

Tribute paid to Maj Akram
F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Services Chiefs, and Armed Forces of Pakistan pay heartfelt tribute to Major Muhammad Akram Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider on his 53rd Shahadat anniversary. Major Muhammad Akram Shaheed was commanding a company of 4 Frontier Force Regiment at Hilli (East Pakistan) on 19 May 1971, where he defended the area.



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Pakistan Army committed to serve nation

Military leadership calls for stringent laws against elements sowing polarisation

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), presided over two days 84th Formation Commanders Conference at GHQ, attended by Corps Commanders, Principal Staff Officers, and all Formation Commanders of Pakistan Army.

The forum began by offering Fateha and paying solemn tribute to the martyrs of the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies, and citizens of Pakistan who sacrificed their lives for the nation's security and sovereignty, including those Law Enforcement Agencies personnel who embraced martyrdom during recent violent protests in Islamabad.

The forum condemned ongoing human rights violations in Indian



Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering political, diplomatic, and moral support for the Kashmiri people. It also expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people, strongly condemning the atrocities in Gaza and supporting international legal measures to end military aggression.

Participants were briefed on the prevailing security environment, both external and internal, and reviewed the Army's operational readiness to

address evolving traditional and non-traditional threats.

The forum conducted a comprehensive analysis of ongoing counterterrorism operations and resolved to continue neutralizing terrorists, their facilitators, and abettors working at the behest of hostile forces to destabilize Pakistan, with heightened focus on operations against terrorists operating inside Balochistan including BLA Majeed Brigade.

Forum noted with concern the

malicious propaganda done in the aftermath of the lawful deployment of the Army in the capital to secure key government buildings and provide safe & secure environment for the valued visiting delegations. This pre-planned coordinated and premeditated propaganda reflects continuity of a sinister design by certain political elements as an attempt to drive a wedge between the public & Armed Forces and institutions of Pakistan. This futile attempt, fueled and abetted by external players, will never be successful, InshAllah.

Forum emphasized that it is imperative that Government should promulgate and implement stringent laws and regulations to check unfettered and unethical use of freedom of expression to spew venom, lies and sow the seeds of polarization. Those

spreading fake news for vested political / financial interests need to be identified and brought to justice. Forum resolved that Army remains committed to serving the nation & public and guard against all external and internal threats without any bias and political affiliation, and any attempt to pitch innocent people against each other and use of violence as an instrument for vested gains can never be tolerated.

Unabated use of Afghan soil against Pakistan by terrorists especially belonging to Fitna Al Khwarij was also noted with concern. Forum urged that it is in the interest of both neighboring Islamic countries to rather focus on mutually beneficial engagements and IAG needs to take visible measures to prevent use of its soil by the terrorists.

Forum reiterated resolve to continue supporting all socioeconomic & development efforts being undertaken in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan by Federal and Provincial Governments for well-being of the resilient people of these Provinces who continue to stand tall against scourge of terrorism.

Highlighting Army's commitment to socioeconomic progress, the forum resolved to continue to support government efforts in fostering economic growth, cracking down on illegal spectrum and eradicating terror-crime nexus. Concluding the conference, the COAS emphasized the importance of professionalism, operational readiness, and the Army's unwavering dedication to ensuring Pakistan's security and stability, notwithstanding any odds and challenges.

Pak reaffirms desire for cooperative ties with all neighbours

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reaffirmed its desire for cooperative relations with all its neighbours, including India. At her weekly news briefing in Islamabad, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan has consistently advocated constructive engagement and result oriented dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues including Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

She, however, said the political will to resolve disputes and differences through dialogue seems lacking on India's part. She said Pakistan believes in peaceful co-existence, emphasizing it wants peace and stability in the region. She said Pakistan has been acting in a responsible manner notwithstanding the difficulties in bilateral relations. She said the eastern neighbour should create conducive environment for advancement of peace and dialogue, and resolution of longstanding disputes.

The Spokesperson voiced concerns over the continuing seizure of properties of Kashmiri people in Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. She said the Indian actions are part of an ongoing drive to confiscate Kashmiri lands and properties to harass and intimidate the Kashmiri people and punish them for their dissenting political views. She urged the Indian authorities to end the ongoing campaign of seizing the properties and abide by its international obligations as an occupying power.

Expressing deep concerns over latest developments in Syria, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said we believe that the ongoing situation will further destabilize the region and embolden terrorist groups. She said it is critical to promote peace and security in Syria for regional stability. She called for international efforts to deescalate the situation and for upholding unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria.

PM reaffirms Pakistan's support for just struggle of Palestinian people

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Palestine to Pakistan, Dr. Zuhair Mohammad Hamadallah Zaid Thursday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister House and discussed matters relating to mutual interests.

While welcoming the ambassador, the prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people for their right to self-determination, freedom and justice. He reiterated Pakistan's strongest condemnation of Israel's genocidal actions against innocent Palestinians, particularly the worsening situation since October 7, 2023 that has resulted in the loss of over 43,000 lives and injured more than 105,000 others.

The prime minister expressed his deep disappointment at the absence of global accountability of Israel and reiterated the call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza and unhindered flow of humanitarian

assistance to the suffering Palestinian people in the occupied territories. The prime minister assured Ambassador Zaid that the entire Pakistani nation stood united in its solidarity with the brave Palestinian people and would continue to support them in every possible way.

The prime minister also stressed upon the need for a just and lasting resolution of the Palestine issue, based on the two-state solution, with the creation of an independent state of Palestine with pre-1967 borders and Al Quds as its capital, in accordance with the UN's relevant resolutions. Ambassador Dr. Zuhair Mohammad Hamadallah Zaid deeply appreciated Pakistan's steadfast support to the Palestinian people during their present ordeal, as well as Pakistan's principled position on the Palestinian Question.

He thanked the prime minister for his leadership and support for Palestine, as well as for providing much-needed humanitarian assistance and offering scholarships to

Palestinian medical students to complete their studies in Pakistan. The prime minister wished the ambassador a productive tenure in Pakistan and assured him of his full support at all times.

PM for strict measures to accelerate taxation, implement revenge collection strategy: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed the authorities concerned to ensure effective and swift taxation and take strict measures to implement the strategy for revenue collection.

The prime minister, who chaired a review meeting on the country's economic situation and digitization of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), said that the FBR's digitization was a key component of the government's agenda of economic reforms, according to a PM Office press release.

He appreciated the progress in the FBR's digitization and lauded the efforts of the finance minister, state minister for finance, FBR chairman



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Palestine to Pakistan Dr. Zubair Mohammad Hamadallah Zaid called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

(Continued on Back Page)

Violence in Kurram

Opp regrets failure of KP govt to address issue

PESHAWAR (APP): Leader of Opposition in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Dr. Ibadullah here Thursday regretted indifferent attitude of government relating to Kurram incidents and said that it is astonishing that KP Chief Minister is short of time to visit violence-hit areas and express solidarity with affected families.

He was addressing session of KP assembly that was chaired by Speaker Babar Salim Swati. He said that providing security to people is foremost responsibility of government adding that CM has not yet visited violence affected areas of Kurram that speaks of his indifferent attitude and failure of government.

He said that government employees are afraid to leave offices after duty hours while all the important posts have been occupied by people belonging to D I Khan. He said that assembly agenda is mainly consisted of irrelevant issues like shelling, baton

charge and D Chowk while the matters relating to well-being, development and welfare have been ignored.

Dr Ibadullah said that unemployment that is a serious problem of KP province could not be addressed by misleading people and raising deceiving slogans. He said that it would be unwise to incite Pashtuns to participate in protests and sit-ins. He said that we would support any such attempt that was meant to provide help to innocents that are incarcerated.

He also criticized policies of PTI leadership and said that Pashtuns should be used to achieve political objectives. He said that PTI has also promoted culture of indecency in politics by using vile language in public rallies and protests. He said that our province is confronted with many issues including law and order and government must show its progress rather using misleading slogans to divert attention of people from basic problems.

Provincial assembly

passes KP Parks, Horticulture Authority Bill 2024: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly passed KP Parks and Horticulture Authority Bill 2024. The bill was tabled by Provincial Minister for Local Bodies in the session that was chaired by Speaker Babar Salim Swati.

To a question of opposition members, Adnan Khan, the minister told that the new authority would not interfere with the ambit of Peshawar Development Authority and Local Government. He said that new authority would help support the working of these two departments

Opposition member, Ahmad Kundi said that a 16-member board would be constituted under the bill and added that government should ensure transparency and impartiality in working of board. Chairing the proceedings, Speaker also accorded the suggestion of Adnan Khan to nominate four members in the board.

Saif mocks KP Governor over APC

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Information Advisor, Barrister Dr. Saif, has criticized the province's governor for holding an All Parties Conference (APC) at the Governor House in Peshawar. Dr. Saif mocked the governor, stating that he should not behave as if he were the chief executive of the province.

Reacting to the APC, which brought together various political groups, Dr. Saif called it a meeting of the province's "rejected group" and labeled it a failed attempt to score political points and undermine the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The advisor stressed that it was not the governor's role to organize such a meeting, as the responsibility lay with the elected provincial government.

"The APC is not the mandate of the governor but of the elected government," Dr. Saif emphasized. He further suggested that instead of hosting the APC, the governor should focus on addressing issues related to arrears from the central government, in his capacity as a representative of the federation.

Imran, others indicted in GHQ attack case

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and other accused were indicted in the May 9 GHQ attack case on Thursday after it was deferred for four times.

An anti-terrorism court in Rawalpindi framed charges against the 60 accused, including former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, ex-railways minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, former law minister Raja Basharat and Zartaj Gul. The PTI founder and his deputy Qureshi were produced in court where their lawyers were also present. After ATC Judge Amjad Ali Shah read the charge-sheet, they denied the allegations. The case was adjourned till Dec 10. Following the indictment, police arrested Raja Basharat and Leader of Opposition in National Assembly Omar Ayub from outside the Adiala Jail.

A day earlier, ATC Judge Amjad Ali Shah rejected the acquittal plea of Omar Ayub in the GHQ attack case. During the hearing, Special Public Prosecutor Zaheer Shah argued that the acquittal

Omar Ayub among other PTI leaders arrested

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Top Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders including Omar Ayub Khan were taken into custody by police in Rawalpindi on Thursday. Alongside Ayub, other PTI leaders include Raja Basharat, Ahmed Chattha, and Azim-ud-Din. PTI lawyer Rana Mudassar told reporters that Ayub and Basharat were arrested by policemen at Adiala Jail's check post. He added that it was unclear what charges led to the arrests of the PTI leaders. The arrested leaders are expected to be produced before an anti-terrorism court (ATC) today as the party's legal team challenged their detention. The ATC issued directives to the concerned authorities for producing the PTI leaders at 7:30pm today.

pleas of other accused, including Sheikh Rashid, Shireen Mazari, Amjad Niazi, and Omar Tanveer Butt, had already been dismissed.

He further stated that Omar Ayub was named as an accused based on the confessional statements of Wasiq Qayyum Abbasi and Omar Tanveer Butt. The prosecutor contended that the petition for acquittal could not be approved until the magistrate, who recorded the confessional statements, appeared before the court. He also pointed out that the acquittal decisions of certain

accused in related cases had been challenged in the anti-terrorism court Sargodha.

Dismissing the petition, the court observed that the case was still in its preliminary stages. It noted that serious allegations were involved and that the facts would only become clear after the trial and presentation of evidence. More than 143 individual, including Imran Khan, have been booked in the case, while 23 accused, including Zulfiqar Bukhari and Shahbaz Gill, have been declared fugitives for not appearing before court.

All Parties conference expresses concern over law, order in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a major political development, All Parties Conference (APC) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were unanimous to work together for resolution of problems and safeguarding rights of the province. Started with the recitation of holy Quran, the APC with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi in Chair has expressed deep concerns over the deteriorating law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially its southern and Kurram districts.

Besides others, the APC was attended by Engr Amir Muqam of PMLN, Aftab Sherpao of Qumi Watan Party, Mian Iftikhar Hussain of ANP, Maulana Ataur Rehman of JUIF, Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha of PPP alongwith sixteen religious-politico parties at Governor House Peshawar. APC expressed deep concerns over the deteriorating law and order situation in the province and declared that KP became a victim of bloodshed more this year compare to last year.

The 14 points communique announced by KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at the concluding ses-

sion of APC here at Governor house said that over 70 security personnel were martyred during previous month while over 200 lost lives in Kurram district and the Provincial Government seemed unsuccessful as for as maintaining law and order situation was concerned.

APC decided establishment of political and technical committees representing all political parties for financial and political situations and protection of the interests of the province. APC demanded immediate issuance of 11th NFC Award with inclusion of three percent quota for ex Fata, Forest and Environment sectors in the formula as per the population of KP and implementation of the recommendations of Sartaj Aziz Committee in letter and spirit.

APC also stressed details of mines and mineral leases of KP should be made public, immediate opening of all historical and trade routes on Pak-Afghan border for all kinds of trade and ensuring gas facility to people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa besides regular holding of Council of Common Interest (CCI) meeting on regular basis under the constitutional period and constitution of PFC with regular



issuance of the award. Besides release of uniformed funds to all local bodies representatives as per Local Government framework and withdrawal of two percent IDC imposed by the provincial government as it was affecting afgans trade, the APC also demanded dignified repatriation of all IDPs of merged areas and non harassment of peaceful pashtoons in other provinces and Islamabad.

The APC also demanded performance audit of the Provincial Government. In its inaugural address, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor

Faisal Karim Kundi while welcoming the political leadership of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said that their presence testified that "we are united for rights of the province." He said that it would have been made better if Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who is a Provincial President of his party hold this conference.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that recommendations and joint communique of the conference would be forwarded to the federal government and would also be presented in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly. APC was

unanimous for finding durable solutions of KP issues including law and order.

Through Speaker KP Assembly, he said that invitation were given to PTI but it seemed that it was not interested to fight for provincial rights. The Governor said this was our province and solution of its problems should be given priority. The APC offered dua for eternal peace of martyres of the province. Presentation about provincial resources and national finance commission (NFC) were given to APC.

Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs Engr Amir Muqam welcomed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor's initiative of holding All Parties Conference (APC) on security and rights of the province and termed it positive development. Addressing APC, Engr Amir Muqam said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister should have taken this initiative but he was concentrating on agitation politics and sit ins which is no service to people. He said that Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa needs to focus on resolution of issues of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa rather than leading protest demonstrations towards

Islamabad for political gains.

Engr Amir Muqam said that people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have voted PTI for resolution of their problems rather for continuing of the agitation politics. He accused Gandapur for using Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government resources for November 26 protest march. Engr Amir Muqam said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was badly affected by terrorism and that rebuilding of its infrastructure should be the top priority of the KP Government. Engr Amir Muqam said that Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has failed to bring peace to Kurram. He said that all political leadership of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were on same page as for as resolution of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's rights are concerned.

He said that opposition would extend support to all quarters as for rights of the province was concerned. Engr Amir Muqam said thanked the Governor Faisal Karim Kundi for holding of a successful APC. The APC offered dua for eternal peace of martyres of the province. Presentation about provincial resources and national finance commission (NFC) were given to APC.



Sindh CM commemorate Int'l Day for persons with disabilities

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah during his visit to Clifton Park to commemorate the International Day for Persons with Disabilities. The event featured an inspiring talent show and exhibition, showcasing the creativity and potential of differently-abled individuals.

The Chief Minister emphasised his government's commitment to creating an inclusive society, saying, "This day serves as a powerful reminder of the strength, resilience, and contributions of persons with disabilities, while reaffirming our shared responsibility to foster a society where everyone can thrive with dignity and equality."

He highlighted the government's initiatives to empower persons with disabilities, including Vocational training programs tailored to individual abilities and interests, Accessibility enhancements in public spaces, transportation, and educational institutions, Public awareness campaigns to combat stigma and discrimination, Collaborations with NGOs and organizations dedicated to disability advocacy and support.

The Chief Minister praised the talent displayed at the exhibition, noting that the performances and creations challenged stereotypes and demonstrated the limitless potential of differently-abled individuals. "Disability is not a limitation but a unique strength when coupled with opportunity, support, and determination," he said.

He also acknowledged the vital role of families, educators, and advocates in supporting persons with disabilities, commending their dedication and impact. Murad Shah concluded

with a call to action, urging the community to champion inclusivity and build a Sindh where persons with disabilities are leaders and changemakers. "Together, we can ensure that no one is left behind and create a world that is truly inclusive, equitable, and empowering for everyone," he said. The event, attended by distinguished guests, families, and advocates, was organised to celebrate achievements and promote awareness about the rights and capabilities of persons with disabilities.

Murad inaugurates Prof. Hashmat Lodi Youth Development Center at SMIU: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah inaugurated the Prof. Hashmat Lodi Youth Development Center at Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU), which is dedicated to empowering the youth with opportunities for education, employment, and personal development.

Addressing the ceremony, the Chief Minister lauded SMIU's rich legacy as the alma mater of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and other national luminaries. He commended the university's 140-year-long commitment to excellence in education and its role in shaping visionary leaders, freedom fighters, and scholars. The inauguration event was attended by Chairman HEC Prof Tariq Rafi, Vice Chancellor NED Dr Hashmat Lodhi, Vice Chancellor SMiU Dr Mujeeb Sehrai, Secretary U&B Abbas Baloch, Secretary HEC Mo'in Khan, Haji Hanif Tayab and others.

The Chief Minister paid tribute to the late Prof. Hashmat Lodi, highlighting his lifelong dedication to education, his contributions to academic excellence, and his achieve-

ments as a pioneering quizmaster, athlete, and media personality. "Prof. Lodi's legacy will inspire generations to come, and this youth development centre stands as a testament to his vision and values," the Chief Minister said.

Mr Shah praised Vice Chancellor Dr Mujeebuddin Sahrai for SMIU's remarkable progress, including a 200 per cent increase in student enrollment in the last three years, the establishment of a Hi-tech computer lab, an AI lab, and the Allama I.I. Kazi Library, as well as hosting 11 international conferences.

The CM also highlighted the importance of extracurricular activities, emphasising the role of student societies in debates, arts, community service, literature, science, sports, and character-building. "These initiatives foster teamwork, discipline, and a competitive spirit, ensuring holistic development for students beyond academics," he said.

Murad Shah reiterated the government's commitment to supporting education and youth development, urging students to fully utilize the resources of the new centre for their personal and professional growth. "Your success is integral to the progress of our province and nation. Together, we will build a prosperous and progressive Sindh - where education, innovation, and opportunity flourish," the Chief Minister concluded.

The event was attended by prominent figures, including Chairman Sindh HEC Prof. Tariq Rafi, Vice Chancellor NED Dr Hashmat Lodhi, Vice Chancellor SMiU Dr Mujeeb Sehrai, Secretary U&B Abbas Baloch, Secretary HEC Mo'in Khan, Haji Hanif Tayab and others.

22 KDSP children visit CM House, become 'Chief Ministers for a Day'

F.P. Report

KARACHI: In a heartwarming initiative, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah welcomed 22 children from the Karachi Down Syndrome Program (KDSP) to the Chief Minister's House. The visit, organised on the Chief Minister's invitation, aimed to inspire the children and offer them a unique, memorable experience.

The children, accompanied by KDSP Co-founder and CEO Tabish Shehzad, were greeted warmly by the Chief Minister. "CM House is over 100 years old," Shah shared with the children during the tour of the historic building. During the visit, Syed Murad Ali Shah engaged the children with lighthearted conversations and asked, "Who among you wants to become a Chief Minister?" Most children eagerly raised their hands, expressing their dreams.

However, Baby Dua stood out by confidently stating her desire to become the Chief Minister. Honouring their aspirations, the Chief Minister invited each child to sit in his chair one by one, while he sat beside them. "If you become the CM, we will become your assistants," he said, bringing smiles to the children's faces. One child enthusiastically exclaimed, "I have become the CM," while another used the CM's desk phone to call her father. The children also visited the CM House gallery, where portraits of previous Chief Ministers are displayed. The experience was further enriched when Baby Dua was invited to preside over a formal meeting in the conference hall as the "CM of the Day." The session began with the recitation of the Holy Quran and the national anthem. Principal Secretary Agha Wasif briefed Baby Dua about Sindh's population, education, and governance. Taking her role seriously, Baby Dua instructed her "cabinet" of children to "keep Pakistan clean." Her instructions were met with support from the Chief Minister, who assured her, "Miss Dua CM, we will follow your instructions to keep every city and the country clean." Another child, Angela, asked the Chief Minister about ways to ensure the country's progress. Shah emphasised the importance of democracy, saying, "The country will progress through democracy."

Karachi hosts 17th Aalmi Urdu conference: The 17th Aalmi Urdu Conference, a hallmark of Pakistan's cultural calendar, opened to much fanfare at the Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi. Honouring the rich linguistic and cultural heritage of Urdu and other regional languages, the event brought together an illustrious gathering of literary luminaries, diplomats, artists, and enthusiasts

from across the globe.

The Honourable Chief Minister, addressing the audience, highlighted the event's significance as a celebration of Pakistan's diverse cultural fabric. He commended the remarkable journey of the Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi, which has become a beacon of creativity and dialogue over the past 70 years.

Acknowledging the vision-



ary leadership of Arts Council President Mohammad Ahmed Shah, the Chief Minister lauded the transformative initiatives that have positioned Karachi as a global cultural hub. "From hosting the 38-day World Culture Festival featuring artists from 44 countries to expanding the Aalmi Urdu Conference beyond its traditional premises, these efforts symbolize Karachi's emergence as a global city of art and intellect," he stated. The event also celebrated regional literature, honouring Sindhi, Saraiki, Punjabi, Pashto, and Balochi authors with Lifetime Achievement Awards. This gesture underscored the Council's commitment to promoting linguistic diversity and fostering unity among communities.

The Chief Minister expressed

optimism for the Council's ambitious plans, including global outreach initiatives and a larger cultural festival next year with participation from nearly every country. He reaffirmed the Sindh Government's steadfast support for the Arts Council's vision of cultural diplomacy, youth engagement, and intellectual growth.

Concluding his address, the Chief Minister praised Karachi's contributions to Pakistan's cultural and intellectual legacy. He called for continued efforts to nurture the city's youth through art and culture, ensuring a brighter and more inclusive future for all. The Aalmi Urdu Conference remains a testament to Pakistan's enduring cultural legacy, bringing together diverse voices to celebrate the power of language, art, and unity.

How Karachi's coastline is being destroyed

Kinza Sualiha

KARACHI'S practice of dumping untreated sewage into the Arabian Sea has far-reaching and devastating consequences that go beyond immediate pollution. The introduction of sewage into the sea harms marine ecosystems by introducing excessive nutrients, chemicals, and toxins that disrupt the natural balance of the water.

This causes phenomena such as algal blooms, which deplete oxygen levels, leading to the suffocation and death of fish, crabs, and other marine life. The destruction of biodiversity is not just a loss of species but also an economic blow to industries like fisheries, which depend on a healthy marine ecosystem for sustainable harvests.

Moreover, the presence of pathogens and harmful bacteria in the untreated sewage poses severe health risks to humans who come into contact with polluted water. Coastal communities that rely on seafood face a significant threat from bioaccumulation of toxins in marine organisms, leading to long-term health problems like cancer, organ failure, and neurological disorders. Additionally, the pollution damages coral

reefs, which act as natural barriers against coastal erosion, leaving the city vulnerable to rising sea levels and storm surges.

Tourism, which has the potential to generate significant revenue, also suffers as the beaches become unfit for recreational activities. The foul smell, dirty water,

pathogens and toxins. Additionally, the contamination of the sea harms industries such as desalination plants, which are essential for providing clean water in water-scarce regions like Karachi. These plants are forced to work harder to treat polluted seawater, increasing opera-



tional costs and reducing efficiency. The long-term consequences of adding sewage to the sea are dire, including irreversible damage to marine habitats, loss of livelihoods, declining public health, and stunted economic growth. Without immediate intervention to establish proper sewage treatment systems and enforce strict environmental regulations, Karachi risks losing its coastline as a natural, economic, and cultural resource.

The economic cost of this pollution extends to the government, which faces increasing healthcare expenses due to diseases caused by waterborne

and deteriorating aesthetic appeal drive away both local and international visitors, creating a negative image of the city. Furthermore, the unregulated discharge of sewage into the sea impacts neighboring countries, tarnishing Pakistan's reputation for environmental responsibility.

