377 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 50.416 billion against Rs.56.624 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 467 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 258 of them recorded gains and 180 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 29 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading

companies were WorldCall Telecom with 257,531,069 shares at Rs 1.61 per share, Cnergyco PK with 213,200,271 shares at Rs 6.85 per share and Pak International Bulk with 89,650,764 shares at Rs.8.57 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.334.89 per share price, closing at Rs.20,200.00, whereas the runner-up was Hoechst Pakistan Limited with Rs 53.32 rise in its per share price to Rs 2,748.57.

Sahhpire Fibres Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 87.62 per share closing at Rs 1,112.38 followed by Indus Services Industries Limited with Rs 51.40 decline to close at Rs1,430.37.

**Rupee sheds 06 pasia against dollar**

Pakistani rupee on

Wednesday depreciated by 06 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.92 against the previous day's closing of Rs 277.86.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.45 and Rs 278.95 respectively.

The price of Euro increased by 16 paisa to close at Rs 292.13 against the last day's closing of Rs 291.97, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen came down by 01 paisa and closed at Rs 1.84, whereas an increase of 52 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 352.71 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 352.19.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 02 and 01 paisa to close at Rs75.66 and Rs73.96 respectively.

**Gold prices remain unchanged at Rs.275,200 per tola**

The price of 24 karat per tola gold remained unchanged at Rs 275,200 on Wednesday, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat and 10 gram 22 karat also remained constant at Rs 235,940 and Rs 216,278 respectively.

Per tola and ten gram silver were also traded at same rate at Rs 3,400 and Rs 2,914.95, respectively.

The price of gold in the international market remained stagnant at \$2,640, the Association reported.



LAHORE: A vendor arranging and displaying dry fruits in his shop at Davies Road.

### PFC to join 5th Pak-Africa trade moot

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) will participate in the 3-day 5th Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference and Single Country Exhibition (PATC & SCE) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, commencing from Jan 15.

Chairing board of directors meeting here on Wednesday, CEO PFC Mian Kashif Ashfaq said Addis Ababa, a hub of African diplomacy, provides an ideal venue for fostering economic collaboration between Pakistan and Africa, promoting sustainable growth and long-term partnerships across the continent.

The conference aimed to facilitate meaningful business engagements between Pakistani exporters and African importers, showcasing Pakistan's diverse products, including textiles, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, agriculture, and engineering goods. The single-country exhibition will provide a platform for Pakistani companies to display their offerings, fostering mutual trade and investment opportunities, he added.

Organized by the Federal Ministry of Commerce, in collaboration with the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), this event underscores Pakistan's commitment to deepening trade and economic ties with African nations under its "Look Africa" policy, he concluded.

### Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was report at the port where four ships, Maersk Newark, Mantecore, Brave Commander and Chemroad Orchid scheduled to load/offload Container, Rice, Wheat and Chemicals, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Grain Terminal and FOTCO Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Marathopolis and Venus also arrived at outer anchorage during last 24 hours.

A total of nine ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a containers ship 'Maersk Newark' left the port on today morning, while three more ships, DM Bea, Brave Commander and Pacific ERA are expected to sail on today afternoon.

Cargo volume of 115,522 tonnes, comprising 81,405 tonnes imports cargo and 34,117 tonnes export cargo carried in 2,716 Containers (1,450 TEUs Imports & 1,266 TEUs Export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 12 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, AU Taurus, Venus and Marathopolis & three more ships, CMA CGM Nabucco, Cap Andreas and Valence carrying Palm oil, LPG and Container are expected to take berths at LCT, SSGC and QICT respectively on today Wednesday, while four more container ships, One Readiness, X-Press Mekong, Tirua and MSC Positano are due to arrive at port on Thursday.

## Banks, institutions urged to lead in providing finance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb said here on Wednesday that the government will not revert to directed lending to the housing sector and urged for creating incentivization to facilitate bank-led financing to make it accessible to public.

"We will not go back to directed lending, which was wrong thing to do. It creates distortions and has implications for the medium term," the minister said while speaking at International Affordable, Green & Resilient Housing Conference.

In order to promote housing finance, the government will instead focus on creating incentivization on creating incentivization mechanisms, he added. This approach will encourage banks and microfinance institutions to take the lead in providing housing finance, making it easier for people to access.

The minister said, the country's housing sector was linked with two existential problems including population growth and climate change. With a population growing at an alarm-

ing rate of 2.5 percent, the minister said, it had far-reaching consequences, including child stunting, poverty, poor learning outcomes, and a significant number of girls being out of school.

Housing plays a critical role in addressing these issues, and the government recognizes its importance in providing affordable and resilient housing solutions, he added.

On the other hand, he said, the devastating 2022 floods served as a wake-up call, highlighting the need for resilient housing that can withstand the impacts of climate change. He said, the Sindh government has taken the first step towards promoting resilient housing by discouraging the construction of houses on water banks.

He said, to address the housing finance gap, the government plans to establish a regulatory authority that will enable financing for housing. Furthermore, the government aims to introduce foreclosure laws to encourage banks to lend to the housing sector.

Talking about the state

of economy, the minister said, Pakistan has achieved notable milestones in its journey towards a sustainable and inclusive growth paradigm, with housing emerging as a critical pillar of this inclusiveness.

Over the past 14 months, the country has witnessed significant progress across various industries, marked by a reversal of the twin deficits on both fiscal and current account sides.

Key indicators of Pakistan's economic health are also showing promising signs as the foreign exchange reserves have increased to cover 2.5 months of imports, up from just two weeks previously. If this trend continues, Pakistan is expected to achieve three months of import cover by the end of the fiscal year, a benchmark considered satisfactory by international standards.

Inflation has also been brought under control, with the rate dropping to a 78-month low of 4.9% in November. The policy rate is expected to decrease further, while the benchmark KIBOR has already fallen below.

## Seoul stocks sink amid South Korea drama as Asian markets mixed

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): South Korean stocks sank Wednesday while the won rebounded from earlier losses after President Yoon Suk Yeol dramatically declared martial law overnight before reversing the decision hours later.

The shock announcement sent shivers through the trading floor in Seoul and fuelled a political crisis in Asia's third-biggest economy, with the opposition party saying it had submitted a motion to impeach Yoon.

Investors are now keeping a close eye on developments in the country, with analysts pointing out that the upheaval comes as authorities steered for the second US presidency of Donald Trump who has vowed to reignite his hard-ball trade policy.

The Kospi index ended down more than one percent, having shed as much as 2.3 percent at the open, as traders fretted over the impact of Yoon declaring South Korea's first martial law in more than four decades. He said the decision was made "to safeguard a liberal South Korea from the threats posed by North Korea's communist forces and to eliminate anti-state elements plundering people's freedom and happiness".

However, he backed down hours later when lawmakers voted to oppose the declaration, while thousands of protesters took to the streets and the nation's largest umbrella labour union called an "indefinite general strike" until Yoon resigned.

The won tumbled more than three percent to a two-year low of 1,444 per dollar after the declaration, then bounced back to around 1,410 following the U-turn. "Rarely does a combined sell-off in a country's

stocks, bonds and currency feel like a relief rally," said Thomas Mathews, head of Asia-Pacific markets at Capital Economics.

Mathews said the situation could have been "much worse" had the president not aborted his plan. "Investors now 'only' have to worry about a period of significant political uncertainty," he said.

The South Korean finance ministry and central bank looked to provide stability and reassure markets.

"As announced together with the government, it has been decided to temporarily supply sufficient liquidity until the financial and foreign exchange markets stabilise," the Bank of Korea said. It added that "the range of securities eligible for (repo) transactions and the target institutions will be expanded".

Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, who also holds the economy portfolio, said financial authorities will keep international partners informed about developments.

But Michael Wan at MUFG warned of remaining uncertainty, despite the measures to recover from the initial economic hit.

"From a macro perspective, South Korea was already one of the more vulnerable countries to the impact of Trump's proposed tariffs," he said in a commentary. "This recent development could raise some further risk premium on the currency at least until we get clarity on political stability," he added.

The losses in Seoul came on a mixed day for Asia markets, with Tokyo, Singapore, Taipei, Mumbai and Jakarta rising but Shanghai, Sydney, Wellington, Bangkok and Manila falling. Hong Kong was marginally lower.

London fell at the open, while Frankfurt hit another fresh record after ending Tuesday above 20,000 for the first time.

Wall Street had provided a healthy lead, with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq hitting fresh records as investors try to assess the chances of the Federal Reserve slashing interest rates again this month.

Even Paris eked out gains despite the brewing political crisis in France, where opposition lawmakers vowed to topple the three-month-old minority government of Prime Minister Michel Barnier in a no-confidence vote owing to a budget standoff.

The euro remained wedged just above a 14-month low on concerns about the outlook for the eurozone's number two economy.

Oil prices extended gains after surging around 2.5 percent Tuesday on reports that major producers at the OPEC+ grouping were close to a deal to extend output limits.

### Court Notice

In the court of Muhammad Umair Qasmi civil judge(ii)Alaqa Qazi Khwazakhela Swat Case No:26FC, Next hearing date: 11/12/2024, Miss Zakia Bibi vs Sultan room, Notice to Defendant: Sultan Room S/O Gulbar R/O Brakhu Miamdam Tehsil Khwazakhela District Swat. In above mentioned case the defendant can't be served in the ordinary way, it is therefore proclaimed that if said defendant will not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:00 am dated 11/12/2024 ex-parte proceeding will be held against the mentioned defendant under my hand and seal of this court.

