

Two students shot dead
F.P. Report

MARDAN: Unknown assailants on Thursday shot dead two students on Nisata Road in Mardan. Police said assailants fired multiple shots on a vehicle, resulting in the death of two students on the spot. The deceased were identified as Saudais, a resident of Gharibabad, Mayar, and Shehzad, a resident of Sharifabad. Police have transferred the bodies to DHQ Hospital for post-mortem examination.



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FC man martyred
F.P. Report

BANNU: An FC personnel was martyred by unidentified assailants in Bannu on Thursday. The incident occurred in the Noorad area within the jurisdiction of the Miryan Police Station, where unknown attackers opened fire on the FC personnel, Khurshid Alam. As a result, he died on the spot. Rescue teams promptly arrived at the scene and transferred the body to the District Headquarters Hospital.

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Pakistan's economic growth journey resumed: Shehbaz

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that after attaining stability in the country's economy, the government had resumed the journey of economic development and growth from where it was halted in 2018.

He said Pakistan witnessed a golden era of economic development under the leadership of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and today, under his leadership too, the development journey was continued. He expressed the gratitude to the friendly and brotherly countries as Pakistan avoided the default like situation and moved towards the path of development due to their cooperation.

"The credit of significant decline in inflation and interest rate goes to the hard work by the government economic team," he said while talking to a delegation of Pakistan Broadcasters' Association which called on him here. The prime minister said the relationship between government and the media was based on mutual trust.

He emphasized that the the government always welcomed constructive criticism by media as it was very important to improve governance. "The government believes in media being the fourth pillar of the state," the prime minister said adding that there was complete freedom of expression in the country.

He expressed the confidence that "Uraan Pakistan", a home made development project, will be made successful with cooperation of media and all other relevant stakeholders. Similarly, he underscored that the country's exports had been increased and industrial and agricultural sectors were also showing positive results due to the business friendly policies of the government.

As regards performance of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), the prime minister said the reforms actions were being implemented in the Board besides work on digitization of FBR was also continued rapidly. He told that the faceless assessment had also been launched to improve the customs' system. "This system will help increase tax revenues, enhance transparency and stop corruption from the sector.

He said after the launch of this system, the national exchequer was benefited due to the prevention of smuggling of petroleum products, sugar, fertilizers, and wheat. The increase in remittances reflects the growing trust of overseas Pakistanis in government policies, he said adding that the expansion of relationship with friendly countries and successes on the diplomatic front were also continued.

He said Pakistan's identity on the global stage had been restored. As regards the progress of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the prime minister said the benefits of the mega project were starting to materialize. "The dream of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Chinese President Xi Jinping for the development of Pakistan and the region is very close to being realized," he said adding that the government was working tirelessly for the early completion of CPEC projects.

Additionally, the prime minister said the entire nation had made unmatched sacrifices in the war against terrorism. "The Pakistan armed forces, along with the entire

nation, will continue the fight against this menace until its complete eradication." He noted that the anti-Pakistan elements, who had dreamed of Pakistan's default, continue to make repeated attempts to attack Islamabad.

PM says CPF a pathway to economic stability; assures commitment to implementation: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif termed the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) of the World Bank as a landmark initiative forged through decade-long strategic cooperation to boost employment opportunities, IT-led initiatives and climate resilience ensuring economic stability.

He was addressing the launching ceremony of the landmark US\$20 billion Country Partnership Framework (CPF) which is a transformative initiative marking the longest-ever development partnership between Pakistan and the global financial institution. The strategic collaboration aims to address Pakistan's pressing economic and developmental challenges while fostering growth, climate resilience, and technological advancement.



ISLAMABAD: Vice President of World Bank for South Asia, Mr. Martin Raiser, presenting a copy of booklet of World Bank's Country Partnership Framework for Pakistan to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at ceremony.

Demolition of bunkers in Kurram

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The phased-wise demolition of tribal bunkers in the Kurram district will resume on Friday, said official sources on Thursday. As per further details, a convoy of 61 supply vehicles has reached Parachinar, while another convoy is scheduled to depart on January 24.

Sources revealed that the demolition process will restart on Friday as part of ongoing efforts to ensure peace in the region. Additionally, over the next three days, a tribal assembly will be held involving peace committee members and signatories of the provincial government-led peace agreement.

Pakistan Navy takes over CTF

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy has assumed command of Multinational Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) from Turkish Navy during a Change of Command Ceremony held at HQ US NAVCENT, Bahrain. Commodore Sohail Ahmad Azmie of Pakistan Navy took over the command from Rear Admiral Rustu Sezer of Turkish Navy.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commander of Combined Task Force-151 (CCTF-151), Commodore Sohail Ahmad Azmie, assured that his team is fully prepared to shoulder this challenging responsibility efficiently. He emphasized Pakistan Navy's belief in collaborative efforts to maintain security and stability, ensuring uninterrupted flow of maritime traffic through this critical region. He added that Pakistan Navy's active participation in CMF's maritime security efforts reflects this commitment. Commodore Sohail also appreciated and congratulated the outgoing Commander, Rear Admiral Rustu Sezer, and his team for their dedicated efforts in achieving the objectives during their tenure.

Pakistan Navy holds the unique distinction of commanding CTF-151 for the eleventh time. In July last year, Pakistan Navy also assumed command of CTF-150 for the thirteenth time. These achievements reflect Pakistan Navy's dedication to maritime peace and stability in the region and the trust placed in it by partner nations.

The Change of Command Ceremony was attended by the Ambassador of Pakistan to Bahrain, Mr. Saqib Rauf; the Ambassador of Turkey to Bahrain, Mrs. Ayse Hilal Sayan Koytak; the Commander of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), Vice Admiral George M. Wikoff; Deputy Commander of the Turkish Fleet, Vice Admiral Ibrahim Ozden Kocer; and distinguished guests, including senior diplomats and representatives of navies operating under the CMF.

NA passes PECA Amendment Bill, 2025

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly has passed the PECA Amendment Bill, 2025, a contentious bill aimed at regulating social media in Pakistan. As per details, the bill, presented by Federal Minister Rana Tanveer, seeks to establish a new authority to oversee social media platforms and protect users' rights.

The authority will be responsible for facilitating

social media platforms, ensuring users' rights, and registering social media platforms. After the formation of the authority, it will have the power to take disciplinary action against social media platforms that violate the law, direct relevant institutions to remove illegal content, and register and deregister social media platforms.

Furthermore, the authority will consist of nine members, including the

Secretary Interior, Chairman PTA, and Chairman PEMRA as ex-officio members. The chairman and five members will be appointed for a five-year term. It is worth noting here that the government has decided to give representation to journalists in the authority, with five members having at least 10 years of experience as journalists, software engineers, lawyers, social media professionals, and IT experts.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy assumes Command of Combined Task Force-151, during change of command ceremony held at Bahrain.

PECA amend bill has no effect on journalists: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attullah Tarar on Thursday brushed aside misleading notion around the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Bill, 2025, which is aimed at regulating the digital media, and would not affect the working journalists at all.

"The PECA amendment is a major step towards protection of the working journalists of the print and electronic media," said the minister while addressing the journalist community at the Press Gallery of the Parliament. He said there was no mechanism or law to regulate the digital media which is shrinking the space for print and electronic media. On the other hand, the Council of Complaints of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority and other platforms are there to regulate the print and electronic media.

Recently a person announced a bounty over the head of the former chief justice on the social media, but no action was taken against him, he said, adding no authority could take notice of the fake news and malicious campaigns on social media in the existing scenario in Pakistan. He said without any association with the journalism, people have been reporting on social media and there is no authority which could hold them accountable for accu-

Best kind of facilities available to PTI founder

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attullah Tarar on Thursday informed the National Assembly that best kind of facilities were available to the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in prison.

Answering a question asked by Syed Agha Rafiullah of PPP, he informed that facilities like a bicycle, exercise room, kitchen, and walking gallery were available to the founder of PTI which were not permissible to other prisoners, adding he obtained these facilities by submitting applications in the courts. Recalling the ill-treating that Pakistan Muslim League (N) leadership faced, he said that during the PTI era, the leadership of the PML-N was subjected to political revenge.

sations or fake news.

This is the first time that the term digital media is being defined formally, he said, adding any online media through which the information is being transmitted has been defined as the digital media. "For the first time, online platforms, online systems of information dissemination, mobile application and mobile web are brought under the purview of digital media," he remarked.

He said the Federal Investigation Agency does not have the capacity to deal with the crimes like child pornography and deep fake. The establishment of the Cyber Crime Investigation Agency is not a one-day initiative, he said, adding the government would consult all the stakeholders including the journalist community in this regard.

Under the proposed criteria, he said the Digital

Rights Protection Authority will have a one member from the journalist community. "It will not happen that anybody take action arbitrarily as a speaking order would have to be passed within 24 hours," he said, adding if the speaking order is not passed within 24 hours of taking cognizance of an offence then the matter will not proceed any further.

"I would like to clarify once again that there is no provision in PECA which targets working journalist," he said assuring the journalists that the proposed law would ensure protection of their rights. He said the journalist community is allowed to comment or criticize, but there is a need to take some realities under consideration. "I invite all the media organizations to come and consult with us and see whether it is targeting the working journalists or protecting them," he remarked.

Parliament reduced to a rubber stamp: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Dr. Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, has stated that the government's refusal to form a Judicial Commission is proof of its unconstitutional and illegitimate nature.

In a statement, Barrister Dr. Saif said that the federal government was introducing new laws to eliminate the judiciary, media, and opposition. "Parliament has been reduced to a rubber stamp, but the government will ultimately bury itself in the grave it has dug for the media" He added.

Barrister Dr. Saif added that Speaker Ayaz Sadiq should be ashamed of his undemocratic role. The government's escape from negotiations will force the opposition to take to the streets. He further stated that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was setting up a political front against the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government by providing shelter to the incompetent Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Islamabad.

PFUJ rejects amendments to PECA law

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) has vehemently and outrightly rejected the amendments to the Prevention of Electronic Crime Act 2016 (PECA), threatening nationwide protests until the amendments are withdrawn.

PFUJ President Afzal Butt and Secretary General Arshad Ansari expressed their outrage over the passage of the amendment bill, which they claim was facilitated by the opposition's staged walkout from the National Assembly.

The PFUJ leaders urged the government to immediately withdraw the amendments, calling them the "blackest law" of Pakistan's history adopted by a democratically elected government. They said that they were deeply disappointed by the government, led by those who had promised to consult them before passing the amendment bill. "Government kept the stakeholders in dark and passed the law in great haste," they opined.

The PFUJ's stance is supported by various media stakeholders, who have also condemned the amendments, citing concerns over freedom of speech and PFUJ has reaffirmed its commitment to protecting press freedom and free speech, stating that it will defend these fundamental rights "by all means."

PTI founder ends ongoing negotiations with govt

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former Prime Minister Imran Khan ended the ongoing negotiations with the government on Thursday.

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar quoted Imran Khan while talking to the reporters outside Adiala jail. Barrister Gohar stated that the government was supposed to form a commission within seven days, but so far, no judicial commission has been formed regarding the events of May 9 and November 26. Therefore, the decision was made to end the negotiations.

The PTI chairman mentioned that "today he and other lawyers met with the founder of PTI, who made it clear that since the commission had not been formed, the negotiations should be ended. The founder of PTI stated that there would be no further rounds of negotiations."

Barrister Gohar said that it was their strong desire for the negotiations to continue and progress but perhaps the political differences are so cold that the ice is not melting. It is unfortunate that no announcement has been made by the government until Thursday (today).

He further stated that if a commission is to be formed, its members should be 3 senior judges from the Supreme Court or High Court. We will continue our struggle in accordance with the constitution and law, and will work against an independent judiciary and the 26th amendment. Barrister Gohar added that the founder of

PTI made it clear that they are not waiting for help from any foreign country; instead, they would start their struggle alongside all political parties.

Meanwhile, the government's negotiation committee convened in the National Assembly speaker's chamber under the chairmanship of Speaker Ayaz Sadiq to deliberate on the formation of the Judicial Commission on May 9, 2023 incidents, and respond to the opposition's demands.

Federal Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar briefed the committee on critical legal points, including a legal opinion on the commission's formation.

According to sources, the government committee has agreed to formulate a strategy based on the legal advice provided. A follow-up meeting with both the government and opposition negotiation committees has been scheduled for January 28 to discuss the next steps. Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar highlighted legal aspects surrounding the Judicial Commission's formation and its implications. Detailed consultations were held, focusing on the opposition's letter and its legal considerations.

The government's negotiation committee spokesperson, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, spoke to the media after the session. He said the committee is scheduled to meet again tomorrow after a detailed consultation held on Wednesday. "A response to the opposition's demands will be prepared in the next meeting based on the legal advice," he added.

Pakistan ready to engage with new US admon: FO

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office stated that Pakistan remains ready to engage with the new US administration to take these longstanding relations forward.

At his weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan said Pakistan is committed to a strong and robust relationship with the US based on the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. Welcoming President Donald Trump's oath taking, the spokesperson emphasized that the US-Pakistan relationship is very important, covering multiple areas. He said we

look forward to continuing the positive trajectory of these relations.

Responding to a question, the spokesperson said we have an arrangement with the US by virtue of which it is committed to take a lot of Afghans from Pakistan to the US for resettlement by September this year. He said this arrangement is in place so far. Voicing serious concerns over the sanctuaries enjoyed by TTP in Afghanistan, the spokesperson said Pakistan continues to impress upon the Afghan authorities to address these concerns so that the bilateral relations could achieve its full potential.

Regarding Kashmir dispute, Shafqat Ali Khan said Pakistan's position on the longstanding dispute is very clear. He said the world is aware of the oppression campaign unleashed in the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He said Pakistan will support any effort directed towards the resolution of the dispute.

To another question, the foreign office spokesperson said Pakistan remains committed to the full implementation of Indus Water Treaty including its dispute settlement mechanism. He hoped India will also implement the treaty in good faith and in its entirety.

Six militants killed in Zhob operation

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Movement of a group of khwarij, who were trying to infiltrate through Pakistan-Afghanistan border, was picked up by the security forces in general area Sambaza, Zhob District. Own troops effectively engaged and thwarted their attempt to infiltrate. Resultantly, Six Khwarij were sent to hell. A large quantity of weapons, ammunition & explosives was also recovered.

Pakistan has consistently been asking Interim Afghan Government to ensure effective border management on their side of the border. Interim Afghan Government

is expected to fulfill its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil by Khwarij for perpetuating acts of terrorism against Pakistan. Security Forces of Pakistan remain committed to secure its borders & eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country.

Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday paid tribute to the security forces for foiling an infiltration attempt on the Pak-Afghan border in Zhob district.

In separate messages, the president and prime minister appreciated the bravery of the security forces for killing six terrorists during the time-

ly operation.

"Pakistan's valiant armed forces are determined to protect the country's borders at all times. Operations against terrorists will continue until the complete elimination of the menace of terrorism. The entire nation stands with its security forces in the war against terrorism," the president said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said, "The nation is proud of the security forces. They will continue to thwart the nefarious intentions of the enemies of humanity. The government of Pakistan and the security forces are mobilized to completely eliminate terrorism from the country."



KP govt decides extension in contract of school leaders

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: KP Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education, Faisal Khan Tarakai has said that the purpose of appointing School Leaders is ensure the quality education and their problems would be resolved on priority basis.

Replying the queries of the members of the KP Assembly Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education here on Thursday, the provincial minister told the panel that the provincial government has decided extension in the contract of the School Leaders and except monitoring the quality of education, they are not being given any other responsibility. He said that the department has directed to present proposals for their better future.

The meeting of the standing committee was held with Chairman Taj Mohammad Tarand in the chair. Besides, the provincial minister, members including Abdul Salam Afridi, Mian Sharafat Ali, Arif Ahmadzai, Adnan Khan and Sobia Shahid, the Special Secretary Qaiser Alam, Additional Secretary Maqbook

Khan, Director E&SE Samina Altaf, Director DPD Mohammad Mazar and other higher authorities also attended the meeting.

Questions, problems raised in the previous meeting and steps taken by the department were highlighted and the officials of the education department gave sequential answers to the questions asked by the committee members.

The committee was told that the main objective of appointing Regarding the transfer of ministerial staff, the committee was informed that a period of one and a half years has been fixed. Employees who have been at a station for one and a half years will be transferred immediately. Initially, these transfers will take place in three districts and soon the ministerial staff of all districts will be transferred.

In response to a question, the Minister said that a scholarship programme has been started for the improvement of education in districts where the literacy rate is low, especially in the merged districts, so as to attract more students. Regarding the Accelerated Learning Programme

(ALP), the provincial minister said that this initiative is being extended to other districts of the province and a strategy is also prepared to bring these students into the mainstream and conduct their exams.

Chairman Standing Committee Taj Mohammad Khan Tarand said that the ALP is the best programme and called for the removal of all shortcomings and problems in it before the extension. Taj Muhammad Khan Tarand directed the education authorities to get approval of the posts from the finance department immediately for the schools which are nearing completion. So that the work is not delayed.

MPAs Arif Ahmedzai and Mian Sharaf Ali apprised the committee about the delay in construction of schools and other issues in Charsadda and Swat. For which Special Secretary Education Qaiser Alam was entrusted with the responsibility. Faisal Khan Tarakai told the committee that beside other problems, the construction of schools takes a long time due to which the present provincial government has started the Rented Building School Programme.



KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon addressing a press conference.

Siberian birds add beauty to coastline

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Karachi, known as the land of migrants, has become a seasonal haven for Siberian birds fleeing the harsh winters of their homeland.

These migratory guests, traveling thousands of kilometers through Kazakhstan in search of food, have made Karachi's coastal belt their home since October and will stay until February before heading back to their permanent habitats.

The visiting birds, which include ducks, pelicans, cranes, and several other species, are a mesmerizing sight as they grace Karachi's shores, enhancing the natural beauty of the coastline with their vibrant presence. Speaking about the phenomenon, Deputy Conservator Muntaz Soomro highlighted the importance of these migratory birds and the role they play in showcasing nature's splendor.

Citizens, particularly those with a love for the sea, have expressed their delight at the sight of these winged visitors. Each year, these birds, known for their ability to fly for up to 10 months, bring life and color to Pakistan's coastal belt, making it a natural attraction for locals and wildlife enthusiasts alike. As February approaches, these majestic creatures will take their final flight back to the Siberia, leaving behind fond memories and a promise of their return next year.

Operation in against beggars launched

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: District administration of Peshawar under the supervision of Commissioner, Riaz Khan Mehsud has launched mega operation in the provincial metropolis against professional beggars.

The operation has been launched in pursuance of the directives of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapure. The operation will be carried out by a coalition of several government departments including district administration, Social Welfare department, Excise, Police, Rescue 1122 and Civil Defence.

A total of eight teams have been constituted for carrying out operation against professional mendicants roaming in city and bothering people by seeking alms. On the first day of the operation, hundreds of panhandlers, including female and children have been nabbed by raiding teams.

During operation a gang of 24 members also came into surface who use beggars and arrange accommodation besides vehicles for transporting them into different places. In a recent press conference, Commissioner Peshawar, Riaz Mehsud apprised newsmen that each commercial area has separate rates and earning for beggars.

He claimed beggars in main Saddar bazar earns more than Rs. 10,000 on daily basis and give share to their handlers. He said the arrested beggars would be shifted to skill training centres of Social Welfare department and will be imparted livelihood training. The minor beggars would be taught basic education by Social Welfare department and some other organizations, he added.

Aseef visits AFIC, hails Chinese support

Muhammad Naem Khan

RAWALPINDI: First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari visited the Armed Forces Institute of Cardiology and National Institute of Heart Diseases (AFIC-NIHD) today, where she was briefed by the Chinese Cardiology Expert team, headed by Professor Dr Pan Xiang Bin, about the advanced medical procedures for congenital heart diseases and structural heart diseases under ultrasound guidance, which were being performed for the first time only in AFIC-NIHD with the Chinese support.

Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong, and Commandant AFIC-NIHD, Major General Naseer Ahmad Samore, were also present on the occasion.



Speaking on the occasion, the Chinese Ambassador said that China would extend such services to the province of Balochistan as well, besides offering training opportunities to Pakistani doctors to perform these procedures. He said that China would increase collaboration with Pakistan in the health sector.

The First Lady extended her sincere gratitude to the

Chinese government for its cooperation in the health sector. She also commended the management of AFIC-NIHD for providing state-of-the-art treatment to heart patients. The First Lady visited various wards, interacted with patients, and presented them with flowers. The Commandant of AFIC-NIHD also presented the First Lady with a commemorative shield.

State of the art media management system launched

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Directorate of Advertisement, Information Department, Government of Sindh, has achieved a significant milestone with the launch of a state-of-the-art Media Management System. The first phase of this advanced system was inaugurated by the Secretary Information Mr. Nadeem Rehman Memon, is poised to revolutionize the handling of Sindh Government advertisements through cutting-edge software technology with Q.R Code.

This innovative system introduces a one-window operation for the efficient management of advertisement processes, including

receiving, issuance and billing. The initiative is designed to streamline operations and enhance



transparency in advertisement dealings across the province. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Secretary Information Mr. Nadeem Rehman Memon lauded the efforts of

Director Information Advertisement, Mr. Muhammad Yousef Kabooro and his team for their commendable work in bringing this initiative to fruition.

"This system is a landmark achievement that will significantly improve efficiency and facilitate seamless advertisement management," he noted. The launch event was attended by several key officials, including Director General (PRs) Muhammad Saleem Khan, Director Information Admin Mansoor Ahmed Rajput, Director Press Information Majid Khan and Deputy Directors Sarwar Samejo, Sarang Latif Chandio, Zafar Mallah and others.

Seminar on solid waste management showcases key achievements

F.P. Report

MINGORA: A seminar on Solid Waste Management (SWM), organised under the Oxford Policy Management's Sub-National Governance (SNG) Programme, brought together key stakeholders to review innovative practices in SWM and chart future directions. The event, attended by Chief Guest Muzzammil Aslam, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Finance, and other distinguished speakers showcased the transformative outcomes of pilot projects in Babuzai and Bahrain Tehsils.

In his address, the Chief Guest, Mr Muzzammil Aslam, praised the success of the SWM pilots as exemplary models for other districts. He highlighted the importance of Carbon Credits and Carbon Markets in fostering sustainable development and reaffirmed the government's commitment

ment to scaling this approach across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He also emphasised the integration of climate resilience into governance frameworks and the potential for recycling-based industries to enhance Own Source Revenue (OSR).

Commissioner Malakand Division, Mr Muhammad Abid Khan, commended the technical assistance provided by the SNG Programme and the efforts of TMA Bahrain. He expressed a strong desire to extend this project across the entire Malakand Division, starting from district DIR lower and Malakand.

Dr Vaqar Ahmad, Senior Governance Advisor for the SNG Programme, underscored the scalability of these pilots, emphasising the importance of cost recovery mechanisms and the provincial government's plans to allocate funds for similar initiatives in Haripur and Mansehra.

Jo Moir, Development Director at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), applauded the SNG Programme's problem-driven, iterative approach, which has led to improved service delivery, cost recovery, and citizen satisfaction. She stressed the need for institutionalising these practices to ensure long-term sustainability.

Dr Raheel A. Siddiqui, Provincial Team Lead for the SNG Programme, highlighted the critical role of evidence-based policymaking and strategic collaboration in driving lasting reforms. He expressed gratitude to all stakeholders and reiterated the programme's unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability and enhanced service delivery. The seminar concluded with a collective call to expand and sustain these reforms, ensuring their benefits reach communities across the province.

Man strangles wife to death in Karachi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: A 22-year-old woman was allegedly strangled to death by her husband in Karachi's Baldia area on Thursday. According to deceased woman's father, the suspect identified as Irfan, called him after the incident and told to come and collect her dead body.

