

Erdogan leaves for Turkiye  
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan Thursday departed for Turkiye after completing his two day visit to Pakistan. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar saw off the Turkish President at the Nur Khan airbase.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif and President of Turkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan exchanging views during meeting.

## PM, Turkish President discuss bilateral issues

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of Turkiye Recep Tayyip Erdogan Thursday held a bilateral meeting and had an in-depth exchange of views on various bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest.

President of Turkiye had arrived on an official visit the night before. Upon arrival at the Prime Minister House, the Turkish President was welcomed warmly by the Prime Minister. He inspected the Guard of Honour, witnessed a fly past of PAF fighter jets, and planted a tree in the lawn of the Prime Minister's House. During the meeting, the two leaders expressed satisfaction on the positive trajectory of Pakistan-Turkiye bilateral relations and reaffirmed their resolve to transform these relations into a mutually beneficial strategic partnership. This was followed by the 7th Session of the Pakistan-Turkiye High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC), co-chaired by both leaders. In the HLSCC, the respective ministers of both sides presented the progress reports of the nine Joint Standing Committees covering various areas of cooperation. Two new Joint Standing Committees on Health and IT also presented their reports.

The Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir also participated in the meeting between the Pakistani and Turkish leaders, as well as the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC). The Prime Minister emphasized upon the need to deepen bilateral economic cooperation between the two brotherly countries through result-oriented actions, enhanced business interactions, and facilitating bilateral investments. He invited Turkish companies to take benefit of this immense potential offered by Pakistan's economic, trade and investment landscape and explore mutually advantageous collaboration in the fields of agriculture, new and

emerging technologies, energy, and mining, among others. The Prime Minister also thanked President Erdogan for his strong, consistent and principled stance on Jammu and Kashmir dispute, and reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast support to Turkiye on core issues of its national interest. Both leaders also discussed recent developments in the Middle East during the course of which they expressed unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people. The Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan's call for a two-state solution that envisages the creation of an independent and sovereign state of Palestine with pre-1967 borders and with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the UN and OIC.

In addition to signing the Joint Declaration, the two leaders also witnessed exchange of 24 MoUs, Protocols and Agreements in diverse areas of bilateral cooperation. They also unveiled a plaque for naming a main interchange in Islamabad in honour of the Turkish President. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed to enhance the economic ties between Pakistan and Turkiye, pledging to unlock the full potential of bilateral trade and investment.

"Our bilateral trade volume is strengthening year by year and in 2024 alone it increased by around 30%," President Erdogan said while addressing the Pakistan-Turkiye Business and Investment Forum. But, he said "we are still far behind our target of \$5 billion trade volume", expressing his confidence that all the relevant stakeholders would play role in increasing the trade volume. He believed that expanding the scope of preferential trade agreement between the two countries and evolving it into a free trade agreement would contribute to stable and balanced increase in the trade volume.

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## Appointment of four HCs acting CJs notified

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Law and Justice on Thursday notified the appointment of Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar as Acting Chief Justice of the Islamabad High Court till the nomination of regular chief justice.

Besides this, the law ministry also issued separate notifications regarding appointment of acting chief justices of other three high courts of the country.

Justice S.M. Attique Shah is appointment Acting Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court, Justice Junaid Ghaffar as Acting Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court and Justice Muhammad Ejaz Swati is appointed as Acting Chief Justice of High Court of Balochistan.

The notifications issued by the ministry of law and justice said that in exercise of the powers conferred under Article 196 of the constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the President of Pakistan, is pleased to make the appointments of Acting Chief Justices of aforesaid high courts.

## 13 militants in operations

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Thirteen Khwarij were sent to hell in five separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. On reported presence of Khwarij, an intelligence based operation was conducted by Security Forces in general area Khulachi, Dera Ismail Khan District. During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location, resultantly, five khwarij including Kharji Shah Gul @ Rohani were sent to hell.

In two separate encounters in North Waziristan District, fire exchange took place between the Security Forces and khwarij in general areas Dosali and Tappi. Resultantly, five khwarij were effectively neutralized by own troops.

In another encounter that took place in Lakki Marwat District, two khwarij were sent to hell. During an engagement in general area Bagh, Khyber District, own troops effectively neutralized one more kharij.

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed khwarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces as well as killing of innocent civilians. Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Kharji found in the area as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif appreciated the officers and personnel of security forces for successful operations at different locations against Khawarij in KP.

### NBA's debut in Mumbai

WASHINGTON DC: In a landmark event on February 13, 2025, President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a massive gathering at the NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas. The event, reminiscent of the 2019 "Howdy, Modi!" rally, drew an enthusiastic crowd of over 50,000 attendees, underscoring the deepening ties between the United States and India.

### Strengthening space collaboration

A highlight of the event was the announcement of an ambitious space cooperation initiative between the two nations. President Trump revealed plans for a collaborative lunar mission, stating, "The United States and India will embark on a joint mission to the Moon, combining our expertise to explore new frontiers." This partnership aims to leverage NASA's advanced technology and the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) cost-effective space solutions. Prime Minister Modi added, "Our collaboration in space will not only enhance our scientific capabilities but also inspire future generations."

### Trade and economic cooperation

Both leaders emphasized the importance of robust economic ties. President Trump highlighted the recent trade agreements, noting, "We've made significant strides in reducing trade barriers, benefiting businesses and consumers in both countries." Prime Minister Modi acknowledged the mutual benefits, stating, "Our economic partnership is stronger than ever, creating jobs and fostering innovation."

### Defense and security partnership

The speeches also touched upon defense collaboration. President Trump announced the sale of advanced defense equipment to India, enhancing its military capabilities. He stated, "Our defense partnership is a pillar of our relationship, ensuring the security of our nations." Prime Minister Modi affirmed India's commitment to this partnership, emphasizing joint efforts in combating terrorism and promoting regional stability.

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### Cultural exchange and mutual respect

The event celebrated the rich cultural heritage shared by both nations. Traditional Indian performances captivated the audience, symbolizing the fusion of cultures. President Trump praised the contributions of the Indian-American community, stating, "Your achievements enrich our nation." Prime Minister Modi reciprocated by highlighting the shared values of democracy and freedom, asserting, "Together, we are stronger."

The overwhelming attendance and the leaders' announcements underscored the growing strategic partnership between the United States and India, setting a promising course for future collaboration.

# The Frontier Post

Second polio case reported  
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health (NIH) has confirmed the detection of the second wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) case of year 2025. The lab confirmed one polio case from District Badin, Sindh. The first case of the year was reported from D.I.Khan district in South Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## Pakistan, Turkiye ink multiple deals

— strengthen bilateral cooperation in diverse fields

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Turkiye on Thursday exchanged the signed documents of several Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), protocols and cooperation agreements in various fields to step-up bilateral ties in various fields during the visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Pakistan.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan witnessed exchanges of the accords between the two sides. On the occasion, PM Shehbaz Sharif and President Erdogan also signed the joint declaration of 7th meeting of High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) to further deepen strategic partnership between Pakistan and Turkiye.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and Turkish Minister of Trade Omer Bolat exchanged the signed documents of the declaration on the MoU between Export Credit Bank of Turkiye and Export Import Bank of Pakistan. Minister of Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, and Turkish Minister for Trade Omer Bolat exchanged documents of the joint ministerial statement on cooperation of the verification of origin certificates used in trade and an MoU on digitalization of the verification of origin certificates used in trade.

Similarly, an MoU on cooperation in the field of industrial property was also exchanged by Minister of Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Turkish Minister of Industry and Technology Mehmet Fatih Kacir. In defence sector, an MoU on exchange of military and civilian personnel for social and cultural purposes was exchanged by Minister of Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Turkish Minister of Defence Yasar Guler.

Minister of Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Turkish Minister of Defence Yasar Guler also exchanged the signed documents of MoU on cooperation in Air Force

## Islamabad, Istanbul vow efforts for \$5b trade volume

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Turkiye on Thursday agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in multiple fields including defense, economy, science, education and health besides reiterating the efforts to achieve the goal of \$5 billion bilateral trade volume.

The bilateral ties and cooperation were discussed during the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the 7th session of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council encompassing wide-ranging areas including trade, investment, defense, agriculture, education, energy, science & technology, and infrastructure. The two leaders, addressing a joint press stakeout, following their meeting and HLSCC meeting, told the media that they reaffirmed to fight against terrorism considering it their common enemy. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in his remarks, said that both sides discussed a range of issues including trade, strategic and defense cooperation and signed accords for multiple cooperation including for a special economic zone to be built by a Turkish firm.

"I assure you that I will work closely with you and our teams will work closely to convert these MoUs into action," he remarked. Welcoming the Turkish president who was visiting after five years, he said that the bilateral relations were not carved out after Pakistan's independence but went back centuries. He said during the Turkish Independence movement, the Muslims of the subcontinent, fully supported the Turkish people who also reciprocated with even greater compassion and magnanimity. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that be it was earthquake or floods, Turkiye stood by Pakistan through thick and thin and recalled President Erdogan and the First Lady's visit to Pakistan's flood-hit areas in 2010 and support for the reconstruction of houses and schools. He viewed that President Erdogan's visit would take the bilateral friendship to new heights and called him a highly respected Muslim world leader for his strong stance on issues like Gaza, Palestine and Kashmir. "Turkiye always stood by Pakistan for the just cause of Kashmir. You always maintained your stance loud and clear. Similarly, Pakistan fully supported the cause of Northern Cyprus and stood by Turkiye in this cause in an unwavering fashion," he remarked.

Electronic Warfare and an MoU between the Secretariat of Defence Industries and the Ministry of Defence Production, Pakistan. Likewise, a protocol on training and cooperation in the field of military health was exchanged between Minister of Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Turkish Minister of Defence Yasar Guler. Another MoU between Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) and Naval Research and Development Institute (NRDI) of Pakistan was

exchanged by DG NRDI Pakistan Navy, R/Admiral Javed Iqbal HI (M) and Director Turkish Aerospace Industries Dr Mehmet Demiroglu. In the field of Science and Technology, an MoU for cooperation in halal trade was signed by Minister of Science and Technology Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and Turkish Minister of Trade Omer Bolat. Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and Turkish Minister of Industries and

(Continued on Back Page)

## President for stronger relations with Turkiye

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Turkiye have reiterated their commitment to further improve bilateral cooperation in the areas of trade, economy, energy, defence, tourism, and people-to-people contacts for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries. Emphasizing the vast potential for enhanced economic cooperation, both sides underscored the need to increase trade and investment relations.

These matters of mutual interest were discussed during a meeting between the visiting Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr Thursday. Welcoming President Erdogan, and his delegation, President Asif Ali Zardari said that Pakistan and Turkiye enjoyed historic fraternal ties and supported each other on various international fora. He underscored that President Erdogan's visit held special significance for the people

of Pakistan and would help further solidify bilateral relations.

The President stated that Pakistan offered an investment-friendly environment and reiterated Pakistan's desire to see enhanced investment by the Turkish enterprises in Pakistan including in the stock market and other key areas of the economy. He called for increasing cooperation in the banking sectors of the two countries to facilitate businesses and boost bilateral trade volume to its fullest potential. He underscored the need for increased connectivity and air links between Pakistan and Turkiye to encourage tourism and strengthen people-to-people ties.

The meeting also discussed regional and international issues, particularly Gaza and Syria, and agreed to work together to promote peace and stability in the region and globally. He thanked President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for Turkiye's principled sup-

port for Kashmiris' right to self-determination.

President Erdogan reiterated Turkiye's commitment to strengthening bilateral economic ties, and stated that he would continue to encourage Turkiye's companies to invest in Pakistan and wanted to raise bilateral trade to \$5 billion.

The Turkish President called for enhancing people-to-people relations to pass on the friendship to succeeding generations. He lauded the advancement and stability achieved by Pakistan. He also thanked the President for Pakistan's continued support to Turkiye on the Cyprus issue. He stated that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute should be resolved through dialogue and in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions. Following the meeting, President Asif Ali Zardari hosted a banquet in honour of President Erdogan, First Lady Emine Erdogan, and the Turkish delegation.

## KP's NFC share stands at 19.46%: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Adviser to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has stated that following the merger of tribal districts, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's share in the NFC Award stands at 19.46%, which the federal government is constitutionally obligated to acknowledge. He urged the federal government to take immediate practical steps to ensure the development of the merged districts and protect them from further deprivation.

Barrister Dr. Saif further stated that any attempt to hinder the development of the tribal districts will fail, as keeping these areas underdeveloped is tantamount to promoting insurgency. He explained that before the merger, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's NFC share was 14.72%, which has now increased to 19.46%.

He demanded the immediate release of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's rightful dues, including net hydel profit, developmental funds for merged districts, NFC Award allocations, and other outstanding payments, to allow the province to progress according to its resources. He emphasized that attempts to marginalize a province that has already suffered due to terrorism must be stopped, as such actions are against national unity and stability.

Barrister Dr. Saif warned that if the province is denied its legitimate rights, strong resistance will be made at both political and legal levels. He described the federal government's attitude as tantamount to rebellion against the federation, which is completely unacceptable. He further stated that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is not asking for charity but demanding its constitutional rights, and any violation of these rights will not be tolerated. He reiterated that there will be no compromise on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's rights. The province will raise its voice on every platform and will secure its due share at any cost.

## Shahab appointed as KP Chief Secretary

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a significant administrative reshuffle, senior bureaucrat Shahab Ali Shah, a BS-21 officer of the Pakistan Administrative Service, has been appointed as the Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah was previously serving as the Additional Chief Secretary Home, Balochistan and brings with him a wealth of experience and a reputation for integrity and excellence in governance.

Known for his strong administrative acumen and public trust, Shahab has held several key positions throughout his illustrious career. His previous roles include Additional Chief Secretary Planning & Development (P&D) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Khyber

Pakistan, Political Agent of Khyber, Kurram, and South Waziristan, and Deputy Commissioner Hangu. His vast experience in handling complex administrative and governance challenges makes him a highly respected bureaucrat in the province.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is currently grappling with serious administrative challenges, and Shahab Ali Shah's appointment is expected to bring much-needed stability and leadership. Given his proven ability to manage crises, implement reforms, and supervise governance effectively, his tenure is anticipated to revitalize the provincial administration and restore efficiency in governance.

With a track record of merit, discipline, and proactive decision-making, Shahab Ali Shah is widely

regarded as one of the finest bureaucrats in the province. His leadership is set to play a crucial role in steering Khyber Pakhtunkhwa toward improved governance and administrative efficiency.

Meanwhile, on the recommendations of the Provincial Selection Board, Arshad Khan, Secretary, Information & Public Relations Department has been promoted from (PCS SG BS-20) to (PCS SG BS-21), on a regular basis, with immediate effect.

Consequent upon above, Mr. Arshad Khan (PCS SG BS-21) has been allowed to actualize his promotion in BS-21 against the already occupied post of Secretary, Information & Public Relations Department. This was notified here by the Establishment Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.









PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Industries Abdul Karim Tordher in a group photo at the launch of startup cohort by Business Incubation Center at UoP.

## Business Incubation Center launches First startup cohort

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Business Incubation Center (BIC) at the University of Peshawar marked a historic milestone with the launch of its first startup cohort. On Thursday, the event launching ceremony attended by Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Industries Abdul Karim Tordher as a chief guest while other distinguished guests, industry leaders, and aspiring entrepreneur attended. In the event, Dr. Shakeel Khan, Head of BIC, opened the ceremony with an inspiring address, emphasizing the pivotal role of the incubation center in fostering entrepreneurial talent. Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Industries Abdul Karim Tordher, addressed the gathering, offering words of encouragement to the startups and highlighting the government's commitment to supporting entrepreneurship.

Following his remarks, former President of the Chamber of Commerce, Fawad Ishaq, reaffirmed the industry's full support for the incubation center, pledging collaboration and mentorship opportunities for emerging businesses. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Peshawar, Professor Dr. Muhammad Naeem Qazi welcomed the startups and witnessing this landmark achievement. In his speech, he underscored the university's commitment to fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation. Industry leaders also joined hands in supporting the initiative.

Fazal Moqem Khan, President of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce expressed his enthusiasm for strengthening industry-academia linkages. Similarly, British Council representative Ms. Tahira Kaleem extended her support for fostering innovation and global collaboration opportunities for young entrepreneurs. The inaugural cohort comprises 25 promising start-

ups spanning diverse industries, including environmental conservation, edtech, fintech, and other emerging sectors. Notably, over 10 startups in this cohort are dedicated to environmental sustainability, reflecting BIC's commitment to responsible and impact-driven entrepreneurship. Over the next six months, these startups will undergo an intensive incubation program, benefiting from expert mentorship, business development training, and networking opportunities.

Upon completion, they will be well-positioned to scale their businesses and contribute to the economic and social development of the region. The launch of this first cohort marks a defining moment for the University of Peshawar, reinforcing its role as a hub for entrepreneurial excellence. BIC remains committed to empowering young innovators and bridging the gap between academia and industry to drive sustainable economic growth.

## Imran appointed as acting Mayor

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali has departed for Makkah to perform Umrah. He has appointed Chairman Neighborhood Council 23 Gulbahar, Imran Naveed, as the acting mayor for six days. A formal letter in this regard has been sent to the Minister for Local Government. According to details, Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali sent a letter to the Provincial Minister for Local Government through the Civil Secretariat, requesting leave from February 14 to February 19, 2025, for the pilgrimage. In the letter, he also designated Imran Naveed as the acting mayor of Peshawar in his absence. During this period, Chairman Imran Naveed will oversee the affairs of the City Metropolitan Government and ensure the smooth functioning of municipal operations. Speaking on the matter, Imran Naveed expressed his best wishes for Mayor Haji Zubair Ali's pilgrimage and pledged to manage the city's administrative affairs efficiently during his temporary tenure.

## Piverifine, KMU sign MoU

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Khyber Medical University Business Incubation Center (KUBIC) Peshawar and Piverifine Private Limited. The purpose of this agreement is to promote entrepreneurial skills, innovation, and economic development in Pakistan. The MoU was signed by the Vice Chancellor of KMU, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq, and the CEO of Piverifine Private Limited, Mr. Haroon Nawaz. Under this partnership, Piverifine Private Limited will sponsor the Hult Prize Pakistan National Summit, which is scheduled to be held from May 2-4, 2025, at Khyber Medical University, Peshawar. The Hult Prize is an international competition that provides students with a platform to present innovative solutions to global challenges. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq, Vice Chancellor KMU, said, "We are delighted to partner with Piverifine Private Limited, as this collaboration will empower young entrepreneurs and innovators in Pakistan."

## 76th Police Policy Board meeting held at CPO

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 76th meeting of the Police Policy Board was held on Thursday at the Central Police Office Peshawar. Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Zulfiqar Hameed presided over the meeting. Additional IGPs Operations, Headquarters, Investigation, Training, Special Branch, CCPO Peshawar, Commandant FRP, DIGs Inquiry, Headquarters, Finance, IT, Investigation, AIG Establishment, AIG Legal

and SP Headquarters attended the meeting.

The meeting thoroughly discussed the agenda of recruitment of children of police martyrs, promotion of police personnel to various ranks and establishment of new traffic police stations. The participants of the Police Policy Board had a discussion on all the points included in the agenda and presented several suggestions in the light of their professional expertise. It is worth mentioning that the Police Policy Board has been formed as a police "think tank" to consider and decide on future policy

decisions, including improving the performance of the force and further improving the condition of the force personnel. The IGP directed the participants of the Police Policy Board to utilize their experience and high capabilities for the betterment of the force and formulate far-reaching policies to further enhance the capabilities of the force, ensure the welfare of the youth, provide them with equal opportunities for Promotion, fulfill the agenda of serving the public and effectively deal with the challenges of the modern era.

## Annual Sports Gala at Islamia Collegiate School begins

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Grand Opening Ceremony of the Annual Sports Gala at Islamia Collegiate School Peshawar. The much-anticipated Annual Sports Gala of Islamia Collegiate School commenced with a grand opening ceremony, graced by Chairman BISE Peshawar, Professor Nasrullah Khan, as the Chief Guest, along with renowned Test Cricketer Riaz Afrido and Ali Hoti sports Director ICP. The event began with a vibrant display of military performances, a PT show, and other colorful activities, which energized the participants and the audience alike. The school Principal, Mr. Sikander Khan, Vice principal Muhammad Hayat Khan and Mr. Roohullah extended their heartfelt gratitude to the esteemed guests for their presence and support in promoting sports and physical education among students. The Principal also thanked Vice chancellor Professor Dr. Ali Muhammad yousafzai for his keen interest. One of the most thrilling moments of the day was the Tug of War competition among teachers, where Dr. Inayat ur Rehman and his team emerged victorious after a fierce contest. The 100-meter race saw an outstanding performance by Mr. Abdur Rahim, who clinched the first position. The students discipline eas exemplary. Stage duties were efficiently handled by Dr. Shahzad and Dr. Saabra Khan, ensuring smooth coordination throughout the event.

## Inadequate housing options leave KP's poor families, Govt employees in limbo

PESHAWAR (APP): The population explosion coupled with escalating property prices and rising inflation, has worsened the housing problems for low-income people and Govt employees in the urban areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The situation has reached a critical point in KP where around 2.5 million additional housing units are needed to meet the growing demand of the poor and underprivileged, experts say. As Pakistan's population hits a new high of 250 million, the gap between available housing and demand has widened dramatically, particularly in KP, where 2.5 million homes are urgently needed for homeless.

The growing challenges are most acutely

felt by salaried class and marginalized groups, who are struggling to secure affordable housing units for families amidst skyrocketing land prices and limited economic opportunities, forcing them to pay hard earned money as rent for years.

Local residents are expressing growing frustration over the lack of affordable housing options in Peshawar. Every year, I see my house rent increase while my salary remains the same," says , Waris Khattak, an employee of a Govt department in Peshawar.

"It seems impossible to save money for own house due high inflation and land cost at Peshawar. Many like me are forced to endure overcrowded living conditions or are compelled to live far from

their workplaces in search of affordable housing."

"Affordable housing is a fundamental right for all citizens of Pakistan," argued Professor Dr. Zilakat Malik, former Chairman of the Economics Department at the University of Pakistan. He explained that rapid population growth, rural-to-urban migration, and soaring land prices have created a dire housing backlog in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's major cities.

While some governments have tried providing affordable housing on urban peripheries to relieve overcrowding in city centers, he said this has often led to additional social and economic issues besides traffic jam and pollution.

"Relocating people to the outskirts has resulted

in them being isolated from essential services, job opportunities, education institutions, hospitals and social networks," he added.

He said this issue has been exacerbated by political instability, frequent changes in government, and an unchecked rise in property prices, particularly in KP, where affordable housing remains largely out of reach for the salaried class and the poor despite tall slogans of PTI.

The rapid urbanization of agricultural land in areas such as Peshawar, Mardan, Abbottabad, and Swat has turned fertile land into unplanned towns, further contributing to the housing shortfall and low agriculture production.

Dr. Zilakat said projects that to meet the grow-

ing demand of 600,000 new homes per year in KP alone, at least 1.1 million new units will be needed annually over the next 14 years to clear the current housing backlog of 10 million.

In Peshawar, where the population has already surpassed 1.97 million, the housing problem is projected to worsen, with the city's population expected to reach 2.8 million by 2030. This will likely consume even more agricultural land, further exacerbating the food security situation.

The high cost of land has made housing unaffordable for many. The price of a five marla house in Peshawar has soared to Rs 20 million, while rents have surged to Rs 40,000—far beyond the reach of low-income workers.

