

Earthquake shakes KP  
F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Earthquake tremors were felt across various cities in Pakistan, including Peshawar, Swat, Zhob, and surrounding areas, sparking panic and widespread concern among residents. The tremors caused people to rush out of their homes and mosques, many reciting religious prayers in fear. The epicenter of the earthquake was located at the border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan.



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# Govt committed to achieve \$5b bilateral trade target with Turkiye

## PM directs e-Office implementation in all federal ministries by March 20

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that Pakistan and Turkiye were committed to take the bilateral trade volume between the two countries to \$5 billion mark.

Addressing a meeting of the cabinet, the prime minister referred to the recent visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and said that he had always supported Pakistan at all global fora. He said, "President Erdogan had been a strong voice for Palestine and Kashmir. Pakistan and Turkiye enjoy brotherly ties and both countries also hold regular consultations and support each other at all fora."

The prime minister said that a number of MoUs were also signed during Turkish president's visit and urged the ministry of commerce and other relevant ministries to work jointly for the achievement of bilateral trade mark of 5 billion dollars. He said that a flyover which was completed in 84 days in Islamabad was named after President Tayyip Erdogan as a sign of affection by the people of Pakistan.

The prime minister also welcomed a recent Gallop's survey, according to which about 55 percent of people had reposed confidence in the government's pro-business policies. However, he stressed that they had to move forward and work hard to accomplish the economic agenda and its key components including Uraan Pakistan.

The prime minister, about his meeting with a delegation of World Bank directors, said that they had unanimously expressed their satisfaction over the reforms agenda and the macro-economic stability. They had

## Premier inaugurates Tayyip Erdogan Interchange

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday inaugurated the Recep Tayyip Erdogan Interchange near F-8 and F-9 sectors, commending the efforts of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and his entire team for completing the project in record 84 days. In his address at the inaugural ceremony, the prime minister mentioned that he had also advised the Interior Minister to develop plans for future projects aimed at further beautifying the federal capital and improving the lives of the people residing in the city and its surrounding areas.

praised the government and its credit went to every member of the cabinet, he added.

The prime minister said peace in the country was linked with the economic prosperity which would move the wheel of progress rapidly. For economic stability, conducive environment was a requisite, he added. The prime minister also paid tribute to the security forces whose officers and personnel were sacrificing their lives for the protection of the country.

The Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also directed that e-Office implementation in all federal ministries and departments should be completed by March 20, this year. The meeting was apprised that the use of e-Office reached 98 percent across all the federal government divisions with 100 percent implementation in 39 divisions.

Additionally, regarding inter-ministerial communication, the e-Office system had achieved 100 percent implementation in 21 divisions. During the meeting, the cabinet was briefed that the process of implementing e-Office in subordinate organizations and state-owned enterprises also began while 176 institutions had suc-

cessfully adopted the system, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting held at the PM's House, the prime minister briefed the cabinet about the letter sent to him by Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman. The Saudi crown prince, in his letter, informed about the renewal of the Saudi Development Fund's provision of \$100 million per month for another year on a deferred payment basis over petroleum products, he added.

"We are deeply grateful to Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman and the Saudi leadership. Saudi Arabia has always stood with Pakistan in difficult times," he added. The prime minister directed that the entire system of service delivery in Pakistani missions abroad should be digitized to facilitate overseas Pakistanis.

The cabinet approved the signing of an international legal agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea for the protection and sustainable use of diverse marine resources in international waters on the recommendation of Ministry of Climate Change.

## Pakistan calls for practical steps on IOK, Palestine issues

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan Tuesday called for reaffirming the commitment to multilateralism, warning that very fabric of the world order established under the UN Charter was in "danger of being torn apart" unless timely corrective steps were taken.

"We are meeting on Tuesday at a time of profound global turbulence," Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, told a high-level meeting of the UN Security Council, convened by China on multilateralism and global governance.

In his remarks, he highlighted the unresolved conflicts in Palestine and Jammu & Kashmir that threaten world peace and stability, and underscored the need for the 15-member Council, the world body's power center, to implement its own resolutions. "Nowhere is our failure to uphold the Charter and its principles more evident than in the ongoing tragedy in Palestine – in the vicious military aggression in Gaza, the mass killings of civilians,

# President calls for regional cooperation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has reiterated Pakistan's commitment to strengthening regional connectivity and economic cooperation, saying that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Gwadar Port would play a significant role in promoting regional trade and prosperity.

He said that Pakistan's strategic location offered significant opportunities to enhance regional trade, terming the country as a "natural trade corridor" linking China, Central Asia, and the Middle East.

The President expressed these views while speaking at the closing session of the International Conference on "Regional Connectivity & Pakistan: Emerging Opportunities", organized by the Pakistan-China Institute at Aiwan-e-Sadr today.

Chief Minister Balochistan Mr Sarfraz Bugti, Chairman of the Pakistan-China Institute Senator Mushahid Hussain

Syed, and President of the UAE-based Global Council of Tolerance and Peace, Ahmed Jarwan Al Mohammed, members of the diplomatic community, academia and media attended the event.

Addressing the Conference, the President said that he envisioned Gwadar Port, during his long years of imprisonment, as a shared economic hub with friendly nations, including China, to facilitate regional trade and connectivity. He said that CPEC and Gwadar would bring dividends for our future generations.

The President also noted that Pakistan was exploring options to bring water from Tajikistan to Balochistan and, in this regard, a feasibility study had been completed with the support of the UAE government. He emphasized the importance of revitalizing historic trade routes to further strengthen economic and cultural ties across the region.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Balochistan, Mr Sarfraz

Bugti, appreciated the role of President Asif Ali Zardari in the conception, initiation and implementation of CPEC. He said that Gwadar port would be transformed into a significant global port with state-of-the-art facilities to provide access to global markets and serve as a gateway to the world for regional countries.

Terming Gwadar port as a symbol of hope and opportunity for the people of Balochistan, he remarked that CPEC was reflective of the long-standing friendship between Pakistan and China. He said that his government was focused on improving governance, public safety, social development, and empowerment of local communities in Balochistan to ensure inclusive development.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman of the Pakistan-China Institute Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, said that CPEC would prove pivotal in building new bridges and promoting regional partnerships.

more authority. He stressed that local representatives, directly elected by the people, must be empowered to serve their constituents effectively. Provincial Minister for Local Government Arshad Ayub Khan, Local Government Secretary Dr. Anbar Ali, and Law Secretary Akhtar Saeed Turk were also present at the meeting.

Meanwhile, a delegation from the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industries called on Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, at the Chief Minister's House in Peshawar, the other day, and apprised him in detail

# KP govt may approach SC for provincial rights

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A delegation of the Local Council Association, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa led by its President Himmatullah Mayar, called on the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur at the Chief Minister's House on Tuesday. The meeting focused on the province's financial issues related to the federal government, including the share of merged districts in the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, outstanding dues from net hydel profit, and the tobacco cess.

During the meeting, elected local government representatives pledged full support to the provincial government and the chief minister in its struggle to secure the province's constitutional financial rights. It was decided that on February 25, meetings of tehsil councils across the province would be convened to pass resolutions demanding the immediate release of KP's rightful share from the federal government. If these funds are not provided, local government representatives, under the leadership of the chief minister, will stage strong protests.

Additionally, if necessary, the



provincial government will take the matter to the Supreme Court to fight for its constitutional rights. The delegation reaffirmed its commitment to standing by the chief minister in this struggle, stating that the issue concerns the rights of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and is beyond political affiliations. They emphasized that there would be no compromise or political maneuvering on this matter.

Chief Minister Gandapur highlighted that six years have passed since the merger of the former tribal areas with KP, yet the province has not received its due share in the NFC,

which amounts to Rs. 250 billion annually. Furthermore, Rs. 2,200 billion in net hydel profit remains unpaid by the federal government, and the province is also entitled to Rs. 225 billion annually from the tobacco cess.

The meeting also addressed issues faced by local governments. The chief minister assured local representatives that their problems would be resolved on a priority basis. He reiterated his commitment to empowering local bodies in line with the vision of PTI's founding chairman, adding that necessary amendments would be made to relevant laws to grant them

# The Frontier Post

Child brutally slaughtered  
F.P. Report

OKARA: A shocking incident of brutality took place in the Malkah Hans police precinct, where a four-year-old child was allegedly slaughtered by his neighbor. The accused, identified as Hafeez, was arrested, while his wife, Asiya, managed to escape. The horrific crime occurred in Mauza Mall, where the child was killed with a sharp-edged weapon.



ISLAMABAD: US Charge d'Affaires, Ms Natalie Baker, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

## Tarar arrives in Riyadh

RIYADH (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday arrived here to participate in the fourth edition of the Saudi Media Forum.

Saudi Arabia's Deputy Minister for Media Dr. Abdul Rahman received Attaullah Tarar at King Abdullah Airport. The three-day conference is being held in Riyadh from February 19 to 21. On his arrival, the minister said that Saudi Arabia was a close friend of Pakistan and both brotherly countries enjoyed strong historical and cultural relations.

The minister said that Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman's vision for development and prosperity was exemplary. Saudi Arabia's steps to enhance economic development and business activities were worthy of emulation, he maintained.

Tarar termed Saudi Arabia as an important advocate for peace, prosperity, stability and interfaith harmony. "Saudi Media Forum is an important platform to benefit from Saudi Arabia's media-related experiences", the minister said. It should be noted that the Saudi Media Forum will host representatives from all over the world which would be attended by personalities from the media, including international figures.

The forum aims to promote cooperation in the media sector and discuss modern trends. The Saudi Media Forum will explore ways to improve media production, digital journalism and content creation. New business models for media, digital transformation and financial sustainability in the digital age will be examined.

The Saudi Media Forum will also consider strategies on fake news and the role of media institutions in restoring public trust. The forum will also hold discussions on important topics such as artificial intelligence, the future of journalism, media economics, digital systems, misinformation, the entertainment industry and digital streaming. Federal Minister for Information Attaullah Tarar will also meet important international figures on the sidelines of the conference.

During the hearing, Justice Jamal Mandokhail questioned the conse-

# 30 militants killed in operation

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security Forces conducted an intelligence based operation in general area Sararogha, South Waziristan District on reported presence of Khwarij.

During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location, as a result of which, thirty khwarij were sent to hell.

Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other Kharij found in the area as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday lauded the security forces for their successful operation in South Waziristan District in which 30 Khwarij terrorists were eliminated.

The president reaffirmed resolve to complete eradication of Fitna al-Khwarij and said that security forces were carrying out operations to eliminate the specter of terrorism. "The entire nation was united against terrorism," President Secretariat Press Wing, in a press release, quoted the president as saying. He further reiterated that operations against

Fitna al-Khwarij would continue till its complete elimination.

The prime minister said that they would continue foiling the nefarious designs of the enemies of humanity, adding that security forces were reaching nearer to the target of effacing terrorism with each day.

"The sacrifices of the sons of the soil will not go in vain," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying. The prime minister said the government and the security forces were fully committed to completely wipe out terrorism from the country.

# Military trials violate rights of civilians, SC told

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court's Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan has observed that the court martial of civilians is not barred under international principles.

His remarks came during the hearing of an intra-court appeal against military trials of civilians. A seven-member constitutional bench, led by Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan, heard the intra-court appeal against the military trials of civilians, during which senior lawyer Salman Akram Raja presented arguments on behalf of the convicted defendant, Arzam Junaid.

During Tuesday's hearing, Raja contended that military trials violate the fundamental rights of civilians and contradict international standards for fair trials, which require open, independent, and transparent proceedings.

He also stated that, globally, military tribunal verdicts could be challenged in civilian courts, citing a European court ruling that forced several countries to reform their military trial processes.

During the hearing, Justice Jamal Mandokhail questioned the conse-

quences of violating international principles. In response, Raja stated that failure to adhere to international standards meant that the trial was not fair. Justice Mandokhail further inquired about the impact of such violations by states, to which Raja responded that some international principles are binding, while others are not.

Referring to Article 10-A of the Constitution, Raja argued that the right to a fair trial was included in the Constitution based on international principles. However, Justice Afghan maintained that there is no explicit ban on court-martialing civilians in international law.

Raja also stated that in the UK, military trials are overseen by independent judges rather than military personnel. He recalled past judicial practices in Pakistan, where civilian officials such as deputy commissioners and tehsildars were authorised to conduct criminal trials, which led to the argument that if they could conduct trials, so could military officers.

Additionally, Raja referenced a United Nations Human Rights Committee report, which claimed that Pakistan's military courts

lack independence and urged the government to grant bail to individuals held in military custody. Later, the hearing was adjourned after the lawyer completed his arguments.

Last year, the apex court's constitutional bench granted conditional permission to military courts to announce verdicts in cases involving 85 suspects — allegedly involved in the May 9, 2023, riots.

In its order on the hearing of the appeals against civilians' military trial, the constitutional bench had said judgments of military courts would be conditional to the top court verdict on the cases pending before it.

Subsequently, the military courts sentenced 85 PTI activists for two to 10 years of "rigorous imprisonment" for their involvement in the May 9 protests, marking the conclusion of trials for those held in military custody over the attacks on army installations and monuments.

Later in January, the military accepted mercy pleas of 19 out of the 67 convicts sentenced in the May 9 riots case on "humanitarian grounds", the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.



# CM Murad hosts World Bank delegation at Sindh House

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Honourable Chief Minister Sindh, welcomed the world Bank delegation headed by Abdulhak Bedjaoui at a reception hosted by Government of Sindh at Sindh House, Islamabad. Delegation was comprised of 17 esteemed members with eight (08) senior executive directors of World Bank Group from across the world.

Government of Sindh delegation was represented by Hon Chiege Minister Sindh, along with Chief Secretary Sindh, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, Syed Naasir Hussain Shah, other senior ministers and group of Secretaries headed by Chairman Planning and Development Board.

Chief Minister after warm welcome thanked WB for its long uninterrupted partnership with Govt of Sindh in achieving



its development goals. Starting from early 2000s world bank supported Govt of Sindh by partnering in projects in the field of Irrigation, Road infrastructure, Agriculture, Education and also financial assistance of budgetary support. WB partnership was further rejuvenated after a detailed

diagnostic report prepared by WB for Karachi city in year 2014-16, which resulted in Projects like KNIP, CLICK, SWEEP, KWSSIP and Karachi Mobility project (Yellow Line BRT). Real test of partnership was after devastated floods of 2022 when WB stood shoulder to shoulder with

Govt of Sindh in rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure across the province. This resulted in early approvals of Projects like SFERP (Roads and Irrigation sector), SWAT (agriculture), SELECT (Education), SPHF (Housing Reconstruction) and in the sector of Health

and Social Protection.

WBG appreciated the outstanding professional approach of Province of Sindh headed by dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Sindh to resolve the issues of development in the entire province specially in the urban city of Karachi.

Govt of Sindh also presented the future objectives and sought assistance of WBG for timely and early approvals of projects. The impact of these WB-funded projects is evident in improved access to clean water, better irrigation services, upgraded urban transport, and stronger flood protection. These developments have not only enhanced the quality of life for residents but have also contributed to economic growth and poverty reduction in Sindh.

After detailed session the delegation was hosted with refreshment with special touch of cultural ambience and light folk music.

# Nawaz, Maryam meet MPAs, discuss future political strategies

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif met with Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs) to discuss public welfare projects and the party's future political strategies.

MPAs from Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffargarh, Layyah, Rajanpur, and DG Khan were included in the meeting. During the meeting, PML-N President Nawaz Sharif expressed optimism about the country's economic recovery, citing a likely turnaround with a reduction in inflation and interest rates. He stated, "Allah Almighty is making things easier."

The reduction in the policy rate has increased business confidence, and after challenging economic conditions, inflation is decreasing, which will bring more relief to the people." He also highlighted the

resumption of construction work and the international recognition of PM Shehbaz Sharif's efforts.

Nawaz Sharif further emphasized that the opposition's focus on negativity and hatred contrasts with PML-N's record of serving the country, especially in the fields of politics, defense, and development. He noted, "Had the continuity of development not been disrupted, the country would have been much further ahead, and the people would not have had to suffer."

CM Maryam Nawaz acknowledged the trust placed in her by the party, leadership, and the people of Punjab. She said, "It is a big responsibility to meet the high standards of public service set by Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif."

MPAs in attendance praised the leadership of Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif, highlighting that, even in difficult times,

Nawaz Sharif provided hope and demonstrated unmatched patriotism. They commended the swift, transparent, and high-quality development in Punjab, spanning various sectors such as education, health, agriculture, industry, and the environment. They also noted the increasing popularity of Maryam Nawaz Sharif, particularly among women and youth, and appreciated her efforts in advancing the welfare of farmers and the agriculture sector.

Senior party leaders, including Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Rana Sanaullah, Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, and Rashid Nasrullah, were present at the meeting. Other notable attendees included Deputy Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Malik Zaheer Iqbal Channer, Provincial Minister for Irrigation Muhammad Kazim Pirzada, and several other provincial ministers and assembly members.

# Bangladesh media delegation meets Governor Punjab

LAHORE (APP): A 10-member media delegation from Bangladesh called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan and expressed the desire to foster bilateral relations in all sectors and people-to-people ties during a meeting at the Governor's House here on Tuesday.

Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan welcomed the guests to the Governor's House and said that their arrival was a matter of pride for him. He expressed the hope that the visiting journalists will present a true picture of Pakistan on their return.

The journalists from Bangladesh are on a week-long good-will visit to Pakistan and exploring the historical city of Lahore during the second-leg of their tour. The delegation spent four days in federal capital Islamabad and visited many places of historical significance in the first-leg of their sojourn.

Director General Press

Information Department (PID) Lahore, Shafqat Abbas Khan, was present during the meeting. Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that new vistas of cooperation will open under the interim government in Bangladesh, adding that more reciprocal visits in different sectors will usher in a new era of cooperation between the two countries.

He further stressed the need of setting up Urdu and Bangla language chairs in Pakistani and Bangladeshi universities, adding there was need for better understanding of each other and such visits were vital to the ideal of traversing new trails of love.

Head of the Bangladesh media delegation Fakhar ul Alam Khan thanked Governor Sardar Saleem Haider for inviting them to the historic Governor's House. He said that Pakistan and Bangladesh shared common history, culture and faith, adding there was

need to find common grounds of cooperation between the two countries.

He said the delegation comprised journalists from the print and electronic media houses in Bangladesh, adding they see a tide of renewed relationship with Pakistan after the recent revolution in Bangladesh.

The media delegation invited Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan to visit Bangladesh, adding that they were bewitched by the beauty of the country, especially the Northern Areas of Pakistan.

The members of the Bangladesh media delegation presented a souvenir to Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan. Earlier, PID DG Shafqat Abbas Khan showed the Bangladesh journalists round different parts of the Governor's House and briefed them on its historicity. He also presented a memento to the delegation on behalf of the governor.

# Punjab Home Dept forms provincial committee

LAHORE (APP): The home department Punjab has constituted a Provincial Implementation Coordination Committee (PICC) to maintain law and order and ensure the implementation of the National Action Plan. According to a spokesperson for the home department, the secretary will serve as the head of the PICC.

The provincial committee will identify deficiencies at the district level and assist in addressing challenges in a timely manner. The provincial implementation coordination committee will also review the implementation of decisions made under the National Action Plan and the Apex Committee.

Members of the Provincial Implementation Coordination Committee will be the additional inspector general (AIG) operations Punjab, AIG Special Branch and Counter Terrorism Department, Joint Director General Intelligence Bureau, MD Safe Cities Authority, Special Secretary Local Government Department, Special Secretary School Education Department, Director General Industries Punjab and officers from FIA, Anti-Narcotics Force, Customs and intelligence agencies.

The additional secretary (Internal Security) home department will be a member and the secretary of the provincial committee. According to the home department Punjab's notification, the provincial implementation coordination committee will meet every month. It is worth mentioning that the Home Department Punjab had earlier constituted district coordination committees. The Terms of References (TORs) of these district coordination committees include preventing smuggling, drug trafficking and electricity theft, stopping the operation of illegal petrol pumps and curbing the transportation of non-custom-paid vehicles and goods.

The TORs also cover preventing illegal settlements, registering madrasas, and establishing Safe Cities in all districts. According to the notification, the PICC will provide guidance to enhance the capacity of district coordination committees across the districts.

# Open Day held at City School Warsak campus



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A grand Open Day was held at The City School Warsak Campus, featuring a variety of fun and educational activities for children. The event included game shows, magic shows, a science fair, a jumping castle, a book fair, model classes, and other engaging activities that captured the attention of both children and parents. During the science fair, students showcased their creativity, while the book fair encouraged reading habits among children and parents. Speaking at the event, the school's Headmistress, Ms. Zainab Ali Akbar, stated, "Such activities play a crucial role

in enhancing children's creativity and learning process." She further added that The City School Warsak Campus will continue to organize similar events to

promote the mental and physical development of students. Parents appreciated the school's positive initiative and praised the students' hard work and performance.



# PAC expresses no confidence in Sindh Educational Boards' performance

KARACHI (PPI): The Chairman of Public Accounts Committee (PAC), Sindh Assembly, Nisar Ahmed Khuhro has expressed lack of confidence in the performance of educational boards across Sindh and ordered a special audit of these boards, addressing financial irregularities and marking procedures.

According to Khuhro's spokesman, the PAC instructed the Director General of Audit to complete a special audit for the years 2022 to 2024 and submit the report within four months.

The Committee has also directed the Department of Universities and Boards to

prepare the Terms of Reference (TORs) for the special audit of educational boards and provide them to the Director General of Audit within a week.

The committee meeting was chaired by its Chairman Nisar Ahmed Khuhro, with members Saadia Javed, Khuram Karim Soomro, Secretary of Universities and Boards Abbas Baloch, Chairman of the Inter and Matric Board Sharaf Ali Shah, and other educational board chairmen in attendance.

