



# Bilawal for use of 'talks or force' to bring stability

- PPP chief says party not consulted on 'PTI ban, governor's rule'; calls for NAP 2.0 to tackle security situation as party turns 57
- Disappointed with PML-N over its economic, security policies; warns against carving out new canal from Indus

By Imran Ayub

KARACHI: In light of deteriorating security situation in the country, PPP Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Saturday called for political stability which needed to be achieved whether through "dialogue or force".

"In my opinion, new political stability will have to be established, either through dialogue or by force," he said in an address that was broadcast in 150 districts via video link to mark the PPP's 57th foundation day.

"The political stability is essential so that economic stability can be achieved in Pakistan, so we can fight terrorism, and the writ of the state can prevail. The state must function. The PPP's historic stance has always been 'dialogue, dialogue, and dialogue'," he said, adding that solutions could be found through talks.

Reiterating the PPP's "historic opposition" to burning political parties or dissolving provincial governments to impose governor's rule, Mr Bhutto-Zardari emphasised that the party would strive to resolve such issues through consensus and dialogue.

labourative decisions. "The problem with the opposition is that they refuse to engage in dialogue. They only want to talk to the establishment and run democratic forces. If this continues, it will harm both — the opposition party and Pakistan," he added.

The PPP chief also referred to "media reports" suggesting Islamabad was planning to ban the PTI and impose a governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stating that the party had not been consulted on either issue. He added that he would raise such matters with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government if the party was asked for its opinion.

"The media is reporting that the government may be mulling decisions that could either impose a ban on a party or enforce the governor's rule [in KP], possibly targeting those who're going beyond their political mandate and crossing democratic norms," he said.

"The PPP has not been consulted yet on this matter. Our party has a historic stance that we do not support either of these options. We will express our opinion in any conversation and will strive to make decisions

through consensus."

Disappointed with ruling ally

While refraining from issuing any direct warnings to the PML-N-led government at the Centre as he has in the past, Mr Bhutto-Zardari nonetheless delivered a sharp critique of his ruling ally, expressing deep disappointment with its security and economic policies.

He also criticised the federal government's agricultural policies, warning that they could lead to the "economic destruction" of farmers rather than benefiting them. He urged the Centre to address the concerns of provincial governments, particularly regarding the federal government's plan to carve out a canal from the Indus River. "If the government proceeds with this decision, it will only escalate tensions between the federal government and the provinces."

In the same breath, he questioned the government's performance on security, stating that the situation in certain parts of the country was "alarming" and that the writ of the state was collapsing in those areas.

"The entire situation is

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ALEPPO: Smoke billows in the distance as damaged cars are seen at the site of air strikes by Syrian jets against rebel positions, on Saturday. The rebels belonging to an Al Qaeda-affiliate entered Syria's second city the previous day — AFP

## Qureshi urges reconciliation as PTI feels the heat

- PTI leader demands meeting with Imran to convince him on 'national consensus'
- Jailed party leader says talk of ban on party, governor's rule absurd; asserts stability through 'authoritarian rule' unsustainable

By Mansoor Malik

LAHORE: As the opposition PTI reeled from the Nov 26 crackdown, party vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who is in jail along with other key leaders, on Saturday advocated for national reconciliation and national consensus to achieve political stability.

In a media talk after his appearance in an anti-terrorism court in Lahore, the former foreign minister expressed the hope that politically active people in all political parties would play a role for a national dialogue since a ban on the PTI would only complicate the situation.

Mr Qureshi requested that he be provided an opportunity to meet party founder Imran Khan so that he could present his point of view towards national reconciliation and national consensus.

The remarks by the PTI leader came amid reports that the federal government had reportedly been deliberating a ban on the former ruling party and a governor's rule in the PTI-run Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province due to repeated "controversies" on the federal capital by the opposition party.

Mr Qureshi continued that crushing PTI would not be in the interest of Pakistan and the purported plan to proscribe

the party and impose a governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was sheer absurdity.

SC to take up PTI plea against changes to poll law on 4th Page 3

He said political leadership had no idea about the consequences of such a decision, adding that Balochistan was facing insurgency, terrorism was rising in KP, and Sindh was protesting the federal government's approach towards the water issue.

The PTI vice chairman said the incumbent government's consideration to impose the governor's rule in KP could be

tantamount to disrespecting the will of the people that gave a "two-thirds majority" to the PTI. "I do hope that the politically savvy people in the PML-N will oppose the idea of imposing the governor's rule and warn their leadership that it will be a political and historical blunder," Mr Qureshi said.

Referring to the tabling of a resolution in the Punjab Assembly seeking to proscribe the PTI, Mr Qureshi expressed his gratitude to the PPP for opposing the resolution. He also thanked different political parties, including the JUI, the Jamaat-e-Islami, and the Balochistan National

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## Petrol up by R3.72 per litre

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Due to "variation in oil prices in the international market", the federal government has increased the petrol price by R3.72 per litre for the next 15 days, a notification by the finance division said on Saturday.

After the increase, the price of petrol rose to Rs252. "The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority has worked out the consumer price of petroleum prices, based on the price variation in the international market. It has accordingly been decided that the prices of petroleum products for the next fortnight, starting from December 1," the notification read.

Similarly, the price of high-speed diesel also witnessed an increase of Rs3.29 per litre, taking the per litre price to Rs258.41. On the other hand, the kerosene oil and light-diesel oil prices were reduced to Rs154.98 and Rs152.71, with respective cuts of Rs0.62 and Rs0.48. The price hike was contrary to expectations based on declining oil prices in the international market.

Petrol is widely used in motorbikes and cars and its demand had increased after the government cut off indigenous gas supplies to CNG retail outlets in Punjab several years ago. The widely consumed fuel in the country, however, is the high-speed diesel used in the transport and agriculture sectors. Its consumption, however, is low in December

due to transportation limitations owing to severe fog in most parts of Punjab and northern Sindh. Still, the use of diesel in sugarcane areas increases due to the transportation of sugarcane to mills.

Currently, the government charges about Rs26 per litre tax on petrol and Rs15. Although, the general sales tax (GST) is zero on all petroleum products, the government charges Rs60 per litre PDM (petroleum development levy) on both products that normally impact the masses. It also charges about Rs10 per litre custom duty on petrol and HSD, irrespective of their local production or imports. In addition, about Rs17 per litre distribution and sale margins are going to oil companies and their dealers. Petrol and HSD are the major revenue spinners with their monthly sales of about 700,000 — 800,000 tonnes per month compared to just 10,000 tonnes of monthly demand for kerosene.

On the other hand, the government charges Rs50 per litre on light-diesel oil and high-octane blending components and Rs50N petrol used in heavy imported vehicles.

The government has nominally decreased the prices of LDO and kerosene oil. Kerosene oil is used in remote areas, especially the northern parts of the country where LPG is not available for cooking and heating. The Pakistan Army is also its key user in the northern

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## PTA decides not to ban VPNs over 'lack of legal grounds'

Interior ministry to withdraw ban request; Law Division tells govt it can't throttle VPNs under PECA

By Raheel Ali

ISLAMABAD: All Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) will continue working after Nov 30 as the telecom regulator has decided not to ban them over lack of legal grounds, sources here told Dawn.

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) had asked users to register their VPNs by Nov 30, after which unregistered connections will be blocked.

The Minister of Interior had requested the telecom regulator to ban unregistered VPNs, claim-

ing they were being used by terrorists to "facilitate violent activities" and to "access pornographic and blasphemous content".

Sources in the interior ministry said the request, made earlier this month, will be withdrawn.

The decision was taken after an opinion by the Law Ministry stated that the government had no legal standing to block VPNs.

There was an interpretation issue with the clause in the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2015, and eventually, it has been noted that the reading of the interior ministry in this regard was weak, and the courts would allow the functioning of the VPNs, the sources added.

Section 34 of PECA titled "Unlawful online content" empowered the authorities to "remove or block or issue directions for removal or blocking" of any con-

tent "in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defence of Pakistan or any part thereof, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court".

As per the Law Ministry, the said section allowed the government to block "content" and not the tools.

A senior official of the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication said VPNs were tools in access applications or establish connectivity, etc., just like a mobile phone or a computer.

In the past, the government had found it difficult to justify restrictions on internet blockages in court since the internet, too, was a tool, the official added.

The use of VPNs surged in the country after social media platform X (formerly Twitter) was

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## No 'attacker' to be allowed from KP in future, says Asif

Tarar says the man reportedly pushed off container was injured but is now 'completely fine'

guards about the incident. "Everyone knows what the PTI did on Nov 24. It is spreading false propaganda on bodies. If martyred police and Rangers personnel whose funerals were also held, the PTI should not

spread false propaganda on the bodies of its workers. We pay tribute to all the martyrs, including Rangers and police, who did not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for our beloved homeland."

"I should make it clear that no attacker will come from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa now. Those who made big claims left the field and ran away at the first obstacle," he said, adding that the way KP CM Ali Amin Gandapur and former Khan's spouse, Rudra Bhat, left the party workers and fled had no example in the past.

"We'd offered them to sit and hold a rally at other places, yet this lady did not accept. Latif Khosa and other PTI leaders are giving different members of their 'martyrs', initially in thousands, then in hundreds and now 10 or 12. But no testimony has been received from grieving families in this regard," he added.

The defence minister said PTI leader Omar Ayub, who claimed he was shot in the chest, was fit to hold a press conference. He reiterated the PTI had always done politics

of chaos. "It held its first sit-in in 2014, resulting in the cancellation of the visit of the Chinese premier to Islamabad. Then they announced a sit-in to sabotage the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting in Islamabad, but by the grace of Allah, the meeting took place and now, during the visit of the president of Belarus, the PTI tried to hold another sit-in in Islamabad. This shows their 'anti-nationalism'. Gandapur ran away from Islamabad and now he is cheating and saying that the sit-in is still going on. It is beyond understanding what kind of sit-in is this?" the minister wondered.

"PTI is a facilitator"

On the other hand, Mr Asif said that attackers from Afghanistan were crossing the border and coming to KP. "Taliban are crossing the bor-

der. All this is part of a conspiracy that Pakistan's enemies have dreamed of [a bid] to separate KP from Pakistan and PTI is the political facilitator of this conspiracy. This situation is unacceptable and intolerable," he said. "Nov 24 [incident] was actually May 9 [incident], which was thwarted by our defence agencies," he added.

Separately, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar regretted that the PTI was resorting to a "false narrative of dead bodies and firing" to cover up the embarrassment of fleeing from Islamabad.

In a media talk regarding 'fake photos and posts' being uploaded by PTI on social media, he said the party had failed to produce even a single video of the firing in the past

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## KP CM vows indiscriminate action against 'militants' in Kurram

By Umar Farooq and Javed Hussain

PESHAWAR: KURRAM: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has ordered security forces to carry out indiscriminate action against "militants" in Kurram district, where violence has killed around 100 people.

The chief minister visited the neighbouring district of Kohat on Saturday and attended the meeting of a grand jirga convened by the provincial government to address the violence in Kurram district.

Kurram conflict: Editorial on Page 6

The grand jirga took place amid ongoing violent clashes, which started last week when a convoy of passenger vehicles came under attack in Lower Kurram, killing more than 40 people.

Since then, reprisal attacks and intermittent firing have resulted in the death of around 57 more people despite a ceasefire agreement.

Efforts for 'complete peace'

Kurram Deputy Commissioner Javed Mehsood said negotiations were

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## ON OTHER PAGES



## Malaysia to revise tariffs on rice

Malaysia has agreed to revise its tariffs on Pakistani rice, aligning them with duties applied to grain imported from other sources, an official said on Saturday. Prime Minister Shahrizad Sharif held a call with his Malaysian counterpart, Anwar Ibrahim, and expressed satisfaction over the amicable resolution of several trade issues. Page 12

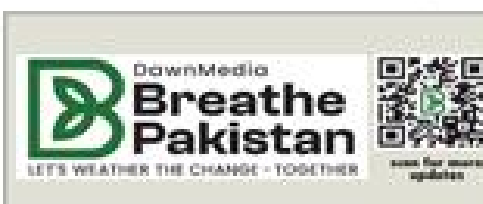


## Hybrid model for Champions Trophy

The Pakistan Cricket Board and the Board of Control for Cricket in India agreed to play their future matches in ICC tournaments on a hybrid model to ease the way for Champions Trophy to be held next year. ICCI claimed that India had refused to allow its team to travel to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy and ICCI has asked the hybrid model to be applied for its team when tournaments are held on the other side of the border. Page 18



They said that they would take up their issues with the government officials for quick redressal. They also warned that the fishermen would hold a sit-in if their grievances were not addressed.



## SC to take up PTI plea against tweaks to Elections Act on 4th

Bench to also decide appeals against objections raised by registrar

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: A six-judge constitutional bench of the Supreme Court will take up on Wednesday challenges by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to implementation of the amendments to the Elections Act, 2017 with retrospective effect.

Headed by Justice Amiruddin Khan, the constitutional bench will take up the petitions moved by PTI chairman Ghous Ali Khan, Muhammad Qayyum Khan and Chaudhary Ishtiaq Ahmed Khan.

The bench, consisting of Justice Jamal Khan Mahmood Khan, Justice Muhammad Ali Marjar, Justice Hassan Asghar Haneef, Justice Mansoor Hakeem and Justice Nasim Aslam, will hear both the appeals against the objections raised by the registrar as well as the main challenges to amendments to the Elections Act.

The petition was filed on Aug 7 after both houses of parliament approved the Elections (Amendment) Bill, 2024. The PTI turned the bill an attack on the top court and said it would challenge the changes.

Also, PTI secretary general Salman Akram Raja had filed an application requesting the court to restrain the Election Commission of Pakistan

(ECP) from allocating seats reserved for women and non-Muslims to other parties and to not abide the amended law.

Legal observers say if the constitutional bench approved the retrospective application of the second amendment to the Elections Act, 2017, the July 12 decision by eight majority judges of giving reserved seats to the PTI would become nullified.

The PTI argued in the Supreme Court that the past and closed transactions that have taken place in terms of the Constitution and the Elections Act prior to the enactment of the amendment cannot be undone through the new law with retrospective effect.