The deceased woman, Saba's father added that Irfan had subjected her to physical violence in front of their two minor children, who were left crying and traumatised. Saba's father stated that Irfan had a history of violence and had previously beaten her. He added that Irfan was addicted to narcotics.

The deceased, Saba, had married Irfan three years ago in a court marriage. Later, it was discovered that Irfan was addicted to narcotics. Saba's mother said that her son-in-law was an alcoholic and would beat her daughter daily. She said, "I would tell her to stay with us, but he would repeatedly call and summon her."

New cybercrime law 'enlarging footprint of intelligence, frightening'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: "The proposed changes to cybercrime law aims to further stifle the freedom of expression through setting up of multiple authorities under executive control, enlarging foot print of unaccountable intelligence agencies and giving sweeping powers to the executive not only over the contents of the message but also the messengers, namely the social media platforms"

This has been stated in a statement by former President Farhatullah Babar, president of the Human Rights Cell of the PPP as the proposed changes to the cybercrime law became public today.

He said that a highly disturbing aspect of the law is that henceforth the Social Media Authority will form Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) with members drawn from unnamed intelligence agencies to investigate allegations against journalists, social media users and the general public.

"This is a dangerous

enlargement of the already large footprint of unaccountable state agencies in governance and deeply impacts all strata of society, not merely journalists and social media users". What the JITs with dominance of intelligence agencies are known to have done in the past needs no elaboration, he said.

The law stipulates creation of a government appointed Tribunal to adjudicate appeals against arbitrary decisions of another executive-appointed body called Social Media Authority in the cases of freedom of expression. As if appeal against an executive authority before another executive authority is not enough of a mockery, the law also restricts the tiers of judicial appeal to only one before the Supreme Court.

This limitation of judicial tiers amounts to extending the torture of aggrieved citizen for exposing corruption, malpractices and skeletons in the cupboards of high and mighty, he said. He said

that so far, the arbitrary shut downs of social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter) were denied by the government. Under the new law the Social Media Authority is empowered to close down any social media platform. Apart from powers to block the content it shall have the powers to block the carrier of the content. "The specter of disappearing both the creator and carrier of the message without oversight and accountability on the basis of reports of unaccountable agencies is frightening".

Farhatullah Babar urged the members of Parliament to reject it saying "it will stand out as black line in the CVs of members voting it". He also reminded that when the PTI government introduced similar curbs the opposition at the time stoutly resisted it. Now in power they can go back on their earlier stance only at the peril of their credibility and public standing. "There is enough baggage that the parliament carries and it is best to not add to it".

Minister reviews provision of facilities at hospitals

F.P. Report

THATTA: Provincial Health Minister Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho evaluated health facilities at government hospitals and health units during her whirlwind visit to the coastal districts of Sujawal and Thatta on Thursday. She visited Al-Farabi Government Hospital, managed in collaboration with the Iranian government, and later reached Ghorabari town to visit the newly constructed Taluka Hospital Ghorabari.

While talking to local reporters, she said that the hospital would soon be made functional to facilitate the people of the coastal areas. She further stated that the Pakistan People's Party believed in

serving the poor masses. "The SNE - Schedule for New Expenditure of this hospital has been prepared and will soon be approved by the Chief Minister," Azra vowed.

Chairman of the town committee Ghorabari, Ramzan Panhwer, briefed the health minister about the hospital's infrastructure and the overall health challenges faced by the coastal areas. According to credible sources within the health department, the health minister reprimanded District Health Officer Thatta, Dr. Safdar Shah, for his failure to prevent the flare-up of the polio virus in the district.

During her visit to Sujawal district, she evaluated health facilities at

Civil Hospital Sujawal and inquired about the dysfunctionality of the Thalassemia center from DHO Sujawal and his team. They revealed that the budget they were receiving was insufficient to manage the Thalassemia center. During the media talk, she announced a blood bank, chest pain unit, and modernized X-ray machines and laboratory for Civil Hospital Sujawal.

"A plan for the new building of Civil Hospital Sujawal has been chalked out and will soon be executed," the health minister claimed. Dr. Azra was accompanied by MPA Heer Soho, Muhammad Ali Malkani, Syed Riaz Hussain Shah, Rehana Laghari, and Shah Hussain Shah Shirazi during her visit.

Civil society demands action against abduction of girl

F.P. Report

LARKANA: The Sindh Human Rights Commission argued Sindh government to take notice of the case of girl Bisma Chandio, who was abducted from Rehmatpur police station in Larkana City.

It has been directed to submit a report with a transparent investigation into the matter and it has been said that the best officer was abducted as compensation, while against the abduction

of Sindh leader Bisma Chandio Sahai Organization(BCSO) Dr. Ayesha Dharejo, women's rights leader Shanel Khoso and Women Lawyers Alliance leader Rabina Chandio and Shazia Nizamani were informed about the struggle of the Sindh government's Provincial Minister for Women Development Shahnila Sher Ali, on whose behalf instructions have been issued for the recovery of the girl Bisma Chandio.

RTJ elects new office bearers: The election campaign of the Roohani Talba Jamaat (RTJ) District Larkana for the year 2025 was held under the supervision of the respected provincial leadership at Al-Markaz Tahriya Gajampur Larkana, in which the election of the Roohani Talba Jamaat (RTJ) Provincial Vice President Provincial Sindh Aamir Hussain Panhwar, Joint Secretary Ali Raza Kori and Auditor Haq Nawaz Memon.

Meeting discusses Peshawar Economic Zone issues

Tordher order removal of any obstacles for easy transportation of goods

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Industries, Abdul Karim Tordher, on Thursday, visited the Peshawar Economic Zone in Hayatabad to listen the issues faced by industries. He chaired a meeting with the Industrial Association of Peshawar during his visit.

The meeting was attended by Aadil Salahuddin, Officiating CEO of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development & Management Company, Naeem Khan, Director General of the Peshawar Development Authority, Assistant Commissioner of Peshawar, Haseena Khan, representatives from other departments, Ayub Zakori, President of the Peshawar Industrialists Association, along with other current and former office-bearers, prominent industrialists and businessmen from Peshawar, and Shoaibuddin, Country Manager of Interlink Communications.

During the meeting, the Special Assistant was

briefed about the various challenges faced by the industries in the Peshawar Economic Zone. Suggestions for possible government cooperation were presented in this regard.

On this occasion, the Special Assistant directed the officials of the Peshawar Development Authority and district administration to remove obstacles hindering the movement of vehicles transporting goods to and from the Peshawar Economic Zone.

He emphasized the need for secure transportation for vehicles and stated that there should be an uninterrupted and appropriate route for vehicles for the industries of Economic Zone. He provided a 10-day timeline for the concerned authorities and administration to find suitable solutions and take necessary actions in this regard.

He also assured that a meeting would be arranged with the relevant authorities to address labor department-related issues.

Regarding a complaint from industrialists about the alleged collection of

illegal fee, through slips, issued for vehicles leaving the industries, the Special Assistant took notice and directed the administration to investigate and ensure such incidents do not recur.

The Special Assistant assured that he would raise the matter of the alleged 2% collection despite a reduction in the export infrastructure development siss with the relevant authorities. He also instructed KPEZDMC to conduct necessary home-work on this issue.

He assured that he would raise the matters related to the supply of affordable gas to industries and other energy-related issues in the zone with the relevant authorities. Additionally, he expressed his intention to work on matters concerning railways under trade transit and raise them with the relevant federal authorities. He also agreed to take measures for organizing trade shows.

Speaking on the occasion, the Special Assistant stated that industrialists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have played a significant role in the economic development of the region. Despite location disadvantage, they

have not lost hope and have played a key role in the economic development of the province by investing here.

He remarked that the resilience of the region's businessmen and industrialists was not less than a form of jihad, as they maintained their determination even during the periods of terrorism.

He said that promoting economic activities is a top priority for the provincial government and the Chief Minister has directed that the relevant Deputy Commissioners in each district be responsible for the promotion of economic activities. Therefore, the district administration must fulfill its responsibilities to help resolve the issues faced by industrialists.

The Special Assistant assured industrialists of full cooperation in resolving their issues on a priority basis.

He conclude that as residents of this province, it is our responsibility to uplift it, as no one will come from outside to do so. Hence, the government values the services of investors and the business community in the province.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur chairing a meeting regarding Peshawar-DI Khan motorway.

Cricket match organized to promote anti-polio campaign

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: A cricket match was organized between DHO Eleven and Deputy Commissioner Eleven to promote awareness about the importance of polio eradication. The special match, which was attended by Deputy Commissioner Gohar Zaman Wazir, aimed to highlight the need for collective efforts to eliminate polio from the community. Deputy Commissioner Gohar Zaman, who participated in the match himself, emphasized the significance of raising awareness about polio and the importance of every individual's role in the eradication campaign. "To eliminate polio, it is essential that all sections of society play their part," he said. "This friendly match is an effort to create awareness among the public about the polio campaign, and we must all work together to make it a success."

The match was not only a fun-filled activity but also an effective way to shed light on social issues. Such events among officials not only provide healthy entertainment but also highlight social responsibilities. Deputy Commissioner Gohar Wazir appreciated the participation of the team players and appealed to the public to join the national effort by administering polio drops to their children.

Through sports, Gohar Zaman Wazir said, we can convey a positive message that a healthy society is not only important for sports but also for the eradication of diseases like polio.

The event served as a reminder that collective efforts are necessary to create a polio-free community, and everyone must come together to achieve this goal.

UET okays new academic programs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 41st meeting of the Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BOASAR), UET Peshawar was held under the convenership of Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali.

The meeting approved the minutes of 40th meeting of BOASAR held earlier. The meeting also approved to start new postgraduate academic programs in emerging fields having market demand and vitality.

Prof Dr. Farid Ullah Khan, Secretary BOASAR presented various agenda items, mainly included starting Ph.D. in Artificial Intelligence, Masters in Polymer Science and Engineering and MBA from the next academic session.

The Vice Chancellor said, keeping in view the successful execution of programs commenced last year, we are determined to stay at the forefront of education while ensuring financial sustainability in the long run.

He directed the meeting to fulfill the criteria as directed by PEC and HEC while proposing the programs and submit them for the upcoming Academic Council meeting.

Kundi highlights urgency of restoring peace in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said that at present, the law and order situation in our province is concerning, restoring peace is our top priority, and to achieve this, we all must work together.

He said this during a meeting with a delegation of the Pakistan Peace Council for Human Rights and Religious Harmony at the Governor House. The delegation was led by Provincial Chairman Saleem Gul Dolatzai, with Vice Chairman Malik Noshad Khan, Zahir Khan Tanoli, Malik Muhammad Javed, and other district and tehsil officers from across the province attended the meeting.

The delegation briefed the Governor about the objectives and goals of the Pakistan Peace Council, emphasizing the organization's commitment to promoting peace, eradicating hatred, and working towards the social and economic development of communities, irrespective of race and ethnicity. The delegation also highlighted the Council's efforts to address public issues and offered full support for resolving the ongoing issue in Kurram. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi assured the delegation that the Governor House remains open to all citizens of the province and praised the efforts of the Pakistan Peace Council in fostering peace and public welfare.

The Governor also expressed his appreciation for the Council's work in promoting peace and public well-being across the province. Meanwhile, a delegation of political representatives from Khyber District, including local and district officials and activists from various political parties, met with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi. The delegation raised several issues faced by the people of Khyber District, including the security situation, the persistent electricity shortages, the need for development projects, the abolition of taxes, and compensation for victims of military operations. The delegation also highlighted other key public concerns affecting the district.

The delegation, led by Hazrat Wali, included local tribal leaders and party members from Khyber District. In a traditional gesture of respect, the tribal leaders presented the Governor with a ceremonial turban. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi acknowledged the sacrifices made by the people of the merged tribal districts and emphasized his commitment to addressing their concerns. He said, "We fully recognize the sacrifices of the people in the merged districts. For sustainable peace in these areas, it is essential to promote educational and health-focused activities."

Kundi further emphasized that it is crucial to bring the merged districts on par with other districts of the province in terms of development. He assured the delegation that efforts would be made to accelerate the completion of development projects in Khyber District and all merged areas. "The youth of the tribal areas should take the lead in showcasing the positive image of their regions to the world," Governor Kundi added.

Tech addiction steals spotlight from Volleyball, time-honored games

PESHAWAR (APP): Volleyball and Kabadi- once famous sports of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are gradually becoming a victim of internet and social media onslaught.

With each passing month, Volleyball and Kabadi among others traditional games are diminishing due to social media addiction in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Ehsan Ullah and Shabir Ahmed, the national volleyball and kabadi players of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, are extremely disheartened by decline in traditional sports activities in his hometown of Amankot, Nowshera District due to onslaught of an internet and social media in Pakistan.

Amankot—once a vibrant center for volleyball and kabadi matches among local players and produced many stars- are now almost deserted due to growing dominance of internet and social media, influencing the area's youth immensely

Shabbir and Ehsanullah recalled a time when volleyball and kabadi tournaments were a major local event before 2000, drawing large crowds amid significant enthusiasm especially among youth of Peshawar, Charsadda and Nowshera districts.

"It is heartbreaking to see the deserted volleyball and Kabadi grounds where we used to play with great spirit and sports discipline," he told APP. He reminisced about the lively gatherings and competitive sportsmen spirits that once defined the local sports scene. Before the rise of the internet and social media in 2001, the villages and towns sports events in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were highly anticipated, with volleyball and Kabaddi tournaments besides other traditional games, drawing enthusiastic support from locals irrespective of caste and colours. Players from surrounding towns and villages of Nowshera, Charsadda and Peshawar had come together every Sunday for Kabaddi matches, with crowds cheering and chanting "Kabaddi, Kabaddi, Kabaddi" as they played, raising winners on shoulders amid dances on beatdrums.

Shabir who represented Police at National Games as well as SAARC games pointed to Pakistan's great success in Volleyball, and Arshad Nadeem's heroic performance at Javelin throw during Paris Olympics 2024 had raised heads of every Pakistani high. He believed that with proper support and recognition, Pakistan can produce more champions like Olympic gold medalist Arshad Nadeem, Squash legends Jahangir Khan and Jan Sher Khan and Seoul 1988 Olympics medalist Hussain Shah to make the national flag high in the world.

However, he emphasized that the current focus on digital entertainment especially on facebook and TikTok are negatively impacting traditional sports especially in rural areas where scope of sports is gradually fading away. The proliferation of internet use in Pakistan, which has crossed 111 million early this year, has mainly contributed to the decline of traditional sports in Pakistan including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat have seen significant user growth, further drawing attention away from physical activities.

The internet users in Pakistan had swelled to a record 111 million January year while about 71.90 million people use social media which is equating to 29.5 million of the total population of the country.

Similarly, about 188.9 million cellular connections are active in Pakistan which is equal to 77.8 percent of 241 million population of Pakistan. Alike, the users of Facebook have jumped to record 44.50 million while 71.70 million population use YouTube, 17.30 million Instagram, 54.38 million TikTok and 30.21 million snapchat, affecting traditional games. Squash legend Qamar Zaman noted the negative impact of the internet and social media on traditional sports including squash. He observed a significant reduction in the number of young players in his squash academy compared to previous years due to the onslaught of internet and social media's influence.

He said Pakistan had ruled on world squash referring to the great squash players such as Roshan Khan, Azam Khan, Jahangir Khan, Jansher Khan, Atlas Khan and himself over the years. Hamza Khan, PMLN Nowshera district President has criticized the PTI-led government for its long delays in upgrading and renovation of the historic Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium. The stadium's renovation, which began in 2017, remained incomplete even to date, depriving thousands of players of crucial sports facilities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially in Peshawar.

He also highlighted the cancellation of seven sports projects valued at over Rs2.34 billion in the KP budget for 2024, which he argued undermines sports development in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said this irrational move has raised serious concerns about the PTI's commitment to sports development and supporting athletes, adding the canceled projects include building two sports stadiums in Peshawar and Swabi and establishment of cricket coaching academy at Kohat, and constructing Takht Bhair Sports Complex in Mardan was tantamount of depriving youth of sports.

The affected initiatives are renovations at Kohat Sports Complex and Swabi Sports Ground, installing new lighting, and developing sports facilities in Lower Dir and a Motor Sports Arena in Nowshera. In response to these daunting challenges, Fakhar Jehan, Adviser to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sports and Youth Affairs, stated that solid efforts are underway to revitalize traditional sports in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said a new sports policy was launched and mandated that schools must dedicate one day a week, especially Saturday, to sports activities. He claimed that 95 percent of work on Arbab Niaz cricket stadium was completed and sports facilities at Ayub Cricket Stadium improved. The CM aide reiterated the government's commitment to promoting sports and healthy activities in the region, emphasizing their significance in building a healthy society.

PHC orders govt to release Rs78m to Peshawar Public School

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah has directed the provincial government to release Rs78 million to the Peshawar Public School within 14 days. The court has also ordered the Secretary of Finance to

appear before the court and submit a report on the matter, on Thursday.

The petition filed by the employees of the Peshawar Public School. The counsel Nauman Mohib Kakakhel advocate informed the court that the school is facing financial difficulties and is in dire need of funds.

During the hearing, Justice SM Attique Shah inquired about the current

state of the school, asking what had happened to the once-renowned institution. The Special Secretary of Education, Qaiser Alam, explained that the school is facing financial difficulties due to low enrollment, with only 2,000 students currently enrolled out of a capacity of 6,000.

The court was informed that the school is incurring a monthly loss of 8.1 million rupees. The petition-

ers' lawyer stated that the Board of Governors (BOG) had requested 80 million rupees, but the government had only released 20 million rupees.

The court directed the provincial government to release the remaining funds to the school within 14 days and ordered the Secretary of Finance to appear before the court and submit a report on the matter.

Health Advisor visits provincial health services academy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister on Health, Ihtesham Ali, made an unannounced visit to the Provincial Health Services Academy (PHSA) to review the mandatory four-month training program for management cadre doctors, required for promotion from Grade 18 to Grade 19.

During the visit, he interacted with trainee doctors and assessed the progress of their training.

Director General PHSA, Dr. Abdul Waheed, briefed the advisor on the academy's overall functioning and the ongoing training initiatives under the Human Capital Investment Program.

The advisor also inspected the construction activities underway at the



facility and emphasized the critical role of PHSA in enhancing the capacity of the province's healthcare workforce.

Focusing on Strengthening of PHSA, the advisor stressed the need to align PHSA with modern standards and pledged to strengthen it both financially and administratively.

While Addressing

Student Issues the advisors directed Immediate resolution of nurses regarding training and tasked DG PHSA to expedite all formalities to resolve administrative hurdles.

Ihtisham directed the launch of a one-year paid internship program for graduates, Introduction of an evening shift for the BS program, Filling the staff

shortage on a priority basis. Recovery of encroached PHSA properties and Operationalization of the newly constructed Bajaur Nursing College at the earliest.?

The health advisor instructed the digitization of healthcare training and emphasized ensuring merit-based admissions in nursing colleges.

He reiterated the government's commitment to raising the quality of healthcare education and training, which would directly translate into improved healthcare delivery for the public.

The visit underscored the provincial government's focus on strengthening healthcare infrastructure, addressing staff concerns, and modernizing medical training to meet evolving challenges.

Several electricity projects underway in merged districts

7 mini solar grids, 900 mosques, worship places converted to solar system

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is taking far-reaching steps for the development of tribal people. Several projects have been completed to bring the electricity transmission system in line with the modern requirements in the merged tribal districts and the process of meterization is going on rapidly to integrate the electricity infrastructure and billing system.

Under the upcoming annual development program, approval has been given to start 4 major electricity projects in merged districts, which will improve the power transmission system in these districts and reduce load shedding including

load management.

To make it possible to supply electricity to commercial centers in tribal districts, 1.5 MW 7 mini solar grids and 900 mosques and places of worship have been converted to solar energy, while another 3050 mosques are being solarized.

These views were expressed by Secretary Energy and Power Mohammad Zubair Khan during a special briefing given by the Chief Executive Officer of Tribal Areas Electric Supply Company (TESCO) Engineer Qazi Mohammad Tahir. In the meeting, Special Secretary Energy Mohammad Irfan Wazir, Additional Secretary Admn Shah Fahad and

Additional Secretary Power Abdul Haseeb were also participants.

Moreover, during the briefing on this occasion, Chief Executive TESCO Qazi Muhammad Tahir said that in the integrated 7 districts and 6 FRs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, TESCO currently has a total of 447,538 electricity consumers, including 407,196 household consumers, where electricity is being provided to consumers through different feeders through 35 grid stations.

He further said that the recovery of electricity bills in these districts is very low, for which TESCO has worked to a great extent on meterization from the provincial annual development funds, AIP funds and

USAID funds.

Secretary Energy and Power, Muhammad Zubair Khan assured the CEO TESCO that the Energy Department will continue its cooperation for the improvement of the electricity system in the merged tribal districts. The provincial cabinet has recently approved the inclusion of 4 schemes under the annual development program in the merged districts, which include the construction of grid stations in South Waziristan, Tirah Maidan Khyber, Mamond Bajaur, he added.

The provincial government will take benefit of experienced officers in the grids system of TESCO to make its transmission and grid company KPT&GC more active, he hoped.



In brief

Free camp for hearing loss

HYDERABAD (INP): The Islamabad Hearing Solution, in collaboration with Siemens Signia Hearing, will organize a free camp for patients with hearing loss on 28th January (Tuesday) 2025. The camp will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Sehat Medical Center Latifabad, Hyderabad, said a statement issued here on Thursday. Eminent ENT specialists from Islamabad would examine the patients with various hearing ailments and provide treatment in the camp.

12 arrested, arms recovered

SARGODHA (INP): The police arrested 12 accused from various parts of the district and recovered weapons and contraband from them. Different police stations conducted raids and arrested Naveed, Saleem, Arslan, Tahir, Wajid, Shams, Shahid, Arif, Rehman, Majid, Mubashir and Zain. The police also recovered 1.8-kg hashish, nine pistols, five guns, three Kalashnikovs, 490 rounds and cash in millions of rupees from the accused.

Free medical camp organized

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): A free medical camp was organized in the Sawan area of Jhelum Valley, Azad Kashmir under the auspices of Pakistan Army and the Department of Public Health. A large number of locals including the families of martyrs and veterans attended the medical camp. During the camp, doctors conducted medical examinations of patients and provided free medicines. The local population expressed their gratitude to Pakistan Army, expressing a desire for such initiatives to continue in the future.

Drugs peddlers arrested

MULTAN (INP): Shamshabad police arrested two drug smugglers and seized at least four kilograms of hashish on Thursday. According to the police, the raid was conducted by a team led by the SP Cantt and arrested the accused with narcotics who were identified as Asad Abbas and Shahbaz. The accused had been involved in drug trafficking. The accused have been charged under the Anti-Drugs Act and the police started investigations.

Train crushes youth to death

GHOTKI (INP): A youth was killed after being hit by train on railway track in Reeti near Obaro, an area of Ghotki. According to police, the deceased youth has been identified as Shehbaz Magasi. Police said the youth was crossing the track and was hit by the train. The body of the deceased youth has been shifted to the hospital.

Accused arrested

HYDERABAD (APP): Two accused including main accused involved in murder of young man Fahad in rent dispute arrested. Hali Road Police acting on a tip-off arrested main accused Hamid Faisal alias China, Abdul Rauf and Zaviar involved in murder of a young man Fahad in a dispute over vacating a rented house within the limits of Hali Road were arrested. A pistol was recovered from the possession of the arrested main accused Hamid Faisal alias China. Another case Crime No.-11/2025 under Section 25-A of the Arms Act was registered against the arrested accused Faisal alias China. According to the details, on 2025-01-15, a dispute broke out between Faisal, Abdul Rauf and others over a dispute.

