

Two killed by militants
F.P. Report
JAMRUD: Terrorists from a banned organization have killed two members of the peace committee, police informed on Tuesday. Police said, terrorists have killed two local peace committee members identified as Haji Sher Mohammad and Abrar, in New Bagh area of Khyber District. The victims were abducted by the militants in recent days before being killed.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing Overseas Pakistanis Global Foundation's convention.

COAS rubbishes Indian mly's 'hollow statements'

Army's top brass condemns blatant human rights violations in IIOJK; demands 'concrete actions' by Afghan govt against militants on its soil

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), presided over the 267th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at the General Headquarters (GHQ).

Participants paid profound tribute to the sacrifices made by the Shuhada of the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies, and citizens who have laid down their lives in pursuit of peace and stability of their beloved motherland. The forum undertook a comprehensive review of the regional, and internal security landscape, assessing the full spectrum of threats.

The prevailing situation along the Line of Control (LoC) and the Working Boundary was discussed. In solidarity with the resilient people of Kashmir on the eve of Kashmir Solidarity Day (5 February 2025), the forum strongly condemned the continued blatant human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK), recognizing them as a grave threat to regional peace and stability.

Reiterating Pakistan's unwavering support for the legitimate struggle of the Kashmiri people for their right to self-determination, as enshrined in relevant UN Security Council resolutions, the forum emphasized the significance of international engagement in addressing these persist-



ent violations.

The forum also took serious note of the recent reckless and provocative statements from the Indian military leadership, terming them irresponsible and detrimental to regional stability.

While addressing the forum, COAS stated: "Pakistan Army remains fully prepared to defend the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. These hollow statements from Indian military are indicative of their growing frustration and serve only to divert the attention of their masses and international community from their multiple internal fissures and blatant violations of human rights. Any misadventure against Pakistan will be responded with full and resolute force of the state, InshaAllah."

Expressing grave concern over the continued use of Afghan soil by Fitna Al Khawarij for terrorist activities against Pakistan, the forum stressed the imperative of concrete and tangible actions by Interim Afghan Government against Fitna Al Khawarij instead of denials as well as continuing with the strategy of undertaking all necessary measures in defence of

Pakistan and its people.

The forum also underscored the need to accelerate people centric socio-economic development initiatives in Balochistan, recognizing the urgency of countering externally driven narratives of exclusion. The forum reaffirmed: "No one will be allowed to disrupt peace in Balochistan and nefarious designs of foreign-sponsored proxies attempting to mislead and radicalize the youth of Balochistan will be decisively thwarted with the unwavering support of the people of Balochistan, InshaAllah."

Commending the operational preparedness of all formations, COAS emphasized the importance of sustained mission-oriented training, enhanced military cooperation, and the conduct of joint exercises in both conventional and counter-terrorism domains. Concluding the conference, COAS reaffirmed that the military leadership remains fully cognizant of the multifaceted challenges confronting the nation and is resolute in fulfilling its constitutional responsibilities with the steadfast support of the proud people of Pakistan.

No more jobs under son quota in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has abolished recruitment under the son quota system for government employees. The provincial government has released an official notification regarding the change in the recruitment process.

According to the notification, the rules for recruitment, promotion, and transfers of employees in the province have been amended. Clause 4 of Rule 10 has been completely removed, while Clause 2 has been partially abolished.

The clauses were previously related to the recruitment of children of employees who had passed away or were deemed unfit for work. Under the previous system, children of deceased or incapacitated employees were provided jobs. With the new policy in place, children of employees who pass away or become unfit for work will no longer be given employment.

Last year, the Punjab government made significant changes to the Punjab Civil Servants Act, 1974 by abolishing rule 17-A. The secretary regulation services and General Administration has issued a notification in this connection. As per the new amendment, now the children of deceased Punjab govt employees will not be entitled to get jobs.

The notification stated, "In exercise of the powers conferred under Section 23 of the Punjab Civil Servants Act, 1974 (VIII of 1974), the Governor of Punjab is pleased to make the following amendment in the Punjab Civil Servants (Appointment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 1974, with immediate effect."

President departs for visit to China

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday departed here for a five-day state visit to China from February 4-8, 2025, at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

He was accompanied by a delegation comprising Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Senator Saleem Mandviwala and Dr Asim Hussain.

During the visit, the president will hold meetings with President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and other senior Chinese political leaders in Beijing. President Zardari's visit to China holds significance to further strengthen Pakistan-China relations besides helping to enhance bilateral trade and commerce ties.

During the meetings, the two sides will discuss matters of mutual interest including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, regional connectivity, and security cooperation.

KP CM directs monitoring of healthcare facilities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, has directed for the removal of District Health Officers (DHOs) in certain districts due to poor performance and directed that professional and competent DHOs be posted strictly on a merit basis, emphasizing that there can be no compromise on the provision of healthcare services to the public.

These directives he issued, while presiding over a meeting of the Independent Monitoring Unit (IMU) of the Health Department. The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister on Health Ehtesham Ali, Secretary Health Shahidullah, Director General of Health Services Dr. Muhammad Saleem, Director Independent Monitoring Unit, and other relevant officials.

Participants of the meeting were briefed on the objectives, responsibilities, performance, challenges, and the future roadmap of the Independent Monitoring Unit. Additionally, the actions taken by the Health Department based on IMU reports were reviewed in the meeting.



Tanveer calls Gandapur

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research called on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur here at CM Secretariat on Tuesday evening. Both the leaders discussed matters related to food security and relevant issues. Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry was also present during the meeting.

The Chief Minister directed the health authorities to take immediate actions on the IMU reports and instructed that the department should also provide details of the actions taken on the reports of IMU. He further directed to strengthen the monitoring of healthcare facilities and to get public feedback regarding service delivery and facilities provided in health centres across the province.

The Chief Minister emphasized that doctors and other staff who demonstrate good performance

should be encouraged and appreciated. He also directed to ensure that all types of machinery and medical equipment in hospitals are fully operational and emergency medicines are available in public hospitals in the province.

Ali Amin Gandapur also directed for strict actions against habitually absent doctors and other medical staff, emphasizing that the attendance of doctors and medical staff at health centers must be ensured at all costs, and no leniency should be shown in this regard.

The Frontier Post

Imam masjid shot dead

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: An imam masjid was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Lakki Marwat district. Police said, the incident took place in Darra Pezu area, where six armed men took Imam Qari Sanaullah outside the mosque and shot him dead. The deceased was an English teacher at a private school and a prominent member of the peace committee in his village, Pahar Khel Pakka.

Govt to unveil Ramadan relief package sans utility stores

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the government would unveil the Ramadan Relief Package this year sans Utility Stores' role to prevent corruption and the distribution of low-quality commodities to the people.

"As the Holy Ramadan is about to start, I have asked the Ministry of National Food Security to bring about a Ramzan Package without Utility Stores to prevent corruption and the sale of low-quality material. I had asked many months ago that this cannot go on with the Utility Stores," the prime minister said in his televised opening remarks at the meeting of the federal cabinet chaired by him. He told the cabinet members that last year, the government had received immense complaints about the execution of the Ramadan Package by the Utility Stores. Therefore, the government has devised a solution to provide the facility minus the Utility Stores.

About the launch of the polio vaccination drive, he mentioned the killing of a policeman Abdul Khaliq in Jamrud who was deployed on the security of the polio team and paid tribute to his sacrifice to make Pakistan a polio-free nation. He also lauded the services of PM's Coordinator on Health Dr Mukhtar, Polio Coordinator Dr Ayesha Farooq, secretary health and polio vaccinators for their tireless efforts to rid the country of this crippling disease.

Apprising the cabinet members of his Quetta visit on Monday, the prime minister said he visited the hospital to inquire after the security personnel who were injured in an anti-terror operation in Kalat in which 18 security personnel were martyred and 23 terrorists were eliminated. "I met the injured. They were in high morale and were even ready to sacrifice their lives for the country."

PM directs steps to operationalize Gwadar Port on commercial basis

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed immediate measures to operationalize Gwadar Port on a commercial basis and instructed the formation of a committee under the chairmanship of Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal to work with all stakeholders to transform Gwadar Port into a modern and fully functional port. The prime minister chaired a meeting of the federal cabinet in which Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal gave a detailed briefing on Gwadar Port, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister also directed for organizing an international conference to create awareness about the significance of Gwadar Port. "A comprehensive marketing and awareness strategy should be devised and diplomatic efforts regarding Gwadar Port should be expedited," he stressed. He also sought details of imports and exports carried out through Gwadar Port. The meeting was informed that Gwadar Port had the capacity to provide cost-effective and time-efficient access to the Persian Gulf for vessels of up to 50,000 Deadweight Tonnage (DWT) and to facilitate trans-shipment to Gulf countries. Furthermore, the port was expected to play a vital role in the development of the mining and aqua-culture sectors in Balochistan province. Western parts of China and the Central Asian States would also benefit from this port.

These are the martyrs and Ghazis who are resolved to rid the country of terrorism and striving day and night for the cause," he remarked. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the soldiers of the army, police, FC and Rangers sacrificing their lives were actually bearing the brunt of the blunderous policies of a government in the past when thousands of terrorists were set free. The cabinet members also offered Fateha for the martyred security personnel as well as the policeman on the polio duty. The prime minister expressed pleasure over the inflation coming down to a nine-year low at 2.4% from 28.73% on a month-to-month basis.

He congratulated the entire nation, the cabinet members particularly the finance minister, his team, FBR and others for their efforts during the last 11 months to bring the inflation down to the lowest level. "Now, we are fully striving to head toward economic growth... This is the main challenge. All of our ener-

gies will be focused on economic growth. Just like other targets, we will achieve this too," he resolved.

He told the cabinet members that on Monday, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman sent a delegation to Pakistan and both sides signed an agreement under which the Kingdom would provide oil worth annual \$1.2 billion on deferred payment. Besides, the Saudi Development Fund will also provide a loan for a \$40 million water supply scheme project in Mansehra.

He said that the entire nation would observe Kashmir Solidarity Day on Wednesday to express solidarity with their Kashmiri brethren. Prime Minister Shehbaz also lauded the approval of agricultural income tax by all four provinces as per the IMF condition and thanked the chief ministers, President Asif Ali Zardari, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Mian Nawaz Sharif for their support in this regard.

SC questions jurisdiction of mly courts over civilians

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: During the hearing of an intra-court appeal against the trial of civilians in military courts, Justice Jamal Mandokhail questioned the extent of powers granted to military courts under the Army Act.

A seven-member constitutional bench, headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, is hearing the appeal. The bench included justices Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Musarat Hilali, Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Shahid Bilal Hassan. Salman Akram Raja, representing a convict, Arzam Junaid, continued his arguments.

While making his case, Raja referred to the F.B. Ali case, that it was decided under the 1962 Constitution, prompting Justice Mandokhail to inquire, "What powers do military courts have under the Act? Can someone who is not part of the military be tried solely based on the nature of their crime?"

In response, Raja argued that even in the F.B. Ali case, the court emphasised that a civilian's trial could only be justified if fundamental rights were fully ensured. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar questioned, "F.B. Ali was himself a civilian. How was he subjected to a court-martial?"

Raja responded that the court had ruled that the provision of fundamental rights was essential and that in F.B. Ali's trial, there was no violation of these rights. Salman Akram Raja argued that Pakistan's judicial system has faced repeated attempts to curtail its independence, particularly noting instances during 1977-1980 when the

Balochistan High Court granted bail to individuals convicted under martial law.

He stated that every eight to ten years, efforts were made to undermine judicial autonomy. Referring to past legal precedents, Raja highlighted that the Supreme Court has historically intervened to uphold fundamental rights, even striking down laws that restricted political freedoms, as seen in the case of the Pakistan People's Party.

Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi pointed out that hostile foreign agencies sometimes exploit civilians, raising complex legal questions about their prosecution under military laws. He noted that sections 2(1)(d)(i) and 2(1)(d)(ii) of the Army Act, which previously allowed such trials, have been declared void. This, he suggested, could hinder the prosecution of individuals working against national interests.

In his arguments, Raja compared Pakistan's Army Act with India's, noting that the controversial provisions present in Pakistan's law do not exist in the Indian legal framework. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar challenged the relevance of this comparison, asking how such an assessment could be valid when the legal provisions in question are absent in India's laws. Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan further emphasised that Pakistan's legal system operated independently of India's.

Salman Akram Raja also made startling revelations about his personal legal troubles, disclosing that he faced an FIR accusing him of involvement in the alleged murder of three Rangers personnel on November 26. He claimed these accusations were part of a broader effort to silence him in court and in the media.

PECA challenged in SC

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Amendments to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2025 have been challenged in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Muhammad Qayyum Khan, a citizen, filed the plea and made the president, National Assembly speaker, Senate chairman and law secretary respondents.

The petitioner contends that the latest amendments to the law contravene fundamental human rights and provisions of the constitution. He said the bill had been passed by the speaker of a sham assembly and the president elected through it. Khan requested the apex court to declare the amendments null and void and form a full bench to hear the case. "The court should also take stock of the original PECA," he demanded.

The amended law has become controversial even before it was enacted. A few days ago President Asif Ali Zardari approved the PECA Amendment Bill 2025 vociferous protests by opposition and journalists. Earlier, the Senate approved the controversial bill and the Digital Nation Bill 2025 after National Assembly's nod.

The bills, which kept the government and the opposition at daggers drawn for several days, were moved by Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar and Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on behalf of the interior minister. The PPP, which is also an ally of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government in the Centre, also voted in favour of the bills. The PTI opposed the bills. The PTI senators lodged their protest by gathering in front of Deputy Chairman Syedal Khan Nasir's dais. The opposition members raised slogans against the approval of the PECA bill and tore its copies. Journalists, on the other hand, staged a walkout from the Press Gallery to register their protest.

Journalists across Pakistan took to the streets against the controversial law and demanded its immediate repeal. Demonstrations erupted in major cities, including Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi and Quetta, with journalists raising slogans against the government and rejecting the legislation. Leading the protests were PFUIJ President Afzal Butt (Islamabad) and Secretary General Arshad Ansari (Lahore), joined by senior media figures, civil society representatives, and prominent journalists including Asma Shirazi and Mazhar Abbas.

FO confirms identities of 13 Pakistanis who died in boat tragedy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) said on Tuesday confirmed the identities of 13 Pakistanis who died in last month's Mauritania-Morocco boat tragedy.

The FO said on January 16 that the boat, carrying 80 passengers, capsized near Morocco, with over 40 Pakistanis reportedly among the dead. Migrant rights group Walking Borders said as many as 50 migrants may have drowned in the latest deadly wreck involving people trying to make the crossing from West Africa to Spain's Canary Islands.

Over 40 Pakistanis were reportedly murdered by African human traffickers on the boat with only 22 out of around 66 Pakistanis onboard surviving the tragedy. The repatriation of the survivors was completed with the arrival of the last batch of eight survivors at Islamabad airport on Saturday.

In a statement issued today, the FO said: "After a process of extensive verification, bodies of 13 Pakistani nationals have been identified. Mortal remains of four Pakistani nationals are scheduled to arrive in Islamabad on February 5" via a Saudi Airlines flight.

Security sources deny any letter from PTI founder

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Security sources on Tuesday stated that no letter had been received from the PTI founder.

No such correspondence has been received from the convicted individual, nor does the Establishment have any interest in engaging with such a letter. The security officials further remarked that the PTI attempted to stage yet another unsuccessful drama under the guise of a letter.



PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim in a group photo with other fellow judges after oath taking of additional judges at PHC.

PHC directs to decide legal status of mining in Khyber within a month

Grants protective bail to two PTI leaders

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Shakeel Ahmad and Justice Sabit Ullah Khan has directed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mines and Minerals Department to decide on a petition filed against illegal mining in Khyber District within 30 days, on Tuesday.

During the hearing, the petitioner's lawyer informed the court that illegal mining is being carried out in Khyber District. He added that the Mining Department had issued an order to stop illegal mining in the district last year, but the order has not been implemented yet.

The lawyer requested the court to issue orders to stop illegal mining in Khyber District. On the other hand,

the defense lawyer argued that mining in the district is being carried out under the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and stopping it would cause them losses.

In the meantime, Justice Shakeel Ahmed remarked that the government should investigate whether the mining is illegal or not. He added that the government cannot turn a blind eye to illegal mining activities. The court has referred the matter to the Mining Department, ordering them to make decision within 30 days.

PHC grants protective bail to two PTI's leaders

The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has granted protective bail to two leaders of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) including former minister Punjab Jamal Nasir Cheema, on Tuesday.

The court's decision came after hearing their protective bail applications. A two-member bench, comprising Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Abdul Fiaz, heard Cheema's application.

The counsel Alam Khan Adeenzai, informed the court that the petitioner is a former provincial minister and that cases have been registered against him in Punjab. He requested the court to provide details of the cases registered against Cheema.

The court granted Jamal Nasir Cheema protective bail until February 24 and directed him to approach the relevant high court to obtain details of the cases registered against him. The court also restrained the concerned authorities from arresting Cheema until further orders.

Similarly, a two-member bench, comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Mudassir Amir, heard Seemabya Tahir's protective bail application.

The lawyer informed the court that unknown cases have been registered against the petitioner, and the government is not providing details of the cases. He expressed fear that Tahir may be arrested and requested the court to grant her protective bail.

The court granted Seemabya Tahir protective bail for a month and directed her to approach the relevant high court to obtain details of the cases registered against her. The court also restrained the concerned authorities from arresting Tahir until further orders.

Wait for Peshawar cricket fans is over PCB considers hosting two matches of PSL 10 at Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium



Shahid Afridi

PESHAWAR: Peshawar's cricket fans may finally get the chance to witness their favorite stars in action as the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is considering hosting two matches of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) Season 10 at the Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium Peshawar. A final decision will be made after a report is submitted to the PCB.

Yesterday PCB's representative Reg Dickason visited the stadium to assess security arrangements. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government provided a detailed

briefing including the security plan. According to sources PCB has expressed willingness to host two PSL 10 matches in Peshawar pending the final security assessment based on Dickason's report.

As per the security plan the provincial government has proposed declaring public holidays on match days with spectators transported to the stadium via a shuttle service from Ring Road. Players and officials will be accommodated in two secure hotels while several roads in Peshawar will be closed for public movement to ensure security.

Sources indicate that the PCB representative was satisfied with the stadium's facilities and security measures. Officials informed him that contractors have been given a deadline of February 15 to complete civil work ensuring that the stadium will be ready for PSL 10 matches. Additionally efforts have been accelerated to install floodlights with hopes that artificial lighting will be available before the start of the league.

The Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium undergoing a PKR 2 billion renovation since 2018 faced delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic

and funding issues. However after years of setbacks the provincial government's efforts have brought the project close to completion paving the way for international cricket's return to Peshawar.

The stadium has a rich history having hosted numerous international Test and ODI matches including two games during the 1996 Cricket World Cup. However the last international match played here was in 2006 between Pakistan and India. If approved PSL 10 will mark the return of top-level cricket to Peshawar after 19 years.

Minister directs activation of local zakat committees

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Zakat and Ushr Council Intiaz Khan, expressing his anger over the slowness in the process of forming local Zakat committees at the district level, has taken strict notice of this matter and has said that the local committees should be fully activated within 10 days in all the districts of the province and the distribution of Zakat funds should be started among the deserving persons, otherwise after 10 days the provincial council will take action against the inactive committees and take legal action.

While presiding over a meeting of the Provincial Zakat and Ushr Council held in Peshawar on Tuesday, Chairman Intiaz Khan said that their rights should be conveyed to the deserving persons immediately and transparency should also be ensured in the distribution of funds.

The meeting was attended by members of the Provincial Zakat Council, District Zakat Chairman Peshawar, former Member of National Assembly Sajid Nawaz Khan and other officers of the department.

The meeting also discussed the reconstitution of Zakat Committees at district level, their per-

formance and immediate distribution of funds to the deserving persons. Addressing the meeting, the Chairman of the Zakat and Ushr Council said that the Provincial Council has released Rs. 128.11 million for the provision of Zakat Committees, however, the District Zakat Committees should not delay in transferring these funds to the provincial level hospitals and this process should be expedited so that the deserving persons can benefit from it.

He further said that appropriate steps should be taken for the District Zakat Committees whose reconstitution process is still pending.

CCPO Peshawar reviews security

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Peshawar, Qasim Ali Khan, conducted an extensive tour of various areas in the city to assess the overall security arrangements.

During his visit, the CCPO reviewed the security measures in place for polio vaccination teams, police stations, and security checkpoints.

He emphasized the need for police personnel on duty to remain vigilant at all times to ensure public safety.

"The protection of people's lives, property, and dignity is the fundamental duty of the police," stated CCPO Qasim Ali Khan. He also directed station clerks to treat complainants with respect and ensure their concerns are addressed professionally.