The economic cost of this pollution extends to the government, which faces increasing healthcare expenses due to diseases caused by waterborne

Violation of HRs will not be tolerated

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Special Assistant to the Sindh Chief Minister for Human Rights, Rajvir Singh Sodha, has stated that violations of human rights will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

In a handout issued from the Information Department, Mr Sodha stressed the need for prioritizing the protection of fundamental rights across the province. He expressed these views during his visit to the Sindh Secretariat after assuming office. He also toured the Directorate of Human Rights and the Treaty Implementation Cell (TIC), where he was briefed on the department's operations by Agha Fakhur Hussain, Director of Human Rights.

Highlighting the commitment of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) to uphold human rights, Sodha urged all stakeholders to work collaboratively towards fostering a society where basic rights are accessible to all citizens. "The protection of human rights is a collective responsibility, and we must ensure that no individual is deprived of their basic rights," he said.

During the briefing, Director Agha Fakhur Hussain welcomed Sodha and provided an overview of the initiatives undertaken by the department to address human rights issues and implement relevant treaties.

New Gwadar International Airport ready for takeoff: Acting DG PAA

F.P. Report

GWADAR: The Acting Director General of the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA), Air Vice Marshal (AVM) Zeeshan Saeed, who also serves as the Additional Director General, visited the New Gwadar International Airport (NGIAP) on Thursday. He was accompanied by Deputy DG Airports Engr Sadiq Ur Rehman and Project Director Engr Faiz Ullah Khattak.

The visit was conducted to review the operational readiness of the airport and to engage with representa-

tives from key stakeholders, including the Gwadar Development Authority (GDA), Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), Gwadar Chamber of Commerce, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Army, and others.

Project Director Engr Faiz Ullah Khattak briefed the delegation and representatives of airport stakeholders on NGIAP's state-of-the-art features and its vast potential for fostering business and investment opportunities. Expressing satisfaction over the airport's readiness, (AVM) Zeeshan Saeed commended the project team for their efforts. He reaffirmed PAA's commitment to operationalizing the airport by the end of this month.

The New Gwadar International Airport, a flagship project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), is poised to become a major driver of economic growth and regional connectivity. Built with Chinese assistance at an estimated cost of USD 246 million, the airport is equipped with modern facilities, including a world-class terminal building and a runway capable of accommodating large aircraft.

Yellow Line Bus Transit project soon for Korangi, Landhi: Wahab

F.P. Report

KARACHI: During his visit to the Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI) on Thursday, Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab emphasized the importance of the city's development and the role of the business community.

He recognized the significant contributions of industrialists to Karachi and stated that the city needs to be collectively "owned" by all stakeholders. He highlighted that some people may claim that the city is stagnant, but the Sindh government has allocated Rs 103 billion for development works.

Wahab also announced several key infrastructure

projects, including the upcoming inauguration of the first phase of the Malir Expressway. He extended an invitation to industrialists to invest in the solarization sector within the city, and mentioned that the Yellow Line Bus Transit project, aimed at benefiting the residents of Korangi and Landhi, would begin soon. Additionally, he assured that the construction and repair of the Baloch Colony Expressway would be completed in the next three months. He also acknowledged the need to address issues in Mehran Town.

While addressing KATI members, Wahab spoke

about the reforms implemented since he took charge of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC). He noted that 80% of KMC's budget had previously been spent on salaries and pensions, but practical steps have been taken to ensure financial stability. One of these steps includes the collection of municipal utility tax charges through K-Electric bills, leading to a significant increase in recovery. He explained that in September alone, 22.8 crore rupees were collected under this head, compared to only 20 crore rupees annually before, with much of that amount being paid to the tax collection party. He

clarified that the municipal utility tax is not new, but aims to provide better services to Karachi's residents.

Wahab also addressed the long-standing issue of water scarcity in the city. He highlighted that for the past two decades, the water supply to Karachi had not been increased. However, the provincial government has initiated efforts to remedy this situation, including the construction of a new canal to bring an additional 50 million gallons per day (MGD) from the Hub Dam. The repair of an old canal has also begun, and as a result, the city will receive an additional 100 MGD of water by next year.

Student councils nurseries for future leaders: Aziz

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Majyd Aziz, former president of the Employers Federation of Pakistan, has urged the members of the Millennium Institute of Technology and Entrepreneurship (MITE) Student Council to view themselves as the future leaders of the student body.

According to a statement issued by Employers Federation of Pakistan today, in a compelling address, Aziz emphasized that their role is to unite fellow students, fostering collaboration and avoiding the pitfalls of negative politics during their tenure.

Aziz, who has long championed leadership development, spoke of the lasting value of such roles. "What you learn here, and the experiences you gather, will serve you in the future, whether you choose to lead trade bodies, professional organizations, or even shape your career," he noted. The former business leader made a direct connection between student council leadership and future success, advising the

council members that the ability to bring people together is a skill that will continue to benefit them long after their school years.

In his reflection on leadership, Aziz remarked that, had he been in charge of a student council during his university days in Pakistan and the United States, it would have equipped him with invaluable experience for his future leadership roles. He revealed that, in his experience as head of various prestigious business organizations, his greatest asset had been the respect and trust he earned through integrity, passion, and courage.

Aziz also acknowledged the importance of MITE's role in shaping global leaders, suggesting that fostering a sense of pride in the institution is key. "One day, when you look back, you should be able to say with pride, 'I am an alumnus of MITE,'" he said. In his concluding remarks, Aziz expressed his belief that leadership within student councils holds a unique potential for future success,

and encouraged MITE's student leaders to make the most of this opportunity to shape their futures and that of their peers.

Awareness walk held

F.P. Report

BUNER: The district administration and tehsil municipal Daggar have jointly organized an anti-corruption walk in which ADC, AC, AAC, TMO, Assistant, officers of government departments, teachers and students participated in large numbers. They participants staged awareness walk in the Bazaar Daggar, during they were carried banners and also raised slogans against corruption. ADC Waseem Ahmed AC Madam Bisharat TMO Zahoor Ahmed in their short speeches said that the countries involved in corruption are facing financial difficulties while corruption free Japan is at the peak of development.



PAF BASE RISALPUR TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited for the maintenance / upgradation and uplifting of different Sports Grounds (Cricket, Hockey, Football, Basketball, Volleyball, Tennis, Athletics, Squash, Badminton, Kabaddi, Futsal, Swimming, Golf etc) / complex and Gymnasium and purchase of various sports items for financial year 2024-25 of Base Sports Flt, PAF Base Risalpur.

Terms and Conditions

1. The firms interested must submit quotes on their letterhead.
2. The firms must be General Sales Tax (GST) - registered.
3. Quotations should be valid for minimum of 90 days, and the envelope should be marked with the Tender opening time and date.
4. Last Date of Submission within 15 days from the publishing of said advertisement which will be opened on the same date on 1200 Hrs. Bidders authorized reps are required to be present at the time of tender opening.
5. The Officer Commanding reserves the right to accept or reject any part or the entire tender, on technical grounds.
6. All Terms & Conditions for Defence - procurement are applicable.

Note: - For additional query or information, please contact on Tel Ext: 0923-63139-7 – 5213 & Mobile: 03239413315.

**Officer Commanding
Administrative Wing
PAF Base Risalpur**

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DIVISION TANK KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

(Single Stage Single Envelope E-Bidding System)

Public Health Engineering Division Tank invites electronic Bids from eligible contractors in accordance with KPPRA procurement rules 2014 for the following works.

S.No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Bid Security 2% of Estimated Cost	Opening date
" District Development Plan for DiKhan Division for District Tank Under ADP No.1172/210556(2024-25)				
1.	From Sabir Shah Ziarat to Durang Gate (12"x10" /d PVC B-class)	33.405 (M)	697000/-	19.12.2024

INSTRUCTION TO BIDDERS

- Bidders may obtain the bidding documents/information from the office of the Executive Engineer PHE Division Tank on address quoted above on any working day.
1. All government taxes will be deducted as per government policies.
 2. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security equal to 2% of the estimated cost in shape of call deposit in the name of Executive Engineer PHE Division Tank..
 3. The contractor/Bidders who quote rates more than 10 % below upto 20% below on the BOQ shall deposit 8% additional Call Deposit in addition to 2 % bid security and if more than 20 % will have to submit to extent of financial difference as per conditions notified vide KPPRA Notification No 6058-71 dated May 10, 2022 shall be intact.
 4. Any bidders who provide incorrect information shall stand disqualified and will be debarred.
 5. Electronic Bidding shall be done on "above / below" system on BOQ / Engineer's estimate, based on the MRS applicable. Only two digits after the decimal point shall be considered for evaluation purpose.
 6. Successful bidder should sign the agreement with the Department within a week time after acceptance of bid.
 7. Call Deposit of Scheduled Banks shall be acceptable. No Banker cheque or pay order will be acceptable.
 8. The employee has the authority to reject any E-bid or all the E-bids assigning valid reason as per B&R Code

All bidders are required to be registered with KPPRA/KPRA.

INF(P)3255/2024 **Executive Engineer**
Public Health Engineering Division Tank

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Our Faith,
کھڑی ہے پاکستان
FREEDOM IS OUR FAITH



Iranian CG visits KP-BOIT to strengthen bilateral trade relations

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran at Peshawar, Ali Benafsheh Khah, accompanied by his team, paid an official visit to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KP-BOIT) here on Thursday.

During the visit, he held a meeting with the Vice Chairman of KPBOIT, Hassan Masood Kunwar, to discuss enhancing bilateral trade relations between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Iran.

The meeting commenced with an exchange of pleasantries, followed by discussions on trade

facilitation and the prospects of expanding cross-border trade. Benafsheh Khah emphasized Iran's keen interest in strengthening economic ties with Pakistan, particularly in areas that offer mutual economic and cultural benefits.

Highlighting the long-standing partnership between the Consulate General of Iran and KPBOIT, Benafsheh Khah praised the collaborative efforts that have contributed significantly to fostering trade relations.

He particularly acknowledged KP-BOIT's pivotal role in facilitating the successful participation of a KP delegation at

the international trade expo held in Tehran in May 2024, which proved instrumental in strengthening commercial ties.

A key highlight of the discussions was the proposal to initiate meat exports to Iran. The Consul General expressed confidence in the potential of this initiative, noting its capacity to boost agricultural and livestock trade, support local farmers, and create new economic opportunities.

He reiterated Iran's interest in sourcing high-quality meat products from KP and stressed the need for efficient trade routes and streamlined processes to facilitate this

exchange.

The Vice Chairman of KPBOIT, Hassan Masood Kunwar, outlined KP's abundant resources and potential, particularly in the agriculture and livestock sectors, and assured support for Iran's demand for quality meat.

He further emphasized KP's strategic location, which positions it as a key player in meat exports, with Iran serving as an ideal market.

During the meeting, both parties also discussed the resolution of regulatory hurdles, improvements in trade transportation infrastructure, and opportunities for joint ventures to enhance bilateral trade.



PESHAWAR: Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Babar Swati presiding over the provincial assembly session on Thursday.

1864 power pilferers held in six months

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Thursday released details of its six months operations against power theft across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and claimed arrest of 1,864 pilferers and lodging of 9,772 cases.

According to PESCO spokesman the crackdowns launched on September 7 last year, adding that so far 10,880 individuals had been arrested for electricity theft since the operation began.

While during the period a total 38,911 cases were registered against the accused.

Giving break up of last six months' operations, he said that 469 were arrested in June, 579 in July, 270 in August, 179 in September, 188 in October and 179 in November.

Similarly, 2561 cases were registered in June, 2885 in July, 1845 in August, 955 in September, 942 in October and 584 in November.

PESCO spokesman reiterated the company's commitment to curbing electricity theft and urged the public to cooperate in reducing losses and ensuring a stable power supply.

KP assembly passes KP Parks, Horticulture Authority Bill 2024

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly here Thursday passed KP Parks and Horticulture Authority Bill 2024.

The bill was tabled by Provincial Minister for Local Bodies in the session that was chaired by Speaker Babar Salim Swati.

To a question of opposition members, Adnan Khan, the minister told that the new authority would not interfere with the ambit of Peshawar Development Authority and Local Government. He said that new authority would help support the working of these two departments.

Opposition member, Ahmad Kundi said that a 16-member board would be constituted under the bill and added that government should ensure transparency and impartiality in working of board.

KP revenues surge by 51% in Nov: Muzzammil

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the KP Chief Minister on Finance and Interprovincial Coordination, Muzzammil Aslam, stated that there has been a 51% increase in tax revenues for November 2024.

Speaking on Thursday, he highlighted that revenues rose from Rs. 2,908 million in November 2023 to Rs. 4,412 million in the same month this year. He further noted that overall revenues for the period from July to November 2024 experienced significant growth of 45.6%, increasing from Rs. 13,480 million last year to Rs. 19,640 million this year.

Muqam welcomes APC on KP rights

PESHAWAR (APP): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs Engr Amir Muqam here Thursday welcomed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor's initiative of holding All Parties Conference (APC) on security and rights of the province and termed it positive development.

Addressing APC here at Governor House Peshawar, Engr Amir Muqam said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister should have taken this initiative but he was concentrating on agitation politics and sit ins which is no service to people.

He said that Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa needs to focus on resolution of issues of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa rather than leading protest demonstrations towards Islamabad for political gains.

Engr Amir Muqam said that people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have voted PTI for resolution of their problems rather than continuing of the agitation politics.

He accused Gandapur for using Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government resources for November 26 protest march.

Engr Amir Muqam said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was badly affected by terrorism and that rebuilding of its infrastructure should be the top priority of the KP Government.

Engr Amir Muqam said that Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has failed to bring peace to Kurram.

He said that all political leadership of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were on same page as for as resolution of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's rights are concerned.

He said that opposition would extend support to all quarters as for rights of the province was concerned.

Engr Amir Muqam said thanked the Governor Faisal Karim Kundi for holding of a successful APC.

126 data focal persons, public health coordinators trained

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Health Department KP in a collaboration with UHHS trained 126 data focal persons and Public health coordinators on disease surveillance and reporting.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Health Department, in collaboration with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), successfully launched a two-day training session on disease surveillance for data focal persons and public health coordinators.

The training is part of UKHSA's ongoing efforts to strengthen Pakistan's

public health system and builds on KP's achievements as a pioneer in implementing the IDSR system.

The combined efforts of the Directorate General Health Services and the National Institute of Health (NIH) have been instrumental in achieving significant milestones in public health surveillance.

In total 126 people were trained in three batches at Peshawar, Abbottabad and Swat.

This training equips Health Department staff with the skills to accurately interpret disease surveillance data, identifying the outbreaks before it

occurs and hence enabling quicker decision-making and earlier interventions to prevent outbreaks. With the rising threat of communicable diseases, this initiative will play a vital role in safeguarding public health and promoting community well-being.

The KP Health Department, NIH, and UKHSA remain steadfast in their commitment to protecting public health through timely and effective responses to health challenges. This training marks a significant step towards achieving a healthier and more resilient future for the province.

UoP's Green Campus initiative to be replicated



PESHAWAR (APP): The 'Green Campus' initiative of Peshawar University is going to be replicated in all the varities of the province to transform them into hubs of sustainability and environmental responsibility.

The replication plan includes nomination of Ambassador of Green Campus in all the universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including both public and private, shared Dr. Shakeel Khan, Head of Green Campus Peshawar University.

The Green Campus initiative was launched in 2023 by the Business Incubation Center (BIC) with the objective of transforming educational institutions into eco-friendly spaces, Dr. Shakeel told APP.

Now after achieving good results at Peshawar University, it has been decided to expand the programme in all the universities of the province, he added.

Under Green Campus initiative a number of research have been conducted to reorient the campus culture towards ecological consciousness, resource efficiency and circular economy principles.

Elaborating his view-

point, Dr. Shakeel said students conducted research and discovered that around seven to eight hundred thousand pieces of paper or plastic tea cups are discarded as trash on campus premises which can be utilized through recycling.

Volunteers of Green Campus also introduced clay pots for drinking tea and water to reduce paper and plastic litter.

Similarly, he continued, a device was introduced by students by use of which the ablation water at campus mosques can be reduced from 10 litre per ablation per person to three litre, saving thousands of gallons of water on a daily basis. The concept of not using polythene bags in campus premises is promoted by members of Green Campus, he added.

The Green Campus is mobilizing youngsters towards minimizing environmental impacts, enhancing campus resilience and providing a healthier, more inspiring learning and working environment.

The same practice will be extended to all the universities of the province and it would have a very positive impact on young generation, Shakeel hoped.

He said initially a com-

mittee comprising ten members would be constituted in each varsity with the task of initiating eco-friendly measures through involving of students and faculty members.

Shakeel said the vision of Green Campus will be expanded to the whole country and in this respect, contacts would be established with students and teachers at the national level.

He said it's need of the hour to involve educated youngsters in mitigating the impacts of climate change which is badly affecting all the segments of society not only at the country level but in the whole world.

It merits mention here that the Green Campus Initiative of Peshawar University has recently launched the Climate Governance & Journalism Fellowship, calling all youth who are passionate about climate change to join a two-month training programme.

The purpose of the eight-month hybrid programme is to impart training to its participants which can help them bring positive changes in their fields for the cause of improving the environment.

To address pressing healthcare challenges in South Health Deptt inks MoU with local organization

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Department of Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Thursday inked Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with local organizations to address healthcare challenges faced by the marginalized segments of South Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and ensure better facilities and service delivery to the people.

The MoU was inked in a ceremony held here at Department of Health which was attended by Advisor to Chief Minister on Health, Ihtisham Ali and Special Secretary Health for Polio Eradication, Abdul Basit.

Director General Department of Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr Muhammad Saleem, officials of Health Department, Provincial Emergency Operations Center and local organizations were present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Advisor to CM on Health, Ihtisham Ali appreciated the initiative saying that provision of basic healthcare services to the deprived segments particu-



larly women and children in southern parts of the province was a good step towards ensuring better healthcare and service delivery.

He said that this initiative places a strong emphasis on protecting children from vaccine-preventable diseases and ensuring maternal health services for women.

Under this initiative Health Department is refurbishing and operationalizing 35 healthcare facilities in 28 of the most underserved union councils across South KP out of which 18 facilities will be

revamped in D. I Khan while 13 facilities in District Tank, two in District Bannu and one each in District North Waziristan and in District South Waziristan Lower to meet community needs.

Sharing his viewpoints, Director General Health Dept KP, Dr Muhammad Saleem said that the Health Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is dedicated to transforming these facilities into sustainable centers of care that meet operational standards and serve as reliable sources of healthcare for the region.

Special Secretary Health

for Polio Eradication, Abdul Basit said that this step will help in provision of better and improved healthcare services to the people directly to the doorsteps of the most affected communities in the region.

Abdul Basit said that the refurbished facilities will provide a wide range of services, including routine immunizations for children to protect them from preventable diseases, maternal healthcare, treatment for common illnesses, and community outreach programs aimed at promoting health awareness.

Sector-wide training on edible oil fortification concludes

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A comprehensive sector-wide training workshop on Edible Oil Fortification and Quality Assurance concluded successfully today at the Serena Hotel, Peshawar. The event brought together approximately 35 millers from across the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to enhance their knowledge and skills in edible oil fortification, with a special focus on quality assurance, regulatory compliance, and addressing industry challenges.

The workshop was organized by Nutrition International in collaboration with TechnoServe and the Millers for Nutrition (M4N) initiative. It aimed to strengthen the edible oil sector's

capacity to combat micronutrient deficiencies in Pakistan through Miller for Nutrition initiatives. The sessions, led by distinguished trainers, industry experts, and food scientists from universities, highlighted best practices in fortification, quality standards, and testing methodologies.

A key highlight of the event was the address by Miss Fatima Shoaib Khan, Executive Member of the Pakistan Vanaspati Manufacturers' Association (PVMA), who attended as the Chief Guest. In her speech, Miss Fatima expressed her commitment to supporting the edible oil industry and pledged full cooperation with Nutrition International to enhance industry standards to address micronutrient defi-

ciencies. She emphasized the critical role of fortified edible oil in reducing vitamin A and D deficiencies in Pakistan and encouraged millers to actively participate in initiatives led by international development partners like M4N.

The agenda included informative sessions on the objectives and approach of the Millers for Nutrition program, strategies to support millers and their products at both national and international levels, and best practices for sample collection and testing to ensure the products meet standards set by the regulatory bodies. Other key presenters included Mr. Imtiaz Ali Shah, Provincial Program Manager, Nutrition International KP; Prof. Dr. Yasir Durrani, Department of

Food Sciences, University of Agriculture Peshawar; and Dr. Atta Ullah Jan, Department of Human Nutrition, Bacha Khan University, Charsadda. Their presentations provided valuable insights to deepen participants' understanding of edible food fortification and other food safety and quality aspects to be considered during the fortification process.

Participants were also introduced to the M4N Platform, a collective initiative designed to offer technical support and address challenges in achieving large-scale food fortification. Millers were encouraged to register on the platform to access training opportunities, technical guidance, and resources for regulatory compliance.

Interactive Anatomy Exhibition organized by KMU

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Medical University (KMU) Institute of Nursing Sciences, Peshawar, organized an interactive anatomy exhibition featuring various stalls showcasing human anatomy models. The event aimed to enhance practical learning and engagement among students through creative and educational displays.

The exhibition was inaugurated by KMU Registrar, Mr. Inam Ullah Khan Wazir, and the Director of the Institute of Nursing Sciences, Dr. Najma Naz, who also visited the stalls and commended the students for their efforts. Speaking on the occasion, the Registrar highlighted the importance of experien-

tial learning, emphasizing that activities like this play a crucial role in enhancing students' skills, confidence, and overall academic growth.

He remarked, "Our youth are brimming with talent; the real challenge is to provide them with opportunities. The creativity and dedication demonstrated by students in today's exhibition are a source of pride for all of us." He further stressed the need for organizing more such activities to nurture creativity and deepen understanding among students.

Dr. Najma Naz also praised the students for their hard work and reiterated her commitment to offering more interactive educational opportunities

in the future. She stated, "The goal of these activities is to uncover students' hidden potential and prepare them for professional and practical challenges."

The anatomy stalls featured models, charts, and live demonstrations, which

were well-received by both students and faculty members. This exhibition underscored KMU's dedication to fostering innovation in education and promoting excellence in the fields of nursing and allied health sciences.





In brief

Day for special persons marked F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: On the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Bunyad Foundation Hafizabad organized a program at local restaurant from the platform of Awaaz-II Programme in which persons with disabilities. Especially women with disabilities, social activists, civil society, Deputy Director Social Welfare and other line department officials participated. The aim of this program is to form a group of women with disabilities in Hafizabad district that can highlight their problems and provide a safe environment for these women. On this occasion, Project Coordinator Awaaz-II Hafizabad, Usman Ghani, Deputy Director Social Welfare, social activists and non-governmental organizations working on persons with disabilities emphasized the empowerment of persons with disabilities.

Free Eye medical camp held F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Haji Meher Deen (Late) 11th Free Eye Camp started at Chak No. 408 JB Khamanawala Road Toba Tek Singh. The free eye camp led by Sufi Farrukh Hassan Shah Qadri will continue for three days, in which Ophthalmologist Specialist doctors under the supervision of Dr. Muhammad Akram provide free eye surgery to patients as well as medicines. On the occasion of the inauguration of the Free Eye Camp, hundreds of patients were given free eye check-ups as well as their operations. Sufi Farrukh Hassan Shah Qadri said that service to humanity is the greatest worship. He said that the eyes are very important in the human body. We want to spread light in the world by restoring the light of the eyes.

Saboor defends Ph. D thesis F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: A resident of Wanda Amir area of Lakki Marwat district named Abdul Saboor Jan defended his Ph. D thesis at the Department of Political Science in Qurtaba University of DI Khan. He completed his thesis titled "Impacts of Al Qaeda and Afghan Taliban on US-Pakistan relations: Problems and Prospects for Regional Peace" under the supervision of Associate Professor Dr Muhammad Ismail. An external supervisor Dr Azmat Ali Shah evaluated his research work. Jan belongs to a respectable religious family of the district and he has expressed his desire to set up a school in Wanda Amir to impart religious and contemporary education to the children of destitute families. Meanwhile, The education department held a painting competition on anti-corruption themes in Lakki Marwat. The competition was held on the special instructions of provincial directress education Sameena Altaf and local deputy commissioner Zeeshan Abdullah as part of anti-corruption week activities. Students from public sector schools participated in the competition held on the premises of Government Higher Secondary School No. 3, Michenkel. The participants made paintings and displayed them to be marked by judges. Atif of Government Higher Secondary School No. 3, Michenkel stood first in the competition followed by Muhammad Okasha of Government Shaheed Muhammad Ghassan Khan Centennial Model High School No. 1, Lakki and Safwan Mehmood of Government Primary School No. 1, Totiabad who grabbed second and third positions respectively.

