



CM Maryam to leave for China on 8-day official visit

LAHORE (APP): On the invitation of International Development Department of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif will leave for China tomorrow on an 8-day (8-15 December) official visit.

A 10-member high-level delegation including Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb will accompany the Chief Minister on the visit, said a handout issued here on Saturday.

Special arrangements have been made for Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's visit to Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Guangzhou. The Chief Minister will meet Mr Liu

Jianzhou, Minister of International Department of CPC. Deputy Minister Ms. Sun Haiyan will host a luncheon in her honor. She will also meet the central leadership of CPC, including Minister of Environment.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif will visit Shijiazhuang Hospital, and will be briefed on the public health system in China. She will also visit Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport, the Science Park, environmental improvement technology, IT and institutions related to the use of modern scientific methods.

The CM will participate in the exhibition of imported goods, visit the CPC Central Congress and the museum. She will also visit

a primary school, and will be briefed on the education system in China.

Punjab China Dinner and Punjab Investment Conference are also included in the visit schedule.

CM Maryam Nawaz will visit the Jiangdong Renewable Energy Facility, and review the renewable energy system of China. She will also visit the Hawaii Technologies Factory. Discussions are also scheduled on increasing mutual cooperation between China's ruling party and Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), besides a discussion on increasing mutual cooperation and economic ties between China and the government of Punjab.

Youths are Pakistan's key asset for progress: PA Speaker

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan has emphasized that youths are Pakistan's valuable asset and they will play a pivotal role in the nation's progress and economic growth.

Addressing the 8th convocation of a private university in Lahore as the chief guest on Saturday, he advised the students to face the challenges of practical life with courage and determination and contribute to the country's development.

The speaker expressed his pride in the achievements of young women, stating, "Our successful daughters are a source of pride for us and demonstrate that our society is moving towards positive change." He also congratulated the successful stu-

dents, their parents, faculty members, and the university administration, praising the institution for its distinguished position in the field of education.

Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan highlighted the revolutionary reforms in the education sector introduced under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. He noted that the Punjab government is committed to providing quality education, distributing scholarships, and implementing vocational training programs to equip youth with essential skills.

The Speaker also stressed the importance of educational institutions in driving national progress through research and innovation, particularly in the fields of climate change

and advanced technology. He assured that the Punjab government would extend full support to educational institutions in this regard.

He acknowledged the efforts of parents and urged teachers to guide students in distinguishing between positive and negative influences. Additionally, he emphasized the need for universities to introduce modern language courses, including Chinese, alongside graduate programs. Nations can only progress on the foundation of education, research, and skills, and the Punjab government will provide all necessary support in this regard, he remarked.

Later, the Speaker distributed degrees to the graduating students, commending their achievements.

Murtaza announces development schemes for UCs

KARACHI (PPI): Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab has announced the approval of development schemes worth Rs4.8 billion for the city's Union Councils (UCs), with each council set to receive Rs20 million.

In a move aimed at bolstering local infrastructure, the Pakistan People's Party government has increased the fund allocation for each UC from Rs500,000 to Rs1.2 million.

Wahab stressed that the PPP was the driving force behind the city's development, asserting, "If a single brick is laid in this city, it is by the PPP." He urged citizens to take ownership of the ongoing projects and emphasized that the real challenge lies in improving the public perception of the city, which, in his view, suffers from no inherent flaws.

Wahab also unveiled the approval of 240 new schemes for the city's UCs, stressing the importance of working together to overcome any external pressures. He added that the PPP's success in the recent by-elections, which saw the party secure three UC chairmanships, was a clear indication of the people's faith in their vision.

Highlighting the party's growing financial support, Wahab revealed that the PPP Council had collected Rs500 million in just two months, underscoring the public's strong backing for the government's initiatives.

Turning to the city's development, the mayor expressed satisfaction with recent cultural and international engagements, including the successful hosting of the IDEAS 2024 Conference,

which attracted military chiefs from 40 countries.

He also lauded the World Culture Festival organized by the Arts Council, which featured artists from 44 countries. The ongoing Urdu Conference, alongside the Karachi Festival, was another point of pride, as it showcased the city's rich literary heritage. Wahab credited the Sindh government's Rs450 million grant to the Arts Council for enabling such cultural growth.

The mayor also pointed to key advancements such as the establishment of the Metropolitan University in Karachi and the provision of CyberKnife treatment at Jinnah Hospital, benefiting patients from across 167 cities. These developments reflect the city's ongoing progress and improved security.

Officers of Civil Services Academy visit Rescue Headquarters

LAHORE (APP): A 25-member delegation of 52nd Common Training Program from Civil Services Academy Lahore headed by Additional Director Programme & Coordination Dr. Syed Shabbir Akbar Zaidi visited the Emergency Services Headquarters and Academy here on Saturday to understand role, function and operational aspects of Emergency Services Department.

They witnessed the ongoing specialized training activities for management of Fire & Hazmat Emergencies, Medical & Trauma Emergencies, Collapsed Structure Search

& Rescue, Water Rescue and Flood Emergencies.

The delegation was briefed about the 24/7 working of the Provincial Monitoring Cell (PMC) to ensure uniform standards of the Service in all Districts of Punjab. They also saw the working of integrated Emergency Management & Dispatch System, integrating Call Management and GPS Tracking to ensure timely response.

In the Provincial Monitoring Cell, they were also briefed about the digital data base of the service in which all emergency data is available and incorporated for future planning

and research work. After that, the delegation visited Managers Training Center (MTC) where they were warmly welcomed by the Registrar, Emergency Services Academy.

On this occasion, Secretary Emergency Services Department (ESD) Dr. Rizwan Naseer briefed the delegation about Emergency Services Reforms in Pakistan and the reasons behind the success of Emergency Services Department, which was started in the provincial capital Lahore as a pilot project with 14 Ambulances, 6 Rescue Stations, and 200 rescuers. He briefed that the Service has rescued over 16.2 million victims of emergencies and saved losses over 650 billion rupees in over 248445 fire incidents.

The delegation was apprised about severity of road traffic crashes in Punjab and the needful prevention to reduce the number of RTCs by 2030 under the United Nations One Vision such as reduction in vehicular speed limit to 30km/h under the UN Road Safety Strategy was discussed.

IBA Karachi awards 1353 degrees at Convocation 2024



F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Karachi marked a significant milestone by hosting its Convocation for the Class of 2024 at the Main Campus. The event celebrated the achievements of 1,353 graduates from various disciplines, making it the largest graduating batch in the institute's history.

The graduates included 990 from six undergraduate programs, 362 from eleven postgraduate programs, and

one PhD recipient. The ceremony was graced by the Honorable Chief Minister of Sindh and Patron IBA, Syed Murad Ali Shah, as the Chief Guest. Ms. Sultana Siddiqui, President of Hum Network and Founder of Moomal Productions, attended as the Guest of Honor.

In his address, Mr. Shah commended IBA for its unwavering commitment to leadership, academic excellence, and societal impact. He highlighted the insti-

tute's exceptional faculty, with 67% holding PhDs from prestigious global institutions.

"This Convocation holds special significance as IBA prepares to celebrate its 70th Anniversary next year—a legacy of leadership, excellence, and impact," he stated, acknowledging IBA's contributions to the educational landscape.

Dr. S. Akbar Zaidi, Executive Director of IBA Karachi, celebrated the graduates' dedication and

perseverance. He remarked, "Today is particularly special as we celebrate the largest graduating class in IBA's history. This day also marks the beginning of a momentous year as we look forward to celebrating IBA's 70th Anniversary—a testament to our legacy of excellence and transformation."

Ms. Sultana Siddiqui lauded the achievements of the graduates and emphasized the importance of integrity and societal responsibility in their future endeavors. "IBA

graduates should believe in their abilities, dream big, and hold firmly to the values of integrity and honesty as true success goes beyond personal achievements," she encouraged.

The ceremony recognized outstanding students, with medals, shields, and merit certificates awarded to position holders in various degree programs. A highlight of the event was the 'Excellence in Sports' award, presented to rowing champion Syeda Manahil Hussain from the Class of 2024, in recognition of her remarkable contributions to sports.

As IBA approaches its 70th anniversary, the institute continues to uphold its legacy of leadership, excellence, and impact. With the establishment of three new schools—the School of Business Studies (SBS), the School of Economics & Social Sciences (SESS), and the School of Mathematics & Computer Science (SMCS) IBA has broadened its academic horizons, reflecting its dedication to fostering innovation and transformation in diverse fields.

This convocation not only marked the culmination of years of hard work for the graduates but also set the stage for IBA's continued commitment to excellence and societal betterments.

Lahore stands second in pollution ranking

LAHORE (APP): The changing weather conditions also failed to reduce air pollution, and the overall air pollution rate in the city was recorded at 196.

Lahore stood second in the country's air pollution ranking. The pollution rate around the Power Zone Head Office was 420, the rate at the US Consulate was 334, UMT 247, the pollution rate at the CERP Office was 239, while the current temperature in the city was recorded at 20 degrees Celsius.

According to the Meteorological Department, the minimum temperature is likely to be 9 and the maximum is 22 degrees, and the humidity ratio in the air was recorded at 31 per cent. Weather forecasters say that there is a possibility of rain in Lahore on Nov 8 and 9, which will further reduce air pollution.

Arora reviews minority card registration

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora visited the Deputy Commissioner Narowal office on Saturday to review the process of minority card registration and inspect the Minority Card Registration Center established by the Chief Minister.

The provincial minister described the program as a historic initiative by the Chief Minister of Punjab, saying, "The issuance of the minority card will undoubtedly be an important and historic program, which holds significant value for the minority community."

He further said, "The Chief Minister of Punjab had stated on the floor of the assembly that minorities are close to her heart, and today this has been proven practically. We have made the registration process for the minority card extremely easy, allowing everyone to register online by themselves."

Under this program, the process of minority card registration has been initiated across the province, with registration centers being set up in gurdwaras and churches to make it easier for members of the minority community to benefit from this initiative.

Ramesh Singh Arora said, "Our government has made a historic increase in the Minority Development Fund to further enhance the welfare of the minority community. Our goal is to ensure that every deserving individual receives their rightful share." He also expressed gratitude to Ahsan Iqbal for his support of the minority community in Narowal.

Minister reviews performance of essential maritime agencies

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Honorable Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, spearheaded a Performance Review Meeting attended by Federal Secretary MoMA, Mr. Zafar Ali Shah and Additional Secretary MoMA, Mr. Umer Zafar Sheikh to assess the progress of key maritime organizations.

These included the Port Qasim Authority (PQA), Karachi Port Trust (KPT), and Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC).

The meeting provided a comprehensive overview of the monthly performance metrics, tackling challenges and pinpointing areas ripe for improvement. Strategic discussions centered on amplifying efficiency, productivity, and overall serv-

ice delivery within the maritime sector.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to put into action the proposed recommendations and strategies designed to drive growth and progress in the maritime sector.

After the Performance Review meeting, Minister for Maritime Affairs, Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, chaired a Khuli Kachehri session, providing an open platform for employees of maritime organizations and industry stakeholders to voice their concerns, suggestions, and ideas.

This interactive forum enabled direct engagement with the Minister, fostering a collaborative environment to address grievances and enhance the maritime sector.

The Minister provided stakeholders with a reassur-

ing commitment that their concerns would be duly recognized and their issues promptly addressed, ensuring a timely resolution to their matters.

The Khuli Kachehri, an open forum, was attended by representatives from various organizations under the Ministry of Maritime Affairs. Notable attendees included the Chairman of Port Qasim Authority (PQA), the Chairman of Karachi Port Trust (KPT), and Executive Directors of the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC), along with team members from their respective maritime organizations, Former Cricketers Mr. Rashid Latif and Shadab Kabir were also present in Khuli Kachehri.

Directives were issued to resolve the issues on a priority basis.

Govt expands children's heart surgery programme

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique announced on Saturday expansion of children's heart surgery program, directing the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) to immediately train technical staff of private hospitals on the programme's online dashboard.

Presiding over a meeting at the Punjab Health Initiative Management Company here, the minister conducted a comprehensive review of the programme. He emphasised improving inter-departmental coordination to ensure the program's success. "Alhamdulillah, since its launch, over 960 children have successfully undergone heart surgeries. No negligence will be tolerated, and empaneled private

hospitals have been instructed to enhance their performance to increase the number of surgeries," he stated.

He further announced plans to expand the program by empaneling additional hospitals to cater to more children. "This initiative has significantly reduced the waiting list for surgeries. Previously, families had to wait for months, but now the capacity of government children's hospitals has increased, and the process has become more efficient and transparent through online monitoring," the minister added.

The meeting highlighted the program's impact, noting continuous monitoring through a live dashboard and transparency in its operations. The minister reiterated the Punjab gov-

ernment's commitment to providing timely and quality healthcare for children with heart conditions.

The Chief Minister's Children's Heart Surgery Program, launched under the leadership of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, continues to expand its reach, providing critical healthcare services to children across the province.

Key attendees included Parliamentary Secretary Rushda Lodhi, Secretary Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Azmat Mahmood, Special Secretary Development Syed Wajid Ali Shah, and CEO PHIMC Dr. Ali Razaq. Representatives from Lahore's private hospitals, Multan Institute of Cardiology, and PITB also participated, some via video link.

Junaid Jamshed death anniversary observed

LAHORE (APP): The eighth death anniversary of popular Pakistani singer-turned-Naath khawan, Junaid Jamshed, was observed here and across the country on Saturday.

Junaid Jamshed died on this day in 2016, along with his wife and 45 others in a plane crash near Havelian. He graduated in mechanical engineering in 1990 and joined PAF as a civilian contractor and moved on to a short-lived career in aeronautical engineering.

Junaid formed a pop music band 'Vital Signs' and had also led it as the lead vocalist. Vital Signs gained immense worldwide popularity during the 1990s, with their songs like Aitebaar, Goray Rang Ka Zamana, Dil Dil Pakistan and Sanwali Saloni. According to BBC, people from 155 countries/territories voted in the most favourite songs' poll. "Dil Dil Pakistan" was ranked third among the top 10 songs. At the peak of his successful career of 15 years, Junaid quit the music industry in 2004 to reconnect to his Islamic faith.

2 martyrs families given homes

LAHORE (APP): Two families of martyrs from Rahim Yar Khan police have been provided with homes, according to a police spokesman here on Saturday.

Families of police constables Ghulam Hussain Shaheed and Qasim Shaheed were given houses worth Rs. 27 million under the martyr quota. Both officials embraced martyrdom on November 29, 2023, during a confrontation with dacoits in Katcha Machka. SP Investigation Arsalan Zahid personally met families of the martyrs at their new residences. The families were provided fully furnished houses in a private housing colony in Rahim Yar Khan, selected based on their preferences. Constable Qasim Shaheed is survived by his parents and wife, while constable Ghulam Hussain Shaheed leaves behind his mother, wife, two sons, and three daughters.

6 arrested over smog SOPs violations

LAHORE (APP): Nine cases were registered, six violators were arrested, and fines exceeding Rs. 884,000 were imposed on 526 offenders over violation of the standard operating procedures to control smog in the province. A police spokesperson said on Saturday that eight violations were reported for burning crop residue and 427 violations for excessive smoke-emitting vehicles.

SUIT ADVERTISEMENT

In the Court of Miss Ambareen Navid Judge Banking Court-1 Peshawar
Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar
Case No: 151/1 of 2024, Date of hearing: 18-01-2025 Suit for the Recovery of
Rs. 1,56,7,246.59 HBL RHQ Bank Road Mardan VS Sadiq Rehman.
Notice Versus: Sadiq Rehman Son of Mahabat Khan, R/o (1) NTS Pakistan,
B-2, Rahatabad Colony near Pakistan Forest Institute Peshawar. (2) Street
No. 11, Shaheen Town, University Town, Peshawar. (3) Meera Khan Kalay,
P.O Qutab Gash, Takht Bhai, Mardan. Where as the plaintiff has instituted a
suit for the recovery of **Rs. 1,56,7,246.59** Against you under section 10(2) of
the Financial Institution leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within
30 days after receipt/ publication of the notice in the newspaper. Failing which
an ex-parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs.
Issue today on 05-12-2024 under my signature and seal of the Court.
Registrar | Banking Court-1 Peshawar

Merged districts: Governor expresses disappointment over unfulfilled promises

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday expressed disappointment over the unmet promises made to the people of the merged districts following the merger of FATA.

“Unfortunately, the promises made to the people of the tribal areas after the merger have not been fulfilled. There has been little focus on developmental work in the merged districts.” The Governor expressed these views in an event organized under the auspices of the Wana Welfare Association at the Governor House.

During the event, Rahmatullah Wazir, the President of WAWA, delivered the opening address. He expressed gratitude to the Governor for hosting the event at the Governor House and provided an overview of the Association’s regional and social services.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, in his address, highlighted the commendable educational, social, and regional services provided by the WANA Welfare Association.

The Governor also distributed scholarships among students on behalf of WAWA.

Governor Kundi emphasized the importance of protecting the province’s resources and rights, saying, “We must ensure the protection of our province’s resources. By utilizing resources effectively, we can ensure regional and provincial development.”

He also pointed out the challenges faced by the province, particularly in regard to water distribution. “Our province has yet to receive its fair share of water. If proper attention had been given to provincial water resources, areas like Wana would not have faced issues of land infertility,” he remarked.

Governor Kundi said that during the All Parties Conference, political leaders came together under one roof to discuss the protection of the province’s resources and rights.

He stressed the need for local leadership to play an active role in regional development, saying, “The local leadership needs to play an effective role in regional development.”

Regarding the issues of South Waziristan and Wana, the Governor assured that he would do his utmost to address the concerns and demands raised by the people of these areas. He also highlighted the importance of keeping borders, such as the Angoor Adda, open for promoting trade and commerce in the province.

The event served as a platform to discuss the pressing issues faced by the tribals, and Governor Faisal Karim Kundi reiterated his commitment to supporting

the development of the areas and addressing its concerns.

Governor lauds successful forces operation against militants: Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday lauded major security operation in different areas of the province in which 22 militants were killed.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, extended his heartfelt praise to the security forces for their bravery and successful efforts in eliminating the militants. He commended the forces for their unwavering commitment to maintaining peace and stability in the province.

The Governor also paid tribute to the six security personnel who laid down their lives during the operation, expressing deep admiration for their courage and sacrifice. He prayed for the elevation of their ranks in the hereafter and for patience and strength for their grieving families.



PESHAWAR: Farmer sorting radish after harvesting for selling purpose in a local market.

‘No civil disobedience movement succeeded’

PESHAWAR (INP): Qaumi Watan Party leader Aftab Sherpao said on Saturday that no civil disobedience movement will succeed in the country.

He said that he was not backing the ban on any political party including the PTI or imposition of the governor’s rule in province.

“The PTI itself creating conditions for ban on the party,” he said. He said the PTI had earlier also tried for the civil disobedience, but it was failed. “Creating anarchy and chaos in the country, has been anti-state act, PTI should play its role at the floor of assemblies,” he advised.

He said maintenance of law and order in the province, has been the responsibility of the provincial government. He advised for bringing down instability and anarchy in the country.

“The province’s situation will not improve until political chaos will prevail,” he observed.

Seminar to be held F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: To mark International Anti-Corruption Day, a high-profile seminar will be held at Nishtar Hall, Peshawar, tomorrow (Monday). The event is being organized as part of an awareness campaign to highlight the importance of eliminating corruption from society and fostering a culture of transparency and accountability.

The Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, will grace the occasion as the Chief Guest. The seminar will also feature addresses by other distinguished speakers, including Chief Secretary and Advisor to CM on Anti-Corruption.

Additionally, subject matter experts from various fields will share their insights on combating corruption effectively.

This initiative is part of the government’s broader strategy to raise awareness about the detrimental impacts of corruption and to encourage active participation from citizens in building a transparent society.

KP faces severe toll with 275 martyrs in 636 terrorist attacks

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has witnessed a harrowing toll of violence this year, with 275 individuals martyred and 460 others injured in 636 terrorist attacks, according to a detailed report compiled by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police.

The report, released by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), highlights the devastating impact of terrorism on both civilians and security personnel in the region.

Of the total number of martyrs, 142 were police officials, while 133 were civilians. The report also recorded 214 police officers and 246 civilians among the injured.

The attacks, carried out by banned organizations, included six suicide bombings, 113 IED blasts, and

355 instances of gunfire across various parts of the province.

These incidents have added to the ongoing security challenges faced by the province, which continues to be a battleground for extremist groups.

In response to the growing wave of terror, the provincial government, along with the CTD, has intensified efforts to combat the insurgents. The CTD report states that 2,981 intelligence-based operations (IBOs) were conducted throughout the year, resulting in the deaths of 246 terrorists. Additionally, 739 terrorists were arrested, 29 of whom were identified as high-profile targets.

Significant material recoveries were also made during these operations, including 849 kilograms of

explosives, 162 hand grenades, seven suicide jackets, and numerous firearms. These seizures underscore the persistent threat posed by the insurgent networks operating within and around the province.

Meanwhile, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur recently addressed the media at the CTD headquarters in Peshawar, emphasizing the provincial government’s ongoing efforts to curb terrorism.

“The law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has improved significantly under our government’s administration,” Gandapur stated. “We have 16 active CTD stations across the province, and we are strengthening the prosecution process as well.”

Christmas celebration of love, brotherhood and peace, says Kundi

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday said that Christmas is a celebration of love, brotherhood, and peace.

He wished that the joy of Christmas bring peace, prosperity, and harmony to the country.

Governor House hosted a special Christmas celebration organized by the Pakistan Peoples Party Minority Wing. The event was attended by a large number of men, women, and children from the minority community through out the province.

Governor Kundi, was the chief guest at the occasion. He was joined by various prominent figures

including the Provincial President of PPP Minority Wing, Naseeb Chand, Kishore Kumar, Farzandullah Wazir, Pastor Yusuf Yunis, Reverend Shehzad Murad, and others.

During the event, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, alongside the Christian community, cut the Christmas cake and extended his heartfelt wishes for the festive occasion. The ceremony also featured a special prayer by the Christian community and a Christmas carol performance.

