

63 Pakistanis deported
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In the last 24 hours, a total of 63 Pakistanis have been deported from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iraq, and Malaysia, according to immigration authorities. Saudi Arabia: Among the deportees, 4 individuals were blacklisted, 15 were sent back for begging, and 10 were deported for overstaying their visas.

 @thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXI No. 345 Regd. No. 241 RAJAB 07 1446 -- TUESDAY, JANUARY 07 2025 PESHAWAR EDITION 12 PAGES PRICE. 30



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting on progress upon the measures taken against human trafficking.

Kurram incident wouldn't affect peace deal: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Saif, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's information adviser, has said that an incident in Kurram district will not affect the peace agreement.

"We could not share the details for now that who are the accused and to whom they belong," provincial official said. Muhammad Ali Saif said, "This is sensitive information, we will share the details after completion of the investigation." He said, the roads will be opened after issuance of security clearance.

It is to be mentioned here that after a peace deal between the warring tribes in Kurram region and it was decided to open the roads, militants opened fire on Deputy Commissioner Javedullah Mehsud, injuring him and some security personnel. According to reports two militants involved in the attack on DC Kurram have been arrested. The militants were apprehended during a crackdown in Kurram, police said. Sources revealed that the arrested militants have also been nominated in the FIR of the firing incident on the DC.

Earlier, the Additional Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa issued a notification imposing Section 144 in Kurram district for a period of two months. The decision comes amid concerns over attempts by terrorists to disrupt the peace agreement in the area.

Meanwhile, following a direct attack on a convoy carrying relief goods to Parachinar, which left Deputy Commissioner Javed Mehsud and six others injured, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has announced a series of stringent security measures for restoration of peace and law and order in Kurram tribal district.

The firing on a peaceful convoy carrying relief goods from Thall to Parachinar on January 4, has drawn widespread condemnation from civil society, politicians, journalists, religious leaders and tribal elders that termed it an attempt to sabotage peace efforts in Kurram.

The life attempt assault, which took place at Bagan area in Lower Kurram on Parachinar-Thall Road, has escalated tensions in the area, prompting high-level government officials to convene an emergency meeting in Kohat that took a number of key decisions for restoration of public order. In a bid to restore peace and security in the restive Kurram, the government of

KP has promised to take decisive action, with strict security measures aimed at both bringing those responsible to justice and preventing further violence in the restive region bordering close to Afghanistan.

An official statement issued by the KP government has revealed that a high-level meeting of Govt authorities at Kohat held last night resolved to name the attackers and their facilitators in an FIR. The culprits would face charges under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATC) and that additionally, those arrested will be added to the Scheduled IV list, which includes individuals deemed to be threats to national security.

The KP government has also made it clear that tribal elders of both parties, who signed the peace agreement will be held accountable for the attack on the peaceful convoy including DC Kurram. The tribal and jirga elders have been instructed to cooperate with authorities of KP Govt and hand over the perpetrators of the January 4 assault, otherwise strict action was on card at the incident place.

Should the elders fail to comply, the government would be left with no other option but to directly arrest the culprits, and severe administrative actions would be enforced on critical routes such as the Thall-Parachinar and Torawrai-Shahsu roads. Furthermore, the government has threatened to halt all assistance and financial aid to the area in question in case of noncooperation. In addition to the above measures, the government will take strong action against any officials found to be inciting sectarianism and fanning violence besides provocation speeches.

A potential operation in the affected area is being considered if the accused are not handed over to the authorities by the tribal and jirga elders forthwith. Strict enforcement of security protocols, such as curfews on Thall-Parachinar during movement of convoys and designation of armed individuals as terrorists, is also on cards.

As the KP government is determined to restore peace in the region and impement the recent KP Apex Committee decisions, the officials emphasized that the violence witnessed in Kurram during this difficult period cannot be tolerated further. Syed Akhtar Ali Shah, former Inspector General of Police, stressed that a clearance operation in Bagan was imminent unless the tribal elders and peace negotiators ensured the handover of the real culprits to Govt.

also expressed his condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families.

Mohsin Naqvi stated, "We salute the sacrifice of our martyred officers and stand with their families during this difficult time. The brave heroes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police have made history with their sacrifices in the fight against terrorism."

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on police officers near Lakki Marwat, in which two brave officers embraced martyrdom. Paying tribute to the fallen heroes, the minister expressed heartfelt con-

lences to their families, assuring them of the nation's unwavering support during this difficult time.

"We salute the sacrifices of the martyred officers who have set an example of courage and dedication," said Naqvi. He emphasized the historic contributions of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police in the fight against terrorism, stating that their bravery and sacrifices will always be remembered and honored. Naqvi reaffirmed the government's commitment to combating terrorism and ensuring the safety of law enforcement personnel who continue to protect the nation.

Gandapur's arrest warrant issued

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A District and Sessions Court in Islamabad has ordered the arrest of KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur in a case pertaining to possessing liquor and illicit arms.

According to details, the court has ordered the SSP Operations to arrest the KP CM on his continuous absence in the hearings. Earlier, the court had handed over a questionnaire to Zahoor Hassan, the CM's counsel in a case pertaining to the violation of Section 144 and illegal possession of weapons and liquor.

In the questionnaire, the District and Sessions court asked Ali Amin Gandapur as if he had participated in the gathering on October 30, 2016, despite the Magistrate's restriction orders. The court also asked the chief minister if he flee the scene in a black car, which was later seized by the police. The court directed Ali Amin Gandapur.

"Was a bottle of liquor found in the car, which was confirmed by the Punjab Forensic Science Agency's report? Was a bulletproof jacket and an unlicensed weapon recovered from the car?" the questionnaire read. Read also: PTI founder's bail pleas in Toshakhana, £190 million cases rejected

Fazl denounces riots disrupting peace efforts

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said that riots erupted the next day after he helped Kurram delegations work towards peace. Speaking at an event at Peshawar's Nishtar Hall, Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that democracy and parliamentary politics in the country lacked quality.

"How long will you continue misleading society? Delegations from both sides approached me, and when we paved the way for resolution, riots started the next day," he held. The JUI-F chief mentioned that a diplomat visited him recently and discussed various matters, including Kurram.

"I told him, you want to hear that this is a Shia-Sunni conflict. We know the solution to the issue," he said. Fazlur Rehman shared that his activities had been on hold for two weeks but he was resuming them from today. He highlighted the parliamentary role of their elders in shaping Pakistan as an Islamic state.

changing one-third of his team in a bid to settle the political turmoil. While several MPs of the governing Liberal Party publicly called on the prime minister to step down after Freeland's resignation, many have continued to stand by Trudeau despite the mounting pressure. On Monday, Trudeau declined to comment Freeland's departure and its impact on his leadership.

"Chrystia has been by my side for close to 10 years now. She has been an incredible political partner through just about everything we have done as a government," he said. "I had really hoped that she would agree to continue as my deputy prime minister and take on one of the most important files that not just this government but this country is facing. But she chose

OTTAWA: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has announced his resignation as Liberal Party leader amid increasing pressure to step down from within the party. From a podium outside his residence at Rideau Cottage in Ottawa on Monday, Trudeau added that he would also step down as prime minister once a new leader is selected.

"I intend to resign as party leader, as prime minister, after the party selects its next leader through a robust, nationwide, competitive process. Last night, I asked the president of the Liberal Party to begin that process," Trudeau said. In announcing the decision, the prime minister made reference to the upcoming federal elections, which must be held before October 20 of this year. "This

country deserves a real choice in the next election, and it has become clear to me that if I'm having to fight internal battles, I cannot be the best option in that election," Trudeau explained.

Trudeau, who has been in power for nine years, saw his popularity wane in recent months, with his government narrowly surviving a series of no-confidence votes and critics calling for his resignation. Pressure on the 53-year-old Trudeau further mounted after former Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland quit in December, following a disagreement over how to respond to United States President-elect Donald Trump's threat of imposing a 25-percent tariff on Canadian goods.

Days later, Trudeau announced a major reshuffle of his cabinet –

The Frontier Post

Tribute paid to Shaheed Aiteaz
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday paid tribute to Shaheed Aiteaz Hasan who sacrificed his life to save his school and classmates from a devastating attack. "Today, we commemorate the martyrdom of Shaheed Aiteaz Hasan, a true son of the soil from district Hangu, KP, whose extraordinary courage stands as a beacon of hope and resilience," the PM said in a social media post on X.

Human trafficking groups, confiscation of properties

PM directs strict legal action

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed for taking of strict legal action against all human trafficking groups in the country to set an example, besides called for immediate legal action to confiscate the properties and assets of human traffickers.

The prime minister chaired a review meeting on measures taken against human trafficking in the country, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister appreciated the recent actions taken by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) against government officials involved in human trafficking.

Following disciplinary actions, he further directed that strict punitive measures should also be taken against facilitators. In the meeting, the prime minister was briefed on the measures taken against human trafficking, progress in the legal actions against facilitators, and in legislation for the eradication of human trafficking.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam, and senior officials from the relevant departments. The prime minister said the prosecution process against all individuals involved in this heinous trade should be made more effective, adding the top lawyers should be appointed for prosecution after consultation with the Ministry of Law and Justice.

The prime minister said the Foreign Office should contact relevant countries to expedite the extradition of Pakistanis running human trafficking operations abroad. He further directed that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, launch an awareness campaign to educate the public about using only legal channels for overseas employment.

He said the country should promote technical training institutions

that could provide certified professionals to the international market according to modern requirements, adding that the screening process for individuals traveling abroad at airports should be made more effective.

Pakistan commits to Muslim World League strategies for girls' education: The Islamic Republic of Pakistan in support with Muslim World League launched a comprehensive platform for Partnerships to Advance Girls' Education in Muslim Societies. Under the patronage and in the presence of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, this groundbreaking manifesto will be launched to support girls' education in Muslim societies.

This initiative, based in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, aims to foster international partnerships by forging alliances among governmental, Islamic, and global civil organizations, thereby creating a widespread network to advance girls' education.

This initiative seeks to implement the principles outlined in Article 25 of the Charter of Makkah, along with principles 22 and 23 from the Charter of Building Bridges Between Islamic Schools of Thought and Sects. These principles were underscored during two international conferences held under the generous patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, may Allah safeguard him.

Additionally, the initiative will implement resolutions adopted by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states regarding both charters, in conjunction with the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Secretary-General of the MWL with the Secretary-General of the OIC, and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretary-General of the Islamic Fiqh Council and the Secretary-General of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy. These agreements were formalized in Makkah on 9/7/1445 AH.

The International Partnerships for

Education in Muslim Societies platform is set to be inaugurated at a global conference titled "Girls' Education in Muslim Communities: Challenges and Opportunities," scheduled for January 11-12, 2025. Organized jointly by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Muslim World League, the conference will include wide-ranging international participation, drawing together representatives from international organizations, governments, Islamic institutions, and senior religious, intellectual, and media leaders, as well as civil society activists from across the globe.

The conference reflects assurance of Government of Pakistan joint with the MWL's unwavering commitment to its responsibilities towards Muslim populations and the foundations of their renaissance. The podium aims to promote girls' education in accordance with authentic Islamic principles, to address the challenges impeding it, and to dispel misconceptions surrounding the issue.

Moreover, the conference serves as an Islamic message to the world, affirming that Islam-a religion of knowledge, civilization, and noble values-firmly supports all laws and practices that enable girls access to education. Any legislation or actions, whether by individuals or groups, that hinder girls' education are contrary to Islamic teachings, which are unequivocally free from such practices.

The conference will focus on initiating and developing strategies to address the challenges facing girls' education and will capitalize on available opportunities to enhance and improve educational outcomes in Muslim societies. The goal is to empower women to fulfill their essential and rightful roles in contributing to the development of their communities across various sectors. This will be accomplished in alignment with the principles outlined in the two aforementioned charters, as well as the actions the MWL is committed to undertake for further activate and implement these principles.

Verdict against Imran, Bushra in Al-Qadir Trust case postponed

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad accountability court on Monday yet again postponed its verdict expected on Monday in the £190 million Al-Qadir Trust corruption reference against ex-premier Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi due to the unavailability of a judge.

Imran and Bushra were indicted in the case on February 27, shortly after the general elections. The case alleges that Imran and Bushra obtained billions of rupees and land worth hundreds of kanals from Bahria Town Ltd for legalising Rs50 billion that was identified and returned to the country by the United Kingdom during the previous PTI government.

Yesterday, amid rumours about the verdict being deferred, Khalid Yousef Chaudhry, one of the lawyers representing Imran and Bushra, stated that there had been no confirmation that the verdict had been postponed. The decision could not be pronounced today because Judge Nasir Javed Rana was on leave.

This is the second time the verdict for this case has been postponed. On December 18, the court reserved its verdict after the defence wrapped its reasoning, saying the verdict would be announced on Dec 23. Then while presiding over the hearing on Dec 23, Judge Rana postponed the hearing till Jan 6 owing to the court going on winter vacation from Dec 24 to Jan 1. In December 2023, the National Accou-n-t-a-bility Bureau (NAB) had filed a corruption reference against Imran and seven others, including his wife, in connection with the Al-Qadir University Trust.

IHC reveals reasons for Imran's bail

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Issuing a 14-page verdict on Monday, Islamabad High Court recorded reasons behind granting extraordinary relief of post arrest bail to former Prime Minister Imran Khan in Tosha Khana II case, categorically saying the matter is of further inquiry.

A single-member bench of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) comprising Justice Miangul Aurangzaib stated in the detailed decision that no action can be taken for not depositing the gift of a Bulgarian jewelry set set in the Tosha Khana. The bench added that when action cannot be taken for not depositing the gift, then this is a case for further inquiry. It has been stated in the verdict that the former prime minister and his wife are accused of not depositing a gift of a Bulgarian jewelry set from the Saudi Crown Prince in the Tosha Khana. It added that prima facie, the non-deposit of gifts in state depository does not entail "appropriate action" under the relevant rules. The bench said in its verdict in the matter that the petitioner (Imran Khan) is of 72 years of age whereas his wife was granted post arrest bail in the same matter saying, "Bearing in mind the principles of consistency as well as my tentative view that this is the case of further inquiry, post-arrest bail was granted to the petitioner vide short order"

The reference filed by NAB alleged that Imran, who is currently in jail, played a "pivotal role in the illicit transfer of funds meant for the state of Pakistan into an account designated for the payment of land by Bahria Town, Karachi". It also claimed that despite being given multiple opportunities to justify and provide information, the accused deliberately, with mala fide intention, refused to give information on one pretext or another.

The reference said the "accused [...] were given multiple opportunities to justify and provide information, but they deliberately, with mala fide intention, refused to provide the information on one or the other pretext. "Furthermore, it is established through their responses that they have nothing in their defence to rebut the above-mentioned allegations. Thus, they all have committed an offence"

under the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO).

It added that the investigation proceedings and findings so far "established that accused persons in connivance with each other have committed the offence of corruption and corrupt practices" as defined under the NAO. The reference said Imran played a "pivotal role" in the illicit transfer of funds which were meant for the state which ultimately benefited Riaz.

Akbar, a former special assistant to the premier and Asset Recovery Unit chief, played a "crucial role" in the "illegal design of the funds" which were meant for the state, the reference said. Malik, the reference said, had "actively aided, abetted and assisted and acted in conspiracy" with the other respondents for the diversion of funds earmarked for the state.

Trudeau steps down as Liberal Party leader amid pressure

OTTAWA: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has announced his resignation as Liberal Party leader amid increasing pressure to step down from within the party. From a podium outside his residence at Rideau Cottage in Ottawa on Monday, Trudeau added that he would also step down as prime minister once a new leader is selected.

"I intend to resign as party leader, as prime minister, after the party selects its next leader through a robust, nationwide, competitive process. Last night, I asked the president of the Liberal Party to begin that process," Trudeau said. In announcing the decision, the prime minister made reference to the upcoming federal elections, which must be held before October 20 of this year. "This

country deserves a real choice in the next election, and it has become clear to me that if I'm having to fight internal battles, I cannot be the best option in that election," Trudeau explained.

Trudeau, who has been in power for nine years, saw his popularity wane in recent months, with his government narrowly surviving a series of no-confidence votes and critics calling for his resignation. Pressure on the 53-year-old Trudeau further mounted after former Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland quit in December, following a disagreement over how to respond to United States President-elect Donald Trump's threat of imposing a 25-percent tariff on Canadian goods.

Days later, Trudeau announced a major reshuffle of his cabinet –

changing one-third of his team in a bid to settle the political turmoil. While several MPs of the governing Liberal Party publicly called on the prime minister to step down after Freeland's resignation, many have continued to stand by Trudeau despite the mounting pressure. On Monday, Trudeau declined to comment Freeland's departure and its impact on his leadership.

"Chrystia has been by my side for close to 10 years now. She has been an incredible political partner through just about everything we have done as a government," he said. "I had really hoped that she would agree to continue as my deputy prime minister and take on one of the most important files that not just this government but this country is facing. But she chose

otherwise." Trudeau's departure leaves the party without a permanent head at a time when polls suggest the Liberals will badly lose to the official opposition Conservatives in the federal elections.

Trudeau trails his main rival, Conservative Pierre Poilievre, by some 20 points in public opinion polls, amid a range of challenges facing Canada from a housing crisis to soaring costs of living. When pressed by reporters about whether another candidate could beat Poilievre, Trudeau was firm: "Absolutely." He also took several swipes at the Conservative leader, who he accused of leading a "veer towards the hard right".

"Pierre Poilievre's vision for this country is not the right one for

Canadians," he said. "Stopping the fight against climate change doesn't make sense. Backing off on the values and strength in diversity that Canada has always, always, worked to pull itself together on is not the right path for the country." Trudeau swept to power in 2015 and led the Liberals to two more ballot box victories – in 2019 and 2021.

Coming to politics after working as a snowboard instructor, bartender, bouncer and teacher, Trudeau was first elected in 2008 to the House of Commons to represent a working-class Montreal neighbourhood. In his first two terms as prime minister, he brought in Senate reforms, signed a new trade deal with the US and introduced a carbon tax to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions.



The father of three also legalised cannabis, held a public inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women, and passed legislation permitting medically assisted suicide. — Aljazeera



KARACHI: A view of passengers sitting on the roof top of the bus while travelling in city cause any incident. —INP Photo

Murad, Rana Tanveer discuss establishment of industrial park

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research (NFSR) and Industries & Production, Rana Tanveer, Monday met at the New Sindh Secretariat to discuss several key initiatives, including the establishment of an industrial park on extra land from the Pakistan Steel Mill, the revival of the Steel Mill, and the creation of the proposed National Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health Regulatory Authority.

The meeting was attended by Provincial Minister for Industries, Jam Ikram Dharejo, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif and SMBR Baqaullah Unar. Rana Tanveer was assisted by Federal Secretary NFSR Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry, DG Waqas Alam, and CEO PIDC Rizwan Bhatti, a CM House Communique said.

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and Federal Minister Rana Tanveer discussed creating an industrial park on 3,200 acres of land belonging to the Pakistan Steel Mill. The Chief Minister noted that this land is already registered in the name of Pakistan Steel Mills Limited (PSML).

In response, the federal minister indicated that the land's designation could be changed to "Industrial Use."

It was agreed that the Federal Ministry of Industries and Production would send a letter to the provincial government to request the change of land use, allowing the provincial government to take appropriate documentation steps. The meeting also highlighted that 1,675 acres were allotted to PSML in 1974-75 for the Steel Project, but the title had not yet been transferred to PSML. The Chief Minister assured Rana Tanveer that this matter would be resolved.

Murad Ali Shah emphasised that approximately 700 acres earmarked for the Pakistan Steel Mills Plant should be preserved for either revitalising the existing steel mill or establishing a new one.

In response, Federal Minister Rana Tanveer informed the Chief Minister that a Russian team had already inspected the current steel mill plant and would submit a proposal for a new plant installation in February.

The Chief Minister expressed a desire for his government to be involved in decision-making regarding the revitalisation of the steel mill,

to which the federal minister assured him support.

The federal minister explained that the National Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health Regulatory Authority is being established with the primary goal of implementing inspection and quarantine controls for the import and export of animals, plants, agricultural products, food, and feed.

The Chief Minister remarked that if the federal government considers the draft Act relevant, it should involve broader consultations with all provincial departments, including Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Provincial Food Authorities, before implementing the Act. He suggested that greater representation from provincial governments be included in the proposed authority.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to strengthen coordination to ensure that the industrial park and revitalized steel mill projects are implemented on schedule.

Additionally, regarding the establishment of the National Food Safety, Animal, and Plant Health Regulatory Authority, the federal ministry would seek comments from the provincial Agriculture and Livestock Department.

Police arrested over 10,000 suspects in crackdown

LAHORE (APP): Lahore police arrested 10,723 suspects and registered an equal number of cases during operations against illegal weapons in 2024. The confiscated weapons include 148 Kalashnikovs, 620 rifles, 376 shotguns, and 9,487 pistols, according to a police spokesman.

CCPO Bilal Siddique Kamyana said that the police carried out successful raids to seize illegal weapons from criminals and offenders. He emphasised a zero-tolerance approach toward illegal firearms, the display of weapons in public, and aerial firing.

Kamyana directed the police to maintain strict surveillance of habitual offenders involved in the possession and sale of illegal weapons. He also ordered action against those using firearms to instill fear in the public.

In addition, he urged continued operations targeting unlicensed weapon holders, fake arms dealers, and unauthorised firearm repairers, ensuring no discrimination in the enforcement of the law.

The CCPO reaffirmed the Lahore Police's commitment to intensifying efforts against arms smuggling and the illegal weapons trade. He commended the force for its vigilant role in crime prevention.

90 acres state land reclaimed

LAHORE (APP): In line with the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Forest Department, in coordination with the police, successfully retrieved 90 acres of state land in a major operation in Khanpur tehsil.

Additionally, the target has been set to recover 188 acres of land in the Rakh Khanpur forest area. A spokesperson for the forest department told media here on Monday that during the operation, the land mafia attacked their team, snatching cash and mobile phones, and attempting to set fire to a government vehicle. The mafia also removed the battery from a tractor. A case has been registered against the influential culprits, and police are conducting raids to arrest them.

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb praised the Forest Department and police team for their successful operation. She reiterated that the protection of state land is the government's responsibility, and all forest lands will be reclaimed.

Marriyum Aurangzeb said that CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz had ordered a grand operation against the land mafia occupying government lands across Punjab. She directed that all government lands be recovered without yielding to any pressure or political influence.

Marriyum Aurangzeb also appealed to the public for cooperation, emphasizing that the success of the operation relies on public support, and lawbreakers will face justice.

LDA seals 116 illegal buildings

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) on Monday continued its crackdown on illegal commercial properties and sealed another 116 buildings in various localities of the city.

