

Karakoram Highway blocked
F.P. Report

DIAMER: Passengers traveling to and from Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad were stuck on the Karakoram Highway (KKH) on Wednesday as heavy rains caused landslides that blocked the main road at several points in Kohistan. Snowfall and rain continue across the northern region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan and have paralysed life in the area.



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Pakistan, Uzbekistan agree to enhance trade

TASHKENT (APP): Pakistan and Uzbekistan on Wednesday vowed to take the volume of bilateral trade from current \$400 million to \$2 billion in the near future, besides agreeing to exploit the immense potential for cooperation in the fields of investment, connectivity and tourism.

The bilateral ties were discussed in the "fruitful" one-on-one meeting and the delegation-level talks between President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who was on a two-day visit here. The two leaders, addressing the joint press stakeout, told the media that both sides had agreed for the efforts to realize the "dream" project of Trans-Afghan Railway to connect Central Asia with South Asia, which the prime minister said would be a game changer for the region.

Thanking the Uzbek side for warm hospitality, the prime minister said both countries shared the centuries-old bond rooted in a shared history and that the bilateral ties were moving in the right direction. "The relations between our countries are moving in the right direction-positively and speedily. You have played a pivotal role in strengthening this bond and converting it into relations that stand on investment and trade," he remarked.

The prime minister spoke highly of the dynamism, leadership and transformation journey of President Mirziyoyev who turned around his country's economy by reducing poverty ratio from 42% in 2016 to 8% now and increased Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from \$1.2 billion to \$30 billion. "Definitely, it is a miracle. Miracles do not happen through fiery speeches or articulating wonderful quotes but through vision, dynamism, hard work, and honesty of purpose. All these qualities are embedded in your personality," he said.

He also highlighted his government's efforts to stabilise the economy during the last one year by reducing inflation from 38% to 2.4%, interest rate from 22% to 12%, with surging exports and business moving forward. "This is just the beginning and the start of the path to economic growth. This journey is not easy. We



will be able to achieve macroeconomic stability, and the journey to progress is restarting in Pakistan," he said.

He assured the Uzbek side of his government's "finest role" in achieving the Trans-Afghan rail connectivity project. Prime Minister Shehbaz told the media that both sides were willing to expand tourism through an increased number of flights and adding new destinations.

Coming to the regional situation, he said both sides emphasized that a peaceful and stable Afghanistan was vital for regional connectivity and peace. However, he said that Afghanistan's soil must not be allowed to be used by militant groups to attack any other country, including Pakistan. He told the media that some of his delegation members would stay in Tashkent to be joined by some more government officials from Islamabad later to take forward the discussions between the two sides for cooperation in areas including energy, mines, and Trans-Afghan railways.

He also reiterated that Pakistan stood by the people of Gaza and believed in the two-state solution for an independent state of Palestine, as their rights were enshrined in UNSC resolutions. He also assured Pakistan's continuous support to the Kashmir people who had been struggling over the last seven decades for their right to self-determination.

Prime Minister Shehbaz invited President Mirziyoyev to visit Pakistan, which he accepted. In his remarks, President Mirziyoyev said that they had "truly productive" discussions on cooperation in different directions. Calling Pakistan a "trusted partner" with growing reputation, he said the bilateral ties had developed dynamically.

He also appreciated Prime Minister Shehbaz for his government's efforts and achievements for economic stability. He said Prime Minister Shehbaz's visit was "historic" to mark a new chapter in bilateral relations. He said both sides reached a conclusion on the establishment of a High-Level Strategic

Council and the relevant ministries and departments from both sides would give bi-monthly reports on the measures taken to promote cooperation. He said both sides had a similar approach on Afghanistan's social development and the Palestinian issue besides agreeing to continue supporting each other at multilateral organizations. He said while discussing the Trans-Afghan Railway project, it was agreed that a committee would be formed to look into the allied challenges and issues.

"This is our future. Trade will increase, and the flow of people will rise," he said. Citing rich cultural heritage, he called for joint film production to exploit the potential and promoting cultural tourism and people-to-people contacts. He said both sides were ready to fill the gaps and convert commitments into actions.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral ties, expanding trade, and enhancing regional

Islamabad, Tashkent sign accords

TASHKENT (APP): Pakistan and Uzbekistan on Wednesday signed multiple accords to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the fields of defense, technology, technical training and youth empowerment. The documents were signed during the two-day visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Uzbekistan, at the invitation of Shavkat Mirziyoyev. Following their bilateral meeting and the delegation-level talks, Prime Minister Shehbaz and President Mirziyoyev witnessed the ceremony as the officials from both sides exchanged the pre-signed documents of the agreements and MoUs for cooperation in different fields.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Uzbek Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov exchanged the documents of agreements in the fields of visa-free travel for diplomatic passport holders, military intelligence, internal affairs, professional and technical training and training of diplomats. Another inter-government agreement was signed between both sides to collaborate in the fields of scientific research, technology, and innovation. Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan and Uzbek Deputy Prime Minister Khodjayev Jamshid exchanged the documents.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tatar and Director General of the National Information Agency of Uzbekistan Kuchimov Abdusaid exchanged a document of news cooperation agreement between the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) and National Information Agency of Uzbekistan (UZA). DPM Ishaq Dar and Mayor of Tashkent Shavkat Umurzakov Buranovich exchanged the documents of an MoU between Lahore and Tashkent. Another MoU was also signed to establish the twincity relations between Lahore and Bukhara. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tatar and Director Youth Affairs Agency of Uzbekistan Sa'dullayev Alisher exchanged documents of MoU between Pakistan's Prime Minister's Youth Programme and the Government of Uzbekistan on youth affairs. Later, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Mirziyoyev signed a joint declaration on the outcomes of the former's visit and also the protocols on the establishment of High Level Strategic Cooperation Council.

connectivity during the prime minister's official visit to Uzbekistan.

According to a joint declaration issued on the outcomes of the visit of PM Shehbaz Sharif to President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, both leaders expressed satisfaction over the progress made in Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations since the establishment of diplomatic ties 33 years ago. During the talks, the two leaders discussed the ways and means to further strengthen the strategic partnership; exchange views on the current state and prospects of bilateral cooperation in all spheres, and on issues of regional and international importance.

The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen relations and elevate cooperation to a qualitatively new-level, that meets the fundamental interests of both countries and serves to ensure peace and stability in our regions. They

noted the steady progress in bilateral relations and reiterated their dedication to the Strategic Partnership Declarations of July 16, 2021, and March 4, 2022.

The two sides strongly determined to comprehensively develop and strengthen cooperation in order to support each other's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. They expressed their support for the development and expansion of regular political dialogue, including in the format of formal and informal summits. In this regard, they positively assessed the outcomes of the talks held within the framework of the Astana Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia on 13 October 2022 and the Baku COP-29 Summit on 12 November 2024.

(Continued on Back Page)

All five judges rejected civilians' trial by military court: SC

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail on Wednesday remarked that all five judges were unanimous that civilians cannot be tried in a military court. Justice Mandokhail gave these remarks while hearing the intra-court appeal against the trial of civilians in military courts in the Supreme Court. He is part of a seven-member constitutional bench which is hearing appeal. Other members of the bench are: Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarat Hilali, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan, and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan.

At the outset of the proceedings, Advocate Faisal Siddiqui argued that there are not one but three decisions by the five-member bench against military courts. Justices Ayesha Malik, Muneeb Akhtar, and Yahya Afridi wrote their decisions, and all the judges agreed with each other's observations. If the judges' decisions are similar but the reasons are different, all the reasons are considered part of the decision, he added.

Justice Mazhar remarked that the judges did not write additional notes. Justice Mandokhail remarked that all five judges were unanimous that civilians cannot be tried in a military

court. Advocate Siddiqui said that the jurisdiction of the intra-court appeal is limited; but he does not agree with him. Bhindari's reliance was on Justice Mansoor Ali Shah's note in the Practice and Procedure case.

Justice Mazhar remarked that Justice Shah had correctly upheld the right of appeal from retrospective effect, but he disagreed with it. If the right of appeal had been granted from retrospective effect, appeals would have started coming from 1973. Advocate Siddiqui argued that if the scope of the appeals is limited, many of appeals will be dismissed. Justice Khan remarked that a review decision is given by one judge, while an intra-court appeal is heard by a larger bench. A larger bench is hearing this case for the first time and is therefore not bound by the earlier decision.

Advocate Siddiqui said that he has complete trust in the constitutional bench. Justice Mandokhail observed that it would take three months to complete proceedings if he continued like this. The lawyer said that the constitutional bench can declare the trial of civilians null and void without declaring the provisions of the Army Act unconstitutional.

Later, the court took a brief recess during the hearing. After the break, Advocate Siddiqui argued that under

Section 94, the discretionary power given to the commanding officer to hand over the accused is against the law. Justice Afghan said he had been asking since day one of the hearing is there any formal order from the ATC judge to hand over the accused. The lawyer replied in the affirmative and said there are no reasons given in the order.

Justice Mandokhail questioned that whether the court has to determine on its own regarding its jurisdiction. Is it up to a party to raise an objection to jurisdiction? Justice Khan remarked that the court has to determine its own jurisdiction. Advocate Siddiqui said if someone claims right to the Quid's Mausoleum, would the court say that no one raised an objection to its jurisdiction?

It is a fact that our judicial history is dark; but it is also true that our judicial history is very beautiful. Our judges have defended the rights of the people in many instances. In the F.B. Ali case, the Supreme Court gave relief. There were two charges against Ali, one of which was conspiracy. Justice Hilali observed that there was a time when the situation in Balochistan was so critical that we had to stay in court even at night. I hope you have never witnessed such circumstances.

Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi to arrive today

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: At the invitation of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, will undertake his first official visit to Pakistan today.

He will be accompanied by a high-level delegation, including Ministers, senior officials, and prominent business leaders. The Crown Prince will hold extensive discussions with Pakistan's leadership on issues of mutual interest, focusing on strengthening historical ties and expanding economic and investment cooperation.

The visit is expected to witness the signing of several agreements and Memorandums of Understanding to enhance collaboration across multiple sectors. These commitments aim to create new opportunities for joint ventures and economic projects benefiting both nations. The Foreign Office emphasized the longstanding relationship between Pakistan and the UAE, highlighting mutual respect, trust, and shared aspirations.

Petroleum dealers warn strike

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The All Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association announced a nationwide shutdown of fuel stations on March 4 in protest against the government's deregulation policy.

According to the association, a crucial meeting with Federal Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik is scheduled to discuss concerns over the policy. The dealers warned that if they are not taken into confidence, they will shut down fuel stations indefinitely from March 4.

Raza Abbas, a leader of the association's central executive committee, stated that they are willing to support Musadik Malik in implementing the deregulation policy, but only if they are consulted. He underlined that deregulation should not be limited to petroleum prices alone but should encompass the entire oil sector.

Bilawal opposes use of state institutions for revenge

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said on Wednesday the state institution should not be used for political revenge.

Addressing the Oxford Union, he said Pakistan was facing various challenges and lamented that democracy was also not strengthened in the country. He highlighted that democracy was also under strain across the world. He said the PPP strongly believed in democracy, and the party played a key role in the Charter of Democracy.

Bilawal said his party supported the national politics whenever it was needed. He noted that in the past, the PPP was targeted in the name of accountability. When Asif Zardari was elected as president for the first time, there were no political prisoners, he recalled, adding that his aunt was arrested during the tenure of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

He said Shehbaz Sharif and other political leaders were also arrested when the PTI was in power. He emphasised that PPP did not support targeting any one politically. The party believes in negotiations to

resolve issues.

He pointed out that even the jail menu for political prisoners was changed during the PTI rule. "Now there is a demand for changes in the jail menu and the provision of facilities," he apparently referred to PTI chairman Imran Khan, who has been detained for months. Bilawal also recalled that Asif Zardari spent a long time in jail as a political prisoner. When PPP came into power, they believed that "democracy is the best revenge," he said. The PPP chief said the party has always opposed the NAB system of accountability.

Hamas to hand over 4 Israeli hostages' bodies

GAZA CITY (AFP): Hamas will hand over the bodies of four Israeli hostages on Thursday in what it said would be an exchange for more than 600 Palestinian prisoners, capping the first phase of a Gaza ceasefire deal.

The United States said talks were on track for a second phase of the ceasefire deal that has largely held but whose complexity and long-drawn-out implementation have highlighted its fragility.

In Israel on Wednesday, thousands of mourners gathered for the funeral of Shiri Bibas and her sons, who were killed in captivity in Gaza and had become symbols of the country's hostage ordeal. The ceasefire has largely halted the Israel-Hamas war sparked by the October 7, 2023 attack, and has seen 25 hostages released alive so far in exchange for hundreds of prisoners.

"Hamas and other resistance factions will hand over four bodies of Israeli captives," a Hamas official told AFP, adding that in return, Israel would free 625 Palestinian prisoners in an exchange beginning on Thursday. Israel has reached an agreement with mediators for the return of the bodies of four Israeli hostages held in Gaza, the office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said. Another 23, all women

In Washington, US President Donald Trump's top envoy on the Middle East said Israeli representatives were en route to talks on the next phase of the ceasefire deal. "We're making a lot of progress. Israel is sending a team right now as we speak," Steve Witkoff told an event for the American Jewish Committee.

"It's either going to be in Doha or in Cairo, where negotiations will begin again with the Egyptians and the Qataris," he said. This first phase is supposed to end on Saturday, but negotiations for the next stage — which were due to begin in early February — have not yet started. Hamas has said it is ready to release all the remaining hostages "in one go" during the second phase.

The group accused Israel of endangering the Gaza truce by delaying the release of more than 600 Palestinian prisoners. Israel said it had concerns over how the hostages have been freed, with Netanyahu describing the handovers as "humiliating ceremonies." Israel has yet to comment on whether it will release Palestinian prisoners on Thursday. According to the Hamas official, who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity, 602 prisoners due for release last weekend would be freed on Thursday. Another 23, all women

and minors, would also be released, he said. The Israeli parliament held a minute of silence to mourn the deaths of three members of the Bibas family, as well as other victims of the October 2023 attack on Israel. "Yesterday, the funeral of Oded Lifshitz took place; today, the funeral of Shiri, Kfir and Ariel Bibas is taking place. We remember all the victims of October 7. We remember, and we will not forget," said speaker Amir Ohana.

Since the ceasefire took effect on January 19, Hamas has released 25 living hostages in public ceremonies across Gaza, where masked, armed fighters have escorted the captives onto stages covered in slogans. Israel has released more than 1,100 Palestinian prisoners. The International Committee of the Red Cross has urged all parties to carry out prisoner and hostage swaps "in a dignified and private manner."

In Israel, the prisoners are largely viewed as "terrorists" for the violent attacks they have carried out against civilians and security forces. For Palestinians, however, the releases are viewed as long-delayed justice for prisoners regarded as symbols of resistance against Israeli occupation. The two sides have accused each other of violating the ceasefire, but it has so far largely held.

ATC cancels Umar's bail
F.P. Report

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Wednesday cancelled former PTI leader Asad Umar's bail in three May 9 cases. ATC Admin Judge Manzoor Ali Gul held the cases and canceled Asad Umar's interim bails due to his absence. Asad Umar faces charges of arson, violence, and vandalism in cases registered at Jinnah House Lahore and Askari Town police stations.

Iqra University hosts groundbreaking conference on power dynamics

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Faculty of Social Sciences at Iqra University, Islamabad H-9 Campus, in collaboration with Capacity Analytics, successfully organized a high-impact academic conference titled "State, Society, and Culture: Dynamics of Power, Identity, and Change." Bringing together leading scholars, researchers, and policymakers,

fully organized a high-impact academic conference titled "State, Society, and Culture: Dynamics of Power, Identity, and Change." Bringing together leading scholars, researchers, and policymakers,



the conference served as a dynamic platform for insightful discussions on the evolving landscapes of power, identity, and societal transformation in the modern world.

Under the leadership of Professor Eatzaz Ahmad, the conference flourished as an intellectual hub for critical discourse and interdisciplinary collaboration. The conference delved into a range of thought-provoking themes, including:

and Sustainable Development – Examining climate governance, renewable energy transitions, and the socio-economic impact of environmental challenges on the Global South.

• Geopolitical Shifts and Pakistan's Foreign Policy – Analyzing Pakistan's strategic imperatives amidst shifting global power dynamics, regional conflicts, and economic alliances.

• Cultural Narratives and Identity Politics – Addressing historical reinterpretations, the representation of marginalized voices, and the role of literature and art in social transformation.

• Digitalization and Economic Evolution – Investigating the impact of artificial intelligence, financial inclusion, and governance in an increasingly technology-driven world.

The organizing committee included Prof. Eatzaz Ahmad, Prof. Dr. Shehryar Khan, Dr. Muhammad Khan (Associate Professor), Dr. Tasawar Hussain (Associate Professor), and Mr. Muhammad Abdullah (Senior Lecturer and focal person of the conference). The event featured engaging keynote addresses, panel discussions, and research presentations from renowned scholars. Distinguished speakers included representatives from academia, international organizations, and think tanks, fostering a dynamic exchange of ideas.

The conference also featured notable panel discussions with esteemed discussants, including:



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TEHSIL HEADQUARTER DISTRICT SOUTH WAZIRISTAN UPPER

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders based on MRS-2024 (Bi-Annual) / Non MRS-items as per approved PC-I for the below mentioned works out of "District Development Initiatives in South Waziristan Upper ADP No.979/240312 (2024-25)" are hereby invited on the basis of **Single Stage Single Envelope** procedure from the Government contractors registered with PEC, enlisted with C&W Department as per Centralized Enlistment Policy of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the current financial year as per following schedule:

S#	Work Name	Estimated Cost Million	Bid Security @ 2% (Rs)	Last date & time of submission of tender form	Date & Time of Opening of bid
1	Construction of PCC Street for Noor Abad Dwatoi Makin Area	7.300	146000/-	18th March 2025 12:00 PM	18th March 2025 01:00 PM
2	Construction of DWSS for Rehmat Gul Kot Village Badder Tiarza Upper Waziristan	3.900	78000/-	-do-	-do-
3	Construction of DWSS for Shankai Mela Irfan Ullah Kot	4.900	98000/-	-do-	-do-
4	Construction of Protection Bund for Sohail korona Shabi Khel Kach Patonrai Dwyotoi Ladh.	4.000	80000/-	-do-	-do-
5	Construction of DWSS Sohail Korona Tehsil Tiarza	4.000	80000/-	-do-	-do-
6	Construction of Protection Bund for Noor Wali Kotkai Mughli bund area.	4.000	80000/-	-do-	-do-
7	Construction of Protection Bund for Saeed ur Rehman Koroona Wacha Khwara Sharwanga Habeeba.	3.000	60000/-	-do-	-do-
8	Construction of Protection Bund for Muhammad Junaid Kach Village Sultana Maidan Tehsil Ladh.	3.000	60000/-	-do-	-do-
9	Construction of DWSS for Bilal Koroona Badar Khel Upper Waziristan.	5.400	108000/-	-do-	-do-
10	Construction of PCC Street for Maqbool Koroona (BEGA) Kaniguram.	4.000	80000/-	-do-	-do-
11	Construction of Protection Bund for Rehmat Shah Kot Murgi Bund.	3.000	60000/-	-do-	-do-
12	Installation of Solarized Street Lights in Chagmalai Atta u Rehman Koroona.	3.000	60000/-	-do-	-do-

Terms and Conditions:

1. A complete set of Bid Solicitation Documents can be obtained by an interested eligible bidder on submission 7 of a written application on bidder official letter head from an authorized person upon provision of a non-refundable fee of Rs.2000/- in shape of original Call Deposit Receipt prepared in the name of the Assistant Director, Local Government & Rural Development Department South Waziristan Upper after publishing NIT during office hours. In case of any further information / clarification, the bidders may visit the office on any working day before the closing of the bid or contact No. 0963-511 000 or email at adlgswtd@gmail.com. 2. The NIT tender will be available on KPRA website (www.kpra.gov.pk) 3. The bid securities shall be in the shape of call deposit receipt in favor of the **Assistant Director, Local Government & Rural Development Department South Waziristan Upper**. 4. The contractors quoting their bids up to a limit of 10% below Engineer estimate shall submit bid security @ 2% only of Engineer Estimate. The contractors quoting their bids more than 10% below up to 20% below on Engineers' Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer's Estimated cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security, then will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer's Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineers' Estimate along with detailed rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and / or required amount of additional security, then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is, in view of the Procuring Entity, not convincing, the Head of the Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons thereof. 5. Bids and original call deposits received through fax or by hand will not be acceptable. Sealed bids sent through registered mail / courier service should reach up to the specified time and date as mentioned above. 6. The original envelope complete in all respect must be delivered through courier to the Office of the Assistant Director, LG&RDD, South Waziristan Upper, at Tank while the duplicate copy may be delivered through courier to the Directorate General LG&RDD Office No. 20, B-5 opposite NESPAK Office at Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar before closing time of bid (In case of scheme having cost more than 2.00 Million). 7. The contractor or his representative can be present at time of opening of bids. 8. The call deposits i.e. bid security for the work / contract must be prepared after publishing of NIT and before closing time of the bid apply. 9. In case of tie / draw amongst the responsive bidders, the bid may be decided through free toss which shall be considered as final. 10. The bidder shall have the relevant codes as per Pakistan Engineering Council against each mentioned work. 11. The bidder shall submit their bids in sealed envelope within due time and date with requisite mandatory documents i.e. Tender Form, BOQ duly signed and stamp, BSDs, C&W Centralized Enlistment Card, active NTN/Income Tax certificate, valid PEC License, Active KPRA Registration. 12. The quoted rate must be clearly mentioned in words and in figures on tender and BOQ form. Incomplete /over-writing/disfiguring will not be acceptable and will be considered as non-responsive. 13. The procuring entity may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of bids or proposals in light of KPRA Rule-47. 14. The bidder on a written request to procuring entity may withdraw his bids at any time before the deadline for submission of bids 15. No bidder shall be allowed to withdraw his bid till award of contract or till bid is valid, whichever is earlier. 16. Any bidder who provides false, or materially inaccurate or incomplete or do not send information in hard form will be disqualified as per KPRA Act Section 29 (1) read with KPRA Rule (43). Furthermore, the office of the Assistant Director, LG&RDD South Waziristan Upper will recommend and sent cases for debaring/blacklisting and will initiate / take action in light of approved procedure / mechanism as per KPRA Act 29 (2) read with KPRA Rule (44). The contractor who is already debarred by the LG&RDD can't participate in these tenders. 17. Bids will remain valid for 180 days from the closing date of bids. 18. All material testing and all sorts of test will be performed by contractor on the demand of the procuring entity. 19. Any addition made in the terms & conditions in the NIT advertised will be implemented as per KPRA Rules

INF(P)821/25

Assistant Engineer
LG&RDD South Waziristan Upper

Assistant Director
LG&RDD South Waziristan Upper

Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | Tehsil Municipal Administration, Abbottabad

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tehsil Municipal Administration Abbottabad invites sealed tenders based on Single Stage Single Envelope procedure from the eligible Government contractors / firms fresh registered with Pakistan Engineering Council, fresh enlisted with Local Council Board Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and KPRA Authority for the current financial year, for the following works:-