Ikhtair Wali, spokesperson for the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), claimed that the PTI-led government failed to deliver on its promises of constructing 5 million houses, worsening the housing situation in the province. "Rather than addressing public issues, taxpayers' money was wasted on unnecessary gatherings," he claimed.

In response to the growing demand for affordable housing, the Provincial Housing Authority (PHA) initiated a survey under the Naya Pakistan Housing Program, identifying a shortfall of 750,000 houses in KP.

According to PHA spokesman, the survey revealed that significant land, around 262,500 kanal, is required to build

these houses. Peshawar alone needs 104,897 homes, with other districts such as Mardan and Swat requiring over 60,000 units each.

Several housing projects are being developed across KP, such as the Hangu Township on 8,400 kanal and the Jalozai Phase III project in Nowshera. Other initiatives include the construction of 900 residential flats in Peshawar, and a 20-story high-rise building in Nishtarabad with 300 low-cost flats for underprivileged families.

Additionally, large-scale housing projects in Swat, Mardan, and other areas are aiming to provide affordable homes for thousands of families. The PHA and the KP government are also collaborating on the Surizai project in Peshawar, which will

build 8,000 low-cost housing units in the first phase.

While these projects offer hope, they are only a drop in the ocean when compared to the overall demand.

Dr. Zilakat stressed that the KP government must adopt more sustainable, long-term strategies to bridge the housing gap, including better land utilization, improved financial support for low-income buyers, and more coordinated urban planning.

As housing prices continue to soar, and thousands of poor families remain without adequate shelter in KP, it remains to be seen whether the government can make affordable housing a reality for them who need it most in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in near future.

## 2500 athletes to take part in KP Games 2025, says Fakhar



### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jihan has stated that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Games 2025, to be held in the province, is a major event of its kind where in, a total of 2,500 athletes from across the province will participate. He expressed satisfaction with the ongoing preparations for the games and directed the concerned authorities to complete all arrangements on time.

He shared these views while chairing a meeting at his office to review the preparations for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Games 2025. The meeting was attended by Secretary of Sports

and Youth Affairs, Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, Additional Secretary Pir Abdullah Shah, Director General of Sports Abdul Nasir Khan as well as other directors and officers.

During the meeting, the provincial minister was given a detailed briefing about the sports and other recreational activities that will take place in this important event.

This event, which will feature the largest number of games and athletes to date, is set to start on 20th February. It will include 17 sports for men and 12 for women with the games running from 20th to 23rd February.

Similarly, for the first time, the sport of Wushu will also be included. Athletes from all

seven regions of the province will participate, most already completed and some near to completion.

According to the briefing, these games will take place at various locations, most of the women's competitions being held at the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) ground in Peshawar and District Charsadda. Arrangements will also be made for travel and accommodation for the athletes.

The winners of the games will receive a prize of one lakh rupees and the runners-up will receive fifty thousand rupees. The colorful opening ceremony of the games will take place on 20th February at the Peshawar Sports

Complex, featuring music, traditional dances and other events along with a march-past by various contingents.

In the meeting, the Sports Minister stated that in line with the vision of founder chairman Imran Khan, the provincial government, under the leadership of Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, is committed to provide the youth with healthy sports activities so that they can showcase their talents.

He further stated that the provincial government is providing opportunities for positive and healthy activities for the younger generation and hosting the largest event of its kind in the province is a unique honor for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## PCP hosts ACT Basic Clubfoot Treatment Provider workshop

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A two-day ACT Basic Clubfoot Treatment Provider workshop successfully conducted at the Paraplegic Centre Peshawar (PCP). Out of the total 8 participants the training program brought together 5 new trainee healthcare professionals from DHQ Teaching Hospital Haripur and 3 from the Paraplegic Centre Peshawar. The training aimed to enhance the skills and knowledge of healthcare providers in clubfoot treatment, ensuring high-quality care for children affected by clubfoot.

Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas, CEO Paraplegic Centre Peshawar, awarded certificates to the participants who successfully completed the training course with practical demonstration. He praised the participants' dedication to learning and expressed

the hope that they would provide comprehensive and free treatment to children with clubfoot at the newly established clubfoot clinic in Haripur.

Dr. Ilyas stated that this initiative is part of a broader effort by the Paraplegic Centre Peshawar and MiracleFeet to provide free treatment to children with clubfoot in Haripur district and surrounding areas. He said that Clubfoot clinics have already launched at major cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Peshawar, Abbottabad, Swat and Swabi as well as federal capital Islamabad and Muzafarabad AJK that have become a success story and over 4000 children with clubfoot chronology have been treated free of cost so far. He revealed that the plan will be gradually extended to other remote cities of the province including Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu and

merged districts wherein well equipped Clubfoot clinics would be established with active support of the MiracleFeet.

Dr. Amir Zeb, Provincial Coordinator, Clubfoot Program and Representative of PCP, exhorted during the workshop that the center is committed to providing comprehensive treatment to children with clubfoot with not a single affected child left untreated.

He expressed gratitude for MiracleFeet's support and looked forward to continuing their collaboration to improve the lives of children with clubfoot and providing succor to their families.

The Paraplegic Centre Peshawar and MiracleFeet share a common vision of ensuring that all children with clubfoot have access to timely, high-quality treatment. This initiative marks a significant mile-

stone in their joint efforts.

Noteworthy is that the ACT (Africa Clubfoot Training) program is a foundational training initiative that played pivotal role in strengthening the clubfoot treatment system in sub-Saharan Africa. Between 2015 and 2017, this program trained fresh national-level trainers in 18 countries, contributing to enhance partnerships and improve treatment outcomes.

The Africa Clubfoot Training program is structured into three progressive stages: the Basic Clubfoot Treatment Provider Course, the Advanced Clubfoot Treatment Provider Course, and the Train the Trainer (TTT) Program. This training initiative equips medical professionals with the effective application of the Ponseti method, ensuring that every child receives timely and high-quality treatment worldwide.

## Graduation ceremony held at NWSM

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Northwest School of Medicine (NWSM) held its 3rd Graduation Ceremony, awarding degrees to 105 male and female graduates of the MBBS batch of session 2018-2023. The ceremony took place at the College Auditorium, attended by distinguished guests, faculty members, parents, and graduating students.

The Chief Guest, Prof. Zia Ul Haq, Vice Chancellor of Khyber Medical University (KMU), graced the occasion. Other notable attendees included Mr. Inam Ullah Wazir, Registrar KMU; Prof. Dr. Abid Hussain, Principal NWSM; Prof. Dr. Sardar Muhammad Alam, Chairman Board Alliance Healthcare Ltd; and Malik



Abdul Latif Awan, CEO AHL.

During the ceremony, five outstanding graduates were awarded gold medals for their exceptional performance. The gold medalists included Dr. Muhammad Raees, who secured four gold medals and achieved 1st Position in 4th Professional Examination 2022 at NWSM and KMU, and 4th Position in 5th Professional Exams 2023 at KMU. Dr. Shahab Ahmad, who achieved 7th Position in the 4th Professional Exams 2022 at KMU, and 1st

Position in 5th Professional Exam at NWSM and 2nd at KMU 2023.

Dr. Farishta Hamayun, who secured 1st Position in 2nd Professional Exams 2020 at NWSM, 1st Position in 3rd Professional Exam 2021 at NWSM, and 6th Position in 4th Professional Exam 2022 at KMU. Dr. Ehtisham ul Haq, who achieved 1st Position in 1st Professional Exam 2019. Dr. Maria Shoaib, who secured 3rd Position in 5th Professional Exam 2023.

Prof. Dr. Abid Hussain, Principal NWSM, wel-

comed the guests and congratulated the graduating students. He highlighted the college's achievements and its role in the healthcare system, and administered the oath to the new graduates.

Mr. Malik Abdul Latif Awan, CEO AHL, emphasized Northwest's commitment to maintaining high standards and producing skilled graduates for the healthcare system.

Prof. Zia Ul Haq, Vice Chancellor of KMU, addressed the participants and urged the graduating students to remain sincere to their profession, honor their teachers and parents, and uphold the dignity of the medical profession. The ceremony concluded with a sense of pride and accomplishment, as the graduating students embarked on their journey as medical professionals.





## In brief

### 5 injured in road mishap F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: A collision between a Mazda truck and a car in Abbottabad district on Thursday left five people injured, including two women. Following the accident, the truck fell into a ravine. Rescue 1122 said its medical teams promptly arrived at the scene and began providing assistance. Rescue 1122 said two individuals in the truck, 22-year-old Kashif and 18-year-old Saad, were injured. Among the car passengers, three including 50-year-old Azala Bibi, 29-year-old Lubna, and 56-year-old Saleem Khan, reportedly from Swabi were injured. The rescue team provided first aid to the injured and transported them to DHQ Hospital.

### Transgender shot dead F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: A transgender was shot dead by unknown assailants in Charsadda district, police informed on Thursday. Police said unidentified assailants opened fire in the jurisdiction of City Police Station in Tehsil Bazaar, Charsadda, killing a transgender. The transgender, identified as Gorgora, who was inside his room died instantly. Following the incident, the police took the body into custody and transferred it to DHQ Hospital for post-mortem examination. City Police have registered a case against an unknown accused and started an investigation.

### Operation against defaulters F.P. Report

KOHAT: The Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) was conducting an indiscriminate recovery operation against defaulters on the instructions of Tehsil Officer Regulation, Riaz Awan. Several shops were sealed under the supervision of Assistant Tax Superintendent, Aimal Khan and Chief Officer, Waqas. During the operation, recoveries were also made on the spot. The local police were also active during the operation, in which SHO Police Station Mills Area, Ayub Janan was present along with his personnel to deal with any untoward situation. The TMA has made it clear that the campaign to recover arrears would continue without discrimination, and strict legal action would be taken against defaulters.

### Cabinet elected F.P. Report

SHAHADKOT: A ceremony held for All Pakistan Khaskheli Ittehad at Waggan Qamber Shahdadt district, which was attended by countless people belonging to the community, on Thursday. The foundation of "All Pakistan Khaskheli Ittehad" was laid for the organization. Chandio, Senior Vice President Mujahid Bhangar, Deputy Secretary Muharram Khaskheli, Liaison Secretary Allah behayo Khaskheli were elected while the organization was supervised by Chairman Haji Bagan Khan, Ziaul Haq, Ali Nawaz. President Khaskheli Union Muhammad Bakhsh Khaskheli said that every member of his community will be supported while I am determined to support him till death. Meanwhile, the police arrested three alleged culprits from different areas. The police of Lashari arrested the accused Sarfaraz Chandio with more than one kilo (1100) grams of hashish recovered and registered a case.

# GSCWU to boost academic, research with collaboration



F.P. Report

BAHAWALPUR: The Government Sadiq College Women University Bahawalpur (GSCWU) has taken a significant step towards enhancing academic collaboration and research excellence by signing two Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with esteemed institutions. These partnerships aim to promote knowledge exchange, research development, and international academic ties.

The first MOU was signed between GSCWU and Pakistan Economic Forum (PEF) to foster research initiatives, conferences, and workshops that contribute to intellectual growth and policy develop-

ment. The agreements mark a significant milestone in GSCWU's ongoing efforts to establish itself as a leading institution committed to academic excellence and global cooperation.

Prof. Dr. Shazia Anjum, Vice Chancellor of GSCWU, signed the agreement on behalf of the university, while Dr. Irfan Hussain Khan, CEO and Founder of PEF, represented the forum. This collaboration will facilitate joint research endeavors and academic discussions on key economic and social issues.

In another landmark development, GSCWU has entered into an international collaboration with Tazkia University, Indonesia, to strengthen research part-

nerships between the two institutions. This MOU will create opportunities for faculty and student exchanges, collaborative research projects, and joint academic programs.

Prof. Dr. Shazia Anjum represented GSCWU, while Prof. Dr. Murniati Mukhlisin signed on behalf of Tazkia University. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Shazia Anjum emphasized the importance of such partnerships in expanding research horizons and fostering global academic connections. She stated, "These collaborations will not only enhance our research capabilities but also open new avenues for academic growth and international engagement."

# Kisan Board rejects imposition of agri tax

F.P. Report

MARDAN: President Kisan Board Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Rizwan Ullah Khan condemned Agricultural Income Tax and Abolition of Pakistan Tobacco Board. He strongly criticized the provincial government for imposing an agricultural income tax, calling it an "economic massacre" of farmers.

He further stated that the abolition of the Pakistan Tobacco Board would be a severe economic blow to farmers. He highlighted that the tobacco crop supports 80,000 laborers and 1.5 million households, while generating an annual revenue of 237 billion PKR for the federal government through sales tax and excise duty.

Farmers have issued a warning that if the provincial government does not immediately withdraw the agricultural tax and the decision to dissolve the Pakistan Tobacco Board, they will stage a protest sit-in outside the provincial assembly before Ramadan. He made these remarks during a crowded press conference at the Takht Bhai Press Club. Also present on the occasion were Haji Abdul Akbar Khan President Kisan Board Central

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Abdul Samad Khan, Anwar Khan, Mushtaq Khan, Imran Khan, and Shad Khan.

Kisan Board Khyber Pakhtunkhwa criticized the poor performance and failed policies of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, stating that the farming community is facing severe challenges. He pointed out that the prices of fertilizers and pesticides have skyrocketed across the country, and the continuous increase in petroleum

prices is further worsening the situation for farmers. He condemned the imposition of agricultural income tax on farmers and demanded its immediate withdrawal. He also strongly opposed the federal government's decision to dissolve the Pakistan Tobacco Board, calling it an unjust move. Rizwanullah Khan emphasized that tobacco is a cash crop for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, generating billions of rupees in revenue for the federal government.

He further stated that the closure of the tobacco industry would leave 80,000 workers unemployed and push 1.5 million people into financial distress. Moreover, the federal government would lose 237 billion PKR in annual revenue, while the provincial government would lose 450 million PKR. Rizwanullah Khan demanded that the provincial government immediately announce a clear agricultural policy.

**WSSCM approves 20 years master plan:** The Board of Directors (BoD) of Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM) has approved a 20 years Master plan for twenty union councils of Mardan.

The 71th BoD meeting held under the chairmanship of Chairman BoD Engineer Adil Nawaz while members of BoD Javed Hussain, Haroon Rashid, Mubina Raziuddin, CEO Shahid Khan, RMO Zeeshan Arif, General Manager Muhammad Khalil Akbar, Chief Engineer CIU Mardan Engineer Imran Zaman, Chief Financial Officer Naveed Akhtar and others were present in the meeting.

Chief Engineer CIU

Imran Zaman briefed the forum that a master plan has been prepared to cater the issues of sewerage & drainage system, solid waste management and water supply sectors in Mardan for the next 20 years. Union Councils included Bagh Irum, Baghdada, Bari Cham, Bicket Gunj, Bejli ghar, Dagai, Gul Bagh, Hoti, Kaskoroona, Mardan Khas, Muslimabad, Parhoti, Roriya, Sikandari, Chak Hoti, Mardan Rural, Mayar, MuhabatAbad, Gujar Garhi and Cantt Area. The meeting was informed about sewerage system that 91,492 cubic meters of waste water is currently coming into drains and canals, which will be increased by 43,000 cubic meters by 2045.

The proposed 20 union councils of Mardan have been divided into two zones for the waste water treatment. Zone A comprised of six union councils with 15.5 km area, while Zone B will be comprised of 13 union councils with 42.82 km area. Three full and three partial union councils of Mardan city will be covered and served under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Citizens Improvement Project at a cost of 8.5 billion.

The master plan proposed two more sewerage treatment plants by 2045 with a cost of 22.49 billion rupees. Similarly, the Integrated Solid Waste Management Master Plan has also been approved to reduce the garbage volume under the Solid Waste Management Plan. Meanwhile 160 tons of garbage is collected and disposed from the city's fourteen union councils and inclusion of six union councils will have an additional increase by 75 tons.

## PRCS medical officer abducted F.P. Report

WANA: Unidentified armed men abducted Dr. Nauman from a Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) medical center in Sharif Khan Kot, Azam Warsak area of South Waziristan. The assailants also looted the staff before taking the doctor away on a motorcycle, on Thursday.

PRCS has been providing free healthcare and ambulance services in the region, where government medical facilities are almost nonexistent. However, rising incidents of kidnappings and attacks on humanitarian workers are making it increasingly difficult for such organizations to operate.

The local community has strongly condemned the incident, demanding urgent action for the doctor's safe return. They warn that if such insecurity continues, aid organizations may withdraw, leaving thousands without medical care. Authorities must act before the situation further deteriorates.

## BISP beneficiaries hold protest F.P. Report

BUNER: Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) beneficiaries protested against the termination services at Jowar Center. They were staged sit in at Pir Baba road for a while. Due to road blockade the passengers faced severe difficulties, on Thursday.

On this occasion, the protesting women told media persons, they come from distant mountains in the morning but to wait till night at the nearest center in case of closing Jowar center, they would not be able to reach distant centers to collect their payments. The protestors claimed if this center is closed and transferred to distant centers, then they will not get funds in months. They have demanded that the KPK government and district administration withdraw this decision of closing Jowar center, otherwise the protest will be continued every day and this road will be closed daily.

## Hydro society announces plots F.P. Report

KARAK: WAPDA Hydro Employees Cooperative Housing Society has announced a big package regarding plots for government employees. It has announced plots on easy installments for government employees and free plots of 5 marla for police martyrs.

A ceremony was held in this regard at the Circuit House in which government employees including ADC Shahid Gandapur, former MNA Maulana Shah Abdul Aziz Mujahid and others participated. Addressing a press conference after the ceremony, CEO of the society Danyal Paracha Star Marketing Manager Imran Khan said that WAPDA Hydro Cooperative Housing Society has started near Kohat Tal Plaza with the aim of providing plots on easy installments for government employees.

According to this scheme, plots from 5 marla to one kanal will be given on easy installments for 5 years, while 5 plots of 5 marla will be given free of cost to Karak police martyrs and plots will be allotted to the heirs of those whose names came in the draw. Apart from this, life insurance will also be provided. If, God forbid, someone dies, the society will pay all the installments. If someone becomes disabled in an accident, the society will pay 50 percent of the installments.

All kinds of facilities will be provided in the society, while 100 plots have been kept for Karak government employees. The applications will be decided through a lottery. The applicant whose name comes out in the lottery will be given the plots.

# Govt commits transparency in healthcare: Ihtesham

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Advisor for Health Ihtesham Khan claimed that Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa committed for public welfare and transparency in Healthcare, on Thursday. Advisor for Health stated that the PTI government does not believe in false promises and deception.

The provincial government is utilizing public tax money solely for public welfare. Through transparency measures in the Health Card program, the PTI government has saved one billion rupees. Ensuring that healthcare services are provided at people's doorsteps is our primary goal. He announced that a separate, well-equipped unit for children will be established at Takhte Bhai Hospital, which will soon be included in the healthcare facility.

Meanwhile, PTI has formed a Domestic Diplomatic Engagement Committee for the promotion of diplomatic and political relations at the country level. Senator Zeeshan Khanzada from Mardan has also been included in the committee.

On the instructions of the party leader other members of National Assembly Ali Asghar, Osama Ahmed Mela,

Senator Ali Zafar, and former senior minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Taimoor Salem Jhagra are also included. This committee will work to make diplomatic and political relations effective in the country by consulting on policy issues and highlighting the party's position at the international level.

**Director Excise & Taxation assured facilitations for traders:** Regional Director Excise, Taxation and Anti-Narcotics Control Mardan, Excise and Taxation Officer, visited Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (MCCI) to discuss issues of mutual interests, on Thursday.

The officials visited MCCI on invitation trader's leader Zahir Shah while Senior Vice President Nouman Faqir, Vice President Haji Waheed Gul, Chairman Ghulam Sarwar Saraf, Vice Chairman Muhammad Pervaiz Babu, Senior Vice Presidents Haji Awais Khan, Malik Najibullah, Shah Gee, Aftab Mohmand, Saeed Khan, Wajid Khan, Tahir Hoti, Abdul Jabbar, Shamsheer Khan, Bahadar Sher Afridi, Saleem Khan, Munir Khan, Women Chamber Aqeela Sumbal, members of the Executive Committee, presidents and general secretaries of different mar-

kets of Mardan district participated in large numbers.

In the meeting, the problems of business community including property tax and professional tax etc. were discussed in detail. Provincial General Secretary Zahir Shah informed the Regional Director about the problems faced by the traders, including undue harassment by the Excise Office and heavy taxes, and deliberated on making a solid strategy to solve the problems. He appreciated the decision of the Excise Department to make the registration of vehicles from other provinces tax-free and on easy terms in this province.

Regional Director of Excise, Taxation and Anti-Narcotics Control Mardan Muhammad Sufyan Khan Haqani said that the main purpose of our meeting is to inform about various issues including property tax, professional tax and vehicle registration and said that our first priority is to provide support and awareness to business community. He further said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has taken various steps to simplify the vehicle registration process which the business community and general public can benefit from without any hindrance.

# Cleanliness campaign inaugurated in Kohat

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Mutasim Billah Shah has under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda" along-with the Deputy Commissioner Orakzai Muhammad Irfanuddin and District Police Officer Nazir Khan, formally inaugurated the 3-Week Cleanliness Campaign in Kalaya Lower Orakzai followed by an Awareness Walk in his leadership.

The inaugural ceremony beside others, was also attended by the officers of the district administration, police and other relevant departments. Tehsil Chairman Lower Orakzai and tribal chiefs.

During the campaign, cleanliness of garbage, drains and open areas across the district will be ensured and the garbage will be shifted to the allo-

cated locations. Similarly, cleaning of the streets, provision of clean drinking water, repair of lines etc will also be made in the said campaign.

Commissioner Kohat appealed the people of Orakzai to cooperate with the sanitation staff and put the garbage in the designated dust bins so as to maintain cleanliness in Orakzai district and restore its natural beauty.

Furthermore, the Commissioner Kohat also distributed walnuts, olives and other fruit plants among the citizens under the Billion Tree Plus Campaign. During the current plantation drive in Orakzai District, 2 lakh saplings will be planted, which will be maintained and protected by the elders and the people themselves, he said.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner Kohat Division also held Kuli Katchery at Kalaya in

which DC Orakzai, government officials, elected public representatives and tribal elders were participated. The individual as well as collective problems of the area were presented on this occasion for which the Commissioner Kohat assured its early solution.

Commissioner Kohat also attended the free medical camp organized by the Health Department with support of the District Administration and Orakzai Scouts at Government High School Jalka Mela Lower Orakzai. During the camp, men, women and children were provided free medicines along-with medical examination. The tribal elders and common people welcomed the holding of free medical camp and Kuli Katchery and thanked the Commissioner Kohat, Orakzai Scouts and the district administration for their efforts.

# DPO awards policemen for their performance

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: District Police Officer (DPO) Nowshera distributed prizes and certificates among policemen for their performance against menace of crimes. They have effectively taken actions against criminals, ensuring the safety and security of citizens' lives, property, honor, and dignity.

This was stated by DPO to award certificates to police officers and soldiers from various police stations and checkpoints across the district. The officers and Jawans were recognized for their key role in controlling crime.

DPO Abdul Rashid addressed the participants and said, "Police officers and Jawans who protect citizens' lives, property, honor, and dignity are the pride of the police department. They should continue to serve humanity with good morals and make a name for themselves in the hearts of citizens through their excellent performance."