Under the guidance of DG LDA Tahir Farooq, teams carried out operations in Gulberg, Faisal Town, New Garden Town, Allama Iqbal Town, Gujjarpura, Shadman and Gulshan Ravi. These operations resulted in the sealing and demolition of commercial properties operating illegally.

A total of 28 properties were sealed in Gulberg, Faisal Town, and New Garden Town, while 36 properties were sealed in Allama Iqbal Town. Additionally, 52 properties were sealed in Gujjarpura, Shadman, and Gulshan Ravi.

The sealed properties include a variety of establishments such as private schools, marriage halls, markets, salons, shops, offices, stores, and more.

CM Punjab, Saudi prince discuss bilateral cooperation

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif praised Saudi Arabia's longstanding brotherly cooperation with Pakistan, stating, "Saudi Arabia is like Pakistan's elder brother; the hearts of the people of both countries beat together."

The CM held a detailed meeting with the former Governor of Hafr Al-Batin Province of Saudi Arabia H.E. Prince Mansoor, to discuss the promotion of

bilateral relations and mutual cooperation, here on Monday.

The meeting also focused on potential investment opportunities in various sectors in Punjab.

During the discussions, the chief minister invited Saudi investors to explore opportunities in infrastructure, health, education, and religious tourism in Punjab. She assured Saudi investors of her government's full cooperation and the pro-

vision of incentives under a special package. "The Punjab government has ensured foolproof security and established a system based on merit to improve the business environment in the province" she said.

Prince Mansoor stated, "The relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is crucial for the stability and prosperity of the entire region." He added, "Saudi Arabia will always stand by Pakistan."

PPP celebrates Zulfiqar Bhutto's birthday



F.P. Report

KARACHI: A ceremony was held in the Sindh Assembly to commemorate the birthday of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.

The event included a cake-cutting ceremony led by prominent mem-

bers of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Ms. Faryal Talpur, Chief of the PPP Ladies Wing, alongside Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon and Provincial Minister Saeed Ghani, took the lead in cutting the cake.

The occasion was attended by several provincial ministers and Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs), marking a tribute to the legacy of the former Prime Minister and founder of the PPP.

Wapda Chairman reviews construction of Mohmand Dam

LAHORE (APP): Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Engr Lt Gen (Retd.) Sajjad Ghani visited Mohmand Dam, a multipurpose project being constructed across River Swat in Mohmand District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and reviewed the ongoing construction activities carried out at the key sites of the project.

During his visit, the Chairman was briefed about the construction in progress at different sites of Mohmand Dam Project that include Diversion Tunnels Outlet Works and Downstream Coffor Dam, Powerhouse Excavation and Shaft Access Tunnel, Spillway Concrete Works, Main Dam, Pit and Plinth Excavation/Concrete Works, Downstream Coffor Dam and Diversion Tunnels Inlet Structure, Power Intake on-going works, according to WAPDA spokesman here Monday.

Sajjad Ghani was accompanied by the General Manager/Project Director Mohmand Dam Project with his team and representatives of the Consultants and Contractors during his visit.

He also presided over a progress review meeting to meet the timeline in accordance with schedule for completion of the project at the project office with WAPDA team, the consultants and the contractors. The matters related to construction in progress on Upstream and Downstream Coffor Dams, Dam Plinth, Foot Print and Pit Excavation Powerhouse, Power Intake/Tunnel Quarry Development and Large Scale Triaxial Results and Spillway Concreting were discussed in detail to achieve the target of timely completion scheduled in 2026-27.

It is important to note that WAPDA is constructing Mohmand Dam Project

across River Swat in Mohmand District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is the 5th highest concrete-face-rock-fill dam (CFRD) in the world and first highest CFRD in Pakistan.

Mohmand Dam will store water for agriculture, control floods, supply water to Peshawar for urban use and generate green, clean and economically affordable hydel electricity. On completion, Mohmand Dam will store 1.29 MAF of water to irrigate 18,237 acres of new land in Mohmand and Charsadda and supplement irrigation supplies to 160,000 acres of existing land. The project has an installed power capacity of 800 MW with annual energy generation of 2.86 billion units of electricity. It will also provide 300 million gallons water per day to Peshawar for drinking purpose. Annual benefits of the project are estimated at Rs. 51.6 billion.

LESCO detect 401 power pilferers in 24 hours

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a total of 401 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) during its anti-power theft campaign in the last 24 hours.

The LESCO spokesman told media here Monday that the company has also submitted FIR applications against electricity thieves, out of which 118 FIRs have been registered in respective police stations, while 19 accused have been arrested by the respective police. Grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are being conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division and the LESCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider is supervising these operations.

The LESCO chief vowed that the operations would continue without discrimination until the complete end of electricity theft. The electricity pilferers as well as the LESCO

officers and employees who facilitate them are also being brought to justice.

During last 24 hours of the anti-power theft campaign, the spokesman added, large commercial consumers were found involved in electricity theft. Among the seized connections, 16 were commercial, 07 agricultural, and 378 domestic, and all of them were also disconnected and charged with detection units. All these connections were disconnected and charged with a total of 274,331 units as detection bill amounting to Rs 12,409 million.

Number of single-phase faulty meters in LESCO region exceeds 120,000: Lahorites are facing problems in timely replacement of faulty meters in various areas of the provincial metropolis.

In this connection, the number of single-phase faulty meters in LESCO region has crossed 120,000.

According to LESCO sources, thousands of faulty meters could not be replaced for the last four months while consumers are facing multiple problems in payments of bills

for faulty meters. When contacted the LESCO local administration said that they could not replace faulty meters due to severe shortage of meters.

It is worth mentioning here that LESCO Chief Executive Shahid Haider in a recent statement has said that to overcome the shortage, the company has borrowed 20,000 single-phase meters from the Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO). The measure was taken to temporarily overcome the shortage at LESCO and resolve the issues being faced by the people while getting new electricity connections. However, the matter would be resolved shortly, he said.

It is worth mentioning here that LESCO is the country's largest power distribution company in terms of power consumption and number of consumers, the company is all set to float tenders in the next couple of days for the procurement of 750,000 single-phase meters, he said. It is worth mentioning here that due to the shortage of meters, people have been facing delays in getting new connections.

LHC stays dismissal of PIA senior flight steward

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday stayed the dismissal of a senior flight steward of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and directed him to deposit Rs. 500,000 with the deputy registrar (judicial) within a week to avail the relief.

Justice Muhammad Raza Qureshi passed the order while hearing a petition

filed by Senior Flight Steward Adnan Khan, who had challenged the Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment's decision to dismiss him. The court also issued notices to PIA, the complainant, and other respondents, seeking replies by January 22.

The petitioner's counsel argued before the court that a female colleague of the

petitioner had filed a complaint with the ombudsman, accusing him of sexual harassment via WhatsApp. The ombudsman accepted the complaint, ordered the petitioner's dismissal, and imposed a Rs. 500,000 fine. A subsequent representation filed by the petitioner to the president was also dismissed, he added.

The counsel submitted

that the ombudsman's decision was unlawful and that the petitioner was not given a fair opportunity to cross-examine evidence. He also described the penalty as harsh and disproportionate.

After hearing initial arguments, the court stayed the petitioner's dismissal, issued notices to the respondents, and sought their replies.

Decade of Doctrinal Shift in South Asian Skies

Dr Air Commodore (Retd) Naveed Khaliq Ansaree

Indulged by the self-perceived concept of "counter-weight to China and net-security provider" in Indian Ocean Region and Indo Pacific, Indians had resorted to a failed approach to intimidate Pakistan in February 2019. Having learned embarrassing lessons, Indian Air Force (IAF) hurriedly inducted Rafale combat aircraft to offset first-shot advantage of Pakistan Air Force (PAF). In order to restore conventional balance in favour of the PAF and frustrate IAF aggressive designs, the current Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber, Sidhu embarked upon an unprecedented fast-track force-modernisation involving induction of state-of-the-art weapon-systems and high-end force-multipliers, concurrently restructuring the entire PAF operational set up as well as establishing new organisational structures for Multi Domain Operations (MDOs), thus; setting the scene for the South Asian skies to witness a phenomenal shift in air doctrine and combat air operations.

PAF has repeatedly proven its mettle and resolve, even beyond borders. Latest PAF Exercise Indus Shield-2024 (IS-2024) has taken PAF once again to the new heights with unmatched precision, strength and dedication while leading from the front. IS-2024 is a mark of Pakistan's strategic-vision for defence-diplomacy, commitment for regional-security and international-collaboration, aiming to boost cooperation, interoperability and strengthen strategic military ties with a range of diverse military forces with Pakistan at the helm.

Indus Shield-2024 was held at Sargodha in October 2024 revalidating the potency of recently inducted weapon-systems and force-multipliers as well as the new air doctrine and operational concepts. Exercise reflected a broad international presence of twenty-four countries, such as: Turkey, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, China and Indonesia as well as

growing roster of states from Middle East, Africa and Europe. The exercise involved very potent combat aircraft, such as: J-10s, F-16s, J-17 Block-III, Panavia Tornado besides employment of traditional and high-end force-multipliers replicating real combat conditions.

Upping a notch further, PAF also conducted Indus Shield C-2024 bilateral module between Pakistan and China which included J-16, J-10 C and lethal HQ-22 Surface to Air Defence system, potent Airborne Electronic Warfare YTG-9 alongside KJ-500 Airborne Early Warning system pitched against PAF's J-10 and JF-17 Block-III fighter aircraft simulating contemporary aerial combat scenarios.

IAF also conducted Tarang Shakti 2-2024 (TS-2024) at Jodhpur a month earlier with an aim of projecting India as a strategic partner and "self-perceived top-tier security provider" in Indian Ocean Region. Eleven countries participated including USA, UAE, UK, Greece, Germany, Spain, France, Australia, Japan and Singapore. The air platforms included F-16s, F-18s, A-10s, Rafale, SU-30 MKI and Mirages as well as traditional force multipliers. TS-2024 did conduct Large Force Engagements and supporting combined operations. However, the focus was on the use of electromagnetic spectrum of the participating foreign air arms and their interoperability. An analysis of recent air exercises given in the succeeding paragraphs could help unfold the doctrinal shift taking place in the skies of the South Asia and its proximities.

The Exercise IS-2024 involved unprecedented Multi Domain Operations, addressing the dilemmas confronting a next-generation air force like the PAF for employment of air power. The Exercise helped honing abilities of the participants in MDOs and warfare-confines while exploiting a range of higher-end force-multipliers, like; Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), Ground-Based Electronic Warfare (EW), Cyber and Space domains. To extract realistic training value, the Exercise

employed "Blue Force" Vs "Red Force" setting with contestants engaging each other with Rules of Engagement conforming to the roles of next-generation air power as well as extending seamless teamwork across multi-domains.

The Exercise also provided another opportunity to PAF for validating the role of four newly established organisational structures for Cyber, Space, UAV and EW domains which constituted essential elements of the MDOs. Another highlight was the newly upgraded and modernised version of Airpower Centre of Excellence (ACE) to conduct international exercises, evaluate large-force tactics, integration of MDOs into combat air operations commensurate with next-generation warfare. Newly restructured ACE rightly earned its fame as "a next-level air warfare training centre".

The Exercise enabled Pakistani defence industry to offer solutions to target-buyers in Africa and Middle East; especially for the JF-17 Block-III, drones, guided stand-off range munitions like cruise missiles and glide bombs, anti-UAV weapons and custom integration services etc. It also unlocked a gateway to air forces seeking to participate in modern exercises without geo-political constraints.

Rapid induction of lethal weapon systems, force-modernisation and restructuring of PAF's entire operational set-up reflect clear strategic vision, futuristic approach and the doctrinal shift that Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber, Sidhu has ensured to retain conventional balance in favour of the PAF as well as provide much-awaited impetus to aviation industry of Pakistan. Hence, the South Asian skies are set to witness a phenomenal shift in modern air warfare doctrines, air strategies and operational concepts; especially the MDOs involving cyber, space, UAVs and EW domains-all integrated into lethal combat scenarios.

Writer is a Director at Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore who could be reached at info@casslhr.com



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi listening to the problems of the people during 2nd Public Day at Governor's House.

SIDB seals 21 illegal shops at SIE Kohat Road

PESHAWAR (APP): On the directives of the Managing Director (MD) Small Industries Development Board (SIDB) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Habib Ullah Arif, the officials of the board and local police sealed 21 illegal shops at Small Industrial Estate (SIE) Kohat Road here on Monday.

These shops were operating in contravention to industrial activities. Heavy cash penalties were also imposed on the owners of the shops.

The shops were included grocers, show-rooms, bakers (tandoors), milk shops and confectioners. The owners of the factory which have had allowed these illegal shops were also fined.

The operation was carried out under the supervision of the Joint Director (Estate) Naseeruddin. Other members of the team were included Incharge SIE Peshawar Muhahid Maqsood, Deputy Director Engineer Zohaib Hassan while the office bearers of the CBA Union Haji Imtiaz, Adnan Gul, Mohammad Roze and other staff members also participated in the operation.

Local police were also deployed to prevent the any unpleasant incident.

According to a spokesman of the Board, a formal commercial building has been constructed to facilitate the workers, which would be operationalise soon.

PESCO notifies power suspension for Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): The PESCO on Monday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Jamrud Grid Station on 7th January from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. resultantly, consumers of New Jamrud grid connected feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will also remain suspended from Hayatabad Grid Station on 7th January from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Peshawar University and Peshawar Industrial grid connected feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, the power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar Grid Station on 7th January from 11 a.m. AM to 1 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Peshawar grid connected feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar Industrial Grid Station on 8th January from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Peshawar Industrial grid connected feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will also remain suspended from Kholian Bala Grid Station on 8th and 9th January from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Sajikot, City Havelian, Town Havelian, Industrial, 1, Kholian, Jabri 3 Customers of CAD, INF Bridge, Sarai Salah, Sangar, Rehana, Bogara feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Haupur Grid Station on 7th and 9th January from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Pinyan 1, 2, Kot 1, 2, Chamha, Zeb Farma, PIDC, Pospet, KT, S 1, 2, Swabi Mera, Swabi Mera 1,2, TOWN 1, 2, 4, 3, 5, SNK, Judicial complex, SIRYA, Baldhir, Pak Istria, NRTC, T&T Mirpur 1, Rehana 1 TIP feeders will face inconvenience.

Doctoral Study stresses psychological capital in female faculty in HEIs

Study calls for a positive job environment

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A doctoral study at UoP stresses high psychological capital for sustaining job performance and organisational commitment in female faculty of Higher Education Institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Further, the said study calls for a positive job environment, including transfer and postings close to natal towns with value addition for toddlers.

Further, the research indicated that work-family conflict results in physical and psychological stress for female faculty and only positivity at both places enhance job performance and organisational commitment. The work-family conflict has been taken as an independent variable and job performance and commitment variables were taken as dependent variables while psychological capital took as a moderate variables.

The effect of work-family conflict on job performance and organisational commitment with the moderation of psychological capital in the female faculty members of higher education institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Earlier, Dr. Durre Nayyab Gul has successfully defended her dissertation titled as "Effect of work family conflict on job performance and organisational commitment with the moderation of psychological capital at higher level in khyber Pakhtunkhwa" under the supervision Prof. Dr. Sajjad Ahmad Khan, Dean of Faculty of Management and Information Sciences.

Her external examiner Dr. Khalid Iqbal from Agriculture University, Peshawar.

The Internal examiner duties were rendered by Dr. Muhammad Junaid, Assistant Professor at Institute of Management Studies, University of Peshawar.



Air pollution: A persistent threat to lives of Peshawarites

PESHAWAR (APP): Once known as City of Flowers, Peshawar is presently confronted with a monster challenge of air pollution that are posing a serious threat to its residents due to an unchecked smoke emission of hundreds of thousands of vehicles, brick kilns and industrial units mostly operating in its urban areas.

The visitors that once impressed by the fragrance of Gul-e-Dawoodi in Peshawar, is now inhaling the growing thick air smoke mostly emitting from thousands of vehicles, brick-kilns, marble units of Warsak Road and chip board factories operating at Hayatabad Industrial Estate, burning of tyres, hospitals waste's burning, which could be seen even with a naked eye while standing on top of Suray bridge near Jinnah Park, Peshawar City.

In Peshawar, the Particulate Matter (PM 2.5) pollution is higher than limits set by the National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS) with a bigger impact on people's lives having more exposure to toxic air increases age-specific mortality risk.

"The PM 2.5 pollution enhances an age-specific mortality risk, and the residents of Peshawar are highly vulnerable to it mostly due to an unregulated traffic, brick kilns and chip boards factories," said Professor Dr Muhammad Shafiqur Rehman, former Chairman Environmental Science Department at the University of Peshawar while talking to APP.

"Basically, PM 2.5 pollution is a complex mixture of extremely small and light particles that stays for longer in the air and once inhaled, can affect people's hearts, nose to lungs, respiratory system besides leading to high blood pressure, strokes, asthma, cancers and other chronic chest related diseases," he said.

Dr Shafiqul Rehman said that the air quality of Peshawar is very poor. He said air quality should be around 25 milligrams (mg) per cubic meter as per WHO standards, adding if the amount of dust, smoke, and zeolite content in the atmosphere exceeds the WHO limit; it is detrimental to the health of living creatures.

He said Peshawar was a geographically and climatically dry city and due to inadequate rainfall, particles of dirt and dust collect up in large amounts in the air and add to the environmental and air pollution.

He said that recent studies revealed that smoke and dust in Peshawar's air is measured between five to 10 feet height where PM2.5 pollution is almost four times higher than

NEQS standards and needs special urgent measures to control it.

Dr Sharique Rehman said the research studies further revealed that emissions from the transport sector constitute a significant portion of overall pollution in Peshawar, accounting for 58.5% while other contributors include roadside dust (17.7%), domestic burning (11.7%), industry (6.6%), waste burning (4.10%), and commercial burning (1.4%).

"The quantity of Nitrogen Dioxide at most of the points has also exceeded NEQS limits, and that its increase can cause lung irritation and weaken body defense against respiratory infections," he said.

"Air pollution first hits the ENT and then attacks a person's lungs. It severely affects the heart and respiratory system besides causing strokes, asthma

and cancers, killing thousands of people mostly children every year worldwide," said Dr Riaz Khan, Principal Medical Officer at Government Hospital Pabbi Nowshera.

He said air pollution kills about seven million people worldwide per year while pollution-induced COPD claim approximately 3.23 million lives per year globally. In Pakistan, he said that COPD causes about 138.2 deaths per 100,000 males and 41.3 per 100,000 females.

Besides implementation of national clean air plan and implementation of environment protection act 2014, he said the Ghari Chandan forest in the outskirts of Peshawar has been raised to improve air quality in the historic city.

He referred to establishing of motor vehicle emission standards, setting up tune-up stations for gasoline and diesel vehicles,

promoting the use of LPG and bio fuel, implementing industrial emission standards, establishing environmental squads of traffic police and regularly checking the quality of fuel and lubricating oils sold in the market and said that cooperation of masses were key to win fight against the common enemy.

The health department is being technically assisted for speedy disposal of thousands tons of solid waste produced by Government and private hospitals every year, he said adding that hospitals were directed to install incinerators for speedy disposal of solid waste and this process has already begun from Peshawar.

Lady Reading Hospital is the largest solid waste producing hospital with 221,920 kilograms per year and such a large quality can't be left unattended," he said, adding first

central incinerator plant installed at LRH for its proper disposal.

Hayatabad Medical Complex, Khyber Teaching Hospital and Shaukat Khan Memorial Hospital Peshawar were also equipped with incinerators. These incinerators work on 1200 degree centigrade to destroy waste in a short time without any adverse effects.

A grand operation against pollution emitting steel-mills, chip boards and marble units was launched at Industrial Estate Hayatabad as well as on Warsak Road and notices was issued to it for installation of dry pollution control system besides several sealed on non-compliance.

1st internet of things (IoT) based Air Quality Monitoring Gadget in KP has been installed at District Government Office Peshawar, especially

designed to detect toxic elements in the air. The machine is designed to sense air quality and temperature, the humidity present in it and the dust, carbon dioxide levels present in the air besides allowing environmentalists to devise pragmatic solutions.

The ban on use and preparations of unsolvable plastic bags has been imposed and only biodegradable plastic bags were allowed in markets, he said, adding operation is conducted in Peshawar, DI Khan, Swat and Peshawar against unsolvable plastic bags units.

Vehicles Emission Testing Stations (VETS) are being strengthened to regulate unregistered vehicles, and ban on smoke emitting vehicles imposed besides installation of dry pollution control system, adoption of safe energy resources and whopping plantations in urban areas to control air pollution.

Azad discusses national unity with Governor

PESHAWAR, (APP): Chairman of the Ruet-e-Hilal Committee and Imam of Badshahi Mosque Lahore, Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabeer Azad, on Monday visited Governor House and met with the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi to discuss national unity.

The meeting was also attended by leaders of the Pakistani-origin business community based in London.

During the discussion, various national and religious issues were addressed, with a special focus on the importance and implementation of the Fatwas issued under the Paigham-e-Pakistan initiative.

The meeting emphasized the need for joint efforts to promote national unity, harmony, and sectarian tolerance.

Maulana Azad highlighted the Fatwas issued under the Paigham-e-Pakistan initiative as a crucial milestone for national unity, pointing out their positive impact.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi acknowledged the role of Paigham-e-Pakistan and said that these Fatwas provide a strong foundation for maintaining peace and eradicating extremism.

The Governor also mentioned that the Governor House had been opened to the public to address issues to the best of its ability.

He emphasized that the Governor House was taking practical steps to promote interfaith and inter-sect tolerance.

He further announced that a national conference of religious leaders would be organized soon at the Governor House. He urged scholars and religious leaders to play their part in spreading this message to the public.

Maulana Azad praised the Governor for holding public days at the Governor House, drawing a comparison to Caliph Umar bin Al-Khattab (RA) who established open courts during his caliphate.

He also appreciated the practical steps being taken at the Governor House to promote inter-sect harmony. Maulana Azad shared that a conference focused on religious tolerance, organized by the Ruet-e-Hilal Committee, would soon be held at the Governor House in Peshawar.

In the meeting, Maulana Azad paid tribute to the late Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, for his services to Pakistan and the Muslim world.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, recognized Maulana Azad's national and religious services, honored him with a special shield and gifts.

Meanwhile, A special Senate meeting of Lakki Marwat University was held at the Governor House under the chairmanship of Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi.

The meeting reviewed recommendations from the Governor Inspection Team's inquiry report regarding the university. The university's institutes and business rules were also presented for approval.

A committee, including HEC, the Higher Education Department, and university members, was tasked with reviewing the future of 5,000 students affected by the illegal affiliation of 35 colleges. A report will be presented in one month.