In his address, Governor Kundi emphasized that the celebration at the Governor House was a testament to the shared joy and unity among all Pakistani citi-

zens, regardless of their religion. He reiterated that all minorities in Pakistan enjoy equal rights, and the Constitution guarantees their protection and religious freedom.

He highlighted that the Pakistan Peoples Party has been the most instrumental political force in providing rights to the minorities living in the country.

“The role of minorities is critical in the national development and prosperity of Pakistan,” he added.

He also praised the Christian community for their exceptional contributions in the fields of education, health, and other services, further acknowledging their continuous efforts in

promoting peace and love in the country.

Addressing the importance of preserving historical institutions, Governor Kundi remarked that Edwards College Peshawar, a valuable asset, would be restored to its original form and will struggle to give it university status.

He announced the introduction of an “Open Day” every 10 days at the Governor House, allowing anyone to visit without restrictions.

In a symbolic gesture of goodwill, the Christian and other minority communities presented traditional gifts and a turban to the Governor as a token of respect.

Robotics take center stage at Allied School’s Science Fair

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Allied School Gulberg Peshawar Campus on Saturday hosted a thrilling Science Fair, where students from Pre-school to Grade 10 showcased their innovative projects and experiments. This year’s theme, Robotics, sparked immense creativity and enthusiasm among the young participants.

The exhibition was a testament to the students’ remarkable understanding of science and technology. From robotic arms to artificial intelligence, the projects on display demonstrated an impressive grasp of complex concepts.

The event was graced by the presence of Mr. Inam Mateen, Managing Director of Allied School, as the Chief Guest.



Renowned experts, Mr. Asghar Khattak and Mr. Ayaz Mehmood, served as judges, evaluating the projects and providing

valuable feedback to the students.

The Science Fair was a resounding success, providing a platform for students

to showcase their talents, learn from each other, and develop a deeper appreciation for the wonders of science and technology.

Dairy farmers training stressed to prevent spread of zoonotic bacterial infection of Brucellosis

PESHAWAR (APP): A research scholar and expert on Zoonotic disease, Dr Muhammad Shahid while laying stress over creating awareness about threats to public health by Brucellosis disease, has suggested for training of dairy farming community regarding measures to prevent spread of most contagious bacterial infection of livestock that not only affects animals but also humans.

“Brucellosis is a bacterial disease caused by various Brucella species, which mainly infect cattle, swine, goats, sheep and dogs. Humans generally acquire the disease through direct contact with infected animals, by eating or drinking contaminated animal products or by inhaling airborne agents” explains Dr Shahid who is serving as Senior Research Officer Microbiology and Biotechnology Center Veterinary Research

Institute (VRI) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In view of increase in occurrence of brucellosis infection cases among people even in dwellers of urban localities, it is needed to create awareness about threats posed by this disease and measures for prevention from it, Dr Shahid opined.

Talking to APP, Shahid informed that recently a surge in cases of Brucellosis has been observed especially in Swabi district of KPK.

The case history of infected people revealed that they have brought new animals from Afghanistan and Punjab after which the infection was reported.

Shahid advised the dairy farming community to arrange quarantine even at their farms and homes by keeping the newly arrived animal in isolation for ten to twelve days during

which the infection symptoms are exposed.

He also suggested for Brucellosis test for newly arrived animal from Livestock hospitals where facility is available at a very nominal charge of Rs 100 per test.

The incidence of brucellosis is increasing day by day, particularly in large dairy herds, Shahid warned.

This infection has a considerable impact on human and animal health as well as on socioeconomic factors where rural income relies mainly on land cultivation and domestic animals farming and people usually live in very close proximity with their livestock, he added.

In case of contracting of this bacterial infection, humans are administered high potency doses of antibiotic including Streptomycin and Doxycycline.

There are seven to eight

species of brucellosis bacteria among them the most common and reported are Brucella abortus and Brucella melitensis.

About the symptoms of disease among humans, Dr Shahid said these include severe fever, excessive sweating and joint pains.

The mortality due to infection is very low but becomes in case of detection in the stage of severity can also become fatal, he warns.

In some cases, the illness also causes miscarriage among females and impotency among males, he continued.

In animal also, the major symptom of Brucellosis is miscarriage after which the animal is brought to veterinary hospital and blood samples lead to detection of infection.

The treatment is also expensive and in most of the cases veterinary doctors

advised owners for culling of the animal.

If preventive measures are taken, people can be saved from this economic losses which they face due to infection of their animals, he observed.

Brucellosis can be controlled by routine screening of domestic livestock and animal vaccination programme, he reiterated.

The Livestock and Dairy Development Department is also arranging training sessions educating people about preventive measures from this zoonotic disease.

There is need for dissemination of messages in newspapers, radio channels and on social media regarding infection symptoms, early treatment and preventive measures including disinfection of dairy farms, utilization of boiled milk and fully cooked meat besides regular screening of animals, he concludes.

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Minister for Social Welfare, Syed Qasim Ali Shah has said that the government was taking steps to end the scourge of begging from the society and to make beggars a useful part of the society.

He said this during a meeting held in the Social Welfare Directorate to clear Peshawar of beggars and drug addicts.

On the occasion, a briefing was also held to inform

participants of the meeting about efforts of the provincial government against begging and drug addiction.

Director Social Welfare told that about 320 million rupees were being spent on the rehabilitation of 2000 addicts under Phase III of Drug-Free Peshawar initiative.

Director Social Welfare also urged professional beggars to educate their children and keep them

away from begging.

Speaking on the occasion, the provincial minister said that identifying the drug-supplying network and proper action against them is vital to achieving the goals of the Drug-Free Peshawar campaign.

He said that the government desires to make beggars a useful part of our society and added that an agreement has been signed with TEVTA to achieve the objective.

People with disabilities an important part of society: Somi Falak Naz

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: PTI’s former Member Provincial Assembly Somi Falak Naz said that people with disabilities are an important part of our society, and with their support, they can become useful members of society and serve the country and nation in the best possible way.

People with disabilities

can play their best role in all aspects of life. In the previous government tenure, the government provided excellent support to people with disabilities. She expressed these views while talking to the media.

Somi Falak Naz said that during Parvez Khattak’s tenure, wheelchairs and sewing machines were provided to people with disabilities on various occa-

sions, enabling them to secure employment. In the field of education, fees were waived for people with disabilities, and this facility is still ongoing. She said that people with disabilities can be made capable of doing business by providing them with easy loans. In this regard, the support of various institutions is also commendable and admirable.



In brief

Three shot dead in Swabi F.P. Report

SWABI: Three persons, including a woman, were killed while a little girl was injured after some men opened fire at a vehicle in Swabi over what was stated to be an old enmity. The bodies were later shifted to a Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital in Topi. Police said the slain persons belonged to the Ismailia area.

3 killed over petty dispute F.P. Report

ATTOCK: Three persons, among them a man and his son, were shot dead over some petty dispute near Khunda Chowk in the limits of the Jand Police Station. Police sources said that Hakmat Khan, a van driver, exchanged hot words with Shahbaz Ahmed over some petty dispute and slapped him. Later, to take revenge and settle the score, Shahbaz, along with his two accomplices, came to the spot and fired at him, killing on the spot Hakmat Khan and his son Khadim Hussain, while one of the attackers received a bullet injury and died on the spot.

Staff of check post suspended F.P. Report

D I KHAN: District police officer (DPO) Sajjad Ahmad Sahibzada on Saturday suspended the entire staff of the police checkpoint in Khhutti for negligence of duty and ordered an inquiry into the matter. According to the police spokesman, the DPO paid a surprise visit to the Khhutti checkpoint and found the entire staff including the Incharge of the checkpoint absent from duty. He also directed departmental enquiry against the absent staff and resolved that no concession would be made with those officials who were showing negligence in duty. The DPO directed the SP City and ASP Suburb to deploy dedicated and responsible personnel to the checkpoint. He emphasized that police officers and personnel stationed at police stations, checkpoints, and on important assignments should not show carelessness or negligence in their responsibilities. Ensuring the safety of citizens' lives and property and maintaining peace and order was the responsibility and top priority of the police department.

Faisal Gandapur visits Mardan F.P. Report

MARDAN: Member National Assembly, Faisal Amin Gandapur, visited Mardan and visited the residence of late Babani Sadar Ali, an activist of Mardan who died in the Islamabad sit-in, and condoled with his family and recited Fatiha for the deceased. MNA along with provincial food minister Zahir Shah Toru, special assistant Tufail Anjum, provincial assembly members and party leaders and workers laid flowers on the grave of the deceased worker on behalf of PTI founder Imran Khan and Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. Faisal Amin Gandapur said that Sadar Ali, the worker who died in D Chowk, while talking in the room of Provincial Minister of Food Zahir Shah Toru, said: And other martyrs are martyrs of Pakistan who sacrificed for the better future of Pakistan.

Drug peddler held

SIALKOT (INP): District police arrested a drug peddler with narcotics and liquor. The SHO Sadder Sialkot police station along with a team arrested Matloob Jatt with 2,510 kg hashish and two bottles of liquor.

JI demands restoration of closed utility stores in KP

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Jamaat-i-Islami former district chief and former MPA Izazul Mulk Afkari has said the closure of utility stores is an injustice with the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Talking to local journalists at Munda here on Saturday the former lawmaker condemned the federal government for closing a total of 30 utility stores in Kambhat and other areas of Lower Dir.

"Surprisingly, many utility stores have been closed across Pakistan on the pretext of loss, most of which are located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa", he said, adding the closure was unacceptable and intolerable, due to which many employees had become jobless. He said that the need was to bring reforms in utility stores, but the poor policies of the federal government and especially the PTI provincial government had pushed the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa towards inflation and deprivation of basic amenities.

Former MPA Aizaz-ul-Mulk Afkari strongly condemned the unfair move and said that the closure of utility stores was a conspiracy against the poor and middle classes. He demanded that the voice be raised at every forum against this injustice done to the people of Pakhtunkhwa. He said the Jamaat-e-Islami will always fight for the rights of people as serving the people was among its top priorities.

Stolen motorcycle recovered by police within 12 hours in Dir: The Samarbagh police on Saturday recovered a stolen motorcycle within 12 hours and arrested two accused identified as Umar Hussain, a resident of Kamangro Samarbagh and Shauna, a resident of Lajbok Balambat. The station house officer Abrar Muhammad Khan along with his team, while taking action, arrested the accused within 12 hours and recovered a stolen motorcycle, Honda 125 from their possession. The SHO told local journalists that the accused had confessed to the crime.

He said the arrested men were involved in other crimes as well. Further investigation is underway against the accused. The stolen motorcycle was recovered from Bajaur. One of the accused told local journalists that police should give him a chance and he would never commit crimes in future. He said that he had spent Rs 15000 on repairing of the stolen motorcycle, so the owner must pay him the amount.

Meanwhile a group of local journalists led by Waheed Tajik met DSP Circle Jandol Naem Khan at his office and discussed the law and order situation with him. The DSP assured the delegation that

patrols would be made more effective and all resources would be utilized to bring criminals to justice. He said that special measures will be taken to improve the traffic flow in the area.

During the meeting, emphasis was also laid on establishing an atmosphere of trust between the public and police so that the process of reporting crimes and taking timely action can be made effective. DSP Naem Khan said that the police is always ready to serve the public and a coordinated strategy is being adopted to prevent crimes. He thanked the representatives of the Press Club.

ANP demands review on delimitation of PA constituencies in Dir: The Awami National Party has expressed strong reservation on delimitation of provincial assembly constituencies in the Lower Dir district and demanded a review on it. The ANP district secretary culture Syed Khalid Ahmed while addressing a function at Samarbagh on Saturday strongly reacted to the fresh delimitation in provincial constituencies PK 16 and PK 17.

He said the ANP would bring people onto the roads if the delimitation was not reviewed. He said that the current delimitations were against the interests of the people. "The people of Jandol are not ready to accept this attempt of unfair delimitation. If the government does not review it, we will be forced to take to the streets", he said. He appealed to the government and the ECP to listen to the voice of the people and review the fresh delimitation.

The election commission of Pakistan partially modified its delimitation order for Lower Dir dated Nov 30, 2023 and issued a fresh order regarding delimitation of the Lower Dir provincial assembly constituencies on Friday last, copy of which is available with Dawn. According to the fresh order, PK-14 Lower Dir I is now comprised of tehsil Lal Qila including three union councils of tehsil Balambat; Koto, Hayaserai and Balambat.

Similarly, tehsil Khall, tehsil Balambat (excluding its three union councils) and Kotigram union council of Adenzai tehsil have been included in PK-15 Lower Dir II. In PK-16 Lower Dir III, the whole tehsil of Adenzai excluding union council Kotigram has been included. The PK-17 Lower Dir IV is now comprised of Timergara tehsil and Munda tehsil excluding its union council Mian Kalay while Samarbagh tehsil and union council Mian Kalay of Munda tehsil has been included in PK-18 Lower Dir V. According to the notification the delimitation would be applicable for next general elections in the country.

Training on teaching methodologies arranged

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: The University of Science and Technology Bannu with collaboration of Higher Education Commission arranged training on modern teaching methodologies on the varsity's main campus.

Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Safdar Rehman Ghazi inaugurated the month-long training aiming to enhance the professional capabilities of faculty and teaching staff. On the occasion, Dr Safdar Rehman Ghazi expressed his gratitude to HEC and its team, emphasizing that this training will equip the university's teaching staff with advanced skills, besides enabling students from Bannu and surrounding region to meet international educational standards.

Professor Dr Ishtiaq Hassan from the International Islamic University Islamabad will conduct the sessions for the first two days. Other notable attendees included Professor Dr Sultan Mahmood from Bannu University, HEC Islamabad Assistant Director Ghulam Murtaza Goraya, program focal person Dr Fahad Nawaz and senior members of the teaching faculty.

The training programme will feature educational experts from prestigious universities across the country, who will train Bannu University's faculty to align with modern academic demands. Speaking

at the event, HEC Assistant Director Ghulam Murtaza Goraya assured full support from the HEC for such initiatives. He said that the Higher Education Commission was committed to promoting quality higher education in Pakistan and it would take all necessary steps in this regard.

Dr Safdar Rehman Ghazi said that the training would significantly improve the teaching standards at Bannu University and empower students to achieve academic excellence, aligning with global trends in education.

Milkmen fined: Over a dozen milkmen were fined over selling low quality milk in Domel town of Bannu on Thursday. "In compliance with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister's public service agenda, deputy commissioner Abdul Hameed Khan tasked additional assistant commissioner Zaman Khan to check the quality of milk being sold in the town's bazaars and at dairy farms", said an official.

He said that the official along with experts collected samples from 22 milkmen shops and sent those to the laboratory for chemical examination. He said that the laboratory test revealed the milk being sold by 16 milkmen carried low fat, density and adulterated with water. The deputy commissioner asked the additional assistant com-

missioners to regularly check the quality of milk and send samples to the laboratory for analysis to free Bannu district from adulterated milk.

Meanwhile, Additional Assistant Commissioner Muhammad Arid paid surprise inspection visits to bazaars and markets following the directives of deputy commissioner Zeeshan Abdullah. He checked the availability of the official price list and its implementation by traders.

The additional AC imposed heavy fines on violators and warned that the shopkeepers involved in illegal acts of artificial price hike, profiteering and hoarding would also face imprisonment. Under his supervision, the anti-encroachment squad of the tehsil municipal administration removed temporary encroachments from the bazaars in Lakki city.

Additional AC Gohar Ali Khan also inspected restaurants in Naurang town following public complaints about poor hygiene conditions and low quality food. The official warned the owners of restaurants and hotels to improve cleanliness and provide quality food to people on control and reasonable rates otherwise the district administration would initiate action against them. Gohar also fined vegetable and fruit vendors and other traders over violation of the official price list and selling substandard food items.

Voting, a path to national welfare: Zulfiqar

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: The Regional Election Commissioner of Hazara Division, Zulfiqar Ahmed Saturday has emphasized the fundamental role of voting in strengthening democracy, stating that the power of the vote ensures the people's voice shapes the nation's future.

In a press release issued on Saturday, Zulfiqar Ahmed highlighted the

undeniable importance of voting as a means to uphold democratic principles. He noted that the day serves as a reminder of the vital role citizens play in the democratic process. "Voting is the Primary means through which citizens participate in the democratic process," he said. "It empowers individuals to influence government decisions, shape policies, and determine the overall direction of the

country.

The election commissioner underscored that voting is more than a right it is a civic duty. He explained that by casting their votes, citizens hold leaders accountable for their actions and decisions. He said that participation in elections promotes good governance and allows the public to challenge policies or practices that go against the public interest.



D I KHAN: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur addressing during convocation of Gomal Medical College.

Court convicts 3 for forging revenue record F.P. Report

LARKANA: The special anti-corruption court Larkana has sentenced 3 people with stamp vendor to 11 years in prison and a fine of Rs 330,000 to the father and son after being found guilty of forging the local revenue record.

In the court of Special Corruption Judge Munwar Ali Lodhi. A hearing was held on the application by lawyer Ajaz Bhatti to change the revenue records of the place through forgery by Mushtaq Merani with his son Nadeem Merani and stamp vendor Haji Khan Merani has been sentenced to 11 years in prison and a fine of 330,000 rupees. Along with son Nadeem Mirani and stamp vendor Haji Khan Mirani, he has tampered with the revenue records of his city survey office in Neodero through forgery.

International Volunteer day celebrated: The National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) and Volunteers Community Development (VCD) has jointly celebrated International Volunteers day in village Zakrya Punjabi near Mehrar city. In this program Mr. Shihabuddin Mahesar Co-ordinate VCD District Dadu and NCHD (Human Development) Deputy Director Pahlwan Khan Magsi, Assistant Director Muhammad Sadiq Aalamani participated, on this occasion all the school students paid tribute to the volunteers and saluted the volunteers.

The ceremony was started with the recitation of the Holy Quran, later the deputy director of National Commission for Human Development Pahlwan Khan Magsi, assistant director Muhammad Sadiq Alamani and the focal person of VCD District Dadu Makhdoom Shuhabuddin Mahesar addressed and said that the volunteers have a great place, today, the International Day of Volunteers is being celebrated.

National voters' day marked F.P. Report

D I KHAN: A special ceremony was held at the Regional Election Commissioner Office, Dera Ismail Khan, to mark National Voters' Day on Saturday. The ceremony was presided over by Regional Election Commissioner (REC) Saeed Ahmad Khan.

While addressing the event, the REC underlined the need that each citizen should actively contribute to the continuity and stability of democracy as it was an essential element for the progress of the nation. For this, it is vital that every individual understands the significance of voting, its utilization, and its benefits, he added.

To achieve this objective, he said, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) observes December 7 as National Voters' Day every year, ensuring that voters play an effective role in the electoral process. He highlighted that the ECP was making special efforts to ensure the participation of women, minorities, transgender individuals, and differently-abled persons in the electoral process so that marginalized groups are registered as voters and the roots of democracy are firmly established in the country. He said each eligible individual must ensure the accurate registration of their votes based on the address mentioned on theirCNICs so that no one is deprived of their right to vote.

SMBB Medical Varsity holds 6th convocation

F.P. Report

LARKANA: The 6th Convocation of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University (SMBBMU) Larkana was held on Saturday at the main Arija campus of the university.

Vice Chancellor (VC) of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University (SMBBMU) Larkana, Prof Dr Nusrat Shah presided over the convocation. While, Vice Chancellor of Begum Nusrat Bhutto University, Sukkur, Dr Tehmina Nagaraj and VC of Larkano University professor Usman Keerio, were the guests of honour on the occasion.

In her address on the occasion of the Convocation of SMBBMU Larkana, Vice Chancellor of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University (SMBBMU) Larkana, Prof Dr Nusrat Shah, has exhorted medical graduates to serve the ailing humanity with dedication and devotion and without discrimination. She reminded the graduates of the Hippocratic Oath and said that if taken seriously, it would guide them in performing their duties without discrimination.

She said doctors had the responsibility of giving hope to their patients besides health and happiness and added that they should opt for serving humanity in backward and rural areas while observing medical ethics and Islamic teachings. Congratulating the passing medical graduates, Prof Dr Nusrat Shah reminded them of their prime duty of serving humanity.

She said, "Chandka Medical College was the gift of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, while the university was the dream of the brave leader Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto". Speaking on the occasion, the Women Univerty Sukkur Vice-

chancellor Tahmina Nagaraj said, "I am happy to see the university in this position. We have felt proud to see the institutions that we had sown become trees."

Later, Vice Chancellor of SMBBMU Larkana, Prof Dr Nusrat Shah, Vice Chancellor of Begum Nusrat Bhutto University, Sukkur, Dr Tehmina Nagaraj and Vice Chancellor of University of Larkano, Prof Dr. Usman keerio distributed gold and silver medals among the best graduates on the occasion.

Admn inspects implementation of official price list: Additional Assistant Commissioner paid surprise inspection visits to bazaars and markets following the directives of deputy commissioner. He checked the availability of the official price list and its implementation by traders.

The additional AC imposed heavy fines on violators and warned that the shopkeepers involved in illegal acts of artificial price hike, profiteering and hoarding would also face imprisonment.

Under his supervision, the anti-encroachment squad of the tehsil municipal administration removed temporary encroachments from the bazaars in Lakki city. Additional AC also inspected restaurants in Naurang town following public complaints about poor hygiene conditions and low quality food.

The official warned the owners of restaurants and hotels to improve cleanliness and provide quality food to people on control and reasonable rates otherwise the district administration would initiate action against them. He also fined vegetable and fruit vendors and other traders over violation of the official price list and selling substandard food items.

Language shapes the environment

Muhammad Saleem

As we stand at the crossroads of environmental degradation, climate change, and the struggle for sustainability, it becomes increasingly clear that language is not just a means of communication—it's a tool that shapes the way we perceive and relate to the natural world.

In a time when the planet is facing unprecedented ecological challenges, how we speak about the environment has the power to either nurture or diminish our collective responsibility towards it. Language is more than just a way to convey facts; it frames our thoughts, influences our behaviors, and ultimately shapes the world we inhabit.