**National Women Youth Career Conference held**

**FG College:** The 6th National Women Youth Career Conference took place at FG Degree College, Nowshera, with the goal of guiding students toward various career paths and preparing them for practical life in the modern world. This four-day national conference was organized through the collaborative efforts of the non-governmental organization Khagarah Development Organization and others.

According to the event's chief organizer, Mehwish Bukhari, the conference was structured into multiple phases. In the initial phase, she informed that students participated in a range of sessions designed to introduce them to different career fields, adding these sessions covered topics such as traffic laws, self-defense, banking, and beautician services.

"In the next phase, psychologist Rabia from Hayatabad Medical Complex, Peshawar, led a session on self-grooming, where she spoke to students about building self-confi-

dence" the event organizer added. She further said that the conference also featured skill-based competitions, including designing and sewing using Qureshi techniques while contests in cooking, dress-making, beautician skills, painting, speech, Naat, and Quranic recitation were held, with cash prizes awarded to the top three winners in each category.

The organizers highlighted the importance of bridging the gap between academia and employers, ensuring that students gain practical insights into various fields before entering the workforce.

"The primary objective of the conference was to build students' self-confidence and equip them with the necessary knowledge and awareness to meet the demands of the modern era" she concluded. Aneela Naz, AIG Gender was Chief guest of the closing ceremony while SP Shazia and college principal Azra were also presented on the occasion who distributed cash prizes among the competition winners.

# Girl's body recovered from lake

F.P. Report

TAKHT BHAI: The body of a 14-year-old girl who drowned in Shanki Dhand, a scenic spot in Takht Bhai was recovered after four days of continuous search efforts.

Police said, Malaika

Bibi, the daughter of Zafar Ali, had visited Shanki Dhand with her parents for a day out on Sunday. Unfortunately, she slipped and fell into the water, leading to her drowning.

Rescue teams, along with divers from the Pakistan Navy, worked

tirelessly for four days to locate and recover the body. Eventually, the search efforts bore fruit, and the body was retrieved. The body was transported to Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital in Takht Bhai for necessary formalities.





# Migrants stranded in Mexico try to restart life

TIJUANA, Mexico (AP): Margelis Rodriguez and her two children took selfies on their flight to Tijuana, showing off the T-shirts she had custom-made to mark what she expected to be her family's life-changing moment.

On the back of the shirts were their names and the flags of the six countries they passed through in 2024. On the front between the flags of her native Venezuela and the United States, was written in Spanish: "Yes it was possible, thank God. The wait was worth it, I made it!!" The celebratory words now sting - driving home how close they came without making it and how precarious their lives are with their future more uncertain than ever, Rodriguez said while standing near the tent her family lives in at a shelter in Tijuana, a block from the towering wall marking the US border.

The family is among tens of thousands of people who had appointments into February, many of them left stranded in Mexican border cities after President Donald Trump took office. As part of a broader immigration crackdown, his administration quickly canceled all appointments people had made through a US government app. Under the Biden administration, the CBP One app facilitated the entry of nearly 1 million people since January 2023, and supporters say it helped bring order to the border and reduced illegal crossings. US Customs and Border Protection estimates about 280,000 people were trying to get appointments each day, many of them after traveling to Mexico, the only country where the app worked. Now they face the daunting question of what to do next.

Some returned home. Others left shelters vowing to cross the border illegally. The Rodriguez family appears to capture the prevailing mood: Stay put and see how Trump's policies unfold over the next few months. Rodriguez flew to Tijuana with her 12-year-old son and 6-year-old daughter on Jan. 19, the day before Trump was sworn in. She never worried the change in administrations would affect their Jan. 21 appointment. A Venezuelan friend in Chicago had a job for her at a factory, a place to live and a school for her children.

She cried when the notification popped into her email. "It felt like being punched," she said. But she still went to the port of entry with her



children at 5 a.m. and waited seven hours, hoping to be called. They never were. It has been over a year since they left their hometown of Tumeremo in a region plagued by violence and gang feuds tied to illegal gold mining in the remote, mineral-rich area near the borders of Guyana and Brazil. Rodriguez said gangs increasingly controlled life there, including by shuttering her children's school periodically and hiding in people's houses. She and her family left with her friend and the friend's 16-year-old son, taking buses and walking 2 1/2 days through the rugged Darién Gap. They spent nine months in Pachuca, outside Mexico City, where Rodriguez, 38, found jobs at a tortilla shop, butchery and then caretaking while waiting for their CBP One appointment.

Nearly all the money she earned was spent on the trip to Tijuana. She doesn't have the \$1,200 needed to return to Pachuca. She and her children pass the days in an uncomfortable state of boredom piqued with anxiety. They help clean the bathrooms, cook and sweep at the shelter. "There are no kids here my age so I don't play with anyone," said her son, Mickel, who dreams of becoming a soccer player and buying his mom a house.

At night, the family stays in the shelter's covered patio filled with roughly three dozen small tents under a giant banner that reads: "This is about humanity." They share their tent with her Venezuelan friend and her son, the boy's feet hanging out of the opening. Rodriguez has not been able to sleep. "I have so many worries," she said. She won't put her children at risk by trying to enter the US

illegally. Her mom says things in Venezuela are worse than ever. Family and friends in Denver and Chicago who entered the United States under a Biden administration program that granted them humanitarian parole fear they may be deported.

"I don't see anything that gives me hope," she said. "All I see is everyone getting deported." Though she worries about safety in Tijuana, she is applying for a Mexican visa so she can work there. She plans to start apartment hunting and enrolling her children in school. On a recent afternoon, she and her children and a half dozen other migrants walked to a laundromat, the T-shirts she had made wadded up in a bag of dirty laundry that teetered on a stroller she pushed down unbroken pavement past a pack of dogs and people picking through a pile of trash. A Haitian friend of Rodriguez's hung back and scanned for trouble as they walked on the edge of a red light district filled with strip bars. A few days later, she was more at ease. A local pastor had reassured Rodriguez that she's in the best spot right now. "Look at the situation with migrants in the United States, where they are chasing out everyone," she said, echoing his words.

Her relatives tell her things might improve in a few months, saying the US is just "cleaning out" the immigrants with criminal records and maybe the Trump administration will open another legal pathway. "We have been left stranded, stuck in limbo," she said. "Of course at times I still despair, but I also keep a bit of hope, too. We just have to start over, start over again."

## UN says Gaza aid flows have risen during ceasefire

GENEVA (Reuters): The United Nations said aid flows into Gaza had risen significantly since a ceasefire took effect last month including for items such as tents that had faced Israeli restrictions, even as fears rise that the fragile calm might not last.

After the UN update, witnesses at the Egypt-Gaza border said some aid items such as clothing, medical supplies and soft drinks were being held up on trucks waiting to enter the enclave after checks by Israeli officials. Some truck drivers near Gaza's Rafah border crossing with Egypt added that construction materials and tents had been blocked there since the start of the ceasefire.

Hamas began releasing some hostages gradually under the first phase of a ceasefire, but said it would free no more until further notice, accusing Israel of violating the terms with several deadly shootings as well as hold-ups of some aid deliveries into the Gaza Strip. Israel denies holding back aid supplies and says it has fired on people who disregard warnings not to approach Israeli troop positions. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the ceasefire would end if Hamas did not return hostages held in the enclave.

Hamas said alleged Israeli violations included stopping some humanitarian aid from entering Gaza as stipulated in the deal, such as 60,000 mobile houses and 200,000 tents as well as heavy machinery to remove rubble and fuel. Earlier, UN humanitarian office (OCHA) spokesperson Jens Laerke told a Geneva press briefing that since the truce took effect on January 19, "we have been able to scale up humanitarian operations significantly with food, medical and shelter supplies and other aid during the ceasefire period".

Earlier this month, aid officials said there were impediments to importing some items like shelter equipment which Israel said had the potential for "dual use" - civilian or military. Palestinians have been appealing for billions of dollars in emergency aid, including for units to house people made homeless by Israeli air strikes and bombardment. Israel denies allegations that it has stopped certain supplies including tent poles from entering Gaza on aid trucks.

"Unfortunately, no tents or any other type of aid have been allowed in," Jordanian aid truck driver Ahmed Hussein told Reuters in Arish in Egypt's Sinai region bordering Gaza. "Trucks leave from Durgham in Arish here, head to the crossing, and more than half of them are sent back. Only a few dozen are getting through," he said. COGAT, the Israeli military agency overseeing the aid deliveries into Gaza, said in a statement sent to Reuters that more than 100,000 tents had entered the coastal enclave during the ceasefire so far. When asked if "dual use" restrictions imposed by Israel are still in place, Laerke deferred to the Israeli authorities.

# Ukraine, Russia trade long-range attacks

KYIV, Ukraine (AP): Russian forces targeted Ukraine's energy and gas infrastructure in a "massive" nighttime missile attack and Ukrainian drones struck an important oil refinery inside Russia, officials said, as the near three-year war rumbled on against a backdrop of renewed diplomatic efforts to end it.

Ukraine's state energy company, Ukrenergo, said it imposed emergency blackouts due to the Russian attack. Russia has repeatedly hammered Ukraine's power grid throughout the war. Meanwhile, as part of its long-range drone campaign against targets deep inside Russia, Ukraine hit a refinery in Russia's Saratov region about 500 kilometers (300 miles) from Ukraine's border, the Army General Staff claimed. The facility produces gasoline, fuel oil and diesel fuel for the Russian military, it said.

International efforts are afoot to stop the fighting, with President Donald Trump's senior advisers expected to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy later this week on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference to discuss a path toward ending the war. Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, Trump's special envoy to Ukraine and Russia, are among the US administration officials traveling to Germany for the summit. Zelenskyy said that Trump's representatives will visit Ukraine this week, ahead of Munich, though he didn't provide details.

Trump said he was sending Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent to Ukraine to meet with Zelenskyy. "This war must and will end soon - too much death and destruction," Trump said on his Truth Social platform. "The US has spent billions of dollars globally, with little to

show. When America is strong, the world is at peace." (The Ukrainian government aims to sidestep new US tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, according to Ukraine's First Deputy Prime Minister and Economic Development Minister, Yuliia Svyrydenko. Metallurgical products make up nearly 58% of Ukrainian exports to the US, earning Ukraine just over \$500 million last year, she said.)

Ukraine is also offering to make a deal with Trump for continued American military aid in exchange for developing Ukraine's mineral industry, including rare earth elements needed for modern technology. The Ukrainian air force said Russia fired 124 Shahed and decoy drones across Ukraine overnight. In addition, at least 19 Russian missiles of various types hit Ukrainian gas production facilities, it said. Reports in Russia of the claimed Ukrainian drone attack were sketchy. Officials rarely provide details of successful Ukrainian attacks. The governor of Russia's Saratov region, Roman Busargin, reported a Ukrainian drone attack that sparked a brief fire and inflicted damage on an unspecified "industrial facility." He said that the fire was put out within hours.

One unconfirmed Russian media report identified the attacked facility as the Saratov oil refinery, part of Russia's state-run oil giant Rosneft. Some other unconfirmed reports said the attack also targeted Engels, a city in the Saratov region that houses multiple industrial plants. In addition, the main base of Russia's nuclear-capable strategic bombers is located just outside Engels. It has come under repeated Ukrainian drone attacks since the early stages of the war, forcing the Russian military to relocate most of its bombers to other areas.

## Russia offers India its most Su-57 fighter jet

BENGALURU, India (Reuters): Russia has offered to make its fifth-generation stealth fighter jet Sukhoi Su-57 in India for the Indian Air Force, a Russian and an Indian official said, as Moscow looks to boost defence ties with New Delhi.

Russia has for decades been the main weapons supplier to India, the world's biggest arms importer, and its fighter jets are part of India's military fleet. But Moscow's ability in recent years to export has been hobbled by the war in Ukraine, making New Delhi look westward. A spokesperson for Russian state arms exporter Rosoboronexport told reporters the fighter jet could go into production as early as this year if the Indian government accepts its offer.

India's defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for

comment. A Russian industry source and an Indian official said an informal offer had been made by Russia in talks with officials of the Indian government and state-owned planemaker Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. The move comes as the Indian Air Force is keen to shore up its fighter squadrons, which have fallen to 31 from a target of 42, at a time when rival China is expanding its own air force.

Making the aircraft in India, with a full transfer of technology, will ensure that production and maintenance will not be affected by Western sanctions on Russia, the Rosoboronexport spokesperson told reporters on the sidelines of the Aero India aerospace exhibition in the southern city of Bengaluru. He declined to share his name. He said the jet could be produced with enhancements to the Indian produc-

tion line of the Sukhoi Su-30 aircraft, 260 of which are in the Indian Air Force's fleet. Both the Su-57 and rival Lockheed Martin's F-35 Lightning II, a fifth-generation stealth fighter jet of the US, were on display at the Aero India exhibition.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has been stressing the need to make India a global manufacturing hub and boost domestic defence production in order to achieve self-reliance. Despite being touted as a Russian fifth-generation fighter aircraft to rival its US equivalent, the Su-57 was plagued by development delays and a crash in 2019. According to its manufacturer, serial production of the aircraft began in 2022. Last year, Russia flew the SU-57, to Zhuhai in China for its first air show abroad, in an apparent message to the West about China-Russia cooperation.

## Norwegian Refugee Council NGO to suspend aid work

C O P E N H A G E N (Reuters): The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) said it would suspend humanitarian work in nearly 20 countries worldwide after US President Donald Trump imposed a freeze on US foreign aid worldwide when he took office on January 20.

The non-governmental organisation received just under 20% of its funding from the United States in 2024, or around \$150 million, it said, with that funding helping some 1.6 million people worldwide. "We have, in our 79-year history, never experienced such an abrupt dis-

continuation of aid funding from any of our many donor nations, inter-governmental organisations, or private donor agencies," the NRC said in a statement. The agency said the consequences of suspending aid would become increasingly serious for people facing crises around the world.

Already in Ukraine, NRC said, it had to halt the scheduled February distribution of emergency support to 57,000 people in communities along the front lines and had to lay off staff worldwide. The Trump administration said it would put on leave all

directly hired employees of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) globally and recall thousands of personnel working overseas.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that the administration would reach out to USAID to identify and designate programs that would be exempted from the stop-work orders.

However, the NRC said it was unable to take advantage of the temporary waiver unless the US government resumed payments to its partners for work completed before the foreign assistance pause.

## US aid freeze risks handing influence to China in Beijing's backyard

WASHINGTON (Reuters): After US President Donald Trump's administration froze donations in January to Cambodia's largest demining organization, which works to clear the countryside of deadly remnants of Washington's past wars in Southeast Asia, the group announced new funding - from China.

Beijing has doubled its contributions over the past three years to the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC), which helps clear millions of unexploded munitions, said Heng Ratana, who leads the group. On Feb. 5, CMAC said it had received a pledge from Beijing to contribute \$4.4 million - surpassing the \$2 million donated by the US last year. Ratana said China understands that such support helps "build up people-to-people networks" and generates economic returns.

Beijing invests heavily in its neighboring countries and has recently focused on building soft power through goodwill exchanges and diplomatic engagement, according to the Lowy Institute in Sydney, which studies Asia-Pacific geopolitics. But it does not provide traditional aid on the same scale as Western democratic nations. China also has little experience providing the specialist assistance - from combating

disease outbreaks to distributing humanitarian aid in conflict zones - that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Washington's main vehicle for delivering such support, is known for. Trump has halted most US government-funded aid globally for 90 days, while moving to dismantle USAID, which he accused of being run "by a bunch of radical lunatics." The move is part of an effort by his administration to slash the federal government workforce and curb spending it considers wasteful.

While the administration has said some funds may be released when the pause expires, a lack of clarity around what could be restored has prompted scores of groups across Asia to abruptly stop work or lay off staff. The US provided over \$894 million in assistance to Southeast Asia in 2023, the latest year for which official data is available.

The freeze will hobble humanitarian work and human rights at a time of a tussle with China for influence over the region, said Joshua Kurlantzick, an analyst at the Council on Foreign Relations think-tank in New York. "The overall shift will be toward China and away from the US as the US squanders its soft power," he said, adding that the com-

bination of Beijing providing more assistance and Washington retreating from funding civil society programs "crushes democratic potential in virtually every country in the region." A spokesperson for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in response to Reuters' questions that it offered aid "without political conditions" and in alignment with the needs of its partners. Chinese cooperation with other developing countries would remain steadfast "regardless of changes in the international landscape," the official said.

The US State Department, whose top diplomat Marco Rubio is now USAID's acting administrator, did not respond to a request for comment. China, which has its economic troubles at home, is unlikely to match the generosity of the US, the world's largest aid donor. Instead, Beijing prizes "large-scale infrastructure and investment programs" that are a hallmark of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), said Derek Grossman, an analyst at the RAND Corporation think-tank. The BRI is China's \$1 trillion infrastructure assistance program, which envisions ports and railroads connecting Asia, Europe and Africa. The ISEAS-Yusof Ishak think-tank's annual poll of Southeast Asian decision-makers in 2024 found that

China for the first time had "edged past the US" as their preferred partner, a finding attributed in part to pro-China sentiments among Beijing's BRI partners in Southeast Asia.

China says BRI boosts the economies of developing nations and brings needed modern infrastructure, but it has been accused by critics of lacking transparency, burdening countries with heavy debts, and serving primarily as a tool to expand Chinese economic influence. Among those who have most enthusiastically embraced BRI is impoverished Laos, which borrowed heavily to finance railways, highways and hydroelectric dams, but has a public debt burden the World Bank considers "unsustainable." President John F. Kennedy, who spearheaded the creation of USAID during the Cold War, saw it as a "powerful source" through which the US could "exert influence for the maintenance of freedom." Similar sentiments were previously echoed by Republican internationalists like Rubio.

Now, among the groups that stand to lose vital funding because of the US suspension are those focused on causes that Beijing considers hostile, such as supporting Uyghur Muslims in China, as well as dissidents from

Myanmar and North Korea. In Myanmar, the Chin Human Rights Organization, which employs health professionals who went on strike following the military's seizure of power in 2021, has laid off 30 percent of its workforce since the freeze. USAID's stop-work order has also halted programs including HIV prevention for women, skills training, and scholarships for future leaders in "what we hope will one day be a democratically elected government," said former U.K. ambassador to Myanmar Vicky Bowman, who now campaigns for transparency and human rights in business.

The freeze has "undermined faith that the USA is a reliable friend of those in Asia who are fighting for equitable development, democracy, and human rights," she said. With South Korean governments alternating between engaging and isolating Pyongyang, US funding had also been a lone source of stability for North Korea-focused issues, said Hanna Song, executive director of the Seoul-based Database Center for North Korean Human Rights. Most North Korea-related funding is disseminated through a State Department office that had a budget of about \$5 million per year for such projects, Song said. That, too, has

been paused.

China-focused nonprofits that track alleged rights abuses also face an "extinction event," said Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, a China expert at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute think-tank in a post on X. She declined to name specific groups in a subsequent ASPI article, saying some feared retribution by Beijing. The Tibet Fund nonprofit that supports Tibetan communities in exile said that several of its programs were at "immediate risk." "Now we worry not just about the short-term operations but the long-term effects on autocratic states," Song said.

Beijing has a mixed record of selling itself as a reliable partner: Xi offered a vigorous defense of globalization ahead of Trump's first term, only to turn to confrontational "wolf warrior" diplomacy, or aggressively defending China against foreign parties that Beijing believed were hostile. But the US aid freeze, coupled with the targeting of Canada and Mexico for tariffs, was a warning to US partners "of the capriciousness they'll face over the next four years," said Greg Poling, an expert on Southeast Asia at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think-tank in Washington.



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## The AI revolution needs guardrails

**T**HE fascination with which governments, entrepreneurs and thought leaders have greeted the rise of artificial intelligence was on show this week as not one, but two high-profile international gatherings focused on this transformational technology. Few attendees at the World Governments Summit in Dubai or the AI Action Summit in Paris doubted AI's potential to change societies and economies. However – as is often the case – consensus on finding the best way forward is not as definitive.

On Tuesday, US Vice President JD Vance delivered a strong rebuke of “excessive regulation” when it comes to shaping AI. Speaking at the AI Action Summit in Paris, Mr Vance said “a new industrial revolution, one on par with the invention of the steam engine” would be at risk “if overregulation deters innovators from taking the risks necessary to advance the ball”.

Meanwhile, Kristalina Georgieva – managing director of the International Monetary Fund – struck a nuanced tone when she told the World Governments Summit that 60 per cent of jobs in advanced economies could be affected, transformed or eliminated owing to the adoption of the emerging technology. “[AI] can be a great story, a world that becomes more productive,” she said. “Or a sad story – a world that is more divided.”

Although it is true that companies and creators need freedom to flourish, the kind of laissez-faire approach championed by Mr Vance comes with its own risks. A failure to guide and control AI responsibly overlooks its transformative nature, its growing ubiquity, and its potential for rapid learning and self-development.

Naysayers predict a future in which the rampant and unfocused use of AI technology makes millions of people redundant. Historically, the introduction of such profound innovations has certainly led to economic and social upheaval – the Industrial Revolution that Mr Vance referred to was a time of intense class conflict as much as it was a new beginning. On the other hand, AI's enthusiasts believe digital technologies, unimpeded by regulation, have the potential to improve everything from health care to transport and creativity to business. The reality lies somewhere between these two positions.

It is here that the UAE's experience with AI stands out, for several reasons. The country's considerable investment in and embrace of AI has been twinned with comprehensive regulatory guardrails. In addition to several digital strategies to oversee the Emirates' use of AI, the country also works in partnership with the private sector to oversee its development; earlier this month, a foundation to promote responsible AI governance in the Middle East and the Global South was launched by US tech company Microsoft, Emirati AI firm G42 and Abu Dhabi's Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence.

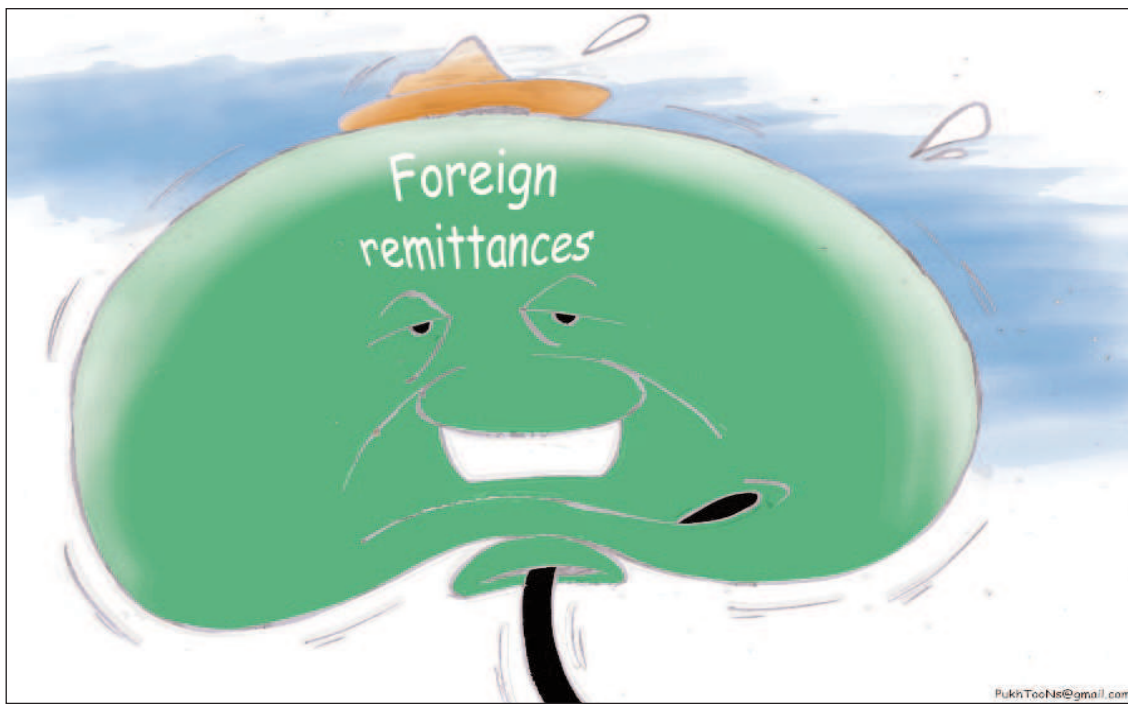
The UAE has also convened AI proponents such as Elon Musk, who will speak at the WGS today, as well as others who have a more hesitant approach. By doing so, the Emirates continues to inform the global conversation on AI and looks set to continue on this path; next year's AI Everything Global Summit and Expo in Abu Dhabi promises to be another valuable contribution to the debate.

