

**Bilawal convenes meeting**  
**F.P. Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has called a meeting of the party's Central Executive Committee (CEC) at Zardari House, Islamabad on January 24 (Friday). According to a press release issued here by the party secretariat, all the members of the Central Executive Committee are expected to attend the session.



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**Arrest warrants issued**  
**F.P. Report**  
FAISALABAD: An anti-terrorism court has issued non bailable arrest warrants for PTI leaders Omar Ayub and Shibli Faraz in connection with May 9 riots cases. As per details, the court heard the case registered in Civil Lines police station Faisalabad and issued non-bailable arrest warrants for PTI leaders including Omar Ayub, Shibli Faraz, Kanwal Shauzab and former minister Fawad Chaudhary.

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BHIMBER: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif lays foundation stone of Danish School.

## PTI says No talks sans formation of JC

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Wednesday announced that it would not participate in the fourth round of talks with the government's committee if the judicial commission was not formed to investigate May 9 and November 24 protests.

Speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail, PTI's negotiation committee member Omar Ayub stated that the party has decided to abstain from the fourth round of talks. He emphasized that the establishment of a judicial commission is essential before proceeding further, and PTI would not participate in the negotiations until the commission is formed.

He further added that PTI's founder has given clear instructions that without the formation of a judicial commission, negotiations would be futile; therefore, the party will not sit with the government in the fourth round of talks.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq summoned the meeting of negotiating committee to hold talks between the government and opposition on January 28.

It will be in-camera meeting that will be presided by NA speaker. The government is likely to respond the demands of opposition in written form. It merits mention here that PTI leader Barrister Gohar has said that the next meeting wouldn't be held if the government doesn't respond to the demands of PTI.

Earlier, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar had given 7-day ultimatum to the government to form judicial commission on May 9 incidents. "We'll not hold the fourth

meeting with the government negotiating team if there is no judicial commission in next seven days," said the PTI chairman.

Gohar said that PTI is adamant on its earlier demands. He said that PTI really wants to continue negotiations with the government. Moreover, PTI chairman urged PML-N's Senator Irfan Siddiqui not to disrupt the political dialogue between the government and opposition.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Barrister Ali Zafar says the party has submitted written demands to the government, allowing a seven-day deadline for a response. No negotiation meeting will take place if the government fails to respond.

Speaking at a press conference in the federal capital, Ali Zafar said that the National Crime Agency (NCA) initiated an inquiry into the Al-Qadir Trust case based on suspicion. The NCA later unfroze the money; according to UK law, if the money is stolen, it cannot be unfrozen, he added. He said that both the Supreme Court of Pakistan and UK courts affirmed that the money was not stolen. NAB claimed that the PTI founder's cabinet had directed the unfreezing of the funds.

The PTI leader further said that the investigating officer confirmed that no case could be made against the property tycoon and his son. Barrister Ali Zafar said the UK court was informed that there were no doubts or suspicions regarding the money. He emphasized that the entire case rests on the assumption that the money was stolen, even though it was deposited into the Supreme Court's account before the cabinet's decision. The NCA had originally frozen the funds in 2018.

## Saif urges Nawaz to stop monitoring mly from Raiwind

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Adviser for Information, Barrister Dr Saif, has urged Nawaz Sharif to stop monitoring the military from Raiwind.

In his statement, Barrister Saif alleged that Nawaz Sharif has aligned PML-N ministers against the Army Chief, putting Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif under "friendly fire." He highlighted that the military and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are currently sacrificing lives in the fight against terrorism, while government ministers were attempting to undermine military leadership.

The PTI leader further questioned why government ministers issued statements and clarifications if Shehbaz Sharif already knew the details of the meeting. He criticised the government for focusing on the Army Chief's meetings instead of addressing inflation and combating terrorism.

## ATC records statements of witnesses in GHQ case

**F.P. Report**

RAWALPINDI: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) recorded statements of four additional prosecution witnesses in the GHQ attack case.

Judge Amjad Ali Shah heard the case at Adiala Jail. Prosecutors objected to the appearance of Mishal Yousafzai, noting that her licence had been suspended. The court, on this, issued a show-cause notice to Mishal Yousafzai, counsel for the PTI chairman, for appearing despite her suspended license. The court demanded a response from Yousafzai by the next hearing.

Afterward, the court gave a show-cause notice to Yousafzai, stating that her appearance constituted professional misconduct. Judge Shah remarked that Yousafzai failed to provide a satisfactory explanation for her actions and directed her to justify why criminal proceedings for forgery should not be initiated against her. Meanwhile, four more witnesses for the prosecution recorded their testimonies, bringing the total number of witnesses to nine. The hearing was adjourned until Saturday, January 25.

## Court sends SI to jail

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: A local court on Wednesday sent a sub-inspector of Islamabad police to jail on 14-day judicial remand in a case pertaining to alleged kidnapping and molesting of children.

Judicial Magistrate Ahmed Shahzad Gondal heard the case wherein accused Sohaib Ali Pasha produced before the court after ending of his two-day physical custody by the FIA.

include a five-year imprisonment or a fine of Rs1 million for individuals found guilty of deliberately spreading fake news.

According to the previous draft, spreading false information, inciting fear, or disrupting peace through online platforms could lead to severe penalties. Later, the jail term was increased to seven years while the fine was raised to Rs2 million.

of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025, the proposed changes include new definitions, the establishment of regulatory and investigative bodies, and stricter penalties for disseminating "false" information.

Last month, it was reported that the government was planning changes to the country's cybercrime laws, which

## £190m scam, biggest graft case in history: Tarar

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Wednesday that the 190 million pounds scam was a mega corruption case in the history of Pakistan.

In a televised media talk, he said that during Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf rule, Shahzad Akbar who headed the then Asset Recovery Unit had shown £190 million handed over by the National Crime Agency of the United Kingdom as confiscated money.

He said that a note was put up to the then Prime Minister regarding 190 million pounds recovery. But in gross violation of law, he added, the amount was transferred to the Supreme Court account and used for payment of the fine imposed on the tycoon by the apex court.

The international media also headlined the 190 million pound case verdict as punishment for corruption as there was solid evidence

of graft, misuse of power and authority. He said the then-ruling couple took two hundred kanals of land as a bribe, Al-Qadir Trust was formed, and 5-carat rings were taken from the tycoon whose fine was paid through 190 million pounds.

In sheer violation of rules, a sealed envelope was brought to the cabinet meeting and its approval was taken without even sharing details of the content, despite some member's objections. The Supreme Court had termed the case as a classic example of robbing Peter to pay as the money was taken from one hand and given to another in case of daylight robbery.

The government of Pakistan's money was misused and billions of rupees of public money was practically handed over to the person who was found guilty of money laundering in the UK. He said the National Accountability Bureau had been investigating many cases of corruption and land grabbing

## Proposed PECA amends lower jail term to 3 years

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has tabled amendments to the contentious Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016 (Peca) in the National Assembly, lowering the jail term to three years from seven years for "intentionally disseminating false and fake information".

According to the draft

# The Frontier Post

## Earthquake rehabilitation projects Supreme Court seeks ERRA report

## Govt wants to set up tribunal through legislation for missing persons: Apex court informed

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: A constitutional bench of the Supreme Court on Wednesday sought a report from the federal & provincial governments and Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) regarding the rehabilitation of earthquake victims.

The court also sought an audit report from the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) regarding the rehabilitation funds. A six-member constitutional bench headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan heard the case regarding the rehabilitation work in earthquake affected areas.

At the outset of hearing, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi remarked that it will be 20 years since the earthquake in October 2025. Is there a 50-year plan for the earthquake victims, he asked.

Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail remarked that if there are no resources, then why does the government announce such projects? Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar asked how

many houses were built for earthquake victims and how many victims were helped in business.

The petitioner said that the government had announced the construction of New Balakot city and the Supreme Court had given 30 months for this, but nothing has happened regarding the project yet. The ERRA representative said that we had completed projects for more than 14,000 earthquake victims. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar asked where the projects that were completed. How much money came from donors, and where that money was spent, he asked. The court sought reports from the federal & provincial governments and the ERRA, and adjourned further hearing of the case.

Meanwhile, the additional attorney general on Wednesday informed the Supreme Court of Pakistan that the government wanted to set up tribunal through legislation to address the issue of missing persons.

He informed the top court that the government has appointed Justice (retired) Faqir Muhammad Khokhar as

Chairman Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances (CoIED) in replacement of Justice (retired) Javed Iqbal. The additional attorney general said that a cabinet committee was working on draft for the legislation on the matter to which Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar questioned that much time it would take for legislation.

Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail said that the law is already exist according to which enforced disappearance was a crime. He said that we could expect that the government would address the matter soon, adding that we can't direct the Parliament for legislation.

Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi questioned that the how many recoveries the commission has made, whether the recovered missing person told that where they have been, he asked. The Registrar CoIED adopted the stance that the recovered missing person don't disclose that where they were kept or had been. Later, the court adjourned hearing for indefinite time.

## PM performs ground breaking of first Daanish School in AJK

**F.P. Report**

BHIMBER: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday performed ground breaking of the first Daanish School Science and Technology Center of Excellence in Bhimber, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), marking a significant milestone in the area's educational development.

The prime minister expressed his commitment to establishing more Daanish Schools in AJK and other underdeveloped areas of the country, aiming to provide quality education to talented and intelligent children who lack access to educational facilities.

Addressing the ground breaking ceremony of the AJK's first Daanish School Center of Science and Technology Center of Excellence in Bhimber, the prime minister termed the establishment of Daanish School in AJK as a welcoming sign. He said that the project of Daanish Schools was the brainchild of his leader and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif which were initially aimed at providing quality education to the talented and intelligent children of the less developed areas of Punjab whose parents were unable to bear their educational expenses.

"Thousands of students are now serving different key departments after completing their studies from Daanish Schools," he added. He said the talented orphans and poor children were enrolled in Daanish Schools which would bring educational revolution in the country. He informed that the children in the schools get free books, meals and boarding facilities. Similarly, he said the school's buildings would be totally separate for girls and boys.

He announced that more Daanish Schools will be opened soon in Neelum and other areas of AJK. Similarly, he said more Daanish

## Shehbaz for transparency in student selection for China's agri training

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the authorities concerned to ensure a transparent and merit-based selection of the students to be sent to China for modern training in the agriculture sector. The prime minister, chairing a meeting on the subject, also directed the formation of a committee to address the grievances of the students not meeting the standard during the scrutiny. Calling China a time-tested friend of Pakistan and lauding its development in the agriculture sector, he told the participants that during his China visit, he had requested the Chinese leadership for the modern training of Pakistani students in the agriculture sector.

He said that the Government of Pakistan would bear the expenses of the students' training and the first batch would soon leave for China. A 10% quota has been allocated for Balochistan among the students to be selected for the training, he added. Prime Minister Shehbaz also thanked the Chinese leadership and the universities for allowing the Pakistani students.

In the meeting, the prime minister was told that 1287 male and female students had applied through a portal of which 711 - including those from Gilgit Baltistan and Balochistan - met the criteria. The students would be sent to China in two batches. Scheduled to leave for China in March this year, the first batch of 300 students will receive training in improving irrigation, diagnosing and monitoring veterinary diseases, veterinary breeding and genetics, and modern seed preparation and processing.

Schools will also be opened soon in Gilgit Baltistan, Balochistan and merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The prime minister said all funds for the schools will be paid by the federal government.

He directed the relevant authorities to construct and operationalize the school within one year. The prime minister pointed out that the people of Occupied Kashmir who were fighting for their independence will be happy to see their brothers getting such high standard education facilities.

He said that the chief ministers of Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan were taking steps to provide the best possible facilities in education and health sectors. The prime minister added that "as long as the people of Kashmir do not get their right to self-determination according to the United Nations resolutions, we will continue

our political, moral, and diplomatic support".

"The Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir, is firmly committed to supporting our Kashmiri brothers. The sacrifices of the Kashmiris will not go in vain, they will attain freedom", he added. The prime minister said due the incumbent government's prudent steps, the inflation rate and subsequently the policy rate had come down significantly, besides the country's exports and foreign remittances also witnessed notable increase.

He said the World Bank, in its 10-years plan, had also allocated US\$20 billion for various projects in Pakistan. "We have saved the country from falling into default by resolving key economic challenges," he said adding that the government was committed to successfully complete the programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

## KP CM: Action to be taken against terrorists, militants in Kurram

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: A high-level meeting held here on Wednesday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, took stock of the prevailing situation in the restive district Kurram, and took important decisions.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Secretary, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Additional Chief Secretary Home and other relevant officials. It was decided to resume the process of demolition of illegal bunkers in the area from today (Wednesday) further deciding to dispatch four convoys of vehicles to Kurram carrying essential supplies by the end of this month.

The meeting decided to convene a jirga of the signatories of Kurram Peace Agreement with the aim to highlight and emphasis the responsibilities of the signatories for implementing the agreement. It was also decided to reactivate the village-level committees in Kurram, and both the parties involved in the conflict were asked to submit a plan to the provincial government as soon as possible for de-weaponising the area. The meeting decided that payments of compensation to victims of the Bagan area will be conditional to their cooperation with the government and local administration. Furthermore, indiscriminate action will be taken against terrorists

## KP Tourism Dept, BoK sign MoU

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: In a step forward towards promoting tourism in the province, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Tourism Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Bank of Khyber for the implementation of the provincial government's Homestay Tourism Program, "Maizban."

The signing ceremony was held on Wednesday at the Chief Minister's House in Peshawar, with Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur presiding as the chief guest. This innovative project by the provincial government is being launched initially in seven districts — Upper Chitral, Lower Chitral, Upper Dir, Lower Dir, Mansehra, Abbottabad, and Swat — with an initial budget of Rs. 395 million. Under the program, interest-free loans of up to Rs. 3 million will be provided to local residents through the Bank of Khyber. The loans will enable residents to offer quality residential facilities to tourists within their homes by either renovating existing rooms or constructing two new rooms. These accommodations will include essential facilities such as bathrooms and kitchens.

and militants on both sides, and individuals nominated in FIRs will be apprehended for legal action actions against them. It was decided that civil administration and police will take lead a role in the restoration of normalcy in the restive area with the support from other law enforcement agencies. To enhance security, special units will be deployed along the Kurram Road whereas police will finalize a plan for both temporary and permanent recruitments to this end. Immediate steps will be taken for the rehabilitation and renovation of the damaged Bagan Bazaar. Similarly, provincial level monitoring committee

led by Barrister Saif, will also be made more effective.

The meeting emphasized the need for political leadership and elected representatives to actively participate in restoring peace in Kurram and come up with a clear stance on the issue. Regular visits will be conducted to oversee the demolition of bunkers and arrangements for temporarily displaced individuals; it was decided in the meeting further deciding that additional police personnel will be deployed in the area, and all elements disrupting peace, along with their facilitators, will be arrested and prosecuted.





## CM briefs Air War Course delegation on Punjab development projects

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif met a 79-member delegation of Pakistan Air War Course, led by Air Vice Marshal Rashid Habib at CM's office on Wednesday.

The CM said that it is a matter of pride to meet the protectors and guardians of the skies of Pakistani land, adding that Pakistan Air Force has accomplished valuable achievements in guarding the skies of Pakistani land. "I have immense respect for Pakistan Air Force, I look at it with love and respect," she remarked.

The CM stated that every flight of the Air Force takes off with hope, adding that the Pakistan Air Force has earned a place of respect in the hearts of Pakistanis by rising to challenges and fulfilling every call of duty. The importance of the Air Force is evident from its pivotal role in recent conflicts in Ukraine, Iran, Israel, and other regions.

CM Maryam Nawaz said that forces can achieve a higher position with training and discipline, adding that a series of good news has started in Pakistan,

and it will continue. Joy is shared over every success of the nation, she said. She stated, "Pakistan is a land of golden opportunities, and we will continue to improve it." She added, "Inflation has dropped from 38 percent to 4 percent, while foreign exchange reserves and the stock market are rising. She said Chinese investors are ready to invest in Pakistan. She said in January, Pakistan's largest scholarship program was launched. 30,000 students were given checks. Political instability has caused a lot of damage to Pakistan. She said with a sense of pride and gratitude, People from all over Pakistan are coming to Punjab for better business opportunities.

She said every sector and scheme of Punjab is government's priority. Free market economy is a priority but rates will not be allowed to increase for the poor. Punjab government is working on agricultural mechanization, the conditions of farmers will improve, she added. She told "We have presented the first comprehensive policy and plan to eliminate smog and environmental pollution. We have launched the waste management and sanitation system in

38 districts across the province. Machinery worth Rs 30 billion is being provided for sanitation and waste management across Punjab. A new industry has started with the creation of a new waste management system. "We are bringing Punjab on the path of industrialization" she added.

The visiting Air Vice Marshal Rashid Habib and course participants appreciated the projects of Chief Minister for the development of Punjab. Air Vice Marshal Rashid Habib remarked, "I am pleased to see the numerous development projects underway in Punjab. It has been a delightful experience meeting the dynamic and proactive Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and her team." He added, "Under the Chief Minister's leadership, the Punjab government appears dedicated to the prosperity of the common man. I extend my gratitude to Madam Chief Minister and her team for their warm hospitality and gracious welcome in Punjab." The chief minister also responded to questions from the course participants.

## CyberKnife offers free cancer treatment in Sindh

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Government spokesperson Sumeta Afzal Syed and Ghanwar Isran stated that CyberKnife provides 100% free of cost treatment for brain cancer, as well as prostate cancer. The hospital is also part of a project involving the recruitment of 570 new doctors and the construction of a seven-story medical tower.

They shared these thoughts during their visit to the CyberKnife department at Jinnah Hospital on Wednesday. Professor Dr. Tariq Mahmood, head of the CyberKnife department, was also present. Spokesperson for the Sindh Government and PPP Provincial Assembly member, Sumeta Afzal Syed, visited the CyberKnife center at Jinnah Hospital. Professor Dr. Tariq Mahmood briefed her in detail about the department's performance. Sumeta Afzal Syed expressed satisfaction with the center's work during her interaction with patients and their families. She emphasized that cancer treatment is being provided free of charge using modern technology. The CyberKnife center at Jinnah Hospital treats 45% of patients from Sindh, with majority patients also coming from other provinces and over 14 countries.

She mentioned that in addition to CyberKnife, facilities like PET scans and TomoTherapy are also available here. Sindh Government spokesperson Ghanwar Isran stated that this initiative was implemented under the vision of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. He highlighted that work is being done in health and other departments through public-private partnerships. He added that today they had met a patient from South Africa as well. Dr Tariq Masood, He mentioned that Jinnah Hospital had been entangled in legal matters since 2011, which led to a stay order on recruitments. Currently, the hospital has 1,498 employees, and the court has granted permission for an additional 2,225 appointments. The hospital currently employs 100 FPCS doctors, and 570 more will be added. He also revealed that \$140 million had been raised with the help of philanthropists. Furthermore, the plan includes replacing the old emergency wards with a seven-story medical tower, adding more than 500 beds to the hospital.

## Mohtasib calls for swift resolution of public complaints



F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman), Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has asked the heads of federal agencies in AJ&K to ensure speedy resolution of public complaints. He was addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Wafaqi Mohtasib's Regional Office, Muzaffarabad.

He said that this Office is continuously reaching out to the public, as a result increasing number of people are contacting this forum for redressal of their grievances. The outgoing year 2024, he said, witnessed a record increase in the receipt and disposal of complaints. Now with the opening of the Regional Offices at Muzaffarabad and Gilgit Baltistan, it has presence in

24 cities of the country, adding that more Regional Offices are expected to be opened later this year.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by a large number of senior officials belonging to AJ&K, apart from the heads of federal agencies, members of civil society and media. Speaking on the occasion, the Wafaqi Mohtasib further added that the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat during the outgoing year 2024, received as many as 226,372 complaints, out of which 223,171 have been disposed of, indicating an increase of 17% and 16% in the receipt and disposal of the complaints respectively over the figures of 2023.

"Our Investigating Officers travelled across the length and breadth of the country and held Khuli

Katcheries to dispense administrative justice at the doorsteps of the people, observing that Wafaqi Mohtasib's Office is truly a poor man's court", he added.

He also presided over a meeting with the heads of federal government agencies, wherein he called upon them to ensure speedy redressal of public complaints. Later, he also addressed a well-attended press conference, wherein he lauded the constructive role being played by press and media and said that it remained instrumental in raising public awareness regarding the availability of this useful forum for prompt redressal of public complaints. He invited them to stand by the institution to enhance awareness for the general good of the people at large.

## LGH organises rally to express solidarity with Palestine

LAHORE (APP): The Orthopedic Department of Lahore General Hospital (LGH) and the Grand Health Alliance organised a rally on Wednesday to show solidarity with the people of Palestine.

A large number of doctors, nurses, and paramedics participated in the rally, raising slogans in support of Palestine and expressing their unwavering commitment to aiding the oppressed.

Principal of Postgraduate Medical Institute and Ameer Uddin Medical College Professor Dr. Al-Fareed Zafar, highlighted the urgent need for financial assistance, medicines, and healthcare professionals to aid thousands of injured Palestinians returning to their homes following the ceasefire in Gaza. He stated that the Grand Health Alliance is in close coordi-

nation with the Government of Pakistan and that doctors, nurses, and paramedics from LGH are ready to voluntarily travel to Palestine to provide medical care, subject to approval.

Head of the Orthopedic Department, Professor M. Hanif Mian, emphasized solidarity with Palestinians, stating that LGH has contributed over three million rupees to support them. He pledged continued assistance to help the Palestinian people recover and rebuild their lives.

Medical Superintendent (MS) Dr. Faryad Hussain praised the resilience and courage of the Palestinian people, saluting their ability to stand firm in the face of oppression and brutality. Dr. Haseeb Thind lauded the efforts of Palestinian citizens, describing their steadfastness as a "wall of resistance" against injus-

tice. Similarly, Dr. Adnan Masood expressed the unwavering support of LGH's medical staff for Palestine, assuring their readiness to provide help whenever needed.

President of the Paramedical Association, Junaid Mayo, expressed satisfaction with the ceasefire and reiterated the commitment of LGH staff to continue assisting their Palestinian brothers and sisters in every possible way.