## SECP to hold, Second 'IICM Conference, Expo in Karachi

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) unveiled the details of the Second 'International Islamic Capital Market' Conference, 2024 during a press briefing held on Wednesday at the SECP Karachi office.

The briefing was led by SECP Chairman Akif Saeed, Commissioner Muftaba Ahmed Lodhi, and Executive Director Khalida Habib, who highlighted the importance of the upcoming conference, said a press release issued here.

Tariq Naseem, Head of Islamic Finance, highlighted that in SECP's regulated sectors, Islamic finance has already made considerable progress, as Shariah-compliant segments now constitute a major portion of capital markets, with 55% of the market capitalization of listed securities, 48% of

assets of mutual funds, 65% of assets of voluntary pension funds, and 95% of REITs are already Shariah-compliant.

He also mentioned that the level of compliance of Pakistan's capital market with IOSCO principles for securities regulation was assessed at 86% in an independent international assessment conducted in 2015 and 2018.

He mentioned that the SECP now plans to have an assessment of compliance with IFSB's principles for Islamic capital markets, which is expected to further enhance the global standing of Pakistan in Islamic finance.

The second international Islamic capital market conference, 2024 being organized by SECP in collaboration with AAOIFI and IsDBI, will be held on December 12, 2024, at the

Pearl Continental Hotel in Karachi.

The esteemed co-hosts bring unparalleled expertise in advancing Islamic finance globally. AAOIFI, as a global standard-setting body for Islamic financial institutions, and IsDBI, the research arm of the Islamic Development Bank Group, have been instrumental in the growth of Islamic financial markets worldwide.

Under the theme 'From Tech Transformation to Realising Sustainability: Building an Inclusive Islamic Capital Market,' the conference will address critical challenges and opportunities in building a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable Islamic capital market.

More than 20 distinguished international experts and policymakers from countries including Bahrain, Saudi Arabia,

Nigeria, Malaysia, Türkiye, Oman, Iran, and the United Kingdom will attend.

Key guests included Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Deputy Prime Minister (expected), Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Finance, Sheikh Ebrahim Bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Chairman of AAOIFI, and Dr Sami Al-Suwailem, Acting Director General of IsDBI.

In addition to the main conference, several events will take place, including pre-conference workshops, a gong ceremony at the Pakistan Stock Exchange, and an Islamic Finance Exhibition featuring 38 leading institutions.

The conference will also feature panel discussions, breakout sessions, and a dedicated session on economic transformation with a focus on sustainability.

## Aga Khan University Paediatrician receives award



F.P. Report

KARACHI: AKU's Chair of Paediatrics & Child Health, Dr Fyezah Jehan, has been selected as a Distinguished International Fellow of the prestigious American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene for her accomplishments in research, advocacy and service for malnourished mothers, children and infectious diseases.

The award was granted at the Society's annual

meeting in New Orleans at a ceremony with ASTMH President Dr. Linnie Golightly and CEO Jamie Bay Nishi. The award is conferred in recognition of outstanding accomplishment by an individual who is not an American citizen and has made "eminent contributions to some phase of tropical medicine and hygiene."

One of Dr Fyezah's key interventions leveraged ready-to-use supplemental foods through peri-urban

clinics in Karachi, reaching over 10,000 women and children at risk of malnutrition. She collaborated with Rotary International and the Trust for Malnutrition and Stunted Growth to develop initiatives aimed at early diagnosis and management of malnutrition among children and pregnant women; work that earned her recognition as a Paul Harris Fellow.

In the MUMTA trial, Dr Fyezah led a team that studied the impact of balanced

energy protein supplementation, along with micronutrients in pregnant and breastfeeding women on newborn outcomes. This effort, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is groundbreaking in examining how targeted maternal nutrition can support early brain health. Her work on the Alliance for Maternal and Newborn Health Improvement (AMANHI) biobank, established in collaboration with the World Health Organization and institutions across South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, is the first population level in-country biobank in pregnancy and newborns making groundbreaking discovery in the biology of adverse pregnancy and birth outcomes.

Additionally, Dr Fyezah has worked on reshaping pneumonia treatment guidelines for children and more efficient diagnostic and treatment protocols to reduce unnecessary antibiotic use and prevent antibiotic resistance. She has published over 100 papers on topics such as vaccine equity, child health interventions, and infectious diseases.

Dr Fyezah is the second Pakistani and AKU faculty to have received this award. Dr. Zulfikar Bhutta received it in 2018.

## Services trade deficit shrunk 9.94% in 4 months of FY2024-25

ISLAMABAD (APP): Services trade deficit during the first 04 months of the current financial year shrunk by 9.64 percent as compared to the corresponding period of the last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reported on Wednesday.

During the period from July-October, 2024, the services trade balance was recorded at \$993.24 million against the \$1,009.24 billion of the same period of the last year, it added.

In the first four months

of the current financial year, services exports grew by 7.91 percent and imports increased by 2.41 percent respectively as services worth \$2,600 billion were exported from the country as compared to the exports of \$2,409 billion of the same period of the last year, it added.

Meanwhile, the imports of services into the country in the first four months of the current financial year were recorded at \$3,593 billion as against the imports of \$3,509 billion of the same period of the last

year, it added.

On month on month basis, the services traded deficit contracted by 26.79 percent as services exports grew by 13.43 percent and imports by 16.82 percent, it added.

In October 2024, services valued at \$688.95 million were exported as compared to exports of \$607.37 million, whereas imports of services were registered at \$950.08 million as compared to the imports of \$813.32 million.

On year on year basis, the services trade deficit

widened by 1.02 percent in October 2024 as compared to the same month of the last year as services valued at \$688.95 million were exported as compared to the exports of \$661.91 million of the same period of the last year.

As compared to the month of October 2023, the services trade imports into the country grew by 3.22 percent as it was recorded at \$950.08 million in October 2024 as compared to the imports of \$920.40 million of the same month of the last year.





In brief

Saim, Afridi jump in ICC rankings

KARACHI (Web Desk): Pakistani players Saim Ayub and Abbas Afridi took giant leap in latest rankings issued by the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday. The development comes as Pakistan sealed three-match T20 and ODI series against Zimbabwe in Bulawayo. Pakistan's hard-hitting opener Saim Ayub gained 12 spots to move 78th on the list for ODI batters and 39 places to 119th for T20I batters after some big scores over the last week. Teammate Abbas Afridi moved up by 20 places to 61st spot in the list for T20I bowlers, while Zimbabwe are boosted by improvements made by veteran Sikandar Raza (up six places to 40th) for ODI bowlers. Meanwhile, Travis Head continues to rule at the world No 1 T20 batsman while Babar Azam is the top ODI batsman. On the other hand, Harry Brook has re-emerged as Joe Root's biggest challenger for the mantle of best Test batter in the world after the England star made good ground on the latest ICC Men's Test Player Rankings. Brook scored his seventh Test century when making a superb 171 during the first innings of England's eight-wicket victory over New Zealand in Christchurch and gained two spots to move to second on the updated rankings for Test batters. With Root suffering a rare failure with his first Test duck in more than two years in the same innings, Brook closes the gap to his more senior teammate to just 41 rating points while obtaining a new career-high rating. Brook's rise sees India youngster Yashasvi Jaiswal drop to fourth on the Test batter rankings, while England duo Ollie Pope (up eight spots to 32nd) and skipper Ben Stokes (up seven places to 34th) also make some ground following strong showings against the Black Caps.

DAZN awarded TV rights

MIAMI (AFP): British streaming service DAZN has been awarded the exclusive global rights to broadcast next year's expanded 32-team Club World Cup in the United States, FIFA announced Wednesday. "The landmark agreement will see all 63 matches... live-streamed, free to view on DAZN worldwide," read a statement from FIFA. A source close to the negotiations told AFP the contract was worth around one billion euros (\$1.05 billion). The announcement came on the eve of Thursday's tournament draw which is set to take place in Miami. DAZN chief executive officer Shay Segev called the deal "groundbreaking". "We're committed to ensuring that every fan can watch every moment of the thrilling action from this new prime club tournament," he said. The agreement comes after multiple media reports suggested that DAZN could receive a major cash injection from Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF). In October, PIF, which is involved in numerous sports investments including LIV Golf, Newcastle United and the ATP and WTA tennis tours, denied the reports. PIF said at the time it was "not currently engaged in discussions with DAZN on this matter and has no current plans to invest in the company". DAZN was announced the global distributor for the Saudi series of 'Riyadh Season' boxing fights and the broadcaster also has rights, in several markets, to the Saudi Pro League football competition.

## India defeat Pakistan to clinch Junior Hockey Asia Cup title



MUSCAT (Monitoring Desk): Araijeet Singh Hundal scored four goals and led India to beat Pakistan 5-3 and win the 2024 men's Junior Hockey Asia Cup.

Pakistan got off to a flying start to the blockbuster contest as they acquired an early lead through skipper Hannan Shahid just three minutes into the game.