In light of the ongoing polio vaccination campaign, strict security measures have been implemented across the district to safeguard healthcare teams. The CCPO reiterated that Peshawar Police is utilizing all available resources to maintain peace and security in the city.

Security checks have been intensified, and law enforcement agencies are on high alert to prevent any potential threats.

F.P. Report

P E S H A W A R : A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding online membership registration was signed between the Housing Foundation and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board on Tuesday at the Civil Secretariat Peshawar, in the presence of the Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Housing, Dr. Amjad Ali, and the Special Assistant for Science and

Technology, Shafqat Ayaz.

On this occasion, Dr. Amjad Ali, the Special Assistant, said that the provincial government, keeping in mind the housing needs of employees, will provide plots through the Housing Foundation in various government housing schemes that are ongoing under the Housing Authority and in new upcoming schemes.

He further stated that government employees will be provided plots based on their scales through easy

installment plans. The primary objective of this foundation is to provide plots to government employees without profit or loss. He added that today is a pleasant day for all provincial government employees who have longed for their own homes, as their long-awaited dream is about to be true.

The Special Assistant said that Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, envisions introducing residential projects in the province that

are in line with modern-day requirements and ensure that residents face no difficulties.

On this occasion, the Special Assistant also thanked the media present at the event and expressed hope that the media will give full support to such schemes.

Earlier, the Managing Director of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa IT Board, Mohammad Aqif Khan, gave a detailed briefing on the Housing Foundation's project.



PESHAWAR: Commissioner Peshawar Riaz Khan Mehsood chairing meeting regarding widening of the University Road and traffic jam issue.

Kashmir amidst Two-Front War

Nida Khattak

Louiss Althusser, in his exploration of state power, explains two apparatuses through which authoritarian states seek to acquire absolute submission: the repressive state apparatus and the ideological state apparatus. At present, it would seem that India, as a state, is currently operating this twin mechanism well with full rigour in the occupied territory of Kashmir. As if the armed oppression of the people of Kashmir did not suffice, the state is actively indulged in political oppression coupled with propagation of a narrative that paints the very people of Kashmir as villains in India's manufactured tales of the Kashmiri land, trapping the people in two-front war in efforts to gradually erase their identities.

The repressive state apparatus is operating at full throttle, armed oppression in the form of brutal tortures and killing of Kashmiri people have become the state's instrument of control within the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Ideological state apparatus in the form of political oppression, on the other hand, aims at making the region ungovernable so that status of union territory can be retained in favour of the central government. The recent developments including the so called legislative Assembly elections that were held in IIOJK from 18 September to 1 October 2024, elected 90 members to the new illegally formed Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly as to serve as puppet legislatures under a titular chief minister with its cabinet playing second fiddle to an unelected appointee, the lieutenant governor.

Although, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s effort to convert a demographic Muslims majority valley into a political minority failed this time as the votes in the valley were highly anti-

BJP and their proxies like 'Apni Party' and 'Awami Ittehad Party'. However, this marks the first instance that BJP has secured 29 seats in the Jammu region by emerging as a second largest party after Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), which secured 49 seats in coalition with the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI (M)). The whole situation is highly indicative of growing realisation of Hindutva aspirations to shift the balance of power in the region.

Take for example, the current political situation of IIOJK. Through measures such as the delimitation of the constituencies, the inclusion of non-resident voters via remapping electoral roles, and the New Domicile Law of 2019, which granted domiciles to non-Kashmiris, the BJP-led central government has created a perfect recipe for creating a politically charged and polarised environment in the region. If in case, the local parties wish to govern the region, the state has effectively ensured their eventual failure. This, in turn, seems to be an effort to retain the centre's control over the region and alter the political distributions in such a way as to solidify pro-Hindutva parties in the region.

The ideological state apparatus that is currently employed by the Indian state also takes the form of digital and print mediums of knowledge and entertainment, which constitutes a significant aspect within the broader scheme of oppression. Althusser reveals that the experience of watching a film or reading a book has underlying mechanisms and psychological processes which are related to deep ideological implications. In a way, these mediums can be used to 'reinvent' history and reconstruct memories.

For the past couple of years, Indian state has accelerated its efforts to produce cinema that portrays Kashmiri

Muslims in a villainous light. Such content skyrocketed specially after the abrogation of the Article 370, establishing false narrative, propagating Islamophobia, and building false icons of Hindutva. The media industry executes it in such a cunning way that it would put Goebbels to shame. Such fictional content mainly aims to justify Indian armed forces illegal presence in the occupied region by dehumanising the local people. In the recent years, it has been consistently observed that incidents of violence against Muslims across India surge right after such media productions.

This rhetoric extends beyond the fictional media to Indian news agencies that readily disseminate misinformation. Indian media promotes the narrative of Indians being welcome by Kashmiris and portrays the region as normal. It is a tactic that has been functional since occupation to re-enforce illegal India control over the region. Furthermore, international coverage has also been influenced by offering incentives to the foreign journalists in an effort to align India's domestic and international narratives with the state interests as part of a wider strategy of gaining total ideological control over public discourse.

Under this scheme, the Indian government has attempted to suppress the voices of Kashmiris in two ways: by physically eliminating them and by manufacturing false stories about them. However, the community has persevered by demonstrating indomitability. At the time, when Kashmiri people are trapped in a two-front war, it becomes even more important to express solidarity for Kashmiris, voice their concerns, and bear witness to their struggle and resilience.

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Endless Indian forces oppression behind movement for independence at IIOJ&K

PESHAWAR (APP): Every year, Kashmiris living in both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) and Pakistan observe Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 with a renewed pledge to continue their struggle till achievement of freedom from the Indian yoke.

From Khyber to Karachi and Gawadar to Muzaffargarh, the Pakistanis as well as Kashmiris will raise placards and banners inscribed with different slogans against Indian forces' oppression and state terrorism unleashed since October 27, 1947 at the held valley.

78 years ago, India without any legal justification, had forcibly invaded the Muslims dominated state of Jammu and Kashmir in a sheer violation of Indo-Pak partition plan by depriving its people of all rights, liberties and independence.

Breaking all records of persistent human rights' abuses, extra judicial killings and state terrorism in IIOJK, the India's apartheid regime deprived the oppressed Kashmiris of all civil, economic, constitutional and political rights as well as liberties besides autonomous status on August 5, 2019,

making life nightmare for over one million innocent Kashmiris.

"The unending repression, human rights abuses and organized Indian state terrorism that started from an illegal invasion at Srinagar on October 27, 1947, has further intensified after the fascist Modi Govt had unlawfully revoked the special status of IIOJ&K on August 5, 2019", said Professor Dr. Muhammad Ejaz Khan, former Chairman, International Relations Department at University of Peshawar while talking to APP.

Following abrogation of Articles 370 and 35 A on August 5, 2019, he said the fascist Modi Govt had made over one million oppressed Kashmiris hostage at gun point in IIOJ&K where life became a nightmare especially for the children and women.

He said that India went against several passed UN Security Council resolutions after abolishing the special status of IIOJK which was major dispute between Pakistan and India, saying it was the responsibility of UNSC members to grant rights of self-determination to the oppressed Kashmiris. Mushtaq Ahmed Shah,

Vice Chairman, Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League told APP that February 5 would be observed as Kashmir Solidarity Day by the people of Kashmir where protest rallies, seminars and workshops planned.

"After August 5 illegal actions, Indian occupation forces had killed innocent Kashmiris in fake encounters, put Kashmiri leadership behind bars, imposed clampdown on media and used human rights abuses against women and children as weapon of war," he said.

Even the mass rituals and funeral of great Kashmiri leader, Syed Ali Gillani was not allowed and his body was forcefully snatched from the bereaved family and buried at night.

Similarly, great hurriyat leader, Muhammad Yasin Malik was jailed for life in a fake case in a bid to silence his strong voice for Kashmir's freedom and terrorism against Kashmir leadership.

Despite the brutal killing of freedom fighter Burhan Wani and others Kashmiris leadership in a fake encounter, he said India has failed to suppress the indigenous freedom movement in IIOJK.



In brief

Winter sports competitions held F.P. Report

CHITRAL: The traditional winter sports competitions were held in the picturesque Kalash Valley of Chitral, attracting a large number of locals and tourists. The district administration said on Tuesday that the event was organized in collaboration with the Frontier Corps North and the Winds Eagle Polo Club in Bamboret, aiming at promoting sports and highlight the local culture. The competitions featured traditional games such as Buzkashi, Horseback Archery, Wrestling, and Stone Throwing, with enthusiastic participation from the youth. The chief guest at the event was the local commander of Frontier Corps North, who presented prizes to the winning athletes. Such sports competitions are held annually in the Kalash Valley, drawing participants from various regions, who come fully prepared to compete. The events not only promote local culture but also boost the tourism sector in Chitral.

Kashmir Solidarity Day F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: A ceremony to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day was held at Divisional Public School & College, Toba Tek Singh, organized to express unwavering support for the people of Indian-occupied Kashmir. The event was attended by District Police Officer (DPO), Additional Deputy Commissioner General (ADCG), Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Education Aqeela Intikhab, Principal Rao Muhammad Siddique, faculty members, and a large number of students.

The ceremony commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by a Naat. Students presented thought-provoking speeches, patriotic songs and tableaux depicting the resilience of the Kashmiri people and their decades-long struggle for the right to self-determination, which resonated strongly with the audience. Addressing the gathering, DPO Ibadat Nisar underscored that Kashmir Solidarity Day serves as a stark reminder of the sacrifices made by the people of Kashmir in their pursuit of freedom. He reiterated Pakistan's firm commitment to continue extending diplomatic, political, and moral support to the Kashmiri cause at all levels. Speaking on the occasion, ADCG Zeeshan Labbha Masih affirmed that the Pakistani nation stands united with the Kashmiri people, adding that their struggle for legitimate rights will continue to be highlighted on every international platform. In his remarks, Principal Rao Muhammad Siddique lauded the efforts of the students and faculty in organizing the event, emphasizing that such activities play a crucial role in raising awareness among the youth about the Kashmir issue and nurturing a spirit of solidarity.

Commissioner reviews work F.P. Report

SARGODHA: Commissioner Sargodha Division, Jahanzeb Awan on Tuesday chaired a weekly performance meeting to review the progress of several ongoing initiatives of Chief Minister Punjab here. All the four DC of the division gave a detailed briefing on the key agenda items during the meeting. The Commissioner reviewed the progress of the anti-encroachment operation, beautification, ongoing registration under the Socio-Economic Registry, the Clean Punjab campaign and the public welfare initiatives during the last week.



FAISALABAD: Students performing in tableau during an event organized on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day at Government College for Women University.

KUST hosts ceremony to honours VC

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: The administrative staff of Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) organized a prestigious ceremony in honor of Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Naseeruddin, recognizing his leadership in advancing the university, implementing administrative reforms, and improving infrastructure.

The event was attended by administrative officers, faculty members, and other staff, who highlighted the significant reforms and development policies introduced under his leadership. Speakers emphasized that the university has witnessed remarkable improvements in academic and administrative domains due to transparent policies,



merit-based recruitment, and better career growth opportunities for staff.

Speaking at the ceremony, KUST's Controller of Examinations, Bahadur Khan, stated, "Under the leadership of Professor Dr. Naseeruddin, several development projects have been successfully executed, including infrastructure enhancements, strengthening of the academic environment, and the implementation of merit-based policies."

Expressing gratitude for the ceremony, Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr.

Naseeruddin acknowledged the collective efforts of faculty and administration in the university's progress. "We are striving to transform KUST into a world-class institution, and we will continue our commitment to further development projects," he stated.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the Vice-Chancellor was presented with a commemorative shield in recognition of his services. The attendees applauded his vision and leadership, offering high praise for his contributions to the university's growth.

Law, order situation in Pabbi reviewed F.P. Report

PABBI: Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Pabbi circle said that to improve law and order in the premises, patrolling will be increased. Checkpoints and searches on Branch Road will be improved. The deployment of police personnel in plain clothes will be increased.

The meeting was attended by SHO Pabbi Police Station Timur Salim Khan, SHO Akbarpura Police Station Haji Muhammad Khan, SHO Jalozai Police Station Faisal Khan, Sub-Inspectors, and Moharrars. FIRs will be registered against those who fire aerial shots during weddings. Action will be taken against those who openly display weapons, in accordance with the law. No political recommendations will be accepted in cases of ice (drug) peddling. Car and motorcycle lifters will be dealt with iron hands.

Police will use modern investigative techniques to tighten the noose around robbers and dacoits, and bring them to justice as soon as possible. Moharrars at police stations will behave politely and gently with complainants.

PML-N govt commits for public welfare F.P. Report

ATTOCK: Pakistan Muslim League (N) Member National Assembly Malik Sohail Khan has said that Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif are trying to provide relief to the people. He said the PML-N has always preferred the interests of the state over its politics. The people of Pakistan and Punjab have given mandate to his party and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and provincial Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz are working tirelessly to address the problems of the people.

He expressed these views while talking on the occasion of an open court held at Municipal Committee in Tehsil Pindi Gheb on Tuesday. Member of the National Assembly Malik Sohail Khan Kamriyal listened to the problems of the people and issued orders to solve them on the spot.

On this occasion, President of Anjuman Tajran Pindi Gheb Malik Nazakat Ali Khan, DSP Asghar Guriah, SHO Malik Manwar Khan, Numberdar Chaudhry Abid Hussain, Former Chairman Haji Muhammad Saleem, Malik Nadeem, Former Councilor Haji Abdul Ghaffar, SDO IESCO, besides local officers of provincial and federal departments including health department, Sui Gas, Police and Muslim League (N) workers participated in large numbers.

The Member National Assembly Malik Sohail Khan has said that the current government is facing tough and difficult challenges. The Pakistan Muslim League (N) Government is trying to provide relief to the common man. He said that the Muslim League (N) government is fulfilling the promises made to the people.

ANP observes Bacha Khan, Wali Khan death anniversaries

F.P. Report

BUNER: Awami National Party (ANP) Buner In connection with the death anniversary of Bacha Khan Baba and Wali Khan Baba was organized a grand gathering at Government Degree College ground Swari in which central, provincial, divisional and district leadership, workers, doctors, lawyers, paramedics, teachers, class IV, students in large numbers participated.

The ground was echoed with the slogans of Pakhtun nationalism by the workers wearing red clothes and red caps and the youth of the Pakhtun Students again and again raised "revolution revolution Pakhtun revolution" Bacha Khan Baba Wali Khan Baba Zindabad" and

"Wali Khan Baba". Those addressed were central leader former Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Haider Khan hoti, provincial general secretary Shah Hussain Khan, provincial leader Sardar Hussain Babak, district president Muhammad Karim Babak, district general secretary Qaisar Wali Khan, district leader Haji Rauf Khan, Gulzar Hussain Babak, Afsar Khan, Ali Muhammad Khan Shuja Khan and others.

The speakers pointed to the flood of thousands of red-clad people in the ground and challenged the opponents who were tried to force the Awami National Party out of the parliament and to end politics. They repeatedly shouted that Pakhtun cannot

eliminate nor ANP can be ousted from politics. The speakers mentioned the sacrifices of Bacha Khan Baba and Wali Khan Baba for the Pakhtun nation and appreciated their struggle for Pakhtun rights.

They asked all of Pukhton to gather under Bacha Khan Baba and Wali Khan Baba's banners who were were sacrifices for Pakhtun rights. They also mentioned the struggle of Asfandiar Wali Khan who named Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and brought 18th amendment in the constitution. They branded it great gains for Pakhtun. They repeated credit goes to the Awami National Party leadership who actively participate in the practical struggle of securing Pakhtun rights in the Eighteenth Amendment.

Resident demand action against private hospital

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A resident of Bijli Ghar Shah Fahad, strongly protested against the alleged negligence and irresponsibility of the private hospital and appealed to the higher authorities to take actions against the female doctor of the hospital and provide justice.

Shah Fahad during the Press conference said that on February 1, 2025, he took his wife to Dar al-Shifa Hospital, where the medical staff told him that normal delivery was not possible and that an operation was required, but according to him, the hospital administration had previously blamed the unavailability of the doctor. He made an excuse and after a delay of several hours, the operation was performed, as a result of which his newborn son lost his life.

He said that the hospital administration acted eva-

sively by giving repeated consolations while the alleged negligence and carelessness of the doctors caused the death of his son. He demanded from the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur and Health Advisor Ihtisham to take notice of this sad incident by providing us with justice and take strict action against those responsible so that no other family should go through such trauma in the future.

Driver commits suicide after killing owner: A motor-car driver committed suicide soon after killing the car owner over a pity dispute in Hosai locality of tehsil Takhtbai, a remote area of district Mardan.

The officials of relevant police station registered FIR in the murdered case on the complaint of Ghulam Haider, father of the motor car owner identified as Nasir. The deceased Nasir's father stated in his

FIR report as saying that the alleged killer identified as Waleed Akbar, was on duty as driver the victim for long time.

The complainant, however, revealed that the alleged killer was a drug addicted and his son often was taking him to doctor for treatment. On the incident day, he told police that the deceased Nasir went to the house of his driver Waleed Akbar early in the morning to take him to the relevant doctor for treatment.

But unfortunately, Waleed Akbar opened firing on his son Nasir with his own pistol as he got out of his home and then he himself also committed suicide. Both of them died instantly. After lodging FIR, the police officials began further investigations on different angles of the case with the purpose to ascertain further facts in the double murdered case.

JI to hold rally on Kashmir Solidarity Day

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Jammata-Islami (JI) Nowshera chapter to organize a protest rally at Pabbi Station Chowk on 10 ab, to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day.

JI Naib Emir Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Maulana Hidayat Ullah, Nowshera Emir Haji Inayat ur Rehman, General Secretary Mian Mehmood Shah, and other district, zonal, and local leaders.

Speaking to the media, JI Naib Emir Maulana Gohar Rehman Gohar, expressed these views, stating that the Kashmir issue is a matter of the dignity, life, property, and future of approximately 1.5 million Muslims. He

emphasized that Kashmir is the "jugular vein" of Pakistan and that without Kashmir, Pakistan is incomplete. He assured that they will not remain silent on the Kashmir issue and will continue to raise their voice in support of the Kashmiris.

JI appealed to the international community, particularly the United Nations, to fulfill their responsibilities and urged the entire nation to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day with full enthusiasm and dignity.

Police arrests alleged motorcycles theft: Police has arrested ring leader of intra-district motorcycle theft gang, recovering stolen motorcycles and cash obtained from their

sale. Further investigation is underway, and additional revelations are expected.

According to details, police arrested one while recovering stolen motorcycles and cash obtained from their sale. Further investigation is underway, and additional revelations are expected.

The investigative team arrested Jan Muhammad, a resident of Mardan district, and recovered stolen motorcycles and cash obtained from their sale during his interrogation. The arrested suspect, Jan Muhammad, is not only wanted in Nowshera but also in other districts for motorcycle theft. Further investigation is underway.

Lighthouse facility setup at Al Shifa Eye hospital

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) along-with the Deputy Commissioner inaugurated the Lighthouse Facility at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital Kohat. Administrator Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital Kohat Col. (R) Safdar Amir and other hospital staff were also present on the occasion, on Tuesday.

The aim of the Lighthouse is to enable people who are blind from birth or have very low vision to lead a normal life and become active members of the society. This is a unit is equipped with the most modern instruments and international standard technology, with the help of which people with low vision or congenital blindness to lead a normal life.

This unit costing millions of rupees, is the only unit of its kind in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which is a great gift from the Al-Shifa Eye Trust to the people of this province.

On this occasion, MPA Daud Afridi and DC Kohat Abdul Akram were briefed

by the Administrator of the Hospital and informed about the complete treatment facilities in details. The special guests also visited various departments in the hospital and appreciated the services of the Administrator Col. (R) Safdar Amir and expressed their best wishes for the hospital.

Former Minister inaugurates under-22 trials: Former Federal Interior Minister and member National Assembly Shahryar Afridi has formally inaugurated the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Games 2025, District Kohat and Kohat Region Under-22 Trials 2025 along-with Daud Shah Afridi MPA and Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah in a colorful ceremony at the Kohat Sports Complex on Tuesday.

The ceremony besides the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram and Regional Sports Officer Kohat was also attended by the large number of sports enthusiasts and players. MNA and Daud Shah Afridi MPA were the spe-

cial guests of the inaugural ceremony. Players from Kohat, Karak, Hangu, Orakzai and Darra Adamkhel participated in the trials. The special guests reviewed the preparations for various sports competitions and encouraged the young players.