The meeting reviewed audit paras of educational boards across Sindh from 2016 to 2017. The PAC questioned the perform-

ance of these educational boards and expressed concern over financial irregularities.

Khuhro remarked that there are allegations of 'pay-for-marks' within the boards. He further stated that if A+ marks are awarded in exchange for money, students will fail entrance tests.

He emphasized that this is an issue concerning the future of the younger generation and that there will be no compromise on education. He stressed that the financial dealings and performance of educational boards should be monitored.

Committee member Khuram Soomro raised

questions about the investigation following the dismissal of Inter Board Chairman Amir Qadri.

Dr Syed Sharaf Ali Shah, the Chairman of the Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education, Karachi (BSEK), stated that the strategy regarding the transparency of results was being changed and the committee's report would be made public soon.

Committee member Saadia Javed emphasized the need for a special audit of educational boards. Khuhro stated that with transparency in the results of educational boards, students will be able to compete globally and move forward.

# APPC delegation visits Wafaqi Mohtasib's secretariat

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from the Associated Press of Pakistan Corporation (APPC) visited the Wafaqi Mohtasib's Secretariat here today. This visit was part of the institution's efforts to raise awareness about scope of its work and the services provided to the general public.

Welcoming the visiting APP delegation, Secretary Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat, Syed Asif Shah said that the Wafaqi Mohtasib's institution considers the media fraternity as one of the important stakeholder which can effectively disseminate its message regarding availability of this forum to the general public.

The Advisor (Appraisal), Advisor (Implementation) and Advisor (Media), WMS were also present on the occasion. The APPC delegation included Mr. Rab Nawaz Bajwa, Director, VNS and Mr. Abdul Qudous, Chief Editor, VNS.

The visiting delegation was briefed by a team of senior officers of the Secretariat. The APP delegation comprising a group of professional reporters was informed that the office has emerged as the premier agency of adminis-



trative accountability, providing relief to millions of people in the country.

It was added that in 2024, the Office received and processed a record number of public complaints totaling 226,373, out of which 223,198 were disposed of showing an increase 17% and 16% in the receipt and disposal of complaints respectively over the figures 2023. In financial terms, the office provided a relief equivalent to Rs.8.22 billion to the people during 2024.

Furthermore, owing to various initiatives like the Outreach Complaint Resolution (OCR), Information Resolution of Disputes (IRD), Inspection Visits etc., the institution has been able to dispense administrative relief at the doorsteps of the complainants.

Similarly, greater use of technology has remarkably enhanced the institution's accessibility. During 2024, nearly 63,980 complaints were lodged on line reflecting a growing trend to use digital platforms. The APP delegation was briefed that another landmark achievement of the institution during the year 2024 related to effective implementation of its Findings/decisions, which comes to 93.21% as against 85.70% achieved during 2023.

It was added that this office has presence in 24 major cities including the Headquarters at Islamabad, covering almost the entire length and breadth of the country including Gilgit-Baltistan and AJ&K.

Touching on the international linkages of the institution, it was stated that

Wafaqi Mohtasib is an active member of the International Ombudsman Institution (IOI) and currently holds the post of President of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA). Wafaqi Mohtasib's unanimous election by the 47-member strong professional body of ombudsmen in the region has brought a distinct honor to the country.

The briefing was followed by a lively question/answer session. The members of the delegation evinced a keen interest in the working and operations of the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat and its Regional Offices. Lauding its role, they expressed the confidence that addressing maladministration would ultimately help pave the way for good governance and rule of law in the country.

# No road cutting without prior permission: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab, has stated that no roads under the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) should be cut without prior approval. If it is necessary to cut roads for utility services, written permission must be obtained otherwise, legal action, including FIRs, will be taken against such institutions.

He expressed these views on Tuesday during a meeting with a delegation from Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) at his office. The delegation was led by SSGC Deputy Managing Director Saeed Rizvi.

Municipal Commissioner Afzal Zaidi, Director Coordination Ikhtlaq Khan Yousafzai, and other relevant officials were also present on the occasion. The Mayor Wahab emphasized that KMC alone has the right to charge road-cutting fees for 106 designated roads. If

any institution pays this fee to any entity other than KMC, such as other departments or towns, they will be responsible for their actions. He further stated that KMC is responsible for the maintenance and repair of these 106 notified roads in Karachi.

He highlighted that KMC spends billions of rupees on the upkeep and development of these roads, but some institutions recklessly cut them without consideration. He specifically mentioned that if SSGC intends to install new pipelines or carry out repairs in areas like Korangi Town and PECHS, they must obtain written permission from KMC.

The Mayor Wahab asserted that no individual or institution can be allowed to cut roads without proper authorization. He stressed that all public service institutions should work in accordance with regulations and maintain communication to improve overall efficiency. While he does not intend to hinder public services, he insisted on strict adherence to laws to prevent conflicts between institutions.

# Hina proposes Women Protection Centres in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): During the pre-budget speech in the Punjab Assembly, Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) Hina Perviz Butt presented several significant proposals aimed at enhancing the protection of women and improving access to legal assistance.

She urged the establishment of Women Protection Centres (WPCs) in all districts of Punjab to provide immediate and effective support to women in distress. She highlighted that, at present, only Multan has a WPC, whereas such facilities should be available across all districts to ensure timely intervention and support for affected women.

Additionally, Hina Perviz Butt suggested that all hospitals in Punjab should issue free medical certificates for women, ensuring that victims of violence or abuse are not subjected to any financial burden for their medical examinations. She further emphasised the need to provide immediate and cost-free legal assistance to women who are victims of abuse and violence.



## کراہیدواری برائے کیٹین اڈکان

### سر مہر پیشکش کی طبی جامعہ پشاور

جامعہ پشاور کیس کی پرائم لویشن پر واقع کیٹین اڈکان عرصہ میں سال کے لئے مہار کراہیدواری سالانہ 10 فیصد اضافہ پر مسترد اور طلبہ میدان میں جرہ کر کے دلی پارٹیوں سے بڑے بڑے سر مہر بولی دستیاب ہیں۔ دلچسپی رکھنے والے افراد فرم نمبر 04.03.2025 تک دفتری اوقات کار میں مطلوبہ جگہیں ملاحظہ کر سکتے ہیں۔ ہر لحاظ سے مکمل سر مہر پیشکش نمبر 05.03.2025 کو دفتری اوقات کار میں جہ کرنا ہوگا شرکاء کو وضو ایڈاؤ کیٹین کے بارے میں مزید تفصیل جامعہ پشاور کے ویب سائٹ [www.uop.edu.pk](http://www.uop.edu.pk) ڈائریکٹ آف ایڈمیشن غیر ماؤس، نزدکانی ٹاپ بازار یونیورسٹی کیس جامعہ پشاور سے حاصل کی جاسکتی ہیں۔

ڈائریکٹر ایڈمیشن جامعہ پشاور



## DIRECTORATE OF MEDICAL STORES, EME, HEALTH & SUPPORT

### CORRIGENDUM

Reference our Ad, published in this newspaper, dated 08 Feb 2025. The date of opening of the Tender is to be read **26th February, 2025**, instead of 27th Feb, 2025. Other Terms & Conditions shall remain the same.

**DIRECTOR MEH&S (AHQ PESHAWAR)**  
**C/O Deputy Director Medical Stores**  
**PH: 091-9507433, 0336-0956146**



PESHAWAR: Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Khan Mehsud, chairing meeting to resolve the longstanding Regi Model Town dispute.

## PM&DC to decide fee structure of private medical and dental colleges

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) is set to deliberate on the standardization of tuition fees for private medical and dental colleges in its upcoming Council meeting. This decision comes in response to growing public concerns regarding the affordability and accessibility of medical and dental education in Pakistan.

The PM&DC has taken a proactive approach to address these concerns by implementing a structured fee schedule to ensure transparency and fairness in the education sector.

The council aims to prevent excessive tuition charges while maintaining high educational standards in private institutions across the country. PM&DC is committed to ensuring that quality medical and dental education remains accessible to aspiring students. The regulation of fees is a crucial step in maintaining a balance between affordability and sustainability in private medical education.

In a statement issued by the PM&DC, it was apprised that an emergent Council meeting has been called which will include discussions with stakeholders, including representatives from private medical and dental colleges, education experts, and government officials, to finalize a fair and standardized fee policy.

The PM&DC remains dedicated to promoting equitable access to medical education while upholding academic excellence.

Further details and the final decision of the Council meeting will be communicated shortly. PM&DC encourages all concerned parties to stay informed through official channels for updates on this important development.

Earlier in pursuit of the directions passed by the subcommittee of the Senate standing committee on National Health Services Regulations and Coordination meeting. All private medical and dental institutions were directed not to collect fee for session 2024-2025 from the students till the final outcome of the committee constituted on medical education by the honorable prime minister of Pakistan and chaired by the deputy prime minister of Pakistan to review and revise tuition fee of private medical and dental institutions of Pakistan. All colleges were directed to comply with the directives and to take necessary steps accordingly.

## Patients from Kurram airlifted to Peshawar, says Ihtesham

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The Health Advisor Ihtesham Ali has said that patients lacking medical facilities in kurram are being airlifted to Peshawar via helicopter in emergency cases. Additionally, medicines are being provided on an urgent basis in Kurram, and the provincial health department remains in constant communication with the field staff every week.

He commended the medical personnel stationed in Kurram, stating that they have delivered exceptional services and deserve recognition.

Ihtesham Ali reaffirmed that efforts are underway to introduce further reforms in the healthcare sector, ensuring better medical services for the people.

**KP Health Advisor Ihtesham Ali Announces a Major Educational Initiative for Mardan**

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Health Advisor, Ihtesham Ali, has announced a major educational initiative for the people of Mardan and surrounding areas: the establishment of a sub-campus of the historic Islamia College. Official documentation and administrative processes for this project have already begun.

In this regard, Ihtesham Ali held a key meeting with the Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan Afridi. The meeting resulted in an agreement to establish the Islamia College sub-campus in Mardan and initiate admissions for FA and FSc students in the upcoming academic year.

Speaking on the occasion, the Health Advisor stated that this initiative is a gift from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to the people of Mardan, serving as a long-term investment in the education of future generations.

This step will not only provide higher education opportunities to local students but also enhance access to quality education in the region.

## Minister briefed on digitalization of Labour Department

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: A review meeting on the digitalization of the Labor Department was held on Tuesday at the Civil Secretariat Peshawar, under the chairmanship of the Minister for Labour Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Fazal Shakur Khan.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary of Labour Department Mian Adil Iqbal, Secretary of the Workers Welfare Board KP, Muhammad Tufail, Director Labour, Vice Commissioner of Employees Social Security Institution, and other concerned officers.

The Provincial Minister was thoroughly briefed on the complete digitalization of the department. It was told in the briefing that factories and production units will be registered online with the department.

In briefing it was further said that paper-based process for factory registration has been completely eliminated, and factory or production unit owners will submit their registration applications online.

The briefing further mentioned that all the shortcomings in the manual system had been addressed in the new online registration system.

The provincial minister was also briefed on the digitalization of labour courts. Regarding the Workers Welfare Board scholarships, it was said that students will apply online for scholarships, and applications will be approved for those who meet the criteria while in case of ineligibility, the application will be rejected on the spot. It is further explained that the allocation of quarters in labour colonies for workers has also been computerized, and data for workers registered with ESSI or EOBI will be entered online.

The briefing also included a detailed discussion on the digitalization of ESSI's medical facilities and other services.

However, various proposals were considered in the meeting to further improve the digitalization process.

Speaking on the occasion the Provincial Minister Fazal Shakur Khan said that the digitalization of the Labour department will eliminate all the shortcomings present in the manual system. He added that the digitized system will bring complete transparency in labour department. He further said that digitalization will ensure timely disbursement of scholarship funds to the eligible students.

The Provincial Minister added that revolutionary reforms are being implemented for the welfare of workers, and with the digitalization of the department, almost all the issues faced by workers will be resolved.

"The labour department will deliver its services more efficiently in a better way" he concluded.

### Shafqat completes PhD

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Dr. Shafqat Ullah, son of Shaukat Ullah Hamdard, has successfully completed his PhD in Management Sciences from Qurtuba University. He conducted his research under the supervision of Dr. Imran Khan and Dr. Mujeeb Khan, while Dr. Sajjad Afridi served as his internal examiner. A large number of faculty members and researchers were present during the defense of his dissertation, congratulating him on his successful defense. The scholar attributed his achievement to the prayers of his parents and the relentless efforts of his teachers.

## Formulating S&T strategy of KP First consultative session begins in UET

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The first consultative session on formulating the "Science and Technology Strategy of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" was held.

The ORIC UET Peshawar, in collaboration with the Directorate of Science and Technology, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa hosted the session.

The Minister for Science and Technology Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr. Shafqat Ayaz, spoke to a large number of academic representatives of various public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said, the provincial government is focused on funding large-scale projects with practical applications that directly benefit KP's economy and have a market demand.

He emphasized over applied research and academia collaboration to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world applications.

Mr. Sajid Shah, Director General Science and Technology (DoST) said, the Directorate is dedicated to promoting and developing science and technology across various sectors to drive the province's economic growth.

"We are bringing a comprehensive Science and Technology Policy through consultative sessions which will take all the stakeholders on board including Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and the Provincial Government".

Dr. Nasir Minallah Director ORIC UET Peshawar gave a presentation on identifying key areas where universities could enhance their contribution including curriculum development, entrepreneurship skills and promote professors having direct liaison with local industry.

## Kundi hosts colorful art exhibition at Governor House

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Tuesday organized a one-day vibrant art exhibition at the Governor House to highlight the province's rich culture through various art pieces and products.

The exhibition was inaugurated in the presence of Chief Guest, renowned artist Yusuf Bashir Qureshi, and Vice Chairperson of Punjab Social Protection Authority Jahan Ara and senior politician Manzoor Watoo.

Governor Kundi toured various stalls showcasing products created by female students from different universities.

The products, which reflected the rich culture and traditions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, were highly appreciated, and the students were encouraged to continue their creative pursuits.

Speaking at the event, Governor Kundi expressed his pride in hosting the art exhibition at the Governor House.

He emphasized that the exhibition highlighted the province's rich culture through various art pieces and products.

"Art is not just a combination of colors and images; it is a language that speaks to the soul. Such exhibitions are the perfect platform to bring out the talents of our youth," he said.

He further stressed the importance of promoting the soft image of the province to counter the challenges of terrorism and extremism, emphasizing that highlighting the cultural heritage and traditions of the province is essential.

"Our history, culture, and traditions define us, and promoting these values is crucial in shaping a peaceful and developed society," said the Governor.

Governor Kundi also underscored the significance of empowering women for the development of society.

"No society can progress without the empowerment of women. We must provide our youth, especially female students, with opportunities in education, art, and business," he added.

He expressed his commitment to further promoting sports, education, and cultural activities in the province, ensuring the provision of support for art galleries, cultural centers, and educational institutions.

The Governor also thanked Yusuf Bashir Qureshi and other distinguished guests for their special participation in the event.

The event featured speeches by the guest of honor, Yusuf Bashir Qureshi, and Dr. Gulzar Jalal, who praised the Governor for organizing the exhibition, saying that such programs not only encourage students but also help in promoting the province's soft image both within the country and internationally.

The event was attended by various dignitaries, including Member of Provincial Assembly Arbab Zarak Khan, former Provincial Ministers Malik Mehr Elahi and Adnan Jaleel, PPP leader Razaullah Khan Chugharmati, and faculty members and students from the University of Peshawar, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Sarhad University of Science and Technology, Iqra National University, College of Home Economics, and Roots Millennium Universal College's Art and Design Department.

At the conclusion of the event, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi presented commemorative shields to Yusuf Bashir Qureshi, the event organizers, and participating students and faculty members.

## UoP VC, Speaker KP Assembly discuss verification of assembly employees' academic credentials

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The Vice Chancellor of the University of Peshawar met with the Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Babar Saleem Swati, at the Speaker's Chamber. The meeting was attended by Special Secretary for Administration Syed Waqar Shah, Member of Provincial Assembly Nisar Baz, and officers from the examination section of university and Assembly Secretariat's Admin branch.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to verify the academic degrees, transcripts, and certificates of the Assembly Secretariat employees to identify any discrepancies or fraudulent credentials. This initiative aims to ensure that only qualified and educated individuals hold key positions in the Assembly Secretariat, ultimately enhancing its efficiency and effectiveness.

Speaking on the occasion, Speaker Babar Saleem Swati emphasized that as a legislative body, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly should set an example for other institutions. Unfortunately, the Assembly had been operating for decades without a formal act, which led to irregularities. To address this, a new act was introduced and approved, with significant contributions from both Assembly members and officials.

The Speaker further stated that while eradicating wrongdoing completely may be challenging, significant improvements can be made.

He underscored that inviting university officials to the Assembly was a key step in ensuring transparency.

As part of this initiative, employees' academic credentials were formally handed over to the responsible authorities in the Speaker's Chamber. Additionally, an officer from the Assembly Secretariat's Admin Section was appointed to oversee the process and ensure maximum transparency.

Speaker Babar Saleem Swati reiterated the importance of completing the verification process in the shortest possible time, ensuring that only honest, competent, and educated individuals serve in the Assembly Secretariat. This step is expected to improve administrative efficiency and promote a more transparent and credible system within the Assembly.

## KP Health Dept launches 'Big Catch-Up' vaccination drive

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has launched a province-wide vaccination campaign, "Big Catch-Up", aimed at immunizing children under the age of 5 against 12 deadly diseases.

The campaign was inaugurated by the Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Health Mr. Ihtisham Ali, at the Molvi Ameer Shah Memorial Hospital in Peshawar.

The 12-day campaign will target 78,000 zero-dose children and 1.2 million children who have received one or two doses of vaccines.

"The 'Big Catch-Up' campaign is a critical effort to protect our children from vaccine-preventable diseases," said Mr. Ihtisham Ali. "We urge all parents to get their children vaccinated and play their part in keeping our communities healthy and safe."

Director EPI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Asghar Khan on this occasion emphasized that the campaign will focus on reaching children who missed their vaccinations due to COVID-19 or other reasons.

"Our teams will visit fixed centers, schools, and communities to ensure that all eligible children are vaccinated," said Dr. Asghar Khan. "We appeal to all parents to cooperate with our teams and get their children vaccinated."

The "Big Catch-Up" campaign is supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and other partners.

On this occasion Coordinator Emergency Operation Centre Basit Ali, Medical Superintendent Molvi Jee Hospital Dr. Sher Khan Afridi, Pakistan Pediatrics Association President Dr. Bawar Shah, CFO Unicef Radek, Unicef Health Team Lead KP Dr. Inamullah Khan, Deputy Director EPI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr. Mehtab, WHO team lead Dr. Babar Alam, Health Department and Unicef representatives attended the ceremony.

## Syed Qasim Ali Shah announces launch of Sasta Tandoor

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Social Welfare, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, has announced the "Sasta Tandoor" scheme in light of the directives of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Provincial Minister stated that the "Sasta Tandoor" scheme is a gift for the people of Peshawar, and its formal inauguration will take place very soon.

He further mentioned that soon, people from all districts and tehsils of the province will benefit from the "Sasta Tandoor."

He added that the Provincial Government is taking strong measures to control inflation, and in the coming days, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will experience a significant reduction in the cost of living due to these efforts.

The "Sasta Tandoor" scheme is a relief initiative for the people of the Province.

Calling it another welfare initiative of the government, he stated that the current government believes only in serving the people and wants to utilize all available resources for the welfare, well-being, and development of the public.



## In brief

### DPO awards policeman Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: District Police Officer (DPO) Nowshera awarded policeman with a certificate for best performance. According to details, Police Station Pabbi demonstrated outstanding performance in arresting criminals, fugitives, and narcotics dealers, as well as launching campaigns against Kalashnikov culture and land mafia. DPO Abdul Rashid Khan presented the best performance certificate to Inspector Timur Salim Khan for his exceptional work in maintaining law and order in Pabbi city and surrounding villages.

### Removal of encroachment F.P. Report

BANNU: The joint meeting of municipal administration officials and the mayor of Bannu district-wide collection of arrears, opening against encroachments, opening revenue targets, completing salary payments for the provincial government, providing grants from the provincial government and cleaning the streets, including on a daily basis, on a daily basis, the Chief Minister has been instructed to submit a report on activities under the public agenda. Durrani, Tehsil Municipal Administration Officer Muhammad Yusuf Khan held a joint meeting in the chair. The meeting was attended by the section heads of all TMA departments and relevant officers. The meeting was briefed on the outstanding property of TMA. By which the immediate provision of the grant is ensured. The salaries of hundreds of employees here should be paid on time. He said that the relevant section heads should prepare an immediate report for the immediate elimination of encroachments under the public agenda of the Chief Minister in the district of Bannu and adjacent areas and ensure that action is taken on a daily basis. The work on the restoration of the parks should be accelerated and the cleanliness of all the parks in the relevant city should be given immediate attention so that the young people of the city and adjacent areas can have walking and recreation facilities at their doorsteps. There are some shortfalls in the execution of affairs. Strict action against the officers and officials who are otherwise negligent is not given.

### Zia visits Larkana F.P. Report

LARKANA: The provincial minister for the Sindh government's prison department, Zia ul Hassan Lanjar reached at Larkana spoke to the media after offering condolences for the passing uncle of former provincial home minister Sohail Anwar Sial's uncle renowned writer Dr. Zulfiqar Sial, he remarked that the incident that occurred in Larkana is unfortunate, as the Hindu community is specifically being targeted, with the intention of blackmailing the government. This area is the district and constituency of the chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party, and terrorism finds an easy target here further he said that I have received extensive briefings regarding the incident in wholly Larkana district, in this regard, I have also had a meeting via Zoom with Madam Faryal Talpur, which will result in progress in this case soon as we have reached the perpetrators. The DIG and SSP Larkana will shortly hold a press conference to inform about them.

