

Terrorists kidnap 17 civilians
F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Terrorists abducted 17 civilian workers in the Kabalkhel area of Laki Marwat district. Security forces successfully rescued eight of the abducted workers. The terrorists kidnapped the workers for extortion purposes. The abducted workers were unarmed civilians. The terrorists also set a local contractor's vehicle on fire following the abduction.



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Student goes missing
F.P. Report

KARACHI: A seven-year-old boy named Sarim has gone missing in Karachi's North Nazimabad. As per details, minor Sarim has been missing for two days after leaving to attend madrassa in North Karachi. The family of Sarim has registered FIR of missing child fearing abduction. Sarim went to a madrassa located within the apartment complex on Tuesday afternoon but did not return.

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SC questions ‘selective mly trials’ of May 9 suspects

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A seven-member constitutional bench of the top court Thursday raised critical questions about the trial of civilians involved in the May 9 events, specifically the basis for sending certain suspects to military courts while others being tried in Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs).

The seven-member constitutional bench, headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan and also including Justices Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Musarrat Hilali, Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Shahid Bilal Hassan, resumed the hearing of the case regarding the trial of civilians in military courts.

Resuming arguments on behalf of the Ministry of Defence, senior advocate Supreme Court Khawaja Haris contended that interpretation of Article 233 of the Constitution of Pakistan pertained to the suspension of fundamental rights during an emergency, was incorrect when the decision to conduct military trials for civilians was made. He emphasised that fundamental rights could only be suspended under an emergency, as was the case during the tenure of Gen Pervez Musharraf.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar observed this case does not involve the suspension of fundamental rights. He pointed out that during Musharraf's regime rights were suspended due to a lack of the right to appeal. Justice Aminuddin Khan raised the issue of whether an emer-

gency had been declared in this case, prompting Justice Mazhar to clarify that the suspension of fundamental rights required an emergency to be in place.

Justice Musarrat Hilali also pointed out that, in the present case, the fundamental rights of the accused were not suspended, nor was an emergency declared when the individuals were taken into military custody. She raised a question saying who determined the jurisdiction for trials in military courts and how the differentiation was made between cases that proceed in ATCs and those sent to military courts.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar noted that all suspects from the May 9 incidents were booked under similar FIRs and questioned why some were subjected to military trials while others faced ATCs. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan asked whether there was any ATC order transferring suspects to military courts and demanded clarity on the process for taking suspects into military custody.

Justice Jamal Mandokhail sought an explanation of the principles and procedures followed to determine the jurisdiction of cases. He also remarked, "An accused is acquitted in an ATC, but then sentenced by a military court. Is there any special evidence presented in military courts that isn't considered in civilian courts?"

The bench further raised concerns about a lack of legal precedent for trying civilians in military courts without constitutional provisions like

the suspension of rights. Justice Hilali questioned whether any examples existed where civilians were tried in military courts without an emergency being declared. Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi pointed out that previous terrorist attacks on military installations, including the hijacking plot against an army chief's plane, were tried in civilian courts. He asked what distinguished the May 9 incidents to justify military court trials.

Justice Mandokhail suggested that instead of diverting cases to military courts, ATCs should be strengthened to handle such matters. He highlighted that ATCs operate based on evidence and expressed concerns about the process and transparency of military trials. The court requested FIRs for all cases related to the May 9 incidents and detailed decisions by ATCs transferring suspects to military courts.

Justice Afghan revealed that as many as 103 suspects from the May 9 cases were tried in military courts, while others remained in the ATC courts. He asked how such distinctions were made and emphasised the need for clarity on the criteria used for allocating cases.

The bench observed that decisions regarding trials must be evidence-based and legally sound. It stressed the importance of a clear legal framework to ensure transparency and fairness in the judicial process. Later the bench adjourned hearing of the intra-court appeal against military court trials of civilians until tomorrow (Friday) where Khawaja Haris may resume arguments.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur offering dua after inaugurating newly established institute of health sciences at University of Peshawar.

Court upholds arrest warrants for KP CM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The District and Sessions Court Islamabad upheld the non-bailable arrest warrants for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur in the audio leak case.

During the hearing, the court cancelled the non-bailable arrest warrants of co-accused Asad Farooq after his appearance in court.

Neither Gandapur nor his counsel appeared before the court during the proceedings. Subsequently, the court maintained the non-bailable arrest warrants for the chief minister and adjourned further proceedings in the audio leak case until January 25.

N Korea's latest missile launch Pakistan calls for dialogue amid rising tensions

UNITED NATIONS: Following North Korea's latest launch of a ballistic missile on Monday, Pakistan has voiced concern and called for diplomatic engagement and dialogue to address the challenges confronting the Korean Peninsula on Thursday.

North Korea had fired a ballistic missile into the sea at the same time United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken was holding meetings in Seoul, South Korea's capital including a meeting with Acting President Choi Sang-mok.

Pakistan's Ambassador and representative to the United Nations Munir Akram told the UN Security Council that the country "strongly supports

the calls for revival of talks among the relevant parties", two days after the ballistic missile was fired off what Pyongyang described as a new type of intermediate-range hypersonic ballistic missile (IRBM) loaded with a hypersonic glide vehicle.

Akram also called these developments detrimental to regional and international peace and security. Pakistan, he said, supported the objective of denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, the implementation of the relevant UNSC resolutions, and the goals of global non-proliferation and disarmament. "Provocations such as missile tests on the one hand — and coercive actions and threats on the other — must be ended," the Pakistani

envoy said.

"Pakistan opposes any further nuclear weapons testing in Korea or elsewhere," he added. "We hope that the Security Council will find ways of reviving the dialogue and playing its due role in reducing tensions and threats to peace and security in the region." The South Korean military had detected "one projectile presumed to be an intermediate-range ballistic missile", as quoted by Al Jazeera.

Following the launch, a senior UN official opened the debate by warning that North Korea has been actively working towards acquiring new military capabilities that undermine the global non-proliferation architecture. — Aljazeera

Tarar appreciates Gandapur

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attallah Tarar on Thursday appreciated Chief Minister of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur on understanding about the correct way to hold a protest in the country.

"Ali Amin Gandapur has finally learnt the right way to protest," said the minister while sarcastically responding to the statement made by the CM KP today in a gathering regarding his newfound approach for holding a protest.

The CM KP had specifically commented on the comparison recently drew by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif between the protest strategies adopted by the people in Japan and the opposition in Pakistan.

The minister, in a news statement, said the whole nation knew the usual tactics of chaos, violence and arson opted by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) during their protests. "It is commendable that for the first time in ten months, the Chief Minister has chosen the correct manner of protest," he added.

He said it would have been quite better if he had protested peacefully with sounds like 'oooo oooo' on November 26 and May 9 instead of resorting to aggression and arson. Protests, in the civilized society, are held in a peaceful manner without disrupting the normal life, he remarked.

Omar seeks meeting with Imran

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Omar Ayub dared the government to arrange a meeting with the party founder Imran Khan if it actually has the power.

Talking to media at Islamabad Judicial Complex, the opposition leader in National Assembly said that the government isn't allowing the PTI leaders to meet Imran Khan. "We were told that arranging a meeting with Imran Khan isn't included in the jail manual," said Omar Ayub.

No increase in foreign debt over last 2.5 years: SBP

F.P. Report

KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmad has claimed that the country's external liabilities have remained unchanged for an extended period, attributing this stability to the incumbent government's prudent economic and fiscal management. "Foreign debt has not increased in the last two and a half years, while an \$8 billion loan has been fully repaid in the short term," Governor SBP stated addressing industry leaders at the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) in Karachi.

He highlighted that the country's actual foreign debt stood at more than \$100.08 billion, adding that its volume has improved significantly, adding that the foreign debt increased by \$500 million due to the revaluation of debt.

He said that debt service and balance of payments improved as the country borrowed money mostly through multilateral institutions this year and that the short-term debt was being paid by long-term debt. The governor stated that controlling external accounts would pave the way for economic growth. "Issues

such as high interest rates stand addressed, and there are no longer any restrictions on imports," Ahmad added.

Last month, the central bank slashed the key policy rate by 200 basis points (bps) to 13%, marking its fifth consecutive cut following a continuous reduction in the inflation rate which fell to 4.1% in December 2024. The central bank chief also highlighted that the current account situation has stabilised, with remittances projected to reach nearly \$3 billion in December. "The remittances for the current fiscal year are likely to total at least \$35 billion," he forecast.

The governor further noted that food inflation had peaked at 47% in May 2023, adding that the inflation rate might rise during the April to June 2025 period. He, however, admitted that exports were lower than expected, urging the business community to step up production and international trade activity.

On external investment, the governor revealed that \$2.2 billion was allowed to be taken out of the country in 2024. Additionally, he announced that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) would benefit from

a new funding facility, allowing businesses to borrow up to Rs10 million without collateral.

Saying that the government would cover 20% of any losses on these loans, Ahmad also confirmed that export-based small businesses would be prioritised for these credits. During the event, the FPCCI president briefed the central bank governor on the ongoing issues with trade with Iran and Afghanistan, urging immediate interest rate cuts to 9% to support the economy.

Pakistan is navigating a challenging economic recovery path and has been buttressed by a \$7 billion facility from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in September 2024. Though the country's economy has stabilised since it came close to defaulting last summer, it is dependent on IMF bailouts and loans from friendly countries to service its huge debt, which swallows up half of its annual revenues. Islamabad wrangled for months with IMF officials to unlock the latest loan, which came on the condition of reforms including hiking household bills to remedy a permanently crisis-stricken energy sector and raising pitiful tax takings.

Latest Israeli raids kill 50 in Gaza

GAZA: The United Nations warns that a lack of fuel supply in Gaza threatens to shut down more medical facilities across the besieged territory, putting the lives of patients and newborns at "grave risk". The UN's condemnation of the "deliberate and systematic" attacks on Gaza hospitals came as relentless Israeli strikes killed more than 50 more Palestinians in the last 24 hours.

Gaza health officials on Thursday said Al-Aqsa, Nasser and the European hospitals are at risk of imminent closure, after repeated Israeli bombardment and blockade of supplies, as they face the same fate as Kamal Adwan, Indonesian and Al-Awda hospitals. Al Jazeera's Hani Mahmoud, reporting from Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir el-Balah, said the facility was now "overstretched" given an influx of more injured civilians, many of them women and children,

who had now faced a genocide for 15 months.

"Doctors are reporting about the acute shortage of basic supplies, including surgical tools, antibiotics and painkillers," he said. Dr Bushra Othman, general surgeon and a volunteer at the hospital, said the situation is being assessed every 24 hours, as officials attempt to replenish supplies. "At any time during the day, power and electricity will cut out, and certain areas should be protected such as the operating theatres, the intensive care unit, including the neonatal unit," she told Al Jazeera.

At Nasser Hospital, Doctors Without Borders warned that the lives of 15 newborns in incubators were at risk due to a shortage of fuel for generators that provide electricity to the facility. "Without fuel, these newborns are at risk of losing their lives," said Pascale

Coissard, MSF's emergency coordinator. Al Jazeera's Tareq Abu Azzoum, also reporting from Deir el-Balah, said the atmosphere in the Palestinian territory "is quite charged with tension and fear".

"What we have seen over the past 24 hours has been very bloody. The death toll from the past day has really been staggering," he said. On Thursday, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) renewed its call for a ceasefire. "More humanitarian aid must come into Gaza and a ceasefire is more critical than ever," the group wrote on X. Despite the UN's appeal, Israel continued its bombardment across the Gaza Strip. Medical sources told Al Jazeera Arabic at least six Palestinians were killed in attacks at dawn in central and southern Gaza, while at least eight others were killed in Jabalia in northern Gaza. — Aljazeera

IF YOU'RE GOING THERE, SO ARE WE



Businessmen to be provided with maximum facilities

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, stated that the President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, the Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and the Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, recognize the vital role of traders, industrialists, and the entire business community.

A significant portion of the country's economy is driven by traders and industrialists, who also contribute the highest taxes. Industries provide employment to millions of people. Therefore, the business community must be provided with maximum facilities to foster economic growth and create more employment opportunities.

Speaking at a luncheon hosted by the Korangi Association of Trade and Industries in Karachi in honor of Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that The government is committed to addressing the challenges faced by traders. It has extended an open invitation to private entrepreneurs to establish their own industrial zones, aiming to strengthen the country's economy, attract maximum investment, and create employment opportunities. Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon assured that he would brief President Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and the Chief Minister of Sindh about the concerns of traders.

He stated that the Dhabeji Special Economic Zone presents a golden opportunity for traders, offering zero import duties and a ten-year tax exemption. Its connection to CPEC further

enhances its value, providing significant benefits to traders and industrialists.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon also announced that the Malir Expressway is set to open in two days, with Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari scheduled to inaugurate it. He described the Malir Expressway as a major, modern gift for Karachi and the entire country, emphasizing its role in improving connectivity and facilitating industrialists' access.

He stated that a representative of KATI will be specially invited to the board meeting of the Yellow Line BRT. Efforts are underway to complete the construction of the Jam Sadiq Bridge within eight months. He highlighted that the Sindh government is currently operating transport services in Karachi on a subsidy. For the first time in Pakistan, the Sindh government introduced EV buses and special buses exclusively for women. The Yellow Line BRT comprises diesel hybrid buses, but there are plans to introduce EV buses to the Yellow Line BRT system. Additionally, he announced that EV taxis would be introduced very soon.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon clarified that there has been no delay in the Red Line BRT project on the part of the government; the delays occurred due to the transfer of utilities. He further announced that double-decker buses are being introduced in Karachi this year, with efforts underway to operate them on Shahr-e-Faisal within the same timeframe.

He stated that the law and order situation in Karachi is very good, although some concerns remain. He noted that, in the past, strikes lasting

up to ten days would disrupt work and create difficulties for people, but such situations no longer occur. He emphasized that the country is now safe for investment and that Karachi's situation, in terms of street crimes, is much better compared to other cities around the world.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the Sindh government's cess amounting to Rs. 190 billion is currently stuck in the Supreme Court. He mentioned that the government has engaged various legal experts to expedite the process of securing these funds. Once recovered, this money will be allocated toward improving infrastructure. He emphasized the need for collective seriousness in addressing such matters.

He stated that water scarcity is a significant issue in Karachi, and efforts are underway to address it through the K-4 and Hub Canal projects. He also highlighted that the Sindh government is allocating billions of rupees to the Solid Waste Management initiative for garbage collection. In cities like Hyderabad and Larkana, garbage is being collected directly from people's doorsteps as part of these efforts.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the Sindh government is advancing the health sector in line with the vision of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and President Asif Ali Zardari. He highlighted NICVD, SIUT, and Gambat Hospital as prime examples of this progress. He added that dozens of NICVD units are being established, and liver and lung transplants are being successfully performed in Gambat.



He also mentioned that the Sindh government has introduced the CyberKnife facility for public use. This advanced treatment, available in only 11 countries worldwide at a cost ranging from five to ten million dollars, is being provided free of charge in Sindh.

He stated that the Sindh government is taking measures concerning the fitness of vehicles. Plans are in place to inspect vehicles, and while opposition and resistance may arise, the government is determined that any unfit vehicle will not be allowed on the roads. He emphasized that strict action will also be taken to improve the traffic system.

Speaking on the occasion, Korangi Association of Trade and Industries President Junaid Naqi informed Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon about the issue of heavy traffic on the roads. He highlighted that accidents occur as a result of the congestion and emphasized the need for strict enforcement of traffic laws and the implementation of an effective strategy to address the problem.

He stated that the Korangi Industrial Area spans 12,000 acres and, over the past 12 years, has grown to become the largest industrial area in Pakistan, now covering 12,500 acres. Exports have increased significantly, with a major contribution to leather exports coming from Korangi. Additionally, around 60 to 70 percent of the country's oil, petrol, and diesel are refined in this area. The Korangi industry provides employment to approximately 1.5 million people.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for the information of general public that below listed 225 vehicles of different categories and 224 motor cycles have been seized by Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other Law Enforcement Agencies are advertised for the purpose of confiscation under Rule 9(1) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Road Checking (Seizure & Disposal) Rules, 2015. Under Rule 6 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Road Checking (Seizure and Disposal) Rules 2015, these vehicles were forwarded to FSL Peshawar for chemical examination. After expiry of 14 days of this public notice these 449 (total) vehicles shall be confiscated in favour of State.

LIST OF 225 MOTOR CARS, VANS AND PICKUPS FOR PROCLAMATION			88	SB308PK883113	Suzuki Mehran	178	912381,	SUZUKI BOLAN,	42	BJO19246	Motorcycle 125	132	7DY231264K	MOTORCYCLE 70
Lot No	Chassis before FSL	Make	89	SB308PK659940	Suzuki Mehran	179	LH102-0001260	TAYOTA HIACE,	43	3AH8-219461K	Motorcycle 100	133	MC15-1057349	MOTORCYCLE 125
1	SB308PK636685	Suzuki Mehran	90	KE30-427145	KE30	180	854582,	Suzuki Mehran 2005,	44	FML0412091	MOTORCYCLE 70	134	U69664	MOTORCYCLE 125
2	SB308PK689096	Suzuki Mehran	91	SB308PK865386	Suzuki Mehran	181	LH114-6071131	Toyota Haice	45	404513	Motorcycle 70	135	US17359668	Motorcycle 70
3	SS80FP120512	FX	92	DC51T-224505	suzuki pick up	182	SB308PK-951494,	Suzuki Mehran,	46	H24202	Motorcycle 125	136	FML199153/ 189153	MOTORCYCLE 70
4	SB308PK698794	Suzuki Mehran	93	283164	Suzuki carry	183	EE-90-5005196,	Toyota Corolla,	47	FML287279	Motorcycle 70	137	SWB-11X0104	MOTORCYCLE 70
5	SB308PK952326	Suzuki Mehran	94	SB308PK823978	Suzuki Mehran	184	9001563	Toyota Corolla Saloon 1996,	48	03081268	Motorcycle monstar	138	061323	MOTORCYCLE 125
6	SB308PK606416	Suzuki Mehran	95	SS80FP143173	FX	185	EE100-9514576,	Toyota Corolla	49	486-043151	MOTORCYCLE 100	139	BE242047	MOTORCYCLE 70
7	PK6-5205221	Honda m car	96	KE70-0574027	KE70	186	898668,	Suzuki Van,	50	JE096862	MOTORCYCLE 70	140	PM8808426	MOTORCYCLE 125
8	SB308PK626187	Suzuki Mehran	97	SB308PK642552	Suzuki Mehran	187	NFBGE15437R144725,	Honda City	51	FML-266887	MOTORCYCLE 70	141	HML0-6111306	MOTORCYCLE 70
9	SB308PK639118	Suzuki Mehran	98	SB308PK945526	Suzuki Mehran	188	RA31S250995,	Suzuki Liana	52	338278	Motorcycle SUZUKI	142	ZXPAHB02581	MOTORCYCLE 70
10	SB308PK986902	Suzuki Mehran	99	NZE120-6008257	Toyota Corolla	189	CE100-3025326,	Toyota Corolla	53	C70623	MOTORCYCLE 125	143	20076594	Mon Star
11	SB308PK989644	Suzuki Mehran	100	Deeply Grinded	Suzuki carry	190	995883	Suzuki Van	54	FML-202509	MOTORCYCLE 70	144	BE013975	Motorcycle 70
12	SB308PK969644	Suzuki Mehran	101	923594	suzuki Carry	191	WBADM52010GE39005,	BMW car	55	US70-108758	MOTORCYCLE 70	145	NIL	MOTORCYCLE 70
13	911491	Suzuki carry	102	SB308PK613662	Suzuki Mehran	192	ZZE121-9012227	Toyota Corolla	56	U531133	MOTORCYCLE 125	146	SP70-0584766	MOTORCYCLE 70
14	951194	Suzuki carry	103	SB308PK624452	Suzuki Mehran	193	ZZE121-9012691	Toyota Corolla	57	S89585	MOTORCYCLE 125	147	LKXPDDL0930002413	MOTORCYCLE 70
15	not present	suzuki pick up	104	SB308PK933161	Suzuki Mehran	194	NFBESSE01R100401,	Honda Civic	58	DSF-372307	Motorcycle DiwanLifan	148	PJ12575	MOTORCYCLE 125
16	not present	suzuki pick up	105	NZE120-6028773	Toyota Corolla	195	930625,	Suzuki Mehran	59	US70347361	MOTORCYCLE 70	149	ZXP0802A0538	MOTORCYCLE 70
17	CE100-9015756	Toyota Corolla	106	SB308PK-747798	Suzuki Mehran	196	PK66203505	Honda Civic	60	D19357	MOTORCYCLE 125	150	3AH6-110818K	MOTORCYCLE 100
18	SB308PK703758	Suzuki Mehran	107	1011424	Suzuki carry	197	997893	SUZUKI CULTUS	61	ZXP1402A0584	MOTORCYCLE 70	151	3AH7-005328K	MOTORCYCLE 100
19	JDA000G1100733326	daihatsu charade	108	SB308PK-631957	Suzuki Mehran	198	862151	SUZUKI VAN	62	486-423303	Motorcycle 100	152	48603980K	MOTORCYCLE 100
20	SB308PK889099	Suzuki Mehran	109	868874	Suzuki carry	199	NZE140-2130976	TOYOTA COROLLA	63	3AH8-326210K	MOTORCYCLE 100	153	MAF233559	MOTORCYCLE 70
21	NZE120-6020127	Toyota Corolla	110	SB308PK-986110	Suzuki Mehran	200	851600	MEHRAN	64	LJZPCDB38120219	MOTORCYCLE 100	154	02965	MOTORCYCLE 125
22	KE70-7222074	Toyota Corolla	111	240619	Suzuki carry	201	899090,	MEHRAN	65	S44362	MOTORCYCLE 125	155	5K2-05160K	Motorcycle 100
23	504F11-3438995	Pegoeo	112	ZZE121-9006153	Toyota Corolla	202	SCP10-0131085	TOYOTA VITZ	66	ZXP701A0329	MOTORCYCLE 70	156	H32687	MOTORCYCLE 125
24	SB308PK9482XX	Suzuki Mehran	113	942495	Suzuki carry	203	SB308PK-851045	SUZUKI MEHRAN, ,	67	3AH8298131K	Motorcycle 100	157	3AH5-106808K, 106848	MOTORCYCLE 100
25	SB308PK717349	Suzuki Mehran	114	277738	Suzuki carry	204	LH113-0007902,	TOYOTA HIACE	68	373707	Motorcycle 70	158	ZXP-0807A0210	MOTORCYCLE 70
26	KLATF19T1PB432742	Daewoo	115	SB308PK-897110	Suzuki Mehran	205	7519132,	DAIHATSU COURE, ,	69	U251447, 251441	MOTORCYCLE 125	159	HKFOCF5188	MOTORCYCLE 70
27	not present	Nissan	116	SB308PK-636728	Suzuki Mehran	206	LH1140011199,	TOYOTA HIACE	70	SA9G008683	Motorcycle 70	160	7DY-061622K	MOTORCYCLE 70
28	CL043VGJ400823	Inter cooler	117	SB308PK-753121	Suzuki Mehran	207	905430,	MEHRAN	71	C-80473	MOTORCYCLE 125	161	FM13864345	MOTORCYCLE 125
29	CE109-0044278	Toyota Corolla	118	SB308PK-01003146	Suzuki Mehran	208	, 915327	Suzuki Van	72	NIL	Motorcycle 70	162	HKFFAF6802	MOTORCYCLE 70
30	L1060017255	Toyota Pick up	119	KMHUF11MPU1772088	Hyndai	209	786085	Suzuki Mehran	73	42839	Motorcycle 70	163	486-380433	MOTORCYCLE 100
31	SB308PK625178	Suzuki Mehran	120	SB308PK-639310	Suzuki Mehran	210	L501S-801257,	Daihatsu Courr,	74	H19691	Motorcycle 125	164	US70800218	MOTORCYCLE 70
32	AE101-9092160	Toyota Corolla	121	SB308PK-944439	Suzuki Mehran	211	DD51T-358322,	Suzuki Pick UP	75	PA12534424	MOTORCYCLE 125	165	LGNPCJLX-447070047	Motorcycle osaka
33	EE80-7049406	Toyota Corolla	122	263223	Suzuki carry	212	EK3-3041185,	Honda City	76	ZXP1105A1035	Motorcycle 125	166	A80-104609	Motorcycle SUZUKI
34	KE30-527594	KE30	123	277725	Suzuki carry	213	AT190-00118653,	Corona	77	C21658	Motorcycle Honda	167	SAC032432	MOTORCYCLE 70
35	LH114-6000425	Toyota Hiace	124	SB308PK-673918	Suzuki Mehran	214	PK65217217,	HONDA	78	US70-30384	MOTORCYCLE 70	168	GJ51B-102886,	Motorcycle SUZUKI
36	SB308PK885518	Suzuki Mehran	125	SB308PK-635646	Suzuki Mehran	215	FBGE15A83R101417	HONDA CITY	79	2956	Motorcycle 100	169	US70-170605,	MOTORCYCLE 70
37	SB308PK855875	Suzuki Mehran	126	SB308PK-822171	Suzuki Mehran	216	626370,	Suzuki	80	3AH4-024854K	MOTORCYCLE 100	170	58A-040489K	MOTORCYCLE 70
38	SB308PK636224	Suzuki Mehran	127	SB308PK-842608	Suzuki Mehran	217	DB71T-126585,	Suzuki Pickup	81	3AH8368024K	MOTORCYCLE 100	171	JA792038	MOTORCYCLE 70
39	SB308PK628075	Suzuki Mehran	128	SB308PK-952025	Suzuki Mehran	218	1004914 914559	Suzuki Mehran	82	265082	Motorcycle 125	172	S89915	MOTORCYCLE 125
40	SB308PK634651	Suzuki Mehran	129	SB308PK-850274	Suzuki Mehran	219	EKT5201613,	Honda City	83	SWD11X0454	MOTORCYCLE 70	173	MR-A296092	MOTORCYCLE 70
41	CE100-9010784	Toyota Corolla	130	SB308PK-617176	Suzuki Mehran	220	CE100-3015634	TOYOTA CORLLA	84	S36568	MOTORCYCLE 125	174	AE00550	MOTORCYCLE
42	LN56-0039519	Toyota Pick up	131	SB308PK-664967	Suzuki Mehran	221	RA410PK504774	SUZUKI VXR,	85	ZXP1309A2659	MOTORCYCLE 70	175	ZXP1109A1254	MOTORCYCLE 70
43	LN106-0079111	Toyota Pick up	132	CE100-6000055	Toyota Corolla	222	NZE120-6048407	TOYOTA COROLLA, ,	86	US70357592	MOTORCYCLE 70	176	PF-01409	MOTORCYCLE 125
44	KE70-0588505	KE70	133	EK7-6212409	Hyndai	223	SCP10-0413907	Toyota Vitz,	87	US70-138966	MOTORCYCLE 70	177	C-22275	MOTORCYCLE
45	SB308PK742383	Suzuki Mehran	134	917286	Suzuki carry	224	TOYOTA COROLLA	NZE120-6003095	88	BD024703	MOTORCYCLE 70	178	37R-025693K	MOTORCYCLE 100
46	SB308PK718684	Suzuki Mehran	135	SB308PK-793345	Suzuki Mehran	225	NZE170R-4140282	TOYOTA COROLLA	89	DSF308792	MOTORCYCLE 70	179	D92038	MOTORCYCLE 125
47	SB308PK689240	Suzuki Mehran	136	SB308PK-621684	Suzuki Mehran	LIST OF MOTOR CYCLES FOR PROCLAMATION			90	U-262119	MOTORCYCLE 125	180	9937567	MOTORCYCLE 70
48	SB308PK902804	Suzuki Mehran	137	EE100-9048000	Toyota Corolla	Lot No	Chassis before FSL	Make	91	U245442	MOTORCYCLE 125	181	SP0235998	MOTORCYCLE 70
49	SB308PK665722	Suzuki Mehran	138	SB308PK-923902	Suzuki Mehran	1	NIL	Motorcycle 70	92	US7075103	MOTORCYCLE 70	182	BE085466	MOTORCYCLE 70
50	SB308PK647911	Suzuki Mehran	139	NZE120-6072015	Toyota Corolla	2	158115	Motorcycle 70	93	SQM1004219942	Rikshaw	183	35240	honda 125
51	SB308PK961298	Suzuki Mehran	140	CE100-9005806	Toyota Corolla	3	S75764	Motorcycle 125	94	B85547	MOTORCYCLE 125	184	ZXP1406A1815	MOTORCYCLE 70
52	SB308PK983825	Suzuki Mehran	141	not present	Potohar	4	JC-589614	MOTORCYCLE 70	95	C71179	Motorcycle 125	185	no chassis	
53	SS80FP125340	FX	142	CE100-3038840	Toyota Corolla	5	3AH8039596K	MOTORCYCLE 70	96	H80531	MOTORCYCLE 125	186	JCT12469	MOTORCYCLE 70
54	EE80-7035730	Toyota Corolla	143	not visible	Toyota Corolla	6	58A-027004K	Motorcycle 100	97	U347702	MOTORCYCLE 125	187	L1255-5045963	Motorcycle SUZUKI
55	LN40-229497	Toyota Pick up	144	SF413PK-910953	Suzuki cultus	7	EME805868	MOTORCYCLE 70	98	U286575	MOTORCYCLE 125	188	US70651764	MOTORCYCLE 70
56	879688	Suzuki carry	145	NZE120-6019767	Toyota Corolla	8	C-14532	MOTORCYCLE 125	99	NAZ7440	MOTORCYCLE 70	189	U399040_U399010	Motorcycle 125
57	CE90-5032913	Toyota Corolla	146	CE120-0021497	Toyota Corolla	9	FML5F106661	MOTORCYCLE 70	100	US70-141857	MOTORCYCLE 70	190	U239344_239333	MOTORCYCLE 125
58	LH114-0008988	Toyota Hiace	147	896779	Suzuki carry	10	SP70-0197182	MOTORCYCLE 70	101	AG088946	MOTORCYCLE 70	191	239355	70cc
59	SB308PK913096	Suzuki Mehran	148	ZZE121-9012565	Toyota Corolla	11	JC-152451	MOTORCYCLE 70	102	JC185189	MOTORCYCLE 70	192	JC792225	Motorcycle 70
60	not present	Toyota Hiace	149	SB308PK-837529	Suzuki Mehran	12	FML278110	MOTORCYCLE 70	103	FML233434	MOTORCYCLE 70	193	3AH6108929K	Motorcycle 100
61	ZZE121-9000667	Toyota Corolla	150	888720	Suzuki carry	13	ZXP1103A2738	MOTORCYCLE 70	104	C-60689	MOTORCYCLE 125	194	FML137136	MOTORCYCLE 70
62	NZE120-6093819	Toyota Corolla	151	SB308PK-767736	Suzuki Mehran	14	JE601378	MOTORCYCLE 70	105	U-553968	MOTORCYCLE 125	195	HKF09F6628	MOTORCYCLE 70
63	not present	Suzuki carry	152	SB308PK-948762	Suzuki Mehran	15	D31372	MOTORCYCLE 125	106	US70376824	MOTORCYCLE 70	196	5HM033161K	MOTORCYCLE 100
64	SB308PK621648	Suzuki Mehran	153	894241	Suzuki carry	16	ZXP0802A0511	Motorcycle 70	107	JD677206_JD677200	MOTORCYCLE 70	197	BE265833	MOTORCYCLE 70
65	SB308PK665842	Suzuki Mehran	154	PK6-5308341	Honda m car	17	US70-357481	MOTORCYCLE 70	108	G71851	Motorcycle KAWASAKI	198	BE061633	MOTORCYCLE 70
66	LN40-090017	Toyota Pick up	155	SB308PK-784515	Suzuki Mehran	18	ZXP0809A0465	Motorcycle 70	109	C39				