Prominent participants included Prof. M. Hanif Mian, MS Dr. Faryad Hussain, Dr. Adnan Masood, Dr. Khalid Kazmi, Dr. Haseeb Thind, Dr. Iqbal Mayo, Dr. Naveed Ali, Dr. Shuja, Dr. Shiraz, Dr. Abdullah, and Dr. Hussain Khalid. The rally was marked by the participants' enthusiasm and strong slogans in favor of Palestine.

## IGP listens police employee's problems

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr Usman Anwar met with police employees and their families at the Central Police Office, and issued orders for immediate relief.

In response to various financial assistance requests, the IG Punjab issued orders accordingly. For retired Constable Touseef ul Haq's request, orders were issued to the DIG Welfare for assistance.

Similarly, in the case of Constable Tanveer ul Hassan's request, instructions for relief were given to the DIG Welfare. Regarding Constable Laiq Abbas's request, relief orders were issued to the AIG Welfare. In the case of the son of the late Head Constable Syed Athar Ali, orders for relief were issued to the DPO Layyah.

## Secretary orders to take strict action against illegal occupants

LAHORE (APP): A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Secretary Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) Fareed Iqbal to evaluate the performance of various zonal and district offices of the board.

District officers were assigned important tasks such as rent assessment based on market rates, increasing departmental revenue, and recovery.

According to a press release issued here on Wednesday, a series of meetings were held at the head office under the leadership of Secretary Fareed Iqbal to assess the performance of all zonal administrators, deputy administrators, rent collectors, and district office staff.

The Secretary directed all districts to take strict action against illegal occupants and their facilitators to protect trust properties.

## Sindh to launch EV taxi service within 24 hours



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Government to Accelerate Efforts to Launch EV Taxi Service Within 24 hours, another meeting of the Transport Department was convened at the Sindh Secretariat in Karachi under the chairmanship of Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon, alongside Provincial Minister for Energy, Planning, and Development Syed Nasir Hussain Shah. The meeting resolved to expedite the establishment of charging stations for EV taxis.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Planning and Development Najam Shah, Secretary Transport Asad Zamin, Managing Director of Sindh Mass Transit Authority Kamal Dayo, Project Director of People's Bus Service Sohaib Shafiq, and other officials. During the meeting, the ministers were briefed on the operational

model, benefits, and affordability of the electric taxis.

The officials apprised that the passengers would be able to travel up to 200 km in EV vehicles for Rs. 1,800, thus the service would be economical and friendly to the environment as well. During the meeting, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon directed that the first batch of EV taxis be launched by February.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon and Provincial Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah instructed the relevant departments to ensure the timely completion of the necessary infrastructure, including EV charging stations. They emphasized that the EV taxi service would revolutionize Sindh's transportation system by offering an environmentally friendly and affordable alternative, reaffirming their commitment to launching the service without delay.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that this initiative aligns with their vision for a modern and sustainable transport

system. He added that it will create employment opportunities for the youth, protect the environment, and encourage investment.

Speaking on the sidelines of the meeting, Provincial Minister for Energy, Planning, and Development Syed Nasir Hussain Shah stated that their goal is to establish a comprehensive EV ecosystem in Sindh, encompassing everything from charging infrastructure to modern financing models. He added that, with the support of banks, EV taxis would be made available to unemployed youth on easy installment plans.

He stated that the vision of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is to empower individuals and make them self-reliant, enabling them to contribute to a brighter future. The meeting also reviewed various banking models to ensure the availability, accessibility, and financial viability of EV taxis on easy installment plans for unemployed youth.

**GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA**  
**TEHSIL MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION, TMA JAMRUD**

Tehsil Municipal Administration TMA Jamrud District Khyber, invites electronic bids from eligible firms/contractors in accordance with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Procurement Regulatory Authority (KPPRA) Rules 2014 on **Single Stage Two Envelops**. The firm/contractor must be registered with: (i) Pakistan Engineering, Council (PEC) in relevant category and code (ii) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRRA).

**OUT OF PROVINCIAL ADP NO.978/240311**  
**"DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (DDI) (2024-25)"**

S#	Scheme Name	Amount in Million	2% Earnest Money in Rs	Last Date/ Time of Submission of Tender of Forms	Date/Time of Tender Opening
1	PCC Road, Hand Pump, Solar System for Existing DWSS and New DWSS/Solar System and Water Tank Rehabilitation of DWSS at Sherbrj, Zaga Aziz Abad, Meyan, Meyan Morcha, Gharay Kalay, Lwaramina, Tatara, Muraddand, Bara Dara ShaheedMina, Khoga Khel, Pased Khel. Bacha Mena, Manz Sawakay, Sekhmal Khel, Kam Shelman, LoeShelman. Sultan Khel. Sadu Khel, Prang Dara, Tehsil Landikotal	50.00	1000000/-	14/02/2025 12:00PM	14/02/2025 02:00PM
2	PCC Road, Hand Pump, Solar System for Existing DWSS and New DWSS/Solar System and WaterTank Rehabilitation of DWSS at Ali Masjid Shagai, Shakas, Ghuday, Tadi Bazar, Sakhi Pull, Bakara, Surkamar. Chora, Wazir Dand, Ghoriza, Jaba Tehsil Jamrud.	50.00	1000000/-	--do--	--do--
3	PCC Road, Hand Pump, Solar System for Existing DWSS and New DWSS/Solar System and WaterTank Rehabilitation of DWSS at Kala Khel, AdamKhel, Shalobar, Malik Din Khel, Sepha Aka Khel, Kamar Khel, Qambar Khel, Tehsil Bara	50.00	1000000/-	--do--	--do--
4	Construction of Street Drain Culverts DWSS BTR Culverts etc at Ali Masjid, Shagai, Lala Chena, KataKushta, Chora, Rekalay, Islam Dara, Cangay Kalay, Surkamar, TD Bara, Jalal Din, Spera, Qadam, Jamal Khel, Gudar, VC-3, Warmando Mela, Azgho Mela, Walo Mela, Chapani, Ghundi-1, Husey Kali, Abdal Khel, Malak Shaga, Ghudi-2/Sikandar Khel, Mandatu Kuti, Spelano Kaas, Wazir Dhand, Town-3/Sardar Kalay, Ulano Kali, Safer Kali, Shakas-I, Malakano Kali, Ibrahim Khel, Shakas-II/SamGhakhi, Doran, Momeen Kali. Neher Ghara, Jamrud	40.00	800000/-	--do--	--do--
5	Construction of Street Drain Culverts DWSS BTR Culverts etc at Shalobar (Bhera Dhand, Hisara, Nogazi Baba, Qambar Abad, Muslim Dhand, Sodogy, Swati Dhera, Star Kalay, Arjali Nadi, Khan Kaleem Stop, Podli Abad) Jamrud	40.00	800000/-	--do--	--do--
6	Construction of Street Drain Culverts DWSS BTR Culverts etc at Barqambad Khel (Hamdard Kalay, Speendaand Jan Khan Kalay, Sambaba, Takyaa, Shinko, Sarkay Kamar, Saidano Kalay, Waliabad, Tootdhand) Jamrud	35.00	700000/-	--do--	--do--

**Terms & Conditions:**

- Bid Solicitation Documents (BSD) can be obtained from the office of the Engineering Branch, TMA Jamrud on any working day by depositing a sum of Rs 2000/-in PKR as "non-refundable" in shape of call deposit in favor of **Tehsil Municipal Officer TMA JAMRUD** from the date of publication of this advertisement in newspaper till one day prior to Tender opening.
- All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in shape of call deposit equal to 2% of the estimated cost in the name of **Tehsil Municipal Officer. TMA Jamrud** call deposit of scheduled banks will be accepted. All relevant documents i.e enlistment copy of Local Council board, and photo copy of CNIC and NT N must be attached with financial bid.
- The deadline for submission of "Technical Bid" and "Financial Bid" is **14/02/2025 at 12:00 PM**.
- Technical and financial bid (in original) shall reach to this office through courier only, before submission deadline.
- With reference to the letter No. SOG/LG/7-1/Miscellaneous/2025 dated 20/01/2025 & SOG/LG/7-1/Miscellaneous/2025 dated 21/01/2025 the e-bidding and e-tendering, process has been cancelled So, Financial Bid shall also be submitted Manually on their Firm Letter Head, before submission deadline.
- The 'Technical Bid shall be opened by the Procurement Committee in the presence of firms/contractor, or their representative who to be present on date **14/02/2025 at 02:00PM**. Date of Financial bid opening shall be intimated accordingly.
- The contractor/bidder must quote their rate according to "Above/Below system" based on market rate system 2024 1<sup>st</sup> ", and as per KPPRA Notification No S.R.O. (14)/Vol.1-24/202122 dated 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022
- The bidder shall submit their bid (Hard Copy) with requisite Mandatory Documents i.e Financial Form, BOQ duly signed, Active NTN/ Income Tax Certificate, PEC License duly renewed, KPRRA Registration Showing Active Status on opening date of tender.
- The technical Qualification will be carried out with criteria mention in the standard bidding document (SBD) which includes PEC registration in relevant Code, Tax Payer Proof, Relevant past Experience performance, Technical Personnel, Required Equipment, Financial Status, Managerial Capabilities, Litigation status etc.,
- Any addition made in terms and conditions in the NIT advertised in the newspaper will be implemented as per KPPRA Rules.
- The contractor quoting their bids more than 10% below up to 20% below on Engineer Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer Estimate cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied by the required amount of Additional Security, then it will be considered as non-responsive and 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- Similarly, a contractor quoting their bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid of Engineer's Estimate along with the detailed rate analysis, in case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detail rate analysis and/or required amount of additional security, then the said shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- In case detailed rate analysis submitted with bids is, in the view of procuring entity not convincing, the Head of Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reason thereof
- Workorder will be issued subjected to availability of Fund.
- If the evaluated Financial Bid of two or more than two bidders are equal then the successful bidder will be declared through Open draw.
- Open draw will be conducted after verification of CDR's from concern banks.
- As per KPPRA Advise, insurance bond will not be acceptable.

**Tehsil Officer(I&S)**  
TMA JAMRUD

**Tehsil Municipal Officer(I&S)**  
TMA JAMRUD

INF/PJ270/25

## Shahani condemns violence against PSF workers at Punjab University

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Mansoor Ali Shahani, the Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Sindh for Student Affairs, strongly condemned the recent violence against Pakistan Students Federation (PSF) workers at Punjab University. Addressing a press conference at his office, Mansoor Ali Shahani described the incident, in which a group of individuals affiliated with wing of a

political party attacked PSF youth, as "unacceptable" and stressed that such actions will not be tolerated.

Mansoor Ali Shahani noted that the PSF had recently organized a large convention at the university, after which the youth members of the organization were subjected to brutal violence. He condemned this act and called for greater efforts to foster positive political engagement among students.

"Violence against students reflects negative trends in society. We must guide the upcoming generation towards positive politics," he remarked. The Special Assistant also highlighted that on 25th January, Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will attend the convocation at Mehran University. Earlier, Bilawal Bhutto had visited Sindh University and IBA Sukkur, where he distributed degrees to students.



Mansoor Ali Shahani emphasized that Pakistan's youth population faces a myriad of challenges, including internet restrictions, at a time when the world is advancing with 5G technology.



# Women entrepreneurs play vital role in economic uplift: Tordher

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Industries, Abdul Karim Tordher described the business activities of women as vital to achieve the goals of economic development, saying there is a need to address the problems faced by women entrepreneurs.

He expressed these views while addressing the Public-Private Dialogue session under the auspices of the Centre for Governance and Public Accountability (CGPA) in collaboration with the Centre for International Private Enterprises at a local hotel in Peshawar on Wednesday.

The Special Assistant assured all possible support to the Women Chambers of Commerce and Industries (WCCIs), established at the district level and said that efforts will be made to resolve the problems and difficulties faced by them by holding meetings with them.

The aim of holding the session was to give an opportunity to business-women, relevant institutions and the government to promote business at the dis-

trict and provincial levels and to solve the problems faced by them in order to empower women economically.

Addressing the session, the Special Assistant appreciated the efforts of the organization in the support of Women Chambers of Commerce and Industries.

He said that women have a crucial and active role in the economic development and on behalf of the provincial government assured all support to the Women's Chambers and asked it to provide details regarding the problems faced by them and the support required from the government.

Referring to the regional problems, the Special Assistant said that since 1979 we have been passing through unfavorable conditions which have left deep negative effects on the economic journey.

He said that they will make practical steps to bring improvement in the environment for business.

Highlighting the government's initiatives regarding the development and financial support of women, he said that an interest-free loan scheme has been launched under the Social Welfare Department for the women, underprivileged

individuals and transgenders.

Under the scheme loans ranging from Rs.0.1 million to Rs.0.5 million is available through Akhuwat Foundation.

He asked the officials of the Chambers to create awareness about this project to the business women so that they can take benefit from it.

Similarly, under this program they can get a large loan in the form of clusters from Bank of Khyber and up to Rs.0.5 million through Akhuwat Foundation.

He said that a loan of up to Rs.0.5 million can be obtained under Ehsaas Honar Programme, which is specially for the people with technical skills.

He directed the Provincial Chief of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) to play a role in developing linkages of women entrepreneurs with related institutions for providing financial support.

Addressing the women associated with the chambers, he said that they can showcase their products for marketing and sale in the Art and Craft Gallery of the Small Industries

Development Board (SIDB) in Islamabad, which will boost their production.

The Special Assistant said that they will hold a meeting with the Women Chambers officials of the five districts and try to extend them support wherever possible.

He said that they will be able to achieve real development only when they have the support of their women, so they will take possible steps to provide them with a peaceful and sustainable business environment.

Project Manager CGPA Khalfan Ahmad Khattak shed light on the organization and its activities under the project and informed the participants about the positive impact of Public Private Dialogue in Dir Lower, Abbottabad, Mardan and Charsadda.

President, WCCI (Peshawar) Rabia Basri, Provincial Chief SMEDA Rashid Aman, Assistant Commissioner Peshawar Miss Rashida Tahir and other speakers also addressed the session and highlighted the services extended by their institutions and departments regarding women's business activities.



PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Industries, Abdul Karim Tordher in a group photo with participants of Public-Private Dialogue session under the auspices of the Centre for Governance and Public Accountability (CGPA).

## PHC extends stay order against usage of mercury in gold mining

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah has extended the stay order against the use of mercury in gold mining operations in the Kohat region, and has directed the provincial government to submit its response in this regard, on Wednesday.

The petition was filed by Amjad Afridi and others, while the counsel Nauman Mohib Kakakhel advocate informed the court that mercury is being used in gold mining operations in Kohat, which is not only causing environmental pollution but also affecting the health of local residents. He added that the mercury waste is being dumped into the Indus River, contaminating the water and harming aquatic life.

The counsel argued that the use of mercury in gold mining is in viola-

tion of the Environmental Protection Act, and therefore, its use should be declared illegal and stopped. He requested the court to issue directions to the provincial government and relevant departments to regulate the use of mercury and prevent its harmful effects.

Deputy Director Legal Environmental Protection Agency Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mumtaz Ali requested the court to grant more time to submit the response to the petition, citing the need to conduct a site inspection.

The court accepted the request and granted the provincial government one month's time to submit its response to the petition, while extending the stay order against the use of mercury in gold mining operations.

**PHC seeks response against appointment of Law Officers at Attorney & Advocate General offices**

The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has issued

notices to the Attorney General of Pakistan and the Advocate General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, seeking their response regarding the appointment of law officers in their respective offices, on Wednesday.

The counsel Malik Salman advocate argued that the appointments are in violation of Articles 4, 25, and 227 of the Constitution. The petitioner claims that the appointments are based on political affiliations rather than merit.

PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah questioned the petitioner about the procedure for appointments. Justice SM Attique asked whether the law prescribes a specific procedure for appointments and where the violation of law is occurring.

In the meantime, Justice Sahibzada Asadullah asked the petitioner to explain how the appointed officers are not

meeting the required standards. He inquired whether the appointed officers lack education or qualifications.

The petitioner responded that the law does provide a procedure for appointments, which is being ignored in favor of political appointments. He argued that the appointments should be based on merit, and a transparent procedure should be followed.

The petitioner argued that advertisements should be published to invite applications, and a test and interview process should be conducted to select the most suitable candidates. He emphasized that the appointments should be made based on merit, rather than political affiliations.

The court, after hearing the arguments, issued notices to the Attorney General of Pakistan and the Advocate General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, seeking their response in the next hearing.

## Minister to address Worker Welfare board issues

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Labor Fazal Shakoorkhan said that the problems of Workers Welfare Board employees and laborers are being solved on a priority basis, and all resources are being utilized for this purpose. He added that very soon, the problems faced by the employees will be resolved, and the performance of this

department and the schools operating under it will also improve.

He expressed these views during a meeting with President Workers Welfare Board Employees Association Yunus Marwat. On this occasion, Yunus Marwat appreciated the steps taken by the Provincial Minister to solve the problems of employees and reiterated his commitment to play his role in the

betterment of the department.

The Provincial Minister emphasized that employees should utilize their abilities to enhance the educational capabilities of laborers' children, so that no one faces any difficulties in this regard.

On this occasion, the association president presented a souvenir to Provincial Minister for recognition of his services.

## KP BISP DG clarifies misconceptions about Solar Panel Scheme

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Zahra Aslam, Director General of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), has issued an official statement to address public misconceptions regarding the provincial government's solar panel scheme and the BISP registration process.

Speaking on the matter, Ms. Aslam clarified that the solar panel scheme is an independent initiative of the KP government, aimed at providing solar panels to deserving individuals across the province. She emphasized that this scheme is not associated with BISP in any capacity.

The DG also shed light on the registration process for BISP, underscoring that it is completely free of charge. "There is no fee or survey form required for registration in the Benazir Income Support Program," she said. Ms. Aslam further explained that BISP has established Dynamic Registration Centers in every tehsil across the country, where trained staff conduct surveys for eligible households without any cost.

In addition, the program extends its reach to remote areas of Sindh and Balochistan through mobile registration vans, ensuring that no deserving family is left behind. "Other than these official channels, there is no alternative method for registration in BISP," she emphasized.

Ms. Aslam urged the public to remain vigilant against fraudsters and scammers.

"If anyone demands payment for BISP registration, please report the incident immediately to our call center at 0800-26477," she advised.

## Ihtesham chairs Diabetes Task Force meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting of the Diabetes Task Force was convened under the chairmanship of Advisor to Health, Ihtesham Ali. The

meeting was attended by Dr. A.H. Amir, former Project Director of D-Talk and Insulin for Life, Dr. Babar Alam, Head of WHO KP Office, representatives from the Finance and P&D

departments, and other members of the task force.

The health advisor emphasized the critical importance of raising public awareness about diabetes prevention.



PESHAWAR: Habib ur Rehman advocate getting his degree and merit certificate from Chairman Political Science Department.

## Encroachments at Arbab Road demolished

PESHAWAR (APP): District administration in a joint operation with Capital Metropolitan Government (CMPG) and Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) demolished dozens of illegal constructions and encroachments at Arbab Road on University Road on Wednesday.

In the grand anti-encroachment operation initiated under the public agenda of the provincial government, was also participated by the administrative officers of PDA, CMPG. A heavy contingent of police was also present to avert any toward incident. During the operation, dozens of illegal construc-

tions and encroachments were removed through heavy machinery.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar, Sarmad Saleem Akram has said that the demolished constructions and encroachments were creating hurdles in the movement of the pedestrians and were also affecting the flow of

traffic that prompted the administration to demolish them by using heavy machinery.

He said that the ongoing indiscriminate anti-encroachment operation will continue in all localities of the district and stern action will be taken against those re-erecting their encroachments.

## NCHD, UoP sign MoU to promote education and social awareness

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) and the University of Peshawar have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at fostering collaboration in promoting education, health, and awareness about social issues. This partnership seeks to train students on addressing societal challenges and initiate the "Each One Teaches One" program.

The signing ceremony was attended by NCHD's Director Operations, Mr. Anwar Iqbal, who represented the organization, accompanied by Deputy Director Saeed Khan. Representing the University of Peshawar were Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Qazi Naeem,

along with Dr. Shakeel, Dr. Bushra, and Dr. Gohar.

Under the agreement, NCHD will prepare students to contribute to literacy initiatives and work on various social issues through specialized training programs. Successful participants will be awarded certificates for their efforts.

As part of the Prime Minister's vision, the "Each One Teaches One" campaign will be launched, under which every student will be responsible for educating at least one illiterate individual.

Speaking at the event, NCHD Director Operations Mr. Anwar Iqbal highlighted the significance of this collaboration in improving education and engaging youth in community service. He expressed gratitude to the University of Peshawar's

leadership and called this partnership a milestone in the fight against illiteracy.

Vice Chancellor of the University of Peshawar, Professor Dr. Qazi Naeem, appreciated NCHD's initiative and emphasized its importance in training young people and promoting community service. Dr. Shakeel elaborated on the practical aspects of the

partnership, assuring that students will receive comprehensive training and guidance for teaching literacy.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the leaders of both institutions reaffirmed their commitment to accelerating societal progress through joint efforts in education, health, and addressing social issues.



## Kundi promises to address Mohmand tribe issues with Federation

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday assured Mohmand Political Alliance that he would raise the issues concerning departments such as Nadra, passport services, Wapda, and Mohmand Dam with the federal government.

The Governor said this in a meeting with the delegation from the Mohmand Political Alliance, led by Malik Jangriz Khan, here at Governor House.

The delegation included leaders from various political parties affiliated with the Mohmand district.

They briefed the Governor about the issues facing the Mohmand tribe, including problems related to electricity, water, communications, and other sectors.

The delegation also commended Governor Faisal Karim Kundi for organizing an All Parties Conference and forming political and technical committees to raise the rights of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the merged districts. They particularly appreciated the decision to include the Mohmand tribe in these committees.

In response, Governor Kundi emphasized that the Governor's House would act as a lawyer for all the provinces in advocating their issues with the federal authorities.

He also assured the delegation that they could submit their concerns in writing, and he would ensure positive progress.

Governor Kundi acknowledged the frustra-

tion expressed by the delegation, recognizing that the provincial government had failed to properly utilize the funds received from the federal government following the merger of FATA and the NFC Award.

He highlighted the mismanagement of these funds, the lack of resources for police, and the failure to allocate funds for the merged districts, which has led to growing discontent among the tribal communities regarding the merger.

Governor Kundi further praised the Mohmand Political Alliance for setting an example in the province by putting aside political differences for the greater regional interest.