# Anti-harassment laws: Call for raising awareness

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: The alleged harassment of a female student by a teacher at the University of Malakand (UoM) has sparked widespread debate in Lower Dir. The Dir Thank Tank (DTT), a group of intellectuals and professionals, during a group discussion on the incident, emphasizing the need for a more practical and vigilant anti-harassment committee at UoM.

The participants suggested that penalties such as suspension or fines be considered for the accused, and called for raising awareness among all stakeholders, including students, faculty, and staff, about anti-harassment laws and their implications.

Ibrash Pasha, a social activist, argued that the anti-harassment committee should be empowered to propose punishments such as dismissal or fines for perpetrators. He stressed the importance of educating the university community on the legal ramifications of harassment.

Prof. Muhammad Usman from UoM clarified that the incident occurred on February 4, and the teacher was suspended the following day. He emphasized that the university's anti-harassment committee was investigating the matter, though he cautioned against a one-sided trial.

Prof. Tajdar Yousafzai criticized the university for not acting swiftly enough, warning that in the age of social media, trying to conceal such incidents is difficult. He advised that UoM could have handled the case better and more transparently.

Rahim Shah Akhunkhail, the founder of DTT, added that sexual harassment is a global issue, occurring in many institutions, including religious ones. He expressed the view that while the UoM could have been more proactive in communicating, there were internal power struggles at play within the institution. Akhunkhail suggested that the DTT should write a constructive letter to the Vice Chancellor of UoM with specific suggestions for improving the handling of such cases.

He also proposed that the DTT members should support UoM on social media to maintain the reputation of one of Pakistan's top universities, particularly since it ranks 9th nationally. He encour-

aged promoting the university in the best interest of the region's youth.

A former UoM student, now living in Europe, described the university's anti-harassment committee as ineffective, calling it a "dead horse." He argued that suspending the accused teacher was not sufficient and that more severe consequences should be enacted to serve as a deterrent.

Ibrash Pasha also emphasized the need to protect the dignity of harassment survivors in media reports, urging responsible and sensitive coverage of such issues. Usman Zeb, a young scholar, proposed reforms in higher education, particularly the centralization of paper checking, to reduce opportunities for harassment by teachers.

Prof. Humayun from Islamabad noted that while the UoM incident was concerning, it should not be generalized to all universities, arguing that co-education and semester systems were beneficial for students.

Maqbol Ahmad, an intellectual from Pakistan civil services, suggested reforms in the teacher selection process, proposing a competitive examination to ensure the best candidates are chosen. Talking to this scribe he also pointed out that harassment takes many forms, not just sexual, and suggested that harassment of male students by male teachers should be addressed as well. He cautioned against using social media to judge the accused before the legal process had run its course.

Meanwhile the Islami Jamiat Tulba (IJT), a student group, organized an "Anti-Harassment Walk" at UoM, demanding an impartial and transparent inquiry. IJT leaders, including Maaz Khan, voiced anger over the increasing cases of sexual harassment in universities and called for the abolition of co-education.

They also advocated for the restoration of student unions, which were banned under General Zia-ul-Haq, and demanded reforms in the semester system. The IJT delegation later met with UoM officials to urge swift and transparent action on the case. The incident at UoM has ignited broader discussions on how universities handle harassment, the role of social media in these cases, and the need for systemic reforms to protect students' rights and dignity.

## Muqam administers oath to Shangla press club cabinet

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan, and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam administered the oath to the newly elected cabinet of Shangla Press Club in his office today. On this occasion, he praised the importance of journalism and the role of journalists, emphasizing that free and responsible journalism plays a fundamental role in the development of any society and the stability of democracy.

In his brief address, the Federal Minister highlighted the role of journalists as a bridge between the public and the authorities, bring-

ing public issues to the attention of decision-makers. Engineer Amir Muqam reiterated the federal government's commitment to addressing the problems faced by journalists and promoting press freedom by providing all possible support.

He announced a special grant for Shangla Press Club (Alpuri) and additional grants for Tehsil Press Clubs in Puran, Bisham, Chakesar, and Shahpur. Congratulating the newly elected office-bearers of Shangla Press Club and Shangla Union of Journalists, he expressed hope that they would uphold journalistic principles and effectively high-

light public issues.

On this occasion, the oath was taken by Aftab Hussain (President of Shangla Press Club), Syed Muhammad Shah Khan (President of Shangla Union of Journalists), Sohail Hassan (General Secretary), and other cabinet members, including Sabir Hussain Shah, Ismat Ali Khan, Sohail Hassan, Sardar Ali, Ifthikhar Hussain, Gohar Ali, and others.

Similarly, the newly elected cabinet of the Shangla Union of Journalists also took the oath, including General Secretary Sohail Hassan, Vice President Raza Shah, Muhammad Younas, and Sail Shehzad.

## Awareness walk organized

F.P. Report

BUNER: An awareness walk in support of immunization campaign was held in main business hub Swari on Tuesday. Aim of the walk was to create awareness among locals regarding routine immunization drive started from today

17th february and to be continued till 28th of this month.

The participants of the walk were carried banners reading "Hero from Zero" "complete the course of childhood vaccinations to protect children from 12 life-threatening diseases".

The awareness walk was

organized by a local social welfare body, Rural Development Organization (RDO) in collaboration with the Health Department Buner and UNICEF. RDO Executive Director Hakeem zada DHO Buner Akhtar Nawaz and social workers in large numbers participated.

# Harassment incidents and their addressal in universities

Haleem Asad

**T**HE increasing incidents of harassment in Pakistani universities can be attributed to multiple factors. It would be an oversimplification to solely blame co-education for this issue. While there are indeed challenges within co-education systems, the root causes lie in institutional weaknesses, moral decay, lack of accountability, and the misuse of authority within these academic institutions.

Causes of Harassment: Non-Transparent Accountability of Professors and Administration

In many universities, professors and administrative personnel hold significant authority, yet there are often insufficient checks and balances. When power is misused, it can foster an environment where harassment thrives.

Misuse of Marks and Authority

Professors who hold exclusive power over awarding marks, without any effective monitoring or transparency, can exploit this authority. Students, particularly female students, are sometimes subjected to blackmail, undue pressure, and inappropriate demands.

Lack of Effective Punishment and Enforcement of Law

Although harassment cases do surface in universities, strict and transparent action is rarely taken. This failure to pursue justice allows perpetrators to escape accountability, leaving victims without the recourse they deserve.

Absence of Moral Training Universities have increasingly become degree-awarding institutions, with a concerning lack of focus on character building and moral education for both students and faculty. Integrating moral development alongside academic instruction could significantly mitigate these issues.

The Risks of Professors Having Full Authority Over Marks

Bias Based on Personal Preferences

Professors sometimes award marks based on personal likes or dislikes, undermining fairness and impartiality. This could result in unjust grading, which may also foster instances of harassment.

Corruption and Nepotism

The unchecked power over marks can lead to instances where professors demand bribes or other undue benefits in exchange for favorable grades. Such behavior can escalate

harassment.

Student Anxiety and Stress

When professors have complete control over students' grades, it generates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. This pressure can discourage students from participating openly in class discussions and asking questions, which ultimately affects their academic performance.

Potential Consequences of Limiting Professors' Authority Over Marks

Carelessness Among Students If professors lose control over grading, students may feel less compelled to attend class, submit assignments, or engage in academic activities, leading to diminished academic discipline.

Weakening of Academic Integrity

Without professors' involvement in grading, students may become less serious about their studies, negatively impacting overall academic discipline and quality.

Decline in Student Effort

A lack of active professor involvement in the grading process could erode the academic spirit necessary for genuine learning, as students may no longer feel motivated to strive for excellence.

A Balanced Solution

A balanced approach is required to address these issues effectively. Rather than offering professors total freedom or completely removing their authority, a middle-ground solution would be most beneficial. Key recommendations include:

Establishing a Transparent Grading System

A grading system should be established that is transparent, taking into account class performance, assignments, and attendance. An effective appeal system should also be implemented to ensure fairness and provide students with a platform to contest unjust grading practices.

Implementing Strict Anti-Harassment Measures

Every university must have a functioning anti-harassment cell with dedicated channels for female students to lodge complaints securely. Any individual found guilty of harassment should face strict and transparent punishment to serve as a deterrent.

Furthermore, universities can consider incorporating third-party oversight for harassment investigations, allowing independent organizations to review cases and ensure impartiality.

This approach would reduce biases and offer victims confi-

dence in the system.

Mandatory Moral and Ethical Training

Both students and teachers should undergo training programs focused on ethics and morality, in line with Islamic teachings. This will help create awareness about harassment and discourage the misuse of authority. Incorporating workshops on gender equality, respecting boundaries, and tackling harassment can foster a positive and supportive learning environment.

Awareness Campaigns and Student Support Systems

Universities should establish ongoing awareness campaigns about harassment, its consequences, and students' rights. These campaigns should be visible and engaging, using social media, seminars, and posters to reach as many students as possible.

Additionally, student support services—such as counseling, peer support groups, and accessible hotlines—should be expanded to provide students with resources and emotional support if they experience harassment.

Strengthening Legal Frameworks

Pakistan's legal framework must be strengthened to deal

with harassment more effectively. While the Prevention of Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010 addresses harassment in workplaces, it should be further extended and clarified to include academic institutions, ensuring universities adopt robust anti-harassment policies and provide clear legal recourse for victims.

Regular Audits and Monitoring

Universities should undergo regular audits to evaluate their anti-harassment policies and their implementation. Third-party organizations or student unions can assist in monitoring university environments to ensure adherence to ethical standards and identify potential problems early on.

Conclusion

Harassment incidents in universities are not solely an educational issue; they are rooted in moral decay, abuse of power, and a lack of accountability. To address this, a balanced approach to professor authority, along with increased transparency, moral training, and accountability, is essential. These measures will not only prevent harassment but will also foster a healthier, more disciplined academic environment.



SEHWAN: A large number of devotees attending Urs of Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar.

## Tribesmen demand recovery of abductees F.P. Report

WANA: A massive protest rally and gathering were held in Wana, in which thousands of people participated. The protesters gave the government and security agencies a three-day deadline to recover four abducted individuals.

On Tuesday, thousands of people in Wana took to the streets, holding a rally and protest for the recovery of four kidnapped persons. The demonstrators carried white flags inscribed with the word "Peace."

The protest was organized by "Wana Aman Pasyon," with participation from local leaders of all political parties, the business community, travel agencies, and people from all walks of life. The rally moved through the market and culminated in a large gathering at the western end of Wana Bazaar.

The speakers issued a three-day deadline to the civil administration, the government, and local security forces, demanding the recovery of the kidnapped individuals. They warned that if the abductees were not released within three days, the protest would escalate, and the next sit-in would be at the main gate of the IGFC Headquarters, Javed Sultan Camp, Wana.

It is noteworthy that last week, on the same day, unknown armed men carried out two separate incidents in which they abducted Dr. Nauman, the President of the South Waziristan Chamber of Commerce & Industry Saif-ur-Rehman, and two customs officers, Nisar Abbas and Khushal. Their whereabouts remain unknown.

Political leaders accused the security forces of a failed policy in tribal areas, stating that the policy, in place since 2003, has caused immense harm to the country. They declared that this policy could no longer continue, peace must be ensured at all costs, and the responsibility for recovering the abducted individuals lies with the government, which has failed to fulfill its duty properly.

## 4th Dosti festival kicks off at KKKUK

F.P. Report

KARAK: The 4th Dosti Peshawar Literature Festival (DPLF) 2025 commenced its Karak Chapter on Tuesday here at Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKKUK) Karak's old campus. The four-day event, from February 18th to 21st, promises a vibrant celebration of literature, poetry, and the arts, fostering harmony, friendship, and intellectual discourse.

The inauguration ceremony was graced by Additional Deputy Commissioner Shahid Rafiq Gandapur as the chief guest. He lauded KKKUK efforts in organizing such an event of national repute. Professor Nimat Ullah delivered the welcome address, setting the stage for the festival's diverse programs. Distinguished guests Dr. Arif Khattak and Muhammad Arif Khattak, among others, were also present. The event saw enthusiastic participation from civil society, faculty members, administrative officers, staff, students, and community representatives.

While addressing on the occasion, Professor Arif



Khattak highlighted the significance and power of literature while citing different and distinct events in the world history. The festival aims to utilize literature as a powerful medium to promote harmony, inclusivity, and mutual understanding among diverse communities. The festival will bring together writers, poets, and intellectuals from across the nation to engage in stimulating discussions about literature, history, and contemporary issues. It also seeks to inspire students and book lovers to actively participate in literary discussions and creative activities.

Earlier in his welcome address, Professor Nimatullah explains that this year's Karak Chapter offers a rich program, including

three keynote addresses, 20 parallel sessions covering a wide range of literary topics, a Mushaira showcasing local and regional poetic talent, and a three-day book fair to be held at the Government Postgraduate College, Karak. The book fair will provide attendees with access to a diverse selection of books and literary resources.

The Karak Chapter serves as a vital platform connecting authors, readers, and literary enthusiasts, underscoring the transformative power of words in building a more informed, harmonious, and culturally vibrant society. The festival organizers extend a warm invitation to all those passionate about literature and culture to join this enriching event.

## Dr. Mamoon defends Ph. D thesis

F.P. Report

SWABI: Dr. Mamoon ur Rashid has successfully completed his PhD in Physics from the University of Ulsan, South Korea. Upon completing his PhD, he has become the first PhD degree holder from his village.

Dr. Mamoon ur Rashid is deeply grateful to his teachers, friends, and family members for their unwavering support and encouragement, which enabled him to reach this milestone. He has dedicated his achievement

to his loving family, particularly in the loving memory of his late mother, Nour Shah Zeib.

Dr. Mamoon ur Rashid vows to utilize his knowledge for the betterment of society. This achievement is not only a testament to his personal hard work but also a reflection of the blessings and support of his family.

Dr. Mamoon ur Rashid's accomplishment serves as an inspiration to the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, demonstrating that with perseverance and dedication, they can achieve great



ness and make their families and communities proud.

## Acting PHC CJ visits Mardan courts

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Acting Chief Justice Pshawar High Court Justice Syed Attique Shah visited district Court, Mardan, on Tuesday.

District & Sessions

Judge, Mardan, brief him on disposal of cases besides the operationalization of Challan Management System, E-portal and CFMIS at Mardan.

His lordship held a brief meeting with the Judicial

Officers of District Judiciary Mardan and directed them to prioritize disposal of cases in order to mitigate the agonies of the general public. He directed the Judicial Officers to play their proactive role in dispensation of Justice.



# European leaders want a say in talks to end war in Ukraine

PARIS (AP): European leaders insisted they must have a say in international talks to end the war in Ukraine despite the clear message from both Washington and Moscow that there was no role for them as yet in negotiations that could shape the future of the continent.

Three hours of emergency talks at the Elysee Palace in Paris left leaders of Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Poland, Spain, the Netherlands, Denmark, NATO and the European Union without a common view on possible peacekeeping troops after a US diplomatic blitz on Ukraine last week threw a once-solid trans-Atlantic alliance into turmoil. U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer called for US backing while reaffirming he's ready to consider sending British forces on the Ukrainian ground alongside others "if there is a lasting peace agreement."

There was a rift though with some EU nations, like Poland, which have said they don't want their military imprint on Ukraine soil. Macron was non-committal. Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof acknowledged the Europeans "need to come to a common conclusion about what we can contribute. And that way we will eventually get a seat at the table," adding that "just sitting at the table without contributing is pointless." Starmer said a trans-Atlantic bond remained essential. "There must be a US backstop, because a US security guarantee is the only way to effectively deter Russia from attacking Ukraine again," he said.

Top US officials from the Trump administration, on their first visit to Europe last week, left the impression that Washington was ready to embrace the Kremlin while it cold-shouldered many of its age-old European allies. Gen. Keith Kellogg, Trump's special envoy for Ukraine and Russia, said he didn't think it was "reasonable and feasible to have everybody sitting at the table." "We know how that can turn out and that has been our point, is keeping it clean and fast as we can," he told reporters in Brussels, where he briefed the 31 US allies in NATO, along with EU officials, before heading to Kyiv for talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. His remarks were echoed by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who was equally dismissive about a role for Europe. "I don't know what they have to do at the negotiations table," he said as he arrived in Saudi Arabia for talks with US officials.

Last week, Vice President JD Vance and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth in a flurry of speeches questioned both Europe's security commitments and its fundamental

democratic principles. French President Emmanuel Macron, who has long championed a stronger European defense, said their stinging rebukes and threats of non-cooperation in the face of military danger felt like a shock to the system. The tipping point came when Trump decided to upend years of US policy by holding talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in hopes of ending the Russia-Ukraine war.

Shortly before the meeting in Paris, Macron spoke with Trump, but Macron's office would not disclose details about the 20-minute discussion. Starmer, who said he will travel to Washington next week to discuss with President Trump "what we see as the key elements of a lasting peace," appears to be charting a "third way" in Europe's shifting geopolitical landscape - aligning strategically with the US administration while maintaining EU ties. Some analysts suggest this positioning could allow him to act as a bridge between Trump and Europe, potentially serving as a key messenger to the White House. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told reporters a possible peace agreement with Russia cannot be forced on Ukraine. "For us, it must and is clear: This does not mean that peace can be dictated and that Ukraine must accept what is presented to it," he insisted. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said that any peace agreement would need to have the active involvement of the EU and Ukraine, so as to not be a false end to the war "as has happened in the past."

He went on: "What cannot be is that the aggressor is rewarded." A strong US component, though, will remain essential for the foreseeable future since it will take many years before many European nations can ratchet up defense production and integrate it into an effective force. Highlighting the inconsistencies among many nations about potential troop contributions, Scholz said talk of boots on the ground was "premature." "This is highly inappropriate, to put it bluntly, and honestly: we don't even know what the outcome will be" of any peace negotiation, he added. European nations are bent though on boosting their armed forces where they can after years of US complaints, and most have increased defense spending to 2% of gross domestic product, but the path to reaching 3% is unclear.

"The time has come for a much greater ability of Europe to defend itself," Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk said. "There is unanimity here on the issue of increasing spending on defense. This is an absolute necessity." Poland spends more than 4% of its GDP on defense, more than any other NATO member.

## Gazans must return home, EU plans to tell Israel

BRUSSELS (Reuters): The EU plans to tell Israel next week that Palestinians uprooted from their Gaza homes should be ensured a dignified return and that Europe will contribute to rebuilding the shattered territory, according to a document seen by Reuters. That echoes Arab positions but conflicts with President Donald Trump's stated aim for the US to take over the shattered coastal strip and rebuild it into a "Riviera of the Middle East" while Gazans emigrate to other nations. The EU, which has been a major aid provider to Palestinians, is to outline its position to Israeli officials in talks in Brussels on February 24 as part of the EU-Israel Association Council, the first such session since 2022.

A document outlining the draft EU position emphasizes both Europe's commitment to Israel's security and its view that "displaced Gazans should be ensured a safe and dignified return to their homes in Gaza". "The EU will actively contribute to a coordinated international effort to early recovery and reconstruction in Gaza," it said, also calling for full humanitarian access. "The EU deeply deplores the unacceptable number of civilians, especially women and children, who have lost their lives, and the catastrophic humanitarian situation notably caused by the insufficient entry of aid into Gaza, in particular in the North." Israel launched its assault on Gaza after fighters from the Palestinian militant group Hamas stormed southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people and taking more than 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

More than 48,000 people have been killed in Gaza, according to Palestinian health officials. Much of the enclave has been laid waste with most of its 2.3 million pre-war population displaced multiple times, humanitarian agencies say. "The EU strongly opposes all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution," the document added, referring to its position that Palestinians should have an independent homeland alongside Israel.

## Many weary Ukrainians long for an end to war

KYIV (AP): After nearly three years of living under constant threat of Russian airstrikes while their troops fight a grinding campaign against Russia's invasion, many Ukrainians long for an end to the war - but now fear it could come on unfavorable terms. Top US and Russian officials plan to meet Tuesday in Saudi Arabia to discuss an end to the war - without Kyiv's participation - ranking some Ukrainians who worry they will be sidelined. "We are being destroyed, Ukraine is suffering, Ukraine is fighting. And our president does not participate?" Lidiia Odyntsova, 71, said with disbelief of the upcoming talks. "We are the victims. We should play first fiddle in these talks."

Standing with tears in her eyes beside a snow-covered memorial to fallen Ukrainian soldiers in central Kyiv, she said: "I will never forgive them! I will never forgive!" While Ukraine will not take part in Tuesday's talks, US State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said any actual peace negotiations would only take place with Ukraine's involvement. Still, many Ukrainians are watching a barrage of developments from the United States with apprehension. Ukrainian social media has been flooded with posts reflecting deep unease, and many remain anxiously glued to their phones for updates. US President Donald Trump last week sent shockwaves across both sides of the Atlantic after he agreed by phone with Russian President Vladimir Putin to begin negotiations - abruptly upending a long-standing US-led effort to isolate Moscow over its invasion.

Egypt's Al-Ahram newspaper said the proposal is designed to "refute American President Trump's logic" and counter "any other visions or plans that aim to change the geographic and demographic structure of Gaza Strip."



KYIV: Ukrainian servicemen prepare to fire an MRLS BM-21 'Grad' towards Russian army positions near Chasiv Yar, Donetsk region, Ukraine.

# N Korea slams US, Asian rivals for pursuing 'absurd' plans

SEOUL (AP): North Korea on Tuesday criticized the United States and Asian neighbors for pursuing the "absurd" goal of denuclearizing the North and said it will push to expand its nuclear forces under the direction of its authoritarian leader Kim Jong Un.