Last Date & Time of Obtaining Tender Forms / Bid	18/03/2025	5:00 pm
Date & Time of Tender Forms / Bid Submission	19/03/2025	12:00 pm
Date & Time of Tender Forms Opening	19/03/2025	2:00 pm
S.#	Name of Schemes	Estimated Cost E/Money (2%)
* ADP No. 1173/210557 District Development Plan (2021-22) District Abbottabad (WRS)		
Package No.1 U/C Bagh (Revised)		
1	Construction of Road Dhen Kehal U/C Bagh PCC Pathways in Mohallah Andra Kals Village Bagh U/C Bagh	1,500,000 1,000,000 Total 2,500,000
Package No.2 U/C Bagnotar (Revised)		
2	Const: of Iqbal Shaheed Road and PCC Ban to Boys Primary School, Chahan U/C Bagnotar	1,500,000 Total 1,500,000
Package No.3 U/C Nathiagali (Revised)		
3	PCC road and Retaining wall Mowan to Kair Sarfali, Passala U/C Nathiagali PCC Street in Kala Kot Baghan U/C Nathiagali	1,500,000 900,000 Total 2,400,000
Package No.4 U/C Nagri Bala (Revised)		
4	PCC Street Bagh Nakar, Nagri Bala-U/C Nagri Bala PCC Pathway and Retaining walls Talreela U/C Nagri Bala	500,000 1,000,000 Total 1,500,000
Package No.5 U/C Namli Maira (Revised)		
5	PCC road Chrahan to karpasi, Dhaki Kheitar U/C Namli Maira	1,000,000 Total 1,000,000
Package No.6 U/C Phalkot (Revised)		
6	Const: of road and Retaining walls Sehana Phalkot-II U/C Phalkot PCC Pathways Middle school to Primary School Jandarbari U/C Phalkot	1,500,000 500,000 Total 2,000,000
Package No.7 U/C Phalkot (Revised)		
7	PCC Road Malsa Gali U/C Phalkot	2,200,000 Total 2,200,000
Package No.8 U/C Sarbhana (Revised)		
8	Construction of Road Aziz Bang, Maira Aziz Band U/C Sarbhana PCC pathways in vc sarbhanna U/C Sarbhana PCC Work Pathway in village Aziz Bang U/C Sarbhana	500,000 500,000 500,000 Total 1,500,000
9	PCC Road in Gul Dhok U/C Dhamtour	500,000 10000
* ADP No. 1173/210557 District Development Plan-I (2021-22) District Abbottabad PK-44		
Package No.1 U/C Nara (Revised)		
10	Construction / Widening of Road Main Road U/C Nara Construction / Widening of Road U/C Nara PCC Link Road Village Nara U/C Nara	600,000 800,000 800,000 Total 2,200,000
Package No.2 U/C Langrial (Revised)		
11	Construction of Road Village Karhaki U/C Langrial Construction / Widening of Road Village Danna Noral U/C Langrial PCC Link Road Village Karhaki U/C Langrial PCC Street Village Karhaki U/C Langrial	500,000 500,000 1,000,000 500,000 Total 2,500,000
Package No.3 U/C Dewal Menul (Revised)		
12	PCC Road Village Sajkot U/C Dewal Menal PCC Road Makol U/C Dewal Menal	1,000,000 1,500,000 Total 2,500,000
Package No.4 U/C Gharhi Phulgran (Revised)		
13	PCC of Pathways Village Malkan U/C Gharhi Phulgran PCC of Pathways in Upper Sajawal and Lower Sajawal U/C Gharhi Phulgran PCC of Pathways in Village Dharan U/C Gharhi Phulgran	800,000 800,000 800,000 Total 2,400,000
Package No.5 U/C Langra (Revised)		
14	PCC of Pathways Village Tanaki U/C Langra	500,000 Total 500,000
Package No.6 U/C Majohan (Revised)		
15	PCC Pathway in Village Bodla U/C Majohan	1,000,000 Total 1,000,000
Package No.7 U/C Havelian Cantt (Revised)		
16	Construction of Drain near Railway Line Ward-1 Havelian Cantt PCC Street Havelian Cantt: W-1 Const: of Drain / PCC Street Gujrat Cantt-1 Havelian Cantt:	700,000 1,000,000 500,000 Total 2,200,000

17	Package No.8 U/C Havelian Cantt (Revised)		40000
	PCC Street / Drain Sultanpur Cantt Ward-II Havelian Cantt:	500,000	
	PCC Street / Drain, Mattian, Ward-II Havelian Cantt:	500,000	
	PCC Street Ward-2 Havelian Cantt	500,000	
Construction of Drains Havelian Cantt: Ward # 2		500,000	
Total		2,000,000	
18	Package No.9 U/C Havelian Urban (Revised)		30000
	Pavement of Streets in Havelian City, Havelian Urban	500,000	
	PCC Street / Drain Havelian Urban	500,000	
	Const: of Drain Depo Road near GHSS Havelian Urban	500,000	
Total		1,500,000	
19	Package No.10 U/C Havelian Urban (Revised)		40000
	PCC Link Road Havelian Urban	500,000	
	Const: of Cause-way Havelian Urban	500,000	
	Const: of Drain / Street Havelian Urban	500,000	
Const: of Road (Retd: Police) Havelian Urban		500,000	
Total		2,000,000	
20	Package No.11 U/C Havelian Urban (Revised)		50000
	PCC Road Police Chowki, Havelian Urban, Gajal	1,500,000	
	Const: of Road Village Dhoiban Havelian Urban	500,000	
	PCC Link Road Basti Khoon Havelian Urban	500,000	
Total		2,500,000	
21	Package No.12 U/C Havelian Urban (Revised)		50000
	PCC Road Village Sohlan Havelian Urban	1,000,000	
	PCC Road Village Kokal Havelian Urban	1,000,000	
	PCC Streets Village Barseen Havelian Urban	500,000	
Total		2,500,000	
22	Package No.13 U/C Chamhad (Revised)		40000
	PCC Main Road & PCC Street Jamia Masjid Chamhad U/C Chamhad	500000	
	PCC Street, Dheri Beeram Gali U/C Chamhad	500000	
	PCC Road Boys High School to Girls High School Chamhad U/C Chamhad	1000000	
Total		2,000,000	
23	Package No.14 U/C Chamhad (Revised)		30000
	New Shingle Road, Chaharain Toot Basti Baeh Dara U/C Chamhad	500000	
	PCC Path, Moh Arab Giah Bagh Dara U/C Chamhad	500000	
	Construction New Shingle Road Soka to Chamak maira U/C Chamhad	500000	
Total		1,500,000	

PFC Funds for the Year of 2020-21			
1	PCC Path Moh: Afsar Khan, U/C Balderi	300,000	6000

TERMS & CONDITIONS: 01. A complete set of Bid Solicitation Documents can be obtained by an interested eligible bidder on submission or a written application on bidder official letter head from an authorized person upon provision of non-refundable fee of @ 0.03% (printing / reproduction cost) in shape of original Call Deposit Receipt prepared in the name of TMO, TMA, Abbottabad. In case of any further information / clarification, the bidders may visit the office on any working day before the closing of the bid or contact on email: maabbottabad@gmail.com of the TMA, Abbottabad or Phone No. 0992-9310253. 02. The bid securities shall be in the shape of call deposit receipt in favor of the TMO, TMA, Abbottabad. 03. The contractors quoting their bids up to a limit of 10% below Engineer estimate shall submit bid security @2% only of Engineer Estimate. 04. The contractors quoting their bids more than 10% below up to 20% below on Engineer's Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer's Estimate cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security then it will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. 05. Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer's Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineer's Estimate along with detailed rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and / or required amount of additional security, then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. 06. Bids and original call deposits received through fax or by hand will not be acceptable. Sealed bids sent through registered mail / courier service should reach up to the specified time and date as mentioned above. 07. The original envelope complete in all respect must be delivered through courier to the office of the Assistant Director (LG&S) TMA Abbottabad, while the duplicate copy may be delivered through courier to the Building No. 33, Street 13, 8, Phase VII Sector E Hayatabad, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa before closing time of bid (only for schemes greater than Rs 2.00 Million). 08. The contractor or his representative can be present at time of opening of bids. 09. The call deposits i.e. bid security for the work / contract must be prepared after publishing of NIT and before closing time of the bid apply. 10. In case of tie-draw amongst the responsive bidders, the bid may be decided through free toss which shall be considered as final. 11. The bidder shall have the relevant codes as per Pakistan Engineering Council against each mentioned work. 12. The bidder shall submit their bids in sealed envelope within due time and date with requisite mandatory documents i.e. Tender Form, BOQ duly signed and stamp, BSDs, fresh LCB Registration, CNIC copy, active NTN / Income Tax certificate, valid PEC License, Active KPRA Registration. 13. The quoted rate must be clearly mentioned in words and in figures on tender and BOQ form. Incomplete / over-writing / disfiguring will not be acceptable and will be considered as non-responsive. 14. The procuring entity may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of bids or proposals in light of KPRA Rule-47. 15. The bidder on a written request to procuring entity can withdraw their bids till closing time of the bid. 16. No bidder shall be allowed to withdraw his bid after closing of bid time till award of the contract or till bid is valid, whichever is earlier. 17. The rules & Regulation / direction in future if issued by Provincial Government or any competent authority shall be applicable. 18. In case, the contractor is not successful then 2% call deposit & Additional Securities will be refunded to him after 5th working day of tender opening date during the office hours. 19. If a holiday is declared by the Government on the tender opening date, the tender will be opened the next day during office hours. 20. Any bidder who provides false, or materially inaccurate or incomplete will be disqualified as per KPRA rules. 21. Bids will remain valid for 180 days from the closing date of bids. 22. Any addition made in the terms & conditions in the NIT advertised will be implemented as per KPRA Rules.

Published By:-
Tehsil Officer (Infrastructure)

Ordered By:
Tehsil Municipal Officer

INF(P) 806/25

TEHSIL MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION ABBOTTABAD

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (SENIOR) LOCAL GOVERNMENT & RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT DISTRICT HANGU.

Email: adhangu@gmail.com, Ph#: 0925-622120

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders based on MRS-2024 / Non MRS-items as per approved PC-I for the below mentioned works out of "Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (DDI)" 2024-25 are hereby invited on the basis of **Single Stage Single Envelope Procedure** from the Government contractors registered with PEC, enlisted with C&W Department as per Centralized Enlistment Policy of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the current financial year.

S.No.	Work Name	Estimated Cost (Million)	Bid Security @2% (Rs)	Last date & time of submission of tender form	Date & time of opening of bid
1	Repair of Transformers at District Hangu	10.00	200,000/-	25 March 2025 12:00 PM	25 March 2025 02:00 PM
2	Construction of PCC Village Roads in District Hangu	14.50	290,000/-	25 March 2025 12:00 PM	25 March 2025 02:00 PM
3	Beautification & Miscellaneous work at Markazi Eid Gah Hangu	02.00	40,000/-	25 March 2025 12:00 PM	25 March 2025 02:00 PM
4	Installation of Pressure Pumps at various places PK-93.	03.00	60,000/-	25 March 2025 12:00 PM	25 March 2025 02:00 PM

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- A complete set of Bid Solicitation Documents can be obtained by an interested eligible bidder on submission of a written application on bidder official letter head from an authorized person upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Rs 0.03% of the Estimated Cost in light of (para 6.31 B&R Manual of orders/ and IB.3 SBDs Small Works)- (printing / reproduction cost)** in shape of original Call Deposit Receipt prepared in the name of procuring entity AD (Sr.) LG&RDD Hangu. In case of any further information / clarification, the bidders may visit the office on any working day before the closing of the bid or contact on email adhangu@gmail.com or Phone no. (0925) 622120.
- For SF 01, those contractor/firms are eligible to participate in the tender who are registered with Inspectorate of Electricity, Energy & Power Deptt; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of electricity act 1937 Under Rule 48 & hold Class-E license as well as Provide One-year warranty of the particulars as per PESCO SOP, the contractor/firm workshop must be registered with PESCO. Furthermore, the Bidders must have the relevant codes for the above mentioned works as per PEC i.e EE04 & EE05.
- The bid securities shall be in the shape of call deposit receipt in favor of the procuring entity i.e. AD (Sr.) LG&RDD Hangu.
- The contractors quoting their bids up to a limit of 10% below Engineer Estimate shall submit bid security @ 2% only of Engineer Estimate in the shape of original call deposits. The contractors quoting their bids more than 10% below up to 20% below on Engineers' Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer's Estimated cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security, then will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer's Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineers' Estimate along with detailed rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and / or required amount of additional security, then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is, in view of the Procuring Entity, not convincing, the Head of the Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons thereof.
- Bids and original call deposits received through fax or by hand will not be acceptable. Sealed bids sent through registered mail / courier service should reach up to the specified time and date as mentioned above.
- The original envelope complete in all respect must be delivered through courier to the Office of AD (Sr.) LG&RDD Hangu, situated at Tehsil Building Thall Road, Hangu, while the duplicate copy may be delivered through courier to the Directorate General LG&RDD Office No. 20 Sector B-5 opposite to NESPAK Office at Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar before closing time of bids (**Only for schemes more than 2.00 Million**).
- The contractor or his representative may be present at time of opening of bids.
- The call deposits i.e. bid security for the work / contract must be prepared after publishing of NIT and before closing time of the bid apply.
- In case of tie / draw amongst the responsive bidders, the bid may be decided through free toss which shall be considered as final.
- The bidder shall have the relevant codes as per Pakistan Engineering Council against each mentioned work.
- The bidder shall submit their bids in sealed envelope within due time and date with requisite mandatory documents i.e. Tender Form, BOQ duly signed and stamp, BSDs, C&W Centralized Enlistment Card, active NTN / Income Tax certificate, valid PEC License, Active KPRA Registration.
- The quoted rate must be clearly mentioned in words and in figures on tender and BOQ form. Incomplete / over-writing / disfiguring will not be acceptable and will be considered as non-responsive.
- The procuring entity i.e. AD (Sr.) LG&RDD Hangu may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of bids or proposals in light of KPRA Rule.47.
- The bidder on a written request to procuring entity can withdraw their bids till closing time of the bid.
- No bidder shall be allowed to withdraw his bid after closing of bid time till award of the contract or till bid is valid, whichever is earlier.
- Any bidder who provides false, or materially inaccurate or incomplete or do not send information in hard form will be disqualified as per KPRA Act Section 29(1) read with KPRA Rule (43). Furthermore, the Office of the Assistant Director (Sr.) LG&RDD Hangu will recommend and sent cases for debaring / blacklisting and will initiate / take action in light of approved procedure / mechanism as per KPRA Act Section 29(2) read with KPRA Rule (44). The contractor who is already debarred by the LG&RDD can't participate in these tenders.
- Bids will remain valid for 180 days from the closing date of bids.
- Any addition made in the terms & conditions in the NIT advertised will be implemented as per KPRA Rules.

Assistant Engineer (Sr.) | LG&RDD Hangu

Assistant Director (Sr.) | LG&RDD Hangu

INF(P) 837/25



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah chairing a meeting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority.

Youth play a vital role in society uplift: Fakhar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jihan has emphasized upon the crucial role of youth in the progress of society. He stated that a significant portion of the country's population comprises young individuals, who hold the future of the nation in their hands.

He expressed these views while addressing the Young Leaders Parliament

Convention 2025, held at Nishtar Hall in Peshawar, on Wednesday.

During the convention, the provincial minister also administered the oath to the newly elected cabinet of the Young Leaders Parliament Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chapter and extended his congratulations to them.

On this occasion, the minister reiterated the philosophy of founding chairman Imran Khan, stressing that one should never give up. He encouraged the

youth to engage in relentless efforts for the development and prosperity of the country and to face challenges with resilience.

He expressed his delight that youth from merged districts across the province were actively participating in the Young Leaders Parliament. Concluding his address, the minister urged young individuals to work with dedication and commitment for the betterment of the province and the nation.

Uncle of Tordher passed away

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: SACM Industries Abdul Karim Tordher Uncle Passes Away Abdul Malik, the brother of former provincial minister Abdul Razziq Khan (late) and the uncle of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister's Special Assistant for Industries, Abdul Karim Tordher, has passed away. His funeral prayer was held on Wednesday in Tordher, District Swabi and was attended by prominent political figures, government officials, people of different walks of life and a large number of local residents. He was later laid to rest in his ancestral graveyard. The Soym (third-day prayer) for the deceased will be held on Friday.

Commandant Thall Scouts visits Hangu

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Commandant Thall Scouts, Alamgir Yousafzai, visited Hangu, where he met with members of the peace Committee and presided over an important meeting regarding the security situation in the region. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Hangu, Gohar Zaman Wazir, District Police Officer (DPO) Muhammad Khalid, Colonel Jawad, Additional Deputy Commissioner, and other senior officials. Discussions focused on the prevailing security situation, measures to maintain stability, and the role of public cooperation in sustaining peace. Commandant Thall Scouts commended the efforts of the Peace Committee, emphasizing that long-lasting peace is only possible through the collaboration of local leadership and the community. It was decided in the meeting that security forces and the local community would strengthen their coordination to ensure law and order in the region. Deputy Commissioner Gohar Zaman Wazir and DPO Muhammad Khalid reiterated their commitment to ensuring lasting peace in Hangu, stating that the district administration and security institutions are dedicated to maintaining stability.



PESHAWAR: Traffic passing through accumulated rainwater at Bacha Khan Chowk. — INP photo

Govt policies aimed to achieve sustainable, inclusive economic growth: Aurangzeb

PESHAWAR, Feb 26 (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb here Wednesday said that the government was endeavouring for sustainable and inclusive economic growth imperative for progress and prosperity of the entire nation.

Addressing Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) meeting as chief guest along with Minister of State for Finance and Revenue, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said that the country has achieved economic stability after Federal Govt's goal oriented policies and economic reforms that started positive effects on people lives.

He said that the Govt was committed to broadening its tax base and advancing with a focused approach to make Pakistan an export-led country.

The Govt has simplified the taxation process and the Tax Policy Office would be operationalized

in a few days to facilitate taxpayers, industrialists and the business community. The Federal Minister said that information technology and digitalization were introduced in the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to save time and ensure more transparency in financial affairs.

The Minister said that Pakistan has been put in the right direction by the present elected Govt and great responsibility rests on the private sector to come forward and contribute richly in the country's development process.

He said the private sector has to take a lead role in promotion of business and industrialization in the country especially in mineral rich Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, adding that the Govt would facilitate business and industrialization to generate employment opportunities for youth and alleviate poverty in KP.

As a result of the Govt's prudent economic and fiscal policies, he

Aurangzeb meets Muzzamil

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb met with the Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Finance Muzzamil Aslam at the Civil Secretariat in Peshawar to discuss key economic issues. The meeting was attended by Federal Minister of State Ali Pervaiz, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Excise Minister Khaliq ur Rehman, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, Additional Chief Secretary P&D Ikramullah, SMBR Javed Marwat, Secretary Finance Amir Sultan Tareen, Secretary Excise Fayaz Ali Shah, and DG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) Fozia Iqbal. During the meeting, Federal Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb commended Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on its efforts to implement the National Fiscal Pact and Agricultural Income Tax. He assured that the federal government would address Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's concerns regarding the NFC Award. Muzzamil Aslam expressed concerns over the federal government's decision to withhold funds allocated for the merged districts under the Annual Development Program (ADP) and the Accelerated Implementation Program (AIP). He emphasized that the merged districts require immediate financial support to meet their expenses, which exceed their allocated budget. Mr. Aslam proposed that interim arrangements be made through the NFC to support the merged districts. He also stressed the need for provinces to be taken into confidence on tax collection, pension, and salary matters before the next budget.



said that price hike has been slashed below signal digit and rice and IT exports achieved record growth during last one year that spoke volume of

our commitment towards inclusive economic development. The Minister said that food inflation, current account deficit and pressure on

Pakistani rupee has been significantly reduced and the country's economy is stabilized.

He said that the business and industrialization

sectors were being incentivized to generate employment opportunities for youth. The Federal Minister said that local industries and SMEs

Governor argues for joint efforts for KP uplift

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has said that the province produces the most electricity and gas, but it is also the province that faces the most load-shedding.

The resources of the province are being given to other regions, but Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is not being given its due share, on Wednesday.

This he said while addressing lawyers at the Peshawar High Court and hat the 18th Amendment, which gave more autonomy to the provinces, was a major achievement. However, he lamented

that the province was only given an additional 1% share in the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, while the promised 3% funds for the merged districts have yet to be delivered.

Regarding the law and order situation, the Governor said that the situation in the southern districts is alarming, and a lawyer was kidnapped in broad daylight in Dera Ismail Khan, but no one is asking questions.

He said that the arms left behind by the superpowers in Afghanistan are affecting the peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Governor emphasized that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can rapidly

progress if its borders are opened and its resources are utilized effectively. He also stressed that no messiah from Punjab or Gilgit will come to save the province, and that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa must unite to defend their rights.

The Governor praised the services of the lawyers' community, saying that they have always provided the country with good leaders.

He assured the lawyers that the doors of the Governor's House are always open to them and that he is ready to be their advocate with the federal government.

He also criticized the Prime Minister, saying

that since he took office, he has not visited Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Governor advised the Prime Minister to visit Peshawar and see the situation in the province for himself.

The Governor concluded his address by reaffirming his commitment to protecting the interests of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, despite any political differences.

Also present on the occasion were Peshawar High Court Bar President Fida Gul, General Secretary Alam Khan Adeenzai, and People's Lawyers Forum President Gohar Rehman Khattak, among a large number of lawyers.

Chief Secretary chairs briefing on higher education department

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A high-level briefing on the Higher Education Department was held with Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, in the chair. During the session, the Secretary of Higher Education presented a detailed overview of key initiatives, achievements, challenges, and the department's future roadmap.

The briefing covered significant developments in the higher education sector, focusing on enhancing transparency, improving academic standards, and aligning education with market needs.

Key initiatives discussed included a structured transfer system, academic programs, digital training programs, various scholarship schemes to support deserving students, and a comprehensive review of universities' financial status and other institutional matters.

In light of the discussions, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah emphasized the importance of structural reforms in the higher education sector. He directed the establishment of a *Higher Education Reform Working Group* to formulate a policy document.

Furthermore, the Chief Secretary highlighted key priorities to enhance the education system, including the optimal allocation of teaching staff, designing education programs in alignment with industry requirements, strengthening

monitoring systems, and encouraging collaboration between academic institutions and industry to equip students with entrepreneurial skills and promote job creation.

The Chief Secretary reaffirmed that quality education remains a cornerstone of progress and development, ensuring students are prepared to meet the challenges of a rapidly evolving job market.

Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chairs Briefing on Food Safety and Halal Food Authority

Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, chaired a briefing on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority, where he was apprised of the author-

ity's key activities, achievements, and operational framework.

During the session, the Director General of the Halal Food Authority presented an overview of the authority's Ramzan Action Plan, outlining measures to ensure the availability of safe, halal, and quality food in the markets during the holy month of Ramzan.

Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah directed the Food Authority to work in close coordination with district administrations for the effective implementation of the Ramzan Action Plan. He emphasized that these efforts aim to provide maximum relief to the public by ensuring the availability of safe and hygienic food during Ramzan.

Peshawar administration gears up for Ramazan

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In preparation for the holy month of Ramazan, the Peshawar district administration has devised a comprehensive strategy to facilitate the public and ensure the availability of essential commodities at controlled prices. Acting on the directives of Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, an important meeting was held on Tuesday under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Sarmad Saleem Akram.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Rao Hashim, district administrative officers, officials from the food and livestock departments, representatives of other concerned departments, and members of the trader community.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on ensuring the availability of food items, price control, and measures to provide relief to the public during Ramazan.

Deputy Commissioner Peshawar instructed that a well-coordinated mechanism be implemented to regulate food prices and quality standards. To achieve this, monitoring desks will be set up in all major markets of Peshawar, where district administration officers and representatives of relevant departments will be present. These desks will play a proactive role in addressing public complaints, preventing price gouging, and taking immediate action against illegal activities.

The meeting also decided that an official price list for fruits and vegetables would be issued daily at dawn in the wholesale market, with strict enforcement measures in place. Following the issuance of the price list, district administration officials will conduct market inspections, and any violations will result in strict legal action.

To ensure the supply of pure and high-quality food items, special initiatives have also been planned. In collaboration with the Livestock Department, daily milk samples from across Peshawar will be sent to laboratories for analysis, and further action will be taken based on the results.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all district officers to conduct daily market visits and take immediate action against hoarding, profiteering, and the sale of substandard food items. Violators will face strict legal consequences to guarantee the provision of affordable, high-quality, and hygienic food items to citizens.

Deputy Commissioner Peshawar reaffirmed that the district administration is fully committed to implementing the directives of the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and will remain proactive in providing maximum relief to the public during Ramazan.

Travel agencies, hotels sealed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Tourist Services Wing of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) conducted raids and sealed several travel agencies, hotels and restaurants in Peshawar and Abbottabad for non-registration and failure to renew their licenses. Following the directives of Tourist Services Wing Controller Umar Arshad Khan, Manager Regulation Zeeshan Majeed along with Additional Assistant Commissioner, Peshawar City, Waseem Yousaf, Deputy Manager Licensing, Afrasiab Khattak and personnel of Tourism Police carried out an operation at Chowk Yadgar and sealed Karwan Hudaibiya Hajj and Umrah Services for lack of renewal of its license.

were being promoted for the people's prosperity.

He said the Tax Policy Office would help facilitate traders and taxpayers besides take the country forward towards inclusive growth.

The Federal Minister said that he came here to personally observe and listen to the difficulties and problems of KP's businessmen, asking the SCCI President to submit detailed workable proposals and recommendations for consideration in the upcoming budget.

He said the height of prosperity could be achieved by creating a balance between revenue and expenditure. He said that nothing has been delayed on the side of his department and now it was between the bank and client to address their issues. Minister of State for Finance and Revenue, Ali Pervaiz Malik said that 'we all are Pakistanis and it was our collective duty to work for progress and prosperity of the country. He said the Govt was endeavouring to create balance between

income generation and expenditure and the Govt's economic and fiscal policies besides reforms has immensely helped in achieving economic stability despite enormous challenges.

He said the Govt has ensured financial discipline and addressed issues related to tax refund. He said that the Govt was striving hard to provide relief to poor consumers of electricity. Before Shahbaz Sharif Govt took over, he said the country was facing an imminent economic collapse and prices of daily commodities were soaring high. However, the Shahbaz Sharif Govt accepted the massive economic recovery's challenge and put the economy back on track.