Visitors show interest in Gul-i-Dawoodi exhibition

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: The University of Malakand (UoM) inaugurated the annual 'Gul-i-Dawoodi' exhibition at its main campus here on Thursday. The UoM vice chancellor Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad along with other senior faculty members including admin officer Altaf Khan cut the ribbon and opened the exhibition during a function attended by faculty, administration officers, students and visitors.

According to the organizers, a total of 30 different kinds and colours of Gul-i-Dawoodi were put on display for the visitors. They said the exhibition would last for a week and everyone could visit the site.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof Dr Rashid said that Gul-i-Dawoodi was not less than a blessing for humans and insects in the autumn season as no other flower existed around k. He said that flowers were the symbols of love, peace and affection.

He said the varsity's gardeners started their preparations for the exhibition well before autumn and then exhibited the flowers in the month of December. The VC said the varsity regularly observed this exhibition in the start of December to create an attractive atmosphere for students and other visitors. He said the visitors savoured the beauties of flowers. He asked local residents to visit the exhibition along with their families and friends.

Hundreds of party workers to join JUI-F conference in Peshawar on 8th: The Lower Dir chapter of the Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl on Thursday announced that hundreds of the party workers would participate in the proposed 'Israel Muradabd' conference at Peshawar to be held on Dec. 8. Speaking at a news conference at the 'Timergara press club the JUI-F district chief Siraj ud Din, former provincial minister Muzafar Syed advocate, Muhammad Rahim Haqqani and others said the Peshawar conference would

set the direction of politics in the region.

The speakers said that motorcycle rallies would be held one day before the Peshawar conference in every district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They condemned the Israeli forces for killing innocent Palestinians during the last one year and said the world had kept criminal silence on the matter. The JUI-F leaders asked party workers to mobilize the general public in the district so that the event could be made a success.

PO arrested: The Munda police on Thursday claimed to have arrested a proclaimed offender wanted by it in a triple murder case since 2008. On special directives of the district police officer Salim Abbas Kulachi, the station house officer Munda Aqal Amin tasked a police team to crack down against POs in the area. The team traced one of the Pos through modern technology and human sources.

Talking to local journalists, the SHO Munda said that a proclaimed offender identified as Sher Bahadar, a resident of Takoro village was arrested. He said the accused had killed three persons over an old enmity in 2008 and then went underground. The accused is being interrogated, the official said. The DPO Sali Abbas awarded the policemen with appreciation certificates and praised their professionalism.

Meanwhile the DPO also held a meeting with police officers of the Jandol and Maidan circles and directed them to speed up their campaign against crimes in their respective areas. The SP investigation Rashid Ahmad, DSPs, SHOs and other officers were in attendance.

The DPO said that there was no room for criminals involved in drug smuggling, robberies and arms' smuggling. He directed the police officials to take solid steps for arresting the Pos and ensuring smooth traffic flow. He also asked the participants to keep close liaison with community elders as they played a vital role in curbing street crimes.

'Persons with disabilities' need empathy

F.P. Report

ZHOB: 'Persons with disabilities should not consider themselves inferior in society but should accept their disability as a challenge. The community needs care, inclusion, and empathy', emphasized Wing Commander Zhub Militia Lieutenant Col Tanzeel.

He was speaking at a ceremony to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities here at the Zhub Militia Headquarters (ZMHQs). The ceremony was organized by the Frontier Corps Balochistan in collaboration with the Social Welfare Department Balochistan. FC officials, teachers, disabled persons, and their families participated in the ceremony.

Maj Saad and Captain Sajid, while speaking on the occasion, said that around 1.2 billion people are suffering from some kind of disability globally, which makes fifteen percent of the total population of the world. Celebrating the day as the 'International Day of Persons with Disabilities' aims at highlighting the grievances of the community and making them realize that they should not consider themselves inferior in society.

'The United Nations Convention on the Rights of PWD is an international human rights treaty, and Pakistan also has laws for the rights and welfare of persons

with disabilities,' they maintained. The speakers lamented that the manifestation of mental health is considered a stigma in society. Due to this, its diagnosis and treatment resulted in severe complications. Timely diagnosis and treatment of persons with disabilities can help them avoid lifelong disability.

Head of the Towheed Technical Institute, Dr Mussarat Aziz, said that the proper way to call persons with disabilities is 'special persons', but calling them disabled persons is an insult, adding that the only weapon that persons with disabilities should possess for their survival and sustainable future is their education.

'Special educational institutions should be established at the government level for them, and they should be provided with entertainment opportunities too. Moreover, their health services and employment opportunities should also be taken into account, which is their right, so that their livelihoods can be improved,' she demanded.

Deputy Director of Social Welfare Department Malak Ehsan-ul-Haq Mandokhel thanked the FC Balochistan for organizing the ceremony and said that special persons deserve special attention and care in society. Physical disability should not be considered an obstacle in the way of their progress. 'The Balochistan government is always working for the wel-

fare of the community. Their five percent quota in government jobs is the highest number as compared to other provinces,' the official claimed.

Quoting the official data, he said that thirteen hundred disabled people are currently registered with the Social Welfare Department in Zhub alone. Along with a monthly stipend for them, there is also a dire need to equip them with technical skills. So that the stressful burden on their parents could be eased. He suggested.

At the end of the ceremony, a weapons exhibition was also held, where the participants took a keen interest. Gift packets were distributed among the disabled children who participated in the ceremony, while ration packs were also distributed among the families at their doorsteps who were unable to participate in the ceremony. It is worth mentioning that the International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) is an UN-sanctioned day that is celebrated globally on December 3rd every year. The annual observance of the day was proclaimed back in the 1990s that aims to promote community awareness, understanding, and acceptance of people with disabilities. The theme for this year, 2024, is 'Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future.'

KKKUK holds 26th academic council meeting

F.P. Report

KARAK: The Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak convened its 26th Academic Council meeting on Thursday. The meeting was chaired by the Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr Muhammad Naseer Ud Din. It was also attended by a prominent panel of academic and administrative experts, to decide matters of university academic journey.

The Panel included Muhammad Rahim, Controller of Examinations; Dr Abdul Hakim Shah, HoD Physics; Dr Abdul Aziz, HoD Zoology; Basar Ali, Lecturer Communication and Media studies Department, Faisal Nawab, Lecturer Renewable Energy department, Principal GPGC Karak, Prof Ajmal Khan; Principal Joint College Chokara Karak for BS, Nazia Hassan; Ilyas Tehsin, Deputy Registrar Meetings along with Director Academics and Research, Dr Fasih Ur



Rehman; and Director QEC, Dr Muhammad Anwar. Registrar Dr Ghani Ur Rehman and Dr Muhammad Zubair, director ORIC, also graced the occasion with his presence.

During the session, the Academic Council deliberated on vital academic issues and prepared recommendations to the syndicate regarding Board of Studies meetings, adoption of HEC policies, and the conduction of examinations. These discussions underscored the commitment of the council to maintain academic excellence in the university.

In his address, Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Naseer Ud Din appreciated the contribu-

tions of the council members in resolving the academic issues of the university. He reaffirmed the university's commitment to uphold a standard of education, emphasizing that educational excellence will be maintained at all costs. The Vice Chancellor further expressed his gratitude to the council members for their dedication and acknowledged their role in shaping future of the institution. Members of the Academic Council expressed their confidence in the dynamic leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Naseer Ud Din. They promised their support in advancing the university academic agenda.

Police arrests alleged culprits F.P. Report

LARKANA: Police arrested alleged culprit identified as Kashif Gopang, who was involved in various serious crimes, near Saidu Dero railway track within the limits of Nodero Police Station.

The accused are involved in the registration of cases in various police stations, on receiving such information from SSP Larkana Mir Ruhail Khan Khoso. Appreciation certificate orders have been issued for SHO Nodero Inspector Abdul Ghafoor Chutto and his team while the criminal records obtained so far from various police stations of the said arrested accused are listed below, further criminal records are being checked.

Police rescues two persons: Deputy Inspector General of Police Range Larkana Nasir Aftab Patahan on the strict instructions of Range Police Larkana conducted an operation against bandits in the rough area of police station Ghalpur of district Kashmir and Kandakot.

The police on the spot last month abducted 7-year-old innocent child Ahmed Ali son of Khalid Hussain Bhutto from the limits of Miani and Badani police station and on the other hand in Garhi Teghu a area of district Shikarpur, 50-year-old Muhammad Yusuf son of Muhammad Ramzan Sheikh, who was abducted from Mandi Shah area of Jhang district of Punjab province.

ACP performs reformed drama: Arts Council of Pakistan Larkana presented this 10th Larkana Theater Festival play "Meeran" written by Sikandar Abbasi under the direction of Javed Shaikh and Bader Soomro, the theme of this play was that the beasts living in this society oppress the oppressed people in the form of human beings, in which a great fish Marandi falls to the waves of the river and dies, and the wild man of the area.

The fish merchant in whom the devil awakens, tries to get Meeran, the wife of Mahani, by paying half of the money to those fishermen, and from Meeran's daughter. He wants a slave, but Meeran refuses the marriage. After that, the merchant comes down to Ghaliz Raktak, until Meeran's son also dies by drowning in the river. Meeran's brother and sister decide together where the honors will be auctioned. Instead of giving support, it is better to leave the world.

Farewell party organized F.P. Report

BUNER: On the retirement of District Prosecutor Syed Farrukh Sair, colleagues of the Prosecution Branch organized a farewell ceremony in his honor in which retired Syed Farrukh Sair DDP Fazal Hadi DPO Shah Hassan ADC Waseem Ahmed SP Investment Jahangir Khan Buner Bar General Secretary Advocate Ilyas Khan Journalist Abid and a large number of prosecutors and police officers participated.

During the ceremony Prosecution Branch Buner Bar District Administration and police officers presented souvenirs and garlanded him and hosted him lunch and respectfully sent to home in a procession of vehicles. DPPO (Retired) Farrukh Sair ADC Waseem Ahmed DPO Shah Hassan SP Jahangir Khan Regional Director Prosecution Malakand Division Saeed Naeem Prosecution Officers Welfare Association Provincial President Sangen Khan and DDDPP Fazal Hadi spoke.

Faisalabad Law College awarded position holders



F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Law College granted prizes to students and position holders were awarded medals during annual ceremony. The Chief Guest of the event was Justice Javed Iqbal, a judge of the Anti-Terrorism Court.

The ceremony was a vibrant display of students' talents, with some showcasing their singing skills, while others entertained the audience with humorous speeches. The atmosphere was filled with enthusiasm and excitement as students, faculty members, and dis-

tinguished guests gathered to celebrate the academic achievements of the students.

Rida Sindhu was awarded the Best Academic Achievement Award, which was met with thunderous applause from the audience. The ceremony was attended by Principal Major (Retd) Azhar Ghani, Chairman Muhstaq Khan Advocate Supreme Court, Director Amer Yousaf Advocate, and Zul Atif.

Guest of honor Justice Javed Iqbal praised the students' performance, saying, "These young individuals are the future of our coun-

try, and their confidence and hard work are a source of pride for us." Chairman Muhstaq Khan emphasized that "we are not only producing lawyers but also focusing on their character building, so they can become the best citizens for the future."

Director Amer Yousaf Advocate advised the students, saying, "in the profession of law, mastering skills along with adopting ethics is the key to success." Zul Atif stated, promoting self-confidence and creative abilities among young individuals is our top priority.

Abdullah Shah Institute achieves postgraduate status

F.P. Report

SEHWAN: Syed Abdullah Shah Institute of Medical Sciences, Sehwan, has reached a significant milestone in its journey toward growth and excellence. Initially established as a Taluka Hospital, the institute has now attained the esteemed status of a Postgraduate Teaching and Training Hospital, reflecting its relentless commitment to delivering exceptional healthcare services.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSPP) has formally approved postgraduate training programs for the Department of Surgery, Department of Medicine, and Department of Paediatrics. This landmark achievement signifies a transformative leap in advancing medical education and improving healthcare in the region.

This accomplishment has been celebrated by the local community and healthcare professionals alike. Many have expressed profound gratitude to Chief

Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, and Health Minister Sindh, Dr. Azra Pechuho, for their invaluable support in attaining this status for the institute.

The remarkable evolution of Syed Abdullah Shah Institute of Medical Sciences from a Taluka Hospital to a leading postgraduate institution highlights the unwavering dedication and vision of its leadership. Special recognition is extended to Dr. Moin-ul-Deeb Siddiqui, Director of the institute, whose tireless efforts have been pivotal in achieving this transformation.

Civil society members from Sehwan and the surrounding areas have also lauded this development, praising Dr. Siddiqui's contributions and expressing their best wishes for the institute's continued success in advancing medical education and healthcare services.

This achievement not only bolsters the healthcare infrastructure of the region but also creates



new opportunities for aspiring medical professionals. The institute is now setting its sights on an even greater goal: the establishment of a medical college in the area. The process for PC-II approval is currently underway and is expected to be completed within the current financial year.

Syed Abdullah Shah Institute of Medical Sciences remains committed to serving the community and playing a vital role in shaping the future of medical education and healthcare in the region.

WSSCM signs deal with Green trading

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The service contract for selling of compost has been signed between Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM) and Green Wish Trading Company Private Limited (GWTC). The contract was signed by Manager Municipal Services of WSSCM Muhammad Ishaq and Chief Executive Officer GWTC Kosar Ali.

On this occasion, Chief Executive Officer WSSCM Shahid Khan, General Manager Muhammad Khalil Akbar, Deputy Manager Finance Fazal Subhan were also present. Under the contract, Green Wish Trading Company will purchase all compost produced at Integrated Resource Recovery Center of WSSCM and the company will provide technical and administrative support. CEO of Green Wish

Trading Company Kosar Ali emphasized the company's goal of promoting organic fertilizers among farmers to combat climate change challenges in agriculture and ensure healthy crops. Almost 16 days activism on Gender based violence concluded: A special event held at Pakhtunkhwa College of Arts of Abdul Wali Khan University in connection with the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

Commissioner Mardan Division Javed Marwat was the chief guest on the occasion. Deputy Commissioner Mardan Dr. Azmatullah Wazir, Vice Chancellor Abdul Wali Khan University Dr. Zahir Shah, Secretary to Commissioner Sara Tawab, UN Women officials and Principal Pakhtunkhwa College of Arts Fazal Sattar Durrani also attended the event and while addressing,

they highlighted the rights of women and their role in society.

A large of faculty, students and civil society was also in attendance. A special theater show was also presented on the occasion in which the negative attitudes towards women in the society and various forms of violence against them were highlighted. Appreciating the role of women in the society, the DC Mardan said that women's facilitation desks will be established in Mardan to provide various facilities to women.

The chief guest Commissioner Mardan Division Javed Marwat said that women are an important part of the society and protecting their rights is the responsibility of everyone. He said that the 16 days of activities against gender-based violence from the UN platform is a good initiative.

World Soil Day marked at University of Agriculture Swat

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: The Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences at the University of Agriculture Swat organized a seminar on December 5 to commemorate World Soil Day. The event, themed "Caring for Soil: Measure, monitor, manage," aimed to highlight the importance of accurate soil data in understanding soil characteristics and supporting sustainable soil management.

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Jamal Khan, Chairman of the Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences, and Dr. Roshan Ali, Director of the Agriculture Research Institute Swat, delivered insightful talks on the history of World Soil Day and the impacts of climate

change and human activities on soil and water resources. The speakers emphasized the critical role of soil in sustaining life on Earth, providing food, fiber, and fuel, supporting biodiversity, regulating the climate, and filtering water.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Dawood Jan underscored the significance of soil conservation, stating that it is a collective responsibility to protect and conserve this vital resource for future generations. He emphasized the need to recognize the challenges posed by climate change and soil degradation, and to take concerted efforts to mitigate these threats.

Students of the Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences actively participated in the event, creating innovative models related to World Soil Day

and its theme. The Vice Chancellor appreciated the efforts of the students, faculty, and Chairman of the Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences in making the event a success.

The seminar served as a platform to raise awareness about the importance of soil conservation and sustainable management practices. As the world marks World Soil Day, the University of Agriculture Swat reaffirms its commitment to promoting sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Science, arts, cultural exhibition held: A one-day Science, Arts, and Cultural Exhibition was held at Khpal Kor Model School & College Boys Campus, Manganbagh, Mingora Swat, showcasing the creative talents of students in various fields.



Malala meets scholars at Oxford University

F.P. Report

LONDON: Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and global advocate for girls' education, recently met with scholars supported by her Oxford Pakistan Programme (OPP) scholarships at Lady Margaret Hall (LMH), Oxford University. This year, three exceptional women-Zainab Aziz and Ayeda Hamid from Pakistan, and Suha Albanna from Palestine-received Malala scholarships to pursue graduate degrees at Oxford.

The gathering celebrated the transformative role of OPP in enabling talented and deserving students from Pakistan to access world-class education. Malala engaged in a private discussion with the scholars, discussing their jour-



neys and aspirations, before attending a reception with members of the Pakistani scholars' community and distinguished guests, including LMH Principal Stephen Blyth, Oxford Vice-Chancellor Irene Tracey, and OPP donors Suleman Raza and Hamid Ismail.

In her speech, Malala praised OPP's efforts in empowering scholars, particularly women, and emphasized education's

role in driving societal progress. "Initiatives like OPP have the potential to change Pakistan's future by equipping scholars with the knowledge and skills to serve their communities," she said. The event highlighted OPP's dedication to fostering educational excellence and community building. Malala expressed gratitude to donors and reiterated her vision of a brighter, education-driven future for Pakistan.

Romania's front-runner says he's not pro-Russia

IZVORANI, Romania (AP): The surprise front-runner in Romania's presidential election insisted to The Associated Press in an interview that he is not pro-Russian - hours before Romania declassified intelligence alleging Moscow ran an online campaign to promote him to voters.

Far-right populist Calin Georgescu could not immediately be reached about the unprecedented intelligence release ordered by President Klaus Iohannis, which alleges a sprawling network of thousands of social media accounts across platforms like TikTok and Telegram that promoted Georgescu content. The intelligence indicated a modus operandi and resources "specific to a state actor."

"Romania is a target for aggressive Russian hybrid actions, including cyber attacks and information leaks ... and sabotage," a document from the Foreign Intelligence Service says. It was not immediately clear from the intelligence release whether Georgescu was aware of the alleged campaign or assisted in it. Sitting at his desk in an isolated compound north of Bucharest Georgescu told the AP that "I am interested in us being a sovereign and self-sufficient power.

Freedom and independence come from the ability to finance yourself, not from being financed by others."

He said Romania's Western alliances remain secure providing they "serve the sovereignty of the country and nothing else." But his success has left Western allies on edge. In the past, Georgescu - who declared zero campaign spending - praised Russian President Vladimir Putin as "a man who loves his country" and called Ukraine "an invented state." Still, he claims not to be pro-Russian.

Georgescu unexpectedly topped the polls in the first round of the Romanian presidential vote on Nov. 24 despite being a huge outsider, plunging the European Union and NATO country into unprecedented turmoil. He will face reformist Elena Lasconi of the Save Romania Union party in a final vote. His vision lies in Romania-first policies in a push to become self-reliant in areas such as energy, food, and water. Other key issues he wants to address if he wins the presidency include tackling high poverty rates, organized crime and drug use in schools.

Georgescu is also a self-professed Donald Trump supporter and said the

incoming US president "knows what he wants, he loves his people, he put America first, just like I put Romania first ... we have the same ideology." Georgescu has courted controversy for describing Romanian fascist and nationalist leaders from the 1930s and 1940s as national heroes. He denies having any connection to extremist organizations and says the quotes were misrepresented. "I am only for God and my country," he said. "Period."

Once a member of Romania's far-right Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, Georgescu left the party in 2022 after being accused by colleagues of being Russia-friendly and critical of NATO. Romania has played a key role in the US-led military alliance since Russia fully invaded neighboring Ukraine nearly three years ago. Observers wonder how a Georgescu presidency could affect NATO unity. "NATO is a defensive organization, but as long as it remains defensive, everything is fine," the presidential hopeful said. "We will evaluate and see what is to Romania's advantage Everything, no matter what, must benefit the Romanian people," referring to two NATO bases in Romania.

US SC's justice steps away from case

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch will not participate in an environmental case to be argued next week involving a proposed railway in Utah, the court said, a move that followed a call by some Democratic lawmakers for him to recuse over a possible conflict of interest.

The one-paragraph announcement made public by a court official came in a letter addressed to lawyers in the case due to be argued next Tuesday. The other eight justices will hear and decide the case, Gorsuch decided to withdraw from participating in the case consistent with the code of conduct adopted by the court last year, the statement said, but provided no further explanation.

US congressman Hank Johnson and 12 other

Democratic lawmakers sent a letter to Gorsuch on Nov. 21 urging his withdrawal because businessman Philip Anschutz, a former legal client of the justice, has "a direct financial interest in the outcome" of the case. The lawmakers said that the Anschutz Exploration Corporation and other companies tied to the businessman could be affected by the case. Johnson, who has called for stiffer ethics requirements at the Supreme Court, applauded Gorsuch for his recusal decision, calling it "the right and honorable thing." "It is important that the court show the public that it is not in the pocket of billionaire benefactors," Johnson added. "That said, I believe we need a system that does not just rely on individual justices to do the right thing in every case."

The court last year announced its first code of conduct for the justices amid revelations related to undisclosed luxury trips and other financial ties to wealthy benefactors, though it lacked any enforcement mechanism. The case from which Gorsuch withdrew involves a bid by a group of counties in Utah to build a railway line to connect the Uinta Basin in northeastern Utah to an existing freight rail network that would be primarily used to transport waxy crude oil. The case tests the scope of environmental impact studies that federal agencies must conduct under a 1970 federal law called the National Environmental Policy Act, which is aimed at preventing environmental harms that might result from major projects.

Man convicted in Riley's killing asks for a new trial

ATLANTA (AP): The Venezuelan man convicted of killing Georgia nursing student Laken Riley and sentenced to serve life in prison without parole has requested a new trial. Athens-Clarke County Superior Court Judge H. Patrick Haggard found Jose Ibarra guilty of murder and other charges in the February killing. Ibarra, 26, had waived his right to a jury trial, meaning Haggard heard and decided the case.

Attorneys for Jose Ibarra filed a motion for a new trial. The filing says the verdict is "contrary to law"

and "contrary to the evidence," and that the court "committed other errors of law that necessitate a new trial." The lawyers didn't elaborate, but they wrote that Ibarra reserves the right to supplement the motion "after a full and thorough view of the facts and circumstances attendant to the trial of this case." The killing became a flashpoint in the national debate about immigration during this year's presidential campaign. Federal immigration authorities said after Ibarra's arrest that he had illegally entered the US in 2022 and

was allowed to stay in the country while he pursued his immigration case. Prosecutors said Ibarra encountered Riley while she was running on the University of Georgia campus on Feb. 22 and killed her during a struggle. Riley, 22, was a student at Augusta University College of Nursing, which also has a campus in Athens, about 70 miles (115 kilometers) east of Atlanta. Haggard on Nov. 20 found Ibarra guilty of all 10 counts against him and sentenced him to the maximum possible term for each.

Trump reverses course, names new White House lawyer

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US President-elect Donald Trump reversed course and selected David Warrington as his top White House lawyer, reassigning his previous choice, William McGinley, to a role working with Elon Musk's outside government efficiency group.

Warrington, who has served as Trump's personal counsel and a lawyer for his campaign, currently leads the political law unit at the Dhillon Law Group, where he is a partner. "He is an esteemed lawyer and Conservative leader," Trump wrote in a post on Truth Social announcing the change.

Meanwhile, McGinley, will serve as the lead lawyer for a Trump-created government efficiency board dubbed the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE. Trump had initially named McGinley, who served in his first presidential term as White House cabinet secretary, as his White House lawyer on Nov. 12. Trump has indicated that the DOGE entity led by billionaire Musk and former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy would operate outside the government but its planned operations remains unclear. Musk and Ramaswamy, who both have business ties impacted by the US government that could be conflicts of interest, have called for mass layoffs of government workers and billions of dollars in budget cuts.

McGinley "will play a crucial role in liberating our Economy from burdensome Regulations, excess spending, and Government waste. He will partner with the White House and the Office of Management and Budget to provide advice and guidance to end the bloated Federal Bureaucracy," Trump wrote. Warrington has also served as a lawyer for Michael Flynn, Trump's national security adviser during his first White House term, and led a lawsuit for the National Association for Gun Rights over forced reset triggers.