Farah urges youth to play role in mitigating climate change impacts

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Youth can advocate for evidence-based policy development to mitigate climate change impacts by exercising Right to Information. It was stated by Mrs. Farah Hamid Khan, Chief Information Commissioner, KP Information Commission while addressing the conclusion ceremony of a collaborative program of Transparency International-Pakistan and University of Peshawar 'Youth Climate Education & Fellowship Program on Climate Governance', here at Business Incubation Centre, University of Peshawar on Thursday. Chief Commissioner, KPIC added "RTI helps students in research, to uncover data regarding emissions, government spending, and environmental impacts. It also can highlight gaps or deficiencies in current climate policies". Mr. Afrasyab Khattak, Chief, Environment & Climate Change, P&D Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Shakil Khan, Director, Business Incubation Centre, Dr. Bushra Khan, Professor, Department of Environmental Sciences, other faculty members, and students participated in the ceremony. In her closing remarks, Chief Commissioner stressed upon the role of RTI in transparent climate governance, that it enables citizens to hold government and organizations accountable for their commitments and actions regarding climate change.



PESHAWAR: A worker giving final touches to a carpet at his workplace in Khyber Bazaar

Stipend under Benazir Kafaalat program increased: Rubina



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid has announced that the quarterly stipend under the Benazir Kafaalat program for deserving women has been increased from Rs. 10,500 to Rs. 13,500. She described this as a New Year's gift from BISP to registered families, aimed at providing maximum support during challenging times.

During her visit to the

BISP Tehsil Office in Pabbi, Nowshera District, Senator Rubina Khalid spoke to media representatives and highlighted that BISP's registration process has become more dynamic. She urged eligible individuals to visit their nearest BISP Tehsil Office to register, emphasizing that an original National Identity Card, Form B, and children's school details are mandatory for registration. She told media that health and education services are being provided through the Benazir Nashonuma and

Benazir Taleemi Wazaif Programs.

The Chairperson announced the upcoming launch of the Benazir Hunar Mand Program in year 2025, which aims to provide technical skills and training to the beneficiaries. She referenced the legacy of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who created job opportunities abroad for Pakistani laborers by issuing passports. "Even today, there is a growing demand for skilled workers worldwide," she said, adding that Shaheed

Benazir Bhutto once said, "Skill is your asset, which no one can take away from you."

Senator Rubina Khalid stated that BISP's New Year's resolution is to focus on equipping beneficiaries with technical skills & ensuring their employability therefore enabling them to support their families and contribute to the country's development. "By learning valuable skills, BISP beneficiaries can not only uplift their families but also become a national asset," she said. She expressed gratitude to the President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, and Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif for their leadership and support in increasing BISP annual budget.

Earlier, during her visit, Senator Rubina Khalid met & interacted with deserving women at the BISP Tehsil Office, listened to their concerns, and instructed relevant authorities to address their issues on priority basis. She emphasized that the program aims to ensure that beneficiaries receive their stipends with dignity and without any deductions.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Under-19 Cricket League Trophy unveiled

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The unveiling ceremony of the trophy for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's first Under-19 Cricket League organized through a collaboration between Insaf Sports and Cultural Organization and Markhor Builders was held at Peshawar Sports Complex. The event's chief guest was Provincial Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jehan accompanied by Member Provincial Assembly Fazal Elahi, Markhor Builders' owner Nabeel Afridi, Tameer Builders' Zia-ul-Haq Afridi, President of Peshawar District Cricket Association Asghar Ali, Secretary Hanif Shah, and event organizers Zulfiqar and Shakeel. Presidents and players from various clubs also attended the ceremony.

For the first time in the province's history the Khyber



Under-19 Cricket League will feature 40 teams from across the province. Eight players from Pakistan's Under-19 cricket team will also participate representing various teams. All league matches will be played at Peshawar Gymkhana Ground.

Speaking at the ceremony Provincial Minister Syed Fakhar Jehan stated that the provincial government is investing in players and future heroes. He emphasized the importance

of organizing consistent sports activities and supporting players for national and international competitions. Our aim is to ensure that the talent of the province's youth does not go to waste. We are providing them with the best facilities so that they can shine on the global stage he said. The minister also announced cash prizes of PKR 200,000 for the winners, PKR 100,000 for the runner-up and PKR 50,000 each for the best bowler

and batsman.

Member Provincial Assembly Fazal Elahi in his speech appreciated the organization of such a significant event at the provincial level. He noted that the province is rich in talent especially in cricket and highlighted the importance of such activities in today's era. Earlier Markhor Builders' owner Nabeel Afridi and Tameer Group's owner Zia-ul-Haq Afridi also shared their views on the occasion.

SMEs to revolutionize local economy, CM's advisor told

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Industries, Abdul Karim Tordher has stated that the proposed new projects for Small Industrial Estates (SMEs) in Swat and Lower Dir would bring industrial development to the area. He said that a plan includes to provide the energy requirements to these new proposed industrial estates with the province own generated electricity through local corridors, which will lead to economic growth through industrialization.

He also mentioned that the proposed new industrial estate project in Bara, Khyber District, would be an important step for the development of small and medium enterprises in the area. He directed the Small Industries Development

Board (SIDB) to work on reasonable proposals to resolve some financial issues related to compensation for the Mardan III Industrial Estate.

The Advisor appreciated the department's efforts in addressing the obstacles to the establishment of an industrial estate in Naurak Waziristan. These remarks he made during a meeting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly's Standing Committee on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, which was held on Thursday.

The meeting was chaired by the committee's chairman and Member of Provincial Assembly Itfikhari Ali Mashwani, and attended by Provincial Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, Fazal Hakeem Khan Yousafzai, Members of Provincial Assembly from Swat, Akhtar Khan, Sultan Room and Sharaf

Ali, along with other members, including Samiullah, Asif Khan, Sher Ali Afridi, Ali Shah, Secretary of Planning and Development Shahid Ullah Khan, Special Secretary of Industries Anwar Khan, MD SIDB Habib Ullah Arif, Deputy Commissioner of Swat Shehzad Mahboob, officials from the Departments of Finance, Law, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Industries, as well as officials from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company, Directorate General of Industry, Accountant General's Office, and representatives from the Swat Chamber of Commerce.

During the meeting, the committee was briefed on the details of the existing and proposed new development projects of the SIDB and the obstacles in their

way.

The committee members also shared their opinions, and several decisions were made in this regard. Similarly, relevant departments also presented their positions on their responsibilities. The committee was informed about the notices issued regarding plots and other means in industrial estates across the province by SIDB.

Regarding the establishment of a Small Industrial Estate in Swat, a joint meeting will be convened with all the Members of National and Provincial Assemblies from the area, Chamber representatives, and SIDB officials. The Deputy Commissioner of Swat was instructed to arrange this meeting to achieve a consensus on an appropriate location for the estate. The committee granted a 15-day deadline for this.

CM announced New Medical College at the University of Peshawar

Launches Allied Health Sciences Programs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The University of Peshawar has embarked on a new chapter in medical education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the launch of Allied Health Sciences programs and the announcement of a new medical college. These initiatives support broader efforts to enhance human capital, promote employment, and improve societal well-being, aligning with priorities championed by PTI leader Imran Khan, according to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur.

At the inauguration ceremony for the Allied Health Sciences programs at the University of Peshawar, Chief Minister Gandapur announced the

development of a new medical college, including a school of nursing, with an initial investment of 500 million rupees. The college is expected to enroll students next year.

In a significant development for university faculty, the Chief Minister announced the resolution of a long-standing issue regarding faculty promotions. He directed the Minister of Higher Education and the Secretary to promptly address pending promotion requests presented by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Peshawar during the ceremony.

Chief Minister Gandapur expressed his strong support for the new Allied Health Sciences programs, recognizing the growing demand for quali-

fied professionals in these fields. He noted his own experience conferring degrees upon graduates in these disciplines at university convocations. He encouraged students to cultivate talent, teamwork, and a commitment to service in their professional pursuits.

Minister of Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi powerfully reiterated the government's commitment to empowering the nation's youth through a strengthened higher education system.

He articulated his leadership's vision of fostering a generation of self-reliant individuals, prepared to seize opportunities and shape the future. He stressed that promoting quality and healthy competition among institutions is

a key mechanism for achieving this vision, ensuring that students receive the best possible education and are equipped to succeed in a competitive global landscape.

Secretary of Higher Education Captain (Retired) Kamran Ahmad Afridi congratulated the University of Peshawar on the launch of the new academic programs. He recognized the contributions of the Chancellor of Universities and the Chief Minister in establishing a

task force dedicated to raising educational standards and quality across universities. He also acknowledged the provincial government's significant 5.4-billion-rupee allocation to support universities in achieving financial sustainability.

Steps taken to provide education: SACM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The provincial government has taken historic steps to provide educational facilities in the province, says SACM On Forest and Environment, Pir Musavir Khan, while talking to the teachers' delegation.

A delegation of teachers met with Pir Musavir Khan, the Special Assistant to the Chief Minister KP on Forest, Environment, Wildlife, and Climate Change, at his office in the Civil Secretariat, Peshawar. The delegation was led by Senior Teacher Rahat Khan. During the meeting, the teachers' delegation informed the Special Assistant about the shortage of teachers, educational facilities, teacher regularization, and other issues in Agra and surrounding union councils in Malakand.

Pir Musavir Khan, while talking to the delegation, stated that the education sector is a fundamental part of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's manifesto and is one of the provincial government's top priorities. The provincial government has taken practical steps to provide quality education, furniture, and other basic facilities to schools, spending billions of rupees in this regard.

He emphasized that teachers are the builders of the nation, and their role is crucial in shaping an educated society. He assured the delegation that he would soon discuss their concerns with the relevant authorities.

PHC orders release of M. Phil scholar

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Justice S.M Attique Shah of Peshawar High Court (PHC) has issued orders for the release of Junaidd, a resident of Managi, on bail in a case involving the smuggling of 1.7 kilograms of Ice-drug, on Thursday.

The counsel Syed Mubashir Shah advocate argued that the petitioner is an MPhil scholar in sociology and has been wrongly implicated in the case.

According to the lawyer, Junaidd had held a press conference on August 20, 2024, against the police officials of Kalu Khan Police Station, alleging that they were harassing him and interfering in his affairs. The police had subsequently registered a case against him for smuggling 1.7 kilograms of ice.

The lawyer argued that Junaidd had also requested the police authorities to conduct an inquiry into the matter, but no progress was

made. He added that Junaidd is an MPhil student of sociology and has been falsely implicated in the case, and that several individuals have testified in his favor.

The lawyer further argued that Junaidd's arrest and detention are unlawful and that he should be released on bail. He requested the court to grant bail to Junaidd and order his release. After hearing the arguments, the court issued orders for the release of Junaidd on bail.

EOC team congratulates Riaz on winning PPC elections

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Deputy Coordinator of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for Polio Eradication in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zeeshan Khan, emphasized the critical role of media in protecting children from life-long disability caused by polio.

He expressed these views on Thursday while congratulating the newly elected President of the Peshawar Press Club, M. Riaz, on his election.

A delegation from the EOC KP, led by Deputy Coordinator Muhammad Zeeshan Khan, visited the Peshawar Press Club and congratulated the newly elected cabinet on their success in the elections.

The delegation also included UNICEF Media Officer Ms. Shadab Younus and other members of the



EOC media team.

On this occasion, Muhammad Zeeshan Khan appreciated the unwavering support and efforts of the Peshawar Press Club President, in particular, and the journalist community, in general, in promoting the polio eradication program in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and raising public awareness about anti-polio vaccination.

The newly elected President of the Peshawar Press Club, M. Riaz, assured the delegation of the continued support of the journalists in achieving the national mission of polio eradication.

During the visit, Muhammad Zeeshan Khan presented a bouquet to M. Riaz and extended his best wishes to the newly elected cabinet.

Engr. Sidra Gul successfully defends her Ph.D dissertation

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Engr. Sidra Gul, Ph.D Scholar, Department of Computer Systems Engineering, UET Peshawar successfully defended her Ph.D. dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Muhammad Salman Khan, Department of Electrical Engineering,

UET Peshawar (Jalozai Campus) here today at the Video Conference Hall, UET Peshawar. The title of her Ph.D thesis was "Deep learning based volumetric Image Segmentation of Liver and Tumor".

Engr. Sidra presented her research in a public seminar followed by a

Viva-Voce examination by the Examination Committee. The Research Evaluation Committee (REC) in respect of Engr. Sidra Gul included Dr. Arbab Masood Ahmad, Department of Computer Systems Engineering, UET Peshawar, Dr. Shahzad Anwar, Department

Mechatronics Engineering, UET Peshawar, Dr. Shahabuddin, Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering, GIKI Swabi and Dr. Sahibzada Ali Mahmud, Chief Information & Strategy Officer, KP Economic Zones Development and Management Company.

FTO disposes of 9000 complaints, decide cases in 60 days

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: During a press conference in Peshawar, Regional Advisor to the Federal Tax Ombudsman, Sardar Ali Khawaja, while highlighting performance and achievements of his office during the previous year, stated that 583 complaints were received during the last one year, with most of them pertaining to income tax, sales tax, federal excise duties, and customs duties.

He further mentioned that more than 500 complaints have been successfully resolved, and in the remaining cases relevant field formations of the

FBR have been asked to dispose of claims of the affected tax payers within 15 days.

Sardar Ali Khawaja explained that complaints against all the wings of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) can now be filed both online and via telephone. These complaints can be submitted through the Federal Tax Ombudsman's website, email, or the mobile app "FTO" portal. After an investigation, complainants are also offered the facility of online hearings.

Every complaint is investigated within 30 days, whereafter the FBR is asked to implement rec-



ommendations of the FTO within 45 days. It was stated that due to hectic awareness campaign throughout the country, a colossal number of 13500 complaints were received on central level, out of which 12914 complaints were resolved in favour of the aggrieved tax payers.

He informed the public that the Federal Tax

Ombudsman handles several issues, including FBR's illegal procedures adopted for recovery of tax arrears, the issuance of unnecessary tax notices, obstructions in issuing legitimate refunds, flaws in determining tax exemptions discrimination by FBR officials, and the abuse of power, negligence, and unprofessional conduct of FBR employees.

Sardar Ali Khawaja urged the public to submit written complaints to the Regional Office Peshawar, No. 9AB/2, Old Jamrud Road, University Town, Peshawar or online at fto.gov.pk assuring them that every complaint will be thoroughly investigated.



In brief

Four dead, four others injured F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Four people on Thursday were killed and four others injured in two separate road accidents in Abbottabad and Havelian. According to Rescue 1122, a tragic accident claimed the lives of three family members and left three others critically injured in the jurisdiction of Nawan Shehar Police Station, near the Kokamang Tal Kandi area. The incident occurred when a Suzuki van carrying six family members lost control due to slipperiness and plunged into a deep gorge. Three persons including Azam, his wife, and his sister, died on the spot, while the remaining three were rescued in critical condition and shifted to Ayub Medical Complex. The injured were identified as 28-year-old Shakeel, 58-year-old Daryaman, and another Daryaman, aged 52. Emergency services promptly responded to the scene. In another accident that occurred in Havelian near Rehman Flour Mill, where a motorcyclist was struck by a truck. Upon receiving the report, the Rescue medical team arrived at the scene. The victim, identified as 25-year-old Jamshed, a resident of Rajoya, was pronounced dead on the spot. Following the incident, the Rescue team shifted the body to Type-D Hospital in Havelian.

Free medical camp organized F.P. Report

KOHAT: The district administration in collaboration with the OGDCL on Thursday organized a free medical camp for victims of Parachinar and local people at Kacha Pakka center. In the camp, renowned physician, Dr. Muhammad Alam, Dispenser, Naem Khan and other medical staff examined 135 patients with their professional skills, the official sources said. The local people and elders appreciated the initiative immensely and thanked the OGDCL administration and their team. They said that institutions like OGDCL were bringing positive changes in the lives of the people by providing quality health facilities in underdeveloped areas.

PML-N hails federal govt F.P. Report

BUNER Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Buner chapter general secretary Jahanbar Khan said that national economy is obtaining stability due to commitment of federal's government lead by Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif as Prime Minister, on Thursday. The country has been on the path of development since. PML-N leadership appreciated the preparation of the federal government to give relief of 10 rupees per unit rate of electricity to the people. They added it is relying on the central government, the UAE made two billion dollars payment on loan rescheduled which is highly appreciated. The termed it a positive step, the federal government termination of contracts with 5 IPPs as an encouraging step.

Old enmity claims four lives

SARGODHA (INP): Four people were shot dead and five injured by rivals over an old enmity at Aziz Bhatti Town Chowk on Thursday. The police said Shafi, 33, Fazalur Rehman, 32, Zaheer Abbas, 29, Abdul Staar, 41, Shehbaz, 36, Azam, Zafer, Jaleel and Ramzan of Chak No 54 SB were returning home on a car after court hearings when their rivals started firing at them.

Pak-Afghan highway suspends in protest in Landi Kotal

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Against the arrest of a local social worker, the Pak-Afghan road has been blocked for all kinds of traffic in protest here in Landi Kotal on Thursday. According to the police sources last night the police apprehended a local youth, Sawab Noor allegedly in a fight and thrashing of police personnel.