Earlier, SCCI President and other members of the organization welcomed the Federal Minister and Minister of State for Revenue and highlighted problems being faced by the business community. They were also presented with traditional turbans.



In brief

WSSC Kohat meeting held F.P. Report

KOHAT: The 35th meeting of the Board of Directors of Water and Sanitation Services Company (WSSC) Kohat was successfully held under the chairmanship of Chairman Muhammad Saad. Key discussions centered around the company's budget, employee salaries, water bills, and other vital administrative matters. The meeting yielded several significant decisions, including the approval of WSSC Kohat's budget for the financial year 2025-26. This move aims to enhance the city's sanitation and water supply systems. Additionally, new members will be incorporated into the board committees to foster transparency and effectiveness in the company's administrative and financial affairs. To improve the recovery of water bills and the collection of dues, the Board's Budget and Finance Committee's recommendations will be implemented. The meeting was attended by esteemed members of the Board of Directors, including Shakeel Ahmed Afridi, Rashid Ahmed Paracha, and Ehsanullah Jan, among others. WSSC Kohat remains committed to providing top-notch facilities to the public, with the meeting paving the way for a brighter future.

Women hold protest F.P. Report

LARKANA: The women of Umar Bhayo village of Larkana taluka has staged a protest in front of the press club with innocent children. On this occasion women said that Baqrani, Gerello and Dokri police combined raid our house and arrested our 2 young. According to details, Abdul Gafar and Muntazir Mehdi, While the police have filed a false case of competition against Abdul Ghaffar, we have released him on bail from the High Court Circuit Bench in Larkana, while the police have not yet revealed our youth Muntazir Mehdi, nor has his arrest been revealed, which is completely unfair to us. Meanwhile Last day, a 4-year-old child Farooq son of Zahid Dahri was seriously injured when he was electrocuted by an electric motor in the suburbs of Larkana city. He was admitted to Chandka Medical College Hospital for treatment, but their he died due to serious injury, doctors handed his death body to heirs after postpartum.

20 couples tie knot in Dera F.P. Report

DI KHAN: Twenty couples tied the knot in the mass wedding ceremony held in Dera Ismail Khan under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government initiative to support underprivileged and orphaned couples. The provincial government covered all wedding expenses and provided each bride with a financial grant of PKR 200,000. The initiative, aimed at supporting underprivileged families, included comprehensive arrangements for the newlyweds. The event was organized by the Department of Zakat and Ushr in collaboration with the district administration. Deputy Commissioner Dera Sarah Rehman, Tehsil Mayor Umar Amin Gandapur, wife of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Assistant Commissioner Faseeh Abbasi, Chairman District Zakat Committee Amir Pirzada and relatives of the newlyweds participated in the wedding ceremony.



MARDAN: Vice Chancellor Abdul Wali Khan University, Professor Dr. Zahir Shah presenting shield to KP Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi.

Rescue 1122, gets two modern ambulances

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: Two modern and well-equipped ambulances were handed over to the district Rescue 1122 here in tehsil Jamrud, Khyber on Wednesday.

In this connection a simple but impressive gathering was organized that was attended by special advisor to Chief Minister (C&W) Muhammad Sohail Afridi as chief guest besides Assistant Commissioner, Jamrud Fahad Zia, Tehsil Municipal Officer Syed Noorullah and others.

He cut the ribbon to formally inaugurate the modern ambulance service in Khyber. The advisor to CM was briefed on the activities and services of the district Rescue 1122.

Speaking on the occasion Muhammad Sohail Afridi said that traffic mishaps and emergencies happened more at Pak-Afghan highway therefore, the Rescue 1122, Khyber was in dire need of well-equipped additional ambu-

lances.

The facility was provided to the Rescue 1122 to further improve their efficiency, he remarked. As per vision of Imran Khan and CM Ali Amin Gandapur efforts will be made round the clock for the uplift of the area, he added. He also lauded services of Rescue 1122, Khyber, provided to the tribesmen and assured every kind of assistance in supply of relief to the needy people of Khyber.

Earlier, the visiting guest was warmly welcomed by district emergency officer engineer Shareq Riaz Khattak and emergency officer engineer Baryal Mukhtyar on his arrival to the district headquarters of Rescue 1122 where a smart contingent of the Rescue 1122 officials presented him guard of honor.

Tehsil council demands release of budget: Various issues were discussed in tehsil council, meeting held in jirga hall, Landi Kotal last day. Under the head of Chairman Haji Shah

Khalid, a large number of councilors including opposition members participated in the moot.

The councilors thoroughly discussed certain issues like closing of Pak-Afghan highway, tehsil share in provincial financial commission, price list etc. Talking to the media persons tehsil Chairman Shah Khalid said that all members of the council demanded of the provincial government to release the budget, approved in provincial financial commission for the representatives of local bodies.

They also asked the federal government to bestow 110 billion rupees, specialized annually for the merged districts to bring the tribesmen level to the developed areas of the country. The Tehsil Chairman said that on the eve of Ramazan, a certain decision was taken to keep the prices of necessary commodities in control. The council unanimously elected Wali Muhammad as presiding officer.

Three tribes confronted over land dispute

F.P. Report

WANA: The Ghundak land dispute in Azam Warsak has escalated, leading to intense armed confrontations and bloodshed between three tribes including Sarkikhel, Jekhel, and Darikhel. Given the severity of the situation, leaders of all political parties held an emergency meeting with Deputy Commissioner (DC) Lower Waziristan, Nasir Khan, demanding strict legal action to immediately halt the tribal conflict.

Political leaders emphasized that precious human lives are being lost due to this dispute, and the government must take urgent steps to prevent further bloodshed. During the meeting, the safe recovery of the Chamber of Commerce President, Saifur Rehman, a few days ago was acknowledged, and appreciation was extended to the civil administration and law enforcement agencies. Additionally, a strong demand was made for the immediate recovery of two abducted Customs officials and Dr. Nauman.

DC Nasir Khan assured that extensive efforts are underway for the safe return of the abductees, and they will be rescued soon. He also announced that strict legal action has been prepared to control the Ghundak land dispute. If anyone defies government orders, a crackdown will be carried out under 3MPO (Maintenance of Public Order) for illegal possession of weapons and disturbing law and order.

The escalating tensions in Azam Warsak have created immense fear and panic among the public. Will the government be able to resolve this conflict before more bloodshed occurs, or will Waziristan be drawn into another prolonged tribal war? The situation could become even more critical at any moment.

AWKUM and WUM celebrate foundation day

Anees Takar

MARDAN: The foundation day celebrations at Women University Mardan and Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM) were marked by significant announcements regarding university reforms, financial sustainability and infrastructure development. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan Afridi attended the events and emphasized the government's commitment to strengthening higher education institutions.

Vice Chancellor Women University Mardan Professor Dr. Safia Ahmad highlighted the university's eight-year journey of academic excellence. The event was attended by Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Technical Education, Tufail Anjum and Member of Provincial Assembly, Ameer Farzand Khan.

Addressing the gathering, Afridi announced that the provincial government will provide Rs. 100 million (10 crore) this year to complete the university's new campus building, ensuring that classes will commence there from the next academic session. He also emphasized the importance of financial sustainability and improved management to enhance the performance of higher education institutions.

During the event, Vice Chancellor Dr. Safia Ahmad signed multiple Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with various institutions, aimed at foster-

ing academic collaborations and research initiatives.

Later Afridi visited Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM), where he was welcomed by Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Zahir Shah. As part of the foundation day celebrations, the minister inaugurated a newly constructed hostel, highlighting the government's efforts to improve student facilities. He was accompanied by Special Assistant to the CM Tufail Anjum and DEDAC Chairman Zarshad Khan.

During a briefing at the Vice Chancellor's office, officials informed Afridi that AWKUM continues to excel in global rankings and is recognized as one of Pakistan's leading research universities.

Speaking on the occasion, Afridi reiterated the government's commitment to resolving financial and administrative challenges in universities. He urged institutions to adopt better financial management strategies and work towards self-sustainability while ensuring quality education.

The event concluded with Afridi planting a tree on the university campus, symbolizing growth, progress and the government's vision for a sustainable higher education system. The foundation day celebrations at both universities showcased their achievements, future plans and the government's resolve to strengthen the education sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

AD&SJ imposes Rs1m fine on journalist

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Additional District and Sessions Judge (AD&SJ) Nowshera Muhammad Tayyab Khan has announced a verdict in a defamation case filed under the new defamation law. The court has imposed a fine of Rs. 1 million on Farhat Shah, a former representative of a private TV channel, for airing false and baseless news.

During the hearing, the lawyer for the plaintiff, Muhammad Riaz Khan Advocate and Muhammad Naem Khan Advocate, presented arguments and evidence. They stated that the news aired by the private TV channel was false and baseless, and that Farhat Shah had failed to provide any evidence to support his claims.

The court, after examining the evidence and arguments presented by both parties, ruled in favor of the plaintiff and imposed a fine of Rs. 1 million on Farhat Shah. The court also observed that the news aired by the private TV channel was not only false

but also malicious and intended to harm the reputation of the plaintiff.

The plaintiff, Iftikhar Ahmed Paracha, had filed a defamation suit against Farhat Shah and the private TV channel, alleging that they had aired false and baseless news about him. The news had claimed that Iftikhar Ahmed Paracha had been promoted to grade 16 due to his influence and connections with the former Chief Minister Pervez Khattak.

However, the court found that the news was false and baseless, and that Iftikhar Ahmed Paracha had been promoted to grade 16 based on his merit and seniority. The court also observed that Farhat Shah had failed to provide any evidence to support his claims, and that the news aired by the private TV channel was intended to harm the reputation of Iftikhar Ahmed Paracha.

In its verdict, the court ruled that Farhat Shah was guilty of defamation and imposed a fine of Rs. 1 million on him. The court also directed Farhat Shah to pay

the fine within a specified period.

The verdict was announced by Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Tayyab Khan in a 16-page detailed judgment. The court examined the evidence and arguments presented by both parties and ruled in favor of the plaintiff.

The lawyer for the plaintiff, Muhammad Riaz Khan Advocate and Muhammad Naem Khan Advocate, had argued that the news aired by the private TV channel was false and baseless, and that Farhat Shah had failed to provide any evidence to support his claims. They had also argued that the news was intended to harm the reputation of Iftikhar Ahmed Paracha and that Farhat Shah was guilty of defamation.

The court, after examining the evidence and arguments presented by both parties, ruled in favor of the plaintiff and imposed a fine of Rs. 1 million on Farhat Shah. The court also directed Farhat Shah to pay the fine within a specified period.

Vegetable market demolished

F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: The district administration Charsadda has demolished the old vegetable market and handed over the retrieved land to Islamia College Peshawar.

The old vegetable market was established on 55 kanals of land that was property of Islamia College

Peshawar. The vegetable market was shifted to new location having all the needed facilities for traders.

The vegetable market was disputed for a long period and one of the main reasons of traffic jams in Charsadda. The land that was retrieved on the directives of Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Khan Mehsud has been

handed over to Vice Chancellor Islamia College, Professor Dr. Ali Muhammad who announced to construct separate Islamia Collegiate Schools for girls and boys.

Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner said that 4000 kanals of land that is situated in other districts would be retrieved soon.

Enchanting snowfall at Mahodand lake: A springtime wonder

MINGORA (APP): As the spring season breathes life into the valleys of Upper Kalam, a mesmerizing transformation unfolds over Mahodand lake in the Osho Valley due to snowfall, attracting tourists in droves.

The alternating dance of sun and clouds with snowfall casts an enchanting spell, turning this serene lake into a coveted haven for tourists and families alike. Nestled amidst towering deodar trees and abundance of trout fish, Mahodand lake with 2,400feet length and 9,400feet height of sea level emerges as a jewel of nature, its bluish-white waters swelling with the spring rains and snowfalls amid blossoms of flowers.

Visitors flock here, eager to immerse themselves in the lake's tranquil beauty and partake in leisurely boating adventures. The lake's surroundings burst into a riot of colours, with vibrant seasonal flowers and roses sprawling across the landscape, creating a feast for the eyes and soul. This season is cherished as an unparalleled opportunity to visit one of the country's most beautiful tourist destinations. The atmosphere is imbued with a palpable sense of ecstasy, courtesy of the frequent moderate to erratic rains besides snowfall that grace the region.

"I came to Kalam Valley with my family after six years to enjoy its mesmerizing natural beauty and snowfall on the

weekend," said Nasir Khan, a property dealer of Nowshera while talking to APP. "Every snowdrop adds to the magic, enhancing the lush greenery and the lake's emerald allure," he said, adding Mahodand lake is renowned not just for its stunning vistas but also for its freezing waters due to snowfall with highest speed and abundant trout fish besides exploring it through boating of Rs 200 trip," said Nasir while enjoying trout fish as his children playing football around him amid great fun and laughter at Mahundhand with cold breeze started from snow-cad Osho mountains.

Adventure enthusiasts and nature lovers from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are particularly drawn to this beautiful destination known for its breathtaking natural beauty, taking advantage of the open access road and improved transportation facilities. The enhanced infrastructure and Swat motorway have made it easier for tourists to indulge in various adventure sports in Upper Swat, further elevating the lake's appeal.

"With the start of spring season, Mahodand lake stands as a testament to nature's splendor. It invites all to experience its ethereal beauty, to breathe in the fresh, rain-kissed air, and to create unforgettable memories in one of Pakistan's most enchanting locales," he said. Saad Khan,

the spokesman of Tourism and Culture Authority told APP that elaborate arrangements were made for accommodation and facilitation of tourists and adventure sports lovers during current season in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Under Development of Ecotourism Project (ETP), he said that camping pods with facilities of two to four beds alongwith wash washrooms and kitchen were established at various scenic places including Malakand and Hazara divisions. Besides establishment of camping pod at Gabeen Jabba near Mahudhand lake, and Sharan near Saiful Malook lake, he said 10 more camping pods were installed at different tourism places to provide affordable accommodations to tourists' families.

These camping pods were established at Sharan Kagan Mansehra, Mahaband Buner Swabi, Allai Batagram, Bamburait Chitral, Tandyani Abbottabad, Bisigram Swat, Yakhtangi Shangla, Saheed e Sir and Malka Swat and Sheikh Badin in DI Khan. Bishigram, Shran, Yakhtangi, Shaheed e Sir and Malk camping pods have already been opened for tourists.

"Each pod has two to four beds for families, a wash room and a small kitchen with fool-proof security arrangements for tourism police," he said, adding Rs3500 to Rs5000 per day/night

stay was being charged against Rs12,000 to Rs15,000 per room by a private hotels at Khagan, Naran and Galiyat valleys. As many as 10 more camping pods at Jargo and Sulatanr in Swat, Lashkargha Broghal Valley and Surlaspur Shandor valley Upper Chitral, Kumrat valley in Upper Dir, Laram Top and Shahi Bin Shahi in Lower Dir, Lilowani Alpuri in Shangla Samanah Top in Orakzai/Hangu and Kalam Swat.

One of the key initiatives that have been undertaken is to increase the presence of security personnel in tourist spots. This has made tourists feel safer and more secure, resulting in an increase in the number of tourists visiting northern KP. Tourism police force comprises well-trained officers equipped to handle any situation that may arise while tourists are visiting the northern KP to beat sizzling heat in plain districts of Pakistan. These officers are fluent in several languages, including English, to make communication with foreign tourists easier.

A mobile application called the "Tourist Safety App," has been launched enabling tourists to quickly and easily contact the tourist police in case of an emergency. Furthermore, the government has invested heavily in improving the infrastructure, including the road network, transportation, and accommoda-

tion facilities.

The construction of new hotels, resorts, and rest houses has made it easier for tourists to find suitable accommodations while enhanced road networks had reduced load on the established tourism stations. Muhammad Ali Syed, General Manager, Tourism and Culture Authority said that waterfalls of Lamchar, Sajkot, Noori, Chajjian Haripur, Jarogo Swat, Lanchar Dir and Umbrella Abbottabad were being developed to promote ecotourism.

Tourism spots, jeep tracks and roads to link waterfalls of Abbottabad, Haripure and Mansehra were being developed. To reduce tourists' load at Galiyat, Kagan, Naran, Kalam, Malam Jabba and Dir, jeepable tracks was being constructed in 15 areas with an estimated cost of Rs500 million, adding camping pods were also established near it while local communities were encouraged to reserved at least one rooms for tourists to bolster income of rural population.

Omar Khattak, GM Investment, KP Tourism Authority said Integrated Tourism Zones (ITZs) at Ghanool Mansehra, Mankiyal Swat, Madaklasht Chitral and Thandiyani Abbottabad would be constructed with assistance of the World Bank. Ghanool Mansehra would be established on 59.6 acres, Mankiyal Swat on 29.5 acres, Madaklasht on 540

Kanal and Thandiyani on 640 Kanal of land respectively.

As a pilot project, ITZ Ghanool with a proposed cost of Rs5.5 billion and Mankiyal with an estimated cost of Rs2.9 billion to be developed first to promote sustainable tourism. Rules and regulations for Mankiyal and Ghanool ITZs were prepared that would be completed on the patterns of ITZs of Malaysia and Indonesia. These ITZs are expected to create 200,000 direct and indirect job opportunities and USD 2.8 billion investment.

Feasibility of the Cable Car project from Dir Upper to Madaklasht Chitral has been completed and it would be financially supported by the World Bank through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Integrated tourism project (KITE). Four colonial era tracks' development including Thandiyani-Nathigali having 8, 200 feet height, 40km length and 1500 old trees belt, Thandiyani-Biringali track, Dagri Bangla-Meera Jani-Nathigali track and Kagan-Mansehra track starting from Shinkyari to Kund Bangla and onward to Shaheed Pani-Nadi Bangla to Musa Ka Musallah were in pipeline. The experts underlined the need for showcasing these treasures through short videos and pictures through social media to attract foreign tourists imperative for bolstering rural economy.



WEST BANK: Israeli tanks are deployed during an ongoing army operation in Jenin refugee camp.

Congo says rebel uprising has killed over 7,000 people this year

KINSHASA, Congo (AP): More than 7,000 people have died this year as Rwanda-backed M23 rebels have captured unprecedented amounts of territory in mineral-rich eastern Congo, Congo's prime minister said, as the European Union announced it would review an agreement with Rwanda on critical raw materials.

Judith Suminwa Tuluka told the UN Human Rights Council that the security and humanitarian situation in the region "has reached alarming levels."

The conflict has accelerated in recent weeks, with the rebels taking the key city of Goma in January and Bukavu, another provincial capital, this month. M23 is the most potent of the many armed groups vying for a foothold in Congo's east, which has trillions of dollars of mostly untapped mineral wealth crucial to the world's technology.

Pressure grew on Rwanda. The European Union's top diplomat, Kaja Kallas, called Congo's territorial integrity "non-negotiable" and said EU defense consultations with

Rwanda have been suspended - they cooperate on missions in Mozambique and elsewhere - and their memorandum of understanding regarding critical raw materials will be under review. The EU and Rwanda a year ago signed the memorandum of understanding to "nurture sustainable and resilient value chains for critical raw materials," noting that Rwanda "produces tin, tungsten, gold and niobium, and has potential for lithium and rare earth elements."

The EU announcement comes as the government of Congo, far richer in minerals, has accused Rwanda of looting its resources, and after the United States last week urged an "immediate cessation of sourcing of minerals from areas controlled by M23." There was no immediate comment from Rwanda on what could be a blow to its economy. The UN has warned that the fighting poses a wider threat to the region, which has seen decades of simmering conflict that has displaced millions.

The M23 has spoken of unseating

the government of Congolese President Félix Tshisekedi in distant Kinshasa, which has long had a tenuous grip on the east. The rebels are attempting to gain more ground despite calls for a ceasefire, bolstered by about 4,000 troops from neighboring Rwanda, a short drive from Goma. M23 leaders have vowed to "cleanse" cities of alleged bad governance and insecurity. They now threaten the city of Uriva, where gunfire was reported over the weekend. M23 says it's fighting to protect ethnic Tutsis and Congolese of Rwandan origin from discrimination and wants to transform Congo from a failed state to a modern one.

Analysts have called those pretexts for Rwanda's involvement. Witnesses in Goma have asserted that the M23's intelligence branch is searching for former Congolese soldiers and criminals but some people are misidentified. They asserted that 11 young people were killed while waiting for a weightlifting class in the city after being misidentified as thieves.

Russia says latest UK sanctions 'illegitimate'

LONDON (Reuters): Russia's embassy in London said Britain's new package of sanctions against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine was "illegitimate" and many of those targeted had no connection to the conflict.

Britain announced what it said was its largest package of sanctions against Russia since the early days of the war in Ukraine, including companies worldwide that supply components used by the Russian military. The Russian embassy called the measures "futile" in a statement posted on Facebook said. "The moment chosen by London to whip up the sanctions hysteria is quite symbolic - at a delicate time when the foundations of the future Ukraine settlement process are being shaped in line with the Russia-US agreements," the statement said.

Britain's sanctions package, timed to mark the third anniversary of the Russian invasion, also targeted North Korea's defence minister No Kwang Chol over the deployment of North Korean forces in Russia, and Kyrgyzstan-based Keremet Bank.

Limpet mines likely caused blasts on 2 tankers

ATHENS (Reuters): Mines attached to the hulls of ships and set off with timers likely caused blasts that have damaged two crude oil tankers in the Mediterranean Sea since January, three sources close to the investigation said.

At least five vessels have been damaged, including explosions on the Greek-managed tankers Seacharm and Seajewel which Reuters reported last week. The incidents have raised concerns of a new security threat in the typically safe waters of the Mediterranean, just as the shipping industry is dealing with attacks in the busy Red Sea route.

It is not clear who is responsible for the alleged attacks. The vessels had recently called at Russian ports, according to ship tracking data and sources. The cause of the damage to the vessels is being investigated by Greek and Italian authorities. The location of the blasts on the vessels' hulls, the type of blast and other evidence suggest limpet mines, said the sources who had knowledge of the matter but who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"Strong indications suggest that BPM 1 or BPM 2-type limpet mines were used," one of the sources said. The source was referring to explosives used on the Seacharm and Seajewel, which were damaged in the Mediterranean in January and February. Two other sources said the damage on one of the tankers, the Seacharm, was consistent with an explosive device such as a limpet mine.

Separately, two maritime security sources also pointed at limpet mines being behind the blasts on both tankers, based on the damage and their own assessments. Judicial authorities in Italy said they did not have permission to comment while the investigation is underway. A spokesperson for Athens-based Benamaris, which owns and operates the Seacharm and Seajewel, referred questions to Greek and Italian authorities over-seeing the investigation.

Limpet mines are named after the disk-shaped sea snail that clamps onto rocks. The mines are attached to ships with magnets and usually contain TNT (trinitrotoluene) explosives that are triggered with a timer, one of the sources said. Greece's coastguard and armed forces are investigating the cause of the blast on the Seacharm off Turkey. The armed forces were asked to examine the type of explosive used, based on a sample of the debris, a military source said.

Italian prosecutors have launched a terrorism investigation into the Seajewel incident. Maritime security sources have not ruled out intentional damage for these and others tankers recently hit by blasts, including the Koala, damaged in the Russian Baltic Sea port of Ust-Luga this month and the Russian cargo ship Ursa Major, which sank off Spain in December after reporting an explosion.

Kremlin reaffirms opposition to EU peacekeepers in Kyiv

MOSCOW/WASHINGTON (Reuters): The Kremlin, asked about an assertion by US President Donald Trump that Russia was open to European peacekeepers being deployed in Ukraine, referred reporters to an earlier statement that such a move would be unacceptable to Moscow.

Russia has repeatedly said it opposes having NATO troops on the ground in Ukraine, with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov saying last week that Moscow would view that as a "direct threat" to Russia's sovereignty, even if the troops operated there under a different flag. Asked about Trump's comment, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov refrained from publicly contradicting the US president, but effectively reaffirmed Russia's opposition to the idea.

"There is a position on this matter that was expressed by the Russian Foreign Minister, Lavrov. I have nothing to add to this and nothing to comment on. I leave this without comment," said Peskov. Trump said that both he and Putin accepted the idea of European peacekeepers in Ukraine if a settlement was reached to end the war. "Yeah, he will accept that," Trump said. "I specifically asked him that question. He has no problem with it."

Brian Hughes, spokesman for the White House National Security

Council, did not respond directly to the Kremlin's latest comment, saying the Trump administration would continue to work with Moscow and Kyiv to end the war. "President Trump's commitment to achieving an end to this brutal, bloody war and then establishing the framework for a lasting peace will not be negotiated through the media," Hughes said. "The Trump administration knows that sustaining peace requires Europe to do more, and we have heard leaders like (French) President (Emmanuel) Macron and British Prime Minister (Keir) Starmer - as well as others - offer to do just that. We continue to work with Russia and Ukraine for peace because you can't end a war without talking to both sides."