Training and equipping people to best use AI is another area in which the UAE has been proactive. Last June, The National reported how Dubai schools were training teachers in AI to reduce workloads. Such initiatives are in concert with strategies such as Dubai's One Million Arab Coders that aims to develop digital literacy in Arab youth.

Overall, it is the balanced contribution of tech experts, policymakers, investors and educators that will provide the optimal outcome for adopting this powerful and now-unavoidable technology. The road ahead is unclear, 100 per cent agreement will not always be possible, but with the right guardrails, AI could live up to its promise of providing a more prosperous future.

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## Gaza plan undermines US' regional policy

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

**I**T has long been considered a grave breach of international law to deport or displace civilian populations, but in the case of US President Donald Trump's idea of permanently removing Gazans from Gaza, it also runs counter to his ambitions of creating a peaceful and integrated region and reducing the threats from Iran and its allies. The proposal is already undermining the US' standing in the region and emboldening its adversaries.

The idea of removing Palestinians from Gaza clearly flies in the face of every rule the international community has safeguarded since the Second World War, particularly that populations should not be forcibly displaced from their homes, temporarily or permanently, within their countries or abroad.

Article 49 of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, prohibits “individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the occupying power or to that of any other country, occupied or not.” Article 147 of the same convention considers such acts to be war crimes.

Articles 7 and 8 of the 1998 International Criminal Court Statute also consider such acts to be war crimes and crimes against humanity, depending on whether they are committed during war or in peacetime. And so has nearly every court looking into these matters, starting with Article 6 of the 1945 Nuremberg Charter.

UN Security Council resolutions have forcefully upheld these rules. In UNSC Resolution 1674 of 2006, the council cited “the prohibition of the forcible displacement of civilians in situations of armed conflict

under circumstances that are in violation of parties' obligations under international humanitarian law.” And it reaffirmed “its condemnation in the strongest terms of all acts of violence or abuses committed against civilians in situations of armed conflict in violation of applicable international obligations with respect in particular to ... forced displacement.”

Similar provisions can be found in numerous other resolutions, including 1556 on Sudan, Resolutions 752, 819, 1009, 1019 and 1034 related to the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, and Resolution 918 on Rwanda.

This is to say that the prohibition of forced displacement and deportation is among the most respected rules of international law. Therefore, for any country to call for the removal of the entire population of the Gaza Strip is incomprehensible.

President Trump has made it clear that, according to his proposal, Gazans may not be allowed to return, another serious violation of international law, which prohibits denying people the right to return to their country.

The idea has been widely condemned, not only by Palestinians but by nearly every country and international organization, including the US' close allies and partners around the world. The idea has also been rejected by many in the US, including Republican leaders. In Israel, only extremists have publicly voiced support for Trump's idea.

The president has cited several grounds for his outlandish proposal, but none of them stand up to scrutiny. One such justification is that Gaza has been totally destroyed.

He said on Tuesday: “I've watched it so long, all the death and destruction of Gaza. A civilization's been wiped out in Gaza.” According to Trump, rebuilding is only possible if the population is moved elsewhere. Another reason he advanced is that Gaza would be better rebuilt into a great beach community that is open for “all people of the Middle East,” but not for the Gazans themselves. A third reason is that by removing Palestinians from Gaza, it would be safer for Israel, as Hamas would be denied a place to regroup.

But reconstruction could take place while the population is still there; they could provide the workforce instead of importing workers from outside. They could also fill the jobs available after reconstruction. Their gainful employment would reduce the need for outside assistance and make them less vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups.

As for security, the best way to provide it is by reunifying Gaza with the West Bank and allowing the Palestinian Authority to resume governing the Strip. Stability will return only if Palestinians can exercise their inalienable right to govern themselves in their own independent and unified state. Displacing 2 million people would destabilize the entire region and only increase Israel's insecurity.

The proposal has already weakened the US' standing in the region and shored up its adversaries, who have long said that the war in Gaza was against the Palestinians as a whole and not Hamas, accusing Israel of harboring ideas of driving the Gazans out and reoccupying the Strip.

It is also undermining the Trump administration's regional policies. The idea of normalization between countries in the region is now in the distant background, if not totally forgotten. Even more distant is the idea of regional integration, which has been another of Trump's goals since his first administration. Similarly, the hope of a unified front against Iran's regional hegemony or its nuclear and missile programs is fading.

Though still fragile, the ceasefire in Gaza has quieted the Red Sea front, as the Houthis of Yemen have ceased their attacks against international shipping. By proposing to deport Gaza's population, Trump is giving the Houthis another lease of life. They are now agitating to resume attacks on ships, while also threatening to attack government-held areas in Yemen itself.

The deportation idea will certainly embolden other nefarious groups. Hezbollah will have a new pretext to resume operations, Daesh will have a new drum to beat and Iran-aligned militias in Iraq will rally behind a new call for action against the displacement of Gazans.

If the US tries to go ahead with this plan, it could expose American officials and troops to new threats, including the risk of legal action, according to experts. Kenneth Roth, the former head of Human Rights Watch, America's largest human rights organization, said: “Just because Trump endorses a war crime — forcibly displacing Palestinians from Gaza — doesn't make it any less a war crime. To the contrary, if Trump played a major role, he could be charged by the (International Criminal Court) with aiding and abetting this war crime.” That goes for lesser officials as well.

## Sovereign wealth fund will recalibrate US' global influence

Xavier Abu Eid

**T**WO of the major decisions announced by US President Donald Trump last week I believe are linked. The first was the executive order creating a US sovereign wealth fund and the second was the decision to shut down the US Agency for International Development. They are linked because only one of these can define and be the conduit for American cooperation domestically and internationally. The shift from a grant or “charity” instrument to an investment one is the headline that comes from the two decisions.

I will be candid. When reading about some of the international projects that USAID had been financing, I was offended. I was not offended as a citizen by the fact that the programs were an interference in domestic affairs. I was offended as a media owner who never knew that millions of dollars were granted to such irrelevant projects. Jokes aside, it is clear that USAID had drifted from its original goal. It had broadened its mandate of development assistance to push a political or even ideological agenda. It was already the case in the 1990s with the push for freedom and democracy, but in the last decade it had begun pushing a progressive Western agenda.

There is no doubt that today's world is very different to that of 1961, when USAID was established. It is even very different than it was just a decade ago. And so, countries need to adapt the tools they use. The US needs this transformation.

If we focus on sovereign

wealth funds, there is no doubt that the success achieved by the Gulf Cooperation Council states can be used as a good example. Whether it is the Kuwait Investment Authority, Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, Mubadala, Lunate or the Qatar Investment Authority, they have all been engines of growth domestically and internationally. As always in investments there is the good and the bad, but it is clear they have fulfilled their mandate of preserving and increasing wealth for future generations and developing strong domestic growth, while diversifying from hydrocarbon revenues.

Their achievements have been guided by visions and strategies. For example, PIF, which has several mandates, has successfully unlocked new sectors in Saudi Arabia that could never have developed through the private sector or any other public entity or aid. Such investment in infrastructure, both material and intangible, could only be done with patient capital and a long-term vision. Hence, only via a sovereign wealth fund.

I will not dig too much into the different types of sovereign wealth funds, but they can either invest domestically or internationally. Examples of the former include Kazakhstan's Samruk-Kazyna and the Sovereign Fund of Egypt. They hold key national assets and work on partnerships with international investors to facilitate domestic investments and partnerships.

Then there is international

investment, which aims to build and preserve the wealth of future generations. This is the goal of the Kuwait Investment Authority, which in 1953 became the world's first sovereign wealth fund. The delineation of goals between domestic and international investments has permitted the success of such funds.

The other major element is partnerships. The approximately 90 sovereign wealth funds globally collectively manage about \$13 trillion in assets and have gained a leading role in global finance. This also means influence and power. Clearly, the US could not afford to stay out of this club much longer.

Moreover, many of the projects to rebuild US infrastructure have stalled, having failed to bring in the proper partners. The California High-Speed Rail project and the Gateway Program come to mind. Yet, more importantly, there is the infrastructure for the new digital economy that the US cannot afford to miss out on. Hence, a sovereign wealth fund is needed on this front — a public entity that has clear financial targets. On the international level, aid in developing countries has reached its limits. Here too, the GCC countries provide a good example. They have shifted from “blind aid” to investments in direct projects, leaving the aid for specific humanitarian goals. This has been a successful strategy in Africa and Asia. Moreover, it has created stronger bonds of cooperation and collaboration, with tangible results for citizens.

The US has not been able to achieve the same results.

Those who mention the US International Development Finance Corporation are mistaken as it is a development finance institution, such as the Saudi Fund for Development or the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development.

The key accomplishment that has been achieved by most sovereign wealth funds is their focus on financial targets and not ideological programs. Their goal is not to influence. However, by selecting good investments that serve their mandates, they are then able to achieve an undeniable influence on global business. It is the cherry on top of the cake. Seeking to use a sovereign wealth fund for influence would defeat its purpose. This is why the Gulf funds have the most acute, high-level investment professionals and follow a strict process on investment decisions.

In his executive order, Trump stated: “It is the policy of the United States to maximize the stewardship of our national wealth for the sole benefit of American citizens.” This is indeed a much-needed goal for Washington. The combined 2025 budget request of \$58.8 billion for the Department of State and USAID can quickly build up an American sovereign wealth fund. If domestic projects are also added, there is no doubt that this fund will not only achieve better financial results, but also recalibrate and modernize the US' global influence. It is nevertheless important to keep a well-managed window of generosity domestically and internationally, as this is in the nature of the American citizen.

## Forced Migration A Violation of Human Rights and International Law

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

**T**HROUGHOUT history, nations have endured wars, occupations, and forced migrations, yet the idea of an entire population being asked to leave its homeland and settle elsewhere remains an extraordinary and deeply unsettling proposition. The notion of relocating a country's inhabitants to another land raises profound ethical, legal, and political questions. Such an act would not merely be displacement; it would amount to a forced eviction, a violation of sovereignty, and, in many cases, an outright usurpation.

Forced migration, a tragic phenomenon that has scarred human history, continues to raise these questions on both humanitarian and legal fronts. Across the ages, countless nations have been compelled to leave their homelands due to war, persecution, or environmental calamities. These displacements leave deep marks on humanity, reminding us of the fragility of peace and the enduring struggle for justice. The question of whether a country or its people can be forcibly removed is not merely theoretical but a pressing issue that touches upon the very foundations of international law and morality.

The United Nations, as the principal international body responsible for maintaining global peace and security, upholds the sovereignty of nations and the rights of peoples to live in their own land. The UN Charter explicitly forbids the forceful acquisition of territory and displacement of populations. The principle of self-determination, enshrined in international law, grants people the right to govern themselves without external coercion. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in 1948, affirms the right of individuals to live freely in their homeland without fear of persecution or expulsion. It states that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of their nationality or exiled from their country. Any attempt to forcibly remove an entire population would constitute a gross human rights violation, contradicting fundamental international laws that protect people from ethnic cleansing and genocide.

History provides numerous examples of forced migration, each a testament to the suffering and resilience of displaced populations. The Palestinian displacement, beginning in 1948 during the Arab-Israeli War, stands as one of the most enduring and contentious cases. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were driven from their homes, creating a refugee crisis that persists today. Many found shelter in neighboring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, while others scattered across the globe, forming a diaspora that continues to yearn for a return to their ancestral lands. Similarly, the Rwandan Genocide of 1994 forced millions of Tutsis to flee their homes amidst unimaginable violence and loss. More recently, the Syrian Civil War, which began in 2011, has displaced over 12 million people, with 6.5 million fleeing the country entirely. These examples underscore the devastating consequences of forced migration: the loss of livelihoods, the erosion of cultural identity, and the creation of generations of refugees who struggle to rebuild their lives.

The United Nations has established frameworks to address the plight of displaced populations. The 1951 UN Refugee Convention defines the rights of refugees and the obligations of states to protect them, explicitly prohibiting their forced return to countries where they face persecution, a principle known as non-refoulement. Additionally, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include targets aimed at reducing inequalities and addressing the needs of displaced populations. Goal 10 emphasizes the importance of safe, orderly, and regular migration, reflecting the international community's commitment to upholding human dignity. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) plays a critical role in providing humanitarian assistance to refugees

and advocating for their rights, ensuring that forced migration is addressed through legal and humanitarian channels rather than coercion or violence.

At the heart of the issue lies the question of Palestine. For over seven decades, Palestinians have faced occupation, displacement, and systemic efforts to erase their identity. The idea that they could be forcibly relocated to another land is not only morally indefensible but also legally impermissible. Palestinians have a historical and legal right to their land, recognized by numerous UN resolutions and international legal instruments. Any attempt to evict them and resettle them elsewhere would not be a peaceful solution but rather a continuation of historical injustices. It would amount to a de facto annexation of Palestinian land, a policy that has been consistently condemned by the international community. The Fourth Geneva Convention, which governs the treatment of civilians in times of war, explicitly prohibits the transfer of populations under occupation, further underscoring the illegality of such actions.

Would the world allow such an act of usurpation? History suggests that international responses to such situations are often dictated by political interests rather than moral principles. While international law is clear, enforcement is selective, often depending on the will of powerful nations. The so-called “might is right” doctrine, where power dictates the fate of nations, has been seen throughout history, from colonial occupations to modern-day conflicts. The analogy of the “stick and buffalo” formula is apt in this context: those with power dictate the rules, regardless of legality or justice. In the case of Palestine, the equation of force and influence is heavily skewed, with powerful international players shaping the discourse. The support of major Western nations for Israel, despite repeated violations of international law, underscores this reality. If justice were to prevail, international law would be enforced uniformly, preventing any nation from forcibly displacing another.

It is difficult to ignore the historical context in which the Jewish people, who suffered expulsions and persecution, particularly in Nazi Germany and elsewhere in Europe, now stand as the dominant force in displacing another people. The irony is profound and tragic. The pain of historical suffering should have engendered a commitment to justice and human rights, yet instead, history appears to be repeating itself this time with Palestinians as the victims. It is not merely a case of historical vengeance but a political reality shaped by power dynamics, geopolitical interests, and ideological narratives.

Ultimately, the forced migration of any population, whether Palestinians or others, represents a profound violation of human rights and international law. The global response to forced migration must be guided by a commitment to justice, compassion, and the rule of law. Diplomatic solutions, grounded in dialogue and mutual respect, offer the best hope for resolving conflicts that lead to displacement. Violence and coercion have no place in a world that aspires to peace and justice. The United Nations and the global community have a duty to prevent such actions and to ensure that displaced populations are protected, supported, and given the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

History has shown us the devastating consequences of forced displacement. It is incumbent upon us to learn from these lessons and strive for a world where no one is compelled to leave their homeland against their will. The principles enshrined in the UDHR and other international treaties must serve as our guide, reminding us that the dignity and rights of every individual are inviolable. Only through a collective commitment to justice and humanity can we hope to prevent the tragedies of forced migration and build a more equitable and peaceful world.



# US relations with Europe will never be the same

EUROPE'S American century is over. Two geopolitical thunderclaps on Wednesday will transform transatlantic relations.

Donald Trump's call with Vladimir Putin brought the Russian leader in from the cold as they hatched plans to end the war in Ukraine and agreed to swap presidential visits.

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, meanwhile, went to Brussels and told European allies to "take ownership of conventional security on the continent."

The watershed highlights Trump's "America First" ideology and his tendency to see every issue or alliance as a dollars and cents value proposition. It also underscores his freedom from establishment advisors steeped in the foreign policy mythology of the West, who he thinks thwarted his first term.

Although Hegseth recommitted to NATO, something fundamental has changed.

America's interventions won two world wars that started in Europe and afterwards guaranteed the continent's freedom in the face of the Soviet threat. But Trump said on the campaign trail he might not defend alliance members who haven't invested enough in defense. He thus revived a perennial point posed most eloquently by Winston Churchill in 1940 about when "The New World, with all its power and might" will step "forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old."

Trump is returning to the rationale used by many presidents wary of foreign entanglements from the start of the republic, saying Wednesday, "We have a little thing called an ocean in between."

It's long been clear that the second Trump administration would place new demands on America's European partners, which will now lead to agonized choices for governments that have chosen social spending over defense. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte told the European Parliament last month that Europeans must come up with more cash for their militaries. "If you don't do it, get your Russian language courses or go to New Zealand," he said.

But Hegseth was still jarring. He formalized Trump's demand for alliance mem-

bers to spend 5% of GDP on defense and said the US would prioritize its growing clash with China and the security of its borders over Europe's. "The United States will no longer tolerate an imbalanced relationship which encourages dependency," said the new Pentagon chief, who was wearing a stars-and-stripes pocket square.

The tough new approach is not like Trump's fantasy of displacing Gaza's Palestinians to build the "Riviera of the Middle East." It's a rational response to changed political realities. The Greatest Generation that fought World War II and produced presidents who understood the dangers of a power vacuum in Europe is gone. Any American who has an adult memory of the Cold War against the Soviet Union is in their mid 50s at least. And the most powerful competitor to the United States is in Asia not Europe. So, it's fair for Trump to ask why the continent has still not taken over its own self-defense 80 years after the defeat of the Nazis.

Successful American presidents and European leaders have failed to rethink NATO for the 21st century. In retrospect, the transatlantic alliance left itself badly exposed to the most transactional and nationalist American president since the 19th Century.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio suggested in a recent interview on "The Megyn Kelly Show" on Sirius XM that the US should not be the "front end" of European security but rather the "back stop." And he rebuked big European powers. "When you ask those guys, why can't you spend more on national security, their argument is because it would require us to make cuts to welfare programs, to unemployment benefits, to being able to retire at 59 and all these other things," Rubio said. "That's a choice they made. But we're subsidizing that?"

Trump's treatment of allies like Canada and Mexico, as well as his calls for Denmark to hand over Greenland, shows his disdain for the multilateral US foreign policy of old. He's always praising Putin and China's President Xi Jinping over their smarts and strength. It's obvious he thinks them the only worthy

Stephen Collinson

interlocutors for the tough leader of another great power, the United States.

"Trump's agenda isn't about European security; it's that he thinks the USA shouldn't pay for European security," said Nicholas Dungan, founder and CEO of CogitoPraxis, a strategic consultancy in The Hague. "This isn't a new era of transatlantic relations, it's a new era of global big-power relations replacing the deliberately institutional structures of the liberal international order."

The first test of this new US-Europe reality will come over Ukraine.

Trump said that negotiations to end the Ukraine war will start "immediately" after his call with Putin, who has been frozen out by the West since his illegal invasion of Ukraine, a sovereign democracy, three years ago.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was not included, in an alarming sign for the government in Kyiv. Zelensky was at the center of everything the Biden administration did on the war. Trump did call Zelensky later Wednesday, but the American president is already fueling fears he'll cook up a resolution that favors Russia. Asked by a reporter whether Ukraine would be an equal partner in peace talks, Trump replied: "It's an interesting question," and appeared to think carefully, before replying, "I said that was not a good war to go into," apparently buying Putin's line that the conflict was the fault of a nation brutally invaded by an authoritarian neighbor.

Hegseth was just as blunt. He laid out US starting points for the negotiation: that Ukraine could not return to its pre-2014 borders before the invasion of Crimea, that it could not join NATO and that US troops would play no part of any security force to guarantee any eventual peace.

Any peacekeeping force would have to be made up of European and non-European troops and would not be covered by NATO's mutual defense clause — meaning the US wouldn't bail it out in the event of a clash with Moscow's forces.

Former President Joe Biden was also reticent about Ukraine getting a path to NATO membership, fearing a clash with nuclear-

armed Russia that could morph into World War III. And Trump's insistence that European peacekeepers will not wear NATO uniforms will be seen as a similarly prudent move by many observers to avoid dragging the US into a conflict with Russia.

But Wednesday was also the best day for Putin since the invasion, since it swept away many of Ukraine's aspirations. Hegseth argued that he was simply dispensing realism. And he has a point. No one in the US or Europe thought the clock could be turned back to 2014. And Ukraine was unable to win back its land on the battlefield despite billions of dollars in Western aid.

Still, by taking such issues off the table, Trump, the supposed deal maker supreme, deprived the Ukrainians of a bargaining chip that could have been used to win concessions from his old friend Putin. As it stands, Trump seems to have no objection to Russia retaining the spoils of its unprovoked invasion. This is not surprising — since like Russia, America now has a president who believes great powers are entitled to expansionism in their regional areas of influence. But rewarding Russia with a favorable settlement would set a disastrous precedent.

A chilling historical analogy

The US-Russia call and a future summit with Putin in Saudi Arabia, which Trump said would happen soon, may be a hint that he's not just cutting Zelensky out of the deal — but Europe too.

In a statement, France, Germany, Poland, Italy, Spain, the European Union, the European Commission, plus the United Kingdom and Ukraine, warned "Ukraine and Europe must be part of any negotiations." And they warned Trump, who seems to want a peace deal at any cost, that "a just and lasting peace in Ukraine is a necessary condition for a strong transatlantic security."

Former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt is worried by the cozy call between Trump and Putin.

"The disturbing thing is of course that we have the two big guys, the two big egos ... believing that they can maneuver all of the issues on their own," he told Richard Quest on CNN

International. Bildt evoked the most damning historical analogy possible — the appeasement of Adolf Hitler by Britain that allowed the Nazis to annex the Sudetenland. "For European ears, this sounds like Munich. It sounds like two big leaders wanting to have peace in our time, (over) a faraway country of which they know little. They are preparing to make a deal over the heads of that particular country. A lot of Europeans know how that particular movie ended."

Trump's detailed strategy remains opaque. The dashing of many of Zelensky's aspirations means that Kyiv's agreement to any Putin-Trump deal cannot be taken for granted. And after his steady gains on the battlefield, there's no certainty that the Russian leader is as desperate for a swift settlement as Trump, who has long craved a Nobel Peace Prize.

But the framework of a possible settlement has been a topic of private conversations in Washington and European capitals for months, even during the Biden administration. As Hegseth made clear, Ukraine's hopes of regaining all its lost land is unrealistic. What may emerge is a solution along the lines of the partition of Germany after World War II, with Russian-occupied territory frozen under its control with the rest of Ukraine — on the other side of a hard border — remaining a democracy. Perhaps the western edge would be allowed to join the European Union, like the old West Germany. But this time, US troops won't make it safe for freedom.