Venezuelan migrants keep arriving in Colombia

PALMIRA (AP): It's been three years since Douarleyka Velásquez abandoned her career in human resources. Her new job is not what she had planned for, but still feels rewarding. As a cleaning supervisor at a migrant shelter in Colombia, she gets to comfort Venezuelans who, just like herself, fled their homes hoping for a better life.

"I feel that in here I can help my brothers, my countrymen who come and go," said Velásquez, 47, from Pope Francis Migrant Shelter in Palmira, a city in southwestern Colombia. The UN refugee agency, UNHCR, estimates that more than 7.7 million Venezuelans have left their homeland since 2014, the largest exodus in Latin America's recent history, with most settling in the Americas, from neighboring Colombia and Brazil to more distant Argentina and Canada.

According to the International Organization for Migration, Colombia hosts the highest population of migrants from Venezuela. Colombian records show that as of mid-2024, more than 2.8 million Venezuelans were in the country. Pope Francis Migrant Shelter was founded in 2020 to address this phenomena, said the Rev. Arturo Arrieta, who oversees human rights initiatives in the Catholic Diocese of Palmira. The city is mostly a transit point, Arrieta said. Migrants pass through on their way to the Darien Gap, a treacherous route to reach North America. A few others, who found it impossible to keep migrating or yearned for their past life, make a stop before heading back home. "It's one of the few shelters en route," Arrieta said. "The international community has stopped financing places like this, thinking that it would discourage immigration, but that will never happen.



GAZA: Rescuers sift through charred debris after an Israeli strike hit a makeshift camp for displaced Palestinians, in al-Mawasi, Khan Younis.

Iowa sues Biden administration for citizenship status

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP): Iowa officials sued the Biden administration for access to information on the citizenship status of more than 2,000 registered voters they had questioned in the weeks leading up to the 2024 election.

The complaint details a back and forth with the federal government after state election officials checked voter rolls against a list of people who identified themselves as noncitizens with the state's Department of Transportation. The vast majority of the 2,176 names had subsequently registered to vote or voted, meaning that some of those people could have become naturalized citizens in the lapsed time.

Secretary of State Paul Pate's office requested information from the US Department of Homeland Security on the citizenship status of those individuals but did not get it, the complaint alleges. Federal authorities' "failure meant that the State had to rely on the best - imperfect - data it had available to ensure that no Iowan's vote was canceled by an illegal, noncitizen vote," a joint statement from Pate and Attorney General Brenna Bird said.

A DHS spokesperson said in an email that the federal agency does not comment on pending litigation but added that US Citizenship and Immigration Services have "engaged with Iowa and will continue to correspond with them directly through official channels." Two weeks before Election Day, when early voting was already underway, Pate told county elections officials to challenge the ballots case by any of the named individuals and have them cast a provisional ballot instead. The American

Civil Liberties Union of Iowa then sued Pate on Oct. 30 on behalf of four voters who are naturalized citizens but were named on the list, calling into question the accuracy of the DOT's information and alleging Pate infringed upon their right to vote. Their request for a stop to the ballot challenges was denied by a federal judge on Nov. 3.

It is illegal for non-US citizens to vote in federal elections, but there is no evidence that it is occurring in significant numbers, though Iowa and some other states say they have identified dozens of such cases. Some individuals in Iowa had registered to vote or voted before identifying themselves as noncitizens to the DOT, so Pate's office sent those names to law enforcement and Bird's office for investigation and potential prosecution. But Pate's critics have said even those individuals might be wrongly identified as noncitizens since the DOT data has proven unreliable. The ACLU and ACLU of Iowa said in a statement that the state would be getting the information it needed from the federal government if it agreed not to misuse it.

"Studies, journalistic efforts, and repeated attempts by government officials in Iowa and nationally have found very few non-citizens who have voted, out of the many millions of people who vote," the statement said. "This wasteful lawsuit isn't going to change that. State leaders should spend their time on actual problems that face our state." Pate's office has not released any additional information on the number of people who turned out to vote, whose ballots were challenged or whose citizenship status was ultimately confirmed. The

Des Moines Register, based on preliminary information collected from 97 of the state's 99 counties, found at least 500 of the identified individuals proved their citizenship status and had their votes counted. Another 74 ballots were rejected, according to the Register, mostly because those people did not return to prove their citizenship status. The majority of the people on Pate's list did not vote in the 2024 election, according to the Register's data from county auditors. Concern about elections being undermined by noncitizen voting had been a focus of political messaging this year from President-elect Donald Trump and other Republicans, even though such voting is rare in American elections.

Since no voter had been removed from Iowa's lists, Pate tried to differentiate Iowa from other states, such as Virginia, where more than 1,600 voters were purged from the voter registration list in the past two months in a program enacted through an Aug. 7 executive order from Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin. The Justice Department and a coalition of private groups sued Virginia in early October, arguing that state election officials violated federal law's 90-day "quiet period" ahead of elections. The US Supreme Court's conservative majority said that Virginia could continue. Ahead of the Nov. 5 election, Pate said the DOT information was the "only list that we have available to us" without access to federal immigration records. "We're balancing this process. We want everyone to be able to vote. That's why none of them have been taken off the voter rolls," he said. But "we do owe an obligation to make sure that they are citizens now."

Democratic officials blame Harris election loss on outside factors

WASHINGTON (Reuters): While many Democrats are calling for a party overhaul after Kamala Harris lost every battleground state to Republican Donald Trump in the presidential election, some party officials insist it could have been worse and are asking for fresh donations. The party lost ground in the Nov. 5 election among once-core working class, Latino and women voters. Republicans emerged in charge of the White House and both houses of Congress.

Democratic National Committee chair Jaime Harrison sought to play down the extent of the defeat in a memo. "Although Democrats did not achieve what we set out to do, Trump wasn't able to capture the support of more than 50% of the electorate and Democrats beat back global headlines that could've turned this squeaker into a landslide," Harrison wrote. "Trump's election is far from a mandate."

Harrison, who has said he plans to leave his post next year, said the result fit a global pattern in which 80% of incumbent parties lost seats or vote share in 2024. The party's heavy campaign spending across the country helped prevent "what could have been a larger red wave" of Republican victories, he said. Far-right parties have gained ground in Europe, especially with younger voters, and are questioning climate change and pro-immigration policies. Democrats raised about \$1.5 billion in the 2024 campaign, much of it after Harris took over from President Joe Biden as the candidate in late July. Nonetheless, the campaign finished the election in the red, financially and politically. "Continued investment in the central party apparatus is crucial," Harrison said. Harris' loss shocked many Democratic voters and activists who thought a flood of volunteers, fundraising and fresh momentum would help her win. Some Democrats blamed Biden for not stepping aside earlier. US voters identified jobs and the economy as the country's most pressing problem. Reuters/Ipsos opinion polls found, and were concerned about high prices. Trump also claimed, without evidence, a rise in crime due to illegal immigration and blamed immigrants for high prices. Top Harris advisers, including her campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon, deputy campaign manager Quentin Fulk, and advisers

Stephanie Cutter and David Plouffe cited other outside factors in a recent interview. They said Americans' post-COVID economic woes and the short 107-day span of the Harris campaign worked against Democrats and the damage caused by two hurricanes in the final weeks before Election Day diverted attention from Harris' whirlwind campaign.

"This political environment sucked, okay? We were dealing with ferocious headwinds, and I think people's instinct was to give the Republicans, and even Donald Trump, another chance. So we had a complicated puzzle to put together here in terms of the voters," Plouffe told podcast Pod Save America last week. James Carville, a party strategist who was the top political aide to former President Bill Clinton, has called for an audit of the campaign and the Democratic Super Political Action Committee known as Future Forward. He said fundraisers are exhausted. "They're really pissed now, and the damage that the 2024 campaign has done, that the damage that this decade has done to the Democratic brand is almost unfathomable," Carville said on a recent podcast. Senator Bernie Sanders,

a former presidential candidate, is among lawmakers blaming the loss on Democrats' failure to focus on working class issues. Others have clamored for new leadership, especially after hearing the Harris campaign managers' explanations. "If I see a dumpster fire and we've put it out and I want to work on how to prevent future dumpster fires, I'm not going to go talk to the arsonists," Aidan Kohn-Murphy, the founder of Gen Z for Change, a political activism group, said on TikTok. The DNC invested \$264 million in US states, Harrison wrote in memo, helping to pass state abortion rights measures, win legislative seats in others and make it easier for workers to unionize. Trump defeated Harris in the Electoral College 312-226 but received slightly less than 50% of the popular vote because of third-party candidates. His margin of victory over Harris by total votes -- around 1.5% -- ranks 44th out of 51 elections since 1824, Harrison said. Democrats won Senate seats in four states that Trump won, and Democratic Senate candidates in battleground states overperformed Harris by an average of 5 percentage points, Harrison wrote.

Ohio's top elections official rejects GOP challenge

OHIO (AP): Ohio's top elections official has rejected a Republican challenge over the legal residency of one of the state's Democratic members of Congress. Secretary of State Frank LaRose made the decision late last week, saying the complaint brought by a political activist did not provide "clear and convincing" proof that Rep. Emilia Sykes had relocated from Akron to her husband's home in Columbus.

The decision was left to LaRose after the Summit County Board of Elections tied 2-2 along party lines on Oct. 24 on whether the challenge should be taken up. The residency challenge came in the days before the election because her husband, Franklin County Commissioner Kevin Boyce, had listed Sykes as a member of his household in Columbus. Sykes called the allegation that she doesn't maintain residence in Akron "a deeply offensive lie." The

couple has said they maintain separate residences, and Boyce subsequently filed an affidavit with the Ohio Ethics Commission to clarify that his wife lives in Akron. Ohio law does not require members of Congress to live in their districts.

Sykes, 38, was allowed to cast her ballot for the November elections in Akron while she waited for a decision in the case. She defeated Republican Kevin Coughlin to win her second

term in a district centered on that city, where she comes from a family steeped in state politics. Her father, Vernon Sykes, is a sitting state senator and her mother, Barbara, is a former state lawmaker and statewide candidate. In a letter sent Friday to the county elections board, LaRose noted that Sykes provided evidence that she lives at her Akron address and that Boyce had filed the clarifying affidavit.

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Opportunity for seeds of peace to be planted

UNTIL quite recently, a negotiated end to the Russia-Ukraine conflict seemed to be a non-option for either Ukraine or the NATO countries which promised to have its back. Negotiating with Russia, as opposed to defeating it, was apparently off-limits for both Kyiv and its NATO supporters. Anything short of Ukraine reclaiming territory lost to Russia since 2022, even 2014, appeared to be unacceptable.

There has been a subtle change in the rhetoric of Ukraine's Western allies, however, that may have significant implications for the way the conflict, which has lasted nearly three years, unfolds, or even potentially ends.

While the latest discussions about NATO's support for Ukraine remain focused on sustaining, if not significantly boosting, the flow of aid to it, that might not be simply business as usual.

In a news conference on Tuesday, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte urged allies to increase military aid to strengthen Kyiv's position should it enter negotiations with Moscow.

Likewise, while warning that a Russian victory would threaten Europe's security, stability and prosperity, United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer for the first time mentioned the prospect of the war ending in a negotiated settlement.

Even the letter Ukraine's Foreign Ministry sent to the NATO foreign ministers' meeting in session now in Brussels effectively opened the door to a negotiated solution, although the precondition of NATO membership is likely to be a stumbling block.

How things actually play out, however, probably hinges on how the incoming US administration approaches the situation.

While mystery surrounds the US president-elect's claim that he will be able to end the conflict in "24 hours" after his inauguration, with much speculation about what, if anything, he has up his sleeve, the fact that maneuvering a negotiated end to the conflict has become a common topic itself brings hope that there is a general consensus building that the hostilities have dragged on for long enough.

Despite some obvious foot-dragging at times, the NATO allies have generally followed the Joe Biden administration's lead on Ukraine. A lead that has been characterized by its consistent pugnacious animosity.

While the Biden administration is fast-tracking military aid to Ukraine in its last days in office, it is probably not with the intention of giving Kyiv leverage in negotiations with Moscow, but rather with the aim of convincing it that it can prevail by force of arms.

Having finally given the green light to Ukraine to use US-supplied long-range missiles against targets inside Russia, the Biden administration on Monday announced a new package of weapons for Ukraine worth \$725 million.

The challenge now for the international community is how to seize the window of opportunity that has opened to get the two belligerents to sit down for actual negotiations and make the necessary compromises to secure a deal.

Since Kyiv's demand for NATO membership would seem to preclude the possibility of any face-to-face talks with Moscow, a way must be found to provide the two conflicting parties with credible security guarantees as a prelude to meaningful talks aimed at a political solution. Throughout the conflict, China has held an objective and impartial position and promoted peace talks. To this end, it has consistently urged the parties to the conflict to de-escalate the situation and create conditions conducive to direct dialogue.

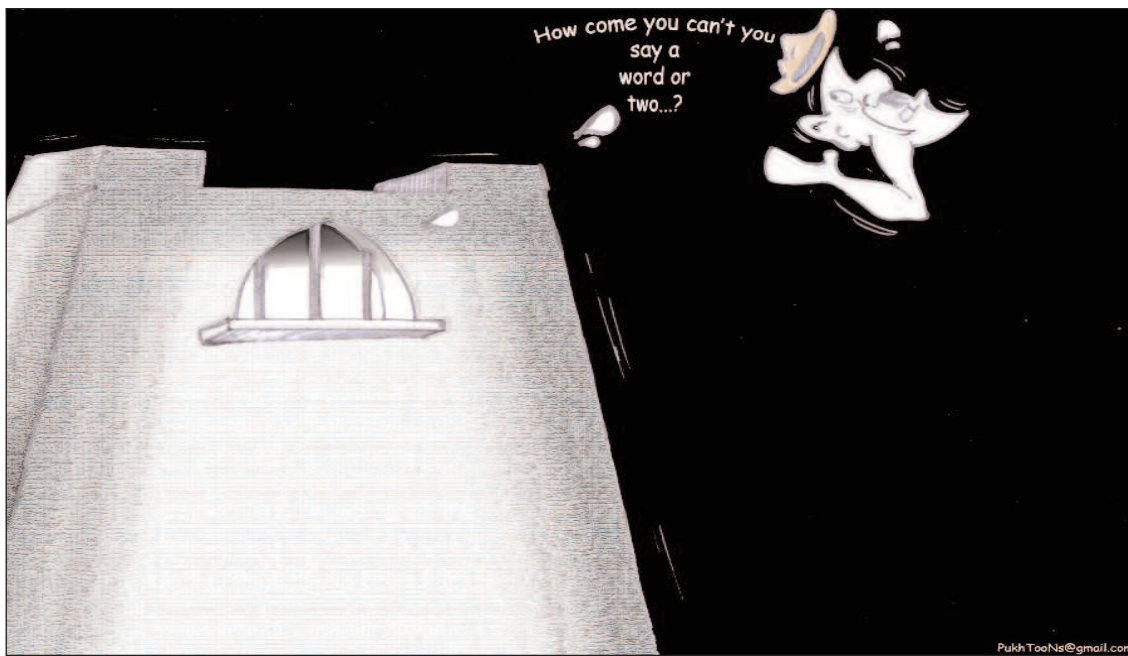
With talk of negotiations on NATO's lips, China hopes that the belligerents will step away from their entrenched positions on the preconditions for peace talks, so they can explore the pathways to a lasting political settlement of their differences.

China will continue to carry out exchanges with all stakeholders and concerned parties in the belief that seeds of hope can be planted for peace.

Although the protracted conflict between Russia and Ukraine has deep-rooted causes, China believes that, if handled with care, the toxicity of these rotten roots can be treated so there is fertile soil for a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

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Western double standards on international arrest warrants

Farhan Ahmad

SOME countries' reactions to the International Criminal Court warrants to arrest Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant have revealed their inconsistencies, if not outright double standards.

Granted, this is the first time officials from a Western-allied country have been the subject of warrants issued by the court. However, given the extraordinary support that it enjoyed in the past, it is surprising how the same countries would come to the opposite conclusion in the case of Israel. While some, such as the US and Hungary, have outright rejected the International Criminal Court's decision, others have issued convoluted opinions undermining them. Still others have said that maybe they were wrong in the past, when they were too quick to support the arrest warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Immediately after the warrants were issued, US President Joe Biden issued a statement calling them "outrageous," adding: "Let me be clear once again: whatever the ICC might imply, there is no equivalence — none — between Israel and Hamas. We will always stand with Israel against threats to its security."

Some US lawmakers went overboard. In an interview with Fox News last week, Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham threatened US allies: "If you are going to help the ICC as a nation and force the arrest warrant against Bibi (Netanyahu) and Gallant, the former defense minister, I will put

sanctions on you as a nation." He added more clarity: "To any ally, Canada, Britain, Germany, France. If you try to help the ICC, we're going to sanction you ... We should crush your economy, because we're next."

On other occasions, Graham emphasized that the court was not established so it can "come after us," referring to fears that it could soon turn on US politicians over Washington's role in Israel's ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip. For some time, the US has strenuously lobbied countries not to cooperate with the court should it issue arrest warrants against US personnel. Now the threshold has been raised to include Israeli officials.

While a minority in Congress have adopted a more balanced approach, Republican Sen. Tom Cotton referred to the International Criminal Court as a "kangaroo court" and its prosecutor Karim Khan as a "deranged fanatic." He ludicrously threatened military action against the court, The Hague and the Netherlands, a close US ally, if the Israeli officials were to be detained and put on trial, citing The Hague Invasion Act of 2002 as allowing such action. Although a military invasion of an ally is outlandish, the court itself could be sanctioned if American lawmakers get their way, meaning its American-based financial dealings and funding could be in jeopardy. This would make its work more difficult. While US politicians appear to be under a spell when it comes to Israel and the International Criminal

Court, it is surprising that some other nations, which have invested in the past in protecting international law administration, including this court, are now doubtful.

Take France's initial reaction to the arrest warrants against Netanyahu and Gallant. Le Monde reported last week that the court "has been dealt a harsh blow by one of its founding states, which also prides itself on being the 'homeland of human rights.'" It cited Paris' "cryptic statement undermining both the authority of this judicial body and the arrest warrants."

France at first said that the arrest warrants were "legally complex," before the French government implied that it would not comply with the court's decision because Netanyahu enjoys immunity due to Israel not being a signatory to the Rome Statute, the court's founding treaty.

The French Foreign Ministry also issued a statement saying that, "France intends to continue to work in close collaboration with Prime Minister Netanyahu and other Israeli authorities to achieve peace and security for all in the Middle East." Out of all the G7 countries, only France has cited alleged immunity for Netanyahu and the US has outright rejected the court's action without citing immunity. The rest of the grouping have been silent or issued ambiguous statements.

Paris later tried to climb out of the "immunity" trap it set for itself, because France enthusiastically supported all previous International Criminal Court warrants, even when they were issued

for individuals whose countries were not members. The argument is legally void because, if the officials of a country can become immune just by not being a signatory to the statute, then all that the perpetrators of war crimes or crimes against humanity need to do is decline to join the court or withdraw their signatures from its treaty, leaving the court ineffective and useless.

From a legal point of view, the crimes cited by the court in the arrest warrants fit the descriptions set forth in the Geneva Conventions and, more relevantly, the Rome Statute itself, for the definition of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The court took six months to deliberate over the prosecutor's request.

Its judges are among the world's most highly regarded lawyers and scholars of international humanitarian law, including for example Theodor Meron, the 94-year-old American lawyer and professor of international law. Meron was born in Poland in 1930, emigrated to Palestine in 1945 and later became a senior Israeli official. He served as a judge of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. After all, as Josep Borrell, the former EU chief diplomat, said: "Respecting the ICC is the only way to have global justice." As he left office last week, he added some parting advice to his successors: "Use our leverage," meaning the EU's, adding, "We have leverage but we do not want to use it."

Papa Biden is a liar, and American justice is a lie

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

PAPA Joe Biden is a blatant liar and the embodiment of a perverse lie that sustains America's phantom democracy.

Only the familiar stable of wind-up partisans who appear on US cable news networks and silly naifs who cling to the fantastical idea that America is a shining-city-on-a-hill model of liberty, equality, and fraternity would deny the essential truth of that blunt opening sentence.

That is why the overwrought brouhaha over Papa Biden's predictable volte-face to pardon his wayward son after insisting that he would not exercise his prerogative to wave a presidential wand and erase Hunter's criminal convictions, strikes me as missing a larger and obvious point.

All presidents lie. It is the American way. It always has been. It always will be.

Indeed, there are two defining qualities that every American president must possess in order to fulfill their duties and responsibilities. They must be able to lie with an almost pathological ease and they must be content to order others to kill without pause or a scintilla of remorse.

Presidents lie about war. They lie about peace. They lie about negotiating "truces". They lie about "intelligence" produced by spy services whose business is deceit. They lie about bridging the schism between rich and poor. They lie about protecting "innocents" at home and abroad. They lie about preventing the planet from burning into extinction.

They lie about pardons. They lie when they place their hand on a bible and swear to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States". The biggest lie of all is when

they reassure "the American people" — again and again — that they will, without fail, tell the truth.

Which raises a necessary question: Why do they lie? They lie to convince the gullible that presidents are "peacemakers" who oppose war rather than fuel conflict with money and arms.

They lie to obscure the fact that, as president, their principal obligation is to serve the parochial interests of the few at the debilitating expense of the many.

They lie to promote a myth that America is a symbol of hope and freedom in order to deny the historical record that US president after president has been the unrepentant architect of loss and suffering on an almost incomprehensible scale across this ever-turbulent world.

Biden's eager complicity in the genocide being perpetrated with such ferocious and lethal efficiency in the desolate remnants of Gaza and the occupied West Bank is more convincing evidence of America's defining and anti-human past, present and, no doubt, future.

America's 46th president has passed the litmus test that every president must pass. Biden has proven throughout his septic tenure as president that he has, all along, had the right stuff all right to be commander-in-chief.

And, like many other presidents who preceded him and are, of course, destined to follow him, Biden will have a shrine — euphemistically known as a presidential library — built in his honour to celebrate his facility to lie and kill.

So, the duelling camps on what constitutes the "right" and "left" in America who, on one hyperbolic side, are excoriating Biden for his hypocritical assault on the

"rule of law" and, on the other sentimental wing, are defending the president's understandable act of love, are both guilty not only of naivete, but a glaring double standard which confirms their profoundly unserious natures.

Biden's detractors wail like colicky babies that he has reneged on a solemn pledge not to grant his second, troubled son clemency because they were convinced of this president's once-uncompromising fidelity to the "norms" that gird the American democratic "experiment".

This may come, I suspect, as a revelation to these starry-eyed chumps, but the pampered and powerful elites in Washington, DC and beyond — who dictate the terms and conditions of the American "experiment" — have never had to abide by any of your fictive "norms".

There are an exculpatory set of rules for the governors and a decidedly different set of incriminating rules for the governed.

Exhibit A: Not one of the grinning nest of Wall Street plutocrats who engineered the sub-prime mortgage racket that triggered the near collapse of the rigged US economy and caused such grief and hardship among "Main Street" America were held to even a perfunctory measure of account.

Instead, they were handed golden, life-time-do-not-go-to-Rikers tickets and bailed out by the legion of "blue-collar" American taxpayers whom they damaged, often beyond repair.

Not surprisingly, they were abetted on this rule-of-law defacing score by a succession of compliant presidents.

In happy league with their grateful Wall Street patrons and donors, not one sitting president has ever

been charged, let alone convicted and jailed, like millions of their much less fortunate "fellow citizens".

God-fearing, law-abiding, Boy Scouts all. I suggest the "I'm shocked, shocked that the president lied" crowd take out a tissue and dab their embarrassing spigot of crocodile tears.

As for The Washington Post columnist and his like-minded brethren on CNN and MSNBC who chafed at Papa Biden's U-turn but gave him credit for saving his kid from an unpleasant fate since that's what any father would do, apparently these maudlin apologists require reminding that poor, little Hunter is a 54-year-old married man who ought to be responsible for his illicit actions and his pop is the president of the United States.

The scales of justice aren't blind when your dad can lift the blindfold and take a good, long peek at the accused in the dock to find out whether they are related to you or not.

Papa Biden should spare an ounce of his mercy for the deserving victims of the "miscarriages of justice" that are rife in America's unsparing "judicial system", which routinely imprisons the poor, minorities, non-violent offenders, and the innocent, who, in many outrageous cases, face the death penalty.