The petition contended that Section 3 of the Elections Act sought to add restrictions not contained in the Constitution, with respect to the submission of lists of candidates for reserved seats under Articles 51 and 106.

The PTI's recognition by the Supreme Court as a political party eligible for a proportionate share in the quota for reserved seats and for its nominated and eligible candidates to be elected on the basis of lists filed by the PTI in accordance with the judgment cannot be overruled by section 3 that has purported to amend the Elections Act, the petition argued.

A returned candidate who was "wrongly declared" to be an independent candidate by the ECP and compelled to join a party other than their own could not be prevented from declaring his affiliation to the actual party, the petition argued.



BALUCHISTAN AIDS Control Programme Coordinator Dr Zulfiqar Baloch addresses a press conference on Saturday. — PPI

## 462 new HIV cases reported in Balochistan

Total hits 2,823, with six districts identified as high-risk areas

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: Balochistan has reported 462 new cases of HIV/AIDS, raising the total number of registered HIV patients in the province to 2,823, an alarming situation, according to Dr Zulfiqar Baloch, the coordinator of the Balochistan AIDS Control Programme.

Speaking at a press conference on Saturday, Dr Baloch, alongside other officials from the AIDS programme, said six districts in the province have been identified as high-risk areas for the disease.

As World AIDS Day is observed globally on December 1, Dr Baloch emphasised the need for greater awareness about HIV/AIDS and solidarity with those affected.

He said HIV weakens the immune system, making the body vulnerable to life-threatening infections. Without timely

World AIDS Day: Editorial on Page 6

treatment, the disease can often prove fatal.

Dr Baloch revealed that Quetta has the highest number of registered cases, followed by Turbat, Hish, Loralai and Nasirabad. He warned that the actual number of cases in the province could range between 2,000 and 3,000, significantly

higher than the current registered figures.

The high-risk districts identified include Quetta, Gwadar, Turbat, Zhob, Sherani and Nasirabad.

To address the rising number of cases, the provincial AIDS control programme plans to establish treatment centres in Khuzdar, Zhob, Khuzdar and Sibi, aimed at improving access to healthcare and treatment for patients.

Dr Baloch also noted that HIV testing kits are available in all districts of Balochistan, with over 800,000 individuals screened in the past year. Testing has been conducted in both district and central jails.

He said efforts are ongoing to ensure timely diagnosis and treatment in order to combat the spread of the disease.

## Journalist Matiullah granted bail in narcotics case

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) has granted bail to journalist Matiullah Jan, who was arrested for alleged narcotics possession and assault on a cop.

The journalist was presented before ATC Judge Tahir Abbas Sijra under tight security on Saturday.

Judge Sijra saw Mr Jan on a physical remand on Thursday. However, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) scrapped the decision and sent the journalist to jail on judicial remand. Mr Jan's lawyers, Imran Mansoor-Haris and Barrister Hadi Chaudhry submitted the IHC order and filed a bail application, urging the court to give immediate relief.

After reviewing the application, the judge issued notices to the prosecution to present their arguments.

Later, he granted bail to Mr Jan and ordered his release despite the prosecution's request for its dismissal. During the proceedings, the judge made candid remarks about the "ethical challenges" in journalism and other professions. He commented on media's role in society and warned against sensationalism.

"A journalist's duty is to report responsibly. Unfortunately, many are tarnishing their credibility for fleeting fame," Judge Sijra remarked. He also criticised unethical practices in various professions, urging accountability and integrity.

The case against Mr Jan has been decided by journalist bodies, human rights organisations and his legal team, which claimed the journalist was being targeted as he was working to verify reports of deaths caused by law-enforcement action against PTI protesters.

Mr Jan's lawyer, Imran Mansoor-Haris, welcomed the court's decision to grant his client bail.

"The decision reflects that justice can prevail despite pressures. Matiullah Jan is a voice for truth, and his release is a step towards ensuring press freedom."

He was arrested on Nov 26 in a case registered at the Margalla Police Station. The FIR against Mr Jan included Section 92(14) of the Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 1957 for possession or trafficking "more than 100g and up to 500g" of psychotropic substance and Section 3 (Punishment for acts of terrorism) of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997.

The FIR claimed that Mr Jan was in possession of the narcotic methamphetamine crystal meth when his vehicle was stopped at a checkpoint at Islamabad's Sector E-9.

It claimed that Mr Jan "rammed the vehicle" into the cops, injuring Constable Mushtaq. When the car stopped at the security barrier, Mr Jan stepped out and "assaulted" a cop, snatched his weapon and pointed it back at the cop, the FIR said.

## KP CM vows indiscriminate action against 'militants' in Kurram

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under way for an effective ceasefire among the groups, and contingents of security forces and police were dispatched to the area.

He said cellular network and internet services, which were shut down when violent clashes broke out last week, had resumed.

On Saturday, tension police returned to the district as local administration managed to vacate most of the bunkers used by warring sides to attack each other.

The tensions were taken over by police and sniping incidents took place in the Bagan and Aitun areas of Lower Kurram.

However, sporadic incidents of violence were reported from Margalla and Kargi Akhail areas in Upper Kurram, besides Khar Kabay, Morghy Chasma, Balash Khel and Songora

in Lower Kurram. The fresh clashes left one person injured.

The chief minister has ordered security forces to dismantle the bunkers and requested the federal government to deploy additional platoons of paramilitary Frontier Constabulary to maintain peace, said a statement released by Mr Gansdaper's office. He said security forces were deployed in the area to restore peace and ordered them to treat any individual disrupting peace as militants.

Senior officials briefed the chief minister about the law and order situation, the ceasefire agreement and the government's efforts to ensure lasting peace, the statement added.

The CM directed the officials to confiscate heavy weapons from locals and temporarily collect arms from residents of areas bordering Afghanistan. He said security

forces, police and civil administration were making coordinated efforts to restore peace in the district.

The chief minister also directed the grand jirga to remain active in the area until complete peace was restored, assuring of full support from the provincial government. Mr Gansdaper called upon locals to identify militants and urged tribal elders to play their role in fostering harmony between rival groups.

"Anyone who takes up arms will be treated as a terrorist, and their fate will be that of a terrorist," the chief minister warned and assured that funds would be released on a priority basis for the temporary displaced families whose "dignified" return to their homes would be ensured.

The chief minister stressed that violence and conflict won't solve any problem, high-

lighting the importance of dialogue and negotiations in resolving disputes.

"In line with [Pakistani] traditions, we are making every effort to resolve this issue peacefully through a jirga," the statement quoted Mr Gansdaper as saying.

He urged the warring parties to cooperate with the administration and jirga to ensure sustainable peace, which was "in the best interest of the region and the government".

National Assembly members Shabir Khan Afridi, Hamid Hussain, and Younis Khan attended the jirga along with provincial ministers / legislators Akbar Khan Afridi and Pakistan Yaq Khan, CM adviser Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, MPA Shafi Jan, Chief Secretary Nadeem Adnan Chaudhry and KP police chief Akhtar Hayat Khan Gansdaper and other officials.

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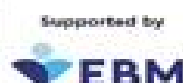
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# Plan finalised to increase QMC's revenue

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) Administrator Muhammad Hamza Shadqat has said a strategy has been finalised to increase QMC's revenue to bridge the gap between income and expenditure of the civil institution and strengthen its financial stability for more development projects in the provincial capital.

Speaking to the media on Saturday, Mr Shadqat, who is also the Quetta Division commissioner, said the corporation was facing a deficit of Rs50 million, as it required Rs100m for its monthly expenditures.

He said a recent survey had shown that many properties, including shops and petrol pumps owned by the corporation, were being leased and rented at throwaway rates.

"Some shops that should be generating millions are being rented for as little as Rs25, and petrol pumps are being leased for just Rs2,000 per month. This is a gross injustice to the people of Quetta," Mr Shadqat said.

He outlined corrective measures, such as auctioning a prime city restaurant that was previously leased for Rs6,000 per month.

The new auction generated Rs1 million per month, significantly boosting revenue.

Similarly, older markets, hotels, and parking spaces, which previously earned Rs1m annually, are now generating Rs15m after being auctioned and upgraded to modern standards.

Mr Shadqat said the increased revenue would allow the QMC to invest in essential public services, including installing streetlights, covering open markets, and conducting daily sewage cleaning.

He also appealed to citizens and traders to cooperate by refraining from dumping garbage into drainage systems, which severely disrupt cleanliness efforts. He warned of strict action against those who continue to dispose of waste in drainage channels.

"Daily fines will be imposed on violators. We are also activating QMC teams and seeking authorisation from the chief minister to empower cleaning and enforcement teams to impose fines, as there is a shortage of magistrates in the city. We will bridge this gap through our staff," Mr Shadqat said.

These measures aim to gradually increase the QMC's income and improve the quality of life for the residents of Quetta.



QUETTA: Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Waqar Kabir seeks a warehouse during an operation on Querry Road, on Saturday. — PPI

## UN mobilises funds to preserve heritage sites

By Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: With Mohenjodaro and other heritage sites in Sindh facing growing vulnerability to disasters, the Unesco has mobilised funds to preserve the province's cultural heritage sites.

Recognising the urgent need to act, Unesco mobilised \$150,000 from the World Heritage Fund to assist the Sindh government in assessing the damage and taking immediate remedial measures to protect the two Unesco World Heritage Sites against the impact of future rainfall.

Another \$50,000 follow-up restoration project was initiated at Mohenjodaro to rehabilitate two severely damaged tanks due to the floods. These efforts have reinforced the importance of integrating disaster risk preparedness into the preservation of cultural heritage, Unesco says in a press release.

The monsoon floods of 2023 damaged cultural heritage all over the country and, in particular, devastated several historical sites across Sindh, including the Archaeological Ruins at Mohenjodaro and the Historic Monuments at Makli, both Unesco World Heritage Sites, and these sites suffered with severe structural damage caused by excessive rainfall.

According to the culture sector analysis led by Unesco in the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment 2023, these disasters caused widespread damage of about \$1m, endangering Pakistan's irreplaceable cultural treasures.

Pakistan's rich cultural heritage stands as a testament to its vibrant history and diverse people, but it has been increasingly under threat from many natural and man-made disasters, Unesco says.

In response to these challenges and long-term capacity building needs, Unesco, in collaboration with the Directorate of Antiquities and Archaeology of the Sindh government, organised a five-day workshop on "Disaster Risk Reduction for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage" which concluded last week at the historic Archaeological Ruins at Mohenjodaro.

Led by Dr Cristina Monzonet, the international expert on culture and heritage at Unesco office in Pakistan, the workshop engaged 25 participants from provincial authorities, the Aga Khan Cultural Services Pakistan, universities, foreign archaeological missions and private cultural heritage companies, to exchange knowledge and best practices.

## CM Bugti lays emphasis on supremacy of Constitution

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti has said the PPP is a symbol of constitutional supremacy and the survival of democracy, a party that has never compromised on these principles.

He highlighted the sacrifices made by the PPP leadership, who laid down their lives along with hundreds of party workers.

Speaking at the 57th Foundation Day ceremony of the PPP on Saturday night, CM Bugti also discussed the government's ongoing efforts for systemic change, good governance, and addressing the issues of Balochistan, assuring that viable positive transformation would take place in the near future.

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari addressed the ceremony via video call.

Rejecting the philosophy of resorting to arms, CM Bugti said that only the ideology of the people of Pakistan would be accepted in governing the country, adding that the PPP has always been the custodian of the people's rights and has made great sacrifices for the preservation of democracy and democratic institutions. — Saleem Shahid

## First adolescent, youth-friendly space inaugurated in Quetta

UNFPA, other international organisations to set up centres for the young in big cities

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA: In a groundbreaking initiative, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Netherlands and the School of Leadership Foundation (SLF) inaugurated the first Adolescent and Youth Friendly Space (AYFS) in Quetta under the 'Aghaz' project on Saturday.

This four-year initiative aims to establish AYFS centres in Islamabad, Peshawar and Quetta, providing safe, inclusive spaces where the youth can access resources, psychological support and skill-building opportunities. The AYFS at NUML Quetta will cater to diverse youth groups, including those with disabilities, offering services such as leadership development, career guidance, recreational activities and peer-led discussions. These centres are designed to operate under strict quality standards and ensure accessibility for all.

With over two-thirds of Pakistan's population under the age of 30, this initiative addresses the urgent need for youth engagement and empowerment.

At the opening ceremony, young leaders, government officials and community stakeholders participated in interactive sessions showcasing AYFS services like counselling, career guidance and creative activities.

"This initiative is a beacon of hope for Balochistan's youth, providing resources and opportunities to develop leadership skills and community-driven solutions," said Muhammad Tariq Qamar Baloch, the provincial secretary of sports and youth affairs.

Sadia Atira, the provincial coordinator of UNFPA Pakistan, emphasised the broader vision behind the initiative. "These spaces represent a commitment to nurturing the potential of our youth and building an inclusive future."

In the coming months, AYFS centres will be established in Islamabad and Peshawar, expanding the reach of this initiative and creating a national network of youth-friendly spaces.

## Policy coordination urged for women's empowerment

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA: Advisor to the Chief Minister on Women Development Dr Rubaba Khan Baloch has emphasised the need to accelerate efforts and implement measures to ensure women's rights and development, laying a solid foundation for a democratic and socially strong Balochistan.

Speaking at a workshop held on Saturday, she stressed the importance of comprehensive and coordinated actions at the policy level to improve the status of women in the province.

The workshop was organised jointly by the Women Development Department and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Dr Baloch said women's full participation in social, economic and political sectors is crucial for Balochistan's progress. "Gender equality is not merely a goal; it is the foundation of our development. Without providing women with their rights and opportunities, we cannot build a better social system," she added.

She underscored the importance of promoting gender-sensitive governance and development across all sectors to ensure women's voices are heard and their needs are addressed at every level.

Dr Baloch also commended the collaboration between the Women Development Department of Balochistan and the WHO, noting that workshops and forums like these play a pivotal role in advancing gender equality and establishing a strong foundation for the development of women in the province.