Expressing the commitment of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf provincial government to improve sports facilities, Shahryar Afridi emphasized that sports activities will not only help in leading a healthy life but will also promote social harmony. He urged upon the youth to actively participate in sports activities side by side their education because a healthy and strong body is of utmost importance in the pursuit of education.

Sheryar Afridi said that various sports competitions will be organized at the local level so that young players get a full opportunity to hone their skills. He emphasized that participation in sports activities will improve the physical and mental health of the youth.



Palestinians appeal for help with short-term shelter in Gaza

CAIRO/RAMALLAH (Reuters): With fighting in Gaza paused, Palestinians are appealing for billions of dollars in emergency aid - from heavy machinery to clear rubble to tents and caravans to house people made homeless by Israeli bombardment.

One official from the Palestinian Authority estimated immediate funding needs of \$6.5 billion for temporary housing for Gaza's more than two million people, even before the huge task of long-term reconstruction begins. US special Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff estimated last week that rebuilding could take 10-15 years. But before that, Gazans will have to live somewhere.

Hamas, the militant Palestinian group that has moved quickly to reassert control of Gaza after a temporary ceasefire began last month, says Gaza has immediate needs for 200,000 tents and 60,000 caravans. In the Egyptian city of El-Arish, not far from the Rafah crossing with Gaza, about 1,000 trucks carrying aid, including food, medical supplies, caravans and tents, lined up awaiting entry to Gaza. "We have trucks carrying aid and tents. We came from Jordan and we were supposed to go straight to the Rafah crossing to provide this aid to the Palestinian side and the Gaza Strip," said truck driver Rami El-Edwan.

Edwan said he and his fellow truck drivers could not figure out the delay's cause, having had conflicting explanations from the various parties operating the crossing and delivering aid. In addition, it says there is urgent need for heavy digging equipment to begin clearing millions of tonnes of rubble left by the war, both to clear ground for housing and to recover



more than 10,000 bodies estimated to be buried there.

Two Egyptian sources said heavy machinery was waiting at the border crossing and was due to be sent into Gaza. World Food Programme official Antoine Renard said Gaza's food imports had surged since the ceasefire and were already at two or three times monthly levels before the truce began. But he said there were still impediments to importing medical and shelter equipment which would be vital to sustain the population but which Israel considers to have potential "dual use" - civilian or military.

"This is a reminder to you that many of the items that are dual use need also to enter into Gaza like medical and also tents," he told reporters in Geneva. More than half a million people who fled northern Gaza have returned home, many with nothing more than what they could carry with them on foot. They were confronted

by an unrecognizable wasteland of rubble where their houses once stood. "I came back to Gaza City to find my house in ruins, with no place else to stay, no tents, no caravans, and not even a place we can rent as most of the city was destroyed," said Gaza businessman, Imad Turk, whose house and wood factory in Gaza City were destroyed by Israeli airstrikes during the war.

"We don't know when the reconstruction will begin, we don't know if the truce will hold, we don't want to be forgotten by the world," Turk told Reuters via a chat app. Countries from Egypt and Qatar to Jordan, Turkey and China have expressed readiness to help, but Palestinian officials blame Israel for delays. Egypt and Qatar both helped broker the ceasefire that has, for now, stopped the fighting. There was no immediate response from the Israeli military to a request for comment.

UN on execution of captured Ukrainian soldiers

KYIV (Reuters): The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission has recorded an "alarming rise" in reported executions of Ukrainian soldiers captured by the Russian armed forces during the war in recent months, it said.

The mission in Ukraine said it had received reports of 79 executions in 24 separate incidents since the end of August last year. International humanitarian law prohibits the execution of prisoners of war and the wounded, and regards it as a war crime. "Many Ukrainian soldiers who surrendered or were in physical custody of the Russian armed forces were shot dead on the spot. Witness accounts also described the killings of unarmed and injured Ukrainian soldiers," the mission said in a statement. Commenting on the report, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiba said the Russian atrocities demanded urgent international action.

"Russia's horrific executions of Ukrainian prisoners of war demonstrate that Ukraine confronts true beasts," he said on X. "We need new and effective international legal tools, and concrete steps to hold the perpetrators accountable." The Russian defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The UN body obtained and analysed video and photographic material published by Ukrainian and Russian sources showing executions or dead bodies and conducted detailed interviews with witnesses. It said the reported executions took place in areas where Russian offensive operations were underway. Danielle Bell, head of the mission, said some Russian officials "have explicitly called for inhumane treatment, and even execution" of captured Ukrainian soldiers.

The mission said it also documented the execution of a wounded and incapacitated Russian soldier by the Ukrainian armed forces in 2024, but gave no details. The Ukrainian prosecutor's office earlier said it was investigating dozens of cases of executions of Ukrainian military personnel by Russian forces.

SK to rebuild aviation safety system

SEOUL (Reuters): South Korea aims to rebuild its aviation safety system from scratch, the transport ministry said, launching a new committee to improve air travel in the country that suffered two major aviation incidents a month apart.

"In order to restore trust in our country's aviation safety system, the government will make a determined effort to rebuild the aviation safety system from the ground up," Deputy Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport Baek Won-kuk will tell the committee, the ministry statement said. The government must address aviation safety as a top priority, he added.

In the deadliest air disaster ever on South Korean soil, a plane belonging to budget airline Jeju Air crashed at the country's Muan airport on Dec. 29, killing all but two of the 181 passengers and crew members on board. Duck remains were found in both engines of the plane, a preliminary investigation report said, indicating bird strikes occurred before the crash. Air accidents are nearly always caused by a combination of factors, according to experts.

Last week, an Air Busan plane was engulfed in flames at Busan's international airport as the low-cost carrier's jet prepared to depart, with all on board evacuated safely. The fire was first detected by a flight attendant in an overhead luggage bin in the rear of the plane, Air Busan has said. Investigations into the causes of both incidents are ongoing. The 10-week committee will include private sector experts and will look at issues including maintenance and aircraft utilisation rates at budget airlines, and airport construction and operation. In response to the Jeju Air crash, which saw the plane belly land but then plough into a concrete embankment supporting navigation equipment past the end of Muan's runway, authorities already said they would amend similar structures at seven airports around the country.

Trump plans to invoke obscure 18th century wartime law

WASHINGTON (Reuters): President Donald Trump is set to test the limits of his immigration crackdown by invoking a wartime law to deport immigrants alleged to be gang members without court hearings, a broad authority that could supercharge his mass deportation push and potentially sweep in people not charged with crimes.

After taking office, Trump ordered military and immigration officials to be ready by Feb. 3 to implement the 1798 Alien Enemies Act, last used to justify internment camps for people of Japanese, German and Italian descent during World War Two. The move - which would almost certainly face legal challenges - could allow him to bypass due process rights and rapidly remove migrants. Trump, a Republican, stormed back into the White House promising to deport millions of immigrants in the US illegally - an action he said was necessary after high levels of illegal immigration under Democrat Joe Biden.

Trump issued a flurry of executive actions to redirect military resources to support the mass deportation effort and empowered US immigration officers to make more arrests, including at schools, churches and hospitals - even though those specific measures are unpopular and highly contested by civil and immigrant rights groups. But even with Trump's sweeping early actions, his administration will have to contend with overwhelmed immigration courts where asylum cases can take years to resolve. Trump expanded a fast-track deportation process known as expedited removal, but it only applies to those in the US for two years or less and still gives migrants the ability to claim asylum. The Alien Enemies Act could allow Trump to rapidly deport migrants deemed part of an "invasion or predatory incursion" - a novel use of a law previously only invoked in wartime. Republicans frequently refer to illegal immigration as an invasion and portray migrants as dangerous criminals and "military-aged."

The White House said on Jan. 20 that it was beginning a process to designate criminal cartels and gangs, including the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua, as terrorist organizations and to use the Alien Enemies Act to deport alleged gang members. Hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans arrived in the US during Biden's presidency, many via legal humanitarian pathways, and deporting them has been challenging due to frosty US-Venezuela relations. Trump said Venezuela had agreed to accept all deportees, but provided few details. One Trump official who requested anonymity to discuss plans told Reuters in November that the administration would have "a willingness to be creative" when it came to unlocking new

enforcement powers.

The White House did not respond to a request for comment. Ken Cucchinelli, a top Homeland Security official during Trump's first term, expects the use of the Alien Enemies Act would face legal challenges but said the administration should try.

"He would have established, for all time in the future, the presidential authority to utilize that statute in that fashion," Cucchinelli said.

Opponents argue the law cannot be used simply to step up immigration enforcement outside of an actual conflict. "Desperate families coming to our border to seek refuge do not constitute an invasion by a foreign government within the meaning of the law," said Lee Gelemt, a leading attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which has put up legal challenges to many of Trump's previous moves. Democratic lawmakers in the US House and Senate reintroduced a bill in January that would repeal the Alien Enemies Act, pointing to its use in the internment of Americans and arguing it violates civil and individual rights.

"We cannot allow antiquated laws to continue enabling discriminatory practices that harm immigrant communities," Representative Ilhan Omar said in a Jan. 22 statement related to the bill. The Trump administration is pushing to ramp up detention space, a move that could work in conjunction with the Alien Enemies Act. Trump last week ordered the expansion of a migrant detention site in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to hold up to 30,000 people. Military officials said they would set up a detention site on a space base in Aurora, Colorado, a city Trump has portrayed as controlled by migrant gangs despite pushback from local leaders. US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) stepped up arrests last week, picking up about 1,000 people per day - three times the daily average last year.

The agency has funding to hold an average of 41,500 migrants this year and currently has about 40,000 in custody, according to its figures. US immigration courts, however, had a backlog of 3.6 million cases at the end of fiscal year 2024, according to the Congressional Research Service, a jam that could hamper deportations. "Unless he figures out a way to bypass the immigration courts, mass deportation is an impossibility," said John Sandweg, a former acting ICE director under Barack Obama. "But if Alien Enemies is allowed to go into effect, then mass deportation becomes a potential reality." Despite his hardline rhetoric, Trump in his first term deported fewer people than Obama, his Democratic predecessor.

NK unlikely to embrace Trump's overture soon

SEOUL (AP): Inits first direct criticism of the Trump administration, North Korea lashed out at US Secretary of State Marco Rubio for calling it a "rogue" state and warned that such "coarse and nonsensical remarks" will never contribute to US interests.

The statement is the latest in a series of North Korean signals that it's not interested in resuming diplomacy with the United States anytime soon, though Trump has said he'll reach out to its leader Kim Jong Un. Many experts say that Kim, preoccupied with his deployment of troops to Russia, is likely concentrating on developments in the Russia-Ukraine war for now. But they say Kim would eventually seriously consider Trump's overture if he assessed he cannot maintain the current solid partnership with Russia after the war ends.

"Now, Kim Jong Un is desperate to maintain the unshakable alliance with Russia but it remains to be seen whether Russia would do so as he wishes," said Moon Seong Mook, an analyst for the Seoul-based Korea Research Institute for National Strategy. During his first term, Trump met Kim three times in 2018-19, becoming the first sitting US president to hold a summit with a North Korean leader. The negotiations over North Korea's nuclear program eventually

fell apart, but Trump's return spawned speculation that a fresh round of talks could begin soon.

On his inauguration day, Trump, speaking to US troops in South Korea via video, bragged of his personal ties with Kim. "You have somebody with pretty bad intentions, I guess," Trump said. "You would say that although I developed a pretty good relationship with him but he's a tough cookie." During a Fox News interview broadcast on Jan. 23, Trump called Kim "a smart guy" and "not a religious zealot." Asked whether he will reach out to Kim again, Trump replied, "I will, yeah." North Korea keeps up its hostility against the US. North Korea hasn't directly responded to Trump's overture but has pressed ahead with its weapons testing activities and bellicose rhetoric against the US. In December, Kim vowed to implement the "toughest" anti-US policy.

Kim likely doubts what concessions he could wrest from Trump, given their previous talks collapsed in Vietnam after the American president rebuffed Kim's offer to dismantle his main nuclear complex, a limited denuclearization step, in return for broad sanctions relief. The breakdown was probably a setback for Kim domestically though the summits provided him with the badly needed diplo-

matic recognition on the world stage. "Kim personally suffered huge humiliation due to a no-deal in Hanoi," said Kwak Gil Sup, head of One Korea Centre, a website specializing in North Korean affairs. "I don't think he would promptly respond to Trump's overture." Kim said in November that the negotiations with the United States only confirmed Washington's "unchangeable" hostility toward his country and described his nuclear buildup as the only way to counter external threats. Kwak said North Korea will still likely avoid high-profile provocations like a nuclear test, knowing that Trump focuses more on other issues like tariff wars and China.

North Korea's Foreign Ministry said that Rubio's comments reaffirmed that the US hostile policy remains unchanged. It likely referred to Rubio's appearance on "The Megyn Kelly Show" on Jan. 30, in which he called North Korea and Iran "rogue states" while addressing foreign policy challenges. Kim's priority seems to be an estimated 10,000-12,000 North Korean troops sent to support Russia's three-year war efforts against Ukraine, the North's first major participation in a foreign war. North Korea has supplied a vast amount of artillery and other conventional weapons to Russia as well.

Pro-Trump ideologue to run public diplomacy at State Dept

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP): The Trump administration has hired a "Make America Great Again" ideologue to run the State Department's worldwide public diplomacy efforts, according to the man put forward for the post and three current department officials.

Darren Beattie confirmed in a message to readers of the conservative website Revolver for which he worked that he would be taking up the post of acting undersecretary of state for public diplomacy. It was not clear if he would be formal-

ly nominated to take the job on a more permanent basis, which would require Senate confirmation. Beattie, an academic, has espoused controversial ideas about race and US foreign policy priorities. He gained notoriety when he was fired as a White House speechwriter during President Donald Trump's first term after it was revealed he spoke at a conference attended by white nationalists.

"Thanks to President Trump's miraculous victory, we have entered the beginning of a new Golden Age of success, prosperity, legiti-

macy, and accountability. I have been given the great honor of serving once again in Trump's administration, this time in the Department of State," Beattie wrote in a message to readers of Revolver, from which he will be taking a leave of absence. The State Department had no comment, although word of his impending appointment to the post had circulated through the building since last week and was confirmed by three officials. Those officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss an as-yet unannounced personnel decision.

UK town broken by grooming gangs wants answers

LONDON (AFP): Once famed as an industrial powerhouse that produced some of the world's finest steel, Rotherham is now known as the epicentre of the UK grooming scandal, leaving the town angry, ashamed and needing answers.

The issue of UK grooming gangs was again thrust into the spotlight when tech billionaire Elon Musk launched incendiary attacks on his X platform against the UK government for resisting calls for a new national inquiry. Over the course of several decades, men of mostly South Asian origin in various English towns are suspected of abusing thousands of mostly white girls from working class families, often from troubled homes. More than 100 people have been convicted of the crimes.

"Of course it's still going on -- I think it's going on across every town, every city in the UK," Jayne Senior, an early whistleblower about the problem, told AFP. Senior is a former manager at Risky Business, a youth project set up in 1997 by the local authority in Rotherham, where an estimated 1,400 girls fell prey to the gangs. Her group helped almost 2,000 girls and boys at risk of being groomed, and she lodged a successful complaint

against police for failing to act on evidence she presented. "There was physical, mental torture, trafficking and horrendous, horrendous abuse," Senior said. At the start of the group "it tended to be predominantly girls 15 to 16, upwards. By 2012, what we saw is the majority of referrals were from about age 12," she explained.

She frequently clashed with police and local authorities, accusing them of indifference. "We'd share telephone numbers, registration numbers, descriptions, names, dates of birth of those that we believed were harming, raping, trafficking our children." There was "very little response," she said, adding: "We could have done so much more." The decline of the steel industry over recent decades has hit the town hard, and more than one in four high street units now stand empty. Trauma over the grooming gang revelations still runs deep. "A friend ... it happened to her daughter and she's all over the place now with her mental health," said Sandra Shirliffe, 59. Standing outside the hair salon where she works, Claire, 50, also told AFP she knew one of the gang's victims.

"Sarah, whose sister was killed, she comes in for her hair done." Sarah Wilson was groomed by

the town's gangs as an 11-year-old and raped multiple times. Her younger sister Laura was murdered by her Pakistani boyfriend, who had treated white girls "as sexual targets," the sentencing judge said. When asked why police were reluctant to pursue her leads, Senior said: "I've never been able to give a definitive answer". "What I can share with you is what was said at meetings. And it could be that these children were consenting. "How children consent to gang rape, I have no idea. Or they were in relationships, you know, 12-year-olds in relationships with 30-year-old men." But the majority of the time, police thought a jury would not believe the children "because some of the stories that they were sharing were so horrifying". "Life's been ruined in Rotherham," former miner Ralph Spooner, 80, told AFP in the town's indoor market.

"There's a lot of anger," he added, saying he would like to see officials who ignored the grooming scandal "answer under oath" at a national inquiry. "It's been swept under the carpet. There's obviously something that's not quite right," added market stall holder Paula. A 2014 inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham found evidence of "blatant

failures" by the authorities. Then-interior minister Theresa May denounced what she called "a complete dereliction of duty".

The current government under Prime Minister Keir Starmer has resisted calls for a national inquiry focused on the grooming gangs, and says it will conduct a series of local probes. Instead of showing contrition, Senior says the authorities have targeted those who spoke out.

Senior and a colleague complained to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) in 2019 that senior local police officers had failed to protect children. The complaint was upheld, but the IOPC refused to publish it. "We were told very clearly that if we published it ... then the senior officers that we complained about would sue us," said Senior.

IOPC whistleblowers have revealed that Senior, who is demanding a wide-ranging national inquiry, was seen as a "bit of a pain". "Not one senior professional in Rotherham has ever been held to account," she said, and no officials have answered questions under oath. "Why was this allowed to happen? Why did it happen? Why did nobody do anything?" she asked. "A lot of these victims and survivors still do not have their answers."

Trump admn moves to end deportation protections for Venezuelans

WASHINGTON/MARACAIBO, Venezuela (Reuters): US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem moved to remove protection against deportation from hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans in the US, part of President Donald Trump's expanding immigration crackdown.

The decision means about 348,000 Venezuelans with Temporary Protected Status, more than half of all Venezuelans in the program, could be deported and lose work permits in April, according to a government notice. The notice said the protections were contrary to US interests and no longer justified by conditions in Venezuela.

Trump, a Republican, took office on Jan. 20 vowing to crack down on illegal immigration and humanitarian programs he says go beyond the intent of US law. Trump tried to end most enrollment in the temporary protection program during his first term but was stymied by federal courts. The status is available to people whose home country has experienced a natural disaster, armed con-

flict or other extraordinary event. "I don't know what will happen," said Venezuelan migrant Ana Maria Pirela, 26, who lives in California and has temporary protected status. "Yesterday they fired my husband from his job - he had been managing a food store for two months - and I'm two months pregnant. I don't want to go back to Venezuela," she said by phone. Former President Joe Biden, a Democrat, greatly expanded the temporary protection program. It now covers more than 1 million people from 17 nations, some in the US for decades, and they could face immediate deportation if they lose the status.

Hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans arrived in the US during Biden's presidency, many via legal humanitarian pathways, and deporting them has been challenging due to frosty US-Venezuela relations.

Trump said Venezuela had agreed to accept all deported people but provided few details. Last week, Noem canceled an 18-month extension of temporary protections for Venezuelans by her

Biden-era predecessor. She stopped their status from automatically renewing for six months. About 300,000 additional Venezuelans have Temporary Protected Status that expires in September and were not affected by decision. The Department of Homeland Security said in the termination notice that while some challenging conditions remain in Venezuela, "there are notable improvements in several areas such as the economy, public health, and crime that allow for these nationals to be safely returned to their home country."

The Trump administration is also preparing to end a Biden-era legal entry program under which some 530,000 Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans with US sponsors can live and work in the US, three sources familiar with the matter said. The move could come in days or weeks, two of the sources said. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government has

taken some steps to control inflation, which previously was in the triple digits, but economic conditions in Venezuela remain dire for most people. The monthly minimum wage equals about \$3. Maduro was inaugurated for his third term in January, despite a six-month-long election dispute, international calls for him to stand aside and an increase in the US reward offered for his capture.

The US charged Maduro and several allies with drug trafficking in 2020, charges he denies. The Venezuelan opposition, which has faced arrests and other crackdown measures since the July election, asked the US to keep the temporary protection program in place.

Venezuelan migrant Tatiana Vazquez, who lives in Atlanta, said by phone that her family submitted a US asylum application but was anxious after seeing other Venezuelans arrested by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). "Yesterday ICE took a friend and her husband. There's anguish," she said.

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Trump unleashes tariff war, sparks worry

UNITED States President Donald Trump had imposed 25 per cent tariff on all imports from Mexico and Canada, and 10 per cent more on Chinese imports through executive orders by declaring national emergency to curb fentanyl and illegal immigration.