The meeting also decided to send the JIT inquiry report's recommendations, covering asset distribution, faculty appointments, and compliance with HEC guidelines, to the university syndicate for review. The importance of merit-based policies for a strong educational system was emphasized by Faisal Karim Kundi.

Other officials, including HEC Executive Director Prof. Dr. Zia-ul-Qyoom, VC Professor Dr. Shakibullah participated in the meeting.

Similarly, The second Open Day at the Governor House was held with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi listening to the grievances of the public.

During the event, individuals from various parts of the province presented their concerns, ranging from administrative issues to local development needs.

The Governor assured the attendees that their issues would be addressed promptly, emphasizing his commitment to providing a platform for people to voice their problems.

The event was part of ongoing efforts to ensure transparency and direct communication between the public and Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.

Focus on irrigation department audit paras

First meeting of Public Accounts Committee held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The first meeting of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Provincial Assembly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for 2025 was held today under the chairmanship of PAC Chairman and Speaker of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Babar Saleem Swati, at the Assembly Conference Room.

The meeting focused on discussing the audit paras of the Irrigation Department. PAC members Mushtaq Ahmed Ghani, Idrees Khattak, Taj Muhammad Tarand, Ahmad Karim Kundi, Riaz Khan, Makhdoom Aftab, Abdul Salam Afridi, and Ikramullah Ghazi attended the meeting.

During the session, Speaker Babar Saleem Swati expressed serious concerns over the poor preparation of the audit paras.

He stated that the presented paras lacked clarity and substantial information, resulting in a waste of time and resources for the committee. The Speaker remarked sternly, "We are not here to engage in fruitless discussions. If the meeting cannot produce tangible results, it would be better to adjourn it."

During the meeting, questions were raised regarding the quality of the audit paras concerning the irrigation system.

The Speaker has decided to conduct a formal meeting with the Auditor General of Pakistan to address the quality and standards of financial accounts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The meeting underscored the need for all departments to fulfill their responsibilities diligently to strengthen transparency and accountability in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The committee emphasized taking immediate and firm actions to prevent the misuse of public resources.

UET Peshawar hosts 'Auto Show 2025'

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Engineering & Technology, Peshawar successfully organized a one-day "Auto Show 2025", an event that captivated automotive enthusiasts and the general public alike.

The event was organized by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) and ASHRAE, UET Peshawar Chapter supervised by Prof. Dr. Sadiq Khattak, Advisor SAE.

The show was inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Amjad Ullah Khattak, Former Dean, Electrical and Computer Engineering, who appreciated the efforts of the organizers in fostering innovation and creativity among the students.

The event showcased over 40 antique cars featuring modified engines, presented by students and other stakeholders from the automotive industry. One of the key attractions was the display of Japan Domestic Market (JDM) cars from the 1990s, which drew considerable attention from the public.

The "Auto Show 2025" highlighted cutting-edge technology, innovative designs, and the creative ingenuity of UET Peshawar's students, offering an exhilarating experience to attendees.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Sadiq Khattak, Advisor SAE, expressed his pride in the event's success. "This auto show, one of its kinds, is celebrated annually and consistently generates an incredible response from the public.

It serves as a platform to encourage innovation in the automotive market," he said. At the end, appreciation certificates were awarded to the participants of the show.





In brief

Four friends injured in mishap Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: As many as four friend critically injured in a car accident occurred on the GT Road in Hakimabad, Nowshera, resulting in injuries to four young friends. According to Rescue 1122 Nowshera, the car, whose number plate is unknown, overturned near the Al-Jadah Marriage Hall on the GT Road due to speeding. As a result, four young friends, Khayam, Kashif, Daniel, and Masood, residents of Hakimabad, were seriously injured. They were shifted to Qazi Medical Complex MTI Nowshera for medical treatment. After receiving medical aid, all four friends were admitted to the hospital for further treatment.

Public service govt top priority F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister on Agriculture Major Muhammad Sajjad Barakwal has said that public service is our agenda and there can be no compromise on this important goal. He said selfless service to the people will be ensured at all cost. He expressed these views during the inspection of Sarki Lawaghar- Fajirabad Road in distant Karak the other day. Elders of the area and authorities concerned were also with him on this occasion. The Agriculture Minister directed the authorities concerned to start work on the said road without any further delay. He said that this road is of great importance as it will facilitate easy communication of the Sarki Belt with the entire district, especially the District Headquarters and the City. It will also facilitate the general transportation and the economic trade. Barakwal asserted, side by side the education and health sectors, construction of main highways and connecting roads are also among his priorities. The key role of the Communication and Works sector in the rapid development is of prime importance and no area can be ignored in ensuring facilitates of timely transportation of general goods as well as the agricultural commodities to the markets.

Provision of insulin monitored F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Deputy Commissioner said that the Punjab government is providing free of cost medicines and insulin to diabetic patients in the hospitals while district administration is strictly monitoring performance of hospitals for implementing people friendly agenda of the Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He stated this while inspecting district headquarter hospital Hafizabad. Chief Executive Officer Health Dr. Zaheer Ahmad and Medical Superintendent Dr. Razwan Ali Tabish and Dr. Faiq Ali Tarr were also accompanied by DC. He checked emergency, chest, TB and diabetic clinic, outdoor, patients ticket counter and help desk. He inspected canteen and reviewed standard of edibles items, cleanliness and prices. During the visit of diabetic and chest clinic, he checked record of medicines and insulin being provided to patients free of cost. He also reviewed availability of medicines to outdoor and indoor patients. Later, he presided over a meeting of health officers and reviewed provision of medicines and other treatment facilities to patients in the hospitals of the district.



KAGHAN: Workers removing snow with the help of tractor to clear Shogran Road.

Rain, snowfall grip Hazara division

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Heavy rainfall across the Hazara Division and third spell of intermittent snowfall in its upper regions Monday have significantly intensified the cold wave, affecting daily life and increasing challenges for residents and travelers alike.

In Kaghan Valley, snowfall continues in popular tourist destination including Naran, Battakundi, and Shogran. Tourist areas, Naran and Battakundi have recorded over a foot of snow, while Shogran has received more than four inches. Kaghan Bazaar has accumulated nearly two inches of snow. The heavy snowfall has heightened the

severity of the cold, disrupting normal life and travel in the region.

Similarly, light snowfall persists in Galyat, where Abbottabad Traffic Police, under the directives of DIG Hazara Nasir Mehmood Satti and the supervision of DPO Abbottabad Umar Tufail and SSP Traffic Tariq Mehmood Khan, are actively assisting and guiding tourists.

On the special instructions of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur and Advisor for Tourism, Culture, and Archaeology Zahid Chanzab, the Kaghan Development Authority (KDA) has deployed machinery and staff at high-alert positions across

Kaghan Valley. Roads blocked due to snow, including Shogran Road, have been cleared to ensure smooth vehicular movement.

The KDA has stationed additional staff and machinery at various key points to assist tourists and locals. Tourism police have been deployed in areas such as Kawai, Shogran, Paras, and Kaghan to ensure the safety and convenience of visitors. Despite the harsh weather conditions, tourists continue to flock to these scenic regions, attracted by the media in his cell and later at the occasion of handing over the cheques to the farmers.

Govt to equip farmers with tools F.P. Report

MARDAN: Advisor for Health Ihtesham Ali Advocate has said that agriculture is the backbone of the country's development, so the current provincial government is solving the problems of farmers on a priority basis.

If the farmer is prosperous, then the country will develop, I am aware of the problems of the constituency and am not oblivious Making PK 61 a model constituency of the province is the top priority. Imran Khan is the leader of 22 crore people, He was speaking to the media in his cell and later at the occasion of handing over the cheques to the farmers.

Engineer Adil Nawaz Khan, Secretary Rahim Jan, Sajjad Anwar Lalaji, Sultan Kaka, President of Shergarh Press Club Muslim Khan and Patron-in-Chief Dr. Sher Bahader were also present on this occasion. On this occasion, he distributed cheques of Rs.1 crore to the landowners of PK 61, while Rs.2 crore was sanctioned for maturing skins.

One dead in road mishap F.P. Report

SHANGLA: A person killed while eight others injured in an accident when a Prado Jeep carrying 10 passengers traveling from Beley Baba Alpuri to Mingora Swat lost control at Bahar Chamtili turn. The accident claimed the life of 64/65-year-old Rahim Gul, son of Abdul Khaliq, a resident of Basi Alpuri, who died on the spot.

The injured were immediately shifted to the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital, Khwazakhela, for medical treatment. The injured identified as Jamaluddin, Nouman, aged approximately 13/14 years, Ahmed Kamal, aged around 7/8 years, Qadeer Kamal, aged around 17/18 years (sons of Pir Jamaluddin Chishti, residents of Mian Kale Pirabad, Beley Baba), Anwar-ul-Haq resident of Qalage Alpuri, Hameedullah, Haroon Rashid and Babar Azghar, son of Muhammad Azghar, resident of Azad Kashmir.

2400 teachers' posts are lying vacant in Dir schools

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Universities' graduated youths on Monday demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and high ups of the elementary and secondary education department (E&SED) to immediately announce its schedule for recruitment of fresh teachers to public sector schools. Talking to this reporter at Timergara, several youths complained that they had completed their BS and MS courses from various universities.

They said that more than 2000 posts of different cadres from grade 12 to 17 were lying vacant only in the Lower Dir district but the authorities had failed to induct fresh graduated youths.

They said that some of their colleagues were near to overage due to a prolonged ban on recruitment. The youths said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had declared an education emergency in the province but practically it did nothing to fill the thousands of vacant posts of teachers of various cadres in the province. They demanded the government and the concerned authorities to start the process of teachers' induction into the public sector schools.

Meanwhile, a well-informed source in the E&SED Lower Dir told on contact that a total of 2401 posts of different cadres were lying vacant in 1572 government schools only in the Lower Dir district.

The source said that there were 1572 male and female government schools including 1238 primary, 143 middle, 129 high and 62 higher secondary schools in the district. A

total of 783 posts of primary school teachers, 268 posts in middle schools, 575 in high and 775 in government higher secondary schools had been vacant for the last two years. The source said that the number of vacant posts increased each month due to retirement of in-service teachers in the district.

The unemployed youths said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government should immediately start the process of teachers' recruitment if it was sincere to education promotion in the province.

Rescue 1122 year wise progress: The Rescue 1122 Lower Dir provided emergency and rescue services in a total of 6423 different types of incidents, some of which were treated on the spot and some were transferred to different hospitals after providing timely medical assistance in the year 2024. Abdur Rehman, a spokesman for the Rescue 1122, said that 47 people lost their lives either in the Rescue 1122 ambulance or on reaching the hospital during the year.

The organization provided rescue facilities in 2697 medical emergencies, 464 road traffic accidents, 209 fires, 41 gunshots and fights, 15 building collapses, 3-cylinder blasts, 325 recoveries and other incidents in the year 2024. A total of 29 drowning incidents occurred in the Panjkora River during the year, to which the Rescue 1122 divers conducted search and rescue operations through scuba diving, boating, line search and various methods, rescuing 09 drowned persons safely alive and the bodies of 20 drowned persons were also recovered and shifted to

various hospitals.

By the end of the year, 2640 patients were shifted from one hospital to another in the Health Referral Ambulance Services led by Rescue 1122 Lower Dir. Out of which 1562 were shifted to hospitals within the district and 1078 to hospitals outside the district. The Rescue 1122 Training Wing team provided practical training on first aid, fire prevention and awareness in educational institutions. The Control Room received 56206 calls in the year 2024, including 23805 drop calls and 28678 unnecessary and fake calls.

BISP distribution point sealed for demanding extra amount from beneficiaries: Taking notice of public complaints, the additional assistant commissioner revenue Tariq Khan on Monday visited one of the cash distribution points of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) at Timergara to resolve the complaints regarding the additional charging.

The AAC inquired about the additional charges from the BISP beneficiaries on the occasion and the distribution point was sealed when women told him that they were charged extra. The AAC told local journalists that the matter would be referred to higher authorities for further necessary action. The BISP beneficiaries were directed not to pay any extra money to any retailer and if anyone demands money, they should immediately inform the local administration. A BISP staffer told on contact that about 52,000 beneficiaries from Lower Dir had been registered for which a total of seven campsites had been set up across the district.

Suthra Punjab programme launched

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: "Suthra Punjab Programme" has been launched to meet modern sanitation requirements in Toba Tek Singh. This project has been started by the Punjab government and private partnership with the aim of making the city clean and free from environmental pollution.

In the opening ceremony, Member National Assembly Junaid Anwaar, Member Provincial Assembly Amjad Ali Javid, Member Provincial Assembly Ayub Khan Gadhi, Deputy

Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindhu, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Syed Jamil Haider Shah, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih, Chief Officer Municipal Committee and District Council Anwar Baig Sial, Chief Executive of Mediland Mian Shahid Mehmood, Project Director Muhammad Waseem Asadullah, media representatives and other dignitaries were also present.

Various Suthra Punjab programs during the ceremony detailed briefing was given on the aspects, highlighting its benefits, strategy, and future initiatives. The briefing informed that the cleaning process will be made more efficient through modern machinery and technology, which will not only improve the urban environment but also have a positive impact on public health.

Modern cleaning machinery, including automatic road cleaning vehicles, waste management systems, and other equipment were also showcased on the occasion. The participants appreciated this machinery and expressed good wishes for the success of this program. Moreover, an awareness walk was organized to create awareness among the citizens, in which Member National Assembly Junaid Anwaar, Member Provincial Assembly Amjad Ali Javid, Member Provincial Assembly Ayub Gadhi,

Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindhu, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Syed Jamil Haider Shah, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih, Chief Officer Municipal Committee and District Council Anwar Baig Sial, Chief Executive of Mediland Mian Shahid Mehmood, Project Director Muhammad Waseem Asadullah, along with media representatives dignitaries and solid waste management Employees and citizens participated in large numbers.

On this occasion, Chief Executive Mian Shahid Mehmood said that the aim of the walk was to inform the public about the importance of cleanliness and invite them to be a part of this national campaign. This project is part of the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, which will play an important role in making Toba Tek Singh a model city with public support.

26th Constitutional Amendment and its impacts

Ziaur Rahman Tajik

THE amendment is a change designed to improve a text, piece of legislation, terms of a contract or a document. Sometimes, it is a correction that leaves the original document substantially intact and better defines and expands the provision of existing law, document or contract. In legal terms, amendment means the process of altering or amending a law by the parliament. In it, formal or official change is made to the law and the law is updated because only the parliament has the power of legislation and amendment.

The amendment is an enrichment of the law or document and makes it more strengthen, useful, relevant, acceptable and adaptable to changing needs and circumstances. It promotes democracy and expresses constitutional values. Amendments are for the welfare of the society, state and its citizens and allow policies, laws, and rules to be refined over time rather than replaced outright.

It also repairs flaws in the law, harmonises laws with international obligations, and improves political stability.

Amendment and correction: The amendment is different from the correction; in a correction, the incorrect information is changed, but in the amendment, a change is made to the text itself.

Reason for Amendment: Amendments fix problems with the original laws and make it clear to address change in society. Most of the time, laws are created in specific contexts, and over time, that context changes, leading to the need for adjustment. For correcting errors or oversights found in-laws after they are passed. For addressing new issues that were not around when the original law was created. Amendments are also made for clarification of law meaning which is open to many interpretation

Kinds of Amendment: Amendments in the law are made in three different ways: amendment with a simple majority, special majority and special majority with approval of the province. Amendment in the ordinary law is made with a simple majority of the total members of the parliament.

Unfortunately, in Pakistan, the ordinary legislation and amendments in the ordinary legislation are not made with a sim-

ple majority because U/A 55 (2) of the Constitution, the quorum for the National Assembly is 1/4 of the total membership, which is 85 members. Under Article 51 (1), all the decisions of the National Assembly are made by the majority of the members present and voting; hence a bill is passed, or an Act is amended by the total member's majority, i.e. 43 members. In the case of the Senate, the quorum is 26 members, and a bill or amendment in the ordinary Act in the Senate is passed or made by the 13 members having a majority.

Amendment in the constitution is made with the special majority of the total members of the parliament under article 239 of the Constitution. The third type of amendment is provided by Article 239 (4) of the constitution, in which the constitutional amendment is also passed with 2/3 majorities of the total members of the provincial assembly concerned whose limits and boundaries are affected and altered through the Amendment.

Amendment in Constitution: The Constitution is amended under the express authorization provided by Article 238 of the Constitution and amendment in the Constitution cannot be chal-

lenged before any court on any ground as per the mandate of Article 239(5) of the Constitution, unlike the German constitution in which article 79 of the Constitution provide the basic structure of the German constitution and constitutional amendment can be challenged on its basis. The German constitutional court in the Southwest case of 1951 had struck down a Constitutional provision based on basic structure theory. The basic structure theory is not recognised in Pakistan, and in the Rawalpindi Bar Association case, the majority of the judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan avoided owning the side doctrine of basic structure, and instead, they used the expression basic features or silent features of the constitution.

26th Amendment: The 26th amendment in the constitution of Pakistan has affected the Judicial, parliamentary and executive framework. Judicial independence is the basic feature of our constitution under Article 2A of the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The judiciary plays an important role in balancing the power between the different branches of the govt. The 26th

Amendment affected the independence of the judiciary and has been subjected to parliamentary and executive control. The majority of Judicial members in the Judicial Commission of Pakistan are reduced to minority members, which change allows for direct political influence. The constitutional benches within the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the High Courts will exercise exclusive jurisdiction in issues about constitution interpretation, vires of law and enforcement of fundamental rights under articles 191A and 202A of the constitution.

The judges for the constitutional benches are also nominated by the Judicial Commission of Pakistan. Before the 26th amendment, the senior-most judge was to be appointed as Chief Justice of Pakistan, but after the 26th amendment, the CJP is nominated by the special parliamentary committee consisting of 12 members from amongst the 3 senior-most judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan in the in-camera meeting. No criteria have been fixed based on which the special parliamentary committee nominate the chief justice of Pakistan. Before the 26th Amendment, grounds for removal of judges of

superior courts were incapacity and misconduct. Now, a judge can also be removed on the grounds of inefficiency, but neither the inefficiency has been defined, nor a threshold criterion has been laid down about the inefficiency of the judge in the said amendment.

Frequent Amendments: Frequent amendments in the law can be avoided by making the law clear and easy to understand by thoroughly reviewing it carefully before implementing it. The promotion of greater cooperation and collaboration among lawmakers could lead to better legislation. Frequent amendments create instability and uncertainty in the legal system, making it difficult for people to understand and comply with the law. Frequent amendments make it harder for people and lawyers to stay up to date. It increases complexity and enforcement difficulties. It decreases public trust in the legal system and makes it difficult for people to understand their rights and responsibilities under the law. It also erodes public trust in the government's ability to govern effectively, and people feel that the system is unstable and out of control.

The writer can be reached at: ziaurrahmantajik123@gmail.com



GAZA STRIP: Women mourning their relatives who were killed by Israeli bombardment outside the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah.

Border shelters relieved pressure during migrant surges

McALLEN, Texas (AP): When Roselins Sequera's family of seven finally reached the US from Venezuela, they spent weeks at a migrant shelter on the Texas border that gave them a place to sleep, meals and tips for finding work. "We had a plan to go to Iowa" to join friends, said Sequera, who arrived at the Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley in October. "But we didn't know how."

Dozens of shelters run by aid groups on the US border with Mexico have welcomed large numbers of migrants, providing lifelines of support and relief to overwhelmed cities. They work closely with the Border Patrol to care for migrants released with notices to appear in immigration court, many of whom don't know where they are or how to find the nearest airport or bus station. But Republican scrutiny of the shelters is intensifying, and President-elect Donald Trump's allies consider them a magnet for illegal immigration. Many are nonprofits that rely on federal funding, including \$650 million under one program last year alone. The incoming Trump administration has pledged to carry out an ambitious immigration agenda, including a campaign promise of mass deportations. The new White House's potential playbook includes using the National Guard to arrest migrants and installing buoy barriers on the waters between the US and Mexico. As part of that agenda, Trump's incoming border czar, Tom Homan, has vowed to review the role of nongovernmental organizations and whether they

helped open "the doors to this humanitarian crisis." Entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, who along with Elon Musk was tapped by Trump to find ways to cut federal spending, has signaled that the groups are in his sights and called them "a waste of taxpayer dollars." "Americans deserve transparency on opaque foreign aid & non-profit groups abetting our own border crisis," Ramaswamy said last month in a post on X. The Trump administration did not respond to repeated requests for comment. The developments have alarmed immigration advocates and some officials in border communities, including Republicans, who say those communities can collapse without shelter space or a budget to pay for humanitarian costs. Aid groups deny that they are aiding illegal immigration.

They say they are responding to emergencies foisted on border towns and performing humanitarian work. "The groundwork is being laid here in Texas for a larger assault on nonprofits that are just trying to protect people's civil rights," said Rochelle Garza, president of the Texas Civil Rights Project, an advocacy group. For the past year, Texas has launched investigations into six organizations that provide shelter, food and travel advice to migrants. Courts have so far largely rebuffed the state's efforts, including rejecting a lawsuit to shut down El Paso's Annunciation House, but several cases remain on appeal. The Texas Civil Rights Project, which represents two organizations being probed by the state, says it has trained more than 100

migrant aid organizations in the weeks since Trump's reelection on how to respond if investigators come knocking. The Texas investigations began after Republican Gov. Greg Abbott alleged in 2022, without evidence, that border nonprofits were encouraging illegal crossings and transporting migrants. Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, which operates a shelter in McAllen with capacity for 1,200 people, was notified by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton in March that authorities wanted to interview the executive director, Sister Norma Pimentel, to investigate whether there were "practices for facilitating alien crossings over the Texas-Mexico border," Pimentel declined to comment to The Associated Press, citing the ongoing case, but attorneys representing her organization responded to the accusations in court calling them a "fishing expedition into a pond where no one has ever seen a fish." In downtown McAllen, a large lobby serves as a welcome center where families receive travel information while their children play with volunteers. This year, nearly 50,000 migrants have passed through the shelter. Personal belongings and sleeping mats are in a separate section sandwiched between the lobby and the kitchen. The Sequeras, who stayed two weeks, fell into a regimen of waking at 6 a.m., clearing sleeping mats off the floor and having breakfast by 7 a.m. They performed other chores such as cleaning or doing laundry to keep the large shelter running. Volunteer attorneys help migrants apply for work authorization.

Thousands protest in Montenegro to demand ouster of top security officials

PODGORICA, Montenegro (AP): Several thousand people rallied in Montenegro demanding the resignations of top security officials over the shooting earlier this week that left 12 people dead, including two children.