The green shirts' lead, however, did not last long as Hundal hit back in the next minute with an equalizer, forcing the first

quarter to end at 1-1. India completely dominated the proceedings in the second quarter as the defending champions struck back-to-back goals through Dilraj Singh and Hundal in the 18th and 19th minute, respectively, to take a 3-1 lead.

Pakistan hit back in the penultimate quarter and levelled the score at 3-3, courtesy of Sufiyan Khan's brace, coming in 30th and 39th minute, respectively.

The fourth and final

quarter saw the defending champions outclassing Pakistan by scoring two goals, through Araijeet Singh Hundal, which turned out to be the difference in their scorelines.

Notably, both Pakistan and India entered the final on the back of an unbeaten run in the group stage and semi-final. It was India's third consecutive title victory at the men's Junior Hockey Asia Cup. The men in blue defeated Pakistan in the final of previous edition as well.

## Peshawar defeats Lahore Whites by 125 runs

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Peshawar secured a vital victory over Lahore Whites, winning by 125 runs on the third day of their second match in the Quaid Trophy at Abbottabad Cricket Stadium on Wednesday.

Chasing a 257-run target, Lahore Whites were bundled out for 131 in 23.3 overs as Sajid Khan's fourth first-class ten-wicket match haul helped his team stay in contention for the final of the tournament. Lahore Whites' captain Saad Nasim resisted with a 62-ball 56 laced with eight fours and one six but in vain.

Pacers Niaz Khan (3-24) and Mir Hamza (2-38) shared five wickets before Sajid (5-43) took just 6.3 overs to register his 17th first-class five-for and second of the match.

Earlier in the day, Peshawar continued from their overnight score of 14-3 and were dismissed for

141 in 40 overs with No.5 batter Nabi Gul remaining unbeaten for a vital 83 off 138 balls including 12 fours. Lahore Whites' pacers Mohammad Salman (3-31), Ahmed Bashir (2-29), Naseem Shah (2-30), Ubaid Shah (2-44) shared the ten wickets among them.

Peshawar's first innings lead of 115 runs came in handy as they managed to set a sizable target of 257 runs. The third and last match of the triangular stage will be played from 27-30 December between Lahore Whites and Sialkot.

Sialkot sit on top of the triangular stage points table with 27 points while Peshawar are second with 25. Lahore Whites, with one match left, have four points to their name and will have a chance to stake a claim in the final when they take on Sialkot as the tournament resumes on 27 December.

Scores in brief (Day 3 of 4):

Triangular stage – Match 2 – Peshawar beat Lahore Whites by 125 runs at Abbottabad Cricket Stadium, Abbottabad

Peshawar 332 all out, 82.2 overs (Maaz Sadaqat 95, Zubair Khan 71, Mohammad Haris 45, Sajid Khan 43, Nabi Gul 22; Ahmed Bashir 3-54, Naseem Shah 2-79, Ubaid Shah 2-95) and 141 all out, 40 overs (Nabi Gul 83 not out, Sajjad Ibraheem 27; Mohammad Salman 3-31, Ahmed Bashir 2-29, Naseem Shah 2-30, Ubaid Shah 2-44)

Lahore Whites 217 all out, 56.3 overs (Obaid Shahid 75, Saad Nasim 36, Imran Dogar 27, Attyab Ahmed 25; Sajid Khan 5-56, Mir Hamza 3-58, Niaz Khan 2-36 and 131 all out, 23.3 overs (Saad Nasim 56, Mohammad Salman 24 not out, Gauhar Hafeez 22; Sajid Khan 5-43, Niaz Khan 3-24, Mir Hamza 2-38).

## Pakistan recall Babar Azam for South Africa tour, Sajid out

LAHORE (AFP): Pakistan recalled former skipper Babar Azam on Wednesday for the away Test series and white-ball matches against South Africa starting next week, but there was no place for spinner Sajid Khan.

The 30-year-old star batsman Azam was dropped following defeat in the first Test against England in October and rested for the ongoing limited-over series against Zimbabwe.

Pakistan will play three Twenty20 internationals in South Africa starting from December 10, followed by three one-day matches and two Tests.

Fast bowler Mohammad Abbas also returns to the Test side after last playing in 2021. Off-spinner Sajid misses out despite taking 19 wickets in the 2-1 home Test series win over England, with selectors taking into consideration the less spin-friendly pitches in South Africa.

"We have adopted a horses for courses policy to ensure squads are well-balanced and leaving out Sajid was an extremely difficult decision," Aaqib Javed, a senior member of the selection committee, said in a Pakistan Cricket Board statement.

Sajid's spin partner Noman Ali, who took 20 wickets against England, is the only spinner for the Tests in Centurion and Cape Town. The first Test starts on December 26.

Javed said fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi has been picked only for the white-ball matches to manage his workload. Opener Fakhar Zaman is still out because he has yet to regain form and match fitness, said Javed.

Pakistan squads for South Africa tour:

Tests: Shan Masood (captain), Saud Shakeel, Aamer Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam,

Haseebullah Khan, Kamran Ghulam, Khurram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Rizwan, Naseem Shah, Noman Ali, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha

ODIs: Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Haris Rauf, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Hasnain, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sufiyan Muqem, Tayyab Tahir, Usman Khan

T20Is: Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Haris Rauf, Jahandad Khan, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Hasnain, Mohammad Irfan Khan, Omair Bin Yousuf, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sufiyan Muqem, Tayyab Tahir, Usman Khan.

### Pressure mounts on West Ham manager Lopetegui

LONDON (Agencies): Julien Lopetegui's future as West Ham United manager looked even more uncertain in the wake of their 3-1 defeat at Leicester City on Tuesday but the Spaniard was determined to put the latest setback behind him and move forward.

Appointed at the start of the season to restore West Ham's expansive playing style after several seasons of pragmatism under David Moyes, Lopetegui has failed to make the desired impact despite a flurry of signings to bolster the squad.

West Ham are 14th after suffering a seventh defeat in 14 Premier League matches but Lopetegui said he was not concerned about his own position.



"The only thing I'm worried about now is to go to tomorrow's training session and encourage the players and prepare for the next challenge," he said after the match. Lopetegui's side endured a frustrating evening against Leicester, managing only a stoppage-time consolation goal despite having 31 goal attempts, nine corners and 55 touches inside the opposition penalty area. "Normally, when you do what we did, you are going to win the match, but we didn't do that and it's hard to explain. It's hard for the players, for us and for the fans," Lopetegui told reporters.

"To change this situation, we have to play as we did for 65 or 70 minutes with this attitude. It's the only way that I know to change the situation, to create a lot of chances, to be able to play in the opponents' half but we need to do better."

Lopetegui made his name at Sevilla, securing three consecutive top-four finishes and winning the Europa League before moving to Wolverhampton Wanderers.

He guided Wolves from the foot of the Premier League to a mid-table finish in 2022/23 but left after only nine months in charge as fell out with the club over their transfer policy. Wolves are West Ham's next opponent, with the sides due to meet at the London Stadium on Monday.

## PAF's Irfan qualifies for ITF Masters C'ship final

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Irfan Ullah of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) has continued to demonstrate his exceptional prowess on the court, securing a commanding 6-2, 6-3 victory over Ahsan Razaq in the seniors singles semifinal of the ITF Masters Championship 2024.

PAF's Irfan Ullah has outclassed the opponent by securing a comfortable win in the semifinal of the ITF Master Championship 2024, organized by the Punjab Lawn Tennis Association (PLTA), the



prestigious tournament is underway at the Sports Board Punjab Tennis Academy, Nishtar Park,

Lahore, showcasing remarkable talent from across the nation.

While talking to The Frontier Post, Irfan Ullah told that he is confident to bring the trophy home as he will continue the form in the final of the championship. He appreciated the arrangements of the tournament and urged the government to provide more facilities to the young talents in tennis to perform on the global stage.

Earlier in the quarter-finals of the championship, Irfan Ullah Khan outplayed Anwar ul Haq 6-4, 6-3.

## Naqvi presents Rs 10 mln to Pak blind cricket team

LAHORE (APP): Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday presented a cash prize of 10 million rupees to the T20 Blind Cricket World Cup winning Pakistan blind team during a ceremony at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) Gaddafi stadium here.

During a reception held to hail the achievement of the Pakistan Blind cricket of clinching the maiden T20 Blind WC title 2024, the Chairman PCB lauded the achievement of the cricketers and making the country proud.

He said that the victory in the global event is a result of team's dedication and hard work and the PCB admires their efforts.

The Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi also announced a grant of 20 million rupees for the Blind Cricket Association and handed a cheque to President Sultan Shah.

The Chairman PCB made a special mention of captain Pakistan Blind cricket team Nisar Ali and

assured the team of complete patronage.

**Gaddafi stadium upgradation work nears completion:** Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday conducted a thorough visit of the upgradation work at the Gaddafi stadium, reviewed the progress and expressed satisfaction on the high-quality of work and expedited efforts.

The redevelopment of Gaddafi Stadium has gained significant momentum, with 80 per cent of construction work completed in just 53 days, says a PCB handout.

The main building's grey structure has achieved 100 per cent completion, while the pavilion building stands at 90 per cent completion. Work on enclosures is 75 per cent complete, with structural development for seating and trench work entering its final stages.