Trump has invoked the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). The last president to have used the power under a similar law was Richard Nixon, another Republican president. It remains to be tested whether Trump is enabled to impose broad import curbs for specific causes like fentanyl and illegal immigration. The issue can be challenged in the courts. But experts feel that the courts have generally justified the use of emergency powers by the president.

"The courts have historically upheld the president's power to take emergency actions, especially when they are related to national security," according to international trade practice expert Tim Brightbill of the law firm Wiley Rein.

He has however raised the question, "The question is, does that include tariffs, since IEEPA has only been used for sanctions?" The issue of tariffs should have been legislated by the US Congress comprising the two Houses, the House of Representatives and the Senate. It is also a curious fact that Trump should have raised tariffs against China on the grounds of illegal immigration. Most of the illegal immigrants have used the Mexican border, and some of them have used the Canadian route. But China and illegal immigration comes as a surprise.

It is clear that President Trump is not much concerned about the details or accuracy of causes. His complaint against Canada, Mexico were the import concessions that they enjoyed with the US. The president feels that it is weakening the American economy on various counts, especially in manufacturing. This is also his complaint against China. But it is a pure question of trade laws. Was there a need to invoke illegal immigration?

The fentanyl crisis and its use in the opioids in drug formulations by ordinary Americans is serious and dangerous. This would have needed laws to punish American pharmaceuticals and doctors and druggists. But Trump is not focusing on the menace of fentanyl. He is looking at the broader issue of America's economic weakness and how he wants to revive the lost strengths of American manufacturing. It would require improving the manufacturing quality of the American industry, the labour skills, and most importantly competitive pricing.

But Trump has no patience with complexities of issues. He wants to be seen as the simple American looking for simple solutions to make America great again. It has been pointed out that the raising tariff walls is likely to hurt America as much, if not more, because trade is a two-way business.

Jennifer Hillman, a trade law professor at Georgetown University said, "At least for me, I don't think there is such a connection [between illegal immigration and fentanyl and tariffs on all goods]. The tariffs would not be applied only to fentanyl, so there is not a clear reason why tariffs on all goods are 'necessary' to deal with a problem of fentanyl and immigration."

Trump wants manufacturers to shift back to the US from Mexico, as also from China. The problem with Canada is slightly different, Canadians enjoy the privileges of a welfare state on the lines of the European Union (EU). Trump seems to feel that the cushioning enjoyed by the Canadians is coming at the expense of the American economy.

The question that is being asked is whether raising tariffs across the board is an effective way of restoring the trade balance. It would have been if the Americans had export clout of their own. The Americans have no advantages except in the manufacture of military hardware.

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Does globalization have a future?

AS wildfires raged through Los Angeles last month, the infamous American conspiracy theorist Alex Jones posted on X that they were "part of a larger globalist plot to wage economic warfare and deindustrialize the United States."

While Jones' suggestion of causality was absurd, he was right that the fires had something to do with globalization. Last year was the Earth's hottest since record-keeping began — and likely the hottest in at least 125,000 years — eclipsing the record set in 2023. For the first time, global average temperatures exceeded the Paris climate agreement's target of 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels. For this, scientists overwhelmingly blame human-caused climate change. Globalization refers simply to interdependence at intercontinental distances.

Trade among European countries reflects regional interdependence, whereas European trade with the US or China reflects globalization. By threatening China with tariffs, US President Donald Trump is trying to reduce the economic aspect of our global interdependence, which he blames for the loss of domestic industries and jobs.

Economists debate how much of that loss was caused by global trade. Some studies have found that millions of jobs were lost to foreign competition, but that is not the only cause. Many economists argue that the more important factor was automation. Such change can boost overall productivity, but it also causes economic pain and populist leaders find it easier to blame foreigners than machines. They also blame

immigrants. Joseph S. Nye Jr.

who may be good for the economy in the long term but are easy to portray as the cause of disruptive change in the near term. The migration of humans out of Africa is arguably the first example of globalization and the US and many other countries are the result of the same basic phenomenon. But as these countries were being built, earlier immigrants often complained about the economic burden and cultural incompatibility of newcomers. That pattern continues today.

When immigration (or media coverage of it) increases quickly, political reactions are to be expected. In nearly all democracies in recent years, immigration has become the go-to issue for populists seeking to challenge incumbent governments. It was a key factor in Trump's election in 2016, and again in 2024. Social media and artificial intelligence may be more important sources of disruption and anxiety, but they are less tangible (and thus less attractive) targets. This is why some people blame the populist backlash in nearly all democracies on the increased spread and speed of globalization and why populists themselves blame trade and immigrants for most of their countries' problems.

Trade and migration did indeed accelerate after the end of the Cold War, as political change and improved communications technology led to greater economic openness and lowered the cost of cross-border flows of capital, goods and people. Now, with populists' influence growing, tariffs and border controls may curtail these flows.

But can economic globalization be reversed? It has happened before. The 19th century was marked by a rapid increase in both trade and migration, but they came to a screeching halt with the outbreak of the First World War. Trade as a share of total world product did not recover to its 1914 levels for decades.

Now that some US politicians are advocating a full decoupling from China, could it happen again? While security concerns may reduce bilateral trade, the sheer cost of abandoning a relationship worth more than half a trillion dollars per year makes decoupling unlikely. But "unlikely" is not the same as "impossible." A war over Taiwan, for example, could decimate US-China trade.

In any case, trying to understand the future of globalization requires us to look beyond economics. There are many other types of global interdependence — military, ecological, social, health and so forth. While war is always devastating for those directly involved, it is worth remembering that the COVID-19 pandemic killed more Americans than have died in all of the country's wars.

Similarly, scientists predict that climate change will have enormous costs as global ice caps melt and coastal cities are submerged later in the century. Even in the near term, climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of hurricanes and wildfires. The perverse irony is that we may be in the process of limiting a type of globalization that has benefits, while failing to cope with types that have only costs. Among the second Trump administra-

tion's first moves was to withdraw the US from the Paris agreement and the World Health Organization.

So, what is globalization's future? Long-distance interdependencies will remain a fact of life as long as humans are mobile and equipped with communication and transportation technologies. After all, economic globalization spans centuries, with its roots extending back to ancient trade routes like the Silk Road (which China has adopted as the slogan for its globe-spanning "Belt and Road" infrastructure investment program today).

In the 15th century, innovations in oceangoing transportation brought the Age of Exploration, which was followed by the era of European colonization that shaped today's national boundaries. In the 19th and 20th centuries, steamships and telegraphs accelerated the process as industrialization transformed agrarian economies. Now, the information revolution is transforming our service-oriented economies.

The widespread use of the internet began at the start of this century and now billions of people around the world carry a computer in their pockets that would have filled a large building half a century ago. As AI progresses, the scope, speed and volume of global communication will grow exponentially.

World wars have reversed economic globalization, protectionist policies can slow it down and international institutions have not kept pace with many of the changes now underway. But so long as we have the technologies, globalization will continue. It just may not be the beneficial kind.

UK, EU should work together

CHANGES in the UK are slow in coming. It is a country more comfortable with evolution than revolution and even the political earthquake of leaving the EU, better known as Brexit, was slow burning, though it still left scorched earth behind it.

The end of January marked exactly five years since the UK officially left the EU and the British people are becoming increasingly disappointed with the outcome of this collective act of political, social and economic self-harm.

However, no one is brave or bold enough to start a process that will minimize the damage caused by Brexit, with or without an outlook of one day rejoining the EU. Back in 2016, while still a relatively unknown politician serving as a junior shadow minister, Keir Starmer resigned from the shadow Cabinet in protest at the then-Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn's lack of a "louder voice on the critical issues of renegotiating the UK's place in the world and mitigating the damaging impact of our exit from Europe."

Several years later, after returning to the front bench as shadow Brexit secretary, Starmer pledged that in the first Queen's Speech of a Labour government, "we will immediately introduce legislation for a referendum to take place." Losing the 2019 general election made this promise redundant, but it still left no doubt that Starmer's heart is in Europe, not only for sentimental reasons but because of the price of being outside it. Although he now holds the most powerful job in the country, he is hesitant to take firm steps toward closer ties with Europe.

A study by Aston University Business School

found that, Andrew Mitrovica

year to open negotiations and 2023, UK goods exports to the EU were down 27 percent and imported goods 32 percent lower than they would have been had Brexit not happened. These are staggering figures, especially for an economy that is extremely slow-growing.

Starmer is known for being a cautious politician and the closer he came to power, the more cautious he became. As a result, even the most ardent British Europhiles held little hope that Labour's return to power last summer meant that Brexit was going to be reversed, despite the party's landslide victory. The issue is still too sensitive, even toxic, for anyone to sincerely consider.

Yet, because Starmer and other Cabinet ministers have repeatedly asserted since the very early days of their return to power that "resetting" relations with the EU is top of their agenda, they have created expectations of some specific action plan — hopes that have not materialized thus far. On the contrary, no progress is being made even on relatively popular ideas such as a youth mobility scheme or committing to voluntary alignment with EU regulations on goods, not to mention rejoining the common market.

For decades, Brits and their European counterparts enjoyed the freedom of open borders between them, to work and study and scientifically and culturally collaborate, which created many employment and business opportunities, in addition to broadening their horizons. Brexit abruptly cut these ties without putting any satisfactory mitigating schemes in place.

When the EU's primary executive arm, the European Commission, proposed last

with the UK on an agree-

ment to facilitate youth mobility, London remained undecided about it. Youth mobility is hardly controversial and is politically expedient for Labour since its supporters tend to be younger. The lack of appetite for reopening the Brexit debate is completely understandable but cannot be justified. Its toxicity opened the way for the most populist elements in British politics to gain credence and influence. Moreover, as long as this government cannot credibly address the issue of migration, it will be exposed to venomous attacks from right-wing politicians and their client media for making any overtures toward Europe.

Yet, at the same time, opinion polls are conclusive that when it comes to economic or other international ties: for Brits, the EU is a priority. In a recent poll, 44 percent of respondents supported the notion that the EU should be the government's top priority when it comes to trade, whereas less than half this number (19 percent) would opt for privileging the US and only 4 percent think the focus should be on China.

This comes as no surprise considering, for instance, that one report has suggested that the cost of Brexit to the UK's economy has so far been £140 billion (\$172 billion). The debate in the UK over membership of the EU was always split down the middle. After all, the 2016 referendum tilted toward "leave" by just 52 percent to 48 percent. However, now, according to YouGov, 55 percent of Britons say it was wrong for the UK to leave the EU, with just 11 percent seeing Brexit as more of a success than a failure.

Since a reversal of Brexit could hardly happen in the very short term, mitigating its damage is paramount considering the commonality of interests, for the EU as much as the UK. Shared interests include how the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East might conclude, ensuring energy and cyber security, and tackling gangs of human traffickers.

Therefore, relations need to enter a new phase, through which a new international regime is established between Brussels and London. The essence of the EU is the free movement of people, goods and capital across the bloc. For the UK, it is the movement of people that is the most problematic. But should it be prepared to make concessions on this issue, as in the case of youth or when it comes to science or culture, or certain businesses in the first instance, as this would likely open the way to reducing EU red tape when it comes to the trade and finance sectors of the UK? This new mechanism could seek to revive areas of cooperation that do not cause friction or attract negative publicity, while also serving as an exercise of rebuilding trust.

The UK-EU divorce was not an amicable one and there is much bitterness in Brussels, but also a realism that accepts that the EU is better off with the UK than without it. For the UK, none of the Brexiteers' promises have materialized — not that many of us were naive enough to believe they ever would. A new EU-UK regime could assess which areas might benefit from immediate moves toward closer relations and which issues should wait for a later date. This would not be a reversal of Brexit by the backdoor but a mature approach that would seek to maximize mutual interests.

Abolition of unnecessary ministries can save billions of rupees

Abdul Bari Tanwri

PAKISTAN faces a financial burden of over 300 billion rupees annually due to unnecessary federal ministries. Many of these ministries have minimal impact, and the government can merge or eliminate them to redirect funds toward more critical and necessary sectors. This approach will not only reduce financial pressure on the treasury but also enhance the government's efficiency to align with global standards and principles.

List of unnecessary ministries in Pakistan:

1. Ministry of Postal Services
2. Ministry of Maritime Affairs
3. Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination
4. Ministry of Narcotics Control
5. Ministry of Religious Affairs
6. Ministry of Privatization
7. Ministry of Science and Technology
8. Ministry of Climate Change
9. Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development
10. Ministry of National Food Security and Research
11. Ministry of IT and Telecommunication
12. Ministry of Human Rights
13. Ministry of Youth Affairs
14. Ministry of Housing and Works
15. Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs
16. Ministry of Statistics
17. Ministry of States and Frontier Regions

Financial burden:

The federal government spends more than 300 billion rupees annually to run approximately 17 unnecessary ministries. If these funds are included in the NFC Award and distributed to provinces, they could greatly aid developmental projects. A strong province forms the foundation of a strong nation, yet the federal government, focusing on

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In any modern country, ministries of science, technology, and IT are essential as they drive innovation and economic progress. Developed nations like the US, South Korea, and Japan utilize these ministries to advance global innovation. However, in Pakistan, despite the presence of such ministries, no significant progress is visible. These ministries have failed to take impactful steps in science, research, or infrastructure to boost economic and national growth. While neighboring countries strengthen their tech industries, Pakistan's science and technology sector moves sluggishly with little focus on innovation. The biggest reason to eliminate these ministries is the example set by developed countries like the UAE, Germany, and New Zealand. They have no Ministry of Narcotics, yet they control drug use and trafficking better than Pakistan.

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bureaucracy, tries to avoid financial responsibilities.

Ministry of Science,

Technology, and IT: Lack

of development

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Developed nations like the US, South Korea, and Japan utilize these ministries to advance global innovation. However, in Pakistan, despite the presence of such ministries, no significant progress is visible. These ministries have failed to take impactful steps in science, research, or infrastructure to boost economic and national growth. While neighboring countries strengthen their tech industries, Pakistan's science and technology sector moves sluggishly with little focus on innovation.

Learning from developed countries:

The biggest reason to eliminate these ministries is the example set by developed countries like the UAE, Germany, and New Zealand. They have no Ministry of Narcotics, yet they control drug use and trafficking better than Pakistan. In these countries, tasks related to narcotics are handled by the Ministry of Interior in the UAE, the Federal Centre for Health Education in Germany, and the Ministry of Health and police in New Zealand. Pakistan's Anti-Narcotics Force can simultaneously manage these responsibilities without needing a separate ministry. Other ministries could also be merged or abolished accordingly.

Globally, there is a trend to streamline government functions and eliminate unnecessary ministries.



This could bring essential reforms to Pakistan.

Constitutional and political background:

Under Pakistan's constitution, the 18th Amendment allows the federal government to maintain only four ministries: Defense, Interior, Finance, and Communications. All other ministries were to be transferred to the provinces. However, additional ministries were retained for political reasons, violating the constitution and burdening the national treasury.

During the first presidential term of Asif Ali Zardari, when the 18th Amendment was passed in 2010, it was clearly decided that the federal government could retain only four ministries, and the rest would be transferred to the provinces. Despite this, additional ministries were maintained for political interests, which violates the constitution and imposes an extra financial burden of over 300 billion rupees annually.

Chairman of the PPP, Bilawal Bhutto, has consistently criticized the budget spent on surplus ministries. He proposed merging or eliminating these ministries during the 2022 coalition government and reiterated this suggestion in the 2024 coalition government. Bilawal has always raised objections to the unnecessary expenses of these ministries during joint sessions of the National Assembly and Senate, advocating for their abolition.

IMF and reform pressure:

In September 2024, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreed to release a \$1 billion tranche

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on the condition of abolishing six federal ministries. Although the government agreed, no concrete steps have been taken. This delay reflects the lack of political will to implement necessary reforms.

Future steps:

To alleviate Pakistan's financial pressure and improve governance, the following measures should be adopted:

1. Merge or eliminate unnecessary ministries: Transfer the responsibilities of less critical ministries to relevant federal or provincial institutions.

2. Redistribution of saved funds: Allocate saved funds to the NFC Award for provincial benefits.

3. Full implementation of the 18th Amendment: Reduce the number of federal ministries and delegate more power to provinces, as per the constitution.

4. Adopting international models: Learn from countries that effectively manage similar tasks with minimal bureaucracy.

Pakistan cannot afford surplus ministries that have no significant impact and merely waste resources. Considering economic challenges, it is time to prioritize government efficiency and financial discipline.

Eliminating unnecessary ministries is not just a matter of financial savings but a step toward better governance and provincial autonomy. Furthermore, the lack of progress in the Ministry of Science, Technology, and IT highlights the urgent need for reforms in these sectors. The government should take swift steps to ensure these fields become drivers of national growth rather than lagging behind.

The ‘Netzarim Corridor’ is not a corridor, it is a nightmare

THE so-called “Netzarim Corridor” has been in the news a lot lately, as its “opening” ushered in the much-awaited return of Palestinians to the northern part of the Gaza Strip. Half a million Palestinians headed back to their homes – most finding only rubble. Then on January 29, United States Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff visited the “Netzarim Corridor”, becoming the first US official to step on Gazan soil in more than a decade.

Foreign media has talked at length about this “strategic corridor” or “buffer zone”, as they call it, and its utility for Israeli “military operations” and for “controlling” Palestinians. But for us, the people living on its outskirts, Netzarim has been a living nightmare. It has inflicted unbearable pain and trauma on me and my family and on thousands of other Palestinians.

Netzarim is not a corridor; it is a large land grab carried out through the killing of Palestinian people and the destruction of their homes in Nuseirat and Bureij refugee camps, and the neighbourhoods of al-Mughraqa, az-Zahra, Zeitoun, Juhor ad-Dik, and others. It is not some smart military strategy; it was and continues to be another way of terrorising the people of Gaza.

In the first days of the war, we were unaware that areas in the vicinity of our home were selected for establishing this “corridor”. The air strikes were incessant, demolishing everything in their path – homes, schools, and gardens – without regard for whether people were inside or not. The Israeli army was annihilating everything in its way, whether stone or human.

Most of the air attacks occurred at night, leaving us unable to sleep, constantly waiting for the next explosion. The sky would light up

in white or red, and we would cover our ears and hide, knowing an explosion was coming, but never sure how close it would be. Based on the sound of the blast, we would try to guess the type of missile or weapon used – drone, F16, F35, Apache helicopter, or tank – and the location it hit, a house or farmland.

This is how the war invaded and took control of our nights. The darkness would usher in fear and anxiety; the children would run into their mothers’ arms, fearing the sounds of explosions.

As part of the preparation for establishing the “corridor”, the Israeli army bombed all the tall buildings around us. One of those was our neighbour’s five-storey house, which was hit in the middle of the day. The explosion was so powerful that it completely destroyed two houses, partially damaged two others, and demolished the front part of our house, where our “safe room” was located.

We had chosen it as “safe” because it was farthest away from another building whose owners received a warning from the Israelis that it would be targeted. So this room became the place where we thought we were “safe” until the shock wave from that explosion collapsed its outside wall onto us, leaving us with varying degrees of injury. I got away with bruises and cuts on my head, but my brother was severely wounded and bled internally, while some of my nieces and nephews had fractured skulls and broken bones.

When we realised that daytime had become as dangerous as the night, we decided to leave. We sought refuge at Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir el-Balah, waiting for the situation to improve or the war to end. But we left our hearts at home. For us, even safety meant nothing compared to being at home.

After one month, we

Hala Al-Khatib

returned to our house, hoping to regain some sense of normalcy. But there was none. The Israeli army was hard at work expanding its “corridor” into the areas north of the Nuseirat camp, such as az-Zahra and al-Mughraqa.

As part of this effort, Israeli troops would regularly raid the northern area of Nuseirat. The familiar sound of air raids was accompanied by the roar of tanks and unfamiliar military vehicles. With every small advance, gunfire erupted wildly and randomly, while drones hovered near the windows, listening for any sound. We did not understand the purpose of all this, but we knew we were in danger. We would lie on the ground, turn off the lights to avoid being noticed, and pray endlessly that we would all wake up in the morning, alive.

As our daily lives crumbled under the weight of constant fear, even the simplest routines disappeared. My family and I used to enjoy drinking coffee on our roof, watching kids playing in the street. Every time we tried to sit on the roof, drones would approach us from above and artillery shelling would intensify, forcing us to rush back inside the house out of fear. Eventually, we had to stop sitting on the roof altogether. The roof itself became a dangerous place, even for basic tasks like filling water pots and pans to store water for our daily needs.