Meanwhile, the Kremlin said that Russia had lots of rare earth metal deposits and that it was open to doing deals to develop them after President Vladimir Putin held out the possibility of such collaboration with the United States. "The Americans need rare earth metals. We have a lot of them," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. "We have our own plans to develop strategic resources, but there are quite broad prospects for cooperation here," he told reporters.

Putin told state TV that Russia was open to joint projects with American partners - including gov-

ernment and the private sector - under a future Russia-US economic deal. US President Donald Trump has pledged that "major economic development transactions with Russia" would take place.

Peskov said there was still a lot of work to be done to normalise relations between Moscow and Washington before any economic deals could be struck. "Next on the agenda is the issue of resolving the Ukrainian crisis", said Peskov. "And then, especially since the Americans themselves have also spoken about it, it will be time to consider possible projects related to trade, economic and investment cooperation." "When there comes, let's say, a moment of political will, we will be open to this (cooperation on rare earth metals)," Peskov added.

Rare earths are a group of 17 metals used to make magnets that turn power into motion for electric vehicles, cell phones, missile systems, and other electronics. Russia has the world's fifth-largest reserves of rare earth metals, according to the US Geological Survey data, after China, Brazil, India and Australia. The US and Ukraine are negotiating a separate deal involving rare earth metals. Trump said this week that deal was "pretty close" to conclusion. Putin said those negotiations were not a concern for Russia.

'We are still at war': Syria's Kurds battle Turkey months after Assad's fall

DAMASCUS (BBC): To reach north-east Syria, we cross a rickety floating bridge over the River Tigris. Our minibus rattles as it takes us from Iraqi Kurdistan through Syrian oil fields, where jacks pumping crude oil line the roads.

This part of Syria is controlled by Kurds, who call it Rojava - meaning western Kurdistan. Since 2012, after the outbreak of civil war, they have run it as a self-declared autonomous region, protected by Kurdish-led armed forces. But Bashar al-Assad's regime never recognised it and, despite his fall from power, its future remains uncertain.

As well as more than a decade of civil war, the Syrian Kurds have faced years of conflict with its northern neighbour, Turkey - a battle they are still fighting. A decade ago, the Islamic State group (IS) swept through this region, capturing cities and villages with little resistance - until it reached the city of Kobane, next to the Turkish border, in September 2014.

IS militants didn't manage to enter the city, but they imposed a brutal siege that lasted for months. Kurdish-led factions, sup-

ported by the US-led military coalition, broke the siege in early 2015. This January, I join the city's residents as they mark the 10-year anniversary. At the entrance to Kobane, women in their 50s, armed with AK-47 assault rifles, guard the checkpoints. Women played a crucial role in the fight against IS - many volunteered in the all-female Women's Protection Units (YPJ).

As we drive around the city, the scars of war are still visible, along with posters of young men and women who lost their lives. But in the main square, the mood is festive. Young girls and boys, dressed in colourful Kurdish outfits dance hand in hand, singing as they celebrate. For the older generation, though, it is a bittersweet moment. "Last night I lit candles for my martyred brother and others killed in Kobane," says Newrouz Ahmad, a 45-year-old mother of four. "It is a joyful day, but also a painful one. I wish he was here to see it."

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) declared victory over IS in north-east Syria in 2019. But freedom from IS hasn't brought lasting peace. Turkey and a coalition of Turkish-backed rebel

groups known as the Syrian National Army (SNA) have launched several military operations against SDF-controlled territories since 2016, and captured a swathe of territory running along hundreds of kilometres of the border.

Turkey considers the largest component in the SDF - the People's Protection Units (YPG) - an extension of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has fought for Kurdish autonomy in Turkey for decades and is listed by Ankara as a terrorist organisation. The country wants to push the SDF back from its border. As the Assad regime collapsed in late 2024, the Turkish-backed SNA launched a new offensive to capture territory west of the River Euphrates from the SDF.

Now battles have reached areas near Kobane. A Kurdish commander in the city quietly tells me: "Don't film here, we have built tunnels beneath the city to prepare for another siege." In the city, the smell of gasoline fills the air, and the deafening sound of generators can be heard everywhere. Locals tell me that most of the power stations, refineries, and even telecommunications antennas have been destroyed by

Turkish air strikes over the past two years.

Newrouz Ahmad says that having "defeated IS in Kobane... we won't allow Turkey and its proxies to occupy our city, we will defeat them too". At a restaurant, the moment people realise we are not locals, they surround us. I ask an old man with grey hair and a stick in his hands how old he is. I guess he is about 80, but the answer he gives embarrasses me. "I am 60," he says.

It's clear that people here have been exhausted by war, having witnessed so much death and bloodshed. And now the threat of another battle is looming. Turkish-made drones and Turkish jets have targeted SDF positions and supply routes around the city. Even civilians protesting have been hit.

In a regional hospital, I find one of the wounded - Lea Bunse, a 28-year-old German peace activist who has been volunteering at a women's shelter in Rojava for over two years. She shows me a video of an attack on a demonstration she says she was part of in January. The footage shows two projectiles dropping from the sky and hitting a crowd of people dancing.

Stress and fear roil a tiny, rapidly militarizing Japanese island

YONAGUNI, Japan (AP): This tiny island on Japan's western frontier has no convenience store. Nature lovers can dive with hammerhead sharks and watch miniature horses graze on a hill.

But the wooded mountain ranges now carry radar sites. A southern cattle ranch has been replaced with the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force's Camp Yonaguni. Japan and its ally, the United States, hold joint military exercises here. Plans are underway to add a new missile unit and expand a small airport and port. All of the buildup has cemented the island's as a front line in a potential clash over Taiwan, the self-governing democratic island that China claims as its own.

"As a child, I was so proud of this westernmost border island," said Fumie Kano, an innkeeper on

Yonaguni. "But recently, we are repeatedly told this place is dangerous, and I feel so sad." The militarization has been especially felt as the island's population shrinks. There are less than 1,500 local residents. Supporters say new servicemembers arriving are needed for the island's safety and struggling economy. Opponents like Kano say the military buildup is damaging the environment, making the island's economy dependent on the military and could provoke an attack. Yonaguni is only 110 kilometers (68 miles) east of Taiwan, around which China has bolstered military activity. Worried about a conflict, Japan has made a "southwestern shift" in its military posture and accelerated defense buildup and spending around the frontline.

Missile units for PAC-3 interceptors have been

deployed on Yonaguni and nearby Ishigaki and Miyako islands. Yonaguni residents find themselves at the center of the geopolitical tension. A recent government plan to deploy more missiles, possibly long-range, has caused unease about the future of the island, even among those who initially supported hosting troops. Kano, a Yonaguni native, recalls that officials and residents once wanted to improve the economy and environment through commercial exchanges with Taiwan by operating direct ferries between the islands. But that was set aside when a plan to host Japanese troops became an easier alternative to gain government subsidies and protection.

Disagreement about the plan has divided the small community. Support for hosting Japanese troops

carried in a 2015 referendum; that meant the island's fate would be largely decided by the central government's security policy. A year later a 160-member coast watch unit was set up to monitor Chinese military activity, with radars built on Mount Inbi and elsewhere. Now there are about 210 troops, including an electro-warfare unit. Servicemembers and their families account for one-fifth of the island's total population. The local economy largely depends on the servicemembers and their families who use local shops, schools and community services.

There's worry on the island about the pace and extent of the militarization, says Kyoko Yamaguchi, a potter. "Everything is pushed through in the name of the Taiwan emergency, and many feel this is too much."

Son of Chinese journalist jailed

WASHINGTON (AP): The son of a Chinese journalist accused of espionage called for his father's release from a seven-year prison sentence in the high-profile case that signaled Beijing's tighten grip on journalism.

Dong Yuyu, then a senior editor at a Communist Party-run newspaper that was increasingly out of step with the party's hardening line, was arrested in February 2022 as he was having lunch with a Japanese diplomat in Beijing. Dong Yifu said at the National Press Club in Washington that his father is planning to appeal his convictions. He urged Japanese authorities to help show that the senior Dong's meetings with Japanese diplomats had nothing to do with espionage.

"It is a press freedom issue. It is a human rights issue. It has very little to do with national security or espionage," said the younger Dong. China's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Dong Yuyu previously was the

deputy head of the commentary department at the Guangming Daily, a newspaper once considered more liberal than other party outlets.

Dong wrote articles arguing for constitutional democracy, political reform and official accountability - views that were once discussed openly in party outlets but are now out of favor. He was a Nieman fellow at Harvard University from 2006 to 2007 and became a visiting fellow at Keio University in Japan in 2010. He later worked as a visiting professor at Hokkaido University in Japan before returning to China. Dong's arrest, which came just two months before he planned to retire from Guangming Daily, shocked journalists and diplomats across China. It is common for journalists to maintain contact with diplomats as part of their newsgathering. The younger Dong says his mother later heard in court that meetings with eight Japanese diplomats were listed as evidence

against his father.

Last November, the Beijing No. 2 Intermediate People's Court sentenced Dong to seven years in prison for espionage, his family previously said. Then-US Ambassador Nicholas Burns wrote on the social platform X at the time that the verdict was unjust. Japan's Assistant Foreign Secretary Masashi Mizobuchi said that all diplomatic activities by officials at the Japanese Embassy and Consulate in China are part of their legitimate duties.

The Japanese Foreign Ministry protested in December over the "disadvantage" the ruling created for Chinese citizens who have friendly exchanges with the Japanese Embassy and its officials, warning it has a chilling effect on economic and personal exchanges with China. Dong is in good health and has tried to stay fit in prison by doing 200 pushups and 200 leg raises a day, his son said, but he gets just a few hours of sunlight per year and has not been allowed to see his wife.

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Macron-Trump tango displays differences

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron is the first European leader to meet American President Donald Trump at the White House on Monday. The media is busy interpreting the physical vibes between the two leaders, who are reviving their friendship forged in the first terms of office of the two.

There seems to be a continuation of the handshakes, hugs, laughter and the compliments they exchanged with each other. British journalist Piers Morgan, a friend of Trump, seems to have summed it up well: "No world leader handles Trump as well as Macron. Friendly but firm, respectful but not afraid to stand up to him when he thinks he's wrong, and Trump respects him for it."

And Macron did correct Trump openly at the press conference when Trump said that all the European aid to Ukraine was in the form of loans. Macron said, "No, in fact, to be frank, we paid 60 per cent of the total effort and it was – like the US – loans, guarantees, grants." Trump did not accept that he was wrong. He just said, "If you believe that, it's ok with me."

But the differences between France and the US under Trump went beyond the tidbits. Macron made clear that Europe wanted a truce but the peace agreement needs to be "assessed, checked and verified." And Macron reiterated the fact that Russia was the aggressor, something that Trump wanted to gloss over. The age difference between Macron, 47, and Trump 78, is obvious. And Macron is being sensitive to the age factor without being either deferential or diffident.

France is well aware that US is the bigger ally in more ways than one. While acknowledging the fact, France has always asserted its independent view of the world. This has been so from the days of Charles De Gaulle immediately after the Second World War.

The United Kingdom was only too willing to play second fiddle to the US, and Germany had no choice after the Second World War but to toe the American line. It was so in the case of Japan too, which like Germany was the vanquished country of the Second World War. Can France counter the cavalier attitude towards the Ukraine-Russia war and NATO?

It cannot on the face of it. But France feels bound to defend the unity of Europe. Germany too finds it necessary to stand up for Europe. The German conservative leader Friedrich Merz had made that clear. European leaders realise that in Russia they face more than the proverbial Big Brother. Putin is seen as posing a threat to the democratic values of Europe. And even right-wing Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has been compelled to take a stand against Russia and Putin over Ukraine.

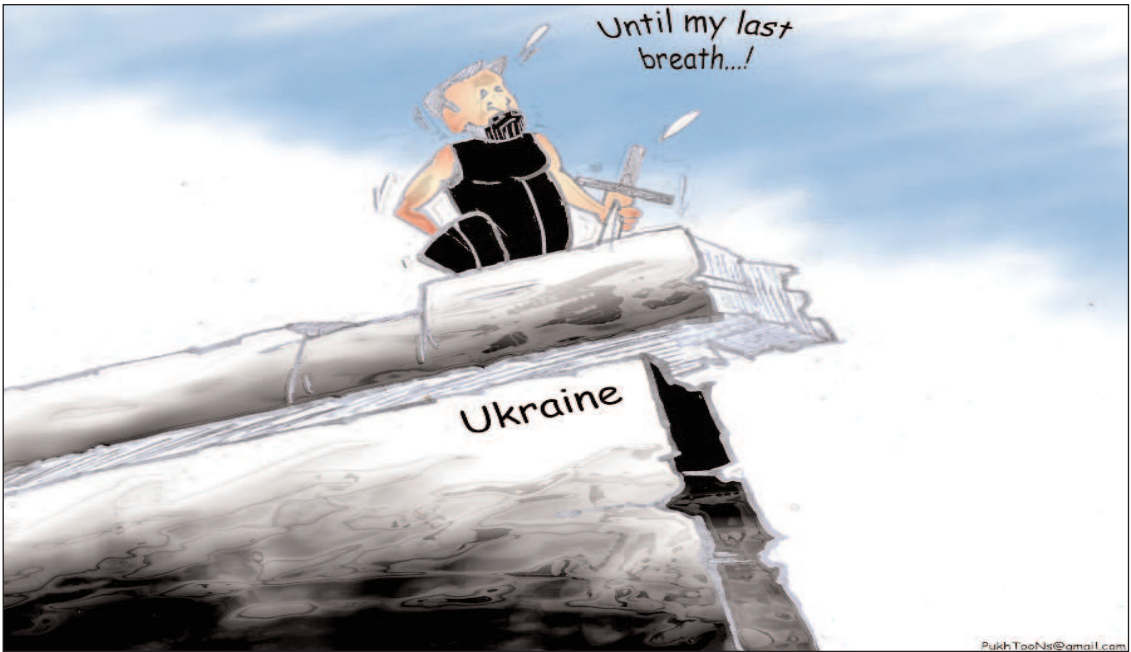
So Trump will face resistance in Europe. This will not prevent him from connecting with Russian President Vladimir Putin because Trump is not worried about the democratic credentials of Putin. Trump's attitude towards dictators is neutral as was revealed when he met North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore in June, 2018.

Now, Trump has said that he would travel to Moscow once the peace deal with Russia is made. European leaders are most likely to consider the Trump interregnum as an aberration and that the US would sooner than later get back to its position as the leader of the democratic Western bloc.

Trump's Democrat predecessor Joe Biden might have overstated the democracy vs. authoritarian thesis in the Ukraine context, but he was playing the traditional American card. It would be difficult even for Trump with his own ideas of politics and diplomacy to alter the American position beyond a point.

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Pakistan cricket: Passion, profits, and performance concerns

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

CRICKET in Pakistan is more than just a sport; it is an emotion that unites millions. Every victory brings national pride, and every defeat feels like a collective loss. The passion for cricket runs so deep that almost every other person considers themselves an expert analyst, offering detailed critiques and strategies as if they were coaching the team themselves. This undying enthusiasm is what makes cricket the most-watched and played sport in the country.

However, in recent times, Pakistan's cricketing performances have left fans frustrated and heartbroken. Whether it was the crushing defeat against India in Dubai or the embarrassing exit from the ICC Champions Trophy, the team's failures have exposed deep-rooted issues. The recent tournament was nothing short of a nightmare-Pakistan's bowling, batting, and fielding all crumbled, leaving no room for excuses. Even the last strands of optimism-the familiar narrative of "ifs and buts"-could not salvage the campaign. These failures are not just about a single match or tournament; they reflect deeper problems plaguing the team, the management, and the entire cricketing structure.

Just a day earlier, Australia and England played a remarkable match, demonstrating the true spirit of the game.

Regardless of the result, both teams enjoyed their performance, and their fans remained engaged throughout. In contrast, Pakistan's performance was disheartening, lacking the passion and professionalism expected from a well-paid national team.

The Pakistan cricket team consists of professional players who enjoy significant financial perks. Their

contracts with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) offer them hefty salaries, central contracts, and match fees. According to the latest contracts, top-tier players receive monthly retainers that range from PKR 4.5 million for Category A+ players to PKR 1-2 million for Category C players. Match fees further add to their income, with substantial payments for Test matches, ODIs, and T20s. Additionally, players receive bonuses for individual and team performances, further increasing their earnings.

Beyond their official contracts, advertising endorsements have become a major source of income for Pakistani cricketers. Players sign multi-million rupee deals with corporate brands, often appearing in commercials that have little to do with the sport itself. This raises a serious concern about their focus and priorities. While the team struggles on the field, their commitment to advertisements remains unwavering. The result is a decline in performance, as seen in the match against India, where the players seemed out of touch with the game's demands.

The role of the PCB in maintaining discipline and accountability within the team cannot be overlooked. There needs to be a stricter approach towards managing players' commercial engagements who performed not well.

These Cricketers should be bound by contracts that limit the number of advertisements they can feature in per year. Currently, players appear in multiple ad campaigns, often prioritizing lucrative deals over training and fitness. The board must take an active stance in ensuring that their primary focus remains on cricket

rather than financial gains.

A major issue contributing to the decline in performance is the lack of commitment to rigorous training and fitness regimes. Successful cricketing nations such as Australia, England, and India have strict policies regarding players' fitness levels and commitment to training. In contrast, Pakistani players often appear unfit and underprepared, leading to subpar performances on the field. The PCB must adopt a no-compromise policy when it comes to fitness, ensuring that only the fittest and most dedicated players represent the country.

Additionally, Pakistan's domestic cricket structure plays a crucial role in shaping the national team. Over the years, the domestic system has been plagued with inconsistencies, lack of proper facilities, and insufficient financial incentives for emerging players. Without a strong domestic foundation, it is impossible to expect consistent performances at the international level. Investment in grassroots cricket, along with better training facilities and coaching, is essential for long-term success.

Mental toughness and game awareness are equally important dimensions that need improvement. Cricket is as much a mental game as it is a physical one.

The ability to handle pressure, make strategic decisions, and perform under challenging conditions separates the best teams from the rest. Unfortunately, Pakistani players often crumble under pressure, especially in high-stakes matches against rivals like India. Mental conditioning programs, psychological coaching, and leadership training must be incorporated into the team's routine to develop a resilient

squad.

Another critical aspect that cannot be ignored is the role of leadership within the team. A strong and visionary captain can make a significant difference in shaping the team's approach to the game. Pakistan has had captains who have displayed brilliance but lacked consistency. A long-term captaincy plan must be developed, allowing the team to build stability and a coherent strategy rather than changing leaders frequently based on short-term results.

The commercialization of cricket is not inherently wrong, but it must be balanced with professional responsibilities. Players should be reminded that their primary duty is to represent the country and perform at the highest level. The board should implement performance-based incentives, ensuring that players earn endorsements based on their achievements rather than their marketability.

Cricket in Pakistan needs a structural overhaul. Instead of players prioritizing personal gains through endorsements, they must be reminded that representing the country is a privilege, not just a job. The board must enforce strict guidelines that limit unnecessary distractions, ensuring that the team regains its lost glory. Until then, the disappointment of defeats like the one against India will continue to haunt passionate Pakistani cricket fans.

To restore the team's former glory, the PCB must take decisive steps to revamp domestic cricket, enforce stricter discipline, and ensure that financial benefits do not overshadow the game itself. Only through dedicated efforts, stringent policies, and a renewed commitment to excellence can Pakistan reclaim its status as a formidable cricketing nation.

Imposing tariffs on China will not help resolve the US fentanyl crisis

Cao Xiaolin

ON February 1, the United States government announced a new 10 percent tariff on Chinese imports under the pretext of combating the proliferation of the opioid fentanyl. The following day, the spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry stated that China firmly deplored and opposed this move and would take necessary countermeasures to defend its legitimate rights and interests.

Indeed, a new tariff is counterproductive not only when it comes to efforts to rein in the production and distribution of fentanyl but also for bilateral trade relations.

The US is one of the largest consumers of fentanyl-based drugs in the world and in recent years, their abuse has exacerbated drug addiction and caused many deaths. The crisis has its roots in longstanding opioid use patterns in the country, the profit-driven nature of the US pharmaceutical industry, inadequate public awareness and ineffective social governance.

China has some of the world's toughest counternarcotics policies and laws. In the spirit of humanity and goodwill, China has given support to the US's response to this issue. At the US's request, China announced back in 2019 the decision to officially schedule fentanyl-related substances as a class. China has conducted counternarcotics

cooperation with the US side in such fields as the scheduling of drug-related substances, intelligence sharing, and cooperation on individual cases.

Yet, the US still insists on dramatising the issue and accuses China of driving its fentanyl crisis. But scapegoating other countries for a domestic crisis will not make the problem disappear; tariffs certainly will not.

The unilateral sanctions imposed by the US risk weakening its anti-drug cooperation with China and may also force fentanyl precursor transactions to be conducted on the black market or through third countries, making law enforcement even more difficult.

Furthermore, these unilateral sanctions imposed violate the basic principles of the World Trade Organization (WTO), of which both China and the US are members. According to the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) – the precursor to the WHO – trade should be conducted in a non-discriminatory manner.

However, the unilateral sanctions imposed by the US on specific countries or enterprises essentially constitute discriminatory treatment. This undermines fair competition among WTO members and poses a potential threat to multilateral trade rules.

Additionally, the US practices violate the princi-

ple of national treatment laid out in Article III of GATT. The article requires that imported products must not be accorded unfavourable treatment based on their origin after entering the territory of a WTO member. The sanctions the US imposed may directly restrict the import of legal drugs or their precursor chemicals, resulting in discrimination against imported goods from China.

The US may seek to justify its unilateral tariffs by citing threats to public health or national security, which under GATT can be used to justify tariffs. But to invoke GATT's Article XX ("General Exceptions") or Article XXI ("Security Exceptions"), the US would have to demonstrate not only the relevance and necessity of imposing tariffs to protect public health or national security, but also the absence of other less trade-distorting and equally effective means. Factors such as the complexity of the fentanyl crisis and domestic demand make it difficult for the exceptions to be applied.

The frequent use of unilateral sanctions by the US not only violates the core rules of the WTO but also disrupts the international trade order and multilateral cooperation. In particular, abusing exception clauses may prompt other countries to question the fairness and efficacy of WTO rules. The possible retaliation in

response to US tariffs from other WTO members could lead to a global trade conflict and encourage the trend towards fragmentation of the global trading system.

In the long run, the US sanctions will backfire at home as well. Higher tariffs will result in increased prices for imported goods, increasing the burden on American consumers and undercutting the competitiveness of US companies globally.

The US needs to view and solve its own fentanyl issue in an objective and rational way instead of threatening other countries with arbitrary tariff hikes. Reducing domestic demand for drugs and enhancing law enforcement cooperation can be effective solutions to the fentanyl crisis.

Trade and tariff wars have no winners. Pressuring or threatening China is not the right way to engage, as my country will firmly defend its legitimate rights and interests.

Keeping business ties between China and the US robust serves the fundamental interests of both countries and both peoples, and benefits global economic growth. China hopes the US will work with it to address concerns through equal-footed consultation, maintain the hard-won positive dynamics in counternarcotics cooperation, and jointly promote the steady, sound and sustainable growth of bilateral trade and economic ties.

Space - an emerging battlefield

Adrak Hussain

SPACE is transitioning from a domain of peaceful collaboration for scientific exploration to a contested arena for military and strategic rivalry. Rapid technological advancements and increasing dependence on space-based assets have enhanced the significance of space for defence strategies. Driven by strategic and geopolitical ambitions, powers like the US, China, Russia and India are actively increasing their space capabilities in terms of militarisation and potential weaponisation, threatening strategic stability among major powers. This insight aims to analyse the current status of space vis-a-vis the future of space as an emerging battlefield, highlighting the need to maintain stability and peace.

Space is of paramount importance to economic development and military strategy. Space technologies have dual purposes, such as navigation systems and earth observation satellites at Low Earth Orbit (LEO) with high-resolution cameras. Integration of these systems into defence strategies strengthens operational capabilities, enabling intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), positioning, navigation and timing (PNT), command and control (C2), as well as early warning, communication, and precise targeting. Space-based systems are, hence, central to modern warfare. Considering the strategic importance of space, countries like the US, China, Russia, India, and others are allocating substantial budgets.

As the power struggle intensifies, major powers increase their space capabilities for defensive and offensive purposes. According to the Space Foundation, the global military space budget was US\$57 billion, i.e. 56% of government space spending in 2023. The comparison of space military capabilities in Table shows that the US is the dominant force in space, followed by Russia, China, and India. The new space competition started in the first decade of the 21st century and intensified recently by establishing space forces and developing new technologies like Anti-Satellite (ASAT) weapons.