During his visit, the Chairman PCB inspected various ongoing activities, including the newly constructed uppermost seat-

ing structures, praising the enhanced view of the ground. He also visited the pavilion floors to observe the progress and directed the installation of aesthetically pleasing grills on both sides of the trench.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi stated, "The redevelopment of Gaddafi Stadium began on 10 October, and Alhamdulillah, tremendous progress has been made in just 53 days with top-notch quality. The entire team is working tirelessly, day and night, to meet the project deadline. We are confident of completing the stadium well ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025."

He further added, "The new Gaddafi Stadium is being built to state-of-the-art, international standards, with a seating capacity of approximately 34,000 spectators. This iconic facility will reflect our commitment to delivering a world-class venue for cricket fans."

## Knicks and Bucks advance to NBA Cup knockout stage



NEW YORK (Agencies): The Milwaukee Bucks and the New York Knicks eased to victories to advance to the knockout stage of the NBA Cup with clean sweeps of their groups, but reigning NBA champions Boston Celtics were eliminated.

The Knicks recorded an emphatic 121-106 win against the Orlando Magic at Madison Square Garden to finish East Group A unbeaten and secure home-field advantage in the quarter-finals.

Karl-Anthony Towns scored 23 points and grabbed 15 rebounds, while Josh Hart contributed a triple-double of 11 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists.

Despite defeat, the Magic clinched the East wild card berth on points differential over the

Celtics, who also finished the group stage with a 3-1 record.

Giannis Antetokounmpo and Damian Lillard starred as the Bucks beat the Detroit Pistons 128-107 to clinch East Group B undefeated.

Antetokounmpo - NBA MVP in 2019 and 2020 - scored 28 points with seven rebounds and eight assists while Lillard scored 27.

The Bucks scored 23 three-pointers during their seventh-consecutive victory and will host the Orlando Magic in the quarter-finals on Tuesday.

Elsewhere, a 37-point performance from Luka Doncic inspired the Dallas Mavericks to overcome a 15-point fourth-quarter deficit and beat the Memphis Grizzlies 121-116 and secure the West

wild card spot.

They will travel to the Oklahoma City Thunder in the next round after they thrashed the Utah Jazz 133-106 to clinch West Group B over the Phoenix Suns.

The Knicks will host the Atlanta Hawks - who won East Group C ahead of the Celtics - on Wednesday.

The Houston Rockets and the Golden State Warriors will contest the last quarter-final after winning their groups despite final-game losses to the Sacramento Kings and the Denver Nuggets respectively.

The quarter-final victors will advance to semi-finals played on 14 December in Las Vegas, with the final three days later in the city.

In Tuesday's other games, the LA Clippers beat the Portland Trail Blazers 127-105, the Phoenix Suns defeated the San Antonio Spurs 104-93 and the Cleveland Cavaliers thrashed the Washington Wizards 118-87.

The Philadelphia 76ers won on the road at the Charlotte Hornets (110-104) while the Toronto Raptors beat the Indiana Pacers 122-111.





## In brief

### ANF seizes 209 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting three operations across the country managed to recover over 209 kg drugs worth more than Rs 1.6 million and arrested three suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Wednesday. The spokesman informed that 4 kg hashish was recovered from an accused near Lyari Basti in Taiser Town, Karachi. The arrested accused confessed to selling drugs to the students of educational institutions. 200 kg cannabis hidden in a vehicle near Sahianwala Interchange Faisalabad was recovered and an accused was arrested. 4.8 kg opium and 1 kg ice were recovered from the possession of a drug dealer arrested near Shaheen Chowk, Gujrat. Cases have been registered against the arrested accused under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.

### IRSA releases 99,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 99,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 44,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1488.59 feet and was 90.59 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 21,700 cusecs and 55,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1152.95 feet, which was 102.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 4,900 cusecs and 27,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 68,000, 46,600, 36,900 and 7,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### 12 outlaws arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police apprehended 12 outlaws involved in different criminal activities recovered drugs from their possession on Wednesday. An official told APP that the ICT Police Tarnol, Khanna, Humak, Bhara Kahu, Ramna and Bani Gala police teams took legal action against accused involved in possessing illegal weapons and drug peddling activities. He said the police team also arrested eight accused namely Ehsan, Tahir Manzoor, Sajid, Sajad Masih, Zahir, Shafique, Zaman, Nasrullah and Touseef Gul and recovered 2210 gram heroin, 475 gram ice, 02 pistols and one dagger from their possession. Moreover, 04 absconders were also arrested from various areas of the city during the last 24 hours. SSP Operation, Muhammad Arslan Shahzaib said that the Islamabad Police is actively working to ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property in the federal capital, emphasizing that no elements will be allowed to disrupt citizens' peace. Protecting the lives, property and dignity of citizens is the Islamabad Police's top priority, he added. Citizens are urged to report any suspicious activities to the relevant police station, emergency helpline "Pukar-15" to help make the city crime-free through cooperation between the police and the public.



ISLAMABAD: Akamatsu Shuichi, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan along with Governor Kamran Tessori and Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif cutting cake to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) Day.

## Afzal slams PTI for focusing on lie-based propaganda

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister Rana Ihsan Afzal Wednesday criticized the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party and said that they lack of a public-related agenda by focusing on spreading lie-based propaganda.

In an interview with a Private news channel, Coordinator Rana Ihsan said PTI's false propaganda about protester deaths is a desperate attempt to achieve their nefarious political objectives and hide the failure of their protest.

About PTI's propaganda efforts, he said that they are merely an attempt to tarnish Pakistan's image internationally, he mentioned.

The spread of misinformation on social media has become a significant concern, and it is alarming to see fake images, videos, and false statistics being used to manipulate public opinion, he mentioned.

Rana Ihsan emphasized that PTI's propaganda is not only harmful to Pakistan's international reputation but also undermines the country's

stability and security. He urged the nation to be vigilant and not fall prey to PTI's misinformation campaign.

Rana Ihsan Afzal strongly condemned K-P Chief Minister Gandapur for making unfounded and provocative statements against state institutions.

To another question, Rana Ihsan Afzal pointed out that no concrete evidence has been presented and no affected families have come forward to register First Information Reports (FIRs) with the authorities.

## Salik for use of pulpit, niche to address Muslims issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Wednesday met with Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi and discussed the use of pulpit and niche to address the issues faced by Muslims and to promote various aspects of the Prophet's teachings.

During the meeting, Chaudhry Salik Hussain said scholars and esteemed religious leaders should play a significant role through the pulpit and niche to promote religious harmony, tolerance, and the message of Pakistan.

To provide a secure future for the new generation, he said the government, institutions, and scholars must work together. If scholars convey a message of unity and solidarity, its impact will be substantial and will send a strong message, he added.

The minister said, "We need to put an end to the misuse of Islam's name, and the implementation of scholars' suggestions regarding terrorism will also be ensured."

Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi mentioned that international lobbies are interfering in Pakistan's

internal affairs. Every segment of Pakistan, including the armed forces, has made sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, he added.

He said scholars reject extremism, and the law always comes into action against extremism. He said promoting interfaith harmony is only possible by fostering feelings of love, equality, tolerance, and coexistence in our society. Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi further said allowing installments for Hajj will benefit the middle class. Chaudhry Salik Hussain emphasized that making excellent arrangements during Hajj is his top priority.

## Reliance on academic research key to sustainable housing: Pirzada

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada on Wednesday said that reliance on academic research for producing sustainable policies in the housing and real estate sectors was inevitable.

While addressing the international conference on Re-Imagining the Real Estate: Sustainable Market Growth and Urban Planning, he lauded the team at NUML that worked tirelessly to take the lead and to introduce real estate as a sector that has a huge potential for workable research and planning.

This conference was arranged by the faculty of Management Sciences at National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad. The

conference was aimed to underscore the persistent challenges and inefficiencies within Pakistan's real estate sector.

As one of Asia's largest real estate markets, the sector significantly influences the national GDP but suffers due to the lack of transparency, standardized valuation methods, and regulatory oversight that results in mispricing, under-invoicing, and unauthorized housing developments, particularly in urban areas like Islamabad.

Through the conference experts in real estate industry were brought together to forge solutions that would enhance market efficiency and integrity, which are vital for fostering sustainable economic growth and urban development in Pakistan.

The Minister said that in many counties like Japan, Türkiye and Iran urban expansion has been managed efficiently through proper planning and management. He deplored that Pakistan has vast resources particularly in the form of rich lands that can be utilised for economic development through strategic foresight.

At this occasion, he announced that housing ministry is ready to collaborate with a group of experts and students nominated by NUML. This group will study the current challenges and opportunities in housing sector and their recommendations will be incorporated in the upcoming Housing Policy that ministry is going to launch in early 2025.

## NHMP successfully controlled load on motorways

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General (IG) of the National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) Salman Chaudhary on Wednesday said that since November 15, 2023, motorway police have successfully controlled as many as 95 per cent of the axle loads on the roads to improve safety and preserve the road infrastructure.

Addressing the launching ceremony of the E-Ticketing system on the occasion of the 28th Raising Day of NHMP, he expressed pride in leading an organization that has become a symbol of national pride, noting the NHMP's exemplary service over five thousand Kilometers covering the National Highways and Motorways of all provinces, including Gilgit-Baltistan.