Numbers of workers of Tanzeem-e-Nujawan, and

Landi Kotal, councillors and members of civil society put stones on the road to suspend it from traffic.

Addressing on the occasion former head of the organization Israr Shinwari, tehsil chairman Shah Khalid, Aftab Shinwari, Haji Sher Afridi and others categorically condemned the arrest of the their colleague and said that they were peaceful people and it was injustice to detain a social without First Information

Report (FIR).

Harassing a citizen is unfair, he added and said police is the protector of life and property of the people, they remarked. They maintained that no one would be let to misuse his authority and threatened that their protest would be continued till provision of justice to them. It is to be stated here that the detainee was released on midnight of Wednesday after interference of the local elders.

Funds to be sought for ongoing uplift projects

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Deputy Commissioner Lower Dir Muhammad Arif Khan has said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and its concerned departments will be contacted for funds release for those projects which lack funding. He was chairing a meeting regarding development projects under the Annual Development Programme projects in the Lower Dir district on Thursday.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (finance and planning) Gohar Ali, assistant director local government, executive engineer

(XEN) building, XEN Highways, XEN public health engineering department, tehsil municipal officers and representatives of Pesco briefed the meeting about the ongoing development schemes under the new ADP.

The DC said that a report of the development projects in which there was an issue of funds would be sent to the provincial government for further action. The DC asked the officials to take special care of quality and quantity in ongoing development projects. He directed the concerned officers to share their progress reports regarding work on ongoing

development projects with the additional deputy commissioner (finance and planning), Mr Gauhara Ali.

He also issued directives that after the completion of the construction phase of the development scheme, physical verification should be ensured that the project was completed as per PC-1. The DC said that the department should not take the responsibility of the projects until the contractor completed it as per PC-1. He said the department would be dealt with legal actions if incomplete projects were taken from the concerned contractor.

Commissioner holds Revenue Darbar at SDC

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division, Syed Motasim Billah Shah, under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Program Awami Agenda on Thursday held a Revenue Darbar at Service Delivery Center (SDC) here The Revenue Darbar, besides the Deputy Commissioner Abdul Akram Chitrali, Deputy Director SDC, Assistant Commissioner, Additional Assistant Commissioners and Tehsildar Kohat, was also attended by the media persons, Revenue staff and the general public in large numbers.

Commissioner Kohat said the purpose of holding

Revenue Darbar is to solve the land disputes and other related issues of the people on the spot. He further said that 21 complaints received in the previous Revenue Darbar have been resolved.

Similarly, beside setting-up Special Counters for Special Persons, Overseas Pakistanis and women, a Temporary Record Room has also been arranged while establishment of a permanent Record Room is also in the pipeline.

Motasim Billah Shah said, presently 12 computer operators are working in the Service Delivery Center while the government has been requested for 16 more computer operators vacancies. A special place for offer-

ing prayers has also been arranged, he said. He added, there is a program to impart computer and modern system training to the Patwaris to ensure better service delivery to the people.

On this occasion, the people openly put their problems before the Commissioner Kohat, among which issues like Intiqalaat, correctness of records and illegal occupations were at the top. Commissioner Kohat listened to all the problems seriously and solved most of the problems on the spot while necessary directions were given to the authorities concerned to resolve the complicated cases at the earliest.

Code of conduct issues for Hazart Ali (RA) birth anniversary

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue (ADCR) has said that on the occasion of Hazrat Ali Murtaza (RA)'s birthday, all possible security and administrative measures should be taken in the district. And adherence to code of conduct has been ensured as much as possible.

In order to establish peace and order, all relevant departments should make the coordination more efficient. These views were expressed by Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Syed Jamil Haider Shah

while presiding over the arrangements on the occasion of Hazrat Ali Murtaza (RA) Day. On this occasion, Assistant Commissioner Kamalia Iqra Nasir, Civil Defense Officer Mehmood Gill, Chief Officer District Council Mahar Anwar Baig Sial, District Health Officer Dr Kashif, Superintendent DC Office Muhammad Ziaul Haq and other relevant officers were also present in the meeting.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue said that the emergency control room should be kept active. He further said that a plan should be made regarding

the security of the main procession route.

District welfare office portrays performance: District Population Welfare Officer Toba Tek Singh, Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem, highlighted the department's efforts in 2024. Throughout the year, various group meetings and seminars were organized to raise public awareness on important issues.

These initiatives focused on pre-marital counseling, child marriage awareness, marital counseling for harmony, and promoting birth spacing methods for healthier families.



LANDI KOTAL: Workers of Tanzeem-e-Naujawan Qabail block Pak-Afghan highway in protest against arrest of their colleague by police.

Resident demand action against land transfer F.P. Report

PABB: The residents of Mohalla Khumarkhel in Jaloza, area of Nowshera district requested Chief Minister Pakhtunkhwa and Chief Justice Peshawar High Court to take notice against illegal sale of their lands using fake stamp papers, on Thursday.

This was requested by Intikhab Alam while speaking at a press conference at Pabbi press club and said that their lands have been transferred to non-residents of the area. These individuals have come from other cities and towns in the province and have no ancestral links to Jaloza area of Nowshera.

The resident alleged that these individuals have occupied their lands and are causing disputes among the local residents. He held Abid, serving as Qanongo "a patwari" (land record officer) from Merah Jaloza, and his relatives responsible for the situation.

He claimed that Abid and his relatives have appointed their own people in the patwari office and are making illegal land transfers in collaboration with land mafia. They are also including non-resident individuals in the local family trees.

The resident Intikhab Alam appealed to the Deputy Commissioner of Nowshera, the Tehsildar of Pabbi, and other relevant authorities to take notice of the situation and prevent further illegal land transfers.

Police busts intra-district robbers gang Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Police has busted intra-district three-member gang of robbers and motorcycle thieves while recovered stolen items from their possession, on Thursday.

According to details, police has recovered stolen goods including 8 mobile phones, Rs. 120,000 in cash, and 10 motorcycles. This was disclosed by SDPO Pabbi Circle Jawad Khan while addressing a press conference.

Politician urge setup of bus stand in Wana

F.P. Report

WANA: Political leader Taj Muhammad Wazir recently emphasized the urgent need for a general bus stand in Wana during a media discussion. He stated that this is a critical necessity of the time, and the provincial government must address this issue promptly.

Taj Muhammad Wazir leveled serious allegations against the local TMO (Town Municipal Officer) and district administration, accusing them of inaugurating two fake bus stands for personal financial gains without delivering any practical results. "To date, there is no tangible evidence of these projects on the ground," he explained. Taj Muhammad outlined that a proper general bus stand should include essential facilities such as restrooms, a mosque, a separate waiting area for women, and transport hubs connecting to other cities in Pakistan. According to him, this project would not only benefit the local population but also play a significant role in the area's development.

He further stated that private lands are being used for inaugurating these fake bus stands, which has led to disputes among local tribes, sometimes escalating to violence. "These illegal actions are creating law and order issues in the region, which are unacceptable," he added.

Taj Muhammad Wazir's remarks highlight a pressing need for the region's residents. The people of Wana are also urging the government to take practical steps toward establishing a general bus stand. This project is essential not only for public convenience but also as a means to boost the local economy. The provincial government and district administration must take this demand seriously and expedite the establishment of a general bus stand in Wana. This step will not only help address public grievances but also strengthen the government's credibility.

Pine Nut union demands fair treat-

ment from Customs' officials: The office-bearers of the Pine Nut Union Waziristan, including prominent figures Haji Zaman Wazir, Maiwah Khan, Javed Khan, Awais Khan, Haji Qabil Khan, and Rasool Muhammad, have issued an appeal to authorities and the public regarding an issue affecting the trade of their local produce, chilgoza (pine nuts).

According to the union, pine nuts are legally transported from Waziristan to major cities across Pakistan. The Forest Department of South Waziristan collects a fee of PKR 25 per kilogram under the Forest Development Fund, after which traders receive a transport pass to move the produce through lawful means.

However, the union highlighted the challenges posed by the closure of the Angoor Adda border crossing for the past 15 months, which has hindered access to Afghanistan, forcing traders to transport and store the produce in Pakistani cities for timely sale.

In a troubling development, Customs Collector Muhammad Saeed Wattoo recently sealed a store named "Zain" in Lahore, alleging that the pine nuts were smuggled from Afghanistan. Despite the union providing all relevant legal documents to prove the local origin of the produce, the collector reportedly refused to accept their claims and continues to act in what the union described as an "arbitrary and unlawful manner."

The union has urged authorities to take immediate action and guide Customs Collector Wattoo to abide by the law, ensuring that legitimate traders are not unfairly penalized. The issue has sparked concerns among traders, who fear that such actions could disrupt their livelihood and harm the local economy.

The Pine Nut Union called on stakeholders and relevant government departments to address the matter urgently to safeguard the legal trade of Waziristan's renowned pine nuts.

Football talent hunt trial arranged

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: District Sports Officer Hafizabad Nabeela Cheema said that with collaboration of Pakistan Army Under-16 Talent Hunt Trials Football tournament will be held on 15, January. She said that trial of Tehsil Hafizabad will be held on 15, January and Tehsil Pindi Bhattian on 16, January. She said that Talent Hunt competitions were being arranged with collaboration of Pakistan Army for promoting Football and for exploring new talent.

She said that cash

awards would be given to winners teams in Tehsil, District and Division level competitions. She also said that semifinal matches at Tehsil level competition will be held on 17, January while final matches would be arranged on 18, January.

A sum of two lakh rupees will be given to winner teams each at tehsil level while one lakh rupees would be given to runner-up teams, said that added that a sum of five lakh rupees will be awarded to winner team at district level and ten lakh rupees to winner teams of division level.

Population control

awareness stressed: In order to create awareness among people about hazards of uncontrolled population, the human chain formed at Bus Satand on Gujranwala led by Chie Executive Officer Health Dr. Zaheer Ahmad and District Population Welfare Officer Muhammad Atif Ali.

Addressing the participants, CEO Health Dr. Zaheer Ahmad said that uncontrolled increase in population was creating economic, social, unemployment, crimes and other problems and small family and interval in birth of children was need of hour.

Swat's Trout Fish: A fresh winter flavour bringing foodies together

MINGORA (APP): Known as Switzerland of Pakistan, Swat is a treasure trove for food lovers, offering an array of delectable traditional dishes including the tantalizing recipe of chappli kabab and trout fish during winter season.

During the harsh winter with chances of snowfall in upper areas of Kalam, Malam Jabba, Osho valley and Bahrain, a special treat of trout fish of river Swat has become a quintessential part of the city's culinary offerings. As visitors stroll through the bustling Mingora and Kalam bazaars, they are drawn in by the tantalizing aromas of sizzling Chappli Kabab and crispy fried trout fish.

The combination of these local delicacies, accompanied by traditional Qehwa and spicy sauces, captures the essence of Swat's vibrant food culture, particularly during the winter months. Fish outlets in the city are experiencing a surge in business, with food enthusiasts flocking to enjoy fresh, locally sourced fish varieties.

The tourists takes keen interest in Rainbow and Brown Trout, along with other regional favorites such as Mushka, Raho, Simon, Pomfret, Mahsher, and

Lobsters. With the winter chill getting harshers, hotels, restaurants, and vendors in these bazaars are brimming with orders, not just for dine-in services but also for home deliveries. Visitors alike are savoring these flavorful bites in the comfort of their homes, making trout fish a much-anticipated winter delicacy in Swat.

"As special winter offer, we have received sufficient trout stock from private fish farms of Kaghan keeping in view tourists pressing demands," said Attaullah Khan, the owner of a famous fish outlet at Mingora bazaar while talking to APP.

He said, "The recipe of trout fish is very simple and cost as well as time-efficient. We prepare trout in oil after its proper water wash and cutting. Later, varieties of spicy sauces, pomegranate seed powder, salt and other species ingredients are properly mixed. Before making it fry on medium flame, the fish is properly marinated for about two hours to ensure that all sauces are intact and color is unchanged and later served to customers with chips, sauces (Chitnis), salad and naans."

Attaullah Khan, who remained associated with the

fish business for 20 years said that most people wanted deep-fried fish, some liked "tawa machi" and wanted grilled and baked trout fish for eating at shops as well as taking the parcel for their loved ones. "Trout is my favorite seafood as its meat is full of proteins and vitamins besides easily digestible," said Fayaz Khan, a retired teacher of Nowshera at Mingora while talking to APP.

"Normally on every einter, I visit Swat to enjoy trout fish with my family alongside enjoying snowfall and paragliding" Fayaz said. "When I was young, I frequently visited Swat with my father to enjoy the freshwater brown trout due to its aromatic taste and spiciness amid snowfall. This year, I came with my son to explore Swat beauty along with grilled and baked brown trout fish at Peshawar," he added.

Dr Riaz Khan, Children Specialist, Government Hospital Pabbi Nowshera said there was an additional burden on the heart, brains, joints and lungs of weak people and children due to persistent cough, nausea and frosts in winter. He said consumption of the fish was the best and easily available choice to help reduce

risks of these diseases. Terming fish as the best source of proteins, vitamins, omega 3 fatty acids, phosphorus, iron and iodine, he said that consumption of seafood help improve digestion, protects skin from dryness and relieves joints' pains.

Usman Ali, General Secretary of Swat Trout Fish Farming Association said that business of trout farmers have shined in winter following increase in demands of consumers and hotel industry from across the country. He said about 150 trout farms existed in Swat that engaged extra laborers to meet the placed orders. He said about 2,500 people were directly associated with trout farming in Swat and urged the government to announce a special package for trout farmers keeping in view of their substantial economic losses during COVID-19 pandemic.

"In case of vulnerability of temperature, the mortality ratio of trout remained high and fishermen suffered great economic losses," he added. Usman said one kilogram trout in the open market was being sold at Rs 2000 to Rs 2500 per kilogram. "Trout farming is a highly profitable business. Any farmer having 35 marla land and proper water inflow and outflow

system can produce 2,250 kg trout by earning about two million rupees profit after 15 months ranging," he added.

He said Pakistan can earn substantial revenue by giving special incentives to trout's farmers besides construction of new trout lakes especially in Malakand and Hazara divisions due availability of plenty of cold water reservoirs and ideal climate conditions for trout farming. KP government had launched Trout Village Project (TVP) in Hazara and Malakand Divisions where about 93 new small and large trout fish farms were established, said officials of KP Fisheries Department.

"These farms were established under a 50:50% cost sharing formula basis contributed by the KP Government and farmers mostly in Swat and Mansehra districts under TVP," he said. A model trout hatchery under KP government has been established at Salathana valley in Upper Swat on 15 kanal with capacity to produce six million fish seeds per year Another project 'development of cold water fisheries resources, a joint venture of Federal and Provincial Governments having 40:60pc cost sharing basis, was under-

way in Malakand and Hazara divisions under which 297 trout lakes were being established.

The KP government approved 'development of reservoirs for uplift of fisheries resources under which 67 carp fish farms and model hatchery on 179 kanal at Swabi to be established from where fish seedlings would be provided to private hatcheries and Turbella dam. With completion of these projects, he said KP's fish production would likely increase to 740 metric tons from the existing 400 metric tons by next year.

Terming water pollution and climate change as a big threat to trout farming, the official suggested a comprehensive mechanism for disposal of hotels waste in Malakand and Hazara divisions especially in Swat. Throwing of plastic pollution and hotels effluent drains directly into River Swat and Kunhar are extremely harmful for freshwater trout, he added. A model coldwater research centre was established at Madyn Swat with a facility of a fish hatchery where academia and young researchers were being facilitated to conduct researches on different issues of aquatic resources.



Colorado governor walks a tightrope in approaching Trump

DENVER (AP): Colorado Gov. Jared Polis donned safety glasses and seized the handle of the electric saw, guiding the buzzing blade down through a stack of printed-out executive orders dating back decades. Polis' pre-Christmas news conference was designed to highlight how he was repealing unnecessary regulations, and it caught the eye of a prominent Republican - one the Democratic governor's party has grown to despise.

"Nice work," wrote Vivek Ramaswamy, the brash MAGA-disciple who President-elect Donald Trump tapped to help slash government spending, on the social media site X. "Send that shredder over to (the Department of Government Efficiency) next month!" Polis reposted Ramaswamy's message and continued to banter with him on the site about closing a federal cheese facility in Missouri. It was only the latest example of how Polis, who prides himself on his quirky independence, is walking a difficult line with the incoming administration. As Democratic governors across the country adapt to Trump's victory - New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, for instance, reached out to Trump to find common ground while California Gov. Gavin Newsom has prepared for legal battles - Polis stands out.

In the days following the election, he joined Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker to form an ostensibly nonpartisan group of governors to "protect democracy," a seeming reprise of Democrats' resistance during Trump's first term and in line with Newsom's batted-hatches approach. But days later, Colorado's governor zagged, going beyond Hochul's conciliatory call. Polis cheered Trump's nom-

ination of vaccine skeptic Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. to be secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, noting he had worked with Kennedy before. Polis later defended his comments by saying he personally supports vaccination and hoped Kennedy would take on "big pharma and corporate ag." In an interview with The Associated Press, Polis explained his outreach with his go-to refrain that isn't often heard in today's hyperpolarized politics: "We can get good ideas from the left and the right." "There might be some people who are over-simplistically saying they are either for or against whatever is going on in Washington," he said. "I think it's a little bit more nuanced than that." Some Democratic activists and operatives began texting each other in disbelief after Polis' praise of Kennedy. The Colorado governor has been on several shortlists as a possible 2028 presidential contender, but now a few Democrats are moving him down several spots. "I think a lot of Democrats have learned the wrong lessons from this race, and he's the prototype of that," Bakari Sellers, a prominent Democratic strategist in South Carolina, a top early primary state in 2028, said of Polis. "After 18 months, when people look at the failures of this administration and you were the one to cuddle up to it, they're going to remember." Polis supporters see the governor's actions as what one called "vintage Jared." The openly gay, wealthy entrepreneur-turned-politician has a distinctly libertarian bent. He resisted imposing mask or vaccine mandates during the coronavirus pandemic, pushed to eliminate all state income taxes, and has spo-

ken fulsomely about the benefits of capitalism and free trade. "Jared's not picking a fight; that's not his style," said Ted Trimpa, a veteran Colorado Democratic strategist who's known Polis for decades. "It's not what he does. He's not Gavin," Trimpa added, a reference to the California governor, who has highlighted his own ideological opposition to Trump. "I do think he is always going to look for ways to work with Trump, even if he vehemently disagrees with other things Trump is doing," said Democrat Steve Fenberg, the departing state Senate president who has known and worked with Polis for over a decade. "The question is how do you balance that with Trump attacking actual institutions and norms?" When asked about balancing his fears with his concerns that Trump could threaten the Republic, Polis said, "I'm never afraid to speak out where I disagree." He has voiced concerns over some of Trump's proposed policies but has rarely criticized Trump himself, as other Democrats often do.

One likely area of disagreement is immigration. Trump has zeroed in on Colorado as an example of what he contends are the costs of unchecked migration. He held a rally in Aurora, a city of 400,000 east of Denver where video surfaced of heavily armed men going door to door in an apartment complex housing recent Venezuelan migrants. A man was shot to death the night the video was recorded. Trump used the incident in a single apartment building to paint a picture of a city the size of Tampa overrun by immigrant gangs. He vowed to dub his national mass deportation program "Operation Aurora."

Dangerously high winds force Biden to cancel event

LOS ANGELES (AP): Dangerously high winds forced President Joe Biden to cancel a trip to the Eastern Coachella Valley, where he was to announce the creation of two new national monuments in California that will honor Native American tribes.

Winds began gaining strength across Southern California as forecasters warned of "life-threatening, destructive" gusts. The president was in his limousine ready to leave Los Angeles when the event was canceled. The White House initially said Biden would speak in Los Angeles but later announced the event would be rescheduled at the White House next week at a time when others could attend.

The National Weather Service said it could be the strongest Santa Anawindstorm in more than a decade and it will peak, when gusts could reach 80 mph (129 kph). Isolated gusts could top 100 mph (160 kph) in mountains and foothills. Biden's announcement was part of his administration's effort to conserve at least 30% of US lands and waters by 2030 through his "America the Beautiful" initiative. But the cancellation of the trip was also a stark reminder of another administration priority: cli-

mate change and the increasing effects of extreme weather.

The proclamations name the Chuckwalla National Monument in Southern California near Joshua Tree National Park and the Sattitla National Monument in Northern California. The declarations bar drilling and mining and other development on the 624,000-acre (2,400-square-kilometer) Chuckwalla site and roughly 225,000 acres (800 square kilometers) near the Oregon border in Northern California. The new monuments protect clean water for communities, honor areas of cultural significance to tribal nations and Indigenous peoples, and enhance access to nature, the White House said.

Biden, who has two weeks left in office, announced he will ban new offshore oil and gas drilling in most US coastal waters, including in California and other West Coast states. The plan is intended to block possible efforts by the incoming Trump administration to expand offshore drilling. The flurry of activity has been in line with the Democratic president's "America the Beautiful" initiative launched in 2021, aimed at honoring tribal heritage, meeting federal goals to conserve 30% of

public lands and waters by 2030 and addressing climate change. The Pit River Tribe has worked to get the federal government to designate the Sattitla National Monument. The area is a spiritual center for the Pit River and Modoc Tribes and encompasses mountain woodlands and meadows that are home to rare flowers and wildlife.

A number of Native American tribes and environmental groups began pushing Biden to designate the Chuckwalla National Monument, named after the large desert lizard, in early 2023. The monument would protect public lands south of Joshua Tree National Park, spanning the Coachella Valley region in the west to near the Colorado River. Advocates say the monument will protect a tribal cultural landscape, ensure access to nature for local residents and preserve military history sites. "The designation of the Chuckwalla and Sattitla National Monuments in California marks an historic step toward protecting lands of profound cultural, ecological and historical significance for all Americans," said Carrie Besnette Hauser, president and CEO of the nonprofit Trust for Public Land.

NATO membership only credible security guarantee for Ukraine

KYIV (Reuters): Membership in NATO is the only credible long-term security guarantee Ukraine can receive against future Russian aggression, Finland's top diplomat said. Donald Trump's return to the White House on Jan. 20 has sparked hope of a diplomatic resolution to end Moscow's invasion but also fears in Kyiv that a quick peace could come at the high price of Ukrainian officials including President Volodymyr Zelenskyy have called for strong security guarantees from partners that would prevent Russia from rearming for a new attack. "I think in the long term the only credible security guarantee is Article 5 of the Washington

Treaty - so NATO membership essentially," Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen told Reuters in Kyiv, referring to the alliance's collective defence clause. "And we are supporting Ukraine's NATO membership further down the line and hopefully not in (the) too-distant future." Ukraine's leaders have aggressively pushed for an invitation to join the 32-member alliance but have met resistance from key members as the war lurches toward its three-year mark and Ukrainian troops struggle to beat back Russian advances.

Trump, who has criticized US aid to Ukraine, said he sympathizes with Russia's position that Ukraine should not be part

of NATO. His aides and allies see Ukrainian membership as an unnecessary provocation toward Moscow.

He also blamed outgoing Democratic President Joe Biden for allegedly changing the US position on NATO membership for Ukraine. Valtonen, who was in Kyiv days after Finland assumed the chairmanship of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, said a Trump administration would not necessarily spell the end for Ukraine's NATO ambitions. "Three years ago nobody thought that Finland would be joining NATO, or Sweden for that matter," she said. "So here we are, you never know."

Linked oil tanker has serious deficiencies

HELSINKI (Reuters): Finland's public transport agency said that an oil tanker suspected of damaging undersea cables in the Baltic Sea was found to have serious deficiencies and will not be allowed to operate until repairs have been made. Baltic Sea nations are on high alert after a string of power cable, telecom link and gas pipeline outages since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. The NATO military alliance has said it will boost its presence in the region.

Finnish police on Dec. 26 seized the Eagle S tanker carrying Russian oil and said they suspected the vessel had damaged the Finnish-Estonian Estlink 2 power line and four telecoms cables by dragging its anchor across the seabed. While the police investigation is ongoing, authorities also checked the vessel's condition in a port state inspection, and said they found 32 errors, including in the fire safety, navigation equipment and pump room ventilation. "Operating the ship is forbidden until the deficiencies have been rectified," Director of Maritime Affairs Sanna Sonninen at Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom said in a statement.