People of Malakand to resist imposition of taxes: Inayat

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami Khyber Pakhtunkhwa North chief and former provincial minister Inayatullah Khan has said the people of Malakand will strongly resist the imposition of taxes in Malakand division. He was speaking at a news conference at Chakdara after attending a consultative meeting of the JI leadership.

The JI former MNAs including Sahibzada Tariqullah, Bakhtiar Maani, former MPAs Shah Raz Khan, Izazul Mulk Afkari, former district and tehsil nazims, sitting tehsil chairmen, party district heads from Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Bunir, Swat, Malakand and other party activists were also present on the occasion.

Inayatullah said that under no circumstances any kind of tax implementation in the tax-free Malakand region would be tolerated. He said there would be an immediate public reaction against the imposition of taxes because the people of

Malakand Division had already suffered losses of billions of rupees due to militancy, military operation, floods and the earthquake of 2015, and the entire infrastructure system had been destroyed. The JI leader said the people were still suffering because of record inflation, unemployment and heavy utility bills.

"There are many threats to peace in Malakand Division, especially in Bajaur district, the law-and-order situation is extremely tense and many precious lives have been lost due to terrorism and target killings", Inayat said, adding peace could not prevail until the army was shifted to the borders. "In the prevailing situation people are not ready to pay any kind of tax", he said.

The JI leader demanded the government to restore the special and tax-free status of Malakand division for the next ten years in the best public interest. He said that during the first term of PTI, mega projects were launched in the region, while from the 2018 term

of PTI government to this day, there was no development in Malakand division, although the people had given a full mandate to the PTI.

Inayat alleged the PTI government had dropped several development projects worth Rs 42 billion in Malakand division, approved by the then Chief Minister Mahmood Khan. He said the funds for the already approved projects had been shifted from different districts of Malakand division to other areas, which was a great injustice to the area. He announced that the JI would take legal actions against the PTI-led provincial government for dropping the approved development schemes in Malakand division.

Addressing the JI consultative meeting, Inayatullah asked the party leaders and activists to mobilize workers and youths for raising their voice for the uplift of the area. He said the JI would use every platform to force the government to make justice with the people of Malakand division.

Land registration necessary for progress: Speakers



F.P. Report

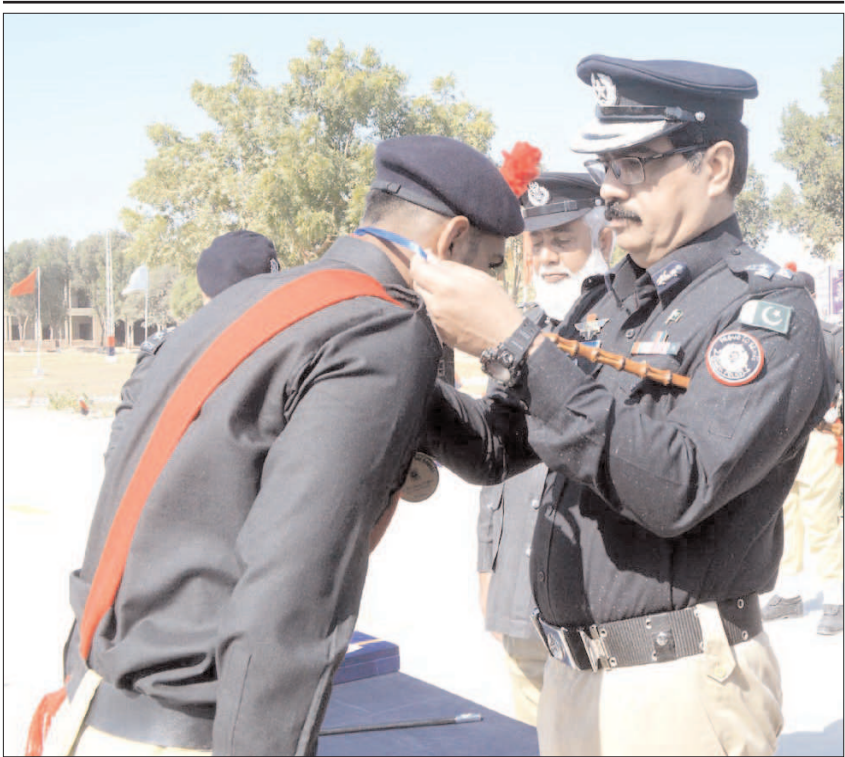
LANDI KOTAL: Land registration in Landi Kotal is inevitable for inclusion of mainstream and durable development; however lack of awareness among the local tribesmen suffers the process.

The views were expressed by the speakers including Tehsil Chairman Shah Khalid, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf local leader, Malik Muhammad Ibrar Afridi and Aftab Shinwari while talking into the awareness session, themed "Land Settlement" held in District, Khyber Press Club, Landi Kotal on Thursday.

They said that although the land registration process had functioned in Landi Kotal but the practice was alien to the tribesmen that suffered the activity. Ninety percent of disputes in the area erupt due to lack of land record and fair land reforms will resolve the cases, they remarked. They suggested forming a committee of honest tribal elders that would assist the concerned officials to conduct the settlement process correctly in addition with to publish their process phase wise to restore trust of the locals.

In the course of the land registration not only the tribal would avail their real

rights but a basic database would be compiled that would add to the progress of the area, they opined. After abolishment of Frontier Crime Regulation (FCR) trust deficit, occurred between the tribesmen and the government that must be restored but adopting pro-tribal initiatives, they added and urged the members of civil society to play their due roles to carry out land registration process in the Landi Kotal. It is to be stated here that the land registration officials were also invited in the forum but they refused to attend it without their high-ups permission.



HYDERABAD: DIG, Police Training Sindh, PSP Faizullah Koreja giving away medals during 26th batch passing out parade of recruit course at Shaheed Abdul Aziz Bullo Recruit Training Centre.

Action against vegetables grown in sewage water

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: In Toba Tek Singh, action was taken by the Punjab Food Authority against vegetables grown in toxic sewage water. On the instructions of DG Food Authority, the food safety teams under the leadership of Deputy Director (Operations) Yasir Mushtaq checked the cultivation of vegetables in an area of more than 16 kanals in the city area.

During the operation, the spinach crop irrigated with sewage water and other poisonous vegetables were plowed and destroyed and strict warnings were issued to the farmers for violating the rules. According to the

spokes person of the Food Authority, vegetables grown in sewage water cause gastroenteritis, typhoid, hepatitis and other diseases, while only non-edible vegetables are allowed to grow in sewage water.

He further said that cultivation of vegetables from sewage water has been banned across the province and strict action will be taken against violators. Punjab Food Authority is closely monitoring at all levels to ensure safe food supply from farm to plate.

Price Control Magistrates performance meeting held: On the direction of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz

Sharif, the district administration is constantly active regarding the supply of food and drink at the official price. Additional Deputy Commissioner Zeeshan Labbha Masih presided over the meeting.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner reviewed the performance of all Price Control Magistrates. He strictly directed the Price Control Magistrates to conduct field visits on daily basis to ensure implementation of the prices fixed by the district administration. He said that strict action will be taken against the shopkeepers selling essential items at prices higher than the fixed rates.



QUETTA: A view of sunny day after couples of cloudy weather in provincial capital.

Every union council has given equal funds

F.P. Report

HANGU: Chairman District Development Advisory Committee (DDAC) Hangu Shah Abu Turab Bangash MPA has said that he is responsible for the fair use of each and every penny of the people here and hereafter and he even can't imagine betrayal. He added that every union council has been given equal funds on the basis of equality beyond any political affiliation and personal likes and dislikes.

This he said while addressing the public gathering at Darweza Palusa area of Hangu district today. Elites of the area, Local party leadership and general people were present on this occasion.

Shah Turab said that Rs.25 Crore have been released for the developmental projects out of which Rs.10 Crore will be spent on roads while rest in the other sectors. He while giving good news to the people, said that in the next coming days, significant amounts of gas royalty will be released, which will start a new era of development in the district. He said, it is the beginning and it will continue for the next 5 years.

Chairman DDAC maintained, despite all kinds of difficulties and pressures, the people voted for PTI and brought us to the helm of affairs. Now, before starting any scheme, public opinion will be taken into account.

Rescue 1122 conducts first aid training

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Rescue 1122 Training Wing Team here on Thursday organized a comprehensive one-day first aid and fire safety training for police personnel at Police Lines.

The training included practical demonstrations on essential emergency response skills, such as blood flow control, CPR, fracture management, fire safety, and various techniques for transferring patients during emergencies.

The team also provided guidance on effective methods to control or reduce fire in case of incidents. Speaking on the occasion, the spokesperson for Rescue 1122 Lower Dir emphasized the importance of equipping every individual with basic emergency response skills for creating a safer society and ensuring immediate control of accidents. He highlighted the role of Rescue 1122 in fostering preparedness and contributing to community safety. The training aimed to enhance the emergency response capabilities of police personnel, enabling them to respond effectively during critical situations.

Student allegedly gang raped

JHANG (INP): A 16-year-old student has been allegedly gang raped in jurisdictions of Satellite Town police station. The police sources said that two men kidnapped the student.

The police arrested the accused identified as Muzammal and his companion Hammad, he added.

Skyrocketing prices hit masses in Kurram

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: Parachinar, the capital of Kurram District, is grappling with unprecedented price hikes of daily use commodities as all major roads to the district remain blocked.

The ongoing crisis in the area has caused severe shortages of essential food items, driving prices to record highs. In Parachinar, peas are being sold at Rs. 600 per kg, onions at Rs. 500 per kg, and tomatoes at Rs. 400 per kg.

The closure of the main Thall-Parachinar highway, the Afghan border, and other key routes for the past four months has exacerbated the situation. To mitigate the crisis, 61 trucks loaded

with essential goods, including vegetables, fruits, flour, sugar, and cooking oil, were recently dispatched to Parachinar.

However, according to Haji Imdad, president of the local trade union, the supply is far from sufficient to meet the growing needs of the population. He urged authorities to ensure a continuous supply of goods to stabilize the market. Local residents lament the skyrocketing prices, with many saying they can no longer afford basic necessities. "Inflation has reached unbearable levels," said a local resident. "Cauliflower and peas are both being sold at Rs. 600 per kg, onions at Rs. 500,

and tomatoes at Rs. 400. Even basic groceries have become out of reach for most people."

The crisis has also rendered fruits a luxury for many. Oranges are being sold at an exorbitant Rs. 750 per dozen, leaving them beyond the reach of the average consumer. Thousands of people from nearby villages, who travel to Parachinar to buy essentials, are often forced to return empty-handed due to the exorbitant prices.

Residents are calling on the provincial government to take immediate action to reopen the blocked routes and stabilize prices, as the current situation is unsustainable for the majority of the population.

Solar street lights penal looted in Nowshera

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: A bizarre incident of theft occurred at the Gumbad Shah Janazgah (funeral prayer place) in Nowshera Kalan, where unknown thieves stole solar-powered streetlights. The thieves took advantage of the night's darkness and cut down a solar pole with a sharp tool, making off with the entire pole. They also stole solar panels and batteries from another pole.

According to reports, during the previous Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

(PTI) government, former MPA and Excise and Taxation Minister Mian Jamsheuddin (late) allocated funds for the installation of solar-powered streetlights in Nowshera district, including Nowshera Kalan. The project aimed to provide illumination to the area, and two solar-powered streetlights were installed near the Gumbad Shah Janazgah in Nowshera Kalan.

However, the night before last, thieves stole the solar-powered streetlights, leaving the area in dark-

ness. The thieves' modus operandi was to cut down one of the solar poles with a sharp tool, making off with the entire pole, while stealing the solar panels and batteries from the second pole.

The incident has sparked widespread outrage among the local residents, who are demanding that the authorities take immediate action to recover the stolen items and prevent such incidents in the future. The locals are also questioning the security measures in place, wondering how thieves could carry out such a daring heist without being detected.

Chairman Zakat body visits WSSCM office

Fazal Haq

MARDAN: Chairman District Usher & Zakat Committee, Malik Jehanzeb Khan paid a visit to Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM) and inspected various sections of the company, on Thursday.

General Manager Muhammad Khalil Akbar briefed the delegates regarding the company's operations and sanitation services provided to the citizens of Mardan. Malik Jehanzeb also met with the Chairman Board of Directors WSSCM Engr. Adil Nawaz and Chief Executive Officer Shahid

Khan praised the initiatives and efforts been made by the company regarding the cleanliness and beautification of Mardan.

During the visit it was decided to establish various Union Councils of Mardan as model UCs and accelerate the pace of awareness campaign among the masses to keep Mardan clean and waste free. He assured that the poor and needy daily wages staff of the company shall be supported financially through the zakat fund and praised the sanitation staff for keeping Mardan clean and waste free.

T20 tournament concluded: The Cricket

Academy League T20 tournament has concluded in which five teams participated. After winning 10 consecutive matches, Board Cricket Academy won the final trophy by defeating Nice Cricket Academy in the final match as well.

In response, Nice Cricket Academy scored 153 runs in the allotted 20 overs. Likewise, in the final match, Board Cricket Academy won the title by winning by 56 runs, in which Jawad scored 53 runs and Sohail scored 27 runs. Shehzad took 3 wickets and Zakaria took 2 wickets from Board Academy.

VC Buner's Varsity greets KP University Act

F.P. Report

BUNER: The appointment of the Chief Minister as Chancellor in the University Act is a very good move for universities across the province. Vice Chancellor University of Buner hailed the decision. The statement issued by media & protocol officer on Thursday elaborated the Vice Chancellor University of Buner Dr. Saiful Islam has termed the appointment of the Chief Minister as Chancellor a very good move and a milestone for universities across the province.

He said in the statement that all the affairs of the province are under the supervision of the Chief Minister, so his appointment in the new Act will

not only improve the quality of education, but also accelerate the development work of universities. Thanks to this, clear changes will take place in the education system of universities across the province.

The Vice Chancellor, in his views on this new Act in an official statement, said that one of the positive aspects of this Act is that under it the term of appointment of the Vice Chancellor has been reduced to four years, which will enable him to do his work with great enthusiasm. In addition, the appointment of the Registrar from the bureaucracy in universities will play the role of a bridge between the university and the secretariat.



The Vice Chancellor termed this decision as very appropriate and very useful for universities across the province. He paid tribute to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, Minister Education Meena Khan and Secretary Higher Education Kamran Khan Afridi for this act.



Italy under fire from International Criminal Court

ROME (AP): Human rights groups voiced outrage after Italy released a Libyan warlord on a technicality, after he was arrested on a warrant from the International Criminal Court accusing him of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The Hague-based court, for its part, issued a more diplomatic response but its anger appeared evident. In a stern statement, the ICC reminded Italy that it is obliged to "cooperate fully" with its prosecutions and said it was still awaiting information about what exactly Rome had done. The reaction came after the Italian government released and sent back home Ossama Anjem, also known as Ossama al-Masri, who heads the Tripoli branch of the Reform and Rehabilitation Institution, a notorious network of detention centers run by the government-backed Special Defense Force.

Al-Masri had been arrested in Turin, where he reportedly had attended the Juventus-Milan soccer match the night before. The ICC warrant, dated the day before, accused al-Masri of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Mitiga prison in Libya starting in 2015 that are punishable with life in prison. The ICC said he was accused of murder, torture, rape and sexual violence. It said the warrant was transmitted to member states, including Italy, and that the court had also provided real-time information that he had entered Europe.

The court said it had reminded Italy at the time to contact it "without delay" if it ran into any problems cooperating with the warrant. But Rome's court of appeals ordered al-Masri freed, and he was sent back to Libya aboard an aircraft of the Italian secret services,

because of what the appeals court said was a procedural error in his arrest. The ruling said Justice Minister Carlo Nordio should have been informed ahead of time, since the justice ministry handles all relations with the ICC.

The ICC said it had not been given prior notice of the Rome court's decision, as required, and "is seeking, and is yet to obtain, verification from the authorities on the steps reportedly taken." Al-Masri returned to Tripoli, received at the Mitiga airport by supporters who celebrated his release, according to local media. Footage circulated online showed dozens of young men chanting and carrying what appeared to be al-Masri on their shoulders. "This is a stunning blow to victims, survivors and international justice and a missed opportunity to break the cycle of impunity in Libya," said Amnesty International's Esther Major, deputy director of research for Europe.

Nordio appeared in the Senate for a previously-scheduled briefing, and was grilled by outraged opposition lawmakers who demanded clarity about what happened. Former Premier Matteo Renzi accused the right-wing government of hypocrisy given its stated crackdown on human traffickers. "But when a trafficker whom the International Criminal Court tells us is a dangerous criminal lands on your table, it's not like you chase him down, you brought him home to Libya with a plane of the Italian secret services," said Renzi of the Italia Viva party. "Either you've gone crazy or this is the image of a hypocritical, indecent government." The Democratic Party demanded Premier Giorgia Meloni respond specifically to par-

liament about the case, saying it raised "grave questions" given the known abuses in Libyan prisons for which al-Masri is accused. Nordio didn't respond.

Italy has close ties to the internationally recognized government in Tripoli, on whom it relies to patrol its coasts and prevent waves of migrants from leaving. Any trial in The Hague of al-Masri could bring unwanted attention to Italy's migration policies and its support of the Libyan coast guard, which it has financed to prevent migrants from leaving. Human rights groups have documented gross abuses in the Libyan detention facilities where migrants are kept, and have accused Italy of being complicit in their mistreatment. Two humanitarian groups, Mediterranean Saving Humans and Refugees in Libya, which have documented abuses committed against migrants in Libyan detention facilities, said they were incredulous that Italy let al-Masri go. David Yambio, a 27-year-old from South Sudan who said he was abused by al-Masri while he was detained at the Mitiga prison in 2019-2020, said he felt betrayed by Italy. Yambio, who eventually escaped from the prison and arrived in Italy on a smuggler's boat in 2022, said he had a "fleeting feeling of justice" when he heard that al-Masri had been arrested in Turin.

"Those who waited long before me, the Libyans who are victims of his criminal network, his war crimes, have been waiting for this day to come," said Yambio, who received asylum and now lives in Modena and runs his Refugees in Libya advocacy group. "But when it came, it was immediately extinguished hours before it could even truly be felt in our hearts."

UN chief warns gangs could overrun Haiti's capital

UNITED NATIONS (AP): Gangs in Haiti could overrun the capital, Port-au-Prince, leading to a complete breakdown of government authority without additional international support for the beleaguered national police, the United Nations chief warned.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a report released to coincide with a Security Council meeting on the deteriorating situation in the Western Hemisphere's poorest country that "time is of the essence." Further delays in providing the police with additional officers for the multinational force trying to curb gang violence or additional assistance "carry the risk of a catastrophic collapse of national security institutions," he said.

"This could allow the gangs to overrun the entire metropolitan area, resulting in a complete breakdown of state authority and rendering international operations, including those to support communities in need, in the country untenable," Guterres said.

He told the Security Council: "We must urgently do everything in our power to prevent such an outcome." Kenya is leading the multinational police force, and 217 additional officers arrived over the weekend, bringing its total

deployment to more than 600, below the 1,000 officers the country's president pledged. An additional 150 Guatemalans and an advance team of eight Salvadorean troops have also arrived, but the force remains far below its anticipated strength of 2,500 officers. The power of gangs in Haiti has grown since the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moise.

More than 5,600 people were reported killed across Haiti last year, according to the United Nations. The number of killings increased by more than 20% compared with all of 2023, according to the UN Human Rights Office. Maria Isabel Salvador, the UN special envoy for Haiti, told the Security Council gang violence has forced more than 1 million Haitians to flee their homes, with many crowding into makeshift and unsanitary shelters after gunmen razed their homes. The humanitarian crisis in Haiti has reached "alarming levels," she said, with nearly 2 million people facing emergency levels of food insecurity and 6,000 in catastrophic conditions facing starvation. Haiti's leaders have asked for a UN peacekeeping force to replace the multinational force, and the permanent council of the

Organization of American States, the United States and dozens of other nations have supported the request. The multinational force is funded by a trust fund, which has only \$101.1 million in pledges, while a UN force would be funded from the UN peacekeeping budget. Guterres is preparing options for the UN's future role in Haiti.

Haiti's Foreign Minister Jean-Victor Harvel Jean Baptiste told the council that a UN peacekeeping mission was crucial. Echoing Guterres, he said gang violence, massacres and kidnappings pose "an existential threat" to the safety and security of Haitians - and threaten "the very survival of our state." Guterres said he is "appalled at the brutality and scale of the violence" committed by the gangs, citing reports of sexual violence, including collective rape and recruitment of children. "Setbacks in the political process have contributed to a climate in which these atrocities have become possible," he said. Guterres said the transition roadmap that began after Moise's assassination "has been worryingly slow." "Simply put, the goal of restoring democratic institutions by February 2026 is in jeopardy," the UN chief said.

China's navy commissions new-generation frigate

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP): China's navy has commissioned a new-generation frigate as competition rises with the US and other regional powers, saying the ship will "play a vital role in enhancing the overall combat effectiveness" of its forces.

China already has the world's largest navy in terms of number of hulls, although its technology is sometimes seen as lagging. Its largest competitor, the US, has warned its Navy could be outnumbered and has called for a building program as well as reforms to put damaged ships into action sooner. China's People's Liberation Army

Navy operates mainly in waters off the Chinese east coast and in the huge and strategically crucial South China Sea, which China claims almost in its entirety. A key mission also remains backing up the army in any attack on Taiwan, the self-governing island democracy about 160 kilometers (100 miles) off the Chinese coast that Beijing has vowed to annex by force if necessary.

The first Type 054B frigate, christened the Luohe, was commissioned in Qingdao, a port city in northern China where the PLAN's northern fleet is based. The ship has a displacement of approximate-

ly 5,000 tons and includes stealth technology, combat command systems and fire-power integration, "significantly enhancing overall performance," the navy said.

"With strong capabilities for comprehensive combat operations and diverse military missions, the warship will play a vital role in enhancing the overall combat effectiveness of naval task forces," it added. The Luohe's armaments include a variety of machine guns for close combat and anti-air and anti-ship missiles, according to defense publications, some of which say the ship could become the backbone of the Chinese navy.

US committed to Philippines in call about China's actions

WASHINGTON (Reuters): New US Secretary of State Marco Rubio discussed China's "dangerous and destabilizing actions in the South China Sea" with his Philippine counterpart and underscored the "ironclad" US defense commitment to Manila.

"Secretary Rubio conveyed that (China's) behavior undermines regional peace and stability and is inconsistent with international law," the US State Department said in a statement on his call with Foreign Minister Enrique Manalo. The Philippines has been embroiled in wrangles at sea with China in the past two years and the two countries have faced off regularly around disputed features in the South China Sea that fall inside Manila's exclusive economic zone.

Rubio's call followed his hosting of counterparts from Australia, India and Japan in the China-focused "Quad" forum, the day after President Donald Trump returned to the White House. The four recommitted to working together. Quad members and the Philippines share concerns about China's growing power and analysts said meeting was designed to signal continuity in the Indo-Pacific and that countering Beijing will be a top priority for Trump.

In the call with Manalo, Rubio "underscoring the United States' ironclad commitments to the Philippines" under their Mutual Defense Treaty and discussed ways to advance security cooperation, expand economic ties and deepen regional cooperation, the statement said. Just ahead of Trump's swearing-in, the Philippines and the United States carried out their fifth set of joint maritime exercises in the South China Sea since launching the joint activities in 2023.

Security engagements between the allies have soared under Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who has pivoted closer to Washington and allowed the expansion of military bases that American forces can access, including facilities facing the Chinese-claimed but democratically-governed island of Taiwan.