The IG emphasized that the NHMP was known for its dedication, honesty, and professionalism, aligning it with international traffic policing standards. Reflecting on the organization's history, he acknowledged the efforts of former Inspectors General and the sacrifices of the Motorway Police personnel, including those who gave their lives for the safety of the public.

Salman highlighted several achievements, including the successful implementation of the axle load control regime and the addition of new patrol vehicles in the fleet of NHMP to improve the efficiency of operations. He also spoke of the NHMP's technological advancements, such as the modern e-ticketing system and the ongoing transition to a paperless office with plans for a cashless system soon.

Furthermore, he mentioned the commencement of patrolling on the Karakoram Highway and the expansion of FM-95 radio coverage to other cities to provide traffic and weather updates.

Additionally, the regular issuance of driving licenses has now been extended to Quetta, following its success in Islamabad and Sheikhupura, he added. The 28th Raising Day of the NHMP was commemorated through a special ceremony at the Driving Licensing Authority Auditorium.

The event's chief guests were Inspector General Salman Chaudhry and the family of martyred Sub-Inspector Shabbir Ahmed. Additional Inspectors General of Police, DIGs and numerous officials also participated in the ceremony. A poignant moment of the ceremony was when the daughters of martyred Sub-Inspector Shabbir Ahmed cut a cake in honour of the occasion.

## Japan embassy celebrates its 70th self-Defense forces Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Japan embassy on Wednesday celebrated 70th self-Defense forces Day, attended by the military officials as well as Ministers and parliamentarians.

Chargé d' Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of Japan in Pakistan, Mr. TAKANO Shuichi and Mrs. TAKANO Asako hosted a reception, to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) Day. Defense Attaché, Colonel ABE Kazuo represented the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) at the Embassy.

Mr. AKAMATSU Shuichi, Ambassador-designate of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and Mrs. AKAMATSU Yumiko were also present at the occasion. Air Marshal Muhammad Sarfraz, HI(M), Deputy Chief of Air Staff (Projects), Air Headquarters, was the chief guest on the occasion.

The reception was attended by the military officials as well as Ministers, parliamentarians, senior members of the

Government of Pakistan, members of the diplomatic community and other dignitaries from the public and private sectors.

In his remarks, Mr. TAKANO stated, "I am pleased to see the progress in defense exchanges and cooperations between Japan and Pakistan" and "I believe that the deepening of the exchanges and cooperation between the JSDF and Pakistan Armed Forces will lead to strengthening the Japan-Pakistan relations."

In August this year, the Pakistan Navy PNS YARMOOK together with Japan's Counter Piracy Enforcement Unit, JS SAMIDARE, conducted a goodwill exercise in the Gulf of Oman that contributed to deterring pirate activities and ensuring the safe navigation of merchant vessels navigating in the Gulf of Oman.

Next year in February, the multilateral joint exercise "AMAN25" will be hosted by the Pakistani Navy. Japan is participating in AMAN25. We regard it as an important exercise, contributing to the

realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" in cooperation with like-minded navies.

With regard to disaster relief cooperation, Mr. TAKANO mentioned that in the earthquake in 2005 and the floods in 2010 in Pakistan, the JSDF dispatched helicopter units to transport relief supplies and affected people as part of the Japan Disaster Relief Team.

He paid gratitude to the Pakistani people residing in Japan who had extended immense support to the Japanese people during the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 by giving food and distributing relief supplies to the affected people.

In his brief remarks, Mr. AKAMATSU stated that he feels very fortunate to have been appointed as the Ambassador to this wonderful country and expressed his desire of working together to further strengthen the ties between Japan and Pakistan. "Japan and Pakistan share a long-standing friendship, built on mutual respect and cooperation."

## Prof Shuja reinforces IIUI's commitment to excellence in education

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prof Dr Shuja, President, International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), on Wednesday said that quality and innovation in higher and lower education needs collective and collaborative efforts at all levels. He was addressing the inaugural ceremony of the two-day conference titled "Quality and Innovation in Higher Education" (CQIHE).

On the occasion, Prof Dr Ahmad Shuja highlighted that this conference reflects IIUI's unwavering commitment to educational excellence and innovation. The conference is being hosted by the Faculty of Education in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission Pakistan, Iqbal International Institute for Research & Dialogue (IRD), Office of Research, Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC), and Admas University, at Allama Iqbal Auditorium Faisal Masjid Campus from 04-05 December, 2024.

Researchers are presenting papers in multiple sessions during the conference. More than 300 participants, including distinguished academics, policymakers, and researchers from around the globe are participating in the conference.

Foregrounding the timeliness of this conference,

President IIU congratulated the organizing faculty for hosting this significant conference, underscoring the fact that not only the Faculty of Education but all other faculties of the university need to participate in and benefit from its interactive sessions.

The Chief Guest of the conference, Dr Shafqat Ali Janjua, Joint Educational Advisor at the National Curriculum Council, Ministry of Education and Professional Training, Islamabad stressed upon aligning education policies with global trends to ensure quality and accessibility.

Commending the efforts of the organizers, he added that universities are meant to provide leadership to the society while youth are to be trained to be creative, critical, collaborative and communicative during their academic journey. This would enhance their competence in the practical field. He advised students to focus on their academic activities with a strong commitment and clear purpose.

Prof Dr Nasir Mahmood, Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, Dr Anzar Khaliq, Chief Learning Officer at San Francisco Bay University, USA; Dr Leele Susana Jamian, Associate Professor at UiTM, Malaysia, and Dr Steve

Warner from the University of the Southern Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago are the keynote speakers of this important conference.

During the opening session, Dr Azhar Mahmood, Incharge Programs at the Faculty of Education, welcomed the attendees and highlighted the significance of the conference in shaping the future of higher education. Dr Muhammad Munir Kayani, Chairperson of the Department of Teacher Education, acknowledged the contributions of all stakeholders in making CQIHE a resounding success.

Dr Fouzia Ajmal, the Conference Convener, emphasized the importance of blending quality and innovation in education to address modern challenges. She stated that the conference features over 150 paper presentations and sessions on critical themes such as artificial intelligence in education, quality assurance frameworks, and inclusive teaching methodologies.

At the end, a souvenir was presented by the President IIUI to the Chief Guest, Dr Shafqat Ali Janjua, Joint Educational Advisor at the National Curriculum Council. Later, Dr Shafqat also visited the exhibition area and appreciated the students' efforts on the occasion.

## Mohtasib to ensure good governance and human rights

ISLAMABAD (APP): Administrative accountability is vital for ensuring the rule of law, good governance and protection of human rights, which are considered essential for any successful democratic system.

This was stated by the Wafaqi Mohtasib, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi while speaking as the key-note speaker at the International Ombudsman Summit 2024 on the eve of 35th Anniversary of establishment of the Office of Ombudsman in Hong Kong, China, said a message received here from Hong Kong on Wednesday.

He said that issues of maladministration and protection of human rights are linked with good governance and at the heart of it lies accountability and justice. "We expect to achieve these goals and objectives by steadfast adherence to the core values of Ombudsmanship", he added. Qureshi, who holds the position of current President of the 47-member strong Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA), further

stated that even world bodies like the UN recognized the importance of Ombudsman Institutions in strengthening democracy, good governance and the rule of law. Efficient service delivery, good and responsive administration, he said, also constitute the essential features of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) being espoused by the UN.

He went on to add that the scope of work of Ombudsman Institutions is currently witnessing speedy expansion and now includes issues like the climate change, business rights, public accessibility and inclusivity. He observed that these common goals have a direct bearing on the role and functions of Ombudsman Institution around the world striving to build peaceful and inclusive societies and accountable institution at all levels for providing easy access to justice. He also called for sharing of experiences and best practices amongst the Ombuds Institutions.

Referring to Pakistan's experience

Ombudsmanship, the Wafaqi Mohtasib said that it has taken firm roots in the country and we are keen to transform this institution into an architect of good governance rather than a mere complaint resolution office. Following the success of Wafaqi Mohtasib Institution in providing free and expeditious administrative justice to the general public, the concept has been replicated to other essential areas impacting the welfare of general public.

He added that 14 Ombudsman Institutions are functioning in the country at the Federal and Provincial levels and contributing in improving service delivery of the government agencies in their respective areas of competence.

The International Ombudsman Summit at Hong Kong, it may be added, is being attended by over 140 Overseas participants, representatives of the UN bodies including a large number of the member institutions of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA).



ISLAMABAD: A street vendor on the way on his motorcycle with different kinds of balloons at Tamari Chowk. —APP Photo



### Construction resumed

KABUL (BNA): The Kabul Municipality has announced the resumption of construction on the first phase of the Kabul-Logar road, valued at 920 million Afghanis, after a brief delay. The Deputy for Construction Affairs at Kabul Municipality, Engineer Amir Zmarak Yasar, stated that the remaining portion of the Kabul-Logar road, located within Kabul city, was assigned to the municipality for completion following a decision by the Cabinet of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

## The Frontier Post

Jamadi Us Sanni 02, 1446 — Thursday, December 05, 2024

### Russia sends 28 tons of aid

KABUL (Khaama Press): Russia's Ministry of Emergency Situations has announced the delivery of another humanitarian aid shipment to Afghanistan. The shipment, which includes 28 tons of food, was sent under the orders of Russian President Vladimir Putin. 28 tons of food were sent to Kabul on Wednesday. Earlier, the OCHA stated that more than \$603 million was needed to address the growing needs of vulnerable populations in Afghanistan during the upcoming winter.