Just as we started to adjust to the situation, in December 2023, the Israeli army issued an order to evacuate the entire area. At first, we thought things could not get any worse, so we decided, along with the displaced families staying with us – my aunt’s family, my uncle, and my sisters – to stay in the house and hold on.

But things only got

worse. Going outside during the day became as dangerous as the night, with drones constantly dropping bombs on the main streets and markets. Our neighbours began to leave one by one, and Nuseirat started turning into a ghost town. At night, tanks moved into the main streets, firing shells at homes. Apache helicopters flew overhead, shooting everywhere. The families staying with us fled, leaving us alone to face this nightmare.

We finally decided to take refuge in a school run by UNRWA near our home, thinking it would be safe, but it was not. Soon Israeli tanks advanced and surrounded the area, leaving us trapped.

We had to choose: stay in the school, which was no longer protected, or flee south to Rafah or Deir el-Balah like everyone else. We were four women, an 11-year-old girl, a 15-year-old boy, who was still suffering from his injury, and an elderly man – our father – who was exhausted trying to keep us all safe and fed; we had no choice but to head to Rafah. After spending an entire month in Rafah, we decided to return to our home; we had heard that the situation was improving. But it was not. The “Netzarim Corridor” was even bigger than before, having devoured more Palestinian homes. The Israeli army had destroyed houses on the northern borders of Nuseirat to secure a route for its forces to enter and exit the camp whenever they wanted. The incursions became a daily reality. Suddenly, we would hear the sound of tanks getting louder and louder, followed by the deployment of all types of weapons and aircraft. They would drop flares above our homes to light up the area, watching for any movement. We would sit in constant fear, trying to guess how far they would advance this time. We relied on the sounds of the vehicles to fig-

ure out their positions. Then, we would hear the terrifying sound of a shell being fired from a tank, waiting for it to hit one of the homes. Each time, we feared it could be ours.

In the neighbourhood, families would call for help from the Red Crescent to evacuate the injured, as leaving home was almost impossible. Ambulances were rarely allowed to enter, and the injured were left to bleed to death, as they begged the world to save them. People would die while trying to bring bread and water for their children; they would be targeted without mercy.

We would sit for hours in this nightmare, unsure when the raid would end. When the forces would finally begin to retreat, Apache helicopters would circle overhead, firing randomly to cover their withdrawal. All of this seemed to have no purpose other than to terrorise us, to ensure that fear would grip us, and to make it clear that moving north meant death.

The situation stayed the same for a year. The ceasefire, announced on January 15, was supposed to end this horror, but it did not. Even after it came into effect, the shelling and bombing continue and the demolitions are not stopping. Quadcopters still hover around our homes at night.

Just last week, the Israeli army bombed a bulldozer, trying to remove a car stuck in the road in Nuseirat. Its driver was killed. The Israelis also targeted an animal-drawn cart, killing a five-year-old girl and injuring others, in the western part of the camp. Two weeks into the ceasefire, we continue to live in fear. We still do not know when and if the Israelis will fully withdraw from their “corridor”. But the images of people returning home to the north we have seen have given us hope that the Netzarim nightmare will soon be over and we, too, will feel relief.

In the face of a trade war with America’s neighbors, Trump blinked

Stephen Collinson

THERE are two things to remember when assessing Donald Trump’s presidencies.

First, nothing is more important than the commander in chief looking tough.

Second, nothing is really what it seems.

Trump’s classic political method is already on full display in his second presidency and helps explain the baffling chaos, brinkmanship and posturing of his tariff showdown with Canada and Mexico.

Punishing 25% levies on imports from America’s closest neighbors were due to come into force at 12:01 a.m. ET Tuesday, but Trump put his two-front trade war on hold, claiming he’d scored two big wins and major concessions.

But despite a White House victory lap, there’s a more convincing case that it was really Trump who backed away from a fight that could have caused severe economic pain.

Trump does have some bragging rights. He campaigned on strengthening America’s northern and southern borders and demanded Canada and Mexico do more to cut the flow of undocumented migrants and fentanyl.

After Trump spoke to President Claudia Sheinbaum on Monday, she announced she’d send 10,000 Mexican troops to the border. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau agreed to name a fentanyl czar, set up a joint US-Canada border task force and spend \$1.3 billion on helicopters and technology to secure the 49th Parallel. “As President, it is my responsibility to ensure the safety of ALL Americans, and I am doing just that,” Trump wrote on Truth Social after putting tariffs on hold for 30 days to see how the “deals” he forged with Canada and Mexico play out.

Pro-Trump media proclaimed famous victories. “Mexico and Canada buckle,” Fox News declared in a chyron. “Canada Caves,” said Breitbart News, adding, “Art of the Deal: Trump already won the trade war with Mexico for USA.”

For the White House, Trump had racked up wins, and in “America First”

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The president vowed as recently as last week that there was nothing that Canada or Mexico could do to avoid the tariffs he planned to impose. But he pulled back on imposing them anyway. As markets tanked on Monday morning, the potential consequences of a North American trade war were laid bare. The potential for tariffs to spike the grocery prices that Trump was partly elected to fix came into focus. There were fresh warnings that the auto industry — a cross-border concern — could seize up and that the price of a new vehicle could soon shoot up by \$3,000. And Canada and Mexico didn’t really give up that much. For the Canadians, the cost of a new border strategy was far lower than the fallout of a trade war — and they’d offered the \$1.3 billion border strengthening program back in December. Adding a new “fentanyl” czar was hardly a huge political loss. Mexico has several times moved troops to the border. For example, it sent 10,000 in April 2021 at the request of President Joe Biden, who didn’t need to threaten to pitch America’s southern neighbor into a recession to get it to act. Still, Trump has renewed his reputation as a brazen and belligerent force, who sees little distinction between allies and adversaries and leaves his interlocutors guessing at his next move. This is a good political look back home among some of Trump’s supporters.

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mode, bullied foreign states into submission.

“Canada is bending the knee, just like Mexico,” White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told CNN. This was a stunning insult coming from a press aide with no diplomatic responsibility. It also suggested deep contempt for Canada, especially in the White House of a president who demands it become the 51st state.

How much is real about Trump’s ‘wins’?

But what did Trump get? What did it cost? And will it last?

A more objective view of the bizarre showdown with America’s neighbors suggests a blunter truth: Trump blinked.

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Still, Trump has renewed his reputation as a brazen and belligerent force, who sees little distinction between allies and adversaries and leaves his interlocutors guessing at his next move.

This is a good political look back home among some of Trump’s supporters. But he’s also reinforced the impression, left over from his first term, that he’s merely transactional and cares more about the chance to claim big wins than the substance of his deals.

More seriously, the tariff showdown has confirmed that once again, the foreign policy of the world’s most powerful nation is an expression of Trump’s volatile character.

And by undermining the US-Mexico-Canada trade deal that he argued in his first term was one of the world’s greatest, Trump has undermined trust in America’s word and raised doubts over his capacity to close future deals. Constantly offending the country’s closest friends threatens to undermine Western solidarity against America’s real enemies like Russian and China.

And by backing down at the 11th hour, the president also sent a clear message to Beijing — which has been slapped with a new 10% tariff on exports to the US — that he might jump at a potential deal if it looks like a breakthrough, even if it lacks depth.

Minutes after those tariffs came in, China retaliated with its own new set of duties which will come into effect on February 10.

Trump has also started to answer one of the key questions about his second term: Is he serious about paying a

because America’s northern neighbor has fallen far short of its NATO obligations to spend 2.0% of GDP on defense. (He’s right — official alliance data shows it spent 1.37% on defense in 2024).

The president also complained that US banks were not able to operate in Canada and that the US didn’t need any of its northern neighbor’s lumber, oil or products — giving the impression he wants a fight on any grounds.

Former US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers told “CNN News Central” that White House claims that Canada was inciting the trade war with the US were “absurd.”

“Canada is our friend, Canada is not an important source of illegal immigrants, Canada is not an important source of illegal drugs,” said Summers, who served former Democratic President Bill Clinton. “Canada is an important market for American products, Canada is a crucial coproducer with American automobile companies that enable North America to compete with Asia and Europe,” he said.

The vehemence of Trump’s incessant demands for the annexing of Canada caused alarm north of the border. At first the comments appeared ridiculous, but Trump’s consistent harassment of one of America’s closest friends is beginning to look like part of a 19th century-style imperialist strategy given his designs on Greenland and the Panama Canal.

“Look, I’d like to see Canada become our 51st state,” Trump said Monday. “We don’t need them for the cars. We don’t need them for lumber. We don’t need them for anything.” The president added: “As a state, it’s different. As a state, it’s much different, and there are no tariffs.”

Even if the trade war remains suspended in 30 days, the fallout may take years to overcome.

Trump has succeeded in bringing Canadians together at a time of deep political polarization as Trudeau serves out his final months and a general election looms.

Mark Carney, the former governor of the banks of Canada and England and a candidate for the Liberal

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Party leadership and therefore prime minister, said on “Quest Means Business” on CNN International that Canada was “offended” given its long friendship with the US. “We are a proud, independent nation. We view ourselves as the greatest country on Earth. We have been insulted on multiple occasions by senior members of the administration. We are not going to reciprocate in those insults.”

Some Americans in border states with deep ties to Canada are also dismayed. “The long-term damage to our relations with Canada has really, really been severe. The feelings of Canadians, our best friend, our best partner, our best allies have been really devastated,” former Michigan Gov. James Blanchard, a Democrat, told CNN’s Phil Mattingly on Monday. “It’s going to take a lot of time, many months, maybe years, to repair the damage to our partnership with our trusted ally, Canada.”

In a sign of that fury, fans at several NHL and NBA games in Canada have booted the US National Anthem. It’s more normal for Canadian crowds to fill in for anthem singers with microphone issues and belt out the Star-Spangled Banner in a show of affection for their southern neighbors.

Thanks to Trump, the allies are singing a different tune now.

— CNN

SADC must act now to save Mozambique from becoming a failed state

ON January 9, Mozambique’s main opposition leader, Venancio Mondlane, made his return home after two months in self-imposed exile.

As he emerged at the gates of Maputo International Airport, he knelt on the ground clutching a Bible, offered a prayer for his homeland and declared himself “the president-elect of the Mozambican people, ... elected by the genuine will of the people”.

Addressing reporters, he claimed the government was perpetrating a “silent genocide” by abducting and executing members of the opposition to hide obvious irregularities in the October 9 elections. What followed was a violent clash between state security forces and thousands of protesters who came to show their support for the 50-year-old Pentecostal preacher.

The chaotic scenes that day at the airport were representative of Mozambique’s grim postelection reality, defined by widespread antigovernment protests and senseless state violence.

After the elections, the Mozambique Electoral Commission (CNE) was quick to declare the Frelimo Party, which has been at the helm of the country for 50 years, and its presidential candidate, Daniel Chapo, as the rightful winners. It claimed Chapo won more than 70 percent of the votes and Mondlane, backed by the Podemos party, came second with just 20 percent.

However, by the time the CNE announced the official results, several independent electoral missions, including the European Union Electoral Observer Mission and the Episcopal Conference of Mozambique, had already reached the conclusion that the electoral process that led to Chapo declaring victory was neither free nor fair. They reported irregularities during counting and alteration of results at both local and district levels.

Mondlane and other opposition figures immediately denounced the election results, demanded a repeat of the polls and encouraged supporters to rise up against Frelimo.

In response, the Frelimo government ordered a violent crackdown on all public expressions of dissent.

More than 300 people, including several children, have died in the violence in the past three months. Among the tragic losses are Elvino Dias, a legal representative of Mondlane, and Paulo Guambe, an official from Podemos, who were both shot dead by unknown assailants in the capital, Maputo, in October. It was after these killings that Mondlane made the decision to temporarily move abroad for his safety.

The dispute over the elections has also wreaked economic chaos in Mozambique and the wider region.

Frequent large-scale protests began to disrupt commerce while vandalism and looting became commonplace, thrusting the Southern African nation into a perpetual state of severe uncertainty, trepidation and unrest.

Vital trade routes have also been affected with South Africa’s mining sector facing daily losses of 10 million rand (\$562,822) and potential shutdowns owing to the recurring closures of the Lebombo border post.

Moreover, a prison riot in Maputo on Christmas Day led to the escape of 1,500 prisoners, highlighting a critical failure in law and order.

On December 23, Mozambique’s Constitutional Council confirmed Chapo’s electoral victory, officially extending Frelimo’s 50-year tenure in office. This judgement, however, served only to escalate the fury of the protesters.

As Mozambicans lost all faith in the ability of their country’s internal mechanisms to ensure democratic governance, they started to look outside their borders for solutions to the prevailing crisis.

On January 6, a group of Mozambican civil society organisations delivered an extraordinary plea to the office of South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, asking him to intervene to help resolve the standoff between Frelimo and the opposition.

They urged Ramaphosa to facilitate the involvement of the African Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court and the African Union’s Peace and Security Council to resolve the crisis.

There is no doubt that this was an unusual request.

Instead of approaching

Tafi Mhaka

the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the regional body that should be leading any outside efforts to resolve the tensions, the Mozambican activists chose to start a bilateral engagement with South Africa, the region’s leading democracy. This demonstration of distrust in the SADC was certainly not surprising, but it further underscored the pressing necessity for the regional body to improve its performance.

A day before the petition was lodged in Pretoria, the SADC Troika responsible for matters relating to politics, defence and security – which is currently comprised of Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia – had convened a virtual summit to discuss the situation in Mozambique. At the meeting, the troika mandated the SADC Panel of Elders and a ministerial committee to engage with the Mozambican government and key leaders of the opposition.

While this was a step in the right direction, it is important to note that it was a move that came very late and was seen by many as nothing but an attempt to save face.

Indeed, the SADC election observer mission, unlike all the others, had eagerly endorsed the October 9 polls, declaring that they were “professionally organised” and took place in an “orderly, peaceful and free atmosphere”. In the eyes of the majority of protesters, this stance had already proved the SADC cannot serve as an objective and just arbiter in this crisis.

Those in the region from Zimbabwe, eSwatini and Angola to the Democratic Republic of the Congo had long been aware of the SADC’s tendency to turn a blind eye to gross electoral malpractice and state oppression.

In fact, those in Mozambique too had learned long before these most recent elections not to expect much from the SADC when it comes to protection of democracy.

Five years ago, Mozambique’s previous Frelimo-backed president, Filipe Nyusi, had secured a second term in office after declaring victory in the 2019 elections.

The opposition and sever-

al independent electoral missions similarly maintained this poll was marred by widespread irregularities, intimidation, violence and political assassinations. The bullet-ridden body of Babula Jeque, the Renamo Women’s League leader in Zumbo, was found next to her husband’s in the western province of Tete a day before votes were cast.

Like today, the SADC did nothing much to address the problem and continued cordial relations with the Frelimo government.

If the SADC is to maintain any credibility and cause positive change in the region, it cannot continue to interact with the Frelimo government as if everything is normal.

More significantly, if the SADC – or even the African Union – do not immediately intervene in the situation, Mozambique could be pushed into a much deeper and more violent crisis that would prove catastrophic for its more than 30 million citizens as well as the wider region.

For 16 years from May 1977 to October 1992, Mozambique experienced a devastating civil war. More recently, since 2017, the gas-rich northern province of Cabo Delgado has been entangled in a violent insurrection that has killed more than 4,000 people and displaced 946,000.

Meanwhile, the country is ranked 183 out of 189 countries on the 2023-2024 United Nations Human Development Index. With a national poverty rate of 74.7 percent, it is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world despite an abundance of natural resources.

Moreover, Mozambique is overwhelmed by systematic lawlessness.

In December 2022, Elisa Samuel Boerekamp, the general secretary of the Mozambican Judges Association, said her country had encountered “a crisis of the democratic rule of law”. This came after Frelimo enacted the Single Salary Table, a law that weakened the independence of the judges of lower courts.

Amid blatant attempts to undermine the rule of law, corruption is also rife in the country. The infamous \$2bn hidden debt scandal involving Frelimo officials reportedly cost Mozambique at least \$11bn, led to a sub-

— Aljazeera



PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 809 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Tuesday, losing, 809.63 points, a negative change of 0.72 percent, closing at 111,935.38 points as compared to 112,745.01 points on the last trading day.

A total of 436,325,053 shares were traded during the day as compared to 401,456,556 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs23.225 billion against Rs20.351 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 440 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 129 of them recorded gains and 225 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 56 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 54,615,977

shares at Rs1.58 per share, Cnergyico PK with 21,090,416 shares at Rs7.49 per share and K-Electric Limited with 20,621,518 shares at Rs4.43 per share.

Sazgar Engineering Works Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs78.01 per share closing at Rs1,140.96 whereas runner-up was Bata Pakistan Limited with Rs28.54 rise in its share price to close at Rs1,968.16.

Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs86.15 per share price, closing at Rs9,397.18, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Textile Mills Limited with Rs39.64 decline in its share price to Rs1,165.68.

Rupee gains 09 paise against dollar

Pakistani rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 09

paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.95 against the previous day's closing of Rs279.04.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs279.50 and Rs281.00, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs2.98 to close at Rs288.02 against the last day's closing of Rs285.04, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.79, whereas an increase of Rs3.55 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs346.31 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs342.76.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and

the Saudi Riyal decreased by 03 and 02 paise to close at Rs75.94 and Rs74.37 respectively.

Gold prices up by Rs1900 per tola to Rs294,300

The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs1900 and was sold at Rs294,300 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs292,400 on previous trading day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs1629 to Rs252,314 from Rs250,685 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went up to Rs231,296 from Rs229,802.

The prices of per tola silver increased by Rs49 to Rs3,314 from Rs3,265.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$16 to \$2,815 from \$2,799, the Association reported.



LAHORE: A tire mechanic skillfully repairs wheels at his workshop.

Exports increase by 9.98% to \$19.551b

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country increased by 9.98 percent during the first seven months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding months of last year.

Exports during July-January (2024-25) were recorded at \$19.551 billion against \$17.777 billion during July-January (2023-24), according to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) data.

On the other hand, imports into the country went up by 6.95 percent by growing from \$30.893 million last year to \$33.039 million during the first seven months of the current year.

Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the months under review was recorded at \$13.488 billion against the deficit of \$13.116 billion last year, showing a slight increase of 2.84 percent, according to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) data.

Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports in January 2025 increased by 4.59 percent to \$2.920 billion from \$2.792 billion in January 2024.

On the other hand, the imports went up by 10.04 percent by going up from \$4.756 to \$5.233 percent, according to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) data.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports from the country went up by 0.31 percent when compared to the exports of \$2.911 billion during December 2024.

The imports however witnessed a decrease of 2.33 percent when compared to the imports of \$5.358 billion in December 2024, according to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) data.

Call for public consultation on draft Pak Green Taxonomy

F.P. Report

KARACHI: As part of its efforts to promote green finance, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is pleased to release the draft National Green Taxonomy for public consultation.

The Taxonomy has been developed in collaboration with Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC) with technical assistance from the World Bank.

The National Green Taxonomy provides clear definitions of green projects and activities enabling the policy makers, banks and financial institutions

and investors to increase capital flows to the sectors for climate risk mitigation and adaptation. The taxonomy will also provide clarity to financial markets about the green projects and activities, increase transparency in green investments and financial products, mitigate climate-related financial risks, and help the financial sector direct capital flows to projects or activities that will meet the country's environmental and climate objectives.

To ensure that the taxonomy reflects a holistic view of all market players, the draft taxonomy has

been uploaded on State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) official website for public consultation. The consultation period will be open from February 04-18, 2025 (two weeks).

For ease of understanding, a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) is also available alongside the draft document.

The SBP encourages all the stakeholders including the environment professionals and banks and public at large to share their valuable feedback on the draft taxonomy enabling it to issue and rollout the finalized taxonomy as per plan.

Vital role of govt-business collaboration highlighted

ISLAMABAD (APP): Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), underscored the vital role of a strong partnership between the government and the business community in tackling the country's economic challenges and paving the way for sustainable growth.

Speaking at a ceremony held at the Chamber House, Qureshi commended the government for its recent achievements, including the stabilization of the dollar, reduction in markup rates, and controlling inflation, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

He emphasized that the ICCI is fully committed to working alongside the government to ensure continuing economic stability. "The initiatives being

undertaken by the government are a step in the right direction, and we are optimistic that they will create a favorable environment for businesses to thrive, which will directly contribute to the nation's economic prosperity," Qureshi said.

He also praised the Federal Minister for Finance, Senator Aurangzeb, for his proactive approach in addressing tax-related issues with the Chief Justice of Pakistan, aiming for faster resolution of disputes between the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and taxpayers.

He proposed the establishment of a Dispute Resolution Committee consisting of members from both the ICCI and the FBR, which would streamline dispute resolution, reduce litigation costs, and foster a collaborative business environment.