Visiting the Philippines last week, Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya said a trilateral initiative to boost cooperation launched by Japan, the US and the Philippines at a summit last year would be strengthened when the new US administration took over in Washington.

Two killed in a knife attack in Germany

BERLIN (AP): Two people, including a 2-year-old boy, were killed and three others injured in a stabbing attack in Bavaria. The suspect, a former asylum-seeker who was supposed to be leaving Germany, was arrested.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz said that authorities must clear up why the suspect was still in the country. He said the attack, a month before a national election in which curbing irregular migration is a major issue, must have consequences. The attack occurred just before noon in a park in Aschaffenburg, a city of about 72,000 people. Bavaria's top security official, Joachim Herrmann, said the assailant attacked the boy, who was part of a group of kindergarten children, with a kitchen knife. He said the 2-year-old of Moroccan origin was killed, along with a 41-year-old German man who was passing by and appeared to have intervened to protect the other children. Bavarian officials said two adults and a 2-year-old Syrian girl were injured and taken to a hospital for treatment, and none of their lives were in danger. Other passers-by chased the suspect and he was arrested 12 minutes after the attack, Herrmann said.

He said the suspect, a 28-year-old Afghan national, had come to authorities' attention at least three times because of acts of violence. On each occasion, he was sent for psychiatric treatment and later released.



BERLIN: Rescue vehicles are seen near a crime scene in Aschaffenburg, Germany, where two people were killed in a knife attack.

China families appeal to free relatives held by scam gangs

BEIJING/BANGKOK (Reuters): The abduction and cross-border rescue had all the makings of the kind of action script struggling Chinese actor Wang Xing had hoped to land - only not as a reality star. Wang, 22, flew to Bangkok earlier this month after getting an unsolicited offer to join a film that was shooting in Thailand. There was no movie.

Instead, like hundreds of other Chinese men, Wang had been duped by a job offer that he later acknowledged appeared too good to be true, as part of a trap set by a criminal syndicate. Like others desperate for work, he was kidnapped and put to work in one of the online scam centres that operate just across the Thai border in Myanmar, according to his account and statements by police in China and Thailand. But unlike most trafficked Chinese whose families wait in quiet anguish, Wang had a powerful advocate back home. His girlfriend, who goes by the nickname Jiajia, broadcast details of Wang's abduction and started a social media campaign documenting her battle to get him back to China, picking up millions of followers and the support of Chinese celebrities.

When Wang was freed on Jan. 7 by Thai police, who said he had been found in Myanmar but gave few details about his release, frustrated families of other Chinese people still detained in the Myanmar scam centres began to post details of their own cases in an attempt to capitalise on the attention. Within days, the rare grassroots effort had collected the names of nearly 1,800 Chinese nationals that family members said had been trafficked into

Myanmar from border areas of China and Thailand. Scam compounds, where workers are often treated brutally, have proliferated in Myanmar amid the chaos and widening civil war since the military seized power in a 2021 coup. The UN says hundreds of thousands of people have been trafficked to scam centres in Southeast Asia since the COVID-19 pandemic in an industry that defrauds people across the globe and generates billions of dollars per year for organised crime groups, many of Chinese origin. The tally, which organisers said had been handed over to Chinese authorities, quickly became the most detailed census of Chinese victims of the syndicates that trap people into working online scams from towns like Myawaddy, on Myanmar's border with Thailand.

In an unusual statement issued, China's Ministry of Public Security said it was "making every effort" to crack down on the scam compounds and "rescue trafficked people." China's state broadcaster said Beijing had reached a consensus with Thailand and Myanmar to arrest the syndicates' leaders and eradicate the scam centres. After a surge in crimes targeting Chinese citizens, Beijing initially moved in 2023 to combat the Myanmar fraud compounds, resulting in the arrest of tens of thousands of Chinese nationals suspected of involvement in the illicit business. That reflected China's approach to treat those trafficked primarily as suspects rather than victims, according to groups that fight human trafficking. "It's difficult to get a confirmed number of Chinese people trafficked to

scam compounds," said Mina Chiang, founder of the Humanity Research Consultancy, an anti human trafficking group.

Reuters spoke to family members of four people listed as disappeared in Myanmar and identified in the database, which drew its name from Wang's first name, Xing, or star. None would agree to be identified by full name for fear of angering authorities and slowing efforts to release the victims. Of the nearly 1,800 victims identified in the "Star Homecoming" campaign, about 93% are men. The average age is 27, with the vast majority between the ages of 15 and 45. Most of them told stories of economic hardship -- indebtedness, the struggle to make ends meet as gig economy workers, job loss in the construction industry amid a nationwide downturn -- that made them jump when the scam centres came calling. Chinese law does not consider men as potential victims of human trafficking, and about half the families said they had been unable to file a missing person report with local police, according to a Reuters analysis of the crowd-sourced spreadsheet.

"At first I wanted to file a police report, but they said missing persons reports were only for women and children," said one woman, whose 30-year-old husband disappeared after accepting what turned out to be a scam job offer because he needed to pay back debts. Another woman, the wife of a 22-year-old electrician who went missing, said Chinese police had told her they could not accept a report on his disappearance since he had been travelling with his passport.

Pentagon sending 1,500 troops to help secure US-Mexico border

WASHINGTON (AP): The Pentagon said it has begun deploying 1,500 active duty troops to help secure the southern border, putting in motion plans President Donald Trump laid out in executive orders shortly after he took office to crack down on immigration.

Acting Defense Secretary Robert Salesses said the troops will fly helicopters to assist Border Patrol agents and help in the construction of barriers. The Pentagon also will provide military aircraft for Department of Homeland Security deportation flights for more than 5,000 detained migrants. The number of troops and their mission may soon change, Salesses said in a statement. "This is just the beginning," he said.

"In short order, the department will develop and execute additional missions in cooperation with DHS, the federal agencies, and state partners to address the full range of threats outlined by the President at our nation's borders," Salesses said. Defense officials added that

the department is prepared to provide many more troops if asked, including up to 2,000 more Marines. Officials said there was no plan now for the troops to do law enforcement, which would put them in a dramatically different role for the first time in decades. Any decision on this would be made by the White House, they said.

The active duty forces will join the roughly 2,500 US National Guard and Reserve forces already there. Until this deployment, there were no active duty troops working along the roughly 2,000-mile border. A couple hundred troops started moving to the border, according to a senior military official. The military official and a defense official briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity to provide additional details on the deployment. The troops will include 500 Marines from Camp Pendleton in California, and the remainder will be Army. The US forces being used for the deportation flights

are separate from the 1,500 deployed for the border mission. Those flights will involve four Air Force aircraft based in San Diego an El Paso, along with crews and maintenance personnel. Troops have done similar duties in support of Border Patrol agents in the past, when both Trump and former President Joe Biden sent active duty troops to the border.

Troops are prohibited by law from doing law enforcement duties under the Posse Comitatus Act, but that may change. Trump has directed through executive order that the incoming secretary of defense and incoming homeland security chief report back within 90 days if they think an 1807 law called the Insurrection Act should be invoked. That would allow those troops to be used in civilian law enforcement on US soil. The last time the act was invoked was in 1992 during rioting in Los Angeles in protest of the acquittal of four police officers charged with beating Rodney King. The widely

expected deployment, coming in Trump's first week in office, was an early step in his long-touted plan to expand the use of the military along the border. In one of his first orders, Trump directed the defense secretary to come up with a plan to "seal the borders" and repel "unlawful mass migration." "This is something President Trump campaigned on," said Karoline Leavitt, White House press secretary. "The American people have been waiting for such a time as this -- for our Department of Defense to actually implement homeland security seriously. This is a No. 1 priority for the American people." Just as Trump fired the Coast Guard commandant, Adm. Linda Fagan, the service announced it was surging more cutter ships, aircraft and personnel to the "Gulf of America" - a nod to the president's directive to rename the Gulf of Mexico. Trump said during his inaugural address that "I will declare a national emergency at our southern border."

Bereaved Gazans dig out bodies from city ruins, give them graves

CAIRO/GAZA (Reuters): Guns may have fallen silent in Gaza, but for Mahmoud Abu Dalfa, the agony is not over. He is desperately searching for the bodies of his wife and five children trapped under the rubble of his house since the early months of the war.

Abu Dalfa's wife and children were among 35 of his extended family who were killed when an Israeli airstrike hit the building in Gaza City's Shejaia suburb in December 2023, he said. As bombs continued to fall, only three bodies were retrieved. "My children are still under the rubble. I am trying to get them out... The civil defence came, they

tried, but the destruction makes it difficult. We don't have the equipment here to extract martyrs. We need excavators and a lot of technical tools," Abu Dalfa told Reuters.

"My wife was killed along with all my five children - three daughters and two sons. I had triplets," he said. Burials are usually carried out within a few hours of death in Muslim and Arab communities, and failure to retrieve bodies and ensure dignified burials is agonizing for bereaved families. "I hope I can bring them out and make them a grave. That's all I want from this entire world. I don't want them to build me

a house or give me anything else. All I want is a grave for them - to get them out and make them a grave," said Abu Dalfa.

The Palestinian Civil Emergency Service and medical staff have recovered around 200 bodies since the ceasefire between Hamas and Israel came into effect, halting a 15-month conflict that has killed more than 47,000 Gazans. The war in Gaza was triggered when Palestinian Hamas militants attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people and taking about 250 as hostages, according to Israeli tallies. At least 94

of those hostages remain in Gaza. Mahmoud Basal, the head of the service, said extraction operations have been challenged by the lack of earth-moving and heavy machinery, adding that Israel had destroyed several of their vehicles and killed at least 100 of their staff. Basal estimates the bodies of around 10,000 Palestinians killed in the war are yet to be found and buried. A UN damage assessment released this month showed that clearing over 50 million tonnes of rubble left in the aftermath of Israel's bombardment could take 21 years and cost up to \$1.2 billion.

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Israel's war machine shifts to the West Bank

VIOLENCE in the West Bank is escalating after a ceasefire was reached in Gaza. It is merely the latest step in Israel's dangerous, multi-front war against the Palestinian people and their cause for self-determination.

On Tuesday, Israel's forces launched Operation Iron Wall, killing at least 10 Palestinians and wounding several others in the Jenin camp. The operation also resulted in more arrests and demolitions of entire streets. As decades of experience show, the probable outcome will be more instability in the future.

Last weekend, Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire deal that, for now, has halted the 15-month-long conflict in Gaza. But just two days after pausing a war that has killed more than 47,100 people, displaced more than 90 per cent of the territory's 2.3 million residents and destroyed more than 90 per cent of its housing units, Israel's actions in the West Bank are threatening to create a new theatre of conflict with serious repercussions.

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz has said that his military's security strategy is aimed "at eliminating terrorists and terrorist infrastructure in [Jenin] camp". Meanwhile, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has billed the operation as an action "against the Iranian axis wherever it extends its arms".

Jenin has for years been the site of periodic, internecine flashes of violence between various armed Palestinian factions. While their actions have contributed to the breakdown of law and order in the West Bank, it is important to remember that these groups have simply stepped into the political and security vacuum left by the governing Palestinian Authority's inability to challenge Israel's military assaults and the illegal settlement building that has gone on for far too long, often with the tacit approval of the Israeli state.

The Israeli government claims its actions secure the settlements from these groups' excesses, but in reality, its military operations have only perpetuated an unending cycle of violence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. It's worth noting that, since the war in Gaza began on October 7, 2023, there have been about 1,000 casualties in the West Bank alone.

The territory's troubles come on the back of years-long statements made by current and former members of Israel's cabinet, who have often called for the annexation of large parts of the West Bank. Mr Netanyahu himself made it a priority during his election campaign in 2019.

A total or partial annexation of the West Bank would constitute a breach of international law. But Israel's current coalition government, which relies on the support of far-right, ultranationalist parties, is likely to feel further emboldened by US President Donald Trump's inauguration this week.

On his first day in office, Mr Trump signed an executive order rescinding sanctions on Israeli settler groups and people accused of being involved in violence against Palestinians in the West Bank. Elise Stefanik, Mr Trump's nominee for UN ambassador, on Tuesday avoided questions on Palestinian self-determination during her confirmation hearing in Congress.

Despite the Israeli government's evident military, political and diplomatic advantages over the Palestinian movement, its actions reflect short-term thinking. It is incumbent upon politicians and the people who vote for them to ask whether any of their government's actions, including its refusal to entertain discussions on a two-state solution – a solution that the international community overwhelmingly endorses – keep them or their country secure in the long term?

This week, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres expressed concern about an "existential threat" to Gaza and the West Bank. But he also reminded the rest of the world that it has a "responsibility to help make sure the people of the Middle East come out of this turbulent period with peace, dignity and a horizon of hope grounded in action".

The occupation of Palestine lies at the very heart of the turbulence in the region. Ending the occupation and reaching a sustainable peace lies in an immediate cessation of violence, diplomatic talks and an agreement to facilitate the two-state solution.

Important Notice

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



Who will be the winners in space in 2025?

Khaled Abou Zahr

EVERY year begins with a series of reports about the future of the space industry. I will not go over the size and importance of the space economy. Yet, the fact is that the immediate present is what will determine the future of space. Whether in China, where space actors are state-owned, or in the US, where the private sector is taking the lead, we are now reaching the point of winner-takes-all scenarios. And 2025 will be the year the identity of the winners is shaped.

The winner-takes-all aspect of space is impacted by the fact that the lion's share of business orders today still come from governments and mainly sovereign institutions. The commercial part of the space economy is still too small to make a difference. So, this year's strategic decisions will determine the winners of the competition for space, especially in the Western part of the world.

There is no doubt that SpaceX has positioned itself as the cornerstone in a cornerstone year. In 2024, SpaceX conducted 138 launches, comprising 132 Falcon 9 missions, two Falcon Heavy missions and four Starship test flights. Globally, there were 259 orbital launch attempts last year. Only two of these launches were from Europe.

Regarding payload mass, SpaceX delivered about 1.6 million kg to orbit in 2024. This is close to 80 percent of all orbital payload mass. The interesting part is that SpaceX has been focusing on Starlink missions, which accounted for some 67 percent of its

total launches. Hence, it has created a self-fulfilling prophecy that will give it the lead. Blue Origin successfully launched its New Glenn rocket last week, but it failed to land on a platform in the Atlantic Ocean. This highlights the difficulty of space.

These attempts offer confirmation, if it were needed, that space presents a historic opportunity in terms of business and investment. Yet, it is much like media or tech — an outlier business. This means that growth is captured by a limited number of players and unevenly. And just like in tech, the US has been capable of creating a new wave of giants within space and defense. Europe has not yet been able to do so.

Indeed, when looking at the space economy, we notice that the legacy actors are still capturing the biggest share and this extends to defense and security due to the dual-use nature of the business. These companies, whether in the US or Europe, have their origins in the 1920s, for the most part, with a revival in new technologies after the Second World War. The nature of conducting business in these fields has made it difficult for new players to reach critical mass and not be absorbed. With space and defense, the US has new champions being developed and being disruptive exactly a century later. Europe is still trying to figure this out.

The other key transformation for space is the obvious artificial intelligence element. And here, it

is interesting to notice that a space company working on AI solutions, whether for Earth observation or for space situational awareness, might be at a disadvantage compared to a pure AI giant who will be able to apply its model to space. This is why we are noticing a big focus on sister companies or convergence with others in order to meet this need. Here too, the US is at a clear advantage.

We understand that any country that does not have launch capacity will always be reliant on and subservient to another nation. This does not mean that every nation should develop its own launch capacity, because the investment might not be worth it for its needs, but it will have to maintain good relations with the ones that do. Some nations, or the EU, will probably decide to maintain this capacity at a much higher cost than other services for sovereignty reasons. Yet, commercially, it will not make sense and will not allow for the same growth as in the US. China and India will benefit from their public-private partnerships and will most certainly be able to achieve greater capacity at lower costs. India might surpass many other countries in the future.

Something else is also clear. Even if commercialization is still in development, the opportunity is real. Hence, this year will see a greater drift from space as a global platform for collaboration toward a world of tough competition. In the West, access to the US market will be of utmost importance for any

company that wishes to become perennial.

A direct consequence of this growing interest is space militarization. Nations need to protect their satellites as, in today's data-driven world, losing satellites means going blind. This means that military buildup in space is now a necessity. Moreover, nations will also look for ways to maintain satellites for longer and service them faster. This will see the beginning of in-orbit services going from repairs and refueling to even data storage and energy. Earth's gravity is costly, so limiting the need for launches will increase efficiency.

And here we reach the next step, which is the moon. The development of infrastructure on the moon will be the realization of a new scope. First, launches from the moon will cost less. It could also become a station to service the in-orbit ecosystem. Crucially, this means protecting this infrastructure, so it would be a military base or outpost. SpaceX believes the moon is a distraction and Mars should be the direct target in the scope of making humans multiplanetary to avoid extinction. Yet, for now, the geopolitics of Earth's orbit is the dominating factor.

Just as the nation that mastered the oceans mastered the planet, we are now moving toward nations mastering space. And just as in the past, when only a few companies that were intrinsically linked to the state and its decision-making dominated, space is going the same way. This is why this year will be decisive in determining the few winners.

Economists' way out of the wilderness

James K. Galbraith

IN a remarkable catalogue of horrors for The New York Times, journalist Ben Casselman details the "central tenets" of mainstream economics that have fallen out of political favor — free trade, open borders, a carbon tax, fiscal austerity. Covering the American Economic Association's recent annual meeting in San Francisco, Casselman notes the problems that economists have not solved: deindustrialization, the 2008 crash and ensuing recession, the long-term growth slowdown. And he highlights their biggest forecasting failures — the 2007-09 financial crisis, the 2021-22 price shock, and the transitory nature of the resulting inflation, which has so far receded without triggering a recession.

With admirable restraint, Casselman reports Jason Furman's view that economists need to "do a better job ... understanding the problems people care about," and Glenn Hubbard's observation that too many in the field have been "dismissive and insensitive" regarding such concerns. No kidding.

It is not surprising that a reporter encountered such a congeries of failures — and almost no one with a dissenting opinion — at this meeting of "top" economists.

Of course, there are economists who have embraced contrarian ideas about tariffs and development, financial fraud and crises, the roots of deindustrialization in the 1980s, industrial and environmental policy, and money, deficits, and debt. But when

these experts attend the meetings — firmly controlled by the mainstream — they are sidelined to small rooms at satellite hotels. No amount of error can embarrass the "top" economists into giving up the prime slots.

The grip of the conventional is deeply rooted in institutional norms. To be a "top" economist requires tenure at a "top" economics department, which in turn requires publication in a "top" journal — a needle's eye tightly controlled by the orthodox. The only other route to professional prestige is an appointment to a high-level position at the White House, the Federal Reserve, the US Treasury, or perhaps the International Monetary Fund. Heterodox scholars are dispersed, their departments underfunded and poorly ranked. Holding a coherent dissenting view — particularly one that was right on the merits — bars them from the type of meeting that Casselman observed.

Yet none of this explains why the track record of mainstream economics is so poor, and why it yields lousy, and often politically impossible, policies. On the topic of inflation, former chair of the Council of Economic Advisers Christina Romer remarked: "We're all sitting up here trying to diagnose what went wrong." Her comment could have been applied to every issue in Casselman's catalogue.

Oren Cass, a talented conservative polemicist who served as a foil to the largely moderate and liberal mainstream economists gathered in San Francisco,

is on to something when he suggests that "it's all been wrong." Cass rightly names the theory of comparative advantage as one of the discipline's major errors, although it is far from being "the most basic mistake," and it doesn't work "great in the classroom," as he claims.

A paper exercise with no real-world application, comparative advantage was invented by the early-19th-century British stockbroker David Ricardo to advance and justify a free-trade policy that he already supported. Ricardo's theory served national interest — free trade benefited the dominant economic power, which was Britain — and the rising commercial-industrial class. In America at that time, free trade was the policy of planters and farmers. It took firm hold only in the mid-20th century, when the US supplanted Britain as the world's foremost industrial economy. Before that, trade protections were "the American System" — paralleled in Germany and widely emulated in Asia.

A deeper explanation may disturb even Cass. Economists derive their theories from the parable of exchange and the assumption that markets are the key economic institution. This enables them to treat production as an afterthought — organized in pseudo-markets for labor, capital, technology and so forth — and cling to an illusion of equilibrium. The comforting idea that underpins economists' models is that — apart from all the problems, like monopoly — markets in some ideal setting will sort

things out.

In every other field of human knowledge, theories of equilibrium faded after the mid-19th century, when evolution and thermodynamics came to dominate scientific thinking. Mainstream economists are the lone holdouts, preferring the trivial verities of self-contained mathematical models to engagement with the real world.

A thermodynamic view understands that production, not exchange, is primary. Without production, there is nothing to exchange. Acquiring and mobilizing the resources needed for production requires fixed investment, made by organizations in the hope of profit. All such investments are uncertain. And all activity must be regulated — just like your blood pressure or the temperature in your car engine.

There is no sophisticated market — actually, no market — without government, and there is no government without borders and boundaries to determine its jurisdiction. That alone is why globalization was destined to end in chaos.

It is not hard to adjust one's thinking to this well-established paradigm, with which every other branch of the natural and social sciences came to grips long ago. Many policy issues — trade, inequality, energy, interest and discount rates, deficits and debt, monopoly power — come into focus. But one cannot expect progress so long as an antiquated school of thought monopolizes the resources underpinning universities, journals, promotions, research funds — and the top slots at the annual economics meetings.

Pakistan Navy: Deep waters and beyond - AMAN 2025

Sanobar Nadir

IN the deep blue waters of the Arabian Sea, the story of bravery, resilience, and cooperation has been unfurling since 2007. Since then, with each flip of the page, this story has only grown stronger.

Exercise AMAN, an initiative started by the Pakistan Navy, carries the flag of the country's commitment to promote and support peaceful coexistence in the region.

This exercise is more than a military drill. It is a global message of peace, collaboration, unity, and collective responsibility for maritime security, tying together the navies across the world under the motto "Together for Peace."

The AMAN exercise aims to promote peace and regional cooperation by enhancing alliances among both regional and extra-regional navies, acting as a bridge between global maritime regions. By participating in this biennial event, navies from various countries can refine their tactical coordination and strengthen joint operational capabilities. This event also serves to display a unified stance against maritime terrorism and criminal activities, including piracy and human trafficking, which contribute significantly to global maritime security.

Over the years, this biennial event has symbolized Pakistan's leadership in promoting peace and unity in the region by addressing traditional and non-traditional maritime threats. Pakistan Navy, known for its strategic vision and multifaceted approach to maritime security, has propelled AMAN to greater heights.

Since its inception, the scale of Exercise AMAN has grown significantly, with participation

Over the years, this biennial event has symbolized Pakistan's leadership in promoting peace and unity in the region by addressing traditional and non-traditional maritime threats. Pakistan Navy, known for its strategic vision and multifaceted approach to maritime security, has propelled AMAN to greater heights. Since its inception, the scale of Exercise AMAN has grown significantly, with participation increasing from 28 countries in 2007 to 50 in 2023. The first AMAN exercise "AMAN-07" involved 14 warships from Bangladesh, China, France, Italy, Malaysia, the UK, and the USA, with 28 participating nations and 29 observers. The second exercise in 2009 saw 24 countries, 14 warships, two aircraft, and nine Special Operations Forces (SOF) teams from Australia, Bangladesh, China, France, Japan, Malaysia, the UK, Nigeria, Türkiye, and the USA.