The US Strategy aims to maintain space superiority to secure vital national interests by supporting combined operations and ensuring space stability. Establishing the US Space Force in 2019 and the highest space defence budget of US\$29.4 billion in 2024 underscores the US commitment to its strategy.

To counter ASAT threats, the US aims to develop electronic warfare systems and cyberspace capabilities for offensive and defensive operations in space while expanding satellite constellations in LEO to ensure operational redundancy.

China considers space a critical domain for strategic competition in the security field, emphasising the protection of space assets and ensuring information dominance.

China aims to achieve strategic parity with the US in space, with the PLA Aerospace Force overseeing space operations and spending an estimated US\$10 billion annually. It also plans to establish a "Belt and Road Space Information Corridor" to advance its global interests.

Once a leading space power, Russia seeks to maintain its status in parity with the US and China. Russia operates its Global Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS) for dual purposes besides military satellites.

The 2021 ASAT test ensured its position as a space power aimed to counterbalance the US and NATO in the strategic domain. Despite economic challenges, Russia has strategic ambitions, as indicated by its veto of the 2024 UN resolution sponsored by the US on arms control in space.

As an emerging space power, the Indian Space Programme emphasises

dual-use technologies such as Geosynchronous Satellites (GSAT), Cartosat Earth Observation Satellites, and the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), seeking strategic autonomy. It also leverages its partnership with the US to obtain geospatial intelligence and enhance its capabilities. The 2019 ASAT missile test aimed to portray itself as a space power.

Pakistan's first-ever space policy, made in 2023, aims to address the economic and security challenges by deploying Earth-Observing Satellites at LEO in cooperation with friendly states, particularly China. However, Pakistan's space programme is nascent compared to the US, Russia, China, India, etc.

The study of the space strategies of leading contenders, technological advancements, and space discourse indicates that the trend is shifting from space militarisation to space weaponisation. There are four major concerns regarding the future of space. The first is the potential violation of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, banning the deployment of weapons in LEO and celestial bodies. The major powers have vetoed the UN resolution on "The Prevention of Arms Race in Outer Space" since the 1980s. They could not agree on the latest resolution in April 2024 regarding the ban on weaponising outer space. It reflects the distrust among major powers and their intentions to weaponise space in the future.

Second, the development of sophisticated ASAT missiles by the US, Russia, China and India indicates a space arms race. Though it does not violate the outer space treaty, it will lead to its weaponisation and increase the risk of unintended escalation, lowering the threshold for conflict between rivals.

Developing and deploying co-orbital ASAT weapons, space-to-earth missiles, cyber threats, and electronic interference could further complicate the situation, thus undermining strategic stability.

Third, the deployment of nuclear weapons in space is another primary concern. There are two opposing arguments: the first is to establish a successful first-strike capability, and the second advocates enhancing deterrence by establishing a second-strike capability. However, the race for the deployment of nuclear weapons will undermine the deterrence stability among states by influencing strategic calculations and lowering the threshold for a nuclear war with serious consequences for global security.

The fourth concern regarding the future of space is the emergence of private space companies, which could be decisive in shaping conflict dynamics by providing states with ISR and communication services in times of war. Space X offers such services for Ukraine against Russia in the ongoing conflict through its Starlink satellite constellation. According to a CNN report, Ukraine is using Starlink services for drone attacks against Russia. The role of Starlink, owned by Elon Musk, indicates that future wars on Earth and space may be influenced by individuals or non-state actors with space capabilities.

To conclude, the strategic rivalries among major powers and technological advancements have undeniably shifted space from a peaceful domain to an emerging frontier for war. Taking notice of the developments regarding space, Pakistan should consider it a national security issue and develop its capabilities to avoid a situation where it is taken off-guard.

The international community needs to increase efforts to prevent strategic instability, strengthen the Outer Space Treaty and establish conflict resolution mechanisms. It is essential to ensure this vital domain remains a realm of peaceful cooperation and exploration.

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A nascent backlash against Musk sharpens risk for Trump and GOP

THE resistance may be stirring. Elon Musk's chainsaw is not only slashing away at the bureaucracy but is generating the first warning signs that it could eventually cut deep into the political standing of President Donald Trump and his MAGA allies.

Political risks are rising for Republicans as court defeats pile up for the administration and as confusion is fomented by conflicting instructions from the SpaceX chief-turned-government cost cutter and the rest of the administration.

Trump often prospers in the chaos that he foments, and the erratic swathe that Musk is slicing through the civil service is a direct response to the fury many voters expressed in last year's election. And for some in Trump's base who embrace the president's anti-elite rhetoric, the act of subjecting federal workers to fear and pain may be a political end in itself. Among conservatives more generally, meanwhile, cutting government is perennially popular.

So, Musk's onslaught may still be a winner – at least for now.

But pushback from some of the most authentic Make America Great Again Cabinet secretaries to Musk's email to federal workers asking "what did you do last week?" hints at another possibility – concern that confusion and morale-busting assaults on staff could make it harder to enact Trump's agenda.

Two dozen and counting court challenges to the constitutionality of the administration's dramatic personnel and cost cutting purges could be similarly chilling to the president's goals. As could several cases testing whether Musk is acting legally in assuming more power than any private citizen in modern history.

Some GOP members of Congress are meanwhile beginning to experience a backlash over Musk's frenzy – including in rowdy town hall meetings that have gone viral. While it's unclear whether these represent the first roots of a political uprising, or just canny progressive organizing, they're a reminder that the federal government is not limited to Washington but is also a huge red state employer.

And while Musk's wild anti-government theater fits Trump's shock-and-awe application of raw power since his White House return, some lawmakers are wondering whether the sheer velocity of his effort could be politically counterproductive.

"Things are happening so fast and furiously," Rep

Nicole Malliotakis told CNN's Manu Raju on Tuesday. "We need to take a step back and make sure that we're doing things in a way that we are rooting out the waste, the fraud and the abuse and the mismanagement, making programs efficient but not resulting in unintended consequences," the New York Republican said.

Some recent polls have shown majority public disapproval of Musk's Blitzkrieg through the federal government and concern about his potential overreach. In a CNN/SSRS poll last week, 51% said Trump had gone too far in cutting federal programs and 53% thought it was bad that Musk is so prominent.

If attitudes towards Musk harden, they could crystallize into broader opposition to what many critics see as an unprecedented and unconstitutional attempt to destroy the rule of law and the federal government. This would deepen the intrigue over the friendship between the world's richest man and its most powerful man. Their capacity to preserve their relationship under stress could also shed light on one of the key unknowns of the president's second term: If his plans for the most far-reaching shake-up of US governance and society in decades make him unpopular – will he press on or take it down a notch?

So far, Trump has shown no sense of disengaging from Musk or that he's whipped up an incoming political storm. "I thought it was great," the president said Monday of his friend's demand for federal workers to reply to an email justifying their productivity last week. For now, the Tesla pioneer is the personification of his determination to ensure that this term, no one will rein in his power grabs.

The White House will attempt to dispel any suggestions of concern within the administration over Musk's role when he shows up to the first Cabinet meeting of the president's second term on Wednesday.

"The president and Elon and his entire Cabinet are working as one unified team," White House Press

Secretary Karoline Leavitt said.

Tuesday brought another dizzying spate of developments in the high-speed effort to dismember the US government and in the drama surrounding Musk. — Twenty-one United States Digital Service technology staffers, including skilled engineers, designers and data scientists resigned. The staffers complained of hostile interviews from DOGE employees and said that in the current extreme circumstances they could no longer honor their oaths to serve the people and uphold the Constitution. Their gesture threatens to severely hamper government operations through the loss of experts who best understand its operating system.

But Paul Barrett, deputy director of the Center for Business and Human Rights

Two dozen and counting court challenges to the constitutionality of the administration's dramatic personnel and cost cutting purges could be similarly chilling to the president's goals. As could several cases testing whether Musk is acting legally in assuming more power than any private citizen in modern history. Some GOP members of Congress are meanwhile beginning to experience a backlash over Musk's frenzy – including in rowdy town hall meetings that have gone viral. While it's unclear whether these represent the first roots of a political uprising, or just canny progressive organizing, they're a reminder that the federal government is not limited to Washington but is also a huge red state employer. And while Musk's wild anti-government theater fits Trump's shock-and-awe application of raw power since his White House return, some lawmakers are wondering whether the sheer velocity of his effort could be politically counterproductive. "Things are happening so fast and furiously," Rep Nicole Malliotakis told CNN's Manu Raju on Tuesday.

at New York University's Stern School of Business, said that the symbolic value of the resignations of public servants who intimately understand the government's operating systems, would outstrip any operational risk their departures posed. "The federal government is a big workforce, a couple of million. So, 20 people leaving is not going to change the situation in some dramatic way," Barrett said.

"What's important here is that, like some of their brother and sister civil servants who have resigned or been willing to be fired rather than cooperating with the Musk-DOGE rampage, these people are saying, 'We will not cooperate. We will not obey. This is not legitimate.'"

— In another development likely to exacerbate concerns about crushed legal and personnel protections, the Office of Management and Budget, along with the Office of Personnel Management, are expected to issue a memo that will direct agencies to prepare for large-scale firings, CNN's Alayna Treene reported.

— Trump meanwhile sowed new confusion about Musk's directive to federal employees to detail their productivity after the tech

mogul several times said a failure to respond would be tantamount to a resignation. "Well, it's somewhat voluntary, but it's also, if you don't answer, I guess you get fired," Trump said in the Oval Office. "What it really is, what it is, is – do people exist?" he added, underscoring the baffling logic and execution of his government gutting plan.

— A federal judge indefinitely blocked the administration from freezing federal loans and grants. That move, in the first days of the administration caused nationwide uproar as vital services were shuttered, showing for the first time how the loss of federal services could impact daily life and be a political liability. "Defendants' actions were irrational, imprudent, and precipitated a nationwide crisis," said US District Judge Loren AliKhan.

— Another federal judge halted Trump's executive order that indefinitely suspended refugee admissions, while a second ordered the administration to pay foreign-aid related funds owed to government contractors and nonprofits by Wednesday following Musk's evisceration of USAID.

— Hostility towards government runs deep in America's DNA. But the callous treatment of thousands of government employees who've been fired, including probationary workers, often with little notice or compensation, seemingly at the whim of Musk and his young followers, has been callous. Some of those workers spent Tuesday going door to door in the Senate demanding action.

"Our goal is to just start putting some faces and names to all the federal workers who have been impacted by the furloughs, layoffs, immediate firings by Musk and DOGE," said Elizabeth Glidden, who was fired as a technical program officer in USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance. "It's been terrible. I've cried everyday," Glidden said. "I go through waves of crying, anger, frustration."

The human toll of the firings, as well as the concern among Americans over potentially lost government help is beginning to crest into political momentum, CNN's Annie Grayer reported. Several House Republicans pleaded with leadership Tuesday for guidance on handling a deluge of questions from constituents about recent cuts, multiple sources said. GOP lawmakers are on a tightrope between pro-Trump base voters and constituents being hurt by Musk's destruction.

Malliotakis said Trump had appointed "very smart people" as Cabinet secretaries and they should be empowered to make cuts. "This idea that they were going to just fire people via Twitter, Elon Musk, that to me, seems rash," she said. The New York lawmaker is far from the most endangered Republican in next year's midterm election, so her concern is notable.

But so far, House Speaker Mike Johnson, who is already hampered by a tiny majority, is holding the line. "I think the vast majority of the American people understand and applaud and appreciate the DOGE effort, the goal to scale down the size and scope of government," the Louisiana Republican said.

GOP Senate Majority Leader John Thune was more mindful of the humanity of the federal workers let go, while sharing the goal of trimming government, saying "It needs to be done in a respectful way."

Respectful is the antithesis of Musk's approach – one reason why it's worth watching whether he develops into a political liability for Trump.

Revolts often start from a small pile of political kindling – for instance, the Tea Party movement that reached critical mass in response to the early policies of President Barack Obama. Barrett believes that significant political pressure on even a small number of GOP members in Congress could slow the DOGE purge.

He said: "I think there's every chance in the world that a handful of members of Congress will summon the courage to confront Trump and suffer his wrath if they get enough constituents back home telling them 'Hey, we sent you to Washington and we've had enough of this. This is this is chaos, craziness.'"

Should such a backlash develop, Musk's swinging of a chainsaw above his head at the Conservative Political Action Conference will be seen less as an exuberant emblem of disruption and more an act of hubris that presaged a political fall.

— While the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, exaggerating crimes against Israelis or Jews and ignoring those that target Palestinians and Muslims, should anger the entire world, especially the people of the Middle East. Unfortunately, this disparity does not get much attention in either the US or Israel. But the gap between how the two are reported is immorally immense.

Last Thursday, explosions destroyed three empty civilian buses in separate car parks in Bat Yam, a city south of Tel Aviv. Israeli police immediately called it a terrorist attack. Even though no one was hurt, the nonlethal attacks dominated media reports in America and Israel.

Meanwhile, barely reported by any American mainstream media is the daily carnage in Gaza.

Israel's violence in the Strip takes place 24 hours a day, every day, meaning it does not fit the journalistic definition of "news" – that of being "new."

Under that cloud is another wave of ongoing violence being carried out by the Israeli security services and armed Jewish settlers against West Bank Palestinians. Little is being reported. It is almost like nothing is taking place. But it is happening. Daily.

The day before the attacks on the three empty buses, the Palestinian Wafa news agency reported that Israeli forces had killed at least three Palestinians in an attack on a house in the Far'a refugee camp. The mainstream American media ignored this. Had the victims been Israeli, the reporting would likely have been hysterical.

B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights watchdog staffed by Jews and Arabs, continues to persevere despite an ongoing campaign of harassment, beatings and bullying by Israeli security forces. It reports on violence against Palestinians in the West Bank and in Israel itself, but its findings are often ignored.

This month, for example, B'Tselem published a report into the events of Dec. 19, 2024. At about 10 a.m. that day, two vehicles with Palestinian license plates drove into the market street, a central thoroughfare in Balata Refugee Camp in Nablus. Local security signaled for the unknown buses to stop and that is when Israeli soldiers emerged from the vehicles and began firing indiscriminately, wounding six people and killing

two. Halimah Abu Leil, 80, who was shopping for vegetables in the market, was shot and killed.

— *CNN*

The Western media's Israel-Palestine double standard

Ray Hanania

two. Halimah Abu Leil, 80, who was shopping for vegetables in the market, was shot and killed. The Israeli attack lasted more than two hours. Soldiers blocked all attempts to take the injured Palestinians to hospital for treatment.

The Israelis entered a nearby home, expelled the family that lived there and used it as a command center. They used one of the family's daughters, Lara Sawalmeh, as a human shield, stationing her at the front door as they shot at residents from the home's windows. A neighbor, Qusai Al-Sarjii, peeked out of the door of his balcony to check if the raid was over so that he could go to work. He was shot dead, the B'Tselem investigators reported.

Even with all that detail confirmed by a highly respected agency, nothing was reported by the Western news reporters who work out of Jerusalem under Israeli government supervision.

In another incident last year, Israeli forces went on a campaign of destruction in Tulkarem refugee camp. B'Tselem reported that special forces personnel arrived at the camp at about 12.30 p.m. on Sept. 10 in civilian vehicles with Palestinian license plates. They were later joined by additional military, border police and Shin Bet forces, who brought bulldozers. The purpose? To dig up the streets, smash Palestinian-owned cars parked on the side of the road and block the entrances to homes. The destruction was so widespread it turned much of the area into rubble.

As residents returned to their homes on hearing about the raid, the Israeli forces shot at them. Two young Palestinians were killed. They were Ahmad Majdubah, 25, who was trying to close the gate of his family's car wash to go

home, and Hibat Allah 'Obeid, 21, who stepped out of her house with her mother to see what was happening.

Also, in the summer of 2024, Israeli forces repeatedly entered Hebron and injured dozens of Palestinians. B'Tselem volunteers took testimony from 25 of the victims who were abused by Israeli soldiers between May and August last year. They describe acts of violence, humiliation and abuse by Israeli soldiers against men, women, teenagers and children. The victims gave harrowing accounts of physical and psychological abuse, including beatings, whippings, cigarettes being put out on their bodies, blows to their genitals, injections of an unidentified substance, prolonged binding and blindfolding, threats, insults and more.

Soldiers appeared to select the victims arbitrarily. The day before the attacks on the three empty buses, the Palestinian Wafa news agency reported that Israeli forces had killed at least three Palestinians in an attack on a house in the Far'a refugee camp. The mainstream American media ignored this. Had the victims been Israeli, the reporting would likely have been hysterical.

B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights watchdog staffed by Jews and Arabs, continues to persevere despite an ongoing campaign of harassment, beatings and bullying by Israeli security forces. It reports on violence against Palestinians in the West Bank and in Israel itself, but its findings are often ignored.

This month, for example, B'Tselem published a report into the events of Dec. 19, 2024. At about 10 a.m. that day, two vehicles with Palestinian license plates drove into the market street, a central thoroughfare in Balata Refugee Camp in Nablus. Local security signaled for the unknown buses to stop and that is when Israeli soldiers emerged from the vehicles and began firing indiscriminately, wounding six people and killing

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US must take proactive approach to counter China

THE Chinese Communist Party has aggressively expanded its influence beyond China's borders, posing a significant and evolving threat to US national security, economic interests and global stability. This expansion is not limited to traditional military or economic competition, it also extends into espionage, cyberwarfare, strategic infrastructure control and influence operations.

Recent reports from the US House Committee on Homeland Security highlight the increasing threats posed by China's espionage activities, especially on American soil. Additionally, the Department of Homeland Security has raised alarms about Chinese-made internet-connected cameras that could be exploited for surveillance.

At the same time, China's growing control over strategic maritime chokepoints, particularly the Panama Canal, presents serious risks to global trade and American geopolitical interests. These developments demand urgent attention and decisive action from policymakers in Washington to counteract Beijing's encroachments.

One of the most persistent threats from China is its extensive espionage operations. The FBI has long warned about relentless Chinese efforts to infiltrate American institutions, steal critical infor-

mation and undermine national security. Beijing's intelligence services operate through various methods, including recruiting insiders, cyber intrusions and economic espionage.

A key example is the "Thousand Talents Plan," a program designed to recruit scientists, researchers and professionals worldwide, often encouraging them to transfer valuable intellectual property back to China. This strategy has led to the theft of cutting-edge technologies, including in defense, artificial intelligence and biotechnology, eroding America's competitive advantage. According to the FBI, China benefits from more than 80 percent of all economic espionage cases in the US.

Furthermore, espionage is not limited to the economic sphere. In recent years, Chinese intelligence agencies have attempted to infiltrate various levels of government, from local to federal, targeting politicians, business leaders and even military officials. These efforts undermine decision-making processes, influence policy debates and gather intelligence on the nation's defense strategies.

China's cyber capabilities present another major challenge to America's national security. Cyber intrusions by Chinese state-sponsored hackers have been responsible for some of the largest data breaches in US history. These attacks target both

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Chinese cyberattacks getting American water systems, energy grids and hospitals. Another serious challenge is the expansion of Chinese control over strategic maritime chokepoints and one of the most alarming developments of recent years is Beijing's growing influence over the Panama Canal. This canal is one of the world's most critical trade routes, serving as a key passage for global shipping and a substantial portion of US trade. Although the canal remains under the Panamanian administra-

Dalia Al-Aqidi

tion, Chinese state-owned enterprises have secured significant stakes in port operations on both the Atlantic and Pacific sides. These investments have

raised concerns in Washington that China could leverage its position to control, monitor or disrupt the flow of global commerce.

The US has historically maintained strong relations with Panama, ensuring the canal remains neutral and open to international trade. However, China's increasing foothold in the region raises strategic concerns. If tensions between Washington and Beijing escalate, China could exert influence over Panama to restrict US naval operations or disrupt the move-

ment of American goods. Given that more than 70 percent of cargo passing through the canal is either coming from or going to America, any disruption could have catastrophic effects on its economy.

Additionally, Chinese investments in ports throughout Latin America contribute to a broader strategy of gaining influence over key maritime trade routes. By controlling crucial points in the Western Hemisphere, China enhances its ability to project power, gather intelligence and challenge US dominance in global trade.

Beyond these two vital operations, China has engaged in transnational repression and influence operations inside America. Chinese security agencies

are used to harass critics of the Chinese Communist Party and coerce individuals into silence or even forcibly repatriate them to China.

The House Committee on Homeland Security has documented numerous instances of Chinese authorities attempting to influence local US politics. These efforts include funding political campaigns, spreading disinformation and leveraging business investments to gain sway over American politicians.

The influence of the communist government

also extends into academia, where Confucius Institutes, Chinese government-backed educational programs, have been accused of promoting the party's propaganda on university campuses. Many of these programs have faced scrutiny and closures due to concerns over intellectual property theft, censorship and interference in academic freedom.

To counter these growing threats, Washington must take decisive action. Strengthening cybersecurity is crucial to protect critical systems from Chinese intrusions, while cracking down on economic espionage requires stricter regulations on research collaborations and foreign investments. Reducing reliance on Chinese technology by boosting domestic manufacturing will also minimize vulnerabilities.

At the same time, Congress must increase oversight of strategic assets, especially in ports and telecommunications, while working with allies to counter China's regional influence. Meanwhile, exposing the Chinese Communist Party's influence in politics, academia and business is equally vital.

Finally, given China's expanding military presence, reinforcing US naval power in key regions is essential. A proactive strategy is the only way for America to protect its national security and maintain global leadership.

— *Arab News*



Vietnam shows growth in industrial, agriculture, services sectors: Envoy

FAISALABAD (APP): Vietnam has shown an impressive growth in the industrial, agriculture and services sectors which is the outcome of its broad-based economic transformation strategy.

This was said by Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan Mr Pham Anh Tuan while addressing the business community in the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) on Wednesday.

He said that Pakistan is a big country with a lot of potential in the textile sector as statistically Faisalabad accounts for 30% of Pakistan's textile production and 44% of its textile exports.

He mentioned that in 2024, Vietnam's global exported \$405.5bn while its imports

were \$380.8bn. He said that foreign direct investment in Vietnam during 2024 was estimated at \$25.35bn.

He said that Vietnam had signed agreements with 34 countries, including nine comprehensive strategic partners, 11 strategic partners and 14 comprehensive partners in addition to signing 19 FTA with various countries.

About data and statistics of trade between Vietnam and Pakistan, he said that in 2023 bilateral trade between Pakistan and Vietnam was around \$750million. "In 2024 total import and export turnover reached over \$850million", he said and added that exports reached \$522million while imports were \$328million.

He said that Pakistan's main exports to Vietnam consist of corn, woven fab-

rics of cotton and leather while on the other hand Pakistan's imports from Vietnam include electronic equipment, yarn, rubber and tea etc.

He said that potential sectors where Pakistan could further enhance its exports to Vietnam include processed meat, pharmaceutical products, fruits and vegetables.

He said that there was tremendous room for collaboration in the information technology and tourism sectors. He said that there is a need to find new avenues of trade between Pakistan and Vietnam because Vietnam being an active member of ASEAN, holds great importance for Pakistan.

He suggested that a Memorandum of Cooperation between the

FCCI and Vietnam Cotton and Spinning Association should be initiated to forge relationships between the business communities of the two countries.

Earlier, FCCI President Rehan Naseem Bharara underlined the economic importance of Faisalabad in the national economy and said: "We must collaborate to maintain a strategic balance between bilateral trades".

He also stressed the need to further enhance relations with Vietnam in the field of tourism promotion.

The president also stressed the need to create maximum facilities for the textile export from Faisalabad to Vietnam. He also proposed a trade delegation for Vietnam to interact with the real stakeholders of that country.



FAISALABAD: A group photo of local traders and business community with High Commissioner Republic of Rwanda Hareimana Fatou during his visit to Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

PSX turns bearish, loses 665 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 665.76 points, a negative change of 0.58 percent, closing at 113,862.33 points as compared to 114,528.09 points on the last trading day.

A total of 640,178,422 shares were traded during the day as compared to 495,984,234 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs22.740 billion against Rs29.362 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 446 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 126 of them recorded gains and 260 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 60 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Cnergyco PK with 83,863,183 shares at Rs.7.69 per share, Pak International Bulk with 49,255,813 shares at Rs.9.08 per share and Sui South Gas with 39,439,690 shares at Rs.34.18 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.323.44 per share closing at Rs.23,324.97 whereas run-

ner-up was Ismail Industries Limited with Rs.34.92 rise in its share price to close at Rs.1,934.92.

Abbott Laboratories (Pakistan) Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.31.55 per share price, closing at Rs.1,048.58, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Textile Mills Limited with Rs.28.77 decline in its per share price to Rs.1,717.18.

Gold prices decrease by Rs2,400 per tola to Rs306,300

The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.2,400 and was sold at Rs 306,300 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs308,700 on previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 2,058 to Rs 262,602 from Rs.264,660 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went down by Rs.1,886 to Rs 240,727 from Rs.243,613.