"The US position on Ukraine as articulated today should surprise no one in Europe: it's just what European insiders have been saying to me off the record, in back channels, behind the scenes for two years: West Ukraine and East Ukraine, like West Germany and East Germany but in this case — EU Yes, NATO No," said Dungan.

Such a solution would conjure a cruel historical irony. Putin, who watched in despair from his post as a KGB officer in Dresden as the Soviet Union dissolved, may be on the verge of creating a new East Germany in 21st century Europe with America's help.

— CNN

# From Teddy to Trump: Speak loudly and carry a big stick

GIVE me your tired, your poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me..." [1]

Two weeks were more than sufficient to make the character of US President Donald Trump's second term foreign policy apparent to the entire world. Trump is returning to American imperialism's formative era, brandishing an aggressive mix of Gunboat and Dollar diplomacy — updated for the 21st century. This throwback approach might well warm the spirits of former Presidents William McKinley [2], Theodore Roosevelt, and W. H. Taft. Trump's behavior especially brought Roosevelt to mind because of his famous adage, "speak softly and carry a big stick." Trump has modified this to "speak loudly, act thugishly, and carry a big stick."

Since World War II, US leaders generally accepted that America's interests were best served through international cooperation, and the integrated chains of global commerce, anchored by the US economy, served as concrete illustrations of that reality. Trump has completely jettisoned that approach. From now on, Trump decides what

Ukraine as articulated today should surprise no one in Europe: it's just what European insiders have been saying to me off the record, in back channels, behind the scenes for two years: West Ukraine and East Ukraine, like West Germany and East Germany but in this case — EU Yes, NATO No," said Dungan.

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— CNN

Dr. Adam McConnel

What about China — can an enormous, non-democratic, and not fully industrialized power function as a stabilizing force for the world? The EU does not even have internal unity, much less the capacity to ensure world stability. Can the world's states coexist without a leviathan?

Outliers: Israel/Palestine and Syria

Just as clearly, two interlinked situations will test the contradictions in the course Trump has chosen for himself and the US. Last Tuesday, after a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Trump shocked the entire world by demanding that Gaza's Palestinian population be removed, Gaza taken under US control, and the territory rebuilt under American auspices as "the Riviera of the Middle East." [5] Global outrage erupted immediately.

In other words, Trump is picking up right where the Biden Administration left off, not only as a facilitator of Israel's war crimes, but now as an active participant in ethnic cleansing. Israel already applies the same annihilation techniques to the West Bank, and Trump implicitly approved Netanyahu's expansionist aims [6]. Such plans, however, will result in more Eastern Mediterranean

Trump's behavior means, most essentially, the further erosion of the system that has determined norms of international state behavior. Trump is not the first US president to ignore international diplomatic and legal standards, but he has declared the US to be completely unhindered by those principles. Without those standards, though, we risk sinking back into the Hobbesian world of all-against-all, where might makes right, and life is "nasty, brutish, and short."

There is precedent for this situation. WWI saw the definitive downturn of the British Empire, which had overseen the world's maritime commerce lanes for the previous 150 years during humanity's first era of true globalization. Britain's decline created a power vacuum that various smaller actors attempted to fill. Historians and political scientists generally agree that this lack of a global 'leviathan' was a key factor contributing to WWII's outbreak, or that reason, during WWII US officials and their United Nations allies designed a series of international institutions, underpinned by US economic, military, and political strength, to lay the foundations for an international system that would provide order to the world's affairs. Who will or can replace the American colossus and create a basis for world diplomatic, economic, and legal stability? Can the UN be reformed in order to fulfill that function? Without the world's states agreeing to forego some of their sovereignty and grant the UN true enforcement capability, that seems unlikely. What about China — can an enormous, non-democratic, and not fully industrialized power function as a stabilizing force for the world? The EU does not even have internal unity, much less the capacity to ensure world stability. Can the world's states coexist without a leviathan? Just as clearly, two interlinked situations will test the contradictions in the course Trump has chosen for himself and the US. Last Tuesday, after a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Trump shocked the entire world by demanding that Gaza's Palestinian population be removed, Gaza taken under US control, and the territory rebuilt under American auspices as "the Riviera of the Middle East." [5] Global outrage erupted immediately.

serves "America First."

The leviathan in flux

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conflict, and if Trump is serious about taking control of Gaza, then US forces will inevitably be involved in, and the target of, potential conflict.

That is the fundamental danger in Trump's aggressive posturing: threats of force only work if the threat is backed by concrete action. Sooner or later someone will call Trump's bluff. Moreover, if Gaza's inhabitants are forced to migrate to Egypt or Jordan (or both), civil unrest will be the guaranteed short-term outcome as those regimes are already struggling to keep a lid on political discontent. Would massive regional upheaval finally force Trump to recognize that his approach is mistaken? Some observers suggested that Trump's stance towards Gaza is a negotiating ploy, but Trump later reiterated his intent [7]. Ultimately, a gambling bluff must be believable, but Trump's Gaza plans are so atrocious and inhumane that one can only conclude that he simply believes he can do whatever he pleases.

In Syria, on the other hand, rumors suggest that Trump is preparing to withdraw US troops [8]. Although Trump failed to push the Pentagon into withdrawing from Syria during his first term, he seems more determined this time around. And whether the US remains in Syria or not, Türkiye is now the key actor supporting the new Damascus government.

Even more importantly, Türkiye is now the foundation for an emerging regional power bloc that already includes Qatar and the new Syria, but which also looks to include Lebanon and Iraq. The implication is that Türkiye is now Israel's de facto neigh-

bor, and Tel Aviv will not be able to pursue its current expansionist aims indefinitely, whether in the Golan Heights, in Lebanon, or in Gaza. The Eastern Mediterranean — if not Ukraine or China — looks like the spot where Trump's foreign policy preferences will be given a litmus test.

A new colossus?

Trump's horrific threat to remove Gaza's population and turn it into an American possession brought Emma Lazarus' poem, inscribed in the Statue of Liberty's pedestal, to mind. Once upon a time, the US gave shelter to "huddled masses" fleeing oppression and poverty. But for many decades now, US society has turned against immigration. Now, Trump ships plane loads of desperate people back to the source of their poverty and oppression; now, Trump sees those teeming homeless masses as impediments to luxury real estate projects.

Thus, America's general abandonment of its ideals in favor of pure material gain and political expediency is accelerating.

So, who will be the New Colossus?

[1] From Emma Lazarus's famous poem, "The New Colossus": <https://www.nps.gov/stli/learn/historyculture/emm-a-lazarus.htm>.

[2] <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/22/us/politics/william-mckinley-trump.html>.

[3] Previous US Presidents already made significant progress in destroying the system the US sponsored: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/opinion-america-abandons-its-own-project-the-united-nations-system/3238531>.

[4] <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3207/3207-h/3/2/0/7-h.htm#link2HCH0013>

[5] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0xJ1sXq2FE>.

[6] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgXL7NOnm-p&list=PLuYunuspaksoy/s-tus/1887219330120884502>. The following day, the White House spokesperson told the press that the US would not send troops to Gaza and would not pay for Gaza's reconstruction. Because neither Egypt nor Jordan have the resources to perform the logistical or military operations Trump suggested, and because Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and other Arab states with financial resources will not provide money without a Palestinian state's establishment, Trump's entire proposal seems to be, at the moment, sheer nightmarish fantasy: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/white-house-refuses-to-commit-to-ensuring-palestinians-can-stay-in-gaza-under-trumps-plan/3473192>.

[7] <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/trump-says-hes-committed-to-buying-and-owning-gaza/3476963>

[8] <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/dod-drafting-plans-withdraw-us-troops-syria-recent-trump-comments-rcna190726>

— AA

# Musk-tering power

SOUTH African multi-billionaire Elon Musk is the most influential civilian in the entourage of Donald Trump who seems unable to say no to his interventions in US foreign and domestic affairs. Musk has even escaped Trump's ire by dismissing his Gaza plan. By contrast, Trump vented fury on Time magazine for printing covers placing Musk behind the presidential desk in the White House's Oval Office. The covers suggest that Musk's \$288 million campaign donation has made him the Rasputin of today.

Grigory Rasputin was an Orthodox priest who exerted immense power over Alexandra, the last Tsarina of Russia, and her husband Tsar Nicholas who disastrously mismanaged his country's military during World War I. The couple and their children were arrested in 1917 and executed in 1918.

In mid-January, Musk demonstrated he could avoid being destructive like Rasputin by taking a surprisingly positive line on Gaza. While saying there was "no choice but to eliminate those who wish to eliminate ... Israel," naming-Hamas, Musk said there must be a Marshall Plan for Gaza. This would rebuild and "make the Palestinian areas prosperous." Musk's proposition contrasted with Trump's cockeyed declaration that Israel would transfer Gaza to him. The strip's 2.3 million Palestinians would be ethnically cleansed so Gaza could be developed as a Mediterranean tourist resort accessed by anyone but Gazans.

As co-director of Trump's Department of Government Efficiency (Doge), Musk and his partner Vivek

Ramaswami serve as "outside volunteers not federal officials or employees." This means both can interfere in external and internal affairs without answering to Congress or the judiciary.

To prove his intention to mount a Marshall Plan, Musk must end the suspension of \$400 million slated for humanitarian and food aid in the Gaza Strip. More will be needed. Since Gazans need shelter while the Marshall Plan is drafted, temporary

To prove his intention to mount a Marshall Plan, Musk must end the suspension of \$400 million slated for humanitarian and food aid in the Gaza Strip. More will be needed. Since Gazans need shelter while the Marshall Plan is drafted, temporary mobile homes must be imported and accommodation for health care provided as hundreds of doctors and nurses are currently treating patients in tents and schools. Gazans will need treatment for injuries and trauma. Several thousand may have to go abroad for operations and psychiatric help. Many may need long-term or lifelong care. Once the plan is finalised, Musk's first task will be to ensure that the ceasefire ends Israel's campaign to obliterate Gaza while insisting that Hamas must stand aside and allow a Palestinian technocratic administration to take charge. Second, Musk must ensure that Israel will not oppose, obstruct, and meddle in implementation of the plan. Since Hamas' take-over of Gaza in 2007, Israel has waged war on the strip in 2008-2009, 2012, 2014, and 2021 and has done its utmost to interfere in and limit reconstruction. As Israel controls land, air and sea access to Gaza, Israel has imposed limitations and controls on the importation of building materials and machinery, claiming that Hamas would use these goods for military purposes.

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Michael Jansen

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materials and machinery, claiming that Hamas would use these goods for military purposes. Consequently, after these repeated military assaults Gazans could only partially rebuild homes, businesses, and infrastructure. This led Gazans to construct tunnels beneath the Egyptian border to smuggle construction materials and consumer goods banned by Israel. By 2011 there were more than a thousand tunnels and trade was brisk. Gazans who wanted to repair or build homes could obtain cement and other essential materials while food-stuffs, medical supplies and equipment, clothing,

livestock, and vehicles were freely imported through the tunnels which were closed down by the Egyptians in 2013.

Third, since about 70 per cent of Gaza's structures have been destroyed or damaged, a survey will be needed to decide on what can be repaired and what must be levelled. Gaza's water and sanitation systems and electricity plants and networks will have to have priority. The UN Development Programme has said rebuilding homes could

cost as much as \$40 billion and take until 2040 to complete. Gazans do not the luxury of rebuilding over such a long period. They need homes now. Fourth, Gaza must be cleared of 42 million tonnes of rubble at a cost of \$500 million to \$600 million. Before tackling this task, Gaza must import deminers and equipment to eliminate unexploded ordnance in the rubble created by Israel's demolition of Gaza. Once an area is cleared of explosives, experts will have to recover human remains and eliminate toxic materials. Machinery will be needed to remove rubble and lor-

ries to transport it to dumps. Some rubble can be crushed for reuse in buildings of one and two stories (not more) and for roadbeds. Before the war, Gaza had facilities for crushing rubble. I visited one.

Fifth, farmland must be cleared of explosives and toxic waste and restored. Greenhouses must be rebuilt, fields for grazing replanted, and barns and sheds reconstructed and cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and chickens restocked. Before the war, half the food consumed in Gaza was home grown. The other half of farm produce was exported. At one time, Gaza sold cut flowers and early strawberries to Europe.

Who would finance Marshall Plan II? The countries which funded Israel's war on Gaza. The US has provided Israel with \$32.9 billion to turn Gaza into a wasteland and should be responsible for largest proportion of the funding for the Marshall Plan. Germany supplied \$453.7 million. France, Britain, India, Canada, Italy, Serbia, and Holland should contribute sums equal to the value of their arms exports to Israel. It should be compelled to pay reparations to Gazans for their human and physical losses.

The objective of the new Marshall Plan — like the original — would be to make Gaza liveable and provide young men with decent careers and living wages so they do not take up arms against Israel.

As young women enter the workforce they must be given equal treatment in employment. As a tech-multi billionaire, Musk could invest and encourage investment in Gaza as a hub for regional high-tech development. Gazan youths began to prepare for such a future two decades ago, but war and more war intervened.





# PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 360 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Thursday, losing, 360.86 points, a negative change of 0.32 percent, closing at 112,564.08 points as compared to 112,924.94 points on the last trading day.

A total of 596,739,574 shares were traded during the day as compared to 669,597,325 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs30.965 billion against Rs27.904 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 445 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 176 of them recorded gains and 221 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 48 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were B.O. Punjab with 79,317,612 shares at Rs11.86 per share, Lotte Chemical with

72,104,503 shares at Rs21.23 per share and Power Cement with 40,290,839 shares at Rs10.03 per share.

Ismail Industries Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs90.97 per share closing at Rs1,943.16 whereas runner-up was Pakistan Services Limited with Rs64.51 rise in its share price to close at Rs1,025.10.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs441.45 per share price, closing at Rs23,482.54, whereas the runner-up was Nestle Pakistan Limited with Rs63.50 decline in its per share price to Rs7,366.50.

**Rupee sheds 01 paisa against dollar**

Pakistani rupee on Thursday depreciated by 01 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs279.26 against the previous day's closing of

Rs279.25.

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

The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.38 to close at Rs291.09 against the last day's closing of Rs289.71, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.81, whereas an increase of Rs1.46 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs349.37 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs347.91.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham increased 01 paisa close at Rs76.03 while the Saudi Riyal remained stagnant and closed at Rs74.46.

**Gold prices up by**

**Rs2,500 per tola to Rs304,000**

The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs2,500 and was sold at Rs304,000 on Thursday against its sale at Rs301,500 on previous trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs2,144 to Rs260,631 from Rs258,487 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went up by Rs1,965 to Rs238,920 from Rs236,955.

The prices of per tola silver increased by Rs55 to Rs3,367 and that of ten gram went up by Rs47 to Rs2,886.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$25 to \$2,913 from \$2,888 whereas the prices of silver in international market increased by \$0.55 to \$32.25, the Association reported.



KARACHI: A view of MoU signing ceremony between International Institute of Central Asia and Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh.

## Tayyip's visit to boost trade

LAHORE (APP): Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Pakistan will significantly boost bilateral trade and strengthen economic ties between the two Muslim countries.

Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Coordinator Saif-ur-Rehman said, in a media statement here on Thursday, that the visit helped enhance cooperation in key sectors such as trade, investment, cultural exchange and bilateral trade, which currently stands at US \$ 1.3 billion, and work towards an ambitious target of US \$ 5 billion annually. This goal will be pursued through the expansion of the Strategic Economic Framework (SEF) and the removal of trade barriers, including non-tariff obstacles and market access challenges faced by Pakistan's textile sector in Turkey.

The Pakistan-Turkiye Business and Investment Forum brought together leading investors and business leaders to explore new opportunities in energy, infrastructure, and technology sectors.

He said, this visit marks a defining moment in Turkiye-Pakistan relations, setting the stage for a more robust and diversified partnership that promises shared prosperity and security.

# CISSS and IICA sign MoU

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS) has formalized an institutional collaboration with the Tashkent-based International Institute for Central Asia (IICA) through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This MoU aims to foster research and dialogue on a wide range of strategic, economic, and geopolitical issues of mutual interest.

The MoU was signed by Ambassador (R) Qazi M. Khalilullah, Executive Director of CISSS, and Ambassador (R) Javlon Vakhobov, Managing Director of IICA, representing their respective institutions.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Ambassador Qazi M. Khalilullah underscored Pakistan's commitment to strengthening engagement with Central

Asian Republics (CARs) and prioritized five key areas: political and diplomatic cooperation, trade and investment, energy and connectivity, security and defense, and people-to-people exchanges.

He further commended the steady progress in Pakistan-Central Asia relations, as evidenced by the establishment of a strategic partnership and the signing of landmark transit trade and preferential trade agreements.

Highlighting Pakistan's strategic geographical advantage, Ambassador Khalilullah emphasized that the country provides the shortest land route for Central Asian states to access global markets through the ports of Pakistan.

He also referenced major regional connectivity projects, particularly the Trans-Afghan Railway Project, and stressed the need to integrate the China-

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with other regional initiatives to enhance economic interconnectivity.

Javlon Vakhobov, in his remarks, expressed confidence in the collaboration between CISSS and IICA, emphasizing the importance of expert consultations on regional connectivity.

He highlighted the mutual benefits of enhancing the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan connectivity corridor, which would facilitate access to major ports and open new economic opportunities for both Central and South Asian markets.

The partnership between CISSS and IICA is expected to contribute significantly to regional discourse, policy research, and strategic dialogue, fostering a deeper understanding of shared challenges and opportunities in an evolving geopolitical landscape.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was report at the port where three ships, Dumbledore, Falcon Royal and Doha carrying Palm oil, Mogas and LNG, berthed at Liquid Cargo Terminal, FOTCO oil Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively on during last 24 hours.

Meanwhile four more ships, Breman Express, SIBI, Kosei and Khairpur scheduled to load/offload Container, Rice, Bitumen and Mogas also arrived at outer anchorage on during last 24 hours.

A total of seven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Kyra Zafira and Kouroos Queen are expected to sail on Thursday afternoon.

Cargo volume of 129,777 tonnes, comprising 119,312 tonnes imports cargo and 10,465 tonnes export cargo was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are Eleven ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, DSM London, Kathrine Kosan and Bremen Express another ship 'Maersk Capetown' scheduled to load/offload Rice, Chemicals and Container are expected to take berths at FAP, EVTL and QICT are respectively, while another containers ship 'X-Press Mekong' due to arrive at outer anchorage today (Friday).

## Blue Skincare launches in Pakistan

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Blue Skincare is making its highly anticipated debut in Pakistan, marking its first entry into the local market with a soft launch on February 10th. This introduction brings a premium lineup of gentle, effective, and dermatologically tested products suitable for all skin types, from ages 2 to 80. With formulations enriched with organic ingredients and marine elements such as Mother of Pearl, Blue Skincare aims to redefine skincare standards in Pakistan.

# EFU strengthens Takaful footprint in KP, Balochistan

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: EFU Life Assurance Ltd., a leading Life & Health insurer and Family Takaful operator in Pakistan, proudly announces the phased conversion of its individual life branches in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan operations to Takaful as a key step in our journey to make Shariah-compliant financial solutions widely available and is aligned with SECP's strategic direction of increasing the penetration of Takaful in Pakistan. We remain steadfast in our commitment to financial inclusion, providing affordable Shariah Compliant solutions."

By leveraging its extensive branch network and innovative digital platforms, EFU Life aims to continue expanding its outreach to the entire population of Pakistan.

tions that prioritize ethical financial planning and security.

Commenting on the development, Mohammed Ali Ahmed, Managing Director & CEO of EFU Life, said, "The phased conversion of our Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan operations to Takaful is a key step in our journey to make Shariah-compliant financial solutions widely available and is aligned with SECP's strategic direction of increasing the penetration of Takaful in Pakistan. We remain steadfast in our commitment to financial inclusion, providing affordable Shariah Compliant solutions."

By leveraging its extensive branch network and innovative digital platforms, EFU Life aims to continue expanding its outreach to the entire population of Pakistan.

# Pak-China festival to start from 21st

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) is collaborating with Punjab Food Authority (PFA), Information and Culture Department Punjab, and Pak Connects to organise 'Pak-China Chah (Love) Mela', a three-day cultural and trade festival, from February 21 to 23 at Wildlife Park (Safari Zoo), Lahore.

The main agenda of this event is to highlight the vibrant colours of culture, business, and entertainment, bringing together people from different backgrounds to celebrate and strengthen the strong bonds between Pakistan and China.

The PCJCCI President Nazir Hussain told media here Thursday that this festival will present the similarities and uniqueness of Chinese and Pakistani Food and will bring revolutionary changes in the present inundated system of disparities between public and private sector.

## Lost and Found

I have lost the original file of 10 Marla plot application no: LV5177191 situated Kingdom valley. If anyone finds it please return it to Safir Ahmed Khan S/o Laghel Khan. Khot Payeen teh: Mastuj dist: Chitral. CINC: 15202-5608647-7, Contact: 03456200063

## Court Notice

In the court of sidra jalal civil judge-III judicial Magistrate II, tehsil malla district Swat. Case #.99/1. Institution 02/09/2024. Next Hearing date 05/03/2025. Mian Syed Ayub VS Mst. Ferson etc. Notice to :-1/8) Hassan Khan Husband Mst- Ferson.4/4) Ali sher s/o jamshed.4) Muhammad Hanifa s/o Mian Hazrat Syed r/o sambat Tehsil Matta District Swat. Whereas the above named cannot be served in ordinary manner it is therefore proclaimed or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court on 05/03/2025. at 8.00 am. Ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against you. Seal of the court.

# Children to use mobile phones only for educational purposes: Sadia

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: Children should use mobile phones only for educational purposes. While participating in online forums or playing games, they should never share their personal photos, locations, or contact numbers. In case of online harassment or blackmailing, they should immediately inform their parents. These thoughts were expressed by Ms. Sadia Rashid, President of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, during her presidential address at the Hamdard Nauehal Assembly Karachi meeting, titled "Online Protection for Children," held yesterday at the Bait-ul-Hikmah Auditorium, Madinat-ul-Hikmah. The meeting was attended by educationist, IT professional and former Hamdard Public School student, Dr. Kashif Mehmood, as the guest of honour.

Ms. Sadia Rashid stated that the internet is one of the most amazing and ben-

eficial inventions of the current century. It is an excellent source of modern information and research, which has led to the loss of dominance by a few countries over modern knowledge. However, many people are misusing it. The negative use of the internet is leading to harmful behaviors and anti-social activities in society, which mainly affect the younger generation. True happiness is derived from spending time with parents and siblings. One should serve the elderly and benefit from their experiences. The wisdom to navigate through difficult circumstances comes with time and experience.

Dr. Kashif Mehmood remarked that the online world has caused social isolation for everyone. Parents must also adapt to modern technology to stay informed about their children's online activities. Parents should listen to their children's concerns attentively and with an open heart.

Children often cannot share cyberbullying or blackmail by criminals due to fear, leading to depression. No matter how big the mistake, parents should approach the issue calmly and provide enough trust for the children to feel comfortable sharing their problems.

Excessive screen time is a waste of time. An online friend could be a terrorist or a criminal. Every day, incidents are emerging where a child befriended someone online, and when they met, they were abducted.