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By AMAN-11, 28 countries participated, with 11 ships, three aircraft, and additional SOF, EOD, and marine teams from countries like Australia, Japan, China, and the USA, along with 43 observers. AMAN-13 saw 29 countries with 12 ships, two aircraft from Japan, and eight SOF teams from Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Italy, Sri Lanka, and Türkiye, along with two EOD teams from Türkiye and the USA, alongside 36 observers.

The AMAN-17 exercise witnessed an increase in participation as 34 countries, 12 ships, and eight Marine teams from nations including China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Russia, Sri Lanka, Türkiye, and the UK, with 67 observers participating in the year 2017. AMAN-19 saw 46 countries, 11 ships, two aircraft, and 10 SOF/EOD Marine teams, along with 113 observers, reinforcing the growing scale of the exercise.

Whereas in AMAN-21, 42 countries participated, showcasing 11 ships, air-

craft from Türkiye, and numerous SOF teams from Russia, Sri Lanka, and Türkiye, with 117 observers. While the latest, AMAN-23 exercise, held in the North Arabian Sea, was the largest yet, with 50 countries, seven ships, and various special teams, along with 116 observers. By hosting and organizing successful AMAN exercises throughout all these years, the Pakistan Navy played a pivotal role in earning Pakistan the reputation of being a key regional player in global maritime affairs.

Due to the ever-expanding global participation of Exercise AMAN, the Pakistan Navy has introduced the AMAN Dialogue alongside the AMAN-25 exercise this year. AMAN Dialogue focuses on promoting a shared understanding of the region's security challenges, with particular emphasis on the Blue Economy. This strategic forum provides senior military and defense leaders with a platform to discuss regional security and develop solutions to maritime challenges. It also aims to identify gaps in maritime security strategies and explore innovative solutions to growing threats at sea, such as cyber-attacks on maritime infrastructure and environmental hazards. The Dialogue also highlights the importance of the Blue Economy in contributing to economic growth through the sustainable use of marine resources, fisheries, and tourism.

Furthermore, the AMAN Dialogue will gather Chiefs of Navies, Coast Guards, and Defense Forces for multi-lateral discussions and one-on-one meetings, as well as include keynote addresses and seminars

on current maritime issues, promoting collaboration in the ocean's safety and security. By looking at the achievements of the Pakistan Navy, it is apt to say that its influence is not just limited to the sea, as it goes beyond the boundaries of the ocean. Pakistan Navy operates as a four-dimensional force, and with each passing year, it has proved its mettle by being at the forefront when it comes to national security and safety. It has also advocated the significance of forming friendly alliances with other countries and working with other navies to promote peace in the region. With strategic capabilities in surface, subsurface, and aerial domains, the Pakistan Navy maintains authority across various aspects of maritime security. Exercise AMAN demonstrates the Pakistan Navy's ability to address both traditional maritime challenges and emerging threats to peace and security.

Now, under the guidance of the Pakistan Navy, the AMAN Dialogue will open a new door to enhance regional cooperation and stability. This initiative promotes global collaboration and further cements the Pakistan Navy's role as a promoter of peace and stability in the global regions. By leading this innovative initiative, the Pakistan Navy continues to shape the future of maritime security, ensuring a peaceful, cooperative, and secure global maritime environment for everyone.

Elon Musk is causing trouble in Europe: What’s in it for him?

“I would prefer to stay out of politics,” Elon Musk told his followers in 2021, on the platform then known as Twitter. Plenty has changed since then.

Musk now owns the social media giant, renamed X and repurposed as his personal soapbox. He has welcomed back far-right agitators banned under previous ownership. Musk spent a quarter-billion dollars to help reelect Donald Trump as United States president, and stood a few feet away as Trump took the oath of office on Monday.

Now, with that task complete, the world’s richest man appears to have a new goal: upend Europe, one government at a time.

The mogul has cast himself as kingmaker in the populist wave that is submerging multiple centrist European leaders. “From MAGA to MEGA: Make Europe Great Again!” he posted on Saturday, reveling in the unease he is bringing to the continent.

Several European Union leaders have accused him of interfering in their affairs and promoting dangerous figures; Musk has waged a brutal and personal online campaign against Britain’s government, rallied for a far-right activist there to be released from prison, and endorsed a far-right party in Germany with a staunchly nationalist platform and a string of scandals relating to some of its members’ views on the Nazi era.

At the same time, a torrent of misinformation on Musk’s platform – plenty of it born from anger over high levels of migration – has unnerved Europe’s governments. Some in Britain blame it for contributing to a wave of far-right riots last summer.

“I’m awed at his lack of inhibition to think that he can intervene in multiple countries where issues are complex,” Eric Nelson, a diplomat who served as Trump’s ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina during his first term, told CNN. “To assert that he knows best. It’s quite a hubris.”

But X’s reach, Musk’s extreme wealth and his role as an efficiency adviser to Trump make him a difficult problem to deal with. Political figures in Europe are grappling with two questions: Why does Musk care about us, and what can we do about it?

Neither is easy to answer. “The Europeans are stuck,” said Bill Echikson, senior fellow in tech policy at the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) think tank, and a former European communications head for Google.

Leaders on the continent “certainly are worried,” he said. “They certainly blame disinforma-

tion and trolling and automated bots for causing problems with European elections and fostering the rise of their extremes.

“(But) they don’t have any plan. They don’t really know how to respond yet.”

‘An effort to cancel him’

Musk’s politics have evolved at supersonic speed since the SpaceX and Tesla mogul conducted a hostile takeover of Twitter in 2022. “For Twitter to deserve public trust, it must be politically neutral,” he insisted then. He described politics as a “sadness generator” and wrote: “Politics is war and truth is the first casualty.”

Today, Musk is on the front lines. The platform’s owner enjoys levels of disruptive influence around the world that few unelected figures have ever held, without

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facing the scrutiny of voters. He hails and shares the views of radical figures, and has backed fiercely anti-establishment populists around Europe. It’s not yet clear how much sway he will have on Trump’s foreign policy – and that’s precisely why, for now, European governments are so uncertain about how to tackle his interventions.

But his comments chime with a wider, interventionist tone towards Europe coming from the new administration, and could set up Musk for a role as an interlocutor. Trump and Musk have already forged close ties with figures whose politics at least partially overlap, like Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, an immigration hardliner who attended the inaugu-

Rob Picheta

ration in a break with precedent.

Some of those who have previously advanced Trump’s interests in Europe now see Musk as an unfettered, even less polished version of the president; an agitator whose style and ambition has come to mirror Trump’s. As with Trump, opinion polls suggest Musk is unpopular across Europe.

“It’s interesting to see the similarities between he and (Trump); their ability to try to drive public opinion, especially, unfortunately by disseminating disinformation. Creating a lot of chaos, being disruptors,” Nelson said.

That chaos intensified after Musk made a gesture with his right arm on stage during a post-inauguration rally, which to some in Europe bore

Schitzl”

There is disagreement about why, exactly, Musk is targeting Europe.

It could be personal. “When Elon took over Twitter there was a concerted effort to shame companies out of advertising on his platform, to alienate him, to cancel him,” said Trevor Traina, Trump’s previous ambassador to Austria, where a far-right party is on the cusp of power. “So Elon has had a taste of the same bitter medicine that Donald Trump and others have been force-fed, and I think what we see today is his response.”

Or it could be financial; a more time-tested story that pits the innovator against the regulators. “I think his purpose is always thinking about his own business interests,” Nelson said.

Musk has railed against red tape surrounding the tech sector

rain; the mainstream parties in both countries are uniquely unpopular, tainted either by inflation-struck or scandal-ridden stints in power, or viewed by much of the public as unimaginative, unambitious or technocratic. Germany will hold an election next month in which the AfD could place second. Just last year, the AfD became the first far-right party to win a state election in Germany since the Nazi era.

And they have something else in common: Each country has failed to adequately grapple with public anger over immigration, which is threatening to become the continent’s defining political dynamic.

Still, Musk will need to build lasting alliances to have serious influence. He has already publicly fallen out with Nigel Farage, the Reform leader, who refused to back his support for jailed far-right figurehead Tommy Robinson. Reform is still hoping for a massive financial donation from Musk, but the feud has dampened the party’s optimism.

He will also face regulatory landmines. A fine, possibly reaching 6% of X’s global annual turnover, is looming once the EU completes an investigation into whether X broke rules put in place by the sweeping Digital Services Act, which regulates how the tech industry handles misinformation and illegal content on social media, as well as illegal goods and services on online marketplaces.

In Britain, Musk has been asked to testify to the parliamentary Science, Innovation and Technology Committee about his company’s algorithm, after it was blamed for promoting misinformation about a tragic stabbing of children last summer that resulted in rioters clashing with police and setting hotels housing asylum seekers on fire.

“Free speech is part of a conversation,” Chi Onwurah, the Labour lawmaker who heads the committee, told CNN. “Instead of shouting across the Atlantic at the UK, will he engage in the legitimate democratic processes which represent the British people, and have a conversation with us?”

For now, Musk’s proximity to Trump might shield him from such scrutiny. “I don’t expect (Europe) to do too much; they don’t want to ignite a war with Donald Trump,” Echikson said.

But the more entangled the tech mogul becomes in Europe’s affairs, the more strained that approach becomes. “If he is, as it looks like he is, entering politics,” Onwurah said, “then as part of that, you have to listen as well as talk.”

— CNN

Trump’s tariff war hurt the US-China relationship, but his pragmatism could help revive it

Sholto Byrnes

DAYS into the new US administration, much of the world is awaiting – or fearing – just how aggressive President Donald Trump’s trade policies may be. Stocks in China fell on Wednesday after Mr Trump said he was intending to impose a 10 per cent tariff on Chinese imports from the beginning of February, although there was also a degree of relief that this was nothing like the 60 per cent figure that he had aired during his election campaign.

How Mr Trump plans to approach the US’s relationship with Beijing is one of the key questions – and not just for those two countries, as the spillover effects on everything from international trade and supply chains to peace and security in the Asia Pacific and beyond would leave few countries untouched.

So far there have been mixed signals. On his first day in office, Mr Trump signed an execu-

be that of a peacemaker and unifier.” That does not sound like a man who is itching to get into a conflict over the future of Taiwan, the island where some American politicians have foolishly encouraged aspirations to independence, but which China regards as a renegade province whose reunification with the mainland is inevitable.

That’s on the positive side. On the other hand, his administration is going to be packed with China hawks, from Secretary of State Marco Rubio (who was actually sanctioned twice by Beijing over his vocal criticisms in 2020), to Mr Trump’s picks for defence secretary, Pete Hegseth, and national security adviser, Mike Waltz.

On Tuesday, his first full day in office, Mr Rubio convened a meeting of the foreign ministers of the Quadrilateral security dialogue states – the US, Japan, Australia and India. Chinese accu-

forge firm bonds with strong leaders far more. As one commentator put it: “Somewhere out there, the spirit of Richard Milhous Nixon is smiling.” Just as “only Nixon could go to China” during the Cold War, wouldn’t Mr Trump like to be the one world leader who could stop a new one heating up?

Quite apart from all it could (presumably) do to “Make America Great Again”, it could also help him gain the accolade he thinks he was wrongly denied for forging the Abraham Accords – the Nobel Peace Prize. And while Mr Trump may be surrounded by officials who urge extreme caution, the Tesla-owning “first buddy” Elon Musk sells one third of his cars in the Chinese market. So at least one person close to Mr Trump has reason to back up his faith in his own ability to reach a fabulous bargain with Mr Xi.

Some of the sticking points, however, may be of Mr Trump’s own making. It was he who initiat-

Mr Trump also had what he called a “good” phone call with Chinese President Xi Jinping last Friday. “It is my expectation that we will solve many problems together, and starting immediately,” he wrote in a social media post. “President Xi and I will do everything possible to make the world more peaceful and safe.” In his inauguration speech, Mr Trump may have falsely accused China of operating the Panama Canal – “we didn’t give it to China, we gave it to Panama, and we’re taking it back”. But he also stated: “We will measure our success not only by the battles we win but also by the wars that we end. And, perhaps most importantly, the wars we never get into. My proudest legacy will be that of a peacemaker and unifier.” That does not sound like a man who is itching to get into a conflict over the future of Taiwan, the island where some American politicians have foolishly encouraged aspirations to independence, but which China regards as a renegade province whose reunification with the mainland is inevitable. That’s on the positive side. On the other hand, his administration is going to be packed with China hawks, from Secretary of State Marco Rubio (who was actually sanctioned twice by Beijing over his vocal criticisms in 2020), to Mr Trump’s picks for defence secretary, Pete Hegseth, and national security adviser, Mike Waltz. On Tuesday, his first full day in office, Mr Rubio convened a meeting of the foreign ministers of the Quadrilateral security dialogue states – the US, Japan, Australia and India.

tive order that allowed TikTok – seen as a Chinese company and as a national security threat by many in the US – to go back online. The app’s future in the US is still uncertain, as Mr Trump is insisting it be 50 per cent American-owned. But he spoke approvingly of the company on Tuesday, saying he thought it had won him young people’s votes in the election. “I have a warm spot in my heart for TikTok,” he said.

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sations that the “Quad”, as it is known, is an “Asian Nato” formed to prevent its rise will not be quelled by Mr Rubio calling China “the most potent, dangerous and near-peer adversary this nation has ever confronted” in his Senate confirmation hearing last week.

And lastly, no one can doubt how deeply attached Mr Trump is to the idea that tariffs can be easily deployed against any countries that have been “very, very bad to us”, as he put it on Tuesday. He was talking about the EU, but he has used far more incendiary language about China in the past.

However, Mr Xi reciprocated Mr Trump’s warm words about their phone conversation last week, calling for “a new starting point”, a sentiment reiterated by Chinese officials in the past days. And Mr Trump has reportedly said that he wants to meet the Chinese President in Beijing within his first 100 days in office. The indications are that both sides would like to strike a deal.

The ideological differences that so concern Mr Biden and hawks on both sides of the aisle in the US are less troubling to Mr Trump, who prizes his ability to negotiate and

ed the trade war with China during his first term in the White House. Plenty of anti-Chinese legislation – not just tariffs – followed. The decoupling of the two economies has already begun, and it may take on a life of its own. And while the Republican Party may have been remade in Mr Trump’s image, both houses of Congress – even while controlled by the GOP – will be very sceptical of any deal, however the President spins it.

Most of us who live in South-East and East Asia will probably be hoping that the friendly words between the Chinese and US leaders, combined with Mr Trump’s non-ideological and transactional disposition, will provide us reasons for optimism. The alternatives don’t really bear thinking about. I wouldn’t necessarily go so far as Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, but he may have spoken for many in the region on Tuesday. When asked what would happen if there was a full decoupling between the two superpowers, he responded, “If such a scenario was to arise, frankly, God help us all,” he said. “Then we are truly at the brink of a third world war.”

— The National

Divded attention

Michael Jansen

WHILE world media focused almost exclusively on Israel’s three women hostages freed last Sunday at the start of the six-week ceasefire in the war on Gaza, little attention was paid to individuals among the 90 Palestinian hostages held by Israel. They included leftist lawmaker Khalida Jarrar, journalist Bushra Al-Tawil and Dalal al-Aroui, sister on a slain Hamas leader. There is a world of difference between the two trios.

The Israeli women were captured by Hamas during the Oct. 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel. Doron Steinbrecher, 31, is a veterinary nurse seized at Kafr Aza kibbutz; dual British-Israeli Emily Damari, 28, was wounded in the hand and leg when abducted by Hamas from the same kibbutz where she grew up; and Roni Gonen, 24, was caught at the nearby music festival. The three were living normal, secure lives where they could build decent futures. While none were

serving soldiers, women must enlist for a minimum of 24 months in the Israeli armed forces in both combat and support units.

The three Palestinian women I have chosen to identify among the 737 prisoners of Israel due for release during the first stage of the ceasefire/hostage/prisoner deal have survived Israeli conquest, occupation, expropriation, ethnic cleansing and apartheid. Their lives have been disrupted, and their futures are uncertain.

The most prominent of the three is Palestinian legislative council member Jarrar, 61, who has been held in indefinite administrative detention since the 2023 outbreak of Israel’s war on Gaza. A leading member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), she was elected in 2006 to the council which was suspended in 2007 after Hamas took control of Gaza. Since then, legislators have maintained a low level of contacts and have assumed political

roles. Jarrar has been Palestinian representative at the Council of Europe and head of the council’s prisoner committee.

Jarrar was heavily involved in securing the Palestinian Authority’s bid to join the International Criminal Court (ICC). Last year the ICC issued warrants on charges of war crimes for the arrest of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and ex-Defence Minister Yoav Gallant. She has served five terms of imprisonment. Her most recent arrest was in December 2023 when she was placed on administrative detention in a women’s prison. Last August Jarrar’s life was put at risk while she was held isolated in solitary confinement in a tiny cell and denied regular meals although she suffers from serious ailments, including diabetes. Her father, daughter and nephew all died while she was behind bars, and she was not allowed to attend their funerals.

Journalist Bushra Al-Tawil, 31, was arrested for

the first time while in secondary school and was sentenced to 16 months in

held in prison under administrative detention for several years. The most prominent of the three is Palestinian legislative council member Jarrar, 61, who has been held in indefinite administrative detention since the 2023 outbreak of Israel’s war on Gaza. A leading member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), she was elected in 2006 to the council which was suspended in 2007 after Hamas took control of Gaza. Since then, legislators have maintained a low level of contacts and have assumed political roles.

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prison. Upon her release five months later in a prisoner swap, she studied journalism in Ramallah and graduated in 2013. Tawil founded a news network to cover Israeli abuses of prisoners and media personnel. Between 2014 and 2022, she was arrested half a dozen times and was

held in prison under administrative detention for several years.

Tawil’s father is Jamal Al-Tawil, a prominent Hamas leader and former mayor of Al-Bireh in the West Bank. He has spent many years in prison while her husband Mohammed Al-Tawil has been serving nine life sentences since 2002.

Dalal Al-Azouri, 52, is

the younger sibling of Saleh Al-Azouri, deputy head of Hamas politburo and West Bank military chief who was assassinated by Israel in Beirut in January 2024. She and her sister Fatima, 47, were arrested and indicted by Israel for transferring money to her brother and supporting Hamas 2023 attack on southern Israel. The charge Israel levelled against them was “incitement.”

Among the notable men freed was Mohammed Halabi who was arrested by Israel in 2016, charged with terrorism and sentenced to 12 years in prison. Before his arrest, Halabi worked for the humanitarian organisation World Vision International. The Israeli authorities accused him of diverting funds to Hamas. Although World Vision denied the accusation, Halabi was forced to confess under duress by Israel’s internal intelligence agency Shin Bet. This prompted a global campaign by activists calling for his release.

According to Israeli official figures, there are 10,221 Palestinians in Israeli prisons; 3,376 of them are held under administrative detention while another 1,886 are classified as “unlawful combatants” and also held without charge or trial. Administrative detention – imposed by Britain during the mandate and retained by Israel – provides for repeated periods of detention without the accused being charged, tried, or sentenced.

As it can be indefinite in practice, it is a particularly cruel punishment for detainees and their families.

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry said 1,890 Palestinians, including 734 prisoners and 1,156 from Gaza held outside Israel’s justice system, will be released in the first 42-day phase of the ceasefire in exchange for 33 Israeli hostages, 25 of whom are believed to be alive. The release of the rest of the 98 hostages held by Hamas will be negotiated and take place

during the second and third phases of the deal. Israel continues to refuse the release of 10 high value prisoners, including Fatah’s military chief Marwan Barghouti and the PFLP’s Ahmad Saadat.

The 90 released prisoners included 69 women and 21 teenaged boys, the youngest being 12 years old. All but seven were arrested after the October attack on Israel. Haaretz reported on January 18th that the “list includes men and women who were arrested from 2020 onward, with 66 of them detained during 2024.” Five were accused of attempted murder, three of murder, and seven of assault or “causing serious bodily harm.” Sentences were imposed on 10, 31 are administrative detainees, and 54 are regular prisoners.

Palestinians argue that imprisonment is a key element of Israel’s 57-year-old occupation policy, and it is estimated that 40 per cent of Palestinian men have been arrested at least once in their lives.



OICCI hosts Ahsan Iqbal for economic policy dialogue

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, while addressing members of the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) in Karachi, unveiled the comprehensive vision behind the government's transformative initiative, "Uraan Pakistan." Highlighting the need for collective action, the minister emphasized that this movement must become the voice of 240 million Pakistanis to ensure sustainable economic progress.

Pakistan" - Exports, Empowerment, Environment, Energy, and Education (5Es). "This initiative is not just another government project. It represents our commitment to addressing Pakistan's core challenges and propelling the nation into a new era of prosperity," he stated. He emphasized the significance of export-led growth, improving productivity in key sectors, and addressing structural issues such as the low tax-to-GDP ratio, high deficits, and weak social indicators.

PSDP payments for the last quarter. Taking office on April 22, 2022, we faced a critical situation, including the tough decision to raise fuel prices by Rs. 150 within a month, which severely impacted our vote bank." However, he noted the government's success in stabilizing key economic indicators, such as reducing inflation from 38% to 4%, improving the stock market to cross the 100k benchmark, and reducing the policy rate to 13%.

easy path, but it is the only way forward," he asserted. The minister also introduced the National Economic Transformation Unit and PM Delivery Unit, which are tasked with rigorous monitoring and collaboration to ensure the timely execution of reforms.

forward many suggestions to the government, but these are often ignored, which discourages collaboration and private sector participation." The minister addressed these concerns, reaffirming the government's commitment to inclusive policy-making and private sector engagement. "Your input is critical to our success. Uraan Pakistan is not just a vision; it is a call for action that requires collaboration from every sector of society. We value your contributions and will ensure they are incorporated into policy decisions," he responded.

and ensure the government remains aligned with the private sector's needs. He stated, "The minister has agreed to quarterly meetings to ensure our recommendations are implemented effectively. We believe this partnership can drive innovation and sustainable growth in Pakistan."

He also highlighted ongoing initiatives under Uraan Pakistan, including: Exports: Developing export clusters in agriculture, IT, creative industries, and blue economy sectors. Education: Reforming the curriculum to focus on problem-solving skills, conceptual learning, and teacher training. Energy: Reducing the carbon footprint, promoting renewable energy, and lowering energy costs.

"Our goal is to enhance Pakistan's Human Development Index (HDI) by improving healthcare, education, and population growth rates. This requires a coordinated approach, and the newly established National Economic Transformation Unit will ensure rigorous monitoring and delivery," he added. The minister concluded by emphasizing the government's vision for exponential progress, urging all stakeholders to work together as "Team Pakistan" to achieve a brighter, self-reliant future. "Uraan Pakistan is not just an initiative; it is a mission to redefine our nation's potential," he stated.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal addressing media after attending session with members Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

100-Index of PSX turns bullish, gains 594 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 594.36 more points, a positive change of 0.52 percent, closing at 114,037.79 points as compared to 113,443.43 points on the last trading day.

As many as 442 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 213 of them recorded gains and 181 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 48 companies remained unchanged.

Pakistan Engineering Company Limited with Rs67.80 rise in its share price to close at Rs806.14. Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs210.00 per share price, closing at Rs21,690.00, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Textile Mills Limited with Rs76.94 rise in its per share price to Rs1,147.82.

trading day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs641 to Rs247,799 from Rs 246,440 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat also went up to Rs225,323 from Rs225,911. The prices of per tola silver decreased by Rs30 to Rs3,401 whereas that of ten gram silver went down by Rs26 to Rs2,915 respectively.

OGDCL enhances oil production from Kunnar Oil Field in Hyderabad

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) on Thursday announced a significant enhancement in oil production from its Kunnar Oil Field in the Hyderabad district of Sindh. The company's optimization efforts have increased oil output from two key wells, Kunnar-12 and Kunnar-6, contributing an additional 1,160 barrels per day (BPD).