Towards that — dare I say it — just end, Biden better carve out some time during his dwindling days in office to call the Innocence Project — a group of honourable volunteers who work hard to free the condemned — and seek its advice on who he should pardon next.

That might temper the shameful stain on the "truth" and "justice" he has left behind.

— Aljazeera

The arrogance of power: A reminder of divine sovereignty

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

POWER is a formidable force that holds the potential to shape societies, dictate fates, and influence minds. Its allure often tempts individuals into a dangerous realm of arrogance and entitlement. The intoxication of power is unlike any other; it speaks loudly, sometimes deafening its possessor to reason, morality, and the delicate balance of life. This phenomenon has been observed throughout history, as those who ascend to positions of authority often become blind to the responsibilities and transient nature of their station. They forget that the very source of power, Allah Almighty, can retract it at His will, for no worldly rise is eternal.

The intoxication of power stems from the illusion of invincibility. A person who achieves

of individuals who forget their Creator and the transient nature of their authority. The intoxication of power leads them to commit injustices, oppress the weak, and prioritize their desires over the collective good. Such behavior not only invites the wrath of Allah but also paves the way for their downfall. The Quran warns: "And We do not send the Messengers except as bringers of good tidings and warners. And those who disbelieve dispute by [using] falsehood to [attempt to] invalidate thereby the truth, and they have taken My verses and that of which they are warned in ridicule. And who is more unjust than one who is reminded of the verses of his Lord but turns away from them and forgets what his hands have put forth? Indeed, We have placed over their hearts coverings, lest they

The intoxication of power stems from the illusion of invincibility. A person who achieves power begins to feel untouchable, surrounded by sycophants and shielded from critique. This state of mind leads to arrogance and a sense of superiority over others. The Quran cautions against this mindset, reminding believers of the story of Pharaoh, who, in his intoxication of power, declared himself a god. His downfall was swift and severe, a reminder that no one is beyond the reach of divine justice. Allah states in the Quran: "Indeed, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people into factions, oppressing a sector among them... Indeed, he was of the corrupters" (Surah Al-Qasas, 28:4). His fate serves as a stark warning that the abuse of power leads to ruin. The fall of those intoxicated by power is inevitable, for apart from Allah, every rise has a fall. This universal truth is often ignored in the euphoria of success. Yet, history is replete with examples of once-mighty rulers and leaders who met humbling ends. Their stories serve as lessons for those who come after them, yet the cycle continues. Why does this happen? The Quran explains that such arrogance stems from ingratitude. Allah says: "And when We bestow favor upon man, he turns away and distances himself; but when evil touches him, then he is full of extensive supplication" (Surah Ha-meem-Asajadah, 41:51).

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The blindness caused by power is not just a loss of sight but a loss of insight. It clouds judgment, leading individuals to act against principles they once held dear. This blindness often manifests as an inability to empathize with others or recognize their struggles.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) warned against such arrogance, stating: "The most despicable among people in the sight of Allah on the Day of Judgment will be those whom others avoid because of their arrogance and tyranny" (Sahih Bukhari). This Hadith underscores the responsibility that comes with power and the dire consequences of misusing it.

The Quran further emphasizes that power is a test from Allah. It is not a privilege to be abused but a trust to be upheld with justice and humility. Allah says: "Say, 'O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will. You honor whom You will, and You humble whom You will. In Your hand is [all] good. Indeed, You are over all things competent'" (Surah Aal-e-Imran, 3:26). This verse is a reminder that power is neither permanent nor absolute; it is a temporary responsibility that must be exercised with accountability.

Despite these reminders, history and contemporary times reveal countless examples

understand it, and in their ears deafness. And if you invite them to guidance, they will never be guided — then ever" (Surah Al-Kahf, 18:56-57).

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The antidote to the intoxication of power is humility and a constant remembrance of Allah. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) embodied this principle throughout his life. Despite being the leader of a growing Muslim Ummah, he lived modestly, treated everyone with kindness, and upheld justice without favor. He reminded his followers: "The leader of a people is their servant" (Sunan Abu Dawood). This Hadith encapsulates the essence of leadership in Islam: it is not about dominion but service.

In conclusion, power is a trust from Allah, not a possession to be abused. Its intoxication is a test of character, separating those who rule with justice and humility from those who succumb to arrogance and tyranny. The Quran and Hadith provide ample guidance on the proper use of power and the consequences of its misuse. As believers, it is imperative to recognize that all power belongs to Allah alone. The one who gives can take it away, and every rise is followed by a fall. Remembering this truth can keep a person grounded, ensuring that their authority is exercised with responsibility, justice, and a constant awareness of their accountability before Allah.

There is now a window of opportunity for peace in Syria

ON November 27, merely hours after a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Lebanon came into effect, a coalition of Syrian opposition factions launched their biggest military operation in years. Led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), they attacked positions of the Syrian regime in Aleppo province, quickly advancing as their opponents retreated.

Within days, they managed to gain control of Syria's second-largest city Aleppo and the entire Idlib governorate, reaching the outskirts of Hama.

This unexpected campaign by the Syrian opposition has rekindled a conflict that was long considered "frozen". It has also shattered the perception that Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad has achieved victory and may pave the way for renewed peace negotiations.

For nearly 10 years, a coalition of Russian forces, Hezbollah, and Iran-linked groups have helped al-Assad retain control of most of Syria, with the exception of the north.

Over the past two years, this coalition has been degraded due to a series of developments, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and this year's Israeli war on Lebanon.

In 2023, after the rebellion of mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin and his subsequent death, Russia ordered his Wagner Group forces, which had played a critical role in ground battles, to leave Syria. This year, Moscow was forced to pull some of its air force units back from Syria which had long provided

much-needed air cover for the Syrian regime forces. The fleet of Russian aircraft currently stationed at the Hmeimim base in Latakia has dwindled compared with its peak strength before the onset of the Ukraine war.

Hezbollah forces deployed in Syria have also declined. The war with Israel inflicted heavy losses on the group, as many of its

For nearly 10 years, a coalition of Russian forces, Hezbollah, and Iran-linked groups have helped al-Assad retain control of most of Syria, with the exception of the north. Over the past two years, this coalition has been degraded due to a series of developments, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and this year's Israeli war on Lebanon. In 2023, after the rebellion of mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin and his subsequent death, Russia ordered his Wagner Group forces, which had played a critical role in ground battles, to leave Syria. This year, Moscow was forced to pull some of its air force units back from Syria which had long provided much-needed air cover for the Syrian regime forces. The fleet of Russian aircraft currently stationed at the Hmeimim base in Latakia has dwindled compared with its peak strength before the onset of the Ukraine war.

upper echelons and its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, were killed. As a result, the group has had to withdraw a good part of its forces deployed in the Aleppo and Idlib countryside towards Lebanon. Iran's military presence in Syria has also been weakened by frequent Israeli attacks.

The Syrian regime forces have also been degraded over the past 14 years of war. Defection and combat losses have dwindled significantly, while the financial crisis has limited Damascus's ability to pay regular wages.

When the opposition launched its attack, it faced a completely worn-out army that had lost the will to fight. Morale had

Marwan Kabalan

collapsed, especially with the absence of allies on the ground and the Russian Air Force in the sky; they retreated quickly.

By contrast, the opposition's performance has improved significantly in recent years, as it has become better organised and more disciplined, especially HTS. It has

also been better equipped as a result of local manufacturing, seizing weapons from the regime's positions and its allies, and obtaining them from external parties. The Syrian opposition's advance was surprising to many probably because for years, al-Assad has been acting as a victor in the Syrian civil war.

Since his forces regained control over large parts of the country in 2018, including the three de-escalation zones in the south, Damascus countryside and northern Homs, it has refused to make any concessions or even engage in any serious negotiations – whether through the United Nations-spon-

community of nations and secure economic aid for reconstruction without having to make any concessions, neither to the Arab countries nor to the Syrian opposition. In addition, believing that he has the upper hand, al-Assad turned down several offers by Turkiye to resolve the Syrian refugee problem and move the political process forward.

The rapid advance of the opposition has shattered the illusions of victory that the regime and its allies have cradled. The opposition now controls most of northern Syria, including Aleppo, home to about one-fifth of the Syrian population. With its economic, industrial, human and political

sored Geneva process or the Russian-sponsored Astana process.

Normalisation of relations with Arab countries also boosted al-Assad's self-confidence. Just last year, he was invited to attend the Arab Summit in Riyadh which ended 12 years of Arab isolation. All of this had convinced the regime that it could regain its membership and legitimacy in the

weight, Aleppo could become a pivotal point for the Syrian opposition and a major asset in any potential negotiations.

The situation on the battlefield also reflects new geopolitical realities. Al-Assad's main allies, Iran and Russia, have been losing influence due to regional and international conditions, whereas Turkiye, the main regional ally of the opposition, is on the rise.

As a result, there is now a window of opportunity to launch a genuine political process that could end the 14-year-old conflict, which has left hundreds of thousands of Syrians dead, millions displaced and the country in tatters.

As things stand now, Russia and Iran lack the troops and firepower to reverse the tide. To save al-Assad this time around, they have no alternative but to commit themselves to a political process.

The incoming US administration may also encourage this. Although previously, US President Donald Trump turned away from Syria, describing it as a land of "sand and death" and ordering the withdrawal of US troops in the Kurdish-held northeast, this time around, the Syrian war may present him with an opportunity for a quick foreign policy success and making good on his promise to "end wars".

Syria is low-hanging fruit, and Iran and Russia may be eager to strike a deal with Trump. Succeeding where his Democratic predecessors failed may be a good enough incentive for the new US president to put his weight behind the negotiation of a peace agreement.

visionary projects of today's Arab world. As we embark on an era of great challenges for the world, particularly with regards to the environment, increased conflict and hatred, and a necessary reinvention of the world economy and world order, the Arab world has much to offer. As relatively late bloomers in the modern era, we have been able to reinvent ourselves and leapfrog many countries in areas that will be vital for the future. Our youthful populations and rapid progress offer the world hope for a brighter future. Both East and West are looking toward us as a land for environmental awakening, for youthful innovation and for future stability. Our Israeli cousins and neighbors must also rouse to a dynamic they can be a part of, accepting our extended hand to partner with us for peace and progress.

The Jewish people have formed an integral part of the Middle East for as long as we Arabs have. Until the creation of the state of Israel, we all lived together in peace and in mutual respect. Jews occupied top posts in government and in business in Iraq, Egypt and beyond; they were always regarded as important constituents of Arab society. The three monotheistic religions carry a message of peace for the world: they all belong to this region. This is an opportunity to be seized. The time is right for understanding and empathy, not for being petty or talking by the gun. A peaceful and prosperous Palestinian state living side by side with an Israeli state fully integrated into a dynamic and forward-looking region would be the best hope for us and for global stability and progress.

Just like our great desert, the Sahara, hides tremendous riches and opportunities for the future in terms of mineral resources, underground water reservoirs and opportunities for agriculture and carbon capture, the Arab world, living in peace with Israel, has much to offer the world and this 21st century.

China ready to meet challenges of Trump era

THE meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden on Nov 16 has set a crucial stage for the future of China-US relations. As the world's two largest economies navigated through fraught dynamics during Biden's tenure, this meeting offered a glimpse into their intentions for shaping global stability. Both leaders expressed optimism about trade cooperation and the fight against climate change, though significant disagreements on the Taiwan question and technology transfers were apparent.

The outcomes of this meeting underscore the complex interdependence between the United States and China. Biden aims to leave office with a stable bilateral relationship — though his actions contradicted this purpose — but the return of Donald Trump to the White House as the 47th president of the US creates new uncertainties for global geopolitics, particularly concerning China. A hawkish stance toward China marked Trump's first term as US president. Trump has emphasized the importance of reducing trade imbalances, addressing intellectual property rights concerns and countering China's growing global influence, and his "America first" strategy, defined by economic nationalism and strategic competition, could intensify tensions between the two countries.

Trump's likely focus on domestic priorities — such as re-industrialization and reshoring manufacturing — may restrict his capacity to engage in multilateral diplomacy. This could lead to a more unilateral and selective approach to foreign engagements, creating a power vacuum in global governance.

However, his transactional approach to international relations could lead to unpredictable engagements with China, ranging from escalated economic decoupling to selective cooperation on issues such as Korean Peninsula denuclearization issue or supply chain stability. This shift in US foreign policy under Trump may present opportunities for other global players, particularly the BRICS-Plus bloc, to

Marcus Vinicius De Freitas

play a bigger role in global affairs. The potential impact of Trump's policies on US-China relations could lead to a more confrontational approach, creating more opportunities for BRICS-Plus to expand its influence.

As US-China relations face renewed volatility, BRICS-Plus has an opportunity to position itself as a stabilizing force in a fragmented world. The bloc's capacity to provide alternative frameworks for development and cooperation makes it uniquely suited to address the Global South's ever-growing needs, including economic development, infrastructure improvement and sustainable growth. The group's economic agenda, including the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and Brazil's expertise in agricultural innovation, could help address critical challenges such as food security and sustainable infrastructure development across Africa and Asia, one of the main issues raised in the last G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Furthermore, the potential de-dollarization of the global economy — driven by China's economic policy and ongoing initiatives within BRICS-Plus — signals a shift away from the long-standing dominance of the US dollar. This transformation could empower emerging economies to pursue development models independent of Western financial systems. BRICS-Plus can seize the opportunity to advocate for significant reforms in key international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. By championing multipolarism and localized solutions, the bloc could inspire greater autonomy and resilience among its member states and partners, leading to a more equitable and diversified global order. This era of uncertainty offers BRICS-Plus the opportunity to redefine the Global South's role in global governance. With its potential to establish itself as a credible alternative to the US-led world order, the bloc can inspire hope and optimism through initiatives focusing on trade liberalization, regional integration and sustainable development. Such efforts would enhance economic

growth and address pressing global challenges such as climate change, digital inclusion and infrastructure deficits, instilling a sense of hope for a better future. The meeting between Xi and Biden has underscored the urgent need for pragmatism and cooperation in addressing the world's pressing challenges. As Trump prepares to take office, his policies will undoubtedly reshape US-China relations, creating challenges and opportunities for the international community. BRICS-Plus, with its collective economic strength and a shared vision for a fairer world, holds the potential to lead the way in this new era of global transformation, inspiring and motivating the international community to act swiftly and decisively. Finally, it is important to stress that the widespread flawed concept of the "Thucydides trap", a term used to describe the likelihood of conflict when a rising power challenges an established power, while provocative, needs to be revised when applied to China. This concept needs to consider the rich nuances of Chinese history and its historical commitment to peaceful coexistence. Unlike the Western tradition of zero-sum power struggles, China's historical approach to international relations has often emphasized the importance of harmony, balance and mutual benefit. A long history of 18 centuries as one of the world's largest economies shows a country not imposing its military power on other countries in the way Western powers have historically done. China has traditionally been a center of gravity for neighboring states through cultural and economic influence. Projecting a Western historical pattern onto a fundamentally different civilization ignores China's long commitment to resolving power transitions through diplomacy and strategic accommodation. China's rise is a clear testament to its will to pursue peace, prosperity and stability, not a new Cold War. BRICS-Plus will follow the same commitment, and the new administration in Washington must keep that in mind when shaping its policies.

What the Arab world means to the planet

THE Arab world stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the edges of the Arabian Gulf and from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. It has, therefore, always formed a crossroads between continents and between peoples, connecting the world and radiating enduring influences. Today, its 22 countries, covering an area of 13 million sq. km, have a combined population of almost 500 million people. From the cradle of civilization to the birth of the world's three big monotheistic religions, from a wealth of innovation — past and present — to a wealth of resources, the Arab world has always played a crucial role in the world and in our lives, whether we realize it or not.

In recent decades, much Western discourse concerning the Middle East has tried to paint the Arab world as closed and backward, while elevating Israel as a paragon of democracy and innovation. As is almost always the case, it serves to look beyond the conventional discourse to discover a rather different, and far more nuanced, picture. Yes, the Arab world continues to experience major upheaval and conflict in Syria and Lebanon, in Iraq and Yemen, in Palestine and Libya, in Sudan and Somalia. Of course, this represents a tremendous challenge for broad populations, acting as a restraint on progress and a drain on shared resources. But there are major reasons to believe that the Arab world today is a region driving change for much of the rest of the world, as it is rapidly transforming and progressing.

While the Arab world's combined gross domestic product of about \$3.56 trillion includes substantial disparities between individual countries, the rate of economic growth has exceeded global averages in recent years, with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries leading the way. These numbers only tell a fraction of the story, as the Arab world is setting the trend in

a number of crucial areas for the future. Particularly in the areas of renewable energy, sustainable urban development, food and water security, innovation and education, the Arab world has been breaking new ground. With

The UAE and Qatar's large infrastructure projects, tech hubs and research universities aim to provide similar opportunities for their populations. The great potential of solar and wind power is being tapped by all these countries in their drive for renewable energies, alongside Morocco with, for example, its Noor Solar Plant. The Arab world has also become a leader in sustainable and water-efficient farming, in salt-water irrigation and water desalination. And we must not forget the healthcare innovation that is taking place, especially in the Gulf region, which is paving the way in telemedicine and genetic research. Saudi Arabia has also invested heavily in artificial intelligence and fintech, or modern financial technologies. As a progressive overhaul of education and a youthful push in entrepreneurship take hold, the region's young population stands on the cusp of a new era of potential and opportunity. These profound developments in the Arab world do not derive from anywhere. Centuries ago, the Arab world was the origin of major advancements in algebra, medicine, navigation and trade. Just as the Arab world once built qanat systems to transport water to arid regions or developed ingenious irrigation systems, today the Arab world leads the way in smart water management, water recycling and desalination. Just as the Arab-Muslim caliphates found themselves at the center of regional diplomacy through the practice of Islamic principles such as "shura" (consultation) and "hudna" (truce), making peace by "sulh" (tribal reconciliation) and "waqf" (resource redistribution) in the interest of cohesion, today a number of Arab countries like Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt play an oversize role in conflict resolution and mediation. The caliphates were also known for their architectural innovation, mirroring the visionary projects of today's Arab world.

one-third of its population under the age of 15, a youthful Arab world is being buoyed by a new sense of dynamism and enthusiasm, not least due to the shrewd decisions of a young and visionary set of leaders.

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Morocco have all been launching innovative and forward-looking projects. Saudi Arabia, in particular, has shown a tremendous capacity for transformation over the past seven years with the realization of Vision 2030, as outlined by the young Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman under King Salman. Launching innovative projects, transforming Saudi Arabia's economy, opening up its society and providing ever-growing opportunities for its youth, the country has achieved a tremendous sense of progress, enthusiasm and opportunity over recent years.

The Kingdom has invested heavily in renew-

Hassan bin Youssef Yassin

able energies, sustainable urban development, education and innovation. From the world-leading King Abdullah University of Science and Technology to the National eLearning

Center, from Neom's smart city that emphasizes sustainability and innovation to the New Murabba development's focus on cultural offerings and quality of urban life, there is something major underway in Saudi Arabia today. The UAE and Qatar's large infrastructure projects, tech hubs and research universities aim to provide similar opportunities for their populations. The great potential of solar and wind power is being tapped by all these countries in their drive for renewable energies, alongside Morocco with, for example, its Noor Solar Plant. The Arab world has also become a leader in sustainable and water-efficient farming, in saltwater irrigation and water desalination. And we must not forget the healthcare innovation that is taking place, especially in the Gulf region, which is paving the way in telemedicine and genetic research. Saudi Arabia has also invested heavily in artificial intelligence and

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vation, mirroring the visionary projects of today's Arab world. As we embark on an era of great challenges for the world, particularly with regards to the environment, increased conflict and hatred, and a necessary reinvention of the world economy and world order, the Arab world has much to offer. As relatively late bloomers in the modern era, we have been able to reinvent ourselves and leapfrog many countries in areas that will be vital for the future. Our youthful populations and rapid progress offer the world hope for a brighter future. Both East and West are looking toward us as a land for environmental awakening, for youthful innovation and for future stability. Our Israeli cousins and neighbors must also rouse to a dynamic they can be a part of, accepting our extended hand to partner with us for peace and progress.

The Jewish people have formed an integral part of the Middle East for as long as we Arabs have. Until the creation of the state of Israel, we all lived together in peace and in mutual respect. Jews occupied top posts in government and in business in Iraq, Egypt and beyond; they were always regarded as important constituents of Arab society. The three monotheistic religions carry a message of peace for the world: they all belong to this region. This is an opportunity to be seized. The time is right for understanding and empathy, not for being petty or talking by the gun. A peaceful and prosperous Palestinian state living side by side with an Israeli state fully integrated into a dynamic and forward-looking region would be the best hope for us and for global stability and progress.

Just like our great desert, the Sahara, hides tremendous riches and opportunities for the future in terms of mineral resources, underground water reservoirs and opportunities for agriculture and carbon capture, the Arab world, living in peace with Israel, has much to offer the world and this 21st century.

NATO helping US

AS Ukraine presses for NATO membership to secure its future, the alliance faces deeper questions about its direction and unity. Many are wondering what the future of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization would be like given US president-elect Donald Trump's skepticism over the military alliance. Despite the uncertain outlook, however, the United States has already steered NATO away from its avowed role as global peacekeeper toward a confrontationist and meddling organization because of its continued eastward expansion and attempts to interfere in Asia-Pacific affairs.

The 75-year-old NATO is a relic of the Cold War era, not least because it deploys a large number of nuclear weapons across Western Europe and Turkiye and conventional forces across the world. Established in 1949 with 12 founding member states, NATO has expanded to include 32 members. Throughout NATO's history, the US has controlled the defense system of European countries, regarding it as a symbol of its hegemony.

For the past few years, the transatlantic military alliance, led by the US, has been trying to establish its presence in the Asia-Pacific region to maintain its global hegemony. In its Washington Summit Declaration in July, NATO said that it would continue to support Ukraine on "its irreversible path to full Euro-Atlantic integration, including NATO membership", that China poses a challenge to "NATO's interests, security and values", and that it attaches great importance to Asia-Pacific partners and cross-regional cooperation in "supporting Ukraine, cyber defense, countering disinformation, and technology".

However, NATO's summit in Washington did not project solidarity as the US expected, for Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez urged the military alliance leaders to adopt "consistent political positions" on Ukraine and Gaza instead of resorting to "double standards". Besides, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban is opposed to Ukraine joining NATO, and paid surprise visits to Kyiv, Moscow and Beijing before the summit and soon after Hungary assumed the presi-

Jia Ruixia

dency of the Council of the European Union on July 1. EU officials, the US and NATO have criticized Orban for visiting the three capitals. Ignoring the criticisms, Orban wrote in an article published in Newsweek in September that "If it (NATO) chooses conflict instead of cooperation, and war instead of peace, it will be committing suicide." Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, too, is opposed to Ukraine's NATO membership. In fact, one month after winning the Slovak election on Sept 30, 2023, Fico halted military aid to Ukraine. And Turkiye, whose military force is second only to the US in NATO, said the transatlantic military alliance resorts to double standard on international laws. Turkiye also denounced Israel's assault on the Gaza Strip while maintaining neutrality on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Turkiye President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's close ties with Russia have made the US uncomfortable.

Equally important, during NATO's summit in Washington, Erdogan and Orban exchanged views on maintaining peace efforts.

That the European Union is divided, politically and ideologically, became clear when far-right parties won more than expected seats in the European Parliament election in June, splitting the parliament itself and the political structures of France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and many other EU countries. Following the election, voices against military aid to Ukraine and for a peaceful solution to the Russia-Ukraine conflict have been rising in the new European Parliament. According to German think tank Kiel Institute, from Jan 24, 2022, to Aug 31, 2024, the US provided Ukraine with aid worth 84.73 billion (\$89.19 billion), and the EU offered 118.23 billion, including military assistance such as long-range missiles, mobile artillery rocket systems, armored vehicles, air defense systems and ammunition. In the eurozone, the government debt to GDP ratio was more than 80 percent in 2022 and 2023, though the debt ratio has declined slightly since then. At the end of 2023, the gov-

ernment debt to GDP ratio ranged from 20.2 percent in Estonia to 167.5 percent in Greece. In July, the EU executive initiated so-called excessive deficit procedures against Belgium, France, Italy, Hungary, Malta, Poland and Slovakia, whose deficits exceeded the bloc's fiscal limit of 3 percent of annual GDP in 2023. Many non-eurozone EU members are facing high debt risks, with most of the EU member states being NATO members.