## Constable injured in IED blast

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA: A police officer was injured in a bomb explosion near a police checkpoint in Qila Abdullah town on Saturday.

According to police officials, unidentified assailants planted an improvised explosive device (IED) behind the police check post in the Qila Abdullah Bazaar area. The device exploded, injuring a police constable and damaging

part of the checkpoint. Police rushed to the site soon after the blast and shifted the injured officer to the district hospital.

A senior police officer confirmed that an IED was used in the attack, which was detonated remotely.

The blast also caused damage to the Waqar grill station, leading to a power outage in the area.

Police have launched a search operation in the area to locate the elements involved in the blast.



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**STARTING FROM:**  
December 28, 2024 (Online)  
**ENDING:**  
Every Saturday  
2:00 PM to 5:00 PM PKT

**ISSUE:**  
Institute of Business & Health Management  
GDM Campus, GDM Karachi,  
5th Building 10th Floor, Right Fl.,  
Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Sindh-75

**EXTENSION**  
**REQUIREMENT FOR THE ON GRID SOLAR PROJECT AT LRBT HOSPITAL**  
One additional submission to "Mansoor & Sons (Private) Works" on 19 November 2024 (Monday).  
Supplier are invited to visit the site registered on 27.10.24 & 27 November 2024 (Thursday, Friday & Saturday) from 08:00 hrs to 1:00 hrs, at our Hospital site.  
Detailed Specs supported by the brochures giving technical details, layout of the specifications and type, etc. are to be delivered at our office address, latest by 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024.  
LRBT reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids without assigning a reason.  
Contact Person: Mr. Irfan Iqbal, Party Phone: 34900000 to 11:00 hrs, except the Saturday. Call No: 021-4007601 & 021-4007602, Fax: 021-4007603, Email: [info@lrbt.org.pk](mailto:info@lrbt.org.pk)  
**LRBT**  
10000, Mansoor 27-11, Sector 10, Phase 1A, 10<sup>th</sup> Commercial Street, Phase-1B, Government, G.D.A. Karachi, Sindh. Work: 34900000

**KAPCO**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) SALE OF PRESERVED POWER PLANT (TWO GAS TURBINE FIAT/TG-50 UNITS ALONG WITH TWO BOILERS)**  
**RFP: KAPCO/SALE/OT 34/001**  
KOT ADDU POWER COMPANY LIMITED (KAPCO) invites sealed bids from Local / Foreign reputed parties including power plant operators for sale of two complete Gas Turbine units (50 MW capacity each gas turbine) and allied components.  
The powertrain under sale comprises from unit transformer to boiler exhaust duct all inclusive. The assets are located at KAPCO, Kot Addu, Punjab, Pakistan and are being offered for sale strictly on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS". Relieved Steam Turbine is not included in the proposed sale of the equipment. KAPCO intends to sell all major / minor components as a single lot.  
The assets under sale are fully operational and maintained in preserved condition and are capable of functioning as an operational electricity generating unit. KAPCO may also consider to dispose of the asset as scrap provided the sale under this arrangement is commercially / financially viable and acceptable to KAPCO.  
A brief description of major equipment is given below:  

Gas Turbine	Unit Transformer	Generator	HRSG
TG-50, Fiat TGO (Italy)	ANP400, 95.5 MVA, 132 /11 KV	SGTHC, Ercole Merello	Babcock & Wilcox CWT Nuova EMG

  
**RFP Issuance and Site Visit**  
Interested parties can register themselves by procuring the RFP document by submitting a written request on their company / official letterhead along with a non-refundable tender fee of PKR 50,000/- only, to KAPCO Power Complex at Kot Addu to the attention of Mr. Gesser Iqbal, Manager Purchasing & Imports, Email ID: [gesser.iqbal@kapco.com.pk](mailto:gesser.iqbal@kapco.com.pk), Tel: +92 99 2301047-49 Ext. 219 not later than 18 December 2024. Local agents of foreign parties are also required to submit a copy of valid NTN Certificate.  
The assets forming part of the RFP may be inspected at KAPCO Power Complex, Kot Addu, Punjab not later than 23 December 2024 (between 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, excluding Saturday and Sunday). Only registered parties will be permitted to inspect the assets.  
**Bid Submission**  
Bids in US\$/PKR should be submitted in accordance with the Terms & Conditions set out in the RFP: KAPCO/SALE/OT 34/001. An earnest money deposit (in US\$ / PKR) equivalent to 5% of the 'Bid Price' is required to be submitted along with the bid in the form of a pay order / bank draft (from a bank acceptable to KAPCO) in favour of Kot Addu Power Company Limited.  
**Bid Submission Date is 13 January 2025 by 11:00 am PST. The Bid Price should be exclusive of all taxes.**  
Bids received later than the specified date and time will not be entertained. KAPCO does not accept any responsibility for bids delayed, delayed or misplaced in transit by courier, mail or otherwise.  
KAPCO reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bid(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever with no legal or other obligations. The acceptance and final approval of any bid shall be subject to KAPCO duly obtaining internal and external approvals / consents / permissions, including corporate and regulatory approvals / consents / permissions.

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**  
Service of Building Settlement Observation (No.: POEPC-PS-CS-250)

**1. Project Overview**  
Port Qasim Electric Power Company (Private) Limited (Buyer) intends to engage an eligible company to execute the Service of Building Settlement Observation ("Services") for Port Qasim 2x660MW Coal-fired Power Plant.

**2. Qualification Requirements for Bidders**  
2.1 The Bidder must keep independent legal status in Pakistan, and their bank account has not been previously suspended.  
2.2 The Bidder shall provide scanned copies of relevant qualification certificates for the Services, including but not limited to business license, production safety license project manager certificate, quality system certification, environmental management system certification, occupational health and safety management system certification, construction qualification certificate etc.  
2.3 The Bidder shall have project experience on more than 3 similar Services.  
2.4 The input of the qualifications and quantities of the persons must meet the management and progress of the Services.  
2.5 The Bidder should have a valid surveyor license from Pakistan Engineering Council and any other relevant bodies.  
**3. Acquisition of Tender Document**  
3.1 Interested participants are requested to obtain the Procurement Documents free of charge from November 28, 2024, to December 5, 2024, daily from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM (Pakistan time) at the office building 306 of Port Qasim Electric Power Company (Private) Limited by presenting an authorization letter (or company introduction letter) and ID.  
3.2 The Bidder may contact the Buyer to receive the electronic version of the Procurement Documents via email. Upon receiving the potential Bidder's authorization letter (or company introduction letter) and ID, the Buyer will send the electronic version of the Procurement Documents by email within 1 day.  
3.3 Response Documents from those who do not comply with the requirements of Clause 3.1 and 3.2 of this notice for obtaining the Procurement Documents will be rejected.  
**4. Submission of Bidding Documents**  
4.1 The deadline for submission of Response Documents is the 16 December 2024, 10:00am. The submission location is: Port Qasim Electric Power Company (Private) Limited E2/L1/SP-14, opposite the Engro Polymer, Port Qasim, Karachi, Pakistan.  
4.2 The Buyer will reject Response Documents that are delivered late, have not been delivered to the designated location, or not sealed (or encrypted) in accordance with the requirements of the Procurement Documents or have failed pre-qualification (if any).  
**5. Contact Information**  
**Buyer: Port Qasim Electric Power Company (Private) Limited**  
Address: Plot No. E2/L1/SP-14, Eastern Industrial Zone, Port Qasim, Karachi, Pakistan  
Contact Person: Mohsin  
Contact No.: 0092-3119000949  
E-mail: [mohsinjavid@pepc@gmail.com](mailto:mohsinjavid@pepc@gmail.com)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
The Schedule of Charges for the period of January to June, 2025 shall be revised effective from 1st January, 2025.  
For more details please contact your nearest Bank. Affiliated branch, visit our website [www.meezanbank.com](http://www.meezanbank.com), or use the QR codes below or call our helpline at 021 33 235 10.  




**Meezan Bank**  
The Islamic Bank of Pakistan  
**Schedule of Service Charges**  
Meezan Bank's Schedule of Service Charges has been revised, which will be applicable from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2025. Details of the revised service charges are available at all Meezan Bank branches as well as on the website [www.meezanbank.com](http://www.meezanbank.com). kindly visit your branch or call us at our 24/7 Call Center 111-331-331/332.  
[www.meezanbank.com](http://www.meezanbank.com)  
24/7 Call Center (021) 111-331-331 & (021) 111-331-332

**Vehicles Auction**  
A leading Multinational Company is organizing a sealed bid vehicle auction (as an in house) featuring a variety of 2wheeler and 4wheeler at the following cities: Karachi, Sukkur, Sahiwal, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Hyderabad, Faisalabad, Sargodha, and Multan.  
**Asset Details:**  

Item	Qty
Bikes 100 CC	20
Small Bikes 50 cc Toyota Maruzdy 24/300cc Honda City 1.6	8
Motorized Trikes (Attached to ice cream cold box)	03

  
**Auction Process:**  
This auction will be conducted through sealed bidding. It is mandatory to bid for the entire lot at a specific location / city using the company's prescribed bidding form. After completing your bid form, and it is in an envelope and insert it to the company's head office address.  
**Inspection & Further Information:**  
Inspection & Further Information: You may visit the location to inspect the assets before placing your bids, from December 2<sup>nd</sup> to December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Please note that photography and videography are prohibited at the location. For more details on the auction items, bidding form, or asset photos, kindly reach out to us.  
**Muhammed Sajjad Muzaffar 0300-0133880**  
**Mirza Muhammad Asif Abbas 0310-1234258**



DAWN

## Flying ban reversal

THE European Aviation Safety Agency has finally lifted the ban on flights of the national flag carrier to and from Europe after more than four years. Nevertheless, it will take months and potentially heavy investment in new planes before the airline can resume operations on lucrative European routes. The ban on PIA flights to the UK is yet to be revoked. Still, celebrations are in order since the EU ban has been lifted after repeated failures of the Civil Aviation Authority since 2020 to address EASA's safety concerns. The European aviation watchdog has apparently "re-established sufficient confidence in the [CAA's] oversight capabilities". The decision to approve the resumption of commercial operations was based on the CAA's "significant efforts". However, EASA clarified that the EU states would continue monitoring through the "prioritisation of ramp inspections of the air carriers certified in Pakistan and their crew to ensure compliance with aviation regulations and standards and identify safety concerns and trends before they become a threat".

Besides causing reputational damage, the ban, which came in the wake of a fatal PIA plane crash in Karachi, followed by a scandal over alleged fake pilot licences sparked by the claims of the then aviation minister, has cost the airline an annual revenue loss of nearly Rs40bn. It was also one of the several reasons for the government's failed attempt to privatise the national carrier a month ago when only one bidder showed up to buy the airline for a paltry Rs10bn for a 50pc stake in the company, against the asking price of Rs82bn. Undoubtedly, the resumption of flights to profitable European routes is being seen as a recovery point for the air carrier and may lead many to call for cancelling plans to sell it off and turn it around by investing in EU operations under a new management.

Similar efforts made by successive governments in the last one decade to resurrect PIA have amply exposed the futility of such exercises. There are many, including the incumbent privatisation minister, who have argued that the last attempt to sell the airline was structured in such a way as to scare away potential investors. Many influential leaders of the ruling PML-N are not in favour of disinvesting the airline. But only the naive can expect the reinstatement of European operations to help restore PIA's profitability. The reasons that have brought PIA to this pass are many, and deep-rooted. At best, the new development can only help the government fetch a better response from bidders when the airline is put up for auction again. It is, therefore, advisable that the authorities continue to focus on selling the company rather than investing public money in its fleet to resume its European operations.

## Kurram conflict

DESPITE a ceasefire being in place, violence has continued in Kurram tribal district. The latest round of bloodshed was sparked by the deplorable attack on a convoy on Nov 21, and ever since, a retaliatory spiral of conflict has resulted in around 100 deaths, and many more injuries. Moreover, normal life in the area remains paralysed, as reports indicate there is a shortage of essentials including medicine, while schools also remain closed. Mobile services have been shut since the clashes first erupted. A KP government delegation had parachuted into the troubled region last week and managed to broker a seven-day truce, which was later extended. However, that effort has failed to stem the bloodshed as rival tribes, leading over land, have continued to trade fire. Moreover, the sectarian dynamics of Kurram have turned the district into a powder keg, as any dispute has the potential to morph into communal violence. Sadly, the state's efforts have lacked the wherewithal to bring stability to this sensitive region, and allow its people to live in peace.

Along with the KP government's efforts to enforce a truce, the province's governor has scheduled a multiparty conference on Dec 5 to discuss law and order across KP; the Kurram violence is also to be highlighted at this event. However, all tiers of government — the centre, the province, and the security apparatus — have taken a lackadaisical approach to the violence in the district, as the bodies continue to pile up. There are, of course, historical, geopolitical and religious factors behind the violence that cannot be addressed in a matter of days. However, as per the vision of the founder of this nation, the first duty of the state "is to maintain law and order". In Kurram, as elsewhere in Pakistan, the state has miserably failed to do that. The coercive power of the government was on full display recently in Islamabad to counter a political protest. Yet the same urgency has not been applied to Kurram in order to warn armed actors that any loss of innocent life will be firmly dealt with. Heavy weapons can be found in abundance in the region, while the presence of sectarian fighters also complicates matters. But the state only promises the people that it will act. It is time these pledges were transformed into action.

## World AIDS Day

IT is a travesty that, decades after HIV/AIDS first perplexed medical awareness about the disease remains low in Pakistan, particularly among vulnerable populations. As HIV/AIDS incidents drop worldwide — in 2023, some 39.9m people lived with HIV; 53pc are women and girls — Pakistan's figures are proliferating. According to UNAIDS, the country's HIV cases stood at 270,000 in 2022, while The Lancet forecasts HIV pervasiveness to be less than 0.1pc in the general population with some 165,000 people living with the virus. On World AIDS Day, the country's second fastest rate of HIV escalation in the Asia-Pacific region should put its health officials and policymakers to the test for their callous and outdated collective response: vigilance, information and testing initiatives are virtually non-existent, and the stigma attached to the infection is unaddressed. This year, the UN notes that the presence of AIDS mandates that "we reach and engage everyone who is living with, at risk for or affected by HIV ... This World AIDS Day is a call to action to protect everyone's health by protecting everyone's rights. Leaders need to take the rights path".