Chanting "Resignations" and "Killers," protesters outside the Interior Ministry building in the capital, Podgorica, demanded that Interior Minister Danilo Šaranović and Deputy Prime Minister for Security and Defense Aleksa Bečić step down. Milo Perović, from a student-led group that helped organize the rally, told the crowd that innocent people died during their watch. "You failed to protect us, so resign!" Perović said.

Hours earlier, hundreds

of people held 12 minutes of silence for the 12 victims at a rally in Cetinje, Montenegro's historic capital where the shooting took place. It was the second such massacre in the town in less than three years. Many residents of Cetinje and other Montenegrins believe that police mishandled the situation and haven't done enough to boost security since the first massacre, which happened in August 2022. Shooting resulted from a bar brawl. A 45-year-old local man went home to get his gun before returning to the bar and opening fire. He killed four people there and eight more at various other locations before killing himself.

The massacre fueled concerns about the level of violence in Montenegrin

society, which is politically divided. It also raised questions about the readiness of state institutions to tackle the problems, including gun ownership. Police have said the shooting was impossible to predict and prevent, though the gunman, identified as Aco Martinović, had been convicted for violent behavior and illegal weapons possession. His victims were mostly friends and family. Montenegrin authorities swiftly announced a new, strict gun law and other tough measures to curb illegal weapons, which are abundant in the Balkan nation of around 620,000 people. Police said they raided several locations in the country and confiscated about 20 weapons, more than 500 rounds of ammunition and explosives. Protesters in Cetinje and Podgorica also demanded a "demilitarization" of the population through the destruction of illegal weapons, high taxes on gun ownership and a moratorium on new licenses while existing ones are reconsidered under strict criteria.

The attacker in 2022 in Cetinje gunned down 10 people, including two children, before he was shot and killed by a passerby. Maja Gardašević, a protest organizer, said during the rally in Cetinje that "we came here looking for answers" to several questions. "Why did a massacre happen in Cetinje for the second time?" Gardašević asked. "Why is no one responsible? Why is it so hard to resign?"

Austrian far right leader Herbert Kickl will be asked to form a govt

VIENNA (AP): Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen announced that he would meet with far-right politician Herbert Kickl as speculation grows that he will ask the Freedom Party leader to form a government.

Van der Bellen made the announcement after meeting with Chancellor Karl Nehammer and others at his presidential palace. Nehammer has announced his intention to resign after coalition talks between his conservative Austrian People's Party and the center-left Social Democrats collapsed over the budget. Nehammer has ruled out working with Kickl, but others within his party are less adamant. Earlier, the People's Party nominated its general secretary, Christian Stocker, as interim leader, but the president said Nehammer would remain chancellor for now.

Van der Bellen said that he had spent several hours

talking to key officials, after which he got the impression that "the voices within the People's Party who exclude working with the Freedom Party under its leader Herbert Kickl have become quieter." The president said that this development has "potentially opened a new path," which has prompted him to invite Kickl for a meeting on Monday morning. Kickl's Freedom Party topped the polls in the autumn's national election with 29.2% of the vote, but Van der Bellen tasked Nehammer with putting together a new government because no other party was willing to work with Kickl. That decision drew heavy criticism from the Freedom Party and its supporters, with Kickl saying in October that it was "not right and not logical" that he did not get a mandate to form a government.

"We are not responsible for the wasted time, the

chaotic situation and the enormous breach of trust that has emerged," Kickl said on social media. "On the contrary: It is clear that the Freedom Party has been and continues to be the only stable factor in Austrian politics," Stocker addressed reporters and confirmed that he had been appointed "unanimously" by his party to serve as interim leader. "I am very honored and happy," he said. He also welcomed the decision by the president to meet with Kickl and said that he now expects that the leader of the party that emerged as the clear winner from the last election would be tasked with forming a government. "If we are invited to negotiations to form a government, we will accept this invitation," Stocker added. In the past, Stocker has criticized Kickl, calling him a "security risk" for the country. In its election program titled "Fortress Austria," the Freedom

Party calls for "remigration of uninvited foreigners," for achieving a more "homogeneous" nation by tightly controlling borders and suspending the right to asylum via an emergency law. The Freedom Party also calls for an end to sanctions against Russia, is highly critical of Western military aid to Ukraine and wants to bow out of the European Sky Shield Initiative, a missile defense project launched by Germany. The Freedom Party has also signed a friendship agreement in 2016 with Putin's United Russia Party that it now claims has expired.

Kickl has criticized "elites" in Brussels and called for some powers to be brought back from the European Union to Austria. Austria was thrown into political turmoil after the liberal party Neos pulled out of coalition talks with the the People's Party and the Social Democrats.

SK extends shutdown of Muan airport

SEOUL (Reuters): South Korea's government said on Monday it will extend the shutdown of Muan International Airport by a week to Jan. 14, citing the ongoing investigation into the crash of a Jeju Air jet that killed 179 passengers on board. The airport had been due to reopen following the Dec. 29 crash.

A joint investigation team is stepping up the probe into South Korea's deadliest air accident. Two of the Korean investigators on Monday are set to leave for the United States with flight data recorders for analysis with the US National Transportation Safety Board. The flight data recorders, along with cockpit voice recorders, are the two black boxes that contain key information about the crash. Investigators compiled the complete transcript from the cockpit voice recorder recovered from the wreckage of the Jeju Air Boeing 737-800. It is not clear whether they will disclose the transcript. Investigators retrieved two of the plane's engines over the weekend, as a representative from engine maker GE joined the probe. The transport ministry extended to Jan. 10 its inspections of all the Boeing 737-800 planes operated by Jeju Air and five other airlines in the country, including their maintenance records.

American troops arrive in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP): About 150 military police officers from Central America have arrived in Haiti to reinforce the embattled government's fight against violent gangs that have upended daily life for millions in the Caribbean country.

The deployment of around 75 security officers, mostly from Guatemala, was greeted at Toussaint Louverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince by the Kenyan commander of the UN-backed mission that for months has been struggling to restore order. "The gangs have only two choices: surrender, lay down their weapons, and face justice, or face us in the field," the officer, Godfrey Otunge, said in remarks at a welcoming ceremony. "With the addition of the Guatemalan and El Salvador forces, the gangs will have nowhere to hide. We will root them out of their enclave."

A similar sized contingent, which also included a small number of forces from El Salvador, traveled aboard a US Air Force aircraft and was greeted by top Haitian officials and US Ambassador Dennis Hanks. Coordinated gang attacks on prisons, police stations and the main international airport have intensified in Haiti since the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. Gangs are estimated to control about 85% of the capital. In what is perhaps the most brazen attack yet, gunmen opened fire on a crowd that gathered on Christmas Eve for the much-anticipated reopening of Haiti's biggest public hospital, which was closed after being rampaged by gangs earlier this year. Two journalists covering the event and a police officer were killed. Prior to this week's deployment, the international mission seeking to quell the violence was led by around 400 security officers from Kenya, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin and Chad have also pledged personnel although it isn't clear when they would be sent.

A contingent of 150 Guatemalan soldiers has arrived in Haiti, tasked with helping to restore order amid the chaos wrought by armed gangs. A first group of 75 soldiers arrived and another 75, all drafted from the military police, according to Guatemala's government. A state of emergency has been in place across the Caribbean nation for months as the government battles violent gangs that have taken control of much of the capital Port-au-Prince. The forces are in Haiti to boost a United Nations-backed security mission led by Kenya that has so far failed to prevent violence from escalating.

Zelenskiy reports heavy Russian, NK troop losses

KYIV (Reuters): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said that Russian and North Korean forces suffered heavy losses in fighting in Russia's southern Kursk region. Ukrainian and Western assessments say that some 11,000 North Korean troops are deployed in the Kursk region, where Ukrainian forces occupy swathes of territory after staging a mass cross-border incursion in August.

In his nightly video address, Zelenskiy quoted a report from top Ukrainian commander Oleksandr Syrskyi as saying that the battles had taken place near the village of Makhnovka, not far from the Ukrainian border. "In battles yesterday and today near just one village, Makhnovka, in Kursk region, the Russian army lost up to a battalion of North Korean infantry soldiers and Russian paratroops," Zelenskiy said. "This is significant." The president provided no specific details. A battalion can vary in size but is generally made up of several hundred troops.

Reuters could not independently verify the president's account. Zelenskiy last week reported heavy North Korean losses in Kursk region, saying their forces were not being protected by the Russian forces

they are fighting alongside. He said North Koreans were taking extreme measures to avoid being taken prisoner and in some instances were being executed by their own forces. In his latest remarks, Zelenskiy also said "fierce battles" had raged along the entire 1,000-km (620-mile) front line, with the most difficult situation near the city of Pokrovsk.

Russian forces, he said, "continue to expend vast numbers of their own personnel in assaults". A Ukrainian military spokesperson earlier said Pokrovsk remained the "hottest" frontline sector, with Russian troops launching fresh attacks near the town in an effort to bypass it from the south and cut off supply routes to Ukraine's troops. The city, home to a mine that is the sole supplier of coking coal to Ukraine's once-giant steel industry, had a pre-war population of some 60,000 people. Ukraine estimates that around 11,000 of them remain in the city. Trehubov said Russian forces were trying to block supply routes by sending small groups of soldiers to settlements south of Pokrovsk. "They (Russians) don't go directly into the city because it means heavy urban fighting. So they first try to bypass the city and interrupt the logistics chains," Trehubov said. He said Kyiv's forces were using drones and precision weapons to try and prevent Russian troops from reaching their targets.

and rail hub in the eastern Donetsk region could create serious difficulties for the Ukrainian army on the eastern front and also allow Russia to reinforce and advance its front line to the west. "The Pokrovsk direction remains the hottest and there the Russians attacked 34 times (in the past 24 hours) and tried to break through our defences south of Pokrovsk," Viktor Trehubov, spokesman for Ukraine's Khortysia group of forces, told Ukrainian national television.

The city, home to a mine that is the sole supplier of coking coal to Ukraine's once-giant steel industry, had a pre-war population of some 60,000 people. Ukraine estimates that around 11,000 of them remain in the city. Trehubov said Russian forces were trying to block supply routes by sending small groups of soldiers to settlements south of Pokrovsk. "They (Russians) don't go directly into the city because it means heavy urban fighting. So they first try to bypass the city and interrupt the logistics chains," Trehubov said. He said Kyiv's forces were using drones and precision weapons to try and prevent Russian troops from reaching their targets.

Military tunnel complex linked to Assad's palace

DAMASCUS (AFP): On the slopes of Mount Qasyun which overlooks Damascus, a network of tunnels links a military complex, tasked with defending the Syrian capital, to the presidential palace facing it. The tunnels, seen by an AFP correspondent, are among secrets of president Bashar al-Assad's rule exposed since rebels toppled him on December 8.

"We entered this enormous barracks of the Republican Guard after the liberation" of Damascus sent Assad fleeing to Moscow, said Mohammad Abu Salim, a military official from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the dominant Islamist group in the alliance that overthrew Assad. "We found a vast network of tunnels which lead to the presidential palace" on a neighbouring hill, Salim said. During Assad's rule, Qasyun was off limits to the people of Damascus because it was

an ideal location for snipers -- the great view includes the presidential palaces and other government buildings. It was also from this mountain that artillery units for years pounded rebel-held areas at the gates of the capital. An AFP correspondent entered the Guard complex of two bunkers containing vast rooms reserved for its soldiers. The bunkers were equipped with telecommunications gear, electricity, a ventilation system and weapons supplies.

Other simpler tunnels were dug out of the rock to hold ammunition. Despite such elaborate facilities, Syria's army collapsed, with troops abandoning tanks and other gear as rebels advanced from their northern stronghold to the capital in less than two weeks. On the grounds of the Guard complex a statue of the president's brother Bassel al-Assad, atop a horse, has been toppled and Bassel's head severed. Bassel al-

Assad died in a 1994 road accident. He had been the presumed successor to his father Hafez al-Assad who set up the paranoid, secretive, repressive system of government that Bashar inherited when his father died in 2000. In the immense Guard camp now, former rebel fighters use pictures of Bashar al-Assad and his father for target practice.

Tanks and heavy weapons still sit under arched stone shelters. Resembling a macabre outdoor art installation, large empty rusted barrels with attached fins pointing skyward are lined up on the ground, their explosives further away. "The regime used these barrels to bomb civilians in the north of Syria," Abu Salim said. The United Nations denounced Bashir's use of such weapons dropped from helicopters or airplanes against civilian areas held by Assad's opponents during Syria's years-long civil war that began in 2011.

Biden on Trump's US birthright citizenship

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US President Joe Biden said he thought it was awful that President-elect Donald Trump was trying to do away with birthright citizenship in the United States.

Speaking to reporters at the White House, Biden said the transition to Trump's government seemed to be going smoothly, though he said he thought there was a problem with Trump's team internally related to the handover.

Asked ahead of the anniversary of the Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol whether he still thought Trump was a threat to democracy, Biden said he thought what Trump did

was a "genuine threat to democracy." Trump falsely claimed he had won the 2020 election and urged his supporters to go to the Capitol that day.

"It should not be rewritten," Biden said about Jan. 6. "I don't think it should be forgotten." Biden said white supremacy was one of many threats to the United States. "We are the most extensive multicultural nation in the world. It's the reason why we're so strong. It's the reason why we're who we are," Biden said. Trump told NBC last month he plans to take executive action on his first day in office to try to end birthright citizenship, which confers citizenship

on anyone born in the US regardless of their parents' immigration status. "The idea we're going to change a constitutional birthright - if you're born in the country ... you're not a citizen? What's going on?" Biden said. Biden, a Democrat, criticized Trump, a Republican, for encouraging lawmakers not to vote for a bipartisan immigration bill Biden supported to strengthen border enforcement. "It's ridiculous. It's ridiculous," Biden said. Trump used immigration as a key issue to rally his base in the 2024 election, which he won, prevailing over Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee.

China seeks to bolster ports and aviation hubs

BEIJING (Reuters): China said it would launch 15 measures to bolster the development of its western provinces with the construction of logistical infrastructure such as ports and aviation hubs. The General Administration of Customs said the measures would enhance the integration of rail, air, river and sea links in China's west, state media reported.

The measures are to include enhancing international aviation hubs in cities including Chengdu, Chongqing, Kunming,

Xi'an and Urumqi, while developing comprehensive bonded zones, and integrating these with ports and other transport links. A number of ports would also be built and expanded. China has long sought to bolster the economic heft of its western regions, which have markedly lagged coastal provinces. But ethnic tensions in such places as Xinjiang and hard-line security measures Beijing says are needed to safeguard national unity and border stability, have drawn criticism from some

Western nations.

China's western regions comprise around two-thirds of the country's land area and include regions such as Sichuan, Chongqing, Yunnan, Xinjiang and Tibet. China's Politburo last year called for a "new urbanisation" of western China to revitalise rural areas, expand poverty alleviation efforts and strengthen energy resources. Efforts have also been made to increase linkages to Europe and South Asia through trade corridors including rail freight routes.

The Frontier Post

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Hospital attacks could constitute war crimes

AFTER a series of Israeli attacks on hospitals in the Gaza Strip, the United Nations Security Council met on Friday morning in New York at Algeria's request to debate the collapse of health services in Gaza.

Israel's military operations in the Gaza Strip have had a devastating impact on the hospitals in the Palestinian enclave, and 53 percent of the hospitals in Gaza are no longer operational and several physicians have died in Israeli custody, those attending the meeting were told.

As UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said at Friday's meeting, while recognizing Israel's right to self-defense and the shock that Israeli society has been through following the deaths of 1,200 citizens and the captivity of 100 hostages for 14 months, "The destruction of the healthcare system, in combination with the killing of patients, humanitarian workers, medical staff and other civilians, constitute severe violations of international humanitarian and human rights law".

Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, strongly condemned the recent Israeli attack on Kamal Adwan Hospital, the only remaining comprehensive medical service institution in northern Gaza, and urged Israel to effectively abide by its international humanitarian law obligations.

He said that it should "stop turning hospitals into battlefields", which is part of its "systematic strategy to make Gaza uninhabitable".

The conflict in Gaza has lasted for more than a year since Oct 7, 2023, when Hamas launched its surprise attack on Israel, and a ceasefire is imperative as Israel's brutal military response has left civilians "with nowhere safe to go", as Tom Fletcher, UN under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, said at the end of last month after his visit to the occupied Palestinian territories.

In Friday's meeting, Turk called for the immediate opening of crossings for the unhindered distribution of aid into Gaza and the assurance that shelters for the displaced remain safe havens rather than "death traps".

The continued violence is a vicious circle that will not produce lasting peace and security for either side, but instead only deepen the enmity between the two peoples. Which will in turn make it harder for the two sides to reach a deal for lasting peace.

There was once a ray of hope for the end of the enmity between the two peoples when then Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and then Palestinian Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat shook hands 30 years ago. Leaders of both sides at the time realized how important it was for both to recognize the legitimate right of the other to exist as a country. Despite the failure of the peace deal for various reasons, both parties accepting the existence of the other as a sovereign entity remains the sole solution to the decades-long conflict.

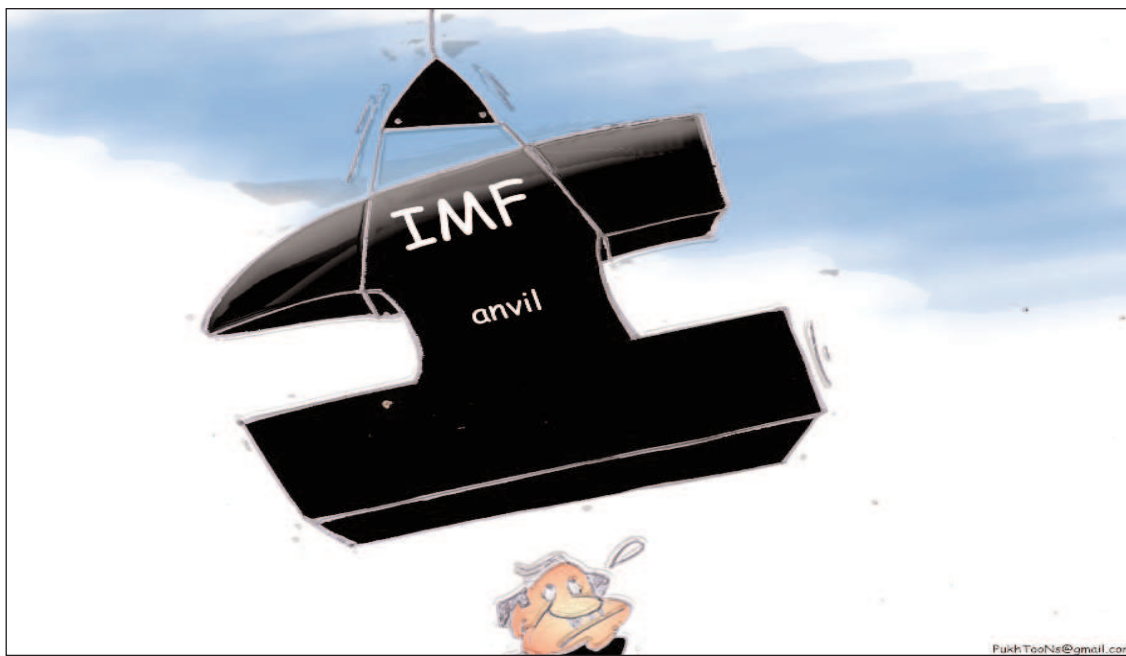
That explains why China has been consistent in supporting the two-state solution. Beijing knows well that there will never be lasting peace in the Palestine region unless the Palestinians have their own country, which would be able to maintain neighborly ties with Israel. It is also clear that Israel can never expect conflict-free dealings with the Palestinian people unless it allows the latter to exist as a sovereign entity.

It is really very difficult and complicated for both sides to remove their entrenched enmity before they can reach a deal. But it is essential for key figures on both sides to know that there is no other option for peaceful coexistence between the two sides.

As far as the current crisis in Gaza is concerned, both sides should continue talks to secure the release of all hostages still being held by Hamas and the end of military attacks by Israeli forces in Gaza and allow the Palestinian people access to humanitarian aid.

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.



Gaza's healthcare in tatters

Michael Jansen

ISRAEL'S systematic effort to eradicate Gaza's hospitals is part and parcel of its overall campaign to make it impossible for Palestinians to live in the narrow coastal strip. The initial objective of this campaign is to drive Palestinians from the north to the south which cannot sustain the entire population of 2.3 million.

Israel's ultimate objective is to force desperate Palestinians to emigrate "voluntarily" so that Gaza can be colonised by Israelis and absorbed into Greater Israel.

The first to opt for emigration under Israel's impossible conditions are likely to be professionals: doctors, nurses, teachers, academics, engineers, and architects who could find countries to accept them. Gazans left behind could serve Israeli colonists as agricultural labourers, construction workers, household staff, garbage collectors, and road-menders. A report issued on December 31st by the UN Human Rights Office "found that Israel's pattern of deadly attacks on and near hospitals in Gaza, and associated combat, has pushed the healthcare system to the brink of total collapse, with catastrophic effect on Palestinians' access to health and medical care." UN Human Rights Commissioner Volker Turk stated, "The protection of hospitals during warfare is paramount and must be respected by all sides, at all times."

The Israeli offensive against medical staff and hospitals began after the October 7th Hamas attack on southern Israel. In November, the Israeli army focused on Al-Shifa Medical Complex, the strip's largest, in Gaza City, and by April 1st, 2024, it was "a complete ruin" with three mass graves in the hospital grounds.

Subsequently, Israel assaulted all of Gaza's 36

hospitals, leaving southern Gaza with four functioning field hospitals. In Beit Lahia in the north the Kamal Adwan hospital was attacked, emptied of staff and patients, and torched on December 27th while the West was celebrating Christmas and New Year. Israel announced the hospital was closed permanently. Kamal Adwan was a Palestine Liberation Organisation leader who was assassinated by Israel in 1973 in Beirut.

Hospital director Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya was arrested along with medical staff and patients. He is being detained in the Negev at the notorious Sde Tieman detention camp where torture and abuse are rampant, according to prisoners who have been released and have testified to Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem.

Abu Safiya is employed by MedGlobal, a Chicago-based humanitarian organization that provides medical care in disaster and conflict zones. He joins five other MedGlobal personnel who are under arrest by Israel, MedGlobal Executive Director Joseph Belliveau told The Intercept.

Two other doctors, two cleaners, one data entry worker, and one nurse administrator arrested on October 26th at Kamal Adwan remain in prison. Belliveau has been working with the UN, US Congress, the European Union and Israeli authorities to free the Medglobal staff who have disappeared without a trace. "Where exactly are they? What are their conditions? What are they being accused of? How are they being treated? What comes next? What about due process here? Nothing," Belliveau asked.

Amnesty International expressed "extreme" concern over Abu Safiya's arrest. Amnesty's Secretary General Agnes Callamard demanded, "He must be released immediately and unconditionally."