Correcting the deficiencies will require outside assistance and will take time, she added. Finnish lawyer Herman Ljungberg, who represents the ship's owner, United Arab Emirates-based Caravelle LLC FZ, said the inspector's findings should have first been delivered to the company and the vessel before being shared in public. The lawyer has said that the ship's alleged damage to undersea equipment happened outside of Finland's territorial waters and that the country lacked jurisdiction to intervene. A Finnish court last week denied a request for the vessel's release. Finnish police have said they ordered a travel ban for eight crew members as part of the investigation. Finland's customs service has said it believes the Eagle S is part of a shadow fleet of tankers used to circumvent sanctions on Russian oil, and has impounded its cargo. Moscow has said Finland's seizure of the ship is not a matter for Russia.

Armenia warns of escalation risk

MOSCOW (Reuters): Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has accused neighboring Armenia of posing a "fascist" threat that needs to be destroyed, in comments that Armenia's leader called a possible attempt to justify fresh conflict. Armenia and Azerbaijan have fought a series of wars since the late 1980s, when Nagorno-Karabakh, a region in Azerbaijan that had a mostly Armenian population, broke away from Baku with Yerevan's support.

In September 2023, Azerbaijan retook Karabakh, prompting almost all of the territory's 100,000 Armenians to leave en masse to Armenia. Both sides have since said they want to sign a treaty to end the conflict. But in an interview with Azerbaijani television channels, Aliyev said: "Armenia is effectively a source of threat to the region. The independent Armenian state is essentially a fascist state. For nearly 30 years, this country was governed by bearers of fascist ideology, and they shaped the state in their own image. "Therefore, fascism must be eradicated," he added. "It will either be eradicated by Armenia's leadership or by us. There is no other way." In comments to Armenian state news agency Armenpress, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said that Yerevan remained intent on peaceful negotiations.

"Perhaps Baku is attempting to form 'legitimacy' for escalation in the region," Armenpress cited Pashinyan as saying. Peace talks between the two sides have been fitful and progress has been slow. They have no formal diplomatic ties and their 1,000 km (620 miles) border remains closed and heavily militarised. Azerbaijan has said that Armenia must change its constitution to remove what Baku says are claims to its territory before a treaty can be signed. Armenia says it makes no claim on Azerbaijani lands.



GAZA STRIP: Mourners reacting as they carry the body of a Palestinian child killed in an Israeli strike in Khan Younis.

US, French troops could secure Syria's northern border

PARIS (Reuters): Talks are taking place on whether US and French troops could secure a border zone in northern Syria as part of efforts to defuse conflict between Turkey and Western-backed Kurdish Syrian forces, a senior Syrian Kurdish official said.

Ankara has warned that it will carry out a cross-border offensive into north-eastern Syria against the Kurdish YPG militia if the group does not meet Turkish demands. Turkey regards the YPG, which spearheads the US-allied Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), as a terrorist group linked to Kurdish PKK militants who for 40 years have waged an insurgency against the Turkish state. The SDF played an important role in defeating Islamic State (IS) militants in Syria in 2014-17. The group still guards IS fighters in prison camps there, but has been on the back foot since rebels ousted Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on Dec. 8.

French President Emmanuel Macron said earlier this week that Paris would not abandon the SDF, which was one among a myriad of opposition forces during Syria's 13-year-long civil war. The United States and France could indeed secure the entire border. We are ready for this military coalition to assume this responsibility," Ilham Ahmed, co-chair of foreign affairs for the Kurdish administration in northern territory outside central Syrian government control, was quoted as saying by TV5 Monde. "We ask the French to send troops to this border to secure the demilitarised zone, to help us protect the region and establish good relations with Turkey." Neither France nor Turkey's foreign ministries immediately responded to requests for comment. The US State Department was not immediately available for comment. It is unclear how receptive Turkey would be to such an initiative, given

Ankara has worked for years to secure its border against threats coming from Syria, and has vowed to destroy the YPG.

"As soon as France has convinced Turkey to accept its presence on the border, then we can start the peace process," Ahmed said. "We hope that everything will be settled in the coming weeks." A source familiar with the matter said such talks were going on, but declined to say how advanced or realistic they were. Washington has been brokering ceasefire efforts between Turkish-backed groups and the SDF after fighting that broke out as rebel groups advanced on Damascus and overthrew Assad. Addressing a news conference in Paris alongside outgoing US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot hinted that there were talks on the issue. "The Syrian Kurds must find their place in this political transition. We owe it to them because

they were our brothers in arms against Islamic State," Barrot said. "We will continue our efforts ... to ensure that Turkey's legitimate security concerns can be guaranteed, but also the security interests of (Syria's) Kurds and their full rights to take part in the construction in the future of their country."

Blinken said it was vital to ensure that the SDF forces continued the job of guarding more than 10,000 detained IS militants as this was a legitimate security interest for both the US and Turkey. "We have been working very closely with our ally ... Turkey to navigate this transition ... It's a process that will take some time," Blinken said. The US has about 2,000 troops in Syria who have been working with the SDF to prevent a resurgence of IS. A French official said France still has dozens of special forces on the ground dating from its earlier support of the SDF, when Paris provided weapons and training.

Turkey threatens military operation against Syrian Kurdish fighters

ISTANBUL (AFP): Turkey threatened to launch a military operation against Kurdish forces in Syria unless they accepted Ankara's conditions for a "bloodless" transition after the fall of strongman president Bashar al-Assad. "We will do what's necessary" if the People's Protection Units (YPG) fail to meet Ankara's demands, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told CNNTurk television. Asked what that might entail, he said: "Military operation".

Assad's overthrow by Islamist-led rebels last month raised the prospect of Turkey intervening directly in the country against Kurdish forces accused by Ankara of links to armed separatists. Ankara accuses the YPG - seen by the West as essential in the fight against Islamic State jihadists -- of links to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey. The PKK has fought a decades-long insurgency against the Turkish state and is listed

as a terrorist organisation by Ankara and its Western allies. "Those international fighters who came from Turkey, Iran and Iraq must leave Syria immediately. We see neither any preparation nor any intention in this direction right now and we are waiting," Fidan said. "The ultimatum we gave them (the YPG) through the Americans is obvious," he added. Since 2016, Turkey has carried out successive ground operations in Syria to push Kurdish forces away from its border. The foreign minister also said Turkey had the capability to take over the management of prisons and detention camps holding IS jihadists in Syria if the new leadership was unable to do so.

"Our president gave the instruction that if others cannot do it, Turkey will keep control (of the camps) with its own soldiers. As Turkey, we are ready for this," Fidan said. New Syrian leader Ahmed al-Sharaa, whose HTS group has long had ties with

Turkey, told Al Arabiya TV that the Kurdish-led forces should be integrated into the national army. Fidan, who met with Sharaa in Damascus last month, said Ankara expected the new leadership to address the YPG issue. Asked if they were taking the necessary steps, Fidan said: "We need to give it some time," adding talks between Damascus and the YPG were going on. He said Syria's new rulers were capable of fighting the YPG, which he accused of buying time. "The administration in Damascus is not made of those who are scared of war. They seized Damascus by fighting," Fidan said. Referring to Kurdish fighters in Syria, he said: "If you do not want any military operation in the region, neither by us nor by the new administration in Syria, the conditions for this are clear."

"The terrorist fighters coming from international countries must leave Syria, the PKK leadership must leave the country. The

remaining cadres must lay down their weapons and join the new system, this is for a bloodless and problem-free transition." Asked if Turkey would still intervene in Syria despite the United States' support for the YPG, Fidan said: "We did it in the past in Afrin, in Ras al-Ayn and in Tal Abyad," referring to locations in northern Syria that Turkey has targeted. He said Turkey would not hesitate to do it again. "This is what our national security requires. We don't have any other option." More than 100 combatants have died over the past few days in northern Syria in fighting between Turkish-backed groups and Syrian Kurdish forces, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. Kurdish-backed factions in northern Syria resumed their armed conflict with Kurdish forces at the same time rebels launched their November 27 offensive that ousted Assad just 11 days later.

US warns NK becoming better prepared for war

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters): The United States warned that North Korea is benefiting from its troops fighting alongside Russia against Ukraine, gaining experience that makes Pyongyang "more capable of waging war against its neighbors." Russia has forged closer diplomatic and military ties with North Korea since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

More than 12,000 North Korean troops are in Russia and last month began fighting against Ukrainian forces in Russia's Kursk region, Deputy US Ambassador to the UN Dorothy Camille Shea told the United Nations Security Council. "The DPRK is significantly benefiting from receiving Russian military equip-

ment, technology and experience, rendering it more capable of waging war against its neighbors," Shea told the 15-member council, which met over what Pyongyang said was a test of a new intermediate-range hypersonic ballistic missile. "In turn, the DPRK will likely be eager to leverage these improvements to promote weapons sales and military training contracts globally," she said, using the acronym for North Korea's formal name - the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

North Korea's UN Ambassador Kim Song justified missile test as part of a plan to enhance the country's defense capabilities. He accused the United States of double standards. "When the civilian death toll exceeded 45,000 in

Gaza, United States embellished Israel's nefarious mass killing atrocity as the right to self-defense ... Meanwhile, it takes issue with legitimate exercise of the right to self-defense of the DPRK," Kim told the Security Council. Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia repeated Moscow's longstanding accusation that the US, South Korea and Japan provoked North Korea with military exercises. He also rejected as "wholly unsubstantiated" a US allegation that Russia intends to share satellite and space technology with Pyongyang. "Such statements are the latest example of baseless conjecture which is geared towards smearing bilateral cooperation between the Russian Federation and the friendly nation of the

DPRK," said Nebenzia, who also congratulated North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on his birthday.

South Korea's UN Ambassador Joonkook Hwang told the council that North Korea's soldiers were "essentially slaves to Kim Jong Un, brainwashed to sacrifice their lives on faraway battlefields to raise money for his regime and secure advanced military technology from Russia." North Korea has been under UN sanctions since 2006, and the measures have been steadily strengthened over the years with the aim of halting Pyongyang's development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. Russia has veto power on the 15-member body, so any further council action is unlikely.

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Trump's claims raise European hackles

DENMARK Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen made it clear that Greenland could become independent – it is now an autonomous region of Denmark – if the Greenlanders wish, but it would not become a state of the USA.

This was in response to American President-elect Donald Trump that the use of force is not ruled out to get control of Greenland. Trump's son, Trump Jr has been to Greenland on a private visit. Trump's claims on Canada and Greenland are outrageous, but he seems to quite serious about what he is saying. France, Germany and the European Union (EU) say that sovereignty of members of EU will not be compromised, and there cannot be use of force to change borders. Greenland's Prime Minister Mute Egde said that the island is not for sale.

The outlandish claim by Trump is backed by a security concern of the Americans who fear that the Arctic would be dominated by Russia and China, the adversaries of the US. Rasmussen took note of the American fears. He said, "We are open to a dialogue with the Americans on how we can possibly cooperate even more closely than we do to ensure that the American ambitions are fulfilled."

Denmark is aware that it is an unequal battle with the US. It wants to strike a conciliatory note without losing ground. Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen expressed the view that Trump's ambitions would not lead to American military intervention in Greenland. And she also felt that a trade war with the US is not the way forward for Denmark. Danish company Novo Nordisk's weight losing medicine, Wegovy, is hugely popular in America.

Trump's statements indicate that his second term in the White House may not be a mellowed one, and he would take to his unorthodox and provocative ways with full abandon. The question is whether the Republicans in the Congress – in the House of Representatives as well as in the Senate – would support his wild policy initiatives, especially on the foreign policy front.

The Republicans have a narrow majority in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. Trump is likely to override the Congress, but he cannot take it too far. The Russia-China factor in the Arctic is something that all conservatives in Americans are likely to buy, but they cannot afford to antagonise the European countries and the EU.

Trump might feel that Europe is a faded power, and America can have its way. Trump's second presidential term could indeed be testing for the leaders in Europe, whether it is the question of NATO, Ukraine, and now the issue of Greenland.

Trump's assumption that Europe is a pushover is wrong. It is indeed true that Europe's influence is not what it was a century ago, and its decline in influence in global affairs had been playing out in the more 75 years of post-Second World War era.

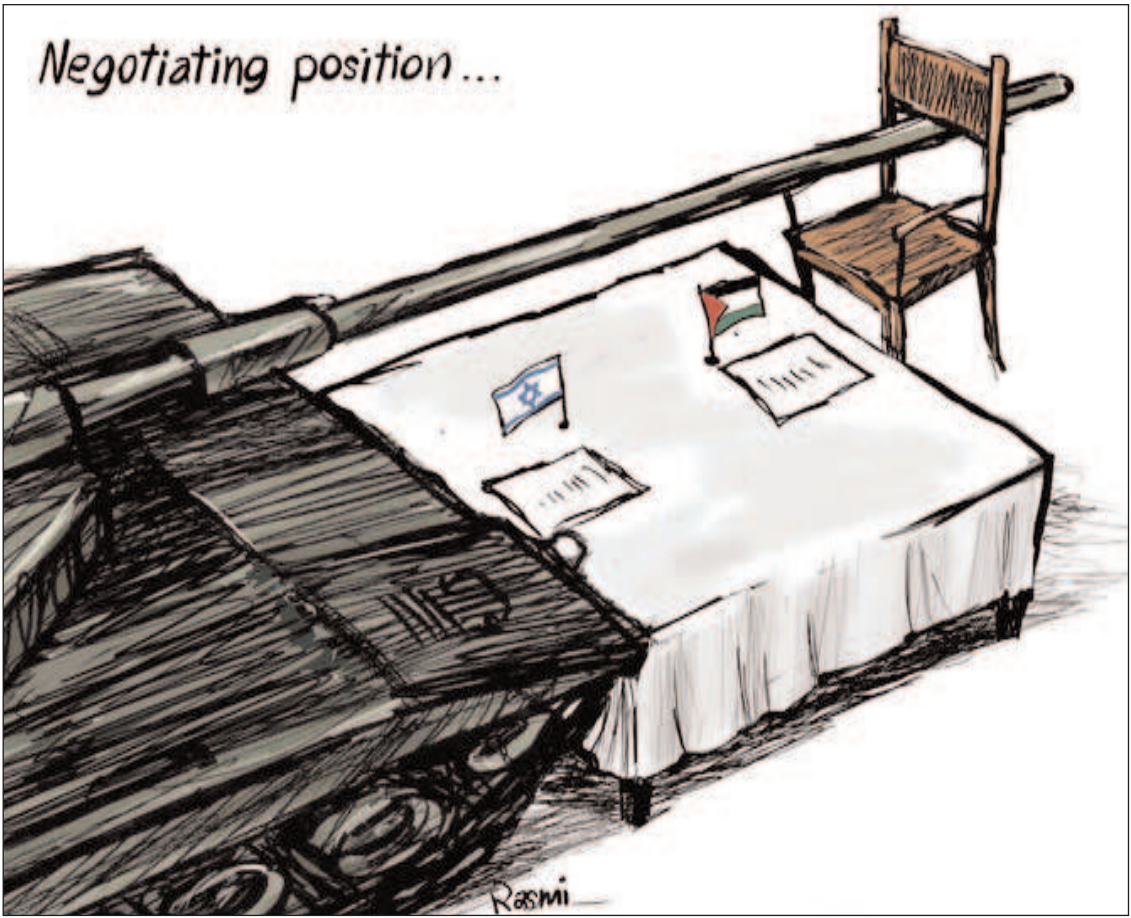
Europe was battered at the end of the war, and it needed America's Marshall Plan to recover its economic feet. But the Europeans are not dependent on the American markets exclusively for their investments or their businesses.

It is true that the European countries do not enjoy the financial and military clout that America still has, and this has been evident in nearly three years of the Russia-Ukraine war. It was America that had been pumping financial and military aid to Ukraine. The European contribution was crucial but smaller.

It is difficult to imagine whether Ukraine would have been able to stay in the war as it has done without American help. This must have strengthened Trump's dismissive view of Europe. But in laying his claims on Greenland, he might be stretching the long American arm far too long.

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Trump seizes on Los Angeles infernos to reopen his feud with Newsom

Dr. Ramzy Baroud

WALLS of fire devoured neighborhoods, forcing tens of thousands of residents to flee for their lives. But as a cataclysm fueled by windstorms charred swathes of Los Angeles, Donald Trump spotted an opportunity.

The president-elect responded to six massive blazes by reopening his long-term feud with California Gov. Gavin Newsom, landing an early jab on a Democratic governor and a state likely to emerge as a major opponent to his second term plans.

Trump and Newsom have clashed bitterly in the past, including over fire prevention, environmental policies, climate change, green vehicles and immigration.

And the incoming president wasted no time in laying the blame for simultaneous wildfires raging in the Los Angeles area that have so far killed at least five people.

Trump slammed "the gross incompetence and mismanagement of the Biden/Newsom Duo," in a post on his Truth Social network. He claimed that California environmental policies that divert fresh water to preserve wetlands and wildlife were to blame for hydrants running dry. "I will demand that this incompetent governor allow beautiful, clean, fresh water to FLOW INTO CALIFORNIA! He is the blame for this," Trump wrote as part of a flurry of social media posts, later writing that Newsom should resign.

In Trump's misinformation game, it doesn't really matter whether it's true that Newsom is responsible for diverting water to protect the delta smelt – "a worthless fish" in Trump's words – and that, as a result, homes of Angelenos were burned down. The president-elect just needs enough people to believe it might be the case to inflict political damage on the governor, who's one of the nation's most high-profile Democrats and a possible 2028 presidential hopeful.

California is also a perfect target as a liberal state that went for Vice President Kamala Harris in last year's election. The conceit of a state and city inflicting self-defeating environmental policies is a perfect fit for Trump's narrative that liberal governance in blue states and cities invites chaos, crime and misery.

"This is not Government. I can't wait till January 20th!" Trump wrote on Truth Social.

There will be legitimate questions about California's and Los Angeles' level of preparedness for the fires. Newsom and city officials will be called to account for any failures – like many politicians tested in the crucible of natural disasters. But in such dire situations, blame usually awaits the ebbing of the crisis.

Newsom told CNN's Anderson Cooper that "one can't even respond" to Trump's attacks. "People are literally fleeing, people have lost their

lives, kids lost their schools, families completely torn asunder, churches burned down – this guy wanted to politicize it."

"I have a lot of thoughts about what I want to say, and I won't," the governor added.

In this specific case, Trump's complaints about the freshwater issue being to blame for difficulties in responding appeared to be at best a vast simplification of complex factors at play.

But after a meeting with Republican senators on Thursday, the president-elect doubled down.

"This is a true tragedy, and it's a mistake of the governor," Trump told reporters. "They don't have any water. Millions and millions of gallons of water that they have, and they send it out into the

Pacific." But water officials said that while hydrants in Pacific Palisades did run dry early Wednesday, there was sufficient water in Southern California to fight the fires. The logistics of getting enough of it to Pacific Palisades – and at the rate overwhelmed firefighters need to control the blazes – were prohibitive.

Still, Trump's attacks were a characteristic attempt to politicize a natural disaster while it is still unfolding. Newsom spokesman Anthony York told CNN that "we're focused on protecting lives and battling these blazes – not playing politics."

Normal practice for a national leader when disaster strikes is to bury partisan grievances, unite behind Americans in need and pledge to stand with the victims for as long as it takes.

Even Florida Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, who has often locked horns with Newsom and California in the past – especially over pandemic lockdowns – offered prayers and assistance to California. "When disaster strikes, we must come together to help our fellow Americans in any way we can," DeSantis wrote on X.

Newsom praised his fellow Democrat, President Joe Biden, for quickly joining the might of the federal government to bear as the infernos gathered strength with a major disaster declaration.

"It's impossible for me to express the level of appreciation and cooperation we received from the White House in this administration," Newsom

said, standing alongside the president in Santa Monica on Wednesday. "So on behalf of all of us, Mr. President, thank you for being here."

Biden said the federal government was prepared to do "anything and everything" to contain the fires and listed multiple military deployments to fight the disaster. He, however, ended the media availability on a jarring note by marking the arrival of a new family member, after his granddaughter Naomi gave birth at an area hospital.

"The good news is, I am a great-grandfather as of today," he said. The White House announced late Wednesday that Biden will no longer travel to Rome, Italy, this week as scheduled, canceling the trip in the final days of his

presidency to monitor the wildfires. Trump's attacks on Biden and Newsom are his latest attempt to portray the outgoing administration as incompetent, apparently designed to flatter his own incoming White House team by comparison. His comments suggest that his second administration, which begins in 11 days, will be just as unorthodox and turbulent as his first, and will be punctuated by angry outbursts on social media against his opponents even during crises.

Trump and Newsom have a deeply antagonistic relationship, which is exacerbated by their sharply differing ideologies and the fact that mighty California has the power to frustrate some of the president-elect's political priorities.

Trump is also fixated on the management of forests and fire prevention, including his view that Democratic jurisdictions conduct insufficient clearance of fallen foliage, which he insists is to blame for many fires. "The Governor of California," @GavinNewsom, has done a terrible job of forest management," Trump wrote on what was then Twitter in November 2019. "I told him from the first day we met that he must 'clean' his forest floors regardless of what his bosses, the environmentalists, DEMAND of him. Must also do burns and cut fire stoppers...."

Trump's tweet, during a previous California wildfire crisis, seemed incongruous at the time since it followed praise from Newsom for his efforts to help his state. Environmentalists

argue that the real problem that makes California so susceptible to worsening fire seasons is something that Trump refuses to accept exists – climate change. In the current crisis, parched earth and unseasonal heat made Los Angeles a tinderbox that was deeply vulnerable to the added catalyst of roaring high winds that spread fires.

During another California wildfires crisis, as millions of acres burned in 2020, Trump dismissed an appeal from Wade Crowfoot, the state's natural resources secretary, to acknowledge the impact of global warming.

"It'll start getting cooler. You just watch," Trump said. When Crowfoot asked him to look at the science, he added: "I don't think science knows, actually."

Trump insisted on Capitol Hill Wednesday that he "got along well" with Newsom despite their differences.

But their renewed estrangement could be a problem for California as it will potentially soon be seeking hundreds of millions in dollars in federal disaster aid from the Republican-controlled White House and Congress.

"It looks like we are going to be the ones having to rebuild it," Trump said after meeting the senators.

And Trump and Newsom will be at odds over more than fires. The governor has already pledged to act if Trump seeks to wipe out electric vehicle tax credits. And his state is likely to be at the vanguard of legal efforts to thwart Trump administration policies in many areas, including immigration and reproductive rights.

There are many previous examples of Trump politicizing national crises.

In 2017, he was criticized for his handling of Hurricane Maria that devastated Puerto Rico and killed nearly 3,000 people. There is blame to go around when relief efforts fall short, and the then-president was not solely responsible for the missteps in the federal and local responses. But he repeatedly blamed local leaders and complained about the level of aid that was required, falsely claiming that the operation was an "an incredible, unsung success."

And Trump's management of the Covid-19 pandemic contained multiple examples of him trying to preserve his political fortunes that ironically helped seal his defeat in the 2020 election.

More recently, Trump seized on the terror attack that killed 14 people in New Orleans on January 1, falsely implying on social media that the suspect was an undocumented migrant who recently crossed the southern border.

It was a reminder that in times of national stress, the president-elect's first response has sometimes been to seek political gain instead of promoting unity and facts-based responses.

How international community can resolve the Sudan crisis

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

THE conflict in Sudan, which is now in its 21st month, has plunged the country into one of the most severe humanitarian crises in modern history. The devastating war between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces has caused massive human suffering, forced millions to flee their homes and decimated the country's economy and infrastructure. This crisis transcends national borders, threatening regional stability. This year must mark a turning point in global efforts to resolve the crisis and alleviate the suffering of the Sudanese people.

The scale of destruction and displacement in Sudan is staggering. More than 11 million Sudanese have been internally displaced, making the country the epicenter of the world's largest internal displacement crisis. An additional 3 million have fled to neighboring countries like Chad, South Sudan and Egypt, overwhelming host nations that are already grappling with limited resources.

The situation within Sudan's borders is no less dire. The healthcare system has nearly collapsed, with 70 percent to 80 percent of hospitals and clinics in conflict zones rendered nonoperational. Medical supplies are critically scarce, leaving millions without access to essential healthcare.

Food insecurity has reached catastrophic levels, with nearly 25 million Sudanese — half the population — facing acute hunger. The UN World Food Programme has warned of famine-like conditions in several regions. Agricultural production has plummeted due to the ongoing violence and rising food prices have made basic staples unaffordable for many.