Furthermore, Qureshi called for the creation of an FBR facilitation desk at the ICCI, similar to the ones already operating for TDAP, NADRA, FTO, and Police Verification, to improve coordination and support the business community.

He also emphasized the importance of supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of the economy.

Qureshi proposed extending tax exemptions to startups and small e-commerce businesses while offering incentives to promote entrepreneurship.

He advocated for special incentives for Special Economic Zones in the region to foster the growth of businesses and enhance regional economic development.

FFC extend its product portfolio by launching Sona Urea Zinc Coated

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited, a Pakistan's leading fertilizer manufacturing and distributing company has extended its product portfolio by launching a new Enhanced Efficiency Fertilizer "Sona Urea Zinc Coated". Senior Management of FFC was also present at the launch event.

Zinc is an essential micronutrient, which plays a vital role in crop growth & development and improves yield & produce quality. Research data reveals that zinc is widely deficient in soils of Pakistan. Therefore, Zinc use in crops is necessary.

Research trials indicate that use of Zinc can enhance crop yield by 6-20%. Zinc fortification in human food is also very important as Zinc plays vital roles in human health.

Urea is widely used fertilizer in Pakistan and is very popular among the farming community as it provides the highest nitrogen content than any other nitrogenous fertilizer.

Sona Urea Zinc Coated has 42% Nitrogen and 1% Zinc. This unique formulation ensures uniform distribution of Zinc in soil and enhances its efficiency owing to better availability. Moreover, Zinc - Nitrogen synergy also improves efficiency & availability of Nitrogen and Zinc. For



coating purpose, water soluble Zinc Sulfate is used in manufacturing process of Sona Urea Zinc Coated, and thus the Zinc becomes instantly available and doesn't require any further activation. Zinc coating on urea also provides additional benefits of prolonged availability and minimal losses of Nitrogen.

Mr. Jahangir Piracha MD&CEO FFC formally launched Sona Urea Zinc Coated. While talking to media MD&CEO FFC told that FFC is the largest fertilizer manufacturing & marketing company in the country which is contributing to the national agricultural development since its inception by providing quality fertilizers and advi-

sory services to the farmers. FFC has always been at the forefront in innovation to make farming advance and profitable for the farmers across Pakistan.

He explained that Zinc is an important micronutrient which is widely deficient in soils of Pakistan and affecting the crop yield & quality. Sona Urea Zinc Coated is a very important enhanced efficiency fertilizer, containing 1% Zinc along with 42% Nitrogen.

It improves efficiency of Zinc & Nitrogen and protects environment through minimizing nitrogen losses. Field trials on different crops revealed significant increase in crop yield over standard Urea.

He explained that being part of every granule of Sona Urea Zinc Coated, Zinc will be distributed uniformly in the field, which will enhance Zinc availability & improve its efficiency and ultimately the crop yield.

Furthermore, mandatory use of Zinc in the form of Sona Urea Zinc Coated will also improve the human health. Sona Urea Zinc Coated is available at all FFC dealers' outlets throughout the country.

He assured that FFC will continue to endeavor for innovation to develop and introduce new fertilizer products to bring advancements in Pakistan's agriculture, boost crop yields and ensure food security.

IBA Karachi organize Annual Career Fair 2025



F.P. Report

KARACHI: IBA Karachi proudly hosted its Annual Career Fair 2025, organized by the IBA Career Development Center (IBA-CDC), at the IBA Main Campus. This year's theme, "Think Next," captured the bold and innovative spirit of students and the limitless opportunities awaiting them.

The Career Fair 2025 witnessed an impressive turnout, with over 170 companies and some seasoned professionals serving

as mentors. Representatives from various sectors, including banking and financial institutions, information technology, manufacturing, food and beverages, retail energy and resources, service sector, textiles, and pharmaceuticals engaged with the diverse pool of talented students at IBA.

Inaugurating the ceremony, Dr. S Akbar Zaidi, Executive Director, IBA, expressed his enthusiasm for the event, stating, "The Annual Career Fair at IBA provides students with a

vital platform to engage with industry leaders, explore career opportunities, and gain valuable insights, reflecting our commitment to producing highly employable graduates who secure jobs or launch ventures even during their academic journey." Additional remarks were provided by Syed Atif Murtaza Qaiser, Head, IBA-CDC; Ms. Faiza Faisal, Lead HR Business Partner, National Bank of Pakistan; Mr. Adeel Asim, HR Head, Tafsool Technologies, and Syed

Danish Ali, Manager Organizational Development, Meezan Bank.

The Career Fair 2025 featured a range of interactive engagement activities, including mentorship lounges, where students connected with industry professionals for career guidance, and a personality self-test, helping them gain deeper insights into their strengths and career preferences.

IBA Karachi is an institution par excellence with a 70-year legacy of Visionary Leadership, Academic Excellence & creating a Sustainable Impact. It boasts a proud 20,000+ Alumni network working in leading organizations and leadership positions across Pakistan. IBA comprises three unique schools: School of Business Studies (SBS), School of Economics & Social Sciences (SESS), and School of Mathematics & Computer Science (SMCS). This strategic expansion features IBA's commitment to advancing Leadership, Excellence & Impact across diverse fields.

Seminar on Islamic banking at LCCI

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in collaboration with Faysal Bank here Tuesday, organized a seminar on Islamic Banking, to educate the business community on the principles and benefits of Islamic banking and its potential to revolutionize the financial sector.

President Mian Abuzar Shad, Faysal Bank President Yousaf Hussain, SAARC Chamber Vice President Mian Anjum Nisar, GM Faysal Bank Agha Mehdi Raza, Regional Manager Zohair Amjad Dar, Amer Waheed Chishti spoke on the occasion and highlighted the various aspects of Islamic Banking. LCCI Executive Committee Members Syed Salman Ali, Karamat Ali Awan and Aamir Ali were also present.

The experts said that Islamic banking in Pakistan has witnessed significant growth since its inception, emerging as a robust alternative to conventional banking systems. The State Bank of Pakistan has played a pivotal role in fostering this sector by introducing regulatory frameworks and ensuring compliance with Islamic financial laws.

Faysal Bank President Yousaf Hussain shared that his bank is leading Islamic Banking in Pakistan and currently operates 850 branches across Pakistan and aims to expand its network to 900 in the near future. He reaffirmed Faysal Bank's commitment to leading the transition towards a fully Shariah-compliant banking system. He talked about the importance of eliminating interest-based transactions in accordance with Islamic teachings and urged the Lahore Chamber to support initiatives that educate the business community about interest-free banking.

LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad lauded the

State Bank of Pakistan's proactive role in promoting Islamic banking. He said that six Pakistani and six foreign Islamic banks are currently operating in the country. According to 2024 data, Islamic banks collectively operate over 5,000 branches, serving approximately 16.7 million account holders, with total deposits amounting to Rs 7,268 billion—representing 24 percent of the banking sector's total deposits. Islamic financing has also gained significant traction, reaching Rs 3,504 billion, which accounts for 29 percent of total banking sector financing.

He further said that Pakistan's Federal Shariat Court has declared the interest-based economic system as un-Islamic and has directed the government to transition towards a completely interest-free banking system by December 2027. The court has instructed authorities to ensure that all banking transactions and loans comply with Islamic principles.

Mian Abuzar Shad reaffirmed LCCI's dedication to supporting this transition and stated that the chamber has been actively organizing awareness sessions in collaboration with financial institutions. He noted that

such initiatives help educate the business community on the principles of Islamic banking and financing, enabling them to make informed financial decisions. The seminar provided valuable insights into the differences between conventional and Islamic banking, equipping LCCI members with knowledge on Shariah-compliant financial solutions.

SAARC Chamber Vice President Mian Anjum Nisar, while addressing the seminar, emphasized the vital role of Islamic banking in Pakistan's economic landscape. He stated that shifting towards a fully Shariah-compliant banking system is not just a religious obligation but also an economic necessity for sustainable growth. He highlighted that Islamic banking offers a stable and ethical financial system that minimizes risks associated with interest-based transactions. Mian Anjum Nisar urged businesses to adopt Islamic financial solutions and stressed the need for more awareness campaigns to educate entrepreneurs and investors about the benefits of interest-free banking. He also appreciated the collaborative efforts of LCCI and Faysal Bank in promoting this important cause.

MCB Islamic inaugurates new branch in Multan

F.P. Report

MULTAN: MCB Islamic proudly inaugurated its new branch in Multan, marking another milestone in its commitment to providing Shariah-compliant banking services across Pakistan. The grand opening ceremony was graced by the esteemed presence of the President and CEO of MCB Islamic Bank Mr. Zargham Khan Durrani along with Mr. Azhar Iqbal, General Manager Multan & Balochistan Circle, and Mr. Ali Feroz, Regional Head Multan. Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Durrani emphasized the bank's vision of expanding its customer base with innovative, ethical, and customer-centric financial solutions. He expressed confidence that the new branch would play a vital role in facilitating the banking needs of individuals and businesses in Multan.

RTO-I collects Rs28.6b taxes

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Regional Tax Office-I (RTO-I) Karachi has surpassed its monthly target for January 2025 with tax collection of Rs 28.6 billion in the month by adopting a proactive enforcement strategy for increasing domestic taxes.

The RTO-I Karachi was assigned by FBR headquarters a monthly tax collection target of Rs 26 billion during the month of January 2025 through tax collection under its administrative domain, said a statement issued here on Tuesday adding that the regional office climaxed at Rs 28.6 billion on the closing date thereby contributing 10% more than the assigned 100% tax collection target.

An efficient tax collection, exceeding the monthly target, from a regional office signifies remarkably well for the Federal Board of Revenue that has already been pinpointing its focus on achieving the annual tax collection target for the ongoing FY 2024-25.

Chief Commissioner RTO-I Dr. Faheem Muhammad appreciated the efforts of his officers and staff in achieving landmark tax collection figures and imparting awareness among the trading community regarding PoS violations. He also called upon taxpayers to improve tax compliance voluntarily in the best interest of the country and discourage tax evasion and fraud.

The Regional Tax Office-I has adopted a proactive enforcement strategy to enhance the share of domestic tax in the overall collection and various actions were taken against tax evaders through on-spot stock takings and penalties on violation of PoS protocols, he added. Owing to these enforcement measures the voluntary tax compliance has shown visible signs of improvement climbing up from a meager Rs. 300-400 million on an average to over a billion in December and January.



Champions Trophy: Tickets for Pakistan-India match in Dubai sold out

DUBAI (Monitoring Desk): Tickets for the highly-anticipated ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 match between arch-rivals Pakistan and India have been sold out in less than an hour after the tickets for the mega tournament went on sale.

Cricket enthusiasts rushed to the tickets' sales website with more than 140,000 fans queuing up online to get their hands on the tickets for the match scheduled to take place at Dubai International Cricket Stadium on February 23.

The development comes as the Champions Trophy tickets went up for grabs on Monday for both the matches set to take place in Pakistan as well as four fixtures scheduled in Dubai as the tournament is being played under a hybrid format with India set to play their matches in the United Arab Emirates.

Pakistan will host a total of 10 matches in their country, while four

matches, including all three of India's group-stage matches and the first semi-final in Dubai.

The final of the Champions Trophy — set to begin on February 19 with the Green Shirts taking on New Zealand in the inaugural fixture — is scheduled to be played in Lahore, but if India qualifies, then it will be held in Dubai.

The minimum ticket price for the Pakistan-India match in Dubai was AED500 and went up to as high as AED12,500.

The tickets for the Pak-India match were sold out for a total of AED45.6 million — Rs3.4 billion — with the venue having the capacity to entertain 25,000 spectators.

Meanwhile, the tickets for all the matches set to take place in Dubai were sold out for AED88.5 million.

With the exception of Pakistan-India match, the ticket prices for Dubai's matches start from as low as

AED125.

On the other hand, the physical sale of tickets for the Pakistan-hosted matches of the eight-team tournament were made available for purchase across 108 designated centres in 26 cities nationwide a day earlier.

The tickets for the highly-anticipated final of the tournament, scheduled to be played on March 9, will be put on sale after the conclusion of the first semi-final.

It is to be noted that the eight-team tournament, comprising 15 matches, will run from February 19 to March 9, across three venues — Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi — in Pakistan along with the Dubai stadium.

The eight teams are divided into two groups. Group A features Pakistan, India, New Zealand and Bangladesh, while Group B is comprised of Afghanistan, South Africa, England and Australia.

Haris Zeb becomes first Pakistani-origin footballer in FIFA Club World Cup



KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistani-New Zealander footballer Haris Zeb is set to become the first player of Pakistani origin player to feature in the FIFA Club World Cup after signing with Auckland City FC.

The 23-year-old left winger, who previously played for Birkenhead United, has joined Auckland City FC and begun pre-season training with the team.

The club secured its place in the 2025 FIFA

Club World Cup by winning the 2024 OFC Champions League.

Auckland City FC will compete in the expanded 32-team 2025 FIFA Club World Cup, set to take place in the United States. The club is set to face European powerhouse Bayern Munich, Argentine giants Boca Juniors, and Portugal's Benfica in the group stage.

Zeb was born in New Zealand on May 15, 2001, to Pakistani parents and holds dual citizenship, making him eligible to represent Pakistan internationally.

He was called up to the Pakistan national team for the 2023 Four Nations Cup in Mauritius but missed the tournament

due to injury.

The left-winger has played for several New Zealand clubs, including Christchurch United and Miramar Rangers.

His move to Auckland City marks a significant step in his career as he prepares to play on the biggest stage in club football.

Zeb has already informed the Pakistan Football Federation of his availability for future national team selections. He was set to join Pakistan during Shehzad Anwar's tenure but his arrival was delayed during Stephen's era.

However, the young footballer remains confident of bringing Pakistan football to the global map.

Special committee to review security of Gaddafi Stadium

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab home department is finalizing security arrangements for the Tri-Nation Cricket series and the Champions Trophy.

A special committee had been formed to conduct a security audit of the Gaddafi Stadium.

According to a notification issued by the Punjab home department, the committee will carry out a comprehensive security review of Gaddafi Stadium, its surrounding areas, security checkpoints, parking zones, public seating sections and the surveillance system.

The committee will be headed by the SSP Special Branch, with members including the SSP

Operations Lahore, additional deputy commissioner (General) Lahore, senior officers from the Intelligence bureau, military intelligence, inter-services intelligence, and the Director of Security for the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

The decision to establish security audit committee was taken during a meeting of the Provincial Intelligence Committee, chaired by the Punjab home secretary. The committee is expected to submit its findings to the home department by February 5. The spokesperson added that all aspects of security arrangements were being reviewed to ensure peaceful conduct of cricket matches.

Raducanu loses in Abu Dhabi Open first round

ABU DHABI (Agencies): Britain's Emma Raducanu lost in the first round of the Abu Dhabi Open as she went down in straight sets to former Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova. Raducanu, 22, was beaten 6-3 6-4 as she proved unable to take advantage of her late wildcard entry to the main draw.

She made a positive start against Czech Vondrousova and led 3-1 after an early break of serve, but she then surrendered the first set by losing five consecutive games. Vondrousova, who returned from a six-month lay-off in January following shoulder surgery, saved four break points early in the second set before breaking for a 5-3 lead and the chance to serve out the match.

While Raducanu offered an immediate response to stay in contention by winning the next game, the 2021 US Open champion's hopes of making a comeback were soon ended.

It was all over when Vondrousova, the 2023 winner at Wimbledon, clinched her third match point. Raducanu was promoted into the main 28-player field in Abu Dhabi at the weekend, having initially been set to compete in qualifying for the first time since her fairy-tale run in New York three and a half years ago.

The world number 56 reached the third round of the Australian Open last month. She climbed back into the world's top 60 last year after missing most of the 2023 season following surgery on both wrists and her left ankle.

PSL logo unveiled

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) today unveiled the emblem for the milestone 10th edition of the HBL Pakistan Super League (HBL PSL) — a tournament that has become synonymous with world-class cricket, unrelenting passion and electrifying entertainment.

The much-anticipated season will take center stage across Pakistan from 8 April to 19 May 2025, marking a decade of thrilling cricketing excellence.

The HBL PSL 10 logo is a bold tribute to the league's phenomenal journey, encapsulating its evolution into one of the most dynamic and fiercely competitive T20 leagues in the world. Designed with a vibrant and modern aesthetic, the emblem celebrates

the tournament's unwavering spirit, unity, and star-studded legacy while symbolizing the exciting future that lies ahead.

A striking element of the logo is the six bold lines, a heartfelt tribute to the six franchises that have carried the league's essence forward. These lines represent not only the regional identities and cricketing cultures that each team embodies but also the unbreakable bond of sportsmanship and camaraderie that defines the HBL PSL.

PSL Chief Executive Salman Naseer said: "From breathtaking last-ball finishes to awe-inspiring centuries, the HBL PSL has delivered unforgettable moments that have become part of cricketing folklore. Over the past nine seasons, we have witnessed extraordinary talent, record-break-

ing performances and a league that has brought fans together like never before.

"As we embark on this landmark 10th season, the HBL PSL is set to elevate the spectacle even further — bigger stars, higher stakes and celebrations befitting a decade of excellence.

"Fans can brace themselves for an unforgettable season of high-octane action, legendary rivalries, and a cricketing carnival that will once again unite the nation and captivate audiences worldwide."

With its remarkable journey over the past decade, the HBL PSL has evolved beyond a league — it's a movement, a festival, and a testament to Pakistan's cricketing passion. The countdown to Season 10 begins, and the celebrations are only getting started.

Woods announces death of mother, 'my biggest fan'

LOS ANGELES (AFP): Tiger Woods announced on Tuesday that his mother Kutilda had passed away, paying tribute to his parent as "my biggest fan."

"It is with heartfelt sadness that I want to share that my dear mother, Kutilda Woods, passed away early this morning," the 15-time major champion wrote on Instagram.

"My Mom was a force of nature all her own, her spirit was simply undeniable. She was quick with the needle and a laugh. She was my biggest fan, greatest supporter, without her none

of my personal achievements would have been possible.

"She was loved by so many, but especially by her two grandchildren, Sam and Charlie.

"Thank you all for your support, prayers and privacy at this difficult time for me and my family. Love you Mom."

Thai national Kutilda met Woods' father Earl when he was serving in the US military in Bangkok in the late 1960s.

An ever-present on the golf course during her son's greatest triumphs, Woods

has often spoken affectionately of how his mother's support helped shape his career, noting in an interview how he was more fearful of her than his father.

"He was very worldly and deep in his thinking," Woods said of his father. "My mom was the enforcer. My dad may have been in the Special Forces, but I was never afraid of him."

"My mom's still here and I'm still deathly afraid of her. She's a very tough, tough old lady, very demanding. She was the hand, she was the one, I love her so much."

Booker breaks Suns scoring record in loss to Portland



NEW YORK (Agencies): Devin Booker became the Phoenix Suns' all-time leading points scorer against the Portland Trail Blazers on Monday — but it was not enough to earn victory.

Booker topped the game's scoring charts with 34 points to surpass Suns legend Walter Davis' total of 15,666.

However, he missed a free throw at the end of overtime that would have levelled the game, with Portland claiming a narrow 121-119 win.

Booker reached the milestone with a three-pointer in the third quarter, sparking a warm reception from the Portland crowd, before hugging his family on the sidelines at the next timeout.

The four-time All-Star has spent his entire career at the Suns, making 642 appearances since being 13th overall pick in the 2015 draft.

Davis, a six-time All-Star, played in 766 games for Phoenix between 1977 and 1988.

Elsewhere, Jalen Brunson scored 42 points as the New York Knicks overturned an 11-point deficit in the fourth quarter to beat the Houston Rockets 124-118.

The Oklahoma City Thunder extended their lead at the top of the Western Conference with a 125-96 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander top-scored with 34 points for the Thunder, who led by 44 points at one

stage in the third quarter. A depleted Bucks side were without Giannis Antetokounmpo, Damian Lillard, Brook Lopez, Khris Middleton and Bobby Portis.

The second-placed Memphis Grizzlies beat the San Antonio Spurs 128-109, with Jaren Jackson Jr top-scoring with 31 points.

Trae Young scored the game-winning basket with 1.6 seconds left as the Atlanta Hawks won 132-130 at the Detroit Pistons to end their eight-game losing streak.

Nikola Jokic scored 27 points with 14 rebounds and 10 assists as the Denver Nuggets beat the New Orleans Pelicans 125-113, while the Golden State Warriors beat the Orlando Magic 104-99.

Arteta 'disappointed' by Arsenal transfer window



LONDON (Agencies): Manager Mikel Arteta says he is disappointed by Arsenal's failure to make any signings during the winter transfer window, but praised the club's discipline.