The statement by Pyongyang's Foreign Ministry came after the top diplomats of the US, South Korea and Japan met at a security conference in Germany and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening military cooperation and reinforcing an international sanctions regime to counter Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions. The North Korean ministry accused the US of trying to realize an "outdated and absurd plan" of denuclearizing the North and warned of "overwhelming and decisive counteraction" against its rivals if it perceives its security is under threat. It said the North will "consistently adhere to the new line of bolstering the nuclear force" established by Kim and "thoroughly deter the US and its vassal forces" from threats and blackmail against the North's sovereignty.

It was the latest North Korean statement accusing the US of maintaining hostile policies against Pyongyang, though state media has so far avoided directly naming US President Donald Trump, who, during

his first term, engaged in unprecedented summits with the North Korean leader. US Secretary of State Mark Rubio held a three-way meeting with the South Korean and Japanese foreign ministers in Munich, Germany, and reaffirmed their commitment to the North's "complete denuclearization" and maintaining an effective sanctions regime targeting the country's weapons program. The countries also agreed to bolster defense and deterrence, including by expanding three-way military exercises and strengthening Japan and South Korea's military capabilities, according to a joint statement released after the meeting.

Trump and Kim met three times in 2018 and 2019 during Trump's first term, but their diplomacy quickly collapsed over disagreements about exchanging the release of US-led sanctions for North Korean steps to wind down its nuclear and missile programs. North Korea has since suspended any meaningful talks with Washington and Seoul as Kim ramped up his testing activity and military demonstrations to counter what he portrayed as "gangster-like US threats." Kim's foreign policy priority is now Russia, which he has supplied with weapons and troops to help prolong Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

Seoul fears that Kim may receive economic assistance and advanced technology to develop his arsenal in exchange for its military supporting Russia.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said a diplomatic delegation led by Kim Ik Song, director of the Bureau for Affairs with Diplomatic Corps, departed for Russia in the latest diplomatic activity between the countries. The agency didn't specify what will be discussed during the meetings. Trump's election win has touched off speculation about a possible resumption of summit-driven diplomacy with Kim, but analysts say a quick return to 2018 is unlikely, given the significant changes in the regional security situation and broader geopolitics since then.

North Korea's nuclear program is no longer an independent issue but connected with broader challenges created by Russia's war on Ukraine and further complicated by weakened sanctions enforcement against Pyongyang. Kim's efforts to boost North Korea's presence in a united front against Washington could also gain strength if Trump's efforts to increase tariffs and reset global trade rekindles a trade war with China, the North's main ally and economic lifeline, according to some experts.

# Russian troops intensify attacks on Ukrainian forces in east

KYIV (Reuters): Russian troops have sharply stepped up their attacks in eastern Ukraine, Kyiv's military said, as a NATO official predicted Moscow would increase the pace and intensity of its assaults with talks to end the war approaching.

The main attacks were concentrated near the imperilled logistics hub of Pokrovsk, Kyiv said, with US and Russian officials expected to hold talks in the coming days in Saudi Arabia and US President Donald Trump pushing for peace. Kyiv's military reported 261 combat engagements with Russia over a 24-hour period, easily the largest number recorded this year and more than double the roughly 100 per day it reported in previous days.

"Today was the hardest day of 2025 at the front," the Ukrainian DeepState military blog wrote. A late evening report by the military showed the number of engagements over a 24-hour period had declined to

117. Thirty-eight occurred in the Pokrovsk sector, with one still going on. Russia's military reported the capture of the village of Berezivka, northeast of Pokrovsk.

Ukrainian reports did not mention the village but its report said the adjacent settlement of Vodiane Druhe was one of several under attack in the area. Moscow's troops advanced steadily in the east for much of the second half of 2024, announcing the capture of village after village, though the intensity of the fighting dropped in January this year, according to Ukrainian military data.

Russian forces have seized a swathe of territory to the south of Pokrovsk and are now pushing upwards to its southwest, threatening a main supply route into the outpost, the capture of which could open up more lines of attack for Russia. Despite being on the backfoot, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reported a "good result" in the east and a military spokesman said Kyiv's forces had recaptured the village of Pishchane, about 5 km to Pokrovsk's south. "It isn't so much the result of something collapsing for the Russians or some kind of magical weapon being delivered to Ukraine, no. Certain organizational actions were taken to help Ukrainians act more effectively," Viktor Trehubov, a military spokesman, told Reuters.

Ukraine has been using drones for deep strikes on Russia in an effort to inflict pain and strengthen its overall position. Russia has continued to conduct regular drone and missile strikes, while making advances on the ground in the east. "I would expect a much stronger push. I would expect that we would see ... a lot of Russian efforts to advance," a NATO official who requested anonymity told Reuters. Though Ukrainian officials are careful to praise Trump, his

push to engage directly with the Russians without first consulting with Kyiv and to leave out the Europeans entirely is a cause for alarm in Ukraine and Europe. Kyiv has said it was not invited to take part in the talks in Saudi Arabia and that in any case it wants to devise a joint strategy with its US and European allies before meeting Russian officials.

France said it would host a summit of European leaders to discuss the Ukraine war and European security as the continent scrambles to respond concretely to Trump's unilateral approach to the conflict. Zelenskyy gave figures for Russian strikes with aerial bombs and missiles that appeared to suggest they had increased in size in the last week. He said Russia had fired about 1,220 aerial bombs, more than 850 drones and 40 missiles at Ukraine, compared with 1,206, bombs, 750 drones and 10 missiles the week before.

# China urges US to 'correct its mistakes'

BEIJING/TAIPEI (Reuters): China urged the United States to "correct its mistakes" after the US State Department removed previous wording on its website about not supporting Taiwan independence, which it said was part of a routine update. The fact sheet on Taiwan, updated last week, retains Washington's opposition to unilateral change from either Taiwan or from China, which claims the democratically governed island as its own.

But as well as dropping the phrase "we do not support Taiwan independence", the page added a reference to Taiwan's cooperation with a Pentagon technology and semiconductor development project and says the US will support Taiwan's membership in international organisations "where applicable". Beijing regularly denounces any international recognition of Taiwan or contact between Taiwanese and foreign officials, viewing it as encouraging Taiwan's separate status from China.

The update to the website came roughly three weeks after US President Donald Trump was sworn

in to his second term in the White House. Speaking in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said the revisions for Taiwan on the US State Department's website were a big step backwards and "sends a seriously wrong message to Taiwan independence separatist forces".

"This is yet another example of the United States' stubborn adherence to the erroneous policy of 'using Taiwan to suppress China'. We urge the United States side to immediately rectify its mistakes," Guo said. The United States, like most countries, has no formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan but is its strongest international backer, bound by law to provide the island with the means to defend itself. "As is routine, the fact sheet was updated to inform the general public about our unofficial relationship with Taiwan," a State Department spokesperson said in an email sent Taiwan time responding to questions on the updated website wording.

"The United States remains committed to its one China policy," the spokesperson said, refer-

ring to Washington officially taking no position on Taiwan's sovereignty and only acknowledging China's position on the subject. "The United States is committed to preserving peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," the spokesperson said. "We oppose any unilateral changes to the status quo from either side. We support cross-Strait dialogue, and we expect cross-Strait differences to be resolved by peaceful means, free from coercion, in a manner acceptable to people on both sides of the Strait." Taiwan Foreign Minister Lin Chia-lung expressed his appreciation for what he called the "support and positive stance on US-Taiwan relations".

Taiwan's government rejects Beijing's sovereignty claims, saying that only the island's people can decide their future. Taiwan says it is already an independent country called the Republic of China, its official name. The Republican government fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing a civil war with Mao Zedong's communists, who set up the People's Republic of China.

# Egypt developing a plan to rebuild Gaza

CAIRO (AP): Egypt is developing a plan to rebuild Gaza without forcing Palestinians out of the strip in a counter to President Donald Trump's proposal to depopulate the territory so the US can take it over. Egypt's state-run Al-Ahram newspaper said the proposal calls for establishing "secure areas" within Gaza where Palestinians can live initially while Egyptian and international construction firms remove and rehabilitate the strip's infrastructure.

Egyptian officials have been discussing the plan with European diplomats as well as with Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, according to two Egyptian officials and Arab and Western diplomats. They are also discussing ways to fund the reconstruction, including an interna-

tional conference on Gaza reconstruction, said one of the Egyptian officials and an Arab diplomat. The officials and diplomats spoke on condition of anonymity because the proposal is still being negotiated. The proposal comes after an international uproar over Trump's call for the removal of Gaza's population of some 2 million Palestinians. Trump said the United States would take over the Gaza Strip and rebuild it into a "Riviera of the Middle East," though Palestinians would not be allowed back. Palestinians have widely said they will not leave their homeland, while Egypt, Jordan - backed by Saudi Arabia - have refused Trump's calls for them to take in Gaza's population. Rights groups have widely said the plan amounts to

forced expulsion, a potential war crime. European countries have also largely denounced Trump's plan. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has praised the idea and says Israel is preparing to implement it. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who was in Saudi Arabia in a tour of the region, has said the United States was up to hearing alternative proposals. "If the Arab countries have a better plan, then that's great," Rubio said on the US radio program "Clay and Buck Show."

Egypt's Al-Ahram newspaper said the proposal is designed to "refute American President Trump's logic" and counter "any other visions or plans that aim to change the geographic and demographic structure of Gaza Strip."

# Taiwan considering multi-billion dollar arms purchase from US

WASHINGTON/TAIPEI (Reuters): Taiwan is exploring buying arms worth billions of dollars from the United States, sources briefed on the matter said, hoping to win support from the new Trump administration as China continues to apply military pressure on the island.

Three sources familiar with the situation, speaking to Reuters on condition of anonymity given the sensitivity of the situation, told Reuters that Taiwan is in talks with Washington. The package is meant to demonstrate to the United States that Taiwan is committed to its defense, one of the sources said.

A second source said the package would include coastal defense cruise missiles and HIMARS rockets. "I would be very surprised if it was less than \$8 billion. Somewhere between \$7 bil-

lion to \$10 billion," the source added. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment. However, US national security adviser Mike Waltz has said he wants to speed delivery of weapons to Taiwan. Taiwan's defense ministry declined to comment on specific purchases but said it is focused on building its defenses.

"Any weaponry and equipment that can achieve those goals for building the military are listed as targets for tender," it said. China claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory and has never renounced the use of force to bring the island under its control. Taiwan strongly objects to China's sovereignty claims and says only the island's people can decide their future. US President Donald Trump

unnerved chip powerhouse Taiwan on the election campaign trail by saying the island stole American semiconductor business. This month, he threatened tariffs on chip imports. But his administration maintained diplomatic support for the Chinese-claimed island.

Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba issued a joint statement on February 7 opposing any attempt to change the current situation in the Taiwan Strait through force or coercion. The US State Department also removed language on its website that it does not support Taiwan independence, a move praised by the island's government. China has urged the US to "correct its mistakes". Taiwan plans to propose a special defense budget that prioritizes precision ammunition, air-

defense upgrades, command and control systems, equipment for the reserve forces and anti-drone technology, a third source familiar with the matter said. During his 2017-2021 term, Trump established regular arms sales to Taiwan, including multi-billion dollar deals for F-16 fighter jets. The Biden administration continued these sales, though often with smaller price tags. Taiwanese officials see encouraging signs from Trump's administration even as tariff threats weigh on that optimism.

Taiwan does not believe Trump is looking to make a "grand bargain" with Chinese President Xi Jinping to sell out Taiwan's interests, one of the sources said. Trump is more concerned with putting tariffs on semiconductors, the source said.

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## All stakeholders must be included in Ukraine peace process

**I**T was all very "America first". And given the remarks of the US leader beforehand, forewarned.

Yet European leaders were still left shell-shocked by the barrage of criticism that came their way at the just-concluded Munich Security Conference. They were also left aghast at the possibility of the United States striking a deal with Russia on the Ukraine crisis without them having any say. Even Kyiv, it appeared was not to be involved.

While the US messaging was walked back to a degree subsequently, Tuesday's talks in Saudi Arabia between the US and Russia were still being viewed with some anxiety by European countries, suspicious of what might be on the table for discussion. After all, it was not so long ago that the US said those not at the table were going to be on the menu.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that Kyiv would neither participate in nor accept the results of the talks because it was not invited or notified. In addition, European leaders held an emergency meeting in Paris on Monday and expressed their concerns about the possibility of them being excluded from relevant peace talks. They are adamant that how the conflict ends concerns not only Ukraine's security, but also that of Europe.

China has always believed that dialogue and negotiation are the only viable way to resolve the crisis, and it has made consistent efforts to promote peace talks.

It supports all efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of the crisis, and welcomes all efforts to that end, including the talks between the US and Russia. At the same time, it expects all relevant parties and stakeholders to be included in any peace process.

Past experience shows that a conflict, when prolonged, tends to deteriorate and escalate, even to an extent unthinkable for the parties concerned. The Ukraine conflict is once again imparting that lesson. It has already had far-reaching consequences, and there has been the growing risk of a broader confrontation between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Russia, and even concerns it may trigger a nuclear war.

So it should be to the relief of the world that both sides directly engaged in the hostilities have given indications that they are now willing to end the conflict at the negotiating table.

China's position on the Ukraine crisis has always been that the earlier talks start, the sooner peace will arrive. That has not changed.

It continues to maintain communication with relevant parties and seeks to play a constructive role in promoting the political settlement of the crisis, urging that both sides' concerns be addressed.

With the crisis now having seemingly reached a critical moment for its resolution, the talks between Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio — the first high-level, in-person discussions in years between the two countries — should be viewed as a positive development.

Such diplomatic engagement is critical to get the ball of peace talks rolling. But while China is glad to see "enhanced communication and dialogue" between Russia and the US, as a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said, it wants the peace process to produce a sustainable European security architecture, not just a quick-fix deal aimed at achieving a notable diplomatic success to fulfill the US president's election promise.

So that a fair, lasting, binding and mutually acceptable agreement is forthcoming, as Beijing urged, all parties and stakeholders should participate in the peace talks process in a timely manner.

Since the conflict is being fought in Europe, China believes that it is necessary for Europe to play a role in the peace process. The final outcome of the negotiations should be a balanced, workable and lasting European security architecture that is truly conducive to lasting security in Europe.

China hopes that the latest developments are generating momentum toward the restoration of peace on the European continent. In the current circumstances, all parties need to remain calm, exercise restraint, and avoid any move that might complicate the crisis.

A solution that is truly conducive to lasting security in Europe would be a boon for the world. China will do all it can to play a constructive role to this end.

### Important Notice

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



## Champions Trophy 2025 kicks off amid India's traditional stubbornness

Shahid Afridi

**A**FTER 29 years an ICC mega event returns to Pakistan as the ninth edition of the Champions Trophy commences today at the National Stadium in Karachi. Despite India's traditional reluctance the tournament is set to begin with the opening match between hosts Pakistan and New Zealand. Matches will be held across multiple venues, three games each at the National Stadium in Karachi and Rawalpindi Stadium while five matches are conditionally scheduled at Gaddafi Stadium Lahore and Dubai International Stadium. The semi-finals and final will only be played in Dubai if India qualifies otherwise only three group matches will be held there.

The tournament features eight teams divided into two groups Group A consists of Pakistan, India, New Zealand and Bangladesh while Group B includes Australia, England, South Africa and Afghanistan. Afghanistan is making its debut in the Champions Trophy.

The tournament has been hosted three times in England while Bangladesh, Kenya, India, Sri Lanka and South Africa have each hosted it once. Pakistan's squad for the tournament will be led by wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan and includes key players such as Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, Kamran Ghulam, Saud Shakeel, Tayyab Tahir, Faheem Ashraf, Khushdil Shah, Salman Ali Agha,

Usman Khan, Abrar Ahmed, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Hasnain, Naseem Shah and Shaheen Shah Afridi.

Fakhar Zaman who scored a century against India in the 2017 ICC Champions Trophy final makes his comeback. However the selection of the squad has sparked criticism particularly over the inclusion of Faheem Ashraf who has neither recent performances nor a strong record to justify his selection. Similarly Khushdil Shah and Mohammad Hasnain have failed to impress and their inclusion has raised doubts. Imam-ul-Haq who was initially picked for the West Indies series was dropped without getting a chance. Many argue that Imam should have replaced Khushdil while Irfan Khan and Sufiyan Muqeem or Sajid Khan should have been preferred over Faheem Ashraf and Mohammad Hasnain given the spin-friendly conditions in Dubai and Pakistan. With this squad Pakistan's chances of reaching the semi-finals seem slim as evident from their poor performance in the tri-series against New Zealand where they lost both a group match and the final.

Looking at the history of the Champions Trophy the highest team total in the tournament belongs to New Zealand who scored 347/4 against the USA on September 10, 2004, at The Oval. The second-highest total was Pakistan's 338/4 against India in the 2017 final also at The Oval. The

lowest total record belongs to the USA who were bowled out for 65 against Australia on September 13, 2004, in Southampton. Bangladesh holds the second-lowest total having been dismissed for 77 against New Zealand on September 23, 2002, in Colombo.

The highest individual score in a single innings belongs to New Zealand's NJ Astle who scored an unbeaten 145 against the USA on September 10, 2004. Among Pakistani players Shoaib Malik, Fakhar Zaman and Saeed Anwar have scored centuries in the tournament with Saeed Anwar achieving this feat twice.

The leading run-scorer in Champions Trophy history is West Indies' Chris Gayle who scored 791 runs in 17 matches between 2002 and 2013 at an average of 52.73 with a highest score of 133. He is followed by Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardene who scored 742 runs in 22 matches from 2002 to 2013, averaging 41.22.

The highest wicket-taker in the tournament is New Zealand's KD Mills, who claimed 28 wickets in 15 matches between 2002 and 2013, averaging 17.25, with best bowling figures of 4/30. Sri Lanka's Lasith Malinga is second on the list with 25 wickets in 16 matches between 2006 and 2017, with best figures of 4/34.

The ICC Champions Trophy is a quadrennial ODI cricket tournament organized by the

International Cricket Council (ICC). It was first held as the ICC KnockOut Trophy in 1998 and was initially played every two years. In 2002, it was rebranded as the ICC Champions Trophy and later became a four-yearly event from 2009 onwards. In 2016, the ICC announced the cancellation of future Champions Trophy editions with the 2017 tournament serving as the last major event in this format. However in November 2021 the ICC revised its international calendar and reinstated the Champions Trophy from 2025 onwards.

Over the past 27 years the Champions Trophy has been played eight times producing multiple different winners. South Africa won the inaugural tournament in 1998, followed by New Zealand in 2000. In 2002, India and Sri Lanka were declared joint winners after the final and reserve day were washed out. The fourth edition in 2004 saw West Indies emerge victorious. Australia won back-to-back titles in 2006 and 2009 while India secured its second title in 2013 (first as sole winners). Pakistan won the tournament for the first time in 2017, defeating India in the final in England.

As the defending champions Pakistan will begin their title defense in the 2025 Champions Trophy aiming to retain their crown in front of home fans.

*Writer is a senior sports journalist and Secretary General of Sports Writers Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*

## Saudi Arabia's rise as a global diplomacy broker

Osama Al-Sharif

**S**AUDI Arabia is solidifying its position as a global and regional diplomatic hub. On Friday, Riyadh will host the leaders of the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries, in addition to Jordan and Egypt, to discuss an Arab plan for the reconstruction of Gaza without displacing its 2.2 million inhabitants. Once approved, the plan will be presented at the meeting of Arab leaders in Cairo at the end of the month. It will become a counterproposal to President Donald Trump's plan to displace the people of Gaza while taking over the beleaguered enclave and turning it into a regional riveria.

And on Tuesday, in the Saudi capital, senior US and Russian officials kicked off preparatory meetings aimed at setting the parameters for a plan to end the war in Ukraine ahead of a proposed summit between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Saudi Arabia.

The choice of the Kingdom as a diplomatic hub for conflict resolution initiatives indicates the country's growing influence regionally and globally as it implements a foreign policy that seeks to keep its doors open in all directions.

When President Trump suggested that the US would "own" Gaza and displace its inhabitants, ostensibly on humanitarian grounds, his suggestion sent shock waves across the globe, but particularly through the region. His proposal rattled Jordan and Egypt, the two countries that Trump called on to receive the Palestinians displaced from Gaza. But more importantly, it signaled a dangerous departure from the decades-old policy that was anchored

in international law. Such a proposal, if executed, would further destabilize the region and bring down the foundations of the current global order.

So, when Jordan's King Abdullah met with Trump at the White House last week, his response to Trump's idea was that Arab leaders had been invited by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, whose country has rejected any attempt to displace the Palestinians from their land, to work on an Arab plan for the reconstruction of Gaza without the displacement of its people.

The choice of the venue is essential. Trump understands the importance of Saudi Arabia politically and economically. It was the first country he visited at the outset of his first term. Early in his second term, the president spoke of the Kingdom's importance, especially as an economic powerhouse valuable to the US economy.

The Arab plan for Gaza will be agreed to in Riyadh will receive recognition and support not only in the Arab and Muslim worlds but also beyond. Already, many European, African, Asian and Latin American leaders have decryd any attempt to displace the Palestinians, while supporting efforts to rebuild the enclave.

Egypt has been working on the details of the proposed plan, which calls for an independent body of technocrats to administer the Palestinian enclave without the participation of Hamas or any other faction. A plan to rebuild the Strip will be implemented through the World Bank and other regional and international bodies without the displacement of the inhabi-

tants.

Once such a plan is approved, a senior Arab delegation will present it to Trump. All indications point to a positive reception by the Americans, who will ensure that all parties, including Israel, abide by it.

In terms of the Ukraine war, the Saudis have followed a wise foreign policy since the beginning of the conflict, adhering to the principles of international law without alienating any of the parties involved.