Despite AIDS becoming more manageable due to medical advancements, related complications claimed 630,000 lives last year. This alone should fill the authorities with a sense of foreboding as the onus of the spread falls largely on health providers in Pakistan — scores contract the virus through infected medical equipment and poorly screened blood samples; the most recent health debacle at Mullan's Nishtar Hospital serves as a horrific instance. This day must be viewed as a rallying call for enhanced action through scaled-up testing, oversight to reduce the risk of transmission, advocacy to transform societal attitudes, and heightened screening for sexual abuse victims, jail inmates and children. Pakistan does not have time on its side; for HIV/AIDS to end as a public health threat by 2030, the right to health must become sacrosanct.

## OPINION



BY MUHAMMAD AMIR RANA

## Spoiling the youth potential

Imran Khan's political agenda does not address the structural challenges the youth face.

POLITICAL parties in Pakistan generally do not have a plan to engage the youth in constructive activities to capitalise on their potential. The exception is the PTI, which has mobilised a large segment of the youth to fuel an agitation movement in the country. Nevertheless, the party's approach stems from its focus on its leader Imran Khan's personality, rather than a deep connection between the youth and democratic values, rights, freedoms, and hope.

In their comparison of PTI-led activities with the recent student movement in Bangladesh, which led to the ouster of Sheikh Hasina Wajed, political commentators overlooked several vital points. First, the student movement was centred on the pursuit of rights and freedoms, which Sheikh Hasina's government had curbed. The movement was not sudden but the result of a continuing dialogue and debate about the situation in Bangladesh, which primarily took place on university campuses, with Dhaka University as the main point. Social media platforms amplified the impact of these discussions, but they were essentially underpinned by robust intellectual discourse.

It was Gen Z — all too often stereotyped as self-centred — which actually came up with compelling arguments for change and successfully executed plans and strategies, drawing strength from marginalised segments. By contrast, PTI-led youth activities lack the organisation and strong intellectual discourse of the student movement in Bangladesh. In fact, it is mainly jobless youth from KP that constitute the bulk of the party's street power. Moreover, the PTI lacks strong organisational roots on campuses, which has limited its ability to foster sustained youth engagement.

A more fitting comparison for the student movement in Bangladesh might be drawn with the Jamiat and Khatim-e-Jamiat Action Committee and the Awami Action Committee of Gilgit-Baltistan, which effectively mobilised the public against the government's efforts to eliminate subsidies. Moreover, political and ideological parallels could be drawn with movements like the Haq Do Tehreek in Qandahar and the Rahbari Vakelet Committee, led by Mawlawi Rahbari, which have galvanised marginalised segments around the issue of rights and the

missing persons.

What unites the youth around Imran Khan is his consistent narrative and political rhetoric, couched with his populist leadership style. For many, he represents a heroic figure, a symbol of resistance against the establishment, and a beacon of hope in a political landscape where mainstream parties have compromised mainly with the establishment. Most importantly, he serves as a symbol of change for the growing middle class of Pakistan, a demographic burdened by the demands of the country's 59 per cent youth bulge.

However, the PTI is similar to other political parties in the country, many of which have transformed into political dynasties. Power and leadership within the PTI are increasingly concentrated around Imran Khan and his family, with crucial decisions made only with his consent. Despite widespread public support, the party needs a solid organisational structure and an effective secondary leadership capable of uniting its cadre when the top leadership is absent.

The PTI often displays overconfidence, as evident in its "solo flight" approach when it holds protests. It prefers this to building consensus with rival political parties. Its agitation revolves around Imran Khan's release from jail, instead of broader democratic principles. Even its stance on judicial independence has been selective as evidenced by its approach to the 26th Amendment to the Constitution.

While Pakistan does have potential for a vibrant student movement to evolve, there are three major constraints in the way. First, the PTI is channeling youth energy into populist ideas and ethnic loyalty, which erodes the potential for open dialogue among the youth. Second, the establishment has taken control of university campuses, and has managed to restrict spaces meant for intellectual debate and activism. Religious activities — spearheaded by groups such as the Talib-e-Millat Jamiat, the Talib-e-Millat Pakistan, and even some banned ones — are given prominence. Unfortunately, this has also impacted faculty members, who have either come under these groups' influence or surrendered their independence to the establishment. Even a mid-level official of the establishment can effectively control a university, with the teaching staff and administrators unable to chal-

lenge his authority.

The powers that be along with other state institutions and political parties have undermined Pakistan's youth's potential. Two key factors should be mentioned: their fear of a youth-led movement for change and their lack of vision regarding the constructive harnessing and channeling of the youth's potential. In brief, the power elites are focused only on safeguarding their own interests. They send their children abroad for education or send them in one of the handful of exclusive elite institutions in the country, with little to no concern for the broader quality of education, the future of the youth, or the development of a knowledge-based economy. Their primary focus remains on controlling the youth rather than empowering them.

Those who call the shots in Pakistan follow a template similar to Sheikh Hasina's in Bangladesh. In her case, the first subdued the media through severe censorship, then eliminated political opponents, brought the judiciary under her control, and forged alliances with the military. While there may be some differences in sequence, the overall process here is strikingly similar, with the ruling parties reinforcing such practices.

But despite such parallels with Bangladesh, the power elites here do not perceive the emergence of a similar nationwide movement, given their tight grip on university campuses, the fragmentation of rights movements on ethnic and national or lines, and the limited potential for a unified uprising. The PTI, perhaps unintentionally, plays into the strategy of those who wield actual power by keeping the youth engaged in futile political activities and diverting their energy from constructive efforts. Even if Imran Khan achieves his aims, including his release, through youth support, it is unlikely to inspire any long-term optimism in the younger generation. His political agenda does not offer any real hope, nor does it address the structural challenges the youth face.

Additionally, the links between the extremists and the power wielders are still there, which ensures that the latter can rely on these religiously inspired elements for support in times of crisis, further consolidating their control. ■

The writer is a security analyst.



Rizvi Brijant



BY ABBAS NASIR

## An ode to the political worker

PAKISTAN'S history is replete with the heroism of political workers who have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to democratic ideals in total and that they will risk life, limb, and liberty for their cause.

Whether you call them heroes or villains will depend on your point of reference. Ergo, many of you will see the political workers who reached D-Chowk in Islamabad on the call of their leadership as valiant heroes.

Valiant heroes because they defied all the odds and overcame every obstacle in their path to keep what they thought was a just cause. A righteousness which, they believed, would result in their jailed leader being freed, vindicated and possibly en route to the corridors of power once again.

At the other hand was the state, with all the might at its disposal. It was prepared to ensure that it was a conspiracy to destabilise the country and the economy which, in its view, was now showing signs of a revival and was on the path of growth. So, the troublemakers, the "miscreants" had to be stopped.

There was never any doubt about the intent of either the political worker or the state; both were hell-bent on having their way a week ago today, and neither was prepared to give an inch. There was no way the state would allow the painstakingly crafted hybrid structure to crumble.

The political workers were no less adamant that they would snatch away the mandate stolen from them in February this year. In between these two extreme positions, what was missing? What was missing was the leadership on whose call the workers had reached the federal capital in droves.

What was missing was a strategy on how to force the government, and particularly the establishment, to accept the demands of those who had marched on the federal capital. With the top leader, their hero, in jail, what was missing was a credible secondary leadership, which could have guided and steered the protest in a direction where the goals could have been attained.

Instead, what happened was that a large section of the protesters was encouraged to head to

Islamabad's politically significant venue D-Chowk, where they were to remain, along with their leaders, till Imran Khan was freed and brought to the verdict.

This supercharged the worker. What happened next is public knowledge. As night fell, the protest leaders, who seemed unbending and unprepared to consider a sit-in at any venue other than D-Chowk, inexplicably drove away. They never got to D-Chowk anyway as they'd promised from not just the protest but the capital itself.

And soon after, the law-enforcement personnel sprang into action. Whether 12 protesters were killed as some PTI leaders acknowledged or

Unlike many of Pakistan's chattering classes, political workers put their money where their mouth is.

many more, including implausibly large numbers in their hundreds claimed by senior leaders including the KP chief minister, is not the issue. For me, and I am sure for you, the killing of one political worker is one too many.

Because the life and expectations of every political worker represent hope. Yes, unlike many of Pakistan's chattering classes whose members hold forth all manner of their well-appointed drawing rooms and exclusive social media chat groups, political workers put their money where their mouth is.

They take to the streets in pursuit of their ideals, amid teargas, baton charges, rubber bullets and even live fire and they dare to dream a dream and continue unshaken. One can be sure there are always those who break the law and display a propensity to violence.

But I remain convinced that the vast majority of the protesters wish to peacefully assert their

rights. Yes, they may be committed to a leader or an ideology but don't wish to press for their demands through violent means.

In fact, from my own recollection of the MRD movement of the 1980s, which I first witnessed as a student and then as a journalist, the story of the political worker is one of dreaming a dream and offering sacrifices, even their lives, as they pursue their dreams.

Just look at those who formed a protective cordon around Benazir Bhutto, despite knowing she was on the terrorists' hit list as became clear from the mayhem in October 2007 in Karachi when her procession was bombed.

Even that bombing and mass murder did not dissuade the loyal workers who were guarding her with their own bodies and lives and not weapons when she was assassinated in Rawalpindi in December the same year. Devotees died protecting her, with no hesitation or greed. Just their dedication to a cause.

So, it isn't blaming the victim as some PTI critics on social media have been accused of doing by those sympathetic to the party. I ask where were the leaders who had pledged to the workers to keep a trust with destiny in D-Chowk but did not even perfunctorily try to keep their end of the bargain? Yes, I know the state is brutal but they should not have left the workers alone.

And so alone that so far, I have seen just one leader of the PTI offering justice at the grave of one of the party's fallen workers. A party that controls so much of the narrative and has all the modern communications tools at its disposal has been very short in sharing images where the leaders are displaying sympathy with the affected families.

I do hope, and this goes for all political parties, that the workers, the cannon fodder, should not let their ideals become a weakness to be tapped into, even exploited, by compromised political leaders. And sadly, for democracy and Pakistan the number of such leaders is outstanding whether it is PTI or PML-N or PPP. ■

The writer is a former editor of Dawn. [abbas.nasir@tdnmail.com](mailto:abbas.nasir@tdnmail.com)

## OPINION



BY MUNA KHAN

## Our own PTSD

I AM proposing a new ailment unique to Pakistan: Perpetual-Traumatic Stress Disorder. I am not making light of our situation. On the contrary, I'm asking we recognise how this PTSD strikes us, irrespective of income or political affiliation or even a lack of interest in politics. It requires recognition and then treatment, one of which is mobilising powerful nations to impose change on social media platforms and AI companies' incentives. They will not self-regulate. And I don't want any Pakistani government to regulate them because their solution to everything is to ban it.

In almost two decades, social media has gone from being the place we (re)connect with to becoming a source of major conflict in families and societies for disinformation. It is an uncontrollable beast that no one can tame.

But this column isn't about the dollar-proliferating disinformation industry per se; it is about its impact that, along with a curb on our liberties, is making us ... men ... ill. We are in a perpetual state of traumatic disorder caused by the uncertainty of when the internet will return to normal, for example. And normal wasn't even that amusing to begin with.

This state of anxiety has reached a perpetual level because we do not get good governance or balanced, fair information from the government or media. Karachi may be a better city at the moment due to "low AQI on PTV" (thank you Tanzeem Shahid for this joke on X) but our stress levels begin when we step out into a crumbling infrastructure. Friends in Lahore say the smog is killing them. Islamabad is in some form of lockdown every day. Fear rules KP and Balochistan every day. And this is without them turning on screens.

Who is responsible for this constant form of anxiety? Will banning the PTV turn us all these illiterate?

There are plenty of studies to show how exposure to TV following mass traumatic events — violence, war, natural disasters, disease outbreaks — leads to post-traumatic stress disorder. They can result in health issues like depression, which can be a lifelong issue, says the National Institute of Health. In the last decade, studies show anxiety is heightened among people who use social media more than those who don't. Social media is responsible for young people's mental health troubles. It is responsible for the increasing polarity in societies the world over.

The trouble is not the studies documenting what we all know. It is a failure to address these issues that causes this perpetual state. No one paid heed to the warning signs like a 2015 study in the UK by Dr Pam Ramsden which suggested that

watching gruesome videos and images online at home could lead to the same types of symptoms most associated with combat veterans. Its publication caused a lot of controversy at a time before TikTok or 'Tale news' was a phenomenon.

"How could someone who merely watches events on a screen suffer the same problems as, for instance, a combat veteran," asked the BBC. One expert replied "vicarious PTSD is a well-established phenomenon". The vulnerable are especially susceptible. Social media doesn't come with a warning, like traditional media, about harmful content. In fact, it lures you in, knowing the harmful consequences. Unesco said on Thursday that 62 per cent of social media influencers do not verify their content.

You see this play out on our streets every day like the controversy around the number of dead PFI protesters. No one is willing to believe anyone. Also notice how no one is even talking about the documented deaths in Kurram. Our PTSD is also selective.

The trouble is we are left to fend for ourselves in the absence of adequate services, from utility to health to information. We have limited access to resources to help us. A two-day wellness festival in Karachi offers lots of options to help you deal with a number of issues — if you can afford it. Imagine if this was offered as a national service.

For that, you'd need to have a government which prioritises the healthcare industry in the same manner it spends looking up disinformation.

Imagine living in a country where you feel scared for, secure knowing that a lockdown won't deprive you of access to essential. Of equal import is knowing the information you receive is fair, accurate and responsible. People are turning to social media because traditional media has over the years eroded public trust. The last few months have shown us the violent consequences of disinformation campaigns. Maybe, they can be the wake-up call for journalists to unite and come up with strategies to win back public trust. I am hopeful people will return to news media because social media will trick them and fail them. Until then though, I fear we will remain in this perpetual state. ■

The writer is a journalism instructor.  
X: @LeadingLady



BY NASEER MEMON

## Water deficit

RATHER than augmenting water productivity, our planners are obsessed with building new reservoirs and expanding irrigated areas. The reason? More structures mean more money. Barring the wet monsoon years, the Indus basin frequently endures water scarcity. For the last 25 years, the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) has declared water shortages every year and has not allocated water shares as outlined in the 1991 Water Apportionment Accord.