Arsenal were expected to bring in an attacker after Gabriel Jesus suffered a season-ending anterior cruciate ligament injury last month, while Bukayo Saka is yet to return from a hamstring issue.

"We had a clear intention which is always when a window opens to explore the opportunities to improve our squad with players that can make an impact," Arteta said before Arsenal's EFL Cup semi-final second leg against Newcastle on Wednesday.

"With players injured, we've been impacted and we haven't achieved it. We are disappointed in that

sense but as well we are very aware that we only want to bring certain kinds of players and we have to be very disciplined with that as well. I think that we were.

"It's in the profile, a player that we believe can make us much better. Financially there is a lot of ways, a lot of things that we must stay in the lane that has taken us this far and from there try to improve."

Speaking to BBC Sport before Arteta's news conference, football finance expert Kieran Maguire explained that Arsenal's lack of business was a decision made in a tough market for buyers. "As far as the market they would be looking at [is concerned] there are relatively few players," Maguire said.

"We've got the extension of the Champions League and Europa League [into

January] so clubs were reluctant to sell.

"So if Arsenal wanted to recruit they've really got to go into a rarefied market. I guess they felt there wasn't somebody who would improve the starting XI or regular 16."

Arteta said the Arsenal front line will have to be "flexible" and that he might have to "try something different" because of injuries.

Three players left Arsenal during the window, with defenders Ayden Heaven, 17, and Josh Robinson, 20, joining Manchester United and Wigan Athletic respectively.

Brazilian attacker Marquinhos joined Cruzeiro on loan until the end of the season. Arsenal are second in the Premier League following Sunday's 5-1 win over Manchester City, six points behind leaders Liverpool having played one game more.

Chelsea's Felix completes AC Milan loan move: Chelsea forward Joao Felix has completed a loan move to AC Milan until the end of the season.

The Italian side have paid a £5m loan fee for Felix, with no obligation to buy the 25-year-old Portugal international in the

summer. Though the deal was only announced on Tuesday, the required paperwork was submitted in advance of Monday's Serie A and Premier League transfer deadline.

Felix signed a seven-year contract when he moved to Chelsea on a £45m permanent deal in August, having had a loan spell at Stamford Bridge during the second half of the 2022-23 season.

The Felix deal came about in unusual circumstances as Chelsea and Atletico Madrid exchanged players, with academy graduate Conor Gallagher going to Spain for £33m.

Chelsea's talks to sign Atletico striker Samu Omorodion collapsed, with the Felix deal seemingly a replacement to enable Atletico to find the required funds to complete the Gallagher transfer.

Gallagher had entered the final year of his contract at Stamford Bridge so Chelsea wanted to sell to generate profit and avoid losing him on a free transfer in the summer of 2025.

However, Felix has only started three Premier League matches this campaign, though regularly featured in cup competitions, scoring seven goals.



In brief

Anti-polio drive continues

ISLAMABAD (APP): The second day of the polio vaccination campaign is underway in the federal capital, with teams working across schools, bus stops, and public spaces to ensure every child receives the anti-polio drops. In this regard, the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration was closely monitoring the efforts, emphasizing the importance of community cooperation. The polio vaccination campaign in the federal capital has entered its second day, with teams actively administering drops to children in schools and public areas. Polio workers have been stationed at various bus stops and high-traffic locations to reach as many children as possible. Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioners are overseeing the operations, ensuring the campaign runs smoothly. On the occasion, Additional Deputy Commissioner East has also conducted inspections to monitor the teams' progress. Security measures have been tightened for polio teams, following directives from the Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad, said Memon. Irfan Memon highlighted that polio teams are present across the city to provide protective drops to children. He urged parents to cooperate, stating that their support is crucial for securing a healthier future for their children. The campaign aims to eliminate polio by ensuring every child is vaccinated. Authorities have called on the public to play their part in this critical initiative. With strict supervision and heightened security, the polio campaign in Islamabad is making steady progress. Community participation remains key to its success, as every drop brings the city closer to a polio-free future.

SP holds meeting with HIU officers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Investigation Muhammad Arslan Shahzeb, on Tuesday, held a meeting with the officers of the Homicide Investigation Unit (HIU) to review their performance and provide directives for improving efficiency. A police spokesperson told APP that during the meeting, the SSP emphasized the importance of preventing murder incidents and ensuring strict legal action against those involved in such crimes. He instructed the officers to expedite the arrest of the remaining suspects and resolve investigations on merit. SSP Shahzeb stressed the need to prioritize merit and transparency in investigations, ensuring that solid evidence is presented when submitting challans to ensure convicted criminals receive appropriate punishment. SSP also reminded the officers to carry out all responsibilities in a professional manner, emphasizing that any negligence in duty would not be tolerated.

Three bike lifters arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Three bike lifters active in the limits of Ratta Amral and Waris Khan police stations of Rawalpindi were arrested on Thursday. According to a police spokesman, the Ratta Amral Police busted a two-member gang involved in motorcycle theft and street crime. A stolen motorcycle, two mobile phones and weapons were recovered from the accused Faizan and Shahrul, who would be sent jail for an identity parade. Similarly, the Waris Khan Police held an accused Aqeel and recovered a stolen motorcycle from his possession.

Pakistan to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day with nationwide rallies: Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Engineer Amir Muqam on Tuesday said Pakistan will mark Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 (tomorrow) with nationwide events and global advocacy to reaffirm support for Kashmiris' right to self-determination.

Addressing a press conference, Minister Muqam announced a series of activities, including a one-minute silence at 10:00 AM to honor Kashmir's martyrs.

Flanked by Convener of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir chapter, Ghulam Muhammad Safi, he said a solidarity rally will be held at Constitution Avenue, Islamabad, attended by federal ministers, lawmakers, and Kashmiri leaders.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif issued statements reaffirming Pakistan's diplomatic, political, and moral support

for Kashmiris.

The federal minister said, Pakistani embassies and consulates worldwide organized seminars, rallies, and exhibitions exposing India's human rights violations in Indian occupied Kashmir. The Ministry of Kashmir Affairs, in collaboration with PNCA and Lok Virsa, arranged documentaries, poetry recitals, and theatrical performances in Islamabad.

He said Ministry of Information and Broadcasting launched a media campaign, with PTV, Radio Pakistan, and private news channels airing special programs on Kashmir.

Similarly, across Pakistan, metro stations, airports, and major roads were adorned with banners showcasing solidarity with Kashmiris. Educational institutions held debates and essay competitions to engage students in the Kashmir cause.

In Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), massive rallies and demonstrations took place, including at the Line of Control (LoC).

Calling on the UN and global human rights organizations to take notice of India's oppression, Muqam warned that regional and global peace is at risk due to India's aggressive policies. He urged Pakistani youth to use social media effectively to expose India's human rights abuses.

Ghulam Muhammad Safi, reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast support, condemning India's unilateral revocation of Kashmir's special status on August 5, 2019. He accused India of demographic engineering and a Hindutva-driven agenda aimed at altering the region's Muslim-majority character.

Since 1990, Pakistan has observed Kashmir Solidarity Day annually, reinforcing its commitment to supporting Kashmiris in their struggle for self-determination until the UN-mandated plebiscite is held.

Minister seeks initiation of Pak-France labor training initiative

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, met with the Ambassador of France to Pakistan, Nicolas Galey, to explore ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in key sectors such as labor migration, human resource development, and overseas employment.

During the meeting, Minister Hussain emphasized the invaluable contributions of overseas Pakistanis to the national economy and stressed the importance of further strengthening people-to-people ties between Pakistan and France.

He also highlighted the potential for Pakistanis to thrive in sectors of high demand in France, including hospitality, pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, shipbuilding, and civil engineering, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

"We want the French government to help train

Pakistanis according to the specific demands of the French labor market. By equipping them with the right skills, we can ensure that they excel in these sectors while working in France," said Minister Hussain.

He further added, "Such targeted training programs would not only address labor shortages in France but would also provide a safe and legal pathway for Pakistanis to work abroad, preventing the tragic loss of life that many have suffered while attempting illegal immigration routes."

The minister said that my vision to provide opportunities for Pakistanis to work abroad through legal means, preventing illegal migration by enabling them to gain the skills required by foreign job markets. He emphasized that this approach would be the most effective strategy to reduce illegal immigration and protect the lives and dignity of Pakistani citizens.

Ambassador Galey expressed France's keen interest in exploring opportunities for collaboration in Pakistan's human resource development, particularly in vocational education and training. He acknowledged the skilled Pakistani workforce and noted the potential for mutually beneficial partnerships in technology, innovation, and other sectors.

Minister Hussain also reiterated the government of Pakistan's firm commitment to ensuring the safety, rights, and interests of overseas Pakistanis, promising to continue efforts to guarantee their safe and dignified employment abroad.

He appreciated France's ongoing support for Pakistan's development initiatives, especially in education and vocational training. This meeting is seen as a key step towards further strengthening Pakistan-France relations and fostering collaboration in areas of shared interest.



ISLAMABAD: Executive Director General of DEMP Mubashir Tauqeer viewing paintings after inaugurating Digital Photographic and Painting Exhibition organized by Directorate of Electronic Media and Publications.

ISA hosts art exhibition transforming pain into beauty

ISLAMABAD (APP): "Digital Photographic and Painting Exhibition and Competition" held at Information Service Academy (ISA) on Tuesday showcased thought-provoking paintings and photographs, capturing both the natural beauty of Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IloJK) and the struggles faced by its people.

The exhibition was organized by the Directorate of Electronic Media and Publications (DEMP), under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day. The exhibition served as a powerful tribute to the resilience, courage, and unyielding spirit of Kashmiris.

On this occasion, Executive Director General of DEMP, Mubashir Tauqeer, as a chief guest, spoke about the significance of art in raising awareness about Kashmiri's struggle.

"Art has always been at the forefront of raising awareness about struggles. The photographers and artists whose work we are showcasing today have used their craft not only to capture the beauty of IloJK but also to shed light on the reality faced by its people," he said.

Highlighting the importance of sto-

rytelling through visual mediums, Tauqeer stated, "The importance of today's event-the Digital Photographic Exhibition and Painting Competition-cannot be overstated. Art, in all its forms, has always been a powerful medium for social change, for telling stories that words alone cannot."

"Through these exhibitions, we not only celebrate the artistic expression of the human spirit but also provide a platform to highlight the struggles of the people of IloJK," he observed.

He further praised the students and artists for their creativity and vision, emphasizing their role in keeping Kashmir's story alive through artistic expression.

"Your creativity, your vision, and your commitment to raising awareness through art are deeply commendable. Let us stand united today, and always, in our solidarity with IloJK," he concluded.

He said, "Kashmir Solidarity Day holds deep significance for all of us, it is a time to express our unwavering support for our Kashmiri brothers and sisters, who continue to endure hardships in their struggle for justice, peace, dignity and right to freedom".

A total of 56 students from various

educational institutions participated in the painting and photography competition, demonstrating their artistic talent and passion for the Kashmir cause.

The winners of the competition were Tanzila Shahid from Allama Iqbal Open University who secured first prize, Umm-e-Hani from Riphah International University obtained second prize while Alina Tariq from National university of Media Sciences got third prize. Their artworks were praised for their depth, creativity, and strong messaging, portraying both the struggles and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Earlier, a documentary titled 'The Story of Kashmir' was also presented highlighting the Indian atrocities against Kashmiri people.

Director General, DEMP, Imrana Wazir, Director Human Resource, Associated Press of Pakistan, Farina Mughal and others senior officials of the ministry attended the event.

The exhibition attracted diplomats, journalists, artists, and students, all gathered to express their unwavering support for Kashmir.

The event concluded with a pledge to continue advocating for the rights and freedom of Kashmiris through art, media, and diplomatic initiatives.



ISLAMABAD: Engineer Amir Maqam Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs along with APHC Leadership addressing a Press Conference on Kashmir Solidarity Day at PID Media center. —APP Photo

ANF seizes over 33 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations recovered 33.839 kg drugs worth over Rs 9.3 million and arrested seven accused including three women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that in an operation, 6.712 kg absorbed ice drug was recovered from the bag of a passenger going to Bahrain at Islamabad International Airport.

327 grams hashish hidden in the shoes of a passenger going to Dubai at Peshawar International Airport was rounded up.

6 kg opium and 4.8 kg hashish were recovered from the possession of an accused arrested near Bhuwana in Chinioit.

4 kg heroin and 4 kg ice were recovered from a car intercepted on M-1 Motorway Islamabad and two accused including a woman were arrested.

In 5th operation, 6 kg hashish hidden in secret cavities of a car was recovered near Pashtkhara Chowk Peshawar.

In 6th operation, 2 kg ice was recovered from two women going in a passenger bus near Sher Shah Toll Plaza Multan.

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

Drug peddler, 2 liquor suppliers held

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police during actions against drug peddlers and liquor suppliers on Tuesday arrested three accused.

According to a police spokesman, the Airport Police held accused Kamran and recovered 650 grams of charas from him.

Similarly, the Pirwadhai Police nabbed accused Sameer with 15 litres liquor and the Bani Police recovered five litres liquor from accused Danish.

Ayaz Sadiq reaffirms commitment to Kashmir cause

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Tuesday reaffirmed the country's strong and unwavering commitment to supporting the Kashmir cause on all diplomatic, political, and international fronts.

He emphasized that Pakistan will continue to stand in solidarity with the people of Kashmir.

In his statement, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq emphasized the nation's resolute and steadfast position on the Kashmir dispute, noting that Pakistan observes Kashmir Solidarity Day every year on 5th

February.

He reiterated Pakistan's firm support for the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their struggle for the right to self-determination.

The Speaker condemned the persistent human rights violations and abuses by Indian forces in Kashmir, expressing grave concern over the plight of the Kashmiri people.

Denouncing India's revocation of Article 370 and Article 35A—which had accorded special status to Jammu and Kashmir—he termed the move a blatant violation of international

law and a disregard for the region's disputed status.

He underscored the urgent need for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions, reaffirming that these resolutions guarantee the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination and call for an end to India's unlawful occupation of the territory.

The Speaker further affirmed that Pakistan would continue to raise the Kashmir issue on international platforms, advocating for a peaceful resolution in line with the aspirations of the people of Kashmir.

Waste Management Co kicks of cleanliness drive

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Manager Rawalpindi Waste

Management Company has said that according to the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister, the modern cleaning operation has started in full swing in Tehsil Pindi Gheb under the Sathra Punjab program. Sanitation containers have been installed all over the city and vehicles have also come to lift the containers. A control room has also been set up where our representatives are present to listen to public complaints.

He expressed these views while talking to the media after visiting Tehsil Pindi Gheb along with the local administration on Tuesday. Manager

Rawalpindi Waste Management Company Tehsil Pindi Gheb Ali Hassan said that under the special instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, modern and effective cleaning measures are being taken under the Sathra Punjab program to maintain the best quality of cleanliness throughout the Tehsil including Pindi Gheb city, are being done.

The Manager said that if people have any complaint regarding cleanliness, then they should call the helpline number which is our team. They will immediately take action on this complaint and implement it immediately. He said that the programme was launched on the directives of the

Punjab chief minister to ensure better cleanliness and sanitation facilities. He said the campaign was part of the government's efforts to improve the living standards of the people of Punjab.

He said that there is a strong request to the people now because the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company has started working regularly throughout the Tehsil. Missionaries and sanitation staff are working throughout the tehsil including Pindi Gheb city. The public is requested to cooperate with the cleaning team and put the garbage in the containers. Our vehicles will work twice in twenty four hours to clean the entire city, he added.

Govt launches mass deworming drive for school kids

ISLAMABAD (APP):

The launch event for the 6th Round of the Mass Deworming Campaign, scheduled to take place from February 10 to 14, 2025, was successfully held on Tuesday at the Islamabad Model College for Girls (IMCG) F-7/4.

The event brought together esteemed government officials, health experts, and key stakeholders to mark the beginning of a nationwide effort to protect school-aged children from the harmful effects of intestinal worm infections.

Organized by the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training (MoFE&PT) in collaboration with the Ministry of National Health Services Regulation & Coordination, the Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives, and IRD Pakistan's Pakistan Deworming Initiative (PDI), the campaign aims to improve child health and education outcomes across the country.

Ms. Wajiha Qamar, Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

In her address, she emphasized the government's unwavering commitment to ensuring the well-being of children. "Healthy children are the foundation of a strong and prosperous nation," she stated. "This deworming initiative is a vital step in ensuring that children across Pakistan can reach their full potential without the burden of parasitic infections."

The event started with address of Senior Joint Secretary of Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. The Deputy Chief Health of the Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives (MoPDSI) shared insights on sustaining deworming efforts in Pakistan, highlighting the significant impact of previous rounds and the need for continued commitment to the cause.

Key stakeholders also delivered remarks during the event. Dr. Narantuya Jadamba, the WHO Representative, underscored the global importance of deworming, emphasizing its role in improving child nutrition and cognitive development.

The District Health Officer (DHO) of

Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) provided an overview of the implementation of deworming activities at the district level, while the Parliamentary Secretary Ms Wajiha Qamar reiterated the government's dedication to advancing public health initiatives.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by the Principal of IMCG F-7/4, followed by a media interaction and refreshments.

Attendees expressed optimism about the campaign's potential to make a lasting impact on child health in Pakistan.

The Pakistan Deworming Initiative, now in its sixth round, continues to be a flagship program in the fight against neglected tropical diseases. By ensuring that children remain healthy and active, the initiative not only addresses immediate health concerns but also contributes to long-term educational and economic benefits for the nation.

As the campaign prepares to roll out across schools and communities next week, the government and its partners remain steadfast in their mission to create a healthier, brighter future for Pakistan's children.

Frees of 123 prisoners ordered

KABUL (BNA): In a significant act of clemency, Amir-ul-Momineen, the supreme leader, has issued a decree ordering the release of 123 prisoners from Nangarhar’s central prison while also reducing the sentences of 321 others, according to the Bakhtar News Agency (BNA). The Nangarhar prison media office confirmed the implementation of the decree, stating that among those freed were 99 men, 8 women, and 16 children.

Two miners killed

SAMANGAN (Khaama Press): Two miners lost their lives following the collapse of a coal mine in the Dara-i-Suf district of Samangan. Hashmatullah Rahmani, spokesperson for the provincial security command, stated in a press release that the incident occurred on Monday, in the “Shakol Sheikha” area of the district. He confirmed that a team has been dispatched to investigate the cause of the collapse and provide assistance to any injured miners at the site.

IEA dismisses Trump’s threat to reclaim Bagram base

KABUL (Ariana News): Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesman for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, has dismissed US President Donald Trump’s statements about retaking control of Bagram base and US weapons left behind during the 2021 withdrawal, and said this was a “dream”.

Mujahid also rejected Trump’s claims that Bagram is managed by China, and said: “This base is in the hands of the Islamic Emirate forces.”

He said: “Afghanistan is independent and we will not place our territory in the hands of any country. Bagram is in the hands of our own forces, not China.”

Trump recently said Bagram base was under China’s control.

“Taking Bagram is a dream; America should also get rid of this idea, and so should the fugitives of the

previous regime,” he said.

On the issue of reclaiming weapons left behind by the US, Mujahid said: “These weapons were taken as spoils and we will use them to defend independence and the Islamic system.”

He warned the United States and said: “We are not the (former) Ashraf Ghani administration that will do whatever you order.”

Mujahid claimed that Western interference in Afghan affairs is increasing day by day and said: “They cannot reach us, but they are spreading propaganda. It is not easy for them to forget their defeat.”

He went on to say that Trump’s statements were election-related and that “Trump has now returned to power and is gradually getting the point.”

In response to a question about the Islamic Emirate not yet recognized as the

official government, after three and a half years, Mujahid said: “We are not to blame for the current impasse.”

He explained that foreign relations are a bilateral issue and that unilateral efforts to improve relations without the other party’s consent will not work.

He stated that countries cannot independently establish relations without the US’s guidance. He claimed that the Security Council and the United Nations are all under US influence.

However, the IEA spokesman claimed: “Despite the current tense atmosphere, we have diplomatic relations with 40 countries.”

Mujahid also reacted to reports that former republic government leaders in Turkey had met with representatives of Pakistan’s intelligence agency.

Zabihullah Mujahid stated that intelligence information showed that some former leaders in Turkey had met with representatives of the ISI.

He said that “these figures, who for 20 years accused the Taliban of being dependent on Punjab, are now committing themselves to the ISI.”

He continued that these individuals could not achieve anything with the support of Western intelligence; now they think that they can return with the support of the ISI. He reiterated that “this is a dream and a fantasy.”

In response to reports of increasing concerns, he stressed: “There is unparalleled security in Afghanistan. Security forces suppress, arrest, and in some cases kill the slightest opposition movement.” Referring to reports



of tense conditions in the capital, he called on the Emirate not to be “country, especially in the forces of the Islamic fused” and not to become “victims” of media propaganda.