The words we choose to describe nature can either reinforce destructive attitudes or inspire a more harmonious and respectful relationship with the environment. For example, when we describe nature as a "resource" or a "commodity," we often reduce its value to something solely for human exploitation. This way of speaking dehumanizes nature, turning

forests, rivers, and animals into mere things to be used up. But when we use terms like "ecosystem," "biodiversity," or "habitat," we acknowledge that nature is far more than a set of exploitable assets. These words bring to mind the interconnectedness of life, the inherent value of each species, and the importance of balance in the natural world.

Moreover, the power of language is not just about the words themselves but the metaphors and narratives we use to frame environmental issues. Consider the term "climate change." While it has become an everyday part of our vocabulary, it can inadvertently diminish the urgency of the crisis.

The word "change" may sound neutral, even inevitable, as though it is part of the natural course of events. However, when we choose to speak of a "climate emergency" or a "climate crisis," the language conveys the severity of the situation, demanding immediate attention and action. These words prompt a collective recognition that we are in the midst of a global catastrophe, one that requires profound changes

in how we live, consume, and interact with the planet.

The language we use also holds the potential to challenge dominant cultural narratives that perpetuate environmental harm. For example, indigenous communities around the world have long recognized the sacredness of nature. They use language to tell stories that celebrate their deep connection to the land, the rivers, and the sky—stories that have been passed down through generations. These narratives are not just cultural artifacts but call us to action, advocating for environmental justice and the protection of the earth.

Environmental activists, too, have used powerful language to confront corporate greed, challenge unsustainable practices, and mobilize public opinion for the protection of the planet. Writers and poets have long found ways to articulate our shared vulnerability and our interconnectedness with the earth, turning words into a call for collective change.

The writer is PhD Scholar (Eco-linguistics), Department of English, Air University, Islamabad and can be reached on saleem-safi5@gmail.com

Chan calls for political dialogue

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Nadeem Afzal Chan, a central leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) emphasized the need for political stability and dialogue to address the country's pressing issues. He raised concerns over the ongoing economic challenges, including the looming wheat crisis, rising fertilizer prices, and inflation, suggesting that a collaborative government involving multiple political parties is the way forward.

Chan questioned why the current leadership should remain unchanged, stating, "Why should the driving seat not be changed? We also have the right." He suggested that PPP, along with parties like JUL, PTI, and ANP, should come together to form a government capable of

tackling the nation's issues.

He highlighted the anticipated wheat crisis, warning that in 3-4 months, the country will face a shortage, leading to the need for imports. "The wheat crisis will start after 3-4 months, then it will have to be imported," Chan stated, expressing concern about the rising costs of essential commodities. He also pointed to the dramatic rise in tractor prices, which have escalated from 6-8 lakhs to 3 million rupees, making it increasingly difficult for farmers. Chan criticized the current government for failing to foster political dialogue, noting that political stability cannot be achieved through authoritarian measures.

He compared the current situation to the era of dictatorships, including those of General Musharraf, Ayub

Khan, Yahya Khan, and Zia-ul-Haq, stating that such systems did not work. "Political stability comes from dialogue," he stressed. "Imran Khan's problem was that he did not have political dialogue, and the current government also lacks this."

The PPP leader underlined that without political stability, any government, including Imran Khan's, would fail to address the country's problems. "The people and institutions are fed up with the daily sit-ins and markets," he said, adding that only through dialogue and consensus can Pakistan move forward. Chan's call for a united political front comes as the country grapples with economic difficulties, urging that a more inclusive approach to governance could help address the nation's challenges.



‘Third nuclear age’ threatens West

LONDON (BBC): The world is at the dawn of a "third nuclear age" in which Britain is threatened by multiple foes including Russia, the head of the armed forces warned. Admiral Sir Tony Radakin said "wild threats of tactical nuclear use" by Russia, China's nuclear build-up, Iran's failure to co-operate with a nuclear deal, and North Korea's "erratic behaviour" were among the threats facing the West.

He emphasised the need for more defence funding and reform in a speech at the Royal United Services Institute (Rusi) defence think tank. Despite the warnings, Admiral Radakin said there was only a "remote chance" Russia would directly attack or invade the UK if the two countries were at war. Admiral Radakin added that Russian President Vladimir Putin is aware of the UK's nuclear arsenal and said it has more impact on him than other threats. Successive British governments had invested "substantial sums of money" in renewing nuclear submarines and warheads because of this, he said.

He said it was necessary to keep the UK's nuclear deterrent strong, describing the first nuclear age as the Cold War and the second characterised by disarmament efforts and "counter proliferation". "We are at the dawn of a third nuclear age, which is altogether more complex," he said. This era is more dangerous than any he has

known in his career and the world more contested than ever, he added. Reiterating a pledge to raise defence spending, he argued that "the cost of defence and deterrence is always less than the costs that flow from instability and conflict". The government has committed to increase defence spending to 2.5% of GDP, but has refused to say when it will meet this target. Spending more on defence would be politically controversial because it would mean less for other public priorities such as health and education. Any increase on the 2.5% target - which many analysts believe will be necessary and the US may even demand - would require popular support. To do that, Admiral Radakin said he wants to give voters a sense of what he calls "the tragedy of war" without having to experience it - by warning about the scale of the threat the UK is facing.

His warning is stark and designed, as he said, both "to reassure the nation and stiffen its resolve".

"Do we understand what is at stake? And are we sufficiently motivated to respond?" he said. In other words, how can voters begin to understand that there is no more peace dividend which they have enjoyed over the last three decades since the Iron Curtain came down. This will be a core argument that underpins the government's strategic defence review, which will be released next year and set out what military capabilities need to be changed to

face future threats.

Admiral Radakin said Britain needed to be "clear-eyed in our assessment" of the threats it faces. "That includes recognising that there is only a remote chance of a significant direct attack or invasion by Russia on the United Kingdom, and that's the same for the whole of Nato," he told the audience.

A spokesperson for the prime minister's office said Defence Secretary John Healey had previously spoken about "the state of the armed forces that were inherited from the previous government". The spokesperson said: "It's why the Budget invested billions of pounds into defence, it's why we're undertaking a strategic defence review to ensure that we have the capabilities and the investment needed to defend this country." The armed forces chief's speech follows Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer warning earlier this month that the post-war years of ascendancy were over, and the UK had to emerge "from that twilight of naivety" and "dig deeper" to defend its national interests. Defence minister Alistair Carns has also warned a major war would lead to the army being wiped out within six to 12 months. He told an audience at the same think tank that Britain needed reserves in order to be able to fight in a "war of scale". Official figures show the army had 109,245 personnel on 1 October, including 25,814 volunteer reservists.

Iranian fighter jet crashes, killing 2 pilots

TEHRAN (AP): An Iranian fighter jet crashed in the south of the country, killing the two pilots, state media reported. State television identified the pilots as Col. Hamid Reza Ranjbar and Col. Manouchehr Pirzadeh, saying they were on a test flight after the plane was overhauled. The crash took place near the town of Firouzabad, some 770 kilometers (480 miles) south of the capital Tehran.

The report did not elaborate on the type of plane or provide a cause for the crash. Video on the semi-official Fars news agency, which is close to the military, showed columns of white smoke billowing from the remains of the aircraft. Iran's air force has an assortment of US-made military aircraft purchased before the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the Tomcat F-14 is American-made. It also has Russian-made MiG and Sukhoi planes. Decades of Western sanctions have made it hard to obtain spare parts and maintain the aging aircraft. The country has a history of similar crashes among its faltering fleet. In 2022, a fighter jet crashed in the central desert of Iran, killing both pilots. Prior to that in the same year, a fighter jet plunged onto a soccer field in the northwestern city of Tabriz, killing both pilots and a civilian.

Romania hit by major election influence drive

BUCHAREST (BBC): Authorities in Romania have revealed details of what appears to be a major attempt to interfere in the country's presidential elections using the social media platform TikTok, and with a series of cyber-attacks. Romania's domestic intelligence service says there are signs the effort was "co-ordinated by a state-sponsored actor".

Calin Georgescu, a far-right Nato-sceptic who has previously praised Vladimir Putin, was almost unknown in Romania until he won the first round of voting in the presidential elections two weeks ago. Now Romanian intelligence says his sudden and surprise surge in popularity is down to a "highly organised" and "guerrilla" campaign on social media, sharing identical messaging and using influencers. They say it was conducted from "external locations" to bypass controls.

A separate intelligence assessment says that Romania has been identified as an "enemy state" by Moscow and a priority target for what it calls "aggressive hybrid actions". The politically explosive information - which has landed just days before the second round of voting - comes from declassified documents published this evening by the outgoing president, Klaus Iohannis. They reveal how paid content supporting Georgescu was promoted on TikTok, without being marked as election campaigning - in violation of the platform's own rules and of Romanian electoral law. Other candidates' content was subject to closer controls.

Georgescu has always said he spent "zero" on election promotion, denying he was even campaigning. But the intelligence documents identify one TikTok account which they say made payments of \$381,000 (£299,819; 361,872) in just one month from 24 October - to users who were promoting Georgescu. Georgescu claims the release of the documents is a coordinated attempt to block his candidacy.

"I think it's the first time in the history of the world when a state is organising an action against a candidate to stop him from running," he said in a TV interview. He also denied knowing any of the influencers or funders mentioned in the reports. The documents released in this highly unusual move were all papers drawn up for a meeting of the security council following the first round of the presidential election. They also reveal that access data for electoral websites was stolen from legitimate users and published online "on cyber-crime platforms originating from Russia".



SEOUL: Protesters from conservative groups attend a rally supporting South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol.

Congo govt ‘on alert’ over mystery flu-like disease that killed dozens

KINSHASA, Congo (AP): Public health officials in Africa urged caution as Congo's health minister said the government was on alert over a mystery flu-like disease that in recent weeks killed dozens of people.

Jean Kaseya, the head of Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told reporters that more details about the disease should be known in the next 48 hours as experts receive results from laboratory samples of infected people. "First diagnostics are leading us to think it is a respiratory disease," Kaseya said. "But we need to wait for the laboratory results." He added that there are many things that are still unknown about the disease - including whether it is infectious and how it is transmitted.

Authorities in Congo have so far confirmed 71 deaths, including 27 people who died in hospitals and 44 in the community in the southern Kwango province, health minister Roger Kamba said. "The Congolese government is on general alert regarding this disease," Kamba said, without providing more details. Of the victims at the hospitals, 10 died due to lack of blood transfusion and 17 as a result of respiratory problems, he said.

The deaths were recorded between Nov. 10 and Nov. 25 in the Panzi health zone of Kwango province.

There were around 380 cases, almost half of which were children under the age of five, according to the minister. The Africa CDC recorded slightly different numbers, with 376 cases and 79 deaths. The discrepancy was caused by problems with surveillance and case definition, Kaseya said. Authorities have said that symptoms include fever, headache, cough and anemia. Epidemiological experts are in the region to take samples and investigate the disease, the minister said. The Panzi health zone, located around 435 miles (700 kilometers) from the capital Kinshasa, is a remote area of the Kwango province, making it hard to access.

The epidemiological experts took two days to arrive there, the minister said. Because of the lack of testing capacity, samples had to be taken to Kikwit, more than 500 km away, said Dieudonne Mwamba, the head of the National Institute for Public Health. "The health system is quite weak in our rural areas, but for certain types of care, the ministry has all the provisions, and we are waiting for the first results of the sample analysis to properly calibrate things," Kaseya said. Mwamba said that Panzi was already a "fragile" zone, with 40% of its residents experiencing malnutrition. It was also hit by an epidemic of typhoid fever two years ago, and there is currently a resurgence of sea-

sonal flu across the country. "We need to take into account all this as context," Mwamba said.

A Panzi resident, Claude Niongo, said his wife and seven-year-old daughter died from the disease. "We do not know the cause but I only noticed high fevers, vomiting... and then death," Niongo told The Associated Press over the phone. "Now, the authorities are talking to us about an epidemic but in the meantime, there is a problem of care (and) people are dying," he added. Lucien Lufutu, president of the civil society consultation framework of Kwango province, who is in Panzi, said the local hospital where patients are treated is underequipped.

"There is a lack of medicines and medical supplies, since the disease is not yet known, most of the population is treated by traditional practitioners," Lufutu told the AP. He also said the disease affected Katenda, another nearby health zone. When asked about a potential outbreak in other health zones, the minister said he could not tell if that was the case but that nothing was reported. Congo is already plagued by the mpox epidemic, with more than 47,000 suspected cases and over 1,000 suspected deaths from the disease in the Central African country, according to the World Health Organization.

As sabotage allegations swirl, NATO struggles to secure Baltic Sea

TURKU, Finland (Reuters): On Nov. 18, hours after two communication cables were severed in the Baltic Sea, 30 NATO vessels and 4,000 military staff took to the same body of water for one of northern Europe's largest naval exercises. The 12-day "Freezing Winds" drill was part of a push to step up the transatlantic defence alliance's protection of infrastructure in waters that carry 15% of global shipping traffic and are seen as increasingly vulnerable to attack. The Baltic Sea is bordered by eight NATO countries and Russia. There have been at least three incidents of possible sabotage to the 40-odd telecommunication cables and critical gas pipelines that run along its relatively shallow seabed since 2022, when Russia invaded Ukraine. "NATO is stepping up patrols, ... allies are investing in innovative technologies that can help better secure these assets," said Commander Arlo Abrahamson, a spokesperson for NATO's Allied Maritime Command. Yet the ease with which a ship's anchor can slice through a cable, coupled with the often-treacherous sea conditions, makes actual prevention of such attacks almost impossible.

On day three of the exercise, Beata Król, German commander of the multinational task group, and the crew of her de-mining vessel, the Weilheim, tried to launch an underwater drone to inspect the seabed as a winter storm raged. After a 30-minute delay in launching it, the drone had frozen and could not operate. "The batteries got cold," she said, shrugging, as she waited for the equipment to warm up.

Having spent years detonating World War Two-era mines on the Baltic seabed, NATO is repurposing its six-vessel minehunting fleet to also monitor suspicious underwater activity, with its hull-mounted sonar scanning the seabed, drones able to take pictures and video under the water, and specialist divers on hand. But its powers are still limited. "We are a defensive alliance, so by conducting training and exercising, also in areas which are crucial with underwater infrastructure, we show presence and prevent rather than actively engage," Król said. Security sources say the Chinese bulk carrier Yi Peng 3, which left the Russian port of Ust-Luga on Nov. 15,

was responsible for severing the two undersea cables in Swedish economic waters between Nov. 17 and 18 by dragging its anchor on the seabed. It was stationary in Danish economic waters, being watched by NATO members' naval ships, having been urged by Sweden to return to be investigated. Some politicians had accused it of sabotage, but no authority had shown evidence that its actions were deliberate. China has said it is ready to assist in the investigation, while its ally Russia has denied involvement in any of the Baltic infrastructure incidents. The case is similar to an incident last year when the Chinese ship NewNew Polar Bear damaged two cables linking Estonia to Finland and Sweden as well as an Estonia-Finland gas pipeline. China made similar promises to assist, but the ship was not stopped and, a year on, Finnish and Estonian investigators have yet to present conclusions. Damage to cables is not new. Globally, around 150 are damaged each year, according to the UK-based International Cable Protection Committee. The telecoms cables, power

lines and gas pipes in the shallow Baltic are particularly vulnerable due to its very intense ship traffic, the US-based telecom research firm TeleGeography said. If any of the recent incidents are proven to be sabotage by another country, it would mark a return of a type of warfare not seen for decades. "You should go back to World War One or the Spanish-American War to find a state-sponsored sabotage of a submarine cable," said Paul Brodsky, a senior researcher at TeleGeography. To counter this potential threat, NATO in May opened its Maritime Centre for Security of Critical Undersea Infrastructure (CUI) in London, which wants to map all critical infrastructure in NATO-controlled waters and identify weak spots. In Rostock, on Germany's Baltic coast, a multinational naval headquarters opened in October to protect NATO members' interests in the sea. "What I think we can achieve is to place the responsibility after an incident," CUI's Branch Head, Commander Pal Bratbak, said onboard the Weilheim, stressing the growing power of technology.

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Indonesia arrests a Chinese man wanted by Beijing

JAKARTA (AP): Indonesian authorities have arrested a Chinese man sought by Beijing for allegedly helping transfer and laundering almost \$18 million from a criminal online gambling group in China, officials said. Yan Zhenxing was detained by immigration officers at a cross-border ferry terminal on Batam island, next to Singapore.

Yuldi Yusman, the Director of Immigration Supervision and Enforcement, said Yan was arrested following an Interpol red notice for him. The notices request law enforcement agencies worldwide to detain or arrest a suspect wanted by a specific country. Yusman said Yan, a permanent resident of Singapore, was arriving in Batam for holiday with his family when he was detained. Indonesian authorities brought the suspect, wearing a detainee's orange shirt and a facemask,

to a news conference in the capital of Jakarta. The suspect did not make any statements and was not asked any questions.

Yusman said that Yan was named as a suspect by police in China's Inner Mongolia region who allege he was involved in transferring and laundering more than 130 million Chinese Yuan (\$17.8 million) from a criminal online gambling group. He said Yan was handed over to Indonesia's National Central Bureau Interpol in Jakarta and a decision to deport or to extradite him to China will take some time. The arrest came just two months after immigration officers on the tourist island of Bali arrested a Chinese suspect sought by Beijing who allegedly helped to run investment scams that brought in over \$14 billion from clients in China. "We are committed to protecting Indonesia's territory from the arrival of foreign nationals who are not useful and

threaten national stability," Yusman said.

Indonesia, an archipelago nation on the crossroads between Asia and the South Pacific, is attractive to local, regional and global organized crime because of its geographical location. Last month, authorities in Bali arrested Hector Aldwin Pantollana, a Filipino fugitive accused of helping scam over \$67 million out of clients in the Philippines. Another Filipino, Alice Guo, a fugitive former mayor accused of having links to Chinese criminal syndicates, was arrested near Jakarta in September. She has since been deported to the Philippines. In June, Chaowalit Thongduang, one of Thailand's most wanted fugitives, was escorted back to Thailand on a Thai air force plane after being arrested in Bali following months on the run over allegations he was involved in several killings and drug trafficking.

The Frontier Post

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

*USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Ignoring voters comes at a high price

MICHEL Barnier always did have a way with words. "I have the honour of submitting to you the resignation of the government," said his letter, as if he had just been appointed rather than defenestrated. He is the shortest-serving prime minister in French history, the first for six decades to be forced out by a no-confidence motion. And felled, in effect, by Marine Le Pen. Many had assumed that she was on the way out, accused of embezzling European Parliament funds. But as she has just shown the world, her party is perhaps more potent now than ever.

Rassemblement National cannot form a government. It lacks the allies. Barnier was right to say he had been taken out by a "coalition of opposites" who agree on nothing more than the need to remove him. But what unites Le Pen and her new partner in insurgency, Jean-Luc Melenchon, is contempt for Emmanuel Macron. His calamitous decision to call a snap parliamentary election resulted in a hung parliament where his only hope was that the Right and Left could never unite. Once again, his enemies have just proved him wrong.

About 20 candidates are mooted as potentials for the next presidential race, but none come close to Le Pen's popularity. Her support is running at about 40 per cent in some polls. Edouard Philippe, mayor of Le Havre, is next at about 25 per cent. A conviction for embezzlement would debar her from the race, but other than that it's hard to see what could stop her running. Just as the lawfare and obloquy used against Donald Trump ended up making him stronger, the same tactics seem to be powering Mme Le Pen. It wasn't so long ago that Macron was proposing a centrist "revolution", publishing a book by the same name. It failed because he failed. For seven years, under the presidency of this former investment banker, French public spending surged - as did national debt - leading to the current budget crisis. The kind of Budget and pension cuts that Barnier was trying to pass are the only solution. But Macron never properly built the case for this, or any proper reform agenda.

It was always possible to out-argue Le Pen and hold her fiscal denialism up to ridicule. But portraying her as a far-Right monster was more name-calling than argument. Similar tactics have been deployed against Alternative for Germany (AfD), the Sweden Democrats, Poland's Law and Justice Party, Geert Wilders' PVV in the Netherlands and Austria's Freedom Party. Look around Europe and it doesn't seem that this tactic is working very well - but it never stops being used. The strange phenomenon we saw in America, how Trump's enemies attacked him when it was clear that attacks backfired, can be seen all over Europe. Germany is learning this the hard way. Olaf Scholz's coalition collapsed last month. As the recent state elections in Brandenburg, Saxony and Thuringia demonstrated, the momentum is with AfD. Violent crime in Germany is becoming inseparable from the issue of migration, with police statistics saying that 40 per cent of suspects are foreign-born. Combine this with its woeful economic trajectory and demographics (it's expected to have one of the sharpest working-age population declines of any major economy) and it adds to a perfect electoral storm for populists.