The toll of this conflict on Sudanese civilians is multifaceted, with no segment of the population spared from its devastating impacts. Civilians face daily threats to their safety, ranging from aerial bombardments to ground attacks by rival forces. In addition to direct violence, reports of sexual and gender-based violence have escalated alarmingly. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable, with many subjected to sexual violence during displacement or in overcrowded camps. These traumatic experiences leave lasting scars, both physical and psychological.

Children, often the most vulnerable in times of conflict, are disproportionately affected. Millions are out of school, robbing them of education and exposing them to risks such as recruitment into armed groups or exploitation as child laborers. The lack of access to education has long-term implications for the country's future, depriving an entire generation of the skills and opportunities necessary for rebuilding post-conflict Sudan.

Resolving the crisis in Sudan requires a unified, multifaceted response from the global community. The failure to act decisively risks further destabilizing the Horn of Africa and prolonging the suffering of millions. The following measures are imperative. First of all, the international community must prioritize meeting the \$4.2 billion funding target set by the UN for 2025.

This funding will enable humanitarian organizations to deliver lifesaving aid, including food, medical supplies and clean water, to millions of vulnerable Sudanese. Governments, private donors and international financial institutions must step up their contributions to address this shortfall.

Sustained diplomatic efforts to resolve the underlying conflict are also essential.

The international community must leverage its influence to pressure the conflicting parties to adhere to ceasefires and engage in meaningful negotiations.

Countries such as Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and the

UAE have expressed a willingness to mediate and these efforts should be supported and expanded. A unified approach involving key international actors, including the UN, EU and regional powers, is critical to fostering a sustainable resolution.

The African Union is uniquely positioned to play a leading role in resolving the Sudan crisis. Its deep understanding of regional dynamics and established relationships with Sudanese stakeholders make it an invaluable partner in mediation and peacebuilding efforts.

Collaboration between the African Union and international actors can enhance the effectiveness of interventions. Joint peacekeeping missions, coordinated intelligence sharing and unified diplomatic initiatives can amplify efforts to stabilize the region. Furthermore, the bloc's influence can ensure that local voices are included in peace negotiations, fostering a more inclusive and durable resolution.

The African Union's track record in addressing regional conflicts, such as its role in brokering peace in Ethiopia's Tigray region, demonstrates its capacity to lead such efforts. However, its success hinges on receiving adequate financial and logistical support from the international community.

Aid organizations are also on the front lines of the crisis, providing essential services to displaced populations and communities in need. Their contributions include delivering food, clean water and medical care to those affected by the conflict; offering safe spaces and psychosocial support for vulnerable groups, particularly women and children; and raising global awareness about the crisis and lobbying for increased international support.

However, aid organizations face significant challenges, including restricted access to conflict zones, security risks for humanitarian workers and chronic funding shortages. The international community must work to address these obstacles by providing financial support, ensuring the safety of humanitarian corridors and advocating for the protection of aid workers.

The Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan, signed in May 2023, provides a crucial foundation for peace efforts. The declaration outlines key measures to safeguard civilians, facilitate humanitarian aid and promote dialogue among the conflicting parties. However, its implementation has been hampered by ongoing violence and a lack of enforcement mechanisms.

Building on the Jeddah Declaration involves ensuring that ceasefires are adhered to and enforced to allow humanitarian aid to reach those in need; deploying independent monitors to oversee compliance and address violations promptly; and engaging all relevant stakeholders, including civil society groups, marginalized communities and diaspora organizations, in peace negotiations.

Recent diplomatic efforts, such as Turkiye's offer to mediate and the UAE's support for these initiatives, provide an opportunity to reignite the Jeddah Declaration and advance peace. These efforts must be supported by the broader international community to ensure their success.

In summary, the ongoing conflict and related humanitarian crisis in Sudan represent one of the most pressing global challenges of 2025.

The scale of suffering demands immediate and sustained action from the international community. By scaling up humanitarian assistance, engaging in robust diplomacy, collaborating with the African Union, supporting aid organizations and building on the Jeddah Declaration, the international community can take meaningful steps toward alleviating the crisis and fostering peace.

History will not be kind to Biden’s presidency

IN less than two weeks, President Joe Biden will leave the White House, ending his one-term presidency, which analysts agree has left the long-time US politician frustrated and disillusioned about his legacy and achievements.

Biden, now 82, has already set many personal records that he would rather be omitted from history. His most prominent foe was his age and mental state; notably, his poor performance at last June’s presidential debate, which turned his world around, drove his closest allies to work against him and eventually forced him to pull out of the race.

This was not how things were supposed to work out. When he defeated the incumbent Donald Trump in 2020, Biden declared to the world that “America was back,” a direct snub to his predecessor, who had America’s allies and enemies baffled by his unpredictable and maverick leadership style.

Biden vowed to reengage the US in global affairs, from defending democracy, law and order by opting for diplomacy over military interventions to protecting the environment and being at the forefront of addressing the world’s most pressing challenges, such as climate change.

However, the former US senator and vice president, who spent most of his life in Washington as a legislator, especially in foreign policy, had no real answers to the global challenges that unfolded during his presidency.

Pundits are divided over his response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and whether his failure to address Vladimir Putin’s genuine concerns about Kyiv’s overtures with NATO contributed to Moscow’s choice of the last resort.

Now, after almost three years, Ukraine finds itself in a military stalemate despite receiving tens of billions of dollars and euros in military aid. Trump has vowed to end this war

and it appears that a deal will come at Kyiv’s expense, handing Putin a costly victory.

Biden will be blamed for failing to engage Putin in a bid to save lives and ensure a state of detente in Europe.

Since then, Europe has veered away from liberal democracy, as the far right has made significant gains in several key countries, including France, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands.

While the US’ hasty

Osama Al-Sharif

peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians, while also failing to revive the nuclear deal with Iran.

But it is Biden’s response to the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on southern Israel and Israel’s brutal response that will leave a lasting stain on his legacy. Biden’s initial support of Israel’s right to defend itself was understandable.

Biden vowed to reengage the US in global affairs, from defending democracy, law and order by opting for diplomacy over military interventions to protecting the environment and being at the forefront of addressing the world’s most pressing challenges, such as climate change. However, the former US senator and vice president, who spent most of his life in Washington as a legislator, especially in foreign policy, had no real answers to the global challenges that unfolded during his presidency. Pundits are divided over his response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and whether his failure to address Vladimir Putin’s genuine concerns about Kyiv’s overtures with NATO contributed to Moscow’s choice of the last resort. Now, after almost three years, Ukraine finds itself in a military stalemate despite receiving tens of billions of dollars and euros in military aid. Trump has vowed to end this war and it appears that a deal will come at Kyiv’s expense, handing Putin a costly victory. Biden will be blamed for failing to engage Putin in a bid to save lives and ensure a state of detente in Europe. Since then, Europe has veered away from liberal democracy, as the far right has made significant gains in several key countries, including France, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. While the US’ hasty and embarrassing withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 has been blamed on his administration, it is fair to say that it was his predecessor who took the decision to end America’s most protracted and expensive war. The victory of the Taliban left the rest of the world wondering about the limitations of America’s military power. The Biden administration has failed to engage China and instead maintained the policies of his predecessor. Meanwhile, the US has done little to advance peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians, while also failing to revive the nuclear deal with Iran. But it is Biden’s response to the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on southern Israel and Israel’s brutal response that will leave a lasting stain on his legacy. Biden’s initial support of Israel’s right to defend itself was understandable.

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Meanwhile, the US has done little to advance

Still, as Benjamin Netanyahu and his far-right government unleashed the most horrific firepower on one of the most heavily crowded population centers in the globe, the official US response to the massacre was ambiguous at first and complicit later on.

Israel has been accused of many appalling crimes since it declared war on Gaza. But it is the Biden administration’s indifference to the wanton killing of civilians, especially women and children, that has condemned America’s role in what is now being defined as

genocide, the worst since 1945.

On Biden’s watch, Israel has carried out an extermination mission against the 2 million inhabitants of Gaza, targeting women, children, journalists, medics, doctors, relief workers, UN staff and academics.

It has been accused of the deliberate bombing of safe areas, including schools and hospitals, ethnic cleansing, abducting thousands of Gazans, summary executions, tor-

than that, the US has sent Israel tens of billions of dollars-worth of military aid, including munitions that Tel Aviv has used against civilians in Gaza.

In a shameless move, the Biden administration last week approved another \$8 billion arms sale to Israel, including bombs.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken knows that Netanyahu is the main obstacle to a deal to end the war and release Israeli captives, yet has done nothing to pressure him to embrace a deal, even one that is based on Biden’s proposal that Hamas had accepted.

Biden’s brazen and unapologetic support of Israel has divided the Democratic Party and damaged his chances — and later those of Kamala Harris — of uniting the party, while exposing the Zionist influence over US politics.

The reality is that the Biden administration could have done more to stop Israel’s killing spree, but chose not to. This means the US has become directly implicated in the Gaza genocide, the dehumanizing of Palestinians and the defense of a pariah and lawless state.

Also, the Biden administration has undermined the international system the US itself built, sponsored and has maintained over the past seven decades. By applying double standards in its responses to the crises in Ukraine and Gaza, the US irrevocably damaged America’s so-called global leadership and its self-perception as a country guided by moral principles.

Biden leaves the White House with the death toll in Gaza nearing 46,000. But there are also tens of thousands of victims who remain missing, presumably under the rubble. The final death toll from Israel’s Gaza war may be double the announced figure.

This ineptness has also caused the unnecessary death of tens of Israeli captives who could have been released many months ago. This failure can never be excused.

— Arab News

Trump says he wants to annex Greenland and Canada

Hussein Ibish

IN his successful campaign last year for a second term in the White House that will begin on January 20, US president-elect Donald Trump ostentatiously ran as “a man of peace” opposed to foreign adventures and “forever wars”. But if his recent comments are anything to judge by, he is more like a man of pieces. He wants a piece of this country, and a piece of that country, and a piece of yet another one.

It’s hard to exaggerate how extraordinary, norm-violating, provocative and disturbing his recent statements — coming even before he has returned to the Oval Office — have been. They are without precedent in more than 100 years of US policymaking, with Mr Trump suddenly sounding less like a

Panamanian sovereignty in 1999, pursuant to a treaty negotiated in the 1970s by then president Jimmy Carter, who passed away last week. Given his fit of international bellicosity, it’s no surprise, then, that the Panama Canal, too, has come squarely into Mr Trump’s crosshairs.

He has accused China of controlling the Canal, which has no basis in fact.

And he accused the Panamanian government of charging US shipping “exorbitant” rates in violation of the handover treaty even though fees are assessed based on vessel type, cargo and other characteristics not associated with the ownership or flagging of the vessels. It is the kind of accusation that makes little sense when subjected

and regional countries as another revisionist power standing against the global system that was, ironically, constructed largely under US influence since the end of the Second World War. Moreover, it would, as the targets of such threats indicate, increasingly pit the US against historical partners rather than adversaries.

Perhaps worst of all, such a development would surely presage the retreat of the US into a smaller but much more firmly controlled sphere of influence, presumably based mainly in the western hemisphere, but possibly including parts of the North Atlantic and South Pacific.

Under such circumstances, the US could be anticipated to readily accede to the development of regional spheres of influence by former

It’s hard to exaggerate how extraordinary, norm-violating, provocative and disturbing his recent statements — coming even before he has returned to the Oval Office — have been. They are without precedent in more than 100 years of US policymaking, with Mr Trump suddenly sounding less like a 1930s isolationist and more like an 1890s imperialist. He has renewed his previous idea of annexing Greenland to the US — an idea roundly rejected by both the inhabitants of Greenland and the Danish state to which they are affiliated. He has offered to buy the territory from Denmark, but he has also more than once suggested that the US might just seize Greenland by force. Denmark, it might be noted, is not just a US ally in Nato, but a founding member of the security alliance dating back to 1949. But what is a little extortion or annexation among friends? Given Mr Trump’s well-known hostility towards Nato, perhaps Copenhagen should regard all of this as well-earned punishment. Closer to home, Mr Trump insisted he would rename the Gulf of Mexico the “Gulf of America”, as if Mexico were not in the Americas or, for that matter, in North America. However, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, who appears to relish her demagogic exchanges of threats and insults with Mr Trump, said it might be more appropriate to rename the US, “Mexican America”. It’s hard to know who sounds more ridiculous in this puerile mudslinging. But it doesn’t bode well for US-Mexican relations in the coming months, despite the fact that the two countries rely on each other for crucial economic, environmental, strategic and other co-operation. Mr Trump is long on record as having been opposed to the return of the Panama Canal to Panamanian sovereignty in 1999, pursuant to a treaty negotiated in the 1970s by then president Jimmy Carter, who passed away last week. Given his fit of international bellicosity, it’s no surprise, then, that the Panama Canal, too, has come squarely into Mr Trump’s crosshairs. He has accused China of controlling the Canal, which has no basis in fact. And he accused the Panamanian government of charging US shipping “exorbitant” rates in violation of the handover treaty even though fees are assessed based on vessel type, cargo and other characteristics not associated with the ownership or flagging of the vessels. It is the kind of accusation that makes little sense when subjected to scrutiny, but which will probably play well with Mr Trump’s nativist base. He declined to rule out the use of force in seizing the Panama Canal as well as Greenland. In a slightly gentler threat, but with a somewhat more ambitious target, he proposed that Washington could use “economic force” to turn Canada into the 51st state in the US.

Children in Gaza find respite from war in music lessons

IN the west of Gaza city, the sound of music is temporarily drowning out the staccato sounds of bombs and the constant dull thrum of warplanes.

Guitars are strummed and notes woven into the air from violins as tutors from the Gaza city branch of the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music host music lessons for children. It is not their usual setting: the old conservatory in the Tel Al Hawa area of the city, comprising one floor of a building owned by the Palestine Red Crescent Society, is impossible to reach because of Israeli operations.

When war broke out in Gaza in October 2023, the conservatory’s staff did not know whether they would see their pupils, or each other, again. Israel’s bombardment and ground invasion of Gaza has killed more than 45,900 people in the enclave and made almost the entire population homeless. But Fouad Khader, a music producer and co-ordinator at the conservatory, came up with an idea to bring music to the people.

“The staff of the conservatory were constantly checking on me and the students during the war,” Mr Khader told The National. “One day, I suggested: ‘What if we let music help the children escape the atmosphere of war?’ They loved the idea.”

The project began in February 2024, but the team was forced to compromise on its plan almost immediately. They had no access to the conservatory’s instruments, and no way of knowing whether the building that housed them was still standing.

Not one to be defeated, Mr Khader and the team made use of the one instrument that is much harder to take away — the human voice.

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The project began in February 2024, but the team was forced to compromise on its plan almost immediately. They had no access to the conservatory’s instruments, and no way of knowing whether the building that housed them was still standing. Not one to be defeated, Mr Khader and the team made use of the one instrument that is much harder to take away — the human voice. The team visited nearly 30 displacement shelters across northern Gaza, encouraging children to sing for peace. Their efforts culminated in the production of a slick music video released in May 2024 and titled Salute to Gaza. It gained 15,000 views on YouTube. It shows a choir of Palestinian children, all wearing keffiyehs in front of a ruined building in the northern Jabalia camp. “The idea of the song and the video was to amplify the voices of Gaza’s children to the world — voices that speak of resilience amid unimaginable suffering,” Mr Khader explained. These musical activities have created recreational spaces where children can express themselves, release the emotional weight of war and start to heal from trauma. In December 2024, NGO War Child surveyed 500 Gazan children, parents and caregivers, from families where at least one child is disabled, injured or unaccompanied and found that 96 per cent of children feel death is imminent. It said 87 per cent display severe fear.

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Naghm Mohanna

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said.

He was also forced to flee Jabalia, leaving behind the few instruments they managed to collect from other institutions, or take with them from their own homes. “We had to start from

scratch in Gaza city,” he added. “But with the intensification of attacks on Jabalia, many of the children we began teaching also fled, and we lost contact with them.” The team now operates from a building in the west of Gaza city, but hopes to begin visiting displacement camps once funding is available. Still, the one remaining shop selling instruments in the enclave has been a lifeline, and music lessons began in November. “Every time we acquire instruments, they are destroyed in the ongoing violence. Buying new ones is expensive, but we persist,” Mr Khader said. Mr Khader is teaching 30 children — 15 are learning the violin and 15 are learning the guitar. Each teacher has only one instrument to share between all of the stu-

dents.

“This makes it challenging to keep the children engaged as they wait for their turn,” Mr Khader said. “But their enthusiasm never wanes. They eagerly await class time and are reluctant to leave when it ends.”

Elias Khader, 10, lost his home and his cherished piano to Israeli bombardment. He had been learning to play at the conservatory before the war began, but lost contact with the programme after moving more than 12 times in search of safety. Miraculously, he found the programme leaders again when he arrived at a relative’s home.

“Music gives me a break from the continuous bombing and reminds me of life before the war,” Elias told The National. “When my time at the camp ends, I feel sad knowing I’ll return to the sound of hovering planes.”

Elias said he has rediscovered his passion for music and singing through the camp’s activities, proving that resilience can shine even in the darkest of times. Ishaq Abu Ghanem, 11, originally from Jabalia, lost his father and sustained injuries during the shelling. “Ishaq’s experience was deeply traumatic,” Mr Khader said. “He lived in a constant state of anxiety and was haunted by the incident.”

Through the programme, Ishaq has found solace in learning the guitar. He also made new friends and his time at the camp has brought him joy, Mr Khader said. “Music helped Ishaq overcome the haunting memories of the bombing and discover a new passion that boosted his self-confidence.”

1930s isolationist and more like an 1890s imperialist.

He has renewed his previous idea of annexing Greenland to the US — an idea roundly rejected by both the inhabitants of Greenland and the Danish state to which they are affiliated. He has offered to buy the territory from Denmark, but he has also more than once suggested that the US might just seize Greenland by force.

Denmark, it might be noted, is not just a US ally in Nato, but a founding member of the security alliance dating back to 1949. But what is a little extortion or annexation among friends?

Given Mr Trump’s well-known hostility towards Nato, perhaps Copenhagen should regard all of this as well-earned punishment.

Closer to home, Mr Trump insisted he would rename the Gulf of Mexico the “Gulf of America”, as if Mexico were not in the Americas or, for that matter, in North America.

However, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, who appears to relish her demagogic exchanges of threats and insults with Mr Trump, said it might be more appropriate to rename the US, “Mexican America”.

It’s hard to know who sounds more ridiculous in this puerile mudslinging.

But it doesn’t bode well for US-Mexican relations in the coming months, despite the fact that the two countries rely on each other for crucial economic, environmental, strategic and other co-operation.

Mr Trump is long on record as having been opposed to the return of the Panama Canal to

to scrutiny, but which will probably play well with Mr Trump’s nativist base.

He declined to rule out the use of force in seizing the Panama Canal as well as Greenland. In a slightly gentler threat, but with a somewhat more ambitious target, he proposed that Washington could use “economic force” to turn Canada into the 51st state in the US. All of these measures he characterised as pressing matters of national security.

The question is, how seriously to take all of this provocation?

Mr Trump’s defenders will undoubtedly claim that he is adopting canny bargaining positions, over-bidding to achieve some sort of beneficial terms in future negotiations.

It’s hard to imagine what can be realistically gained from Denmark or Panama, although complex trade talks with Canada and Mexico are always ongoing.

But this theory seems like an indulgent rationalisation. Perhaps four years of frustration have built up a number of aggressive ideas that simply need to be vented before real responsibility is assumed.

Again, that’s probably too optimistic.

Mr Trump may actually be preparing to begin trying to throw the disproportionate US military and economic might around the world for economic gain and perhaps even territorial expansion — including at the expense of longstanding allies.

This is probably the worst-case scenario. It would effectively find Washington joining the ranks of some of the other most potent global

adversaries such as Russia, China and even Iran, or others, in their own immediate environs.

Historically, maintaining a balance of power between spheres of influence held by waxing and waning forces on a global scale has a wretched history.

It has almost invariably led to periods of massive strife, most notably the two world wars, and even the Napoleonic wars that were effectively a first world war before that term was coined. Any US policy oriented in that direction is overwhelmingly likely to prove calamitous.

Probably the least worrying plausible explanation is that it’s all just political pandering to a chest-thumping, frustrated, flag-waving domestic support base. Among the most worrying is that this is further, although hardly the only, indication that Mr Trump may be ageing badly.

The rapid-fire nature and inexplicable strategic or any other meaningful value of these outbursts could be consistent with any of these interpretations, especially the latter two.

If he’s just pandering, there is little to worry about, at least for now. If, however, this is more evidence of a particularly important national leader increasingly drifting away from reality, that’s bad news for the whole world.

Hopefully the self-proclaimed “man of peace” isn’t going to pieces. It’s even more imperative that he isn’t serious about gobbling up huge chunks of the closest US neighbours. That could take a jigsaw to the international landscape.

— The National



PSX stays bearish, loses 1,510 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Thursday, losing 1,510.19 points, a negative change of 1.32 percent, closing at 112,638.26 points as compared to 114,148.46 points on the last trading day.

A total of 695,142,411 shares were traded during the day as compared to 1,099,982,065 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs24.293 billion against Rs32.466 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 454 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 89 of them recorded gains and 321 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 44 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 195,296,323

shares at Rs1.79 per share, K-Electric Limited with 48,682,503 shares at Rs4.76 per share and Cnergyco PK with 35,460,848 shares at Rs6.69 per share.

Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs125.47 per share price, closing at Rs9,080.41, whereas the runner-up was JDW Sugar Mills Limited with Rs90.50 rise in its per share price to Rs995.45.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs188.99 per share closing at Rs20,811.01 followed by Nestle Pakistan Limited with Rs131.02 decline to close at Rs7,151.21.

Rupee gains 12 paise against dollar

Pakistani rupee on Thursday appreciated by 12 paise against the US dollar

in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.60 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.72.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs278.75 and Rs280.25 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.33 to close at Rs286.68 against the last day's closing of Rs288.01, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen remained unchanged to close at Rs1.76, whereas a decrease of Rs6.09 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs341.42 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs347.51.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased

by 03 paise each to close at Rs75.85 and Rs74.22, respectively.

Gold prices up by Rs1,300 per tola

The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs1,300 and was sold at Rs278,300 on Thursday against its sale at Rs277,000 on previous trading day. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs1,114 to Rs238,597 from Rs237,483 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat also went up to Rs218,714 from Rs217,693.

The prices of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs3,350 and Rs2,872.08 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$13 to \$2,665 from \$2,652, the Association reported.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan and Korean Trade Minister Inkyo Cheong shake hands after signing historic declaration to initiate Pakistan-Korea EPA negotiations in Seoul.

CBEC-SIUT holds int'l conference

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Centre of Biomedical Ethics and Culture (CBEC) of the Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT) is holding an international bioethics conference to celebrate its 20th anniversary.

The program features diverse talks that will be of interest to professionals and the public alike.

The event, titled "The Warp and Woof of Human Morality," on January 10-11, 2025, at the Agha Hasan Abedi Auditorium, Deewan Farooq Medical Complex, SIUT.

The conference will host prominent international speakers including Dr. Caesar Atuire (joining online) from Ghana currently serving as the President of International Association of Bioethics (IAB) and Dr. Paul Lombardo, a legal historian from the USA.

National speakers include Dr. Arfana Mallah, Dr. Fatima Hassan, Dr. Syed Nomanul Haq and Dr. Nauman Faizi.

The program features a play performed by Karachi schoolchildren and an engaging Urdu literature session.

Renowned literary figures Iftikhar Arif, Zehra Nigah, Noor-ul-Huda Shah and Harris Khalique will take part in this session.

Total liquid reserves \$ 16.38 billion

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 16,377.8 million as of January 3, 2025 while the reserves held by the central bank were recorded as \$ 11,695.2 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, Thursday, reported that foreign exchange reserves held by the central bank "decreased by US\$ 15 million to US\$ 11,695.2 million" during the week ended on January 03, 2025.

Meanwhile, the commercial banks held net foreign reserves of \$ 4,682.6 million during the period under review, the break up shown. Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country, in the previous week ended on December 27, 2024, were \$ 16,408.7 million. Among them foreign reserves held by the central bank were recorded as \$ 11,710.5 million while commercial banks held net reserves of \$ 4,698.2 million.

Hyundai Motor to invest record

SEOUL (AFP/APP): South Korea's Hyundai Motor Group said Thursday it plans to make a record \$16.6 billion investment in the country, boosting EV and AI development, as it navigates geopolitical challenges and uncertainties.

The world's third-largest carmaker has been confronted with tough competition abroad, as US President-elect Donald Trump's second term is expected to bring higher tariffs.