In May 2023, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was invited to address the Arab League Summit in Jeddah. And while Ukraine will not be a party to the US-Russian preparatory talks in Riyadh, Zelensky will visit Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, one day after a meeting there between top Russian and US officials. Likewise, Putin visited Saudi Arabia in December 2023, a rare foreign trip by the Russian leader since the war with Ukraine broke out in February 2022. He met with the Saudi crown prince, who he had last seen in 2019.

Riyadh's balanced approach to the Russia-Ukraine crisis has presented it as an acceptable venue for the US-Russian talks and the planned Putin-Trump summit. Saudi Arabia has played a key role in mediation and in resolving its own conflicts with other nations. In March 2023, Riyadh embraced a Chinese initiative to normalize ties with Iran, which has succeeded in strengthening relations between the two regional powers.

The Saudis have been active in attempts to end the war in Sudan, bring peace to Yemen and rebuild war-torn

Syria, while supporting the election of a new president in Lebanon and helping to bring peace and stability to Iraq, among other things.

Addressing the core of the region's instability, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Kingdom presented the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002 and this remains the benchmark for a just and lasting peace in the region based on the two-state solution.

Riyadh's past successes, such as brokering the Taif Agreement in 1989 to end the civil war in Lebanon, and its current strategic positioning suggest a potential for significant influence in shaping the new global landscape. This carefully orchestrated approach has enabled Saudi Arabia to create political and commercial alliances with countries like China, India and Russia and blocs like BRICS, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and others.

This diplomatic dynamism did not come at the expense of the Kingdom's decades-old alliances and partnerships with countries like the US and blocs like the EU. Saudi Arabia has also worked to mend relations within the Gulf region, particularly after the 2017 diplomatic crisis with Qatar. Efforts at reconciliation have included high-level meetings and discussions aimed at restoring cooperation among GCC member states.

As part of its Vision 2030 reform plan, Saudi Arabia is using its diplomatic reach to improve its international leverage. This includes efforts toward conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives. Today, it has become the locomotive that pulls other countries in the region toward a more stable and prosperous future.

## AMAN - A prudent investment by Pakistan

Rear Admiral ret'd Faisal Shah

**T**HE 9th edition of Exercise AMAN was culminated on February 11, 2025, with an impressive International Fleet Review displaying unity at sea. It was a four-day mega event in which more than sixty countries, one hundred and twenty delegates and seventeen Chiefs of Navies and heads of organisations participated. For the first time it had AMAN Dialogue which was themed as "Secure Seas - Prosperous Future." Interpreting this theme one can easily discern that the agenda of Dialogue was focussed more on Maritime Security and Blue Economy.

To understand the economic benefits that Indian Ocean carries not only for its littorals but also for the landlocked countries in the region it is important to know its salient features. It has one fifth of the water bodies of the world and is the busiest trade route for international community. It has some critical chokepoints of the world namely Strait of Hormuz joining Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, Bab Al Mandab joining Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and Strait of Malacca connecting Andaman Sea and South China Sea. About forty percent of world's oil passes through Strait of Hormuz and daily transportation is around 20M barrels out of which 18M barrels pass via Malacca Strait. Bab Al Mandab handles fifty percent of international trade, while ninety five percent of world's digital infrastructure joining Asia with Europe lies underneath it. There is a wealth of minerals and resources in Indian Ocean which serve the whole mankind. Understandably, there are challenges like piracy, illegal trafficking, smuggling and terrorism which are aimed at stealing these resources. The upcoming challenges such as climate change effects, use of emerging technologies and cyberspace are further compounding this situation. Indian Ocean has been a conflict zone and a place for agreements. It is thus marred with traditional and non-traditional threats.

While the traditional threats and challenges are specifically between countries which may and may not affect others sitting on the fence, it is the non-traditional threats that affect everybody in the region and beyond which merit our due attention. Climate change has made Indian Ocean as the warmest ocean due to which its temperature and water level are rising. This phenomenon has cast some serious repercussions at different places. For instance, there has been a decrease in oxygen while increase in acidification in water mandating use of special material for ships, port and offshore infrastructure affecting economy. It also results in lack of biodiversity and fish migration, depriving people of their age-old profession of fishing and persuading them for migration. Land inundation has also been observed due to rise in water level, making people losing their valuable land pieces. These all activities are costly in terms of economy. The use of emerging technologies especially by the non state actors is a serious concern as it can hurt the peaceful environment of the region adversely. For example, a ship sailing on navigation aids is hacked and directed to an unknown destination where either it is captured by pirates or is run aground, especially in restricted waters where international traffic can be impeded. Such is a devastating scenario not only for the countries involved in trade via this particular ship but in case of its grounding in restricted waters a larger community will be severely affected. The nontraditional challenges and threats are the ones requiring collaboration

and cooperation between international community as no single country can negotiate these alone.

The countries linked to Indian Ocean are therefore naturally in a quest to find and form a platform that serves the purpose of acting together. AMAN is Pakistan's premier initiative that gathers regional and extra regional countries to form a bulwark against enemies of peace and prosperity at sea. It was initiated in year 2007 with participation of 28 countries which over the period have grown to 60. With this number, AMAN has become a global forum as countries from around the world formed part of it. During the current event, it was a galaxy of maritime professionals with friends and foes together at one place undergoing same activities. This time's uniqueness was marked by AMAN Dialogue, a departure from the normal practice of holding conference, which was attended by 17 chiefs of navies and maritime organisations. They shared their valuable experiences, observations and foresights with rest of the participants. Hailing from different regions it was an explicit treasure of first-hand information. Focus was particularly accorded to Blue Economy and best practices in this field were discussed. It was valuable for Pakistan to learn from the experiences of people from different regions as we still lag behind in tapping this resource.

The adversaries of Pakistan have been claiming to isolate it diplomatically. While such claims have been defied by Pakistan on many occasions, AMAN has been doing it every two years. The growing number of countries every time is indicative of countries' realisation that AMAN is a prudent platform where they can share their ideas and reap tangible benefits. The growing number also endorses Pakistan's resolve to bringing peace for prosperity. It has also been a sign of their trust on Pakistan Navy's exceptional capability to look after them during their stay in Pakistan.

The key highlights of AMAN Dialogue 2025 were spread over two main things, continuation of efforts against the existing challenges while forming a formidable strategy for the upcoming threats to benefit from the treasures that Indian Ocean retains. The learned speakers shared their own vision of the prevailing dynamics and expressed their thoughts on countering upcoming ones. There was a cultural display from many countries that included food stalls, dance performances and attires. It is important to have such cultural exchanges which help understanding the thought processes of people hailing from different parts of the world. An impressive maritime counter-terrorism display by Pakistan Navy's special forces authenticated their capability to thwart such threats at sea. On the last day there was a joint exercise between ships, submarines, aircraft and helicopters from different countries which culminated in International Fleet Review witnessed by the dignitaries.

AMAN 2025 was overall a spectacular show which not only included talks but a practical demonstration of cooperation and collaboration that Pakistan and Pakistan Navy have always pursued.

It is now time to harvest the goodwill and professional applaud that Pakistan Navy has earned for the common good of all. AMAN is no doubt a prudent investment by Pakistan which must be navigated towards making it a more productive platform for peace and prosperity simultaneously.

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# Trump’s rush for a deal with Putin leaves Ukraine and Europe scrambling

**A dangerous fault line is opening as Donald Trump rushes to end the war in Ukraine.**

The US president craves an early political triumph to fuel his claims to a Nobel Peace Prize. But an equitable end to the conflict may defy a quick fix since it poses existential issues for Ukraine and European security.

This tension was exacerbated by the president’s decision to exclude officials from Kyiv and European powers from US-Russia talks that took place in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday. The meeting lasted more than four hours and was described by a member of Moscow’s negotiating team as “positive.”

The fate of his push to end the war will ultimately rest on whether his swift pace can accommodate critical details of a peace that allows Ukraine to survive, secures the borders and security of Europe and avoids rewarding Russia’s illegal invasion.

Trump has shown little obvious concern for any of these three goals – one reason why his strategy is a gamble.

But each party in the process has grave concerns and significant leverage, which explains why ending the war will be far harder than his failed campaign trail promises to forge peace in 24 hours.

The war often seems a distraction from what Trump really wants – the chance to sit down with Putin, one of the global strongmen he admires.

Still, there’s a chance that Trump’s urgency and power, plus that channel with the Russian leader, could change the dynamics of this World War I-style war of attrition.

Trump is, for instance, only voicing a reality that many US and European officials have shared privately for months: that Ukraine can no longer win the war and eject Russia from all the territory it has seized.

Trump’s subordinates endlessly laud him as the world’s greatest dealmaker. But his efforts so far seem naive.

He’s conceded some of Russia’s top goals, often seems to empathize with the goals of the invasion and has turned on America’s European friends who’ve shared the cost of supporting Ukraine’s war effort. Those are the same allies who

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth says must police any peace alone.

In his most extraordinary move, Trump tried to claim half of Ukraine’s rare earth metals wealth — in a play that exploited an invaded nation’s desperate vulnerability. President Volodymyr Zelensky rejected the “deal.”

Trump appears to have little understanding of the historical hazards either in Ukraine or indeed in the Middle East, given his plan to move the Palestinians from Gaza so he can build beach resorts.

Trump’s view of every geopolitical crisis as a real estate deal waiting to be clinched suggests he might embrace an agreement that lets Putin keep all of the land he’s stolen just to stop the killing.

And there’s a big risk he’s being played by Putin. The Russian leader warmed the atmosphere ahead of the Saudi talks by handing Trump victories with the release of several US prisoners, including on Monday with Kalob Byers, 28, who was arrested on drug smuggling charges last week.

And Trump thinks he came away from his call with the Russian leader last week with a pledge to talk sweeping nuclear arms cuts. This is one reason why the Saudi talks involving Secretary of State Marco Rubio and national security adviser Mike Waltz are so important: They must test Russia’s seriousness and protect Trump from overzealous interpretations of Russian concessions.

The stakes are huge. A hurried peace deal that strengthens Russia and weakens European security by validating Putin’s expansionism would likely sow the seeds for an even worse future war.

At the end of the Cold War, President George H.W. Bush managed the fall of the Soviet Union and its satellite states in Eastern Europe — sometimes overruling regional leaders in the wider interests of the West and their own security. There’s no sign that Trump feels any such affinity for Europe or its future.

While Trump craves political glory, Zelensky is fighting for something far more profound: his country’s survival, now and as a future viable, independent sovereign state. Trump’s decision to open talks with Russia in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday without Ukraine

**Stephen Collinson**

raised fears he’s targeting a quick agreement with Putin that he’d then impose on Kyiv.

Zelensky warned last week at the Munich Security Conference that he would “never accept deals made behind our backs without our involvement.” But if Trump walks away, Zelensky would have to decide whether to fight on without US arms and ammunition and to rely on Europe’s lesser punch.

Zelensky understands that he can’t count on US support with Trump in the White House and said last week it was time to form a European army because, “the old days are over when America supported Europe just because it always had.”

Trump has given few signs that he’s got Ukraine’s interests at heart. Last week, for instance, he echoed one of Putin’s rationales for the war, saying that Ukraine’s NATO aspirations helped trigger Russia’s invasion.

This new US empathy with the invader, rather than the invaded party, is why Europe’s participation in peace talks is necessary to even the playing field. But Trump is already looking beyond Zelensky, who was the recipient of the telephone call that led to Trump’s first impeachment in his first term. He said last week that Ukraine needs elections “at some point” after a peace deal and archly noted that Zelensky’s poll numbers were “not great.”

This is another Russian talking point that Trump has picked up — even though the idea that Putin, who sustains his long rule with sham elections, has any credibility in talking about elections is absurd.

Trump said on Sunday that he’s convinced after his phone call with Putin that the Russian leader wants to end the war. “I think he wants to stop fighting. I see that. We spoke long and hard,” the US president said.

But strategically, Putin may have reasons to keep fighting. Despite horrendous losses, his forces are making grinding progress on the blood-soaked battlefield.

The Russian president has already achieved some of his goals before sitting down with Trump. The US president has shattered Putin’s status as a pariah in the West by speaking enthusiastically about the

possibility of summits in both the US and Russia. And by ruling out a path to NATO membership for Ukraine and the deployment of any US troops to keep an eventual peace, the Trump administration has given up key potential sources of leverage.

Putin might have failed in his bid to capture all of Ukraine, to take Kyiv and to replace Zelensky with a pro-Moscow leader. But he’s carved off a big chunk of territory in the southeast that he can use to protect Crimea and that offers a long shoreline along the strategically vital Black Sea coast.

Russia must now calculate whether its potential payoff for handing Trump a huge win with a peace deal will outweigh the benefits of continuing to fight. The lifting of US and European sanctions, for example, would free the Russian economy, and Trump is already demanding that Putin be readmitted to the Group of Eight industrialized nations.

Most scenarios for ending the war envisage a hard border between eastern and western Ukraine — reminiscent of communist East Germany and West Germany that emerged from World War II.

History suggests that Putin would use such territory to replenish his military for a possible future resumption of hostilities or to destabilize the rest of Ukraine with the hope of eventually getting a sympathetic government in Kyiv.

He’s long assessed he could wait out the West on Ukraine. His bet now seems likely to pay off as he seeks to to reconstitute the historic Russian empire and Moscow’s regional sphere of influence.

Putin is playing a far longer game than America’s lame duck president who’s desperate for a quick deal.

Until a few weeks ago, some European diplomats and foreign policy opinion formers were suggesting that alarm over Trump’s reelection was overblown, and that the new president’s volatility could be handled.

So, the hostility of Hegseth and Vice President JD Vance in Europe last week was a rude awakening. As was Trump’s shattering of Western unity over Ukraine by sending his team to discuss peace with Putin’s team before consulting Europe.

In retrospect, it’s baffling why European governments were so surprised. Trump is only doing what he said he’d do on the campaign trail. Their misreading of the US president led to the embarrassing spectacle of key leaders rushing to Paris for emergency talks on Monday to work out how to respond to being cut out of the game.

The outcome of the Ukrainian war is almost as vital for Europe as it is for Ukraine. A peace deal that strengthens Russia would leave the continent facing an emboldened enemy just as the US threatens to walk away from 80 years of security guarantees to its allies.

Europe’s severely depleted armed forces after years of budget cuts makes it doubtful it can sustain a meaningful peace force in Ukraine after any peace agreement.

And new promises of surged defense spending could take years to fill the gaps and will be a heavy political lift that will require cuts in social spending.

But British Prime Minister Keir Starmer warned after the Paris talks on Monday that Europe faced a “once in a generation moment.” In another sign that Europeans are trying to get their act together, Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, wrote on X that Ukraine deserves “peace through strength,” echoing Trump’s new buzzword for his “America First” foreign policy.

Starmer offered to send UK troops to help monitor any peace deal in Ukraine as part of an international force, but with one important caveat — that there’s a US “backstop” since such a guarantee would be the only way to prevent Russia from invading Ukraine again.

His comment showed that European leaders understand that they’d be exposing their troops without US support and could risk getting into a war with Russia themselves.

Starmer, who plans to meet Trump in Washington next week, is offering himself as a bridge between European powers and the US president, while trying to repair Britain’s global clout that has waned since it left the European Union.

There are just two problems: Trump doesn’t seem interested in a bridge. And there’s little sign he really cares what the Europeans think.

— CNN

# British Imam who reached out to far-right rioters says dialogue is central to breaking faith stereotypes

**A Muslim cleric who last year reached out to offer food, drinks and hugs to hundreds of protesters gathered outside the UK’s oldest mosque says regular dialogue is critical to recognise the “human in the other side”.**

When Imam Adam Kelwick invited rioters into Liverpool’s Abdullah Quilliam mosque and embraced a far-right protester in August last year, he became an online sensation.

The riots were sparked by a fake social media campaign that falsely claimed a Muslim asylum seeker was responsible for stabbing to death three young girls and seriously wounding eight others at a Taylor Swift dance class in the seaside town of Southport, 30km from Liverpool on July 29. This led to days of rioting, attacks on shops and violent protests across England and Wales.

“For as long as the Muslim is the other ... it will be a scary character that you’re building up,” Mr Kelwick told The National. “But when people meet in person and interact, that’s when we can break the ice and get to know each other. We ask people to speak to us face-to-face, we build friendships, we have coffee, we have snacks and that’s usually when the magic happens.”

Mr Kelwick was in Abu Dhabi to speak at In Dialogue, a conference held on Monday at the Abrahamic Family House.

He detailed how his outreach efforts have continued well after last year’s protests as has “made friends” with the ringleaders of the demonstrations, met for meals and organised community walks in the countryside.

“I’ve been invited with the Muslim communities to some of their gyms and boxing rings. They’ve offered to train our youngsters up and they come to the mosque,” he said. “I’ve appeared on some of their podcasts and the message is getting out to their followers.”

**Ramola Talwar Badam**

lowers that Muslims aren’t all these terrorist extremist monsters who are trying to take over of the world.”

The imam spoke out against spreading hatred and misinformation on social media and emphasised the power of engagement.

“It’s actually when we stand together, eat or drink something together and listen to each other that people realise they are human just like me,” he said. “It’s when you talk, when you listen that all sides involved realise that the other is not a horrible monster ... This is about recognising the human in the other side.”

Mr Kelwick also spread the message within the Muslim community that all protesters were not “nasty, evil people” but there were some genuine people tagged as Islamophobic. He said it was important to “break through the anger and fear” and find solutions as both sides realise they faced similar issues from the rising cost of living to the decline of health services in the UK.

“Let’s go one step beyond that and be the solution to these problems,” he said. “When it comes to the crunch, you find out that they might not necessarily fit the stereotype, which we apply to them in the same way that we don’t fit the stereotypes they apply to us. Coming together as humans doesn’t leave any room for stereotypes any more. You meet people for who they are and that’s literally the solution to ignorance.”

Mr Kelwick said it was crucial to push back against labelling people and fitting them into boxes as Muslim, asylum seekers, legal and illegal immigrants. “As soon as any one person from any one of these groupings does anything wrong, everybody within that circle gets the blame ... and my message is ‘No, that’s not true.’”

Mr Kelwick added that cultural, sports figures, MMA Mixed Martial Arts

fighters helped improve understanding, noting the impact of Liverpool footballer Mohamed Salah in particular. “It’s an opportunity for high profile people to understand the importance and the responsibility of the position that they have,” he said. “We need to amplify positive messages and positive examples.”

Mr Kelwick also saw hope in the numerous anti-racist rallies showing solidarity with the Muslim community and immigrants that were held in the UK after the rioting.

“At the same time, we had protests against the mosque, against the Muslim community, we also had anti-racist protests which were bigger in size than the far right protests,” he recalled. “We had counter protests by hundreds of people from all walks of life from different religious communities. This shows the resilience that can be built from interfaith dialogue.”

With Ramadan around the corner, the cleric said it was not only about stopping indulgence in food and drink and spoke of the quality of forbearance or hilm in Arabic.

“The point is to improve your spirit, to train your spirit up,” he said. “If we’re talking about times where people are in conflict, one particular characteristic and quality we need, is the characteristic of forbearance. Forbearance is this awkward patience where you choose to respond to negativity with positivity. It’s the characteristic when you’re attacked, when you’re abused, you respond with positivity, kindness and generosity. The reason we exercise this hilm, this forbearance, is so we can both rise together.”

Asked about Israel’s war in Gaza, he said he prayed for the continuing ceasefire to hold. “Let’s continue to pray that we get some peace, some security, some justice, we get some mercy in that region, which is really, really lacking those things right now.”

# Israel’s violations of Palestinian culture

**WHILE Israel has been accused of war crimes and alleged genocidal intentions in Gaza, as well as enacting a harsh and repressive military policy against Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank, East Jerusalem has become a focal point for ongoing Israeli cultural violations affecting Palestinians. These actions in the hoped-for capital of Palestine have sparked international concern, as they threaten the preservation of Palestinian identity and heritage in the area.**

Jerusalem, the cradle of the three Abrahamic religions, has long been a cultural and religious hub for Palestinians. It is home to highly respected cultural institutions, artists and scholars. While Israel, which annexed East Jerusalem following its occupation in 1967, initially gave its residents a wide range of cultural space, the Oslo process that began in 1993 caused a major Israeli reversal.

In addition to the huge concrete wall Israel erected around the city, barring the rest of the West Bankers open access to the city, it has also cracked down on various symbols of cultural expression. Using the false claim of connectivity to the Palestinian national center in Ramallah, Israeli policies have increasingly restricted Palestinian cultural activities, often under the guise of security concerns.

Palestinian cultural events have routinely faced disruption. The Israeli authorities have imposed restrictions on festivals, performances and artistic gatherings, severely limiting the ability of Palestinians to celebrate and preserve their cultural identity.

Palestinian cultural institutions in East Jerusalem have experienced frequent raids and closures. In June 2013, Israel ordered the cancellation of a children’s puppet festival at a Palestinian theater in East Jerusalem, claiming the eight-day event had been unlawfully sponsored by the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinian National Theatre, also known as El-Hakawati Theatre, had been running an annual festival for children continuously for 18 years. It was previously barred by a military order based on the 1945 British Emergency Regulations.

Similar orders have been issued to stop what Israel considers national events, or if Tel Aviv believes that the Ramallah-based Palestinian government is involved in either funding, sponsoring or giving its blessing to such events. Using draconian decades-old laws inherited from the time of the British mandate, Israel has ordered the stoppage of events such as art exhibitions, music festivals and even the screening of a film about drug abuse in Jerusalem and an event to celebrate high school students’ accomplishments. More recently, this month’s raid on the Educational Bookshop and its owners’ arrest illustrate the ongoing Israeli attempts to suppress intellectual freedom by confiscating literature deemed provocative. As Nathan Thrall, a Pulitzer Prize-winning American author, commented regarding the bookstore incident: “To have a country ban books with the word Palestine in them is an outrage.”