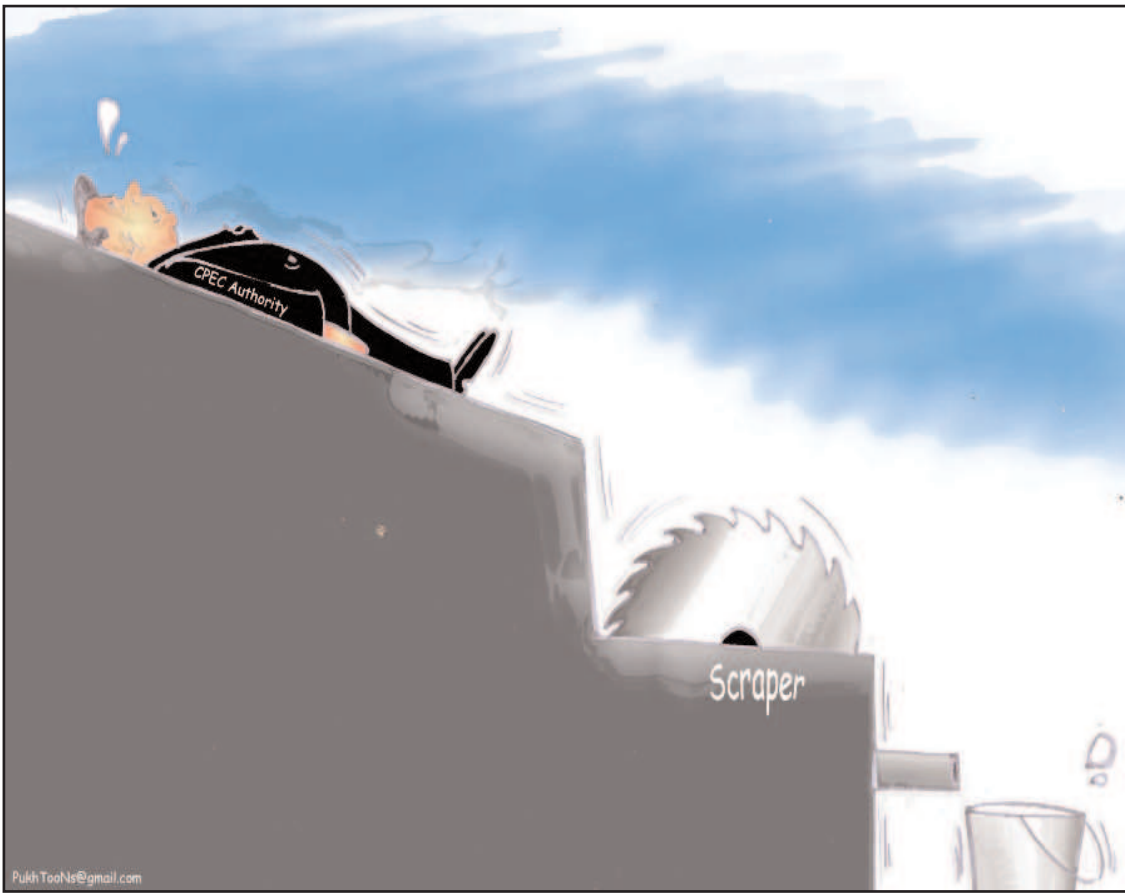
JD Vance, America's vice-president elect, has a theory that it's not enough to embody voters' ambitions: when you're up against a falling government, you also need to embody their anger. So people vote for Trump (or Le Pen) not because they necessarily think such characters deserve to be president, but because they see him as a necessary corrective to a failed consensus. Under this strategy, attacks are helpful. The louder the shrieks of horror from the establishment, the stronger the Trumpian (or Le Penian) claim to embody electoral vengeance.

Giorgia Meloni has always understood this. Her politics are standard centre-Right (as her presidency has shown) but having the Brothers of Italy denounced as "post-fascist" burnishes her rebel credentials. Now and again, she'll play it up. She'll be coy about Mussolini's record or defend the tricolour flame in her party's logo (a visual nod to the bad old days) hoping her opponents will take the bait. This is from the Trump playbook of political jiu-jitsu: use your opponent's vitriol as a campaign fuel. Let them portray themselves as deranged. "They're not after me, they're after you," Trump likes to say. "I just happen to be standing in the way."

The countries where support for the new-Right parties has been waning - Sweden, Poland, Hungary - are those where populists have held or shared power. This is what really hurts: when they get the chance to change, but flop. Perhaps the best way of weakening Le Pen would be having Jordan Bardella, her protégé and parliamentary leader, as prime minister. Let him see how the bruises of government dampen his rebel yell. And if young Bardella would succeed and end up as impressive as Meloni has been? Then the world may have to rethink the far-Right label, one already regarded as nonsense by a good chunk of French voters. But as things stand, Le Pen has Macron exactly where she wants him: in the Elysee, taking the blame, trying to form another government but one which - as she has just demonstrated - can be thrown out by her new rebel alliance at any time. This leaves her in the ideal populist fist-shaking position. As Brexit negotiator, Barnier liked to say that time was running out. Macron has the opposite problem: his time as a lame-duck president has another two and half agonising years to run. Some 59 per cent of French voters want him to stand down earlier but tonight he said he will serve his term "fully, until its end." To walk away early and trigger another snap election would certainly be a gamble. And after this year's debacle - and the crisis into which he has now led his country - Macron may well have had enough of those.

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Case for supporting Ukraine both moral and geostrategic

Alexander J. Motyl

AS the second Trump presidency approaches, calls for immediate negotiations to end the Russo-Ukrainian War are getting louder. That fact alone is of little importance - after all, even Putin says he wants to negotiate. What is important, and frequently ignored, are the assumptions on which calls for negotiation are based. Putin assumes that Ukraine is part of Russia. Invading Ukraine not only makes sense for him; it's a moral imperative/Anything short of Russia's destruction of Ukrainian sovereignty is unacceptable to him.

Putin also assumes, wrongly, that Russia is winning. Given these assumptions, he can accept nothing short of Ukraine's capitulation. Compromise with him is impossible as long as he remains in power and believes he's winning. Ukraine assumes it has the right to exist as an independent state. The size and content of that state - though not its survival - are negotiable in principle. Compromise is, as President Volodymyr Zelensky's recent remarks about Ukraine's willingness to accept territorial losses in exchange for NATO membership, therefore possible.

Until the war began on Feb. 24, 2022, most Western leaders assumed Ukraine did not matter to their own nations' stability, security and survival. For most of them, that assumption has changed. Survival is non-negotiable, but stability and security are open to a variety of definitions. Compromise is possible. It follows that, while Ukraine and the West are willing to make concessions in order to reach a compromise with Russia, Putin is not. He will accept a compromise only if he is forced to accept one.

The New York Times recently ran an op-ed by Megan K. Stack acknowledging "Vladimir Putin's hunger for expansion," which goes so far as to state that if "Ukrainians would be hung out to dry ... Putin could end up attacking, again or expanding his imperial designs to other neighbors." In other words, Ukraine is the only thing between Russian expansionism and the West. This is a strategic argument that rests on unsentimental

geopolitical realism. But Stack goes on: "We want Ukraine to function as a protectorate, but ultimately, we are unwilling to protect it. A sensible, ugly strategy - tactically defensible but morally reprehensible."

For the sake of argument, let's say that America is unwilling to protect Ukraine and that morality has nothing to do with it. Even then, it logically follows from the assumption that Ukraine is the only obstacle to Putin's further

omy is something that proponents of immediate negotiations frequently ignore, as if the only problems that mattered were Ukraine's. Russia has lost over 715,000 soldiers and is losing roughly 1,700 every single day, about 40,000 per month. Moreover, the Russian economy is headed for stagflation or hyperinflation, and even Russian officials know that Putin's military spending is destroying their country. To be sure, Russia is gradually

As Ash writes, Putin's "invasion of Ukraine has proven to be a catastrophe of epic proportions for Russia. Almost three years in Russia, a supposed great power, has been unable to defeat Ukraine ... A war which was meant to be over in two weeks has lasted over 1,000 days and is nowhere near a conclusion. Russia has lost perhaps half a million men, and maybe half its conventional military capability."

expansionism that ignoring Ukraine's importance is tactically senseless and strategically indefensible. After all, how can permitting Putin's expansionism be regarded as defensible? Such a position would make sense only if one were to argue that Europe's security and existence are completely irrelevant to US interests. Not even most MAGA-friendly Trump supporters would be willing to go quite that far. Stack's conclusion - "America is not going to save Ukraine" - is thus off the mark. For one thing, it contradicts its own geopolitical premises. A strategically savvy America would realize that its own security and well-being depend on Ukraine's. For another, America isn't the only game in town. The Europeans, and possibly the South Koreans, also matter. For a third, Ukrainians will save themselves, partly because they can win if given enough assistance, but mostly because Putin's Russia is losing and cannot win.

The abysmal state of Russia's military and econ-

capturing bits and pieces of Ukrainian territory. But as the University of Saint Andrew's Phillips O'Brien notes, that amounts to less than 0.5 percent of Ukraine.

Ignoring Russia leads many to conclude that Ukraine is too overwhelmed with problems to win. In fact, Russia is also too overwhelmed with problems to win. It is simply not true that, as the Stack writes, "the Russian position has gradually strengthened, and there is no reason to expect Mr. Putin to lose the upper hand now. That may sound like defeatism, but it's also realism." No, it's not defeatism or realism. It's fantasy, as veteran journalist James Brooke and Ukraine expert Timothy Ash have shown. As Ash writes, Putin's "invasion of Ukraine has proven to be a catastrophe of epic proportions for Russia. Almost three years in Russia, a supposed great power, has been unable to defeat Ukraine ... A war which was meant to be over in two weeks has lasted over 1,000 days and is nowhere near a conclusion.

Russia has lost perhaps half a million men, and maybe half its conventional military capability."

It gets worse, according to Ash: "Russia has had to scrape the barrel by going cap in hand to North Korea and Iran for weapons and now troops. ... Let's not forget that the war in Ukraine was going so badly that only a year back Putin faced an existential threat from the Prigozhin coup - he came close to losing power. Russia has been exposed as a declining colonial power." Ash therefore concludes: "Putin goes into any talks with Trump in a critically weak position. Yes he can continue the war, as can Ukraine, for some time yet, but it will just kill hundreds of thousands more Russians, waste huge amounts more resources and finance and still leave a risk of a Prigozhin 2."

Since Russia is weak and Ukraine matters to the survival of the West, it follows that the West's priority must be Ukraine's security and survival - goals that are attainable now if the West takes advantage of Russia's weakness and drives a hard bargain at the negotiating table. Ukrainians focus on NATO membership mostly because that would signal a genuine Western commitment to their country. But they have no illusions that the meaty-mouthed Article 5 would compel NATO members to rush to their assistance with boots on the ground, hence their focus on security guarantees by individual countries.

But Ukrainians also know that such guarantees, like those included in the 1994

Budapest Memorandum, are promises that can be broken. Their security and survival are primarily up to themselves - which is why they insist on the "nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine" formula. That is, they must have the military capacity to both stop Russia today - which they're doing despite lukewarm Western support - and to deter Russia tomorrow, which they'll be able to do if the US and its allies continue to enhance their military capabilities. Geopolitics - as well as morality - require stopping Putin's further expansion at all costs and under any circumstances. And that means, quite simply, that Ukraine's survival is a precondition of the West's survival.

Bangladeshis want new elections

Masood Farivar

FOUR months after a student uprising deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, most Bangladeshis want new elections within a year, despite strong support for the interim government's reform agenda, according to a new survey. The survey, sponsored by Voice of America and conducted by a Bangladeshi research firm in late October, found that while 65.9% of respondents back ongoing government reforms, more than 61.1% want new polls held within 12 months.

The findings suggest that many Bangladeshis desire reforms and elections equally - elections to restore democracy after 15 years of Hasina's increasingly authoritarian rule and reforms to strengthen institutions weakened under her watch.

"I think that people definitely want elections, and at the same time, people definitely want reforms," said Zillur Rahman, a journalist and political commentator based in the capital, Dhaka. "This government would do well to focus only on the reforms related to elections." The poll, based on a random sample of 1,000 respondents, is one of the largest measures of public opinion in Bangladesh since Hasina was removed from power in August. Conducted by Org-Quest Research Limited, it has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The survey was conducted when the interim government began rolling out an ambitious set of reforms that officials say could take years to implement. These reforms aim to overhaul key state institutions, including the elections commission, police and judiciary, and the constitution itself, to prevent a return to what proponents call Hasina's authoritarianism. The poll found strong support for institutional reform. An overwhelming majority of respondents (59.9%) said they wanted the government to complete "all necessary reforms" before holding elections, while 31.9% said it should focus only on election-related reforms.

Among those supporting comprehensive reforms before elections, support for reforming the election commission and several other key sectors ran upward of 90%. But even as they supported reforms, Bangladeshis appeared increasingly impatient for new elections. Support for early elections spanned all demographics, with 60.4% of city dwellers and 61.4% of rural residents saying they wanted elections within one year.

There were 18.7% of respondents willing to wait between two and three years for new elections to allow time for reforms, while another 8.6% were open to waiting longer than a year but not more than 18 months. In a country where results of three recent elections - in 2014, 2018 and 2024 - were questioned, the strong desire for fresh elections is not surprising, said Nusrat Chowdhury, an anthropology professor at Amherst College.

"When people think

about democracy, one of the first things they think about is elections," Chowdhury, a native of Bangladesh, said in an interview with VOA. "So, I think it's kind of almost a gut response to say, 'Yes, we want elections within the next year because people want stability.'" For the interim government, balancing calls for early elections and the need for long-term reforms is a delicate act. Since the interim government's installation in August, various political parties, including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the main opposition to Hasina's Awami League party, have demanded a road map for parliamentary elections within a "reasonable time."

The government, however, has not committed to a timeline. In a September interview, army chief General Waker-uz-Zaman voiced support for holding elections within 18 months. Yet, interim government officials, including leader Muhammad Yunus, have indicated elections would occur only after at least some reforms are implemented. In a recent interview with Al Jazeera, Yunus said his government has a mandate to carry out reforms before holding elections.

"The highlight of the whole government was reform, because the whole student movement was to create a New Bangladesh," he said. "New Bangladesh is not going to come through just [by] holding a new election. Holding an election is a repetition of the old ways of doing things." Reform advocates appear willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. Student leaders have warned that holding elections before completing the reform program will bring back "fascism," a reference to Hasina's rule.

Four months in, the interim government remains popular. Some 58.4% of respondents said it was governing Bangladesh better than Hasina's administration, while 20.4% said it was doing worse. Some 63.2% said the government was doing a better job maintaining law and order, and 64.1% believed it was doing a better job providing security for ethnic and religious minority groups, according to the survey.

But with inflation stubbornly high, 44.7% said the government was doing a worse job reining in the cost of essential goods, with 23.8% saying it was doing a better job. And 30.8% said it was performing the same as the previous government. As revealing as the survey might be, Chowdhury noted that Bangladesh is a deeply divided country, with most people supporting either the BNP or Hasina's Awami League.

With Awami League supporters keeping a low profile, those divisions may not be captured in public opinion surveys, she said. "There are people who are [Awami League] loyalists. There are people who are critical of the interim government only because it came at the cost of the fall of the regime. I think when we see survey data, we also need to keep that in mind," Chowdhury said.

VOA

Cop29 gave us a Putin-friendly deal

Fiona Harvey

been, but I don't think they believed me.

Baku was the second worst climate Cop (it stands for conference of the parties, under the UN framework convention on climate change) of the 18 that I have covered. In rancour and division, it was rivaled only by Copenhagen in 2009, which notoriously ended in chaos and discord, though also a partial deal. What failed at Baku - where poor countries received a promise of \$1.3tn a year in climate finance by 2035, but only \$300bn to come directly from the rich world - is that governments refused to put aside their apparent short-term interests in favour of the real long-term interests they all know are firmly on the side of climate action.

Rich countries came preparing to offer only \$300bn a year in direct overseas aid and through institutions such as the World Bank, leaving the

rest of the \$1.3tn to come from a mixture of potential new levies on high-carbon activities and the private sector. This public finance number is too low - the economists Nicholas Stern, Vera Songwe and Amar Bhattacharya have calculated that \$390bn will be necessary by 2035. Insultingly, it was also delivered only on the last day of the talks. Many developed world governments are struggling with budget constraints and economic turmoil - witness Germany's bombing car sector. They fear the weaponisation of climate action by the resurgent far right - Donald Trump's reelection just five days before Cop29 showed how powerful that can be.

But providing climate finance for poor countries to cut their emissions and adapt to the impacts of extreme weather is clearly in the rich world's real inter-

ests. Climate migration is already in the tens of millions a year and is only going to accelerate. There were other actors, too, for whom short-term apparent self-interest ruled. Saudi Arabia, whose entire wealth is built on oil and gas, has long played an obstructive role at Cops. This year, the negotiating team did not bother to hide it. A Saudi official was accused of altering a key text without full consultation in a way observers said the Azerbaijan presidency should have prevented. A key resolution to "transition away from fossil fuels" was effectively defeated.

India also played an intriguing role. With the conference running more than 30 hours overtime, the Azerbaijan presidency thought it had achieved consensus, with poor countries judging a meagre deal better than putting off nego-

tiations to next year with a Trump White House. Then India made a last-minute intervention. Delhi has a long history of trying to prevent climate deals or forcing concessions: in 2011, blocking the roadmap to what became the Paris agreement; in 2021, forcing the weakening of a resolution to "phase out" coal to a "phase down". On those occasions, India had the backing of China. But this time China - the world's biggest supplier of renewable energy components - clearly wanted a deal.

In the end, agreement was reached and India, with a handful of allies, claimed to have been ignored. This is not unusual in UN talks - deals are reached by consensus, not unanimity, and if the presidency is satisfied that holdouts have been heard, they can bring down the gavel. Whatever India's intentions, the outcome was in its favour: without having to scupper a deal that

poorer countries desperately needed, India could still vent its anger and claim to be standing up for the developing world.

Azerbaijan, whose presidency was roundly condemned by many participants, also came away with a deal that will please Vladimir Putin, who is supplying the country with gas while it sells its own to Europe. Next year, countries will meet again, charged with laying out stringent new plans to cut their greenhouse gas emissions in a last attempt to limit global temperature rises to 1.5C above preindustrial levels. Poor countries will argue they cannot set stricter limits with so little finance. Fossil-fuel producers will do their best to prevent a deal through their lobbyists and country groupings. As I prepared to leave Baku, more than a day after the last delegates had straggled home, I scanned the shore of the Caspian Sea in the darkness. There it was, burning again. The flame of self-interest.

Many moving parts in Syrian puzzle on brink of new offensives

SYRIA has been through various stages from the outbreak of the so-called Arab Spring to the Arab winter. Such seasonal changes have brought the rise and decline as well as the concentration and fragmentation of rebels in many cycles. Over the past 4 years, the situation map in Syria had been quite stable, though. Bashar al-Assad's regime had a working relationship with the terrorist organization PKK/PYD/SDF, felt safe under the roof of the Russian air support, and was waiting for the outbreak of chaos in Idlib under sporadic bombardment.

The terrorist organization PKK concentrated its forces in the east of Euphrates with a couple of remaining exclaves in the west of the river. The Syrian Interim Government with its Syrian National Army (SNA) was consolidating its rule in the northwestern corner of the country. Finally, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) seemed to be consolidating its monopoly of power in Idlib, where over 3 million Syrians are stuck. This stalemate has all changed this week in a matter of hours. The HTS offensive toward Aleppo faced little defensive strength before capturing the center of the governorate. With no hesitation, they have moved down to Hama, and as this piece is being penned, they are getting closer to taking another population center of the country.

The SNA also made a move from the north to the PKK-held Tel Rifaat as the PKK forces fled the town with little resistance. The SNA is currently concentrating its forces around the only remaining terrorist organization PKK pocket in the west of Euphrates. While the parties on the offensive were quick to gain ground in the respective theaters, the defense lines were shockingly soft.

The obvious questions are where the Iranian proxies on the ground are to repel the offensives, and where the Russian air force is,

which previously did not shy away from bombing population centers in Aleppo and Idlib, among others. To start with the first one, it seems that Iran's presence in Syria is weaker now as its proxies are overstretched throughout the Middle East. Hezbollah has been hesitant to start a territorial conflict with Israel and tried to keep the escalation under control. But Hezbollah has recently received significant blows at home due to Israel's indiscriminate attacks as well as its

too. The war in Ukraine is grinding down the Russian manpower and economy, perhaps in a less severe degree compared to Ukraine, but the current condition still hurts Moscow. With the elimination of Wagner's effective role in 2023 by Russia's President Vladimir Putin himself, Russia also lacks a handy tool to intervene in conflicts far from its primary sphere of interest. A third factor for the Russian inertia in defending Aleppo is the Trump factor. Trump has signaled

Aleppo. As long as Putin can manage to keep its naval base safe without much coordination with Iran, he thinks that he has a winning hand in the bigger picture.

While not having a smooth working relationship with both Russia and the United States (US), Türkiye seems to be focusing on the terrorist organization PKK-held territories. The terrorist organization PKK filled the vacuum when the terrorist organization Deash/ISIS was taken down with a bloody fight on multiple fronts, in some of which Türkiye paid a heavy price to defeat Deash/ISIS. Now we see another shrinkage, this time of Assad's control.

Türkiye is committed not to let the terrorist organization PKK fill in the new power vacuums this time. Even more, Türkiye is using this turbulent time in an opportunistic way to erase the remaining pockets of the terrorist organization PKK in Western Syria: first Tel Rifaat and then Manbij. As the terrorist organization PKK's rule in Tel Rifaat was sitting on the regime stool in Aleppo, they quickly fell to the ground once the regime forces deserted Aleppo.

While so many pieces are moving in this puzzle, the clear part is that the HTS-led rebels of Idlib will expand as much as possible and then consolidate their rule in their newly acquired territories. Another clear part is that Türkiye will pursue its goal of erasing the terrorist organization PKK from the Syrian theater no matter how much or how long it takes.

Assad's options are more limited as his military is falling apart on top of the lack of much-needed Russian air and Iranian ground support. As for the US and Russia, Syria is no longer on the first page of their to-do list. All this shows that Türkiye is the most capable and committed actor with a clear roadmap and endgame in Syria, no matter what happens in the clashes between the rebels and Assad forces.

AA

Dr. Huseyin Alptekin

But a better strategy for Iran might be to drop its offensive strategies in favor of retrenchment for a firmer stance before Trump's expected "maximum pressure" policies start. In other words, unlike 2016, Assad no longer has tens of thousands of Iranian proxy militias to retake Aleppo. Russia is on the cautious side too.

assassinations. Under such circumstances, Hezbollah is now more focused on its home front as Lebanon and Israel are on the verge of a shaky cease-fire. Hezbollah simply does not have enough manpower to fight Iran's war in Syria.

Iran itself has failed to de-escalate the situation with Israel. In the past, Iran's controlled escalation plan with Israel used to pay off to sell the country's foreign policy in the Middle East with no severe cost. But a better strategy for Iran might be to drop its offensive strategies in favor of retrenchment for a firmer stance before Trump's expected "maximum pressure" policies start. In other words, unlike 2016, Assad no longer has tens of thousands of Iranian proxy militias to retake Aleppo.