To prevent such incidents, the whole society must play a role and prepare children not to make online friends. If they do, they should inform their parents.

The FIA (Federal Investigation Agency) is a very proactive law enforcement agency, and if you are ever in trouble, immediately report it to them. Anything you don't want people to see, avoid taking pictures or videos of it, as criminals can steal data

from mobile phones. Excessive use of mobile phones weakens children's reading habits.

Young speakers, including Ayesha Fawad (Leader of the House, Hamdard Public School), Syed Muhammad Shuja (Leader of the Opposition, Hamdard Public School), Fatima Zahra (Azimi Public School), and others, stated that the online exploitation of children has become a global issue, and no society is immune to it.

Due to their innocence and lack of understanding, children become victims of criminals or begin to believe in organized propaganda against the state and its institutions. Children should inform their parents before downloading any game or application.

Students from various schools performed awareness skits or theater based on the theme of the session. The meeting concluded with Dua-i-Said, presented by the students of Hamdard Public School and Hamdard Village School.

# Indus Hospital & Health Network launches Ramazan Campaign 2025

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: Indus Hospital & Health Network (IHHN) officially launched its annual Ramazan Campaign 2025 at its Karachi campus in a grand ceremony. The event brought together senior leadership, philanthropists, corporate representatives, media professionals, hospital staff, and over 100 youth volunteers from various schools.

The Ramazan Campaign 2025 aims to ensure the uninterrupted provision of quality healthcare services at Pakistan's largest pri-

vate, free-of-cost healthcare network.

The ceremony was attended by Chairman Abdul Karim Paracha, Dr. Muhammad Shamvil Ashraf (Executive Director, Medical Services, IHHN), Dr. Ashar Alam (Medical Director, IHHN Korangi Campus), and senior leadership of IHHN.

Prof. Syed Zafar Zaidi, CEO of IHHN, addressed the audience, stating: "Indus Hospital & Health Network was founded on the belief that every individual, regardless of their financial status, deserves

access to quality healthcare. Over the years, with the unwavering support of donors and partners, we have expanded our reach, but the need continues to grow. This Ramazan, I urge everyone to come forward and contribute to sustaining this life-saving mission."

Following Prof. Zaidi's remarks, Syed Mashood Rizvi, Executive Director of Communications and Resource Development at IHHN, provided insights into the network's vast operations and impact. He highlighted IHHN's significant expansion, which now

includes 13 hospitals, 4 regional blood centers, 3 physical rehabilitation clinics, over 100 primary care centers, multiple public health initiatives, Indus University of Health Sciences, and Indus Research Center.

He further explained that rising healthcare costs push over 400,000 households below the poverty line each year in Pakistan, making IHHN an essential lifeline for many. Currently, over 500,000 patients receive free treatment every month, with 70% of them supported through Zakat funds.

During the event, a video

message from Dr. Abdul Bari Khan, President of IHHN, was played, as he was traveling. He expressed gratitude for the public's trust and generous donations, which have transformed Indus Hospital into a nationwide network. Acknowledging the financial challenges, he appealed to donors to continue their support for free, high-quality healthcare services.

The event concluded with a collective prayer for the success of the Ramazan Campaign 2025 and for the well-being of all deserving patients.

# Tribute paid to renowned author Bapsi Sidhwa



## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: An event to pay tribute to renowned Pakistani author Bapsi Sidhwa was held in Islamabad, organised by her nephew, MNA Isphanyar M. Bhandara. Mr Bhandara is the only son of Ms Sidhwa's brother the late Minoo Bhandara (1938-2008), and the CEO of their family business the Murree Brewery founded in 1861.

The event was held at the Multipurpose Hall of the Islamabad Club and was attended by Islamabad's literary community as well as friends of

the family. A panel of esteemed guests spoke at the event. They included Ms Perin Boga, former literature and drama teacher at Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore and a family friend of Bapsi Sidhwa; Senator Walid Iqbal, whose parents Justice Javed Iqbal and Nasira Iqbal were also friends of Bapsi Sidhwa; Harris Khalique, Secretary-General/CEO of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) and also an award-winning poet; and Dr Arif Azad who has written widely on culture, poli-

tics, and literature and is also a health and public policy consultant.

The event began with a welcome note by Isphanyar Bhandara who remembered his aunt fondly. He recalled her relationship with her brother Minoo and praised her contribution to Pakistani literature in English.

The MC of the after-noon's proceedings Nilofar Afridi Qazi followed and invited the panel to take their seats.

The panel segment was moderated by Amna R. Ali, who also moderated the discussion. Ms Perin Boga

began with a presentation about the milieu that Bapsi Sidhwa grew up in, the Parsi community to which she belonged and how her writing took flight. Pegging her presentation on some of the architectural delights of Lahore she provided a pictorial journey through Bapsi Sidhwa's beloved Lahore augmented by images taken from FS Aijazuddin's book

Forgotten Images and the painting of Commercial Buildings by Ijaz Anwar. This was the city which nurtured Bapsi Sidhwa to write her first book The Crow Eaters in 1978, followed by The Bride in 1982.

Senator Walid Iqbal recalled his parents' friendship with Bapsi Sidhwa, reminding the audience that it was his father who helped Bapsi self-publish The Crow Eaters in Lahore before it was published in the UK, leading to Ms Sidhwa's international acclaim. Harris Khalique and Dr Arif Azad also shared their views on the themes of Bapsi Sidhwa's work - the complexity of Partition, pluralism, women's rights, the lives of minorities - and her rich

storytelling that brought to life a wide gamut of characters and places.

Video tributes were sent in by Feroze Bhandara, Bapsi Sidhwa's younger brother who lives in Houston, Texas; Ameena Saiyid (OBE, SD), Publisher and Managing Director of Lightstone Publications and founder of Adab Festival; Muneeza Shamsie, editor and critic and the author of a literary history, Hybrid Tapestry; and editor of four anthologies of Pakistani writing in English. And finally, Sadia Uqaili, a Pakistani American artist, and filmmaker, educator and activist, and the producer of Bapsi - a feature-length documentary on the life and work of Bapsi Sidhwa. This was followed by a six-minute clip of the documentary, some of it showing a snippet of Bapsi Sidhwa's life in Houston, Texas, USA where she lived after leaving Pakistan.

The memorial reference ended with praise for Bapsi Sidhwa's literary legacy and her impactful life which will inspire future generations for years to come.





# Pakistan has a good chance of defending CT title: Sarfaraz



ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed believes Pakistan has a really good chance of defending the Champions Trophy title as the green-shirts have a strong team.

"Pakistan have a really good chance of defending that title and I think they have a strong team. Some of the boys from 2017 are still there and we're talking about some of the best - especially Babar Azam. He is a different Babar to the one that played in 2017, a more mature play-

er and a dominant player in the game. His batting will be so important for Pakistan and so will Fakhar Zaman's," he said as quoted by ICC.

Ahmed said Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf are brilliant bowlers and are playing well. The captain, Mohammad Rizwan, is also a wicket-keeper-batter, which worked pretty well for me back in 2017. There will be pressure. Pakistan being at home, being the defending champions, there will be high expecta-

tions, but the fans will get behind them.

If I had to pick four semi-finalists, I'd probably go for Pakistan, India, Australia and Afghanistan at this stage, but I would not rule anyone out, he said. He said when Pakistan will play New Zealand in Karachi next week, it will mark the first senior ICC event held in our homeland since 1996 and to say we are bursting with excitement would be an understatement.

Ahmed said of the pool matches, everyone will be

talking about Pakistan's match against India, and the game will be huge.

Whenever we meet, it is a special occasion and there is so much hype and pressure around it. But as players, you need to stay calm, try and block that noise out and just play with the same intensity as you would play Australia or any other team, he said.

He said in 2017, we played India in our first match and were soundly beaten by 124 runs. It was my first game as captain and we were poor in all areas. Afterwards, we had a great team meeting, and some of our senior guys - Shoaib Malik, Mohammad Hafeez - all said their piece. You need those types of characters around you.

Our head coach, Mickey Arthur, and I were so confident we would do well. We had come through a really tricky series against the West Indies, which was key for 2019 World Cup qualification, and were the bottom-ranked side in the tournament. We felt we had nothing to lose and so took as much pressure as we could away from the players, he said.



ESHER, ENGLAND: Jockey Rob Hargreaves on Casa Loupi during The Right Of The Line Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Hurdle Race at Sandown Park on Thursday in Esher, England.

## Pakistan vs New Zealand in a title clash and a dress rehearsal

K A R A C H I (ESPNCricinfo): It's rare for a tournament final to be a dry run, but that's almost what this Pakistan vs New Zealand game will be. There's a trophy on the line in Karachi, five days before another Pakistan vs New Zealand game in Karachi - that is the big one, the opening game of the Champions Trophy. In that sense, when this tri-series was planned, this was the final that would have made the most sense, if you'd asked anyone bar, perhaps, South Africa.

New Zealand have comfortably been the team of the tournament so far, but Pakistan arguably come in on a bigger high, riding a wave after coming back from the dead to steal the second place on the table after an epic ODI chase against South Africa. The execution of the win was more satisfying than the fact that it happened. Two men in Pakistan's middle order stringing together Pakistan's third-highest ODI partnership - Mohammad Rizwan and Salman Agha put on a whopping 260 for the fourth wicket, masterfully pacing a chase while seemingly not playing a single shot in anger. Most notably, it will allay fears of an over-dependence on Fakhar Zaman up top if the middle order can find a way to stand up for itself more regularly, balancing Pakistan's batting line-up ahead of the Champions Trophy.

But Pakistan's death bowling remains a cause for concern. They conceded 98 in the final six overs against New Zealand, and 87 in the final seven on Wednesday against South Africa. On both occasions, one man in a purple patch took the attack to them - the fast bowlers in particular. It was Glenn Phillips one day, Heinrich Klaasen the next. It keeps New Zealand in the game till late, knowing they can catch up against a bowling line up that has revealed it is vulnerable.

New Zealand have just about played two perfect games, with control the key feature of their performances. There is a calm this side exudes when it appears a passage of play is going against them. They didn't panic when they weren't quite at the run rate they wanted to be against Pakistan until deep in the innings, keeping their ammunition dry until the opportunity to use it presented itself.

When Matthew Breetzke took them on at the death, they retained their composure, aware the target was still below par, and then made short work of it with a near faultless chase.

Most notably, New Zealand have shown how to use spin as a leash for the opposition on these surfaces, and possess more experienced, more varied and, frankly, superior slower bowlers. Mitchell Santner has been in the middle of special run the last few months, and stifled Pakistan alongside Michael Bracewell, Phillips and Rachin Ravindra last week.

They bowled 26 of the 47.5 overs through that innings, and while Pakistan's spinners bowled a similar amount, they weren't nearly as effective.

It is a game with silverware up for grabs, and the group-stage rubber between the two next week inflates its importance rather than diminishing it.

Fakhar Zaman's fireworks at the start have been integral to Pakistan's hopes. When Zaman fell for a 69-ball 84 against New Zealand, Pakistan's chase fell apart in Lahore, and his 28-ball 41 saw Pakistan fly to 91 in the first ten overs - their third fastest ten-over score in ODI history - against South Africa. It has gone some way towards replacing the hole left at the top by Saim Ayub's injury, and given impetus to a side whose middle order doesn't quite have the explosiveness to make up for any dawdling up top. On flat wickets where big totals will have to be put up and chased down, and with Fakhar key to Pakistan's success in international tournament knockout games, his performance and the game's outcome may well be very closely aligned.

Kane Williamson followed up a half-century against Pakistan with an unbeaten hundred to vanquish South Africa. New Zealand haven't played too many ODIs since the 2023 World Cup, but he appears to have picked up where he left off, on surfaces that are perfectly suited to his

immense ability. He showed in the first game he could grind it out on a "tackier wicket", as he put it, while picking the pace up on the flatter surface against South Africa. His legendary unflappability has handled far bigger occasions, with his current form not just a warning sign for Pakistan, but every side he comes up against in the next few days.

**Team news: Rachin Ravindra won't be rushed back**

With Haris Rauf unavailable, Pakistan are unlikely to tinker with the side that got them to the final barring injuries.

**Pakistan (likely): 1 Fakhar Zaman, 2 Babar Azam, 3 Saud Shakeel, 4 Mohammad Rizwan (capt, wk), 5 Salman Agha, 6 Tayyab Tahir, 7 Khushdil Shah, 8 Shaheen Afridi, 9 Naseem Shah, 10 Mohammad Hasnain, 11 Abrar Ahmed**

Rachin Ravindra remains a significant concern after the blow to his head in the first game of the series, and New Zealand have stated that they do not intend to rush him back, especially with his replacement Devon Conway filling in with aplomb.

**New Zealand (probable): 1 Devon Conway, 2 Will Young, 3 Kane Williamson, 4 Daryl Mitchell, 5 Tom Latham/Mark Chapman, 6 Glenn Phillips, 7 Michael Bracewell, 8 Mitchell Santner (capt), 9 Ben Sears, 10 Matt Henry, 11 Will O'Rourke**

## Last-gasp equaliser gives Everton point against Liverpool

LONDON (BBC): James Tarkowski's dramatic last-gasp equaliser gave Everton a deserved point in a stormy conclusion to the final Merseyside derby at Goodison Park.

Liverpool looked to be heading nine points clear at the top of the Premier League as a fiery encounter entered its final seconds, until Tarkowski lashed home a leveller that was only awarded after video assistant referee (VAR) checks for offside and a foul.

As tempers flared, Abdoulaye Doucoure taunted the Liverpool fans and was confronted by Liverpool substitute Curtis Jones, with players from both sides squaring up before the pair were sent off. Liverpool boss Arne Slot and his assistant Sipke Hulshoff were also dismissed after the final whistle, with Liverpool adamant Tarkowski's leveller should have been ruled out for a shove in the build-up.

It all meant Goodison Park went out with a bang, with both Everton and Liverpool ending on 41 wins apiece in derbies played in this atmospheric old arena.

Everton took the lead after 11 minutes in an emotionally-charged atmosphere when Jarrod Branthwaite's free-kick caught Liverpool cold and Beto slid a composed finish past Allison.

Liverpool's response was instant as Alexis Mac Allister equalised with a glancing header from Mohamed Salah's cross within five minutes.

In a Goodison cauldron, with temperatures rising by the second, Salah pounced on Branthwaite's clearance to score with 17



minutes left as Everton cursed their fortunes after Doucoure had missed a glorious headed chance.

Then Goodison Park got one final moment of derby drama that will live long in the memory as Tarkowski lashed home in front of the Gwladys Street end.

Liverpool remain seven points clear at the top of the Premier League - but it was Everton who were more satisfied with the result. From a final Goodison Park derby that looked like ending in disappointing defeat, Everton showed the revived spirit and character brought by the return of David Moyes as manager to provide a climax of genuine sporting theatre.

Everton's fans exploded with joy when Tarkowski fired an unstoppable shot high past Allison in the 98th minute - but the celebrations were put on hold for what seemed like an age as checks were carried out for offside and a foul on Liverpool defender Ibrahim Konate.

The old stadium rocked when the goal was confirmed and Everton emerged with real honour

and credit, having made sure they did not end derby games at Goodison on a losing note.

The brawl after the final whistle was unsavoury, Doucoure needlessly goading Liverpool's fans to the fury of Jones, but all the fire and fury of a remarkable evening encapsulated what Goodison Park is about.

Moyes has rejuvenated Everton - Beto in particular, with the striker showing a composure rarely seen previously - and they even overcame the first-half loss of key man Iliman Ndiaye to injury.

The manner in which Everton pushed Liverpool all the way, then claimed a point, was the sort of performance Goodison Park deserved and was another example of their improvement under Moyes.

Liverpool's fans were taunting their Everton counterparts with chants of "we won the league at Goodison Park" just moments before Tarkowski denied them the victory they thought was theirs.

It was a response to Everton fans directing "you lost the league at

Goodison Park" after Liverpool were defeated here near the end of last season.

And those supporters would have had every right to believe the title was on its way back to Anfield as Salah's late strike looked to be putting them nine points clear of Arsenal.

In the end, Liverpool had to settle for a point - a fair outcome for all the controversy surrounding the equaliser. Head coach Slot, who cut an agitated figure all night as Everton's fans urged their team on with deafening noise, was furious Tarkowski's goal was allowed and appeared unhappy with referee Michael Oliver throughout. Liverpool were not quite themselves, with Everton making life uncomfortable, but their disappointment will be even more acute because they looked to be closing out the win without too many alarms until those wild closing seconds.

They can console themselves by still holding a very healthy seven point lead at the top of the league.

## Afridi fined and handed demerit point for on-field clash with Breetzke

K A R A C H I (ESPNCricinfo): Shaheen Shah Afridi, Saud Shakeel and Kamran Ghulam have all been slapped with fines and a demerit point each for separate Level 1 breaches of the ICC's code of conduct, after their tri-series game against South Africa in Karachi on Wednesday.

Afridi was fined 25% of his match fee for breaching Article 2.12 of the code of conduct, which pertains to "inappropriate physical contact" with a player or someone else during a match.

In the 28th over of South Africa's innings, Afridi was seen stepping into the path of batter Matthew Breetzke as he attempted a run. This, as



the ICC put it, led to "physical contact and a heated exchange between the two players".

That was off the last ball of the over. Just the ball before, Breetzke, after defending the ball, made a gesture with his bat, which Afridi reacted to by walking down the pitch and saying something.

Breetzke didn't back down, and the umpires were quickly at the scene.

Off the last ball, Breetzke took off for a run after playing the ball away to the leg side and Afridi moved towards the batter. Breetzke bumped into him before completing his run. Shakeel and Ghulam, the substitute fielder, were

fined 10% of their match fees for "celebrating too closely to batter Temba Bavuma following his run-out in the 29th over".

That was a breach of Article 2.5 of the code, which relates to "using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from a batter".

None of the three had any prior demerit points.

Pakistan won the match, chasing down South Africa's 352 for 5 with one over left - it was their first successful chase of 350-plus runs in ODIs, and got them into the final of tri-series, where they will take on New Zealand on Friday before the action shifts to the Champions Trophy.

# Jasprit Bumrah, Shamar Joseph, Amelia Kerr, Rohit Sharma and Pat Cummins win ESPNcricinfo Awards for 2024

DUBAI (ESPNCricinfo): Tournament-defining displays at the two T20 World Cups won big at the 18th edition of the ESPNcricinfo Awards.

Ball dominated bat at the men's and women's World Cups of 2024, and fittingly, the MVPs from both won the T20I bowling honours: Jasprit Bumrah's 2 for 18 to rescue India from the brink of defeat against South Africa in the final in Bridgetown won the men's award, while Amelia Kerr's 3 for 24, also in a final against South Africa, took home the women's title.

The two T20I batting winners produced defining innings to eliminate Australia: Rohit Sharma's stunning assault in the Super Eight fetched him the men's award, and Anneke Bosch won the women's equivalent for her unbeaten 74 in the semi-final to end Australia's six-year winning reign at the event.

New Zealand's unbelievable turnaround at the Women's T20 World Cup - they had lost ten T20Is in a row coming in - was recognised in Sophie Devine winning for women's captain of the year. India ended their

own wait of over a decade to win an ICC event, but Rohit was pipped to the men's captain title by a familiar nemesis: Australia's Pat Cummins, who won the award for the second year running.

Australia's 3-1 win to regain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy after a decade played no small part in that: under Cummins' leadership, they lost only two Tests in 2024. The first of those was among the upsets of the year, and fast bowler Shamar Joseph's breathtaking 7 for 68 in Brisbane to deliver West Indies a first Test win in

Australia in 27 years was the runaway winner in a stacked men's Test bowling field. Joseph's overall display in his breakout year also fetched him the men's debutant award.

The men's Test batting performance award went to Ollie Pope for his sweeping masterclass in Hyderabad to hand India what was - at the time - a rare home defeat.

The men's Associate batting and bowling awards were claimed by performances that enabled USA to make the Super Eight on their men's T20 World Cup debut. Saurabh

Netravalkar's excellence in the shock Super Over win over Pakistan took home the bowling honours, while the batting award went to Aaron Jones for his spectacular 94 not out against Canada on the opening night of the World Cup.

ODIs, understandably, were on the backburner in 2024, but the limited 50-overs action wasn't short on individual brilliance. Travis Head's blitzkrieg hundred against England in Nottingham narrowly pipped Pathum Nissanka's unbeaten double-century versus Afghanistan to win the

men's batting award, while Jeffrey Vandersay bagged the bowling award for his collapse-inducing performance against India, where he removed six of India's top seven in the space of five overs.

The women's ODI batting award saw a contest between two marathon efforts from the same game, where Chamari Athapaththu's 195 not out edged Laura Wolvaardt's unbeaten 184 to the prize - just as it did in the high-scoring affair in Potchefstroom. Marizanne Kapp won the bowling honours for her 3

for 12 in Australia's only ODI defeat of the year. The women's debutant title went to Georgia Voll, who caught the eye and the imagination in a run-laden maiden outing in Australia's year-ending ODIs against India.

The women's T20 league awards, introduced last year, covered performances in the WBBL, the WCPL, the WPL, and the Women's Hundred. Lizelle Lee took the batting award for her record-smashing 150 not out for Hobart Hurricanes against Perth Scorchers, while Ellyse Perry's 6 for 15 in a vital win for RCB

over Mumbai Indians en route to their WPL title clinched the bowling award for her.

The men's T20 leagues awards, which consider performances in ten franchise leagues - BBL, BPL, SA20, ILT20, PSL, IPL, CPL, LPL, MLC and the Men's Hundred. Josh Brown's dazzling century in the BBL Challenger against Adelaide Strikers - the joint-second-fastest hundred in BBL history - fetched him the batting honours. The bowling award went to Bumrah for his spell of 5 for 21 in an RCB total of 196 for 8 at the Wankhede.





## In brief

### Police arrest 10 in operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi District Police here on Thursday carried out search operations in the jurisdiction of different police stations and arrested 10 renting rules violators. According to a police spokesman, the search operations were conducted in order to maintain law and order and net the suspects following the directions of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani. Police arrested 10 suspects namely Rashid, Aryan, Amir Shehzad, Ali Riaz, Abu Bakar, Ali Rehman, Asif, Ibrar, Asirullah and Ghulam Rehman. He informed, senior police officers and police personnel including women police took part in the search operations. Police checked houses, shops, hotels, tenants and a large number of individuals during the search operations. He said that police were more vigilant to keep an eye on suspects and maintain law and order in Rawalpindi.

### ANF recovers 66 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducted five operations across the country, arrested six accused and recovered over 66 kg of drugs worth more than Rs 30 million, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that 300 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near a college in Mansehra. 12 kg hashish hidden in the shoulder bag of an accused was recovered near a university in Karachi. The arrested accused confessed to selling drugs to the students of educational institutions. 22.2 kg hashish concealed in the travel bag of the accused was seized on Gulshan-e-Ravi Road in Lahore and the accused was arrested. 12 kg opium, 16 kg heroin, and 2 kg ice were recovered from the possession of two accused held near Shahrul Alam in Multan. 1.964 kg ice was recovered from Jamrud in the Khyber district and an accused was arrested. Cases have been registered against the arrested accused under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.