She pointed out that he has been at the forefront of the effort to save Gaza's health services and appealed "for the protection of his hospital [which has been] working under inhumane conditions."

The doctor continued working after he was wounded, and his 15-year-old son was killed in an Israeli drone strike in October. Fifty-seven staff members, including all the surgeons, were arrested, leaving Kamal Adwan hospital with paediatricians only.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) said it is "appalled" by the raid on Kamal Adwan hospital, which put the last major health facility in North Gaza out of service. The systematic dismantling of the health system and a siege for over 80 days on North Gaza puts the lives of the 75,000 Palestinians remaining in the area at risk. "Healthcare workers around the world have launched a social media campaign demanding the Israeli army immediately release" Dr. Abu Safiya, The New Arab reports. Former British Labour Party leader and serving member of parliament Jeremy Corbyn called on X for an end to arms sales to Israel.

Israel's attacks on hospitals, ambulances, and health facilities constitute multiple war crimes. Israel is accused of violated medical neutrality, which is a war crime under the 1948 Geneva Conventions. Attacks on hospitals can amount to "a form of collective punishment:" a war crime. Although Israel nearly always claims targeted medical installations harbour armed militiamen who are fighting Israeli troops, Israel has failed to provide convincing evidence.

Turk told the Security Council on January 3rd that Israeli claims that Hamas launches attacks from Gaza's hospitals are often "vague" and can be "contradicted by

publicly available information." Even if militiamen are receiving treatment or sheltering in hospitals, the laws of war prohibit indiscriminate attacks which are intentionally launched at civilians causing death or injury: a war crime.

WHO stated, "The principles of precaution, distinction and proportionality under International Humanitarian Law are absolute and always apply. Disproportionate attacks are also war crimes. These crimes can be judged to be crimes against humanity and, even, genocide. The detention of medical staff and destruction of hospitals is just one aspect of Israel's assault on Gaza."

In January 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Israel to prevent the commission of actions covered by the 1948 Genocide Convention by killing Gazans, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and deliberately inflicting on them conditions to destroy them. The ICJ also ordered Israel to enable the provision of basic services and humanitarian aid. In March, the ICJ scolded Israel for failing to implement its January order as the situation in Gaza had become catastrophic.

In July, the Court ruled that Israel's occupation of Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem is unlawful and called on Israel to end the occupation, dismantle its settlements, pay reparations to Palestinian victims and repatriate Palestinian refugees. While Israel has ignored ICJ rulings, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued warrants for the arrest of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and ex-Defence Minister Yoav Gallant.

The ICC considered them co-perpetrators for committing...the war crime of starvation as a method of warfare, and the crimes against humanity of murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts."

Governance matters: Basic structure and constitutional amendments

Muhammad Mushtaq Jadun

AMONG the democratic countries, only British Parliament is fully sovereign. It has constitutional power to make legislation on any subject, and to any extent, as there is no concept of basic structure of Constitution. Neither such framework has been defined by the British Supreme Court. United State Congress cannot legislate to take away fundamental rights because American Independence declaration and the constitution dictates that fundamental rights are inalienable and God-given. Since these rights have not been granted by the Congress so the Congress cannot legislate to take away these rights.

Article 368 of the constitution of India gives an impression that powers to amend the Constitution are absolute and the Parliament can amend the Constitution to any extent. Earlier judgments of Indian Supreme Court held (Golak Nath VS the State of Punjab), by 6 to 5 majority, that there is implied limitation on the powers of Parliament to amend the Constitution. The Court further held that the people had reserved the fundamental rights for themselves. Thus, the basic structure and essential features concept emerged and the judges in specific judgments laid the parameters of basic structure such as supremacy of the Constitution, republican and democratic form of government, separation of powers, individual freedom and secular nature of constitution. Basic Structure of Indian Constitution was further defined in Kesavananda Bharti VS Kerala Case asso-

ciated with the validity of 24th amendment. In this landmark judgement the Indian Supreme Court held that the Parliament's powers to amend the Constitution under article 368, are not unlimited. In this judgement, the Supreme Court set basic features of Indian Constitution such as democracy, federalism, secularism and the protection of fundamental rights. Similar views were held in Indra Ghandi VS Narain Case of 1975. In Minerva Mill case of 1980, several provisions of 42nd Constitutional amendment were declared unconstitutional and struck down. So far 106 amendments have been made in the Indian constitution. Thus, the Indian constitution is the most amended constitution.

In USA, just 27 amendments have been made in the Constitution till now, ten in 1791. So over a period of about 234 years, only seventeen amendments were made, last being in 1992, which was pending for

203 years. Congress can propose an amendment with two third vote of Senate and House of Representatives or by two third of states legislatures. It has to be ratified by three fourth of the states which means 38 states or by Convention in three fourth states. Thus, Constitutional amendment procedure in USA is most rigid and cumbersome as compared to UK and Pakistan. Since 1789 about 11848 proposals, regarding amendments have been drafted so far. Seven amendments are still unratified since 1792. Supreme Court in USA in Marbury VS Madison (1803) case arrogated to itself the powers of judicial review, which

means the power to determine the constitutionality of amendments.

In Pakistan, 26th Constitutional amendment has re-triggered the debate about powers of the Parliament as per article 239(6) to amend the Constitution. Under our Constitution, Parliament is not fully sovereign. As per Constitution, sovereignty belongs to Allah and any law, which is repugnant to the Injunctions of Holy Quran and Sunnah, shall be declared null and void. Fundamental rights are also subject to law. As per article 8, any law or custom or usage having the force of law, inconsistent with the rights conferred under chapter II (article 8 to article 28), shall be void. But provisions of article 8 are not applicable to armed forces, police and laws specified in First Schedule and other laws specified in part I of the First Schedule. It is obvious that fundamental rights, as enshrined in article 8 to 28, are not absolute but subject to law. In case of emergency under article 232 to 234, fundamental rights can be suspended. Moreover, no writ petition can be filed in any area or province where army has been called in aid of civil power under article 245 of constitution. Constitutional amendments in our constitution were challenged multiple times, landmark judgements in this regard are Asma Jilani case (PLD 1972 SC 139), Brig FB Ali (PLD 197 SC 507), Abdul Wali Khan (PLD 1976 SC 57), Dewan Textile, Zia ur Rehman (Fifth amendment was challenged), Mehmood Khan Achakzai Case 1997

and most recent landmark judgement of Supreme Court (District Bar Rawalpindi VS Federation) reported as PLD 2015 SC 401. In Zafar Ali Shah Case, General Musharraf was even allowed to amend the Constitution. It has been constant view of our judges that the judiciary is creation of Constitution and can not declare any provision of the constitution to be invalid unless it has been adopted in a manner different to that prescribed by the constitution. Through eighth and seventeenth amendment drastic changes were made which almost converted the Parliamentary form of government to quasi-Presidential, yet both the constitutional amendments were validated by the Supreme Court. In the recent landmark judgement (PLD 2015 SC 401) whereby 18th and 21st Constitutional amendments were challenged; the Honorable Supreme Court of Pakistan dismissed the petition against 18th amendment with a majority of 14 to 3. In regard to 21st amendment, establishment of military Court was challenged. It was also dismissed with a majority of 11 to 6. In all the cited petitions, it was held that basic structure of Constitution is a question of academic nature which can not be answered. It was further held that as per provisions of article 239(7), there is no limitation, expressed or implied, on the powers of parliament to amend the Constitution and Court lacks jurisdiction to strike down any Constitutional amendment.

Writer is Advisor to Federal Ombudsman, Regional Office, Peshawar.

Lessons from history: How dialogue can transform Pakistan's political landscape

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

IN Pakistan's parliamentary democracy, dialogue between the government and opposition plays a pivotal role in ensuring political stability and the smooth functioning of democratic institutions. The country's diverse social, ethnic, and political landscape makes such dialogue essential for bridging divides and promoting inclusive decision-making. Historically, the absence of effective communication between opposing sides has led to political impasses, destabilized governments, and hindered national progress. Constructive dialogue provides a platform to resolve contentious issues such as electoral reforms, economic policies, and constitutional amendments through mutual understanding and compromise. Furthermore, it addresses the grievances of marginalized groups and smaller political entities, ensuring governance reflects the aspirations of all citizens.

Pakistan's political history has often been marked by polarization and mistrust, further underscoring the significance of dialogue. Instances like the Charter of Democracy signed on May 14, 2006, demonstrate how meaningful engagement can pave the way for institutional reforms and political stability. Conversely, failures in dialogue, as witnessed during the political crises of 2014 and 2023, have led to prolonged stalemates, undermining public confidence in democratic processes. Effective dialogue fosters accountability, enabling the opposition to critique government policies constructively while providing the government an opportunity to explain its actions and build consensus. Strengthening Pakistan's democratic foundations requires prioritizing dialogue to address challenges, promote national unity, and uphold parliamentary democracy.

Since Pakistan's inception in 1947, the relationship between the government and opposition has frequently been characterized by mistrust and conflict. This lack of a cooperative political culture has historically hindered efforts at dialogue, resulting in missed opportunities for national consensus. Dialogues have ranged from constitutional agreements to attempts at resolving political crises, yielding varying degrees of success and failure. In the early years of independence, Pakistan's nascent political system faced significant challenges, including the struggle to formulate a constitution. Efforts for dialogue were evident during the first Constituent Assembly's deliberations, but political rivalries and regional differences marred these attempts. The dismissal of Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin's government on April 17, 1953, set a precedent of political instability, discouraging meaningful engagement between opposing political forces. This early breakdown in dialogue established a pattern of mistrust that persisted for decades. The political turmoil of the 1970s underscored the necessity of dialogue during one of Pakistan's most severe crises. After the 1971 secession of East Pakistan, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government initiated the drafting of the 1973 Constitution, a landmark achievement of consensus politics. However, the political environment soon deteriorated. In 1977, the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) alleged electoral rigging by Bhutto's government, leading to widespread protests. Attempts at dialogue between the government and the PNA in June 1977 failed, ultimately paving the way for General Zia-ul-Haq's martial law. The return to civilian rule in 1988 marked a period of frequent political dialogues between the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the two dominant political parties. However, these engagements often devolved into personal rivalries, undermining institutional stability. One notable instance was the 1993 dialogue, which resulted in the resignation of both Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, ending a prolonged standoff. While this resolution underscored the importance of dialogue, it also highlighted the recurring inability of political actors to resolve disputes independent-

ly. The political dynamics of the 2000s were shaped by the return of exiled leaders and the restoration of democratic processes. The 2006 Charter of Democracy, signed by Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, symbolized a commitment to democratic norms. Although the charter provided a framework for cooperation, its practical implementation often fell short as both parties prioritized their interests over institutional reforms. Nevertheless, the document remains a reference point for proponents of democratic dialogue in Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Dharma (sit-in) politics emerged as a significant phenomenon in Pakistan's political landscape, often reflecting a deadlock between the government and opposition. Early instances, such as Qazi Hussain Ahmed's dharnas in 1993, set a precedent for mass mobilization to challenge government policies. Rooted in ideological opposition to corruption and perceived misgovernance, these protests highlighted the frustration of opposition parties unable to achieve their goals through parliamentary mechanisms. In subsequent years, dharna politics gained prominence with Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri's Pakistan Awami Tehreek sit-ins and Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protests.

Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri's 2013 dharna demanded electoral reforms and accountability, while the 2014 PTI sit-in reshaped the political narrative. Lasting 126 days, the PTI sit-in in Islamabad called for an investigation into alleged rigging in the 2013 elections. While these protests demonstrated the power of large-scale mobilizations to disrupt governance and draw national attention, they also deepened political polarization, as seen in the growing mistrust between the PTI and the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) during that period. These protests underscored both the strength of democratic expression and the limitations of dialogue and institutional mechanisms in resolving political crises, often pushing disputes from parliamentary halls to the streets. The political dynamics following the 2018 general elections brought new challenges. The PTI's ascension to power was met with resistance from opposition parties, which accused the government of political victimization. Deadlocks over issues such as electoral reforms and accountability highlighted the persistent lack of trust. Despite occasional overtures for dialogue, meaningful progress remained elusive. The removal of Imran Khan as Pakistan's Prime Minister through a no-confidence vote on April 10, 2022, was a historic and polarizing event. While opposition parties hailed it as a victory for democracy, Khan's supporters protested, claiming it was a foreign conspiracy.

Negotiations began again in earnest in May 2023, mediated by civil society groups and political actors concerned about Pakistan's stability.

Discussions revolved around a roadmap for electoral reforms and a consensus on the timing of the next elections. However, the talks collapsed, over disagreements on key issues, including the composition of the caretaker government. This impasse further polarized the political environment, with both sides accusing each other of insincerity. Currently, PTI and the government, facilitated by Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, have initiated dialogue to ease political tensions, with the first session held on December 23, 2024. The government has urged PTI to present a formal charter of demands. Both sides recognize the importance of dialogue for political and economic stability, making these talks a pivotal step toward reducing polarization in Pakistan.

Pakistan's history underscores that constructive dialogue between the government and opposition is not merely an option but a necessity for democratic stability. Moving forward, fostering a culture of dialogue and compromise is essential to bridging political divides and ensuring that the country's democratic institutions can effectively address the challenges of governance and representation.

Four years after his supporters invaded the US Capitol, Trump is more powerful than ever

LATE on a day of chaos and blood on January 6, 2021, it was unimaginable that Donald Trump — who summoned a mob to Washington and told the crowd to “fight like hell” — would get anywhere near the presidency again.

Yet on Monday, exactly four years after his supporters invaded the US Capitol, beat up police officers and interrupted the certification of President Joe Biden’s 2020 victory, Congress will convene to again confirm another election.

The democracy that Trump tried to desecrate will enshrine his return to power.

A joint session of Congress to count the electoral votes from his November victory will rekindle chilling memories of the horror and fear felt by anyone who was in the US Capitol four years ago.

The ceremonial process that will clear the way for Trump’s swearing in as the 47th president in two weeks will also highlight an extraordinary moment in political history in a nation where Trump is more powerful and popular than he’s ever been. A plurality of voters decided that despite his egregious conduct four years ago, he was the best option to lead the country until January 2029. January 6, 2025, will mark the most stunning political comeback in US history, and will usher in a new administration that could feature the president-elect’s most extreme stress test of the Constitution so far.

It will also underscore the Democratic Party’s failures in convincing voters that Trump represents a mortal threat to the country’s democracy and that they had the answers to Americans’ economic struggles and concerns over immigration.

Americans made a choice in November, and even though he conjured a day of infamy four years ago, they picked Trump.

The congressional certification of Trump’s victory — over which his vanquished opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris, will preside — will reward an extraordinary effort by the ex-president, his supporters and the conservative media machine to whitewash what happened on one of the darkest days in US history.

Trump, with a storm of misinformation, has convinced millions of Americans of his lie about the 2020 election being stolen. Republicans have rebranded the January 6 rioters as “tourists,” persecuted victims and heroes, despite the hundreds of convictions handed down by courts. Trump has promised to pardon those found guilty over

the attack. He launched his 2024 campaign with a recording of the National Anthem by the “J6 choir,” sung by prisoners jailed for their role in the riot. And he rebranded January 6, 2021, a “beautiful day” and a “day of love.”

This could hardly be more misleading. The truth of January 6 was told in shocking details by witnesses and law enforcement officers to a congressional select committee when the House was still under Democratic control. “It was carnage. It was chaos,” said Caroline Edwards, a Capitol Police officer whose testimony was interspersed with footage of her being knocked unconscious by Trump’s supporters and who described slipping on the spilled blood of her colleagues. “I am not combat trained, and on that day it was just hours of hand-to-hand combat,” Edwards said in June 2022.

While this was unfolding, senators and representatives were running for their lives. Trump’s supporters breached the Senate chamber and Secret Service agents hustled then-Vice President Mike Pence to safety as the crowd chanted for him to be hanged.

But by shrugging off his second impeachment over January 6, 2021, reestablishing his dominance over the GOP and winning a subsequent election despite multiple criminal indictments, Trump avoided paying a meaningful political price for his assault on democracy. When he won a nonconsecutive second term, he went from being a political aberration to one of the most significant figures in American history. Along the way, he skillfully portrayed attempts to bring him to justice for his transgressions as persecution, creating a political rallying effect. He’ll return to the White House as an even more powerful leader, thanks to a Supreme Court ruling arising from one of his legal cases that gives the president substantial criminal immunity for official acts committed while in office. Most profoundly, Trump will send a message down through the ages that a president who refuses to accept the result of a free and fair election and who incites an attack on the Capitol can get away with it — and regain power.

Yet, the process of certifying Trump’s election win will also be a reaffirmation of democracy. And Biden and Harris, in one of their final acts in office, are restoring a tradition of smooth handoffs between administrations denied to them by Trump. Biden said Sunday this had been deliberate.

“If you notice, I’ve

Stephen Collinson

reached out to, to make sure the smooth transition. We’ve got to get back to the basic, normal transfer of power,” the president told reporters at the White House. In a Washington Post op-ed published Sunday evening, he also warned of the dangers of forgetting what happened four years ago.

“An unrelenting effort has been underway to rewrite — even erase — the history of that day. To tell us we didn’t see what we all saw with our own eyes. To dismiss concerns about it as some kind of partisan obsession. To explain it away as a protest that just got out of hand,” Biden wrote without naming Trump. “And we should commit to remembering Jan. 6, 2021, every year. To remember it as a day when our democracy was put to the test and prevailed. To remember that democracy — even in America — is never guaranteed,” he continued, adding that he has invited his successor to the White House on the morning of January 20 and that he will be attending Trump’s inauguration.

Unlike in 2020, the losers — this time, the Democrats — have not lied about election fraud, drawn up alternative slates of electors or called for a crowd to come to Washington to protest false claims of a stolen election.

“He led an insurrection, but the people have now voted and our job tomorrow, which is also January 6, is to implement the will of the people,” Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar told CNN’s Jake Tapper on “State of the Union” on Sunday. “It’s the peaceful transition of power. So, Democrats and Republicans will come together tomorrow to certify those results ... that’s what we do. That’s what America has done, and that’s what we will do on the Inauguration Day.”

The electoral certification of Trump’s win will be a bitter moment for Democrats. And it will highlight the party’s painful reality that it couldn’t produce a candidate in 2024 to beat a twice-impeached, four-times-indicted, once-convicted ex-president who tried to burn down democracy to stay in power. If the core purpose of Biden’s 2020 campaign was to purge Trump from American political life, then his presidency was a failure, whatever other achievements burnish his legacy. Biden’s decision to run for reelection, which came disastrously unstuck in a CNN debate that laid bare the brutal reality of his diminished capacity, helped set Democrats up for failure. And Harris’ inability to coin a convincing case for how

she’d help Americans at a time of high prices and economic insecurity opened the door to Trump’s return to the Oval Office. She never sufficiently distanced herself from the Biden administration’s failure to secure the border or its insistence that an inflationary crisis was merely “transitory.”

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in an interview on CBS’ “Face the Nation” on Sunday that voters hadn’t ignored what happened on January 6, 2021, but had made a judgment on what was most important to them. “I wouldn’t say that the American people disregarded this. They just had a different view as to what was in their interest, economically and the rest,” the California Democrat said.

Trump, with his searing anti-immigration rhetoric, succeeded in painting his chaotic presidency as a kind of lost golden age, despite the scenes of violence and lawlessness that he conjured at its end. The country indisputably took a step to the right in the 2024 election, toward Trump’s populist nationalism, even in many blue-leaning districts and cities. Trump won all seven swing states and became the first Republican since 2004 to win the popular vote, even if he fell marginally below a majority of votes cast. His claims of a historic mandate are exaggerated, but that’s unlikely to thwart his promise to use power to mount a mass deportation of undocumented immigrants, wreak revenge on his political enemies and attempt a crack-down on the media. Republicans now control both the House and the Senate and will have the backstop of an often-supportive Supreme Court majority. Trump’s triumph has left Democrats adrift, seeking a new message and wondering how they can connect with working Americans again. And the party is facing the reality that a plurality of voters preferred a former president who tried to destroy democracy to stay in power to their candidate. Sufficient voters seemed to decide that they’d prefer a strongman who better voiced their grievances than an alternative who warned that Trump was a threat to democracy.

With their warnings about Trump’s threat to constitutional values, Democrats found themselves in the position of defending a government and an establishment in which many Americans had lost faith, after years of foreign wars and the hollowing out of the blue-collar industrial economy. This sense of the end of an ancient regime was

reflected Saturday when Biden made the latest of his postelection jabs at Trump. He awarded Presidential Medals of Freedom to recipients whom many Democrats see as embodying the democratic order that Trump repudiates. They included former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who lost to Trump in 2016. Biden also posthumously recognized assassinated former Democratic presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy, whose vaccine-skeptic son split with Democrats and his family and is Trump’s controversial choice to lead the Health and Human Services Department. He also awarded the medal to former Michigan Gov. George Romney, a Republican and the late father of former Utah Sen. Mitt Romney, one of Trump’s last and most prominent critics in the GOP.

After the ceremony, Biden implied that despite Trump’s imminent arrival in the White House, the fight to save democracy would go on. “Let’s remember, our sacred effort continues, and to keep going, as my mother would say, we have to keep the faith,” he said.

The party that once prided itself on defending global democracy has, however, long since moved on, profiting from its denial of the events of January 6, 2021, which has helped Republicans vault back to power.

Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson, keeping the gavel in a razor-thin victory on Friday, is already laying the groundwork to implement Trump’s ambitious agenda of strict immigration enforcement, tax cuts and slashes to the size of the federal government despite his tiny House majority. Johnson has also changed his mind on the urgency of upholding the certification of electoral votes. Four years ago, he was a key player in Trump’s attempts to subvert the result of a democratic election. Even after the bloody riot, the Louisiana Republican voted against the awarding of electoral votes to Biden in Pennsylvania and Arizona based on false claims of election fraud.

Now, however, he says nothing must get in the way of enshrining Trump’s win.

“We got a big snow storm coming to DC, and we encourage all of our colleagues, do not leave town, stay here, because, as you know, the Electoral Court Act requires this on January 6, at 1 p.m. so whether we’re in a blizzard or not, we are going to making sure this is done,” he told Fox News on Sunday. “We cannot delay that certification.” — CNN

German democracy seeing interference from both East and West

Mohamed Chebaro

IT would not be an exaggeration to say that Germans in 2025 are stuck between the devil and the deep blue sea, as their country starts the new year with an increasingly heated election campaign that is attracting clear attempts to influence its voters from two diametrically opposed reasons. But both are likely to pose an existential threat for German democracy not seen since the rise to power of Adolf Hitler in the 1930s.

The general election due to be held on Feb. 23 came about after the collapse of Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s unruly three-party coalition, as it was unable to agree a solution for the country’s ailing industries.