He stressed the need for a similar approach across the province to address broader

issues related to the rights of all districts.

He assured the delegation that he would work to ensure they have access to relevant high-ranking officials in the federal government.

Meanwhile, a certificate distribution ceremony was held at the Governor House for students of the Enlighten School System and Training Center led by.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi awarded certificates to both male and female students in recognition of their outstanding performance.

Special persons who completed skill development training at the institution, as well as teachers who showed exceptional performance, were also presented with certificates.

The event was attended by several notable figures,

including Zobia Amir, Vice President of the Women Chamber of Commerce, officials from the NAVTTC, as well as teachers and students.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi congratulated the students who received certificates and emphasized the importance of skill development for youth in the current circumstances.

He said that trained youth have better job prospects both within the country and abroad.

The Governor also highlighted that the federal government has allocated a significant budget for skill development programs across various sectors to equip young people with necessary competencies.

He further reiterated the need for more skill develop-

ment training to empower the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for future employment opportunities.

Similarly, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi handed over the medicine sent by the Balochistan government for the victims in Kurram District to the Pakistan Red Crescent Society for the merged districts.

Chairman of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society for Merged Districts, Imran Wazir, received the medicines from Governor Kundi at the Governor House.

The Pakistan Red Crescent Society will distribute the medicines among the affected people in Kurram District.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi expressed his gratitude to the Chief Minister of Balochistan and the provin-

cial government for their timely assistance.

He praised the people and government of Balochistan for their humanitarian gesture and solidarity with the people of Kurram.

Governor Kundi further said that this gesture of the Balochistan government and its people is a shining example of love and brotherhood between the provinces.

He thanked the Balochistan government for their continued support and compassion toward the victims of Kurram District.

**Governor Kundi condole with Jhagra over demise of brother**

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Wednesday visited the residence of the late Javed Zafar Jhagra, the younger brother of former

Governor and former Secretary General of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Iqbal Zafar Jhagra, to offer his condolences.

During his visit, Governor Kundi expressed his sympathies to former Governor Iqbal Zafar Jhagra, the deceased's son Bahram Khan Jhagra, and other family members.

He prayed for the forgiveness and high ranks of the deceased and patience for the family to bear this irreparable loss.

The Governor was accompanied by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) MPA Arbab Zarak Khan, provincial and district leaders, including Farzand Ali Wazir, Abrar Saeed Swati, Misbahuddin, Malik Saeed, and other party workers.





## In brief

### Action against encroachments F.P. Report

LARKANA: Assistant Commissioner supervised anti-encroachment operation against illegal constructions on various business roads of the city including Gajanpur Chowk, Jail Bazaar Road, Neodero Chowk and footpaths by demolishing set-ups, on Wednesday. The benches, sandals and other items standing on the footpath were also removed to maintain the convenience of the public. Speaking to the media on this occasion, the Assistant Commissioner said that on the special instructions of the Sindh government, the encroachments have been removed by the district administration, while the traffic system has also been simplified to beautify the city.

### 2 robbers injured in encounter F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Two robbers sustained injuries while their accomplices escaped after an encounter in Mamonkanjan police station. A police spokesman said on Wednesday that a police team was returning with two accused, Allah Ditta and Saleem, after recovery of a case property when four assailants on two motorcycles intercepted them and opened firing at the police van near Sewerage Drain of Chak No 494-GB. They got the arrested accused released and escaped from the scene. The police chased the accused and during the encounter, the both accused received injuries due to bullets of their own accomplices. The police shifted the injured to Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital Samundri. The accused were wanted to the police in a number of cases of robbery.

### AC holds Khuli Kachehri F.P. Report

HARIPUR: Assistant Commissioner (AC), Ghazi, Khola Tariq on Wednesday held "Khuli Kachehri" (Open Court) to address the people's problems on prompt basis. The Khuli Kachehri was organized in Government High school, Salam Khand. The assistant commissioner listened the public complaints and directed the concerned authorities to resolve them on priority.

### DC chairs RTA meeting F.P. Report

ATTOCK: Deputy Commissioner Attock reviewed performance of the special task force constituted for traffic management, axle load, accident prevention during the monthly Regional Transport Authority (RTA) held in his office here on Wednesday. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Commissioner Attock, Rao Atif Raza, and attended by District Police Officer Sardar Ghayas Gul alongside police and administrative officials. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Aneel Saeed, Assistant Commissioner Attock Madam Shagufta, Deputy Director Public Relations Shehzad Niaz, EXEN Punjab Highways Attock, DSP Traffic Attock, Motorway Police, Emergency Services Department 1122, and other relevant officers participated. Secretary Regional Transport Authority Ziaheer Ahmad Khan briefed the attendees on axle load management and shared the measures taken in this regard. The Deputy Director and Assistant Director of the Mines Department Attock, along with leaseholders and representatives of the Dumper Association, also attended and assured their cooperation.



HYDERABAD: A view of accumulated sewerage water on main Makki Road.

## Balochistan govt, GHA settle down matters

F.P. Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan government and Grand Health Alliance (GHA) has settled down the matters and announced the culmination of strike.

After holding successful negotiations between the Balochistan government and the Grand Health Alliance, the medical services has been restore and announced the end of the strike.

According to Balochistan government spokesperson Shahid Rind, all matters have been resolved amicably, and the Grand Health Alliance has been given assurances to avoid any future strikes and protests. He said that officials from the Pakistan Medical Association played a mediatory role in the negotiations between the Grand Health Alliance and

the government.

It was made clear that the decision of the Balochistan High Court would be fully implemented, and all orders of the High Court would be followed. He added that Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar are committed to provide quality healthcare services to the general public. The spokesperson mentioned that the ongoing reforms in the health department are for the greater public interest and will be continuously maintained.

The government clarified that public hospitals will be transformed into model health care centers for public service. The resources of the health department are a trust of the poor people, and their proper utilization will be

ensured. The spokesperson further said that no illegal strike or action will be tolerated in the future. The government is determined to uphold its authority, and government institutions will be run in accordance with the constitution and laws.

The Balochistan government has announced a coordinated approach to resolve the legitimate demands of medical staff. Shahid Rind emphasized that the suspension of medical services, in light of public difficulties, is unacceptable, and uninterrupted medical services will be ensured in government hospitals. He concluded that these actions have highlighted the Balochistan government's commitment to public service and demonstrate its serious intentions in completing the ongoing reforms in the health sector.

## Govt withdraw decision of CNG's closure Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: The government withdraw decision regarding closure of CNG stations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to details, for the past several days, the All Pakistan CNG Association's Chairman, Haji Parvez Khattak, along with his cabinet and executive members, had been engaged in efforts at the government and judicial levels to reopen CNG stations in the province.

All Pakistan CNG Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter, presented their demands to the federal and provincial governments and convinced that the government's decision to close CNG stations to supply gas to domestic consumers was counterproductive.

Normally, CNG stations would remain closed for one or two months, but the All Pakistan CNG Association's efforts have led to the reopening of CNG stations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, providing relief to the people of the province.

## Bank of Khyber to hold seminar F.P. Report

BANNU: Bank of Khyber announced a one-day seminar on the Islamic banking, scholars, businessmen and civil society to play a joint role, the provincial government Islamic banking is providing facilities to the business class according to Shariah principles.

All over the country, especially the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, services are being provided to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in accordance with the Islamic constitution and laws, including interest-free loans, under the supervision of eminent scholars in the light of Islam.

Divisional Secretary of Khyber Sharia Mufti Abdul Halim Khan, Head of Khyber Bank Islamic Branches South Region Rahm Baz Khan, President of Association of Traders Dr. Abdul Rauf Qureshi and other leaders participated in a one-day seminar of businessmen, scholars and civil society organized regarding Islamic banking. While addressing, he said that it is a big challenge to attract the public's thinking towards Islamic banking.

## Coordination among media, police urged F.P. Report

BUNER: District Police Officer has made a goodwill visit to the Buner Press Club and held informal talks with journalists' community regarding good governance to assure public trust in government institutions, on Wednesday.

DPO Buner Saud Khan prioritized of maintaining peace, community policing and creating an atmosphere of trust among public. He has expressed his commitment the press and police to work together for elimination of crimes.

DPO has expressed his commitment to investigate the crimes and re-evaluate the cases and arrest the involved elements by adopting the policy of merit.

# Jirga demand socio-economic uplift of tribesmen

F.P. Report

WANA: A grand jirga of the Ahmadzai Wazir tribes convened at the Angoor Adda Zero Point in South Waziristan. The gathering brought together tribal elders, religious scholars, businessmen, and a large number of locals to deliberate on pressing issues facing the region.

The jirga concluded with a unanimous resolution addressing several key demands aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of the area. These included maintaining peace in Angoor Adda by eradicating unrest, theft, and drug-related activities.

It also called for the establishment of a separate counter at the Angoor Adda border gate to facilitate movement for local residents through ID cards, e-passes, or the RFID system, while exempting them from passport and visa requirements.

The resolution emphasized the need to allow unhindered travel for national ID card holders through checkpoints along the Wana-Angoor Adda route. Immediate measures were also demanded to enhance education, healthcare, mobile network serv-

ices, establish a NADRA branch, provide relief in customs processes, and address municipal and electricity supply issues.

The jirga further urged security forces to avoid indiscriminate nighttime firing and called for the removal of obstacles to trade at the Angoor Adda customs terminal, requesting an end to interference by non-relevant authorities in customs operations. Additionally, the participants demanded the repair of the trade highway between Angoor Adda and Wana, which has been damaged by floods and rains. They also called for a special package under the Ehsaas Program to alleviate poverty in the region.

**Tribesmen temporary calls off sit-in protest:** The sit-in protest against alleged high-handedness of tribesmen has been temporarily called off following mediation by the Wana Political Alliance and tribal elders. Protestors, who had blocked the road in front of the Police Lines, reopened it for traffic, deferring their demonstration until 10 AM tomorrow, on Wednesday.

Rasmi Khan, one of the protestors, along with his family, including women

and children, shared their grievances with the media, citing desperation as the reason for their street protest. He alleged that security personnel have been intruding into their homes, violating the sanctity of private property.

Detailing the incidents, Rasmi Khan claimed that his relative Ubaidullah was detained from his shop in the Wana Bazaar earlier that morning. He added that another family member had previously been arrested and later released. According to him, law enforcement agencies are trying to link his family with terrorism, causing them immense psychological distress.

Imran Mukhlis, leader of the Wana Political Alliance and a former candidate from PK-110, addressed the issue during a press conference alongside tribesmen. He emphasized his commitment to the rule of law and the supremacy of civil institutions, urging security agencies to conduct operations in consultation with tribal elders and the police. Mukhlis called for an immediate end to unauthorized house raids and baseless allegations against civilians.

## Command and Control Room inaugurated

F.P. Report

TORGHAR: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Hazara Region, Nasir Mehmood Satti Wednesday inaugurated Police Hospital, Command and Control Room, and Police Rest House during his visit of Torghar.

During the occasion, DPO Torghar briefed the DIG on the initiatives undertaken to enhance police welfare and operational efficiency. He highlighted the challenges previously faced in providing medical facilities to police personnel in the remote district.

DIG Hazara while addressing said that to address these, a dedicated Police Hospital was set up within the police lines, staffed by two medically trained police employees

capable of handling routine check-ups and emergency first aid. The DIG was also apprised of the installation of CCTV cameras at key locations in the district headquarters, with 24/7 monitoring for enhanced security.

Commending the DPO's efforts, DIG Hazara Nasir Mehmood Satti expressed his commitment to improving the welfare of police personnel. He assured the provision of essential medicines and modern medical equipment at the hospital, emphasizing that such facilities in remote areas are a testament to the department's dedication.

The Command and Control Room, he added, would play a pivotal role in crime prevention and enable swift responses to emergencies. The integration

of CCTV surveillance would ensure stringent security at the police headquarters.

During his visit, DIG Hazara also reviewed police performance and challenges in the district. He issued directives for launching a campaign against proclaimed offenders, intensifying search-and-strike operations in the mountainous region, and closely monitoring suspicious individuals. He further instructed bolstering security at all entry and exit points and conducting operations against illegal weapons and narcotics. The DIG concluded his visit with inspections of various security points and the firing range at the Torghar Police Headquarters, where he evaluated the ongoing security measures.

## Police arrests injured PO after encounter

F.P. Report

MARDAN: In the exchange of fire between the city police and the alleged miscreants, one accused was injured and another escaped, according to a Police spokesperson during the blockade near canal road Ashrafabad, the police signaled two suspicious persons on a motorcycle to stop, who opened fire on the police.

In the retaliatory action of the police, one accused was arrested while injured, while the other accused left the motorcycle and escaped. According to the police spokesperson, the arrested suspect was identified as Abdul Baseer a resi-

dent of Zandodhere, who is proclaimed offender and convicted in various cases of theft, robbery at gun-point and drugs.

The injured suspect was immediately shifted to the hospital. 30 bore pistol and motorcycle 125 were recovered from the possession of the accused. The Police have started a search operation in the area to arrest the absconding accused.

**Residents demanded actions against adulterated items:** In Katlang tehsil, the sale of food and drink items prepared in oil and insufficient ghee to the citizens is going on rampantly, the citizens are afraid of the spread of fatal diseases due

to the preparation of samosas, pakoras, chips, burgers, biryani prepared in poor cooking oil and insufficient ghee.

According to the details, the production and sale of pakodas, samosas, chips, burgers and biryani in substandard and poor-quality ghee and cooking oil is going on at various places in katlang tehsil, which is causing various types of deadly diseases among the citizens. Those who sell substandard food items to the citizens have enforced the law of the jungle throughout the tehsil, due to which innocent children and the elderly are suffering from various deadly diseases.

## HEC commits to enhance potential of higher education faculty

F.P. Report

BUNER: The National Academy of Higher Education kick off four weeks National Outreach for Higher Education Faculty at University of Buner to enhance potential in academics initiated by Higher Education Commission (HEC).

The inaugural event, was attended by Assistant Director NAHE, Ghulam Murtaza Goraya, and Prof Dr. Ishtiaq Hussain, Resource Person for the training as well as university of Buner office holders.

Vice Chancellor, Dr. Saif ul Islam, thanked Dr. Noor Amna Malik, Managing Director, NAHE, for awarding the project to the University of Buner, National Outreach Program for Higher Education Faculty.

He extended that before this training, NAHE also

awarded the "Capacity Building Program for the University Management" project which was very helpful and instrumental in professional growth of the administrative and management staff of the university. He emphasized the importance of faculty development in enhancing the quality of higher education.

Dr. Haji Rahman, Director ORIC and Training Coordinator, welcomed the guests and appreciated the encouragement and support of the NAHE (HEC) management and its team. He explained that there would be 80 sessions in 20 working days, four sessions daily.

Ghulam Murtaza Goraya enlightened the participants about importance this training program and shared its objectives as well as structure. He elaborated that this four-week training program aims to enhance teaching

and learning skills, foster research and academic excellence, promote faculty development and mentorship, and strengthen institutional capacity building.

## FC man shot dead in Tank F.P. Report

TANK: An FC personnel was martyred by unknown assailant in Saddar police jurisdiction of Tank district on Wednesday.

Tank police informed on Wednesday that unidentified assailant shot dead an FC personnel, identified as Raees Khan. Local residents transported the deceased's body to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ). Meanwhile, the police have launched an investigation into the incident.

## Ongoing work at LMH Kohat inspected

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram had visited the Liaquat Memorial Hospital (LMH) Kohat where he made a detailed review of the ongoing work in connection with the reconstruction of the hospital.

The authorities concerned briefed the Deputy Commissioner on the current status and progress of the project and briefed them in detail about the various stages and challenges of the construction of the hospital.

Deputy Commissioner Kohat directed the authorities concerned to accelerate

the ongoing work on the hospital and ensure the transparency and quality of the project.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Kohat also met the delegation of Kohat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) led by its President Rashid Paracha. Senior Vice President of the KCCI Fahimullah and other office-bearers were also included in the delegation.

Founder of KCCI Rashid Pracha informed the Deputy Commissioner about the security of small industrial estate, accommodation of labourers, food technologists, domestic transformer, Kohat Chamber office plot and

other issues. He demanded that the required facilities should be provided to Kohat Industrial Estate so that the area can rapidly be put on the road to progress and prosperity through industry and trade and the country can get out of the economic crisis.

Deputy Commissioner Kohat assured all possible support in solving all the problems of the KCCI. President of KCCI and other members of the delegation thanked the Deputy Commissioner Kohat for his support and also presented him a shield. The delegation expressed the hope that this meeting will produce excellent and encouraging results.

## Special Hajj training session held

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: A special Hajj training session was organized at Kohat University under the auspices of the Hajj Directorate Peshawar. The session aimed to provide comprehensive guidance to pilgrims on the rituals of Hajj, enabling them to perform this sacred duty with ease and devotion.

The training was supervised by Assistant Professors

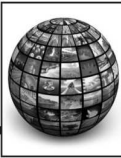
Dr. Qaiser Bilal and Dr. Farhadullah. Guest scholars, including Mufti Muhammad, Mufti Adnan, Mufti Saeed, and experts from the Hajj Directorate, provided detailed instructions on the practical and spiritual aspects of Hajj rituals.

The participants were educated on various aspects of Hajj, including the proper method of wearing Ihram, performing Tawaf, standing at Arafat, visiting

Muzdalifah, stoning at Jamarat, and other key rituals of Hajj.

The session concluded with a heartfelt prayer led by Mufti Muhammad, who prayed for the acceptance of the pilgrims' Hajj and blessings for their journey. Dr. Qaiser Bilal and Dr. Farhadullah expressed their gratitude to the guest scholars and experts for their contributions and extended their best wishes to the pilgrims.





# Gaza rebuild will take ‘a lot of time’, says UN official

GAZA (BBC): The rebuilding process in the devastated Palestinian territory will "take an awful lot of time" despite the promised surge in humanitarian deliveries, a UN official in Gaza has warned.

"We're not just talking about food, healthcare, buildings, roads, infrastructure. We've got individuals, families, communities that need to be rebuilt," Sam Rose, acting director of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (Unrwa) in Gaza, told the BBC.

After a ceasefire and hostage release deal between Israel and Hamas took effect, at least 1,545 aid lorries have crossed into Gaza, the UN said. The lorries brought in desperately needed food, tents, blankets, mattresses and clothes for the winter which had been stuck outside Gaza for months.

The ceasefire deal reportedly requires 600 aid lorries, including 50 carrying fuel, to be allowed into Gaza every day during the first phase lasting six weeks, during which Hamas should release 33 Israeli hostages in return for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. "We're expecting a major uptick in the volume of aid that's coming in, and of course it's far easier for us to go and collect that aid because many of the problems that we have faced so far in the war go away when the fighting stops," Mr Rose said.

"We're no longer moving through an active conflict zone. We no longer need have to co-ordinate all these movements with the Israeli authorities," he added. "And we've not today... faced any major problems with looting and criminality." But he also stressed that "we have to get away from thinking of people's needs in Gaza as a function of the volume of aid". "Every person in Gaza has been traumatised by what's gone on. Everyone has lost something. Most of those homes are now destroyed, most of the roads are now destroyed," he added. "It's going to be a long, long process of rehabilitation and rebuilding."

The World Health Organization's regional director, Hanan Balkhy, meanwhile said it had a 60-day plan to get Gaza's health system back on its feet to meet the population's urgent needs and prioritize care for the thousands of people with life-changing injuries. The plan includes repairing Gaza's hospitals - half of which are out of service and the others are only partially functional - set-



ting up temporary clinics in the hardest-hit areas, addressing malnutrition and controlling disease outbreaks. UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher warned that the humanitarian needs of Palestinians in Gaza were "staggering".

UN officials have previously blamed the humanitarian crisis on Israeli military restrictions on aid deliveries, the hostilities and the breakdown of law and order. Israel has insisted there are no limits to the amount of aid that can be delivered into and across Gaza and blames UN agencies for failing to distribute supplies. It also accuses Hamas of stealing aid, which the group denies. The Israeli military launched a campaign to destroy Hamas in response to an unprecedented cross-border attack on 7 October 2023, in which about 1,200 people were killed and 251 were taken hostage. Israel says 91 of the hostages remain in captivity.

More than 47,000 people have been killed and 111,000 injured in Gaza since then, according to the territory's Hamas-run health ministry. Most of Gaza's 2.3 million population has also been displaced multiple times, 60% of buildings are estimated to be damaged or destroyed, the healthcare, water, sanitation and hygiene systems have collapsed, and there are severe shortages of food, fuel, medicine and shelter. In October, the UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) estimated 1.84 million people across Gaza were experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity, and that 133,000 people were facing catastrophic levels, which can lead to starvation and death.

The following month, an IPC committee warned that there was strong likelihood that famine was "imminent" in some areas of northern Gaza.

Before the ceasefire, the UN said the besieged northern towns of Jabalia, Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun had been largely cut off from food assistance since the Israeli military launched a ground offensive in October with the stated aim of preventing a Hamas resurgence. A Palestinian woman who returned to her destroyed home in northern Gaza after the ceasefire took effect expressed shock at what she had found after Israeli soldiers withdrew.

"The whole place looked as if it had been hit by an earthquake due to the severity of the aggression," Manal Abu al-Drgham told BBC Arabic's Gaza Today programme. "I will set up my tent in the north no matter what it costs... I do not want to be displaced from my land again." Mr Rose said Unrwa teams in southern Gaza, where he is based, had not yet been able to cross into northern Gaza because the Israeli military had not yet opened up routes through the east-west Netzarim corridor. But he said Unrwa, as the largest humanitarian organisation in Gaza, had the networks and the people on the ground who could help if they were given access.

However, Unrwa is facing looming Israeli bans which could make it impossible to operate in Gaza. Two laws passed by the Israeli parliament, which are due to take effect next week, will prohibit the agency from operating within Israeli territory and prevent Israeli state agencies from communicating with it. Israel has accused Unrwa of being complicit with Hamas and said 18 of its staff took part in the 7 October attack. The agency has fired nine employees that a UN investigation found may have been involved and insisted that it is committed to neutrality.

## Libyan police chief arrested in Italy

ROME (BBC): The head of Libya's judicial police has been arrested after the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued a warrant over war crimes allegations, media reports say.

Osama Najim, who directs Tripoli's Mitiga detention centre, was reportedly arrested in the Italian city of Turin.