The prices of per tola silver decreased by Rs.36 to Rs.3,314 and that of ten gram went down by Rs.31 to Rs.2,841.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$24 to \$2,916

from \$2,940 whereas the prices of silver in international market went down by \$0.41 to \$31.79, the Association reported.

Rupee gains 06 paise against dollar

The Rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 06 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs279.61 against the previous day's closing of Rs279.67.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs279.00 and Rs281.25, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs0.75 to close at Rs293.62 against the last day's closing of Rs292.87, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.87, whereas a decrease of 84 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs353.89 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs353.05.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 01 and 02 paise to close at Rs 76.13 and Rs74.56.

Princess Zahra Aga Khan joins ceremony in Aga Khan University



F.P. Report

KARACHI: With Princess Zahra Aga Khan in attendance, 473 women and men graduated from the Aga Khan University (AKU) in Pakistan on Wednesday, as the University paid tribute to its late Founder and first Chancellor, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV. AKU also welcomed His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan V as its new Chancellor, and Princess Zahra as its Pro-Chancellor.

Students earned bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in 16 different fields in nursing, medicine and education. More than 70 percent of the graduates are women. To date, AKU has awarded nearly 16,000 degrees, diplomas and post-graduate certificates in

Pakistan.

"Our founding Chancellor once said that the cornerstone of his vision was opportunity - the opportunity to build a better life for oneself and one's family," President Sulaiman Shahabuddin said. "In Pakistan, His Highness created opportunities for millions of people through AKU and the AKDN. Looking out at the Class of 2024 today, I see women and men who are, without question, ready to play their part in creating a world that is rich in opportunity."

The longest-serving member of AKU's Board of Trustees, Princess Zahra was appointed by His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan V to serve as the University's Pro-Chancellor and act on his

behalf. Her appointment was announced by Chair of the Board of Trustees Zakir Mahmood.

"Princess Zahra's appointment shows the strong commitment of His Highness to build on and advance the legacy of our founding Chancellor and his conviction in the mission and vision of the University," Chair Mahmood said. He cited Princess Zahra's deep understanding of AKU's plans, programmes and founding vision, and her close involvement in its growth and evolution over two decades.

"It brings me much happiness that my brother, His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan, in accordance with my father's wishes and the founding charter of

AKU, has become Chancellor," Princess Zahra said. "I am deeply honoured that His Highness has appointed me Pro-Chancellor of AKU, so that, together-in our respective roles-we may continue to sustain and strengthen this remarkable institution, remaining true to our father's vision for the University."

"His Highness the Aga Khan's vision of pluralism as vital to our existence reminds us of the diverse community we have built here and the inclusive world we aim to shape," Valedictorian Mustafa Saiyoum said. "As graduates of AKU, we are charged with the responsibility to carry this vision forward-to bridge gaps, create solutions and be agents of positive change."

Saira Parveen received the School of Nursing and Midwifery's Outstanding Graduate Award, and Shahnoor Ahmed received the Medical College's Best Graduate Award.

Associate Professor Shabina Arif and Professor Sarah Saleem received the Award of Excellence in Research, Dean Adil Haider received the Award of Distinction and Professor Muhammad Rizwan Khan received the Award of Excellence in Teaching.

Chicken prices increases by Rs137

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of chicken increased by Rs 137 per kg compared to the cost of the last two months from December 2024 to the current month of February 27, before the holy month of Ramadan.

According to the market survey conducted by APP here Thursday, the price of poultry chicken increased to Rs 470 per Kg in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

The last month until December 27, 2024 chicken was sold at Rs 333 per kg, which was less than the previous month's price hike in poultry prices in the retail market.

The poultry consumables, chicken and eggs

prices have been reduced for the past few weeks, and are once again out of reach of the public.

The prices of poultry items have increased by 30 percent in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi during the last two months, which has created huge volatility in the market.

According to the market survey, during the past two months in the twin cities, 32 percent increase was witnessed in the price of chicken, while a 25 per cent increase in the price of poultry eggs in the last eight weeks.

According to the survey, the price of live chicken in the twin cities was between Rs 470 per 480 kg from the

last week of February 2025.

Similarly, chicken meat is sold at Rs 770 to 780 per kg in the market of both cities.

During this time, it was also found that poultry eggs used to be sold at Rs 300 to Rs 310 per dozen in the market of both cities.

Meanwhile, talking to APP, the former Chairman Pakistan Poultry Association (PPA), Chaudhry, Muhammad Ashraf said the increase in the current prices of poultry is due to demand and supply issues.

PPA ex. Chairman said that the increase in poultry business inputs and cost of doing business was seen across the country due to which the market was in

crisis.

He said that many people related to the chicken business in the country were affected by the current crisis and especially small businesses and poultry farms were closed, adding the poultry business in the four provinces including Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is suffering from the current economic crisis.

Chaudhry Ashraf said that the country's economic conditions are also an important issue and the poultry feed ingredients imported from foreign countries are very expensive, in which soybean is important.

Pakistan can revolutionize online business with Chinese assistance

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan can bring a revolution in online business with the help of Chinese companies already working in the country.

This was stated by Pakistan China Joint Chambers of Commerce & Industry (PCJCCI) President Nazir Hussain at a think-tank session, held here at the PCJCCI Secretariat on Wednesday. He said that 10 legal fintech companies are working in Pakistan. Four of them are Chinese companies including Seed Creed Financial Services, Micro Creed Financial Services Limited and Hammra Financial Services Limited are active in the country.

Nazir Hussain said that those companies could also

connect Pakistani fintech industry with WeChat and Alipay. He said that WeChat has already revolutionized online business in China. Users can buy and sell their daily items online through WeChat.

He added that there is a dire need to synchronize these brands with the fintech industry of Pakistan and the state-run financial institutions.

PCJCCI Senior Vice President Brig. (Retd.) Mansoor Saeed Sheikh said that any Pakistani fintech company such as UBL Omni, Jazz Cash and EasyPaisa etc. could be developed on the pattern of WeChat. Currently, local fintech companies are moving in the opposite direction of international fintech

firms. We need to coordinate and make it a unique and common platform, which is accessible to everyone. Pakistan has a good 4G system and it is also moving towards 5G. Pakistan should make its network capable of new technology, he maintained.

The joint Chamber's Vice President Zafar Iqbal added that Pakistani youth could be engaged to develop human resources by introducing training courses in collaboration with Chinese trainers for technological transfer.

He asserted that according to the data provided by WeChat management to WealthPK, the monthly deals of the firm reached 1.309 billion, registering an increase of 3.7 percent.

In January 2022, the WeChat Open Class disclosed to the media that the mini-programmes of the company were growing rapidly in overseas business, with the number of monthly deals increasing by 268 percent, and the monthly average number of daily transactions increasing by 897 percent. "In this way we can also train our companies to boost our economy and to facilitate our people," he remarked.

PCJCCI Secretary General Salahuddin Hanif said that this is the best time to improve the skills of people. People have already latest mobile phones, local machines and latest equipment so they just need to improve their skills.

PMIF 2025 to be held on April 8-9 in Islamabad

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan's leading exploration and production (E&P) company, in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan and strategic partners, is set to organize the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2025 (PMIF25) on April 8-9, 2025, at the Jinnah Convention Centre in Islamabad.

The forum will serve as a premier platform for global stakeholders to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan's emerging minerals sector and unlock the country's vast mineral potential.

Under the patronage of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division), OGDCL is at the forefront of this landmark event to showcase the country's immense untapped mineral wealth. Partners for the event include Barrick, Pakistan Petroleum Limited

(PPL), Government Holdings (Private) Limited (GHPL), Pakistan Minerals Private Limited (PMPL), Frontier Works Organization (FWO), Mari Energies, and Reko Diq Mining Company (RDMC).

During the event, the federal government will formally unveil Pakistan's newly developed, investor-friendly National Minerals Harmonisation Framework 2025. This policy framework aims to attract investment in the country's mineral sector.

PMIF25 will bring together high-level government representatives, foreign and local investors, leading corporations, policymakers, international diplomats, financial organizations, and industry experts to explore lucrative opportunities in Pakistan's mining sector.

The event will highlight recent policy reforms, large-scale mining potential, and the country's commitment to sustainable resource development, reinforcing its ambition to become a global mining hub.

The event represents a transformative opportunity for Pakistan's mining sector by fostering local and international partnerships and promoting responsible mining practices.

With a rich geological landscape and investor-friendly policies, Pakistan is well-positioned to attract global investments that drive economic growth and establish the country as a premier mining destination. Pakistan is rich in minerals, including copper, gold, lithium, and rare earth elements, which are essential for industries such as renewable energy, technology, and infrastructure development.

The forum aims to facilitate discussions on infrastructure development and technological advancements in the mining sector. As global demand for minerals continues to rise, PMIF25 will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Pakistan's minerals sector, driving strategic partnerships, and positioning the country as a key player in the global mineral market.

HCSTSI, SBP hold seminar

HYDERABAD (APP): The Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry, under the directives of President, Muhammad Saleem Memon, organized an important awareness seminar in collaboration with the State Bank of Pakistan.

The seminar focused on the development of SMEs, the availability of financing schemes offered by the State Bank and the benefits of modern banking facilities.

Speaking on the occasion, HCSTSI Senior Vice President Ahmed Idrees Chohan emphasized the significance of this seminar for the business community.

He stated that the event

provided an opportunity for detailed discussions on the challenges faced by the SME sector, the availability of financing schemes, and concerns regarding the lack of cooperation from commercial banks.

He further noted that HCSTSI has always maintained a strong relationship with the State Bank of Pakistan, and today's session has further strengthened this bond.

The chamber believes that it is a shared responsibility to align the business community with modern banking systems, facilitate financial support and prepare them to meet the demands of the international market.

Court Notice

It is Published Through This Notice That I Mrs Bibi Khadija Wife of Umar Hayat Resident of Hangu Road Quaraish Abad Tehsil and District Kohat is The owner of Plot no 145 Sector no F-2 Size 5 Marla Phase 2 KDA Kohat Has Appointed has is Mr Muhammad Adnan Son of Muhammad Sabir Qureshi Resident of Near Masjid Haji Bahadar Sahib House no 322 Mohallah Fateh Khan Khel Tehsil and District Kohat Through (Special) Deed no 418 Bahi no 04 Volume no.292 Dated 16/09/2024 which is Registered in The Office Kohat of Tehsildar/Sub Registrar The Attorney Holder now wants to Transfer The Above Said Plot If Any Bank/ Institution/ Firm/ Person Has Any objection About The Transfer He Should Contact The Housing officer UADA Within 15 Days in Writing with Proofs otherwise Plot will be Transfer and no objection will Be Accepted (Director Urban Area KDA Kohat)

Court Notice

It is Published Through This Notice That I Mr.Akram Khan Son of Haji Akbar Shah Resident of Darsamand Thesil and District Hangu is The Owner of Plot no 81Size.10 Marla Sector A-2. Phase II K D A Kohat He has Requested that the Original Papers of The Said Plot Has Been Lost Somewhere and now Issuance of Duplicate Papers is Desired The Plot is not Mortgaged There has Been Appointed no Attorney and not Sold to Anybody if any Bank /Institution / Firm or Person Has any Objections He /She Should Contact The Housing Officer UADA Kohat Within 15 Days of Publication of This Notice. In Writing with Proof otherwise Duplicate Papers Will be Issued and no objection will be Accepted Project (Director Urban Area KDA Kohat)

Court Notice

In the Court of Erum Bashir Civil Judge-V, Swabi, Suit No. 49/1 Institution 26-06-2023 Next date of hearing 12-03-2025. (Istiqarfa) Cast Titled: Usman Ali Vs Bakhtyar Ali. Notice to. Montakha D/o Shad Ali, Asghar Ali, Shaikat Ali, Liaqat Ali sons of Ibrahim Khan, Fazal Qadar (---) Kashwar Khan, Anwar Khan, Munawar Khan, Rawaid Khan sons of Mstn, Naseem Parwara, Niaz Parwara Daughters of Fazal Qadar, Ghulam Akbar, Muhammad Iqbal sons of Mstn.Nasreen,Gul Amdana, Gul Shama, Hashmat Daughters of GhulamHaidar, Amir Zaidgai widow of Matullah, Mst. Jamila, Zarbaha, Abida, Shamsul Wara, Zubaida, Samina, Sabtoon Daughters of Moladad, Muhabat Jan widow of Shamidar Khan, Matriur Rahman.Aftab Ali, Kifayat Ali, Umair Khan sons of Mstn, Fahmida D/o Hasham Ali, Farena widow wife (2nd) Abdul Ghani, Qaisar Ali, Ravid Ali sons of Mstn. Nasira, Faiza,Tahira, Daughters of Said Rasool,Sultan Bahadar, Muhammad Aslam, Javed Iqbal, Zafar Iqbal R/o Shah Mansoor Tehsiland District Swabi. The defendants are informed through this notice to appear in this court on 12-03-2025. After this no excuse would be accepted and ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. Given under my hand and seal of this court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Javeria Sartaj Khan Additional District Judge II /Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggara. Civil Revision No.40/13 Institution.15/3/2024.Date of hearing. 17/3/2025. Said Ghafar Shah etc VS Mst Shamsul Wara etc. Notice to No.4.Said Zahir Shah s/o Said Dawod Shah.5.Mst Bakht Sultana d/o Said Dawod Shah.7.Sher Afzar s/o Abdul Laiq.8.Akhtiar Shah s/o Badur Shah.9.Nor Khan s/o Muhammad. 11.Faizul Wahab. 12. Norul Wahab.13.Zainul Wahab sons. 16.Msts Rabia.17.Tayeba.18. Muhsena ds/o Abdul Baqi.19.Abdul Hadi.20. Shamsul Hadi.21. Shamsul Baqi.22. Norul Baqi.23.Faizul Baqi sons. 24.Msts Musreqa. 25.Mehtreya ds/o Muhammad Saeed. 26/2. Himayatullah. 26/3. Tehsenullah . 26/4. Sifatullah.26/5. Safiullah sons.26/6. Kherunisa. 26/7. Kherul Wara.26/8. Mst Mujtaba.26/9.Mst Lubna ds/o Mst Bakht Zeba widow. 26/10. Mugtasim Billah s/o Bakht Zeba (late). 6/2.Faizul Wahab.6/3. Norul Wahab.6/6.Husnul Wahab sons.6/7. Msts Rabia.6/8.Tayeba.6/9.Muhsena ds/o Mst Roshan Zari.28. Hemayatullah. 30. Yahsenullah sons of Per Sabir. 39.Ruhullah. 43. Najmul Abrar sons of Per Salih.48.Subhanullah s/o Said Wahed Shah resident of Kohga tehseel Mandarn district Buner.Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will /shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 17/3/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.



In brief

Our focus is on Thursday's game

ISLAMABAD (APP): Bangladesh senior assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin emphasized the importance of living in the moment, rather than dwelling on past performances, as his team prepares to face Pakistan on Thursday. Speaking at a press conference at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Wednesday, Salahuddin stressed that the team's current squad is his primary concern. "I don't believe in history. What's important is how we play on Thursday. We have 15 players in our squad, and we need to focus on them," he said. Salahuddin expressed confidence in Bangladesh's fast bowling arsenal, citing the talents of Taskin Ahmed, Nahid Rana, and Mustafizur Rahman. "We have one of the best bowling attacks, but our bowlers are still learning. We have many young players coming up through the ranks," he noted. The coach also acknowledged that while his team's bowling has been impressive, a balanced performance is necessary to secure victories. "If we can score 300 runs on this track, our bowlers can defend it," he said, highlighting the importance of a strong batting display. Meanwhile, the Bangladesh team also cancelled their practice session at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Wednesday.

Ghazanfar grabs title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ghazanfar Bilal has bagged the 17th National Tenpin Bowling Championship title here at the Leisure City Bowling Club, Safa Gold, F-7 Markaz. Meanwhile Daniyal Shah and Anas Asif got 2nd and 3rd position respectively, while Zeeshan Bhatti secured 4th position with 326 points, in the event. Ghazanfar got first position with 369 points while Daniyal obtained 2nd position with 356 points and Anas bagged 3rd position with 346 points. Ghazanfar received a cash prize of Rs 100,000 with winner trophy. Daniyal Rs 50,000 with runner-up trophy and Anas bagged Rs 25,000. Zeeshan received Rs 10,000 while 5th to 8th positions holder got rupees Rs 5,000 cash prize. Chief Guest, Haji Sadiq Khan Adozai alongwith Deputy Director General, Pakistan Sports Board, Shahid Islam and Director Admin, Chaudhary, Ahtasham Ahmad awarded trophies and Cash prizes to the players. President, Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation, Ijaz ur Rehman, President, Sindh Tenpin Bowling Association, Aleem Agha, Secretary General, Pakistan Student Olympic Association and Rana Tanveer Ahmed were also present on the occasion. About 200 men and women players featured in the championship.

Medvedev downs French giant

DUBAI (AFP): Top-seeded Daniil Medvedev defeated French giant Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard in straight sets on Wednesday to reach the quarter-finals of the Dubai Championships for a third successive year. Medvedev, the 2023 champion, won 6-4, 6-4, standing firm against Mpetshi Perricard whose service speed was regularly clocked at 140 mph. "You don't have any time, so it's pure reflexes," said Medvedev of facing the 6ft 8in (2.03m) French player. "It makes it even easier, because if you don't return it, you're not even disappointed. There were some second serves I missed and I was disappointed. You just try to do your best and I managed it pretty well today."

England out of Champions Trophy after Afghanistan thriller

LAHORE (AFP): Opener Ibrahim Zadran's 177 and five wickets by Azmatullah Omarzai helped Afghanistan knock England out of the Champions Trophy with a thrilling eight-run victory on Wednesday.

Afghanistan posted 325-7 in a virtual knock-out tie in Lahore and then bowled out England for 317 in 49.5 overs to stay alive in the race for a semi-final place while England have no chance of reaching the last four. Joe Root's 120 went in vain as England lost regular wickets to lose their second straight ODI to the Afghans after their shock defeat in the 2023 World Cup in India.

Needing 13 off the last six balls with one wicket in hand, pace bowler Omarzai kept calm to give away just four runs and dismiss Adil Rashid. Playing under the cloud of boycott calls from some British politicians over the

plight of women in the Taliban-ruled nation, Afghanistan elected to bat in a bid to bounce back from their opening loss to South Africa.

But they soon slipped to 37-3 inside nine overs before Zadran pulled the innings together with a fourth-wicket partnership of 103 with skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi, who made 40. Zadran later added 111 for the sixth wicket with Mohammad Nabi, who hit 40 in 24 balls.

Zadran, 23, took the England bowling apart and went past his previous ODI best of 162 in his 146-ball knock laced with 12 fours and six sixes. He not only broke his own record for Afghanistan's highest individual ODI score but also a tournament record, days after Ben Duckett's 165 in England's opening loss to Australia.

'One of the best innings' 'I think it was one of

the best ODI innings I have ever seen," said Shahidi. Mark Wood's injury in the middle of his fourth over hampered England as the fast bowler managed just eight overs and went off with a knee issue.

In reply, England lost two early wickets to be 30-2 after senior spinner Mohammad Nabi struck with his first ball to send back Jamie Smith for nine. Duckett attempted to hit back in a 68-run stand with Root to steady the chase but Rashid Khan trapped the left-handed opener lbw for 38.

Harry Brook looked fluent in his 25 but fell caught and bowled to Nabi in a soft dismissal to further put England in trouble.

Root kept calm and along with skipper Jos Buttler, who took time to settle before hitting two sixes, put on 83 runs to keep the chase going. Afghanistan bowlers kept

up the pressure with dot balls and Omarzai got the skipper out for 38 off a top edge caught at deep square-leg and Liam Livingstone departed soon after.

But Root hung on as he reached his first ODI ton in almost five years and 37 innings and with Jamie Overton kept chipping away with regular boundaries. But Omarzai got the prized wicket as he had Root caught behind.

"He played an unbelievable innings tonight. The way to handle pressure in a run-chase," said Buttler. "He needed one of the other top six batters to stay in with him and take the game deeper."

The pendulum kept swinging as Omarzai dismissed Overton but despite Jofra Archer's late push England went down as the third team to be eliminated in the eight-nation tournament after hosts Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Australia's Kuhnemann cleared over suspect bowling action

SYDNEY (AFP): Australian spinner Matthew Kuhnemann was cleared on Wednesday by cricket's governing body after undergoing testing to determine whether his bowling action was legal. Left-arm righthanded Kuhnemann was reported for a suspect bowling action after his pivotal role in the Test series win in Sri Lanka.

The 28-year-old, who took 16 wickets as Steve Smith's men swept the two-Test series this month, underwent mandatory testing in Brisbane.

"Kuhnemann's action has now been deemed to be legal and the left-arm spinner will continue to bowl in international cricket," the ICC said.

Under cricket rules, a bowler is allowed 15 degrees of flex in their bowling arm, but anything more is deemed illegal.

Had Kuhnemann's action been deemed illegal he faced being suspended from bowling until it was modified and a subsequent assessment passed.

Kuhnemann has played 124 professional matches since his debut in 2017 including five Tests, four ODIs and 55 T20 Big Bash League games.

"We are pleased for Matt that this matter is now resolved," Cricket Australia's Ben Oliver said in a statement.

"It has been a challenging period for Matt, however he has carried himself exceptionally well."

"He has had the full support of Australian cricket and he can now move forward to the next phase of his international career with great confidence."



RAWALPINDI: Interim head coach and de facto chief selector Aaqib Javed speaking at a press conference at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. —INP Photo

Aaqib Javed stands by Pakistan team selection

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan coach Aaqib Javed has come out in defense of the team selected for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, saying that the players were chosen on merit, despite unfortunate results in the mega event.

Speaking at a press conference at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Wednesday, Javed acknowledged that the team's performance had not met expectations, but emphasized that the players were not to blame. "I back my team, but if the results don't go our way, it's the players who get most disappointed," he said.

Javed also discussed the highly-anticipated Pakistan-India encounter, highlighting the signifi-

cance of experience in such high-pressure matches. "This Indian team is the most experienced team, having played almost 1500 games together, while Pakistan has played around 400 games," he noted.

The coach attributed the team's struggles to injuries, particularly the absence of Saim Ayub and Fakhar Zaman. "We performed well in Australia and South Africa, but we needed some players to make an impact in specific games. Unfortunately, injuries hampered our plans, and we had to play with the best available options," he explained.

"Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf are one of the best bowlers and what better

option we have else than Babar Azam. If we lost it doesn't mean we change the whole team," he said.

Javed was of the view that consistency and long-term policies were needed for the betterment of the game and players.

When asked about the Bangladesh team, Javed praised their skilled pacers, including Nahid Rana and Mustafizur Rahman.

He also recognized the significance of the match against Bangladesh on Thursday, and said that every game brings its own set of challenges and pressures. Pakistan will play Bangladesh in the 9th match of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on February 27.

India slammed for one-venue 'farce' in CT

DUBAI (AFP/APP): Former cricketers and pundits have slammed India's "undeniable" advantage of playing all their Champions Trophy matches in Dubai, while the other seven teams have to shuttle between three venues in Pakistan, and the UAE.

India refused to travel to hosts Pakistan for the 50-over tournament, because of security concerns and political tensions, and are playing all their matches at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

A stand-off between the rivals lasted for more than a month, leaving plans for the tournament in jeopardy until the Pakistan board finally agreed a compromise with the International Cricket Council. The deal means Pakistan will play at a neutral venue in any ICC tournament hosted by India until 2027.

The decision was reached after Jay Shah -- secretary of the powerful BCCI -- took over as ICC chairman in December at the headquarters of the sports governing body in Dubai. "I feel very uncomfortable about the way that India is being treated at the moment," former England cricketer and popular broadcaster Jonathan Agnew told ABC Sport.

"This is wrong. If you're going to play an international tournament you can't pick and choose where you play and where you're not going to play. I don't see how long this can carry on for? It makes a farce of these tournaments."

The playing and pitch conditions in Dubai and the venues in Pakistan -- Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi -- are drastically different. There has been no dew in Dubai in India's first two wins with the highest total being 244 when Rohit Sharma's team chased down 242 against Pakistan on a sluggish pitch.

Totals in Pakistan have been much higher with dew also playing a part, notably when Australia's Josh Inglis hit an unbeaten 120 to chase down a tournament-record 352 against England at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium.

'Huge' advantage - "What about the advantage India have in playing only in Dubai -- which seems to me to be a hard-to-quantify advantage, but an undeniable advantage?" former England captain Michael Atherton asked Nasser Hussain on the Sky Sports Podcast. "They're playing at just one venue. Therefore, the selection, you know, can focus in on the conditions in Dubai."

India and New Zealand have moved into the semi-finals from Group A and will play each other in Dubai in the last group match on Sunday. But irrespective of the placing, India will play their semi-final in Dubai on March 4.