The US has been calling on NATO members, especially European members, to increase their defense spending. The EU is in transition to low-carbon development in order to mitigate the effects of climate change. Along with that, the aging population and slow economic growth pose severe challenges to the bloc. As such, increasing the military budgets will deepen the financial plight of EU countries.

The United Kingdom government, in what can be seen as a response to the US' call, announced in July that the country was "broke and broken", showing an empty pocket to Washington.

Before the US presidential election in November, the US limited Ukraine's use of US weapons against military targets in Russia, which suggested the US did not want to expand the war. And although the transatlantic military alliance has somewhat eased the restrictions, the fact that Ukraine is not a NATO member leaves room for negotiation and compromise on Ukraine's neutrality or demilitarization. But with Trump set to take office in 45 days, the Joe Biden administration lifted the ban on Ukraine using US-supplied weapons to strike deep into Russian territory, casting a shadow over global peace.

From heated debates in the United Nations to the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro in November, peace has been the priority for most countries, because they want to focus on development, especially green development.

The US does not want to give up its control in NATO and has used the military alliance to maintain its global hegemony. But NATO should not forget that it was created for the defense of Western European countries and stop acting against the will of countries around the world.



SCCI praises KP govt efforts for improvement, revival of business activities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister for Finance and Inter-provincial Coordination Muzzamil Aslam had practically materialized his commitment made with the business community during his visit to Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

CM aide Muzzamil Aslam had played integral role to remove hurdles in provision of soft loans to business community attached with various sectors on small and medium scale through the Bank of Khyber and revival of business, trade and economic activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under revolutionary steps, and its exam-

ple nowhere.

According to details, a high-level traders' delegation headed by SCCI president Fazal Moqeem Khan held a meeting with Advisor to Chief Minister for Finance and Inter-provincial coordination Muzzamil Aslam in the provincial secretariat, said in a statement issued here on Thursday.

Members of the delegation consisted on the chamber vice president Shehryar Khan, former presidents Riaz Arshad, Engr Maqsood Anwar Pervaz, Industrialist Association Peshawar Ayub Zakori, members of the SCCI executive committee Junaid Altaf, Sajjad Zaheer and Hassan Zahideen.

Muzzamil Aslam had fulfilled commitment and held a meeting between the Bank of Khyber Chief Executive Officer/Managing Director Hassan Raza.

On the occasion, the BoK senior officer Sher Muhammad Khan and others were also present.

Meeting comprehensively briefed on obstacles in provision of soft loans to SMEs through the Bank of Khyber.

Provision of loans on easy terms for small and large scale business and industries crucial for revival of economic and trade activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, participants stressed.

Meeting agreed to establish close liaison and coordination between SCCI and the Bank of Khyber and ensure provision of soft loans to traders from various sectors in consultation with traders' bodies leaders and bazar /market association office bearers to traders, shopkeepers and industries.

In his remarks, SCCI chief Fazal Moqeem extended high gratitude to the CM aide Muzzamil Aslam for playing an important role in resolution of business community issues.

Moqeem vowed that SCCI will continue to play a role with shoulder to shoulder of CM aide Muzzamil Aslam for provision of relief and facilities to the business community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PESHAWAR: A high-level traders' delegation headed by SCCI president Fazal Moqeem Khan meeting with Advisor to Chief Minister for Finance and Inter-provincial Coordination Muzzamil Aslam.

PSX stays bullish, gains 3,134 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 3,134.63 more points, a positive change of 2.98 percent, closing at 108,238.97 points as compared to 105,104.34 points on the last trading day.

A total of 1,647,134,799 shares were traded during the day as compared to 1,749,316,877 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs63.229 billion against Rs50.416 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 473 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 307 of them recorded gains and 129 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 37 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Bank of Punjab with 163,462,276 shares at Rs10.09 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 150,476,152 shares at Rs1.59 per share and Energycico PK with 86,659,730 shares at Rs6.87 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs481.08 per share price, closing at Rs20,681.08, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Fibres Limited with Rs101.64 rise in its per share price to Rs1,214.02.

Hafiz Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs24.27 per share closing at Rs 238.23 followed by Fateh Sports Wear Limited with Rs11.20 decline to close at Rs100.77.

Gold prices up by 500 per tola

The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs.500 and was sold at Rs. Rs 275,700 on Thursday against its sale at Rs 275,200 on previous trading day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

SNGPL's ongoing crackdown:

136 gas connections disconnected

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) continues its rigorous campaign against gas theft, conducting raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad. During the latest operations, 136 illegal gas connections were disconnected, and fines amounting to Rs 9 million were imposed.

In Lahore, the team disconnected 36 illegal connections and 9 connections using gas compressors, imposing fines total-

ing Rs 3.68 million. Similarly, in Faisalabad, 9 illegal connections and 1 compressor-based connection were disconnected, with fines amounting to Rs 0.07 million.

In Sheikhpura, the team disconnected 3 illegal connections and imposed fines of Rs 3.18 million. Meanwhile, in Gujranwala, 2 illegal connections were terminated, and Rs 0.78 million in fines were imposed.

In Bahawalpur, the team disconnected 4 illegal connections and 15 compres-

sor-based connections. Multan's team terminated 30 illegal connections and 2 compressor-based ones, while in Sahiwal, 5 illegal connections were cut off, with fines totaling Rs 0.09 million.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Mardan regional team disconnected 20 illegal connections and imposed fines of Rs 1.22 million on gas pilferers.

SNGPL remains committed to curbing gas theft across its operational areas, ensuring equitable distribution of gas.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Six ships, Cap Andreas, Valence, Marathopolis, CMA CGM Nabucco, AU Taurus and Venus carrying Container, Palm oil and LPG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal and Sui Southern Gas Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile three more ships, BAM BAM, EM Zenith and Seafortress also arrived at outer anchorage during last 24 hours.

Twelve ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Cap Andreas, Valence and Chemroad Orchid left the port on Thursday morning, while three more ships, CMA CGM Nabucco, Marathopolis and Greentec are expected to sail on today.

Cargo volume of 129,231 tonnes, comprising 92,577 tonnes imports cargo and 36,654 tonnes export cargo carried in 4,942 Containers (3,396 TEUs Imports & 1,546 TEUs Export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

Eleven ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them four ships, Acuity, EM Zenith, Seafortress and Jaruh Bhum & three more ships, Tiru, X-Press Mekong and One Readiness carrying Palm Kernel, Gas oil, Coal and Container are expected to take berths at MW-1, FOTCO, PQPET and QICT respectively on Thursday, while three more container ships, MSC Maria Clara, MSC York-VII and X-Press Salween are due to arrive at port on Friday.

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Bit-coin breaks \$100,000; stocks diverge on crises

LONDON (AFP/APP): Bitcoin burst past \$100,000 for the first time on Thursday, while global stock markets diverged as traders tracked political crises in France and South Korea.

Oil prices rose slightly with the OPEC cartel and its allies on Thursday expected to extend their supply cuts to avoid a sharp drop in prices in a global market awash with crude. The dollar dropped against its main rivals.

On the corporate front, UK regulators approved a deal between Vodafone and Three to create Britain's biggest mobile phone operator. Vodafone shares rose around 1.0 percent in London, while Shell dropped 1.0 percent after the British energy giant and Norway's Equinor announced plans to merge their UK offshore oil and gas assets.

Bitcoin smashed through \$100,000 as the Trump Trade powered on with force," noted Dan Coatsworth, investment analyst at AJ Bell, adding that "the French political crisis failed to knock European in-dices off course".

Seoul stocks slipped as South Korea's president faced impeachment after his brief imposition of martial law this week.

Bitcoin shattered the historic level after incoming US president Donald Trump picked crypto proponent Paul Atkins to take over as chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission, the country's markets regulator.

Atkins is founder of risk

consultancy firm Patomak Global Partners, whose clients include companies in the banking, trading and cryptocurrency industries.

Bitcoin reached a high of \$103,800.45 before dipping to around \$102,500.

The Paris stock market was higher in midday deals as President Emmanuel Macron sought a way out of France's political crisis.

French Prime Minister Michel Barnier was meeting Macron to submit his resignation after losing a vote of no confidence in parliament, with the president urgently seeking ways to halt growing political and financial chaos.

Poised to be contemporary France's shortest-serving premier, Barnier arrived at the Elysee Palace for the resignation formality.

Pakistan Airports Authority hold its first-ever DG PAA e-Kacheri



F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) held on Thursday its first-ever DG PAA e-Kacheri, an interactive session streamed live on the PAA and PCAA Facebook pages. Led by Director General PAA, Air Vice Marshal (AVM) Zeeshan Saad SI(M), the event aimed to address public queries concerning country's airports.

During the session

Director Planning and Development shared updates on Sukkur Airport's upgradation project. The Director revealed that initial planning is complete, and land acquisition is underway. The goal is to enable the airport to accommodate Boeing 777 aircraft, which will significantly enhance regional connectivity. This upgrade will bring improved aviation facilities to the region's residents, particularly in Sukkur, greatly enhancing

their overall air travel experience. Adding to this, the DG highlighted ongoing upgradation and expansion projects at Karachi, Lahore, and Skardu airports, alongside over 100 other projects nationwide.

The DG also addressed several other queries during the session. These included thefts and loss of valuables, where the DG requested complainants to provide specific details to aid in further investigation.

Additionally, the issue of beggars at airports was addressed, with the DG issuing directives to airport management to address the nuisance and ensure a pleasant environment for passengers. Baggage handling was also discussed, with improvements noted at Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport, where baggage handling times are now within IATA limits. Lastly, the DG took on a complaint about Subpar Food Quality at Islamabad International Airport canteen and measures being implemented to streamline management at the Gandhara Art Gallery and improve the overall visitors' experience.

DG PAA emphasized PAA's commitment to enhancing passenger experience and operational standards. The e-Kacheri concluded with a vote of thanks to the participants, whose feedback is valued as a vital tool for improving airport services and infrastructure.

Syed Abdullah Shah Institute achieves postgraduate status

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Syed Abdullah Shah Institute of Medical Sciences, Sehwan, has reached a significant milestone in its journey toward growth and excellence. Initially established as a Taluka Hospital, the institute has now attained the esteemed status of a Postgraduate Teaching and Training Hospital, reflecting its relentless commitment to delivering exceptional healthcare services.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP) has formally approved postgraduate training programs for the Department of Surgery, Department of Medicine, and Department of Paediatrics.

This landmark achievement signifies a transformative leap in advancing medical education and improving healthcare in the region.

This accomplishment

has been celebrated by the local community and healthcare professionals alike. Many have expressed profound gratitude to Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, and Health Minister Sindh, Dr. Azra Pechuho, for their invaluable support in attaining this status for the institute.

The remarkable evolution of Syed Abdullah Shah Institute of Medical Sciences from a Taluka Hospital to a leading postgraduate institution highlights the unwavering dedication and vision of its leadership. Special recognition is extended to Dr. Moin-ul-Deeb Siddiqui, Director of the institute, whose tireless efforts have been pivotal in achieving this transformation.

Civil society members from Sehwan and the surrounding areas have also lauded this development, praising Dr. Siddiqui's contributions and expressing

their best wishes for the institute's continued success in advancing medical education and healthcare services.

This achievement not only bolsters the healthcare infrastructure of the region but also creates new opportunities for aspiring medical professionals. The institute is now setting its sights on an even greater goal: the establishment of a

medical college in the area. The process for PC-II approval is currently underway and is expected to be completed within the current financial year.

Syed Abdullah Shah Institute of Medical Sciences remains committed to serving the community and playing a vital role in shaping the future of medical education and healthcare in the region.

KSA extends term for USD 3b deposit placed with Pakistan to support economy

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) on behalf of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has extended the term for the deposit of USD 3.00 billion maturing on 05 December 2024 for another year. The said amount has been placed with State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on behalf of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The extension of the term of the deposit is continuation of the support provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, which will help in strengthening the foreign exchange reserves of Pakistan and contribute to the country's economic growth and development.

It is worth noting that the USD 3.00 billion deposit agreement was initially signed with SFD in the year 2021 and subsequently rolled over in 2022 & 2023, after the issuance of the royal directives that reflect the continuation of the close relationship between the two brotherly countries.

IBA Karachi successfully host 25th Annual Population Research Conference focusing on pathways to sustainable development

F.P. Report

KARACHI: IBA Karachi proudly hosted a two-day 25th Annual Population Research Conference, focusing on the Pathways to Sustainable Development, which was organized in collaboration with Population Association of Pakistan (PAP) and the Population Research Centre (PRC) at the IBA School of Economics & Social Sciences. The partnership with the PAP highlights IBA's dedication to fostering Collaboration among Scholars, Policymakers, and Practitioners to address Pakistan's Evolving Demographic Challenges.

Dr. S Akbar Zaidi, Executive Director, IBA Karachi, delivered the Welcome Remarks at the Inaugural Session.

Senator (R) Javed Jabbar, Director, Social Policy and Development Centre, Karachi, delivered the keynote address. Dr. Nasra Shah, President Executive Council, PAP, highlighted the 25-Year Journey of the PAP Reflecting on the Organization's Contributions to Population Research.

The first panel, "Pakistan @ 2050," moderated by Dr. Asma Hyder, Dean, School of Economics & Social Sciences, focused on the country's future challenges, including Poverty, Urbanization, And Climate Change. Experts like Dr. Zeba Sathar, Senior Associate & Pakistan Country Director, Population Council; Dr. Heman Das Lohano, Professor of Economics, IBA, Karachi, and Dr. G.M. Arif, Former Joint Director, Pakistan Institute

of Development Economics & President Executive Council, PAP, delved into Pakistan's demographic trajectory, examining how Rapid Urbanization projected to see over half of the population living in cities by 2050-will impact the Nation's Social and Economic Landscape. With 40% of urban residents currently living in slums, the discussion emphasized the urgent need for policies to address the opportunities and risks posed by urban growth and climate change, particularly in relation to migration and demographic shifts.

The Spotlight Session, "Data for Development" brought together the heads of regional PRCs, including Dr. Khadija Malik Bari, Director, IBA-PRC to discuss their ongoing initia-

tives, challenges, and opportunities in utilizing data for sustainable development. Dr. Bari highlighted key programs led by IBA-PRC, such as the Young Researchers Workshop Series, which engages emerging scholars to share research tools and methodologies with students, encouraging engagement and collaboration. Additionally, the IBA-PRC hosts a Webinar Series featuring International Scholars, facilitating a Global Exchange of Ideas on how Data can be harnessed to address Pressing Development Challenges.

The second day of the conference featured technical sessions and poster presentations on Migration, Brain Drain, Gender, Health Systems, And Data-Driven Decision-Making.



The final panel of the event, "Private Sector Contribution in Family Planning", examined the role of the private sector in family planning and the utilization

of data to measure impact. IBA Karachi with 70 years of Leadership, Excellence & Impact has broadened its Academic Landscape by launching three

unique schools: School of Business Studies (SBS), School of Economics & Social Sciences (SESS), and School of Mathematics & Computer Science

(SMCS). This strategic expansion features IBA's commitment to advancing Leadership, Excellence & Impact across diverse fields.



ICC, PCB move closer to adopting hybrid model for Champions Trophy and beyond

DUBAI (Espnricinfo): A likely breakthrough has emerged in the impasse over the 2025 Champions Trophy: the ICC and the PCB are believed to have reached an in-principle agreement to adopt the hybrid model for global tournaments being hosted in Pakistan or India until 2027. Such an arrangement would allow the two to play their games at ICC tournaments being hosted by the other at a neutral venue.

Though the agreement has been confirmed to ESPNricinfo by various sources, the PCB - official host of the 2025 Champions Trophy - has not commented on it, revealing only that discussions continue.

It is not known yet whether the hybrid model would be applicable to both men's and women's tournaments. In the ICC's current commercial cycle (2024-27), there are three global events scheduled to be

hosted in either country: the Champions Trophy in Pakistan next February, the women's ODI World Cup in India later in 2025, and the men's T20 World Cup in 2026 co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

ESPNricinfo understands the development emerged on Thursday after meetings between the new ICC chair Jay Shah and PCB chair Mohsin Naqvi. They met in Dubai, on the sidelines of a courtesy board meeting arranged by Shah, who was visiting the ICC headquarters in the city in his new role for the first time. A Board meeting to discuss the Champions Trophy has been scheduled for December 7.

The PCB's acceptance of a hybrid model for the eight-team Champions Trophy is believed to be contingent on a set of conditions. One of the those is that a hybrid model should be applicable for all ICC events, including women's,



hosted in India and Pakistan until at least 2027 if not the entire current events cycle until 2031.

Other conditions are said to centre around compensation for a potential loss of commercial revenue from

India's Champions Trophy games being played at a separate overseas venue. If India were to make it to the knockout stages, then at least one semi-final and potentially the final are likely to be played outside

Pakistan. The UAE and Sri Lanka are among the frontrunners for this.

The PCB, it is understood, has suggested arranging a tri-nation series involving India, Pakistan and another country to off-

set any financial loss suffered by either board due to matches involving India and Pakistan being played elsewhere.

There is likely to be more back and forth between the two boards and

the ICC on the matter, with the final call likely to be taken at the Board meeting on December 7.

PCB had planned for a February 19 start to the Champions Trophy, with Lahore, Karachi and Rawalpindi as the host cities. But, because of the impasse between the PCB and BCCI - the latter told the ICC last month that it could not travel to Pakistan for the tournament because it did not have the Indian government's clearance - the ICC has not been able to release a schedule for the event.

Shah promises 'new era' for the world game

Shah, who was the BCCI secretary from December 2019 until December 1 this year, has officially taken charge at the ICC, becoming its youngest chair at 36. In his first media statement in the ICC role, Shah said the global body was embarking on a "new era" and his aim was to take the

game to "unprecedented heights" collectively with the member countries. While the entire ICC Board was not present in person on Thursday, Shah said he discussed the "initial roadmap and strategies to shape the future" of the game with several directors.

With Shah moving to the ICC, there has been intrigue about who will replace him as BCCI secretary. Since 2022 Shah had also been the BCCI's representative to ICC Board, where he held influential positions including heading the Finance & Commercial Affairs Committee.

While the BCCI has not made any statement on who will be the next secretary, the board's joint-secretary, Devajit Saikia, was present at the ICC meetings in Dubai this week. Potentially, then, Saikia, could be the BCCI representative on the ICC Board.

Debutant Maposa's last-over heroics wins thriller for Zimbabwe

B U L W A Y O (Espnricinfo): On Tuesday, the Zimbabwean cricket team let Bulawayo's exhilarating crowd down, but today, they picked them right back up. In a nerve-shredding encounter, Zimbabwe controlled, won, threw away and eventually stole a roller-coaster of a game off the penultimate delivery. A slap from Richard Ngarava that thudded into the stumps at the non-striker's end, a hesitant jitter, and a scampered single was what it took to seal a two-wicket win that will feel much more significant than the mere consolation it will be recorded as in a 2-1 series defeat against Pakistan.

In pursuit of 133 after a insipid batting performance from Pakistan, Brian Bennett and Tadiwanashe Marumani appeared to have made this game routine when Zimbabwe blazed to 50 in five overs. But with a middle order as fragile as Zimbabwe's no game is truly done, and even when the hosts sat pretty at 73 for 1 with more than half the overs the spare, Pakistan knew they were in with a shot, not least because of a Suriyan Mueem-shaped trump card who ran rampant through the middle overs once more. Within a five-over spell, 73 for 1 became 94 for 5, with Mueem piling on the pressure as Abbas Afridi cleaned up

from the other end. With four overs to go, the run rate was pushing 12.

Pakistan believed Sikandar Raza stood between them and victory, and when Zimbabwe's talisman miscued tamely to long-on off Jahandad Khan, the game looked as good as gone for Zimbabwe. Needing 12 off the final over with 21-year-old Tinotenda Maposa - on T20 debut - on strike, things appeared bleak. But a squirted boundary was followed up by a monstrous hoick over square leg for six that brought Zimbabwe to within two runs of victory. There was time for more drama when Tashinga Musekiwa went for a glory shot and miscued, but a Bulawayo crowd full of soulful singing was not to be denied this time.

Tidy Zimbabwe leave Pakistan in a mess

Stung by heavy criticism after an embarrassing collapse in the second T20I, Zimbabwe came out with a much greater intensity. Blessing Muzarabani had Omair Yousuf hole out for a duck, before Wellington Masakadza, who was accurate throughout, outwitted Sahibzada Farhan. A tentative little dab from Usman Khan off Muzarabani brought the third wicket, and Zimbabwe had the better of the powerplay by a distance.

Raza realized Pakistan were struggling against spin, and brought himself, Ryan Burl and Brian Bennett on at various stages through the middle overs. Pakistan were batting with a rather long tail, which necessitated a rebuild through the middle overs. Salman Agha struck up handy partnerships with Tayyab Tahir and Qasim Akram to keep the visitors ticking over, before useful cameos from Arafat Minhas and Abbas Afridi got Pakistan beyond three figures. It was only an untidy 13-run final over from Muzarabani that got Pakistan past 130 against a bowling attack that offered them very little throughout the innings. It was so very nearly enough.

Bennett and Marumani scorch Pakistan

Pakistan were defending a low total, and Zimbabwe's openers essentially broke the back of it. The intent was clear when Bennett whipped Mohammad Hasnain to the square leg boundary off the first ball of the innings. Marumani, who has had the better of Jahandad for much of this series, whipped him through the offside for a pair of boundaries in the second over, and from thereon Zimbabwe were flying.

But when Hasnain lined up for his second over, he was in for a flaying at

Bennett's hands. His line and length was all over the place and the batter was only too happy to take advantage with a pair of boundaries on each side of the wicket, plundering 19 off the errant over. Salman hastily brought himself into the attack, and Marumani insolently reverse swept him on the first-ball. It had taken them just 19 balls to get to 40, and the required rate was now under five.

Mueem's magic nearly derails Zimbabwe

There's no better indicator of the start Mueem has made in T20I cricket that Pakistan turned to him for a miracle when they needed wickets and a reining in of the run rate. No batter could truly pick out his wrong-un, and his figures of 4-1-19-1 did not do justice to the full breadth of his wizardry. There were multiple pokes that barely missed the outside edge, and a couple of top edges that might so easily have gone straight to slip. It culminated in a beguiling final over to Musekiwa, who desperately tried to see him off, willing to play out a maiden as the asking rate spiked after every ball.

On any other day, Mueem would have wrapped the game up before his spell ended, and on the evidence of this series, there will be many more such days.

PAF duo reach ITF Masters final

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Air Force (PAF) players Irfan Ullah and Shahzad advanced to the doubles final of ITF Masters Championship 2024, on Thursday.

According to details,

the PAF duo earned their place in the final by defeating the top seed Khurram Imtiaz and Hasan Nawaz in the semi final.

Irfan Ullah and Shahzad of PAF showed their excellent form on the court and outclassed the top

seed players Khurram Imtiaz and Hasan Nawaz in the semifinal championship.

Earlier in the quarterfinal of the championship, PAF duo has defeated the Fayaz Khan and Pervaiz Rasheed and continued their advancement in the

championship.

The Punjab Lawn Tennis Association (PLTA) organized the prestigious tournament at the Sports Board Punjab Tennis Academy, Nishtar Park, Lahore, showcasing remarkable talent from across the nation.

Quaid-e-Azam Games: KP teams training camps start

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting was held at Peshawar under the chairmanship of KP Olympic Association President Syed Aqil Shah to review the preparations for the Quaid-e-Azam Games, in which General Secretary Olympic Zulfiqar Butt, Director Operations Sports Naimatullah Khan, Deputy Director Sports Operations Jamshed Baloch, Admin Officer

Syed Jafar Shah, Shah Faisal and other personalities were also present.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Olympic Association President Syed Aqil Shah is determined to win the Quaid-e-Azam Games.

Syed Aqil Shah has directed all the coaches to make the best preparations, and has also directed all the relevant staff to take steps for the best preparation.

The training camps for the Quaid-e-Azam Games

have begun at Qayyum Sports Complex, Peshawar.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's men's and women's teams will participate in 15 games. The Quaid-e-Azam Games will be played in Islamabad from December 13 to 19.

KP Olympic Association President Syed Aqil Shah said that the camps have started, so all the coaches and technical officials should work hard with the players so

that they can win maximum medals for the province in the upcoming Quaid-e-Azam Games.

He said that there are definitely problems due to the lack of athletics and swimming facilities, but we players are working hard and hope that they will perform at their best. He said that the provincial contingent will leave on December 13 to participate in the Quaid-e-Azam Games, for which preparations are being completed.