But this election will be held amid an extremely polarized German landscape due to targeted social media campaigns orchestrated by foes, as well as friends. All that while war still rages not far from Germany, as Russia continues its invasion of Ukraine unabated, despite all the Western help afforded to Kyiv. This, no doubt, will be compounded by the arrival of the new president in the White House.

Fears of foreign interference in politics in general is nothing new in Europe’s biggest economy, but this time it looks like Germany will suffer a pincer movement from East and West, with both sides seeking to destabilize its democracy in favor of populist and far-right politics.

And Germany is not alone among Western nations in terms of being flipped by various means toward hard-right politics. If left unchecked, this shift is likely to change the values and ethos that have governed the Western world by the end of this decade. The Russian meddling is not new, but its intensity is starting to be felt, as a current of anti-establishment sentiment is starting to take root. This is also driven by populists in America, who are magnifying the anti-migrant, “anti-other” sentiment, especially in the formerly Soviet-controlled parts of Eastern Germany.

For some time, German intelligence chiefs have

been raising the alarm about reported Russian attempts to erode public trust in the country’s leadership and institutions and weaken Germany’s resolve to stand by Ukraine. This has no doubt been a force that helped the rise of the hard-right Alternative for Germany, which has enjoyed electoral success in the eastern provinces of Germany. The Russian influence campaign has been composed of both covert and deniable overt acts aimed at sowing discontent through hybrid communications and direct action, while looking like acts of insecurity that magnify the failure of the German authorities on issues related to integration, migration and the economy.

Germany’s domestic intelligence services have often pointed to Russia or Russia-aligned entities as being active in spreading disinformation online and launching cyberattacks aimed at weakening public confidence in democracy, as well as undermining public support for NATO and the EU. Both these issues feature as priorities on the agenda of the Alternative for Germany.

But what is believed to be keeping German politicians and the security establishment awake at night is the influence campaign led by Elon Musk, the owner of X and an influential and outspoken adviser to the incoming US president. He has been using his social media platform to magnify the Alternative for Germany’s political messaging, an act not denied by the party. This has led the German chancellor to hit back, reminding voters that “You, the citizens, decide what happens next in Germany. The owners of social media do not decide that.” Scholz’s party’s co-leader even went on the record accusing Musk of “trying the same thing as Vladimir Putin,” in wanting Germany “to be weakened and pushed into chaos.”

Germans need to wake up. Anything short of policing the internet and the assiduous communication campaigns to their smallest details is unlikely to fend off the historic

blow that awaits German democracy.

Yes, it is easy to think that Friedrich Merz, the leader of the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union parliamentary alliance, is likely to make it as the next chancellor, either alone or with the decimated Social Democratic and Green parties. But make no mistake, the Alternative for Germany is likely to have a greatly increased presence in the new Bundestag as a result of a unique act of meddling in an election of an allied nation.

Musk, it seems, has Germany in his sights. His unrelenting posts on his social media platform are evidently trying to prop up the hard right and undermine the traditional political elite, public institutions and order. His pro-Alternative for Germany opinion article, translated and published in the conservative German newspaper Die Welt last month, ought to be seen as scandalous by most Germans, who still believe that the US is a model democracy.

One could easily dismiss Musk’s political initiatives as being closely linked to him furthering his economic interests, especially as he has repeatedly criticized the EU as undemocratic. This follows the bloc seeking to curb what it believes to be rampant disinformation on social media through new content laws, regulations and accountability.

Come Feb. 23, Germany’s voters should not be envious. Whatever choice they make is likely to change the face of their democracy, unless voters know how to fend off the East-West pincer movement against their democracy and vote in a way that ensures the survival of their country.

Their nation’s standing could be in the balance, as well as the EU project, even if we believe that those protagonists from East and West are demonstrating a mere frustration with liberal democracy and are not part of the more malign campaigns that are also affecting the UK and France, with support afforded to the controversial Reform party of Nigel Farage or Marine Le Pen’s National Rally.

Israel’s pitiless war on Gaza continues apace

Chris Doyle

NORTHERN Gaza is no more, at least not as a livable, populated area. This was not an asteroid strike or a tsunami. But such a fate might have been kinder to the nearly 3 million people who have been compelled to undergo deprivations most of us can barely understand.

The Israeli war on Gaza remains pitiless, nowhere more so than the northern part of this enclave.

Israeli leaders declared openly what they were going to do, did it and now promise more. They have made clear that this is irreversible. Palestinians will not be allowed to return. This has been an exercise in ethnic cleansing, as bold and atrocious in design as any on record.

Few times in modern history have such shocking aims been executed with such cold determination. Israeli leaders showed zero hesitation. Not even the International Criminal Court arrest warrant issued against the serving prime minister or the International Court of Justice’s ongoing investigation into whether Israel is perpetrating genocide in Gaza have acted as a partial break.

Some apologists for Israeli crimes have argued, quite falsely, that the initial few months of terrorizing Gaza with carpet bombing was understandable, given the desire for revenge after the Oct. 7 atrocities. But such an immoral argument definitely cannot be trotted out after 15 months, getting out for 500 days. This is not Israel acting in the heat of the moment. It is cold-hearted, premeditated carnage.

Israeli tosses out the usual propaganda. Its spokespeople claim that hospitals in northern Gaza were all Hamas command centers and therefore “legitimate military targets.” During the last 15 months, they have made such claims but are yet to

provide any substantive evidence. At one moment last week, Israeli denied that it was holding Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, the director of the Kamal Adwan Hospital, only to confirm that it had in fact detained him. His whereabouts, like thousands of others, are unknown. Their fate is unlike the hostages, never mentioned by leaders of the US or EU powers.

Not one single hospital now operates in northern Gaza. Healthcare staff continue to be targeted. The dismantling of the healthcare system here is more than a few notches more severe than in the rest of the Strip.

Aid access is nonexistent for those Palestinians who have not fled. The UN made more than 160 attempts in the last two months of 2024 to reach civilians in northern Gaza, with “almost zero access.” The winter rains are flooding makeshift tents and the freezing weather is lethal, not least for newborns. Israel still blocks fuel and electricity. Disease is spreading, with ever greater contamination of the residual water.

Settler groups dream of colonizing this area once again. Yet already the Israeli military is healing itself. Its soldiers get a military hotel in northern Gaza, flush with all the luxuries of massages, pedicures and a barber. As Gazans die of thirst, Israeli soldiers can make use of a desalination site to provide them water from the sea.

The Israeli message is: “We can do whatever we want and there is nothing that you, the Palestinians, the UN and the human rights community, can do about it.”

Yes, Israel has banned journalists from entering Gaza, but it was never too concerned about the footage that has emerged. It serves a purpose. Palestinians understand

those images and their message in full. Israel knows it can browbeat the Western media to downplay them because these videos and photos were taken by local Palestinian journalists and are, in their view, invalid.

Where to now? Will pulverizing the north suffice? Possibly for some Israeli leaders, given that the rest of Gaza has had 75 percent of the same treatment already. But not for others. Eight members of the Knesset have already penned a letter to the defense minister demanding that Israel destroy all sources of water, food and energy for Palestinians in Gaza. They argue that Israel should do to the rest of Gaza what it has been doing to the north. One of the signatories was Ariel Kallner, chair of the all-party Knesset group on Israel-EU relations. Who would bet against him still having a warm welcome on his next visit to Brussels?

For Benjamin Netanyahu, ethnic cleansing is a negotiating card. Ceasefire talks continue, but the Israeli position is clear. If Hamas does not cave in to each and every one of Netanyahu’s demands, the next area of Gaza can be lined up for exterminatory-level force.

For Israel’s allies, it is simply business as usual. Ever generous, US President Joe Biden leaves office with a parting gift of an \$8 billion arms deal for Israel. Congress will undoubtedly wave it through.

In an imaginary world that treats Palestinians as humans, what is happening in northern Gaza alone would be universally condemned as genocide. Ministers would be tripping over themselves to condemn the ethnic cleansing. Israel would be on the receiving end of the same cold, deadening hand of sanctions as Russia. That it is not is precisely why this horror continues.

AS we enter 2025, the Middle East and North Africa region stands at a major turning point shaped by a complex mix of unique internal dynamics and political realities, economic dependencies, significant demographic shifts and persistent external influences.

The impending return of Donald Trump to the White House signals a seismic shift for the Arab region, as a rehashed “America First” agenda promises an aggressive decoupling from entanglements in the MENA region. This approach, characterized by a reduced US presence and a reliance on normalization efforts or coalition-building, seeks to empower key regional players as primary stabilizers and collaborators in overseeing the Arab world’s hotspots.

However, today’s geopolitical climate demands a reevaluation of such plans. The blend of autonomy and ambition seen in the actions of key regional players — pursuing independent security and economic agendas — reflects a departure from any reliance on or even expectation of US oversight. This independence complicates any simplistic American exit strategy, tying Washington’s hands as it navigates a myriad of intersecting disputes and alliances.

Meanwhile, Arab countries are progressively asserting themselves, filling vacuums left by US disengagement — challenging the efficacy of a wholesale withdrawal or any reconfiguration mirroring past policies. Thus, the Trump administration will be forced to consider a more integrated and contextually aware strategy, sensitive to the evolved dynamics of power and influence in this strategic part of

Arab world faces crucial moment

Hafed Al-Ghwell

the world.

After all, despite the region’s shifting dynamics, its strategic importance remains poised to increase even further, driven primarily by an anticipated rise in the region’s share of global oil production. Forecasts suggest that the Arab world’s contribution to global oil output will surge from under 30 percent to more than 40 percent, with Saudi Arabia alone responsible for half of the Gulf’s production. This uptick not only cements the region’s dominant role in energy markets but also underwrites the growing influence of Gulf Cooperation Council states within global economic and political frameworks. Economically, countries like Algeria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran stand to benefit significantly from high revenues linked to the continued global demand for oil and gas. The crucial challenge, however, lies in modernization. Iraq, for instance, must proactively overhaul its production infrastructure to secure vital oil assets and mitigate risks associated with dilapidated pipelines, vulnerable export terminals and contested maritime routes. These vulnerabilities could potentially disrupt the flow of oil, causing dangerous fluctuations in national revenues.

Furthermore, rationalizing domestic consumption is pivotal. Without enhancing energy security and efficiency, the impressive potential economic windfall from oil sales may remain untapped. This predicament echoes the larger narrative of the Middle East’s economic history, where heavy dependence on oil revenues has often led to short-term prosperity but long-term instability. Nations that fail to

diversify their economies and reinforce their energy sectors may find themselves unable to sustain economic growth. This year, oil producers must thus determine whether they can modernize and grow or risk regression due to infrastructural and strategic deficiencies. However, as parts of the Arab region lean on their dependence on hydrocarbons to navigate a changing world, this reliance reveals vulnerabilities that extend beyond economic fluctuations to geopolitical instability. For instance, the presence and potential spread of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, particularly among unaccountable non-state actors, poses profound threats. For countries heavily invested in petro-economies, any disruption in safety or security could precipitate economic freefall and amplify regional volatility.

Moreover, the growing possibility that regional states might pursue more aggressive nuclear capabilities as a means of deterrence further complicates this security dilemma. In this environment, the risk of an arms race looms large, exacerbated by the interplay between regional adversaries whose hostilities compound the fragile peace and could prompt conflict spillovers that reverberate globally. Should the situation worsen, it will test and ultimately fracture our fragmented global order, which is already stretched thin trying to address multiple crises in real time. The proliferation of delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction, especially among proxy actors not beholden to any state, adds

another layer of complexity, making it increasingly difficult for the international community to engage effectively and promote de-escalation. As global powers grapple with shifting alliances and their own internal challenges, the Arab region risks becoming a theater for proxy confrontations, driven by miscalculation or opportunism.

Further compounding these concerns is the profound impact of demographic trends to the internal dynamics and political economies of the Arab region. Despite a forecasted drop in fertility rates, the region’s population is set to grow significantly, with the working-age population expanding by almost 50 percent. This transformation requires substantial economic opportunities and reforms to integrate the emerging workforce effectively. Some countries are already experiencing how insufficient job creation leads to high youth unemployment rates — now almost double the global average. The consequences are far-reaching. A failure to provide economic pathways for this swelling demographic risks breeding disillusionment, potentially driving young people toward radical ideologies or mass migration, both of which could destabilize the region’s sociopolitical structures. The previous wave of youth discontent ignited the so-called Arab Spring, upending governments and causing widespread unrest. Today’s scenario, compounded by an already unstable geopolitical context, demands urgent and strategic responses before a regression into turmoil.

Next, a significant force shaping the Arab region over the next decades is the escalat-

[illegible]



In brief

Street Child Football trials underway

K A R A C H I (Monitoring Desk): The trials for Pakistan's Street Child Football Team are in full swing nationwide, aimed at selecting players for the Norway Cup 2025 and the Street Child World Cup 2026. In the first phase, trials have been successfully conducted in 12 cities of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Peshawar, Kohat, and D.I. Khan. A large number of young players participated with great enthusiasm. The second phase will cover Sindh, Balochistan, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan, ensuring representation from all parts of the country. The eligibility criterion for participants is a maximum age of 17 years. The Street Child World Cup 2026 is scheduled to take place in the United States in February and March, while the Norway Cup 2025 will be held in Oslo, Norway, from July 26 to August 2.

Singh calls out Gambhir over series of losses

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Former Indian spinner Harbhajan Singh has raised questions over the capabilities of Gautam Gambhir as head coach following a series of losses. Gambhir took charge as head coach from Rahul Dravid after India lifted the T20 World Cup 2024 trophy last year, however, the first six months of his tenure proved to be a disaster for India. Under Gautam Gambhir's tenure, India were defeated by Sri Lanka in an ODI series followed by a whitewash at the hands of New Zealand on their home turf. The Indian team further slumped after they were thrashed by Australia in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. India, the tourists, won the first game in Perth, however, they lost three of the remaining four games while one was drawn. It was the first time in over a decade that India lost the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, while they were also knocked out of the race for a place in the World Test Championship final. Reacting to the recent loss in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, Harbhajan Singh mentioned the downturn in India's performance since Gautam Gambhir arrived as the head coach. "Everything was fine till Rahul Dravid was there. India won the World Cup, and everything was fine. But what happened suddenly? In the past six months, we lost to Sri Lanka, a series whitewash against New Zealand, and now a 3-1 defeat in Australia. Everything seems to have fallen apart," the former Indian spinner said on his YouTube channel. Following the defeat in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, several cricket experts and former Indian cricketers mentioned the impact of the 'star culture' on the team's performance. Harbhajan Singh is among those who urged Indian selectors and Gautam Gambhir to leave the fame-driven glorification. "Every player has a reputation. If this is the thing, then add Kapil Dev, Anil Kumble, or those who have been India's biggest match-winners. BCCI and selectors should take hold. India should leave behind the superstar attitude. Abhimanyu Easwaran was taken on tour, but he didn't play. He can become a player for India if he is given the opportunity. Sarfaraz is the same case.

South Africa wrap up Test series win over Pakistan

CAPE TOWN (Monitoring Desk): South Africa beat Pakistan in the second Test match by 10 wickets to win the series 2-0 here at the Newlands Cricket Ground, Cape Town on Monday. They chased a meagre 58-run target in 7.1 overs after Pakistan's follow-on effort lasted for 122.1 overs in which they scored 478 all out.

David Bedingham, promoted to open the batting with Aiden Markram (14 not out, 13b, 1x4), contributed with a 30-ball 44 not out with the help of four boundaries and two sixes.

Earlier in the day, Pakistan continued from

their overnight score of 213-1 in 49 overs following on and the night watcher Khurram Shahzad departed for a 18 off 47 balls hitting three fours in the 59th over.

Skipper Shan then partnered with Kamran Ghulam (28, 42b, 4x4s) to stitch a 43-run third-wicket partnership, which was broken by Kagiso Rabada in the 67th over. No.5 batter, Saud Shakeel too fell prey to Rabada for a 51-ball 23 after partnering with Shan to collect 51 runs for the fourth wicket.

In the 84th over of the innings, debutant Kwena Maphaka pinned Shan

Masood leg-before to further dent Pakistan's progress as he returned for a 145 off 251 balls hitting 17 fours.

At this juncture of the match, with a deficit of 92 and Pakistan's score 329-5, Mohammad Rizwan and Salman Ali Agha showcased resistance with an 88-run stand for the sixth wicket. The partnership lasted for 156 balls before Keshav Maharaj struck to break open the game as Rizwan (41, 75b, 2x4s) handed a straight catch to Bavuma at short cover.

Maharaj then got rid of Salman Ali Agha, who departed for a gritty 95-ball 48 including five

boundaries, as Pakistan had garnered a 20-run lead. Aamir Jamal (34, 43b, 7x4s) and Mir Hamza (16, 20b, 1x6) stuck around for a 37-run eighth-wicket stand giving Pakistan a 57-run lead before they were bundled out for 478.

Saim Ayub wasn't available to bat in the both innings after he suffered a right ankle injury on the first day of the Test match.

Scores in brief

2nd Test – Day 4 of 5 – South Africa beat Pakistan by 10 wickets at the Newlands Cricket Ground, Cape Town

South Africa 615, 141.3 overs (Ryan Rickelton 259, Temba Bavuma 106, Kyle Verreynne 100, Marco Jansen 62, Keshav Maharaj 40; Mohammad Abbas 3-94, Salman Ali Agha 3-148, Khurram Shahzad 2-123, Mir Hamza 2-127) and 58-0, 7.1 overs (David Bedingham 44 not out), Pakistan 194 all out, 54.2 overs (Babar Azam 58, Mohammad Rizwan 46; Kagiso Rabada 3-55, Keshav Maharaj 2-14, Kwena Maphaka 2-43) and (follow on), 478 all out, 122.1 overs (Shan Masood 145, Babar Azam 81, Salman Ali Agha 48, Mohammad Rizwan 41, Aamir Jamal 34, Kamran Ghulam 28, Saud Shakeel 23; Kagiso Rabada 3-115, Keshav Maharaj 3-137, Marco Jansen 2-101)

Player of the match - Ryan Rickelton (South Africa)

Player of the series - Marco Jansen (South Africa).



Kyle Verreynne celebrates the key wicket of Mohammad Rizwan.

After 18 years, West Indies arrive in Pakistan for Test series

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): In their first visit to Pakistan in 18 years for the longer format of cricket, the West Indies team reached here on Monday to play a two-match Test series.

The team arrived in Islamabad on flight EK 612 from Dubai, prior to the games at the Multan Cricket Stadium later this month.

The visitors will play a three-day practice match, beginning on January 10, against the Pakistan Shaheens as part of their preparations.

Both teams will meet in Islamabad on January 6 and training sessions will take place over the next few days. On January 7, the Pakistani team will start training at the Islamabad Club. To prepare for the series, the Caribbean team

will hold intensive training sessions for two days on January 8 and 9.

This tour represents a major turning point for cricket in Pakistan, as it is the first Test series the West Indies will play in Pakistan since their 2006 visit.

The West Indies have visited Pakistan three times since 2018 for limited-overs matches, but this is the first longer-format series in almost 20 years.

Pakistan and the West Indies have played 54 Test matches against each other, with Pakistan leading the head-to-head record with 21 wins. Whereas, The Windies have won 18 Tests and 15 games ended in draws.

The last Test series between the two sides took place in 2021 in the

Caribbean, ending in a 1-1 draw.

West Indies Squad: Kraigg Brathwaite (captain), Alick Athanaze, Keacy Carty, Joshua Da Silva, Justin Greaves, Kavem Hodge, Tevin Imlach, Amir Jangoor, Mikyle Louis, Gudakesh Motie, Anderson Phillip, Kemar Roach, Jayden Seales, Kevin Sinclair, Jomel Warrican.

Pakistan Shaheens squad: Imam-ul-Haq (captain), Ahmed Bashir, Ahmed Safi Abdullah, Ali Zaryab, Haseebullah, Hussain Talat, Kashif Ali, Mohammad Huraira, Mohammad Rameez Jr., Mohammad Suleman, Musa Khan, Omair Bin Yousuf, Rohail Nazir, and Saad Khan.

Sana Ali elected as Lady Executive Member of POA

HYDERABAD (APP): Leading Physical Educationist Sports organiser, Chairperson Pakistan Archery Federation, President Sindh Archery & Vice President Sindh Olympic Association (SOA) Madam Sana Ali has been elected as Lady Executive Member of Pakistan Olympic Association Association.

On her return from Lahore, Sana Ali was welcomed along with representatives of various associations in Hyderabad by Pakistan Federation Baseball, Sindh Olympic & Sindh Baseball Association's officials, Perwaiz Ahmed Shaikh, Aisha Irum Perwaiz congratulated Madam Sana Ali on her victory with 67 out of 92 votes.

Aisha Irum expressed his best wishes by presenting a bouquet along with Secretary SOA Ahmed Ali Rajput & treasurer Muhammad Asghar Baloch.

They also congratulated the entire cabinet including President Arif Saeed, Senior Vice President Fatima Lakhani, Secretary Mohammad Khalid Mahmood on the success of the aforementioned election.

Sana Ali is a talented, diligent and practical sports figure who has been working hard and dedicated since the beginning of her sports career.

She obtained Professional Bachelor's Degree of Physical Education by securing First Position from Karachi University in 2005 while she completed Masters in 2007 and as a qualified Sports Scientist, she started his professional services from NED University Karachi and later appointed as Director Physical Education by passing Sindh Public Service Commission examination with significant numbers in 2012.

Aisha Irum while talking to media said that "We started a professional career simultaneously in 2004 and Sana Ali was initially affiliated with the Sindh Cycling Association and later served in Gymnastics & Volleyball Associations and federations".

In view of these services and high abilities, she was elected officials of the Sindh Olympic Association in 2007 and is currently offering services as Vice President.

Sohail ends Pakistan's 18-year wait for British Junior Open title



ISLAMABAD (APP): Young squash sensation, Sohail Adnan made the nation proud as he clinched the U-13 title at the British Junior Open Squash Championship 2025.

According to information made available here by Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF) on Monday, Sohail outlasted Egypt's Elmoghazy 3-2 in a heart-pounding final, with game scores of 11-5, 5-11, 6-11, 11-7, 11-5.

This momentous victory marks Pakistan's first title in the British Junior Open in 18 years, reviving memories of the country's golden era in squash. The last Pakistani to win at the tournament was Nasir Iqbal in 2007. Sohail's determination and exceptional skill captivated the audience, leaving them on the edge of their seats during the electrifying match. The PSF hailed Sohail's triumph as a beacon of

hope for the nation's resurgence in the sport. "This victory is a testament to Sohail's hard work and the potential of Pakistan's squash talent," a PSF spokesperson said.