Former detainees from various centres have described abuses, such as routine torture and rape. In 2022, the UN said it had uncovered evidence of "serious rights violations". Mr Najim was arrested in a hotel following a tip from international police body Interpol, Italian newspaper la Repubblica reported. Italian migrant rescue charity Mediterranea Saving Humans said the arrest came after a "difficult" ICC investigation involving "years of complaints and testimonies from victims".

An ICC spokesperson did not immediately respond to the BBC's questions. Mediterranea Saving Humans also criticised the long-standing, controversial deal between Italy, under which Italy trains and funds the coastguard to intercept migrant boats. As part of this agreement, Libya is expected to help reduce the number of migrants who pass through the country and arrive in Italy. At the time Mr Najim was arrested, he was with other Libyan citizens and planned to go to a stadium, attorney general Lucia Musti told la Repubblica. Mr Najim's case has reportedly been forwarded to the justice ministry and and the appeals court in Rome.

## Rebel group frees Spanish national

BAMAKO, Mali (AP): A rebel alliance in Mali said it has freed a Spanish man who was kidnapped in southern Algeria last week. The Azawad Liberation Front, or FLA, a coalition of separatist armed groups in Mali's predominately Tuareg north, said on X that it freed Spanish citizen Gilbert Navarro.

"The former Spanish hostage, Mr. Navarro Giane Gilbert, has been released by the FLA and is in good health," said Mohamed Maouloud Ramaadan, a spokesperson for the separatist movement. Boubacar Sadigh Ould Taleb, the FLA's communications officer, told The Associated Press that Navarro was kidnapped on Jan. 17 by a "transnational mafia," without identifying the group. Taleb said armed men from the FLA located Navarro and his kidnappers near the town of Indelimane in Mali's eastern region of Menaka, more than 200 miles (322 kilometers) south of the Algerian border. After surrounding the kidnappers, the rebel fighters were able to negotiate the Spanish man's release, he said. "The former hostage will be handed over to the Algerian authorities very soon so that he can be reunited with his family," Taleb said. Spain's Foreign Ministry said last week that a Spanish man had been kidnapped in an unspecified northern African country. Spanish media reported that the man was captured in southern Algeria and taken to Mali by the Islamic State group in the Greater Sahara.

The Foreign Ministry would not confirm the media reports or reveal the location of the kidnapping. On Algerian television, a special program showed Navarro aboard an Algerian army plane landing at a military airport west of Algiers. The country's defense ministry said Navarro was a tourist who was taken by five members of an unnamed armed group. He was handed over to Algerian authorities, the ministry statement said. Kidnappings have rarely been reported in Algeria in recent years, but Africa's largest country by area continues to face instability along its southern borders with Niger and Mali. The two countries are among the states in West Africa's Sahel region that have been upended by military coups and are now led by juntas after previous governments failed to quell violence and discontent. Abductions have become increasingly common in Mali, according to data from the non-profit Armed Conflict Location & Event Data.

# Drug-resistant bacteria spreading in Ukraine

KYIV (BBC): When Pte Oleksander Bezverkhny was evacuated to the Feofaniya Hospital in Kyiv, few believed he would live. The 27-year-old had a severe abdominal injury and shrapnel had ripped through his buttocks. Both his legs were amputated.

Then, doctors discovered that his infections were resistant to commonly-used antibiotics - and the already daunting task of saving his life became almost hopeless. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is when bacteria evolve and learn how to defend themselves against antibiotics and other medicines, rendering them ineffective.

Ukraine is far from the only country affected by this issue: around 1.4 million people globally died of a AMR infection in 2021, and in the UK there were 66,730 serious antibiotic-resistant infections in 2023. However, war appears to have accelerated the spread of multi-resistant pathogens in Ukraine. Clinics treating war injuries have registered a sharp increase of AMR cases. More than 80% of all patients admitted to Feofaniya Hospital have infections caused by microbes which are resistant to antibiotics, according to deputy chief physician Dr Andriy Strokhan.

Ironically, antimicrobial-resistant infections often originate from medical facilities. Medical staff try to follow strict hygiene protocols and use protective equipment to minimise the spread of these infections but facilities can be overwhelmed with people injured in the war.

Dr Volodymyr Dubyna, the head of the Mechnikov Hospital's ICU, said that since the start of the Russian invasion his unit alone has increased the number of beds from 16 to 50. Meanwhile, with many employees fleeing the war or joining the military themselves, staffing levels are down. Dr Strokhan explained that these circumstances can affect the spread of AMR bacteria. "In surgical departments there is one nurse that looks after 15-20 patients," he said. "She physically cannot scrub up her hands in the required amount and frequency in order not to spread infections." The nature of this war also means patients are exposed to far more strains of infection than they would be in peacetime. When a soldier is evacuated for medical reasons, they will often pass through multiple facilities, each with their own strains of AMR. While medical professionals say this is unavoidable because of the scale of the war, it only worsens the spread of AMR infections.

This was the case for Pte Bezverkhny who was treated at three different facilities before reaching the hospital in Kyiv. Since his infections could not be treated with the usual medication, his condition deteriorated and he contracted sepsis five times. This situation is different to recent conflicts, for example the Afghanistan War, where Western soldiers would be stabilised on site and then air-transferred to a

European clinic rather than passing through multiple different local facilities. This would not be possible in Ukraine as the influx of patients has not been seen since the Second World War, according to Dr Dubyna, whose hospital in Dnipro neighbours frontline regions. Once his patients are stable enough, they are transferred to another clinic - if it has room - to free up capacity.

"In terms of microbiological control, it means they spread [bacteria] further. But if it's not done, we're not able to work. Then it's a catastrophe." With so many wounded, Ukrainian hospitals simply cannot usually afford to isolate infected patients - meaning that multi-resistant and dangerous bacteria spread unchecked. The problem is that infections they cause must be treated with special antibiotics from the "reserve" list. But the more often doctors prescribe these, the quicker bacteria adapt, making those antibiotics ineffective too.

"We have to balance our scales," Dr Strokhan explains. "On the one hand, we must save a patient. On the other - we mustn't breed new microorganisms that will have antimicrobial resistance."

In Pte Bezverkhny's case, doctors had to use very expensive antibiotics, which volunteers sourced from abroad. After a year in hospital and over 100 operations, his condition is no longer life-threatening. Doctors managed to save his life. But as pathogens grow more resistant, the struggle to save others only gets harder.

# SK president denies ordering arrest of MPs

SEOUL (BBC): South Korea's suspended president Yoon Suk Yeol has made his first appearance at his impeachment trial, where he denied ordering the arrest of lawmakers during his attempt to impose martial law. Parliament voted to impeach Yoon last month, and last week the Constitutional Court began a trial to decide whether to permanently remove him from office.

Yoon is also facing a separate criminal investigation into whether he led an insurrection. He has been detained since last week. Security was tight as Yoon was transported by van from the detention centre, where he is being held, to the Constitutional Court.

Police formed human walls and held up anti-riot barricades to stop hundreds of his supporters who had gathered nearby from getting too close. Last weekend saw violence as dozens of Yoon's supporters clashed with law enforcers and broke into another court house. Yoon was asked if he had ordered military commanders to "drag out" lawmakers from parliament on the night he declared martial law, in order to prevent them from overturning his order. He replied: "No." Military

commanders had earlier alleged that Yoon had given such an order on 3 December, after lawmakers climbed fences and broke barricades to enter the parliament building and vote down Yoon's martial law declaration.

"I am a person who has lived with a firm belief in liberal democracy," Yoon said in his opening remarks. "As the Constitutional Court exists to safeguard the constitution, I ask that you thoroughly examine all aspects of this case," he told the judges. During the hearing, which lasted nearly two hours, Yoon and his lawyers argued that the martial law order was "a formality that was not meant to be executed". Yoon had cited threats from "anti-state forces" and North Korea when he declared martial law, but it soon became clear that his move had been spurred not by external threats but by his own domestic political troubles.

The lawyers prosecuting the case, who were selected by the parliament, accused Yoon and his lawyers for making "largely contradictory, irrational, and unclear" comments. "If they continue to evade responsibility as they did today, it will only work

against them in the impeachment trial and cause even greater disappointment among the public," the prosecutors told reporters after the hearing. Outside the courtroom, Yoon's supporters - who have become more agitated and aggressive lately - demanded that the suspended president be released and restored to office immediately.

They were forced to set up some distance from the court due to tight security. Waving their trademark combination of Korean and US flags, some wore Maga-style baseball caps embossed with the slogan "Make Korea Free Again", an echo of the campaign slogan used by US President Donald Trump. Some of their chants included calls for the leader of South Korea's main opposition party, Lee Jae-myung, and the investigator leading Yoon's criminal case to be executed. Several of the supporters told the BBC they believed Yoon's martial law declaration was an attempt to protect the country's democracy. They accused the opposition party of being pro-China and pro-North Korea, and for wanting to turn South Korea into a communist country.

# Rwanda-backed rebels capture key eastern DR Congo town

DR CONGO (BBC): Rwanda-backed M23 rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo have taken over the key eastern trading town of Minova, according to various sources. The fall of the city puts the rebels within 40km (25 miles) of provincial capital, Goma, which lies close to the border with Rwanda.

It comes two weeks after the M23 captured Masisi, with the Congolese army launching a counteroffensive to retake the town. There has been intense fighting in recent months between the rebels and the government forces in the mineral-rich region, with over 200,000 people being forced from their homes. The Reuters news agency quotes Corneille Nangaa, the head of the Congo River Alliance that includes the M23, as saying that "Minova is in our hands".

The provincial governor, Jean-Jacques Purusi, confirmed the capture, Reuters reports. A contact in Goma, who spoke to the BBC, also said Minova had fallen to the rebels.

The fighting has also seen an influx of wounded people being treated at the hospital in the provincial capital, the AFP news agency quotes Red Cross officials as saying. "Between the 1 and 21 of December we saw 100 patients (and) between the 1 and 20 January we had 211 patients," Myriam Favier, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross in North Kivu province, told AFP.

Since 2021, the M23 have periodically been fighting and taken control of vast swathes of eastern DR Congo. As a consequence of the violence hundreds of thousands of people have fled. Last year, it

was feared the rebels would march to take to Goma, estimated to have a population of between one and two million people. There was a lull in fighting in late July, but heavy fighting resumed in October, and worsened towards the end of the year.

Rights group Amnesty International said a significant uptick in attacks in civilian areas by both sides in the past month has had devastating consequences for civilians. The M23 is often accused by DR Congo and the UN of being Rwanda's proxy force, but Rwanda denies this. Last year however, Rwanda did not deny a UN report saying it had about 4,000 soldiers fighting alongside the M23 in DR Congo. There have been a number of diplomatic initiatives by neighbouring countries and others to resolve the conflicts, which have failed.

# Rescue of miners in a deep South African gold mine began

CARLETONVILLE, South Africa (AP): A specialized camera was lowered late last year into an almost 2.6-kilometer- (1.6-mile-) deep mineshaft in South Africa where hundreds of miners were reported to be trapped, starving, dehydrated and desperate to get out. With no architectural plans of the actual mineshaft and its levels and tunnels, the camera reached 1,280 meters (4,200 feet) underground and gave rescuers their first visuals: A large group of miners was seen standing around on a level, clearly waiting for help to arrive. Rescuers brought the camera to the surface and then sent it back down, this time with a notepad, pen and a letter attached to initiate communication with the miners. Once it reached them, the miners immediately also attached a note telling the rescuers that about 480 of them were underground and those still alive were desperate to exit the mine. It was the beginning of discussions about how to bring the miners to the surface.

It also was the first time a specially designed cage that can be lowered as deep as 3,100 meters (10,170 feet) fitted with specialized cameras and a communica-

tions system was used to rescue such a large number of people underground. "When we got to the level, we could immediately see that there are some people standing. We could not determine the number of people that are standing there, but it was evident that people were standing around and they were in need of help to come up to the surface," said Mannas Fourie, CEO of Mine Rescue Services South Africa, the private company contracted to rescue the miners. At least 87 miners died in the monthslong standoff between police and the miners who were trapped while working illegally in the abandoned Buffelsfontein Gold Mine, police said last week. Authorities faced growing anger and a possible investigation over their initial refusal to help the miners and bring them out of the mine by cutting off their food supplies. The deceased miners were suspected to have died of starvation and dehydration, although no causes of death have been released. South African authorities have been fiercely criticized for cutting off the miners. That tactic to "smoke them out," as described by a prominent

Cabinet minister, was condemned by one of South Africa's biggest trade unions.

According to Fourie, who led the operation at the mineshaft, once the cage was lowered with two volunteers from the community, they were eventually able to reach their target of retrieving at least 35 miners a day. Fourie and his team initially estimated that the operation would last up to 16 days based on equipment that would take two people out of the shaft at a time. But this changed once a full assessment was done and it was determined the cage could be used for the rescue, allowing them to bring up to 13 people at a time. Fifty-seven round trips were made to retrieve 246 surviving minors and 78 corpses.

While the equipment was very important to the operation, a combination of technology and human effort proved to be crucial, with the two volunteers and the miners themselves playing an important role. Fourie said the decision of who to load into the cage first was left to the local volunteers and the miners. "I think on the first cages that arrived, the first couple, it was assessed by them

to see who are the people in need of dire medical attention, who are really taking strain, and they sent those people out first," he said.

"Thereafter, they made a decision themselves to say how many people they can bring out and how they're going to alter between bringing out bodies or bringing out people." Fourie said the volunteers conveyed that their biggest concern was to control the crowd of miners, because everybody was eager to come out. "We could see as they climbed into the cage, they made way for each other to get as many people in at one time," he said. According to the rescue team, the camera was one of the most important tools used in the operation because it sent a signal above ground and provided a live feed to a laptop. The feed is recorded and assessed to determine the condition of the shaft barrel, which people need to travel in, and the level itself. "You know, some of these shafts are flooded with water, some of them are filled up with rubble in the process of rehabilitation, and no one could have given us a clear fact of what the conditions are," Fourie said.

# ‘No choice but to go back’ - migrants despair over Trump border restrictions

MEXICO CITY (BBC): Shivering a little, Marcos pulls his hoodie over his head as much to protect his identity as to shield him from the cold. A year ago, at just 16 years old, he says he was forcibly recruited into a drug cartel in his home state of Michoacán, Mexico.

Recounting his story of horror and escape, Marcos (not his real name) says he and his family fled Michoacán with only what they were wearing. Leaving for the pharmacy one evening to buy painkillers for his mother's toothache, he says he was suddenly surrounded by four pick-up trucks with armed men inside. "Get in," he says they ordered, "or we'll kill your family."

They dragged him off to a shack where several other

youths were in the same predicament, according to Marcos. For months, he says he was made to be a foot soldier in a war he wanted no part of, before managing to escape with the help of a gang member who took pity on him. Marcos has spent months inside a migrant shelter in the Mexican border city of Tijuana waiting to make his case for asylum before the US authorities, confident that he could convince them he has what US immigration courts call "credible fear" of persecution or torture in Mexico. But now he thinks President Trump's sweeping executive orders on immigration and border security have ruined his chances of success. "I hope they look at the circumstances of every person and

take each case on its merit," he says, "and that Mr Trump's heart softens to help those who truly need it." From the Oval Office, hours after returning to the presidency, Trump signed a blizzard of orders aimed at delivering on one of his central campaign promises: to drastically reduce illegal migration and asylum claims at the US border. Among the measures were a move to declare some drug cartels terrorist organisations, paving the way for US military action and deportations. That order has Pastor Albert Rivera, the director of a migrant shelter that primarily houses people fleeing cartel intimidation and death threats, confused. He says there's a contradiction at the heart of the executive order.

"If you're going from saying these people are fleeing gangs to say they are now fleeing terrorists, surely that only makes their claims for asylum stronger," he argues. For Trump's supporters on the other side of the border, in southern California, the need for these strict new measures is self-evident. "It will be a relief," says Paula Whitsell, the chairwoman of the San Diego County Republican Party, about the new president's plan to launch what he's called "the largest deportation in American history". "Our system here in San Diego County is very burdened by the heavy weight of all these people coming in, and we're just not built for it. The county is not made to be able to sustain this," she argues.



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## Climate pact withdrawal breaks trust in US

**T**HIS year will see countries finalize their national plans to meet their emissions reduction targets by 2035, the focus of this November's COP30 global climate talks in Brazil.

Many of those countries' 10-year climate strategies — which will guide how aggressively they can curb their greenhouse gas emissions — are dependent on the funding the developed countries have promised to provide.

The United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement that the new US administration announced on Monday shortly after President Donald Trump began his second term has therefore undoubtedly dealt a heavy blow to the world's efforts to fight climate change at this crucial stage.

Even though the US Climate Alliance, a coalition of governors from 24 states that represent nearly 60 percent of the US economy, has pledged to meet the previous US administration's climate target of cutting the country's emissions by 66 percent by 2035, the US walking away from the pact necessarily calls into question a host of other US commitments, such as providing billions of dollars to support the climate actions of poorer nations.

Trump accompanied his pullout from the global climate pact for the second time — which will take effect in a year, after the official notice period — with a barrage of executive orders, including one declaring a national energy emergency that Trump said would unlock what he called America's "liquid gold" by expanding drilling in the world's top oil and gas producer.

With his re-embracing of fossil fuels and revoking of his predecessor's climate actions, certain vested interest groups in related industries will benefit tremendously from his winding back of the clock. No wonder Manish Bapna, president of the Natural Resources Defense Council, accused the Trump administration of further enriching billionaire oil and gas donors, saying "the US is producing more oil and gas than any country in history", rightly pointing out that "There is no energy emergency. There is a climate emergency".

Trump tried to justify the move by claiming "the United States will not sabotage our own industries" while some major developing countries pollute "with impunity".

But as Ani Dasgupta, president and CEO of the World Resources Institute, said in a statement, "Walking away from the Paris Agreement won't protect Americans from climate impacts, but it will hand China and the European Union a competitive edge in the booming clean energy economy and lead to fewer opportunities for American workers."

The need to realize the global green transition means that the clean energy sector and the green economy have become engines of growth around the world, a central topic in the ongoing Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

That explains why about half of Americans "somewhat" or "strongly" oppose US action to withdraw from the climate accord, and even Republicans aren't overwhelmingly in favor, according to a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Only about 2 in 10 US adults are "somewhat" or "strongly" in favor of withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, while about one-fourth are neutral.

Although the US is the second-biggest source of carbon emissions after China, carbon dioxide lasts in the atmosphere for centuries, and the US has put more of the heat-trapping gas in the air than any other nation if its accumulative historical emissions are taken into account. The US is responsible for nearly 22 percent of the carbon dioxide put in the atmosphere since 1950, according to a Global Carbon Project report. And US carbon emissions fell just 0.2 percent last year. The US had already been slipping behind its 2030 climate targets despite hundreds of billions of dollars in clean-energy spending by the former administration.

Unlike the US, China has never ceased its efforts to realize green development. China's carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP decreased by more than 50 percent in 2021 compared to 2005, with its forest stock up by over 6.49 billion cubic meters, the report said. As of 2023, nonfossil fuels accounted for 17.9 percent of China's total energy consumption, while by October 2024, the total installed capacity of wind and solar power in the country had reached 1.28 billion kilowatts.

And China's commitment to the global low-carbon transition remains unwavering. "Climate change is a common challenge faced by all of humanity, and no country can remain unaffected or solve the problem on its own," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said. China is willing to work with all parties to actively address the challenge of climate change.

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### Combating human trafficking in Pakistan

## Challenges, progress, and role of FIA

Farhan Khan

**H**UMAN trafficking is a serious and multifaceted issue in Pakistan that damages the country's reputation and devastates the lives of countless individuals. This illegal trade operates through various methods, including sending individuals abroad illegally and exploiting them for forced labor or other unlawful activities. Victims are often vulnerable individuals, particularly those facing financial difficulties or seeking better opportunities, who are misled with false promises of a brighter future.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) plays a critical role in combating human trafficking in Pakistan. Over the years, the FIA has intensified its efforts, conducting numerous operations to dismantle trafficking networks and bring perpetrators to justice. These operations include nationwide crackdowns, raids in major cities, and in-depth investigations into the activities of traffickers. The FIA has also targeted illegal travel agencies involved in facilitating human trafficking and taken legal action against them for deceiving individuals and subjecting them to exploitation.

Human trafficking is a complex crime involving organized networks that operate both within

Pakistan and internationally. These networks employ sophisticated methods to evade detection, making it difficult to fully dismantle their operations. Traffickers often prey on the emotional and financial vulnerabilities of their victims, offering fraudulent promises of better job opportunities or living conditions abroad.

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The transnational nature of this crime demands collaboration with foreign governments, international organizations, and global law enforcement agencies. To address this, the FIA has extended its operations internationally, targeting overseas components of trafficking networks and enhancing cross-border cooperation.

The FIA's recent efforts have yielded significant results. Hundreds of traffickers have been arrested, and numerous trafficking networks have been exposed. Illegal travel agencies that forged documents and offered fraudulent visas have been shut down, and groups operating in various cities to facilitate

cial to impose harsher penalties on offenders. Public awareness campaigns are equally important to educate people about the risks of illegal migration and the deceptive tactics employed by traffickers. Empowering individuals with knowledge can prevent them from falling victim to such schemes.

Eliminating human trafficking requires collective efforts. The government, non-governmental organizations, international bodies, and the public must work together to dismantle trafficking networks, support victims, and address the root causes of the issue, such as poverty and lack of education. Effective collaboration at the national and international levels is essential to ensure justice for victims and to prevent future incidents of trafficking.

The FIA's nationwide crackdown on human trafficking is a crucial step in addressing this grave issue. While progress has been made, there is still much work to be done.

Stronger legislation, international cooperation, and public awareness are vital to eradicating human trafficking and protecting vulnerable individuals from exploitation. By working together, Pakistan can take significant strides toward ending this severe violation of human rights.

## Technocratic hubris and the need for politics

Nadim Koteich

**T**ECHNOCRATIC hubris presents politics as primitive, sentimental and irrational — a spiral of conflicts and personal interests. Technocrats — the clergy of governance models founded on technical expertise, data-driven solutions and computational models — argue that purely rational solutions can transcend the "chaos" of politics and tame its conflicts, quietly and effectively driving social progress.