Domestically, it is struggling with sluggish demand, which has been exacerbated by ongoing political turmoil stemming from the brief martial law decree issued by impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol last month.

Reduction of iTFAs saves lives: CGPA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Centre for Governance and Public Accountability (CGPA) on Thursday called for food law and standards enforcement agencies to start enforcement of a less than 2% limit of industrially produced trans fats (iTfAs) to protect people from cardiovascular and metabolic ailments such as heart attacks, diabetes, cancers, and obesity.

CGPA organized the event with support from Nutrition International (NI), in which senior officials from provincial and regional food authorities and the Director General, of Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA), Tauseeq Abbasi, participated, said a press release.

While talking at the event DG PSQCA, Tauseeq Abbasi, said that making policy was important, but implementation was more important, adding that "PSQCA has already developed a mandatory Pakistan Standard 221-2023 in June 2023 that focused not more than 2% iTfAs in banaspati ghee."

"However, now we need to have a strategy to implement the policies across the country with the help of CGPA and NI, who have taken this initiative and added civil society voice and supporting the government in the drive to imple-

ment the standard and eliminate iTFAs from the food supply," Abbasi added.

"We have more than 60% of deaths due to various diseases in which food-related risk factors played an important role," said Muhammad Anwar, Executive Director of CGPA, by adding that the iTFA were harmful to the whole body, including the heart, and around 29% of deaths happen because of cardiac problems.

Project Manager, Edible Oil Fortification, Zameer Haider spoke, "NCDs are rising alarmingly and causing disabilities and deaths, we could prevent them by focusing on both the dietary and lifestyle risk factors and also the reduction of iTFA, which can help save precious lives from premature deaths, diseases, and disabilities."

Farha Ather, Deputy Director, Punjab Food Authority (PFA), who also participated in the event, said, "We have to go the perspective and a clearer idea on how to operationalize the reduction strategy for implementation," adding, "Now this is the time that mere talk about iTFA elimination is not enough, and concrete actions must be taken."

Director, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority, Dr. Abdul Sattar said, "In

KP, we have a number of complaints about partial hydrogenation processes that add iTFAs in ghee, and it is time to take action by implementation."

The World Health Organization has prepared a detailed plan of action for iTFA reduction in food supply and CGPA was helping government agencies to use the plan of action, incorporate it in their monitoring and evaluation processes, and develop reporting mechanisms, said Zubair Faissal Abbasi, Advisor to CGPA on food and health governance, adding that "With enforcement plans and implementation modalities in place, the country will qualify for validation by WHO, and it will not only ensure food safety and disease prevention but create a sense of national pride in the comity of nations."

Dr. Tahira Siddique, Deputy Director of the Islamabad Food Authority; Ali BuxSomro, Director of PSQCA; Mahwish Khadim, Kashmir Food Authority; Dr. Ali Ahmad Shaikh, Director of Sindh Food Authority; Nageeb Ullah, Director of Balochistan Food Authority; and Wahab Ferozzin, Advisor, Ministry of Science and Technology also spoke on the occasion, emphasizing the need for a speedy transition from policy to action.

SECP alerts public against fraudulent investment scheme

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has identified another illegal deposit taking/investment scheme being operated under the name of Summit 4X Trade and Summit AH Experts.

According to SECP press release issue here Thursday, the scheme's sponsors, Abdul Hai and Summer Abbas, are mainly targeting the residents of district Layyah through branch offices, WhatsApp and calls.

They persuade the people to make investment in Summit 4X Trade and Summit AH Experts promising lucrative profits of upto 30 percent. To further their deceptive motives, Abdul Hai has registered a Company namely Summit AH Experts (SMC-Private)

Limited with SECP under the Companies Act, 2017, to create an illusion of legitimacy by misusing its registration status to gain public trust.

SECP clarified that the Company or unregistered entities are not authorized to accept deposits/ investments in any form or arrangement.

The commission strongly warned the general public not to invest or deposit funds with Summit 4X Trade/Summit AH Experts/Summit AH Experts (SMC-Private) Limited or any similar illegal investment or deposit-taking platform.

The statement added, the name of the Company to the "List of Companies Engaged in Unauthorized Activities" on the SECP's official website. In addition, SECP has referred this mat-

ter to the relevant investigative authorities for further action against those involved in this illegal activity.

The general public is once again reminded that a company's "Certificate of Incorporation" only confirms its registration with the SECP and does not authorize the company to raise deposits or launch investment schemes. The SECP urged individuals to remain vigilant and verify the legitimacy of any investment opportunity through its official channels.

Court Notice

In the Court of Javeria Sartaj Khan Additional District Judge II /Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Camp Court Totalay Buner. A p p e a l . N o . 3 9 / 1 3 Institution.13/3/2024. Date of hearing. 30/1/2025. Fazl Azem Shah etc VS Ajmal Khan etc. Notice to no. 2.Shah Baroz Khan s/o Nambat Khan.11.Afsaren Khan s/o Redullah Khan. 37.Diyar Khan s/o Ghafar. 44. Zamran Khan s/o Nadar Khan. 53.Bakhti Mand Khan. 55.Parvez Khan.56.Hayat Khan.57.Behram sons.58.Mst Mashtara. 59.Farmen. 60.Nasren. 61.Waseat ds/o Bahadur resident of Krapa thesel Daggar district Buner. 73.Mohamad Sarwar s/o Kareem Dad.74.Musafar s/o Dary Khan. 75.Akbar Ali. 76.Alsar Ali. 77.Gohar Ali .78. Nazo. 79.Arshad sons Fazal Rehman. 80. Rehani Gul. 81.Aurang Zeb. 82. Bakht Muner. 83.Akhtar Muner sons Khalil Khan s/o Mian Dad resident of Sarden Gul Abad district Charsada. 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 30/1/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Mirza Abdul Rahman welcomes FM's statement on tax relief



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Former Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Mirza Abdul Rahman, has welcomed the Federal Finance Minister's decision to impose restrictions on tax relief. He alleged that if investigations are initiated against

the current FPCCI President and some of his associates, the federal government will uncover extensive financial misconduct amounting to billions of rupees under the guise of a 22% tax relief for the former FATA-PATA regions, particularly Malakand Division.

Mirza Abdul Rahman claimed that while tax exemptions were obtained in the name of the people of these underprivileged regions, not a single rupee of relief ever reached them. Instead, the goods exempted from taxes were sent to settled areas and sold at market rates with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) allegedly turning a blind eye.

In his statement, he demanded an impartial inquiry into these activities, highlighting that the individuals involved used the names of tribal districts to gain tax relief but exploited the system for personal gains, causing financial losses to the national exchequer and depriving the local population of any benefits.

He further emphasized that despite receiving significant tax relief, the people of FATA-PATA have not been provided any substantial benefits, even in essential commodities like oil or ghee. Mirza Abdul Rahman called on the federal government to conduct investigations against complicit FBR officials and ensure accountability.

Welcoming the Finance Minister's timely decision, he stated that the entire business and industrial community of the country stands united in support of this initiative. He urged the Prime Minister, Finance Minister, and FBR to take strict action against those who misused the 22% tax relief, establish a neutral inquiry commission, and bring the culprits to justice.

He also pointed out that despite the existence of FIRs against some individuals involved, no significant action has been taken so far. Mirza Abdul Rahman reiterated his demand for immediate accountability to safeguard the national interest and ensure justice.

Pakistan manufactures freight wagons in joint-venture with China

BEIJING (APP): As many as 115 flat wagons are being assembled in Complete Knocked Down (CKD) form in a factory in Lahore with plans for them to roll out in April this year. These wagons are part of a larger order of 620 freight wagons being jointly produced by Pakistan Railways and the Chinese company Baotou Beifang Chuangye Co., Ltd.

"Once all 620 freight wagons are fully operational, they will double the current railway transportation capacity," said Philippe Mi, the Chinese project director for the 820 High-Capacity Wagon (HCW) project, in an interview with China Economic Net (CEN).

In 2021, Beifang

Chuangye won a contract to supply 820 high-capacity railway freight wagons to Pakistan Railways, including four types of vehicles: open-top wagons, flat wagons, covered wagons, and cabooses. By 2022, 200 wagons were delivered and put into operation.

In 2024, 115 high-capacity open-top wagons, assembled in semi-knocked-down (SKD) form at the Raisalpur factory, were deployed on key freight routes connecting Karachi Port to inland destinations. This not only increased transportation capacity but also eased the pressure on Karachi Port's warehousing operations.

"This initiative will bring significant economic benefits to Pakistan, mark-

ing a crucial step toward reducing import dependence and promoting local industries" said Aamir Baloch, CEO of Pakistan Railways, praising the local production of railway freight wagons. It's a major leap toward economic self-sufficiency and the start of a new era in freight transportation in Pakistan.

The standardized design of the wagons ensures compatibility and consistency across different models, helping reduce operational and maintenance costs for Pakistan Railways. Ishaq Butt, the Pakistani Project Director for the 820HCW project, highlighted the importance of this efficiency, especially in a country where infrastructure development is a key priority.

The production process also created around 450 direct jobs. "This local production project has trained many young technicians and skilled workers for our railway department, significantly boosting our manufacturing capabilities and sustaining them for the future", said Ishaq Butt.

Beifang Chuangye has provided both theoretical training and hands-on support in setting up the wagon assembly lines in Lahore and Raisalpur. Their assistance covers personnel training, equipment upgrades, inventory management, process planning, quality control, and system development, ensuring a comprehensive improvement of the factories.

Saudi Industrial Production Index up 3.4 per cent as output expands

RIYADH (Arab News): Saudi Arabia's Industrial Production Index climbed 3.4 percent year on year in November to reach 103.8, driven by an uptick in mining and quarrying activities, official data showed.

According to data from the General Authority for Statistics, the mining and quarrying sub-index recorded a 1.2 percent annual rise, underpinned by a modest increase in the Kingdom's oil output, which grew to 8.93 million barrels per day in November from 8.82 million bpd in the same month of the previous year.

Manufacturing activities also showed robust growth, expanding 7.2 percent year on year, driven largely by a

17.6 percent surge in the manufacture of coke and refined petroleum products. Additionally, the production of chemicals and chemical products rose 1.6 percent, while food manufacturing increased by 1.5 percent during the same period.

This comes as Saudi Arabia emphasizes industrial production under Vision 2030, aiming to diversify its economy and reduce oil dependence by fostering growth in mining, manufacturing, and other non-oil sectors.

The report noted a mixed performance in other sectors. The sub-index for electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply fell by 2.1 percent year on year, while water supply, sewer-

age, waste management, and remediation activities surged 10.5 percent.

The index for oil activities rose 3.8 percent in November compared to the same month in 2023, reflecting the increased output in the Kingdom's mining sector. Meanwhile, non-oil activities grew 2.4 percent, buoyed by gains across most non-oil economic activities, except for the electricity and utilities sector, which posted declines.

Despite the annual growth, the IPI fell 2.3 percent in November compared to October 2024. Mining and quarrying activities declined 0.5 percent month on month, while manufacturing con-

tracted by 3.1 percent over the same period.

The electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply sub-index posted a steep 21.5 percent monthly drop, and water supply, sewerage, waste management, and remediation activities decreased by 4.7 percent.

Oil activities fell by 2.1 percent month on month, while non-oil activities recorded a 2.7 percent decline in November compared to October.

The mixed performance highlights the volatility in industrial activity, but the overall annual growth underscores progress in Saudi Arabia's ongoing efforts to diversify its economy and reduce dependence on oil revenues.

China's electric and hybrid vehicle sales jump 40.7 per cent

BEIJING (AFP/APP): Sales of electric and hybrid vehicles jumped more than 40 percent in China last year, as demand for new energy models continues to surge and the sector remains entrenched in a gruelling price war.

The Chinese electric

vehicle market has witnessed explosive growth in recent years, driven in part by generous subsidies from Beijing. But the world's largest automotive market has also seen fierce competition among domestic car manufacturers as a consumption slowdown fuels a

price war that is weighing on profitability.

In 2024, almost 11 million new energy vehicles (NEVs) were sold, a year-on-year increase of 40.7 percent, the China Passenger Car Association (CPCA) said Thursday. NEVs accounted for

nearly half -- 47.6 percent -- of all retail sales last year, the association said. By comparison, such vehicles accounted for just 22.6 percent of sales in the European market in November, according to the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association.



KARACHI: Members from the International Cricket Council (ICC) visited the National Bank Stadium on Thursday to assess the ongoing preparations for the upcoming Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan.

ICC delegation visits National Bank Stadium to assess CT preparations

KARACHI (APP): A six-member delegation from the International Cricket Council (ICC) visited the National Bank Stadium on Thursday to assess the ongoing preparations for the upcoming Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan. The delegation, which included key ICC officials, broadcasters and logistics personnel, thoroughly reviewed the arrangements at the venue. The purpose of the visit

was to ensure that all necessary facilities are in place for the tournament, which is set to begin on February 19, 2025. Usman Wahla, Director of International Cricket at the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), provided the delegation with an in-depth briefing on the development works currently underway at the stadium. The deadline for completing the required development works at the

National Bank Stadium is set for January 25, 2025, ensuring that everything is ready well before the Champions Trophy commences. It is pertinent to mention that the eight-team tournament, comprised of 15 matches, will run from February 19 to March 9, across three venues – Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi in Pakistan and Dubai. The eight teams are divided into two groups:

Group A features Pakistan, India, New Zealand, Bangladesh, while Group B is comprised of Afghanistan, South Africa, England and Australia. Hosts Pakistan will take on New Zealand in the curtain raiser on February 19 in Karachi, while the blockbuster clash between arch-rivals Pakistan and India is scheduled for February 23 in Dubai.

KP Minister praises remarkable performance of girls' players

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jehan has praised the remarkable performance of the girls' players of the province in the US Junior Squash Championship and assured that the provincial government will fully support and encourage them. He awarded a cash prize of Rs.500,000/- to Mahnoor, who won the gold medal in the US Squash Under-13 Junior Category, and Rs.200,000/to Sehrish, who won the bronze medal. In this regard both players hailing from the province, Mahnoor and Sehrish called on the Provincial Minister here at his office on Thursday. Talking to the girls' players, the Minister laud-



ed their performance at the Junior Squash Championship in the United States and said that they are a great asset to both the province and the country, as they are making their mark internationally. He added that efforts are being made to encourage talented players in every

possible way. The Minister extended his best wishes for further success to Mahnoor and Sehrish in the future. Meanwhile, Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF) accorded a warm welcome to the country's young squash prodigies, Mahnoor Ali Khan and Sehrish Ali, upon their arrival to the

country at Bacha Khan International Airport on late Wednesday. According to a statement issued here by PSF, the two sisters have brought immense pride to Pakistan with their outstanding accomplishments on the international stage. Mahnoor Ali Khan, the top-ranked player in Asia in the U-13 category, showcased her dominance by clinching both the U.S. Junior Open and the Scottish Junior Open titles. Her sister, Sehrish Ali secured the bronze medal at the Scottish Junior Open. Group Captain (R) Irfan Asghar, Director Academies PSF, received the champions at the airport. A large number of squash enthusiasts, players and supporters also gathered at the airport to celebrate the young athletes' feats.

Smith to captain Australia in Sri Lanka Tests

S Y D N E Y (ESPNcricinfo): Former captain Steve Smith will lead Australia in the upcoming three-match Test series against Sri Lanka as Pat Cummins will be on paternity leave. Smith, 35, previously served a two-year ban from captaincy following his involvement in the 2018 ball-tampering scandal. Cummins is missing the series for the birth of his second child and seamer Josh Hazlewood is also left out as he recovers from a calf injury. Spinner Cooper Connolly earns his first Test call-up while Nathan McSweeney, who opened in the first three Tests in the recent series against India, retains his place. McSweeney, 25, scored 72 runs in six innings before being replaced by 19-year-old Sam Konstas, who is also named in the squad. Connolly, 21, has played two one-day inter-



national and two T20s for Australia and is yet to take a wicket in either format. He joins Nathan Lyon, Matt Kuhnemann and Todd Murphy in the spin attack, while Mitchell Starc, Scott Boland and Sean Abbott are the front-line seamers. All-rounder Mitchell Marsh has also been omitted after a poor series

against India while Beau Webster, who replaced him in the final Test at Sydney, keeps his spot. The first Test takes place on 29 January in Galle. Australia's series win over India saw them qualify for the World Test Championship final, where they will take on South Africa at Lord's on 11-15 June.

Australia Test squad for Sri Lanka: Steve Smith (capt), Sean Abbott, Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Cooper Connolly, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Usman Khawaja, Sam Konstas, Matthew Kuhnemann, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Todd McSweeney, and Todd Murphy. Mitchell Starc, Beau Webster.

PCB unveils domestic cricket schedule for 2025 season

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Thursday unveiled schedule of the men's domestic cricket tournaments for the 2025 season with three first-class tournaments including the ongoing President's Trophy Grade I. Apart from the red-ball, focus will also be placed on white-ball tournaments, which include one 50-over List-A event, three T20 and one non-first-class three-day tournament. Development cricket has seen some exciting changes as well with the introduction of the U15 and U17 tournaments, and the Champions U19 One-Day Cup and three-day Trophy. These three events will serve as a clear pathway for aspiring and talented cricketers. A total of 21 domestic, age-group and pathways tournaments are set to take place in 2025. This includes a minimum of 131 first-class, 37 50-over List-A and 119 T20 matches. Additionally, the club, age-group, schools, colleges and universities tournaments are set to yield more than 10,000 matches across the country, further creating opportunities for emerging cricketers. The 18-team National T20 Cup will take place in March and will provide opportunities to players from 16 regions across Pakistan to showcase their talent in the shortest format.

President's Trophy Grade-II, the non-first-class three-day departmental tournament, will be held in April and May, which will be a battleground for the departments vying for places in the 50-over List-A and first-class departmental tournaments. The exciting Pakistan Super League 10 will catch the eye-balls in April and May, following which the senior men's domestic events will come to a three-month halt. During this time period, the PCB will hold training, fitness and conditioning camps across the 16 regions to get the players ready for the upcoming domestic tournaments, while also preparing for the second half of the year, which again promises to be exciting, competitive and challenging. Quaid-e-Azam Trophy and the Champions Cup – the two premier first-class tournaments – are set to take place in September and October. These events will provide the players opportunities to perform in red-ball matches and strengthen their claims for places in the Pakistan Test side. The 50-over List-A tournament – President's Cup Grade-I – is slotted for the November-December window, which will be followed by the second edition of the Champions T20 Cup. The Champions Cup One-Day tournament will be played in January 2026.

On the age-group and Pathways front, the PCB has reassessed the U13 and U16 categories and relaunched them as U15 and U17 to maximise the participation of teenagers in the national tournaments. The decision also aims at nurturing the talent early and to provide the youngsters with plenty of time in their respective age-groups to grow and emerge. The National U19 Cup will be contested between 18 regional teams in September as the top performers of the Inter-District U19 players will progress to regional academies and then take part in this tournament. After working their way up from the Club and District and Regional level, the best of the best U19 men's cricketers will be assembled as part of the inaugural five-team Champions U19 Cup and Trophy under the guidance of the five mentors, which is set to take place in October and November. The District U19 and senior events along with the Inter-Schools, Collegiate and Universities tournaments are also set to take place as usual helping Pakistan cricket widen the talent scouting net in the year 2025. Domestic cricket schedule 2025 (Subject to any late changes): Men's domestic Tournaments January-February – President's Trophy Grade-I

(first-class) March – National T20 Cup April-May – President's Trophy Grade-II (non-first-class three-day) April-May – Pakistan Super League 10 September-October – Quaid-e-Azam Trophy September-October – Champions four-day Cup (first-class) November-December – President's Cup Grade-I (50-over List-A) December – Champions T20 Cup Age-group and Pathways Tournaments January-June – National Club Championship (Grade-I and II) February – National U15 One-Day Tournament February – National U17 One-Day Tournament February-April – Challenge League Senior (two-day) April – Challenge U19 One-day Cup (Intra-District) May – Regional Inter-District U19 May-June – Regional Inter-District Senior Tournament June-July-August – Regional U19 Academies September – National U19 Cup (Inter-regional) October-November – Champions U19 One-day Cup and three-day Trophy September-October – Inter-Schools Tournament October-November – Inter-Colleges Tournament November – Inter-University Tournament.

Pak-WI test series tickets sale starts in Multan from Friday

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Thursday announced the sale of tickets for the two test match series of the Pakistan Men's cricket team against West Indies due to start at the Multan Cricket stadium from January 17. The tickets will go on sale at the 11 designated TCS centers in Multan from January 10 (Friday),

at 12 pm. Fans can watch the action free of cost from the First Class (Wasim Akram and Elahi brothers) and General (Hanif Muhammad and Mushtaq Ahmed) enclosures of the Multan Cricket Stadium throughout the two Test matches from 17-29 January. For both the Test matches, tickets for the

PCB Gallery (Inzamam ul Haq) will be available for sale at just PKR 500. The VIP enclosures, which include Fazal Mahmood and Imran Khan stands, will be accessible with PKR 150 tickets. Premium enclosures (Javed Miandad and Zaheer Abbas) tickets will be worth PKR 100 for both the Tests. Tickets may be bought

from the following TCS Express Centres in Multan: •Area Office •Qazafi Chowk •Gulgasht •Mall Road •Gulshan Market •Bosan Road •Wapda Town •Mumtazabad •Chung No. 1 •Garden Town •Chowk Rashidabad.

How Amorim's tactics gave Man Utd hope after the 'storm'

MANCHESTER (BBC): When Ruben Amorim predicted a "storm would come" surely even he did not anticipate the scale of the tempest through December. Six defeats from 11 games was the worst start by any Manchester United manager since 1932. But hope has arrived in the most unlikely of places - United's spirited draw at Anfield was more together, more coherent and more Amorim than any other performance under the new leadership. It is too early to say whether the storm has passed or whether they are simply in its eye - the clarity this week a temporary illusion before United are swept up again. Either way, the Red Devils now have a template to follow. And not before time. BBC Sport explores what has changed - and, more pertinently, what has not changed - since the Portuguese manager first arrived at Old Trafford on 11 November. Amorim has managed nine Premier League matches, the same number as Erik ten Hag this season, making the pause for FA Cup third-round weekend - and an eye-catching tie away to Arsenal on Sunday - the perfect moment to assess how the new boss is doing. And the headline numbers are not good. Amorim has won eight points, compared to Ten Hag's 11, and although United's possession average has risen slightly (from 53% to 55%) they are worse at both ends. This passes the eye test. Manchester United

have looked a little dazed and confused in the new 3-4-3 formation, at least partly because they are struggling to press effectively, creating decompressed lines and giving the appearance of a wide-open team drifting through matches. Comparing the two nine-game periods, United's high turnovers have dropped from 83 to 56, their pressed sequences are down from 128 to 100, and their total distance run is down from 976.2km to 966.5 km. This could be because they don't have the right players for Amorim's high-energy pressing and possession football, or it could be because there simply hasn't been the training time for Amorim to build fitness and etch patterns of play into muscle memory. There is a third reason that is less discussed. Up to and including the 3-0 defeat by Bournemouth on December 22, Amorim changed the back three, the midfield pair, the wing-back pair and the inside forward pair between every single Premier League match. When there is no time to train, efforts should be made for matches to mimic lab conditions, yet the United players have rarely been given the chance to discover rhythms or forge relationships. Until now. United's average number of changes has dropped from four per game to three since the Bournemouth defeat, while at Anfield they lined up with the same back five as the previous Premier

League outing for the very first time under Amorim. The gaps between Matthijs de Ligt, Harry Maguire and Lisandro Martinez were reduced and United's ability to defend crosses - a major concern over the past couple of months - notably improved. Nine of the 16 Premier League goals United have conceded under Amorim (56%) have been from crosses, yet at Anfield Liverpool failed to complete a single open-play cross into the area (from 17 attempts) for only the second time this season. Consistent team selections are surely the way forward. That need for stability is as true for central midfield as it is for defence, because the performance at Liverpool was predominantly defined by the energy and tenacity of Manuel Ugarte and Kobbie Mainoo, who surely now deserve a run in the team. The main issue with Amorim's 3-4-3 has been the spaces that open either side of the two-man midfield, especially when the wing-backs are forced to drop to form a 5-2-3 shape. This peaked in the 2-0 defeat by Newcastle, when Joelinton and Bruno Guimaraes dominated in those gaps, leading directly to the two goals. It followed a consistent pattern over the past two months, hence why United's numbers are down across key metrics that indicate a passive or easy-to-play-through midfield. At Anfield, however, Mainoo and Ugarte did

brilliantly to shuttle across the width of the pitch. They were also helped by the wing-backs aggressively stepping up and Bruno Fernandes dropping into midfield. You wouldn't know it from the first two months, but Amorim prioritises purposeful possession - direct and vertical football played through the thirds when opportunity allows. But the only player enjoying the style shift right now is Amad Diallo. Diallo has been directly involved in eight of United's 11 Premier League goals under the new manager (three goals, five assists), and since Amorim's first game in charge only Iliman Ndiaye (25) has completed more dribbles than the Ivorian's 21. His form had dipped a little since moving from right wing-back to number 10, but yet again the Anfield draw marks a step forward. Prior to the Liverpool game United had not scored a single open-play goal with Diogo Dalot and Noussair Mazraoui as the two wing-backs, yet on Sunday Dalot was considerably more adventurous as part of Amorim's plan to target Trent Alexander-Arnold. Dalot had the second-most touches of the ball (70) among United players and took only two fewer than any Liverpool midfielder. He was one of several players to benefit from a more direct approach, initiated, in part, by Fernandes looking to play long - and often blind - forward passes to get things moving.