Steady has then questioned the water availability certificate for the Cholistan irrigation scheme issued by Irsa early this year. In its summary to the Council of Common Interests, Steady argued that Irsa's core water accounts (1999-2023) reveal that Punjab and Sindh have experienced annual water shortages of 13.7 per cent and 19.4pc respectively.

The water availability data presented by Punjab before Irsa was misleading. It left out the amount of water committed for some existing and future needs thus creating an impression of surplus water availability. It also failed to mention several current and future possible reductions. These reductions relate to the eastern river flows (2.98 MAF), India's use of the western rivers (2 MAF), the possible use by Afghanistan of the Kabul river (0.5 MAF), the overcommitment of water supplies in the water accord (a shortfall of 21.5 MAF), Bhakra dam storage (0.4 MAF), Mohmand dam (0.88 MAF), Nal Gaj dam (0.16 MAF), Kurram Tanga dam (0.9 MAF), flood canals including the Kachhi, Raima, Greater Thal, Jalalpur and the Pan Fender extension (3.34 MAF), the Chashma Right Bank canal (1.79 MAF), the minimum outflow to the sea (0.6 MAF) and the LBSP reclamation supplies (2.2 MAF).

Put together, these requirements mean 50.65 MAF water every year. This amount dwarfs the reported surplus flow by a wide margin. From 1999 to 2023, the average annual flow below Kotri Barrage remained 14 MAF. Altogether, there is a colossal annual deficit of 36.65 MAF water in the Indus basin.

Various reports indicate a bleak picture of future river flows due to the impact of climate change. The chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority recently shared worrying data at a moot. He revealed that the country's snow cover has decreased by 23.3pc in recent years.

He said that the glaciers are melting at an alarming rate of 1pc every year, resulting in the loss of 14pc of the glacial mass over the past five years. He warned that while the melting glaciers might result in temporary water surpluses, the long-term implications were dire.

With the cryosphere touching a precipi-

ous tipping point, planning a sprawling irrigation web for corporate farming is an impractical venture. The Greater Cholistan scheme entails the building of three dams on the Chashma river. These include the Chashma dam, the Mad Rongha dam and the Shah Jivana dam, which will collectively store 3.5 MAF of water.

The scheme also entails the construction of two barrages — the Bahawal Nagar and Hasilpur barrages on the Sutlej river. Additionally, the scheme involves the 195-kilometre-long Chinot-Hasilpur link canal with a capacity of 15,000 cusecs and two feeder canals with a capacity of 8,500 and 5,500 cusecs. The Greater Cholistan scheme is designed to irrigate a command area of over 1m acres. If we add the 1.2m acres to be irrigated through the Smaller Cholistan scheme, the ambitious proposition would require even larger quantities of water.

Overall, the scope of corporate agriculture is not confined to Cholistan. In August, during a session of the National Assembly, the minister for food security, Rana Tanzeem Hussain, revealed that, under the Green Pakistan Initiative, 4.8m acres of barren land had been earmarked across the country for corporate farming.

Since corporate agriculture projects are being designed to produce grain for international

trade, a reliable commodity supply is essential. This translates to the need for reliable water supplies to meet its corporate farming. According to a media report last month, Pakistan is seeking up to \$6 billion in investment from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Bahrain over the next three to five years for corporate farming with the aim of cultivating 1.5m acres of previously unfarmed land and mechanising the existing 10m acres of agricultural land across the country.

Cultivating such an enormous land mass would require a massive irrigation network. Such an extensive infrastructure and investment of several billion dollars cannot be left at the mercy of erratic flood flows. An uninterrupted water supply is possible only through perennial rivers and canals. Punjab's own share of water is already committed for existing canals. Therefore, it makes sense when Sindh, the lower riparian provinces concern at the development of new command areas. ■

The writer is a civil society professional.  
reemam2004@yahoo.com

FROM THE PAST  
PAGES OF DAWN

1974 | Fifty years ago

## Trade to resume

ISLAMABAD: The ten-year embargo on trade between Pakistan and India will be lifted on Dec 7 under a trade protocol the two countries signed today (Nov 30) in New Delhi. The protocol, which is the product of five days of negotiations of their delegations held in the Indian capital, provides that the two countries will accord each other the "most-favourable" treatment in trade. The trade will be conducted on the basis of free convertible currency in accordance with the two countries' foreign exchange regulations.

Till it was stopped in 1965, the trade between India and Pakistan was carried on mostly on a barter-cum-cash basis. The protocol, released simultaneously in Islamabad and New Delhi ... further provides (that) to begin with, unless otherwise agreed, the two countries will conduct trade on government-to-government basis or through their government-controlled corporations. Experts of the two countries will meet in December next to work out details regarding restoration of direct shipping services. ... Discussion will also be arranged at a mutually convenient time for the restoration of ... rail links to serve mutual trade. An India-Pakistan trade agreement will be concluded "in the near future" ... — News agencies

1949 | Seventy-five years ago

## Historic exhibition

KARACHI: His Excellency Khwaja Nazimuddin, Governor-General of Pakistan, opened the first-ever international industrial and commercial exhibition ... at the Exhibition Ground, Mohammed Ali Jinnah Road, at 5 p.m. on Wednesday (Nov 30). The Governor-General of Pakistan, speaking at the opening ceremony, said that the Exhibition was "unique" as it was for the first time that almost all the Muslim countries were participating in it.

To promote and expand trade between the Muslim countries, the Governor-General suggested that similar exhibitions should be organised every year in the various Muslim countries. Speaking of the International Islamic Economic Conference, the Governor-General said that he was happy to note that the delegates were anxious to improve the economic conditions in their respective countries and it was a happy augury that they evinced a desire for close co-operation in the matter.

Apart from the material considerations, it was one of the primary injunctions of Islam that "we should strive for the welfare of the poor", the Governor-General observed. — Staff correspondent

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@dawn.com

Letters may be edited for purposes of clarity and space. All letters should carry the writer's address, CNIC and phone numbers.

Fighting the untrue  
Pashtun stereotype

A QUICK session of internet browsing is enough to find multiple fake quotes regarding the code of conduct that was historically constructed during the British colonial period. The code is based on the notion of personal honour, and promotes courage, bravery, leadership, justice, an independent approach, and hospitality.

The same vocabulary is used by political parties to exploit the Pashtuns. This exploitation includes the recent 'final self-politisation' by the party leadership from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Truly, digital platforms have provided empirical evidence of the younger generation's involvement in national issues, encompassing their perspectives and views on political conflicts. As Generation Z (Gen Z) approaches positions of national

leadership, it is imperative to examine the implications of reliance on social media platforms, particularly those with algorithm-driven content.

As a Pashtun myself, I find deeply concerning the widespread use of colonial stereotypes, racial slurs and broad generalisations that mark political discourse in the country. The coalition in government as well as the party in opposition, along with mainstream media figures — including some Pashtuns — are responsible for propagating these harmful and overly simplistic narratives.

The opposition party romanticises the colonial notion of 'Pashtun bravery', a reductive and dehumanising concept, while those in power exploit the negative stereotypes, portraying Pashtuns as 'disorderly'. Even well-intentioned media commentators often depict Pashtuns as 'naïve' who get easily manipulated by non-Pashtun elements.

This entire range of rhetoric is offensive, denies the Pashtuns due agency. As a Pashtun, I reject the idea of being inherently 'brave', 'naïve', or more 'disorderly' than others. I demand the same agency and respect afforded to any Pakistani citizen. To comprehend why Pashtuns have generally been more responsive to the main opposition party's calls for protests, one should consider the underlying issue of political marginalisation.

Frankly, the mainstream political parties, other than the one in power, have been virtually non-existent in KP over the last two decades. Indeed, the party that is ruling the KP for several years, while far from being perfect, is the only party that has seriously engaged with the province, establishing organisational

structures and developing political cadres. The party may not be dependent on Pashtuns alone, but the Pashtuns largely depend on the party for influencing the course of national politics.

Therefore, regardless of one's political stance, people need to abandon their stereotypical, racist approaches towards Pashtuns, who actually represent an incredibly diverse and large group of people that cannot be reduced to one or two fixed, essential or rigid social categories.

Tajfah Dawar  
North Waziristan

## Media credibility

AS a media student, I have concerns about the current state of mainstream journalism in the country. Recent events, particularly the coverage of protests, have exposed a troubling trend in our media landscape. Many television channels, news agencies and online platforms appear to be aligned with a single perspective, often favouring government narratives without questioning their validity. In some cases, however, inaccurate or misleading information has been shared, making it seem as if official statements are being published without due scrutiny.

This one-sided reporting has persisted, with a noticeable focus on discrediting a specific political party. Such practices not only create confusion among the public, but also erode trust in the media. This decline in credibility is deeply concerning. If people lose faith in mainstream journalism, its role as a reliable source

of information will be lost. Another issue is the lack of variety in content across different platforms. Regardless of the channel or newspaper, the same repetitive and biased stories dominate, leaving audiences with little choice or perspective. Journalism's primary role is to present facts, encourage informed debate, and hold those in power accountable. Sadly, it seems this mission is being overshadowed by partisanship as well as sensationalism. The media needs to revisit its purpose and responsibilities. By ensuring fairness, accuracy and impartiality in reporting, it can begin to rebuild public trust. Journalism must return to its roots as a pillar of democracy, providing the people with the truth they so deeply deserve.

Waqif Khaliq Dast  
Rawalpindi

## A progressive soul

WE lost a committed progressive writer when Saeeda Gaudar, who emerged on our literary horizon in the 1970s and remained noticeable in the 1980s, recently passed away. In the last about two decades, she had remained in the grip of numerous health issues and had to withdraw to a private life. Saeeda was an active progressive writer, who was fortunate to have had her intellectual grooming under the guidance of renowned social historian and progressive literary figure Syed Sibte Hassan. Saeeda devoted herself to mainly fiction, poetry and translations. Her books, like *Ang Cholistan Ne Dast*, *Tanpo-Dar Ki Manzam*, *Adhi Ganga*, *Sanjari-Khosh-Nab* and a couple of others, represent her social consciousness and critical thinking about the political and economic distortions of society.

In the mid-1970s, under the supervision of Sibte Hassan, she brought out a literary magazine, *Pakistan Adab*, which lost its momentum in emerging as one of the most notable literary journals of that time. Coming soon after the breakup of the country, the magazine initiated a debate on Pakistani culture and the literatures produced in various Pakistani languages.

With translations of these writings became the hallmark of the magazine. *Pakistan Adab* brought out historical issues, like Amir Khusrav Number, Nal Nasal Number and Amreki Adab Number. Saeeda translated many renowned writers, including Pablo Neruda. She also wrote smart scripts for some memorable documentaries made by her equally creative director/producer husband, Mushtaq Gaudar.

Had it not been for her protracted illness, Saeeda would have contributed much more to our literature. But whatever she wrote would remain a valuable asset in our progressive literary tradition.

Dr Syed Jaffer Ahmed  
Karachi

► **MEDICAL TEST FIASCO:** It is surprising that The Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) is compromised almost every year, but no concrete measures have been taken to stop this haunting. The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) should prepare 50 or more test papers, lock them up in a room, and hand over its keys to some designated senior official. One day before the exam, the official should open the room along with a senior police official and pick over test paper randomly. It should be run on a computer. Further administrative arrangements should also be sorted out. **Akshayam Durrani**  
Karachi

► **POWER SUPPLY:** While the Abdul Aziz Library in Sakkar district's Pano Agil town offers necessary equipment for the visiting students, its poor battery-powered system is a nuisance. Due to limited backup, the staff shuts down the battery-powered system daily from 4pm to 5pm, often causing confusion. Consequently, most of the students leave the library, while some prefer to continue studying using the torch in their cell phones. Students and the library staff have repeatedly complained to the relevant authorities, but no action has been taken so far. The higher authorities should ensure a proper power supply to the library. **Abdullah Khan Kori**  
Pano Agil

► **EMPLOYING CHILDREN:** The Punjab Restriction on Employment of Children Act, 2016, bars employers from hiring children below the age of 15 years for any kind of work. In addition, adolescents cannot be employed to perform hazardous work. However, the legal sanctions are frequently being violated blatantly. We can see children working at all sorts of outlets. It is very unfortunate that this invaluable human asset is being wasted. Moreover, children are prone to sexual exploitation at their respective workplaces. It is high time the law was implemented in its true spirit, and offenders were brought to book without any sort of discrimination. **Jasir Nawaz**  
Lahore

**External Ombudsman**  
Veteran journalist Muhammad Ali Siddiqi is Dawn's External Ombudsman (DEO). His duty is to attend to our readers' complaints, and to respond to them professionally. DEO is the investigating authority to whom all complaints can be referred, and it is DEO who takes notice of any alleged violations of Dawn's code of ethics, and informs the Editor for appropriate action. **Email: dmawebombudsman@gmail.com**

## Bitcoin surge shouldn't be ignored

THIS is with reference to the report 'Bitcoin at record high, sets sights on \$100,000' (Nov 23), which, among other things, pointed out that the cryptocurrency brand had more than doubled its value since Donald Trump's sweeping victory on Nov 5, and the election of a slew of pro-crypto lawmakers to the United States Congress. It will be a folly not to keep an eye on such happenings.

The world is witnessing another technological advancement in the shape of blockchain and cryptocurrencies. They have transformed the exchange of value just as the internet has transformed the exchange of information. All this is evident from the recent surge in Bitcoin value, especially because of Trump's pro-crypto stance.

Many believe that the US may even make Bitcoin its reserve currency. Lobbying to that effect has already started in the US. If that happens, experts believe the US may end up buying about a million Bitcoins and holding them for a couple of decades. This will definitely have an impact on the global economy.