The roots of technocrats' contempt for politics have been deepening since the Industrial Revolution and the scientific boom following the Second World War. With their rational solutions coming to play a prominent role in shaping modern governance, they have portrayed the political sphere as an obstacle that hinders progress.

The intellectual foundations of this hubristic elitism can be traced back to the rationality and positivism of the Enlightenment, which valued empiricism above all else. Empirical science replaced theology as the ultimate source of truth, while politics was marginalized and relegated to a domain of emotions and subjective conflicts.

With the rise of systems theories, economics' transformation into a mathematical science and the advent of modern management, the notion that societies could be managed like mechanical systems that can be analyzed through quantifiable indicators began to

emerge. On the level of institutions, we saw globalization, the expansion of bureaucracies and transnational organizations empower technocratic elites at the expense of political voices and local contexts.

From the failure of the Soviet Union's rigid five-year plans to economic experts' predictions and data not preventing Britain's exit from the EU, known as Brexit, history is replete with examples that attest to the limitations of cold, hard technocratic logic, whether in planning for the future or analyzing the present.

Many of those in Britain who advocated for remaining in the EU relied on experts' economic forecasts to make their case, convinced that rational arguments about the virtues of the labor market and the free movement of people and goods would persuade the public.

However, a wave of nationalist sentiment, as well as the cocktail of cultural and human factors that amounts to the beating heart of political and social decisions and broad skepticism of "elites," proved stronger than all of their quantified projections.

Brexit makes clear that emotional, ideological and conflictual tensions are aggravated, not quelled, when societal challenges are framed as purely technical issues, the political side of governance is marginalized and the significance of reconciling conflicting interests, values and identities

are downplayed. Among other things, the global rise of the right is fundamentally a reaction to the historical trajectory through which technocracy dominated politics, with its elites marginalizing cultural and local identities in favor of what they dubbed "rational" solutions built on data and technical expertise.

This trajectory, which is linked to globalization and the rise of global institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, alienated broad segments of society, which felt that policies ignored their needs and identities, making them receptive to the populist and nationalist rhetoric of the right. This backlash, which revived cultural and religious identities under the guise of defending national sovereignty, emerged in light of policymakers' perilous failure to balance administrative efficiency and popular legitimacy.

The fundamental epistemic shortcoming of technocratic reasoning is neither a potential bug in the data nor a limitation of expertise.

Rather, it is an inherent feature of this reasoning, which fails to incorporate the complexity of human behavior and the composition of societies. Our behavior is shaped by an intricate system of interconnected beliefs, values and cultural factors, meaning that no indicators or projections can reliably ensure the avoidance of a particular outcome. Indeed, technocrats often encounter phenome-

na that resist quantification and do not conform to cold logic.

Accordingly, revaluating politics is not a luxury but a need imposed by the Middle East's complex political, security and economic questions, as well as its intertwined mesh of power centers.

The fact is that politics constitutes the broadest horizon for reconciling divergent interests, conflicting concerns, historical tensions, cultural differences and strategic considerations, none of which can be reduced to mathematical equations or performance indicators.

The urgent need for national dialogue frameworks, as well as engaging with sectors of the economy, civil society and cultural elites in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Sudan, Yemen and other countries, highlights the importance of developing shared visions that transcend narrow sectoral approaches.

This underscores the need to reinforce the role of politics, opening the door to continuous negotiation among the various stakeholders in these nations, and to fostering more flexible and legitimate consensus.

There can be no stability without embracing politics and establishing a political culture that adapts to regional and international shifts.

This is the only foundation that can pave the way to transitioning from merely "managing or exploiting crises" to "leading change" and shaping a sustainable future.

## How NATO could help restore peace in Gaza and the West Bank

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

**W**HILE taking due credit for helping to broker the agreement between Israel and Hamas, President Donald Trump nevertheless said on Monday he was "not confident" the Gaza ceasefire would last. At the same time, he offered hope that, despite the destruction, the Strip can be rebuilt: "I looked at a picture of Gaza — Gaza is like a massive demolition site. That place is, it's really, it's got to be rebuilt in a different way."

Speaking from his experience as a real estate developer, Trump said that Gaza is in a "phenomenal location" along the Mediterranean Sea, with the "best weather," adding that "beautiful things could be done over there, fantastic things." He added that he "might" help in rebuilding the Gaza Strip.

Trump is not alone on either point. There is much concern that the truce will not hold for long or, if it holds during the first phase, that it might not be renewed. But there is also hope that peace will eventually stick and the rebuilding can begin.

Israeli extremists, including some in the Netanyahu government, are opposed to the deal and are determined to undermine it. Itamar Ben-Gvir of the Jewish Power party this week resigned as national security minister, while Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has threatened to do the same if Benjamin Netanyahu does not break the ceasefire once the initial 42-day phase is complete. The latter claimed on Monday that he had "received a commitment from Prime Minister Netanyahu that Israel will return to the battlefield to eliminate Hamas and eradicate this threat once and for all."

Netanyahu is also a reluctant participant and he may try to find pretexts to stop implementing the deal and return to fighting. He said on Sunday that "both President Trump and President (Joe) Biden gave full backing to Israel's right to return to fighting, if Israel comes to the conclusion that negotiations on Phase B are futile." Probably the most consequential phase will be the next. If it comes into effect, it will see the complete withdrawal of the Israeli military from Gaza. Talks for that phase are set to start on Feb. 4, but given the extremists' push against the deal, the talks' outcome may be in doubt.

Two key issues are the need to fill the vacuum when Israel withdraws from Gaza, as foreseen in the deal, and the lack of trust between Israel and Hamas. The Gulf Cooperation Council has supported the call for an international force to be deployed in Gaza. It has also called for the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority, so that it can be responsible for security in the Strip. But the PA cannot do it alone. It needs a partner that has the muscle and credibility to do the job. NATO could fit that description.

NATO has been working to expand its engagement in the Middle East. In 2004, it launched the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative to partner with GCC countries on political coordination, security training and capacity building. In 2017, a regional center for that purpose was set up in Kuwait. Last July, NATO's secretary-general designated Spanish diplomat Javier Colomina as special representative to lead the alliance's engagement and cooperation with the region. The organization also announced that it would establish its first ever liaison office in the Middle East in Amman, Jordan, to focus on "reinforcing cooperation between NATO and Middle East and North Africa countries."

NATO could achieve these goals by joining the global consensus on bringing peace to the Middle East. On Gaza, the deal struck last week was the embodiment of several months of diplomacy, given a final and effective push by the new administration in Washington, even before its official start. The deal is based on UN Security Council Resolution 2735, which was passed last June but took seven months to implement. That achievement could be cut short if the international community does not stand by it and provide the support it needs. NATO could be part of that support mechanism by providing a force to replace Israeli forces and prepare the Gaza Strip for restabilization, recovery, rebuilding and reunification with the West Bank.

The West Bank has witnessed, over the past days and months, an intensification of attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinians and an increase in settlement activity, home demolitions and evictions of Palestinian families.

At the same time as these threats against Palestinians are taking place in the West Bank, the global consensus on resolving the conflict is solidifying, including total rejection of settler violence and unilateral actions taken by Israel in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. That consensus also includes support for the implementation of UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, meaning the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian state on the 1967 borders.

Last September, Saudi Arabia, together with Norway and the EU, launched the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. In November, Riyadh hosted the first meeting of the new alliance, attended by more than 90 countries and organizations, including close allies of Israel. The second and third meetings of the alliance were held in Brussels in November and in Oslo last week, respectively. The meetings discussed the political and economic building blocks of the process. Strengthening the PA is part of this consensus, because this is essential to enable it to carry out the duties of the state and provide basic services. Introducing economic and political reforms will help in the smooth functioning of the state and will encourage donors and investors to commit funds.

However, as in Gaza, any political agreement will need security arrangements, including the presence of an international force to separate the two parties and help the PA govern. It has to address the concerns of both sides, including Israel's security and the full enfranchisement of the Palestinians.

International support for this plan is crucial to provide the incentives and the discipline, or carrots and sticks, which are needed to make it work.

In both Gaza and the West Bank, NATO's support would be extremely useful. It can provide an independent force to separate the parties, provide training for the Palestinian security forces and help the PA exercise full control over its territory and decommission armed groups or bring them under government authority. NATO can provide the security assurances that are needed to encourage investors and donors to help both Gaza and the West Bank. Trump's dream of rebuilding Gaza will need security assurances. The promise of shared prosperity between the countries of the region if peace is restored will also need security arrangements if it is to be realized. NATO could help provide those security assurances. It will be on the right side of history if it does. NATO has done it before, when it helped Kosovo achieve its independence and prepare it for statehood. NATO's success would end speculation about the organization's relevance, which the new administration in Washington appears to question.



# Why Trump’s two days in the White House already feel like a full term

**I**T already feels like he’s been back for months. Donald Trump is setting a frenetic pace in his second term, fulfilling campaign promises, imposing undiluted power and settling scores.

After the sedate Joe Biden years, the return of a presidency that is an incessant assault on the senses is a reminder of why so many millions of Americans see Trump as a compelling, historic figure – and why millions more deeply fear him.

Trump has cracked down hard on immigration, held a splashy \$500 billion tech investment announcement, renamed the Gulf of Mexico, outlaid much of the diversity policy in the federal government, shopped around TikTok, fired people by social media post, mooted territorial expansion, threatened a trade war, talked to reporters more than Biden did in months and danced with a sword.

He’s also mocked the rule of law by freeing January 6, 2021, rioters; lied about the 2020 election; exacted revenge against critics, including by pulling security from an ex-aide threatened by Iran; criticized a bishop; threatened ethics in government; stigmatized trans Americans and cleared the way for ICE arrests in schools and churches.

And it’s only been two days.

**Trump has notched early success, but the real tests lie ahead**

Trump’s velocity is deliberate. So much happens, there’s rarely time to reflect on the gravity of one event. Trivia and world-changing new policies get caught in the whirl. Trump is in the middle of it all, conducting the cacophony and turning up the noise whenever he wants more attention.

For Trump’s fans, all the activity creates an impression of an endless succession of wins and honored promises. Most people don’t follow politics 24/7, but the stories and imagery that Trump creates filter down through social media, talk radio and local news and refills his political capital. Even when Trump is only trolling the media or Democrats, that’s fine: his base voters who distrust the establishment sent him back to Washington to infuriate and obfuscate.

For Trump’s foes, it’s hard to know what to get most outraged about. Opposition becomes scattershot, and he skips free of accountability. Nightly compilations of liberals becoming discombobulated over his latest outbursts, meanwhile, fill fawning conservative news shows.

Most new presidencies begin in a flurry of activity, though most emphasize the first 100 days rather than the first 100

hours.

But Trump has only done the easy part, successfully orchestrating an early rollout. Domestic and international crises lie in wait for a president who has been found wanting in such situations in the past. It’s one thing to sign hundreds of executive orders – some of which are already facing court challenges – but real change can only be cemented by passing laws.

The treacherous task that Trump faces in passing real, lasting change came into focus on Tuesday at his meeting with top Republican congressional leaders. There still does not seem to be a consensus on whether to proceed with one massive bill to push through his agenda or two, smaller vehicles. Either way, nothing is guaranteed given the minuscule GOP majority in the House of

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Stephen Collinson

do it. His good humor after the adulation of his second inauguration – so-far undimmed by inevitable political setbacks – has probably helped too.

**The headline push on immigration**

Trump said something very revealing Monday in a speech to supporters about last year’s election. “They all said inflation was the number one issue. I said I disagree. I think people coming into our country from prisons and from mental institutions (is the issue) for the people that I know. And I made it my number one.”

Trump said. (There’s no evidence to support his claims about prisons and institutions, but his political point still stands). Trump went on: “I talked about inflation too. But you know, how many times can you say an

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working. “ICE officers are back to doing their job,” the president’s border czar Tom Homan told CNN’s Dana Bash on Tuesday, revealing how the deportation operation could quickly expand if cities don’t help track fugitive criminals. “We will find him, but when we find him, he may be with others. Others that don’t have a criminal conviction are in the country illegally. They will be arrested too because we’re not going to strike.”

Immigration is a crowd-pleasing issue for his base, but Trump is taking a risk by prioritizing it since the cost of groceries and housing was one he vowed to fix during the campaign and was especially resonant among swing voters. Trump doesn’t have to run again, but he needs to maintain his coalition to avoid big losses for the

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# SCCI for adopting modern tools to enhance exports

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: President of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqeem Khan underscored the need of adopting modern tools, and meeting international standards to enhance export of Pakistani manufacturing products to global markets.

He was speaking during a National Export Training Program organized by SCCI in collaboration with Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) here at the chamber.

The session was attended by SCCI vice president Shehryar Khan, executive committee members Ashfaq Ahmad, Saifullah

Khan, Rashid Iqbal Siddiqui, TDAP Director Nauman Bashir, Deputy Director Ayaz Muhammad and Assistant Manager Aamir Khan, exporters, 120 students of government and private educational institutions/universities, new young entrepreneurs and members of legal fraternity from corporate, SCCI Secretary General Muqtasid Ahsan and others.

Fazal Moqeem urged the government and relevant institutions to provide special grants and patronage for new young entrepreneurs and the business community.

TDAP officials through a multimedia presentation apprised the participants

about registration in Pakistan Trade Portal, initiatives for enhancement of export to global markets, special grant and incentives for exporters, assistance to business community for participation in international trade exhibitions, and others important points about trade and exports.

The SCCI chief urged the government to introduce business-friendly policies and provision of facilities under one window operation to the trading community.

Director TDAP also addressed and enlightened the participants about initiatives for enhancement of export to the international market and other programs.

He informed TDAP will formulate a business plan for next year in consultation with chambers and relevant stakeholders.

Fazal Moqeem appreciated the TDAP for arranging such an informative session for new young entrepreneurs and students of educational institutions.

He hoped that the participants would get full benefits after getting information about export and trade, business through this session.

Meanwhile, SCCI had provided certificates to 120 participants of the session through TDAP.

In the next session, more than 40 students and new young entrepreneurs will participate in the training.



PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqeem Khan speaking during National Export Training Program organized by SCCI in collaboration with TDAP at Chamber.

## Quick action restores passenger's belongings

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A brown pouch containing foreign currency (£205, PKR 1,500, and coins) and jewellery (including a gold ring, three earrings, and a nose pin) valued at approximately PKR 600,000 was found at the Emirates check-in counter, Zone 01 of Islamabad International Airport, at 08:40 AM.

Despite initial announcements, the owner did not come forward. The Airport Services (APS) team, led by DFO Mr. Sultan, coordinated with Gerry's staff to make additional announcements, including on the EK613 flight. Their diligent efforts led to locating the rightful owner, Mrs. Parveen, and safely returning her belongings.

## Gold prices increase by Rs4,250/tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs4,250 and was sold at Rs287,450 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs283,200 on a previous trading day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs3,642 to Rs246,440 from Rs242,798 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat also went up to Rs225,911 from Rs222,565.

## Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was report at the port where six ships, Maersk Kensington, MSC Positano, Au Taurus, Bullitt, Nord Valorous and Fuwairi carrying Container, Palm oil, Soya Bean Oil, Chick Peas and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal-1, Liquid Cargo Terminal, Grain Terminal and Port Gas Power Terminal respectively, meanwhile three more Container ships, Maersk Cabo Verde, Epic Burano and Al-Areesh are also arrived at outer anchorage.

اطلاع برائے درستی نام و تاریخ  
میں کسی ارمان ملی ولد مقل مرمان تاریخ پیدائش  
16-04-2003، اشتہار ہمارے ذریعے منظر میں کر  
دفاع المدارس وفرد کے کالکٹ میں غلطی سے میرا نام دے  
ساتھ آرمان ملی ولد حافظ مقل مرمان تاریخ پیدائش  
7-05-2003 لکھا گیا ہے۔  
تمام حقائق اداروں سے اپیل ہے کہ مذکورہ غلطیوں کو منسوخ کر  
کے مطابق درست کیا جائے۔  
دست نام: ارمان ملی ولد مقل مرمان  
تاریخ پیدائش: 16-06-2003

## Court Notice

In the Court of Madam Afshen Civil Judge VII/Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar.Suit No 63/1. Institution 2024. Date of hearing. 23/1/2025. Muhammad Zeb etc VS Sabz Ali Khan etc . Notice to No. 13.Mst Zamana d/o Sher Khan (late)at Daggar Kalay Buner. 21.Jehanzeb s/o Bakht Zamana (late) resident of Naway Kalay Panjpaio Buner at Malaysia.Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:30 am dated 23/1/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

# PSX continues with bearish trend, loses 1,598 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 1,598.82 more points, a negative change of 1.39 percent, closing at 113,443.43 points as compared to 115,042.25 points on the last trading day.

A total of 743,632,966 shares were traded during the day as compared to 767,270,814 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs35.245 billion against Rs31.825 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 454 companies transacted their shares in the stock market,93 of them recorded gains and 307 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 54 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 100,218,430

shares at Rs1.7 per share, Cnerygco PK with 96,976,679 shares at Rs7.36 per share and Fauji Cement with 83,552,040 shares at Rs38.58 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs349.99 per share closing at Rs21,900.00 whereas runner-up was Hoechst Pakistan Limited with Rs183.27 rise in its share price to close at Rs3,291.79.

Ismail Industries Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs107.96 per share price, closing at Rs1,857.50, whereas the runner-up was Mari Energies Limited with Rs64.55 rise in its per share price to Rs594.98.

**Rupee sheds 04 paise against dollar**

Pakistani rupee on Wednesday depreciated by 04 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.85

against the previous day's closing of Rs278.81.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs279.80 and Rs281.30, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.29 to close at Rs290.29 against the last day's closing of Rs289.00, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.78, whereas an increase of Rs1.94 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs343.47 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs341.53.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham remained unchanged and closed at Rs75.91 while the Saudi Riyal increased by 02 paise to close at Rs74.32.

# CCP approves asset acquisition of CCML

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has granted approval for the acquisition of certain assets, including land, equipment and machinery of Crescent Cotton Mills Limited (CCML) by Sultan Spinning Industries (Private) Limited (SSIL).

The CCP defined the relevant product market as 'yarn', segmented into cotton, synthetic, and blended yarn, based on differences in production, consumer preferences and pricing, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

The assessment determined that CCML holds a

minimal market share, which will diminish further post-transaction as the assets will no longer contribute to its operations.

In contrast, SSIL's market entry is anticipated to invigorate competition by introducing a new participant in the yarn industry. This is expected to stimulate competitive pricing, innovation and increased product availability, benefiting consumers and the broader market.

The CCP's Phase I assessment concluded that the transaction poses no risk of lessening of competition. Instead, it paves the way for enhanced com-

sumer choice and encourages fair competition. Additionally, the transaction involves the transfer of existing assets rather than the consolidation of market share, ensuring no additional barriers to entry for potential new competitors.

The SSIL, a private limited company incorporated under the laws of Pakistan, has not yet commenced operations but intends to engage in the manufacturing and sale of yarn once operational. Meanwhile, the CCML, a publicly listed company, remains engaged in the manufacturing and sale of yarn.

# FBR organizes tax awareness session



## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), through its Taxpayers Services Wing, organized a tax awareness session at Skans School of Accountancy, Islamabad. The session was attended by the Principal Imran Sohail along with the staff and students of the Institute.

The FBR team included Second Secretary (Tax Education) Zafar Iqbal Khan

and other officials from the TPS Wing.

During the session, Second Secretary (Tax Education) gave a detailed presentation where he highlighted the various measures being taken by FBR to enhance transparency and efficiency of the revenue system. In his briefing, he urged students to become Tax Ambassadors by spreading

awareness about tax responsibilities in their communities.

The session concluded with a detailed Q&A session, where participants asked tax-related questions from the speaker.

The initiative is part of FBR's ongoing efforts to foster a better understanding of the tax system among youth and promote a culture of tax compliance in Pakistan.

# Visa and Meezan Bank partner to increase financial inclusion



## F.P. Report

KARACHI: Visa (NYSE:V), a world leader in digital payments, today announced a partnership with Meezan Bank, the country's leading Islamic bank, to unveil a unique proposition designed to empower the digitization journey of Pakistan's student population. Eligible university students aged 18 to 24 years will be able to gain access to secure, convenient, and rewarding financial services through Pakistan's First Visa card issued solely for students – the Meezan Visa Student Debit Card.

Unveiled by Andrew Torre, Visa's Regional President for Central Europe, Middle East and Africa (CEMEA),and Irfan Siddiqui, Founding President and CEO of

Meezan Bank, the Meezan Visa Student Debit Card is designed to serve as a springboard into the world of digital finance for Pakistan's student population. The card will be offered free of cost to Meezan Asaan Student Account holders—an account that provides a comprehensive platform for managing finances while addressing the unique needs of students, ensuring both accessibility and affordability.

According to the State Bank of Pakistan, the financial inclusion rate in Pakistan stands at just 21% and with over 2.4 million students enrolled in higher education institutions across the country, the potential for impact is significant. This initiative which is timed for launch in the first quarter of 2025

aims to promote financial inclusion amongst Pakistan's young, savvy and digitally engaged population.

Umar Khan, Country Manager for Pakistan & Afghanistan at Visa, commented: "We're proud to join forces with Meezan Bank in an initiative that targets youth. We believe that empowering the youth with financial tools is crucial for their future success and for Pakistan's overall economic growth. This is also aligned with Pakistan Vision 2025 to streamline the energies of Pakistan's extensive youth population. When equipped with secure and accessible financial solutions, students can develop responsible financial habits, participate more fully in the economy, and contribute to a more financially inclu-

sive nation. This initiative goes beyond providing a debit card; it represents Visa's commitment to driving financial literacy and inclusion in Pakistan, by leveraging the appetite of Pakistan's youth."

Irfan Siddiqui, President and CEO of Meezan Bank said: "This partnership enables us to reach a crucial segment of society, providing students with a secure and convenient way to manage their finances while building financial literacy from an early age. The launch of the Meezan Visa Student Debit Card is a significant step towards greater financial inclusion in Pakistan, empowering students with the tools they need for a secure and successful future."

Under the country's Ministry of Planning, Development & Reforms, the Pakistan Vision 2025 aims to streamline the energies of country's large youth population and realize their immense economic potential. By providing access to financial tools and knowledge, Visa and Meezan Bank support this ambition by empowering students to take control of their finances, make informed decisions, and build a more secure future for themselves and their communities.