### CTO orders strict action

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Beenish Fatima has directed the authorities concerned to take strict action against encroachments. According to a City Traffic Police (CTP) spokesman, CTO during a visit to Murree Road distributed helmets among the motorcyclists and instructed the officers to take action in accordance with the law against encroachments. Beenish Fatima visited Murree Road, Committee Chowk, Iqbal Road, Alam Khan Road, Chandni Chowk, Commercial Market and 5th Road and directed the officers to make earnest efforts to ensure smooth flow of traffic and take action against illegal parking particularly in the Commercial Market on daily basis. The CTO said that strict legal action would be taken against the traffic rules violators and the citizens would also be facilitated while ensuring smooth flow of traffic on the city roads. During the visit, the CTO also highlighted the importance of wearing safety helmets. She said that the use of the helmets is extremely important to prevent loss of life in case of road accidents. All the citizens should ensure their own and others' safety and use helmets, she added.

# Ayaz appreciate efforts of CDA and NA officers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday appreciated the efforts of Capital Development Authority (CDA) and National Assembly officers in improving Parliament's cleanliness and sanitation.

He also directed the enhancement of banking services within the National Assembly, instructing officials to initiate negotiations with other banks to facilitate MNAs and employees better. The Speaker emphasized that all essential banking services, including credit card facilities, should be made available through renowned banks.

Furthermore, he highlighted the need for separate parking arrangements for different categories of visitors and directed

National Assembly security staff to implement stricter security checks at the entrance.

He also urged the CDA to expedite the implementation of improved operational and infrastructural mechanisms for the Parliament. The Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq also approved the establishment of a Parliament Museum, which will serve as a historical and educational centre for visitors.

MNA Bilal Azhar Kayani proposed the establishment of separate entry lines for MNAs, guests, and staff of the National Assembly.

He also suggested that Assembly staff use a dedicated entrance for the National Assembly Secretariat, calling for an official circular to enforce the regu-

lation. Additionally, he stressed the importance of coordination with the Senate Secretariat to improve parking management.

MNA Junaid Anwar Chaudhry called for separate and improved parking spaces within the Parliament House. He also emphasized the necessity of better-regulated entry into Parliament House, urging the National Assembly security staff to strengthen access control measures.

Senior officers of the National Assembly, including Secretary General Tahir Hussain, Advisor Legislation Muhammad Mushtaq, Additional Secretary Administration/Principal Secretary to Speaker Saeed Ahmed Maitala, and Special Secretary Syed Shamoon Hashmi, attended the meeting.

## Chairman PEC calls for structured approach

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Engr Waseem Nazir, Thursday emphasized the need for a structured approach to dispute resolution in the construction industry.

He highlighted four key fundamentals including capacity building, legislative support, a resolution framework, and awareness of alternative dispute resolution (ADR).

Speaking at the International Alternate Dispute Resolution Conference 2025, organized by the Lahore High Court Bar Association, he addressed the critical role ADR plays in resolving commercial disputes.

Chairman PEC Engr Waseem Nazir pointed out that Pakistan's construction industry lacks a culture of dispute resolution due to social pressure and other barriers, leading to prolonged legal battles.

He hinted at the stagger-

ing amount involved in the cases that remain pending in courts, hampering industry progress.

He stressed that contractors, consultants, and clients must develop trust in settlement mechanisms, as delays in construction disputes waste public funds, time, and resources.

To address these challenges, Engr Waseem Nazir called for strategic interventions involving regulators, industry stakeholders, and the judiciary. He underscored the need for efficient reconciliation methods, stating that progress depends on the ability to streamline dispute resolution.

The PEC, under its mandate, is actively working with the judiciary to establish ADR centers, aiming to make dispute resolution an integral part of the construction industry.

Chairman PEC Engr Waseem Nazir said PEC is establishing Alternate Dispute Resolution centers, staffed by expert profes-

sionals to mediate disputes in large-scale projects. These centers will conduct hearings, involving all concerned parties, and provide expert opinions to facilitate resolution.

He emphasized that ensuring national and international investment security is a priority, and these centers will play a crucial role in achieving that goal.

The conference was attended by senior members of the judiciary, including Supreme Court Senior Judge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, former DG Judicial Academy Justice (R) Sardar Ahmad Naeem, and Lahore High Court Justices Jawad ul Hassan, Asim Hafeez, and Sultan Tanveer Ahmad.

Other notable attendees included the Chairman of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce, Lahore High Court Bar Association President Asad Manzoor Butt, Secretary Qadir Baksh, and Vice President Mian Sardar Ali.

## PR generates Rs7,575m from land leasing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has auctioned approximately 6,678 acres of land for various purposes through a competitive bidding process, leasing it to government entities and private individuals to generate revenue for the department.

"The department has earned a total revenue of Rs. 7,575 million from leased land over the last two financial years," an official from the Ministry of Railways told APP.

The official explained that Pakistan Railways leases out its land through an open auction process in accordance with the Railway Property and Land Rules, 2023, which were duly approved by the federal cabinet. The department provides land to government institutions for public welfare projects, subject to payment of lease charges and ground rent as per the approved policy.

"Proactive efforts are underway to lease the remaining available land through advertisements across all operational divisions as well as through the Real Estate Development and Marketing Company

(REDAMCO)," he added.

As of December 2024, Pakistan Railways has operated 1,450 freight trains since July 2024, generating Rs15.214 billion in revenue from freight operations. The department recorded its highest-ever revenue of Rs. 88.8 billion during the fiscal year 2023-24 by implementing measures to optimize revenue generation and reduce costs.

The official said that both passenger and freight trains are being operated at optimal capacity, reducing operational expenses and boosting earnings. Furthermore, the department has shifted from long-term to short-term land leasing to remain competitive and maximize revenue.

Pakistan Railways has made significant progress in train punctuality, improving from 79% in the previous year to 82% in FY 2023-24. The department has also expanded its online booking services through its website and mobile applications under the RABTA system, leading to increased customer engagement.

To enhance passenger convenience, the department has installed TVMs

for faster ticket purchases, set up information counters, introduced real-time departure boards under the RABTA system for up-to-date travel information, and launched premium dining cars on select routes.

## ICCI -NEECA host awareness session

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) in collaboration with the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA) hosted a key awareness session titled 'Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure and Battery Swapping Regulations 2024' at the Chamber House.

The event saw a strong turnout from members of the business community, emphasizing the growing interest in the future of EVs and sustainable energy solutions in Pakistan, said a press release issued here on Thursday. During the welcome address, Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of ICCI, underscored the Chamber's dedication to fostering a business-friendly environment that promotes entrepreneurship and economic growth. He also highlighted ICCI's role in bridging the gap between industry and academia, encouraging fresh graduates to take an entrepreneurial path rather than merely seeking jobs.

He stressed the need for Pakistan to embrace modern, sustainable practices in alignment with global trends, noting that effective collaboration between policy-makers, industry leaders, and stakeholders is crucial for the successful implementation of EV infrastructure regulations. The collaboration between ICCI and NEECA marks a significant step towards fostering the development of electric vehicle infrastructure in Pakistan, paving the way for a more sustainable and eco-friendly future, he concluded.



ISLAMABAD: First Lady of Türkiye Emine Erdogan visiting Maarif School in Sector H-8.

## Police arrest seven kite sellers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police while conducting raids in different areas managed to arrest seven kite sellers and recovered 1100 kites and kite flying string rolls.

According to a police spokesman, City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani had directed the police officers to launch operations against kite flyers and kite suppliers.

He informed in a joint operation conducted by CIA and Bani Police, an accused Nabil allegedly involved in supplying kites to the flyers was arrested with over 700 kites and string rolls.

The accused had created a Facebook page, 'Balli Kites' through which he used to sell kites and kite flying string rolls. The accused is also a record holder in a kite flying case.

The spokesman said that the accused involved in illegal activities like kite flying, kite selling and aerial firing would be dealt with iron hands.

In other raids, police arrested six accused and recovered over 400 kites with 35 string rolls.

Saddar Baroni Police recovered 70 kites and 20 strings from an accused Ali Rehman while 50 kites and 15 string rolls were recovered from the possession of a kite seller Saddam.

Race Course and Sadiqabad Police arrested Abdul Quddus, Umair, Sajid and Musa on recovery of 315 kites.

He said, kite flying has been declared a non-bailable offence and the accused will be punished with imprisonment of 3 to 7 years. The citizens should fulfill their social and legal responsibility and play a role in preventing kite flying and aerial firing, he added.

## First Lady visits Maarif Int'l School

ISLAMABAD (APP): The First Lady of Türkiye, Emine Erdogan visited the Maarif International School in H-8, Islamabad on Thursday during her official visit to Pakistan.

The visit highlighted the deep-rooted friendship between Pakistan and Türkiye, particularly in the field of education.

A special ceremony was held at the school to showcase the institution's contributions to Pakistan's education sector.

The Maarif International School, a project of the Turkish Maarif Foundation, is dedicated to providing state-of-the-art educational facilities, fostering academic excellence, and promoting cultural exchange between the two brotherly nations.

During the event, students presented vibrant cultural performances to welcome the Turkish First Lady, reflecting the strong historical and cultural ties

between Pakistan and Türkiye. She engaged with young students, viewed their creative work, and expressed appreciation for the school's efforts in shaping future generations.

Pakistan and Türkiye enjoy exemplary diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations, deeply rooted in shared history, values, and mutual respect.

Over the years, both nations have collaborated in various fields, including defense, trade, health, and education.

Türkiye has been a key partner in supporting Pakistan's infrastructure and humanitarian initiatives, while Pakistan has reciprocated through unwavering diplomatic support.

The Turkish Maarif Foundation, under the patronage of the Turkish government, has played a pivotal role in strengthening educational ties between the two countries.

It has established several

institutions in Pakistan, providing modern education with a global perspective while incorporating elements of Islamic values and cultural heritage.

The Maarif International School is part of a global network of educational institutions established by the Turkish Maarif Foundation.

These schools offer internationally recognized curricula, with a focus on science, technology, and languages, preparing students for higher education and global careers.

The First Lady's visit reaffirmed Türkiye's commitment to supporting Pakistan's education sector and fostering people-to-people connections.

The event concluded with an exchange of goodwill messages between the school administration and the Turkish delegation, further solidifying the educational partnership between the two nations.

## NBF hosts Dr. Najeeba's book launching ceremony

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Book Foundation (NBF) under the auspices of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training hosted a prestigious book launching ceremony of renowned writer and poet Dr. Najeeba Arif's latest literary endeavour, "Nawah e Kazima".

The event took place at the Ahmed Faraz Auditorium on Thursday. "Nawah e Kazima" is a meticulously crafted Urdu translation of the revered "Qaseeda Burda Shareef", a timeless and sacred poem that holds a distinguished place in Islamic world.

Dr. Najeeba Arif who is also serving as Chairperson of Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the Managing Director (MD) of the National Book Foundation (NBF) for publishing her book and organizing its launching ceremony.

She stated that she was deeply indebted to her mother's prayers, which have guided her throughout her journey. "I feel her presence with me in every moment, and I am grateful for the love and support she instilled in me."

She said that "May Allah include us all among the lovers and followers of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and may we continue to draw inspiration from his teachings and legacy."

MD, NBF Murad Ali Mohmand said that it was an honour to publish Najeeba Arif's Book which was the best translated edition of popular Qaseeda Burda shareef.

He said, "Reading culture shall be promoted and it is moral responsibility of everyone to play his or her part in it."

He said that he as MD NBP would continue to strive for the promotion of authors and literature. The occasion was marked by profound appreciation for Dr. Najeeba Arif's remarkable effort, with esteemed speakers unanimously praising the book as a masterpiece.

The ceremony was chaired by renowned literary critic and scholar, Professor Fateh Mohammad Malik, who added depth and insight to the proceedings.

"Najiba Arif has accomplished a remarkable feat by translating Qasida Burda Sharif. Only an intellectual woman like her could have undertaken such a task," he admired.

Other notable speakers included Rai Riaz Hussain, Dr. Habib-ur-Rehman Asim, Dr. Saira Batool and Abdullah Naeem also spoke on the occasion.

The speakers, who had thoroughly perused the book, unanimously praised its engaging narrative, deeming it the most exceptional edition among its predecessors.

## Saudi Embassy highlights King Faisal's historic visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Saudi Embassy on Thursday marked World Radio Day by sharing a special video on its official X account featuring rare archival images and historical details of Saudi King Faisal bin Abdulaziz's 1955 visit to the Karachi Radio Station and underscoring a significant chapter in Saudi-Pakistani diplomatic ties.

Observed annually on February 13, the day recognizes the power of radio in connecting communities and preserving history. According to the Saudi Embassy's Media Attaché, Dr Naif Al-Otaibi, the content was curated to highlight historic moments that strengthen the bond between the two brotherly nations, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

He said such initiatives are aimed at further reinforcing bilateral relations. He emphasized that the Embassy of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in Pakistan remains committed to promoting themes that resonate with Pakistan's historical and cultural significance, connecting them to Saudi Arabia's rich heritage and esteemed leaders.

## Mushaal Mullick calls for intellectual and political efforts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mushaal Hussein Mullick, the wife of Kashmiri freedom leader Yasin Malik, said that intellectual, legal, and concerted political efforts are required to address the Kashmir issue.

Speaking at a seminar titled "From Struggle to Unity: Re-imagining Kashmir's Future" at the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), she stated that Kashmiris are enduring lock downs, restrictions, and a lack of basic facilities, which reflect an inhumane approach by India toward the region.

Mushaal Mullick

emphasized the need for a practical way forward in accordance with contemporary circumstances, cautioning against expending energy without achieving tangible results.

She said that India is systematically altering the region's dynamics through the genocide of Kashmiris and planned settlements. Kashmiris, she asserted, have rejected Indian elections, which she described as manipulated. She further stated that from Afzal Guru to Maqbool Butt and now Yasin Malik, Kashmiri leaders have faced severe persecution and sacrificed

their lives for the cause, and their struggle will not be in vain.

Ghulam Muhammad Safi, convener of the Hurriyat Conference, said that atrocities in Kashmir have become a routine, resulting in a persistent human rights crisis. He highlighted the use of rape as a weapon of war and the continuous denial of the right to self-determination.

He urged the United Nations to implement its Security Council resolutions on Kashmir and called upon the international community to act against what he termed the ongoing

genocide in the region.

He paid tribute to Kashmiri leaders, including Syed Ali Geelani and Yasin Malik, who, he said, have dedicated their lives to the cause. Abdullah Khan from the Pakistan Institute of Conflict and Strategic Studies stressed that Kashmir's resolution is a core commitment and fundamental right.

He highlighted the role of educational institutions in raising awareness of the Kashmiri cause and called for rigorous academic research on the subject to strengthen Pakistan's stance on international platforms.

Dean of Social Sciences Dr Manzoor Khan Afridi expressed concern over global indifference toward the Kashmir issue. He pointed out that Kashmiris are being systematically pushed into economic hardship as part of a broader strategy to suppress their struggle.

Dr Ghufuran Ali, Students' Advisor (male campus) and organizer of the seminar, paid tribute to Kashmiri freedom fighters, stating that their more than seventy-year-long struggle is historic and their resilience remains exemplary.

Dr Amna Mehmood, In-Charge of the female campus at IIUI, called for strengthening research and knowledge on the Kashmir issue. She stressed the need for a detailed understanding of ground realities and a composed way forward to effectively advocate for Kashmir on the global stage.

Zaman Bajwa from the Youth Forum for Kashmir thanked IIUI for organizing a scholarly and thought-provoking session in collaboration with Youth Forum for Kashmir.

The seminar concluded with an interactive ques-

tion-and-answer session, fostering a constructive dialogue on the way forward for the Kashmir cause. It was also attended by Students' Advisor (female campus), Dr Ruksana Tariq and Deputy Students' Advisor Dr Masood Khattak.

The seminar concluded with recommendations in which it underscored the importance of academic and diplomatic efforts in advocating for Kashmir's right to self-determination and highlighted the role of educational institutions in shaping an informed discourse on the issue.



63 Afghan migrants released

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriates has confirmed that 63 Afghan citizens have been released from prisons in neighbor country and returned to Afghanistan. These individuals include four Afghan migrant families, comprising 15 members and 48 other individuals. The statement adds that these individuals were detained in various cities in neighbor country for not having legal documentation and were held in prison for between two and six days.

Taliban flog woman, four men

KABUL (Amu TV): Taliban publicly flogged five people, including a woman, in the northern province of Takhar, accusing them of adultery, sodomy, and theft, according to a statement from the Taliban-controlled Supreme Court on Thursday. The court said that each of the individuals received 39 lashes and was sentenced to prison terms ranging from one year and six months to one year and seven months. The public punishment took place on Thursday in a stadium.

Three miners killed in coal mine blast

SAMANGAN (Khaama Press): Local authorities in Samangan province report that three workers lost their lives in a methane gas explosion at a coal mine in the Dara-e-Souf Bala district.

Hashmatullah Rahmani, spokesperson for the interim government's police in Samangan, stated that the incident occurred in the Leileh village of Dara-e-Souf Bala on Wednesday, February 12.

The spokesperson confirmed that the bodies of the three workers, who were from Daikundi

province, were retrieved from under the rubble by security forces and returned to their families.

The workers were killed as a result of the methane gas explosion, and similar incidents of mine collapses and explosions have occurred in Samangan's coal mines in the past.

On Monday, a mine collapse in the Dara-e-Souf district also claimed the lives of two miners.

The lack of proper mining practices and insufficient equipment are cited as major causes of these dead-

ly incidents. Samangan is a key province in northern Afghanistan, rich in natural resources, with hundreds of workers engaged in mining operations.

Despite the province's wealth in natural resources, the continued lack of safety measures and proper infrastructure poses significant risks to workers' lives.

There is an urgent need for better mining regulations and equipment to prevent such tragic accidents and protect the lives of miners in Samangan and across the country.

Herat's pistachio exports reach \$25m

HERAT (TOLOnews): The Herat Chamber of Commerce and Investment says that in the current solar year, nearly \$25 million worth of pistachios have been exported abroad.

According to officials at the chamber, pistachio exports from Herat this year have increased by 21% compared to last year.

Besides pistachios, other types of dried fruits have also been exported from the province this year.

Mohammad Yousuf Amin, Executive Director of the Herat Chamber of Commerce and Investment, told TOLOnews: "Pistachios are among the fruits exported to European markets. In 1403, pistachio exports reached \$24.676 million. This figure represents a 21% increase compared to 1402."

Meanwhile, the Herat

Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock states that pistachio production in the province has significantly increased this year. The chamber added that more than 7,000 tons of pistachios have been harvested in Herat this year.

This amount of pistachios has been collected from rainfed pistachio forests and cultivated orchards.

Bashir Ahmad Bahaduri, Head of the Herat Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock, told TOLOnews: "There are around 12,000 hectares of rainfed pistachio forests in Herat province, from which more than 5,000 tons of pistachios have been harvested this year."

The premature harvesting of rainfed pistachios in Herat and neighboring provinces has led to a

decline in the quality of Afghanistan's pistachios.

According to experts, if rainfed pistachios are harvested properly and at the right time, it will increase both production and exports.

Mohammad Dawood Noorzai, an economic affairs analyst, stated: "The Islamic Emirate should take measures through the provincial agriculture departments to prevent premature harvesting of pistachios. This initiative would help increase Afghanistan's pistachio yields."

According to statistics, more than 90% of Afghanistan's pistachios come from rainfed forests in Herat, Badghis, and some northern provinces. However, locals often harvest the pistachios prematurely, which lowers their quality.

Survey, design of 1,207km of roads underway

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Public Works has announced that in 1403 Solar Year, the survey and design of approximately 1,207 kilometers of roads in Afghanistan is currently underway.

According to the ministry, the survey of several projects, including the Wakhan Corridor and the Ghorband-Doshi road, has been completed.

Officials also emphasized that major road construction and infrastructure projects are ongoing, with significant progress made in various sectors.

Mohammad Ashraf Haqshenas, spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Works, stated: "Our teams at the ministry's headquarters have surveyed and designed around 1,207 kilometers of roads. The survey work for most of these roads has been completed, and they are now in the design phase."

The ministry's technical deputy mentioned that the Qaisar-Laman ring road project is considered one of the key projects, with its first phase set to begin in exchange for the chromite

mine in Parwan province.

Ongoing Road Construction Projects Include:

- Kandahar-Uruzgan Highway
- Kabul-Kandahar Highway
- Salang Highways
- Second lane of Kabul-Ghazni Road
- Second lane of Kabul-Jalalabad Highway
- Herat-Chisht Sharif Road
- Dasht-e-Archi-Kunduz Road
- Second lane of Kandahar-Spin Boldak Road

Signing of five contracts for the Herat-Kandahar railway, valued at 264 million afghanis

Construction of the connecting road between Maidan Wardak and Logar, valued at over 713 million afghanis

Abdul Karim Fateh, technical deputy of the Ministry of Public Works, said: "The survey and design of two sections of this project have been completed this year. In one of these sections, the construction of a 25-kilometer road, valued at over 1.4 billion afghanis, will be contracted to Noorzi Confidence Construction and

Road-Building Company in exchange for the chromite mine in Parwan province."

The spokesperson of the Ministry of Public Works further announced that the maintenance project for the Hairatan-Mazar-e-Sharif route has achieved 80% progress. However, due to remaining repairs at certain stations, the contract for this project has been extended for another six months with Uzbekistan's railway authority.

Mohammad Ashraf Haqshenas said: "To strengthen transit cooperation with neighboring countries, we have extended the four-party corridor agreement between Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and China until 2025."

Additionally, over the past ten months, nearly 3.5 million metric tons of goods have been transported via four railway corridors:

- Hairatan
- Aqina
- Torghundi
- Khaf-Herat

At present, work on nearly 50 other road construction projects is also ongoing.

Saplings business on rise as spring approached

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): The demand for tree saplings and flowers has witnessed a significant increase in eastern Nangarhar province, with a noticeable rush of buyers at local nurseries as the spring season approaches.

Local officials say about four million tree-saplings have been raised and are ready to be sent to other provinces in addition to local markets of Nangarhar province.

A piece of land in Hadda Farm area has been allocated for nurseries of flowers, tree-saplings and ornamental trees for raising and selling, officials add. On a daily basis, many people and other growers from various areas visit these nurseries for purchasing such saplings and bushes.

Mohammad Ibrahim, a supplier of seedlings, says in the past they would import tree seedlings from

Pakistan and they would give no good result, but now saplings raised locally are familiar with the climate of the country and their result is also favorable.

Ibrahim said: "The plants' market varies, now is the time for the plantation of tree saplings and orchards that is why people purchase more and more tree saplings. When the spring comes, they will purchase flowers as well."

Tree-saplings and flowers market generate a number of employment opportunities for local people as well.

Israruddin, a resident of Fism Hadda area said, he goes to school in the morning and then comes to this market in the afternoon to sell tree saplings and flowers. He said: "When the owner is absent, I do his job. I unload saplings from trucks or load sold items on trucks for customers."

Customers are satisfied with the prices of these plants and they also urge the government to have control on prices.

One customer Sayed Ismail wants to buy some tree saplings for his house yard. He said: "The prices are good. It seems the quality of flowers and tree-saplings is also good."

He said: "The spring season is approaching. I ask other people to come and purchase tree saplings. Each Afghan must plant a tree for the prosperity of the country."

Local Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation director Maulvi Wali Muhsin said about four million tree-saplings had been raised in Nangarhar for the purpose of plantation.

He also asked people to pay more attention to plantation and raising trees for greenery and prosperity of their areas.