OGDCL deployed a rig to replace the conventional Jet Pump with an Electrical Submersible Pump (ESP). These measures have increased production at the well from 1,060 BPD to 1,820 BPD, an increase of 760 BPD. The well is part of OGDCL's Kunnar Oil Field, with a 100% working interest in Kunnar Mining Lease Area.

Upper Sand, combined with re-completion using an artificial lift system (ESP), have optimized its performance. Kunnar-6 is now producing at a rate of 400 barrels per day (BPD) of oil. These interventions have collectively resulted in an incremental production of 1,160 BPD from the Kunnar Oil Field. OGDCL's enhancement efforts highlight the company's technical expertise, innovative strategies, and commitment to maximizing production from its assets, reaffirming its role as a key contributor to the nation's energy security.

Landside area of Jinnah Int'l Airport: Authority taken serious note of stray dogs matter

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Competent Authority has taken serious note of the matter of stray dogs in the landside area of Jinnah International Airport (JIAP), Karachi, following media reports, including one video circulating on media platforms that appears to be from the past. Nevertheless, the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) reaffirms its commitment to addressing this issue with the utmost seriousness.

zone surrounded by densely populated neighborhoods. These neighborhoods include eateries and other establishments that often attract stray dogs. Despite regular cleaning of garbage pits under PAA's jurisdiction, the presence of stray dogs in adjacent areas remains a challenge. The airside, where main flight operations occur, is completely secured with robust fencing and monitored 24/7 by specialized teams to prevent any possible intrusion.

Foundation to help manage stray dogs and has written to the local administration, urging them to intensify efforts to keep stray dogs away from airport premises. The local administration has been responsive, and PAA is ready to provide any support needed. This collaborative effort is ongoing and requires continuous action. The Pakistan Airports Authority remains committed to maintaining the highest safety and security standards across its facilities and will continue its efforts to address such challenges effectively.

Exports up by 7.65% to Rs4.627 trillion in 1st half

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country in the rupee term witnessed an increase of 7.65 percent during the first half of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. Exports during July-December (FY2024-25) were recorded at Rs. 4,627,660 million as against Rs.4,298,761 million during the corresponding period of last year, according to provisional figures released by PBS.

December 2024 were recorded at Rs.811,765 million against the export of Rs. 799,545 million recorded during last December. On month-on-month (MoM) basis the exports in December 2024 went up by 3.15 percent when compared to exports of Rs. 786,953 million in November, 2024. The main commodities of exports during December, 2024 were knitwear (Rs. 108,941 million), readymade garments (Rs.99,330 million), rice other than basmati (Rs. 86,797 million), bed wear (Rs. 71,252 million), cotton cloth (Rs. 41,388 million), sugar (Rs.40,565 million), towels (Rs.24,549 million), pharmaceutical products (Rs.17,634 million), cotton yarn (Rs.17,456 million)

and madeup articles excluding towels & bedwear (Rs.16,404 million). On the other hand, imports during July-December (FY2024-25) totaled Rs. 7,743,637 million as against Rs. 7,496,078 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 3.30 percent. On YoY basis, the imports into the country during December, 2024 increased by 14.25 percent to Rs. 1,500,173 million as against Rs. 1,313,026 million during December, 2023. On MoM basis, the imports into the country increased by 20.01 percent in December 2024 when compared to the imports of Rs. 1,250,062 million in November, 2024.

INX maritime service launched in Pakistan

F.P. Report

KARACHI, 22nd January, 2025: The weekly maritime service will commence its operations globally on February 5th with its first departure from Pakistan's port city, Karachi. Speaking as the chief guest Vice Admiral Faisal Abbasi HI (M), SI (M), Commander Karachi, Pakistan Navy at the launching ceremony, he said Pakistan is constantly seeking international partnerships to expand and strengthen its maritime activities.

Abbasi HI (M), SI (M) remarked. Commander Karachi Faisal Abbasi added, "Our country has abundance of marine, fisheries, mineral and energy resources that can generate additional revenues. From the perspective of the potential of the Blue Economy, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is estimated to expand the maritime capabilities of Pakistan manifolds."

also amplifies opportunities for regional trade and global transshipment through this strategic hub". United Marine Agencies (UMA), the exclusive agent for HMM in Pakistan, is dedicated to providing outstanding shipping services. By representing leading global shipping lines and handling cargo to destinations worldwide, UMA plays a crucial role in strengthening Pakistan's maritime trade. UMA is instrumental in optimizing logistics, enhancing connectivity, and driving economic growth.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships, Maersk Cabo Verde, CMA CGM Manta Ray, One Reliability, Eva Manila and Al-Areesh carrying Container, Palm oil and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively on Wednesday. Meanwhile four more ships, Iskenderunm, Start, KK Marlin and Darya Rapti are also arrived at outer anchorage on same day. Twelve ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, CMA CGM Manta Ray, Maersk Cabo Verde, One Reliability and Venus left the port on Thursday early morning, while two more ships, Chan Hang Hui Hai and Fuwarit are expected. Cargo volume of 190,648 tonnes, comprising 128,454 tonnes imports cargo and 62,194 tonnes export cargo carried in 2,531 Containers (762 TEUs Imports & 2,769 TEUs Export) was handled at the port. Twenty Seven ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Ivan-6, Al-Kyoni SB and GFS Ruby & another ship 'Wan Hai-501' carrying LPG, Coal and Containers are expected to take berths at EVTL, PIBT and QICT respectively.

COURT NOTICE
In the Court of district Judge / Zilla Qazi Buner at Daggar Buner, Civil Appeal No 38/CR Institution 2/5/ 2024. Date of hearing, 7/2/2025. Gul Baz Khan etc VS Mst Bakht Sheda etc. Notice to No. 5. Ajaz s/o Abdulzamen (late)resident of Krappa theseld Daggar district Buner at present abroad. 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 7/2/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

COURT NOTICE
In The Court of Ms Maliha Allauddin Senior Civil Judge Family Court Kohat, Suit no 217/FC Date of hearing 07-02-2025, Titled:- Mst Hina Bibi Vs Muhammad Ishaq Notice against:-Muhammad Ishaq Son of Muhammad Ishaq R/o Sarozai District Hangu present Sector.no.3-D Near Passport Office KDA District Kohat presently R/o (now.in.Abroad Hijama Doha Qatar) (Defendant) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a family suit of Dower against you defendant in which date of hearing 07-02-2025 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you defendant is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 07-02-2025 otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law order Issued on 21-01-2025 (Court of S C.J.F.C Kohat)

FFC partners with Adamjee Insurance Company

— to introduce crop protection insurance for farmers

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC), Pakistan's leading fertilizer manufacturer, proudly announces its strategic partnership with Adamjee Insurance Company Limited to launch a comprehensive crop protection insurance initiative. This collaboration, facilitated through FFC's extensive network of Sonar Centres, aims to empower farmers by providing financial security against unpredictable agricultural risks.



located across Pakistan. These centres serve as a trusted platform for agricultural inputs, advisory, and now, comprehensive risk management solutions. The partnership is expected to contribute significantly to improving the resilience of Pakistan's agricultural sector, fostering economic stability for farmers, and driving inclusive growth across rural communities.

ship, stating, "This collaboration with FFC underscores our commitment to innovation in agriculture insurance. With FFC's trusted presence in rural areas, we can effectively reach farmers and provide them with robust protection against unforeseen challenges."

Through this program, farmers will have access to affordable crop insurance plans directly from FFC's Sonar Centres, strategically

COURT NOTICE
In The Court of Ms Maliha Allauddin Senior Civil Judge Family Court Kohat, Suit no 106/FC Date of hearing 04-02-2025, Titled:- Mst Laiba Vs Faheem Shah Notice against:-Faheem Shah Son of Muntazir Shah R/o Char Bagh Jungle Khel District Kohat presently R/o (now in Abroad Dubai UAE)(Defendant) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a family suit of Maintenance Allowance against you defendant in which date of hearing 04-02-2025 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you defendant is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 04-02-2025 otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law order Issued on 22-01-2025 (Court.of S C.J.F.C Kohat)



Keys stuns Swiatek to set up Sabalenka title showdown

MELBOURNE (BBC): Madison Keys saved a match point before stunning world number two Iga Swiatek to set up an Australian Open final against two-time defending champion Aryna Sabalenka.

Keys claimed a shock 5-7 6-1 7-6 (10-8) victory over five-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek to reach the second major final of her career.

Poland's Swiatek served for the match at 6-5 in the third set and held match point but Keys saved it, broke back and then recovered from 7-5 down in a fraught tie-breaker to advance.

Keys said: "The third set was so up and down. There were so many big points and break point chances. I feel I blacked out at one point and I was just there running around."

Keys' victory came after Belarusian top seed Sabalenka earned the chance to become the first woman in 26 years to win three successive Australian Open titles with a commanding 6-4 6-2 win over close friend Paula Badosa. While Keys has achieved a career-best Australian Open run, Sabalenka is aiming to emulate Martina Hingis'

three straight titles between 1997-99.

"I have goosebumps. I am so proud of myself and my team that we were able to put ourselves in such a situation," Sabalenka said.

"If I put my name in history it will mean the world for me. I couldn't even dream of it."

Swiatek's loss also means Sabalenka will retain the world number one ranking after the tournament.

Swiatek had been in imperious form in Melbourne, losing just 14 games across her five matches before the semi-finals. For context, only three players in history have dropped fewer games in making the last four at the Australian Open in a 128-player draw during the Open era.

However, the four-time French Open winner was undone by an inspired Keys, determined to win an Australian Open semi-final at the third attempt.

A messy start featuring five breaks of serve in the opening six games set the tone for an awkward night under Rod Laver Arena roof for Swiatek, who broke for a fourth time to take the first set before capitulating in the second. Keys took just 27 min-

utes to overwhelm Swiatek reeling off five straight games to force a deciding set.

Both players saved numerous break points as the tension ramped up during an enthralling, high-quality deciding set.

Swiatek eventually took her eighth opportunity to break for a 6-5 lead but, after failing to take her first match point, conceded serve with a double fault.

A winner-takes-all tie-break was what Keys and the match deserved but Swiatek looked to be in control of it at 7-5 up.

However, in a final impressive show of physical and mental resilience, Keys won five of the next six points to complete a sensational win after two hours and 35 minutes.

On facing Sabalenka in the final, Keys said: "There will definitely be some big hitting and not a lot of long points, but I'm really excited for the challenge."

Top seed Sabalenka previously described Badosa as her "soulmate" but she successfully put aside their off-court relationship to continue her pursuit of a third successive triumph at Melbourne Park.

Sabalenka, winner of both the Australian Open and US Open last year, quickly went a break down against Badosa, and the Spaniard was within a point of taking a 3-0 lead.

But Sabalenka emphatically hit back, winning 12 of the next 16 games to record her 20th straight victory at the tournament.

The two barely exchanged a glance as they focused on their respective tasks but they shared relieved smiles after Badosa fell early in the second set before raising a reassuring thumb as she lay on the court.

What started as a fiercely-contested match began to drift away from first-time major semi-finalist Badosa when she gifted Sabalenka control of set two, conceding a break of serve with back-to-back double faults.

Another in the fifth game then allowed Sabalenka to break for a second time with one of her 32 winners, before she served out victory in one hour and 26 minutes.

Sabalenka, later seen consoling Badosa in the players' area, said: "It was a super tough match against a friend, I'm super happy to see her at her highest level."



HUNTINGDON, ENGLAND: Gavin Sheehan riding Super Survivor clear the last to win The Pertemps Network Handicap Hurdle at Huntingdon Racecourse on Friday in Huntingdon, England.

Guardiola accepts PSG were better after Man City's collapse

PARIS (Reuters): Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola appeared resigned to the fact that his side were resoundingly outplayed by Paris St Germain in a 4-2 loss that leaves their Champions League knockout hopes in doubt -- a prospect that would have seemed unthinkable in recent campaigns.

Guardiola's men squandered a two-goal lead on Wednesday as PSG struck four times in the second half. The result dropped City to 25th in the standings, one spot outside the playoff qualifying positions.

They now need to win when they host Club Brugge in a nerve-jangling finale of the league phase on Jan. 29.

"We had our moments and they had their moments, but they were

better," he told TNT Sports. "They were quicker, faster, they won the duels, we could not cope. They were fast. The best team won. The game was never like we wanted."

"To play you have to play. To defend the result you have to keep the ball -- we didn't have it. They had it more, they attacked better, that's why it was more difficult."

The loss was reminiscent of City's shocking collapse against Feyenoord in November, when they surrendered a three-goal lead late in the game to draw 3-3.

When asked about the possibility of City -- Champions League victors in 2023 -- not going through, Guardiola said: "It could happen. We will see."

"If we don't win (v Brugge) we don't deserve it. All the away games we

have are difficult, but it's the reality. We didn't get enough points."

Former Manchester United defender turned pundit Rio Ferdinand said it would be an embarrassment for the Premier League titans to fail to advance.

"I think Manchester City, with all the success they've had in recent years, have put them into a position where people expect them to get minimum into the knockout stages," Ferdinand said on the TNT broadcast.

"I think (City) will take it as an embarrassment, because they see themselves as a team that should get into the latter stages and they've demanded that of their team for the last few years."

Guardiola, who spent much of the match wildly waving his arms in frustra-

tion, said the game was lost in the midfield, where his squad is sorely missing Ballon d'Or winner Rodri to a season-ending knee injury.

"In football, everything happens in the middle," he said. "We have a last chance at home, we'll do everything there."

A thrilled PSG manager Luis Enrique, Guardiola's good friend and former teammate at Barcelona, said the result was a huge boost to his team.

"Take the ball to one of the best teams in the world was our objective and we achieved it," he told reporters. "That was our idea, to be dangerous, to attack the spaces when they opened up and I think we got what we wanted."

"If we can do that at Manchester City, we can do it against a lot of teams."

Leaders Rangpur finally lose as playoff race heats up

DHAKA (ESPNCricinfo): Rangpur Riders and Fortune Barishal have opened up a lead at the top of the BPL points table but the race for the other two playoff spots are tight during the Chattogram phase of the tournament. Durbur Rajshahi and Dhaka Capitals have revived their campaigns and are closing in on No. 3, where Chittagong Kings are placed after losing three of their last four games.

Khulna Tigers are fourth at present with a game in hand over the two teams below them, but will rue missing a great chance to beat Rangpur. Sylhet Strikers are the only team still struggling with four points at the bottom of the table.

Rajshahi began their Chattogram leg under fire after their players protested over not being paid by skipping a training session. But they were the first team to beat Rangpur this season, trouncing them by 24 runs. Barishal beat Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna in their match-

es in Chattogram.

Best batter: Tanzid Hasan

Dhaka's revival was spearheaded by their openers, with Tanzid Hasan hitting 62, 22 and 90 not out off 54 balls in three innings in Chattogram, to follow up his century against Rajshahi in Sylhet. His seven sixes during his unbeaten 90 against Chittagong took his tally to 29 - the most by a Bangladeshi batter in a BPL season.

Chittagong's Graham Clark struck a superb century, a match-winning 101 off 50 balls, against Khulna. Anamul Haque also scored a hundred - 100 not out off 57 - against Khulna but his innings came in defeat for Rajshahi during a chase of 210.

Anamul's team-mate Yasir Ali made 60 off 32 with six sixes in a victory against Rangpur.

Pakistan quick Akif Javed is becoming the revelation of the season; he's currently second on the wicket charts with 15

scalps and an economy of 6.59. Javed, 24, has hit speeds in the high 140kph range and took four wickets against Chittagong and three against Rajshahi, often using the bouncer to good effect from around the wicket.

Ryan Burl's four-wicket haul was instrumental in Rajshahi's big win against Rangpur. Some of the tournament's top spinners were also successful in Chattogram, with Tanvir Islam, Mohammad Nawaz, Arafat Sunny and Sunzamul Islam all taking three-wicket hauls.

Unusual events

Khulna's 19-year-old left-arm spinner Mahfuzur Rahman Rabby conceded 27 in his only over against Chittagong; it was the second most expensive of the season behind Kyle Mayers' 30-run over against Rangpur.

Sylhet lost Al-Amin Hossain to an injury after the toss against Dhaka, but the opposition captain Thisara Perera reportedly refused them a replacement player.

Rajshahi had a poor outing against Chittagong, getting bowled out for 80 - the lowest total in the franchise's history. In that game, Chittagong's Naeem Islam became only the second Bangladeshi batter after Mahmudullah to hit a fifty after turning 38.

Tale of the table

Rangpur finally lost this season after eight consecutive wins, but remain four points clear of Barishal in second place. The defeat to Rajshahi ended a 11-match winning streak for Rangpur going back to their Global Super League title triumph in Guyana.

Barishal's three consecutive wins have put them in second place, on the brink of a playoff spot. Chittagong, currently two points behind in third place, have tough fixtures coming up against Rangpur and Barishal.

Khulna Tigers moved up to fourth place, level with Rajshahi on eight points but ahead on net run rate. Dhaka, despite being on six points, are also in the running for the playoffs.

The Rookie-Scale Hack: Why the Spurs should get Steph Curry

LOS ANGELES (Yahoo Sports): It appears the Golden State Warriors dynasty is coming to a close. The team has lost 19 of its last 28 games, many of those defeats coming with Stephen Curry in uniform, and now sits under .500. It's an unthinkable collapse for a championship organization considering that Curry is still a top-10 player in the league by many advanced metrics. As our own Kevin O'Connor outlined this week, it might be time for Curry and the Warriors to part ways just as Paul Pierce and the Celtics did back in 2013, a tough decision that successfully laid down the next championship foundation for Boston.

If Curry were on the trade block, there's no shortage of teams that, in theory, would be interested in adding the greatest shooter who ever lived. Who wouldn't? But with this new collective bargaining agreement and the trade restrictions it sewed for many teams in title pursuits, Curry's contract will likely prove to be too onerous. The 36-year-old is owed \$55.8 million this season, \$59.6 million in 2025-26 and \$62.6 million in 2026-27 — currently the most

expensive contract in the sport on an annual basis.

The San Antonio Spurs, however, should consider that a bargain.

Spurs president R.C. Buford and the whole organization should do everything they can to acquire Curry. Skeptics might say it's too soon for second-year phenom Victor Wembanyama, who is still playing on his rookie-scale contract.

But that's precisely why you trade for Curry. Wemby's four-year, rookie-scale contract is a roster-building cheat code. It provides a golden window of opportunity.

Past teams recognized the hack in the system and leveraged it into championships. The Spurs should do the same while Wemby is healthy and dominating.

Said one longtime GM: "In this league, you never have as much time as you think you have."

It's not too early for Wembanyama and the Spurs. Early is the whole idea.

Before Jimmy Butler, before LeBron James, there was Shaquille O'Neal. It was the summer of 2004 when Heat team president Pat Riley found out that the Lakers' three-time champi-

on and MVP center might be available following a startling L.A. Finals loss to the Pistons. The Heat had reached the conference finals just once in the 16 years of the franchise and were poised to make a South Beach splash.

What better way to do that than pick from a championship core? Riley struck a deal to pluck the 32-year-old O'Neal, who was just two years removed from winning a Finals MVP.

The Heat sent Lamar Odom, Caron Butler, Brian Grant and a future first-round pick to Los Angeles. Notably absent from the deal: Dwyane Wade, who had just wrapped up a dazzling rookie season.

"I wanted to go to another contender, and Miami is definitely another contender," Shaq told the AP at the time of the trade. "We're just going to grow together."

Operative word: grow. No one could be blamed if he or she saw Shaq's "contender" characterization of the Heat as a tad premature. Wade was still just 22, and the Heat were coming off a season in which they posted a middling 42-40 record.

Riley didn't care about the standings. He didn't care about the \$27.7 mil-

lion that Shaq would be owed in 2004-05, \$10 million more than any other player. When Shaq inexplicably became available, the former Lakers coach pounced on the opportunity to bring in the richest contract in the sport, knowing he had Wade waiting in the wings.

It turned out to be a stroke of genius. Two years later, in just the third year of Wade's career, the Heat won a 2006 championship. It was a 24-year-old Wade, not Shaq, who earned the Finals MVP nod.

Wade's salary while winning the Finals MVP? A hair over \$3 million.

That's right, the NBA champions were paying their best player, who averaged 34.7 points in the NBA Finals, half of what they were paying role players Jason Williams, Antoine Walker and James Posey.

This is the Wemby window. We can talk about the godfather star-chasing story of Riley trading for Shaq. But there's a cold-calculated economic lesson here, too.

The Heat capitalized on the artificially suppressed salary for a budding superstar, Wade, who was still in the midst of his four-year rookie scale contract.

B R I S B A N E (ESPNCricinfo): Rocky Flintoff struck his first century in an England Lions shirt on the second day of the tour match against a Cricket Australia XI at Allan Border Field in Brisbane.

Flintoff, 16, leapt in the air and kissed his bat as he acknowledged the applause of his team-mates after he dominated the home attack, his innings including six sixes, in a 124-ball century.

Batting at nine, Flintoff ensured the Lions recov-

ered from 161 for seven before being bowled out for 316. The teen's second fifty came from just 45 balls and gave the Lions a 102-run first-innings lead before the CAXI reached 33 for one at the close.

Skipper Alex Davies hit 76 at the top of the order and Freddie McCann added 51, while Tom Whitney was the best of the home attack with four for 72.

The Lions were in danger of conceding a first-innings deficit after they lost five for 27 when

Flintoff strode out to bat.

The Lancastrian added 66 with fellow teenager McCann, who struck eight fours in his half-century, before he slapped off-spinner Raf MacMillan to point.

Flintoff then took charge, the feature of his innings of 108 the heaved sixes over the leg side that provided more than a striking resemblance to his father's strokeplay, as the home bowlers had no answer.

The comparison with Andrew Flintoff didn't end

there. At 16 years 291 days old, Rocky is youngest player to score a maiden hundred for England A / Lions .. beating 20 yrs 28 days by his father against Kenya at Nairobi in 1988.

It was subtlety that took him to his century, however, a dab for two to the off-side that immediately prompted him to remove his helmet and begin his celebrations.

Sam Cook then reinforced the Lions' advantage when he nicked off Henry Hunt to wicketkeeper James Rew for one.

Rohit's Ranji return lasts 19 balls as he falls for 3 against J&K

M U M B A I (ESPNCricinfo): Rohit Sharma's return to the Ranji Trophy was a short-lived one - he lasted 19 balls and scored just three in Mumbai's Group A fixture against Jammu and Kashmir at the Sharad Pawar Academy in BKC in Mumbai.

Rohit, India's Test and ODI captain who has been going through a terrible run of form, was the focus of a lot of attention in the lead-up to the game as soon as he confirmed his presence in the game with a nod and "I will" at the Champions Trophy squad announcement press conference last week.

With a white floppy hat and sunglasses on, Rohit was relaxed before the game, joking with his team-mates as they warmed up with some head volleyball.

But he wore a determined look as he walked out to open with his regular India opening partner in Tests, Yashasvi Jaiswal, after Mumbai's captain Ajinkya Rahane opted to bat.

To accommodate Rohit and Jaiswal at the top, Mumbai had to leave out Ayush Mhatre, who, in his debut season, has been one of Mumbai's star performers: 408 runs from nine innings at an average of 45.33 with two centuries.

It was a cool winter morning in Mumbai, a relief after a week that

saw temperatures touch the mid-30s. And J&K's opening bowlers made sure to make use of the early-morning nip.

Auqib Nabi conceded a four early in the opening over but then tightened his lines; Rohit got off the mark with a single through the on side.

But he was given a proper work over by Umar Nazir Mir, who bowled two successive maidens to him. Mir maintained a consistent line outside off and varied his lengths a touch, not allowing Rohit to get going.