Russia is on the cautious side

two critical foreign policy goals during his campaign for his second term: implementing maximum pressure on Iran and ending the war in Ukraine with a negotiated settlement. Perhaps, Putin does not want to look too ambitious to Trump. What would be worse is to line up with Iran and Hezbollah, a nonstate armed group Trump is not very fond of. But this is a picture of a dilemma for Putin. He has reasons not to spend his limited fighting power to help Trump's enemies in Syria right before trying to get a good deal from the same president over Ukraine. However, he also has reasons not to lose his most important gateway to the Mediterranean: the Tartus naval base. It seems like Russia will try to halt the rebels' advance to Tartus and Damascus but will not be eager to put Assad back in charge of

Whisper it, are more Tories going to join Reform?

David Frost

“We are about to witness a political revolution the likes of which we’ve not seen since Labour after the First World War.” Nigel Farage’s prophecy on Tuesday night at The Spectator’s Parliamentarian of the Year Awards is unsettling mainstream politicians. Are things really this bad for the old parties? Will we honestly see the hundreds of new Reform MPs that Farage predicts? Yes, it’s ambitious, but British politics are in flux. No one expected in 2019 that Boris Johnson’s majority of 80 would turn so fast into a Labour majority of 174. If voters believe both old parties have failed, then who can honestly say it couldn’t happen?

No one can know what politics will be like in five years’ time. Many things now unknowable will have come to pass. One can only assess the scene today. That scene shows both the Tories and Reform ticking up in a reaction to Labour’s unpopularity, roughly 55-45 in the Conservatives’ favour. If that split is repeated at the next general election, then the Right will lose again. That much is certain.

So far - and it is early days - the strategy of the new Conservative leadership on Reform is unclear. Robert Jenrick’s wasn’t: it was to turn the Conservative Party into a genuinely conservative party once again, the kind of party most if not

all Reform voters wanted to vote for. That could, should, and perhaps will happen under Kemi Badenoch. Maybe we will learn more next year. Meanwhile, the uncertainty is leading some Tories, for example Dan Hannan this week, to talk about an electoral deal with Reform. It’s a conversation among Tory activists too. But there is a problem: why would Reform politicians and activists want to do it?

Obviously I can’t speak for them, but surely if they and the Conservatives are running neck and neck next time, it will be because Reform voters don’t trust the Tories, don’t believe they will deal with issues like immigration and net zero, and won’t go back to them. So why would they want a deal, on Tory terms, with people they don’t trust and policies they don’t agree with? If on the other hand the Tories have successfully reinvented themselves as a properly conservative party, and if that reinvention is credible, then maybe a deal is possible. But in those circumstances surely either the Reform vote will have collapsed or the parties will have merged.

It’s a paradox: an electoral deal is only possible in circumstances in which it is not necessary.

So talk of an electoral deal is displacement activity - displace-

ment from the fact that the Conservative Party is in a street fight against Reform right now, and Reform is organising and mobilising fast. There’s only room for one party on the Right. For it to be the Tories, they are going to have to do things some of their MPs don’t want to do: repudiate most of their economic and social policy of the past decade; set out a firmly conservative set of policies instead; require MPs to get behind it, and face them down if they won’t. Something like this, something like Boris’s actions in 2019, is going to be needed for the party to answer the question, “Why should we believe you this time?”

I don’t know whether this is really conceivable. Much of the Tory party is still very complacent about the situation, encouraged as they are in the short run by relative success in council by-elections and by Labour’s laughably poor performance. Perhaps that is why Welsh Tories have stupidly felt able to dump their leader, Andrew RYT Davies, for being too Right-wing - even though they are actually running behind Reform in Wales, and the proportional representation system operating for the Welsh Senedd makes a shift Leftwards pointless.

A firm new course surely has to be set. Otherwise the party will just

be operating on the basis of a fragile agreement to disagree on huge issues like withdrawal from the ECHR, immigration control, scrapping net zero, and the various forms of nanny state politics. As long as that’s so, the easier Reform’s job is.

Some Tories, I think, can see this. I sense a subterranean conversation is beginning on the Right of the party about whether the Conservatives will ever do what is necessary. The defections of Andrea Jenkyns and Tim Montgomerie may not be the last. The obstacle now isn’t so much policy - for there is little difference between Reform and half the Tory Parliamentary Party - but rather a sense that Reform is still fragile, not fully organised, vulnerable to leading figures leaving or to simple infighting and chaos. But that particular concern will recede every time Nigel Farage commits himself firmly to long-term and determined political warfare against the old regime, as he did on Tuesday. Much is at stake now for the Conservative Party. Urgency is needed. Watching Farage’s speech and the uneasy silence that greeted it, I couldn’t help recalling the prophet Daniel and the writing on the wall at Belshazzar’s feast. “You are weighed in the balance and found wanting, and your kingdom will be delivered to the Medes and the Persians.”

Is Starmer method finally working?

Rafael Behr

professional purchase on it.

A speech on Thursday is meant to bring new clarity to the government’s programme. The missions that Starmer has previously cited as his guiding purpose will be quantified with “milestones” to be reached under a “plan for change” - shorter NHS waiting lists; less crime; falling immigration; more houses; children starting school reader to learn. Progress in some areas will be measurable with specific targets.

Labour strategists say this is the long-planned execution of a project that started in opposition and not a “relaunch”. But it is hard to escape that word when voters have to be told what they can expect from a prime minister five months after electing him. The delay is partly a function of how steep the learning curve is in transition from opposition to power. Vertical, by all accounts. There has also been much grinding of gears as ministers discover the limitations of Britain’s archaic machinery of government. That is why Starmer talks about a “complete rewiring” of the state as part of his plan. He is expressing the frustration that every prime minister feels on discovering that No 10 levers don’t energise a smart, integrated state, generating change on the ground that voters feel as improvement in the way the country is run.

This isn’t a partisan issue but it acquired a venomous tone under the Tories as an ideological neurosis about an idle, obstructive civil service that hated Brexit, was captured by a nefarious “blob” of vested interests and worked too often from home. Incoming Labour ministers’ first task was to restore trust and confidence among bullied and demoralised officials. But they also see that some of their predecessors’ less paranoid criticisms were justified: that the civil service is poorly equipped for risk and innovation; suspicious of outside expertise; intellectually calcified in silos within silos. It is not set up to tackle social problems that sprawl between traditional departmental jurisdictions. There is no enthusiasm in Labour circles for Dominic Cummings, but some cabinet ministers acknowledge a kernel of rationality in the anti-bureaucracy agenda that Johnson’s chief of staff pursued with narcissistic abandon. The task, they say, is extracting the sane essence and applying it as reform instead of vandalism.

Supporters of the newly appointed cabinet secretary, Chris Wormald, say he is just the man to strike that balance - a veteran civil servant and pragmatic problem solver, surprised no one that such a settlement holds little appeal for Ukrainians. So the Ukrainians continue to fight, even though Russia has had the momentum for much of this year, grinding out gains in eastern Ukraine. The Russians captured some 200 square miles of Ukraine in October, their best monthly total in 2024. But perspective is important. Two hundred square miles amounts to about 1/1000 of Ukraine’s territory. The Russian army paid a horrific price for those gains - on average 1,500 dead or injured soldiers each day in the month of October. Total Russian casualties since February 2022 come to nearly 700,000. For more perspective, in January 2022, the Russian active-duty military - not just the army, but the entire military - numbered about 1 million. No wonder Putin ordered an increase in the military’s size and a mobilization. To be sure, the war has proved to be an awful tragedy for Ukraine. Tens of thousands of soldiers and civilians have died. Ukrainians understandably have grown weary of the conflict. They face a difficult winter. Thus far, however, they have chosen to keep fighting. Should Kyiv decide to enter negotiations, Washington should support that decision and do what it can to help Ukraine secure the most favorable terms. But Washington should not press Kyiv to begin talks, especially when the Kremlin shows no sign of a good-faith negotiating approach. The decisions to enter negotiations and ultimately whether to agree to a settlement are, and should be, for Ukrainians to make.

The Guardian

It’s Ukraine’s choice, not America’s

Steven Pifer

to fight with the weapons at hand, while across the country civilians prepared Molotov cocktails.

Too many commentators talk blithely of Ukraine ceding land as if the land were empty. Giving up territory means giving up the Ukrainians who live there. And, make no mistake, Vladimir Putin demands a lot of territory - Crimea and the provinces of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson - even though Russia’s army does not even occupy all that territory.

As The Economist recently noted, Russian-occupied areas have experienced a “totalitarian hell.” Russification is the order of the day. “All traces of Ukraine are being expunged.” Ukrainians must take Russian citizenship or face deportation. Expressing any pro-Ukraine sentiment means risking arrest.

Ukrainians understand this. They remember what happened in towns such as Bucha. Some 4,000 residents remained there when the Russian army began a month-long occupation in March 2022. When the Russians retreated, 458 lay dead, many shot or victims of torture. Almost all were civilians.

For Kyiv, ceding land means surrendering Ukrainian citizens to such treatment. Moreover, plans proffered to settle the war usually combine Ukraine giving up territory with its acceptance of neutrality. The result: a weakened and diminished state that could become victim to another Russian assault any time the Kremlin chose. Moscow also appears to want more, such as a friendly pro-Russian government in Kyiv. It should

ChatGPT turns 2: Evolution of groundbreaking AI chatbot

Muhammed Yasin Güngör

CHATGPT, OpenAI’s groundbreaking Artificial Intelligence (AI) chatbot, marks its second anniversary on Saturday, with the tool becoming a global phenomenon, transforming industries and redefining how AI integrates into daily life and workplaces.

Launched on Nov. 30, 2022, ChatGPT quickly rose to prominence, reaching 1 million users within five days and surpassing 100 million in just two months --a milestone that outpaced the growth of other major tech platforms. As of October 2024, ChatGPT had more than 180 million active users and recorded over 4 billion monthly website visits in the last month, placing it among the top 10 most-visited websites globally according to Semrush, a company tracking websites.

The tool’s influence extends worldwide, with the US accounting for 14% of users, followed by India at 8% and then Kenya and Brazil, according to Semrush. On the other hand, survey data from Boston Consulting Group on September 2024 shows 45% of Indians reporting the use of ChatGPT, followed by Morocco and the United Arab Emirates with 38% and 34% respectively.

Meanwhile, data from web analytics tool Similarweb highlights its diverse audience: 54.66% male and 45.34% female, with 25-34-year-olds forming almost one-third of the user base followed by the 18-24 group. Education and professional fields have embraced

ChatGPT and similar AI tools.

Microsoft’s 2024 Work Trend Index revealed that 75% of global knowledge workers now use generative AI, while a GovTech survey reported that 58% of students relied on such tools during the 2022-23 academic year. In addition, LinkedIn witnessed a 142-fold increase in AI-related skills added to profiles in 2024. Lastly, ChatGPT was also recognized as the most widely used AI tool in 2024 by developers. ChatGPT operates using OpenAI’s Generative Pre-trained Transformer (GPT) framework, a type of large language model (LLM) designed for natural language processing. These models analyze massive datasets to generate human-like responses through supervised and reinforcement learning, including refinement based on human feedback.

However, the technology they used to train the chatbot has faced criticism. Ethical concerns include Time magazine’s reporting of out-sourced Kenyan workers earning less than \$2 per hour to label harmful content during development. Additionally, copyright infringement and dataset bias remain contentious. The New York Times sued OpenAI and Microsoft in December 2023, alleging unauthorized use of its articles in chatbot training.

Since its launch, ChatGPT has undergone rapid development, enhancing user experience and

expanding functionality. Initially powered by GPT-3.5, the chatbot debuted as a free research preview. By February 2023, OpenAI introduced a subscription-based model, offering premium features such as extended usage and advanced tools. In March 2023, OpenAI unveiled GPT-4 for its ChatGPT Plus subscribers. This version offered significant upgrades, including real-time web searches and computational functions.

In May 2024, GPT-4o debuted with multimodal capabilities, processing text, images, audio and video. Its faster, budget-friendly counterpart, GPT-4o Mini, launched in July 2024, replacing GPT-3.5. September 2024 saw the introduction of the experimental o1 and o1-mini models, promising enhanced speed and scalability. To improve accessibility, OpenAI also introduced mobile apps for iOS in May 2023 and Android in July 2023, further broadening its user base.

ChatGPT is the flagship product of OpenAI, an AI research organization founded in December 2015. OpenAI operates under a dual-entity structure, the nonprofit OpenAI, Inc. and its for-profit subsidiary, OpenAI Global, LLC. Microsoft has been a key partner since 2019, investing \$13 billion and holding approximately 49% equity. Additionally, its Azure platform provides critical infrastructure for ChatGPT’s operations.

OpenAI’s leadership includes

CEO Sam Altman, who co-founded the company alongside Elon Musk, Greg Brockman and others. Musk left the board in 2018, and Altman’s position was briefly jeopardized in November 2023 due to a board dispute, but he was reinstated after negotiations restructured OpenAI’s governance. OpenAI’s valuation has surged to \$157 billion, cementing its dominance in the AI sector. ChatGPT’s success has spurred a wave of competition, with AI products such as Gemini, Claude, Llama, Ernie and Grok entering the market. Microsoft integrated OpenAI’s technology into its Copilot AI-powered digital assistant, initially based on GPT-4.

OpenAI’s API, made available to developers in March 2023, has fueled the creation of numerous AI tools across industries, cementing ChatGPT’s role as a foundational technology. As of January 2024, 92% of Fortune 500 companies were reportedly building products using OpenAI technologies, the company said. The adoption of ChatGPT reflects a growing reliance on AI tools in education, business and personal use. From coding and content creation to customer service and research, ChatGPT has reshaped how individuals and organizations approach problem-solving. As the AI boom continues, ChatGPT remains at the forefront while navigating ethical and legal challenges. Its second anniversary highlights not only its achievements but also its ongoing influence on the future of artificial intelligence.

The Hill



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb talking to media after meeting Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

Economy moving in right direction: Minister

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Saturday said that the investment was coming into the country and existing investment was fantastic. He said that the economy of the country was moving in the right direction.

While briefing the media persons after a meeting with Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI), the Finance Minister said that they talked about structural reforms, taxation, energy, SOEs, privatization agenda and had to move with them in cooperation with existing investors.

Aurangzeb said that the government would only provide policy framework and policy continuity, which was important. He said that these companies would help the government in terms of joint ventures, privatization of SOEs.

He advised the private sector to include a component of export in their investments.

The minister said that the country had import-led economy owing to that they got into the balance of payment problem.

He was of the view, 'If We have to end the boom and bust cycle and put forward the economy towards 4, 5 or 6th percent growth. It has to be export-led growth.'

He said that every single entity of this country should contribute to exports. He said that markets were available for 'Made in Pakistan' products.

He said that they could not be complacent in the wake of the SBP Investors Confidence Report.

'Why do I say that the private sector has to lead this country,' he asked adding that SOEs had

caused Rs6 trillion of loss during last 10 years.

Aurangzeb, replying to a question, said that investors were coming here and political stability was an important component. He said that the loss of Rs190 was being endured every single day due to sit-ins.

'We have to collectively contemplate about it. We should build tolerance. When we talk about the Charter of Economy does not matter, which administration comes in,' he said adding we all should be on the same page for a stable Pakistan.

He said that petroleum volume had grown up due to curb on smuggling. He said that they identified illegal stations, which had been sealed. They had also issued warnings to shops selling illegal cigarettes.

Answering a question, he said we were talking about the Agriculture tax

with the Sindh government. Punjab government had done work on it and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan were working on it.

The Finance Minister said that they were bringing real estate, agriculture, wholesalers and retailers under tax net. He said that they had to deepen and broaden the tax net. He further said that leakages in sales tax and income tax were being stopped through the digitalization process.

Replying to a question on inflation, he said that a Standard Item Agenda had been introduced by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) to control prices of pulses, petroleum, transportation, in view of the decline in rates in international markets to provide relief to the people. He said that Price Control Committees had to be active to control the increase in prices.

Rs3.44b approved for Model Bazaars

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Provincial Cabinet has approved Rs3.44 billion for the construction of Model Bazaars in 13 districts of Punjab, an initiative aimed at providing economic relief and boosting local livelihoods. This approval, significantly higher than the initial Rs2.5 billion under consideration, is a major leap forward in addressing public needs and empowering communities.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif lauded the performance of Model Bazaars, saying that these bazaars were offering essential commodities at prices lower than DC-notified rates. "These bazaars are a lifeline for millions, lowering the cost of living and creating jobs for the people of Punjab," the chief minister remarked. She said that the initiative would provide small business owners with affordable monthly rents starting as low as Rs10,000, fostering

entrepreneurship and economic inclusivity.

The funds will be utilised to expand the network of Model Bazaars at 13 new locations across the province. Currently, 36 Model Bazaars operate in 24 districts, including ten in Lahore, offering a clean and organized shopping environment with daily essentials often priced below notified rates. The 13 new Model Bazaar spots are: Mandi Bahauddin, Okara, Narowal, Chiniot, Sharaqpur, Jhelum, Wazirabad, Khanewal, Muzaffargarh, Bhalwal, Pattoki, Jaranwala and Chunan.

The chief minister also praised MNA Afzal Khokhar, who is also chairman of the Punjab Model Bazaars Management Company (PMBMC), for his steadfast commitment to expanding this public welfare initiative. Mr Khokhar, however, said PMBMC Chief Executive Officer Naveed Rafaqat Ahmad and his team made

exceptional efforts to secure the enhanced funding.

Naveed Rafaqat Ahmad said he had briefed the Planning and Development (P&D) Board about the project's profile and ensuring the cabinet's approval. He said his approach included the acquisition of state land at no cost, significantly reducing project expenses and enhancing the feasibility of constructing 13 new bazaars. With an annual footfall exceeding 60 million customers, the PMBMC has become a benchmark for excellence in public service. The expansion of Model Bazaars is expected to further enhance access to affordable goods, create thousands of jobs, and uplift local economies.

Beyond providing public relief, this initiative will open doors for small entrepreneurs, supporting their growth in a structured and economically viable environment.

Minister takes notice of farmers' complaints

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Saturday took notice of farmers' complaints regarding the low prices of sugarcane by sugar mills.

Chairing the Sugar Advisory Board meeting, the minister directed the Sugar Commissioner to present a report on sugarcane prices in the next meeting, said a news release.

Tanveer emphasized that the exploitation of farmers will not be tolerated and stressed that sugar mill owners must pay the fair price of sugarcane to farmers. The board also reviewed the current situation of sugar stocks in the country and expressed complete satisfaction with the current sugar reserves in the country.

The timely commencement of the sugar crushing season is a significant achievement, Rana Tanveer remarked.

APBF for broadening of tax base through appropriate legislation

F.P. report

ISLAMABAD: As the tax shortfall may further widen to around Rs400 billion by the end of Dec 2024, the All Pakistan Business Forum on Saturday recommended

PHA starts parks upgradation

FAISALABAD (APP): The Parks & Horticulture Authority (PHA) has commenced up-gradation of parks under the "clean & green city" program.

Director General PHA Dilawar Khan said that proactive steps would be taken to transform the city into a clean and green metropolis. He said that the authority had initiated up-gradation of all major parks across the city, focusing on enhancing recreational facilities and beautification.

In Jinnah Garden, the children's play area is being upgraded with state-of-the-art swings to provide a modern and enjoyable experience to families. A beautiful cut-flower shop near the garden's entrance is near completion and this shop would offer a wide variety of flowers at affordable prices for the public, he added.

He said that the D-Ground Park had been illuminated with newly installed lights, adding a vibrant ambiance. The repair work on children's swings in the park had been completed successfully. He emphasized the authority's commitment to prioritizing the development of all city parks and said that every park in Faisalabad would be upgraded step by step while actively promoting the clean and green vision.

Gold prices decrease by 300 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed decrease of Rs300 and was sold at Rs274,400 on Saturday against its sale at Rs274,700 on previous trading day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs257 to Rs235,254 from Rs235,511 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat also went down to Rs215,650 from Rs215,885 per tola and ten gram silver were also traded at same rate at Rs3,400 and Rs2,914.95, respectively.

minister confirmed Punjab's participation in the World Trade Fair in Canada next year.

The delegation included Sajid Malik, Malik Manzoor Hussain and Rao Amjad Iqbal. Dr. Imran Hashmi, Director of the Punjab Board of Investment, along with other relevant officials, also attended the meeting.

the broadening of tax base through appropriate legislation to ensure that all income earners pay taxes equitably, including agriculture income.

The Forum President Syed Maaz Mahmood observed that against the target of Rs4.64 trillion, the FBR collected Rs4.29 trillion in five months, achieving a growth of 23%. It needs a 40% growth to reach the annual goal of nearly Rs13 trillion. He said that the IMF will assess December's tax collection before deciding on bringing a new tax-loaded budget. So, the condition of IMF to rope in agriculture income in the tax net appeared promising in enhancing the tax collection. Otherwise the whole burden will again be shifted to the industry.

Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi expressed dissatisfaction with provinces' delay in passing new agriculture income tax laws. This new legislation is one of the conditions agreed upon with the International Monetary Fund as part of the 37-month \$7 Extended Fund Facility.

Ibrahim Qureshi said that the federal government have also expressed dissatisfaction with the poor pace of adopting agricultural income tax legislations by Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan. Punjab is the only province that has enacted the bill through its provincial assembly.

Syed Maaz Mahmood said that it's a long way when the bill will turn into law and the revenue starts supporting the tax net. Undoubtedly, there is a significant progress, both on fiscal and current accounts, showing surpluses and could lead towards a sustainable point.

The APBF President said that culture of amnesty schemes should be eliminated as it discourages the honest taxpayers, besides enacting penalties in the law to punish tax evaders. "Appropriate laws should be made to enable the government to seize local assets, in equivalent value, or levy appropriate taxes, if any person holds any kind of assets outside the country for which source of income could not be established" he added. He said that export-oriented industries should be facilitated. He was of the view that rules, regulations and procedures for export-oriented sectors should be easy so that it could play its due role in economic stabilization.

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ity of the country.

"It is a matter of concern that exports are showing a low growth besides the fact that country has all resources which is not a good omen" he maintained. We have to focus on investing in the energy sector, lowering of tariffs on smuggling prone items, increasing the share of direct taxes in revenue and lowering the slab of indirect taxes in the forthcoming budget to achieve key economic targets set for the new year. To fill the gap between demand and supply of the energy, maximum funds should be allocated for construction of dams/water reservoirs and tapping of Thar Coal, he added.