The final will be played in Lahore on March 9, unless India qualify in which case it will be in Dubai. Australia's Pat Cummins missed out on leading his team in the eight-nation tournament -- once called the mini World Cup -- because of an ankle injury, but weighed in on the debate. "I think it's good in that the tournament can go on, but obviously, it does give them (India) a huge advantage playing on the same ground," Cummins told Yahoo Australia.

"They already look very strong, and they have got that obvious benefit of playing all their games there." However, England skipper Jos Buttler played down the controversy. "Not really," Buttler said after being asked if the schedule gave India an advantage. "I think it's a unique tournament already, isn't it, with being hosted here with one team playing in a different place but that's not something I'm sort of worried too much about at the moment."



LAHORE: Afghanistan bowler Azmatullah celebrates the wicket of "Phil Salt" during the ICC Champions Trophy one-day international (ODI) cricket match between Afghanistan and England at the Gaddafi Stadium.

Norris tops F1 testing as lights go out in Bahrain

SAKHIR (AFP): McLaren's Lando Norris topped the times in Formula One pre-season testing on Wednesday, the first of three days in Bahrain punctured by a power outage that left the pitlane and circuit in darkness.

The lights went out midway through the afternoon session, triggering a one-hour red flag with mechanics scrambling around for flashlights.

Mercedes' George Russell was one of the drivers caught on the hop by the sudden loss of light.

"I came out the pits and thought 'it's suddenly quite dark out here', and I radioed saying I need to change my visor, and I realised there are no floodlights around," said the Briton.

Temperatures were cooler than expected and even rain made an unexpected appearance as F1 rolled up its sleeves and got down to business after last week's glitzy launch for the 75th anniversary season in London.

All eyes in the morning were on one driver as seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton, resplendent in red, put his new Ferrari team's car through its paces in the

morning stint.

The 40-year-old completed 70 laps, finishing four tenths of a second slower than Kimi Antonelli, the teenager who replaced him at Mercedes.

"To be here with Ferrari is an incredible feeling," said Hamilton, who ended the day with the 13th best time. "Our aim is to test as much as possible, get a maximum amount of data and to familiarise ourselves with the car."

"I've already learned a lot. It's too early to speak about performance, but I'm already feeling comfortable."

Antonelli, 18, put in an assured performance as he prepares for his rookie season with the Silver Arrows, the Italian clocking a morning fastest time of 1min 31.428sec.

Liam Lawson, making his official debut as a fully fledged member of the grid for Red Bull, finished closest before the lunch break at 0.132 behind the Mercedes.

Lawson's new teammate, four-time reigning world champion Max Verstappen, took over for the afternoon session.

- 'Super competitive' - The Dutchman banked

over 65 laps to finish the day with the third quickest overall time behind Norris, who finished second in the 2024 drivers' championship, with Russell splitting the pair.

Norris posted the day's fastest lap of 1min 30.430sec, with Russell at 0.157sec and Verstappen at 0.244.

Charles Leclerc for Ferrari came fourth, ahead of his former teammate Carlos Sainz, now with Williams. Timings in testing are notoriously difficult to decipher, with unknown fuel loads and teams working on different strategies.

But even so on the evidence of day one's testing the 75th anniversary season could be one to remember with less than one second covering the top seven drivers.

"I can see it being super competitive," said McLaren CEO Zak Brown.

"Last year four teams won multiple races, this year I could see that being even more. I'm more excited than nervous," he added. All 10 teams are in Bahrain to fine tune their 2025 cars ahead of the opening race in Australia on March 16.



Chelsea thrash Southampton, Villa beaten by Palace in race for Champions League

LONDON (AFP/APP): Chelsea moved into the Premier League's top four with a 4-0 demolition of hapless Southampton, but Aston Villa's hopes of Champions League football next season diminished after a 4-1 defeat at Crystal Palace.

After a run of three consecutive defeats, Chelsea badly needed a response against bottom-of-the-table Saints, who are set for an immediate return to the Championship.

The Blues duly delivered with three first-half goals through Christopher Nkunku, Pedro Neto and Levi Colwill for just a third league win 11 games.

Before kick-off at Stamford Bridge, a small band of Chelsea fans gathered to protest against



the club's owners over the club's form and discontent over ticket prices.

Once the action got underway, it was a much-needed comfortable evening for Enzo Maresca's men which the Italian will hope can restore confidence among his squad.

Nkunku took his tally for the season to 14 but

only three of those have come in the Premier League as he has often had to play reserve to the injured Nicolas Jackson. The Frenchman stooped to head in a corner at the back post before teeing up Neto to blast home a second.

Colwill headed in Neto's free-kick to make the points safe before the

break. Marc Cucurella rounded off the scoring with a calm finish from teenager Tyrrique George's cross.

"We needed that, the fans needed that and the club needed that so we are happy," said Maresca.

"The priority is to bring this club to where this club should be - the Champions League. It will be like this until the end of the season - we will be up and down and we need to be ready."

Victory takes Chelsea two points above Manchester City into fourth.

Thanks to English clubs' strong performance in European competition this season, a top-five finish is likely to be enough for a place in next season's Champions League.



In brief

DC lauds successful polio campaign

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad on Wednesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the recent polio vaccination campaign, which has been declared a resounding success. Official briefing documents revealed that the campaign's initial target was to administer polio drops to 461,125 children. Remarkably, the final figures showed that 510,659 children received the crucial vaccination, surpassing the original goal by approximately 10.7%. During the meeting, health officials highlighted the strategic planning and ground-level execution that enabled the campaign to not only meet but significantly exceed its target. The achievement underscores the city's commitment to eradicating polio and protecting children's health. Local health authorities expressed satisfaction with the campaign's reach and effectiveness, emphasizing the importance of such immunization drives in preventing the spread of the debilitating disease.

Husband nabbed for attacking wife

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police have nabbed a man for brutally attacking his wife with an axe, leaving her severely injured in the jurisdiction of Phulgar Police Station on Wednesday. A public relations officer told APP that a case has been registered, and further investigation is underway. He said the victim's father report a complaint stating that his daughter was attacked with an axe by her husband, Nadeem Hussain, causing severe injuries. Responding swiftly, Phulgar Police registered case No. 66/25 and launched an immediate investigation. He said that using modern technology and forensic evidence, the police team successfully traced and nabbed the accused. The suspect is now in custody, and legal proceedings are ongoing. DIG Muhammad Jawad Tariq, stated that the police are committed to taking strict action against cases of domestic violence and abuse against women and children. "The accused will be prosecuted with solid evidence to brought into justice," he said.

Traffic Plan issued for foreign teams

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has announced a special traffic plan for Wednesday due to the movement of foreign teams and officials, advising commuters to plan their travel accordingly. The traffic arrangements will be in place from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM, affecting multiple key routes. An official told APP that the Srinagar Highway, Club Road, Murree Road, Faizabad, Faisal Avenue, 9th Avenue, and Express Highway will experience traffic congestion and slow movement during this period. He said citizens are advised to use alternative routes, including underpasses and service roads connected to Srinagar Highway, to minimize delays. He added that travelers should allow an additional 20 minutes for their journey to avoid inconvenience. He said commuters using Express Highway should opt for Khana Pul and Park Road, while those traveling from B-17 and B-15 to Blue Area or F-6 should use Margalla Road. He further stated that Islam Chowk and IJP Road will remain open for traffic. He said motorists heading to Blue Area should prefer 9th Avenue and H-8 Underpass, while those traveling to Red Zone should use Margalla Road, Express Chowk, Ayub Chowk, or Nadra Chowk. Additionally, he said citizens traveling from Red Zone towards Faizabad should take the Convention Centre and Club Road route.

Khawaja Asif meets German, Kyrgyz envoys

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Germany here on Wednesday reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the long-standing partnership between the two countries.

During a meeting, Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Ambassador of Germany to Pakistan Alfred Grannas emphasized the importance of continued collaboration in addressing common challenges, including counterterrorism efforts.

The meeting was focused on enhancing bilat-

eral relations, with particular emphasis on defense cooperation and regional stability, said a news release. The meeting concluded with both leaders agreeing to schedule further engagements to discuss areas of mutual concern.

Meanwhile, Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan, Avazbek Atakhanov called on Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif. The minister said that Pakistan greatly values the friendly relations with Kyrgyzstan. He stressed that Pakistan would contin-

ue to further enhance cooperation with Kyrgyzstan within the framework of regional and international organizations.

The ambassador appreciated Pakistan's support and assistance. He praised the capabilities of Pakistan's Defence Industries and their products and highlighted the importance of cordial relations between the two countries. Both dignitaries agreed to further strengthen the institutional framework for high-level bilateral coordination covering all domains.

25 students selected for UAE scholarships

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United Arab Emirates has announced a Scholarship Program for Students from Balochistan to provide Opportunities for Higher Education.

Twenty five students, including five female student, from various Districts of Balochistan were selected through Written Exams, reported PTV news.

The scholarship recipients will pursue their Education at Top Educational Institutions in the United Arab Emirates. The aim of the Scholarship is to provide Young People from Pakistan, especially Balochistan, with Opportunities to receive Education at an International Level. The Selected Students

expressed their Gratitude to the Government of Pakistan, the UAE, and the Pakistan Army for providing these Educational Opportunities.

They Stated that this Scholarship is a Milestone in their Educational Journey, and they plan to make the most of this Opportunity to bring pride to their country and province.

Pakistan, Hungary share deep-rooted traditions: NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, said on Wednesday that Pakistan and Hungary share deep-rooted traditions, values, a common pursuit of peace, and aspirations for mutual prosperity.

While addressing participants at the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs in Budapest, he highlighted that Hungary, shaped by a rich history at the crossroads of civilizations, and Pakistan, born from its founding father's vision of pluralism, are natural partners in today's interconnected world.

According to a news release received here, the speaker highlighted the deep historical and cultural ties between Pakistan and Hungary, tracing back to Hungarian scholars, linguists, and artists who contributed to South Asia's intellectual and artistic landscape.

He also reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to democratic governance, economic cooperation, and regional connectivity. He underscored the resilience of Pakistan's democratic institutions and the significance of parliamentary diplomacy in strengthening bilateral and multilateral relations. He pointed to Pakistan's growing youth population and the importance of initiatives like the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Program, which has provided opportunities for Pakistani students to study in Hungary.

On economic cooperation, NA Speaker stressed the need to expand trade beyond textiles, particularly in IT, energy, tourism, pharmaceuticals, and agribusiness. He praised Hungary's role within the European Union (EU) and acknowledged the benefits of Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP+), which has enhanced Pakistan's

exports and socio-economic reforms.

He also highlighted Pakistan's geographical and strategic significance, particularly its role in regional connectivity through projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Gwadar Port, which serve as vital trade links between Asia, the Middle East, and Europe.

While addressing global challenges, he called for greater cooperation in tackling climate change, terrorism, and misinformation, emphasizing Pakistan's front-line role in combating extremism and its vulnerability to environmental crises.

Ayaz Sadiq, in his concluding remarks, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening ties with Hungary and the broader European community, advocating for deeper collaboration in trade, education, and diplomacy.



ISLAMABAD: A motorcyclist demonstrates his skills while riding a motorcycle in the 'Well of Death' at the Lucky Irani Circus in F-9 Park. —APP Photo

Pakistan advances green industrialization agenda: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam reaffirmed her government's commitment to sustainable manufacturing and regulatory enforcement to address environmental challenges.

Pakistan is taking significant steps towards advancing green industrialization, said Alam while addressing the UNCTAD & SPRC Green Industrialization Project, highlighting the country's efforts to align its industrial practices with global environmental standards.

In her address, the Coordinator emphasized the critical need for transforming Pakistan's industrial sector to ensure a balance between economic growth and environmen-

tal sustainability.

The plastics sector, which contributes 15% to the national GDP and employs over 1.2 million people, is at the center of this transformation. However, it also faces challenges such as high greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, excessive waste generation, and weak regulatory compliance, all of which are significant contributors to environmental degradation.

"The plastics sector is vital to our economy, but it also presents serious environmental challenges. To address these, we need a robust system of regulatory enforcement and improved recycling practices that align with the principles of a circular economy. Federal and provincial Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs) must play an

active role in ensuring compliance and creating a cleaner, more sustainable manufacturing sector," the Coordinator stated.

The development of the Green Industrialization Policy Framework under the UNCTAD & SPRC Green Industrialization Project is at the forefront of Pakistan's efforts to tackle these challenges. The framework will focus on several key objectives, including lowering industrial GHG emissions across various sectors, particularly high-emission industries like plastics, strengthening compliance with existing environmental standards and developing new regulations where needed, promoting cleaner production methods that reduce pollution and enhance energy efficiency and improving commercial practices to create a

more sustainable industrial ecosystem in Pakistan.

Romina said the Ministry of Climate Change, in collaboration with key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Industries & Production, Ministry of Commerce, the Board of Investment, and Provincial Departments of Industries, is working to finalize and implement the Green Industrialization Policy Framework at both national and provincial levels.

This collaboration is aimed at ensuring that the policy framework is not only comprehensive but also adaptable to the diverse industrial landscape across the country. Romina said in addition to regulatory measures, the State Bank of Pakistan is also advancing its Green Taxonomy initiative, which seeks to mobilize

green finance for sustainable manufacturing practices. The government sees this as a critical step towards promoting green business practices and driving investment into sectors that contribute to long-term environmental and economic sustainability.

"We recognize that the shift towards a green industrialization model is crucial for meeting Pakistan's climate and development goals. The implementation of lean, green, and globally competitive industrial practices is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and for Pakistan to meet its target of net-zero emissions by 2050," the Coordinator emphasized.

As part of its commitment to sustainable industrialization, the Ministry of Climate Change is

organizing a Policy Roundtable, which will bring together key stakeholders from government, industry, academia, and civil society. The roundtable aims to advance discussions on green industrialization and institutionalize the Green Industrialization Policy Framework as a national strategy for achieving sustainable economic growth.

The Green Industrialization Policy Framework will serve as a blueprint for a sustainable industrial future, addressing both the environmental and economic needs of the country. As Pakistan seeks to become a global leader in green manufacturing, the emphasis on sustainability and the circular economy will pave the way for a cleaner, more efficient industrial sector that is both competitive and resilient.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic, Avazbek Atakhanov calls on Federal Minister for Defence and Defence Production Khawaja Muhammad Asif. —APP Photo

Gilani highlights significance of bilateral ties with Iraq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Wednesday said that Pakistan and Iraq share cordial relations, emphasizing that Pakistan highly values its ties with Iraq and is committed to strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation. During a meeting with Hamid Abbas Al-Aramshawi, the Ambassador of Iraq, the Chairman acknowledged Iraq's significance in the region and its vital role in promoting peace and prosperity.

He highlighted the deep-rooted goodwill between the two nations, strengthened by shared bonds of faith, culture, and common aspirations, which present an opportunity to enhance further bilateral cooperation for the mutual benefit of both countries. Emphasizing the need for institutional mechanisms to bolster bilateral relations, Gilani said that the Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) and other platforms exist to expand cooperation in diverse sectors. However, he called for regular engagement through these forums to ensure tangible progress.

He also stressed the need to enhance trade relations, as the current trade volume does not reflect the vast potential between the two nations. He proposed diversifying and expanding

trade, with a focus on implementing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). "We must prioritize cooperation in key sectors such as IT, agriculture, culture, defense, food security, energy, construction, and pharmaceuticals," the Chairman said.

He also suggested establishing direct flights between Pakistan and Iraq to facilitate trade and people-to-people exchanges. The Chairman welcomed the recent MoU on human resource transmission, recognizing Pakistan's large pool of skilled professionals. He emphasized that Pakistan could provide doctors, medical staff, and other expertise to support the rehabilitation of Iraqi hospitals. He also acknowledged ongoing cooperation in the oil and gas sector.

Mr. Gilani briefed the Ambassador on Pakistan's Zaireen Management Policy, noting that 250,000 Pakistani pilgrims visit Iraq's holy sites annually. He called for a streamlined immigration process to facilitate their travel and expressed gratitude to the Iraqi authorities for their continued support in assisting Pakistani Zaireen and resolving their problems.

The Ambassador informed that the visa on arrival facility on diplomatic and official passports has been introduced, which will be operational soon

after fulfilling some formalities.

The Chairman of the Senate appreciated the initiative and said that this will help promote more interaction at different levels. The Chairman proposed high-level parliamentary exchanges to deepen cooperation in legislative processes, governance, and constitutional matters. He emphasized the importance of people-to-people contacts and business community interactions. He underscored the role of Parliamentary Friendship Groups in strengthening bilateral ties through the exchange of visits and regular interactions.

Inviting Ambassador Al-Aramshawi to visit Multan, the Chairman of the Senate encouraged engagement with the local business community and exploration of the city's rich cultural heritage. The Iraqi Ambassador thanked Chairman Senate for his remarks and reaffirmed Iraq's commitment to strengthening cooperation with Pakistan. He recognized Pakistan's regional significance and noted the historical brotherly relations between the two nations. On behalf of the Head of the Council of Representatives of Iraq, he extended an invitation to Gilani to visit Iraq at a convenient time, emphasizing that such a high-level visit would further strengthen fraternal ties.

Shazia leads anti-dengue awareness campaign

RAWALPINDI (APP): Parliamentary Secretary Information and Culture Punjab Shazia Rizwan along with Deputy District Health Officer Dr. Hussain Shah Tirmzi visited Pir Wadhai Bus Stand and Bangash Colony on Wednesday regarding anti-dengue and public awareness campaign. A team of Health Department was also present on the occasion.

According to the details, the parliamentary secretary distributed pamphlets among the passengers regarding awareness about dengue. She also interacted with students of Government Girls School and distributed pamphlets among them. She urged students to create awareness about the harmful effects of dengue fever and the preventive measures should be taken against dengue during the recent rains.

She also gave necessary instructions to the workers of the health department regarding the destruction of dengue larvae and said that it was impossible to control dengue without the public support.

Siddiqui inaugurates AIOU's newly developed 'Exam Management System'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, inaugurated the newly developed 'Exam Management System (EMS)' of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU).

Speaking at the occasion, he stated that aligning the examination system with the demands of the modern era is a commendable initiative by Allama Iqbal Open University, for which the Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, and his team deserve appreciation.

The Education Minister said that the world is changing, and Allama Iqbal Open University has embraced modern requirements by integrating technology into education.

He expressed his desire for collaboration between Allama Iqbal Open University and Virtual University to train the new generation in IT, producing experts needed globally.

"Transparency in the examination system will bring changes in various

sectors of life, and we welcome this step towards transparency taken by Allama Iqbal Open University," he added.

Vice-Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood in his speech, stated that digitizing the examination system was a necessity of the time, which will enhance security, accuracy, and overall transparency in the examination process.

He mentioned that the journey towards reforming the examination system began in 2018 and has now been successfully completed. As a result of this initiative, the university is no longer dependent on external institutions. Dr. Nasir further emphasized that incorporating technology into the management of exams will now lead to savings in both time and resources.

Controller of Examinations, Mian Muhammad Riaz, highlighted that the university conducts exams for approximately 500,000 students each semester across 1,200 different courses, setting up more than 500 examination cen-

ters from Skardu to Gwadar. After the exams, nearly 2 million answer scripts were received from these centers, consuming significant time and university resources. With the new system, both time and resources will be saved, and the overall examination process will become more transparent.

Deputy Controller of Examinations, Syed Faheem Hussain Shah, provided a detailed overview of the Exam Management System, while Deputy Controller of Examinations, Huda Javed, performed the duties of stage secretary.

The event was attended by the university's four deans, professors, principal officers, and a large number of students, while regional directors participated online. It is worth mentioning that Allama Iqbal Open University developed the Exam Management System in collaboration with Pakistan Post Foundation. The Managing Director of Pakistan Post Foundation, Abdul Razzaq, was also present at the ceremony.

Tourists visit Nuristan

NURISTAN (Ariana News): The picturesque mountain province of Nuristan has once again been transformed into a winter wonderland with good snowfalls having been recorded. Located on the southern slopes of the Hindu Kush mountains, Nuristan is the least populated province in the country with an estimated population of only about 170,000. Most of Nuristan is covered by mountainous forests and the entire province was designated a protected national park in 2020.

Education activist arrested

KABUL (Khaama Press): Taliban intelligence forces have arrested Wazir Khan, an education activist who provided free schooling to girls and children in remote areas of Kabul and several provinces, sources told Amu. His whereabouts remain unknown. The arrest has sparked strong condemnation from human rights activists and advocates for freedom of expression, who have called it arbitrary and unlawful.

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

Commission approves 27 key projects



KABUL (Ariana News): The National Procurement Commission, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund, has approved 27 development projects worth approximately 3 billion afghani (AFN).

According to a statement issued by Baradar's office, 37 projects were presented to the commission. Of these, 27 were approved, seven were amended, one

was canceled and a decision on two projects was postponed.

Committees were assigned to review the procurement processes of the two postponed projects, taking into account amendments made by the National Procurement Commission.

The approved and amended projects include the construction of a transport terminal in the eastern part of Kabul city; completion of remaining work at Jumh-

uriat Hospital in Kabul; completion of remaining work at Pashdan Dam in Herat and Bakhshabad Dam in Farah; completion of the protection and maintenance project of Sultan Dam in Ghazni province.

Other approved projects included the initiation of the detailed design project for Sultan Ibrahim Dam in Sar-e Pul province; completion of the power transmission project from Kabul to Kandahar, including the

installation of pylons, construction of substations, and extension of transmission lines; the extension of power transmission lines from Kajaki Dam to Kandahar city; completion of remaining work on existing electricity projects in several provinces; and the construction of several roads in Kabul city.

These projects are being funded by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), the statement read.

Revenue of Nangarhar govt company increased

NANGARHAR (TOLONews): The Nangarhar Government Company has reported collecting 270 million afghani in revenue during the current solar year.

According to officials, around 43,000 jeribs of canal land in the province has been seized over the past few decades, of which nearly 2,000 jeribs have been reclaimed.

"There is one month left until the end of the year, and we hope to further increase our revenue during this period. We predict that our income will rise by another 25 to 30 million afghani, bringing the total revenue to approximately 300 million afghani by the end of the year 1403(solar year)," stated Nadiullah Niazi, the head of marketing for the Nangarhar Government Agricultural and Trading Company.

Meanwhile, several residents of Nangarhar have called on officials to establish gardens on the barren canal lands of the province.

"The lands belonging to the canal should be leased so that orange, citrus, and date orchards can be planted, providing job opportunities for the people," stated Baryali, a resident of Nangarhar.

"All the canal lands that were illegally seized should be reclaimed by the government and turned into orchards. This will create employment opportunities for the youth and reduce dependence on imported fruits," said Esmat, a resident.

According to information from the Nangarhar Government Company, it has signed contracts with private agricultural companies to establish 22,000 jeribs of orange orchards, which will help meet the domestic demand for citrus products.

Flash floods in Farah claim 21 lives

FARAH (BNA): A devastating flash flood in the Pushtkoh district of Farah province has resulted in the tragic deaths of 21 individuals, with four others injured.

The incident occurred around 1:00 PM when a family, including children and women, was enjoying a recreational outing in the mountains and became trapped by sudden flooding.

Mawlawi Mohammad Israail Sayar, head of the Farah Disaster Management Department, confirmed the fatalities and injuries, emphasizing the sudden nature of the floods that swept through the area.

Mawlawi Mohammad Nasim Badri, head of the media office at the Farah Police Headquarters, also

verified the occurrence and stated that local security forces have arrived at the scene to assist.

The community is mourning the loss as rescue efforts continue in the wake of this tragic event. Further updates are expected as authorities assess the situation.

Amu TV adds: At least nine people, including three children, were killed and nine others injured after heavy rainfall and flash floods swept through Kandahar province in southern Afghanistan, Taliban officials said Wednesday.

According to the Taliban's police command in Kandahar, the flooding caused significant damage in parts of the city's fifth, sixth, and seventh districts,

as well as in the Maiwand, Zhari, and Shah Wali Kot districts.

Taliban reported that the floods also destroyed six acres of farmland and damaged six vehicles.

The latest fatalities add to a growing toll from extreme weather in Afghanistan.

Former President Hamid Karzai called for urgent assistance for flood victims, urging NGOs and local businesses to step in and provide aid.

Afghanistan also suffered severe flooding throughout last year, with experts warning that the country's fragile infrastructure and lack of disaster preparedness are exacerbating the crisis.

Interference in national affairs will be prevented

PARWAN (TOLONews): Mohammad Idris Anwari, the governor of Parwan, stated in a public gathering in Siah Gerd district that certain groups outside the country are conspiring against the Islamic Emirate.

The governor did not name any specific individual or group but emphasized that the caretaker government will not allow anyone to interfere in the country's internal affairs.

The gathering was held to enhance coordination between the local government and the people.

During the meeting, Mohammad Idris Anwari said: "They are sitting in infidel countries, expecting friendship from disbelievers, Jews, and Christians, and they want them to bring peace to their homeland, whereas this goes against the divine system."