Tottenham stun Liverpool

LONDON (BBC): Tottenham edged out Liverpool in a controversial finale to their Carabao Cup semi-final first leg. Lucas Bergvall gave Spurs a narrow advantage to take to Anfield - but Liverpool were left raging that the 18-year-old was on the pitch to make the decisive contribution four minutes from time. Bergvall was on a yellow card when he caught Liverpool defender Kostas Tsimikas late in an incident not seen by referee Stuart Attwell. Tsimikas was still off the pitch when Bergvall scored moments later, prompting a furious reaction from head coach Arne Slot, who was cautioned. Spurs deserved the win after Pedro Porro missed a great chance and Dominic Solanke saw a goal ruled out for offside, but the manner of their win will leave a bitter taste for Liverpool, who suffered only their second defeat under Slot. Liverpool came closest when substitute Trent Alexander-Arnold's shot was cleared off the line by Radu Dragusin, but this was a very disappointing display by the Premier League leaders. And the victory for Postecoglou's side, who were already without 10 players through injury and illness, came after they lost Rodrigo Bentancur amid worrying scenes early on. He went down in the penalty area and was taken off on a stretcher wearing a neck brace after 10 minutes of treatment. It was later confirmed he was conscious, talking and would undergo further checks in hospital.



In brief

Raisani flays terror attack

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member of the National Assembly and PPP leader Nawabzada Jamal Raisani on Thursday strongly condemned the terror attack in Zehri area of Khuzdar, and said people of Balochistan were fully determined to foil sinister designs of terrorists. Nawabzada Jamal Khan Raisani termed this heinous act as an assault on peace, humanity, and societal values. He emphasized that malicious elements would never succeed in their nefarious designs. The Government of Balochistan was committed to eradicating terrorism from its roots besides ensuring justice in this regard, he added. He further stated that this despicable act by terrorists was part of a sinister conspiracy to destabilize and destroy Balochistan, which would be thwarted at all costs. Burning public property and causing distress was not humanity, he added.

Police solve murder case

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Taxila Police on Thursday solved the mystery of the blind murder of a woman and arrested her husband who turned out to be the murderer. A Rawalpindi Police spokesman, in a statement, said the accused Allah Ditta reported to the police that his wife had been killed by an unknown person. The Taxila Police used technical means and human intelligence, and found that Allah Ditta had himself murdered his wife over a marital dispute.

3 accused held for kidnapping

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawat Police on Thursday arrested three accused for kidnapping a citizen and blackmailing him to extort money. The victim reported to the police two days ago that the accused Saqib, Qadeer and Umar had kidnapped him, tortured him during captivity, and also extorted money from him. They also made an indecent video of him for blackmailing. The police traced the accused with the help of human intelligence and modern technology, a Rawalpindi Police spokesman said.

33,600 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 33,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 40,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1475.66 feet and was 77.66 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 16,400 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1133.35 feet, which was 83.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 4,800 cusecs and 4,000 cusecs respectively.

‘Mukabila Hifz Qirat’ held

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration, in collaboration with the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), has successfully organized two days prestigious ‘Mukabila Hifz Qirat’ competition at PNCA Auditorium, F-5/1 Islamabad. The event, which concluded here late Wednesday, brought together talented students from various madaris across Islamabad. The competition aimed to promote the art of Qirat and inspire a deeper connection with the Holy Quran.

NA body resolves to ensure MDCAT transparency

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination on Thursday resolved to ensure that the future MDCAT exams are transparent, fair and equitable for all students across the country.

The meeting which was held under the chairmanship of Dr. Mahesh Kumar Malani, proposed the implementation of a single national curriculum to avoid regional disparities in the education system.

A final decision on these matters will be taken in future meetings based on legal reviews and additional consultations with relevant stakeholders.

The committee underscored the need to strengthen country's healthcare sector. The discussions revolved around critical concerns aiming at reforming the MDCAT examination system along with future recommendations to conduct fair exams.

The Committee deferred “The Pakistan Nursing Council (Amendment) Bill, 2024”, moved by Syed Rafiullah, MNA and “The Pakistan Pharmacy (Amendment) Bill, 2024”, moved by Abdul Qadir Patel due to absence of the movers.

The committee discussed the “Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (Amendment) Bill, 2024” and the “Islamabad Healthcare Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2024”, moved by Ms. Shaista Pervaiz, MNA.

The committee pointed

out that the regulation of ‘psychologists’, a growing profession that remained largely unregulated despite the increasing demand for mental health services across Pakistan.

The committee recommended to regulate the profession of psychology to ensure that mental health professionals were properly certified and practicing in line with legal and international standards.

The committee addressed several concerns regarding the MDCAT exam process. Issues related to out-of-syllabus questions in the exam papers were raised by students, prompting a review of the exam's structure.

It was highlighted that many such questions were deleted, and a revised answer key was uploaded to address these concerns.

The committee members voiced their concern that question papers should be accurate from the outset, to avoid the need for post-exam deletions.

The committee proposed making juvenile cards mandatory for biometric verification, similar to the practice in A-levels and O-levels, to prevent impersonation and enhance security during the registration process.

The registration process itself also came under scrutiny, as the software used by PMDC had loopholes that led to errors.

The committee emphasized that such issues should be rectified for future exams to ensure a smoother

registration process.

It was further suggested that the MDCAT exam process be decentralized, with provinces given greater autonomy in conducting the exams, while PMDC should focus on overseeing the licensing exams.

This proposal was made to avoid the current centralization that was seen to contribute to inconsistencies in the examination process.

The issue of supplementary students appearing in the MDCAT, 2024 retest also sparked debate.

The committee expressed grave concerns about including these students in the 2024 MDCAT cycle, as it could disadvantage regular students who had completed their education on time. The committee unanimously agreed that supplementary students should be excluded from this year's exam and allowed to take it in the following year.

A legal review will be conducted to determine the best course of action on this matter.

In terms of future reforms and based on the Committee's previous recommendations PMDC agreed to form a high-powered subcommittee tasked with revising the MDCAT syllabus, developing a common question bank and ensuring that candidates appear for the exam only in their region of domicile.

PMDC will also review the current practice of conducting the MDCAT before the declaration of complete intermediate result.

Students of Govt Technical Institute Rawalpindi’ visit AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): A group of faculty members and 70 students of Computer Science from the Government Technical Institute (GTI), Rawalpindi, conducted a one-day study visit to Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), the other day.

During the first phase of the visit, the students were taken to the Directorate of Student Advisory and Counseling Services. The Director Student Affairs, Syed Ghulam Kazim Ali, provided a detailed briefing about the university's profile, its nationwide educational network, student facilities, and the ongoing admissions for the Spring Semester 2025.

Later, the students were given a tour of the university's printing press, where they were shown the machinery and introduced to the various stages of designing, pasting, plating, and printing. They also visited the Data Center, Call Center, Facilitation Center, Central Library, and Radio/TV studios.

Dr. Aftab Khan, Chairman, Computer Science Department high-

lighted the significance and utility of computer science education. He stated that computer and artificial technology have become essential in today's life.

Addressing the students, Dr. Aftab said, “You have made the right choice in pursuing education in this field, which offers vast opportunities for growth.”

He further informed the students that Allama Iqbal Open University provides online education for post-graduate diplomas, BS, MS, and PhD programs in computer science.

The faculty members and students of GTTI shared their impressions of the visit, expressing that the university's environment, management, discipline, and student facilities were far beyond their expectations and remarkable.

It is worth mentioning that Vice-Chancellor of the university, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, places great emphasis on student exchange programs and visits from educational institutions.

He has instructed all departments of the univer-

sity to warmly welcome visiting students and familiarize them with the university's social and educational contributions, as well as the facilities available to students.

This approach aims to leave a lasting impression on the visitors and encourage them to become ambassadors of the university in society.

NPC governing body meets to review plans

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Press Club (NPC) held the governing body meeting on Thursday under the chairmanship of Present Azhar Jatoti to review the plans. Secretary NPC Nayyar Ali, informed the governing body members that the process of collection of annual fees from the council members for the year 2025 going to start on January 13 as only those members who have deposited fees should be eligible to cast vote in the coming



ISLAMABAD: Young boys cross road on their way home, carrying dry branches of wood for domestic use, especially for cooking and heating in Federal Capital.

Rawalpindi Police arrest 14 law breakers

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police on Thursday arrested 14 law breakers, including eight liquor suppliers, three illegal arms owners, two drug peddlers and a kite seller across the district.

According to a police spokesman, the Sadiqabad Police recovered 20 litres of liquor from accused Junaid and 15 litres from Sharjeel Amanat, while the Waris Khan and Westridge Police held Haroon and Kashif respectively with 5 litres of liquor each.

Likewise, the Gujar Khan Police recovered 10 litres of liquor from accused Shafiq and 5 litres from Naveed, while the Chontra Police nabbed Mujahid and Fazian on the recovery of 10 litres of liquor each from them.

Similarly, five suspects were arrested during operations against illegal arms owners and drug peddlers. The Ratta Amral Police recovered a 30 bore pistol along with ammunition from accused Imran and 560 grams of hashish from Raheel Nawaz, while Taxila and Gujar Khan Police held accused Hekmat Noor and Khan Bashir respectively with a 30 bore pistol each. The Race Course Police recovered 520 grams of hashish from accused Abdullah.

Meanwhile, the Taxila Police arrested accused Salman Bahadur with 70 kites and strings.

Chairman CDA visits Murree Road

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa accompanied by Member Engineering and the relevant officer, conducted a visit to Murree Road to review proposed linkage with Serena Chowk.

During the visit on Thursday, a proposal to construct an underpass at the Srinagar Highway Junction was discussed, keeping in view the pressing traffic issue at the junction of Srinagar and Murree Road.

Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa highlighted that the traffic solution in the shape of the

underpass would facilitate commuters traveling from Murree and Kashmir to Islamabad.

He directed that the proposed underpass at the Srinagar Highway and Murree Road Junction should be integrated with the Serena Chowk Interchange project for enhanced connectivity in the city.

During the briefing, Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa was informed that the soil testing for the construction of the underpass at the Srinagar Highway Junction has already commenced.

Additionally, work on

the feasibility, design, and planning of the project is also underway.

Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa emphasized that the completion of this underpass will offer a long-term solution to Islamabad's persistent traffic challenges.

He instructed the relevant teams to present the design of the underpass at the earliest.

Furthermore, he stated that once the underpass is operational, all traffic from Murree to the Srinagar Highway will be signal-free, ensuring smoother and more efficient travel.

Somalian Ambassador calls on IIUI President

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Somalia, Sheikh Noor Mohamed Hassan met with the President of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Prof. Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed on Thursday at the university's new campus.

The meeting focused on matters of mutual interest, highlighting the role of IIUI in accommodating Somali students and promoting collaboration in education.

The ambassador acknowledged the significant

contributions of IIUI to Somalia, stating that many Somali ministers and individuals in key positions are graduates of the IIUI.

He emphasized the potential for further collaboration between IIUI and Somali educational institutions. He also expressed gratitude to the IIUI President for meaningful initiatives aimed at facilitating foreign students.

The President of IIUI, while welcoming the ambassador, noted that the university represents more than 40 nationalities and is committed to enhancing facilities for foreign students.

He shared plans for a separate hostel facility ded-

icated to international students, as part of a broader hostel revamping initiative.

The president also highlighted the approach of IIUI and shared his personal experience of supervising Somali students, praising their great potential. He underscored that Somalia, being a member country of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), holds a special place in IIUI's collaborative vision.

The ambassador also mentioned the accompanying Second Secretary of the embassy Mohamed Abdurahman Hersi stating that he is also an IIUI graduate, thus, reflecting the university's enduring impact on the country.

MoU signing ceremony between NPC, IBCC today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Press Club (NPC), in collaboration with Inter Boards Coordination Commission (IBCC), will organize an event on Friday, Jan 10, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the appointment of a focal person to facilitate the children of journalists in the verification process of matric and intermediate certificates.

The MoU will also open the avenue for the children of journalists to participate in sports activities, avail of merit-based scholarships and acquire knowledge about the new grading system besides organizing seminars and workshops on education systems, the press release said on Thursday.

Speakers term sustainable, affordable energy critical for uplift

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speakers at day long International Hydropower Conference while terming sustainable energy critical for development of any country on Thursday stressed the need for harnessing the untapped hydel potential to meet Pakistan's future growing energy demands.

The 4th International Hydropower Conference 2025, hosted by Energy Update in collaboration with the Private Power Infrastructure Board (PPIB) and the International Hydropower Association, brought together industry leaders, policymakers, and global experts to discuss hydropower's transformative role in shaping a sustainable energy future for Pakistan.

The speakers highlighted various challenges, including the significant financing and long timelines required to construct large dams and establish hydropower projects.

Speaking at the conference, Senator Sherry Rehman said that sustainable, affordable energy is

vital for the country's development. “Pakistan has immense hydropower potential,” she said.

She emphasized the urgent need for Pakistan to harness its hydropower potential and shift toward renewable energy to ensure a sustainable and resilient energy future. Due to Pakistan's critical energy challenges in the face of escalating climate disruptions and population growth, Senator Rehman underscored the role of hydropower as a cornerstone of the country's energy transition.

“Energy is not just power; it is wealth, stability, and the foundation of modern civilization,” stated Senator Rehman. “As the fifth most populous country in the world, Pakistan cannot achieve sustainable growth without a reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy supply.

Unfortunately, we remain heavily reliant on energy imports, and the escalating costs and supply chain disruptions due to conflicts are intensifying our energy crisis,” she said.

Senator Rehman drew attention to Pakistan's commitment to climate action, referencing its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, which aim for 60% renewable energy by 2030. She underscored the country's clean energy mix, which already sees over 55% of electricity generated from hydropower and nuclear energy, calling for further investments in smaller and medium-sized dams, which she described as “the path to a sustainable hydropower future.”

Senator Rehman painted a stark picture of the climate challenges facing Pakistan, including erratic monsoons, water scarcity, and reliance on glacial melt from the Indus River system. “The 2022 monsoons were unprecedented in scale, stretching human and institutional capacity to its limits. Recovery from such climate-induced disasters has brought invaluable lessons, but we must do more to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and focus on clean, renewable energy sources,” she said.

Emphasizing the untapped potential of hydropower, Senator Rehman noted that Pakistan has a capacity of 64 GW but is only utilizing 10,852 MW. “This is a colossal, missed opportunity,” she said. “Smaller dams offer a more sustainable, consistent, and cost-effective approach to meet our energy needs, especially for agriculture and livestock economies. We must shift our focus to the north, where the hydropower potential is vast and largely unexplored.”

She urged collaborative efforts between local governments, communities, and international stakeholders to bring renewable projects to financial close.

Managing Director of PPIB, Dr. Shah Jehan Mirza, revealed that of the total identified 64,000 MW hydropower potential in Pakistan, only 11,000 MW is currently being utilized. He explained that while hydropower projects have significant benefits, they typically take 7-8 years to complete, and lenders are often reluctant to finance

such large-scale initiatives. However, he noted the government's success in attracting substantial investment in the power sector, citing the Karot and Sukki Kinari hydropower projects as examples. Mirza added that Pakistan is not performing poorly, as green energy accounts for 52% of its total energy mix. The government has also planned to phase out old thermal plants with a combined capacity of 7,000 MW.

Malaysian High Commissioner Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan commended the conference organizers and emphasized that energy is the backbone of a country's economy. He remarked that, like Pakistan, Malaysia is blessed with abundant natural resources and generates electricity through hydropower, gas, and other sources. Mazlan stressed the need to develop indigenous technology for hydropower generation and praised Pakistan's “Uraan Pakistan” program under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

General Manager of

WAPDA, Tanveer Mujahid, underscored the importance of clean and green energy for the country's development. “WAPDA is committed to a strategic vision of tapping Pakistan's hydropower potential,” he said.

Mujahid explained that hydropower currently constitutes 30% of the total energy mix, and WAPDA is actively pursuing various projects to add more clean energy to the system. He shared that around 10,000 MW of clean energy will be added to the national grid through projects like Diamer Basha Dam (4,500 MW), Mohmand Dam (800 MW), Dasu Stage 1 (2,150 MW), and Tarbela 5th Extension Project (1,510 MW). He added that these projects would also support food security by ensuring water availability for agriculture.

CEO of TNB REMACO, Hafiz Isahak, highlighted his organization's expertise in providing maintenance, repair, diagnostic, and project management services for the power sector in Malaysia and other countries, including Kuwait and

Saudi Arabia. He shared examples of their partnerships in Pakistan, such as the Balloki Combined Cycle Power Plant (1,223 MW) and the New Bong Escape Hydropower Plant (84 MW).

Dr. Muzammil Zia, focal person for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), described CPEC as a game-changer for Pakistan's power sector. He noted that 17 power projects with a combined capacity of 9,000 MW were established under CPEC's early harvest plan, including the 720 MW Karot and 840 MW Sukki Kinari hydropower projects.

Other speakers, including GM of China International Group Company Wang Huihua and Dr. Jehanzeb Nisrui, addressed the prospects and challenges facing hydropower projects in Pakistan.

Earlier, M. Naeem Qureshi, Managing Editor of Energy Update, welcomed participants to the conference and described it as a milestone in promoting the hydropower sector in the country.

US issues warning

KABUL (Amu TV): US State Department has issued a Level 4 “Do Not Travel” advisory for 20 countries, including Afghanistan, citing significant threats to safety. This designation is the highest travel advisory level and reflects ongoing instability in the country following the Taliban’s return to power in 2021. The advisory urges Americans to avoid travel to these countries due to risks such as terrorism, civil unrest, and a lack of access to consular services.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Rajab 09, 1446 — Friday, January 10, 2025

Businessmen plan factory

KABUL (BNA): A consortium of Afghan and Iranian businessmen has officially announced plans to establish a tractor factory in Afghanistan. This initiative was discussed in a recent meeting with Mawlawi Ataullah Omari, the acting Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. During the meeting, the consortium representatives expressed their commitment to the project and requested the Ministry’s cooperation to assist facilitate its implementation.

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

Taliban publicly flog seven people in three provinces

KAPISA (Amu TV): Taliban publicly flogged five people in Kapisa Province and two more in Ghazni and Paktia on charges ranging from “illicit relationships” to theft, according to statements from the Taliban’s Supreme Court. In Kapisa’s Alasay district, three women and two men were lashed between 8 and 39 times, with additional sentences of six months to a year in prison. In Ghazni’s Muqur district and the provincial capital of Paktia, two men were flogged 39 times

each, with one sentenced to four years in prison and the other to a year. The punishments, carried out in public, drew large crowds, including Taliban judicial, police, and intelligence officials, as well as local community leaders. The Taliban have defended these acts as part of their enforcement of Islamic law. A surge in public floggings Since their return to power in 2021, Taliban have increasingly used corporal punishment, often

conducted in public, as a tool to enforce their interpretation of Sharia law. According to their Supreme Court, 580 individuals, including 42 women, were flogged in public over the past year. In the last two months of 2024 alone, 93 people—including 12 women—were publicly lashed in 10 provinces. These punishments have been administered for a range of alleged offenses, including moral and criminal charges such as “running away from home,” theft, and “illicit

relationships.” The United Nations and human rights organizations have strongly condemned the Taliban’s use of corporal punishment, describing public lashings as a blatant violation of international human rights standards. These groups have urged the Taliban to cease public punishments immediately. Despite international outcry, Taliban continue to implement such practices as they consolidate their rule, leaving Afghanistan further isolated on the global stage.

Khairullah meets EU diplomat

KABUL (Ariana News): Khairullah Khairkhwa, Afghanistan’s minister of information and culture, this week met with Veronika Boskovic Pohar, the new EU charge d’affaires, to discuss the protection of Afghanistan’s cultural heritage. According to the ministry, both sides discussed and exchanged opinions on the protection of cultural heritage, its value and public awareness on the issue. At the meeting, Khairkhwa voiced appreciation for the EU’s cooperation in the field of cultural heritage protection, and emphasized the need for further development of relations.

“Protection of cultural heritage is not only the duty of Afghans, rather, it is the duty of the world to fully cooperate with Afghanistan in this field,” he said. Pohar in turn assured the minister of the EU’s continued cooperation in this respect.

Surge in tourism in Herat

HERAT (BNA): The province of Herat has witnessed a significant increase in domestic tourism, following the hosting of the fourth season of the Afghanistan Champions League and recent water surge at the Pashdan Dam.

Mawlawi Rahmatullah Mohammad, the tourism director of Herat’s information and culture department, reported that nearly 50,000 domestic tourists traveled to Herat in the past month alone.

This surge in visitors has not only been attributed to the excitement surrounding the Champions League but also to the Pashdan Dam, which has emerged as a popular recreational destination. Tourists have taken the opportunity to explore other historical and cultural attractions in Herat, contributing to a revitalized tourism scene in the region. Mohammadi emphasized the positive impact of this influx on the development of tourism in Herat.

Muttaqi meets with UAE’s Deputy PM



KABUL (Ariana News): Afghanistan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi met with Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs for the UAE, in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday for talks on various issues including the Islamic Emirate’s aspirations for stability, development and prosperity in the country.

The two diplomats also discussed progress made in Afghanistan over the past three years. In addition, they discussed bilateral relations and ways to enhance them to achieve the mutual interests of both countries, promoting prosperity and welfare for their peoples.

According to a statement issued by the UAE’s ministry of foreign affairs, Al Nahyan and Muttaqi also exchanged views on regional and international issues of common concern. Additionally, they reviewed ways to strengthen cooperation between the two countries in several sectors, particularly in economic and developmental fields, while supporting reconstruction and development efforts in Afghanistan.

The meeting was also attended by Ahmed Bin Ali Al Sayegh, the UAE’s

Minister of State. Muttaqi also met with India’s Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri in Dubai where they discussed the need to strengthen bilateral ties.

Misri reaffirmed India’s long-standing friendship with the people of Afghanistan, and emphasized the strong people-to-people connections between the two nations. Misri highlighted India’s commitment to addressing Afghanistan’s urgent developmental needs and extending humanitarian support.

The discussions also included an assessment of India’s ongoing humanitarian assistance programs in Afghanistan.

Gagnon concerned by increasing restrictions on women, girls



KABUL (TOLOnews): Georgette Gagnon, the deputy special representative for the UN Secretary General in Afghanistan, in an exclusive interview with TOLOnews expressed concern over the increasing restrictions on women and girls in Afghanistan.

In this interview, Gagnon described the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan as troubling and stated that the continu-

ation of such conditions would make progress toward change more difficult. She added that efforts are underway to address this issue, and these efforts must be accelerated.

The deputy special representative stated: “This type of restriction will impact the delivery of health services for women and girls across the country. But not only for the women and girls, for whole com-

munities where health services are needed. And that’s a very serious situation. It could result in declining health for women and girls, for children and people across the country and also affect development efforts.”

“For more than three years, secondary and high schools have been closed to girls. Our only demand from the Islamic Emirate is to reopen all schools and universities for Afghan girls,” said Shilla, a student.

“We hope attention will be paid and, particularly, that the doors of schools and universities will reopen as soon as possible,” said Tafsir Siahposh, a women’s rights activist.

In the interview, Gagnon described her mission as serving as a bridge between the international community and the current authorities in Afghanistan.

This UN deputy representative in Afghanistan clarified that UNAMA does not have the authority to grant recognition or assign Afghanistan’s seat in the United Nations to the interim government.