Rohit managed to drive a Nabi delivery through the covers for a couple in the next over but once again was kept quiet by Mir, who got his reward on his 17th ball.

He bowled a length delivery on the fifth stump, with a hint of movement away from the right-hand batter.

Rohit looked to play his trademark pick-up shot over midwicket but only managed to get a leading edge to the off side.

Paras Dogra ran a few yards to his left from mid-off to extra cover, called loud and clear, and pouched it to end Rohit's stay in the middle.

The short stay in the middle meant that Rohit's lean run in red-ball cricket continued.

Across five home Tests against Bangladesh and New Zealand at home last year, he had

just one half-century to show - against New Zealand in Bengaluru - with four single-digit scores across ten innings.

He also had just one double-digit score in five innings in Australia, where he played in three of the five Test matches. He finished the 2024-25 Test season with a batting average of 10.93.

Rohit's first-class batting average of 10.43 across 16 innings in the 2024-25 season is the second-lowest for any batter since 2006 (for a minimum of 15 innings while batting in the top six).

England's Haseeb Hameed averaged 9.44 across 18 innings in the 2018 season.

Before Rohit, Jaiswal fell. Nabi managed to get his line right against the left-hand batter, getting a couple of balls to move away. One of those narrowly missed the outside edge of Jaiswal's bat - a muted appeal was given not out.

On the next ball - the third ball of the third over - Nabi got a length ball to jag back viciously; Jaiswal was caught off-guard, and was beaten on the inside edge and hit on the back leg right in front of middle and leg.

He was quite deep in the crease and the umpire took little time in raising the finger.

Jaiswal, who was one of India's most successful

batters at the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, dragged himself off with 4 against his name.

After the close of play Nazir, who took 4 for 41, said Rohit's wicket was a "prized" one.

"A good ball is a good ball against any player, you don't look at the stature of the player. But Rohit Sharma's wicket is a big one, I am happy."

When you dismiss an international player, it is always a prized wicket.

There was some help from the surface, I tried to bowl in right areas. Rohit Sharma is a big name and his wicket was important for us and for me, personally, as well."

Nazir was part of J&K's line-up when they defeated Mumbai at the Wankhede Stadium in 2014. He had picked up four wickets in the second innings, which was why he was unfazed by having to bowl at such high-profile batters.

"I slept off at 10pm last night and woke up around 7am and was quite relaxed," Nazir said.

"I tried to bowl fuller lengths because of the bounce on the surface. [When Rohit was dismissed] the first thought in my mind... I did not celebrate because I am a big fan of Rohit Sharma."

If we manage to win this game, it would be a proud moment for me, and the team, because India's captain is playing in the opposition."



In brief

PEIRA holds training session

ISLAMABAD (APP): In continuation of its commitment to enhancing educational quality, PEIRA organized a training session on Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)-based education for over 250 teachers from private schools across Islamabad. The training, in collaboration with the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE), focused on equipping teachers with essential skills in Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics aligned with outcome-based learning. Under the visionary leadership of Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, and Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, PEIRA continues to lead efforts to raise teaching standards and improve learning outcomes across Islamabad's private educational institutions. Addressing teachers' community, Dr. Sayeda Zia Batool emphasized, "Continuous professional development and quality teaching are integral to ensuring that our students in the Islamabad Capital Territory receive the best possible learning experience, fostering a brighter future for all." The same was endorsed by the Chairman, FBISE.

ANF recovers 138 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force while conducting seven operations across the country managed to recover over 138 kg drugs worth of Rs 10 million and arrested seven accused including two women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that 1.2 kg opium and 2.4 kg hashish were recovered from a car intercepted near Sagian Bridge, Sheikhupura and three suspects were arrested. The arrested accused confessed to selling drugs to the students of educational institutions. In another operation, 429 different intoxicated tablets hidden in jackets were recovered from a parcel booked for the UK through a courier office in Lahore. 200 grams opium was recovered from a parcel sent to Hong Kong through a courier office in Rawalpindi. 78 kg hashish hidden in secret cavities of a truck was recovered near the Northern Bypass in Karachi and a suspect was arrested. 50 kg hashish hidden in Panshi area of Balochistan was recovered in an operation. 3.6 kg hashish was recovered from a woman's bag rounded up near Japan Road Islamabad. In 7th operation, 1.5 kg ice drug was recovered from two accused including a woman nabbed near Airport Road Quetta.

Omani team visits IIUI

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-profile delegation from Nizwa University, Oman, led by Dr. Waleed Khalid Hilal Al-Rajhi, Dean Planning and Quality Management and national coordinator of Oman along with Dr. Rashid Said Al Abri, Dean of College of Engineering and Architecture, Nizwa University, Oman visited the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) and called on its President, Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed, to explore avenues for scientific and academic collaboration. Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed provided a comprehensive overview of IIUI's progress over the last five decades, highlighting its 11 faculties, 40+ departments, and a diverse academic environment enriched by over 60 foreign faculty members and students from 44 countries.

Minister directed inquiry on theft of fences within a week

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization and Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan has directed that an inquiry should be conducted into the matter of when and where safety fences on Motorways across the country were broken or stolen and a report be submitted within a week after determining those responsible for this.

He further said that theft or damage to protective fences along Motorways will be intolerable in future and the concerned authorities will be held responsible for it, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

While chairing a briefing session of the National Highway Authority, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan said that the obstacles in the construction of the Islamabad

Motorway from Kharian should be removed and it should be made 6 lanes instead of 4 so that the future requirement of the citizens can also be kept in view. He said that there can be no compromise on the safety and security standards on Motorways and in this regard the department of NHA will have to make a permanent and coherent policy to implement.

He also directed to complete the repair work on all the Motorways of the country at a fast pace. Abdul Aleem Khan has called for SOPs within a week for establishing new interchanges from the Motorways and directed that the NHA should make a uniform policy for all and put it on the website.

The minister while declaring the N-25 Highway from Quetta in Balochistan to Karachi as the top priority said that

this project is very important for the country and therefore it must be completed as soon as possible.

In this high-level meeting of the National Highway Authority, the Federal Secretary for Communications and the Chairman of the National Highway Authority briefed the Federal Minister for Communications about the pace of ongoing projects in various provinces and the work completed so far while various policy issues including providing access to Islamabad Airport from the M-1 Motorway were also on the agenda.

Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan was also briefed about the priority projects of the National Highway Authority and budget allocation for various projects and final approval was taken from him on important issues.

Pink Bus Service gets thumbs up from civil society, women's rights

ISLAMABAD (APP): Civil society organizations and women's rights activists have welcomed the launch of the Pink Bus Service in Islamabad, calling it a "positive step" towards promoting women's empowerment and education.

They were of the view that this initiative is a testament to the government's commitment to addressing the transportation challenges faced by women in accessing educational facilities.

Executive Director of Community Empowerment Network Talha Khan said, "We commend the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training for taking this proactive step towards promoting girls' education."

He remarked that the Pink Bus Service in Islamabad has been a

game-changer for women's empowerment and education in the region.

He further stated that it will help reduce the dropout rate of girls from schools and colleges.

Zartasha Niazi Human Right Activist said "Pink Bus Service is a groundbreaking initiative that promotes women's rights and empowerment adding that it is a significant step towards creating a safer and more inclusive public transportation system."

She opined that the Pink Bus Service is a beacon of hope for women and girls who have been marginalized and excluded from public spaces. It is a reminder that their rights and dignity matter.

Fatima a student of F/6 model college said that "By traveling in women-only buses, it reduce their risk of

facing harassment and feel more secure during their journey."

She detailed her experience that "Honestly, getting to college used to be a real struggle for me before the pink buses came along," but now, I feel so much more at ease, and I always arrive on time."

"The Pink Bus Service is providing a safe and reliable mode of transportation for female students and teachers, enabling them to pursue their education without worrying about transportation costs or safety concerns," she stated.

The civil society has urged the government to expand this initiative to other parts of the country, particularly in rural areas where girls' education is severely impacted by lack of access to transportation.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Vatican City Archbishop Germano Penemote meeting with Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony Chaudhary Salik Hussain.

Conference highlights character mastery framework for varsities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Association of Private Sector Universities of Pakistan (APSUP) on Thursday hosted the fifth annual Rectors' Conference in the federal capital, where Superior University presented the guiding principles of its newly developed "Character Mastery Framework".

This framework emphasizes integrating character-building initiatives into academic structures, promoting leadership and ethical skills among students and incorporating these values into curricula.

Speaking at the event, Federal Education Minister Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui stated, "Education devoid of morals and values paves the way for selfishness, greed and destruction. To achieve character mastery, we must focus on grassroots."

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), praised Dr. Sumaira Rehman, Rector of Superior University, for

her efforts in initiating dialogue on character development with university rectors, emphasizing its necessity for youth.

In her address, Dr. Sumaira Rehman shared that seven strategies were employed to implement the Character Mastery Framework at Superior University. "If we aim to train responsible citizens and leaders for tomorrow, character-building must be our top priority to cultivate a generation of wise and ethical leaders," she added. Dr. Basit, President of the APSUP Federal Chapter, highlighted that the framework provides a roadmap for universities to integrate character-building into their academic programs.

The conference featured international participation, including Edward Brooks, Director of the "Project for Character" at Oxford University, and Elizabeth Clifford, Research Fellow at the "Centre for Character and Virtues" at the University of Birmingham. They presented their institutions'

designs for character mastery frameworks to the attendees.

On the final day, a panel discussion was held on the practical integration of character education into university curricula.

The session was moderated by Syed Ali Mohsin Naqvi, Director of the "Center for Contemporary Islamic Sciences". Panelists included notable academic leaders such as Dr. Adnan Noor Mian, Vice Chancellor of ITU, Dr. Muhammad Ali Shah, Vice Chancellor of Punjab University, Prof. Dr. Aftab Maroof, Rector of FAST National University, Prof. Dr. Bushra Mirza, Vice Chancellor of Fatima Jinnah Women University.

The panelists shared actionable strategies for incorporating ethical education into academic programs and discussed challenges faced by higher education institutions in achieving this vision.

The conference concluded with the distribution of honorary shields and certificates among participants.



ISLAMABAD: Hutchison Ports MD Andy Tsoi meeting with Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh.

ICT Police committed to ensuring security

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Police Syed Ali Raza held a meeting on Thursday with a delegation from the Traders' Association to address their security concerns, emphasizing the police's commitment to ensuring the safety of traders and commercial areas.

A public relation officer told APP that the delegation highlighted issues related to security and parking in business hubs. DIG Raza assured the delegation that Islamabad Police is taking robust measures to safeguard traders.

DIG said that zonal SPs have been directed to meet with local traders and resolve their issues on a priority basis. DIG Raza also urged traders to facilitate citizens by ensuring proper lighting, parking arrangements, and installation of security cameras in markets. He further stressed the importance of collaboration between market guards and patrolling officers while discouraging professional beggars and their facilitators.

The Traders' Association commended the long-standing relationship between the business community and Islamabad Police, noting that mutual cooperation has significantly contributed to reducing crime in various areas of the city.

Association presented several suggestions to improve security, which DIG Raza welcomed. He instructed zonal SPs to prioritize addressing traders' concerns to enable a secure and peaceful environment for businesses to thrive.

ICT Police modifies cyber crime unit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police has upgraded the Cyber Crime Unit moving it to the Safe City headquarters, providing state-of-the-art facilities.

ICT Police has also appointing experienced officers to ensure efficient investigation and prosecution of cybercrime cases.

A public relation officer told APP on Thursday that the Inspector General of Police (IGP) had directed operational commanders in a recent conference to take practical measures for efficient handling of cyber-crime cases.

He said that the Cyber Crime Unit has been directed to relocate to the Safe City headquarters to provide advanced technical facilities. Senior officers have been deployed to strengthen the unit, while performance monitoring mechanisms, including KPIs, have been introduced to ensure accountability.

He further stated that skilled officers with expertise in relevant fields have been appointed as inquiry officers, investigation officers, and support staff. Moreover, senior police officers will now handle investigations into cyber crime cases instead of junior officials.

To enhance citizen services, a dedicated counter for cybercrime assistance has been established at the Safe City premises. Islamabad Police remain committed to continuous improvement across all departments, ensuring better services for the public.

Romina highlights ILES's impact

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam lauded the International Labour and Environmental Standards (ILES) in Pakistan's Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) project for its transformative impact in promoting sustainable practices among industries in Pakistan.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the ILES project on Thursday, Romina highlighted the project's significant role in equipping enterprises with smart environmental management practices, which have enabled them to reduce resource use and minimize pollution.

The ILES project, launched in 2016 through a collaboration between the International Labour Organization (ILO), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and the European Union, aimed at fostering sustainable growth in Pakistan. It focused primarily on key export sectors, including textiles, ready-made garments, and leather, enhancing their competitiveness and ensuring continued access to the European Union's Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+).

Ms. Romina stated that this project not only supported labour but also enhanced the industry's effectiveness in addressing

climate change, global environmental sustainability, and the need for the labour force to be better equipped in line with international standards.

Ms. Romina emphasized that the ILES project has been pivotal in strengthening compliance with international labour and environmental standards, contributing significantly to Pakistan's national progress.

She noted that the project improved occupational safety and health, particularly in small factories, while boosting productivity in larger ones.

Furthermore, the initiative played a crucial role in supporting policy reforms that align Pakistan's frameworks with global standards, ensuring the nation's industries remain competitive on the international stage.

"The government of Pakistan remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering partnerships like ILES, which bring together public and private stakeholders as well as our international partners. These collaborations are essential in achieving our shared goals of sustainable development," she said.

She also stressed that the end of the ILES project should not be seen as a conclusion but rather as a foundation upon which to build. "The insights, resources and networks generated through this initiative must

now inform our broader national strategies," she added. "Together, we can ensure that Pakistan not only meets its international obligations but also thrives as a leader in sustainable industrial practices."

Ms. Romina assured the audience that the government would continue to support initiatives like ILES, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to environmental sustainability, global competitiveness, and inclusive economic growth.

Secretary of Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis, Dr. Arshad Mahmood highlighted the achievements of the ILES project. Reflecting on its impact, he noted that the project fostered a new culture of safeguarding labour rights at both the federal and provincial government levels.

Speaking at the event, Director General of WWF-Pakistan, Hammad Naqi Khan said WWF-Pakistan is actively promoting organic cotton cultivation to enhance sustainability and reduce environmental impacts. The organization has engaged over 13,000 farmers across approximately 80,000 acres, with 21,833 acres certified organic.

He provided an overview of the ILES project and emphasized that while the SMEs sector had been overlooked in the past, this initiative helped establish valuable partnerships with the private sector.

Illustrators workshop concludes at NBF

ISLAMABAD (APP): The four-day illustrators workshop concluded successfully at the Ahmed Faraz Auditorium of the National Book Foundation (NBF) on Thursday. Around twenty illustrators from twin cities participated in this international workshop with a special focus on children's education.

NBF, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training and Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi, organised this workshop.

The moderators included Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi Manager Publications Fareeha Nasim, NBF Publication Incharge Nazia Rehman, Srilankan Writer and Director Mahesh Pathirathna, and resource person Maria Riaz from Muzaffarabad, Kashmir.

The aim of the workshop was to produce children's literature in order to pro-

mote reading culture in Pakistan from an early age.

The speakers stressed the importance of producing literature that connects with real life and prepares children for the future.

Manager Publications of Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi Fareeha Nasim expressed a commitment to expanding such workshops to different regions of Pakistan.

"Such initiatives will nurture local talent, providing platforms for writers and illustrators to gain valuable guidance and opportunities."

Renowned Sri Lankan trainer and director Mahesh Pathirathna provided practical principles and suggestions to enhance the participants' skills, while Maria Riaz focused on developing picture books and fostering an appreciation for art and science among children.

They guided participants on writing for children,

generating ideas, and creating engaging stories using illustrations.

Managing Director of the National Book Foundation, Murad Ali Mohmand, shared, "NBF is actively promoting book culture and storytelling events across Pakistan in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education."

He expressed gratitude to Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi and Room to Read for their support in executing this significant initiative.

The workshop concluded with the distribution of certificates to participants.

The event was streamed live worldwide by Asad Nagra and Aftab Ahmed.

Murad Ali Mohmand expressed his satisfaction with the successful completion of the workshop and reiterated the foundation's commitment to organising similar training initiatives in the future.



ISLAMABAD: Visitors taking interest in displayed artwork at exhibition "A Spring Reverie - Petals & Porcelain" by Irfan Cheema in Tanzara Gallery.

Iran’s minister to visit Kabul

KABUL (Amu TV): Iran’s diplomatic mission in Kabul announced that Abbas Araghchi, the country’s foreign minister, will soon visit Afghanistan. The statement did not specify the timing or purpose of the visit. Iran, a key regional player and a neighbor to Afghanistan, maintains close ties with the Taliban. These relations have expanded since the Taliban’s return to power in 2021. However, Tehran has yet to officially recognize the Taliban rule.

Afghan national arrested

KABUL (Ariana News): A 28-year-old man from Afghanistan was arrested following a knife attack in a park in the German city of Aschaffenburg in which two people were killed. The suspect deliberately attacked a kindergarten group in the park with a kitchen knife, Bavarian Interior Minister Joachim Herrmann said. A 41-year old passerby, a German man, and a two-year old boy of Moroccan descent were fatally injured, while a Syrian two-year old girl was injured, he said.

Swedish Committee stops operations in Afghanistan

KABUL (TOLONews): The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, which has been operating in Afghanistan for over 40 years, announced the complete cessation of its activities in the country.

The organization said that it has closed all its offices in Afghanistan and will henceforth operate from outside the country as “Solidarity Committee for Afghanistan.”

In a statement, the committee said: “SCA no longer implements activities in Afghanistan and our offices have closed. Outside Afghanistan we now operate under the name of Solidarity Committee for Afghanistan.”

This comes after the Islamic Emirate suspended the operations of Swedish organizations in Afghanistan in July last year in

response to the burning of a copy of the Holy Quran by a Swedish citizen.

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan mainly focused on providing aid to women, children, and people with disabilities.

Although officials of the Islamic Emirate have not yet commented on the suspension of the Swedish Committee’s activities in Afghanistan, some experts say that humanitarian assistance from organizations like the Swedish Committee benefits Afghanistan. They suggest that the Islamic Emirate should adopt a suitable mechanism to allow such organizations to continue their operations.

Economic analyst Shakir Yaqubi said: “If the Islamic Emirate reviews its strict policies or restrictions imposed on international organizations in

Afghanistan, this could naturally enhance Afghanistan’s international credibility and attract other international organizations to the country.”

Another economic expert, Lal Zazai, said: “It is necessary to establish a mechanism through mutual agreement to align the goals of the Afghan government with those of the Swedish government.”

According to information provided by the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, the organization operated in 16 provinces of the country in 2023 with approximately 7,000 Afghan employees.

The Islamic Emirate suspended the activities of the Swedish Committee in Afghanistan earlier this year in response to the burning of the Quran in Sweden.

Restoring women rights requires meeting with IE



KABUL (TOLONews): The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has stated that restoring human rights for Afghan women and girls requires engagement with the caretaker government of Afghanistan.

Jan Egeland, the head of NRC, has called on the international community to engage with the current Afghan authorities and increase their support for principled humanitarian aid.

He added that the lack of engagement by many countries with Afghanistan’s caretaker government not only results in the imposition of further restrictions but also increases migration.

Egeland stated: “Restoring human rights for women and girls requires engagement with the Afghan authorities. More seminars in Western capitals will have little

impact. We urge the international community to engage with the authorities in Afghanistan, like we do, and increase their support for principled humanitarian assistance, for which the authorities must create an enabling environment. Many countries’ continued disengagement with authorities in Afghanistan is only enabling more restrictions and suffering for the women, girls and families here – many of whom see no option but to risk their lives on perilous journeys.”

Regarding this issue, Nageena Daneshjoo said: “Considering the problems we Afghan girls face, along with immense stress and anxiety, we urge the Islamic Emirate to take more serious action regarding the situation of Afghan girls.”

Women’s rights activist

Bahara Ataee also stated: “If engagement takes place, countries must ensure that these interactions lead to the strengthening of human rights, especially the rights of Afghan women and girls, with a primary focus on their basic needs.”

During his visit to Afghanistan, Egeland warned that after decades of conflict, crippling economic collapse, and devastating climate shocks, the country is not prepared to accommodate millions of people who may face deportation from neighboring countries in the coming months.

Former diplomat Aziz Maaraj said: “Human rights must be upheld in Afghanistan, especially women’s rights regarding work and employment, and schools should be reopened for Afghan girls. Unless this issue is resolved, further problems will arise in Afghanistan, affecting the economic, social, migratory, and even political and security sectors.”

The Islamic Emirate has not yet commented on these statements by the Norwegian Refugee Council.

However, it has previously emphasized its desire to maintain good relations and expand engagement with all countries worldwide.

Recovered addict setup drug treatment center



GHAZNI (TOLONews): A recovered drug addict in Ghazni province has established a treatment center to help other addicts recover.

Nawroz, the director of the private addiction treatment center, stated that he uses his own experiences to treat individuals struggling with drug addiction. On the other hand, some individuals undergoing treatment have expressed their desire to return to a normal life after recovery.

Qader, a patient undergoing treatment, said: “Addiction is not something that can be cured with medicine given to

you by someone else. A person must have patience and endurance. If someone wants to quit drugs, they must believe they can do it.”

Rahimullah, another patient undergoing treatment, said: “I even went to Peshawar and Islamabad, but I was not cured. However, by the grace of God, I recovered here. Now I have very positive thoughts and I believe I can do anything, whether it’s staying in Karachi or pursuing other opportunities.”

Esmatullah Maroof, 52, who completed his treatment at the center, is now engaged in helping other addicts recover.

He stated that returning to normal life was one of his dreams.

Esmatullah Maroof, a recovered addict, said: “I always dreamed of becoming a prosecutor or a good judge, but unfortunately, drugs took those opportunities away from me, even though I had them. I had a law office in Ghazni city, but drugs took it all away from me.”

The director of the treatment center has urged the interim government and aid organizations to support him in providing treatment for those addicts who cannot afford the costs due to financial difficulties.

Central Bank to auction \$20 million amid rising dollar value

KABUL (Khaama Press): Following the rise in the value of the US dollar against the Afghan currency, Afghanistan’s central bank, under the control of the Taliban, announced that it will auction 20 million US dollars.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the bank stated that it would release this amount of currency into the market next Saturday.

The Taliban has urged private banks and financial institutions to participate in this auction.

The auction of this amount of money is aimed at curbing the rise in the value of the dollar against the Afghanistan’s currency.

Just five days ago, the Taliban also auctioned 18 million US dollars.

Recently, the exchange rate of the US dollar has been increasing against the Afghanistan’s currency.

Currently, the exchange rate for one US dollar in Afghanistan’s currency market stands at 75.50 Afghani.

It is noteworthy that the increase in the value of the US dollar coincided with Donald Trump taking office as the new president of the United States.

Meanwhile, Donald Trump, the new president of the United States, recently signed an executive order suspending all US foreign aid programs for 90 days, with reports indicating that this suspension is to assess how these programs align with national interest.

Fluctuations in the value of the dollar against the Afghanistan’s currency have always been a challenge for the people, and with the recent rise in the dollar’s value, citizens are expressing concerns over the increasing prices in the country.

Taliban flog 10 people

KHOST (Amu TV): In the latest instance of public corporal punishment, Taliban flogged nine men and one woman in Khost province on charges that include adultery, sodomy, running away from home, extramarital relations, and making threats.