# Ex-president calls for reversal of girls' medical education ban

KABUL (TOLOnews): Hamid Karzai, the former president of Afghanistan, has said that the closing of medical institutes to girls is "deeply regrettable, especially at a time when women and mothers across the country face severe health challenges."

In a statement, Karzai emphasized that "the only path to self-reliance and the key driver of growth and development in our country in various dimensions is education."

He urged the Islamic Emirate to "immediately reverse the decision banning girls from medical education and, in addition, reopen schools and universities to them as soon as possible to prevent the loss of young talents, which are the nation's invaluable and

primary asset."

The former president added that "Afghanistan will overcome its reliance on foreign assistance and internal challenges only when it possesses a cadre of specialized and educated human resources. This can only happen if educational opportunities are available to all youth, both girls and boys."

This comes amid widespread reactions, both domestically and internationally, to the closing of medical institutes to girls.

The European Union, in response to the Islamic Emirate's decision, called it an "appalling violation of fundamental human rights."

The statement reads, "The European Union expresses its strong concerns over this decision and its

far-reaching implication, including the deepening of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and the exacerbation of the suffering of its people."

The statement further said that women's participation in education and in the workforce is "not just a matter of equality — it is essential for the self-sufficiency, development, and prosperity of any nation."

The EU urged the Islamic Emirate to reverse this decision and fulfill its obligations under international law, including ensuring equal access to education and basic healthcare for all Afghans.

As of now, the Ministry of Public Health has not officially commented to the media on the closing of medical institutes to girls.

## UN provides nutrition counseling to families

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has announced that it provided nutrition counseling to nearly 150,000 families and caregivers of children in October this year. UNICEF made this announcement in a statement released on Wednesday.

According to UNICEF, the counseling services included guidance on breastfeeding for infants up to six months, the introduction of complementary foods from six months to two years, and ensuring healthy and nutritious food for children.

However, aid organizations have consistently warned over the past three years about the growing rates of malnutrition among children and breastfeeding mothers in Afghanistan.

According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, it is estimated that at least 2.9 million children in Afghanistan may suffer from severe malnutrition this year.

Afghanistan has the highest maternal and neonatal mortality rates in the world, with 24 mothers and 167 children dying daily from preventable pregnancy and childbirth-related diseases.

Recently, the ban on girls' education in the country's health institutions has sparked international condemnation. This policy has further exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, particularly for women and children who are already facing severe challenges.

The situation continues to deteriorate, with rising malnutrition rates and an inability to provide proper healthcare to vulnerable populations.

The international community must intensify efforts to address the root causes of these crises, including limited access to education, healthcare, and basic services. Without urgent intervention, the toll on Afghanistan's children and mothers will continue to escalate, worsening the overall humanitarian disaster.

## Breshna reports recovering 259m Afghani

KABUL (TOLOnews): Breshna Company stated that over the past three years, it has collected nearly 259 million afghani in unpaid electricity bills.

According to the company's spokesperson, efforts are underway to recover all outstanding debts.

Hekmatullah Miwandi, spokesperson for the Breshna Company, said: "So far, we have collected 259 million afghani owed to Breshna by the people, and this process is ongoing. Our efforts aim to fully recover this money as soon as possible, and we hope to see the day when no one owes Breshna anything."

The former head of Breshna Company emphasizes that the company needs a systematic plan to collect all electricity debts consistently. Amanullah Ghalib, the former head of Breshna Company, said: "Government departments that owe for electricity still have outstanding bills, which the Islamic Emirate should pay in installments. Efforts were made to have these bills paid through UNAMA, but unfortunately, this did not happen. Based on my information, government agencies and industrial parks still owe 7 to 8 billion afghani to Breshna."

While the process of debt collection is ongoing, the shortage of electricity remains one of the significant challenges for citizens.

"Power outages have increased, and people are facing difficulties. Most of the time, the electricity doesn't come on time. There's no power at night, and it only comes during the day or after midnight," said Feda Mohammad, a resident of Kabul.

en the two neighboring countries and expressed appreciation for Turkmenistan's continued support to Afghanistan in various sectors.

As part of this visit, the two countries are expected to finalize an electricity purchase agreement for 2025, further solidifying their economic collaboration.

# Inter-ministerial body discusses solar energy, economic projects

KABUL (BNA): The Inter-ministerial Investment Committee convened its regular meeting to deliberate on the development of solar energy projects and other significant economic initiatives across various provinces of the country.

According to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, the private sector presented proposals for solar energy generation in Kapisa, Herat, and Kabul provinces, as well as a battery installation project for solar energy storage in Kandahar.

Additionally, plans were discussed for establishing laboratories to control the quality of agricultural and food products at ten key border points and for creating commercial nurseries



for pistachios and other fruit-bearing trees in Herat.

Following comprehensive discussions on these topics, subcommittees were

tasked with conducting technical and economic evaluations of the proposals in collaboration with the presenting companies. The subcom-

mittees are expected to submit their final reports to the Inter-ministerial Investment Committee within the designated timelines.

# Unequal aid distribution sparks complaints among Kabul residents

KABUL (TOLOnews): Some residents of Kabul city have complained about the process of aid distribution in the country, saying that the aid is being distributed unequally among those in need.

Abdullah, who earns 100 afghani daily from his cart, says this income is not enough to meet the needs of his eight-member family, and he requires humanitarian assistance, though he has not received any aid so far.

"I am a laborer and earn 100 to 150 afghani daily. There is no work, and no one helps us either," said Abdullah.

Other citizens also say that they are in need of assistance but claim that representatives in their areas have not included them in the aid recipient lists, expressing dissatisfaction with the distribution process.

"Our request from the Islamic Emirate is to investigate and find out why aid does not reach us," said Qand Agha, a Kabul resident.

"No one has included us in the aid distribution; everyone prioritizes their relatives, and the representatives do not include deserving individuals," said Shirin Dil, another Kabul resident.

However, some local representatives say they are not involved in aid distribution and only act as coordinators between the people and the World Food Program.

Mohammad Yaqub Alkoza'i, the representative of District 10 of Kabul, told TOLOnews: "We have no involvement in aid distribution; we only cooperate. People complain to you because the demand is high, but the aid is limited."

Some economic experts also believe that humanitarian aid does not contribute to Afghanistan's development and emphasize strengthening the country's infrastructure and private sector.

"Whenever the international community wants to eradicate poverty, it needs to provide economic assistance to Afghanistan. The aid should be implemented through the government because the government has the ability to initiate development projects and create permanent income sources for the people," said Abdul Naseer Rishitia, an economic expert.

"Sufficient attention and investment should be given to strengthening Afghanistan's economic infrastructure. Alongside that, Afghanistan's private sector, which has the potential for job creation, should also be

strengthened," said Mir Shakib Mir, another economic expert.

The Ministry of Economy has also stated that ensuring transparency and oversight in aid distribution is one of its key programs.

Abdul Latif Nazari, the technical deputy minister of economy, said: "Transparency and oversight of aid distribution are among the primary programs of the Ministry of Economy of the Islamic Emirate. Some complaints are being thoroughly reviewed and addressed. We are striving to ensure that aid reaches those in need."

According to the Ministry of Economy, 23 United Nations agencies are active in Afghanistan for humanitarian assistance, alongside 174 foreign organizations and 670 domestic organizations.

# New food and beverage company launched



FARAH (BNA): A new food and beverage production company named Delchasb was inaugurated in Farah province by a national trader, with an investment of \$220,000.

At the opening ceremony, Hafiz Shams-ul-Haq Ajmal, the Head of the Farah Industry and Commerce Department, highlighted the substantial facilities provided for national traders in the fields of investment and raw

materials. He encouraged entrepreneurs to take advantage of these opportunities and acquire production company licenses. Ajmal noted that Farah is home to approximately 40 manufacturing factories, each employing around 50 workers. He also urged companies to focus on maintaining product quality and adhering to environmental standards.

Jawad Ghafoori, a national trader and the head

of Delchasb, stated that the company, established with a \$220,000 investment, has the capacity to produce 2,500 packages of mineral water and beverages daily. Currently, the company employs 40 young workers.

Ghafoori called on the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to provide support in areas such as electricity, tax reductions, marketing assistance, and ensuring security for investors and national traders.

# Temporary port established on Afghan border

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Finance has announced the construction of a temporary port at the border area between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan.

According to a statement from the ministry, a delegation led by the Deputy Minister for Revenues and Customs visited the port and discussed its construction with Turkmenistan officials.

The port is considered essential for the transfer of personnel and equipment for the TAPI project.

Sakhi Ahmad Paiman, the First Deputy of the Chamber of Industries and Mines, said: "The new port between Turkmenistan and Afghanistan will be effective in economic and political terms and in providing

more facilities for the TAPI project and expanding relations. The TAPI project is a major project, requiring such an independent border and independent movement to accelerate the practical work of the TAPI project."