Sohail battled through a challenging draw against top players from around the world. His final match showcased not only his technical brilliance but also his mental fortitude, as he fought back after trailing in the third game to secure a historic win.

Gaddafi stadium upgrdation nears completion

LAHORE (APP): The upgradation of Gaddafi stadium is all but complete as 100 percent grey structure work has been completed while finishing work is being undertaken at a rapid pace.

Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi was informed on the progress of work during his visit of the stadium here on Monday.

Chairman PCB conducted a detailed visit to the stadium Monday to review the progress of the renovation project. During the visit, Mr Naqvi inspected the construction work across all areas of the facility, including the main building's floors, and walked up to the top tiers of the general enclosures to personally assess the improved view of the ground.

The stadium is set to emerge as a world-class

facility with a seating capacity exceeding 34,000. Installation of brand-new scoreboards on both sides of the stadium is also underway.

The installation of state-of-the-art floodlights is in its final phase, ensuring unparalleled visibility for players and spectators alike after sunset.

Additionally, enhancements in general enclosures have improved the ground view, providing a superior experience for fans.

Expressing his satisfaction with the progress, Chairman PCB commended the efforts of the workers and acknowledged their dedication in maintaining the project's momentum despite challenging winter conditions and dense fog. He lauded the remarkable transformation and noted the improved fan experience from the general enclosures.

The Chairman met with workers on-site to appreciate their hard work and urged the team to ensure the project is completed within the stipulated timeline.

"This project is advancing swiftly despite adverse weather conditions. We are committed to delivering a fully renovated and modernised Gaddafi Stadium before the ICC Champions Trophy. It will stand as a symbol of excellence and pride for Pakistan cricket," said Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi.

The project director from the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) briefed the Chairman on the progress, while key officials including PCB Chief Operating Officer Sumair Ahmed, Advisor Mr Aamir Mir and representatives from NESPAK were also present during the visit.

Van Dijk defends Alexander-Arnold after Liverpool star's Man Utd flop



LIVERPOOL (AFP): Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk has defended Trent Alexander-Arnold after his poor display against Manchester United, rejecting suggestions that Real Madrid's interest has had a negative impact on his teammate.

Alexander-Arnold was at fault for Lisandro Martinez's opener in Sunday's 2-2 draw against Manchester United at Anfield, falling well below his usual high standards.

The right-back's sloppy performance comes during a long-running debate over his future with the Premier League leaders. The 26-year-old's contract expires at the end of the season, meaning he can now sign a pre-contract agreement with an overseas club.

Spanish giants Real have reportedly made a bid to sign him but Liverpool are believed to have rejected their approach. After Sunday's showdown, former United captain Roy Keane took a swipe at

Alexander-Arnold's error-strewn display.

"There's talk about him going to Real Madrid -- the way he's defending he's going to Tranmere Rovers after this. He's got to do better," Keane told Sky Sports. "We talk about how brilliant Trent is going forward, but Trent's defending today. My goodness, it's like schoolboy stuff."

Fourth-tier Tranmere responded to Keane's jibe by their own light-hearted assessment of Alexander-Arnold. The club posted a picture of their full-back Cameron Norman on X with the message: "Trent to Tranmere Roy? Nah, we're alright thanks".

Former United right-back Gary Neville suggested speculation over Alexander-Arnold's future could have been a distraction. "The supposed bid from Real Madrid is bad timing for him," he said. "I think that will have unnerved him. Real Madrid are such a powerful club. "There are three rea-

sons for that performance -- he has played like this before, he just had a bad game, or his mind was affected by all the talk.

"I thought his passing and forward play was the worst I've seen."

Liverpool still hope to persuade Alexander-Arnold to sign a new contract, but he is entitled to leave on a free transfer at the end of the campaign. Reds defender Van Dijk, who is also out of contract at the end of this season, is confident his teammate can cope with the potentially distracting situation as Liverpool challenge for the quadruple.

Liverpool face Tottenham in London on Wednesday in the first leg of their League Cup semi-final. "I am fine with it. Trent has his own people around him, his family and we are there as well," Van Dijk said. "He wants to perform in the best way possible like we all do. That is the main focus. "In my opinion, maybe ask him, that is the distraction... the game."



In brief

University delegation visits Senate

ISLAMABAD (INP): A 51-member delegation comprising students and faculty from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, visited the Parliament House as part of an academic tour. According to a press release, senior Senate officials warmly welcomed the delegation and facilitated the visit. The group toured the Senate Museum, where they watched a documentary on the history of the Upper House. They showed great interest in the statues of prominent politicians and the historical photographs on display. In the Banquet Hall, the delegation received a detailed briefing on the Senate's working procedures, legislative process, and its role in national governance. They later visited the Senate Hall, where officials further explained the importance of the Senate's functions and its contributions to the country's democratic system. The delegation expressed gratitude to the Senate officials for their hospitality and the informative session, describing the visit as both memorable and educational.

Admin takes action against illegal construction

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad district administration conducted an anti-encroachment operation in Sector H-16 here to remove illegal constructions and encroachments. In a coordinated operation, the district administration cleared illegal constructions that had encroached on government land in Sector H-16. The action is part of an ongoing campaign to eliminate encroachments, said an ICT spokesman on Monday. The operation was conducted in collaboration with law enforcement agencies and relevant departments, ensuring safety and minimal disruption to nearby residents. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Irfan Nawaz Memon directed officials to intensify operations against encroachments across the city without exception. DC Irfan Memon emphasized that any form of encroachment or illegal construction would not be tolerated at any cost, and the land mafia would be dealt with constitutionally. "Encroachments disrupt public order and hinder the city's development. We will not tolerate any violation of the law," he stated. Officials urged citizens to adhere to building codes and obtain proper approvals before undertaking construction projects. They also warned that unauthorized structures would face strict legal action, including immediate demolition.

NHMP organizes medical camp

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) in collaboration with Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital organised a free eye check-up camp at the Islamabad Toll Plaza M-2 here on Monday. According to the Motorway Police spokesman, the camp was organized on the instructions of IG Motorway police Rifat Mukhtar Raja, and aimed to provide free eye examinations to drivers using the motorway, especially drivers of public vehicles and trucks. In addition, blood pressure and sugar tests were also conducted on the occasion while free-of-cost glasses and medicines were provided to drivers having weak eye vision. A large number of drivers benefited and appreciated the initiative of the Motorway Police. IG Motorways Rifat Mukhtar Raja in a message said that for safe travelling it was essential for the driver to have good vision so that accidents could be controlled.

Mushaal urges UN to act as Kashmiri leader survival remain under threat

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mushaal Hussein Mullick, wife of Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik Monday has made an urgent appeal to the United Nations (UN) and the global community to intervene promptly, as the lives of Kashmiri leaders, including her husband hang precariously in the balance.

In an interview with a private news channel, has expressed grave concerns over the deteriorating condition of jailed Kashmiri leaders, including her husband, also appealed to the United Nations to intervene and stop the atrocities perpetrated against innocent Kashmiris.

She said there is a dire situation in Kashmir, with the Indian government's brutal occupation taking a devastating toll on the region's leaders and civilians. She highlighted the alarming lack of healthcare facilities, exacerbating the suffering of the Kashmiri people. Under India's oppressive rule, Kashmiri leaders face immense pressure and their annihilation seems imminent, adding, the Indian army's atrocities, including arbitrary arrests,

enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings have become commonplace.

The occupation has also led to a severe humanitarian crisis, with the Indian government imposing strict curfews, restricting movement and blocking communication channels, he said, adding, the lack of access to basic necessities like healthcare, food and education has pushed the Kashmiri people to the brink of catastrophe.

As the situation in Kashmir continues to deteriorate, it is essential that the international community takes notice and immediate action to protect the human rights and dignity of the Kashmiri people, he added. Mushaal Hussein Mullick has strongly condemned the human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). She expressed deep concerns over the brutal torture, including the use of live ammunition, by Indian forces against Kashmiris, as well as the adverse effects of the complete internet and communication shutdown on human rights.

Secy Info, Bangladesh High Commissioner discuss enhance media cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary Information and Broadcasting Ambreen Jan and Bangladesh's High Commissioner in Pakistan Iqbal Hussain Khan met here Monday and discussed ways to boost media cooperation and people-to-people contacts between their countries.

In a meeting held here at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the two sides focused on enhanced partnerships to highlight shared historical narratives and cultural values that strengthen mutual understanding.

Secretary Information Ambreen Jan said Pakistan and Bangladesh

had a longstanding diplomatic and cultural ties along with a shared history of cooperation in diverse sectors.

She emphasized collaboration between state media organizations including Pakistan Television Corporation, Associated Press of Pakistan and Radio Pakistan with their Bangladeshi counterparts in fields of joint productions and exchange of news.

She highlighted that a journalist exchange programme could provide the media persons from Pakistan and Bangladesh an opportunity to learn about each other's perspectives and nar-

ratives on various matters.

High Commissioner Iqbal Hussain Khan lauded the government of Pakistan for taking steps to encourage multifarious cooperation between the two countries.

He likened the people of two countries as brothers and added that their connectivity through joint cooperation programmes would bring both nations further closer. The two sides also discussed expanding the availability of Pakistani news and entertainment channels on Bangladeshi cable networks and organizing of film festivals and photographic exhibitions.

ANF recovers 1231 kg drugs in 10 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 10 operations across the country recovered 1231 kg drugs worth over Rs 220 million and arrested nine suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Monday.

He informed that 250 grams heroin was recovered from the possession of a motorcyclist near Main Korangi Road, Karachi.

The arrested suspect confessed to selling drugs to the students of educational institutions.

40 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of a passenger going to Bahrain at Lahore International Airport.

64 ice-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of a passenger going to Jeddah through Lahore Airport.

1208 kg hashish was recovered from two different areas of Pishin in Balochistan.

8.4 kg hashish was recovered from secret cavities of a vehicle intercepted near M-1 Interchange, Islamabad and a suspect was arrested.

3 kg heroin, 2 kg ice and 1.2 kg hashish were recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near Daska Chowk, Sialkot.

4.8 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of two accused held near Sargodha Mor, Mianwali.

In an operation, 2.5 kg heroin was recovered from secret cavities of a truck near Kamunki Toll Plaza, Gujranwala and an accused was arrested.

In 10th operation, 700 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of a drug dealer nabbed near Burhan Toll Plaza, Attock.

Separate cases have been registered against the arrested accused under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary Information and Broadcasting Ambreen Jan presents a memento to High Commissioner of Bangladesh Iqbal Hussain Khan.

SC orders blocking incorrect translations of Holy Quran

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan has directed a litigant to provide if there is any evidence of teaching an objectionable translation of the Holy Quran in any educational institution of Pakistan.

The Court observed that it can be blocked if an incorrect translation of the Holy Quran is found.

Justice Amin Ud Din Khan, head of the Seven-member Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court heard the petition of Advocate Ali Khatana versus the Federation of Pakistan through the Federal Minister of Education for 'Making Appropriate Legislation regarding Compulsory Teaching of the Holy Quran and Islamiat in Schools.'

The Court directed to give serial number to the

petition and issued notices to the respondents.

Earlier, Advocated Aneeq Khattana urged before the Court about his Constitutional Petition under Article 184 (3) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in the SCP to direct the Federation to make arrangements for the implementation of Article 31 of the Constitution in its entirety throughout Pakistan and to pass a restraining order against those who have violated this fundamental provision.

Commenting on the claim of the petitioner that there are no arrangements for teaching of the Holy Quran in Sindh and Baluchistan, Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi remarked that he has learnt reading the Holy Quran (Nazira) in School

in Sindh in 1971-72.

Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan was surprised too to hear this and remarked that Baluchistan Assembly has legislated for compulsory teaching of the Holy Quran. The Petitioner, however, said that technology has enabled miscreants to temper with the correct translation of the Holy Quran while there is a translation that is approved by the government.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked that it can be blocked if any incorrect translation of the Holy Book is found.

The Court directed the petitioner to provide if there is any evidence of teaching an objectionable translation of the Holy Quran and adjourned the proceedings for next hearing.

Senate subcommittee highlights urgent issues at Rawal Dam

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Subcommittee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination on Monday highlighted the critical need for stronger interventions to protect Rawal Dam, ensuring its sustainability as a vital water source for future generations.

The session chaired by Senator Shahzaib Durrani called for daily cleaning of the dam and the establishment of solid waste management systems to generate income and potentially produce electricity.

The committee also decided to conduct a site visit to Rawal Dam next week to assess the situation firsthand. "If Lake Michigan can be cleaned, there is no reason why Rawal Dam cannot be restored to its original state," remarked Senator Durrani.

In addition, the committee urged the CDA to report on its waste management efforts around Rawal Dam and demanded a health department briefing on waterborne diseases linked to the reservoir. A formal letter will be sent to the CDA Chairman to expedite measures for maintaining the

dam's cleanliness.

One major point of discussion was the ongoing construction of the Rawalpindi Circuit House by the Punjab Irrigation Department within the Rawal Dam Irrigation Colony Zone 3.

This construction, reportedly carried out without necessary environmental clearances, sparked strong criticism from the committee.

Senator Durrani called for an immediate halt to the construction of the Chief Engineer House if it is found to be in violation of environmental laws and regulations.

The committee also expressed grave concern over rising pollution levels in Rawal Dam, a critical water source for Rawalpindi.

WASA Managing Director highlighted that untreated sewage from Bani Gala is being discharged directly into the dam, exacerbating contamination risks.

Despite WASA supplying 55 million gallons of water daily to Rawalpindi, unchecked construction and pollution pose a severe threat to future water availability. PEPA Director

General underscored the absence of data on the types of waste entering the dam and revealed poor maintenance of sewage systems around the reservoir. "There is no data portal for Rawal Dam's environmental status, and waste continues to flow unchecked," stated the official.

The committee noted that 64% of the dam's pollution originates from Islamabad, while the remaining 36% comes from Punjab. It sought water sampling reports from the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR) to identify pollutants before and after treatment.

Additionally, the subcommittee requested data on waterborne diseases in the region for its next meeting.

Senator Durrani stressed the urgency of the matter, questioning continued construction near the national park's two-kilometer radius.

The representatives from Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (PEPA), Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA), and the Capital Development Authority (CDA) were in attendance.



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of the students and faculty members of the Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad at Parliament House. —APP Photo

Sweets unit sealed for unsafe practices in ICT

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Director Operations (DDO) of the Islamabad Food Authority (IFA), Dr. Tahira Saddique, accompanied by food safety teams (FSTs), cracked down on a sweets manufacturing unit in the federal capital and sealed the unit after uncovering unsafe production methods and poor hygiene practices.

Talking to APP, she said a team from the Islamabad Food Authority raided a sweets production unit located in the No. 26 area and found harmful ingredients used in the ice-making process. The authority also highlighted significant lapses in cleanliness and hygiene within the facility.

According to her, the production unit supplied sweets to multiple shops across the city, raising concerns about public health risks. Inspections of these sweet shops were also ongoing to ensure compliance with safety standards, Dr. Tahira Saddique added.

The Deputy Director Operations emphasized the need for strict measures to improve urban sanitation in the food production sector. The authority plans to intensify checks to protect consumer health. On this occasion, she appealed to the public to cooperate with the food department in identifying illegal food production units operating in small houses to ensure public safety. Notably, the authority has imposed a complete ban on the sale of Chinese salt and gutka, reaffirming its commitment to upholding stringent standards of food safety and hygiene.

IHC rejects bail of old woman in narcotics case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday rejected the post-arrest bail plea of a 65-year-old woman in drugs case and ordered the trial court to conclude the case within eight months.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani issued a written decision rejecting bail of woman Shaheen Akhtar.

The decision said that according to the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), 'hashish' was recovered from the accused during a search of a passenger van on a tip-off. The ANF's special prosecutor

opposed the accused's bail application and also presented the video recording of the hashish recovery from the accused in the court. The results of the chemical analysis conducted within 72 hours of the hashish recovery came out positive, it said.

The prosecutor said that the case challan has been submitted to the relevant court on October 10. According to the medical report, the accused does not have any life-threatening illness, her treatment is ongoing, and the accused's treatment

can continue even during detention.

However, the accused's lawyer requested bail on the basis of her old age and poor health. According to the lawyer, the accused is admitted to the hospital for treatment due to poor health. After hearing arguments, the court rejected the post-arrest bail of the woman and directed the trial court to decide the case within eight months.

The ANF had arrested the accused Shaheen Akhtar for allegedly carrying 9.6 kg of hashish to Peshawar.

Govt taking various steps for promotion of tourism sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): The development and prosperity of Gilgit Baltistan were the top priority of the Federal Government and in this regard, various projects of development had been launched for the promotion of the tourism sector, health facilities, improvement in the education sector and mitigate the pressure of unemployment in this area.

An official source told APP here on Monday, he said that Federal government had announced a series of mega development projects for the remote areas of the GB.

He said the incumbent

regime also focused on developing the road network and connectivity of slum areas with each other to facilitate the local community.

The local government also upgrading the basic health units in the far-flung areas of the GB.

He underlined that tourism is a lucrative business of the local community and in this regard, GB government provides training facilities to the youth of the area.

Tourism is the best source of income for the local population, as millions of tourists visit this area every year.

He commended the

federal government's efforts in promoting tourism and emphasized the need for its enhancement.

He proposed the establishment of camping sites and tourism facilitation centers across all provinces aimed at facilitating tourists and promoting local attractions.

He highlighted the importance of extensive promotion of the Salam Pakistan portal, a dedicated platform designed to guide and assist tourists visiting Pakistan.

He stressed the significance of leveraging technology to provide seamless experiences for travelers.



RAWALPINDI: A view of spike barrier install on Dingi Khoi bazaar for indicates on side road for traffic, mostly bikers injured on night time when they cross road wrong side. —INP Photo

162 projects completed
KABUL (BNA): Officials from the Paktika Rural Rehabilitation and Development Directorate have announced the completion of 162 various projects this year at a cost of 240 million Afghanis. Mawlawi Khan Mohammad Ahmad, the Director of Rural Rehabilitation and Development in Paktika, told Bakhtar News Agency that the directorate, along with various organizations, implemented 162 different projects during the 1403 fiscal year.

Breshna collects 671 million
BAGHLAN (BNA): Officials from the Baghlan Breshna Sherkat have reported that the department has collected over 671 million Afghanis in revenue during the first nine months of the current 1403 solar year. The department's spokesperson, Ramin Khurram, told Bakhtar News Agency that in the past nine months of 1403, the department collected 671,359,021 Afghanis from electricity fees and deposited the funds into the government treasury.

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

Efforts to send skilled workers abroad intensify

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs announced serious efforts to send skilled Afghan workers to Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia.

The leader of the Islamic Emirate has instructed the acceleration of the process of sending skilled workers to these countries.

Samiullah Ebrahimi, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, stated that to facilitate the legal deployment of Afghan workers to regional countries, a meeting was held among several interim government institutions.

"By sending workers abroad legally, thousands of Afghan workers will have job opportunities in these countries. The ministry is in contact with relevant officials in Qatar, Turkey, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia to ensure proper working conditions for Afghan workers," the spokesperson said.

Among the workers waiting with hope for employment is Ismail, a painter, who sometimes stares into the distance and sometimes arranges his brushes while dressed in his paint-stained clothes.

He said he is ready to do any physical work to provide for his family.

"Whatever work is available, we are ready to do it. We can serve and work hard," said Ismail, an Afghan worker.

Some workers, like Mohammad Zarif, spend their days waiting for work from morning until evening.

"We are unemployed. We come here in the morning, stay until evening, and then return home empty-handed. There is neither work nor support, and life is very difficult," said Mohammad Zarif.

"We are ready to do any job, but job opportunities are very scarce. We are young and energetic, but there are no work opportunities for us," said another worker, Rashad.

At the end of a recent meeting between the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and other interim government institutions, it was decided to draft a five-party memorandum of understanding between the Ministries of Labor and Social Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Interior, Public Health, and the National Statistics and Information Authority. This memorandum will focus on ensuring a safe and standard work environment for Afghan workers abroad.

Meeting addresses journalist complaints



KABUL (BNA): The regular meeting of the Media Violations Assessment Commission reviewed the complaints of journalists from Rah-e-Farda and Arezo TV channels.

According to Bakhtar News Agency, the meeting was chaired by Mawlawi Mohajer Farahi, Deputy Minister of Publications of the Ministry of Information and Culture and Vice Chairman of the Media Violations Assessment Commission.

At the beginning of the session, Mawlawi Mohajer Farahi evaluated and praised the decisions and achievements of the previous meeting.

Subsequently, the complaints of journalists from Rah-e-Farda and Arezo TV channels were reviewed in the presence of both parties.

One case was referred to the court, while another was scheduled for further review in the next session. Additionally, four other issues were comprehensively discussed, and necessary decisions were made.

Rise in seasonal diseases reported in Badakhshan

BADAKHSHAN (TOLOnews): Doctors at the provincial hospital in Badakhshan report a significant increase in seasonal illnesses in the province.

According to them, more than 500 patients suffering from these types of illnesses visit the hospital daily, with at least 50 of them being admitted.

"Every day, around 450 to 550 patients visit the hospital, and about 40 to 50 patients are admitted in the pediatrics and emergency departments," said Ghulam Rabbani Mushtaq, a doctor at Badakhshan Provincial Hospital.

Some caretakers in Badakhshan who have brought their patients to the provincial hospital in Faizabad city say the lack of healthcare centers in their areas is a serious challenge.

"Children are very sick. Coughing has increased among children. The winter has been harsh, and we came from a long distance," said Qurban, a resident of Badakhshan.

"Our patient has a respiratory problem, so we brought them to the hospital. In our area, there are no clinics or doctors," said Shahkoko, another resident of Badakhshan.

Some doctors cite cold weather and poor hygiene practices as the main reasons for the rise in seasonal illnesses.

"Seasonal changes and neglect of hygiene lead people, especially children and the elderly, to contract seasonal illnesses. Families should keep themselves warm and pay attention to hygiene during this season," said Shima, a doctor.

Doctors emphasize that consuming warm and healthy food, keeping children and the elderly warm, and observing hygiene principles are the best and easiest ways to prevent these illnesses.

Land distribution for refugees, returnees begins in Daikundi



DAIKUNDI (BNA): The process of distributing land to refugees and returnees in Daikundi province of Afghanistan has commenced, under the supervision of the Commission for Addressing Refugees' Issues.

The distribution initiative was launched in the presence of Qari Fasihuddin Fitrat, Chief of Staff of the Ministry of National Defense; officials from Da Afghanistan Bank, the Railways, and Physical Education authorities; the Daikundi provincial governor, local officials, and several returnees.

During the ceremony, Qari Fasihuddin Fitrat stated that his visit to Daikundi aims to closely observe the issues of refugees and initiate the land distribution process for them. He emphasized that the Islamic Emirate, as a responsible government, is fully committed to addressing the challenges faced by refugees and ensuring their permanent settlement.