Afghan Ministry aims to enhance teacher training

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Education of Afghanistan stated that approximately 30,000 teachers have only a 12th-grade education, while more than 50,000 others are teaching in schools across the country in fields unrelated to their academic background.

According to Mohammad Ibrahim Omari, Director General of Professional Development for Teachers

at the Ministry of Education, plans are in place to improve teaching quality and enhance teachers’ capacities.

“Currently, over 50,000 teachers are teaching outside their field of study, and another 30,000 only have a 12th-grade certificate. We are striving to improve the quality of education in the future,” he said.

In this regard, the Directorate of Professional Development at the Ministry of Education organized a four-day seminar for 250 members of professional development teams and the heads of education departments from Parwan, Kapisa, and Panjshir provinces to train teachers in modern teaching methods.

Some education officials and members of professional development teams have

also emphasized the importance of such programs.

“Holding seminars and workshops addresses the shortcomings in the education system, and after such efforts, these problems will be partially resolved,” stated Sayed Mohammad Faizi, Head of Education in Parwan.

Mohammad Farid Haqqani, Head of Education in Kapisa, also highlighted the importance of knowledge and education, saying, “Science and knowledge are not only the adornment of a society but also a fundamental necessity.”

Some members of professional development teams in northern Kabul province say that schools across the country still face a shortage of qualified teachers.

“Some teachers with over 30 to 35 years of

teaching experience still need to learn modern teaching methods, although their subject knowledge is excellent,” said Ahmad Fawad Faiz, a professional development member from Panjshir.

Ehsanullah Akbari, a professional development member from Kapisa, also emphasized the need for collaboration among education specialists, stating, “Scholar’s teaching in schools should collaborate with teachers on new teaching methodologies.”

Following the return of the Islamic Emirate to power, the teacher training system across the country has been abolished and replaced with the Directorate General of Professional Development, focusing on capacity building and improving the quality of teaching.

Cabinet reviews key issues

KABUL (BNA): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan held its 15th cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund, to deliberate on pressing economic, social, and cultural matters.

According to the General Directorate of Affairs, the cabinet reviewed and made decisions on a range of national issues. Some matters were referred to designated committees for further evaluation, with reports expected in the next session.

Additionally, a delegation was assigned to address challenges faced by traders in Nangarhar’s industrial and commercial sectors. The team is tasked with facilitating solutions, improving conditions, and ensuring broader cooperation with the business community.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister for Administration, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, has been directed to engage with senior officials from the Ministries of Defense and Interior, as well as the Intelligence Directorate, to address the concerns of security personnel stationed in remote regions.

DAB, CoC to stabilize currency

KABUL (BNA): Da Afghanistan Bank and Chamber of Commerce and Investment held a press conference attended by key partners including representatives from Da Afghanistan Bank, the Money Changers Union, and various trade unions.

Sediqullah Khalid, the first deputy head of Da Afghanistan Bank, emphasized the institution’s commitment to maintaining the value of the Afghan currency, describing it as a vital element of national identity.

“The Afghan currency represents our country, and it is crucial for businessmen to utilize it in their transactions,” Khalid stated.

He acknowledged recent fluctuations in the exchange rate but assured attendees that the Afghanistan Bank has implemented measures to restore market stability.

“We have sufficient financial resources and will enact reasonable monetary policies as needed to ensure stability,” he added.

Mohammad Younis Momand, Deputy Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, echoed Khalid’s sentiments, highlighting the shared responsibility of maintaining the currency’s value. He praised the Afghanistan Bank for its timely interventions and noted that the Afghan currency is currently regarded as one of the more stable currencies globally.

Khanjan Alkozi, deputy head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, further stressed the importance of collaboration between the government and the private sector in enhancing the economy.

Girls hope for schools to reopen next year

KABUL (TOLONews): Some female students and university students have once again called for the reopening of schools and universities in the country.

These girls have expressed hope that the doors of education will reopen for them in the coming year.

Nazila, who turned to learning painting and the English language after being deprived of education in the tenth grade, told TOLONews: “My request of the Islamic Emirate in the coming year is to open the school doors for all girls.”

“My request of the Islamic Emirate is to decide in the coming year to open university doors for girls because girls have the right

to education in this country,” stated Manizha, a university student.

On the other hand, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has stated that over the past three years, more than 1.5 million girls in Afghanistan have been deprived of education.

The United Nations has emphasized that the existing barriers to education in Afghanistan must be removed.

“In Afghanistan, the ban on girls’ secondary education is now in its 3rd year. 1.5 million out-of-school teenage girls are being denied their right to learn. This violation must end,” OCHA added.

The interim government

has recently not commented on whether schools and universities in the country will reopen or not; however, some Islamic Emirate officials have occasionally criticized this issue.

“Education and schooling are the rights of Afghan girls based on Sharia and customary laws. The ban on Afghan girls’ education has negative consequences that affect not only individuals but also society,” said a Faryal Sayeddzada, a women’s rights activist.

The uncertainty surrounding female students continues as girls above the sixth grade in Afghanistan have been banned from attending school for more than three years now with a prohibition that remains in effect.

Ministry of Economy rejects report on Wakhan

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Economy has rejected a report by The Washington Post regarding security and economic challenges facing the Wakhan project.

Abdul Latif Nazari, the Deputy Minister of Economy, told TOLONews that Afghanistan, China, and regional countries have the political and economic will to advance this project, and there are no security challenges against it.

“The Ministry of Economy of the Islamic Emirate strongly rejects The Washington Post’s report on Afghanistan’s isolation and the existence of security threats. The Wakhan Corridor can transform Afghanistan into a trade hub and a regional transit and connectivity center. There is political and economic determination in Afghanistan, China,

and regional countries to complete this project,” said the deputy minister.

The Washington Post reported that the Islamic Emirate is attempting to turn the remote Wakhan region into an international trade center and connect Afghanistan to China. However, security challenges and a lack of financial resources could hinder the project’s progress.

The newspaper also analyzed different aspects of the Wakhan Corridor project, stating that, according to satellite images, no new construction has taken place in the past seven months, and the completed section of the road ends less than half a mile from the Chinese border.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development said that 60% of the construction work on

this major regional project has been completed, but due to cold weather, the work is currently on hold.

Noor-ul-Hadi Adel, the ministry’s spokesperson, said: “60% of the construction work on this project has been completed, but due to the cold weather and snowfall, the road construction has been halted. Once the weather improves, work on the project will resume.”

Two weeks ago, Abdul Karim Fateh, Deputy Minister of Public Works, told TOLONews in an exclusive interview that the survey for the Wakhan Corridor in Badakhshan has been completed, and the design process is currently underway. He added that once the budget is approved by the leadership of the Islamic Emirate, the ministry is prepared to start its construction.

ANDMA, WFP cooperate to enhance management



KABUL (BNA): Mullah Nooruddin Turabi, the acting head of the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), convened a significant meeting with representatives from the World Food Programme (WFP).

In the meeting held at the NDMA office, Mullah Turabi emphasized the authority’s commitment to

facilitating various organizations and institutions across all sectors.

He highlighted the recent establishment of a disaster risk database, which aims to identify and document high-risk areas within the country.

Ms. Mutinta Chimoka, head of the WFP, reiterated the importance of partnership, stating that both organizations are dedicated

to enhancing services for the Afghan people. She stressed the necessity of ensuring timely assistance to families affected by disasters.

The meeting concluded with a decision to convene technical teams from both the ANDMA and WFP in the coming days to address and review technical issues related to disaster management.

US team holds talks with ex-leaders

KABUL (Khaama Press): Members of the High Council of National Resistance for the Salvation of Afghanistan, composed of key leaders from the former government, have stated that they met with an American delegation.

Mohammad Mohaqiq, leader of the Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan, told Voice of America on Tuesday, February 4, that several members of the High Council of Resistance, including himself, met with a delegation sent by the Global Peace Operations Initiative.

According to him, the American delegation visited them around two days ago to discuss issues related to Afghanistan. The delegation was sent by the Global Peace Operations Initiative for this purpose.

The leader of the Islamic Unity Party added that several members of the High Council of Resistance for the Salvation of Afghanistan, including himself and Marshal Abdul Rashid Dostum, the leader of the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, attended the meeting with the American delegation.

He also mentioned that senior advisors from the Global Peace Operations Initiative were part of the delegation, but he did not provide any details regarding the specific topics discussed during their meeting.

Reports suggested that the group had met with a Pakistani delegation, but Mr. Mohaqiq, in an interview with Voice of America, firmly denied any such meeting between the members of the High Council of Resistance and the Pakistani delegation.

ICRC continued operations

KABUL (BNA): The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has reaffirmed its commitment to humanitarian operations in Afghanistan, rejecting recent claims that it had instructed staff to stay at home due to security concerns.

The ICRC clarified that its personnel in Kabul and throughout the country are carrying out their duties without any disruptions. This declaration comes in response to reports from an external media outlet alleging that the organization had implemented a lockdown for security reasons.

412 personnel graduated from training command



KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of National Defense has proudly announced the graduation of 412 young personnel from regional corps and units, who have completed a rigorous three-month professional training program.

The ceremony, held at the Abdullah bin Masood Joint Combat Training Command, marked a significant milestone in their military careers.

In attendance were notable figures including

Mawlawi Baz Mohammad Hamidi, the deputy director of education and staff, along with various officials, Mujahideen, and military personnel.

During the ceremony, Mawlawi Baz Mohammad Hamidi extended his heartfelt congratulations to the graduates, emphasizing the importance of kindness, brotherhood, and humility within the ranks of the National Islamic Army. He urged the graduates to adhere to their responsibilities

in accordance with Islamic law and to avoid arrogance and discrimination.

The graduates expressed their commitment to defending their homeland and the people under any circumstances, assuring officials of their readiness to serve.

The ceremony concluded with the distribution of graduation certificates, celebrating the achievements of these young personnel as they embark on their new roles in service to their country.

Drug smuggled from Afghanistan seized

KABUL (Khaama Press): Tajikistan’s Drug Control Agency has reported the seizure of 121 kilograms of methamphetamine from a truck carrying goods from Afghanistan, headed towards China. The drugs were hidden among precious stones on the Dushanbe-Kulma highway.

The Drug Control Agency revealed that the methamphetamine was being trafficked from Afghanistan to China through Tajikistan. This marks a significant bust along the major transit route between the two countries.

Zafar Samad, the head of Tajikistan’s Drug Control Agency, emphasized that the production of synthetic drugs in Afghanistan has

significantly increased. The seizure of synthetic drugs originating from Afghanistan in Tajikistan has increased by 59% in 2024 compared to previous years.

Part of the smuggled shipment was also discovered and seized in the Murgab region of Tajikistan’s autonomous Badakhshan province. This shows that Tajikistan is becoming a significant focus for drug trafficking from Afghanistan.

Previously, both Iranian and Tajik officials have raised concerns about the rising cultivation and trafficking of narcotics from Afghanistan. However, the Taliban government has denied reports regarding the increase in drug traf-

ficking from the country.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime also reported that Afghanistan is the fastest-growing producer of methamphetamine globally. Trafficking of these substances to neighboring countries has increased by nearly 12%. This highlights the growing regional issue and the challenges authorities face in combating drug smuggling.

The situation demands greater international cooperation, as drug production and trafficking continue to escalate, affecting not just Afghanistan but the broader region. It is clear that efforts to curb the production and distribution of synthetic drugs need to be intensified.



5 فروری یوم یکجہتی

KASHMIR



نديم اسلم چوہدری (چیف سیکرٹری حکومت خیبر پختونخوا)

پانچ فروری کو یوم یکجہتی کشمیر منانے کا مقصد مقبوضہ کشمیر پر بھارت کے غیر قانونی قبضے اور وہاں جاری ریاستی جبر و ظلم کی بھرپور مذمت کرنا ہے، اور ساتھ ہی کشمیری عوام کی آزادی کی جدوجہد کے ساتھ اپنی غیر متزلزل اخلاقی، سیاسی اور سفارتی حمایت کا اعادہ کرنا ہے۔

مقبوضہ کشمیر میں بھارتی قابض افواج کی جانب سے انسانی حقوق کی پالیوں، ماورائے عدالت قتل، خواتین کی بے رحمی، اور بے گناہ عوام پر ڈھائے جانے والے مظالم کے خلاف عالمی سطح پر آواز بلند کرنا ہماری ذمہ داری ہے۔

یوم یکجہتی کشمیر نہ صرف کشمیری عوام سے ہماری گہری وابستگی کا عکاس ہے بلکہ اس دن ہم اپنے اس عزم کا اعادہ بھی کرتے ہیں کہ کشمیری آزادی کے لیے ہر ممکن حمایت جاری رکھیں گے اور ان کے جائز حقوق کی بحالی تک چین سے نہیں بیٹھیں گے۔

پاکستان کا ہمیشہ سے یہ موقف رہا ہے کہ خطے میں پائیدار امن کا قیام مسئلہ کشمیر کے منصفانہ حل کے بغیر ممکن نہیں، اور اس مسئلے کو اقوام متحدہ کی قراردادوں کے مطابق حل کرنا ہی اس کا واحد راستہ ہے۔

ہم عالمی برادری پر زور دیتے ہیں کہ وہ کشمیر میں جاری مظالم کا نوٹس لے اور کشمیری عوام کو ان کا حق خود ارادیت دلوانے کے لیے اپنا کردار ادا کرے۔

ہمیں یقین ہے کہ کشمیر کے بہادر عوام، جو حق خود ارادیت کے لیے اپنی لازوال قربانیاں دے رہے ہیں، ایک دن اپنی جدوجہد میں کامیاب ہوں گے۔ کشمیری عوام کو یقین دلاتے ہیں کہ پاکستان ان کے شانہ بشانہ کھڑا ہے اور ان کی ہر امتداندہ جدوجہد میں انہیں کبھی تنہا نہیں چھوڑے گا۔



سردار علی امین خان گنڈاپور (وزیر اعلیٰ خیبر پختونخوا)

خیبر پختونخوا کے عوام اور صوبائی حکومت یوم یکجہتی کشمیر کے موقع پر کشمیری عوام سے مکمل یکجہتی کا اظہار کرتے ہیں۔ آزادی، کشمیر کے عوام کا بنیادی حق ہے۔ ہم آزادی کی اس جدوجہد میں کشمیری عوام کے ساتھ شانہ بشانہ کھڑے ہیں اور مقبوضہ کشمیر کے عوام کی اخلاقی، سفارتی اور سیاسی سطح پر حمایت جاری رکھنے کے عزم کا اعادہ کرتے ہیں۔ انسانی حقوق کے بین الاقوامی اداروں کو چاہیے کہ وہ کشمیری عوام پر بھارتی ظلم و ستم کا نوٹس لیں اور کشمیری عوام کو ان کا حق خود ارادیت دلانے کے سلسلے میں اقوام متحدہ کی قراردادوں پر عملدرآمد کو یقینی بنانے میں اپنا کردار ادا کریں۔ خطے کا امن مسئلہ کشمیر کے حل سے وابستہ ہے، اس کے بغیر خطے میں دیرپا امن کا قیام ممکن ہی نہیں۔ دنیا کو اس اہم مسئلہ کی نزاکت کو سمجھنا ہو گا اور بھارت کی طرف سے نتیجے کشمیری عوام پر ظلم و استبداد کا سلسلہ بند کرنا ہو گا۔ جس طرح مقبوضہ کشمیر کے مظلوم عوام ایک طویل عرصے سے آزادی کیلئے جنگ لڑ رہے ہیں اس کی پوری دنیا میں مثال نہیں ملتی۔ ہم حق آزادی کے حصول کے لئے کشمیری عوام کی بہادری، استقامت اور ثابت قدمی کو سلام پیش کرتے ہیں۔ انشاء اللہ ان کی جدوجہد ضرور کامیاب ہوگی اور کشمیری بھائی امن اور خوشحالی کے ساتھ ایک نئی اور آزاد زندگی کا سفر جلد شروع کریں گے۔ خود کو دنیا کی سب سے بڑی جمہوریت کہنے والے بھارت نے گزشتہ ساڑھے پانچ سالوں سے یکطرفہ طور پر مقبوضہ کشمیر کی خصوصی حیثیت ختم کر کے کشمیری عوام پر جس ظلم و ستم کا بازار گرم کر رکھا ہے وہ نہایت ہی قابل مذمت ہے۔ کشمیریوں کی جدوجہد آزادی کو دبانے کیلئے بھارت آئے روز نئے ہتھکنڈے استعمال کر رہا ہے جو پوری بین الاقوامی برادری خصوصاً اقوام متحدہ اور انسانی حقوق کی دیگر تنظیموں کیلئے لمحہ فکرمی ہے۔ انسانی حقوق کے بین الاقوامی اداروں کو چاہیے کہ وہ کشمیری عوام کو اپنے مستقبل کا فیصلہ کرنے کا حق دینے اور اس سلسلے میں اقوام متحدہ کی قراردادوں پر سن و غن عمل درآمد یقینی بنانے میں اپنا کردار ادا کریں۔ تحریک انصاف کے بانی چیئرمین اور سابق وزیراعظم عمران خان نے اقوام متحدہ کی جنرل اسمبلی میں جس طرح موثر اور توانا انداز میں کشمیر کا مسئلہ اٹھایا، اس کی تاریخ میں مثال نہیں ملتی۔ ہم عمران خان کے وژن کے مطابق آزادی کی اس جدوجہد میں اپنے کشمیری بھائیوں کے ساتھ کھڑے ہیں اور اس مقصد کے لئے ان کی سیاسی، قانونی، اخلاقی اور سفارتی حمایت جاری رکھیں گے۔



فیصل کریم کنڈی (گورنر خیبر پختونخوا)

آج 5 فروری یوم یکجہتی کشمیر کے موقع پر میں اپنے کشمیری بھائیوں اور بہنوں سے بھرپور یکجہتی کا اظہار کرتا ہوں۔ یہ دن ہمیں اس عہد کی تجدید کا موقع فراہم کرتا ہے کہ ہم کشمیری عوام کی حق خود ارادیت کی جدوجہد میں ہر ممکن اخلاقی، سیاسی اور سفارتی حمایت جاری رکھیں گے۔

مقبوضہ جموں و کشمیر میں بھارتی قابض افواج کی جانب سے انسانی حقوق کی سنگین خلاف ورزیاں پوری دنیا کے سامنے عیاں ہیں۔ کشمیری عوام گزشتہ کئی دہائیوں سے ظلم، جبر اور ریاستی دہشت گردی کا سامنا کر رہے ہیں، لیکن ان کے حوصلے اور عزم میں کوئی کمی نہیں آئی۔ بعد میں بھارتی حکومت کی طرف سے 5 اگست 2019 کو بھی کیے گئے غیر قانونی اور یکطرفہ اقدامات نے مقبوضہ کشمیر میں مظالم کی ایک نئی لہر کو جنم دیا، جس نے خطے میں انسانی حقوق کی پالیوں کو مزید سنگین بنا دیا۔

پاکستان کی حکومت اور عوام کشمیری عوام کے حق خود ارادیت کی مکمل حمایت کرتے ہیں اور ہر عالمی فورم پر ان کے مقدمے کو اجاگر کرنے کا سلسلہ جاری رکھیں گے۔ اقوام متحدہ کی قراردادیں اور کشمیری عوام کی امنگیں اس بات کا ثبوت ہیں کہ مسئلہ کشمیر کو کشمیری عوام کی خواہشات کے مطابق حل کیا جانا چاہیے۔ عالمی برادری کی یہ اخلاقی اور قانونی ذمہ داری ہے کہ وہ بھارت کو اس کے غیر قانونی اقدامات اور کشمیری عوام پر ظلم و جبر سے روکے اور کشمیری عوام کو ان کا جائز حق دلانے میں اپنا کردار ادا کرے۔

میں کشمیری عوام کے جذبہ حریت کو سلام پیش کرتا ہوں امید ہے وہ دن جلد آئے گا جب کشمیری عوام آزادی کی فضا میں سانس لے سکیں گے۔ صوبہ خیبر پختونخوا سمیت پورے پاکستان کی عوام ہمیشہ اپنے کشمیری بھائیوں اور بہنوں کے ساتھ کھڑی رہے گی۔

5 فروری

یوم یکجہتی

KASHMIR

اب ٹوٹ گریں گی زنجیریں
اب زندانوں کی خیر نہیں!

کشمیریوں کے حق خود ارادیت کے حصول کی جدوجہد میں پاکستان ان کے ساتھ ساتھ ہے

کشمیر پاکستان
کی شہرگ ہےحکومت خیبر پختونخوا
محکمہ اطلاعات و تعلقات عامہ