Abdul Jabbar Safi, the head of the Afghanistan Industrialists' Association, said: "In the world, all politicians or countries work on their economy. This is also a good opportunity for Afghanistan, as there is currently security throughout the country and no corruption, allowing work on fundamental projects such as CASA-1000, the TAPI project, the Trans-Afghan project, or the Mes Aynak Mine project in Logar."

Some experts also regard

the TAPI project as a significant regional initiative, highlighting its potential benefits for Afghanistan's economic development.

"The TAPI project is a very important and vital project for Afghanistan. The more facilities are created to advance the work of the TAPI project, the higher its effectiveness can be," said Abdul Naseer Rishitia, an economic expert.

The spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate shared a new video with TOLOnews, stating that all necessary equipment for the TAPI project has arrived in Afghanistan. He added that work on this major economic project has begun and is expected to be completed in Herat province within two years.

# DABS officials engage Turkmenistan on projects



KABUL (BNA): Dr. Abdul Bari Omar, CEO of Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS), along with his delegation, has traveled to Turkmenistan, where they met with key officials, including Dovletdurdy Elyasov, the head of Turkmenistan's Electricity Company, Murad Artikov, the head of the TAP project,

and other senior officials.

According to a statement from DABS, the discussions focused on the progress of the TAP project and several other bilateral initiatives aimed at enhancing regional cooperation.

During the meeting, Dr. Omar underscored the importance of expanding economic relations between

# Economic challenges threaten female employment in media

BADAKHSHAN (TOLOnews): Several officials from women-focused private media outlets in Badakhshan province report losing most of their employees due to economic challenges.

According to them, if these economic issues are not resolved, they will be forced to shut down their operations.

Najla Shirzad, the head of one of Badakhshan's private media outlets, stated: "Approximately 18 girls were working here. Due to a lack of funding, some of them stopped working, and now we only have seven girls with us."

Farza Mazin, a media employee, said: "The primary challenge we face here is the lack of funding and sponsors. In my view, media plays a crucial role in any society and represents the voice of the people."

Additionally, some employees of Radio Sadai Banowan, one of the private women-focused media outlets in Badakhshan, say they have not received their salaries for over five



months. They are urging officials in the caretaker government to address their challenges.

Arshin, a media employee, stated: "If media outlets are not supported, the voices that should reach the community will remain unheard."

However, the Badakhshan Department of Information and Culture

assures efforts to address the challenges faced by local media in the province.

Zabihullah Amiri, the Head of Badakhshan's Department of Information and Culture, said: "To resolve these challenges, we brought the Deputy Minister of Publications of the Ministry of Information and Culture to Badakhshan

and shared the issues obstructing the media's progress with him."

Currently, two visual media outlets and ten private audio media outlets are operating in Badakhshan province. Among them, two are run by women, with approximately 45 women and 73 men engaged in media activities in these outlets.

# Discovery of 150 historical sites

BAMIYAN (TOLOnews): The Directorate of Information and Culture in Bamiyan has announced that 150 historical and archaeological sites have been identified in the province, of which 110 have been officially registered by the directorate.

According to the officials of this directorate, efforts are ongoing to identify and register other historical sites and archaeological areas in the province.

Abdullah Baikzad, the director of historical monuments at the Directorate of Information and Culture

in Bamiyan, said: "We have identified around 150 historical and archaeological sites, of which 110 have been registered, while the rest are yet to be documented."

One of Bamiyan's archaeological sites is called "Maghara-e-Kalla" (Skull Cave), located atop a mountain in the Foladi area, approximately 15 kilometers from Bamiyan city.

This cave, with its natural landscape and the presence of dozens of human bone fragments, especially skulls, has become a tourist destination in recent years.

Local residents state that despite centuries passing, no accurate historical information is available about the origin of these skulls and other human bones found in the cave.

Mohammad Hussain, a resident of Bamiyan, said: "This is a cave called Skull Cave, which is said to have forty doors, and in the third and fourth doors, many skulls can be found."

Based on what locals have heard from their ancestors, this location was used as a prison in the past, and many bones of those imprisoned here can still be seen scattered around the

cave.

Karim Dad, another resident of the Foladi area in Bamiyan, said: "They say that this was a prison in the past and was likely a war zone."

In recent years, Bamiyan's historical and natural sites have played a vital role in generating income for the local administration and residents of the province.

Several residents of Bamiyan are urging the interim government to pay greater attention to the restoration and preservation of these historical and natural sites.



# KP Govt, BoK link MoU for Ehsas Apna Ghar Scheme

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as another important step towards public welfare in the province, has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the implementation of "Ehsas Apna Ghar Scheme".

MoU was signed between the Housing Department and the Bank of Khyber in a ceremony, held here at the Chief Minister's House Peshawar. The ceremony was attended by Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur as the chief guest. Provincial cabinet members Dr. Amjad Ali and Muzammil Aslam, along with officials from relevant departments and the Bank of Khyber, were also present.

Under the Ehsaas Apna Ghar scheme, low-income individuals will be eligible for interest-free loans of up to Rs 1.5 million for the construction of new house on their owned land or for

the expansion and renovation of existing ones. The scheme, with a budget of

18,000. It will operate on a revolving funds system and continue for the next

emphasized that providing quality housing to the people is a top priority of the provincial government. He termed the Ehsaas Apna Ghar scheme as a pivotal initiative aimed at delivering interest-free loans to low-income families to ensure access to quality housing.

He added that the scheme would not only improve living standards but also contribute to the social and economic uplift of the province's underprivileged communities. The Chief Minister directed officials to ensure complete transparency in the loan disbursement process and emphasized that the loans must only be awarded to deserving individuals.

The Chief Minister also highlighted other welfare programs being launched under the Ehsaas initiative, including Ehsaas Naujawan, Ehsaas Hunar, and Ehsaas Rozgar, which aim to uplift youth, enhance skills, and provide employment opportunities across the province.

## Gandapur takes notice of medicines shortage in Kurram

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur while taking notice of shortage of medicines in district Kurram due to road blockage has directed the quarters concerned to ensure supply of essential medicines to Kurram through provincial government's helicopter. Further, The Chief Minister has allocated his helicopter for supply of medicines to Kurram until road access is completely restored.

On Wednesday, two consignments of essential medicines, including life-saving drugs worth Rs 6.3 million, were airlifted to Kurram via K.P government's helicopter.

In compliance with the Chief Minister's directives, the Advisor for Health and the Secretary Health are personally monitoring the distribution of medicines in Kurram. The Chief Minister emphasized that the availability of essential medicines must be ensured at all times in the district. He further instructed that air deliveries should remain operational until ground connectivity is fully re-established.

The provincial government is committed to utilizing all available resources to ensure the uninterrupted supply of medicines to the area, he added.

Rs. 4 billion, offers a seven-year easy repayment

schedule with a maximum monthly installment of Rs

seven years.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur

# South Korea's Yoon faces impeachment after martial law debacle

SEOUL (Reuters): South Korean lawmakers on Wednesday proposed impeaching President Yoon Suk Yeol for his sudden decision to declare martial law, which he rescinded after a chaotic standoff between parliament and the army that damaged the country's standing.

Yoon's declaration of martial law late on Tuesday attempted to ban political activity and censor the media in South Korea, which has Asia's fourth largest economy and is a key U.S. ally. Washington had no advance notice of the decision, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken told Reuters, adding that he expected to speak with his South Korean counterpart in the coming days.

Armed troops had forced their way into the National Assembly building in Seoul but stood back when parliamentary aides sprayed them with fire extinguishers. Lawmakers rejected the martial law decision while protesters scuffled with police outside.

On Wednesday evening, civic and labour groups held a candlelight vigil in downtown Seoul calling for Yoon's resignation - a reminder of the massive candlelight protests that led to the impeachment of former President Park Geun-hye in 2017. They then marched to the presidential office.

Six South Korean opposition parties submitted a bill in parliament to impeach Yoon, who had already faced accusations of heavy-handed leadership from his opponents and from within his own party, with voting set for Friday or Saturday.

A plenary session to for-

mally introduce the bill was scheduled to begin shortly after midnight (1500 GMT) on Wednesday.

"We couldn't ignore the illegal martial law," DP lawmaker Kim Yong-min told reporters. "We can no longer let democracy collapse."

The leader of Yoon's ruling People Power Party called for Defence Minister Kim Yong-hyun to be fired and the entire cabinet to resign. Kim has offered to resign, the defence ministry said.

The crisis rattled global financial markets and left South Korea's benchmark KOSPI index .KS11 down 1.4%, taking its year-to-date losses to over 7% and making it the worst performing major stock market in Asia this year.

The won was stable but close to a two-year low, with dealers reporting suspected intervention by South Korean authorities after overnight talks between Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok and Bank of Korea Governor Rhee Chang-yong.

Choi sent an emergency note to global financial chiefs and credit rating agencies late on Wednesday which said the market was functioning as usual, and that the finance ministry was working to alleviate any adverse impact from political turmoil, the ministry said in a statement.

Yoon told the nation in a television speech late on Tuesday that martial law was needed to defend the country from pro-North Korean anti-state forces, and protect the free constitutional order, although he cited no specific threats.

Within hours, South Korea's parliament, with

190 of its 300 members present, unanimously passed a motion for martial law be lifted, with 18 members of Yoon's party present.