According to a statement from the Taliban-controlled Supreme Court, the individuals were whipped between 30 and 39 times in Sabari district of Khost and sentenced to one to three years in prison. The court claimed the punishments were carried out after their convictions were upheld by the Taliban’s Criminal Division of both the Sabari District Court and the city’s Primary Court.

Local Taliban judicial officials, administrative staff, and residents of the area were reportedly present during the punishments, the statement said.

This incident adds to a growing list of corporal punishments carried out by the Taliban in recent months. Since the beginning of the past month, at least 28 individuals, including six women, have been publicly whipped in various provinces on charges such as theft, adultery, and other alleged offenses.

The Taliban’s return to public punishments has drawn sharp criticism from international human rights organizations.

Last year, Taliban reportedly flogged 580 people, including 42 women, in provinces across Afghanistan for a variety of alleged crimes.

The United Nations and other human rights organizations have strongly condemned the Taliban’s use of public punishments.

These organizations have called for an immediate end to such practices, citing violations of international human rights standards.

Amnesty International has previously expressed concern over the lack of access to fair judicial processes under Taliban rule, raising alarms about the conditions of those imprisoned and subjected to punishment.

Afghanistan seeks Turkey’s expanded cooperation



KABUL (TOLONews): Noor Jalal Jalali, Acting Minister of Public Health, in a meeting with Cenk Ünal, the Turkish Ambassador in Kabul, called for the expansion of Turkey’s cooperation in Afghanistan’s healthcare sector.

During the meeting, both parties discussed the issuance of urgent visas for patients, maternal and child health, support and development of sustainable cooperation with Turkey-supported hospitals in Afghanistan, and the

importation of high-quality medicines.

Sharafat Zaman Amarakhil, spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Health, stated that the review of previous healthcare agreements and the implementation of new agreements were also discussed in the meeting.

Regarding this matter, Amarakhil said: “Discussions were held on facilitating the visa issuance process for patients in urgent need. Minister Noor Jalal Jalali emphasized that Turkey’s support is essen-

tial for Afghanistan’s healthcare system.”

Doctors believe that Turkey’s cooperation in Afghanistan’s healthcare sector, especially in equipping healthcare centers and enhancing the capacity of Afghan doctors, plays a significant role.

Dr. Mojtaba Sufi said: “If we can import advanced medical equipment from Turkey and improve the scientific capacity of our doctors, it will greatly contribute to our national economy. In this case, our citi-

zens will not need to spend exorbitant amounts for treatment abroad.”

Dr. Najibullah Qasemi also stated: “If the visa issuance process for patients in need is expedited and training opportunities for Afghan doctors are provided, it will greatly help address the deficiencies in our healthcare services.”

Meanwhile, Afghanistan’s healthcare sector has been supported by several international organizations and countries for many years.

Afghan Minister describes Qatar as ‘friend and partner’ of Afghanistan

KABUL (Ariana News): Acting Defense Minister Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid on Thursday met with Mirdeif Alqashouti, the Chargé d’Affaires of Qatar for Kabul, and described Qatar as a “friend and partner” of Afghanistan.

Enayatullah Khwarizmi, the spokesman for the ministry, said in a statement that Mujahid emphasized the importance of strengthening relations with Qatar.

Mujahid also expressed gratitude for Qatar’s longstanding assistance and cooperation with the people of Afghanistan.

The statement added that the two sides discussed further cooperation in areas such as economic relations, trade, strengthening bilater-



al ties between Kabul and Doha, and other related issues.

On Wednesday, Yaqoob

Mujahid also met with Faisal bin Talq al-Buqami, the Saudi Ambassador to Kabul, and stressed

Riyadh’s commitment to expanding economic, political, and humanitarian cooperation with Afghanistan.

Taliban remain silent on Trump’s comments

KABUL (Amu TV): Five days after US President Donald Trump called for the retrieval of American military equipment left in Afghanistan, the Taliban have yet to issue an official response, maintaining silence on the matter.

In a rally held on the eve of his inauguration, Trump said the US will give them some money but they want their military equipment back.

A joint report by the US Department of Defense and the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) estimates that the value of American military equipment left behind exceeds \$7 billion.

The report, published in June 2022, stated that approximately \$7.12 billion worth of military assets, funded by the United States, were in the invento-

ry of Afghanistan’s former government when it collapsed in August 2021.

These assets included \$923.3 million worth of military aircraft and \$294.6 million worth of related weapons systems. Additionally, the inventory listed more than 316,000 firearms, including rifles, sniper rifles, rocket launchers, and other weapons, valued at an estimated \$511.8 million.

Other leftover equipment included armored vehicles, night-vision devices, and communication tools. The report highlighted that \$4.12 million worth of armored vehicles, including Humvees, were in Afghanistan at the time of the government’s fall.

Concerns about the misuse of these assets have grown, as the report noted that 20 to 30 percent of the equipment had fallen into

the hands of groups such as Al Qaeda in the three years prior to the Taliban takeover, according to the former chief of staff of Afghanistan’s military.

Mohammad Asif Sediqi, the former deputy speaker of the Afghan Senate, said, “A significant amount of the equipment was transferred out of Afghanistan to places like Kashmir, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, and Iran. Much of it is now in the hands of terrorist groups, creating a global security concern.”

The Taliban have not responded to questions about the current location of the equipment or claims that some of it has been used by other extremist groups.

Politically, Trump’s remarks may carry broader implications for the Taliban. Abdul Qader Zai, the former head of the sec-

retariat for Afghanistan’s lower house of parliament, suggested that Trump’s comments were intended as leverage.

“This is a message: if our demands are not met, we want the equipment back. And if our demands are not fulfilled, we will stop financial aid,” Zai said. “It’s a way of preparing the ground for future plans that Trump, his administration, and other Americans may have for Afghanistan.”

Bloomberg, citing unnamed sources, previously reported that the Taliban had rejected Trump’s request.

Taliban officials reportedly stated that they require additional military aid to combat threats like ISIS-Khorasan, which has emerged as a major security challenge in the region.

UK increases funding to clear landmines in Afghanistan

KABUL (Amu TV): The UK government has increased support for the HALO Trust, a Scottish charity dedicated to clearing deadly explosives in Afghanistan, according to a statement by UK embassy for Afghanistan.

This funding of £3 million will allow the HALO Trust to continue its work removing landmines and unexploded ordnance in Afghanistan between April

2025 to March 2026, the statement said.

It added that the funding will help restore basic services and support the safe return of refugees.

“No one should have to live in fear of being killed or maimed by one wrong step. These deadly devices sow fear and destruction for decades and organisations like the HALO Trust do a vital job in clearing mines,” UK’s International Devel-

opment Minister Anneliese Dodds said.

“I was struck by the increasingly important contribution that female deminers are making in a traditionally male-dominated sector,” she added.

The statement said that through UK funding, 5 million square metres of land has been safely cleared of explosive ordnance between April 2023 and March 2024.

The statement added that the UK government remains committed to supporting these efforts as part of its mission to rebuild communities affected by conflict and make global communities safer.

Afghanistan remains one of the most vulnerable countries to the harms posed by landmines and unexploded ordnance left by conflicts.

Pak forces capable of dealing with any challenge: President

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has said that Pakistan Armed Forces were capable of dealing with any challenge. He made these remarks while addressing to the delegation of participants of the 38th Air War Course of the Pakistan Air Force who called on the President, a President Office's news release said.

The President was briefed on the aims and objectives of the course organized by the Air War College Institute of the Pakistan Air Force. The Course participants comprised of 34 military officers from 15 friendly countries who were participating in the 38th Air War Course.

While addressing the participants of the 38th Air War Course, the president said Pakistan desired peace as development and prosperity were possible only with peace. "Pakistan has always desired to promote brotherhood among Muslim countries," he said. The president added that every eye was filled with tears over the devastation in Gaza.

Meanwhile, Pakistan and Azerbaijan have reiterated their commitment to enhancing collaboration in the areas of trade, energy, air connectivity, and people-to-people contacts.

This was discussed during a meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and the visiting Minister of Defence Industry of Azerbaijan, Mr Vugar Mustafayev, who along with his delegation called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Thursday.

Welcoming the visiting Minister, the President highlighted the historic and deep-rooted relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. He urged the need to increase people-to-people contacts, tourism links, and trade and business relations to promote regional economic cooperation.

Zardari to visit Pabbi today

F.P. Report

PABBI: The President Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Asif Ali Zardari, will visit Zarbagh, Pabbi, today (on Friday) to offer condolence Sardar Ali Khan on departure of his wife.

During his visit, President Zardari will offer condolences to Senator Dr. Dreena Durrani, former Provincial President of PPP, on the demise of her mother-in-law and the mother of Shazad Ali Khan. In this regard, the district administration of Nowshera has finalized all arrangements for the President's visit to Pabbi, Nowshera. A helipad has been set up near Ghazi Model School and College, Pabbi. A high-level meeting was held in the office of Deputy Commissioner Nowshera, Irfanullah Mahsud, which was attended by Director IB, Assistant Commissioner Pabbi, Hawla Khadadar, Additional Deputy Commissioner Nowshera, Bashir Ahmed, DPO Nowshera, Abdul Rashid Khan, DSP Pabbi, Jawad Khan, DSP Irfan Khan, Motorway Police, DSP Headquarters, Munir Khan, SHO Pabbi, Taimur Saleem Khan, TMO Tehsil Pabbi, Amin Gul, and the medical staff of Shaheed Miyan Rashid Hussain. The district administration of Nowshera, led by Deputy Commissioner Nowshera, Irfanullah Mahsud, visited Zarbagh, Pabbi, and reviewed the arrangements. Full-proof security arrangements have been made for the President's visit. The President will be accompanied by the Special Security Unit (SSU) and other security agencies, Sardar Ali Khan, former Provincial President of PPP, has appointed Muhammad Ilyas, President of Tehsil Press Club Pabbi, as the focal person for the President's visit to Zarbagh, Pabbi. All departments have been directed to coordinate with the focal person for the smooth execution of the President's visit. The President's visit to Zarbagh, Pabbi, is expected to be a brief one, and he will return after offering condolences.

The President called for finding ways and means to strengthen cultural linkages and further boost people-to-people exchanges. He welcomed the operationalization of direct flights between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, expressing the hope that it would further boost people-to-people ties. Over 72,000 Pakistanis have visited Azerbaijan in 2024 for business and tourism purposes, marking a 25% increase from the previous year's figure of 55,000 travellers.

The Minister highlighted the deep-rooted ties between the two countries, saying that Azerbaijan was keen on further enhancing bilat-

eral cooperation with Pakistan in the fields of energy, business, and culture. He said that both nations had supported each other through challenging times and expressed gratitude for Pakistan's political support to Azerbaijan which, he said, would always be remembered by the people of Azerbaijan.

The Minister of Defence Industry of Azerbaijan thanked the President for his warm welcome and conveyed the sincere wishes of the President of Azerbaijan, Mr Ilham Aliyev, for the good health of the President and the continued success, peace and prosperity of Pakistan.

Progress on proposed Peshawar, D I Khan Motorway reviewed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting regarding the proposed Peshawar-Dera Ismail Khan Motorway project was held on Thursday at the Chief Minister's Secretariat with Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur in the chair.

The meeting reviewed various options for implementing the flagship project, and a decision was made to initiate the land acquisition process, and Finance Department was directed to release an initial amount of Rs. 2 billion for this purpose.It was decided that land acquisition would begin simultaneously from both the Peshawar and D.I. Khan sides.

During the briefing, the Chief Minister was informed that the 365-kilometer-long motorway will feature six lanes, 19 interchanges, and two tunnels, connecting seven districts to be completed with an estimated cost ofRs. 348 billion.

The Chief Minister emphasized that the Peshawar-D.I. Khan Motorway is a flagship project of the provincial government, which will serve as a milestone for the economic development of the region. He noted that the motorway will boost economic and commercial activities, provide high-quality transport facilities to the people, and create employment opportunities.

He directed relevant authorities to work out the most feasible option for the execution of the mega project. The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister on Finance Muzammil Aslam, Additional Chief Secretary for Planning Ikrumullah Khan, and senior officials from the departments of finance, planning, and communications.

KP CM directs Halal Food Authority to improve checking systems: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Authority pre-

sented a report to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regarding sub-standard chips, pops, nimkos and spices in the province, at a meeting held here with Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair.

The meeting was attended by Provincial Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru, Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development Ikrumullah Khan, Secretary Food Saqib Raza Aslam and senior officials of the Food Safety and Halal Food Authority. It was decided in the meeting to take action against unregistered and loose chips, pops, nimkos and spices openly sold in markets and to register all factories producing these items, with a one-month deadline given to both small and large factories for registration with the Halal Food Authority.

It was also decided to ensure effective monitoring and checking of factories to meet food safety standards, with heavy fines to be imposed on factories failing to comply. In the next phase, a ban will be imposed on the sale of unregistered and non-compliant products in the market.

During a briefing by the Halal Food Authority, the participants were informed that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority had completed its testing campaign for chips and pops adding that for the first time in the province's history, a two-week drive was carried out to test pops and spices, during which 462 samples were collected from various factories and analyzed. Out of the total samples, 175 were of pops, 24 of nimkos, 160 of seasoning powders, and 103 of curry powders.

Out of 175 pops' samples, 93 were satisfactory, while 82 were found unsatisfactory. Similarly, out of the 24 nimko samples, 16 passed, and 8 failed. Out of the 160 seasoning pow-

der samples, 131 were satisfactory, while 29 were unsatisfactory. Likewise, out of the 103 curry powder samples, 74 passed, and 29 failed. The percentage of failed samples was found to be 46.2% for chips, 33.3% for nimko, 18.1% for seasoning powder, and 28.1% for curry powder. The analysis of the samples included parameters like moisture, free fatty acids, total ash, peroxide value, packaging thickness, and aflatoxins.

Testing was conducted using advanced equipment such as ELISA readers, Proximate NIR, Muffle Furnace, and Digital Screw Gauge. The purpose of this testing campaign was to evaluate the quality of chips available in the market and the spices used in their production. Addressing the meeting, the Chief Minister said that ensuring public health is the government's foremost responsibility and that no compromises would be made in this regard adding that no business will be shut down or hindered unnecessarily but not at the cost of public health.

He made it clear that, those factories manufacturing and selling food items must comply with food safety standards at all cost. The Chief Minister further directed the Halal Food Authority and other concerned departments to improve their monitoring and checking systems. He emphasized that substandard and harmful products pose serious threats to public health, necessitating timely and effective measures for their prevention. He also stressed the need to launch massive public awareness campaign to educate people about avoiding substandard and harmful products. He also directed that a comprehensive plan should be devised to enforce compliance with food safety standards among factories producing edible products. Subsequently, industries failing to comply standards will face heavy fines and bans.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari in a group photo with participants of 38th Air War Course, currently undergoing training at PAF Air War College Institute.

IHC issues notice to FIA

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday issued notices to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) related to the acquittal pleas of ex-premier Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi in the new Toshakhana case.

In the case, the FIA accused the couple of retaining an expensive Bulgari jewellery set gifted by a foreign leader — including a necklace, earrings, bracelets, and rings — at a low price, saying it caused significant loss to the national exchequer. Today's hearing at the IHC was presided over by newly sworn-in Justice Inaam Ameen Minhas.

The couple were apprehended in the case on July 13, 2024, following their acquittal in the Iddat case the same day. They were indicted in the case by Special Court Central-I Judge Shahrulkh Arjumand on December 15. Judge Arjumand had already dismissed the couple's acquittal pleas in November last year. Subsequently, earlier this month, the couple approached the IHC to appeal the rejection.

While Bushra was granted bail in the case from the IHC in October 2024, allowing her to be freed after nearly nine months of detention, last week's conviction of the couple in the Al-Qadir Trust case has sent her back to jail.

A special court had last month already issued an arrest warrant for the former first lady in the case for failing to appear in court for the past 10 hearings. Imran was granted bail in the case on Nov 20, 2024, but has remained incarcerated since August 2023 in a series of legal cases, which he claims were "politically motivated". In a judgment this month on Imran's post-arrest bail petition in the case, the IHC declared that the PTI founder cannot be prosecuted for failing to deposit a Bulgari jewellery set — gifted by the Saudi crown prince — to the state treasury under the rules. Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb had explained that only the submission of a receipt was mandatory, and not the gift itself, under the Toshakhana rules of 2018.

SC bench reserves verdict

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A two-member bench of the Supreme Court on Thursday reserved verdict in the case of contempt of court by the additional registrar.

A two-member bench of the Supreme Court, consisting of Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Aqeel Abbasi, heard the contempt of court case and reserved the verdict after hearing multiple arguments.

Earlier, in response to the contempt of court notice regarding the rescheduling of the case related to powers of bench, Supreme Court Additional Registrar Nazar Abbas submitted his reply to the show-cause notice. In his response, Additional Registrar Nazar Abbas requested the withdrawal of the show-cause notice, asserting that he did not defy any judicial orders. He stated that he had submitted a note regarding the matter of forming a bench based on the judicial order to the Practice and Procedure Committee.

Advocate Hamid Khan assisted the bench in the matter and presented his arguments. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, engaging in a dialogue with lawyer Hamid Khan, inquired whether a judicial order could be changed administratively.

Advocate Hamid Khan replied that an administrative order could not alter a judicial order. He explained that the Supreme Court's formation is under Article 175, and judicial power is vested in the entire Supreme Court.

PPP has long history of striving for labourers

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in his address at the swearing-in ceremony of newly elected members of Ittehad Union of All Pakistan Employees of OGDCL, said that the PPP has a three-generation long history of striving for labourers and workers.

Chairman Bilawal felicitated the newly elected President Zahid Hussain Bhutto and other members from the Union. He said that the PPP and labourers unitedly attained a Constitution for the country, by struggling shoulder to shoulder with the Quaid-e-Awam, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. This was the first time that the labourers of the country were given unprecedented rights. The labourers also struggled with Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, who was able to face dictators like General Zia and General Musharraf with the support of her brothers.

The PPP, when given the opportunity has always

upheld the labourers' agenda, Chairman PPP said. The labour policy of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was devolved, and put into practice first by the Government of Sindh. The Party has protected and furthered the cause of labour rights in the federal and provincial systems. The economy can thrive with support of the labourer fraternity. Chairman Bilawal Bhutto recalled increasing the allowances of employees during his tenure as the Foreign Minister, adding that the last increase had also been made by the PPP government in 2011.

Chairman PPP said that the success of the members is a testament to the majority of those within the institution supporting their cause. There is no system in the world where a government can sustain without the support of the people. History is witness that systems that are run against the wishes of the people cannot survive. Chairman Bilawal said that this is relevant even today in Pakistan. The government occasionally

adds to its own issues through one-sided policies devoid of consensus. Decisions that are consensus-based and adhere to the desires of the people are more effective and easier to implement. The 18th Amendment cannot be tampered with today because it was based on consensus and the will of the people.

Chairman PPP said that the policies being made today could have seen more success if the allies were consulted. He said that the PPP is the voice of the people not only in the Parliament, but in all interactions with the government's representatives. He commended the employees at the institution for their hard work. Chairman Bilawal advocated for an end to the politics of hate. He expressed concern regarding the current political climate which does not cater towards resolving the issues of the people. He said that the solutions to the problems of the people should take precedence instead of someone's imprisonment or release.

PHC plans to establish Special Inheritance courts

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has made a landmark decision to establish special inheritance courts at divisional level across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This move aims to expedite the resolution of inheritance cases that have been pending for years.

According to sources, the special inheritance courts will be established in phases, starting with the divisional level, followed by the district and tehsil levels. Initially, senior civil judges and session judges will preside over these courts. The Peshawar High Court's circuit benches and principal seats will also have special inheritance benches.

The primary objective of establishing these special courts is to provide timely justice to the people and reduce the burden of pending cases. The court aims to resolve the long-pending inheritance cases and bring relief to the affected families.

According to data, over 5,500 inheritance cases have been pending for years, with the majority of them in Peshawar. The

court's decision aims to address this backlog and provide justice to the affected families.

Judges will receive special training to facilitate the expeditious resolution of inheritance cases. This training will enable judges to handle these cases efficiently and effectively.

Chief Justice Peshawar High Court, Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim will personally oversee the establishment and functioning of these special courts. The Registrar Peshawar High Court has been directed to notify the establishment of these special courts and take immediate action to resolve the pending cases. The establishment of special inheritance courts is expected to have a significant impact on the justice system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It will provide timely justice to the people, reduce the burden of pending cases, and bring relief to the affected families.

Court extends ban on gold mining in Kohat: The Peshawar High Court has extended a ban on gold mining in Kohat district due to the use of mercury in

the process and directed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to inspect the environmental conditions of the area.

The court has also sought a report from the provincial government before the next hearing. Advocate Nauman Mohibullah Kakakhel, in his petition, argued that mercury is used in the mining process in Kohat, which not only causes environmental problems but also leads to the disposal of waste into the Indus River, polluting the water.

He further stated that the waste generated from mercury usage negatively affects the Indus River and nearby agricultural lands. The use and improper disposal of this chemical is harmful to humans, animals, and plants and violate the Environmental Protection Act. Deputy Director Legal of the Environmental Department, Mumtaz Ali, informed the court that more time is required for site inspection. The court granted the provincial government a one-month extension and continued the injunction against the use of mercury in gold mining.

ICC prosecutor seeks arrest of Taliban leaders

THE HAGUE (AFP): The International Criminal Court's (ICC) chief prosecutor on Thursday said he was seeking arrest warrants against senior Taliban leaders in Afghanistan over the persecution of women, a crime against humanity.

Karim Khan said in a statement that there were reasonable grounds to suspect that Supreme Leader Haibatullah Akhundzada and Chief Justice Abdul Hakim Haqqani "bear criminal responsibility for the crime against humanity of persecution on gender grounds". Khan said that Afghan women and girls, as well as the LGBTQ community, were facing "An unprecedented, unconscionable and ongoing persecution by the Taliban."

"Our action signals that the status quo for women and girls in Afghanistan is not acceptable," added Khan. ICC judges will now consider Khan's application before deciding whether to issue an arrest warrant — a process that could take weeks or even months. The court, based in The Hague, was set up to rule on the world's worst crimes such as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

It has no police force of its own and relies on its 125 member states to carry out

its arrest warrants — with mixed results. In theory, this means that anyone subject to an ICC arrest warrant cannot travel to a member state for fear of being detained. Khan warned he would soon be seeking additional applications for other Taliban officials. The prosecutor noted other crimes against humanity were being committed as well as persecution.

"Perceived resistance or opposition to the Taliban was, and is, brutally repressed through the commission of crimes including murder, imprisonment, torture, rape and other forms of sexual violence, enforced disappearance, and other inhumane acts," he said. Human Rights Watch (HRW) said that the prosecutor's actions should put the Taliban's exclusion of women and girls from public life back on the international community agenda.

"Three years after the Taliban retook power, their systematic violations of women and girls' rights ... have accelerated with complete impunity," said Liz Evenson, HRW's international justice director. After sweeping back to power in August 2021, the Taliban authorities pledged a softer rule than their first stint in power from 1996-2001. But

they quickly imposed restrictions on women and girls that the United Nations has labelled "gender apartheid".

Edicts in line with their interpretation of Islamic law handed down by Akhundzada, who rules by decree from the movement's birthplace in southern Kandahar, have squeezed women and girls from public life. The Taliban government barred girls from secondary school and women from university in the first 18 months after they ousted the US-backed government, making Afghanistan the only country in the world to impose such bans.

Authorities imposed restrictions on women working for non-governmental groups and other employment, with thousands of women losing government jobs — or being paid to stay at home. Beauty salons have been closed from visiting public parks, gyms and baths as well as travelling long distances without a male chaperone.

A "vice and virtue" law announced last summer ordered women not to sing or recite poetry in public and for their voices and bodies to be "concealed" outside the home.