The APBF chief said the Protection of Economic Reforms Act", 1992 should be amended appropriately to curb the practice of remitting undeclared income through unofficial channels outside Pakistan and the same being brought into Pakistan through banking channels in foreign exchange. He demanded the government to improve tax structure for developing business and investment. He said that the existing tax structure discourages investment and encourages rent seeking.

NOWPDP launches powerful video drive — to highlight importance of 'Shanakht' for persons with disabilities



F.P. Report

KARACHI: A proud recipient of the Zero Project Award 2025, NOWPDP has been working for the empowerment of persons with disabilities (PWDs) since 2008 and has transformed the lives of over 100,000 individuals in the past 16 years. Recognizing the systemic nature of marginalization experienced by PWDs, through its 7 pillars, NOWPDP provides guidance, identity, welfare, education, skills-development, and employment opportunities to PWDs.

For PWDs to be recognized as citizens of the state and gain access to basic rights is the first step towards ensuring their inclusion and equitable participation in all spheres of life.

However, a majority of PWDs and the general public remain unaware of the existence and importance of Special CNICs - the official identity document specifically issued for PWDs that

not only grants them their due rights and recognition but also entitles them to certain government mandated benefits.

The National Shanakht Campaign is a key initiative undertaken by NOWPDP to address the critical lack of representation of PWDs in the national database which undermines the need for promoting inclusive policies. As part of the Shanakht campaign, NOWPDP launched a compelling video on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities that dismantles prevailing attitudes and social stigmas around disability by asserting the need for recognizing the potential within each individual to lead independent and fulfilling lives.

The video message brings together powerful and diverse voices from Pakistan's social, economic, and political circles - united in their support of Shanakht for persons with disabilities.

According to NOWPDP's CEO, Omair Ahmad, "We are dedicated to ensuring

PWDs receive their due recognition and have already facilitated over 15,000 PWDs in getting Disability Certificates and SCNICs through our One-Window Camps. However, the vast majority of PWDs remain unaccounted for which underscores the importance of the Shanakht Campaign.

Court Notice

In the Court of Jawad Bin Dawood Civil Judge II, Alaga Qazi Buner at Daggar. Suit No. 224/1. Institution 26/7/ 2024. Date of hearing 11/12/2024. Meraj VS District Collector Buner . Notice to No. 7.Wali Mohamad s/o Bakhsh resident of Therahteshel Chaghorzai district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 11/12/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Chairman calls for achieving long-term financial stability

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has stressed the need for undertaking economic reforms and improving the regulatory environment so that financial stability can be achieved in the long-run.

The newly-elected chairman of FRIA Shehbaz Aslam, in a statement issued here on Saturday, stressed the need for reducing cost of doing business, besides evolving a new price control mechanism, as huge taxation, rising oil prices and constant jump in electricity and gas tariffs

have lifted the cost of production to a new high. He warned that bailout packages from the IMF were unlikely to speed up economic growth, as the political instability and lack of reforms would further deteriorate the financial situation in the country.

The FRIA Chairman observed that amidst continuous of hike in cost of production in the country, what the Pakistan's economy really needs is persistent and sound economic management.

The Chairman warned the authorities that high inflation can hurt economic growth and a careful policy

is required to keep it in control.

He said that the pace of inflation is skyrocketing at a time when the economic activity is slowing down.

Shahbaz Aslam said that the anti-business policies would prove detrimental to the industries due to high cost of doing business and will also open the floodgates of inflation.

In addition to making the electricity bills costlier and unaffordable for the consumers, the hike in base tariff would escalate prices of all household goods being widely used in every household, he added.

He termed the constant

increase in tariffs unlawful and a violation of NEPRA's own rules and regulations, as any increase in tariff has to be determined and implemented only after holding public hearings but unfortunately they have solely decided to raise the tariff without holding public hearings, he argued.

He condemned the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority's decision to increase electricity tariffs on daily basis, stating that the burden of power theft, mismanagement, and inefficiencies cannot be shifted to consumers on the pretext of fuel adjustment.

LCCI demands immediate action against hackers

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) said on Saturday that hackers are playing havoc with economy and businesses so there is a dire need to put in place a fool-proof system to avert cyber-attacks.

LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad, Senior Vice President Engineer Khalid Usman and Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry expressed deep concern over the increasing incidents of cyber-attacks and called for the serious risks they pose to businesses and individuals.

Mian Abuzar Shad

stressed the need for urgent measures to combat these crimes stating that cyber attacks on digital platforms undermine trust, compromise privacy and cause financial damage to the business community. The authorities must act decisively to apprehend and penalize these hackers."

Engineer Khalid Usman talked about the critical role of secure digital communication in the business world saying that with businesses relying heavily on digital platforms, hacking incidents can lead to severe data breaches and reputational harm. Strengthening

cyber security measures is essential. He urged the government to introduce comprehensive policies to safeguard users.

Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry underscored the importance of collaboration between law enforcement and cyber security experts to tackle this growing threat.

He also encouraged awareness campaigns to educate the public about online safety.

He said that prevention through education and vigilance is a key to reduce cybercrime. Businesses and individuals alike must remain cautious.

The LCCI office-bearers urged the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and other relevant agencies to prioritize combating cybercrime and implementing strict measures to protect digital platforms. They also called for initiatives to raise awareness about online security and the importance of protecting personal and business accounts.

They said that the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry would continue its untiring efforts to fostering a secure digital environment that supports economic growth and innovation.

Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce meets world trade developers team

LAHORE (APP): The Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain here Saturday held a meeting with a delegation from Canada-based company World Trade Developers.

The delegation was led by the Chairman of the group, Rana Muhammad Tanveer. The meeting focused the upcoming

World Trade Fair to be held in Canada in July next year.

The delegation head extended an invitation to the Provincial Minister to participate in the World Trade Fair, which will host 6,000 businessmen and companies from across the globe. The event aims to foster networking, business matchmaking and B2B meetings between

participants. Provincial Minister appreciated the initiative, stating that organizing such a fair in Canada is a commendable step that will enhance business activities. He emphasized the need for practical measures to strengthen trade cooperation between Pakistan and Canada.

The Minister highlighted that the government pri-

oritizes the promotion of sectors like solar energy, electric vehicles, modern agriculture, and livestock. He noted that Canadian advanced technology could significantly contribute to the development of various sectors in Punjab. He also stressed the importance of increasing people-to-people connections to enhance trade cooperation. The

minister confirmed Punjab's participation in the World Trade Fair in Canada next year.

The delegation included Sajid Malik, Malik Manzoor Hussain and Rao Amjad Iqbal. Dr. Imran Hashmi, Director of the Punjab Board of Investment, along with other relevant officials, also attended the meeting.



In brief

Norris on Abu Dhabi pole with Hamilton 18th

ABU DHABI (Agencies): Lando Norris took pole position at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix ahead of team-mate Oscar Piastri as McLaren put themselves in a perfect position to clinch their first constructors' title since 1998. Norris headed Piastri by 0.209 seconds at the end of a gripping, topsy-turvy qualifying session at the final race of the season. Carlos Sainz took third place for Ferrari, who trail McLaren by 21 points heading into Sunday's race with a maximum of 44 available. His team-mate Charles Leclerc will start at the back, qualifying 13th after having his fastest lap time in second qualifying deleted for exceeding track limits, and with a 10-place grid penalty to come. Lewis Hamilton qualified 18th in his final race for Mercedes after his decisive lap in the first session was wrecked when his car collected a bollard dislodged by Kevin Magnussen's Haas as the Dane tried to get out of Hamilton's way. Hamilton is set to start 16th after penalties for Leclerc and Williams' Alex Albon. Nico Hulkenberg qualified an excellent fourth for Haas, but the German has been handed a three-place grid penalty for overtaking cars at the pit exit. The penalty moves Hulkenberg down to seventh and lifts world champion Max Verstappen up to fourth, Alpine's Pierre Gasly to fifth and Mercedes' George Russell to sixth - directly behind Dutchman Verstappen after their row this week. McLaren had dominated the practice sessions leading up to qualifying and were favourites for pole, but they did not show their hand until the final lap of a session marked by track limits transgressions and other incidents.

Cycling C'ship held

LAHORE (APP): The National Main Road Cycling Championship 2024 was held in Lahore on Saturday. Teams from all major departments and provinces participated in the event. In the 40-kilometre individual race, Mohammad Bilal of Pakistan Army won the gold medal. Overall, Pakistan Army secured all three medals and claimed the first position with 79 points.

Antonio stable after traffic accident

LONDON (AFP): West Ham forward Michail Antonio is in a stable condition, "conscious and communicating" in hospital following a road traffic accident, the club said on Saturday. The Premier League team issued a statement on X earlier on Saturday evening saying Antonio had been involved in an accident but gave no further details. West Ham provided an update in a subsequent post after images of a heavily damaged Ferrari began to circulate online. A club statement read: "West Ham United can confirm that Michail Antonio is in a stable condition following a road traffic accident this afternoon in the Essex area. "Michail is conscious and communicating and is currently under close supervision at a central London hospital. "At this difficult time, we kindly ask everyone to respect the privacy of Michail and his family. "The club will make no further comment this evening, but will issue a further update in due course." The London-born Jamaica international joined West Ham in 2015 and has scored 83 goals for the club in more than 300 games. West Ham host Wolves on Monday.

Lewandowski scores as Barcelona draw with Betis

SEVILLE (Agencies): Robert Lewandowski continued his superb start to the season but couldn't prevent Barcelona dropping points in a 2-2 draw with Real Betis.

Lewandowski scored his 16th goal of the league campaign before Ferran Torres cancelled out Giovanni Lo Celso's penalty - but Assane Diao snatched a point for Betis with a late equaliser.

Real Betis could have easily scored twice in the opening three minutes but Raphina cleared Diego Llorente's header off the goalline before Abde Ezzalzouli - formerly of Barcelona - saw his one-on-one effort saved by Inaki Pena. Lamine Yamal wasted a good chance to break the deadlock from

close range but team-mate Lewandowski made no such mistake.

The Poland international converted Jules Kounde's cross from close range to finish a fine team move and score for the 23rd time in 21 games in all competitions. Betis emerged from half-time with renewed energy but spurned three more clear chances.

Sergi Altimir and Lo Celso sent headers wide of Pena's post before the Barcelona goalkeeper was called upon to tip Chimy Avila's snap-shot wide.

Betis finally got their just reward when Lo Celso converted from the penalty spot after Barca substitute Frenkie de Jong felled Vitor Roque - on-loan from the Catalans - as he raced into the area.

Barca pushed for a winner and found it when substitute Torres beat the off-side trap to latch on to Yamal's reverse pass and finish past Fran Vieites.

It looked like Barca would see out the win, but in the fourth minute of injury-time 19-year-old substitute Diao swept home to rescue a point for the hosts. The draw sees Barca surrender control in the title race. Flick's side are five points ahead of closest challengers Real Madrid but Los Blancos have played two games fewer.

Barca will be in Champions League action against Borussia Dortmund on Wednesday (20:00 GMT kick-off) before facing Leganes in La Liga on Sunday, 15 December.



Sarfraz hints at retirement ahead of Champions T20 Cup

R A W A L P I N D I (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed has recently hinted at his potential retirement ahead of the upcoming Champions T20 Cup.

The veteran wicket-keeper, who is set to mentor the Dolphins in the Champions T20 Cup, was questioned about his future in the national team during a media interaction at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Friday.

Sarfraz Ahmed responded in a sarcastic tone, acknowledging the speculation surrounding his potential retirement. He stated that there was little left for him to say and that he might be hanging up his boots soon.

"Look, as far as my career is concerned, I think I don't need to say anything.

Nothing is left. I know what you are waiting for and it will happen soon," he said. Sarfraz made his international debut for Pakistan in 2007 and has since become a significant figure in the team's history.

He has worn the national jersey in 54 Test matches, 117 ODIs, and 61 T20 Internationals, amassing a total of 6,164 runs which includes six centuries and 32 half-centuries to his name.

His most notable achievement came in 2017 when he led Pakistan to its first-ever ICC Men's Champions Trophy title with a stunning 180-run victory over fierce rivals India in the final.

Under his leadership, the Green Shirts achieved an impressive feat of 11 consecutive T20I series

victories, the highest number ever accomplished by a captain of the Pakistan team.

However, his last appearance for the national side was in the first Test of a three-match series against Australia last year, where he managed to score only seven runs before being dropped from the squad.

Although he remained part of the Test setup for the home series against Bangladesh and the opening Test against England, he found himself warming the bench. Eventually, after a disheartening defeat in the first Test against England, he was released from the squad.

Meanwhile, his last appearance in a white-ball match for Pakistan dates back to November 2021.

Hot Hawks pip LeBron's Lakers, Celtics beat Bucks



MIAMI (AFP): The Atlanta Hawks earned their sixth straight win in the NBA with Trae Young scoring a three-pointer with 7.4 seconds left in overtime to beat the Los Angeles Lakers 134-132 and overcome a LeBron James triple-double.

James, who put up 39 points for the Lakers along with 10 rebounds and 11 assists, saw his 31-foot three-pointer with 1.2 seconds left come out off the rim as the Lakers fell to a third straight loss.

The game ended tied at 119-119 in regulation after Young's last-gasp three-point attempt was blocked by Max Christie. Alongside James, Anthony Davis put up 38 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists but Atlanta were able to match them with Young scoring 31 points and providing 20 assists.

The Hawks bench contributed well with De'Andre Hunter putting up 26 points and Bogdan Bogdanovic adding 20, the pair sinking nine three-pointers between them.

Lakers head coach JJ Redick, whose team have lost seven of their last nine games, said he saw plenty of good signs despite the

defeat. "I told the group that I appreciate their effort, their intent, their energy and truthfully I liked a lot of their execution," he said.

"We did enough to win a basketball game tonight. Similar to Orlando, similar to Oklahoma City, we did enough to win a basketball game and I'm very appreciative of that. "You can build on that, you can adjust and scheme, maybe tweak some things late game," he added.

Tatum inspires Celtics

The Boston Celtics grinded out a 111-105 win over the Milwaukee Bucks with Jayson Tatum leading the way, putting up 34 points. Tatum added 10 rebounds and five assists in another clutch performance while Jrue Holiday scored 20 points and Sam Hauser helped out with 16 points off the bench.

The victory moves the defending NBA champions to 19-4 and leaves them in second place in the Eastern Conference behind the early season NBA pacesetters, the 20-3 Cleveland Cavaliers. It was a well-contested battle, befitting a game which could well feature in the playoffs, with

neither team managing to get more than eight points ahead while there were 14 lead changes.

The Celtics pulling clear late when Al Horford produced a three-pointer to make it 105-101 before Holiday, on a pass from Tatum, made a 14-foot floater to open up a five-point lead with 25.1 seconds left.

"This was a tough win," Tatum said. "We didn't necessarily shoot the ball as well as we wanted to, especially in the first half. But we just... we had to find a way.

"Second half we hit some shots, but we really picked it up on the defensive end and everybody played a part." Damian Lillard top-scored with 30 points for the Bucks while Giannis Antetokounmpo added 30, but Milwaukee fell to an 11-11 record.

Paul George, back after a knee injury, scored 21 points and provided nine assists for the Philadelphia 76ers in their 102-94 win over the Orlando Magic.

The 76ers were again without Joel Embiid, who is dealing with a knee problem, as they split a home series with the Magic after a defeat without George on Wednesday.

K.J. Martin was key for the 76ers as he delivered 20 points on 9-of-10 shooting after coming off the bench. The Indiana Pacers beat the Chicago Bulls 132-123 with Tyrese Haliburton top-scoring with 23 points and Pascal Siakam putting up 21.

Zach LaVine led the Bulls with 32 points but could not stop Chicago falling to 10-14, the same record as the Pacers.

Naqvi assures Nation of positive outcome as ICC meeting is postponed again

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Interior Minister and PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi has confirmed that today's ICC meeting regarding the Champions Trophy has been postponed, but assured the nation that the outcome would exceed public expectations.

Speaking to the media in Lahore, Naqvi said that the decision on ICC Champions Trophy is yet to be finalised but once a decision is finalised, they will be informed promptly.

"We will not disappoint the nation. Once a final decision is made, we will inform you," Naqvi said. "The results will go beyond the expectations of the people."

Regarding the state of domestic cricket, Naqvi outlined plans to improve the condition of grounds across the country.

"We are working to enhance the grounds, and where grounds do not exist, we will acquire land to build them," he stated. "The work on this has already begun. At the domestic level, we need to empower all aspects of the game so we can produce better players."

Naqvi also highlighted the importance of improv-



ing facilities in areas where cricket tournaments are not currently held. "Our goal is to have the stadium in Peshawar ready, and we aim to organise tournaments in cities where they are not taking place at the moment."

In response to a question about the ICC meeting, Naqvi confirmed that it had been postponed and reiterated that the public would be updated as soon as a resolution is reached.

"I cannot speak on any terms before the meeting concludes," he added. "The goal is to make the best decision for both Pakistan's cricket and the international cricket community."

While emphasising

Pakistan's positive role in global cricket, Naqvi further said that Pakistan is contributing positively, and we will continue to do so.

"If the ICC suffers a loss, it will affect global cricket. However, I am hopeful that things will improve in due course," he said.

In a major breakthrough on Champions Trophy 2025, the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) have reportedly agreed to adopt a 'hybrid model' for the global tournaments hosted in Pakistan and India until 2027.

Confusion surrounding the ICC Champions Trophy venue has yet to be resolved, as the ICC has

not announced a verdict, despite several meetings being called and eventually postponed.

But in a major breakthrough today, the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) have reportedly agreed to adopt a 'hybrid model' for the global tournaments hosted in Pakistan and India until 2027.

According to a report by Cricinfo, the 'hybrid model' will allow Pakistan and India to play their games at ICC tournaments hosted by the other country at a neutral venue. The agreement was reportedly reached after meetings between ICC chief Jay Shah and PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi in Dubai.

ICC has three global events scheduled in Pakistan and India between 2024 and 2027: the Champions Trophy in Pakistan (February 2025), the women's ODI World Cup in India (2025), and the men's T20 World Cup co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka (2026). Sources revealed that a Board meeting to discuss the Champions Trophy was scheduled for December 7 but it was later postponed.

Man City come back twice to draw at Crystal Palace

LONDON (Agencies): Manchester City twice came from behind to draw with Crystal Palace as the champions' underwhelming run of form continued.

City's win over Nottingham Forest in mid-week failed to herald the start of their rediscovering their form - and Palace may consider themselves unlucky not to have won this.

Oliver Glasner's side led after just four minutes when Will Hughes picked out wing-back Daniel Munoz in tonnes of space to drive in the opening goal.

They had chances to extend their lead before Erling Haaland leaped well to head in Matheus Nunes' cross to level.

But another defender put Palace ahead with Hughes' corner being headed in by Maxence Lacroix.

However, City salvaged a Selhurst Park point when Bernardo Silva found Rico Lewis, who fired a fine effort into the top corner from the edge of the box.



Lewis was later sent off for two bookings, the second for a foul on Trevoh Chalobah. City are eight points behind leaders Liverpool, having played a game more than Arne Slot's side, while Palace are four points above the relegation zone.

Magic not back yet for City

Manchester City's iffy spell of form has extended to one win, the 3-0 victory over Forest on Wednesday, in nine matches - a run going back to the end of

October. There was plenty to be concerned about here.

Kyle Walker was found wanting for both Palace goals. He kept Munoz onside for the first and was beaten far too easily in the air by Lacroix for the second. Stefan Ortega, preferred in goal to Ederson for the third game in a row, might have done better with the opener too as he let it go through his body.

Had it not been for Ruben Dias making four good blocks to stop Palace shots, it could have been

even worse before Haaland popped up for his 13th Premier League goal of the season - but only his third since September.

Lewis has enjoyed playing against Palace, with all three of his Premier League goals coming against the Eagles. But he will not have enjoyed his sending off, with the first for dissent and the second for a foul in the closing minutes.

They did have other chances too with Haaland blasting the ball at the head of goalkeeper Dean Henderson when through on goal - and Ilkay Gundogan volleying over the post. But they had fewer shots than Palace.

And they were left furious at the end when the referee blew for full-time just as they were launching a dangerous attack. Two more big games are coming up for City as they visit Juventus in the Champions League on Wednesday and host rivals Manchester United next Sunday.

Australia close in on Test victory after Head hundred

ADELAIDE (Agencies): Australia's bowlers backed up a majestic century from Travis Head on his home ground to put the hosts in a strong position to win the second Test against India.

Head played in a typically carefree manner on day two at the Adelaide Oval as his 140 off 141 balls provided the bulk of Australia's first-innings 337 in reply to India's 180.

Mohammed Siraj eventually dismissed Head as he collected 4-98, but it came too late for India who struggled to wrestle a kind of momentum on a second successive day of dominance for Australia.

Marnus Labuschagne's dogged 64 had earlier laid the platform for the hosts while the ever-dependable Jasprit Bumrah finished the pick of India's bowlers with 4-61. Faced with batting the best part of an entire session under floodlights against a pink ball, India's top order wilted in the face of some skilful bowling - spearheaded by Scott Boland.

Australia captain Pat Cummins removed KL Rahul with a short ball before a disciplined fourth-stump line saw Boland snare two of India's star performers from their emphatic first Test win in Perth. Yashasvi Jaiswal and Virat Kohli were both drawn into defensive pokes at deliveries on an awkward length from Boland.

Mitchell Starc then found some of the swing which had brought him career-best Test figures of 6-48 on day one to remove Shubman Gill. Cummins returned to



bowl counterpart Rohit Sharma for six shortly before stumps with India still 29 runs adrift and Australia well placed to level the five-match series at 1-1 on day three.

Home favourite Head thrills crowd

This was a red-letter day for Adelaide-born Head as he scored a stunning century in front of a packed crowd on familiar territory.

It was a buccaneering innings full of trademark shots square of the wicket as he cut, dabbled, pulled and effortlessly flicked his way to three figures.

In fact 113 of his runs came either side of the stumps as India's bowlers fed two of his strongest scoring areas. There were, however, occasional moments of good fortune during a knock which was completely out of kilter with the way most of Australia's players have approached this match.