One person killed in explosion

KABUL (Ariana News): Mohammad Kamal Afghan, a spokesman for the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, confirmed to the media that an attacker who was trying to enter the ministry early Thursday morning was killed by guards before reaching his target.

According to Afghan, one person died in the explosion and three others were wounded.

He added that the attacker was also killed in the incident.

Meanwhile, Abdul Matin Qane, a spokesman for the Ministry of Interior of the Islamic Emirate, confirmed the explosion and told the media that the situation had been neutralized.

Qane added that the Islamic Emirate forces had killed the suicide bomber before he reached his target.

The spokesman for the Ministry of Interior did not say anything about the number of casualties in the attack.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for the incident.

Hibat calls for stronger education

KANDAHAR (BNA): Amir al-Mumineen Sheikh Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, visited Kandahar University, where he met with university officials, faculty members, and students.

In his address, the Supreme Leader stressed the importance of both religious and modern education, urging students to pursue knowledge with sincerity and use it for the benefit of society and the nation.

His Excellency also highlighted the need to preserve Afghanistan's history, calling for greater recognition of the country's historical figures on the international stage.

The Supreme Leader noted that Afghanistan is progressing under its current governance system and encouraged students to contribute to the country's development through academic excellence.

Furthermore, he emphasized that all policy decisions within the Islamic Emirate are made in consultation with religious scholars and in accordance with Islamic teachings.

The gathering took place at Kandahar University's central mosque and was attended by a large gathering of students, faculty, and staff members.

IEA refutes claims made by Iran

KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Afghanistan has refuted claims made by Iranian officials regarding the quality and origin of the saffron exported from Afghanistan.

The Iranian officials alleged that much of the saffron being sold in international markets as Afghan is, in fact, produced in Iran.

Responding to these accusations, Afghanistan's Ministry of Commerce emphasized that the country only exports its own domestically produced saffron, known for its exceptional quality.

According to the ministry, all export shipments are thoroughly vetted and approved by international customer laboratories, ensuring that only the highest quality saffron reaches the global market.

A statement from the ministry, reported by Bakhtar News Agency, asserted, "Without a doubt, Afghanistan's exported saffron is entirely a domestic product. We see no reason to harm the reputation of Afghan saffron by exporting low-quality saffron from other countries."

The ministry also highlighted its commitment to supporting local saffron producers, describing them as a positive example of quality production.

Abdul Ghani Baradar meets Qatari PM



KABUL (Amu TV): Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Taliban's deputy chief minister for economic affairs, met with Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani on Thursday during his visit to Doha, according to a statement from the Taliban.

The statement said the

two officials discussed bilateral relations, Afghanistan's economic situation, and investment opportunities for both the Qatari government and private sector.

The Qatari government has not yet issued a statement regarding the meeting.

Baradar's visit comes despite his name remaining

on the United Nations sanctions list.

He was added to the UN Security Council's sanctions regime in 2001 for his role as a senior Taliban leader and remained under travel bans, asset freezes, and arms embargoes for years.

In 2019, following negotiations between the

Taliban and the United States in Doha, some travel restrictions on Baradar and other Taliban officials were temporarily lifted to facilitate peace talks.

However, after the Taliban seized power in August 2021, the UN did not extend the exemption, effectively restoring the travel ban.

Media watchdog warns of restrictions on radio stations

KABUL (Amu TV): The Afghanistan Journalists Center, AFJC, on Thursday raised concerns over unprecedented restrictions on radio stations across the country, warning that Taliban have intensified their crackdown on independent media since returning to power.

In a report marking World Radio Day on February 13, the organization stated that at least seven radio stations have been shut down over the past year due to direct Taliban orders or mounting restrictions, while several radio journalists remain behind bars.

The Afghanistan Journalists Center noted that while the Taliban claim to uphold the Media Law enacted under the previous government and are working on amendments, their policies toward the press are largely dictated through executive orders and direc-

tives, many of which contradict the existing law.

According to the report, Taliban authorities have issued at least 22 directives over the past three years, imposing stricter control over radio broadcasts.

According to AFJC, these include banning women from working at the state-run National Radio, prohibiting music and interviews with opposition figures, increasing direct and indirect monitoring by intelligence agencies and the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, and threatening and detaining journalists who do not comply with Taliban censorship.

The crackdown has forced some journalists into exile, while others continue working under increasing surveillance, the AFJC said.

The restrictions on women working in media have become even more severe. The report found

that Taliban officials in some provinces have ordered private radio stations to stop airing women's voices altogether, required female journalists to work from home, making direct reporting impossible, and banned women from calling into radio programs to share opinions or ask questions.

Additionally, the Taliban have made license renewals difficult, particularly for stations owned or managed by women, placing them under financial and bureaucratic pressure.

The Afghanistan Journalists Center has called on the Taliban to reverse their restrictive policies, respect the freedom of the press, and release detained journalists.

The group also urged Taliban officials to allow shuttered radio stations to reopen and to support independent media in line with Afghanistan's Media Law.

Meanwhile, Taliban officials deny allegations of suppressing the press.

Habib Ghaffar, a spokesperson for the Taliban's Ministry of Information and Culture, said on Thursday that 33 radio stations have received new operating licenses since the group took power. However, media watchdogs say these licenses are mostly issued to Taliban-affiliated broadcasters, while independent journalism continues to face severe repression.

UN SC condemns attack

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations Security Council has condemned the suicide attack in Kunduz, stating that terrorism in all its forms is one of the most serious threats to peace and security, both in Afghanistan and globally.

In a statement, the Security Council expressed that the attack resulted in multiple casualties, both dead and wounded.

The Security Council emphasized that terrorism is one of the most serious threats to peace and security, not only in Afghanistan but globally, and it must be confronted.

Members of the Security Council stressed the importance of prosecuting the perpetrators, organizers, and supporters of such attacks, urging all countries to cooperate in the fight against terrorism under international law.

The statement also highlighted that all acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable and must be dealt with under any circumstances.

This follows a suicide bombing on Tuesday at a Kabul Bank branch in Kunduz city, which resulted in the deaths and injuries of several Taliban fighters and civilians.

The terrorist group ISIS has claimed responsibility for the attack. The ISIS suicide attack in Kunduz took place just one day after the United Nations Security Council discussed the threat posed by the ISIS-Khorasan branch from Afghanistan and the region.

The international community continues to express deep concern over the rise of terrorism in Afghanistan, with the Security Council calling for a united global effort to address and eradicate these threats. The situation remains critical, and continued support for Afghanistan's security and stability is crucial in combating these ongoing challenges.

Paktia journalists demand action



PAKTIA (TOLOnews): A number of journalists and private media officials in Paktia say that the activities of institutions that exploit the name of media and journalists must be halted.

During a coordination meeting between journalists, media officials, and government spokespersons in Gardez, they emphasized the need for timely access to information by government authorities.

Khalid Zaheen, a journalist, stated: "Media support organizations in Paktia have so far provided no assistance to journalists and media outlets. Our request to these institutions is to increase transparency in their activities and allocate the resources they receive in the name of media and journalists to those who truly deserve

them."

Ashiqullah Danish, a representative of a private media outlet in Paktia, said: "We urge the government to take serious actions against these institutions and to investigate the funds they receive in the name of journalists to determine how much actually reaches those in need."

Local officials say that in addition to supporting journalists and media outlets, they will also prevent any misuse of their name.

Sawab Jan Islamiyar, Director of Information and Culture in Paktia, stated: "At the government level, we have a committee that operates under the framework of the Ministry of Information and Culture. However, if any individual or institution acts beyond this framework, we will

take action against them in accordance with the law."

Meanwhile, some journalists in Ghazni say they still do not have timely access to information and have urged government officials to address this issue.

Momin Sial, a journalist, said: "At times, journalists are not allowed to film or report from certain locations, and in some areas, they are even threatened and forced to leave."

Hafiz Baryal, a journalist, said: "We call on officials to make greater efforts in creating a suitable environment and facilitating access to information."

Previously, the Ministry of Information and Culture had announced that the Media Law and Access to Information Law would soon be enforced.





ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari in a meeting with President of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Hamas to release Israeli hostages

CAIRO: Hamas said Thursday it would release Israeli hostages as planned, apparently resolving a major dispute that threatened the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. The militant group said Egyptian and Qatari mediators have affirmed that they will work to "remove all hurdles," and that it would implement the ceasefire deal.

The statement indicated three more Israeli hostages would be freed Saturday. There was no immediate comment from Israel after Hamas' announcement. That would allow the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip to continue for now, but its future remains in doubt.

Hamas had threatened to delay the next release of Israeli hostages, accusing Israel of failing to meet its obligations to allow in tents and shelters, among other alleged violations of the truce. Israel, with the support of US President Donald Trump, had threatened to renew its offensive if hostages were not freed.

"We are not interested in the collapse of the ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip, and we are keen on its implementation and ensuring that the occupation (Israel) adheres to it fully," Hamas spokesperson Abdel-Latif Al-Qanoua said. "The language of threats and intimidation used by Trump and Netanyahu does not serve the implementation of the ceasefire agreement," Qanoua said.

A Hamas delegation led by the group's Gaza chief, Khalil Al-Hayya, met Egyptian security officials on Wednesday to try to break the impasse. A Palestinian official close to the talks told Reuters that mediators

Egypt and Qatar were trying to find solutions to prevent a slide back into fighting.

In a statement, Hamas said the mediators were exerting pressure for the ceasefire deal to be fully implemented, ensure Israel abides by a humanitarian protocol and resume exchanges of Israeli hostages held in Gaza for Palestinian prisoners and detainees held by Israel on Saturday. Israel has called up military reservists to brace for a possible re-eruption of war in Gaza if Hamas fails to meet a Saturday deadline to free further Israeli hostages.

**Abbas thanks China for support:** Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has thanked Chinese President Xi Jinping for his country's rejection of plans to displace Palestinians from the Gaza Strip.

In a letter to the Chinese leader on Thursday, Abbas commended Beijing's call for the international community to stop the violence in the Middle East and reach a just resolution to the Palestinian issue.

Abbas said that the PA is confident in China's support for Palestinian and Arab "efforts to consolidate the ceasefire in Gaza, stop the current Israeli aggression on the cities and camps of the West Bank, accelerate the reconstruction of Gaza, reconnect it to the West Bank, move toward implementing the two-state solution, end the Israeli occupation and embody the independent, geographically integrated state, with East Jerusalem as its capital, so that we can live with all the peoples of the region in security, peace and stability," according to Wafa agency. — Agencies

## Nepra notifies relief under Nov FCA

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has issued its decision regarding K-Electric (KE)'s petition of provisional monthly Fuel Charges Adjustment (FCA) requested for November 2024, indicating a relief of Rs 1.23 per kWh.

This will be passed on to customers in their February 2025 bills, said a press release on Thursday. Fuel charge adjustments are incurred by utilities due to global variations in fuel prices used to generate electricity, and the changes in generation mix. These costs are reflected in customer bills following NEPRA's scrutiny and approval.

Customers also benefit from negative FCA in their bills when global fuel prices decrease. Rates charged to customer bills are determined by NEPRA and notified by the federal government. As per the Regulatory Authority's decision, the FCA shall be applicable to all the consumer categories except Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS), lifeline consumers, prepaid metering consumers, domestic consumers consuming upto 300 units and agricultural consumers.

## PTI finalizes plan on CEC appointment

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Core and Political Committees held a joint meeting to finalize a strategy regarding the appointments in the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The meeting instructed Opposition Leader Umar Ayub to initiate consultations with the government on the matter independently. During the meeting, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar accused the government of deliberately using delaying tactics for the ECP appointments. He asserted that the government should have completed these appointments within 45 days.

He further alleged that the current Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) is biased, citing the Supreme Court's clear orders that were ignored regarding reserved seats for PTI. The PTI chairman also added that despite notifying 39 lawmakers as PTI members, the CEC did not allocate them reserved seats. Barrister Gohar claimed that the government's plan is to keep the same Election Commission in place to serve its interests.

The meeting also deliberated on approaching the court regarding the ECP appointments and received a briefing on the country's economic situation from its economic team. In the meeting, some economic documents were also presented. PTI's economic team informed the committees that the country's economy is currently in a coma, surviving on life support, while the government's statistics are nothing but fabricated lies.

The team further stated that flawed government policies have destroyed the middle class, leading to unprecedented inflation, unemployment, and poverty. The team also accused the federal government of relying solely on false advertisements to showcase its performance. The meeting decided that PTI would expose the government's false economic claims and directed its members to publicly debunk the government's economic narrative through media and social media platforms.

# SC examines framework of civilian military trials

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Resuming his arguments before a seven-member constitutional bench of the top court in appeals challenging civilian military trial on Thursday Salman Akram Raja - counsel for a convicted Arzam Juaid - made a point saying the existing legal framework of Pakistan doesn't permit civilian court martial.

A seven-member bench, headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan and including Justices Jamal Mandokhail, Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Musarat Hilali, Naem Akhtar Afghan, and Shahid Bilal Hassan, questioned the legal framework surrounding military trials.

Raja placed arguments before the bench and cited UK law, explaining that court-martial cases are handled by independent judges rather than military officers, with commanding officers only referring serious cases to independent forums. However, Justice Khan urged him to focus on Pakistani law, while Justice Mazhar remarked that British military laws applied to military personnel, not civilians.

During the hearing, a member of the bench Justice Musarat Hilali asked from Raja to respond whether he acknowledged that a crime was committed on May 9, 2023, questioning as to why basic rights are now being asked to protect after the limits were crossed during the incident.

Justice Hilali, "Limits were crossed on May 9, and now you remember basic rights?" Justice

Hilali said that the pending appeals seek the restoration of annulled provisions. She pointed out if the provisions are to be reviewed, international laws must also be considered. She added that had the provisions not been annulled, the arguments could have been irrelevant, but now they are not.

Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail raised a question regarding potential for civilians to undergo court-martial under the current legal system, to which Raja firmly responded that such a thing was not possible under any circumstances. The proceedings also highlighted the ongoing struggle for justice by victims of the Army Public School (APS) attack, as advocate Raja submitted that despite their tragic loss, the victims are still deprived of a fair and just resolution.

Justice Amin-Ud-Din, in response, noted that achieving a fair trial would require navigating past certain legal hurdles, such as addressing Article 8(3) of the Constitution. Justice Rizvi remarked that while the military has specialised corps such as engineering and medical and questioned whether there should also be a judicial corps within the army.

Raja further argued that simply accusing someone and depriving them of a fair trial is concerned with the issue of basic human rights. Recalling that he had been falsely accused of conspiring with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to kill Rangers personnel and warned that if the law's provisions were restored, he could be forced to appear before a

colonel — in a military trial.

To this, Justice Mazhar mentioned that an anti-terrorism section was likely added to the FIR against Raja, while Justice Amin-Ud-Din questioned whether a military custody request had been made in his case. Raja submitted that his case was an example of how the system works, where an accusation alone can lead to a civilian facing military trial.

Justice Mandokhail advised Raja to focus on facts and avoid speculation in the context of the case. Moving forward, Justice Hilali remarked that when the 21st Constitutional Amendment was enacted, your [Raja's] party supported the establishment of military courts.

Or, the judge said, she could say that at least one political party had supported military courts under the 21st Constitutional Amendment. Raja clarified that he did not represent any political party and acknowledged that their support for military courts in the past had been a mistake.

Justice Hilali, however, questioned whether it was appropriate to label past decisions as mistakes — now that the political landscape had changed. The court also deliberated on the provision in the 21st Amendment that exempted political parties from military trials, with Justice Mandokhail remarking that it was a positive aspect. Later, the bench adjourned hearing of the matter till February 18 where Salam Akram Raja will resume arguments in the matter.

## Trump to meet Putin in Saudi Arabia on Ukraine

RIYADH: US President Donald Trump will see his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Saudi Arabia for their first meeting since taking office in January.

Trump's announcement came after an almost 90-minute phone conversation with the Russian leader, where they discussed in ending the nearly three-year Moscow offensive in Ukraine. "We ultimately expect to meet. In fact, we expect that he'll come here, and I'll go there, and we're gonna meet also probably in Saudi Arabia the first time, we'll meet in Saudi

Arabia, see if we can get something something done," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

A date for the meeting "hasn't been set" but it will happen in the "not too distant future," the US president said. He suggested the meeting would involve Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. "We know the crown prince, and I think it'd be a very good place to meet."

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov earlier announced that Putin had invited Trump and officials from his administra-

tion to visit Moscow to discuss Ukraine. "The Russian president invited the US president to visit Moscow and expressed his readiness to receive American officials in Russia in those areas of mutual interest, including, of course, the topic of the Ukrainian settlement," Peskov said.

The invitation followed Trump's announcement Wednesday that peace talks would start "immediately" and that Ukraine would probably not get its land back, causing uproar on both sides of the Atlantic. — Arab News

## IMF mission likely to meet SCBA today

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Soon after top representative body of legal fraternity in the country Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) didn't agree with International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission to meet in a private hotel the mission likely to meet the Association in Supreme Court Building on Friday (today).1

Sources stated that the IMF mission had invited the SCBA officials to a private hotel for discussions.

However, the SCBA President Mian Rauf Atta declined the invitation to meet at a private venue. Instead, he extended an invitation to the IMF mission to hold the meeting at the Supreme Court building.

It is pertinent to mention that responding to criticism on International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission meeting with Chief Justice of Pakistan during National Assembly session Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif on Wednesday clarified that the meeting between the Chief Justice of Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) team was held with the consent of both sides.

Dispelling the impression that it was imposed, the Minister remarked that the IMF delegation met with the Chief Justice of Pakistan in order to judiciary's support in maintaining financial discipline.

## Father kills 4 children before ending his life

F.P. Report

SWABI: In a tragic incident in Yaar Hussain area of Swabi district, a father killed his four children before committing suicide.

According to Rescue 1122 on Thursday, the father killed his two sons and two daughters at their home in Sara Cheena area of Yaar Hussain before taking his own life.

Locals and rescue authorities said the man had a fight with his wife the previous night. His wife was staying at her parents' house following a disagreement. Locals said several reconciliation efforts were made to bring her back, but she remained unwilling. The man infuriated with the situation, went for the extreme step, locals added.

The bodies were transferred to Yaar Hussain Hospital. The deceased children were identified as Zia Islam (12 years), Abdul Rehman (10 years), Sana (8 years), and a 2-year-old girl. Police confirmed the bodies had been taken into custody and shifted to the hospital for further investigation. The father, who committed the heinous crime, was reported to be a Hafiz-e-Quran.

## PHC deny extension in bail to PTI leaders

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) denied extension of protective bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders, including Member National Assembly (MNA) Asad Qaiser, Shahram Tarakai, Provincial Minister Faisal Khan Tarkai, and Sohail Afridi due to absence while postponed further hearing till 18th February, on Thursday.

PHC's two-member

bench comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Salahuddin while the counsel Alam Khan Adeenzai advocate appeared before the court. However, the petitioners themselves did not appear in court.

In the meantime, Justice Sahibzada Asadullah inquired about the absence of the petitioners from their counsel. The counsel replied that the petitioners had not yet arrived at the court.

PHC denied an extension of protective bail to the petitioners due to their absence and postponed the hearing of the case until February 18.

Meanwhile, PHC has extended the protective bails of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders, including provincial ministers, members of the provincial assembly, and other leaders. The court has also sought details of the cases registered against them.

## Pakistan, Türkiye

(Continued from Page 1)

Infrastructure. Additionally, in National Technology Mehmet Fatih Kacir also exchanged the signed copies of an MoU on the Establishment of Legal Metrology

Food Security and Research sector, the two sides signed cooperation agreement on Seed Protocol to amend the

agreement. The documents were exchanged between Minister of National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain and Turkish Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Ibrahim Yumakli.

Similarly, in energy sector, the two sides signed protocol to amend the agreement on cooperation in the field of hydrocarbons. The documents were exchanged between Minister for Energy Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari and Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Alparslan Bayraktar. The two ministers also exchanged documents of two MoUs on cooperation in the field of energy transition, and cooperation in the field of mining.

The two sides also signed cooperation agreement in the field of water. The documents were exchanged between Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain, and Turkish Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Ibrahim Yumakli. Minister of Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar and Director of Communications Fahrettin Altun exchanged the signed documents of MoUs on cooperation in the field of public relations and communications, and cooperation in the field of media and communications. Meanwhile, the two sides signed MoU on cooperation in the fields of religious services and religious education.



HYDERABAD: Woman washing and cleaning graves of their loved ones on the occasion of Shab-e-Barat.

## PM, Turkish President

(Continued from Page 1)

President Erdogan also stressed the need to improve combined road and railway transportation to increase the trade activities between the two countries.

He said, "It will be in the interest of entire region to leverage projects that we can implement with a holistic perspective such as reactivating the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul trade railway line as well as initiative on the middle corridor, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)." He emphasized that Pakistan with its dynamic population and fertile agriculture land as well as important strategic position, could become one of the major economies in future.

The Turkish president said Pakistan's evolving economy was expected to undertake significant projects in the coming period particularly in the fields of energy, agriculture, healthcare, infrastructure, IT, energy, trade and investment. He assured the businessmen of providing every kind of support to ensure that they made the most of the trade and economic opportunities between the two countries.

As regards situation in Gaza, the Turkish president said "Gaza belongs to our Gazan brothers and sisters and it will remain to be so, forever". He said Türkiye and Pakistan will act shoulder-to-shoulder to ensure peace and prosperity of the region. PM Shehbaz said the people of Pakistan and Türkiye enjoyed

brotherly relations even in pre partition era.

He said Pakistan had always joined voice with the voice of the Turkish President for the freedom of the people of Gaza and Kashmir. He said under leadership of Erdogan and Nawaz Sharif, investment and trade ties between Türkiye and Pakistan touched highest point in the history of friendship and brotherhood.

The prime minister urged the businessmen and the investors to contribute towards the government's efforts to achieve the bilateral trade volume of \$5 billion. "Today we signed various MoUs and agreements but the more important is to convert them from paper to action. For this I assure to extent my government's all out support to Turkish businessmen investing in Pakistan," he said.

**Turkish President given a guard of honor at PM House:** President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday was given a guard of honour at the Prime Minister's House as he arrived to hold a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Prime Minister Shehbaz warmly welcomed President Erdogan at the main entrance of the PM House.

As President Erdogan's motorcade made its way along Constitution Avenue, it was greeted by a vibrant display of flags of Pakistan and Türkiye, as well as welcoming banners. The local artists dressed in traditional attires performed lively folk dances

along the roadside. A group of men, wearing white cloaks and tall conical hats performed the symbolic dance of whirling dervishes, popular in Turkish culture.

At the formal welcome reception at PM House, the national anthems of Pakistan and Türkiye were played as the dignitary stood at the salute dias. The smartly turned-out contingents of the armed forces presented a guard of honour to President Erdogan which he reviewed.

Later, Prime Minister Shehbaz and President Erdogan introduced their respective delegations to each other before proceeding to the bilateral meeting. The Turkish president also planted a pine tree sapling in the lawns of the PM House to mark the deep-rooted friendship between the two nations. A squadron of Pakistan Air Force jets performed a magnificent flypast to welcome the Turkish president. Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir was also present on the occasion.

Meanwhile, Pakistan officially named the sector F-8 and F-9 Interchange after President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In this regard, President Erdogan and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif unveiled the plaque of the Interchange name plate in a simple but impressive ceremony held at the PM House. The Interchange has recently been constructed in record time at the intersection of Jinnah Avenue and Agha Shahi Road.