The president then rescinded the declaration of martial law, around six hours after its proclamation. Protesters outside the National Assembly shouted and clapped. "We won!" they chanted, and one demonstrator banged on a drum.

"There are opinions that it was too much to go to emergency martial law, and that we did not follow the procedures for emergency martial law, but it was done strictly within the constitutional framework," a South Korean presidential official told Reuters by telephone.

There has been no reaction yet from North Korea to the drama in the South.

Yoon was embraced by leaders in the West as a partner in the U.S.-led effort to unify democracies against growing authoritarianism in China, Russia and elsewhere.

But he caused unease among South Koreans by branding his critics as "communist totalitarian and anti-state forces" as his approval ratings slipped. In November, he denied wrongdoing in response to influence-peddling allegations against him and his wife and he has taken a hard line against labour unions.

Seoul appeared largely normal on Wednesday, with the usual rush hour traffic in trains and on the streets.

But Hyundai Motor's (005380.KS), opens new tab labour union announced plans to stage strikes on Thursday and Friday and some major employers, including Naver Corp (035420.KS), opens new

tab and LG Electronics Inc (066570.KS), opens new tab, advised employees to work from home.

Sales of canned goods, instant noodles and bottled water had soared overnight, said a major South Korean convenience store chain, which sought anonymity.

"I'm deeply disturbed by this kind of situation, and I'm very concerned about the future of the country," 39-year-old Seoul resident Kim Byeong-in told Reuters.

The National Assembly can impeach the president if more than two-thirds of lawmakers vote in favour. A trial by the constitutional court follows, which can confirm the motion with a vote by six of the nine justices.

Yoon's party has 108 seats in the 300-member legislature.

If Yoon resigned or was removed from office, Prime Minister Han Duck-soo would fill in as leader until a new election was held within 60 days.

"South Korea as a nation dodged a bullet, but President Yoon may have shot himself in the foot," Danny Russel, vice president of the Washington-based Asia Society Policy Institute, said of the first martial law declaration in South Korea since 1980.

Blinken said he welcomed Yoon's decision to rescind the martial law declaration.

"We continue to expect political disagreements to be resolved peacefully and in accordance with the rule of law," he said in a statement.

South Korea hosts about 28,500 American troops as a legacy of the 1950-1953 Korean War.



NEW YORK: Police place bullet casing markers outside of a Hilton Hotel in Midtown Manhattan where United Healthcare CEO Brian Thompson was fatally shot on Wednesday in New York City.

## CCoSOEs gives nod to reconstitution of PCP, PR, OPF Boards

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Wednesday chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSOEs) which approved different summaries including reconstitution of the Board of Directors for Printing Corporation of Pakistan (PCP), Pakistan Railways (PR) and Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF).

The meeting was attended by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Minister for Science and Technology Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Executive Director Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Federal Secretaries, and senior officers from the Finance Division, a news release said.

The committee reviewed a summary from the Cabinet Division regarding the reconstitution of the Board of Directors of the Printing Corporation of Pakistan (PCP).

The Board, previously composed solely of ex-officio members, was required to include a majority of independent directors in accordance with the SOEs Ownership and Management Policy 2023.

After detailed discussions, the CCoSOEs approved the new composition of the board, which included five independent directors, as recommended.

The committee also approved a summary from the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, concerning the appointment of independent directors for two vacant positions on the Board of the Livestock and Dairy Development Board (LDDB).

Besides, it reviewed the summary of the Ministry of Railways regarding the reconstitution of Boards of Directors (BoDs) of four Railway SOEs, and okayed recommendations of the Board Nomination Committee (BNC) for the reconstitution of BoDs of Pakistan Railways Advisory and Consultancy Services (PRACS), Pakistan Railways Freight Transportation Company (PRFTC), Railways Estate Development and Marketing Company (REDAMCO), and Railways Construction Pakistan Limited (RAIL-COP) were approved.

The CCoSOEs approved a summary from the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development regarding the reconstitution of the Board of Governors of the Overseas Pakistanis' Foundation (OPF) that recommended addition of two independent members on the Board.

A summary from the Ministry of National Food Security and Research was presented regarding the appointment of independent directors on the Board of Directors of the Fisheries Development Board (FDB), which okayed the nomination of six independent directors.

## Dar briefs diplomats on post-PTI protest situation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Wednesday briefed members of the diplomatic corps on the recent situation caused by the protestors of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), reaffirming the government's commitment to ensure the security of the Red Zone.

The deputy prime minister said the government had enacted a new law "Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Act, 2024" that barred the protest demonstrations in the Red Zone and required permission from a magistrate for any public gatherings.

Explaining why the government resorted to certain actions against the protestors, he said the Islamabad High Court had barred the PTI from holding any protest gathering in the Red Zone.

In pursuance of the court ruling, the government had tasked Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to engage with the party but the efforts remained unsuccessful.

He said the federal government always prioritised the Red Zone's security which housed Parliament House, Supreme Court of Pakistan, federal institutions and the diplomatic corps.

Dar informed the diplomats that PTI had chosen to hold a protest on November 24, which coincided with the planned visit of the Belarusian president.

He noted that this was consistent with the party's past malafide practice of scheduling protests on significant dates, such as the SCO summit earlier this year and in 2014, when their protest led to the postponement of the Chinese president's visit.

He recalled that the Supreme Court had dismissed PTI's claims of rigging in 35 National Assembly seats—the primary reason behind the 2014 sit-in—yet the party never apologized, despite having committed to do so in a written agreement with the government.

Dar explained that PTI stubbornly attempted to march into the Red Zone, despite the government's offer of an alternative protest site in Sangiani. He emphasized that freedoms and human rights should not be exercised in ways that cause lawlessness and endanger the lives and property of both Pakistanis and the diplomatic corps.

The deputy prime minister highlighted that the government had shown restraint, as law enforcement agencies were only equipped with water cannons and tear gas, not live ammunition.

The police and Rangers were deployed in the first two tiers, with the army as the third line of defense to protect the Diplomatic Enclave, Parliament House, the Prime Minister's House, and other important buildings.

Dar also questioned the legality of KP provincial government using public resources to stage a march on the federal capital, asserting that no federating unit had the right to do so.

## Sindh govt rejects allegations on contractual appointments

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Sindh government has strongly rejected the opposition's allegations regarding contractual appointments in universities.

Senior Sindh Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, stated that the allegations made by MQM and Jamaat-e-Islami are contrary to the ground realities, MQM-P and Jamaat-e-Islami of attempting to politicize the issue to serve their own agendas.

In a statement, Senior Sindh Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the implementation of contractual appointments is not interference; its purpose is to ensure that proper procedures are fol-

lowed. He emphasized that misleading the public and creating unnecessary concern within the academic community should be avoided.

He said that the government's measures aim to bring much-needed reforms to the education sector by ensuring transparency and accountability. The recruitment policy is being introduced to ensure all appointments are made strictly on merit and with impartiality. The Sindh government is committed to maintaining the autonomy of universities.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Sindh government has initiated improving facilities of transport in Karachi University and providing benefits in the tuition fee; There is need to ensure structural reforms at operational

matters.

He said that strong measures have been implemented regarding MDCAT, and strict action is being taken against those found responsible for misconduct. The tests will be conducted under strict supervision at IBA Karachi for the Karachi Division and IBA Sukkur for the rest of Sindh.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that there would be no change in the syllabus or paper pattern, and only pre-registered candidates would participate. The purpose of this decision is to maintain merit and ensure complete transparency in the admissions to medical and dental colleges of Sindh. He called for the unity of all stakeholders along with the government for the betterment of the students and teachers of Sindh.

## Qamar chairs meeting to boost investment

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: An important meeting with the officers of the provincial Department of Investment and its subordinate institutions under the chairmanship of Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Sindh on Investment and Public-Private Partnership was held today at the office of Sindh Investment Department, Finance and Trade Center Karachi. Secretary Investment Sindh Raja Khurram Shahzad was also present in the meeting.

On this occasion Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar stressed that a plan should be made to promote and encourage local industry and manufacturers. He directed that special encouragement should be ensured for local manufacturers of IT and other industrial sectors.

He said that plans

should be made to make the exported goods more profitable through value addition and in this regard, opinion and guidance should be ensured from experts in the relevant fields, including universities, and in this regard, work should be started by making a priority list of the areas on which work can be started first.

Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar directed that a unified comprehensive website be created regarding investment opportunities in Sindh so that all necessary information about the opportunities is available to investors at all times.

In the meeting, Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar directed the officers that the Department of Investment and its subordinate agencies should ensure partnership in providing all necessary facilities including energy from partner companies in the agreement made for any project so

that the capital requirement can be met jointly under public-private partnership.

In the meeting, Sindh Special Economic Zone Management Company's (SEZMC) Chief Executive Officer Abdul Azim Uqaili informed about the progress of his organization so far and said that after signing the agreement with the developer in the Karachi Marble City project, work on the project is ongoing and it is expected that sales work will start in August 2025.

In the meeting, Project Director Karachi Education City Abrar Sheikh; Project Director CLICK Anwar Ali Shar; Sindh Enterprise Development Fund's (SEDF) Chief Executive Officer Khizar Pervez and Chief Executive Officer Special Economic Zone Authority (SEZA) Faisal Mujeeb also informed about the performance of their organizations.