‘A bittersweet ending but the achievements remain indelible’

ABU DHABI (BBC): Lewis Hamilton says his final race with Mercedes in Abu Dhabi this weekend is unlikely to be the positive send-off he and the team would have wanted.

"I don't think it will end on a high," said Hamilton, who is moving to Ferrari for 2025. "It'll end. What's important is we turn up and give it our best shot."

Hamilton has had a difficult final season with Mercedes, and it's only become more so as it has wound to its close.

He arrives in Abu Dhabi after last weekend's race in Qatar, during which he said at one point he was "definitely not fast any more", and finished 12th after receiving two separate penalties.

It was the culmination of

a season of frustration, with Hamilton comprehensively out-performed in qualifying by team-mate George Russell. Two wins at Silverstone and Spa - his first for two and a half years - were highs, but have done little to lift his general mood.

He and Mercedes, though, are insistent a low-key end to their partnership will not detract from everything they have achieved together. Team boss Toto Wolff said: "When he took the decision to go, we knew it could be a bumpy year ahead. It's normal."

"He knows he will go somewhere else. We know our future lies somewhere else. And to go through the ups and downs and still keep it together is something we have achieved."

"He wears his heart on his

sleeve and you express your emotions and that is absolutely allowed. Nothing is going to take away 12 incredible years. That will be in the memory, rather than a season or races that were particularly bad."

Together, Hamilton and Mercedes have been the most successful team-driver combination in Formula 1 history. After he joined in 2013, Mercedes won eight consecutive constructors' championships, seven drivers' titles - six of them for Hamilton - and 120 grands prix.

Hamilton has become the most successful driver ever - taking six of his seven championships with Mercedes, 84 of his 105 race wins, and 78 of his 104 poles.

His other successes came with McLaren when they

were Mercedes' works team. Next year - his 19th in Formula 1 - will be his first not as a Mercedes driver.

The team are determined to turn this weekend's grand prix - held on a track where Hamilton has won five times, more than any other driver - into a celebration of everything they have achieved together.

They will be doing it at the place where Hamilton's success with Mercedes came to a screeching halt amid the controversy of the title-deciding race in 2021.

Three years ago, Hamilton was on course to win a record eighth championship, having dominated the race from the start, only for race director Michael Masi to fail to apply the rules correctly during a late safety-car period.

Shaw's 1,675 days lost to injury in three charts

LONDON (BBC): When Manchester United defender Luke Shaw posted on Instagram on Tuesday about his latest injury setback, he described the "absolute devastation" he was feeling and said this was "definitely" his "toughest period".

This from a player who suffered a horrific double leg break in 2015 and who has lost a total of four and a half years to multiple injuries. The focus on Shaw's fitness was magnified again in the summer as England manager Gareth Southgate's Euro 2024 selection gamble resulted in just two substitute appearances and a place in the starting line-up in the final against Spain.

Shaw, 29, has made just three substitute appearances for United this season after he sustained hamstring and calf injuries in February and August respectively.

In the social media post, Shaw acknowledged "frustrated, angry, disappointed" critics, but said "no-one is feeling that more than me".

BBC Sport, working with data from website PremierInjuries.com, looked at the numbers behind Shaw's injuries.

The smallest problem can be magnified

Shaw's injury issues really began to ramp up in 2023, suggesting recurring injuries - particularly those in his hamstrings - have taken their toll.

"When you're talking about highly tuned athletes, the smallest problem can easily be magnified," said Ben Dinnery

from Premier Injuries.

Dinnery explained that muscle injuries, especially hamstrings, have a particularly high recurrence rate in the first 30 days of returning to playing. This is not helped by the increased demands placed on players and the need for them to return from injury as quickly as possible.

"Fans sometimes forget that players are asked to be involved and put themselves on the line, when in an ideal scenario you would be keeping them out of the starting 11," said Dinnery.

"That's the pressure of the game, it's a results-based business, that's how managers are judged. I'm sure Shaw had an open conversation with [former United manager] Erik ten Hag

about whether he could play. These are the risks, there is the potential for a setback."

Dinnery added that in Shaw's case, his decision to accept an England call-up for Euro 2024 having not played in over three months - impacting his recovery work and pre-season preparations - may have backfired.

In October, former Manchester United defender Phil Jones gave a series of interviews, including with the BBC, about the mental and physical strain of battling with injuries throughout his career.

Jones said when he retired he had to "re-evaluate everything and unpick myself personally and professionally, with therapists and psychologists, to find myself".

Zalmi Women League

Bannu, Mardan and Peshawar win matches

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Three matches concluded in the Zalmi Women League with Bannu, Mardan and Peshawar regions securing victories in their respective games.

The league jointly organized by Peshawar Zalmi, Zalmi Foundation and the Higher Education Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is being held at the Hayatabad Cricket Stadium Peshawar.

Three matches were played yesterday In the first match Bannu Region defeated Malakand in a nail-biting finish. Bannu, batting first scored 78 runs for the loss of four wickets in the allotted overs with Aiman contributing 19 and Naseema 13 runs.

For Malakand Hassnat took two wickets while Laiba and Salwa claimed one each. In reply, Malakand managed 76 runs falling short by two runs. For Bannu Shadab claimed three wickets while Naseema and Muqaddas took one wicket each.

The second match saw

Mardan Region triumph over Dera Ismail Khan (DI Khan). Batting first Mardan posted 98 runs for the loss of two wickets with Tayyaba scoring an unbeaten 36 and Sumbal contributing 27 not out.

Ayesha from DI Khan took one wicket. Chasing the target, DI Khan could only score 66 runs giving Mardan a comfortable 32-

run victory.

In the third match Peshawar Region defeated Bannu. Batting first Peshawar scored 108 runs for the loss of three wickets with Tehzeeb leading the charge with a brilliant 72 runs. Bannu in response managed 95 runs handing Peshawar a 13-run victory.

It is worth mentioning that the Zalmi Women

League features eight teams, including six from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's regions and two from Peshawar.

Players for the teams were selected through trials conducted across all regions. The league's final match will be played tomorrow (Saturday) at the Hayatabad Cricket Stadium, Peshawar.





In brief

Study to be carried out

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General (IG) of the National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) Salman Chaudhary has said that a research study would be carried out to control the traffic congestion at Rawalpindi-Islamabad junction near Chungi No. 26. Talking to the media here Thursday, he said that motorway police have successfully controlled around 95 percent of the axle loads on the roads in collaboration with the federal, and provincial governments and transport companies to improve safety and preserve the road infrastructure. Salman said that an e-ticketing app had been launched to make the NHMP organisation paperless while a state-of-the-art cashless system would be introduced soon across the country. The IG noted that NHMPs provide exemplary services to over five thousand Kilometers areas of all provinces, including Gilgit-Baltistan, adding the NHMP was known for its dedication, honesty, and professionalism, aligning it with international traffic policing standards. He said that NHMP had added new patrol vehicles to the fleet to improve the efficiency of operations.

Sevem outlaws arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police on Thursday apprehended seven outlaws involved in different criminal activities including drug peddling and possessing illegal weapon recovered weapon and drug from their possession. A public relations officer told APP that the ICT Police Golra, Sumbal, Phulgran and Bani Gala police teams took legal action against accused involved in possessing illegal weapons and drug peddling. The police team arrested five accused namely Jibran, Wali Muhammad, Allah Bachaya, Muhammad Ehsan and Wahaj and recovered 318 gram heroin and one pistol from their possession. Moreover two absconders were also arrested from various areas of the city during the last 24 hours. SSP Operation Muhammad Arslan Shah Zaib 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 top priority. 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.

91,000 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority on Thursday released 99,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 43,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1487.31 feet and was 89.31 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 20,800 cusecs and 48,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1152.00 feet, which was 102.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 5,000 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 74,300, 46,600, 36,900 and 7,100 cusecs respectively.

PMYP and PAGE signs LoI to empower women

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) and Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education (PAGE) have joined hands to empower young women and girls across Pakistan by signing a Letter of Intent (LoI) at the Prime Minister's Office here Thursday.

The signing ceremony was attended by Chairman PMYP Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Syeda Amnah Batool, Member of the National Assembly and Executive Director of PAGE Fajer Rabia Pasha along with other distinguished dignitaries and team members from both organizations.

This partnership seeks to address critical challenges faced by women and girls in underserved regions of Pakistan by fostering employability, entrepreneurship and digital inclusion.

The agreement emphasized equipping female stu-

dents with essential skills such as communication, CV writing and interview preparation while offering mentorship opportunities to bridge the gap between education and professional careers.

A significant focus will be on promoting digital literacy through the establishment of digital hubs, providing access to digital resources and teaching safe internet practices to enhance employability. Additionally, the collaboration will engage public and private stakeholders to mobilize resources and create employment opportunities for women entering the workforce.

The collaboration reflects PAGE's commitment to addressing gender inequities in education, employment and leadership, as well as PMYP's dedication to fostering youth development and economic empowerment.

Speaking at the ceremo-

ny, Fajer Rabia Pasha highlighted the transformative impact of the partnership, emphasizing its potential to create a generation of resilient, financially empowered women ready to lead Pakistan into a more equitable future.

Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan reiterated the importance of the initiative, stating that the partnership represents a shared vision of ensuring the active participation of young women in Pakistan's socio-economic development.

This joint effort will work closely with local and international organizations, including the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and King's Trust International, to ensure the successful implementation of its objectives. Together, PAGE and PMYP aimed to create sustainable opportunities and meaningful change for women and girls across Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan witnessed LoI signing ceremony between Prime Minister's Youth Programme and PAGE.

IGP reviews Anti-Riot Unit, Safe City performance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi on Thursday chaired important meetings at the Central Police Office (CPO) and Safe City.

A police spokesman told APP that the DIG Headquarters, Security Mohammad Jawad Tariq, DG Safe City Shakir Hussain Dawar and other senior police officers were present in the meetings.

The IGP Islamabad reviewed the performance, available resources, and current strength of the Anti-Riot Unit. He issued orders to improve the efficiency of the to address illegal gatherings and sit-ins in the federal capital.

He emphasized that the strength of the Anti-Riot Unit should be increased, and that young police officers should be provided with the best training and additional resources as part of this unit.

IGP also reviewed the installation and performance of Safe City cameras. DG Safe City, along with the IT staff, briefed the IGP on the citywide camera surveillance system and highlighted the role of Safe City in crime prevention through surveillance and the number of cameras in operation.

IGP Rizvi said that the scope of Safe City Islamabad should be expanded, and its services should be improved. He further emphasized that faulty cameras at key locations in the federal capital should be repaired as soon as possible.

ANP blames PTI for arrest of protestors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Awami National Party's (ANP) spokesperson Engineer Ehsanullah Khan on Thursday, blamed Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) for the arrest of Pashtuns in the protests Nov 24.

Addressing the press conference, he said instead of arresting the innocent people, the government should apprehend the PTI's leadership, who provoked the youth for the 24 Nov protest.

Arrests have also been made of those who have nothing to do with the politics of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), Ehsanullah said.

"The people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa want peace and tranquility in Pakistan; all political parties should sit together and find a solution to the prevailing problems," he proposed.

Minister emphasizes importance of innovation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui Thursday emphasized the importance of innovation and leadership in shaping Pakistan's future.

Addressing the convocation ceremony of the National University of Technology (NUTECH) at its Islamabad campus, the minister urged graduates to actively contribute to the nation's progress.

He stated, "The country has fulfilled its duty by providing you with quality

education; now, it's your responsibility to contribute to its development. This nation, built on an ideology, needs your efforts to shape a brighter future."

He emphasized NUTECH's growing global recognition and its unique status as Pakistan's first "University for Industry," fostering a strong connection between academia and industry.

While addressing the attendees, he extended heartfelt congratulations to the graduating students and their families.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool

Siddiqui commended the graduates and shared inspiring insights for their future endeavors. The ceremony was attended by Chairman HEC, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Lieutenant General Moazzam Ijaz (HI, M), Rector of NUTECH, members of the NUTECH community, parents, and students.

A total of 164 graduates from Engineering, IT, and Technology disciplines were awarded degrees, with top achievers receiving Gold and Silver Medals in recognition of their excellence.

Serena Chowk Interchange construction in full swing

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Capital residents can look forward to a significant improvement in traffic flow as work on the Serena Chowk and

Convention Centre Chowk Interchange project progresses steadily.

Designed to tackle the city's notorious congestion hotspots, the project is making visible strides, with various aspects of construction advancing at pace.

According to a CDA official, on Suhrawardy

Road, piling and concrete work were underway, laying a strong foundation for future development.

Simultaneously, efforts to widen roads and enhance the sub-grade structure on Kashmir Highway were in progress, aimed at accommodating increasing traffic volumes and ensuring smoother vehicular movement.

He said key infrastructure elements, including box culverts and retaining walls, were also being constructed. The girder yard, a vital com-

ponent of the interchange, is nearing readiness with completed girders prepared for installation.

The official have assured residents that the project is on schedule, promising a transformative upgrade to Islamabad's traffic system.

With dedicated efforts from engineers and workers, the Serena Chowk Interchange will become a game-changer for commuters, reducing delays and elevating the city's infrastructure to new standards.

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Thursday issued a power suspension programme for Saturday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, Kror, Scheme.II, Zia Masjid, Highway, S RD Road, G-8 Markaz, Faisal Masjid, G-9/3, I-8 Markaz, Carriage Factory, G-13/4 Extension, F-11/I, Rahara, CM Pak Zong, Kurry, Isolation Hospital, PHA-I, Pindi Point, Beruit, Kotli Satyan, Shahdara Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Dhok Hasso, Pirwadhai, Quaidabad, Muslimabad, Industrial, Social Security, Bagh Sardaran, Dhok Mangtal, Alamabad, DM Mills, Ratta, Railway Colony, Rajaabad, Affandi Colony, New Malpur, National Market, Khurram

Colony, Khanna Road, Farooq Azam, Gangal, Tamasmaabad, Fawara Chowk, Jinnah Road, Liaquat Bagh, Abu Bakar, Sarafa Bazaar, Mangtal, Dhok Hasso, Industrial, Alamabad, Social Security Hospital, Muslimabad, Quaidabad, Bagh Sardaran, Tench Bhatta, Railway Colony, Radio Pak-I, Bajnial, Bajnial-II, Noon, Ratta Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Mehboob Shaheed, Park View, Pindi Board, Jail Park-I, Car Chowk, Zaraj.I&II, Zeta.I, IST, Dhok Awan, Mohra Nagyal, Bank Road-I, Tipu Road, Bostan Khan Road, Model Town, Murree Bururi, Morgaha, Humayun Road, Shahpur, Gulistan Fatima, Girja.I, Chungi No.22, Chountra, New Choaah, Fazl Ahmed Shaheed, Mansoor Ahmed Shaheed, City.II, Sep Abrar, Ghazan Khan, Sagri, Hamid Jhungi, Kaliam, Karnab Kaswal, Nishan Haider, Mahuta Feeders, Attock Circle, Bohi Ghar, Haru, Nawbabad, Jalala, Faisal Hill.II, Faisal Hill.I, Kala

Khan, PM Colony, Wapda Town, Shahia, Rashid Minhas, AWC Housing, Munirabad, Hasan Abdal, Hussainabad, Ahmed Nagar, Shah Deer, Qaziabad, Hattian, Shamsabad, Power Channel Colony, Nar Topa, Attock, Rural, Wesa, Soni, Pindi Gheap City, Kasran, Jhang, Nad, Khore, Galial, Ahmedal, Mahfouz Shaheed, Gagan, Aman Pur feeders, Jhelum Circle, F-5 Jeddah, New Cantt Jhelum, Seela, Nugran, CMH Jhelum, Bolani, Khore, F-8 Civil Line, Akram Shaheed, Jakhar, Dina-3 Rohtas, Chumala, Dina-1 Bakrala, Sohan, New Domeli, Khai, Kalia, Khokhran, Gujjar Khan, Matwa, Scheme-I, Pindmate Khan, Khalia, Chhapar Sharif, Thakra, Kangar Thatti, Islamabad, Qazian Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Bhawan, Line Park, Megan, Khairpur, Islamia Chowk, Adi, Dhadyal Rural, Malhal Mughlan, Chakral, Basharat, Rawal, Katas, Kachhari, Jalalpur, Bilkasar, Murat, Akwal, and surrounding areas.

Pakistan launches NSoER at collaborative workshop

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan, in a significant step toward addressing its environmental challenges, launched the National State of the Environment Report (NSoER) at an inception workshop held here Thursday.

The event was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), said a press release.

In her keynote address, Ms. Aisha Moriani, Secretary of the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, expressed her appreciation for SDPI's pivotal role in shaping the NSoER and

thanked UNEP for providing a methodology to guide the report's development.

She emphasised the importance of involving stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and urged for the presentation of the final report to the cabinet, stressing that evidence-based data is crucial for informed policy decisions.

"We need baseline indicators and capacity-building efforts to effectively implement our environmental policies," she stated, and called for the integration of GIS and remote sensing data in the process.

Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director SDPI, in his welcome remarks, highlighted the significance of evidence-based data in shaping Pakistan's environ-

mental strategies, noting that the first NSoER was also developed by SDPI in collaboration with UNEP in 2007.

"With advancements in AI and software, data has become more accessible, enabling us to better shape Pakistan's. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)," he said.

Ms. Zainab Naeem, Associate Research Fellow and Head of Ecological Sustainability and Circular Economy at SDPI, provided an in-depth technical session on the 2016 NSoER and outlined the critical components of the report, including assessments on air, water, land, and climate change. She stressed the need to address policy gaps, with a particular focus on biodiversity, dis-

aster risk reduction, digital environmental monitoring, green financing, and carbon markets.

International experts from UNEP, including Caroline Kaimuru, GEO Coordination Consultant, and Sandor Frigyi, Programme Management Officer, led training sessions on the methodologies and frameworks required to create an inclusive, participatory environmental report.

The workshop, which attracted key stakeholders from various sectors, is part of a broader initiative under the UNEP-led "Capacity Development for Inclusive Policy Interface" project, which aims to strengthen countries' abilities to use environmental data for science-based planning and decision-making. UNEP is

committed to empowering countries, including Pakistan, to address the climate, pollution, and nature crises through enhanced environmental data accessibility.

Dr. Khalid Walid, Research Fellow, SDPI, concluded the workshop by emphasizing that the NSoER would serve as a crucial tool in evaluating Pakistan's environmental progress, guiding policies, and aligning them with international commitments, including the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and future NDCs.

The report is expected to help identify key environmental risks, track policy effectiveness, and guide resource allocation to strengthen climate resilience across the country, he said. He added that the Min-

35 Sri Lankan students arrived

ISLAMABAD (APP): Another 35 Sri Lankan students have reached Pakistan to study in Pakistani universities at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels under the Allama Iqbal Scholarships for Sri Lankan Students, an initiative of Pak-Sri Lanka Higher Education Cooperation Programme.

According to the Programme, the students arrived at Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore.

Pakistan and Sri Lanka jointly work in multiple developmental areas, including the higher education sector. It includes 1,000 scholarships to Sri Lankan nationals. Of whom, 418 are already studying in Pakistan while 42 have graduated.

Azizi presided meeting
KABUL (BNA): A routine meeting of the Commission for Naming Intersections, Roads, and Historical Sites was chaired by Mawlawi Atiqullah Azizi, Deputy Minister for Culture and Arts of the Ministry of Information and Culture. According to Bakhtar News Agency, the meeting reviewed reports presented by a designated committee that inspected newly constructed roads and intersections in Kabul's 13th, 6th, and 15th districts.

Austria donates 5m aid
KABUL (Khaama Press): The Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the country has allocated 5 million to Afghanistan's humanitarian fund. The funds are aimed at supporting critical relief efforts in the country. Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg, while highlighting ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and the Russia-Ukraine war, stated, "We must not forget the people of Afghanistan."

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

Lifting restrictions on Paktia wood transportation

PAKTIA (TOLOnews): Local officials in Paktia say that due to the unprecedented rise in the price of wood in some provinces, the restriction on transporting wood from Paktia to other provinces has been lifted for 10 days.

Noorullah Mumtaz, the head of the Paktia governor's office, said: "The registered wood that had been left in stockyards for a long time, while people waited, was documented by a committee sent by the governor's office. The registered wood was then allowed to be transported to other provinces."

Ajmal Wahidi, a member of the Timber Traders Union, said: "This is a good step. The Islamic Emirate has made a favorable decision for the people of Kabul, which provides significant relief."

Meanwhile, some traders in Paktia argue that the 10-day period for wood transportation to other provinces is insufficient and have called on officials to extend the duration.

Sakhi Jan, a trader, said: "Our vehicles remain in stockyards for five nights alone. Ten days is not enough, and in this time, we cannot reach our destinations."

At the same time, residents of the capital have complained about the high prices of oak wood and have urged the Islamic Emirate to address this issue.

Shirzad, a wood seller, said: "The roads are blocked, and the price of seven kilograms of oak wood has reached 170 Afghanis."

Abdulhai, a Kabul resident, said: "Wood that can be cut without harming the beauty of forests should be allowed to reach the market so that the price of wood decreases."

Meanwhile, the price of 560 kilograms of oak wood, which was 9,000 Afghanis last year, has increased to about 14,000 Afghanis this year in the capital's markets.

Breshna CEO discusses energy cooperation



KABUL (TOLOnews): The CEO of Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (Afghanistan's electricity company), during his visit to Turkmenistan, met with the head of the country's electricity authority and the head of the TAP project.

According to Hikmatullah Miywandi, the spokesperson for Breshna Company, the parties discussed the TAP project and the extension of Turkmenistan's electricity imports to Afghanistan in 2025.

The spokesperson added: "The purpose of this trip is to ensure the extension of the electricity import agreement with Turkmenistan in 2025. Discussions were also held regarding the TAP project and bilateral energy cooperation."

Currently, the 500-kilovolt Arghandi substation, which transfers 1,000 megawatts of Turkmen electricity to Kabul and neighboring provinces, is under construction.

Meanwhile, some economic analysts believe that facilitating electricity imports and investing in domestic energy resources are essential steps to resolve Afghanistan's power shortage issues.

Abdul Nasir Rashtiya, an economic analyst, said: "At present, visits and meetings regarding energy imports from neighboring countries are of particular importance because we urgently need imported energy. However, in the long term, Afghanistan must become self-sufficient in energy production and meet all its needs domestically."

Amanullah Ghalib, the former head of Breshna Company, said: "Currently, there are studies, laws, and policies in place for the electricity sector. The Islamic Emirate has a clear strategy to implement these policies and can invest in water, wind, solar, or gas energy production."

It is estimated that Afghanistan requires 1,500 to 2,000 megawatts of electricity. Despite having significant water, solar, wind, and thermal energy resources, a large portion of the country's energy needs is met through imports from Central Asia.

Previously, the CEO of Breshna, in an exclusive interview with TOLOnews, stated that Afghanistan currently has access to 960 megawatts of electricity, of which 350 to 400 megawatts are generated domestically.

ANDMA signs agreement with CRS



KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Mohammad Alam Alamyar, Director General of Finance and Administration and Acting Head of Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), signed a cooperation agreement with Ahmad Farid Samimi, Head of the Kabul Office of the Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

According to the ANDMA's press office, the agreement allocates \$577,731 to assist 904 families (comprising 6,328 individuals) in Ashterlai district of Daikundi province. Under this initiative, each individual will receive \$66,857, or its equivalent in Afghanis, while an average of \$468 will be provided to each seven-member family to meet their basic needs over three months.

Global outrage over ban on girls' education

KABUL (Khaama Press): In a recent move, the education of girls and women in medical institutions in Afghanistan has been banned. This decision, made three days ago, has sparked widespread international reactions, including from human rights organizations, world leaders, prominent political figures, and athletes both within and outside the country. Calls have been made for the cancellation of this decree.

Officials from Afghanistan's health institutions announced on Tuesday, that the ban on female students was implemented verbally by the Ministry of Health, under the direct order of Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada.

The decision has been met with strong responses, including from the Human Rights Defenders Forum, the European Union, Amnesty International, UNAMA, countries like Australia and Germany, the British Embassy, and former Afghan president Hamid Karzai, as well as athletes such as Rashid Khan and Mohammad Nabi.

In response to the decision, the European Union stated that the ban on women and girls' education in medical institutions represents a "horrific violation of fundamental human rights" and an "unjustifiable attack on women's education" in Afghanistan.