Palestinian Minister of Culture Emad Hamdan emphasized the impact of the bookshop raid. “This attack is part of a systematic policy aimed at destroying the Palestinian cultural and educational structure in Jerusalem. These actions not only hinder cultural expression but also aim to fragment Palestinian society within Jerusalem,” he said. Cultural leaders and intellectuals frequently face harassment and arrest. These acts are perceived as attempts to silence influential voices advocating for Palestinian rights and cultural preservation. As writer and cultural consultant Rania Masri noted: “The suppression of cultural expression is not just a violation of rights; it is an attack on the very fabric of Palestinian identity.” Such measures contribute to a climate of fear and self-censorship, discouraging public expressions of Palestinian identity.

The cultural violations in East Jerusalem have drawn international condemnation from human rights organizations, diplomats and academics. Many argue that these actions violate international laws protecting cultural rights and heritage. The organization Index on Censorship called this month’s arrest of the booksellers a “brazen attack on freedom of expression.” It called for immediate action to halt the oppressive measures and advocate for the protection of Palestinian cultural and intellectual freedom.

Despite these adversities, Palestinians in East Jerusalem are striving to preserve their cultural heritage. Community organizations, artists and intellectuals continue to find innovative ways to express their identity, often supported by international solidarity movements. As celebrated Palestinian musician Omar Kamal remarked: “In the face of oppression, our art becomes a powerful declaration of our existence.”

The ongoing cultural violations against Palestinians in East Jerusalem highlight a significant challenge: the preservation of a community’s identity in the face of systemic suppression. While the dream of an independent Palestinian state continues to be quashed by Israeli actions, the artist community has been a major source of hope. Addressing these issues is essential not only for the sake of cultural heritage, but also for ensuring that fundamental human rights and freedoms are upheld.

As the international community continues to watch, the hope remains that renewed efforts will advocate for a more just and culturally inclusive future for all of Palestine, as well as for its people and its proposed capital, East Jerusalem.

# USAID should be cherished, not maligned

**FOR a new US administration to review the country’s main policies in terms of objectives and optimizing the resources allocated to attain them is understandable, completely legitimate and, above all, necessary. After all, the American people spoke last November at the ballot box and wanted a change. And foreign assistance is no exception.**

Nevertheless, President Donald Trump’s executive order to pause all foreign assistance funded by or through the State Department and the US Agency for International Development for 90 days pending a review of “programmatic efficiencies and consistency with United States foreign policy” was nothing short of demagoguery to justify wrecking the humanitarian world. It is a move that will not make America great again, but rather exactly the opposite.

For now, it might be the case that the federal judge who last Thursday ordered a temporary lift to this funding freeze that has shut down US aid and development work worldwide has created the space for the new administration to save face. It should rethink this policy, which is as damaging for the developing world as much as it is to US interests, but this is an administration that seems to keep digging whenever it is in a hole.

For those who argue that America needs to reinvent itself as great again, the solution is not to turn its

back on the world. One of the reasons that the US has been considered by many as a great nation is due to its foreign assistance programs since the end of the Second World War. And this has never been a form of charity, even if it has been charitable — this extension of its soft power has always been an important tool of foreign policy.

The Marshall Plan of 1947 was instrumental for the recovery of Europe and the rebuilding of its economies. Nevertheless, in return, it created markets for American goods and it enlarged the community of democracies that provided both an ideological safety net and strategic depth at the height of the Cold War. It was crucial for Europe’s security and prosperity, but equally so for the US.

USAID was established in 1961 by the Democratic President John F. Kennedy with the clear aim of allocating resources to certain countries to counter Soviet influence. Today, in a world where Washington competes with Beijing to influence developing countries, ending USAID paves the way for a major rival to replace America’s friendship and influence — two essential commodities in any sensible foreign policy.

It is true that foreign assistance is a large component of America’s international affairs budget, but for many decades both the executive and legislative branches of the US government have seen this as an instrument of foreign policy, serving America’s

**Yossi Mekelberg**

national security and commercial and humanitarian interests. Its objectives include promoting economic growth, reducing poverty, improving governance, expanding access to healthcare and education, promoting stability in conflict regions, countering terrorism, promoting human rights, strengthening alliances and curbing illicit drug production and trafficking. Moreover, since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, foreign aid has increasingly been correlated with national security policy.

Yes, it is a big expense and the agency under scrutiny. USAID, spends about \$40 billion — about 0.6 percent of the total annual US government spending — on humanitarian aid, much of which goes toward health programs. And in a time of relatively slow economic growth, when there are many competing domestic demands for federal budget assistance, it is understandable that some ask if these resources should not be diverted back to health, education and other good causes at home. But this is the superficial perception of foreign assistance, as draining domestic budgets in some sort of zero-sum game instead of striking the right balance between the two.

Moreover, the suggestion that these and other development agencies operate with no accountability ignores the fact that each of these programs has built-in monitoring and evaluation processes, both

internally and externally, which put to bed the wild allegations that they are infested with corruption and inefficiency. On the contrary, the agency works and supports local groups and activists, assisting a range of projects, from protecting children in war zones and areas hit by natural disasters to improving women’s health, ensuring access to clean water, treating HIV and AIDS, boosting energy security and anticorruption work, all of which help to make the world a better and safer place.

For the new US administration to single out USAID and foreign assistance more generally is partly ideological and partly populist gimmick. The latter is employed because, in times of economic hardship, it is a diversion from the need to deal head-on with the issues that are obstructing the growth of the US economy and the concomitant social hardships and divisions.

Instead, the claim is that the US is sending money to people abroad at the expense of “our own.” Ideologically, Vice President J.D. Vance described this in an interview with Fox News, referring to “a very Christian concept ... (that) you love your family and then you love your neighbor, and then you love your community, and then you love your fellow citizens in your own country, and then after that, you can focus (on) and prioritize the rest of the world.” This bizarre hierarchy of love does not stack





## In brief

## Pak cueists earn victories

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani cueists earned victories in the matches of ACBS Asian Men Snooker Championship 2025 at Doha, Qatar. As per details received here, in the last 22nd round, Shahid Aftab (Pak) beat Sunny Wang (Singapore) 4-1 (38-59, 66-22, 77(77)-0, 91(91)-7, 68-43). In Pre Quarter, Shahid Aftab (Pak) defeated Zhou Jinhao (China) 4-1 (59-54, 63-30, 99(71)-1, 6-65, 62-38) while Amir Sarkosh (Iran) beat Muhammad Sajjad (Pak) 4-1 (78-14, 83(62)-32, 8-96(96), 75(75)-1, 73(52)-0) and Muhammad Asif (Pak) outplayed youngjun park (South Korea) 4-3 (61(61)-71, 91(56)-27, 6-97, 72(56)-60, 10-68, 110(100)-14, 66-50). In ACBS Asian U21 Snooker Championship 2025 Day 1 Result, Hamza Ilyas (Pak) beat Wang Jyun Kai (Taiwan) 3-0 (175(132), 62-32, 84-24) and Ahsan Ramzan (Pak) downed Chen Zih Ying (Taipei) 3-0 (124(89)-10, 89-50, 101(55)-30).

## Ferguson ruled out of CT 2025

LAHORE (APP): New Zealand fast bowler Lockie Ferguson has been ruled out of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 Pakistan due to an injury to his right foot and Kyle Jamieson is due to replace him. Thirty-year-old Jamieson, who has played 13 ODIs, was named as a replacement after Ferguson was ruled out due to an injury to his right foot. According to the ICC Media release issued here on Tuesday, the Event Technical Committee of the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 has approved Kyle Jamieson as a replacement for Lockie Ferguson in the New Zealand squad. The replacement of a player requires the approval of the Event Technical Committee before the player can be officially added to the squad. The Event Technical Committee of the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 consists of Wasim Khan (ICC General Manager - Cricket), Sarah Edgar (ICC Senior Manager - Events), Usman Wahla (PCB Director - International Cricket Operations), Shaun Pollock (Independent Representative).

## Sinner case 'a million miles from doping'

LONDON (AFP): Jannik Sinner's three-month ban for a pair of positive drug tests has been defended by the World Anti-Doping Agency after claims the world number one's punishment was too lenient. Sinner's long doping saga came to an end on Saturday after the tennis star agreed to the ban, admitting "partial responsibility" for team mistakes which led to him twice testing positive for traces of clostebol in March last year. The Italian was facing a potential ban of two years after WADA appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport against his initial exoneration by the International Tennis Integrity Agency. But WADA withdrew its appeal and came to an agreement with Sinner over his three-month ban after accepting the 23-year-old was inadvertently contaminated by his physiotherapist. Sinner said that the banned substance entered his system when his physio used a spray containing it to treat a cut, then provided massage and sports therapy to the player. The sanction has been questioned and criticised by current and former players including Novak Djokovic. However, WADA's general counsel Ross Wenzel believes the sanction level was "in the right place" for what had occurred.



LAHORE: Mohammad Rizwan at a press conference on the eve of the Champions Trophy opener.

## Hosting Champions Trophy, a historic occasion for Pakistan: Rizwan

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Cricket team captain Mohammad Rizwan on Tuesday said that the Champions Trophy would be a historic occasion for the country as this is a first major cricket event hosted by Pakistan in nearly three decades.

Addressing a press conference here at the National

Stadium before first match of the Champions Trophy to be played between Pakistan and New Zealand on Thursday, skipper Mohammad Rizwan said this event is regarded as second only to the World Cup in the one day game.

Rizwan said the global event has come to Pakistan after 29 years and whole

nations would enjoy this historic occasion.

Rizwan hoped to have pace bowler Haris Rauf on the pitch after he suffered chest muscle strain in the match against New Zealand in Lahore last week.

He said Haris Rauf is fully fit and would perform well in the Champions Trophy matches.

## English cricket team reaches Lahore

LAHORE (APP): England Men's cricket team reached Lahore to take part in the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 Pakistan from February 19 to March 9, 2025 in the wee hours of Tuesday.

According to a spokesperson, the 31-member English contingent reached Lahore via a connecting flight from Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) from 19 February to 9 March.

Pakistan is all set to host an ICC event for the first time since the ICC Cricket World Cup 1996, which concluded with the final at the Gaddafi Stadium, where Sri Lanka defeated Australia by seven wickets.

In the lead-up to the ICC Champions Trophy, the three venues in Pakistan

Gaddafi Stadium Lahore, National Stadium Karachi and Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium have undergone major upgradation, offering players and spectators world-class facilities.

Pakistan enter the tournament as the defending champions, having beaten India in the final of the 2017 edition, led by

Managing Director (MD) England Cricket Board (ECB), Rob Key and Head Coach Brandon Maccallum also reached Pakistan.

The Three Lions will face arch rivals Australia in their opening match of the ICC Champions Trophy campaign at the Gaddafi stadium on February 22 (Saturday) in a D/N fixture.

England will play their second match against Afghanistan at Gaddafi stadium, Lahore on February 26 (Wednesday).

The Englishmen will play their last match of the group stage against South Africa at the National stadium, Karachi on March 1 (Saturday).

## Murray to continue as Djokovic's coach 'indefinitely'

LONDON (Agencies): Novak Djokovic says the partnership with Andy Murray as his coach will continue "indefinitely".

Three-time major winner Murray started working with his long-time playing rival on a trial basis at January's Australian Open, where Djokovic reached the semi-finals but was forced to retire with a leg injury.

After his Melbourne exit, the 24-time Grand Slam champion said he and Murray would need to "cool off" before discussing the future. However, speaking on his return to competition at the Qatar Open, Djokovic confirmed the pair will continue working together.

"I expressed my desire to continue the collaboration with him so I am really glad he did accept," Djokovic, 37, told the ATP Tour's in-house media channel, external. "It's indefinite in terms of how long we are going to work together but we agreed we are going to work most likely in the [United] States and then some clay-court tournaments and see how it goes after that."

Murray, who retired in August last year, took a surprise coaching role with Djokovic's team in late November. "It was exciting for the whole tennis world and also for us to be in different roles together on the same side of the net," Djokovic added.

"He has a unique perspective on my game - he has played me, he has played all the current best players in the world in my opponents."

Serbia's Djokovic is aiming to win a 25th major, which would put him clear of Australia's Margaret Court in terms of all-time victories. The next major tournament is the French Open, which starts on 25 May. Djokovic will face Italy's Matteo Berrettini, a former Wimbledon runner-up, in the first round of the Qatar Open later on Tuesday.

# Pakistan's ICC Champions Trophy title defence kicks off tomorrow

KARACHI (APP): The ninth edition of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 will commence in Pakistan on Wednesday, 19 February, with winners of the 2017 edition, Pakistan, taking on New Zealand in the opening match of the tournament at the National Stadium in Karachi. The first ball of the match will be bowled at 2pm PKT.

The eight-team tournament will be played across three venues in Pakistan Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi as well as in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) from 19 February to 9 March.

Pakistan is all set to host an ICC event for the first time since the ICC Cricket World Cup 1996, which concluded with the final at the Gaddafi Stadium, where Sri Lanka defeated Australia by seven wickets.

In the lead-up to the ICC Champions Trophy, the three venues in Pakistan Gaddafi Stadium Lahore, National Stadium Karachi and Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium have undergone major upgradation, offering players and spectators world-class facilities.

Pakistan enter the tournament as the defending champions, having beaten India in the final of the 2017 edition, led by

Sarfraz Ahmed. Fakhar Zaman was the player of the final for his imperious 114 off 106 deliveries, while Hasan Ali was named the player of the tournament for his tally of 13 wickets in five games.

The eight participating teams have been divided into two groups with hosts Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and New Zealand pooled in Group A while Group B comprises Afghanistan, current ODI World Cup champions Australia, England and South Africa.

Following their opening encounter against New Zealand, Pakistan will play their next two group matches on 23 February against India in Dubai and on 27 February against Bangladesh in Rawalpindi.

In the group stage, three matches apiece will be played in Dubai, Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi.

The first semi-final will be played on 4 March in Dubai. The newly-upgraded Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore will host the second semi-final on 5 March. If India do not qualify, the final will take place at the Gaddafi Stadium on 9 March, however, if they qualify, it will be held at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

Apart from winning this

tournament in 2017, Pakistan has also reached the semi-finals of this competition on three occasions: 2000, 2004 and 2009.

Pakistan captain, Mohammad Rizwan said, "A global event has come to Pakistan after 29 years, so I believe the entire nation is celebrating this historic occasion. There are no doubts about our performance, we have worked hard and learned from our mistakes. We hope that we play well tomorrow Insha'Allah.

"Our sole focus is on winning the tournament for the country and our people and we hope that we achieve the desired results."

### Pakistan's 15-player squad:

Mohammad Rizwan (captain & wicket-keeper), Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Kamran Ghulam, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Hasnain, Naseem Shah, Salman Ali Agha (vice-captain), Saud Shakeel, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Tayyab Tahir and Usman Khan.

Pakistan's group stage fixtures in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025: 19 Feb - vs New Zealand, Karachi

23 Feb - vs India, Dubai  
27 Feb - vs Bangladesh, Rawalpindi.

## Asian Taekwondo C'ships going on in full swing

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Combaxx 7th Asian Taekwondo Open Championships witnessed an intense display of talent and skill, with athletes securing medals across various weight categories here at the Liaquat Gymnasium of Pakistan Sports Complex.

As per medal tally as of 5th day- Pakistan: 10 Medals (1 Silver, 9 Bronze); Egypt: 3 Medals (3 Gold); Iran: 2 Medals (1 Gold 1 Bronze); Saudi Arabia: 2 Medals (1 Silver, 1 Gold); Afghanistan: 2 Medals (1 Silver, 1 Bronze); Uzbekistan: 1 Medal (1 Bronze); Jordan: 1 Medal (1 Bronze); Portugal: 1 Medal (1 Silver); Kenya: 1 Medal (1 Gold); Germany: 1 Medal (1 Silver).

In the Men's -54kg category, Pakistan's Shahzaib Khan clinched a silver medal, while Muhammad Ghulam secured a bronze. The gold in this category went to Abdo Refaat Mohamed from Egypt, with Ithasam Rahimi of Afghanistan sharing the bronze podium.

In the Men's -68kg category, Dehghani Mohammad Sadegh from Iran won gold, while Afghanistan's Zain Hikmatullah took silver. Pakistan also secured a bronze medal in this category through Anjum Hussain,

along with Othman Mohammad from Jordan.

The Men's -87kg division saw Egypt's Eissa Seif taking gold, Saudi Arabia's Almbrouk Ali Mabrouk S winning silver, and Ghahremani Amir Mohammad from Iran and Bayhodjaev Nurlan from Uzbekistan claiming bronze medals.

Pakistani women also delivered outstanding performances. In the Women's -46kg category, Momina Khan and Saima Mazhar both secured bronze medals. The gold medal in this category was won by Alsharif Taiba Khalid from Saudi Arabia, while Barroso Kiara from Portugal took silver.

In the Women's -57kg category, Muriu Mary of Kenya won gold, while Pakistan's Rahman Noor secured silver. Pakistani athletes also dominated the bronze medal positions, with Mariam Fatima and Muneeba Alam both earning podium finishes.

In the Women's -73kg category, Orabi Malak Diaa Ahmed from Egypt took home gold, while Hoermann Emily from Germany secured silver. Pakistan's Mubashra Sana and Pakeeza Khan both earned bronze medals, fur-

ther adding to the country's impressive medal tally.

CEO Pakistan Taekwondo Federation (PTF) Omar Saeed and President Col. (R) Raja Waseem Ahmed congratulated the athletes on their excellent performance at the championship. They praised the hard work and dedication of the players, coaches, and support staff, emphasizing that this achievement is a testament to Pakistan's growing presence in international taekwondo.

"Our athletes have showcased immense talent and determination at the Asian Taekwondo Open Championships. This success reflects their commitment and the support of our coaching staff. We are proud of their achievements and confident that Pakistan will continue to shine on the global stage," said Waseem Ahmed.

CEO Omar Saeed also expressed his pride in the team, saying, "Winning 10 medals so far is a fantastic achievement. This is just the beginning, and we hope to see even more victories in the remaining events. Pakistan Taekwondo Federation will continue to support and develop our athletes for future international competitions."

## Liverpool can handle title tension: Slot

LONDON (AFP): Arne Slot insists Liverpool can handle the mounting pressure of the Premier League title race after the leaders were hampered by nerves in their tense win against Wolves.

Slot's side head to Aston Villa on Wednesday knowing a victory would move them 10 points clear of second-placed Arsenal in their bid to clinch a record-equaling 20th English title.

But Liverpool, in dynamic form for much of the season, have looked less secure of late and almost blew a two-goal lead in Sunday's 2-1 win over lowly Wolves at Anfield.

The Reds had already suffered a costly collapse in the Merseyside derby draw just days earlier when Everton's James Tarkowski scored a stoppage-time equaliser. Liverpool's reserves also crashed out of the FA Cup with an embarrassing fourth-round loss at second-tier Plymouth recently, leading to fears the treble chasers are beginning to crack as expectations increase.

Reds left-back Andrew Robertson admitted after the Wolves game that it was natural for the players to be

nervous as they get closer to the finish line. But Slot pointed to Liverpool's ability to grind out several wins by a one-goal margin already this season as proof they won't crumble under pressure. "It is because we are going to the end of the season, not because of us but what people make of it," Slot told reporters on Tuesday.

"We have won other games at home or away by one goal when it was also tight. I remember Crystal Palace away when it was tight in the end. 'If this happens at the end of the season you guys are going to talk about nerves.' To secure a win in the Premier League, if we are winning 1-0, is going to be a lot of defending and hard work."

"Fight until the end"

Arsenal have added to the concern at Anfield with a 15-match unbeaten run in the league since their last top-flight loss at Newcastle on November 2. Several of Liverpool's players have title race experience after winning the Premier League in 2020 under Slot's predecessor Jurgen Klopp. Slot has also successfully navigated the anxiety of the final weeks

of the season in his Dutch title-winning campaign with Feyenoord. But the Reds boss has mixed feelings about how useful those triumphs will be in helping Liverpool this season.

"We lean a lot on the players. They have to show up and bring the performance. We don't present a meeting on how to deal with the pressure, that is not how it works," he said. "It helps that they are used to playing big games with lots of pressure, but don't make that too big. We must not over-value experience."

"It is difficult to take experiences from that time with Feyenoord, different players, different opponents, different league."

"And the ones who won the league here in Corona time (during the pandemic) with no fans in the stadium, at one point they were 25 points up, so there was hardly any pressure then."

Slot knows Villa have the potential to add to the pressure on Liverpool, but he believes their hard-fought success against Wolves will stand them in good stead. "They have a great home record.





## In brief

### Administration issues travel advisory

RAWALPINDI (APP): In view of the weather situation, the district administration has issued an advisory for tourists. The Meteorological Department has predicted rain and snowfall in Murree, Galiyat and surrounding areas from February 19. According to the MET Office, the rain and snowfall are likely to continue till February 21. The local administration of Murree urged the tourists to be aware of the weather conditions from print, electronic and social media before coming to Murree. The advisory includes mandatory use of tyre chains in snowy areas. Tourists should cooperate with the traffic police to ensure traffic flow. Tourists should keep the air pressure in the tyres of their vehicles low. Keep the fuel tank of the vehicle full. Continue your journey in a fully fitted vehicle. Prove that you are an eco-friendly tourist by following the SOPs. In case the tourists face any problem or difficulty, they can get help and guidance from the facility centers. Tourists should cooperate with the traffic police to ensure traffic flow and ensure implementation of the traffic management plan.