Some countries have already adopted Bitcoin as a legal tender and big investment firms have invested heavily in Bitcoin after approval by the Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF), which is a component of the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). According to analysts, the value of a single Bitcoin may hit the million-dollar mark within six years.

In this backdrop, it is quite apparent that the actual power players in the future will be the countries and institutions that



hold a greater share of the 21 million Bitcoins in circulation. These developments should be observed closely by the relevant stakeholders in Pakistan so that a future government strategy may be devised that could resonate with the realities of the decentralised digital future to avoid potential stagnation.

Shakoor Ahmad  
Rajaur





# BUSINESS

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## Banks pump Rs1tr into NBFIs

By Shahid Iqbal

KARACHI: Banks have pumped a record over Rs1 trillion into non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) to avoid incremental tax in case of failure to take the advance-to-deposit ratio (ADR) at 50 per cent by the end of 2024.

The State Bank's latest report showed that the influx of huge liquidity exceeded the total stock of credit to NBFIs by 130 per cent. NBFIs are financial institutions that provide selected financial services but do not hold a banking licence.

Banks have been struggling to avoid incremental tax applicable if they fail to increase the ADR

to 50pc by Dec 31, 2024. The banks have been trying to disperse their excess liquidity by increasing lending and reducing deposit size.

Banks have sent notices to their large account holders with up to Rs10m to Rs15m asking them to pay a 5pc fee on their deposits.

The record bank lending to the NBFIs reached Rs1,015,380m from July 1 to Nov 15 against the net debt retirement of Rs55,800m in the same period last fiscal year, reflecting the same strategy. The credit amount is 130pc more than the total stock of Rs441,400m as of June 30.

The FY24 noted a net debt retirement of Rs70,900m, while the net credit to the sector in

FY23 was Rs144,700m.

In April, some bankers said no bank lending could shut down many NBFIs as the high interest rate damages them. During FY24, the SBP policy rate remained at 22pc, which badly hit all sectors of the economy, but banks remained safe due to the government's extensive borrowing from them.

Most banks were reluctant to finance the private sector and preferred to park their liquidity in risk-free government bonds.

At the end of the third quarter of FY24, NBFIs made a net debt retirement of Rs900m against Rs1400m borrowing in the same period last year.

However, the reduced government borrowings after the KRP

provided Rs2.7tr in profits changed the lending scenario, forcing banks to lend to the private sector and take measures to minimise deposits to meet the 50pc ADR limit to avoid an incremental tax.

Pakistan has a bank-centric financial system where the share of NBFIs remains small and its contribution to financial intermediation is relatively limited.

Bankers believe Pakistan's financial depth, inclusion and debt-to-GDP ratio lag behind neighbouring and other emerging countries. There is a vast scope for expansion of the financial services sector to raise domestic resources and lend to private businesses for fixed investment, bankers said.

## Can local production help make electric vehicles more affordable?

### ANALYSIS

By Aamir Shafiq Khan in Karachi

ELECTRIC vehicles (EVs) are capturing the imagination of Pakistan's motorists, especially in the high-end market, due to an increased awareness about their environmental benefits, as well as the prospect of fuel savings amid a global push to wean motorists off their reliance on fossil fuels.

Under the current pricing regime, even the more basic EV model is quite out of reach for the average car buyer.

However, the government's recently introduced New Energy Vehicle (NEV) policy — which aims to see 30pc of all new cars running on electric power by 2030 — has given some segments of the market hope that incentives being offered to new car-makers entering the Pakistani market now will help make such cars more affordable a few years down the line.

The recent entry of some major names in the NEV market has contributed to this optimism, chief among them is the Chinese auto giant BYD, which has partnered with the Mega Motor Company (MMC) to build an NEV manufacturing plant near Karachi.

The company, which rivals Tesla for the crown of world's biggest EV maker, has already introduced two models — the Atto 3 SUV and Seal sedan. According to a spokesperson, plans are also underway to expand the lineup once local production begins at the \$150 million project, which is expected to have the capacity to roll out 50,000 vehicles annually.

The company aims to achieve that goal within two years of the plant becoming operational, which is expected to be sometime in 2026.

But they are far from being the only players. Regal Automobiles (RAI), has launched what is being billed as the country's first electric sports utility vehicle (SUV) in Lahore, the Sero 3. The vehicle is imported in Completely Knocked Down (CKD) form and assembled at their Margu Margu plant.

CKDs are vehicles that are shipped in parts and assembled at the dealership or factory. Conversely, Completely Built Units (CBUs) are shipped in one piece and do not need to be assembled.

There are several other options too. The Horri, a more compact EV, has been introduced by Yousaf Dawan Companies. Sange Engineering Works Ltd, which has already brought the Chinese Great Wall Motor (GWM) ORA 03 to Pakistan's roads, also has plans to launch CKD production from the end of next year.

But a generation of old-school hybrids (HEVs) and the newer technology plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) are also available to buyers. These employ an internal combustion engine and can run on fuel as well as battery power. The main difference between the two is that HEVs cannot be charged up with electricity directly and have to rely on their engines to produce electric power. PHEVs, however, can be charged at charging stations and run on traditional fuel.

Toyota's Corolla Cross, Ssang's Rexton and Jasion and the Hyundai Santa Fe and

Elantra models are some of the major names in the HEV market.

In addition, Lucky Motors will soon launch a locally assembled version of the Kia HEV, while the company has already introduced the imported EV5 model. As far as PHEVs are concerned, MG Motors unveiled the first locally assembled MG HS PHEV in October. The company has said that it also plans to localise its manufacturing, but the vehicle being sold are currently being imported as CKDs.

Chaudhary Automobiles is also in the process of launching the Cherry Cross Plug-in Hybrid (PHEV) model in January or February 2025.

At present, the imports of completely built units (CBUs) of new energy vehicles — a term that refers to automobile vehicles fully or predominantly powered by alternative energy other than fossil fuels — represent less than 0.1 per cent of vehicles on the road.

So while it makes sense for motorists who can afford it, to switch to some sort of electric vehicle in the future, will localisation of their production make them more accessible to the average motorist?

Local production is usually thought as being cheaper, and it has in the past helped automotive companies bring down prices of their vehicles and parts.

For example, the heavy localisation of Suzuki parts makes their vehicles some of the cheapest to run, which is reflected in their popularity on the roads.

But when it comes to NEVs, the parts and batteries required are not being manufactured in Pakistan, and perhaps won't be for the foreseeable future. Additionally, due to incentives granted by the government, it is currently cheaper for companies to import CKD models rather than if those same vehicles were being brought in as CKD parts and assembled locally.

The Pakistan Automotive Manufacturers Association (PAMA) has already sounded the alarm on this rather counter-intuitive policy.

In a letter to the Engineering Development Board (EDB), a warning that the import of completely built units (CBUs) at a reduced duty structure compared to CKDs could harm the local industry and leave CKD customers without after-sales support.

It also points out that HEV and PHEV vehicles, while still considered 'green', are not as emission-free as NEVs or EVs, as they still employ an internal combustion engine and need fuel to run.

Therefore, they have recommended that PHEVs, which are a part of the government's latest policy, be left out of its ambit. Instead, they have suggested that the current legal regime, under the Auto Industry Development and Export Policy (AIDEP 2021-2026) be allowed to continue.

So is there any hope that with CKD localisation, EVs will become more affordable in the years to come? According to a spokesperson for BYD, localisation of parts, including EV batteries — which constitute 40 per cent of a vehicle's cost — will be explored in the CKD phase to make these new energy vehicles more affordable.

NEVs require specialised components, such as electric motors, hybrid transmissions and high-capacity batteries, making them inherently more expensive than traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles.

The current tax incentives for NEVs in Pakistan are "good but not the best in the world", he said, hoping that the new NEV Policy would introduce better incentives to level the playing field.

## Exports to North America rise 9pc

By Mubarak Zeb Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's merchandise exports to North America witnessed nearly nine per cent growth in the first four months of the current fiscal year compared to the previous year, mainly due to a surge in exports to the United States.

According to data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan, the increase in exports to the region is mainly attributed to the rise in textile and clothing exports to the US.

In FY24, Pakistan's exports to the region recorded a negative growth of 8.42pc to \$5,402 billion from \$5,930m over the same period last year. Pakistan's exports to the US stood at \$5,171m in FY23, down 23.28pc from \$6,740m in the previous fiscal year.

The revival of exports to the region was recorded in the current fiscal year mainly due to a rise in exports of textiles and clothing following a slow down in exports from Bangladesh and Vietnam.

In North America, Pakistan's exports to the US stood at \$2,037m in 4MFY25 from 1,862m over the corresponding months of last year, indicating a growth of 9.39pc. According to PBS data, Pakistan's exports to the US stood at \$5,171m in FY23, which fell by 23.28pc from \$6,740m over the previous fiscal year.

Pakistan's exports to Canada recorded a paltry growth of 2.99pc to \$133.7m in 4MFY25 from \$128.07m over the corresponding months of last year. In FY24, Pakistan's exports to Canada stood at \$189,164m against \$426,575m over the previous year, indicating a decline of 5.77pc.

The imports from North America stood at \$839,274m in 4MFY25 from \$639,609m over the previous year, showing an increase of 28pc. Maximum imports are from the USA.

In the same region, Pakistan's export to Latin America stood at

\$19,037m in 4MFY25 against \$14,953m over the previous year, indicating a marginal increase of 27pc. In FY24, the export value to the region stood at \$27,822m against \$51,087m over the previous year, showing an increase of 46.79pc.

The imports from Latin America stood at \$1,241m in 4MFY25 against \$6,270m over the last year, showing a decline of 80pc.

Pakistan's exports to Central America stood at \$60,525m in 4MFY25 from \$66,581m over the previous year, a decline of 0.092pc. In Central America, Pakistan's main export destination is Mexico, which saw a paltry growth of 7.38pc to \$46,443m in 4MFY25 from \$43,250m over the corresponding months of last year.

The imports from Central America stood at \$28,882m in 4MFY25 against \$22,840m over the same months last year, showing a decline of 8.60pc.

According to SBP data, Pakistan's exports to South America — Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, etc. — stood at \$111,714m in 4MFY25 from \$111,355m over the corresponding months of last year, showing a paltry growth of 0.32pc.

In South America, Pakistan's exports to Argentina stood at \$14,376m in 4MFY25 from \$19,861m over the last year, a decline of 27.62pc. However, Pakistan's exports to Brazil declined by 0.77pc to \$44,727m this year from \$45,075m over the last year.

Pakistan's exports to Uruguay stood at \$2,271m in 4MFY25 against \$2,636m over the last year, showing a decline of 13.84pc. According to SBP, the US remained Pakistan's biggest export destination in the region.

The imports from South America stood at \$296,663m during 4MFY25 against \$156,780m over the previous year, showing an increase of 86.81pc. South America is the second biggest import destination in the continent after North America.



GLOBAL food and agricultural trade grew nearly five-fold, rising from \$400 billion in 2000 to \$1.9 billion in 2022. According to FAO report, the rising production for exports is contributing to inequality and depletion of natural resources.—Reuters

## New Lahore grid station to start work next month

Matiari-Lahore line to transmit up to 4,000MW electricity by March

By Khadija Hussain

LAHORE: The 500kV Lahore (North) grid station is likely to be commissioned partially by next month, paving the way to evacuate power from the Matiari-Lahore High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission line for supply to the various cities of Gujranwala division through 500kV Nohhar grid station and transmission lines near Cakhar, Gujranwala.

The project was delayed due to land acquisition and other administrative issues and was scheduled to be completed last summer. However, according to official sources, the newly constituted board of directors (BoD) took serious notice of the delay, resolving most of the issues in the way of completion.

"The transmission lines have already been completed. However, the grid station couldn't be completed on time due to issues related to land acquisition, as various landowners want to convert. But now, there is no issue in this regard," an official source in the National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC) explained while talking to Dawn on Saturday.

According to the official, who requested anonymity, as many as 2,000MW of power is currently being transmitted by the 4,000MW Matiari-Lahore HVDC line. After receiving the power in Alternative Current (AC) from the AC transmission lines, the energy is converted into Direct Current (DC) by a converter station at Matiari (near Hyderabad). After carrying the load in

DC mode, the converter station at Lahore (near Bahadur) converts the power into AC for onward supply to AC lines.

"Four lines from Matiari-Lahore HVDC line's Bahadur converter station have been completed. Two connect to the 500kV New Lahore Sarfraz Nagar (Phoolbagh) grid station for power transmission to Lahore metropolitan city and adjoining areas. One has been laid from the converter station to Nohhar (Gujranwala), and the last one has been completed from the converter station to the motorway (near Shakhbuzpur). The total length of both lines, which connect Nohhar and Motorway, is 110km, and both were completed in December last year," the official explained.

A senior official, who wished not to be identified, said the Matiari-Lahore line has an installed capacity of 4,000MW, so the NTDC needs power as per demand. "At present, the line is transmitting 2,000MW. However, it will increase by 400MW soon when the 500kV North Lahore grid station has an installation of a transformer and some connectors and starts operating partially in the coming days," he explained.

"And by March next year, three more transformers would be installed, commissioning the project to supply another 1,000MW from the HVDC line. This project would be commissioned fully by March, subject to the availability of all equipment, which is sometimes delayed due to import-related issues."

It is pertinent to mention that the Lahore north substation project is being executed under the Second Power Transmission Enhancement Investment Programme — Tranche-3 — in funding collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

## Stocks scale new peak despite political, security concerns

By Muhammad Kashif

KARACHI: Dominant bulls managed to navigate the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) through turbulent paths to an unprecedented level above 100,000 despite economic, political, and security concerns during the ongoing week.

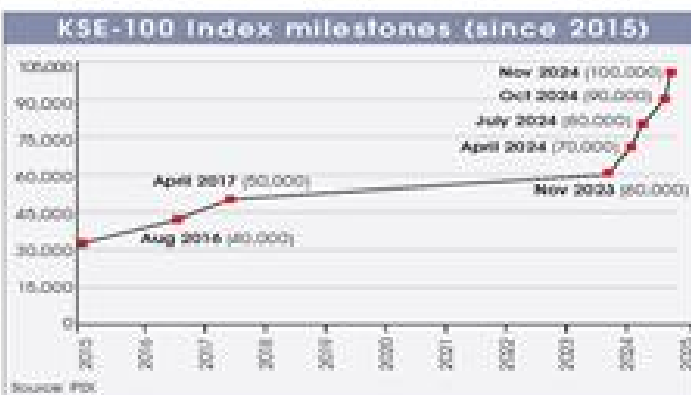
The underlying political instability, rising costs, and deteriorating law and order situation were key worries of big businesses and institutional companies, warning that these issues forced industrialists to relocate their operations abroad.