# Azerbaijan's envoy stresses for deep Pak-Azerbaijan bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov, has emphasized the need to further strengthen the deep historical, cultural, and fraternal ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

He stated that new initiatives and projects must be undertaken to promote trade cooperation between the two countries.

He expressed these views during a meeting with the Secretary General of the Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) UBG, Zafar Bakhtawari, at his office, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

Also present at the meet-

ing were Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, a member of the UBG Central Core Committee, and Waqar Zafar Bakhtawari, an Executive Member of FPCCI.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on enhancing trade between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Khazar Farhadov revealed that the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif, is scheduled to visit Azerbaijan next month, a visit expected to play a vital role in strengthening bilateral relations.

He expressed his desire for prominent Pakistani business personalities to be part of this visit so that opportunities for mutual

trade and investment could be explored. The ambassador shared that the Azerbaijani government is interested in investing \$2 billion in Pakistan and is evaluating various projects in this regard.

He further stated that Pakistan is an important partner, and such investments would prove mutually beneficial for both nations.

Ambassador Khazar Farhadov highlighted the deep historical and cultural ties between the two countries and expressed his wish to expand trade relations further.

He stressed the urgent need for immediate steps to increase the trade volume

and strengthen economic relations.

Zafar Bakhtawari noted that Azerbaijan and Turkey are among Pakistan's great allies.

He emphasized the need for these three countries to take further steps to enhance trade and economic ties.

He stated that these three nations are like one family and should work on joint ventures to deliver the benefits of trade cooperation to their people.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari announced that he would visit Azerbaijan in February and meet with business personalities there to take steps toward promoting mutual trade.

# SECP issues consultation paper, RTP for public unlisted companies

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has issued a consultation paper proposing launch of a Registration and Trading Platform (RTP) for

public unlisted companies at Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited (PSX).

Registration of eligible unlisted public companies at PSX coupled with public dissemination of financial

results will significantly increase visibility of Pakistan's corporate sector, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

This measure is expected to motivate companies to adopt improved corporate governance practices, disclosures and documentation; and embrace a culture of increased transparency and public accountability.

A phased implementation approach has been suggested in the consultation paper, companies with paid-up capital of Rs. 200 million or more will be required to register in first phase, following which, companies with paid-up capital between Rs. 25 million and Rs. 200 million will be registered on RTP.

RTP provides unlisted companies a unique opportunity to reach a much wider investor base, given the local penetration and international visibility of PSX amongst global

investors and media outlets.

On gaining familiarity with the fully automated and digital capital market infrastructure, unlisted companies will find it easier to pursue listings on the PSX Main board or GEM board in future. The concept paper provides proposed mandatory registration of unlisted public limited companies on the RTP.

This registration would enable existing shareholders and sophisticated investors, such as high net-worth individuals, financial institutions and corporates to trade in shares of RTP registered companies. It is important to note that RTP registration does not equate to formal PSX listing.

RTP-registered companies will not enjoy the benefits of being listed on PSX, nor can they raise funds from the stock market without going through the SECP and PSX approval process.

## Cement exports increased

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports of cement witnessed an increase of 23.21 percent during the first half of the fiscal year 2024-25, as against the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

The cement exports from the country were recorded at US \$167.472 million during July-December (2024-25) against the exports of US \$135.925 million during July-December (2023-24), according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). In terms of quantity, the cement export also rose by 33.82 percent from 3,505,672 metric tons to 4,691,376 metric tons, the data revealed.

Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, the cement exports witnessed an increase of 45.47 percent during the month of December 2024 as compared to the same month of last year. The exports of cement from the country during December 2024 were recorded at US \$31.898 million against the exports of US \$21.927 million in December 2023.

On a month-on-month basis, cement exports also rose by 3.04 percent during December 2024 when compared to the exports of US \$30.957 million in November 2024, the PBS data revealed.

## اطلاع عام

اسی اسباق کی نوب جانے مانا اللہ  
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لی لی حدیجی بنی لی زہیر احمد شہ نے اس امر کی درخواست  
کنداری ہے کہ سید احمد ولد زاهد شاہ جو غوغا  
شہ فیہ ایں رہا کی پات نمبر 253 C رقم  
سکوازیٹر کے مالک تھے بقیہ ای وقت پائے چیں  
درخواست وندہ متنی مذکورہ کی جائز داری سے رہا لیا جائے  
مذکورہ اسکے ماسٹل کیا جائے۔ چنگ درخواست وندہ کے حوی  
کی تصدیق اور دیگر کتہ دہ کے پائت عام ذرائع سے حاصل  
نہیں کئے جائے اب وندہ شہر کیا جائے کہ کسی دیگر مالک یا کسی  
بھی شخص کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وندہ پندرہ (15) دن  
ادارہ صدارتی عدالتی دفتر پیر کی میں چل کر دے  
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فون نمبر 0928-633013

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In brief

Oman to host FIH Hockey Cup

ISLAMABAD (APP): The inaugural edition of the FIH Hockey Men's Nations Cup 2 2025, will be held from February 17 to 23 in Muscat, Oman. The FIH Hockey Men's Nations Cup 2 represents a fresh opportunity for eight ambitious teams, ranked below the teams playing in the FIH Hockey Nations Cup to make their mark on the international stage. The tournament is more than just a competition; it's a pathway for these teams to ascend to the FIH Hockey Nations Cup and through it ultimately to the FIH Hockey Pro League, offering them a chance to test their mettle against some of the best in the sport, said a press release. This inaugural event will see eight teams battling it out for the title and promotion to the FIH Hockey Nations Cup in 2026. Pool A includes Egypt, Chile, China, Poland while Pool B comprises Austria, Oman, Scotland, United States. The competition kicks off with pool matches, where teams are divided into two groups of four. Each team will play against every other team in their pool, striving to secure a spot in the semi-finals. From there, the top two teams from each pool will advance to the knockout stage, culminating in the grand final on February 23, where the first-ever FIH Hockey Men's Nations Cup 2 champion will be crowned.

Neymar in talks to leave Saudi team

RIYADH (AFP): Brazilian star Neymar is in discussions about leaving his Saudi club Al-Hilal but his financial demands are holding up an agreement, a club source told AFP on Wednesday. The 32-year-old former Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain forward has had an injury-plagued stay in Saudi Arabia, playing just seven times despite a reported salary of around \$104 million a year. The source, who spoke on condition that he was not identified, said: "Neymar is discussing his departure with Al-Hilal but his high financial demands remain a major obstacle." Neymar is under contract with the Saudi Pro League club until June. Reports in Brazil say Santos, the club where Neymar made his name in his now fading career, are in talks for him to return to his homeland but Al-Hilal would prefer a transfer while Neymar wants a loan deal. Neymar, the subject of what is still the biggest transfer in football history when he joined PSG from Barcelona in 2017 for a fee of 220 million euros (\$230 million), joined Al-Hilal in August 2023. He followed fellow superstars Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema to the lucrative Saudi league. But two months after his arrival in Riyadh, he ruptured a cruciate ligament in his left knee while playing for Brazil in a 2026 World Cup qualifier, which kept him on the sidelines for a year. He then suffered a series of hamstring and knee injuries as he tried to return to action for Al-Hilal. The club's coach Jorge Jesus said recently: "He can no longer play at the level we are used to. Things have become difficult for him, unfortunately." A return to Brazil would likely be the last chance for a player who is his country's all-time leading scorer with 79 goals in 127 matches.



MULTAN: Pakistan's cricket team players attends a practice session ahead of the second Test Cricket Match against West Indies at Multan Cricket Stadium. —APP Photo

Pakistan-Kazakhstan Davis Cup Playoff Tie next month

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) has announced that the Davis Cup World Group-I Playoff tie between Pakistan and Kazakhstan will be held in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, on the February 1 and 2. Trials for the selection of the Davis Cup team were conducted here at the PTF Tennis Complex, January from 11 to 14. Based on their current PTF rankings and performances at national and international levels, the players participated in the trials included Muzammil Murtaza, Yousaf Khalil, Barkatullah, Abdullah Adnan, Ahmad Nael Qureshi, Abubakar Talha, Huzaifa Abdul Rehman and Sami Zeb Khan. After the trials, Huzaifa Abdul Rehman, Muzammil Murtaza, and Ahmad Nael Qureshi were selected for the Davis Cup team. Aqeel Khan and Muhammad Shoaib were exempted from the trials. The finalized Pakistan Davis Cup team is as follows: Muhammad Haseeb Aslam (Captain), Aqeel Khan (Player), Muhammad Shoaib (Player), Muzammil Murtaza (Player), Huzaifa Abdul Rehman (Player), Ahmad Nael Qureshi (Player) and Muhammad Shahid (Physio).

National Tenpin Bowling C'ship begins next month

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ten Pin Bowling Federation (PTBF) is set to host the National Tenpin Bowling Championship from February 20 to 25 here at the Leisure City Bowling Club, Safa Gold Mall, F-7 Markaz. According to PTBF President Ijaz ur Rehman, preparations for the championship are already underway. The event will feature male and female players from across the country competing in eight categories, including Men's Singles, Men's Doubles, Ladies' Singles, Amateur Deaf Men's Singles, Deaf Ladies' Singles, Team Event, and Tik-Tokers. The registration for the championship will commence on February 1. The finals are scheduled to take place on February 25. The winning bowlers will receive prizes at the conclusion of the championship.

Sabalenka & Badosa put friendship aside for semi-finals

MELBOURNE (Agencies): Seeing a friendly face is supposed to be a good thing. Yet when Aryna Sabalenka and Paula Badosa take to the court for their Australian Open semi-final on Thursday, it may only add to the pressure. The pair are close friends with Sabalenka going so far as to call Badosa her "soulmate" in Stuttgart last year. "I love Paula very much," the 26-year-old Belarusian said. "She is an incredible person. It is very important to have friends on the circuit, so when you find someone who you feel is your soulmate, it is the best thing that can happen to you." Their friendship has grown over the past few years with the pair practising together and wearing matching outfits during the 2024 US Open, as well as posting about each other on social media. "We realised that we had very similar personalities and we get along very well, and that we're both very, very competitive," Badosa told the Tennis Channel's Inside-In podcast, external in March. "It's very nice for me having a friend on tour because it's very tough to find." But with a place in the final at stake, that friendship will have to be put on hold in Melbourne. This is not the first meeting between the two - they have played eight times before, with Sabalenka winning the past six - but it is comfortably the most high-profile. World number one Sabalenka is bidding to win a third straight Australian Open title, while it is 27-year-old Badosa's first time in the last four of a Grand Slam. The Spaniard shocked sixth seed Coco Gauff in the quarter-finals as her remarkable recovery from a back injury, that she feared would force her to retire only a year ago, continues. "It's tough to play your best friend," Sabalenka said after beating Badosa in Stuttgart. However, difficult as it may be, once they walk out on Rod Laver Arena, all sentiment will be put to one side. "We know how to separate things," Badosa added. "We decided a long time ago that off the court we are friends, while on the court she really wants to win, I really want to win," said Sabalenka, who beat Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova in the quarter-finals. "So on the court we are

competitors and there is no place for friendship." Swiatek & Keys both have points to prove. Five-time Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek will take on American Madison Keys in Thursday's second semi-final. For Polish second seed Swiatek, it is a chance to improve on a disappointing record at Melbourne Park with this just the second time she has progressed beyond the fourth round. "This is something that I always wanted to improve," she said. "It's not like I need to prove it to other people. It's more that I need to kind of believe. I feel I believe more now." Big-hitting Keys, seeded 19th, will provide a stern test for Swiatek, who has had issues against such players in the past. The former world number one has won four of her five matches against Keys but three of those victories came on her favoured clay surface. On hard courts, they have won one match apiece. Keys, who has won her past 10 matches and triumphed at the Adelaide Open earlier this month, has a point to prove after coming up short at majors over the years. Victory over Swiatek would put the 29-year-old through to a second final - and her first since 2017 at the US Open. "There have been periods of my career where it felt like if I didn't win [a Grand Slam], then I hadn't done enough, and I didn't live up to my potential in all of that," Keys said. "That took a lot of the fun out of the game, and there were times where it felt paralysing out on the court because it felt as if I needed it to happen instead of giving myself the opportunity to go out and potentially do it." Sinner dismisses health fears to reach semis: Defending champion Jannik Sinner dismissed concerns about his physical state to thrash home hope Alex de Minaur and reach the Australian Open semi-finals. Sinner struggled with illness in his previous match but looked sharp in a 6-3 6-2 6-1 victory over eighth seed De Minaur. Two days after being sick before playing Denmark's Holger Rune and needing to see a doctor, Sinner said he felt "ready" when he woke up on Wednesday. Sinner denied speculation he had pneu-

monia, saying blood tests after his fourth-round match were "all good". "I feel like the illness has gone away now. I was feeling much, much better this morning," the world number one said. "When you are young you recover very fast - so it's a bit different." The 23-year-old Italian will face American Ben Shelton in the last four on Friday. Shelton, 22, reached the Melbourne semi-finals for the first time with a battling 6-4 7-5 4-6 7-6 (7-4) against Italy's Lorenzo Sonego. Stunning Sinner silences Melbourne crowd Anticipation was high among the Australian fans arriving at Rod Laver Arena that De Minaur could cause a shock - particularly given the uncertainty about Sinner's condition. A pale-looking Sinner was visibly shaking in his chair during his fourth-round win over Rune and benefitted from an enforced 20-minute break when the net broke. But Sinner looked healthy in a performance where he proved again to be a class above De Minaur. The world number one struck the ball sweetly and consistently to outlast De Minaur in the rallies. Clinching six breaks of serves, and saving just the one chance for De Minaur in the second set, illustrated his dominance. Afterwards Sinner said he had "a very easy day" on Tuesday, hitting with his coaches for only "half an hour or 40 minutes" to maintain rhythm. "I felt ready for today," Sinner added. "When you play a night session you try to sleep as long as you can and eat healthy." De Minaur came into the match with a terrible record against his opponent, losing all nine of their previous meetings and winning just one set in the process. The 25-year-old Australian was looking to end that unwanted run and become the first home player since 2005 to reach the men's singles semi-finals. But what was expected to be a raucous atmosphere failed to materialise on a cool Melbourne night. It was testament to Sinner's assured display that he largely silenced the majority of the 15,000 fans. "Right now my worst match-up on tour is Jannik. The head to head doesn't lie," said De Minaur.

Ireland defeats Pakistan in rain-hit U19 women's T20 match

JOHOR, MALAYSIA (APP): The Ireland Women's U19 team defeated the Pakistan Women's U19 team by 13 runs using the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) method at the Johor Cricket Academy Oval in Malaysia. Ireland, having won the toss and chosen to bat, scored 69 for 5 in their allotted nine overs. Alice Walsh, the player of the match, led the way with a 31-run knock off 19 balls. Pakistan's Memoona

Khalid impressed with two wickets in her only over. Due to rain interruptions, Pakistan's target was revised to 73 runs in nine overs. Despite a promising start, Pakistan ended their innings at 59 for 7, with skipper Komal Khan top-scoring with 12 runs. With this victory, Ireland, along with England and the USA, advanced to the Super Six stage of the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup. Pakistan, finishing fourth in Group B, will face Samoa in

the 4th place play-off on Friday, January 24th. Match Summary: - Ireland Women's U19: 69-5 (9 overs) (Alice Walsh 31; Memoona Khalid 2-6) - Pakistan Women's U19: 59-7 (9 overs) (Komal Khan 12; Ellie McGee 2-13) - Player of the Match: Alice Walsh (Ireland Women's U19) Upcoming Fixture: - 4th Place Play-Off: Pakistan vs. Samoa on January 24th at 7:30 am PKT at JCA Oval, Johor.

PGF to host Asian Tour Development tour events

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Golf Federation (PGF) has announced the return of the Asian Development Tour (ADT) to Pakistan. The upcoming championship will be hosted at the Rumanza Golf & Country Club, Multan, a premier golfing destination renowned for its world-class facilities and scenic layout, said a press release. The last ADT championship held in Pakistan took place in Lahore in October 2019, marking a successful milestone in the country's golfing journey. The PGF continues its commitment to fostering professional golf by hosting another ADT event in Multan, further showcasing Pakistan's potential as a prime venue for international golf tournaments. Pakistan will add two additional ADT events to the 2025 calendar, including CNS ADT Open Golf Championship and Pakistan ADT Open Golf Championship, scheduled for September. These events signify Pakistan's growing footprint on the global golfing map and its dedication to providing opportunities for professional golfers. In a message President PGF, said, "We are delighted to bring the Asian Development Tour back to Pakistan. The inclusion of multiple ADT events reflects our vision of developing professional golf in the country. Our efforts aim to highlight Pakistan as a premier golf destination while providing local talent a platform to compete internationally. We extend our gratitude to the Asian Tour for their collaboration and to Rumanza Golf & Country Club and DHA Multan for their exceptional support."

Sharma, bowlers help India thrash England in T20 opener

KOLKATA (AFP): Inspired bowling and a 34-ball 79 by opener Abhishek Sharma helped India to a crushing seven-wicket win over England in the first T20 international on Wednesday. Spinner Varun Chakravarthi and fast bowler Arshdeep Singh shared five wickets between them as India bowled out England for 132 after the hosts elected to field first in Kolkata. Left-hander Sharma then came out firing and despite losing two of his partners smashed a 20-ball fifty and ended with eight sixes and five fours to steer the team to victory in 12.5 overs and a 1-0 lead in the five-match series. The T20 series, followed by three ODIs, between the two teams serve as a warm-up for the 50-over Champions Trophy next month. England skipper Jos Buttler smashed 68 off 44 balls but the rest of the line-up failed to get going. "The energy, the way we started, that set the benchmark," India skipper Suryakumar Yadav said. "All the bowlers had their own plans and executed." England opener Phil Salt fell for a duck on the third ball of the match, with a leading edge off his bat sending the ball high and into the gloves of wicketkeeper Sanju Samson. Arshdeep dismissed Ben Duckett for four in the third over, with Rinku Singh taking a stunning backward running catch from the covers. Buttler hit back with four boundaries off Hardik Pandya as he attempted to rebuild in a 48-run third-wicket partnership with his new deputy Harry Brook, who scored 17. Chakravarthi bowled Brook with a googly and sent back Liam Livingstone for a duck as the ball darted into the stumps once again. Buttler reached his fifty in 34 balls but wickets kept tumbling and in an attempt to push the scoring the skipper finally fell to Chakravarthi, who returned figures of 3-23, the ball after hitting the bowler for six. Arshdeep, Axar Patel and Pandya took two wickets each and a run out from the last ball saw England all out in 20 overs. India raced to 41 in 4.1 overs before fast bowler Jofra Archer took down Sanju Samson, for 26, and Suryakumar, for a duck, in the space of four deliveries. "He (Archer) always looks good, he's a superstar," said Buttler. "To see him and (Mark) Wood operate in tandem is exciting. Venue to venue, you got to assess the conditions quickly and play well." Sharma kept up the batting blitz to take the sting out of the England bowling. The 24-year-old Sharma finally fell to Adil Rashid but not after a show that entertained the raucous home crowd. It was a disappointing start for England's new white-ball coach Brendon McCullum, who was previously only in charge of the Test side. India surprisingly left out Mohammed Shami after the fast bowler returned to the squad following a heel injury that kept him away from competitive cricket for over a year. The second T20 is on Saturday in Chennai.



DUBAI: Fakhar Zaman smashed an unbeaten 71 off 39 balls, Desert Vipers vs Sharjah Warriors ILT20.

Liverpool's magnificent seven secures Champions League progress

LIVERPOOL (AFP/APP): Liverpool maintained their perfect Champions League record to guarantee a top-two finish in the league phase and automatic last-16 qualification with a 2-1 win over Lille at Anfield on Tuesday. Harvey Elliott's deflected strike secured a seventh consecutive Champions League victory for Arne Slot's men after Jonathan David cancelled out Mohamed Salah's opener. Liverpool remain three points clear of Barcelona, who came from 4-2 down to beat Benfica 5-4. Lille's first defeat in 22

games in all competitions leaves the French side 11th. Liverpool will welcome direct progress to the last 16, without the need for a play-off round, with the Premier League leaders still involved in four competitions. Slot took the chance to rotate with the Reds already all but assured of progress to the next round. Jarell Quansah, Conor Bradley, Curtis Jones and Darwin Nunez, fresh from his match-winning contribution off the bench, came in from the side that beat Brentford 2-0 on Saturday to open up a six-point lead at the top

of the Premier League. Not for the first time this season, Liverpool's strength in depth made the difference with another winner from a substitute in Elliott, who has had to wait for his chance to shine since Slot took charge. "The privilege of managing Liverpool is that you have more than 11 good players," said Slot. "That's also the reason why we can compete in the Champions League, in the League Cup, FA Cup and the Premier League. "You need more than 11 good players, and it's up to them to be ready if they get the

chance, and I think Harvey showed today, with maybe a bit of a lucky goal, but his performance was good. That's also what you expect if you bring a player like him in, because he's a quality player." Lille arrived on Merseyside full of confidence with Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid among the notable scalps on their long unbeaten run. The visitors were far from overawed early on as they started impressively without ever seriously threatening Alisson Becker's goal. Liverpool struggled to get going until a defence-splitting

pass from Jones freed Salah to gallop clear and coolly slot in his 50th European goal for the club on 34 minutes. Jones had to be replaced at half-time in an injury concern for Slot, who also took the chance to rest Ryan Gravenberch for the second 45 minutes as Elliott and Alexis Mac Allister were introduced. Lille's task looked impossible when Aissa Mandi was sent off for a second bookable offence for chopping down Luis Diaz. Yet, within three minutes, Liverpool's club-record European run without conced-

ing was brought to an end. David swept home the rebound after Hakon Arnar Haraldsson's effort had been blocked by Kostas Tsimikas. Liverpool had not conceded for one minute shy of 10 hours since Christian Pulisic struck for AC Milan inside the first three minutes of their opening Champions League game of the season. But it took just five minutes to restore the lead as Elliott's strike from the edge of the area took a huge deflection off Ngal'ayel Mukau to wrong-foot Lucas Chevalier.