### Police bust car lifter gang

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi District Police have busted a car lifting and dacoit gang and arrested its three members, said a police spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that Saddar Baroni police netted three accused namely Suleman, Kashif and Farhan, allegedly involved in car lifting and dacoity cases. Police also recovered a snatched car, two motorcycles, two mobile phones, snatched cash Rs 20,000 and other items from their possession. Superintendent of Police, Saddar appreciated the police team and directed to accelerate ongoing operation against bike and car lifters.

### 7 illegal arms owners arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police during operations against illegal arms possession on Tuesday arrested seven accused from different areas. According to a police spokesman, the Waris Khan Police held three accused Hassan Qadeer, Nadeem and Usama Ahmed on the recovery of a 30-bore pistol from all of them. Similarly, the Bani Police captured two accused Adil Shakeel and Waqas, and the Taxila and Wah Cantt Police also held two accused Ijaz and Muhammad Hassan respectively recovering a 30-bore pistol each from them.

### Kite flying banned

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad district administration on Tuesday launched a comprehensive campaign to prohibit kite flying, citing safety concerns and potential public hazards. According to DC Office, to ensure compliance, announcements have been made in mosques across the city, urging citizens to refrain from the activity. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Memon, emphasized the dangers associated with kite flying, describing it as a "deadly sport" that has led to numerous accidents and injuries. He appealed to parents to support the administration's efforts by preventing their children from flying kites. The administration has also warned that legal action will be taken against anyone including children, found violating the ban. Parents have been specifically asked to monitor their children and ensure they do not engage in this hazardous activity. The administration has urged citizens to cooperate and help eliminate this dangerous practice from the city.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, AKAMATSU Shuichi, Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal along with other dignitaries cut a cake to celebrate the 65th Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor Naruhito.

## Citizens demand action against charging annual school fees

ISLAMABAD (APP): Citizens of twin cities Rawalpindi and Islamabad on Tuesday demanded the quarters concerned to take notice of illegal charging annual fees by private schools.

In a bid to end financial exploitation, parents urged authorities concerned to take action against private schools that charge annual admission fees. They were of the view that many private schools were charging exorbitant annual fees, ranging from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 50,000.

The parents demanded that the relevant authority ensure transparency in the fee structures of private schools and prevent them from charging annual admission fees. A mother of four, Saleeha Jabeen shared her struggles with private school admission fees saying, "I'm at

my wit's end as a sole earner, it's becoming increasingly difficult for me to afford the annual admission fees for all four of my children."

She told that was forced to shell out a significant portion of her income on admission fees, which can range from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 50,000 or more per child adding that It's like throwing money down the drain and not even sure what these fees are used for.

She said "I had to make sacrifices, cut back on expenses, and even take out loans to pay for these fees and I fear that I won't be able to afford it much longer." She urged that It's time for the authorities concerned to step in and regulate these fees adding that we need affordable education options for our children, not exploitative practices that bleed us dry.

She said, "We were fed up with paying annual admission fees, which was an additional financial burden on us, we request the authorities to intervene and regulate the fee structure of private schools."

He said public schools don't charge annual fees, but private schools do it's unfair to charge us for something that's free in public schools. If private schools continue to charge exorbitant annual fees, we'll be forced to look for alternative options like home schooling or online education, he stated. When contacted concerned officials assured the parents that their concerns would be addressed, and necessary action would be taken against private schools violating the rules.

## World Bank's Executive Directors visit Tarbela Dam

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation, comprising Executive Directors of World Bank, visited iconic Tarbela Dam on Tuesday, therein they had a detailed round of the Dam, Tarbela 4th Extension, and the under-construction Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project.

At Tarbela 5th Extension, the delegation witnessed construction activities on Inlet, Tunnel and the Power House sites, said a press release. Chairman WAPDA Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd) accompanied the delegation during the visit. WAPDA's Member Finance, Member Power, GM (C&M) Water, GM (Tarbela Dam Project), Chief Engineer/Project Director Tarbela 4th Extension, Chief Engineer (O&M) Tarbela 4th Extension and Chief

Engineer/ Project Director (Tarbela 5th Extension) along with the Consultants and the Contractors were also present on the occasion.

It was important to note that Tarbela Dam, Tarbela Hydel Power Station and its 4th Extension were completed with financial support of the World Bank. In addition, the Bank is also providing US\$ 390 million for under-construction Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project. Welcoming the delegation, the Chairman said that the World Bank and WAPDA have been partners in progress for more than six decades. We are confident that the World Bank would continue supporting WAPDA for Pakistan's progress through development of hydro resources in the country, he further said.

During the briefing, the delegation was informed that Tarbela Dam had been phenomenally contributing for economic development and social uplift in Pakistan since its completion in 1974. It had released about 411 million acre feet (MAF) of stored water from the reservoir for agriculture besides providing and contributed 597,309 million units of low-cost and environment friendly hydel electricity to the National Grid. It is important to note that the economic and financial benefits of one MAF of water in Pakistan are estimated at US\$ 1 billion, therefore, total benefits accrued so far from Tarbela Dam stand at US\$ 411 billion.

It was further briefed that Tarbela is the biggest electricity generation facility in Pakistan with installed capac-

## IESCO crackdown on defaulters in full swing

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Electric Supply Company's crackdown against power pilferers and defaulters in full swing. In a recent crackdown, the company took significant action against individuals involved in power pilferage and unpaid electricity bills.

According to an IESCO spokesperson, a total of 4,708 people was fined over 40 crores and 27 lakhs for illegally stealing electricity. At the same time, police arrested 2,421 individuals across the region for their involvement in power theft. In addition to targeting theft, IESCO's recovery teams have been working diligently to recover overdue payments from bill defaulters. The company successfully collected more than Rs 6.9 billion from customers who had failed to pay their electricity bills. As part of the recovery efforts, Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) disconnected several meters and transformers of those who had not paid their dues. IESCO is calling on consumers to help in the fight against power pilferage by reporting any suspicious activities. People can report power theft to their local Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) or contact the IESCO helpline at 118.

ity of 4888 MW – 51.6 % of the total hydel capacity of WAPDA. The installed capacity at Tarbela will further increase to 6418 MW after completion of the under-construction Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project. Tarbela 4th Extension, which started generation in 2018, is dubbed 'Flagship Project' of the World Bank. Since then, it has provided 27,531 million units of electricity to the National Grid. Regarding Tarbela 5th Extension, the delegation was briefed that construction activities are continuing on all key sites of the Project, while electricity generation will commence in 2026.

## Aleem Khan leads delegation at Global Road Safety conference

ISLAMABAD (APP): In Morocco, 4th Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety is being held in which 260 ministers, experts, and delegates from 193 countries including Pakistan are participating.

This three-day conference taking place from February 18 to 20 being represented by Pakistan's Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization and Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan who has participated in the inaugural session and headed Pakistani delegation, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

Apart from attending the opening session of the Global Conference, Aleem Khan had a meeting on the first day with Türkiye's Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Abdul Kadir Uraloglu accompanied by

their respective delegations.

During the session, discussions focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation, particularly in the field of communications, between Pakistan and Turkey. Aleem Khan emphasized that Pakistan and Turkey are not merely friends but brothers.

He invited Minister from Türkiye Abdul Kadir Uraloglu to visit Pakistan and also offered him to invest on behalf of his country in construction of Motorways of M-6 and M-9. He stated that there is no doubt that Turkey's development serves as a role model in the region especially in road infrastructure, vehicle and passenger safety and overall social progress.

Abdul Aleem Khan noted that Türkiye has achieved remarkable success in these areas over the past few

decades while there is still much to be done in Pakistan, in this regard.

Minister Transport & Infrastructure Abdul Kadir Uraloglu expressed his best wishes and brotherly sentiments towards Pakistan and its people, assuring full cooperation from the Turkish Government while both Ministers also discussed the multinational project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

It is noteworthy that the 4th Global Ministerial Conference in Morocco also included an address by the UN Secretary-General's Representative. On the first day, the Ministerial Roundtable Session was also held as part of the opening day. Abdul Aleem Khan along with his delegation remained engaged with experts and delegates from various countries.

## KSrelief launches food distribution initiative in KP



### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief), in collaboration with the Relief, Rehabilitation, and Settlement Department (RR&SD) and the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), has Completed a major food dis-

tribution initiative to assist vulnerable communities in KP and its merged districts.

This effort marks the first cycle of the Food Security Support Project for 2024-25 in Pakistan, reached 15 districts across KP. 10,000 food packages have been distributed in districts such as Kurram TDPs, Hangu, Tank, Dera Ismail Khan,

Shangla, Upper Kohistan, Torghar, Upper Dir, and Lower Chitral, Upper Chitral, Battagram, Haripur, Swat, Lower Dir, Bannu, and Buner.

Each food package weighs 95 kilograms and includes essential supplies such as 80 kilograms of flour, 5 liters of cooking oil, 5 kilograms of sugar, and 5 kilograms of lentils (Daal Chana). The distribution process is being carried out transparently, in coordination with district and local authorities, with support from KSrelief's implementing partner, the Peace and Development Organization (PADO).

KSrelief remains dedicated to addressing food insecurity and improving the lives of those in need, reaffirming its global commitment to providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities.

## HEC receives Rs. 65 bln grant for higher education: NA told

ISLAMABAD (APP): Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education and Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture Farah Naz Akbar, informed the National Assembly on Tuesday that the Higher Education Commission (HEC) receives a grant of Rs. 65 billion for higher education projects.

A significant portion of this funding is allocated to the provinces as part of a new agreement aimed at strengthening Pakistan's higher education sector, she said while responding

to a calling attention notice regarding the severe financial difficulties faced by public sector universities.

She explained that a major share, which is approximately 65% of the total grant Rs. 42.01 billion is allocated to the provincial governments.

This distribution plan was formalized through an agreement signed between the Ministry of Finance and the finance ministers from the four provinces: Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

According to the agree-

ment, the provincial governments are committed to assisting the HEC in utilizing these funds effectively.

She said that HEC has demanded Rs. 85 billion in the coming budget, and a 10% increase is expected in future allocations for universities, contingent upon the release of funds.

She further stated that this initiative is aimed at strengthening universities across the country by providing essential financial support for infrastructure development, research, and academic advancements.

## NCRC hosts National Consultation to tackle drug abuse in educational institutes



### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) organized a National Consultation on the Use of Harmful Substances/Drugs in Educational Institutes, bringing together key stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, law enforcement officials, and civil society representatives, to discuss strategies for combating the growing issue of drug abuse among students.

In her opening remarks, Chairperson NCRC, Ayesha Raza Farooq, stressed the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach, stating, "Parents and caregivers are the first line of defense against drug abuse. Their role in prevention is crucial. Parents must create safe spaces that promote open communication, where children feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues without fear of judgment. This open

communication builds trust, empowering children to make informed choices."

She further emphasized the critical role of educational institutions, noting, "Teachers and educational institutions play a key role in shaping young minds. They are uniquely positioned to identify early signs of behavioral changes that may indicate drug use. Schools must become safe spaces where drug awareness is integrated into the educational curriculum."

Highlighting the role of law enforcement and policymakers, Ayesha Raza Farooq stated, "To effectively tackle the drug abuse issue, law enforcement agencies must take decisive action to dismantle drug mafias and control the supply chain, especially around educational institutions. However, punitive measures alone are not enough. Supportive mechanisms should be in place to assist at-risk youth rather than penalizing them."

Mr. Khalid Naeem, Member ICT,

NCRC, elaborated on the objectives of the consultation, emphasizing the need for a collaborative approach to raise awareness, build capacity among educators, and strengthen preventive measures in educational institutions.

Cristina Von Sperling Afridi, Chairperson, Karim Khan Afridi Welfare Foundation, underscored the gravity of the issue, stating, "Drug abuse has become a national security threat in Pakistan. Education is the most powerful tool for prevention. Instead of criminalizing drug use, we must focus on prevention. Schools should encourage positive activities, such as ensuring a minimum of four hours of sports per week. Additionally, schools should adopt a comprehensive drug policy, implement routine health monitoring, and provide counseling services for students."

During the panel discussion, Senator Khalid Tahir highlighted the need for balanced legislation, noting, "While strict punishments must be enforced for drug traffickers, our laws must strike the right balance. Raising awareness is crucial, and the Ministry of Narcotics must lead nationwide awareness campaigns through TV, radio, and social media. Moreover, collaboration with educational institutions is essential to effectively tackle substance abuse." MNA Sehar Kamran emphasized a three-phase approach of prevention, rehabilitation, and aftercare, stating, "Overcrowded prisons make punitive measures less effective. We need proactive and rehabilitative strategies that prioritize recovery and reintegration into society."

Hakim Khan, SP, ICT Police, advocated for rehabilitation over criminaliza-

tion, emphasizing, "Currently, records are maintained for students caught with small amounts of drugs or cigarettes, which may create lifelong barriers to employment and obtaining visas. To prevent unnecessary stigmatization and reduce the likelihood of recurring substance use, a system should be established to expunge records of first-time users, allowing them a chance at rehabilitation and reintegration into society without any stigma."

Ijaz Khan, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Narcotics/Interior, emphasized the importance of strengthening law enforcement's capacity to effectively prevent drug abuse. He stated, "Equipped with the right knowledge and resources, law enforcement personnel can play a pivotal role in prevention, detection and intervention, safeguarding our youth from the harmful impacts of substance abuse."

In the closing address, Chief Guest, Secretary Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Mr. Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani shared his insights on the issue of substance abuse. He emphasized that tackling the problem must be through a combination of training of teachers and caregivers and the incorporation of age-appropriate content in the curricula for students.

During the consultation key stakeholders worked in groups to discuss and propose key recommendations aimed at tackling the growing issue of substance abuse in educational institutes. It was proposed that the federal government allocate a dedicated budget to Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training and Ministry of Narcotics/Interior to outline

actionable points for preventing drug abuse. Furthermore, the importance of allocating prime-time slots for public awareness campaigns focused on substance abuse prevention, ensuring the already mandated 10% air time is implemented effectively.

The stakeholders also called for stricter content monitoring regulations for social and electronic media to reduce exposure to harmful substances. In addition, there was a strong emphasis on providing accessible, affordable and quality-controlled drug rehabilitation services for those in need.

To ensure inclusivity and confidentiality, the consultation recommended the creation of mechanisms that address the specific needs of children engaged with harmful substances. The importance of promoting positive alternatives, such as arts, sports, and extracurricular activities, was also stressed, with the recommendation that these be made mandatory across both public and private institutions.

Lastly, a proposal was made to establish a committee within all educational institutions that includes all relevant stakeholders to oversee case management, prevention, coordination and referrals. The committee would also ensure that mandated free counseling services are made available to all students, with their confidentiality fully respected.

The consultation concluded with a call for enhanced collaboration among parents, educators, law enforcement, and policymakers to create a supportive environment that prevents drug abuse while promoting rehabilitation and reintegration.

IEA officials arrived in Japan

KABUL (Ariana News): A delegation of high-level IEA officials have arrived in Japan. This is the first known visit by the IEA since their takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021. Japan however has been a substantial donor nation over the past few years and has maintained a diplomatic mission in Kabul. Nippon Foundation meanwhile told Japanese media that the visiting delegation is expected to seek insights for future nation building.

8 Afghan migrants freed

KABUL (Amu TV): Neighbor country has released 8 Afghan migrants who had been detained for lacking legal residency documents, Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation said on Tuesday. The freed individuals returned to Afghanistan through the Spin Boldak border crossing, after spending three months in neighbor country prisons. 417 Afghan nationals have been released from neighbor country prisons and repatriated since the beginning of the month.

US aid cut may shrink Afghan economy

KABUL (TOLONews): The Center for Global Development, in a newly published report, has stated that the suspension of US aid will have catastrophic consequences for poor countries, including Afghanistan. The report mentions that Afghanistan is one of eight countries most dependent on US aid. The Center for Global Development also stated that 35% of all foreign aid to Afghanistan was provided by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and the suspension of this aid will result in a 7% reduction in Afghanistan's economic growth. Meanwhile, some Kabul residents have expressed concerns over economic challenges and unemployment, calling on authorities to assist those in need. "My request to the officials is to come and survey our home and help those who are in need, especially as the holy month of Ramadan is approaching," Mujahid, a Kabul resident, told TOLONews. The Ministry of Economy acknowledged the short-term negative impact of the suspension of US humanitarian aid on those in need but said that it will have no effect on the overall economy of Afghanistan. "In the short term, it will have negative effects on our people as some benefited from this aid, but overall, it cannot negatively impact the country's economy because all economic programs rely on domestic revenue," Abdul Rahman Habib, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Economy, told TOLONews. "Aid organizations operating in Afghanistan did not have significant efficiency, faced distribution challenges, and were not effective and beneficial," said Abdul Ghaffar Nazami, an economic analyst. According to the report by the Center for Global Development, the United States has provided over \$3 billion in financial aid to Afghanistan in the past three years and has been the country's largest financial supporter. However, the restriction of this aid has placed Afghanistan among the most economically vulnerable countries in the world.

Japan, Afghanistan strengthen health sector



KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Noor Jalal Jalali, the Acting Minister of Public Health, met with Takayoshi Kuromiya, the Japanese Ambassador to Kabul. The discussion focused on ongoing and future cooperations between Japan and Afghanistan in the health sector. During the meeting, Minister Jalali expressed appreciation for Japan's longstanding support, emphasizing that Afghanistan's new national health policy is designed to foster improved coordination among health partners. He noted that this policy aims to minimize unnecessary delays and costs while addressing pressing health issues within the community. In response, Ambassador Kuromiya expressed satisfaction with the advancements in coordination within the health sector. He reaffirmed Japan's commitment to further cooperation, underscoring the importance of international partnerships in enhancing health services.

Taliban intelligence officer killed in Afghanistan

TAKHAR (Amu TV): A Taliban intelligence officer was shot and killed by unidentified gunmen in Takhar province, local sources told Amu TV on Tuesday. The slain officer, identified as Rahimullah, was a resident of Khairabad village in Dasht-e-Qala district, according to the sources. Images of his body were shared with Amu TV, but due to their graphic nature, they have not been published. Sources say Rahimullah was the nephew of Rahmatullah, the Taliban's police chief in Khwaja-Ghar district of Takhar. Before joining the Taliban, Rahimullah reportedly killed four police officers during the previous government and fled with a military tank and weapons to join the insurgency. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, and the Taliban have not commented on the killing. Surge in attacks against Taliban The attack comes amid a rise in assaults on Taliban forces by anti-Taliban armed groups in northern provinces. In Kunduz, at least three attacks in the past 24 hours targeted Taliban positions. The Freedom Front and the National Resistance Front (NRF) have claimed responsibility for two of the attacks. Meanwhile, last week's explosion outside Kabul Bank in Kunduz City killed at least 25 people, including Taliban members, and wounded about 30 others, according to local sources.

OIC, UN special envoys discuss joint cooperation



KABUL (Ariana News): The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to Afghanistan, Tariq Ali Bakhit, held discussions with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva, at the OIC office in Kabul. The meeting focused on the efforts of both sides in disseminating the Jeddah Document on Women's Rights in Islam, which was adopted during the International Conference on Women in Islam held on 6-8 November 2023, the OIC said in a statement. This initiative is being advanced through a workshop that commenced Monday at the OIC Office in Kabul. Both sides exchanged views on how the OIC and the UN can continue their joint cooperation to support the Afghan people and address the political, humanitarian, and security challenges facing Afghanistan. In a post on X on Tuesday Otunbayeva said she held "important and constructive discussions with the OIC on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, where restrictions on education, work and access to health are causing long-term damage." She said "more engagement, and practical action, is urgently needed."

COA assesses Air Force, Air Defense operations

KABUL (BNA): Chief of Army (COA), Fasihuddin Fitrat, visited the Air Force and Air Defense Command, examining various sections of the facility, the Ministry of Defense said in a statement. Fitrat was accompanied by Mullah Abdul Ghaffar Mohammadi, the commander of the Air Force and Air Defense, as they reviewed the ongoing repair of two Mi-17 helicopter wings. During the visit, Fitrat praised the efforts of Air Force personnel and technicians in restoring and maintaining military aircraft. He highlighted their role in strengthening the country's aerial capabilities and ensuring the operational readiness of Afghanistan's air fleet. The visit comes as Afghanistan continues efforts to bolster its air defense and aviation infrastructure amid ongoing security and logistical challenges.

Vienna Conference started

KABUL (Amu TV): The fifth two-day meeting of opposition groups, known as the Vienna Conference, began on Tuesday, bringing together key anti-Taliban figures. Among the participants are Ahmad Massoud, leader of the NRF, and Yasir Zia, head of AFF. According to Mohammad Afzali, conference's media coordinator, the event has also drawn political figures and activists focused on Afghanistan's future. Among other key speakers at the opening of the event are former MP Fawzia Koofi, former national security advisor Rangin Dadfar Spanta, as well as Mohammad Mohaqiq.

Taekwondo team win gold medal

KABUL (BNA): The Afghanistan youth taekwondo team celebrated a remarkable achievement at the Asian Open Taekwondo Championships, clinching their 3rd gold medal thanks to the stellar performance of Sadees Sakandar. Sakandar, an accomplished Afghan national athlete, showcased his exceptional skills throughout the tournament. In his opening match, he decisively defeated Pakistan's Zaid Mohammad with a score of 2-0, securing his spot in the semifinals. Continuing his impressive run, Sakandar faced Habib Adel from Pakistan, where he again emerged victorious with another 2-0 win. The final match saw Sakandar exhibit dominance, overcoming his opponent Abbas Faisal, thus earning the championship title and solidifying his status as a top contender in the sport. The National Olympic Committee and Physical Education has praised Sakandar's outstanding performance, highlighting the dedication and hard work of the Afghan youth taekwondo team.