Head smashed Ravichandran Ashwin for a towering six straight down the ground in the 68th over, then attempted to do it

again next ball but hit it skywards, only for Siraj to shell a diving catch.

He was on 76 at the time and Australia's position in this Test match might not look so rosy had that chance been held. It is one of Head's strongest qualities, though, that such moments do not faze him, and he continued in a cavalier vein for the remainder of his time at the crease.

He brought up his century with a nudge into the leg-side off Siraj, reaching the milestone off 111 deliveries, celebrating by rocking his bat in a nod to his newborn son before saluting the crowd.

There is certainly something about batting on home turf which appeals to the South Australian. He has scored 634 runs in nine Test innings at the Adelaide Oval, with three centuries.

At 79.25 that is nearly double his career Test average of 41.96. The 30-year-old whipped Siraj stylishly off his legs for six to reach 140 off as many deliveries, before he was finally undone a ball later when the

India seamer yanked him. There was then a terse verbal exchange with Siraj who, rather bizarrely given India's predicament, opted to give Head a send-off. The Aussie batter lingered for a moment, giving as good as he got before walking off.

India wilt as Boland sticks to his strengths

The old cricket adage goes that you cannot win a Test match in a session, but you can certainly lose one.

When India head coach Gautam Gambhir scribbles down in his notepad what has gone wrong for them here then a poor showing under the floodlights will surely be top of the list.

Nathan McSweeney and Labuschagne pulled down the shutters and were fixated on survival in a near-parallel situation in the night session on day one.

Australia ended the day just one wicket down and it earned the right for Head to make hay in more favourable conditions.

By contrast, India collapsed as the top-order failings from their recent series whitewash against New Zealand resurfaced.

Jaiswal (77.41), Rahul (70.00) and Gill (93.33) all had impressive strike rates but left or shouldered arms to a grand total of four balls between them. It might be out of fashion, but a more circumspect approach would have served them better in this scenario.

That is take to nothing away from Australia's attack, who made the most of the conditions and stayed patient rather than chasing wickets.



In brief

Six outlaws arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police on Saturday apprehended six outlaws involved in different criminal activities including drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons and recovered weapon and drugs from their possession. A public relations officer told APP that the ICT Police Korla, Sihala, Phulgran and Nilore police teams took legal action against accused involved in possessing illegal weapons and drug peddling activities. He said police teams arrested four accused namely Shoukat Masih, Muhammad Rafiq, Hassan and Jahan Zaib and recovered 20 liters of liquor, 720 gram heroin, 235 gram hashish 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.

NACTA holds a two-day Exhibition

RAWALPINDI (APP): The National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), in collaboration with the Punjab Arts Council Rawalpindi, held a two-day peace poster exhibition in its art gallery. People from all walks of life witnessed the exhibition and lauded the creative work of young artists. According to the details, the posters/paintings displayed at the gallery were received in NACTA's 5th Poster Competition, 2024. Participants in three different categories sent their entries in the contest. The exhibition was inaugurated by Director General Communications and Outreach NACTA, Ms. Saleha Zakir Shah. Director Arts Council Sajjad Hussain, Senior Analyst Adnan Khaliq Bhatti, Deputy Director Anum Ayaz, Analyst Haider Abbas, Junior Analyst Mohammed Idrees Khan, and Assistant Director Suleman were also present on the occasion. On the occasion, judges reviewed the entries, and finalists in all three categories were also decided. In the first category with an age group of 10 to 15 years, Zahra Kashif got first position, Momin Haroon stood at second, whereas Anaya Tariq clinched the third position. In the second category, 16 to 20 years, the first position was awarded to Sana Javaid, Aleena Qayum secured the second position, and Maria Affaq grabbed the third position. In the third category, 21 to 30 years, Sana Batool secured first, Humna Haider stood at second, and Anum got third position. Winners in all categories will receive prize money of Rs. 50,000, 30,000, and 20,000 for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd positions, respectively. Speaking on the occasion, Saleha Zakir Shah appreciated all winners for their creative work and acknowledged their efforts in making Pakistan a peaceful country. Director Punjab Council of the Arts Rawalpindi Division, Sajjad Hussain, in his remarks, acknowledged the efforts of NACTA in the promotion of peace. He said such initiatives provide an opportunity to the youth to showcase their talent positively.

PTI's Politics Centers on NRO Demand: Ihsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister, Rana Ihsan Afzal, on Saturday said that the politics of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) revolves around a single agenda seeking an NRO for its former chairman. Talking to a private news channel, he criticized PTI's "civil disobedience narrative and divisive politics," asserting that the government will address such tactics with strength and resolve. He accused PTI of

attempting to create chaos and anarchy in the country, and now they are trying to manipulate the sentiments of Pakistanis by the fake news roaming on social media.

Replying to a query regarding dialogue with PTI, he said that the government has repeatedly invited PTI to engage in political dialogue, but they have shown no interest in resolution through talks.

Highlighting the government's achievements,

he said that despite challenges, the economy is shifting from stabilization to growth.

Inflation has dropped to single digits, and remittances and exports have increased. "The economic indicators reflect the government's commitment to turning the country's economy around," he added.

Rana Ihsan emphasized the government's focus on stability and development, assuring that no attempts to derail progress would succeed.

Amjad declares overseas Pakistanis as Ambassadors for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Vice Chairperson of the Overseas Pakistanis Commission (OPC) Punjab, Barrister Amjad Malik, on Saturday praised overseas Pakistanis for their positive role by saying that they are the roaming ambassadors of the country. Talking to PTV, he said that a dedicated portal has been established where overseas Pakistanis can register complaints, which are resolved within six

months through District Overseas Committees operating across 36 districts of Punjab.

He said that since its inception, OPC has received 34,950 complaints, out of which 25,842 have been successfully resolved.

Barrister Malik assured that these committees are actively working at the grassroots level to provide swift solutions to the issues faced by overseas

Pakistanis.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government played a significant contribution to empowering overseas Pakistanis, he added.

He noted that the establishment of the OPC during PML-N's tenure was a transformative step, providing a platform for expatriates to voice their concerns and seeks redressed for their grievances effectively.

HEC launches National Faculty Development Programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, through the National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), has launched the National Faculty Development Program (NFPD) for Interim Placement of Fresh PhDs (IPFP) Fellows at the Training Academy, University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS), Lahore.

The program commenced with 32 participants who have completed PhD recently, preparing to embark on careers in academia.

The program supports new PhDs as they prepare for their formal entry into the academic job market.

The program has always served as a vital stepping stone for new faculty members, equipping them

with the skills, tools, and strategies needed to thrive in the academic world.

The program's objectives are to inspire educators to create student-centered learning environments, improve research and grant-writing abilities, and prepare participants for future leadership roles in higher education. The program offers comprehensive training designed to equip participants with the essential skills for a successful academic career.

It covers a range of key areas including effective teaching and learning strategies, course design, and lesson planning.

The participants will also focus on communication and presentation skills, along with the use of technology in the classroom to enhance student engagement.

In addition, the program emphasizes the importance of assessment and evaluation, as well as the development of research capabilities, including grant writing and publishing.

Further, the training addresses the psychological wellbeing of educators and learners, and management, and provides an orientation on important educational policies and guidelines.

The program is a key initiative in the HEC's broader efforts to improve the quality of higher education in Pakistan by investing in the professional growth of new faculty members. The participants will receive comprehensive training and mentorship, ensuring they are well-prepared to contribute meaningfully to the academic community.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator health Dr Mukhtar Bharath addressing the high level conference regarding Burncon 2024. —APP Photo

JICA celebrates 70 years of ODA to Pakistan with photo exhibition

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on Saturday organized a photo exhibition in order to celebrate 70 years of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Pakistan, highlighting the transformative impact of its projects across the country.

The exhibition brought together prestigious guests, including government officials, development partners and key stakeholders, to celebrate this significant achievement.

Since Japan initiated ODA in 1954 by receiving trainees from Pakistan, JICA has been committed to fostering sustainable development in Pakistan through diverse initiatives such as education, health and disaster management, and infrastructure such as

road and electricity network. The photo exhibition highlights the successful JICA's projects, featuring compelling visuals that capture the dedication and joy of communities that have benefited from this long-standing partnership.

At the inauguration of the exhibition, JICA's Chief Representative in Pakistan, Naoaki Miyata said, "Building reciprocal relationships through continuous dialogues with partner countries to create solutions is a strong tradition of Japan's cooperation. By leveraging the tradition, JICA is ready to advance cooperation among stakeholders for a better future of Pakistan".

Also Chargé d' Affaires of Embassy of Japan, Shuichi Takano said, "We would like to create our

social values together, through dialogue and cooperation. Japan will continue to collaborate with Pakistan in realizing its vast potential."

The event showcases photographs from various successful projects. Each image tells a story of partnership, highlighting the shared commitment to improve the quality of life for millions of Pakistanis.

Distinguished guests at the exhibition included Secretary of Ministry of Economic Affairs, Dr. Kazim Niaz, who emphasized the importance of continued collaboration and innovation in tackling Pakistan's development challenges. Their presence not only underscores the significance of JICA's efforts but also reaffirms the enduring friendship between Japan and Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: An eye catching view of sunset in the federal capital. —APP Photo

Police hold workshop to prevent violence against women

RAWALPINDI (APP): In line with the vision of the Inspector General of Police Punjab, a workshop on preventing violence against women was held at the Police Lines Headquarters on Saturday.

The workshop was organized in collaboration with the Women Protection Cell Rawalpindi, aimed to raise awareness about the types of violence women face and the legal measures available to address them.

Member of Provincial Assembly Tahira Mushtaq, SSP Investigation, DSP Admin, DSP Legal and several female police officers participated. During the workshop, District Women Protection Officer Rizwana Bashir emphasized the importance of women understanding and standing up for their rights. "Women have equal rights in society and should be empowered to protect them," she said.

SSP Investigation reiterated the Rawalpindi Police's zero-tolerance policy against violence, abuse and exploitation of women.

She highlighted several initiatives, including the Tahaffuz Center, Virtual Women Police Station and Women Police Station, which are dedicated to support aggrieved women. Women facing issues can get help by contacting the 15 Emergency Helpline or reaching out to the Tahaffuz Center and Virtual Women Police Station, she added.

Over 7.5 kg drugs seized in major bust

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested four drug peddlers and recovered more than 7.5 kilogram of gs from their possession during crackdown on Saturday. According to a police spokesman, Gujjar Khan Police held Zahoor and recovered 2.4 kg drugs from his possession.

Similarly, Sadiqabad Police apprehended Imran and seized 2.1 kg drugs from his custody.

While, Pirwadhai Police nabbed Abdul Samad and recovered 1.5 kg drugs from him and 1.5 kg drugs was also recovered from Wasif. SSP Operations commended police teams and said that the arrested accused will be challaned in court with solid evidence and will be sentenced.

The crackdown against drug peddlers will be continued to eradicate the scourge of drugs, he added.

Salik Hussain emphasizes importance of madrassahs registration

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Saturday highlighted the longstanding necessity of registering madrassahs (religious seminaries) in the country.

He, in a statement, said the government has consistently engaged with madrassah administrations, eminent religious scholars, and political leaders to ensure broad consultation on the issue.

The minister mentioned that the government fulfilled its commitment by approving a bill in Parliament in line with the demands of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazl) Chief, Maulana Fazlur Rehman. However, due to certain legal complexities, it will take additional time to finalize the legal framework for madrassah registration, he added.

He clarified that these delays should not be misconstrued as an attempt to reverse the entire process. "Madrassahs are educational institutions and fall exclusively under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education," he emphasized.

Chaudhry Salik further explained that madrassah administrations had previously faced lengthy legal procedures during the registration process. To address these challenges, the Directorate General of Religious Education, operating under the Ministry of Education, established a streamlined one-window system after years of dedicated effort. Currently, he said 18,000 madrassahs are registered through this directorate.

The minister cautioned that reopening the registration debate would under-

mine the progress achieved so far and render prior efforts futile. "Madrassahs are educational institutions, not industrial enterprises. Accepting demands to alter their jurisdiction could set a precedent for shifting responsibilities between ministries based on subjective preferences. The country's administrative system operates on established rules and regulations, not personal whims," he asserted.

He said the Ministry of Education and the Directorate General of Religious Education have already simplified the registration process for madrassahs, making it more accessible and convenient. The one-window operation at the Directorate General ensures efficient registration without unnecessary hurdles, the minister concluded.

PML-N leader urges PTI to choose national interests over personal interests

ISLAMABAD (APP): A senior leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry Saturday urged the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to prioritize national interests over personal interests for the sake of Pakistan's young people.

Talking to PTV news channel, he stressed that the politics of hate, chaos and frustration must be set aside, as it is detrimental to the country's well-being.

He regretted the statements of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister, saying that politics in Pakistan needs decency and respect and warned that the law will take its course if anyone attempts to assault the federal capital.

"Since 2014, PTI has been perpetuating a destructive agenda of chaos and animosity, introducing a toxic brand of politics that exploits and endangers future generations," he lamented. "PTI's chaotic agenda is a ticking time bomb, threatening to destroy Pakistan's social cohesion and stability," he added.

Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry urged PTI to engage in dialogue with other political parties to find a way forward for the country.

He emphasized that table talks are the only viable solution to address the current political impasse.

Responding to a query about PTI's propaganda against the government, he said the federal capital's job market seems to be favouring individuals from other provinces equally, with over 80 Pashtuns appointed in the Islamabad Police and more than 100 working as teachers in Islamabad.

However, there is a significant catch citizens of Islamabad with a domicile certificate are still not eligible to apply for jobs in other provinces, he mentioned. Recent events in Islamabad have shown that law enforcement is taking a firm stance against perpetrators, regardless of their background, he added.

He made it clear that anyone involved in the recent attacks would be arrested and brought to justice, with no favouritism towards Punjabis or Pashtuns, he added.

Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry emphasized that the youth should focus on their future and the country's progress, rather than getting distracted by protests and negative politics.

TCF children delegation visits safe city Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of children from "The Citizens Foundation" visited Safe City Islamabad on Saturday, gaining firsthand insight into the city's modern security infrastructure.

The delegation visited the command and control center, the data hub unit, modern technology-equipped cameras, and the Police operations center hall, an official told APP. The delegation was fully briefed about the procedures and advantages of this project.

Furthermore, the delegation was informed that Safe City Islamabad is playing a significant role in various departments through modern techniques, including the Police Operations Center, Emergency Control Center, Data Hub Unit, Dispatch Control Center, E-Challan System, and the "Pucar-15" emergency helpline.

The delegation was also apprised of the functionality and benefits of the Safe City cameras in the city. The modern cameras of Safe City have been playing a crucial role in ensuring the safety of the city, preventing crimes and safeguarding the lives and property of citizens.

Face recognition cameras have been installed at the entry and exit points of the city which are playing an important role in identifying suspicious elements.



The exhibition will remain open to the public until 8th of December 2024 from 10 am to 4 pm at white gallery in Lok Virsa, Islamabad, allowing visi-

tors to immerse themselves in the rich history of JICA's contributions to Pakistan and to inspire future generations to engage in development efforts.

One dead in traffic accident

GHAZNI (BNA): Two traffic accidents in Afghanistan's central Ghazni Province left one person dead and six others injured, according to reports from the Taliban-run Bakhtar News Agency. The incidents occurred in the Gailan and Nawar districts, officials said, as Afghanistan grapples with a rise in traffic accidents amid snowy and rainy weather conditions. Poor road maintenance has further exacerbated the dangers for drivers and passengers.

28 families return to home

KABUL (BNA): Officials from the Registration, Verification, and Reception Committee in Kandahar reported the return of 28 families to Afghanistan through the Spin Boldak crossing. These families, comprising 145 individuals, returned from Pakistan. Additionally, ten Afghan prisoners were also repatriated. The committee has referred these returning families to various organizations for assistance and support.

Ban on poppy cultivation hurt our economy: Farmers

SAR-E-POL (TOLNews): Farmers in Sar-e-Pol province say they have faced serious economic challenges since the ban on poppy cultivation.

They emphasize that alternative crops have not yet been provided, and growing products like wheat, barley, and corn does not cover their agricultural expenses.

Sanaullah Ahmadi, a farmer in Imam Jafar village of Sayyad district, supports his family through farming. He says the lack of improved seeds and chemical fertilizers has caused annual losses for farmers in the province.

"We neither grow marijuana nor poppies now. The

promised improved seeds have not been delivered yet. The seeds we buy from the market don't even cover our costs," said Sanaullah.

Sadam, another farmer, says that the seeds available in Sar-e-Pol markets lack quality and fail to meet farming costs.

"The improved seeds they said they would provide haven't arrived yet. The seeds we buy from the market cost 40,000 to 50,000 afghani but yield poor results," he said.

"The wheat and onions we grow using seeds bought from the market don't yield good results. We urge the government to provide us with improved seeds so our efforts pay

off," said Enayatullah Mokhles, another farmer.

Meanwhile, the Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock in Sar-e-Pol says it has programs in place to support farmers.

"After the ban on poppy cultivation, we proposed Heng as an alternative crop and organized workshops to teach farmers its cultivation methods," said Sharifullah Mosadiq, head of agricultural affairs at the directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock.

Previously, farmers in other provinces also called on the interim government and aid organizations to provide alternative crops.

Plan launched to reduce unemployment

KABUL (TOLNews): The head of Labor and Social Affairs in Parwan province said that the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has initiated a program aimed at introducing young graduates to governmental institutions and offices to reduce unemployment.

According to the department, the process of collecting documents from young graduates has begun and will be submitted to the Ministry of Labor upon completion.

"Those who have educational certificates and are currently unemployed can submit their CVs to us. We will introduce them to various organizations to create job opportunities for them," stated Qudratullah Zakir, head of Labor and Social Affairs in Parwan.

Meanwhile, some young people in Parwan said that the lack of job opportunities in the country has pushed many toward illegal migration.

"Unemployment causes individuals to lose everything they have and fall into confusion. We request the Islamic Emirate create job opportunities for young people," said Mohammad Saber Farooqi, a resident of Parwan.

"If job opportunities are provided in our country, we will no longer witness the deaths of our compatriots at the borders," said Mohammad Anwar, another resident of Parwan.

This comes as in recent months Iran have intensified the expulsion of undocumented migrants.

UN seeks \$141m to help Afghans

KABUL (Ariana News): The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched an appeal for \$140.9 million to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations in Pakistan including Afghan refugees.

This includes \$41.6m for the nutrition emergency; \$59.8m for potential humanitarian responses; \$34.5m for refugee and host community support; and \$5m for disaster risk reduction, preparedness and resilience-building, Dawn newspaper reported.

In a report, UNICEF said that Pakistan hosts more than three million Afghans, 49 per cent of them children, of varying legal status, who require access to basic services, further constraining limited available resources.

The people in Pakistan face multidimensional deprivations that leave them extremely vulnerable to recurrent and sudden-onset shocks.

Climate change contributes to Pakistan being one of the world's most risk-prone countries, which significantly exacerbates vulnerabilities, especially for women and children.

Discussions on strengthening trade relations

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Sayeed Abdul Jabbar Takhari, Acting Consul General of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Karachi, met with Junaid Makda, President of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Chambers of Commerce, to discuss enhancing trade ties between the two countries.

Power deal with Turkmenistan extended for another year

KABUL (Pajhwok): Afghanistan has extended an agreement on importing electricity from Turkmenistan until the end of 2025, the power utility announced on Saturday.

Da Afghanistan Breshna Shirkat (DABS) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. Abdul Bari Omar and a delegation accompanying him renewed the agreement during a trip to Ashgabat.

Based on the accord, Turkmenistan would provide electricity to Afghanistan through four routes -- Andkhoi, Aqina, Badghis and Turgundi-Herat, DABS wrote on its X handle.

The company did provide further details about the agreement, which came after the renewal of a similar deal with Tajikistan on November 25.



65,000 work permits issued, unemployment still a challenge

KABUL (TOLNews): The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has announced that over 65,000 work permits were issued during the first eight months of the current solar year.

According to the ministry's spokesperson, around 2,500 of these permits were issued to foreign nationals. "In the first eight months of 1403 (solar year), more than 65,000 work permits were distributed to citizens of the country and foreign nationals. Work permits have also been issued to women in sectors where their services are required," said Samiullah Ebrahimi, the spokesperson for the

ministry. However, some residents of the capital are calling on the Islamic Emirate and the private sector to create more job opportunities.

Ahmad Shoaib, a Kabul resident and graduate of Kabul University's Faculty of Journalism, expressed his frustration at being unable to find work in his field and apply his skills.

He called on the Islamic Emirate to provide job opportunities for the youth so they can contribute to society and avoid working outside their field of study.

Ahmad Shoaib said, "I had hoped to work in my field of study, but no oppor-

tunities have been provided. Wherever I go, they ask, 'Where is your work experience?' But no one considers that if young people are not given jobs, where will they gain experience?"

Economic experts emphasize that reducing poverty and unemployment requires a focus on large-scale economic projects and global engagement with the Islamic Emirate.

"Investment in production sectors and the establishment of factories can revitalize Afghanistan's economy. This will increase the GDP and improve household economic conditions, ultimately reducing

poverty," said Abdul Ghaffar Nezami, an economic analyst.

"The government must create an environment conducive to attracting more investments. Until jobs are created, the problem of unemployment will not be resolved," said Abdul Naseer Rashtia, another economic expert.

Officials of the Islamic Emirate have also stated that significant efforts are being made to reduce unemployment through various initiatives, including mining, water resource management, urban development, road construction, and investment attraction.

Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan strengthen diplomatic ties

KABUL (BNA): Sardar Ahmad Shakeb, Acting Ambassador of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to Pakistan, met with Avazbek Atakhanov, the Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan, to discuss bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest.

The two diplomats engaged in discussions on Afghanistan-Kyrgyzstan relations, their shared historical and cultural ties, and broader connections between Afghanistan and Central Asian nations. They also examined existing opportunities for cooperation and challenges affecting the region.