Gagnon said: “The UN-UNAMA—it does not have the authority or the mandate to deal with any country’s recognition. That’s the authority and the mandate of the member states of the UN. There are 193 member states, they form the general assembly and it is that group that can decide through a credentials committee whether any country is recognized or not. So, that’s not something the UN can do.”

Georgette Gagnon pledged that humanitarian assistance from donor communities and United Nations agencies will continue to Afghanistan throughout this year (2025).

UNICEF pledges continued support for health workers in Afghanistan

KABUL (Amu TV): The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) on Thursday announced plans to continue supporting healthcare workers in Afghanistan throughout the coming year, as the country grapples with an increasingly strained healthcare system.

In a statement, UNICEF said it currently provides support to 28,000 health

workers and nurses in Afghanistan. This assistance aims to ensure the delivery of quality healthcare services to mothers and children, who are among the most vulnerable populations in the country.

UNICEF’s commitment comes amid growing concerns about the impact of the Taliban’s restrictions on women, which threaten the functionality of healthcare

services for mothers, children, and women.

Last month, the Taliban banned women and girls from studying in medical institutes and issued warnings to healthcare providers. Experts warn that this policy could exacerbate the shortage of female healthcare professionals, severely impacting the delivery of medical care to women and children.

The Taliban’s Ministry of Economy has also reaffirmed its prohibition on women working in domestic and international non-governmental organizations. Groups found employing women face the threat of being shut down, further limiting access to essential services.

In a related development, local sources in Kandahar told Amu TV that several international non-governmental organizations in the province have been forced to close following Taliban directives. The closures are expected to further restrict public access to critical services, including healthcare, in a country already facing severe humanitarian challenges.

Spain pledges \$1.1m in aid to Afghanistan

KABUL (Amu TV): Spain has contributed \$1.1 million to support humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

In a statement shared on X, OCHA said the funds have been allocated to the United Nations’ Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund. The contribution will be used to assist those in need throughout 2023, as the country continues to face a deepening humanitarian crisis. “Consistent support from the international community is essential to save lives in Afghanistan,” OCHA said in its statement. OCHA estimates that in the coming year, 22.9 million people—more than half of Afghanistan’s population—will require humanitarian aid to survive.

Acute food insecurity, combined with limited access to clean water, health services, and sanitation, has significantly worsened the rates of malnutrition across the country.

The agency reported that 3.5 million children under the age of five, along with 1.1 million women, will need urgent nutritional treatment in 2024.

New infrastructure to boost connectivity

FARAH (BNA): Officials from the Farah Provincial Department of Communications and Information Technology announced the construction of 11 new telecommunication sites at a total cost of 91 million Afghani.

Mullah Abdul Majid Abuzar, head of the department, confirmed that in addition to the activation of 10 existing telecommunica-

tion sites, the new sites will be strategically located in various areas of Farah. The projects are expected to be completed within the next two months.

Furthermore, the department has approved the installation of five telecommunication antennas in the districts of Bakwah, Farah Rud, Parchman, and Nardara. Currently, the construction of two anten-

nas in the Sah Qala and Gorzank areas of Islamabad is underway, with completion anticipated in the next two months.

In a positive financial update, the Farah Department of Telecommunications reported a revenue collection of 510,616 Afghani during the current fiscal year 1403, marking an increase of 135,616 Afghani compared to the previous year.

Over 6,000 weapons discovered and seized



B A D A K H S H A N (TOLOnews): The Badakhshan Police Command has reported the discovery and seizure of a weapons cache in this province.

This cache was discovered in the Shahada district of the province, and more than 6,000 various types of weapons have been recovered from it.

Dost Mohammad Ubaida, the security deputy

of the Badakhshan Police Command, said: “A large number of mortar shells, DShK rounds, heavy machine gun ammunition, and various types of munitions have been seized.”

Azizullah Munib, the director of counter-terrorism at the Badakhshan Police Command, said: “These munitions include 16 different types and a total of 6,431 rounds, which

have been confiscated.” Meanwhile, some residents of Badakhshan have called for greater security measures by the province’s security forces.

Faizur Rahman, a resident of Badakhshan, said: “Our request from the Islamic Emirate is to ensure security seriously.”

Nisar Ahmad, another resident of Badakhshan, stated: “Brother-killing, bloodshed, and conflicts must end, and the current security situation should be further improved.” Security officials in Badakhshan emphasized that they will not allow any individual or group, from inside or outside the country, to disrupt the province’s security.

They also added that due to their continuous efforts, criminal activities have significantly decreased over the past year.

Badakhshan youth eye greater access to learning

FAIZABAD (Pajhwok): Beneficiaries of free education at the Youth Training Centre in northeastern Badakhshan demand greater opportunities to acquire essential skills.

Abdul Ali, a public-speaking learner at the Youth Training Centre, initiated by the Department of Information, recalled he struggled in the past, to publicly vent his views.

However, after nearly three months of training, he is now able to eloquently communicate his needs and desires and is pleased with the skills he has gained.

He said: “I cannot afford to attend private courses.

The free courses offer the best opportunity for learning and progress. We hope such programmes will increase so that all young people can realise their dreams.”

Abdul Jabbar, a computer student at the Youth Training Centre, recalled he was unable to attend private educational institutions due to financial constraints. But thanks to the free-of-cost initiatives, he can now join the courses he is interested in and receive training. He acknowledged: “These free courses help us acquire new skills without worrying about the costs. We hope more opportuni-

ties will be made available to more young people.”

These youngsters want the Department of Information and Culture to strengthen such programmes to help youth realise their aspirations to learn.

Meanwhile, Director of Information and Culture Eng. Zabihullah Amiri said over 1,500 students participated in free programmes at the Youth Training Centre this year.

These include courses in English, computer skills, public speaking, improved handwriting, as well as motivational workshops, scientific seminars and sessions on the importance of

reading for personal and social well-being.

He added that currently, around 500 people are participating in free training programmes at the centre on a daily basis.

He recalled nearly 1,000 students were enrolled at the Youth Training Centre last year. But due to improved educational environment, the number of students has risen this year.

Efforts are ongoing to provide better and greater opportunities for youth. Officials say the number of students in educational courses has increased compared to the previous year.

Best possible services to public priority: KP CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has launched Pakistan's first Online Medicine Ordering Portal in the health department as a significant step towards improving service delivery, ensuring accountability, and promoting transparency in the health sector. Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur formally inaugurated the portal on Thursday in a ceremony held at the Chief Minister's House Peshawar.

The event was attended by Speaker of the Provincial Assembly Babar Saleem Swati, Deputy Speaker Suraiya Bibi, provincial cabinet members Major (Retd.) Muhammad Sajjad and Aftab Alam Afridi, MNA Sher Afzal Marwat, members of the provincial assembly, and officials from the health department.

Through this advanced portal, District Health Officers (DHOs) and Medical Superintendents (MS) across the province will be able to place medicine orders online. The portal features a pre-fed list of approved medicines, and orders will be automatically generated based on this list. The officer placing the order will only need to enter the budget, while the system will handle the rest of the process automatically.

The system is designed with pre-

fed medicine requirements based on the geographic profile of each district. All orders will align strictly with the MCC list. Any deviation from the list will be flagged by the system. Medicine orders will be generated online with QR codes, making them easily traceable. Additionally, a comprehensive record of all stock availability will be maintained through an online dashboard.

This system aims to prevent corruption in the procurement of medicines, save time and resources, and ensure transparency. On this occasion, the Chief Minister also launched fuel cards for EPI vaccinators. This initiative will permanently resolve the fuel-related challenges faced by vaccinators, resulting in improved routine immunization services.

While addressing the ceremony, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur said that the provincial government has been striving since day first to provide the best possible services to the public, with health and education being its top priorities. "We are working out of the box to streamline the system. We are simplifying complex routine business and introducing necessary amendments to existing rules and regulations for this purpose," he remarked.

He further emphasized the importance of digitization in all sectors to

enhance transparency and departmental efficiency. "Unfortunately, corruption cases are reported even in sectors directly linked to human lives. We aim to establish a system where corruption is impossible. Alongside reforms, we must strictly adhere to our moral values and Islamic teachings."

The Chief Minister highlighted ongoing efforts for financial self-sufficiency in line with the vision of the founding chairman. "We are making huge investment in potential sectors, boosting provincial revenue, and ensuring fiscal discipline. As a result of excellent teamwork, the province is now on the path to development and financial independence."

He also mentioned major reforms introduced in the Sehat Card program, which have significantly expanded free treatment coverage. These reforms and better monitoring have enabled the provincial government to save one billion rupees monthly. Steps are being taken to bring all public hospitals on Sehat Card panel, ensure free emergency medicines, and include liver and kidney transplants in the Sehat Card scheme. Additionally, at least two cardiac satellite centers would be established in every region of the province.



GAZA: Injured Palestinians, including children, are brought to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital for medical treatment after Israel attacked a residential building in Deir el-Balah.

Pak Navy's Saleem promoted as Vice Admiral

F.P. Report



ISLAMABAD: Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem has been promoted to the rank of Vice Admiral with immediate effect.

Vice Admiral Muhammad Saleem got commission in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1991. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore and National Defence University, Islamabad. He has also done MPhil in Public Policy from National Defence University and International Electronic Warfare Manager Course from UK.

The Admiral has an illustrious career with vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments. His major Command appointments include Commanding Officer PN Submarines HAMZA & HURMAT, Commander 9th Auxiliary & Mine Hunting Squadron, Commandant PNS BAHADUR and Commander Karachi. His major Staff appointments include Senior Staff Officer (Operations) to Commander Submarines, Director Naval Operational Plans and Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Personnel) at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. He also performed duties as Director General National Intelligence Academy, Islamabad.

Vice Admiral Muhammad Saleem also served as Directing Staff at National Defence University, Islamabad and Naval Attaché of Pakistan in India. Currently, the Admiral is serving as Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Training & Personnel) at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. In recognition of his meritorious service, the Admiral was awarded Hilal-Imtiaz (Military).

Khosa allowed traveling abroad

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court Thursday accepted the plea of senior advocate Supreme Court and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Latif Khosa and allowed him to travel abroad, subject to furnishing affidavit that whenever summoned he will appear before the trial court.

Appearing single-bench of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) comprising Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani that his name was placed on the Exit Control List (ECL) in response to proceedings in a case registered against him at the Secretariat Police Station Islamabad under charges of protest outside the Supreme Court.

During the hearing, the bench inquired whether the police report/charge sheet had been submitted before the trial court, to which prosecutor submitted it had not been submitted yet. The court further questioned the nature of the case, asking if it involved violations under Section 144 or Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA). Justice Kiyani also asked if Latif Khosa was to be arrested.

No breakthrough in govt-PTI dialogue: Ihsan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister Rana Ihsan Afzal Thursday reaffirmed the government's commitment to constructive dialogue with PTI, stressing transparency and a willingness to move forward without delay.

Ihsan Afzal said that the government's dialogue with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has stalled due to PTI's failure to present its written demands and show seriousness in the talks. Afzal said PTI has failed to finalize and present its charter of demands, which is hindering the progress of the talks.

He emphasized the importance of avoiding deadlock in the negotiations due to unrealistic conditions. Responding to a query Afzal said that a

meeting took place between Ali Amin Gandapur, Ali Gohar and Imran Khan the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), adding, that this meeting marks a significant step forward in the negotiation process between the government and PTI.

Further negotiations will be held to fulfill the government's commitment to providing a conducive environment for meetings with Imran Khan, he added. The government negotiation team is committed to fulfilling its promise to PTI, which includes providing an opportunity for a meeting with Imran Khan, he assured.

Rana Ihsan Afzal also mentioned counter-demands of the government that Irfan Siddiqui, a member of the negotiation committee, stated that once the

government receives PTI's written demands, they will also present their counter-demands. Additionally, if PTI requests, the government will provide their counter-demands in written form, allowing for discussions on the economy, protests by PTI and national interests, he added.

Afzal emphasized that the PML-N government is committed to stabilizing the economy and believes negotiation is essential for the country's progress. He further added that Speaker National Assembly Ayaz Sadiq is leading the negotiations between the government and PTI, with the next meeting date set to be announced soon. It is expected that these talks will yield positive outcomes, bringing much-needed stability to the country, he added.

Russia breaches frontline river in east Ukraine

KYIV (AFP): Russian forces have established a bridgehead on the Ukrainian-held side of a frontline river in the east of the country, a local official said Thursday, pointing to Kyiv's mounting battlefield struggles.

The Oskil river is the de facto front line in parts of the eastern Kharkiv region, with Ukrainian troops entrenched mainly on the western bank and Russian forces moving to capture the eastern side. Kremlin forces have been launching audacious attempts to cross, and local Ukrainian official Andrii Besedin told state television Thursday they had managed to cross and establish positions. "The enemy is trying to gain a foothold in the town of Dvorichna, which is already on the right bank of the Oskil, and expand the entire bridgehead," he said.

Besedin, the major of the local hub, Kupiansk, said the situation was "extremely difficult" and warned that Russian troops could use the bridgehead to flank Ukrainian positions. He said Russian forces were now just two kilometers (about one mile) outside of Kupiansk, which was one of the main prizes of a Ukrainian counteroffensive in late 2022. "The enemy is

constantly trying to carry out assault operations," he said. The advances conceded by the local official come at a precarious time for Ukrainian forces across the sprawling front, where Russian forces have been advancing at their fastest pace in around two years.

If Russia captures more territory around Kupiansk or in the wider Kharkiv area it would undo gains that Ukraine secured in a sweeping 2022 offensive that embarrassed the Kremlin. Both sides are looking to secure a better position on the battlefield before incoming US president Donald Trump's January 20 inauguration, almost three years after Russia invaded. Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that more needed to be done to clean up an oil spill in the Black Sea, saying efforts so far appeared to have been insufficient to deal with the ecological disaster. The oil leaked from two aging tankers after they were hit by a storm on Dec. 15 in the Kerch Strait. One sank and the other ran aground.

Approximately 2,400 metric tons of oil products spilled into the sea, Russian investigators said last week, in what Putin on Thursday called "one of the

most serious environmental challenges we have faced in years." When the disaster struck, state media reported that the stricken tankers, both more than 50-years old, were carrying some 9,200 metric tons (62,000 barrels) of oil products in total.

Since the spill, thousands of emergency workers and volunteers have been working to clear tons of contaminated sand and earth on either side of the Kerch Strait. Environmental groups have reported deaths of dolphins, porpoises and sea birds. The Kerch Strait runs between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov and separates Crimea's Kerch Peninsula from Russia's Krasnodar region.

Putin told a government meeting that the clean-up efforts had been poorly coordinated between regional and federal bodies. "From what I see and from the information I receive, I conclude that everything being done to minimize the damage is clearly not enough yet," the Kremlin leader told officials. He called for a commission to be formed to mitigate the disaster and prevent oil products from leaking from flooded tankers in the future.

Jimmy Carter unites US as presidents attend state funeral

WASHINGTON (AFP): Jimmy Carter brought a brief moment of national unity to a divided America Thursday as five US presidents gathered for the solemn state funeral of the 39th commander-in-chief in Washington's National Cathedral.

In historic scenes just 11 days before the inauguration of Donald Trump for what promises to be a turbulent second term, the incoming president and outgoing President Joe Biden set aside their bitter rivalry to mourn Carter together. Former presidents Barack Obama, George W Bush and Bill Clinton also sat with them for the sombre ceremony to honour Carter, who died on December 29 at the age of 100 in his home state of Georgia.

Democrat Carter was widely perceived as naive and weak during his single term from 1977 to 1981, but a more nuanced view emerged as the years passed, focusing on his decency and foreign policy achievements. Carter's flag-draped coffin

was transported from the US Capitol, where it had been lying in state, and brought into the immense cathedral by an honour guard of service members in ceremonial uniforms. His grandson Joshua Carter gave the first homily to the last president of the "Greatest Generation."

President Joe Biden will deliver the eulogy for his fellow Democrat at the neo-Gothic cathedral, a traditional venue for send-offs of US presidents, from Dwight Eisenhower and Ronald Reagan to George HW Bush. Biden, who leaves the White House on January 20 after his own single term in office, has said that Carter asked him to do so when the pair — long-standing friends — met for the last time four years ago.

"Carter was a decent man. I think Carter looked at the world not from here but from here, where everybody else lives," Biden said as he gestured from above his head towards his heart. The funeral comes just days before another moment of profound change for the United States,

with the return of Trump to the Oval Office. Obama shook hands and chatted with the billionaire Republican.

There was also a brief moment of reconciliation for Trump and his former vice president Mike Pence, as they met and shook hands for what is believed to be the first time since the 2021 US Capitol riots when Pence refused to back Trump's false claims to have won the 2020 election. The five presidents joined around 3,000 mourners at the service, and Thursday has been designated a national day of mourning, with federal offices closed.

Carter, who served a single term before a crushing election loss to Reagan in 1980, suffered in the dog-eat-dog world of Washington politics and a hostage crisis involving Americans held in Tehran after Iran's Islamic revolution finally sealed his fate. But history has led to a reassessment, focusing on his brokering of a peace deal between Israel and Egypt.

PHC seeks reply against cancellation of town planners' interviews

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court's two-member bench comprising of Justice S.M. Attique Shah and Justice Fahim Wali ordered provincial government and local government department for submission of reply regarding the cancellation of the interview process for town planner positions, on Thursday.

The petition was filed by Fahri Alam and other applicants for recruitment as town planner. The counsel Omar Farooq advocate argued that the petitioners had undergone training as town planners and had applied for the positions. They had also passed the written test and were called for interviews by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission.

However, after completion of 25 candidates' interviews, the local government department sent a letter to the Public Service Commission, directing them to cancel the interview process. The lawyer argued that this decision was made without any reason and was contrary to the rules and regulations.

The lawyer further argued that the town planners were being recruited to address the issue of agricultural land being converted into commercial use due to lack of planning as observed by PHC in several judgements. He stated that the provincial government had approved the recruitment process, but the local government department had cancelled it without any reason.

PHC was also informed that the petitioners had invested time and resources in the recruitment process and that the cancellation of the interview process would cause them irreparable damages. The court has sought a response from the provincial government and the local government department, asking them to explain why the interview process was cancelled. The petitioners have requested the court to direct the authorities to continue the interview process.

Court sought response against high land transfer taxes in Buner: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Fahim Wali ordered Deputy Commissioner Buner, Senior Member Board of

Revenue and Assistant Commissioner to submit reply against double tax imposed on land transfers in the Khudokhel tehsil from rest of areas in the district, on Thursday.

The petition was filed by Shaukat Hayat resident of Khudokhel tehsil in Buner district while Syed Mubashir Shah advocate argued that the taxes imposed on land transfers in the area are discriminatory and excessive compared to other areas. He stated that the taxes are not only excessive but also a violation of the Constitution.

The lawyer informed the court that the taxes imposed on land transfers in Khudokhel are double the amount charged in other areas of Buner district. He argued that this is a clear case of discriminatory treatment and requested the court to direct the authorities to charge the same taxes on land transfers in Khudokhel as are charged in other areas. PHC has directed the SMBR, the Deputy Commissioner Buner, and Assistant Commissioner of Khudokhel to respond to the petition and explain why the taxes imposed on land transfers in Khudokhel are higher than those in other areas.

Minorities' rights team calls on Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The National Lobbying Delegation for Minority Rights met with the Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information Barrister Dr Saif, to discuss the matters related to framing of rules under the Hindu Marriage Act.

The meeting brought together representatives from across Pakistan. Ex provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Wazir Zada and focal person for the delegation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haroon Sarab Diyal was joined by Sheezan William from Balochistan, Pushpa Kumari from Sindh, Romana Bashir from Islamabad, and Habkook Gill and Kalyan Singh from Punjab. Together, they highlighted the growing challenges faced by the Hindu community due to the absence of rules under the relevant act.

During the session, the delegation emphasized the urgent need to frame rules under the Hindu Marriage Act. They highlighted how the absence of these rules has left Hindu citizens without a proper legal framework for registering marriages, causing significant challenges for the community.

Barrister Saif assured the delegation of his full support highlighting that the draft rules under the relevant Act have already been prepared. "This is a matter of justice and equality," he stated, pledging to advocate for presenting the proposed rules in the meeting of the provincial cabinet in the coming days.

The National Lobbying Delegation for Minority Rights expressed optimism following the meeting. "This is a step forward in ensuring that Hindu citizens can exercise their rights with dignity and legal protection," said Haroon Sarab Diyal. "We are extremely thankful to the provincial Advisor on Information for his commitment and positive response in advocating for the rights of minority communities," he added.

Major reshuffling in KP Police Department

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) police department has announced a significant reshuffling of senior officers across various districts.

As per the official notification, Masood Ahmad has been appointed as the new Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations, Peshawar. While, Haroon Rashid Khan, the District

Police Officer (DPO) of Swabi, has been appointed as the Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Peshawar.

Abdul Rashid Khan, who was serving as the Deputy Commandant of the Elite Force KP, has been posted as DPO Nowshera. Saud Khan, the outgoing CTO Peshawar, has been appointed as DPO Buner.

Muhammad Azhar has been transferred from DPO Nowshera to DPO Swabi.

Shah Hassan, DPO Buner, has now been assigned as the Deputy Commandant of the Elite Force KP. Meanwhile, Suleman Zafar, who was serving as the Personal Staff Officer (PSO) to the IG Police, has been posted as DPO Charsadda. Additionally, Iftikhar Ali, the SP Investigation Swabi, has been appointed as the Principal of the Police Training College in Nowshera.

Joseph Aoun elected president of Lebanon

BEIRUT: Lebanese Armed Forces Chief Gen. Joseph Aoun, 61, was elected as the country's 14th president by parliamentarians on Thursday. Aoun received 99 votes, handing him the Presidential Palace for the next six years, breaking a 26-month deadlock over the position.

The military chief took the oath of office in front of deputies before delivering his inaugural speech. People across Lebanon, especially in Aoun's hometown, Al-Aichieh in the south, let off fireworks, ululated, slaughtered sheep and performed dabke dances following the election.

Aoun entered Parliament for the first time in a civil suit, marking his transition from military duty, which started in 1983 when he volunteered for the Army as an officer cadet before then enrolling in the Military College. He took over command of the Armed Forces on March 8, 2018. He now undertakes the civil mission of leading a country stricken by Israeli aggression against Hezbollah and a deepening economic crisis. Aoun addressed the Lebanese people, saying: "No matter our differences, in times of crisis, we embrace one another. If one of us falls, we all fall."

He emphasized the need to "change the political performance in Lebanon," adding: "Let the world know that starting today, a new stage of Lebanon's history

begins, and I will be the first servant of the country, upholding the national pact and practicing the full powers of the presidency as an impartial mediator between institutions. "If we want to build a nation, we must all be under the rule of law and the judiciary." Aoun stressed that "interference in the judiciary is forbidden," adding that "there will be no immunity for criminals or corrupt individuals and there will be no place for mafias, drug trafficking, or money laundering in Lebanon."

"My term will focus on cooperation with the new government to pass a law ensuring judicial independence, while also challenging any laws that violate the constitution. "I will call for parliamentary consultations to swiftly select a prime minister who would be a partner rather than an adversary." Aoun announced plans to rotate senior government positions and restructure the public administration.

He also vowed to assert the state's right to maintain a monopoly on the possession of weapons. "We will invest in the military to secure Lebanon's borders, particularly in the south, demarcate the eastern and northern borders, fight terrorism, implement international resolutions and prevent Israeli hostilities against Lebanon," Aoun said. "I will work to activate the role of security forces as a fundamental tool

for maintaining security and enforcing laws. We will also discuss a comprehensive defense strategy on the diplomatic, economic and military levels to enable the Lebanese state to end the Israeli occupation and deter its aggression," he added.

Aoun pledged to "rebuild what the Israeli enemy destroyed in the south, Beirut's southern suburb, the Bekaa and throughout Lebanon. Our martyrs are the spirit of our determination and our detainees are a trust upon our shoulders." He said: "It is time for us to invest in Lebanon's foreign relations, rather than betting on external forces to gain leverage against one another." Aoun affirmed his "rejection of the resettlement of Palestinians."

He stated: "We affirm our determination to take charge of the security of the camps. We will adopt a policy of positive neutrality and will only export the best products and industries to other countries while attracting tourists." Aoun also called for "initiating a serious and peer-level dialogue with the Syrian state to discuss all relations and pending files between us, particularly the file of missing persons and displaced Syrians." His speech received enthusiastic applause from MPs, except for those from the Free Patriotic Movement, with Hezbollah's MPs expressing reservations. — Arab News