## In brief

### Prof. Dr M. Kamran nominated as VC NTC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has nominated Professor Dr. Muhammad Kamran, Vice Chancellor, MNS University of Engineering and Technology, Multan, as the Vice Chairperson of the National Technology Council (NTC). The notification in that regard has been issued by HEC, said a press release on Wednesday. Experts, teachers, and students associated with the field of engineering from across the country have congratulated Professor Dr. Muhammad Kamran on his nomination as Vice Chairperson of the National Technology Council, terming it a recognition of his professional competence and leadership at the national and global levels.

### ANF recovers 112 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations managed to recover over 112 kg drugs worth Rs 10 million and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that in an operation, 11.129 kg ice drug was recovered from the trolley bag of a passenger going to Jeddah at Peshawar International Airport. 24 kg opium, 70.8 kg hashish and 1.2 kg ice drug were recovered from secret cavities of a car intercepted near Haran Minar Interchange M-2 Sheikhupura and an accused was arrested. 1.7 kg opium and 1.2 kg hashish were recovered from two accused including a woman travelling in a passenger bus on M-1 Motorway Islamabad. In 4th operation, 2.5 kg ketamine hidden in the bag of an accused near Bahria Town in Lahore was recovered. Cases have been registered against the arrested accused under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.

### AIOU offers admissions

ISLAMABAD (APP): The country needs teachers for primary and secondary education levels. To address the shortage of teachers, Allama Iqbal Open University has been providing training to educators for schools, colleges, and universities for the past five decades, said the Vice-Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood on Wednesday. In a statement, he said that, "There is hardly any school, college, or university in the country, including the provinces of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, where a teacher trained by this national institution is not serving." The university has announced admissions for a two-year Associate Degree in Education (ADE) for primary-level teachers and 1.5, 2.5, and 4-year B.Ed programs for secondary-level teachers. The deadline for ADE admissions is February 17, while admission forms for B.Ed programs can be submitted until February 10. The admission forms and prospectuses for these programs are available on the university's website. For the convenience of students, admission forms are also available at the university's campuses and designated sale points across the country. The addresses of these sale points are provided on the university's website. Applications can be submitted both online and manually. For further details regarding admissions, students can contact the Director of Admissions via email at [admn@aiou.edu.pk](mailto:admn@aiou.edu.pk) or call the university's helpline at 051-111-112-468.

# Salik, Turkish envoy discuss job opportunities for Pakistanis in Turkiye

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Wednesday held a meeting with the Turkish Ambassador, Dr. Irfan Nazir Oglu and discussed various proposals regarding religious harmony, respect for humanity, and providing more job opportunities for Pakistani workers in Turkiye.

Minister Salik said Pakistan and Turkiye are like one soul in two bodies, bound by the eternal ties of religion, history, and culture. Both brotherly countries share a similar stance on regional and global issues and have always supported each other's positions on regional and international forums, he added.

Dr. Irfan Nazir Oglu

expressed sorrow over the deaths of Pakistanis in the Morocco boat incident and reaffirmed the commitment to providing more job opportunities for skilled Pakistanis in Turkiye.

He also said Turkiye is working on increasing the supply of machinery to Pakistani industries and expanding technical training and educational projects in Pakistan.

Several Turkish companies are successfully operating in Pakistan; however, there remains significant potential to increase joint investment and trade volume, he said adding that there are sincere fraternal relations between Pakistan and Turkiye, and both countries can achieve many milestones in the economic field.

Minister Salik mentioned that the Government of Pakistan is taking more effective steps to prevent human trafficking.

In the past year, 600,000 Pakistanis went abroad for employment, and by December 2024, overseas Pakistanis sent a record remittance of 3.1 billion dollars to Pakistan, he added. He said the establishment of better banking channels between Turkiye and Pakistan is also essential for promoting mutual trade.

The meeting concluded with an agreement to enhance cooperation towards eliminating extremism and terrorism, promoting interfaith harmony, and providing skilled Pakistanis with modern technical education.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs, Chaudhry Salik Hussain met with the Ambassador of Turkey Dr. Irfan Nazir Oglu.

## NAB distributes Rs 97 million to 132 Jeddah Town victims

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Sohail Nasir, distributed the first installment of cheques totaling Rs 97 million to 132 victims of Jeddah Town during a modest ceremony at NAB headquarters, on Wednesday.

Speaking at the event, the deputy chairman emphasized that NAB is committed to recovering the stolen funds of scandal victims. NAB serves as the custodian of people's investments and also acknowledged the challenges involved in recovering looted funds.

The recovery of Jeddah Town investments was a remarkable achievement, considering that the culprits had already served their sentences and some had passed away. He praised the policies of the current NAB chairman, noting that recoveries have accelerated since he took office. He emphasized

that the true success of NAB lies not in securing convictions, but in returning the looted funds to the victims.

He stressed the importance of investing only in legal, registered societies and promised to return every penny to victims of fraudulent housing societies, urging the public's support in fulfilling this commitment. Mirza Irfan Baig, Director General of NAB Rawalpindi, stated that NAB is dedicated to eliminating corruption from the country to ensure a comfortable future for the next generation.

NAB Rawalpindi is prioritizing the resolution of corruption cases mostly involving fake housing societies. Over the past year and a half, it has recovered Rs 38 billion, including looted money from old cases like Araiyan City, Jeddah Town, and others.

NAB has also resolved fraud cases worth Rs 100 billion, provided billions of

rupees in relief to victims of Ghouri Town. Additionally, 100 Kanal of land was recovered from Ghouri Town's management, with more cases nearing resolution.

He commended NAB officers and officials for resolving the long-standing Jeddah Town scam. He urged people to thoroughly check the legality of a society before investing and recommended consulting the relevant regulator to verify the authenticity of any housing society. "We must prioritize respecting others' rights and honoring our commitments," he emphasized.

NAB is conducting a media awareness campaign to educate the public on precautionary measures before investing in housing societies. This initiative aims to prevent financial losses by informing citizens about the legality of various housing schemes and encouraging them to verify approvals before making investments.

## Romina urges Qalandars to promote climate awareness

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam has called on the Lahore Qalandars to leverage the upcoming Pakistan Super League (PSL) season to promote climate awareness and encourage sustainable living.

During a meeting with the CEO of Lahore Qalandars, Rana Atif who called on her on Wednesday, Alam emphasized the importance of using PSL's peak visibility to highlight the critical need for climate action. She remarked that the collaboration will provide a significant opportunity to reach a broad audience and engage youth on the pressing challenges of climate change.

"The role of influential platforms like Lahore Qalandars is crucial in creating public awareness about the climate crisis," said Ms. Romina. "This partnership is a step toward involving the youth and sports enthusiasts in building a sustainable future for Pakistan."

The Lahore Qalandars, one of the flagship fran-

chises of the PSL, are stepping forward to utilize their widespread fan base and powerful platform to educate and inspire the younger generation on climate-related issues. The team's social media platforms will be key in spreading compelling content, including videos, infographics, and messages from players, to engage the public on sustainable practices.

Ms. Romina emphasized the potential of sports as a powerful tool for driving change and promoting sustainability in Pakistan. She believes that sports, with their widespread appeal and ability to unite people, can play a pivotal role in raising awareness about environmental issues.

"Through sports events and initiatives, players and organizations can inspire action towards greener practices and environmental consciousness. By leveraging the influence of sports, individuals and communities can be encouraged to adopt more sustainable lifestyles, contributing to a more eco-friendly and resilient

Pakistan in the face of climate challenges", she stated.

Ms. Romina also suggested organizing on-ground activities such as school visits, fan meet-ups, and climate-themed events to directly engage fans and encourage climate-friendly actions. In addition, Lahore Qalandars' players will actively participate in special programs to discuss the significance of climate action and offer practical tips on adopting sustainable practices.

Rana Atif, CEO of Lahore Qalandars expressed his enthusiasm for this initiative, stating, "We believe sports can be a powerful medium to inspire change. Through this collaboration, we hope to contribute to a greener and more sustainable Pakistan."

This groundbreaking partnership will roll out during the upcoming PSL season, with innovative content and impactful campaigns aimed at engaging the youth and raising awareness on the urgent need to address climate challenges.



ISLAMABAD: All Government Employers Grand Alliance (ALEGA) Pakistan is protesting in front of Q Block Pak Secretariat in favor of their demands. —INP Photo

## Delegation calls on Law Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from Rawalpindi Bar Association on Wednesday held a meeting with the Minister for Law & Justice and Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.

The delegation was led by Sardar Manzoor Bashir, President Rawalpindi Bar Association. The Law Minister was informed about the completion of various projects during the meeting.

The Minister assured full cooperation from his side and the government. He congratulated the newly elected cabinet and assured that the issues of the bar would be resolved.

## Car thief killed in shooting with Police

RAWALPINDI (APP): A car thief was killed in shooting with a Taxila Police team and his two accomplices managed to escape Tuesday night while the car stolen by them was recovered.

A Rawalpindi Police spokesman, in a statement on Wednesday, said the deceased accused Musa Khan along with his companions lifted a Suzuki Mehran car from an area of Taxila. The accused were driving in the stolen car, when they were signalled by the police to stop during snap checking. Instead of stopping the vehicle, they drove away. The police chased the fleeing car, but the accused started firing on the police.

In the retaliatory fire by the police, accused Musa Khan was killed while his accomplices made their escape leaving behind the stolen car. Weapons were also recovered from the car.

Senior police officers reached the spot on information about the incident. A search was conducted to arrest the fleeing suspects.

The deceased Musa Khan had been involved and convicted in dozens of car theft cases in Lahore and Rawalpindi, the spokesman said.

## OEC to export medical professionals to KSA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) an attached department of Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) would export the medical professionals to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

An official source told APP here on Wednesday, he said that in this regard OEC collecting the data of job seekers who are interested in working in KSA.

He said that only female nursing staff with the relevant qualifications and experience candidates would be eligible to apply against the job.

Bachelor of Science in Nursing BSN (4 years) or (Post RN), Master's Degree in Nursing or equivalent from an accredited institution or SCFHS Diploma in area of speciality—essential, current licensure as a professional registered nurse—essential, Registration with Saudi Commission for Health Specialties—essential, Minimum of 5 (five) years' current clinical nursing experience, 2 (two) years of which in the speciality area of assignment—essential.

## Parliamentary delegation from South Sudan meets with YPF leadership

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-level parliamentary delegation from the Transitional Legislative Assembly of South Sudan, led by Deputy Speaker Rt. Mr. Korneli Kon Ngu Akuck, met today with President of the Young Parliamentarians Forum (YPF), Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar, MNA, and members of the YPF Board, including MNA Muhammad Mubeen Arif and Nawabzada Mir Jamal Khan Raisani, MNA.

The meeting marked a significant step toward fostering parliamentary diplomacy and strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and South Sudan. Syeda Nosheen warmly welcomed the South Sudanese delegation, emphasizing the importance of youth engagement in governance and international collaboration.

"It is an honor and a privilege to host this esteemed delegation in Pakistan. This

meeting provides a unique opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue about the future, particularly concerning the empowerment of our youth. With young people comprising 75% of South Sudan's population, there is immense potential for transformative change," she remarked.

Jamal Raisani delivered an insightful presentation on the objectives, vision, and operational framework of the Young Parliamentarians Forum. He highlighted the Forum's initiatives, including capacity-building seminars and conferences for young parliamentarians and provincial assembly members, a pioneering effort in Pakistan.

Mubeen Arif underscored the importance of collaborative programs, advocating for youth empowerment through education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship initia-

tives. He further emphasized the potential of cultural and parliamentary exchange programs between the two nations.

The meeting explored avenues for enhanced cooperation, including the possibility of establishing a youth exchange program to foster mutual understanding, collaborative sports activities, lifelong partnerships, and shared learning. Proposals for joint cultural initiatives and forums on governance, sustainability, and peace building were also discussed.

The YPF reaffirmed its commitment to sustained engagement with South Sudan and other international counterparts to empower young voices in democratic processes. The session concluded with a shared vision to build a brighter future for both nations by strengthening parliamentary ties and uplifting youth leadership.

## CPDI urges filling vacancies of Chief Information Commissioners

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) has reiterated its call for the immediate appointment of Chief Information Commissioners and Information Commissioners to ensure the effective functioning of federal and provincial Information Commissions. These appointments are essential for upholding citizens' constitutional right to access information.

CPDI has repeatedly communicated with federal and provincial governments over the past year, highlighting the urgency of addressing prolonged vacancies in Information Commissions. Despite consistent reminders, these critical positions remain unfilled, severely hampering the effectiveness and credibility of the Commissions.

Mukhtar Ahmad Ali, Executive Director of CPDI, emphasized, "The absence of Chief Information Commissioners and other critical members in Information Commissions severely undermines their effectiveness. These delays are a disservice to citizens' right to information and good governance."

In Balochistan, CPDI has urged the Chief Minister to immediately appoint a Chief Information Commissioner under Section 18(3) of the Balochistan Right to Information Act, 2021. While acknowledging progress in appointing other members, Mr. Ahmad Ali reiterated in his recent communication that the Commission cannot function fully without the Chief Information Commissioner.

In Punjab, the position of Chief Information Commissioner has remained vacant since May 29, 2024. CPDI recently wrote to the

Chief Minister, requesting the urgent appointment to restore the Commission's full operational capacity. Mr. Ahmad Ali also highlighted the critical role of the third member in resolving potential deadlocks and ensuring majority decisions.

At the federal level, CPDI has called on the Prime Minister to appoint a civil society member as an Information Commissioner. This position has been vacant since January 2024, impeding the Pakistan Information Commission's ability to function efficiently. Mr. Ahmad Ali stressed that a civil society member brings essential diversity and expertise, as mandated by the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017. CPDI maintains that filling these vacancies is not just a legal obligation but a vital step toward promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance.

## Ministry introducing affordable housing: Riaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, stated on Wednesday that his Ministry is developing a new vision for low-cost housing schemes by incorporating advanced construction techniques.

The minister stated during a meeting that investing in smart and green housing techniques and research has become a key aspiration and goal. He commended the idea of exhibitions, emphasizing that such events are essential to move away from conventional construction methods that waste valuable non-renewable resources.

He further said that such platforms are the need of the hour as this industry have a great potential that needs a right vision and impetus to grow and flourish. Minister asserted that conventional mode of construction and Theka (con-

tract) system must be discouraged and become obsolete as they promote corrupt practices and illegal activities.

He reiterated that as per the vision and directions of prime minister we are eager to learn new ideas and capture opportunities through these expos to introduce advance technologies like fiber construction for low cost housing schemes.

The minister's meeting with Saleem Khan Tanoli, CEO of Fakt Exhibitions (Pvt), a Karachi-based exhibition company, was also attended by the Secretary of Housing and Works, Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash, and other senior officials from the ministry.

Tanoli briefed the minister on the idea of 'Build Pakistan' that is the first ever exhibition and conference on infrastructure and construction industry under the patronage of Ministry of Housing and Works. The exhibition will

be held in August 2025 at Expo Centre, Lahore and its main objective is to foster networking; strategic promotion by attracting international companies and investors; to boost infrastructure industry, to highlighting success stories and to transfer construction techniques and technology.

## Two arrested for online gambling

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Bani Police of Rawalpindi on Tuesday arrested two accused playing online gambling with stake money. According to a police spokesman, the accused Sajid and Naem were playing online gambling through Bet Pro app. Besides the stake amount of Rs 6,500, two mobile phones were also recovered from the accused.



120 traffic deaths reported

BALKH (Amu TV): Taliban's traffic department indicate that 123 people died and 177 more have been injured in over 120 road accidents in Balkh over the past 10 months. Most incidents occurred along major highways connecting Balkh to Jawzjan and Samangan as well as the Herat-Mazar-e-Sharif route. Accidents to several factors, including narrow and poorly maintained roads, the prevalence of unregistered vehicles, careless driving, and widespread disregard for traffic laws.

15 children deported

FARYAB (Amu TV): 15 children deported from Iran were reunited with their families in the northern province of Faryab, according to provincial directorate of information and culture. The children were taken by social workers from the Afghanistan Rural Development Institution, which operates in Herat, to the Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs in Faryab. Taliban described the initiative as part of their efforts to support children and facilitate their return to their families.

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

## WFP: 15m Afghans face food insecurity

KABUL (TOLONews): The World Food Programme (WFP) said that this winter nearly 15 million people in Afghanistan are facing emergency levels of food insecurity.

The WFP's communications official added that they are striving to provide humanitarian aid to six million people each month.

Ziauddin Safi, the communications officer for the World Food Program, said: "Thanks to national assistance from the European Union and other partners, the WFP intends to provide emergency food aid to six million people across the country every month this winter."

Meanwhile, 56-year-old Jumma Gul, who complains about poverty and lack of work, said that because his children are young, he is forced to work with his handcart.

Jumma Gul said: "There is no work. The 100 afghani I earn daily – should I buy bread, oil, or wood first? My sons are still young."

However, some economic experts are calling for humanitarian aid to be invested in Afghanistan's development projects. According to them, such an initiative could create job opportunities for the people.

Abdul Naseer Rishtia, an economic affairs expert,

said: "If the world and international organizations are helping Afghanistan, it would be better if they provide economic aid, initiate economic projects that create a stable income for people so they can change their lives. Otherwise, this humanitarian aid is temporary and has no lasting economic impact."

The WFP has also stated that due to the financial crisis, it has reduced its activities in Afghanistan. However, the recent aid from its partners will be allocated to providing food and treating malnutrition among families, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, and young children.

## Omari meets Russian Ambassador

KABUL (BNA): Acting Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Mullah Abdul Manan Omari, met with Russian Ambassador to Kabul Dmitry Zhirnov and Economic and Trade Advisor Nikolai Sazhenov to discuss the enhancement of bilateral ties.

During the meeting, Actinm Minister Omari emphasized the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's commitment to fostering good relations with regional and global partners based on mutual respect and national interests.

Highlighting the security improvements in Afghanistan, he stated that both domestic and foreign investors have now been presented with significant opportunities to invest in the country.

Ambassador Zhirnov acknowledged the positive progress in trade relations between Afghanistan and Russia, noting an increase in trade levels. He committed to encouraging Russian investors to explore opportunities in Afghanistan and assured support for Afghan businesses.

This meeting aligns with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' ongoing efforts to expedite the transfer of Afghan workers to various foreign countries, marking a pivotal step in enhancing economic cooperation.

## Precious stones sold for 40.4m Afs

KUNAR (TOLONews): 40.4 million afghani were paid for, precious stones in Kunar province in an open bidding process. These stones were sold in the presence of local officials and traders. According to officials, the auction has added over four million afghani to the government treasury.

"Today, with the sale of stones, 40.4 million afghani were collected, and 4.41 million afghani were added to the treasury of the Islamic Emirate," said Mohammad Shirin, head of Kunar's Mines and Petroleum department.

Meanwhile, traders of precious and semi-precious stones are calling on officials to provide more facilities in this sector.

"Foreign investors are also in contact with us and are interested in coming here. They want to cooperate with us in the electricity and processing sectors so that we can export these precious stones to other countries. This will be beneficial for traders and will also increase the government's revenue," said Izzatullah, a trader from Kunar.

"If processing machines are activated here and the stones are refined, employment opportunities will be created for 100 to 150 people," said Mirzaman, another trader in the province.

Last week, beryl worth 41.3 million afghani was sold in an open bidding process in Asadabad, the capital of Kunar province.

## Chinese national killed in Takhar

TAKHAR (Ariana News): Takhar Provincial Police Command said Wednesday a Chinese national was killed by unknown gunmen in Takhar Province on late Tuesday night.

Police gave the man's name only as Li, and said the victim had been on his way to Dasht Qala in Takhar when he was shot.

Mohammad Akbar Haqqani, head of press and public relations department for the police command, said in a statement that the man had decided to travel without informing authorities.

Haqqani said: "This Chinese citizen and his interpreter intended to travel for an unknown reason without informing the officials of the Chinese office and the security officials of the office. Unfortunately, he was killed by unknown gunmen on the way to Dasht Qala of Takhar province."

## UAE president meets with Afghan Interior Minister

KABUL (Ariana News): President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan met with Sirajuddin Haqqani, Afghanistan's Minister of Interior, Emirates News Agency (WAM) reported.

The meeting was held at Qasr Al Shati in Abu Dhabi, and the two sides discussed recent developments in Afghanistan.

They also explored ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation to serve the mutual interests of both nations, particularly in development-related areas.

The two officials reviewed efforts to support Afghanistan's reconstruction and stability, aiming to foster development and prosperity for the Afghan people.



Haqqani hailed cooperation between the UAE and Afghanistan and commended the UAE for its humani-

tarian assistance to the Afghan people.

The IEA's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid stated

Abdul Haq Wasiq, the General Director of Islamic Emirate's Intelligence, is accompanying Haqqani.

## Nearly one million individuals return home in three months: IOM

KABUL (Amu TV): Nearly one million migrants returned to Afghanistan from Iran and Pakistan in the last three months of 2024, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported, adding that during the same period, 740,356 individuals left the country.

The IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) recorded 983,055 arrivals into Afghanistan between October and December 2024.

Data was collected from ten border crossing points, categorized as either major crossings connected to national highways—such as Islam Qala, Milak, Spin Boldak, and Torkham—or smaller, secondary crossings.

In addition, IOM said it interviewed over 76,000 individuals to better understand their reasons for returning, documentation status, and intentions for staying in Afghanistan.

Iran and Pakistan have hosted Afghan migrants for decades, with approximately 3.75 million Afghans residing in Iran and 2.05 million in Pakistan as of late 2024, IOM says. Historically, cross-border movement has been driven by economic opportunities, healthcare access, family connections, and security concerns.

However, 2024 saw significant policy shifts aimed at reducing Afghan migrant populations in both countries:

Pakistan implemented Repatriation Plan with new deportation phases announced in April and June. In November, Afghan nationals were barred from remaining in Islamabad without special permissions.

Iran announced plans to deport two million Afghan nationals by early 2025 and introduced measures to reduce the Afghan migrant population by 10% annually. These measures include the construction of a border wall with Afghanistan.

The rising pressure from deportation policies, coupled with economic challenges and strained public sentiment in host countries, has forced many Afghan migrants to return home. In

interviews conducted by IOM, returnees cited reasons ranging from lack of legal documentation and fear of deportation to economic difficulties in Iran and Pakistan.

The large influx of returnees poses significant challenges for Afghanistan, which continues to grapple with economic instability and humanitarian needs. With limited infrastructure to support reintegration, many returnees face uncertain futures.

The IOM report also highlights the need for continued monitoring of cross-border movement to better understand the demographics and motivations of those affected.