According to AKD Securities Ltd, the PSX remained volatile throughout the week due to an acceleration in political instability amid the opposition party vouching to protest in the capital,

creating uncertainty amongst investors and leading to a record single-day fall in the KSE-100 index, marking a decrease of 1,506 points on Tuesday. The market regained momentum in subsequent sessions after the protesters started to back off from Islamabad. The bull run was further fuelled by a circular from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), removing the minimum deposit rate (MDR) requirements on deposits held by commercial banks of financial institutions and public sector enterprises.

As a result, the KSE-100 index registered its highest-ever single-day gains of 4,496 points on Wednesday.

However, another SBP circular revising guidelines for profit sharing on saving deposits of Islamic Banking Institutions



(CRUs) brought Meezan Bank under pressure, eroding 439 points during the week.

According to Arif Habib Ltd (AHL), the key driver

of this recovery included expectations of further easing in inflation and a strong rally in commercial banks following the removal of MDR.

In the T-bill auction conducted during the week, the SBP raised Rs2,494m, significantly exceeding the target of Rs200m. This was accompanied by

a decline in yields of up to 80bps, with the three-month yield reaching its lowest level since April 2022, and the six-month and 12-month yields falling to levels last observed in March 2022.

Furthermore, SBP reserves increased by \$1.14bn. The rupee marginally depreciated by 0.10pc to Rs278.04 against the greenback.

As a result, the market concluded the week at 101,057 points, marking a gain of 3,559 points or 3.64pc week-on-week.

Sector-wise positive contributions came from commercial banks (1.67pc), technology and communication (1.49pc), oil and gas exploration companies (1.04pc), oil and gas marketing companies (1.00pc) and cement (2.34pc).

Meanwhile, the sectors

that mainly contributed negatively were miscellaneous (52 points), automobile assembler (11 points), and automobile parts and accessories (5 points). Scrip-wise positive contributors were Habib Bank (494 points), Bank Al-Habib (538 points), Pakistan Petroleum Ltd (274 points), Systems Ltd (255 points), and Bank Alfalah (205 points). Scrip-wise negative contributors came from Meezan Bank (439 points), Engro Fertiliser (78 points), Faisal Bank (57 points), Pakistan Services Ltd (56 points), and Nagar Engineering Works (34 points).

Foreigner selling continued clocking in at \$15.1m compared to a net sell of \$33.0m last week. Significant selling was witnessed in banks (\$4.7m), followed by fertilizer (\$4.2m). On the local

front, insurance reported buying \$10.6m, followed by individuals (\$7.1m).

The average trading volume eased 1.2pc to 929m shares while the average value traded rose 7.1pc to \$133m week-on-week.

According to AHL, the market will sustain its positive momentum in the coming week, driven by expectations of a further decline in inflation.

AKD Securities said continuing monetary easing due to the disinflationary environment and improving the macroeconomic environment would make equities more appealing, currently trading at a P/E of 4.9x and dividend yield of 10.2pc. The factors mentioned earlier and declining external financing requirements under the IMF programme would keep foreigners' interests alive.

## Kosovo suspects Serbia's hand behind blast

PRISTINA: Kosovo arrested several suspects on Saturday after an explosion at a key canal feeding two of its main power plants, while neighbouring Serbia rejected accusations of staging the blast.

The explosion on Friday near the town of Zubin Potok, which sits in an ethnic Serb-dominated area in Kosovo's troubled north, damaged a canal that supplies water to hundreds of thousands of people and cooling systems at two coal-fired power plants that generate most of Kosovo's electricity.

As security forces secured the area around the canal, where concrete walls were left with a gaping hole gushing water, Prime Minister Albin Kurti visited the site and announced an investigation had arrested several people.

Law enforcement "carried out searches" and "collected testimony and evidence, and the crim-

inals and terrorists will have to face justice and the law," he said. The arrests follow a security meeting, when Kurti pointed the finger at Serbia.

"The attack was carried out by professionals. We believe it comes from gangs directed by Serbia," he told a press conference, without providing evidence.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic hit back, denying the "irresponsible" and "baseless accusations". "Such unfounded claims are aimed to tarnish Serbia's reputation, as well as to undermine efforts to promote peace and stability in the region," he said in a statement.

Serbian Foreign Minister Marko Djuric had earlier suggested on X that the Kosovo "regime" could itself be behind the blast, calling for an international investigation.

—AFP



WORKERS repair a damaged canal which was targeted in a blast near Zubin Potok, a town in Kosovo, on Saturday.—Reuters

## Nations warn of deadlock at landmark plastic pollution talks

Greenpeace activists board tanker in protest off South Korea

BUNAN: Diplomats warned on Saturday that a majority of countries could walk away from talks on the world's first plastic pollution agreement if a handful of delegates continue insisting on a compromise.

Nearly 200 countries are in South Korea's Busan for negotiations on a deal to curb plastic pollution. But efforts to reach the landmark agreement are blocked over several key sticking points, particularly reducing production and phasing out chemicals believed or known to harm human health.

Over 100 countries back those measures, and insist a treaty without them will fail to solve the pollution crisis. But around a dozen nations — mostly producers of plastic precursors derived from fossil fuels — are strongly opposed.

As a result, just a day before talks are supposed to end, the draft text remains full of opposing views and contradictory language. And frustration is growing.

"The overwhelming majority of

delegates here demand an ambitious treaty," said Panama's delegation head Juan Carlos Monterrey Gomez. "If the reduction of production is not there, there is no treaty."

"We cannot let a few loud voices derail the process," he added.

"Ready to walk away"

Environmental groups have pushed ambitious countries to move to a vote if progress stalls, arguing that countries like Saudi Arabia and Russia have not offered any compromises during talks.

A diplomat from the High Ambition Coalition, which groups dozens of countries seeking a strong deal, echoed that sentiment.

"We are a large group writing around key effective elements, and getting ready to walk away," he said. He warned that "some countries" were actively countering

calls to vote, which would circumvent the UN's traditional approach of agreement by consensus and could "raise a lot of eyebrows."

It was a possibility being increasingly discussed as a "last resort," said the Democratic Republic of Congo's J.M. Boppe Boppe Lapwong. "I think that if we can't reach an agreement, we'll be obliged to go to a vote. We cannot come all this way, all these kilometres, to fail,"

he said. "True, it's not the usual way at UN meetings, and we will do it to our shame — because when you negotiate, you don't expect to win it all."

More than 90 per cent of plastic is not recycled, while plastic production is expected to triple by 2040.

"Plastic kills"

Moreover, Greenpeace activists boarded a tanker off South Korea on Saturday in an action intended to draw attention to calls for a treaty to curb plastic pollution, the environmental group said.

Greenpeace said the tanker Bussan Alba, anchored off the Haeinsa, Unalloyed, complex, was scheduled to pick up pyrolysis, which is used to manufacture plastic. "The activists boarded the vessel peacefully and met no reaction from the vessel crew," said Greenpeace spokeswoman Angelica Paga.

"We painted 'PLASTIC KILLS' on the side of the vessel and the climbers successfully set up a camp," she said. "They intend to stay in order to continue putting pressure on the negotiators to resist fossil fuel and petrochemical industry interference in the talks and to deliver a treaty that firmly cuts plastic production." —AFP

## Over 100 Rohingya refugees rescued off Indonesia

BANDA ACEH: More than 100 Rohingya refugees including women and children were rescued after their boat sank off the coast of Indonesia, the United Nations refugee agency said on Saturday.

The mostly Muslim ethnic Rohingyas are heavily persecuted in Myanmar and thousands risk their lives each year on long and dangerous sea journeys to reach Malaysia or Indonesia.

"We received a report from the East Aceh government that there are 115 refugees in total," UNHCR's Faisal Rahmani said on Saturday.

"The refugees are still on the beach right now, it has not been decided where they would be taken," he said. The flimsy wooden boat carrying the Rohingyas was found half-submerged not far from the beach off the coast of northeastern Sumatra island.

A local fisherman, Saifuddin Taber said the boat was first spotted entering East Aceh waters

on Saturday morning, and a few hours later it nearly sank. "All passengers survived, but one of them was ill and ... immediately received treatment," Saifuddin said, adding the boat was only 100 metres away from the beach, and the refugees could walk easily to safety.

Rohingya arrivals in Indonesia tend to follow a cyclical pattern, showing during the stormy months and picking back up when sea conditions calm down. Last month, 152 Rohingyas refugees were finally brought ashore after being anchored for days off the coast of South Aceh district for days while officials decided whether to let them land.

Indonesia is not a signatory to the UN refugee convention and says it cannot be compelled to take in refugees from Myanmar, calling instead on neighbouring countries to share the burden and resettle Rohingyas who arrive on its shores.

—AFP

## Russia, North Korea agree to boost military ties

SEOUL: Russian Defence Minister Andrei Belousov met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and agreed to boost military cooperation between the two isolated nations, Pyongyang state media said on Saturday.

The United States and South Korea have accused the nuclear-armed North of sending more than 10,000 soldiers to help Russia fight Ukraine, with experts saying Kim is eager to gain advanced technology, and battle experience for his troops, in return.

Kim, who met Belousov on Friday, blunt of the recent decision by Western powers to permit Kyiv to strike inside Russia with their weapons, saying it constituted a "direct military intervention in the conflict," according to KCNA.

"It is an exercise of the right to self-defence for Russia to take resolute action to make the hostile forces pay the price," Kim was quoted as saying.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kim signed a strategic partnership treaty in June that obligates both states to provide military assistance "without delay" in the case of an attack on the other and jointly oppose Western sanctions.

KCNA said on Saturday that Belousov's visit "would greatly contribute to bolstering up the defence capabilities of the two countries and... promoting the friendly, mutual cooperation and development of the relations between the two armies," Belousov, in a statement, expressed gratitude for the two countries' deepening bonds and praised North Korea's "absolutely independent foreign policy." —AFP

## Ukraine says war has damaged most of its civilian airports

KYIV: Fifteen of Ukraine's civilian airports have been damaged since Russia invaded the country in February 2022, Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal was quoted as saying by local media on Saturday.

Ukraine, which the state aviation service says has 20 civilian airports, has been exploring avenues to partially open its airspace. It has been completely closed since the start of the war.

Ukrainians who want to fly abroad currently have to go via road or rail to neighbouring countries to catch flights. For those living in the east, the journey out of Ukraine can take a day in itself.

"We conducted a risk assessment and determined the needs of the air defence forces to partially open the airspace," local news agency Ukrinform quoted Shmyhal as saying at a transportation conference. "Security issues and the military situation remain key to this decision," he said.

Shmyhal added that Russia had attacked Ukraine's port infrastructure nearly 60 times in the last three months, damaging or destroying nearly 300 facilities and 22 civilian vessels.

A senior partner at insurance broker Marsh McLennan said earlier this month that Ukraine could reopen the airport in the western city of Lviv in 2025 if regulators deem it safe and a political decision is made. —Reuters

# Vietnam to build \$67 billion high-speed north-south rail link

HANOI: Vietnam said on Saturday that it will build a \$67 billion high-speed railway from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City, in a much-needed boost to infrastructure that is expected to drive growth and enhance its reputation among foreign investors.

The railway, which will stretch more than 1,500 kilometres from the capital in the north to the country's business hub in the south, will reduce the current journey time by rail from 30 hours to around five.

"The national assembly voted to approve... a resolution on investment policies for the high-speed railway project on the North-South axis," said a statement on Vietnam parliament's website.

Vietnam's transport infrastructure is

considered relatively weak, with a road network struggling to keep up with demand and an underdeveloped rail system. The government's priority is one of the fastest in the region, although Vietnam is pushing to expand it, while road transport costs are among the highest.

The country is an increasingly favoured destination for foreign businesses looking for an alternative to China, but low-quality infrastructure is seen as holding back strong investment. Dan Martin, International Business Adviser of Dezan Shira & Associates, said the project would "supercharge the Vietnamese economy".

Making it easier for crucial components to reach manufacturing hubs and exped-

ing the delivery of finished goods, the railway will "boost production, reduce lead times, and solidify Vietnam's role in global supply chains", Martin said.

"A breakthrough"

Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment Tran Quoc Phuong earlier called the new line "a breakthrough" in the country's infrastructure that would boost the country's GDP by an average of 0.57 percentage points annually.

"It is the wish of the people and the determination of the political system to have an international standard high-speed railway," he said prior to the approval.

The National Assembly had in 2010

scrapped this same project, then estimated at \$56 billion, over fears it was too costly. But the project's potential impact has changed dramatically, Martin said, adding that there was "growing momentum" behind high-speed rail projects across Southeast Asia, where Laos and Indonesia have both completed rail lines in recent years.

"For Vietnam... it's about becoming an even stronger player in a region that's rapidly embracing high-speed rail," he said. The new rail line will stop at 21 stations in 20 different cities and provinces, boosting connectivity between the regions and giving locals more travel options.

"The high-speed railway... will make it more convenient for many people to travel",

said university student Pham Dang Quang, speaking onboard a train between Hanoi and the port city of Hai Phong on Saturday. He said he was looking forward to the day he could "take the train between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in the morning and get back home in the evening".

The project is scheduled to take just eight years — beginning in 2027 and aiming for completion in 2035 — although the country has a history of overruns when it comes to major infrastructure projects. Hanoi's second metro line opened this year after nearly a decade's delay while Ho Chi Minh City's first metro route was originally supposed to start operations in 2018. It has still not opened. —AFP



JABALPUR (India): Torch-bearing students take part in an event on the eve of World AIDS Day, on Saturday.—AFP



DABROWKA (Poland): A view of concrete anti-tank barriers of the first completed section of fortifications on the Polish-Russian border.—Reuters

## NEWSMAKERS



ANTIQUEITIES are seen at a station on the first day of metro train operation in Thessaloniki.—Reuters

## New Greek metro is archaeological window on the past

ATHENS: A metro system in Greece's second city Thessaloniki officially opened on Saturday, its stations displaying the same ancient artifacts that nearly derailed the project's completion.