Mawlawi Amir Muttaqi meets OIC Special Envoy



KABUL (BNA): Acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi met with Tariq Bakheet, the Special Envoy and Deputy Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and his delegation at his office in Kabul late on Monday. According to a press release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the meeting covered a wide range of topics, including security, education, counter-narcotics efforts, economic development, humanitarian aid, and strengthening Afghanistan's representation within the OIC. Minister Muttaqi highlighted the achievements of the Islamic Emirate in areas such as security, the economy, education, and counter-narcotics, as well as its positive engagement with regional and global partners. He stressed that the realities on the ground in Afghanistan are much more positive than the portrayal often presented by foreign media. The Acting Foreign Minister expressed his hope that the international community would witness Afghanistan's realities firsthand, rather than relying on media portrayals. He added that altering the long-standing perception of Afghanistan, shaped by decades of conflict, is only possible by observing the facts on the ground. In the same meeting, Bakheet remarked, "Our presence here reflects our desire to witness the reality ourselves, not through the lens of others. While we will listen to various perspectives, our conclusions will ultimately be based on independent assessments and the facts at hand." Bakheet further emphasized that the OIC has always maintained a principled approach in its dealings with Afghanistan, focusing on uncovering and reflecting the realities on the ground. He reaffirmed the OIC's commitment to continuing its support for Afghanistan through various channels. This meeting highlights the Islamic Emirate's efforts to engage in constructive dialogue with international organizations and offer a more accurate portrayal of Afghanistan's current situation.

Herat Municipality prepares over 100,000 flowers for spring

HERAT (TOLONews): Herat Municipality says that more than one hundred thousand flowers have been prepared for the development of green spaces and the beautification of the city for the upcoming spring. According to the Herat Municipality, these decorative flowers are set to be planted in various parks and boulevards of Herat to give the city a fresh and beautiful appearance. "Approximately one hundred thousand different flower cuttings have been prepared, which will be planted in boulevards, parks, and other necessary locations in the new year to make the city more beautiful," said Abdulhadi Noori, the spokesperson for Herat Municipality. Simultaneously, the Herat Municipality has also started planting more than twenty thousand saplings and flower bushes in different parts of the city. Alongside the municipality's efforts, private nurseries are also active in the cultivation of flowers and plants in Herat. Nazir Ahmad Haidari, one of the managers of flower nurseries, cultivates dozens of types of flowers and plants in his nursery and says: "I want to promote the appreciation of flowers and plants among the people. This can bring joy to people and provide them with peace when they see flowers." Herat Municipality's efforts to expand green spaces have been widely welcomed by residents. They demand regular maintenance and watering of these flowers to ensure the city's beauty remains intact. Naqibullah, a resident of Herat, said: "Flowers provide emotional motivation to humans. Humans are emotional beings and need to refresh their feelings. Seeing flowers and their various colors gives an indescribable feeling to people." "Flowers uplift human spirits and enhance the beauty of nature. We are pleased with the municipality's efforts to plant flowers for us," Farzad Mohammadi, another resident of Herat, said. According to municipal officials, nearly seven hundred species of flowers have been cultivated in Herat, which will be planted in the city's parks and boulevards. Many residents also use these decorative flowers in their homes and gardens, striving to make their living spaces more beautiful and vibrant.

Housing planned for returning Afghan refugees



KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations said that in a joint meeting with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), discussions were held regarding the construction of four residential towns for returning refugees in four provinces. According to the ministry's statement, the meeting was held to assess and plan the construction of these special residential towns for refugees. Farhana Faruqi-Stocker, senior protection and solutions officer at UNAMA, said in the meeting: "Our main goal is to assist those in need, and to achieve this goal more effectively, technical meetings must be held regularly with the Ministry of Refugees." The meeting was chaired by Shukrullah Shakir, an official from the Ministry of Refugees. Meanwhile, Sardar Ahmad Shakeeb, acting ambassador of Afghanistan in Pakistan, pledged efforts to address the challenges of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, stating: "We have raised these issues with the Pakistani government to resolve the refugees' problems, prevent their situation from being politicized, and ensure they live peacefully and with dignity here." "Organizations supporting refugees must pay special attention to the situation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and use diplomatic pressure through multiple reports on their conditions to support them," Nazari, an advocate for refugee rights. "Unfortunately, the Afghan Embassy has not yet been able to reach an agreement with the Pakistani government," said Atiqullah Mansoor, an Afghan refugee in Pakistan.

World Bank reports Afghanistan's economic recovery remains 'fragile'

KABUL (Ariana News): In their January Economic Monitor report, the World Bank noted that while Afghanistan's economic growth in 2023-24 was a positive development, growth remained insufficient to significantly improve social indicators. "High poverty, unemployment, limited resources, and weak purchasing power continue to leave millions vulnerable," the report stated adding that the outlook remains fragile due to policy uncertainty, financial isolation, and inadequate human and physical capital. "A rapid decline in foreign aid could further weaken aggregate demand, exacerbating economic pressures," the World Bank stated. The World Bank report revealed that Afghanistan's trade deficit surged by 54 percent in 2024, reaching \$9 billion, which represents 45 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). The report attributes this decline to a five percent drop in exports, totaling \$1.8 billion, primarily due to a reduction in coal and textile exports. "Coal exports saw the steepest decline, plunging 64 percent to \$92 million as Pakistan shifted to its traditional suppliers," stated the World Bank. The report highlighted an 11.5 percent increase in Afghanistan's revenue collection, primarily driven by non-tax revenue and taxes levied at the country's borders. "Revenue collection remained strong in the first ten months of FY2024-25 (March 22, 2024 - January 21, 2025), totaling AFN 190.5 billion (\$2.5 billion), or 12 percent of annual GDP," stated the report. The report also noted the country's central bank, Da Afghanistan Bank, suspended US dollar auctions from September 4 to December 9 last year, which contributed to the depreciation of the afghani (AFN). The auctions resumed in January 2025, with the bank injecting more than \$100 million. The World Bank noted that fragile trade relations with Pakistan pushed Afghanistan to diversify its export markets, with Iran, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan each contributing around three percent of total exports. However, Pakistan remains the largest export destination, accounting for 45 percent, followed by India at 34 percent. "Afghanistan's export base remains heavily dependent on food and coal, which made up 60 percent of total exports in 2024, down from 80 percent in 2023," the report read adding that "this highlights the urgent need for Afghanistan to expand its export portfolio and reduce reliance on a few commodities and markets." The World Bank stated that domestic tax revenue meanwhile grew 11 percent to AFN 72.1 billion, contributing 2.8 percentage points to overall revenue growth. Non-tax revenue increased by 22 percent to AFN 66 billion. This growth was driven by higher income from mining, tolls, vehicle registrations, passport issuance, transport services, railways, and telecommunications, the report read. "Ministries responsible for non-tax revenue exceeded targets by 8 percent, contributing 45 percent to inland revenue collection," the World Bank stated. Customs duties and fees grew 20 percent year-on-year to AFN 51.5 billion, contributing 4.5 percentage points to total revenue growth. This increase was fueled by higher imports, stronger trade ties with Iran and Central Asia, improved border management, and recent tariff adjustments.

# Meaningful talks vital to restore stability: JI

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a sweeping critique of Pakistan's political leadership, Jamaat-e-Islami chief Hafiz Naeemur Rehman accused both federal and provincial governments of failing to curb the country's spiraling security crisis, economic turmoil, and mounting restrictions on press freedom.

Speaking at the 'Meet the Press' program at the Peshawar Press Club, Rehman decried the worsening law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where a dozen districts remain plagued by violence. He blamed successive governments for mismanaging security policy, arguing that Pakistan's decision to align with the US-led war in Afghanistan had inflicted lasting damage. The financial toll, he said, had exceeded \$200 billion, while more than 100,000 people, including security personnel, had lost their lives.

The JI Chief condemned recent attacks in Kurram district as further evidence of government failure, stressing that meaningful dialogue between political factions was necessary to restore stability. "Maintaining peace is the government's responsibility, and it must engage all stakeholders," he said.

Rehman also turned his attention to press freedom, criticizing the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act



(PECA), which he called a tool for silencing dissent. "This law was not made to curb fake news-it was made to suppress real news," he charged, warning that continued curbs on free expression could threaten Pakistan's democracy. He called on media houses to ensure fair wages for journalists, who, he said, are struggling under dire financial conditions.

The country's education crisis, he noted, was another urgent issue. With nearly 3.6 million children out of school in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alone-and over 27.5 million nationwide-Rehman warned of the long-term consequences of neglecting education. He criticized Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for failing to improve the situation despite ruling the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for over a decade. "If millions of children remain out of school, they will inevitably be drawn into lawlessness," he cautioned.

As Pakistan battles an economic crunch, Rehman announced that JI would launch a protest movement against Independent Power Producers (IPPs) after

Ramadan. He demanded transparency in the government's deals with these energy companies and called for lower electricity prices, arguing that the country's dependence on costly energy contracts was pushing the public deeper into hardship.

He further denounced what he described as growing pressure on Pakistan to recognize Israel, declaring that his party would resist any such move. On Kashmir, he pressed the government for clarity on its stance, particularly after India's revocation of Article 370, which stripped the region of its special status. "The people deserve answers," he said.

Amid growing instability and public frustration, Rehman positioned his party as an alternative political force, focused on governance, education, and economic justice. "We are in the politics of education and development," he declared. "If anyone wants to join us in creating real change, the door is open." JI's KP (Central) chief Abdul Wasi and other leaders of the party were also present on the occasion.

## IHC orders authorities to stop illegal constructions

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday ordered the authorities to stop illegal commercial constructions in sector E-11 Children's Park and restore it to its original condition.

The IHC's single member bench comprising Justice Muhammad Asif heard a petition against illegal constructions in E-11 Children's Park. The petition was moved by the residents of E-11 against encroachment and illegal constructions. Advocate Kashif Ali Malik appeared in the court on behalf of the petitioners and argued that a green area or public park cannot be converted into a commercial area.

He further said that armed men entered the park with heavy machinery and uprooted children's swings, causing severe distress to the residents of E-11 and affecting their fundamental rights. The lawyer informed the court that a senior judge of the Lahore High Court is also among the victims. He added that despite bringing the matter to the notice of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), the authority failed to remove the illegal constructions and encroachments.

Kashif Ali Malik Advocate also said that a law and order situation has been created in the area due to the illegal constructions by occupants being stopped. After hearing arguments from the lawyer, the court issued orders to immediately stop the illegal constructions and restore the Children's Park to its original condition.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari addressing the closing session of International Conference on 'Regional Connectivity and Pakistan: Emerging Opportunities', organized by Pakistan-China Institute, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Meeting on incidents of accidents and arson in Sindh held

F.P. Report

KARACHI: On the instructions of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon held a very important meeting at the Sindh Secretariat on the instructions of the Chief Minister Sindh on the incidents of accidents and arson in Karachi.

The meeting was attended by Sindh Home Minister Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar, Opposition Leader Ali Khorshidi, ANP leader Shahi Syed, Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi Deputy Ameer Muslim Pervaz, Muttahida leader Ifthikhar Alam, Taha Hussain, Jamaat-e-Islami MPA Muhammad Farooq, Liaquat Mehsud of the Transporters Dumper Association, Sardar Abdul Hameed of the Water Tanker Association, Muhammad Ramzan of Karachi Goods, Ghulam Muhammad Afridi, Alhaj Yousaf Khan, and others.

The meeting discussed road accidents in Karachi, the working hours of heavy transport, and other important issues. The meeting expressed regret over the death of a citizen in a road accident in the Jail Chorangi area of Karachi last night and the subsequent burning of five vehicles.

Addressing a joint press conference after the meeting, along with Provincial Home Minister Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar, Dr. Farooq Sattar,



Shahi Syed, Ali Khorshidi, and Naib Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Muslim Pervaz, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the purpose of today's meeting was to deliberate on and devise measures to prevent accidents and incidents. All stakeholders presented their perspectives, and transporters also highlighted their concerns.

Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that after the meeting, all participants agreed that accidents are not a political issue but an administrative matter. MQM and ANP also affirmed that accidents should not be politicized.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that yesterday's incident led to the Chief Minister expressing his anger. Following the instructions of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, a meeting was held where it was agreed that accidents would not be used for political rhetoric.

He stated that everyone wants peace and order to be maintained in

Karachi and that no third party should exploit political rhetoric. It was agreed in today's meeting that accidents will not be politicized and that all issues will be resolved peacefully. He emphasized that as Pakistanis, everyone must work together for the betterment of the country. He also acknowledged that the challenges faced by Karachi remain a significant concern for the government.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the heaviest traffic in Pakistan runs in Karachi. We have challenges, but it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that there is not a single accident.

He has also asked the transporters to tell their drivers to drive their vehicles carefully. Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that no inflammatory statements will be made from now on. He mentioned that 15 individuals involved in mischief were arrested yesterday and urged the public not to listen to those who spread hatred.

## KP police honoured for bravery in operations

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In recognition of their exceptional bravery and outstanding performance in combating terrorism and crime, police officers from Peshawar, Mansehra, Karak, Bannu, and Lakki Marwat were awarded cash prizes and commendation certificates in a ceremony held at the Central Police Office, Peshawar.

The event was presided over by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah and Inspector General of Police (IGP) Zulfiqar Hameed.

According to details, Karak police thwarted a terrorist attack on Bahadur Khel check post on the night of February 6. Heavily armed terrorists, equipped with rocket launchers and hand grenades, launched an assault, which was bravely resisted by the police. Three police personnel were martyred, and six others sustained injuries in the three-hour-long battle, ultimately forcing the terrorists to retreat.

Peshawar police successfully arrested a dangerous criminal involved in an attempted murder during a robbery and apprehended multiple suspects in the Pahari Pura area linked to snatching, car theft, and other serious crimes. Similarly, Mansehra police arrested a notorious fugitive, Sabir, son of Gulistan, wanted for multiple cases of murder, attempted murder, robbery, and highway crimes.

Bannu police displayed extraordinary courage in thwarting a terrorist attack on a police mobile in the jurisdiction of Town Police Station, killing two terrorists and capturing another alive through strategic operations. In Lakki Marwat, police officers successfully pursued and arrested suspects involved in an attempted murder during a robbery.

Addressing the ceremony, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah praised the unwavering commitment of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police, acknowledging their sacrifices over the past two decades in the fight against

terrorism. He highlighted the recent swift action of Kohat police, who neutralized a terrorist involved in an attack on a police squad vehicle within an hour. He emphasized that the province's brave police force has always responded fiercely to threats and will continue to ensure the safety and security of the region.

IGP Zulfiqar Hameed commended the proactive policing efforts and expressed immense professional satisfaction in rewarding officers for their valor. He particularly lauded Karak police for their heroic resistance against the nighttime terrorist assault and urged all officers to remain relentless in their pursuit of justice against terrorists and criminals.

During the ceremony, 58 police officers and personnel were honored with cash rewards and commendation certificates. The event was also attended by Additional IGs Muhammad Ali Babakhel (Operations), Kashif Alam (Investigation), and Akhtar Abbas (Training).

## Utility store's employees holds protest

F.P. Report

MULTAN: Employees of Utility Store Corporation (USC) on Tuesday launched protest outside of local press club for closing 1000 stores followed by termination of 3000 employees from the department.

According to a spokesperson, large number of employees gathered and raised slogans against the authority for the employees' termination, calling it 'an economic murder' of the people during on-going wave of inflation hitting the country. The protesters demanded of the government to restore employees got terminated without prior notice and reason with single stole of pen day before yesterday.

They called out the government to take back its privatization decision with closing stores as per the earlier pledge was made with the staffers in recent past. They requested the government to issue funds in order to rehabilitate the department and re-start its operation in full swing.

Addressing the protesters, National Workers Union CBA's patron-in-chief, Israr Fareed Chishti and All Pakistan Workers Alliance's central Vice President (VC), Malik Muzaffar Sandeela said that the authorities have taken U-turn by first shutting down more than 1,000 stores nationwide and now terminating 3,000 daily wage employees, many of whom had been working for 15 to 20 years.

They said that these employees had already been regularized by various courts across the country, adding that the National Assembly's Special Committee, led by Qadir Khan Mandokhail, had also ordered their regularization. Yet, these employees have been left jobless, causing them severe economic hardship, they said.

In a tragic turn of events, Junaid Qureshi, a daily wage employee from Abbottabad, unable to cope with the distress of job loss, took his own life, they said in the speech. The protesting workers also called for the immediate release of the PKR 60 billion subsidy funds allocated for the USC in the 2024-25 budget.

Additionally, they demanded an independent inquiry into the corruption allegations against USC employees. They said that strict action be taken against those of responsible for the any corruption if proved into the department. Furthermore, they urged the Federal board of Revenue (FBR) to release the PKR 12 billion it has withheld from USC.

## PHC orders federal govt to submit cabinet minutes regarding ban on PTM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has directed the federal government to produce the minutes of the cabinet meeting regarding the ban on the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) in response to a petition filed against the ban.

During the hearing, PTM's lawyer, Attaullah Kundi, informed the court that the federal government had banned PTM, claiming that the ban was approved by the cabinet. However, the lawyer argued that the ban was not approved by the cabinet, and the government had not produced any record of the cabinet decision.

The lawyer further argued that over 250 individuals had been placed on the Fourth Schedule, which would result in the freezing of their bank accounts. Therefore, the court should order the government to unfreeze the accounts.

Additional Attorney General Sanaullah Amjad responded that the proper forum for challenging the ban was the Review Board, and the petitioners could approach the board for relief.

The court, comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Qazi Jawad Hassan, directed the federal government to produce the cabinet minutes regarding the ban on PTM by the next hearing, scheduled for March 11.

In a separate petition, a citizen had filed a writ petition against PTM's alleged establishment of a parallel

judicial system. The petitioner's lawyer, Daniel Chamkani, argued that PTM's actions were unconstitutional and that the Supreme Court had already ruled against the establishment of parallel judicial systems.

However, PTM's lawyer, Attaullah Kundi, assured the court that PTM was not establishing any parallel judicial system and was only advocating for the rule of law. The court dismissed the petition, accepting PTM's assurance that it would not establish any parallel judicial system.

**Court disposes off PTI 5 leaders petitions including NA opposition leader:** Peshawar High Court (PHC) two-member bench, comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Abdul Fayyaz, has petitions filed by opposition leader Omar Ayub, Deputy Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Surya Bibi, Provincial Minister Faisal Turki, and other assembly members, seeking details of cases registered against them.

During the hearing, the petitioners' lawyers, Alam Khan Adeenzai and Rab Nawaz, informed the court that cases had been registered against their clients in Islamabad and other regions, but the respondents had not provided details of these cases. The lawyers requested the court to direct the respondents to provide the details of the cases.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) prosecutor, Hashmat Jehangir, stated that there were no

cases against the petitioners in NAB. The Deputy Attorney General said that there were no cases in the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) either.

However, it was revealed that eight cases had been registered against Omar Ayub in Islamabad, and three cases against Faisal Amin. Omar Ayub requested more time to appear before the relevant courts, stating that over 70 cases had been registered against him.

The court granted protective bail to the petitioners until April 8, directing them not to be arrested in any case filed against them. The court also ordered the federal government and other respondents to submit reports.

In a separate case, the court granted protective bail to former National Assembly Speaker and MNA Asad Qaiser until April 8, and to Provincial Minister Meena Khan Afridi until March 11. The court directed the federal government and other respondents to submit reports and ordered the petitioners not to be arrested until the next hearing.

Asad Qaiser informed the court that he goes for Umrah every year and plans to do so again during Ramadan. He requested the court to extend his protective bail to allow him to perform Umrah. The court accepted the request and extended Asad Qaiser's protective bail until April 8. Meena Khan Afridi's protective bail was extended until March 11.

## SHC allows remand of accused in Amir murder case

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Tuesday accepted the request for physical remand of accused Armaghan, who was arrested in the murder case of young Mustafa Amir.

The SHC suspended the verdict of the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) and ordered police to present the accused in the ATC forthwith. The hearing began with the court inquiring about the custody of the accused.

In response, the additional prosecutor general read out the FIR regarding the kidnap of Mustafa. The APG stated that Mustafa was kidnapped on Jan 6. During the investigation, the statement of the victim's mother was recorded. She revealed that she had received a call for Rs20 million. After the call, the investigation of the case was transferred to the Anti Violent Crime Cell (AVCC).

A team of police on Feb 8 conducted a raid at a bungalow in Defence after receiving information

about the presence of the accused.

The court asked the government lawyer which officer from the CIA was investigating the case. The government lawyer replied that Inspector Amir from the CIA was the investigating officer. The operation was conducted at 4:40pm and continued until 9pm during which the accused fired at the police party, he said.

The SHC asked which weapon was recovered from the accused's house. The lawyer stated that a separate FIR was registered for the weapon recovery.

Earlier, he said, Armaghan was presented in an anti-terrorism court on Feb 10. He was brought for physical remand for his alleged involvement in three cases. The lawyer further informed the court that the accused's firing had injured two policemen. They had requested a one-month physical remand, which was not granted. The accused was found in possession of the victim's mobile phone, and it was revealed that there were five previous cases against

## Capital bazaars being monitored

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar has said that teams consisting of inspectors and supervisors were deployed in each Bazaar of the Capital areas to monitor and control the prices and quality of items being sold in these bazaars.

Responding to the question of Senator Haji Hidayatullah Khan, he said that complaints register had been placed in the administrative office established in the premises of each weekly Bazaar, adding the consumers registered their complaints/suggestion, if any in the said complaint register. Tarar said that the area magistrate and the respective Assistant Commissioners visited the bazaars regularly and imposed fines over violations of price hike and others.

Meanwhile replying to another question, he informed the Upper House of the Parliament that PRs had outsourced luggage vans during the last three years, adding PRs had earned as many as Rs 2790m revenue from the outsourced luggage vans during the last three years.