674 Afghan migrant families repatriated in one week

KABUL (Amu TV): At least 674 Afghan migrant families returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan and Iran over the past week, according to data released by a Taliban-run news agency. The findings, reviewed by Amu, indicate that the families returned between December 2 and December 6, either voluntarily or under duress. The news agency did not provide figures for the final two days of the week.

Of the total, 485 families reportedly returned from Iran, while 189 families came from Pakistan. The data shows varied entry points along the Afghan border. From Pakistan, 94 families crossed into Afghanistan through the Turkham crossing, and 95 families used the Spin Boldak route. From Iran, 113 families entered via the Pul-e-Abrisham border crossing in Nimroz province, while 372 families

returned through the Islam Qala crossing in Herat.

This marked a slight decrease from the previous week, when 989 Afghan migrant families reportedly returned to Afghanistan. The continued returns highlight the challenges facing Afghan migrants in neighboring countries, where complaints of mistreatment by host governments have been mounting.

Authorities recently arrested 800 Afghan nation-

als, accusing them of participating in protests organized, according to the Taliban. Meanwhile, in Iran, an official stated that Afghan students would no longer be accommodated in Iranian schools due to capacity constraints.

The forced and voluntary returns come amid ongoing economic instability in Afghanistan, further exacerbating the plight of those seeking refuge abroad.

Taliban flog 5, including woman, in Kapisa



KAPISA (Amu TV): Taliban publicly flogged four men and a woman in Kapisa Province on charges of alleged adultery and sodomy, according to a statement from the Taliban's Supreme Court.

Three of the accused received 39 lashes and were sentenced to one and a half years in prison. A fourth was flogged 20 times and sentenced to one year in prison, while the fifth individual was lashed 39 times and sentenced to two years in prison.

The public punishments were carried out in the presence of Taliban judicial officials.

This marks the continua-

tion of a broader surge in public corporal punishments by the Taliban, who have intensified such practices over the past month. From October 20 to November 20, the Taliban flogged 129 individuals across Afghanistan, including 19 women, according to official reports. The provinces of Jawzjan and Khost recorded the highest number of cases, with 22 and 25 instances of flogging, respectively.

Growing human rights concerns

Human rights organizations and international watchdogs have repeatedly condemned the Taliban's public punishments. The

United Nations, in a quarterly report covering July through September, documented 111 instances of public flogging, affecting 95 men, 15 women, and one girl.

The UN report highlighted grave concerns over human rights abuses under the Taliban's judicial system, which adheres to their strict interpretation of Islamic law.

Despite widespread criticism, the Taliban continue to implement corporal punishment as a method of enforcing social and moral codes, drawing international condemnation and calls for an immediate halt to such practices.

Oxford University to host event on Afghan women

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Women's Rights Network, amid growing concerns about the current situation in Afghanistan, announced that it will hold a meeting to highlight the issues faced by the women in Afghanistan.

According to Daily Oxford, the meeting will take place on Saturday, December 7 at the University of Oxford, initiated by the Women's Rights Network (WRN).

The report states that the event will be an overnight vigil, focusing on the "desperate situation of

Afghanistan's women and girls." The main objective of the event is to shed light on the challenges faced by women and girls in Afghanistan.

The Women's Rights Network Afghanistan has also announced last week on the social media platform X about preparations for this event.

The meeting takes place at a time when women and girls in Afghanistan have been deprived of their rights to education, employment, and work. Most recently, the education of girls in fields like

midwifery and nursing has been suspended until further notice.

This event serves as a critical platform for raising awareness about the continuing violation of women's rights in Afghanistan. With the international community's growing attention to the plight of Afghan women, such initiatives aim to generate support for advocating their rights and push for policy changes.

The future of Afghan women and girls remains uncertain, but these events keep their voices heard on the global stage.

Alborz residents thirst for potable water

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): Residents of various villages of the Alborz district of northern Balkh complain of a potable water shortage, seeking a solution to the problem.

Alborz, a mountainous area, is located 85 kilometers from Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of Balkh. After the Taliban took control, it was separated from the Chamtal and announced as a new district. Some of its residents say due to drought and lack of clean water, they are forced to travel several kilometers to fetch water for drinking from ponds. Meanwhile, local authorities confirmed this issue and stressed the need for a solution.

Mohammad Ishaq, a 52-year-old resident of Chaqnaq village, told Pajhwok

Afghan News the area people were facing difficulties due to the lack of access to clean drinking water.

He added there were some ponds in the village from where rainwater was collected, and people used it for drinking. He said, "There are ponds in the village, but they are dirty and even animals bathe there. However, we have no other choice but to drink this water, which causes health problems for the people."

Mohammad Ishaq urges the interim government to address this issue.

Abdul Qudus, a resident of Garmali village, also grumbled that most people of the district did not have access to clean water, and some fetched it from several kilometers away using don-

keys or horses. He also highlighted the poor condition of roads and lack of access to healthcare services as major problems, urging the government to prioritize resolving the water shortage issue.

Mohammad Naeem, another inhabitant, says every year in summer, they create ponds in various parts of the village to store rainwater and snowmelt.

He added clean water supply networks had been established in other districts of Balkh, but his area had not received any attention.

Saifullah Mutasim, administrative chief of the district, acknowledged the people's problem, saying three check dams had been built in the district to address potable water shortage issue.

voluntarily left Tehran.

He emphasized that businesses should be aware that employing illegal foreign workers is a crime, and if foreigners, especially in food-related industries, supermarkets, and restaurants, are hired, they must be legally authorized and undergo proper health and trial procedures.

The Iranian official mentioned that a continuous operation to collect "illegal

foreign nationals" is underway, and authorities are committed to deporting 2 million more migrants by the end of the current solar year. The report from the head of Tehran's police stated that fewer migrants are seen today in public places, particularly in Freedom Square, due to the police's ongoing efforts in gathering illegal migrants.

The situation for Afghan refugees in Iran has become increasingly dire. The heightened deportation and arrest measures, combined with the lack of legal avenues for migrants to stay, have left many Afghans in precarious living conditions. With limited access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities, many refugees are forced to live in constant fear of being caught and deported.

The situation is worsened by the socio-political land-

scape in Afghanistan, where the ongoing instability continues to push more Afghans to seek refuge in neighboring countries like Iran. However, with increasing restrictions and hostilities in host countries, the plight of Afghan refugees is becoming more severe. This is a humanitarian crisis that requires urgent international attention to provide protection and support for displaced populations.

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Focus on to improve healthcare: KP CM

— awards gold medals to 18 position holders of Gomal Medical College

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, during visit to his native District D.I.Khan, attended the annual convocation of Gomal Medical College on Saturday as the chief guest and awarded degrees and medals to graduating students. A total of 68 medical graduates received degrees, while 18 outstanding students were awarded gold medals for their academic excellence.

Addressing the convocation, the Chief Minister felicitated the graduates, their parents, and faculty members and emphasized that medicine is a noble profession, and doctors hold a significant position in society. He reminded the young doctors of the high expectations of patients and their families have from them. Urging them to see their work as a mission of serving humanity, he called on the graduates to step forward and serve in under-

privileged areas where their services are most needed.

The Chief Minister encouraged the new graduates to aim not only to become competent doctors but also exemplary human beings and role models. He stressed that true greatness lies in selfless service to humanity and highlighted the need to adhere to Islamic teachings in all spheres of life to build a better society. He reiterated the provincial government's commitment to improving healthcare, particularly in underprivileged districts which includes strengthening primary healthcare services and increasing the quota for medical college admissions for students from newly merged districts.

He announced plans to establish a campus of Khyber Medical University in Dera Ismail Khan soon, providing local students with access to quality medical education. Later , the

Chief Minister also inaugurated three state-of-the-art laboratories at Gomal Medical College. These include an IT lab, set up in collaboration with Khyber Medical University at a cost of Rs 90 million, designed for online MBBS examinations.

Additionally, he inaugurated a high-tech 3D "Anatomage Table," costing 40 million rupees, the first of its kind in the province. A skills lab, established at a cost of Rs 30 million, was also opened to enhance hands-on training for medical students. The convocation was attended by elected representatives from Dera Ismail Khan, senior officials from divisional and district administrations, faculty members, students, and their families. The Chief Minister lauded the administration of Gomal Medical College for successfully organizing the convocation and praised the college's achievements in a short span of time.

Sindh govt to construct 40 stops for People's Bus Service

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Sindh government has decided to complete the construction of 40 stops for the People's Bus Service within two months and to mandate modern, scientific fitness checks for vehicles across Sindh.

An important meeting, chaired by Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, was held in Karachi. The meeting was attended by Secretary Transport Asad Zamin, Project Director of the People's Bus Service Sohaib Shafiq, and other officials. Speaking at the meeting, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the construction of 100 stops for the People's Bus Service has been completed, and the remaining stops should be completed as soon as possible.

In the meeting, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon directed that the remaining 40 bus stops should be completed within

PPP Parliamentary Party rejects AJK Presidential Ord

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Parliamentary Party of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) held an important meeting today at Zardari House, Karachi, under the chair of Mrs. Faryal Talpur, President PPP Women's Wing. After comprehensive deliberations, the Parliamentary Party rejected the recently issued Presidential Ordinance, declaring it as contrary to the aspirations and democratic will of the people of AJK. The party emphasized that the ordinance undermines the rights of the people and democratic processes, urging the AJK government to immediately withdraw it in the best interest of its citizens. The meeting was attended by all members of the PPP AJK Parliamentary Party, including: Sardar Yaqoob Khan, Chaudhry Muhammad Yaseen, Chaudhry Latif Akbar, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Mian Waheed, Javed Ayub, Bazil Naqvi, Javed Badhanvi, Zia ul Qamar, Qasim Majeed, Amir Ghaffar Loan, Amir Yaseen and Nabila Ayub. The participants unanimously resolved to stand firmly with the people of AJK and uphold their democratic rights. The PPP remains committed to ensuring justice, fairness, and the preservation of the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

two months, by January 2025.

He stated that the Sindh government is committed to making the transport system modern and globally compatible. The latest bus stops of

the People's Bus Service are crucial for ensuring modern, efficient, and sustainable mobility. These bus stops will offer passengers comfortable seating and protection from the weather.

27th convocation cermeony of Bahria University held

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Bahria University Islamabad held its 27th Convocation Ceremony. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Pro-Chancellor Bahria University, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and conferred degrees to the graduating students.

During the convocation over 1300 graduates were awarded degrees across various disciplines. A total of 103 graduates received gold and silver medals in recognition of their exceptional achievements.

While addressing the ceremony, Chief of the Naval Staff congratulated the graduates and their families on their well-deserved success. He urged the graduates to uphold values of discipline, ethics and service by contributing positively to society. He reaffirmed Bahria University's commitment to achieve the pinnacle in academic excellence with proactive response to the competitive higher education landscape.

Earlier in welcome address, Rector Bahria University Vice Admiral



Italian Navy Ship Amerigo visits Karachi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Italian Navy's sailing and training ship, ITS Amerigo Vespucci, arrived at Karachi Port for a three-day goodwill visit as part of its global voyage. Upon arrival, the ship was warmly received by officials from Pakistan Navy, Italian Navy, and Italian Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Marilina Armellin.

This inaugural visit of ITS Amerigo Vespucci to Pakistan, along with the third consecutive visit of Italian Navy ships to Karachi in the past two months, underscores the strengthening Pak-Italian relations in general and the growing bilateral cooperation between the two navies in particular. Pakistan Navy remains committed to enhancing bilateral cooperation with regional and extra-regional navies, fostering global partnerships, and ensuring a lawful maritime order.

Asif Khaliq (Retd) highlighted the academic achievements of the stu-

dents and the importance of their future professional contributions.

ATC issues arrest warrants for PTI top leaders

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) has issued non-bailable arrest warrants for Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (CM KP) Ali Amin Gandapur and several top leaders of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in connection with the GHQ attack case.

According to reports, the 25 accused named in the GHQ attack case include prominent PTI figures such as Ali Amin Gandapur, Shibli Faraz, Shehryar Afridi, Zain Qureshi, Kanwal Shauzab, Tahir Sadiq, and Malik Taimoor Masood.

Judge Amjad Ali Shah of ATC Rawalpindi signed the warrants, directing the Rawalpindi Police (CPO) to arrest these individuals and present them in court by December 10. The court's decision underscores efforts to hold the accused accountable for their alleged involvement in the GHQ attack case.

The development came two days after jailed PTI founder Imran Khan along with dozens of other PTI workers were indicted in the GHQ attack case related to May 9 violent protests. A total of 100 people, including former interior minister Sheikh Rashid, were indicted in the GHQ attack case — which was registered at RA Bazar Police Station. However, Imran among other indicted leaders denied charges against them.

Over 143 individuals, including Khan, were named as accused in the case, while 23, including Zulfi Bukhari, Shahbaz Gill and Murad Saeed, were listed as fugitives. Additionally, all accused have been prohibited from travelling abroad.

At least 70 PTI leaders were accused of planning the May 9 events and inciting the workers and supporters to attack military and government installations following the arrest of the ousted prime minister by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The May 9 riots were triggered almost across the country after the deposed prime minister Khan's arrest in the £190 million settlement case. Hundreds of PTI workers and senior leaders were put behind the bars for their involvement in violence and attacks on military installations last year. During the protests, the miscreants targeted the civil and military installations including — the Jinnah House and General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

Stable Kabul in Islamabad's interest: Muqam

F.P. Report

HARIPUR: Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs, Engr Amir Muqam on Saturday said that peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan was in the best interest of Pakistan.

He was addressing the Afghans refugees at Malik Abdul Samad Panyan refugee camp where he inaugurated a clean drinking water project for them. Commissioner Afghans Refugees, Shakeel Safi, representatives of the Afghan Community and UNICEF officials were also present.

In his address, Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam said that the Government of Pakistan was taking all possible measures for the assistance and welfare of afghans refugees, and the provision of clean drinking water to Afghan refugees was proof of it.

He said that Pakistan was the only country in the world where over three million Afghan refugees including about 1.4 million POR Card holders were still living mostly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. He said that the people and Government of Pakistan have extended all-out support to millions of Afghan refugees during their longest 45 years stay in Pakistan.

Engr Amir Muqam made it clear that Afghan refugees have to return to their country. However, he said that voluntary and dignified repatriation of the Afghan refugees is being encouraged.



KYIV: A police officer inspecting destroyed cars at the site of the Russian attack in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine.

Govt declared war against religious seminaries: Fazl

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that he only wanted protection for the religious seminaries in the country.

Addressing an event at a seminary in Nowshera, JUI-F chief said that government has announced a war against religious seminaries. "Both the establishment and bureaucracy don't want to bring the religious seminaries in mainstream," said JUI-F chief. According to JUI-F chief, they don't want to have a fight with the state over this issue.

"We only want protection for our seminaries," Fazl said. Maulana Fazlur Rehman was of the view that the government wanted to link terrorism with the seminaries. "We'll remain committed in this cause and will protect our seminaries," he said. The JUI-F chief said that the government was willing to do the registration of seminaries according to our wishes when the PDM took reins of the country. The PPP was also agreed on the proposed draft, he said. Both the houses of parliament passed the bill but President Asif Ali Zardari didn't sign it, said Maulana.

Meanwhile, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F) on Saturday said that "Israel Murda Bad" (Down with Israel) conference would be held in Peshawar on Sunday (tomorrow). Amidst the event, a deadlock continues between the government and JUI-F over the Madrassah Registration Bill.

JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman is expected to announce a potential march towards Islamabad during the conference, JUI-F Spokesperson Aslam Ghauri said that Maulana Fazlur Rehman would deliver a keynote address at the event. The preparations for the conference have been completed, and the party workers from across the province are expected to participate.

The spokesperson stated that public participation in the conference would serve as an expression of solidarity with the Palestinian people. "We will record our protest against the atrocities in Palestine during the conference. Additionally, a plan of action against the government's ill-intentions regarding the Madrassah Act will be presented," said the spokesperson.

He also hinted at the possibility of announcing an

Islamabad march during the event, describing the current government as "illegitimate" and accusing it of renegeing on promises and resorting to deception.

The conference will feature speeches by prominent leaders including JUI-F General Secretary Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, Muhammad Aslam Ghauri, Maulana Amjad Khan, Maulana Asad Mehmood, Engineer Zia ur Rehman, Maulana Atta ur Rehman, Maulana Abdul Wasi, Maulana Abdul Qayyum Halijo, Rashid Soomro, Maulana Atta ul Haq Darwaish, Agha Mahmood Shah and Hafiz Naseer Ahrar.

Meanwhile, the sources said that the deadlock over the Madrassah Registration Bill persists, with JUI-F deciding to adopt a stricter stance on the issue. Maulana Fazlur Rehman is expected to unveil the party's future strategy at tomorrow's rally in Peshawar, where he may announce a march towards Islamabad. The sources said that a consultative meeting of JUI-F is due for today to discuss the Islamabad march. The exact date for the march is expected to be decided during tonight's meeting.

Bilawal should abandon efforts to revive PPP in KP: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif said on Saturday that Pakistan People Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari should abandon his efforts to revive his party in the frontier province.

Responding to the PPP chairman's earlier statement regarding peace and security situation in KP, Saif said PPP could not restore confidence among the people of KP as it had lost its support a long time ago. He also criticised the PPP for calling an all-parties conference (APC) in Peshawar, terming it a failed attempt by reclaim its support in the province. "The children are dying from hunger in Thar. You don't need to worry about what is happening in KP while the Sindh government is busy in plundering the people," he added.

Russian attacks across Ukraine kill 12

KYIV: The death toll from a Russian attack on Ukraine's southeastern Zaporizhzhia region has risen to at least 10, the local governor says. Ivan Fedorov said the strike set a car garage and service station on fire. He shared images and videos on Telegram showing a fire blazing with debris strewn across a street. Fedorov also said that two children, aged four and 11, were among those hurt.

The attack comes after weeks of escalation in the nearly three-year war in Ukraine, where Moscow has stepped up its strikes at the start of winter. The Russian military also struck the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih on Friday, the local governor said, killing at least two people.

The state emergency services agency said at least 16 others were wounded, including a child, while rescuers were searching for one missing person. "A three-storey building was destroyed, residential buildings and cars were damaged," the agency said on Telegram. Kryvyi Rih, located about 80km (50 miles) from the front lines in southern Ukraine, has been targeted frequently by Russian aerial strikes since the country's 2022 invasion of its neighbour.

Attacks came as Russian President Vladimir Putin met with his Belarusian counterpart, Alexander Lukashenko, in Belarus's capital of Minsk, where the two leaders signed a mutual defence pact. Speaking alongside Lukashenko, Putin emphasised the new agreement includes the potential use of Russian tactical nuclear weapons deployed to Belarus in response to an aggression.

Moscow unveiled the nuclear-capable weapon last month in a strike on the central Ukrainian city of Dnipro, sharply escalating tensions. "As for the possibility of deploying, to put it bluntly, such formidable weapons as Oreshnik on Belarusian territory, ... it will become possible, I think, in the second half of next year," Putin said on Friday. Russia had already deployed tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus in 2023. Putin and other Russian officials have repeatedly said such weapons deployed to Belarus remain under Moscow's control, but the secretary of Belarus's Security Council, Alexander Volfovich, said on Friday that their use would require Lukashenko's approval. — Aljazeera

Syrian insurgents reached Damascus

DAMASCUS (Reuters, AFP): Syrian rebels pressed their lightning advance on Saturday, saying they had seized most of the south, as government forces dug in to defend the key central city of Homs to try to save President Bashar al-Assad's 24-year rule.

Since the rebels' sweep into Aleppo a week ago, government defences have crumbled across the country at a dizzying speed as insurgents seized a string of major cities and rose up in places where the rebellion had long seemed over. Besides capturing Aleppo in the north, Hama in the centre and Deir al-Zor in the east, rebels said they have taken southern Quneitra, Deraa and Suweida and advanced to within 50 kilometres of the capital.

Government defences were focused on Homs, with state television and Syrian military sources reporting massive air strikes on rebel positions and a wave of reinforcements arriving to dig in around the city. Meanwhile, the rebels extended their control to almost the entire southwest and said they had captured Sanamayn on the main highway from Damascus to Jordan. The Syrian military said it was repositioning, without acknowledging territorial losses.

The pace of events has stunned Arab capitals and raised fears of a fresh wave of regional instability, with Qatar saying on Saturday it threatened Syria's territorial integrity. Syria's civil war, which erupted in 2011 as an uprising against Assad's rule, dragged in big outside powers, created space for militants to plot attacks around the world and sent millions of refugees into neighbouring states. On Saturday, anti-government protesters toppled a statue of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's late father Hafez in the mostly Druze and Christian Damascus suburb of Jaramana on Saturday, witnesses told AFP.

A witness said by phone that he saw "dozens of protesters" tearing down the statue in a main square in Jaramana, which bears the former president's name. Another witness said the statue had been smashed when he went by the square later. Video footage circulating online and verified by AFP showed young men toppling the statue and chanting anti-Assad slogans. Western officials say the Syrian military is in a difficult situation, unable to halt rebel gains and forced into retreat.

Meanwhile, US President-elect Donald Trump has said that the US should not be involved in the conflict in Syria. "Syria is a mess, but is not our friend, & the United States should have nothing to do with it."

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah advocates global climate justice reforms

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Senior Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, commended Pakistan's trailblazing contribution at the recently concluded COP29 in Baku.

Speaking as guest of honour during the "Post-COP Reflections from Baku to Pakistan" seminar hosted by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), he congratulated Romina Khurshid Alam, PM's aide for climate change for leading a historic

delegation of judges to the global climate summit.

Justice Shah while highlighting that Pakistan was the only country represented by a judiciary-led panel noted that the Global Judges Network also recognized this unprecedented participation, acknowledging the importance of judicial perspectives in addressing climate challenges.

Justice Shah emphasized the intersection of climate justice and human rights, framing it as a crucial lens for addressing environmental crises. "Pollution-related

cases have historically been handled through penal actions in courts, but we are witnessing a paradigm shift. Climate justice is no longer just about visible polluters but encompasses broader systemic issues, including extreme weather events like floods, droughts, and glacial melts," he stated.

Justice Shah noted that COP29 underscored the urgency of climate finance as an essential pillar of climate justice. "Climate finance is not just a policy goal; it is a human right tied directly to the right to life.