Mohammad Javid Ziaurrahman, the police chief of Parwan province, also stated in the meeting: "The enemies of Islam never want divine law to be implemented on God's land and always oppose it. Today, they have been defeated and can no longer



resist, which is their own problem. However, whenever they feel that this jihad has ended, they will return again."

Residents of Siah Gerd district stated in the gathering that they face serious challenges due to a lack of healthcare centers, school buildings, poor road conditions, and limited access to telecommunication networks. They called on officials to address these issues.

"The problems our people face include the absence of telecommunications infrastructure, roads, schools, and bridges over rivers. These shortcomings have caused significant economic losses for the people," said

Hashmatullah Hayati, a resident of Siah Gerd district.

"The first issue we face is youth unemployment. Hundreds of our young people have graduated, but there are no job opportunities for them. Our second problem is the condition of schools; we have schools, but many remain unfinished, and students are forced to study on bare ground," said Nasrullah Azizi, another resident of Siah Gerd district.

Citizens across various provinces have consistently urged local officials to address public challenges by implementing development projects and creating job opportunities.

WHO, King Salman Foundation pledge \$500m to eradicate polio

KABUL (TOLONews): The World Health Organization (WHO) and King Salman Relief and Humanitarian Centre have signed an agreement worth \$500 million to strengthen polio eradication programs in two countries.

Tedros Adhanom, the director-general of the World Health Organization, announced that this financial aid will soon be used in Afghanistan and Pakistan to prevent the spread of polio.

Regarding this agree-

ment, the WHO chief stated: "I am pleased to sign this agreement with Supervisor-General Abdullah al Rabeeah, and to work together to turn the commitment into action."

Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health, in collaboration with its international partners, including the WHO, conducts more than ten vaccination campaigns annually to combat this disease.

Doctors believe that vaccination alone cannot completely eradicate polio;

therefore, Afghanistan and Pakistan must collaborate jointly in this regard.

Mujtaba Soufi, a doctor, commented on the effectiveness of polio eradication efforts in the country, saying: "I think we have not worked properly and sufficiently to eliminate this disease. We have technical teams and experienced advisors whose recommendations should be utilized to ensure that this money is used correctly for the complete eradication of polio in Afghanistan."

"It is necessary for both countries, in cooperation with international organizations, especially the WHO, to establish a structured plan and a joint strategy so that we can eliminate this disease under the framework of this program," Ahmad Shakib Zahir, another doctor, told TOLONews.

Last year, the WHO reported more than 20 confirmed cases of polio in Afghanistan, a statistic that was completely rejected by the Ministry of Public Health.

Urgent call for preventive measures at ANDMA meeting



KABUL (BNA): In a meeting chaired by Mullah Nooruddin Turabi, the Acting Head of Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), officials emphasized the pressing need for preventive measures to mitigate the risks associated with

natural disasters.

The meeting, which included representatives from the Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Assistance Cluster, brought together voices from key organizations, including Sawsen Saad of the International Organization

for Migration (IOM) and Aririn Motif from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Mullah Turabi highlighted the staggering financial and human costs resulting from natural disasters each year. He reaffirmed the

ANDMA's critical role across all stages of disaster management—prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Arerin Motif stressed the necessity of humanitarian aid during emergencies and the importance of effective reconstruction efforts. He pointed out the significant challenges posed by disruptions in aid delivery, which hinder timely recovery for affected communities.

Sawsen Saad provided insights into the IOM's preparedness plans for 2025, particularly regarding the looming threat of spring floods. She underscored the need for strategic storage of humanitarian supplies to ensure rapid response capabilities when disasters strike.

Amu River bank project started

TAKHAR (TOLONews): The Amu River bank reinforcement project, with a budget of 65 million Afghani, has commenced in Darqad district of Takhar.

According to the head of the Amu River Bank Reinforcement Department, the project is expected to be completed within ten months and will help mitigate damage caused by flooding.

Sayed Ghulam Mashani, the head of the department, stated: "Insha'Allah, this project will be completed within ten months. Its cost is covered by the budget of the Islamic Emirate and is estimated at 65 million Afghani."

Several residents of Takhar have said that for years, flooding has damaged their agricultural lands and homes.

They added that the implementation of this project has given them renewed hope and has also created employment opportunities for some individuals.

Mohammad Sadiq, a resident of Takhar, said: "The water from this river has destroyed people's homes and ruined their agricultural fields."

Baba Jan, a laborer, said: "We request the government to implement more such projects so that our people can find work."

Darqad is one of the districts of Takhar that, due to its location along the Amu River, has always been at serious risk of flooding.

Officials say that with the implementation of this project, it is expected that agricultural lands and homes in the area will be protected from such threats.

Explosion kills two and injures one in Farah

FARAH (Khaama Press): Local authorities in Farah province reported that two people were killed and one injured as a result of an explosion in the Gholestan district. The explosion occurred in the village of "Dehk" within a former foreign military base.

Details about the explosion and the identities of the victims have not been provided yet. The area is known for being one of Afghanistan's most con-

taminated regions with unexploded ordnance and landmines left from past conflicts.

Afghanistan continues to be one of the most mine-affected countries in the world, with many casualties, including children, from unexploded devices. The ongoing presence of mines remains a significant safety hazard for the population.

Recently, ICRC stated that Afghanistan is still one of the world's most heavily

contaminated countries with explosive remnants of war. This ongoing issue continues to threaten the lives of civilians.

According to the UN Office for OCHA, approximately 55 civilians are killed or injured each month in Afghanistan due to explosions from remnants of war. OCHA has called for \$21.9 million in funding for mine clearance and awareness efforts in 2025.

Importance of accurate health data highlighted



KABUL (BNA): The Acting Minister of Public Health, Mawlawi Noor Jalal Jalali, emphasized the critical need for accurate data collection in addressing disease outbreaks and improving healthcare services during a national meeting organized by the Ministry's Monitoring and Evaluation Department.

Attended by ministry officials, representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and healthcare

workers, the session underscored the significance of precise data analysis. Minister Jalali stated that such data is vital for understanding disease prevalence rates, assessing public access to healthcare, monitoring vaccination coverage, and evaluating the condition of health centers.

Dr. Enayatullah Enayat, the Director General of Monitoring and Evaluation, provided insights into the current health sector situa-

tion, highlighting the spread of five major diseases. He stressed the necessity of developing and implementing a comprehensive plan to control these health threats.

Representatives from UNICEF and WHO echoed the sentiments of the Acting Minister, reaffirming their commitment to supporting the Ministry of Public Health in its efforts to enhance data collection and improve health outcomes in the country.

Afghan products shine at Dubai exhibition

KABUL (BNA): Afghan domestic products garnered significant attention from international buyers at the recently concluded Dubai International Exhibition. Traders from Afghanistan showcased a diverse array of goods, including dried fruits, saffron, and energy products, at eight dedicated

booths representing Herat. Masood Rahmani, a participant in the exhibition, highlighted the positive response from buyers and noted that several commercial agreements were signed with global companies during the event. "Our products attracted considerable interest, marking a

successful participation for Afghan traders," Rahmani stated in an interview with Bakhtar News Agency.

Traders specializing in Afghan saffron emphasized the high quality of their products, which were met with great appreciation on the international stage. This recognition is expected to

enhance Afghanistan's presence in global markets. Hamidullah Khadem, Head of the Herat Chamber of Industries and Mines, emphasized the importance of participating in international exhibitions. "These events provide an excellent opportunity to introduce local products and expand

our export capabilities," he remarked.

The Dubai International Exhibition, held annually, is widely regarded as a key platform for fostering trade and economic relations among nations, making it an essential venue for Afghan traders to connect with potential buyers worldwide.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur witnessing an agreement signing for exploration of oil and gas in Miran Block North Waziristan.

Enhanced institutional coordination urged

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, organised a roundtable discussion on the evolving intersection of technology and terrorism, titled 'Technology and Terror - A Boon and Bane Relationship.' The event brought together experts from academia, policy research, and counterterrorism to deliberate on how modern technology has transformed both terrorist tactics and counterterrorism strategies.

The roundtable underscored the dual nature of technological advancements, exploring how they have empowered terrorist groups while simultaneously providing sophisticated tools to combat them. Discussions revolved around AI-driven propaganda, encrypted communications, cyberattacks on critical infrastructure, blockchain-based terrorist financing, and counterterrorism responses using AI, blockchain, unmanned platforms, and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs).

Dr Dayyab Gillani, Director of Research Development at the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), discussed the evolving interplay between technology and terrorism. He shared that while terrorists have always adapted to new technologies, they have remained operationally conservative, relying primarily on conventional weapons such as firearms and explosives. However, he cautioned against underestimating the emerging threats posed by cyberterrorism, 3D-printed weapons, and AI-powered radicalisation campaigns. Drawing from historical data, Dr Gillani showed that while the use of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons remains rare, increasing reliance on digital platforms and cyber tactics poses significant challenges for law enforcement and counterterrorism agencies worldwide.

Dr Usman W. Chohan, Advisor on Economic Affairs at CASS,



explored the economic perspective of the technology-terrorism nexus. His discussion focused on blockchain, cryptocurrency, and financial crime networks, highlighting how terrorist groups use decentralised financial systems to fund operations while evading regulatory oversight. Dr Chohan critically examined the effectiveness of global anti-money laundering institutions, such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and argued that despite various reforms, loopholes remain that allow illicit financial flows to persist. He further talked about the role of PPPs in countering terrorist financing through advanced technological tools such as blockchain analytics.

Muhammad Amir Rana, President of the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), provided insights into how cyberterrorism and online radicalisation had created new challenges for policymakers. He stressed the importance of collaborations between governments, tech companies, and financial institutions to curb the exploitation of digital platforms by terrorist organisations and belligerent non-state actors.

A key segment of the discussion focused on Pakistan's unique challenges and opportunities in adopting technology-driven counterterrorism strategies. Discussants highlighted resource constraints, need for enhanced institutional coordination,

and the role of emerging tech ecosystems in strengthening counterterrorism efforts. It was stressed that AI-driven data analytics could detect early signs of radicalisation, identify terrorist networks, and optimise resource allocation for law enforcement; and hence called for greater collaboration between academia, private industry, and government agencies to ensure a proactive approach in integrating technological solutions into national security frameworks.

Following the expert presentations, an interactive question-and-answer session was held. The discussion explored the ethical considerations of surveillance technologies, risks of AI misuse in counterterrorism, and need for a balanced approach between 'security' and 'privacy'.

The roundtable concluded with remarks by President of CASS, Islamabad, Air Marshal Javid Ahmed (Retd.), who reiterated the significance of using technology for national security while ensuring it does not become a tool for adversarial forces. He stressed that Pakistan must stay ahead of emerging threats by fostering a culture of technological innovation in counterterrorism efforts. President CASS highlighted the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration to mitigate the risks associated with technological misuse by terrorist organisations and regional adversaries.

Uzbek Defence team calls on Air Chief

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A high-level defence delegation from Uzbekistan, led by Major General Burkhonov Akhmad Jamalovich, Deputy Minister of Defence and Commander of the Air Defence Forces and Air Force, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, at Air Headquarters.

Matters pertaining to mutual interest, avenues to enhance bilateral military cooperation, joint training and technological collaboration in the aerospace domains were discussed during the meeting, said an ISPR news release. Upon his arrival, a smartly turned-out contingent of the Pakistan Air Force presented a Guard of Honour to Major General Burkhonov Akhmad Jamalovich.

During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff highlighted the robust bilateral military ties between the two brotherly countries and assured that PAF is committed to extending full support for the basic to tactical-level training for pilots, as well as technical training of maintenance crews for capacity building of the personnel of Uzbekistan Air Force.

The Air Chief further said that both Pakistan and Uzbekistan enjoy long-standing religious and cultural bonds which are based on convergence on all important issues related to regional peace and security. The visiting dignitary lauded the historic & exemplary professionalism demonstrated by the personnel of Pakistan Air Force and praised PAF's notable progress in developing a thriving domestic capability in the aviation industry.

The dignitary articulated his desire for enhanced Air Force to Air Force collaboration between the two countries, emphasizing the need for joint training in the face of evolving security threats. He also expressed his earnest desire to expand the existing Mushshak aircraft fleet of the Uzbek Air Force, through procurement from the Pakistan Air Force. Both the commanders agreed on establishment of a more comprehensive two-way exchange of expertise with a specific focus on niche and disruptive technologies in the domains of Cyber, Space and Electronic Warfare capabilities.

The delegation also visited PAF Cyber Command and National ISR & Integrated Air Operations Centre established at Air Headquarters, where it was briefed about the operational capabilities of Pakistan Air Force. The visit of this high-level defence delegation of Uzbekistan to Air Headquarters Islamabad signifies a resolute commitment of both countries to reinforce their military partnership, fostering collaboration and promoting robust relations.

IMF mission reviews climate planning

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A mission from the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), a funding mechanism of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), on Wednesday reviewed the planning process for project selection and appraisal across Pakistan's federating units.

The RSF mission is visiting Pakistan to discuss around \$1 billion in climate financing on top of the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) secured by Islamabad last summer as part of an economic recovery plan. That disbursement will take place under the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST), created in 2022 to provide long-term concessional cash for climate-related spending, such as adaptation and transitioning to cleaner energy.

The RSF officials engaged with the relevant authorities in a meeting hosted by the Planning Division and attended by representatives from all provinces through their respective Planning and Development Departments (P&DDs). The primary focus of the session was on the IMF's assessment of how projects are selected and appraised in the federating units.

KPOGCL, OGDCL sign agreement

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has secured another significant success in the oil and gas sector with the signing of an exploration agreement for the Miran Block in North Waziristan. The signing ceremony took place at Pakhtunkhwa House Islamabad on Wednesday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur attending as the chief guest.

The event was also attended by Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Energy and Power, Tariq Sadozai, along with senior officials from the Federal Ministry of Petroleum, the KP Energy Department, and partner companies. The agreement was signed between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Oil & Gas Company Limited (KPOGCL) and a consortium comprising Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), and Government Holdings Private Limited (GHPL). Under the terms of the deal, KPOGCL will hold the largest stake in the Miran Block, owning 51% of shares, while the remaining 49% will be owned by the OGDCL-led consortium. Similarly, KPOGCL will also receive 51% of the profits generated from the project.

The consortium is set to invest PKR 20 billion in the exploration project over the next three years, with the entire investment coming from OGDCL and other consortium partners. Notably, in case of any financial losses, the provincial government will bear no financial burden. During the briefing at the ceremony, officials highlighted strong prospects of discovering significant oil and gas reserves in the Miran Block.

Speaking at the event, Chief Minister

Ali Amin Gandapur emphasized the strategic importance of the exploration deal, stating that it is not just a milestone for KP but for the entire country. He expressed optimism that the discovery of oil and gas reserves in the Miran Block would help address Pakistan's ongoing energy crisis. Congratulating KPOGCL, OGDCL, and the other consortium partners, the Chief Minister said the agreement marked the beginning of a major success. He further stated that the project would usher in a new era of development and prosperity in the region, creating employment opportunities and contributing to the eradication of militancy.

Highlighting the untapped potential of KP's natural resources, Gandapur criticized past policies for failing to fully harness these assets. "Despite having vast hydropower resources, we still rely on imported furnace oil and LNG for power generation," he noted. The Chief Minister lamented the country's heavy debt burden, which has reached PKR 76 trillion, and stressed the need for a collective strategy to overcome financial challenges.

Gandapur reaffirmed KP's crucial role in meeting Pakistan's energy needs, stating that the province contributes 42% of the country's total crude oil production, 13% of its natural gas output, and 40% of its LPG production. To further expand exploration efforts, the provincial government has allocated PKR 3 billion in its budget for oil and gas discoveries. He assured that the government would provide full security to companies operating in the Miran Block, ensuring smooth execution of the project. The agreement marks a significant step forward for KP in leveraging its natural resources to drive economic growth and energy self-sufficiency for Pakistan.

Every setback is a lesson

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister on Information and Public Relations, underscored the importance of purpose-driven leadership, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to higher ideals at the Young Leaders Convention 2025. In his thought-provoking address, he highlighted the crucial role of youth in shaping a better future by embracing responsibility, resilience, and ethical leadership.

Dr. Saif emphasized that true leadership is not about holding a position of power but about serving a greater cause. "A leader is not defined by authority but by the impact they create," he remarked, urging young individuals to move beyond conventional success metrics and focus on making meaningful contributions to society. He stressed that leadership is a responsibility that demands character, vision, and a deep sense of purpose.

He further elaborated that character is the foundation of enduring success. "History remembers those who stood for something larger than themselves," he asserted, encouraging young minds to cultivate honesty, discipline, and moral courage. He noted that real change is brought about by leaders who act with integrity even in the face of challenges. "The ability to make tough decisions with a clear moral compass is what sets great leaders apart," he added.

Highlighting the importance of resilience and vision, Barrister Dr. Saif spoke about the need to turn obstacles into opportunities. "The future belongs to those who dream big and take bold steps toward their goals," he said. He urged young leaders not to be deterred by failures but to view them as stepping stones to growth. "Every setback is a lesson, and



every challenge is a chance to rise higher," he emphasized, calling on the youth to approach adversity with determination and adaptability.

Concluding his speech, Dr. Saif urged young individuals to take charge of their futures with passion and conviction. "The world needs leaders who are driven by purpose, not personal gain. It is time to step forward, make a difference, and lead with integrity," he declared. He encouraged the audience to engage in social causes, foster innovation, and inspire change in their communities. He expressed confidence in the potential of the youth to redefine leadership and build a prosperous, progressive Pakistan.

Pakistan, Uzbekistan

(Continued from Page 1)

The two sides emphasized the need to intensify efforts on expanding cooperation between the countries in order to increase the efficiency of the use of transport routes, in particular to develop the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan multimodal transport corridor, as well as to broaden the opportunities for facilitating transport services.

In this regard, the two leaders underscored the significance of implementation of the Trans-Afghanistan Railroad construction project. Both sides reiterated their willingness to implement the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (Mazar-e-Sharif to Kharlachi) Railway Project.

Uzbekistan and Pakistan also agreed to expand trade and economic relations and industrial cooperation aimed at strengthening the economic potential of the two countries and improving the well-being of their populations, as well as to increase the trade turnover up to \$2 billion over next four years through among other things successfully implementing the Transit Trade Agreement (2021) and Preferential Trade Agreement (2023), encouraging and facilitating investment in each other's Special Economic Zones and promoting the B2B collaboration.

The two leaders underscored the importance of connectivity as a means of regional integration and economic development. They noted that Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan corridor was the most efficient and economical trade route for the entire region. In this context, they underscored the importance of Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) Railway Project and reiterated their commitment for the same.

opinion on the importance to enhance the role of the United Nations and its institutions in solving global problems, ensure sustainable development, and strengthen security and stability in the world.

Uzbekistan and Pakistan pledged to consider favourably each other's candidatures for various positions within international organizations, enhancing their shared efforts to uphold international law and strengthen cooperation. Pakistan warmly welcomed the holding of the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference in Samarkand in 2025.

In addition, the Pakistani side noted its regular participation in the meetings of working groups on Uzbekistan's accession to the WTO and its support for Uzbekistan's early accession to the organization. The two leaders emphasized the importance of efforts aimed at facilitating the transformation of Afghanistan into a peaceful and prosperous state that effectively confronts terrorist groups and prevents threats to any country, particularly to its neighbours.

The two leaders also exchanged views on their respective regional situations including issues of their core concern and of mutual interest. They agreed that peaceful resolution of all issues in accordance with UN General Assembly, and Security Council Resolutions would lead to progress and prosperity of both Central and South Asia regions, and beyond. Both sides expressed their support for the people of Palestine in their just struggle for self-determination, as well as for the establishment of a sovereign, independent, and contiguous Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders.

CJCSC pays rich tribute to Pakistan's Armed Forces

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: On the solemn occasion of the 6th anniversary of Operation Swift Retort, the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) and the Services Chiefs, pay tribute to the unwavering courage, professionalism, and sacrifices of Pakistan's Armed Forces.

Launched on 27 February 2019, Operation Swift Retort was a resolute and measured response to India's unwarranted aggression, reaffirming Pakistan's unyielding commitment to safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The operation not only demonstrated the operational excellence and preparedness of Pakistan's Armed Forces but also underscored their ability to effectively deter aggression and immediately re-establishing deterrence while maintaining complete operational dominance throughout the engagement.

On this occasion, the CJCSC and Service Chiefs reiterated their steadfast commitment to ensuring Pakistan's national security and stability while continuing efforts to foster regional peace. They reaffirmed that Pakistan's Armed Forces remain ever vigilant and fully prepared to counter any threat to the nation, upholding the trust and confidence reposed in them by the people of Pakistan.

With unwavering resolve, Pakistan's Armed Forces stand ready to defend the motherland while actively contributing to regional and global peace initiatives, in line with Pakistan's enduring pursuit of stability and harmony.

Applicability in next generation warfare for PAF

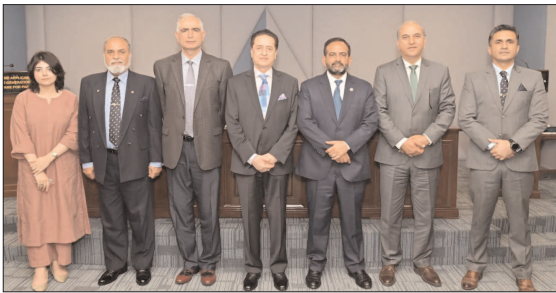
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LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a seminar titled "Air Doctrine: Applicability in Next-Generation Warfare for PAF" on 25 Feb 2025. The seminar explored emerging technologies, strategic alignments, and doctrinal shifts essential for the PAF's effectiveness in the evolving security landscape of South Asia.

Dr Air Commodore Naveed Khaliq Ansaree (Retd), Director at CASS, delivered the introductory remarks, emphasising the immense significance of the subject. Firstly, it is at the forefront of modern military strategies, and secondly, it directly impacts the future operational readiness of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF).

Dr Adil Sultan, Dean FASS, Air University Islamabad, delivered a talk on "Impact of Emerging Technologies on Next-Generation Warfare," covering areas such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, cyberspace, space systems, and AI-integrated drones. He also cautioned that the commercialisation of space may create potential concerns for ensuring security in future conflicts. Air Marshal Abdul Moeed Khan (Retd), Vice Chancellor of Air University Islamabad, delivered a talk on "Airpower Doctrine and Development Strategy for the PAF."

He stated that some aspects considered in PAF doctrine and development strategy include niche and disruptive technologies to offset numerical disadvantages; information superiority to dominate the OODA (Observe, Orient, Decide and Act) loop; agile combat employment to shorten the kill chain; centralised command, distributed control,



and decentralised execution; multi-domain and parallel operations; force projection through low-cost, high-impact autonomous systems; exploitation of the EM spectrum; and indigenisation and self-reliance by supporting and expanding the national hi-tech industrial base.

Air Vice Marshal Nasser ul Haq Wyne, Director Aerospace & Warfare, CASS Islamabad, delivered a talk on "Doctrinal Shift in Aerial Warfare in South Asia." He highlighted a scenario of the Grey Zone conflict, where India is pursuing a strategy of "No War, No Peace," blending kinetic and non-kinetic tools without triggering full-scale war. He stated that the major shift was the transformation of airpower into a supported rather than a supporting role. He noted that some of the PAF's key adaptations included hybrid warfare integration, integrating cyber and EW capabilities as part of a broader MDO, investment in unmanned systems, and forming strategic partnerships.

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President of CASS Lahore, highlighted the PAF's commitment to evolving its air doctrine to counter emerging threats. He stated that the PAF is focused on deterrence, precision engagement, and operational flexibility to ensure strategic readiness. Emphasising rapid modernisation, he outlined advancements in radar man-

ufacturing, BVR capabilities, electronic warfare, and multi-domain capabilities that have strengthened the PAF's edge. He stressed that future warfare will revolve around artificial intelligence (AI), cyber resilience, and space-based surveillance.

Under Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu's dynamic leadership, the PAF remains dedicated to maintaining air superiority through cutting-edge technologies, world-class training, and initiatives like NASTP, which drive innovation. Crediting this innovation, he stated that the PAF currently holds an edge over the IAF for at least six to seven years by virtue of its first-shot capability, planned induction of fifth-generation aircraft, force multipliers, and the introduction of multi-domain forces.

This advantage will only be reduced if the IAF successfully inducts the F-35 into its fleet and matches the PAF in force multipliers and multi-domain advancements. However, if the IAF fails to keep pace with the PAF, it will remain at least a decade behind. The interactive session sparked valuable discussions. Speakers emphasised the need for synergy among the three services to undertake multi-domain operations. They also emphasised that the PAF must enhance its capacity and capability to project power in the Indian Ocean Region and to be recognised as a potent force.