## Afghan Acting Foreign Minister meets head of UNAMA

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), engaged in discussions focusing on the country's economic growth, humanitarian aid, and development initiatives.

During the meeting, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi highlighted Afghanistan's economic progress, citing a recent World Bank report that indicates an economic growth rate of 2.7% for the current year.

Ms. Roza Otunbayeva acknowledged the efforts made by the Islamic Emirate in fostering economic devel-



opment. She expressed her commitment to conveying these achievements at upcoming UN meetings, emphasizing the importance of

international recognition and support for Afghanistan's growth trajectory. Both officials emphasized the need for continued collaboration

between Afghanistan and international partners to ensure sustained progress in humanitarian and developmental efforts.

## Taliban urge Turkey to issue visas for urgent medical cases

KABUL (Amu TV): The Taliban's Ministry of Public Health has called on Turkey to issue visas for patients requiring urgent medical treatment, the ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

Noor Jallal Jalali, the Taliban minister of public health, raised the request during a meeting with Cem Ünal, Turkey's ambassador to Kabul, according to the

statement. The Turkish Embassy in Kabul has not commented on the meeting or the Taliban's request.

Since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, the Turkish Embassy has significantly limited the issuance of visas to Afghan citizens, a decision that has drawn frustration from many Afghans.

Some Afghan citizens

have complained that, despite meeting all the necessary requirements, their visa applications are frequently rejected.

"I have submitted all the documents they requested, but my visa was still denied," said a Kabul resident, reflecting the broader challenges faced by applicants.

Earlier this year, Turkey suspended a reciprocal agreement with Afghan-

istan that allowed visa-free travel for holders of diplomatic passports.

On June 9, Turkish media, including the Daily Sabah, reported that the 2008 visa waiver agreement had been suspended effective June 1. The suspension was enacted through a presidential decree, citing the ongoing complexities in Afghanistan's diplomatic landscape.

## Afghans call on Trump to address economic, human rights concerns

KABUL (Amu TV): Some Afghan citizens have urged the Trump administration to take a serious approach to Afghanistan's political, economic, and human rights challenges.

Among their key demands is holding the Taliban accountable for their actions, particularly concerning women's rights.

"Until the Taliban respect human rights and the rights of Afghan women, the international community should not enable their engagement

with the world," said Shabana, a Kabul resident. "Instead, they should pressure the Taliban to comply with human rights standards."

The position of US special envoy for human rights and women in Afghanistan remains vacant, raising concerns among human rights activists.

"Ensuring the Taliban's strict adherence to the Doha agreement, particularly on human rights, education, work, and women's participation in all sectors,

must be a priority," said Sara, a women's rights activist.

Another Kabul resident, who requested anonymity, emphasized the need for protecting vulnerable groups, particularly women and children refugees. "Repatriating them to Afghanistan would violate their fundamental human rights," the resident said.

In addition to human rights concerns, Afghan citizens are calling on President Trump to address Afghanistan's worsening

economic crisis. They warn that failure to act could push the country further toward collapse.

Many expressed disappointment with the Biden administration's approach to the Taliban, accusing it of engaging with the group without applying sufficient pressure to ensure respect for human rights, especially women's rights.

"It remains to be seen how Donald Trump will handle the Taliban," one resident said.

## Kabir meets NRC Secretary General

— to discuss aid for Afghan refugees



KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation Affairs, held a meeting with Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), to discuss ongoing humanitarian efforts for Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons.

During the meeting, Egeland provided an overview of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)'s activities in Afghanistan,

highlighting their assistance to internally displaced individuals and refugees from Iran and Pakistan.

Egeland proposed the smoothing of agreement-signing processes and the removal of obstacles to expedite assistance for refugees, aiming to improve operational efficiency in the region.

In response, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir expressed appreciation to the

Norwegian government for its humanitarian efforts and the establishment of the NRC in Afghanistan.

He underscored the dual challenges of refugee evacuation from neighboring countries and the pressing issue of internal displacement.

He assured Egeland of the Afghan government's cooperation and pledged to work on resolving existing challenges in the humanitarian sector.

## Taliban publicly flog two men in Kandahar, Parwan

KANDAHAR/PARWAN (Amu TV): Taliban publicly flogged two individuals accused of sodomy in separate incidents in Kandahar and Parwan provinces, the Taliban Supreme Court announced on Wednesday.

In a statement, the Taliban's judiciary said that a man in Bagram District, Parwan Province, was sentenced to three years in prison and 39 lashes for sodomy. The ruling was issued by a lower court and later upheld by the Taliban's Supreme Court.

In a separate case, a man in Maiwand District, Kandahar Province, was sentenced to one year in prison

and 30 lashes on similar charges, the court said.

Over the past three weeks, the Taliban have publicly flogged 16 individuals, including five women, across various provinces on charges ranging from theft to moral crimes. In 2023, at least 580 people, including 42 women, were subjected to public lashings in different parts of Afghanistan.

The Taliban's use of corporal punishment has drawn sharp criticism from international human rights organizations, including the United Nations.

Human rights groups have condemned the Talib-

an's public punishments, describing them as inhumane and a violation of international human rights standards.

Global organizations have called on the Taliban to immediately cease the practice of public corporal punishment. Amnesty International has also raised concerns about the lack of due process and judicial safeguards for detainees under Taliban rule.

"The absence of fair trials and proper legal representation for defendants highlights a systemic failure to ensure justice," Amnesty International said in a statement.

## Inter-Ministerial Committee meeting: Key investment projects discussed



KABUL (BNA): In a recent session of the Inter-Ministerial Investment Committee, key investment plans proposed by the private sector were thoroughly reviewed.

The meeting, held at the Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Economic Affairs, focused on several

ambitious projects aimed at enhancing economic development in the region.

Among the plans discussed were the establishment of commercial markets in Kabul and Balkh, a dedicated market for fruits and vegetables in Kabul, and the introduction of an electronic system for the

registration and verification of official documents.

Following an in-depth discussion, the committee assigned specific tasks to designated subcommittees. These groups are tasked with conducting technical meetings with the companies behind the proposed plans.





MEXICO CITY: Migrants seeking asylum leave an immigration office in Matamoros, Mexico, after their scheduled meetings were cancelled.

## PHC grants protective bail to two PTI leaders

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has approved the protective bail and security bail applications of two leaders of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) including Rauf Hassan and Naeem Panjutha advocate, thereby preventing their arrests, on Wednesday.

During hearing, Justice Shakeel Ahmed heard the protective bail application of PTI leader Rauf Hassan. The petitioner's lawyer, Alam Khan Adeenzai, informed the court that the applicant is a senior PTI leader against whom a case has been registered at the Abpara Police Station. He expressed the applicant's desire to appear before the relevant court, requesting protective bail.

The court granted Rauf Hassan 14 days of protective bail, directing him to appear before the relevant court. Similarly, a two-member bench comprising Justice S M Atique Shah and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah heard the petition of tribal leader Malik Naseer Koki Khel.

The petitioner's lawyer, Shad Muhammad advocate informed the court that the applicant is being nominated in multiple cases of the same nature. He is currently imprisoned in Dera Ismail Khan Jail. Whenever he is granted bail in one case, he is nominated in another, prompting Justice Atique Shah to inquire about the details from the Additional Advocate General.

The Additional Advocate General replied that they possess copies of various cases against the applicant. Justice Atique Shah directed him to submit a comprehensive report, remarking that the same type of cases are being registered against the applicant, who is being made to roam across the province's 36 districts. The provincial government was instructed to compile a detailed report. The hearing was adjourned until February 13.

In another development, the court approved the protective bail application of PTI leader Naeem Panjutha Advocate until February 6, directing that he not be arrest-

ed in any registered case. The applicant was also instructed to appear before the relevant court.

**Court seeks detail report against withdrawal of ex-CM security:** A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice SM Atique Shah and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah has directed the provincial government to submit a detailed report on the withdrawal of security from former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Parliamentary Leader Mahmood Khan, on Wednesday.

The court has asked the government to provide the reasons behind the withdrawal of security and how it relates to the 2018 security policy. The petitioner's lawyer, Shumail Ahmed Butt advocate argued that the withdrawal of security is a violation of the petitioner's fundamental rights.

During the hearing, Justice SM Atique Shah questioned why the security was withdrawn from the former chief minister while other high-profile individuals continue to receive security. He asked whether the government is following the 2018 security policy, which provides for security protocols for former chief ministers.

Additional Advocate General informed the court that the decision to withdraw security was made by the provincial cabinet may due to economic reasons. However, the petitioner's lawyer argued that the withdrawal of security is not justified, as the petitioner is still entitled to security under the 2018 policy.

Justice SM Atique Shah observed that it appears that the petitioner was the main target of the government's decision to withdraw security. He also questioned why the government withdrew security from the former chief minister while other VIPs continue to receive security.

The court has adjourned further hearing, directing the provincial government to submit a detailed report on the matter. The report should include the reasons behind the withdrawal of security and how it relates to the 2018 security policy.

## 11 killed in rail accident in west India

NEW DELHI (Reuters): At least 11 people died in a rail accident in India's western Maharashtra state on Wednesday when they disembarked from their train, fearing a fire, only to be hit by another train passing on the adjacent track, local media reported.

Railway officials told local media that someone had pulled the train's alarm chain, causing it to come to a halt, after which several passengers disembarked onto the adjacent tracks and were mowed down by another passing train.

"As per the information, 11 people have died in the accident and 5 others are injured," a senior railways official in Nashik region, Praveen Gadam, told ANI news agency. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said ambulances had been dispatched to the spot and arrangements were being made to treat the injured.

"Emergency equipment like glass cutters, floodlights etc have also been kept ready," he said on messaging platform X. Indian railways is the fourth largest train network in the world and is undergoing a \$30 billion upgrade, as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's push to boost connectivity.

However, rail accidents in the last two years, including a collision in 2023 that killed at least 288 people, have tarnished its image. India plans to bump up spending on the modernisation of its railways in the federal budget, to be presented next month, Reuters reported earlier this week.

## Illegal arms recovered in Kurram

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: A joint operation by the district administration, police, and security agencies was conducted in Bagan from January 19 to 21, and recovered a large number of illegal weapons.

According to security sources, the operation, which was carried out with the cooperation of local elders and residents, has been hailed as a step towards establishing lasting peace and eliminating criminal elements.

Sources revealed that as a follow-up to the operation, a convoy carrying supplies is expected to depart for Para Chinar today. Furthermore, in line with the peace agreement, security forces will continue to take stern action against miscreants without discrimination, ensuring that the hard-earned peace is maintained, security sources added.

## KP cabinet to meet on 24th

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet meeting has been scheduled for January 24, with official notifications sent to participants.

Official sources said on Wednesday the meeting will be presided over by Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur. Department of Establishment and Administrative Affairs has issued formal invitations to the cabinet members. Cabinet members and secretaries from relevant departments are expected to attend. According to the notification, the agenda for the meeting will be shared later.

Pakistan with the digital world, leading to clear and stable changes in the world of Information Technology. He said that many decisions and steps taken in the promotion of IT and telecommunication are hindered by departmental problems and red tape, but this Act will remove this significant obstacle.

Minister of State Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja briefed the committee members, clarifying that the bill does not centralize data collection but will help streamline digital identity and improve cyber security. She explained that the rules framed under the new bill would reduce corruption and increase the delivery of public services by eliminating the need for paperwork.

delivery models, and strong digital public infrastructure, the people of Pakistan will be able to become a digital nation.

This will further accelerate sustainable economic development, modernize the governance framework, improve citizen welfare, and provide effective public services, Amin ul Haque added. Syed Aminul Haque further said that the Act also aims to create a progressive digital society, promote a thriving digital economy, and establish a shared digital governance ecosystem, which includes secure, comprehensive, and collaborative digital public infrastructure.

He said that this Act would prove to be an important milestone in effectively connecting

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly's Standing Committee on Information Technology and Telecommunications on Wednesday unanimously approved the Digital Nation Pakistan Act 2024.

Chairman Committee Syed Aminul Haque said that the purpose of the Act is to transform Pakistan into a Digital Nation by providing timely opportunities to enable a Digital Society, Digital Economy, and Digital Governance, in accordance with technological requirements. Chairman Committee Syed Aminul Haque said that by leveraging the transformative power of Digital Technologies, responsible use of data, modern service

# Trump delivers fresh tariff threats against EU, China

## US immigrant communities brace for Trump crackdown

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US President Donald Trump vowed to hit the European Union with tariffs and said his administration was discussing a 10% punitive duty on Chinese imports because fentanyl is being sent from China to the US via Mexico and Canada. Trump voiced his latest tariff threats in remarks to reporters at the White House a day after taking office without immediately imposing tariffs as he had promised during his campaign.

Financial markets and trade groups exhaled briefly on Tuesday, but his latest comments underscored Trump's longstanding desire for broader duties and a new Feb. 1 deadline for 25% tariffs against Canada and Mexico, as well as duties on China and the EU. Trump said the EU and other countries also had troubling trade surpluses with the United States.

"The European Union is very, very bad to us," he said, repeating comments made Monday. "So they're going to be in for tariffs. It's the only way ... you're going to get fairness." Trump said on Monday that he was considering imposing the duties on Canada and Mexico unless they clamped down on the trafficking of illegal migrants and fentanyl, including precursor chemicals from China, across their US borders. Trump had previously threatened a 10% duty on Chinese imports because of the trade, but realigned that with the Feb. 1 deadline.

China said it was willing to maintain communication with the US to "properly handle differences and expand mutually beneficial cooperation". It sought to promote stable and sustainable ties with the US, the foreign ministry said. "We always believe that there is no winner in a trade war or tariff war. China will always firmly safeguard its national interests," ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told reporters at a regular press briefing on Wednesday. White House trade adviser Peter Navarro told CNBC early on Tuesday that Trump's Canada and Mexico tariff threat was to pressure the two countries to stop illegal migrants and illicit drugs from entering the US.

"The reason why he's considering 25, 25 and 10 (percent), or whatever it's going to be, on Canada, Mexico and China, is because 300 Americans die every day" from fentanyl overdoses, Navarro said. Trump on Monday announced a sweeping immigration crackdown, including a broad ban on asylum. Trump on Monday signed a broad trade memorandum ordering federal agencies to complete comprehensive reviews of a range of trade issues by April 1.

These include analyses of persistent US trade deficits, unfair trade

WASHINGTON (AP): The administration of United States President Donald Trump has rolled back a decade-old policy that prohibited immigration authorities from making arrests at sensitive locations, including schools, churches and hospitals. As the repercussions of the move set in on Wednesday, many of those living without documentation in the US expressed fears about the effects it would have on the few aspects of life where they felt secure.

"I don't sleep," Iris Gonzalez told The Associated Press news agency from Boston, Massachusetts, where her children have attended school for a decade. Gonzalez, who came to the US from Guatemala 14 years ago, wondered what will happen if she comes into contact with immigration authorities while attending a court hearing or driving. "What if they stop me?" she said. She also questioned whether she should continue to look for work under the new administration. Still, she was adamant that her children would continue to go to school, where she hoped they would be safe. "Education is important," she told the news agency in Spanish. Gonzalez's story underscores the daily negotiations of those seeking to avoid possible immigration enforcement under Trump, whose political comeback has been predicated on a pledge to undertake "mass deportations" and limit immigration into the US. His first days in office have been defined by a slew of executive orders and actions related to immigration enforcement.

That has included declaring a national emergency at the US border to surge personnel and resources there, laying the groundwork for expedited deportations, and suspending the CBP One application upon which thousands of asylum seekers were relying for appointments. Trump has also sought to end so-called birthright citizenship, a move that has already been challenged in court by state officials and rights groups. And on Tuesday, the second day of Trump's second term, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced it had ended the policy of avoiding immigration raids on "sensitive" locations. The shift largely affects two agencies: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP), both of which had guidance barring enforcement at places like medical centres. So far, no major immigration enforcements have been reported in the US since Trump took office, but speaking to reporters on Monday, the incoming president said it was only a matter of time.

practices and currency manipulation among partner countries, including China. Trump's memo asked for recommendations on remedies, including a "global supplemental tariff," and changes to the \$800 de minimis duty-free exemption for low-value shipments often blamed for illicit imports of fentanyl precursor chemicals. The reviews ordered create some breathing room to resolve reported disagreements among Trump's cabinet nominees over how to approach his promises of universal tariffs and duties on Chinese goods of up to 60%.

Trump's more measured approach to tariffs fueled a rally in US stocks that pushed the benchmark S&P 500 index (.SPX), opens new tab to its highest level in a month, though Trump's new salvo on China and the European Union may deflate that momentum. Trump likely "decided to go a little slower and also to make sure he has as firm a legal foundation as he can get for these kinds of actions," said William Reinsch, a trade expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "He's figuring out how to best use his leverage to get what he

wants."

Mexico and Canada struck conciliatory tones in response to Trump's Feb. 1 deadline. Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said that she would emphasize Mexico's sovereignty and independence and would respond to US actions "step by step". But she added that the US-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement was not up for renegotiation until 2026, a comment aimed at pre-empting suggestions that Trump will seek an early revamp of the pact that underpins more than \$1.8 trillion in annual three-way trade. Corn farmers are worried about US tariffs and retaliatory duties disrupting trade with Mexico, their top export customer for corn, and with Canada, the top export customer for US corn-derived ethanol.

"We understand that he is a negotiating type of person," Illinois farmer Kenny Hartman Jr, board president of the National Corn Growers Association, said of Trump. "We're just hoping that we can come out of this where we don't lose the exports - we don't lose that corn going to Mexico or that ethanol going to Canada."

## CASS always prioritised collaborative efforts

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS) and the Center for International Strategic Studies, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (CIS-SAJK) have formalised a strategic partnership by signing a Joint Synergy Charter in Islamabad.

The charter outlines a framework for collaboration in areas such as conducting joint academic research, conferences, and seminars; publishing collaborative research and exchanging academic literature; and sharing institutional expertise, to enhance and promote narratives on key national security issues, especially the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir conflict.

Addressing the gathering, Air Marshal Javaid Ahmed (Retd), President of CASS, underscored the significance of partnerships in advancing research on critical national and regional



issues. He highlighted the need for focused efforts in narrative-building and the role of social media in shaping public policy.

He also praised CIS-SAJK for its unique contributions, particularly its ground-level insights into the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir conflict. "CASS has always prioritised collaborative efforts to address challenges in emerging technologies and security. Our partnership with CIS-SAJK is a step towards combining expertise to tackle pressing issues like the Jammu & Kashmir dispute," he said. He further noted CASS's early efforts

to unite think tanks following the revocation of Article 370 in 2019, highlighting the importance of such coordinated efforts.

Dr Asma Shakir Khawaja, Executive Director of CIS-SAJK, expressed enthusiasm for the partnership, underscoring the importance of joint research in shaping national discourse. She acknowledged the valuable opportunities the collaboration presents, including capacity building, knowledge sharing, and policy impact. Researchers from both institutions shared insights on their ongoing work and highlighted current research endeavours during the visit.

## BD scraps order against anti-govt action

DHAKA (AFP): A Bangladeshi education ministry order demanding officers report institutions and pupils involved in anti-government "provocative activities" was withdrawn on Wednesday after criticism it undermined the spirit of last year's student-led revolution.

The mass uprising spearheaded by students toppled long-time autocrat Sheikh Hasina in August 2024, with an interim government led by Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus taking charge. The order, signed by the ministry's director of its "monitoring and evaluation" for secondary education, Abed Nomani, was issued on January 2 — but shot to attention after it circulated on social media and in newspapers.

Wahiduddin Mahmud, the education minister, said he had not been aware of the order and that it had been cancelled. "The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education was not instructed to issue any notification," he said. "This matter will be investigated". The now cancelled order had told officials to "remain vigilant and proactive in preventing students from engaging in provocative actions, driven by propaganda, misinformation, or disinformation against the government or the country".

It did not provide clarification on what those actions might include. "Officials must notify the authorities if any educational institution or student is involved in provocative activities, so that necessary measures can be taken," it added.

Supreme Court lawyer Snehadri Chakravarty had earlier called it a clear violation of constitutional rights. "Student-led protests once toppled former prime minister Sheikh Hasina because people's freedom of speech and expression was being curtailed," Chakravarty told AFP. "Within five months, some factions of the government appear to be echoing her actions," he added.

## Houthis release crew of commercial vessel seized

DUBAI (AP): Yemen's Houthi said Wednesday they released the crew of the Galaxy Leader, a vehicle carrier seized in November 2023 at the start of their campaign in the Red Sea corridor. The militia said they released the sailors after mediation by Oman.

The crew of 25 included mariners from the Philippines, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine and Mexico. The Iran-backed Houthis said they hijacked the ship over its connection to Israel. They then had a campaign targeting ships in international waters, which only stopped with the recent ceasefire in Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

A representative for the Galaxy Leader's owners had no immediate comment. The Bahamas-flagged vessel is affiliated with an Israeli billionaire Abraham "Rami" Ungar, who is known as one of the richest men in Israel. The

Houthi attack on the Galaxy Leader saw the rebels launched a helicopter-borne raid. Propaganda footage of the raid has been played constantly by the Houthis, who even shot a music video aboard the ship at one point.

On Monday, the Houthis signaled they now will limit their attacks in the Red Sea corridor to only Israeli-affiliated ships after a ceasefire began in the Gaza Strip, but warned wider assaults could resume if needed. However, it likely won't be enough to encourage global firms to reenter the route that's crucial for cargo and energy shipments moving between Asia and Europe. Their attacks have halved traffic through the region, cutting deeply into revenues for Egypt, which runs the Suez Canal linking the Red Sea to the Mediterranean.

The Houthis have targeted over 100 merchant vessels with missiles and drones since the Israel-

Hamas war in the Gaza Strip started in October 2023, after Hamas' surprise attack on Israel that killed 1,200 people and saw 250 others taken hostage.

## GB CM departs for to US

F.P. Report

GILGIT: Gilgit-Baltistan government spokesperson Faizullah Faraq has announced that Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan has departed for a 10-day official visit to the United States.

Accompanying the Chief Minister are Provincial Minister for Tourism Ghulam Muhammad, Provincial Minister for Planning Raja Nasir Ali Khan, and Additional Chief Secretary Captain (R) Muhammad Mushtaq. The Chief Minister is scheduled to land in Houston tonight.