Herat girl establishes sewing workshop

HERAT (TOLOnews): A young woman from Herat has established a sewing workshop, providing job opportunities for dozens of girls deprived of education and women without guardians.

In this workshop, girls who have been unable to attend school or university have learned professional tailoring in recent months.

Parwana Sefatyar, the head of the sewing workshop, stated that the garments produced not only sell in domestic markets but are also exported to the US, Canada, and Germany.

The workshop's primary goal is to create job opportunities and a safe environment for women.

"I wanted to provide job opportunities for women and create a safe space where they can work with complete security and develop their products," she said. Girls deprived of education say that working in this workshop has given them new hope.

"We feel very good that this job opportunity has been created here. Since the schools were closed, I experienced severe depression and stayed at home," said Hasna Afsarzada, one of the employees.

"I'm very happy that this workplace has been created for us. We can sew and earn an income here," Fatima Azizi, another employee, added. Some of the women in the workshop are the breadwinners of their families and express satisfaction with earning an income here.

"There are five of us at home. My husband is sick, and this workshop was a big opportunity for me. It has had a positive impact on my and my family's life, both mentally and financially," said Fariba Alkozai, one of the employees.

With schools and universities closed to girls, many have turned to learning skills and professional work.

In the past three years, hundreds of large and small women's handicraft workshops have become active in Herat, employing thousands of women and girls.

110 water supply projects completed

MAIDAN WARDAK (BNA): The Rural Rehabilitation and Development Directorate of Maidan Wardak province has implemented 110 water supply projects this year.

Mawlawi Rashid, the head of the Directorate, informed Bakhtar News Agency that with financial support from aid organizations, the directorate carried out these projects at a cost of 47 million Afghanis, providing drinking water to thousands of families.

According to him, the projects included the construction of 32 water supply networks and the digging of 87 wells, of which 32 were newly dug, and 55 were rehabilitated.

Qari Fitrat added that after finalizing the procedure, approved by the esteemed Amir-ul-Mu'mineen May Allah Protect Him, those refugees facing housing difficulties will have their problems resolved.

Meanwhile, Daikundi Governor Mawlawi Najibullah Rafi assured refugees that, in line with the elders' instructions, the land would be distributed fairly to those deserving.

It is noteworthy that Amanullah Muttahid, representing the people at the gathering, highlighted the significant migration of Daikundi residents to neighboring countries due to poverty, helplessness, and deprivation.

Amanullah Muttahid expressed gratitude for the special attention of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and efforts to address the issues of refugees in the province.

Iran to use 'all means' to restore water rights

KABUL (Arina News): Iran's foreign ministry said on Monday Tehran will use all means to restore its water rights from Afghanistan and that the Islamic Emirate should take the issue seriously.

Ismail Baqaei, the spokesman for the foreign ministry, said in response to a question at a press conference on the construction of water dams in Afghanistan, that Tehran has been following the issue closely for some time now and has lodged objections to the issue of dams being built in Afghanistan, IRNA news agency reported.

"It is clear that the waters that have flowed from Afghanistan to Iran for thousands or millions of years create rights for parties on both sides of the border," Baqaei said, adding that there is a specific agreement in this regard.

"We will use all means to restore rights in this regard," he added.

The official also said that Iran's acting ambassador in Kabul is following up on the issue of water rights. The issue of water rights has been a source of tension between Afghanistan and Iran over the past few years.

Recently, Fida Hossein Maliki, a member of Iran's parliament, expressed concern about the construction of water dams in Afghanistan and said that this issue is questionable.

He said that the current rulers of Afghanistan are treating neighboring countries, including Iran, in a way that has not been seen in the past.

The Islamic Emirate has repeatedly emphasized that it is committed to ensuring Iran's rights in accordance with the 1973 treaty, but Iran must also consider that the country is dealing with a drought.

Baqaei's comments on Monday, follow close on the heels of his remarks Friday when he underscored the critical need for cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan to maintain the natural flow of water in shared border rivers.

He also noted Iran's long-standing role in hosting millions of Afghan nationals over the past five decades. These enduring ties, he said, underscore the importance of mutual respect and collaboration in addressing shared challenges.

On Friday, Baqaei called on Afghanistan to respect these rights and cooperate in ensuring the continued flow of water.

"The principle of good neighborliness should guide our efforts," Baqaei stated, adding that equitable use of shared water resources is essential for the well-being of both nations.



and Afghanistan to maintain the natural flow of water in shared border rivers.

He also noted Iran's long-standing role in hosting millions of Afghan nationals over the past five decades. These enduring ties, he said, underscore the importance of mutual respect and collaboration in addressing shared challenges.

On Friday, Baqaei called on Afghanistan to respect these rights and cooperate in ensuring the continued flow of water.

"The principle of good neighborliness should guide our efforts," Baqaei stated, adding that equitable use of shared water resources is essential for the well-being of both nations.

Recently, Afghanistan's rulers announced they had begun filling the Pashtun Dam, located near Herat on the Hari Rud River.

The development adds to long-standing disputes over the Helmand River, which dates back to the 19th century. Although a 1939 treaty was drafted to address water sharing, it was never ratified by Afghanistan, leading to protracted disputes.

In 1973, the two nations agreed that Afghanistan would allow a flow of 26 cubic meters per second—equivalent to 820 million cubic meters annually—into Iran.

Makrorayan residents in Kabul complain of heating delays

KABUL (TOLOnews): Residents of Kabul's Makrorayan neighborhoods have once again complained about the non-activation of their central heating systems, and urged the Directorate of Maintenance and Care of Makrorayans to take serious action on this matter.

They say that despite over a month having passed since the onset of winter, delays in activating the heating systems have become a major challenge for them.

"The central heating system has not been activated. They promised that it would be operational by the 10th of Jodi (solar year), but unfortunately, this has not happened yet. Our homes are cold and damp, and our children are getting sick," said Homayoun, a resident of Makrorayan.

Several other residents of the area also called for an immediate resolution to the issue.

"There is not enough electricity, and using heaters is difficult. If the central heating system becomes operational, our problems will be reduced," said Fareed, another resident.

"The heating system must be activated because Makrorayans urgently need it," said Amanullah, another resident.

The Directorate of Maintenance and Care of Makrorayans has cited technical problems with the new central heating system as the main reason for the delay.

"We have made multiple efforts to activate the heating system, but technical issues have prevented us from succeeding. Currently, work is underway to address these problems, and the system will be operational soon," said Mujahid Ansari, the Technical and Operational Director of the agency.

According to the agency, in the past, with the activation of the central heating system, residents were charged 8 Afghanis per square meter daily. However, with the introduction of the new system, these costs will decrease.

Afghanistan welcomes Chechen team to deepen economic ties

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Atiqullah Azizi, Deputy Minister of Culture and Arts of the Ministry of Information and Culture, described the role of the Russian Federation in Afghanistan's economy and infrastructure as important during his meeting with the delegation from the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation.

According to Bakhtar News Agency, the delegation, led by Jambulat Umarov, President of the Academy of Sciences of the Chechen Republic and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Nations of the Russian Federation, visited Kabul to discuss cultural matters and visit Afghanistan's historical and cultural sites.

Umarov expressed his satisfaction with his visit to Afghanistan and emphasized strengthening cultural ties between Afghanistan and the Chechen Republic.

He also spoke about the historical and cultural commonalities between the two countries and considered them significant in developing bilateral relations.

Mawlawi Atiqullah Azizi, in turn, referred to the people of the Chechen Republic as brothers of the Afghan people and highlighted the important role of the Russian Federation in Afghanistan's economy and infrastructure since the Timurid era.



The Deputy Minister expressed his pleasure in hosting such a scholarly and cultural delegation in Afghanistan, which contributes to strengthening and developing cultural relations between the two countries.

Elders mediate feud between families

NURISTAN (BNA): A 26-year-long enmity between the families of Sayed Mohammad and Abdullah in the village of Gordesh, Kamdesh district, Nuristan province, was transformed into friendship today through the mediation of tribal elders and government officials.

The two families, whose conflict had caused both human and financial losses, expressed gratitude to the tribal elders and officials who played a role in resolving the enmity.

They reconciled and pledged to live together in brotherhood and peace from now on.

Kandahar farmers replace poppies with pistachios

KANDAHAR (Ariana News): Farmers in Afghanistan's southern province of Kandahar have taken a solid step towards replacing poppy fields with pistachio plantations.

Local officials said that so far, 115 tons of pistachios have been harvested from 150 hectares of cultivated land.

They said pistachio farming is proving to be an effective alternative to poppies and that the local government is trying hard to encourage farmers to plant pistachio trees.

Most pistachio production occurs in countries with arid climates. Turkey, Iran, Italy, and Syria are the principal pistachio producing countries, outside the United States and pistachio nuts are grown mainly for export in those countries.

Trees are also grown in Pakistan, Greece, India, and Australia.

According to some local farmers, they tend their pistachio orchards daily and employ between 30 and 60 workers.

Some farmers in Kandahar said however that establishing a pistachio orchard was costly and urged the Islamic Emirate government to assist them.

Officials from Kandahar's Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock said pistachio farming was a good alternative to poppy cultivation. They in turn called on former poppy farmers to consider planting pistachio trees.

Pistachio trees can live up to 300 years, but they take five to seven years to begin producing nuts.

They are alternate-bearing, meaning that the harvest is heavier in some years than others.

Peak production is reached around 20 years.



GAZA: A man carrying a wounded girl to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital following Israeli air attacks in Deir el-Balah.

Govt committed to ensuring national uplift: Ahsan Iqbal

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Monday said that the federal government under Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif was committed to ensuring national uplift, which is reflected in the new initiative called 'Uraan Pakistan'.

While talking to media persons, along with Sindh Minister for Planning and Development and Energy Syed Nasir Hussain Shah after a meeting on federally-funded PSDP projects at Sindh Planning and Development Department, he acknowledged the challenges saying that they emerged as a mismanagement and mis-governance in the past by the poor conduct of the previous government.

He said that the federal government would try to resolve issues raised by the Sindh government and would work together for development of the country under the new initiative. Earlier, the Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiative Ahsan Iqbal in the meeting with top-officials and representatives of Planning and Development Sindh reviewed the PSDP projects.

The meeting was chaired by Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal alongside the Provincial Minister for Planning and Development Sindh Nasir Shah. P&D Sindh Chairman Najam Ahmed Shah and other Secretaries briefed the Federal Minister of the projects. The meeting detailed an overview of PSDP and the share of Sindh Government was discussed with the Federal

Minister by the Sindh Planning Development Board. The Meeting also presented the review of PSDP projects under Minister Planning, Development and Special Initiatives. During the meeting Chairman PSDP detailed the strategic barriers and pending approvals from the Ministry of Finance due to which several projects were in the pipeline and once approved would result in four crucial road projects linking key and road projects that are also under approval request with the National Highway Authority (NHA).

The current progress and challenges in the Sindh People's Housing Project For Flood Affectees (SPHF) were also highlighted. Ahsan Iqbal said that 'Uraan Pakistan' was based on the planning to forget the faults made in our past but look towards the future and hope that they had managed to create initiatives that would ensure Pakistan's stability, policy continuation and a pro-reform agenda.

He further stated that it was essential to make export-led growth your motto. Provincial competition on the basis of export initiatives must take place. Every province must create an export development board to work on factors that would improve export quality and general overall management. Ensuring a foolproof initiative to deal with export servicing will in turn lead to the funds being used for debt servicing and pipe them into projects that would hasten the progress of Pakistan.

E-Pakistan is another aspect that must be absorbed as quickly as possible. "The global arena is currently competing on which country is best able to adapt to the requirements and

infrastructure for Artificial Intelligence. We need to generate a massive technology adoption." Water and food security were also an alarming warning that was being given to us. He pointed the need for a green revolution.

Energy and infrastructure was handled by the Federal Government but the overall policies were contingent upon the cooperation of the Provincial Governments. Both Governments need to ensure energy losses are cut down to the minimum. Ahsan Iqbal touched upon the social angle of societal uplifting, he expressed that Universal primary education is the key for any successful nation. He said that literacy rate of Pakistan stands at 60 percent when it should ideally be over 80. Education is the rudimentary factor in determining the overall success of a country.

The meeting discussed some crucial projects that were imperative for the overall betterment of KB feeders and water management to elevate the plight of water shortage leading to a stark rise in the general living standards of masses, there is an urgent need for Pakistan to embrace sustainable water management methods. The Federal Minister also stressed the role of development and infrastructure strategies for Karachi which would in turn shape the future of Pakistan, stating that the development of Karachi is directly tied to the development of the whole country. He expressed the need of integrating Federal and Provincial Government allegiance to elevate Pakistan on all fronts, be it e-Governance, technology, IT or Green initiative.

Imran Khan not seeking any NRO, says Aleema

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Imran Khan's sister, Aleema Khan, has stated that the ongoing negotiations give the impression that the former prime minister also wants to get out of jail through an NRO.

Speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail, Aleema Khan said that Imran Khan had been facing legal cases for over a year and a half. He wants the decision on the Al-Qadir Trust case to be announced so the world knows what this case is about, she added.

She mentioned that the government's negotiations give the impression that Imran Khan, like them, wants to get out of jail by getting an NRO. She reminded everyone that Imran Khan had been facing cases for two and a half years.

Aleema Khan further stated that there were efforts made for Imran Khan to leave the country, with attempts to have him go abroad for three years, then two years, and finally for six months. There were also suggestions to place him under house arrest or have him remain silent while the government continued its work.

Aleema Khan clarified that Imran Khan had sent a clear message to the negotiating committee, which had met the government two or three times. Imran Khan's two main demands are that a judicial commission be formed to investigate both the events of May 9 and November 26, and that investigations be conducted into the FIRs filed against 10,000 to 12,000 people. His second demand is the release of innocent people imprisoned in jails, she added.

Talking about Al-Qadir Trust case, she said, Imran Khan had clearly stated that it was a misunderstanding that the case was being used as a sword hanging over his head. She further mentioned that Imran Khan had told the authorities to issue a verdict in this case just as they did in the Iddat and cipher cases.

Migrant boat incidents: PM summoned

F.P. Report

SUKKUR: A district and sessions court in Sukkur has summoned the top officials, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, over "loss of Pakistani lives" in migrant boat capsizing incidents off Greece coast last month.

During the hearing, the additional session judge-II issued notices to PM Shehbaz, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, directing them to appear before the court on January 15.

The petitioner, in an application, claimed that the unemployed Pakistanis were "poised to leave the country due to the government's negligence." The government writ has ended as 75 Pakistanis lost their lives in the incidents," it added. The petitioner asked the court to issue directives for the registration of a case against government officials at Rohri police station.

'Lack of trust' halts PTI-govt talks

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Negotiations between the government and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have hit a standstill, with no progress made toward scheduling the third round of talks. It reports in media that PTI's failure to present a written Charter of Demands has become the primary reason for the impasse.

According to sources, there has been no contact from either side with the Speaker's office to arrange the third round of negotiations. PTI, following its meeting with the party founder, is expected to finalize its position on the Charter of Demands.

However, the government is reluctant to move forward in the absence of such a document, viewing the Charter as a necessary step to ensure formal negotiations. The government's stance, according to sources, is that if PTI insists on a written Charter of Demands, it will also require a formal written agreement from the opposition party.

Pak Navy Coastal Command annual parade held

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy Coastal Command Annual Efficiency Competition Parade for the year 2024 was held at PNS QASIM. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The event, organized annually by the Coastal Command of Pakistan Navy, celebrates achievements upon the successful culmination of its operational year.

In his address, Chief of the Naval Staff emphasized that the Coastal Command has excelled in its mission by safeguarding Pakistan's coastal areas, spanning from Sir Creek to Jiwani, despite challenging internal and external security environments. Earlier, in his welcome address, Commander Coast highlighted the operational achievements of Coastal Command and presented a brief review of the activities undertaken during 2024. He also underscored command's accomplishments in various operational, administrative, and welfare projects over the past year.

During the ceremony, the Chief Guest presented efficiency awards and trophies to the best-performing units of Pakistan Navy Coastal Command. The event was attended by a large number of senior serving and retired naval officers, civil dignitaries, and CPOs/sailors of Pakistan Navy.

28th annual parents' day held at Cadet College Sanghar: The 28th Parents' Day was held at Cadet College Sanghar (CCS), where Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Upon the arrival of Chief Guest, a smartly turned-out contingent of cadets presented a salute and the Guard of Honour.

While addressing the ceremony, the Naval Chief lauded efforts of the teaching faculty and administration for providing excellent training facilities to the cadets and for their outstanding achievements in the annual board results. He commended the Sindh Government's continued financial support toward the development and progression of this esteemed institute in Pakistan. The Chief Guest also appreciat-



ed the efforts of HQ COMKAR in ensuring high standards of academic excellence and character building at Cadet College Sanghar.

Earlier, the Principal of the College, Commodore Zeeshan Ali, presented the Annual Report - 2024 and highlighted the exceptional performance of cadets in academics, sports, and co-curricular activities. Later, the Chief Guest presented prizes to the winners for their outstanding overall performance during the year. Ex-Cadet Faheem Ahmed and Ex-Cadet Sahib Khan clinched the highest prizes of the Stick of Honour and the Badge of Honour, respectively. Ex-Cadet Junaid Babar was awarded the Quaid-e-Azam Medal for Best Academic Performance. Meanwhile, Cadet Muhammad Aziz received the award for Best Sportsman, and Cadet Muhammad Ali was declared Best Debater for 2024.

The event featured a parade, PT show, Tiger Squad drill, and tent pegging, which were thoroughly enjoyed by all attendees, and the cadets' performance was widely lauded. The Chief Guest also visited Science, Arts, and Cultural Exhibition presented by the cadets and appreciated their efforts and hard work. The ceremony was attended by senior civil and military officials, members of the board of governors, and a large number of cadets' parents.

PHC directs Secy Home to repatriate Khassadars

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Arshad Ali directed the Secretary Home and Tribunal Affairs to resolve status of employees of levies and Khasadar force whose services are disturbed as after merger of erstwhile FATA, on Monday.

The employees of DC Mohmand are repatriated to Khasadar and Levies whereas Levies and Khasadar are either considered to be employees of DC office or given to District Police Officer Mohmand disturbing their seniority, promotions and even the law governing their service.

The counsel Nouman Muhib Kakakhel filed the petitions on behalf of Khasadar Force Employees, Levies Employees and employees of Deputy Commissioner Mohmand which includes Fahad Jan and Sher Khan along with others.

The cases were clubbed together and decided in the same judgement as the service status of 3 different employees were disturbed amongst themselves. The counsel argued that the petitioners were either appointed as Khasadar clerks, Levies Clerks or employees of The Political

Agent and were promoted in the same ranks from time to time.

The counsel argued that after merger of Erstwhile FATA in KP, the District Police Officer took over Khasadar Force and Levies force, however their services were to be governed by Khasadar Force Act, 2019 and Levies Force Act, 2019 whereas the status of employees of Political Agent office are to be governed by Civil Servants Act.

The counsel argued that after merger the employees were to be repatriated to their home departments but instead of sending a khasadar as a khasadar to DPO Mohmand he was sent as levies and Levies officials were sent as khasadar and so much so civil servant employees of DC mohmand were also sent to DPO as khasadar/levies.

The court after hearing arguments of the counsel of the petitioners ordered the Secretary Home and Tribal Affairs to rectify the record and ascertain the status of the employees in accordance with law.

PHC to hear Malik Naseer plea today: Peshawar High Court will hear a petition today filed by Malik Naseer, the central leader of the Pashtun Qaumi Jirga, seeking details of cases registered against him. The Peshawar

High Court Registrar has issued a cause list in this regard.

According to the cause list, a two-member bench comprising Justice S M Atique Shah and Justice Fehim Wali will hear the petition. The petition states that cases have been registered against Malik Naseer, but he has not been informed about these cases, and the concerned authorities are not providing him with details of these cases.

The petition further states that Malik Naseer is entitled to know the details of the cases registered against him, so that he can approach the relevant courts. The petition requests the court to direct the concerned authorities to provide Malik Naseer with details of the cases registered against him.

The federal and provincial governments, as well as other departments, have been made respondents in the petition. It is worth noting that Malik Naseer was arrested by the police for delivering speeches against state institutions and for his involvement in terrorism cases.

However, after his arrest, more cases were registered against him in different police stations, following which he approached the Peshawar High Court seeking details of these cases.

Blinken calls for push to get Gaza truce deal over 'finish line'

JERUSALEM/CAIRO (Reuters): US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on Monday for a final push for a Gaza ceasefire before President Joe Biden leaves office, after a Hamas official told Reuters the group had cleared a list of 34 hostages as first to go free under a truce.

"We very much want to bring this over the finish line in the next two weeks, the time we have remaining," Blinken told a news conference in South Korea, when asked whether a ceasefire deal was close. Israel has sent a team of mid-ranking officials to Qatar for talks brokered by Qatari and Egyptian mediators. Some Arabic media reports said David Barnea, the head of Mossad, who has been leading negotiations, was expected to join them. The Israeli prime minister's office did not comment.

It remains unclear how close the two sides remain, with some signs of movement but little indication of a shift in some of the key demands that have so far blocked any truce for more than a year. US President-

elect Donald Trump has said there would be "hell to pay" in the Middle East if hostages held by Hamas were not freed before his inauguration on Jan. 20, now viewed in the region as an unofficial deadline for a truce deal.

According to Gaza health officials, nearly 46,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's assault on Gaza. The assault was launched after Hamas fighters stormed Israeli territory in October 2023, killing 1,200 people and capturing more than 250 hostages, by Israeli tallies. More than 100 hostages are still believed to be held in Gaza, and Hamas says it will not free them without an agreement that ends the war with Israeli withdrawal. Israel says it will not halt its assault until Hamas is dismantled as a military and governing power and all hostages go free.

A Hamas official told Reuters the group had cleared a list submitted by Israel of 34 hostages who could be freed in the initial phase of a truce. The list provided by the official included female soldiers, plus elderly,

female and minor-aged civilians. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the list had been given by Israel to Qatari mediators as far back as July, and Israel had so far received no confirmation or comment from Hamas about whether the hostages on it were alive. "Israel will continue to act relentlessly for the return of all our hostages," it said in a statement. Israeli forces, which have intensified their operations in recent weeks, continued bombardments across the enclave, killing at least 48 people and wounding 75 over the past 24 hours, according to the Gaza health ministry.

Harsh winter weather continued to exact a toll on the hundreds of thousands displaced into makeshift shelters, with officials saying a 35-day-old baby had died of exposure, at least the eighth victim of the cold in the past two weeks. Officials from Al-Awda Hospital in Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip said an Israeli airstrike at a school compound sheltering displaced families had wounded at least 40 people.