The EU expressed deep concern through a statement, warning of the far-reaching consequences, including an increase in suffering and the deepening humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

Similarly, the Human Rights Defenders Forum condemned the ban, stressing that restricting girls' education in health institutions will result in a higher maternal and infant mortality rate in Afghanistan.

In a statement published by Amnesty International on Tuesday, December 3, the organization said, "This not only closes the last remaining avenue for women's education in Afghanistan, but it will also have disastrous consequences for women's health in a country with one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world."

Amnesty International emphasized that education is a fundamental human right and called for Afghan women and girls to be able to enjoy their human rights without fear, intimidation, or forced deprivation.

The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) expressed concern over the closure of medical institutions to girls, adding that this decision will be detrimental to the Afghanistan healthcare system and the country's overall development.

UN agencies have urged the Taliban administration in Afghanistan to lift the ban on girls' education and create opportunities for them to receive education.

Afghanistan cricket star Rashid Khan also expressed his concern and displeasure over the ban, describing it as "painful."

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Afghanistan emphasizes expanding agricultural cooperation with Iran

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, during a meeting with members of the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce in Tehran, emphasized the expansion of economic and trade cooperation, particularly in the field of agriculture.

According to the ministry's spokesperson, the two sides also discussed opportunities for joint investment in Afghanistan's agriculture sector.

In this meeting, the deputy minister also called for facilitating the export of Afghan agricultural products to Iran.

Misbahuddin Mustaeen, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, said: "In this meeting, both sides explored opportunities for joint investment in Afghanistan's agriculture sector."

Additionally, increasing the export and import of agricultural products and removing trade barriers between the two countries were among the other topics discussed."

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock stated that investments from Iran and other countries in Afghanistan's agriculture sector could play a vital role in increasing agricultural products and boosting the economy.

Mirwais Haji Zada, the First Deputy of the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock, said: "The more we can utilize Iran's experience, the better it is for our farmers and people. How can we stop the migration of our youth? When there are jobs and employment opportunities in Afghanistan, people won't need to migrate to Turkey or other countries via Iran. If work is available here, there is no need for migration. Unfortunately, our agriculture remains outdated, and our industry is weak. We need Iran's expertise."

Mir Shakeeb Mir, an economic analyst, stated: "One of the key economic capacities that currently has the potential to strengthen the country's economy is agriculture. Given Afghanistan's economic conditions and capacities, we cannot make significant investments in agriculture unless we gain the cooperation of neighboring countries, particularly Iran."

This comes as a delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock visited Iran on Monday of this week and previously held talks with the deputy minister of Iran's Ministry of Agriculture Jihad regarding the development of bilateral agricultural cooperation.



EU pledges 15 million to WFP to help mitigate climate crisis impact on Afghans

KABUL (Ariana News): The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has welcomed a 15 million (US\$15.8 million) contribution from the European Union (EU) for its climate related activities in Afghanistan.

According to a statement issued by the EU on Thursday, this contribution will help local communities prepare for natural disasters and face the devastating effects of climate change, and support farmers for more productive and sustainable agriculture.

So far this year, more than 160,000 people have been affected by flooding in Afghanistan. Floods have destroyed almost 20,000 homes, and thousands of hectares of agricultural land.

"The European Union is committed to assisting the people of Afghanistan in adapting to climate change, which is severely threatening food security and livelihoods notably of rural communities, said the EU Chargée d'Affaires to in Afghanistan, Veronika Boskovic Pohar.

"Climate-related shocks also exacerbate host communities' capacity to support internally displaced people and returnees from neighboring countries, and they discourage farmers in poppy-cultivating areas from sustainably shifting to licit crops.

"This latest contribution increases the European Union's steady support to WFP's resilience programme in Afghanistan to a total EUR 85.1 million since 2022", she said.

Harald Mannhardt, WFP Deputy Country Director in Afghanistan, said: "This latest funding from the European Union comes at a critical moment as WFP earlier this year was forced to halt projects across the country due to a massive funding shortfall."

Afghanistan is currently ranked seventh on the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index of countries most vulnerable and least prepared to adapt to climate change.

Afghanistan and Malaysia pledge continued cooperation

KABUL (BNA): Naqibullah Ahmadi, Acting Ambassador of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to Malaysia, met with Kendy Mayung Onon, the newly appointed Director of Central and South Asian Affairs at Malaysia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During this meeting, both sides discussed the recent developments in their bilateral relations and explored opportunities for further cooperation.

According to a statement from the Afghanistan Embassy in Malaysia, Ahmadi reiterated Afghanistan's commitment to fostering closer ties with Malaysia and assured full cooperation in future endeavors. He expressed a strong interest in advancing the bilateral relationship and emphasized the importance of continued collaboration.

Onon, for his part, outlined Malaysia's approach to strengthening its relations with Afghanistan, providing insights into the current state of affairs and Malaysia's future plans for engagement. He highlighted Malaysia's commitment to supporting Afghanistan and underscored the potential for deepening ties between the two nations.

In the end, both sides expressed mutual hope that their collaboration would continue to expand, building on the existing groundwork and further enhancing the relationship through joint efforts in the years to come.



Khost province launches infrastructure projects

KHOST (BNA): The construction of roads and drainage systems in Khost city has commenced with a budget of approximately 93 million Afghanis. The projects include the development of roads and drains in Nakamura Square's northern section, the 1st and 3rd districts, and the Takhte Biko area.

According to Khost Mayor Qari Bismillah Bilal, the projects involve the construction of 2,385 meters of roads, 3,500 meters of drains, 910 meters of slabs in Nakamura Square, and six culverts in the Takhte Biko area. The construction is funded through the municipal budget and is expected to be completed within six months.

Additionally, Khost Governor Mawlawi Abdul Qayum Ruhani emphasized the importance of community collaboration for project success, stating that the implementation of such initiatives is responsibility of the Islamic Emirate. He urged citizens to cooperate with the administration to ensure the smooth execution of these projects.

Residents of Khost expressed satisfaction with the launch of these projects, highlighting the necessity of continuing such development initiatives to enhance the city's infrastructure and beauty. Additionally, other public utility projects are currently underway in Khost, many of which are nearing completion.

Afghanistan's economy shows modest growth but recovery remains fragile

KABUL (Ariana News): The Afghan economy is showing signs of moderate growth, but still faces significant challenges, including fiscal constraints, trade imbalances, and a limited capacity for public investment, the World Bank (WB) said Wednesday.

According to the organization's latest Afghanistan Development Update, issued on Wednesday, "Afghanistan's economic recovery remains uncertain".

Modest GDP growth of 2.7%, driven by private consumption, has recouped only about 10% of past economic losses, indicative of the slow and fragile nature of the recovery, the WB said.

According to the organization, this level of growth has done little to address deeper structural issues and significant vulnerabilities within Afghanistan's economy.

"Enabling women's participation in the economy, strengthening domestic resource mobilization, maintaining price stability, and addressing critical deficits in human capital - particularly in education and healthcare, and especially for women - will be essential for long-term recovery and reducing vulnerability to future shocks," the WB said in a statement.

Faris Hadad-Zervos, World Bank Country Director for Afghanistan said: "Afghanistan's long-term growth prospects depend on tapping into the substantial potential of the domestic private sector and improving the overall business environment."

"Key to this is increased investment, providing access to finance to small businesses, and supporting educated and skilled women entrepreneurs so their businesses can thrive. Without this, the country risks prolonged stagnation with limited prospects for sustainable development," he said.

Meanwhile, the partial recovery, coupled with falling food prices, has contributed to a gradual improvement in household welfare.

But most Afghan households continue to struggle to meet basic needs and poverty remains widespread.

"Vulnerable groups, including women, children, and displaced populations, continue to bear the brunt of the economic hardship due to the lack of social protection mechanisms," the WB stated.

In addition, Afghanistan's trade dynamics remain a significant challenge.

In 2023-24, the country's exports remained stable, but imports surged, leading to a widening trade deficit, the WB reported.

The appreciation of the afghani (AFN) made imports cheaper, fueling demand for foreign goods, while domestic industrial activity revived, increasing the need for imported inputs.

However, the trade deficit, exacerbated by Afghanistan's reliance on imports for essential goods like fuel, food, and machinery, might pose a risk to the country's economic stability, the organization stated.

Meanwhile, Deputy Minister of Economy Abdul Latif Nazari said that Afghanistan's economy has a clear outlook and the current problems are caused by sanctions and the freezing of the country's foreign exchange reserves.

"Afghanistan's economic outlook is bright and hopeful. Some of the economic problems that exist are due to sanctions, banking restrictions and the freezing of assets of the Afghan people," Nazari added.

"Our effort is to free the property of the people of Afghanistan as soon as possible and use it in line with the economic growth and development of the country."

Security forces kill 8 militants

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The security forces on Thursday killed eight Khwarij militants, including a ring leader Khan Muhammad Khoriya, with fixed head money of Rs1 million in two separate intelligence based operations (IBOs) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

"An intelligence based operation was conducted in general area Sararogha, South Waziristan District on reported presence of Khwarij. During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location as a result of which two Khwarij, including Kharij ring leader Khan Muhammad @Khoriya, were killed, while two khwarij were apprehended," said an Inter Services

Public Relations (ISPR) news release.

The killed kharij Khan Muhammad @Khoriya was involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area including target killing & extortion. He was highly wanted by the Law Enforcement Agencies and Government had fixed head money of Rs 1 million on him, it further said. Another intelligence based operation was conducted in Lakki Marwat District and after an intense fire exchange, six Khwarij were successfully neutralised by the security forces.

Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif have paid tribute to the security forces for eliminating eight Khawarij in two separate operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In a statement issued today, President Asif Ali Zardari said entire nation stands with the brave security forces for the complete eradication of Fitna Al Khawarij. The President also praised the bravery of the security forces for killing a wanted terrorist involved in terrorist activities during the operation.

He expressed national resolve to root out the menace of terrorism. In his statement, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif praised the security forces for killing eight Khawarij, including a wanted terrorist, in these operations. The Prime Minister said that entire nation stands with the Pakistan Army in war against terrorism. He expressed determination to completely eradicate all types of terrorism from the country.

Misleading public a history of JI: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that distorting facts and misleading the public has been a history of Jamaat-e-Islami, the new recruitment policy is a stopgap aimed at promoting transparency, and the baseless allegations are an attempt to hinder the Sindh government's efforts toward collective development.

Reacting to the statement of the Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, stated that fees in educational institutions, particularly universities, are determined based on infrastructure, facilities, and operational costs. He emphasized that the government of Sindh is seriously considering reforms to make education more accessible and affordable.

He said that the decay of the transport system at the University of Karachi is an inherited issue and the government is working with the university administration and all relevant stakeholders to restore and modernize it.

Regarding the Red Line BRT, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the Red Line BRT is a historic project designed to address public transport challenges, delays in mega projects are often caused by inevitable challenges, including technical issues.

He mentioned that the BRT project was also running behind schedule because of the suspension of work on the Red Line BRT during the caretaker government and issues related to utilities in Karachi. Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said, "The main reasons for increasing costs of the Red Line are global inflation, price rise of material, and the devaluation of rupee."

KP CM inaugurates Girls' College

F.P. Report

BARA: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur visited Tehsil Bara of Khyber District on Thursday, and inaugurated the newly established Government Girls Degree College Bara on Thursday. Constructed on 45 kanal of land at a cost of Rs. 279 million, the college is equipped with modern facilities, including a solar power system. The institution has a capacity to accommodate 500 students, with 263 already enrolled.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, the Chief Minister announced the upgradation of Category D Hospitals Dogra and Jamrud and the establishment of a nursing college in the district. He also directed the concerned authorities to expedite the construction of the Peshawar-Bara Road and resolve land compensation issues related to the Nogazi Road through local jirgas. He further directed the concerned quarters to take up the matter of increasing the admission quota for students from tribal districts in medical colleges with the federal government. In his address, the Chief Minister reiterated the provincial government's commitment to promoting women's education, and said that "promoting female education is a top priority for our government, and we are making substantial investments in girls' education because educated mothers are the foundation of an educated nation adding that girls have immense potential; and they only need opportunities to thrive".

He assured that the government would continue to provide opportunities to women in all sectors, encouraging them to come forward and showcase their talents. The Chief Minister acknowledged the sacrifices rendered by the tribesmen for the country and pledged to address their grievances saying that the tribal people have made immense sacrifices for this country, but unfortunately, their contributions have not been fully recognized, however, the day will come when their sacrifices will be acknowledged by all.

Gandapur highlighted that KP's citizens have been on the frontlines of the nation's challenges, and the founder chairman of PTI has consistently advocated for the rights and development of the tribal districts.



ISLAMABAD: KP Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi called on PPP Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

KP govt launches Life Insurance Scheme

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, has decided to launch the Life Insurance Scheme- one of the flagship projects of the incumbent provincial government, from the 1st January 2025. The scheme will offer financial assistance to families in case of death of the head of the household at any public sector hospital or a health facility empanelled under the Sehat Card program. Under the insurance scheme, the provincial government will provide financial assistance of Rs. one million for individuals below the age of 60, and Rs. 500,000 for those above 60 years. The initiative is estimated to cost Rs. 4.5 billion annually, which will be funded by the provincial government.

The decision was made during a high-level meeting chaired by the Chief Minister here the other day. The meeting was attended by Provincial Finance Minister Muzammil Aslam, Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development Ikramullah Khan, administrative secretaries of concerned departments, and other officials.

The meeting also reviewed

progress on the flagship projects of the incumbent provincial government including Life Insurance Scheme, Peshawar-Dera Ismail Khan Motorway, Establishment of Islamic Takaful Insurance Company, establishment of a Debt Management Fund, Construction of the Provincial Power Transmission Line, Home Stay Tourism Project, Solarization of Household and Government buildings and Trade Corridor Hub.

During the meeting the Chief Minister Gandapur set a three-month deadline for the establishment of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Islamic Takaful Insurance Company and directed officials to expedite the necessary paperwork on it. He also emphasized the timely completion of Lot 1 of the provincial power transmission line, a 40-kilometer, 220kV line from Matiltan to Bahrain in Swat, at a cost of Rs. 8 billion, expected to be completed within 18 months. Lot 2, which will extend the line 120 kilometers from Bahrain to the Chakdara grid, is also in the pipeline. Once operational, the transmission line is projected to generate an annual revenue of Rs. 9 billion for the provincial government. The Chief Minister directed the Finance

Department to release Rs. 2 billion immediately for land acquisition for the Peshawar-Dera Ismail Khan Motorway, with the process to begin simultaneously in both cities. During the meeting, the creation of a Debt Management Fund was highlighted as another key project, with an estimated monthly revenue of Rs. 400 to 500 million. The Chief Minister directed the immediate transfer of funds to make the fund fully operational.

To promote tourism, the provincial government has decided to advertise the Home Stay Tourism project by January 1st 2025. The chair also instructed the concerned officials to expedite the solarization of government buildings, a crucial component of the province's energy sustainability plans.

The Chief Minister stressed the importance of these flagship projects, terming them pivotal for the province's economic development, and assured that all necessary resources would be provided to ensure their timely completion. "These projects are of the public interest, and any unnecessary delays will not be tolerated," he remarked, emphasizing that their benefits must reach the citizens without any delay.

Senate elections: PHC grants final chance to ECP

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has granted the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) a final opportunity to respond to a petition related for holding Senate elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The court has directed the ECP to submit its response by 24th December and warned that the case will not be adjourned further, on Thursday.

A two-member bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Waqar Ahmed heard the petition, seeking directions for the ECP to hold Senate elections in the province.

During the hearing, the petitioner's lawyer informed the court that the Senate elections are scheduled to be held, but the ECP has not yet announced the election schedule. The lawyer argued that the delay in

holding the elections is a violation of the Constitution and the Elections Act. The ECP's Special Secretary and the lawyer for Azam Swati, appeared before the court.

The ECP's Special Secretary requested the court to grant more time to submit a response, stating that the commission needs to hold a meeting to discuss the matter.

Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim remarked that the ECP should hold a meeting and decide on a course of action. The court directed the ECP to submit its response by 24th December and warned that the case will not be adjourned further.

PHC grants bail to KP advisor, SIC chiefs: PHC's divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Waqar Ahmad has granted protective bail to three individuals, including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders and a chairman of Sunni

Ittehad Council, in cases registered against them in various police stations in Islamabad and Punjab.

PHC heard the petition filed by Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister on Information, Hamid Raza, Chairman SIC and Malik Shahab a PTI leader and lawyer.

During the hearing, the petitioners' lawyer informed the court that cases had been registered against the petitioners in various police stations in Islamabad and Punjab, but they were unaware of the details of the cases. The lawyer requested the court to grant protective bail to petitioners and direct the authorities to provide them with the details of the cases. The court, after hearing the arguments, granted protective bail to the petitioners for a period of three weeks and directed the authorities to provide them with the details of the cases registered against them.

PM reaffirms

(Continued from Page 1)

and secretary of finance. Expressing satisfaction over the increasing fiscal space, he said the efforts of the economic team were coming to fruition. The prime minister directed to complete the important tasks related to the FBR's digitization by the end of this month.

He said that consequent to the crackdown against the smuggled fuel and reduction in petrol and diesel prices, the sale of petroleum products had reached 1.58 million metric tons - the highest ever during the last 25 months. Instructing strict measures to curb petrol smuggling, Prime Minister Shehbaz said that 15% increase in the year-on-year sale of petroleum products showed the revival of the energy market.

He told the participants of the meeting that the timely decision for the sugar export brought in \$500 million in remittance. The meeting was told that the digitization of FBR's value chain will be completed by March next year. The video analytics of the sugar industry has already been completed. The prime minister called for early installation of the cement industry's video analytics system.

It was told that work on system design for digital invoices has been completed and a mobile phone application for the digital

invoicing of small businesses would be ready by the end of this month. The participants were told that a new board of Pakistan Revenue Automation Ltd (PRAL) has been constituted and the organisation's hardware and data center is also being upgraded.

Besides, a central assessment unit for faceless customs assessment at Karachi Airport will start functioning by this year end. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Economic Affairs Minister Ahad Cheema, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

PM directs Commerce Ministry to expedite measures for enhancing exports, major crops' production: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif appreciated the performance of the Ministry of Commerce for its prompt compliance for his instructions issued and directed to convene a meeting of the National Export Development Board next week to increase Pakistani exports.

The prime minister made these remarks while chairing a review meeting on Commerce Ministry's performance, a PM office news release said. The prime minister directed to take immediate steps to create sustainable employment

opportunities for the border districts of Balochistan and step up measures to further increase Pakistani rice exports to Malaysia.

During Dato' Sri Anwar Ibrahim's recent visit to Pakistan, it was agreed to increase rice exports from Pakistan to Malaysia, he added. The PM underscored that the existing special economic zones in Pakistan would be activated along with proper facilities of hotels, hospitals, business schools and other services to increase domestic exports. The prime minister directed to form a special cabinet committee to increase the production of wheat, cotton, sugarcane, rice, edible oil and other major crops.

He added that the Cabinet Committee would submit recommendations based on expert opinions to increase production of major crops. During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed about measures to increase agricultural exports. He was briefed that two MoUs were signed with Russia for trade in agricultural commodities under barter trade. The PM was apprised that the Tajik government had expressed interest in cooperation with Pakistan in the textile sector. The meeting was attended by Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan, Economic Affairs Minister Ahad Khan Cheema, Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ahsan Afzal and officers of relevant institutions.

Kundi briefs Bilawal about APC in KP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi briefed the Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari about the All Parties Conference (APC) held in Governor House Peshawar on Thursday.

The Governor briefed Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in a meeting held at Zardari House in Islamabad. He shared that the APC was attended by 16 political parties from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, discussing key issues affecting the province.

Governor Kundi also mentioned that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had boycotted the APC, which focused on matters such as maintaining peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and resolving the provincial resources dispute with the federal government. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari lauded the APC, calling it a significant step. He assured Kundi of his full support for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's resources and the province's peace efforts, saying, "I stand with you for the betterment of the province and its people."

Earthquake jolts parts of Punjab

F.P. Report

JHELUM: A 4.8-magnitude earthquake was felt in parts of Punjab on Thursday. Following the tremors, people came out of their houses in fear by reciting Kalma-e-Tayyaba.

The National Seismic Monitoring Centre (NSMC) confirmed that tremors were felt in parts of Punjab including Gujrat, Jhelum, Nankana Sahib, Jalalpur Bhatian, Wazirabad, Shakkot, Bhalwal The NSMC said the earthquake of 4.8 magnitude had a depth of 15 kilometers with epicenter near Kharian. However, no loss of life or property was reported in its wake.

Earlier in August, a 4.5 magnitude earthquake was felt in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, mostly in Swat. Today's tremors come after a 5.4 magnitude earthquake jolted parts of Islamabad, Rawalpindi and KP on August 29. In July, another earthquake with a magnitude of 4.7 hit Swat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and surrounding areas.

Pakistan Navy Ship, Moawin visits Kenya

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship MOAWIN visited Mombasa, Kenya, where it established a free medical camp. Earlier, upon arrival at the port of Mombasa, PNS MOAWIN was warmly welcomed by local authorities.

At medical camp, Pakistan Navy surgeons and medical specialists provided free medical consultations, treatments and medicines to patients. The medical camp was widely appreciated by local populace, who benefited from the high-quality medical care provided.

During the port visit, the Commanding Officer of PNS MOAWIN met Commander Kenya Navy,



Major General Paul Owuor Otieno, and other local government officials to discuss matters of mutual interest and explore avenues for enhancing bilateral cooperation. The Commanding Officer conveyed good wishes of Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, to the people of Kenya and expressed

gratitude for the support extended by host Navy and local Pakistani community. The visit of PNS MOAWIN to Kenya and establishment of medical camp serves as a testament to Pakistan Navy's commitment to fostering goodwill and providing essential medical services to communities in need.

Senior SC judge urges full court bench

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Senior Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, has written a letter to Chief Justice Yahya Afridi, asking him to form a full court bench to hear petitions against the 26th Constitutional Amendment.

The letter also expresses reservations over the nominations of additional judges for the Sindh High Court and Peshawar High Court, calling for the postponement of the Judicial Commission meeting scheduled for December 6, 2024. According to the details, Justice Shah pointed out that around two dozen petitions challenging the 26th Constitutional

Amendment are currently under hearing in the Supreme Court.

He stressed the importance of a full court bench to deliberate on these crucial constitutional matters. Justice Shah further emphasized that the legality of the Judicial Commission, which was formed under the 26th Amendment, is under question.

Several petitioners have challenged the constitutionality of the amendment, and the decision on these petitions would directly impact the legal status of the Judicial Commission. In his letter, Justice Shah highlighted that if the 26th Constitutional Amendment were to be declared unconstitutional, any decisions made by the Judicial

Commission and the appointments of judges would be rendered ineffective.

He added that although the petitions against the amendment were scheduled for a full court hearing on October 31, 2024, the hearing has yet to be arranged, and no response has been received from the Registrar's office regarding the matter. The senior-most judge urged the Chief Justice to postpone the upcoming meeting of the Judicial Commission until a final ruling is made on the constitutional issues surrounding the 26th Amendment, underlining the importance of resolving these matters before proceeding with judicial appointments.



BARA: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur inaugurating Government Girls Degree College.

Syrian army withdraws from Hama

BEIRUT (AP): The Syrian army has withdrawn from the central city of Hama after insurgents broke through its defenses, the military said Thursday, in another setback for President Bashar Assad. The announcement came hours after opposition fighters said they had entered the city and were marching toward the center.

The Syrian army said it redeployed from Hama and took positions outside the city to protect the lives of civilians. The capture of Hama, Syria's fourth largest city, is another blow for Assad days after insurgents captured much of the northern city of Aleppo, the coun-

try's largest city.

On Thursday morning, Syrian insurgents said they entered Hama after three days of intense clashes with government forces on its outskirts, part of an ongoing offensive. The Syrian army said in a statement later that a number of troops were killed after resisting the insurgents for days. It accused the attackers of relying on suicide attacks to break through the defenses of the city.

Hama is one of the few cities that remained under full government control during Syria's conflict, which broke out in March 2011 following a popular uprising. Its capture would

be a major setback for President Bashar Assad. The offensive is being led by the jihadi group Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham as well as an umbrella group of Turkish-backed Syrian militias called the Syrian National Army. Their sudden capture of the northern city of Aleppo, an ancient business hub, was a stunning prize for Assad's opponents and reignited the conflict which had been largely stalemated for the past few years. The next target of the insurgents is likely to be the central city of Homs, the country's third largest. Homs is about 40 kilometers (25 miles) south of Hama.