During construction, which began in 2006, workers discovered a Byzantine-era market, a Roman cemetery and other treasures of the city's long and varied history.

The finds stalled the metro's progress and raised questions about how the city would modernise while protecting its rich past. The answer was to blend the two by displaying the uncovered artefacts for modern-day commuters to enjoy.

"This is not just a public works project, which is incredibly important for the city. It is also a museum," Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said before

visiting the Venizelos station for a private tour on Friday.

"It's probably unique in the world. We will go through an underground museum to reach the train." The metro took nearly 10 years to complete, in part because of funding problems during Greece's 2009-2018 debt crisis. It is the first such system in Greece outside Athens.

Builders had to dig deeper than originally planned — up to 31 metres — to make sure the tunnels ran below the archaeological findings, according to the project's contractor. "It is an opportunity for Thessaloniki to become a second Rome, in terms of antiquities," said Melissa Patsidou, one of the archaeologists to discover the relics underground. —Reuters



MONGALIERI (Italy): Italian tightrope walker Giulia Cammarota performs on a 100-metre-long steel cable. Cammarota is the only Italian female tightrope walker to walk at great heights.—AFP



GOTEMBA (Japan): Mount Fuji pictured in the background as people walk around a popular shopping centre.—AFP

Thousands take to streets in Georgia for pro-EU protests

**TLIBSI.** Thousands of people gathered in Georgia's capital Tbilisi on Saturday for a third night of protests against the government's decision to postpone European Union membership talks until 2028.

The Black Sea nation has been rocked by turmoil since the ruling Georgian Dream party claimed victory in an Oct 26 parliamentary election that the pro-European opposition said was fraudulent.

Outside the parliament building in central Tbilisi, crowds of protesters chanted and waved EU and Georgian flags. "My future depends on what Georgia will do right now," 22-year-old protester Anna Katsidzevili said.

More than 100 people were arrested during violent clashes between law enforcement and protesters the night before, with police firing a water cannon and tear gas at demonstrators.

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze's announcement on Thursday that Georgia would not seek accession talks with the EU until 2028 ignited a furious reaction from the opposition. Critics accuse Georgian Dream — in power for more than a decade — of having steered the country away from the bloc in recent years and of moving closer to Russia, an accusation it denies.

Hundreds of public servants, including from the ministries of foreign affairs, defense and education, as well as a number of judges, issued joint statements protesting Kobakhidze's decision.

Some 540 Georgian diplomats criticised the move as contradicting the constitution and leading the country "into international isolation".

**'Resistance movement'**

On Friday, reporters saw riot police fire water cannon and tear gas at pro-EU protesters gathered outside parliament, who tossed eggs and fireworks. Clashes broke out later between protesters and police, who moved in to clear the area, beating demonstrators, some of whom threw objects.

"I extend my gratitude to the minister of internal affairs and every police officer who yesterday defended Georgia's constitutional order and safeguarded the nation's sovereignty and independence," Kobakhidze told a news conference on Saturday.

Georgia's special investigation service said it had opened a probe into "allegations of abuse of official authority through violence by law enforcement officers against protesters and media representatives". Independent TV station Imedi said one of its journalists was hospitalized with serious injuries.

Protests were also held in other cities across Georgia on Friday, independent TV station Imedi reported. "I am afraid I won't hide it — that many people will get injured, but I am not afraid to stand here," 35-year-old Tamar Gulaidze said near the parliament building earlier.

More than a hundred schools and universities suspended academic activities in protest. Pro-Western opposition parties are boycotting the new parliament, while President Salome Zourabichvili — who is an ally of the ruling Georgian Dream — has sought to avoid the election results through the country's constitutional court.—AFP



CHENNAI: People wade through a flooded street as rains lashed southern India ahead of a cyclonic storm, on Saturday.—AFP

Incumbent centre-right in 'driving seat' after elections in Ireland

**DUBLIN.** Vote counting in Ireland's general election began on Saturday as an exit poll indicated a tight finish between the three main parties with the incumbent centre-right coalition most likely to form the next government.

After voting concluded on Friday, the exit poll indicated that the left-nationalist Sinn Fein, the main opposition party, narrowly led with 21.1 per cent of the vote.

But neck and neck on 21pc was the centre-right Fine Gael whose leader is the outgoing prime minister Simon Harris.

Fine Gael's centre-right partner in the outgoing coalition — Fianna Fail, led by deputy prime minister Michael Martin — were slightly further back in third with 19.5pc. Partial results are expected later Saturday, while a final result may not be clear for days.

"Forming a government will depend on two of the three being able to cooperate with one another," Lisa Keenan, a political scientist at Trinity College Dublin, said. But Fine Gael and Fianna Fail are "in the driving seat to re-establish coalition" in the new 174-seat lower chamber of parliament, said the Irish Times newspaper.

During the campaign both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael ruled out entering coalition with Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein's leader Mary Lou McDonald, 55, told reporters at the Dublin concert centre that her party has been given "a powerful and strong mandate" in the election, and that it will talk to potential coalition partners "about the possibilities of government".

"Sinn Fein could well finish first in the popular vote for the second time in a row, but face another five years in opposition," said the Irish Times.

**House-trading ahead**

At the last general election in 2020, the pro-Irish unity Sinn Fein — the former political wing of the paramilitary Irish Republican Army — won the largest vote share but could not find willing partners.

That led to weeks of horse-trading, ending up with Fine Gael, which has been in power since 2011, agreeing a deal with Fianna Fail.

During the last parliamentary term, the role of prime minister rotated between the Fianna Fail and Fine Gael leaders. The smaller Green Party made up the governing coalition.

EU member Ireland's proportional representation system gave voters of almost 400 candidates redistributed during multiple rounds of counting.

While the exit poll suggests Fine Gael and Fianna Fail's performance is down on the last election, "their supporters are increasingly willing to transfer from one to the other," as the count rounds progress, Keenan said.

Smaller opposition parties including

the Social Democrats, and Labour could be in the mix for coalition talks after the final result according to analysts. Non-aligned independent candidates could also play a role in the next government if sought by the frontrunner parties to make up an 88-seat majority in the Dail.

The three-week campaign, launched after Harris called a snap election Nov 8, was marked by raucous over housing and cost-of-living crises, public spending and immigration.

Harris, who became Ireland's youngest-ever taoiseach (prime minister) when he took over in April, held a solid lead entering the campaign. But the party lost ground, in particular after Harris was seen in a viral clip appearing rude and dismissive to a care worker on the campaign trail.

Both centre-right parties stressed their pro-business and pro-EU credentials and said returning them to power would ensure stability, particularly with turmoil abroad and the risk of external shocks like a protectionist incoming USA administration that could slap tariffs on imports and renege on corporate tax of US tech and pharma giants in Ireland.

The exit poll revealed "no enthusiasm for the government, despite a buoyant economy," Eoin O'Malley, a political scientist at Dublin City University, said. "But neither is there any enthusiasm for the opposition parties," he said.—AFP

Cyclone makes landfall in India's south

**BENGALURU.** Heavy rains lashed India's south and a major airport shut operations as cyclone Fengal made landfall on Saturday.

Cyclones — the equivalent of hurricanes in the North Atlantic or typhoons in the northwestern Pacific — are a regular and deadly menace in the northern Indian Ocean.

India's weather bureau said "the forward sector of spiral bands associated with the cyclone has entered into the land" with a forecast of sustained winds of 70-80 kilometres an hour (43-50 miles per hour). Authorities also said there was a "moderate to high flash flood risk" over a few areas.

Several areas in the state of Tamil Nadu were flooded while authorities extended closure of the main airport in capital city Chennai till Sunday. "Due to stormy winds, the road is heavily covered with sand and stones are advised to proceed with caution," traffic police in Chennai posted on social media platform X.

Chennai and surrounding areas experienced heavy rains, leading to waterlogging in residential neighbourhoods and key roads. Suburban areas like Velachery and Hinthamparam were particularly affected, with rainwater entering homes, forcing residents to take preventive measures.

Schools and colleges in numerous districts in the state were shut and at least 471 people had been moved to relief camps, local media reported. Fengal skirted the coast of Sri Lanka earlier this week, killing at least 12 people including six children.

Scientists have warned that storms are becoming more powerful as the world heats up due to climate change driven by burning fossil fuels. Warmer ocean surfaces release more water vapour, which provides additional energy for storms, strengthening winds.

A warming atmosphere also allows them to hold more water, boosting heavy rainfall. But better forecasting and more effective evacuation planning have dramatically reduced death tolls.—Agencies

Ex-defence minister accuses Israel of ethnic cleansing

**JERUSALEM.** Israel's former defence minister Moshe Ya'alon on Saturday accused the Israeli army of ethnic cleansing in the Gaza Strip, sparking an outcry in the country.

"The road we are being led down is complete annexation and ethnic cleansing," Ya'alon said in an interview on a private TV channel.

Pressed on the ethnic cleansing appraisal, he continued: "What is happening there? There is no more Beit Lahia, no more Beit Hanoun, the army intervenes in Jenin and in reality the land is being cleared of Arabs."

The north of the Gaza Strip, which includes the areas Ya'alon mentioned, has been the target of an Israeli offensive aimed at preventing Hamas from regrouping.

Ya'alon, 74, headed the Israeli army between 2002 and 2005, just before Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza.

He served as defence minister and deputy prime minister before resigning in 2015 over disagreements with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

There was immediate

anger in Israel at his comments.

Former National Security Minister Barak Ben Elvir said it was a "shame" for Israel to "have had such a figure as army chief and defence minister".

Netanyahu's Likud party, to which Ya'alon once belonged, dismissed his "empty and dishonest remarks", calling them "a gift to the BCC and to the camp of Israel's enemies".

The statement was a reference to the International Criminal Court, which has issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu and his ex-defence minister Yoav Gallant on charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes in Gaza.

Earlier this month, a UN special committee pointed to "mass civilian casualties and life-threatening conditions intentionally imposed on Palestinians".

Israel's prosecution of the military operation in Gaza was "consistent with the characteristics of genocide", the committee said, in the first use of the word by the UN in the context of the Gaza crisis.—AFP

31 crew of Thai fishing vessels held in Myanmar

**BANGKOK.** More than 30 crew members of Thai fishing boats were detained in Myanmar waters on Saturday after an encounter with other vessels which left one person dead, a navy commander said.

Sawat Donakul, a naval commander in the southern province of Ranong, said one Thai fisherman drowned and "31 people were taken into Myanmar", without specifying who had detained them.

Sawat said several Thai fishing boats were operating within Myanmar's waters at the time of the incident on Saturday. The deceased "jumped into the water during the attack", he said. Sawat said he had instructed local authorities to negotiate with their Myanmar counterparts to secure the release of the fishermen.

A spokesperson for Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that they would also engage in negotiations with the Myanmar side to secure their release. Agency has reached out to Myanmar's junta government for comment.

The incident prompted the Ranong provincial fisheries department to issue a warning to fishers and boat owners to avoid areas near the Thai-Myanmar maritime border. The fisheries department said in a statement that "Myanmar armed fishing boats" had attacked Thai fishing vessels around 20 kilometres west of Phang Nga island, off the Thai coast, without specifying the identity of the alleged attackers.

In warning to say "all fishing operations and vessel owners to be cautious when navigating near the border".

Thailand and Myanmar share approximately 1,500 miles of land and maritime borders, including in the Andaman Sea. According to a notice on the website of Thailand's fisheries department, Thai fishing boats have been illegally operating in Myanmar waters, raising tensions between the two countries.—AFP

## VEHICLES FOR SALE

The Hub Power Company Limited intends to sell following vehicles on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS":

Sr. #	Description	MODE	REG. #
1	CHANGAN KARVAM 1800CC (WHITE)	2020	CV-7508
2	ISUZU D-MAX 2.5 L-ANDEE (WHITE)	2020	CV-7513
3	ISUZU RAVI PICKUP	2019	CU-3209
4	ISUZU RAVI PICKUP	2017	OW-9979
5	ISUZU RAVI PICKUP	2018	OX-8888
6	ISUZU RAVI PICKUP	2018	OX-8887
7	ISUZU RAVI PICKUP	2018	OX-8876
8	ISUZU RAVI PICKUP	2018	OX-8875
9	ISUZU CULTUS VXR 1.8 (SMOKE GREEN)	2013	AZJ-483
10	ISUZU CULTUS VXR 1.8 (SMOKE GREEN)	2013	88K-414
11	ISUZU CULTUS VXR 1.8 (SMOKE GREEN)	2013	AZJ-474
12	TOYOTA COROLLA ALITE 1.8 BAT	2016	88C-440
13	TOYOTA COROLLA ALITE 1.8 BAT	2016	88C-756
14	TOYOTA COROLLA ALITE 1.8 BAT	2016	88C-588
15	TOYOTA COROLLA ALITE 1.8 BAT	2016	88C-592
16	TOYOTA COROLLA ALITE 1.8 BAT	2016	88C-848
17	TOYOTA COROLLA ALITE 1.8 BAT	2016	88C-582
18	TOYOTA COROLLA ALITE 1.8 BAT	2016	88C-592
19	TOYOTA COROLLA ALITE 1.8 BAT	2016	88C-607
20	TOYOTA HACE COMM HINOOP DUAL A/C	2012	CU-1248
21	TOYOTA HACE GRAND CABIN (SILVER)	2016	OW-2564
22	TOYOTA HACE GRAND CABIN (SILVER)	2017	OX-1589
23	TOYOTA HACE GRAND CABIN (SILVER)	2016	OW-2561
24	TOYOTA HACE GRAND CABIN (SILVER)	2017	OX-1587
25	TOYOTA HACE GRAND CABIN (SILVER)	2016	OW-2565
26	TOYOTA HACE GRAND CABIN (SILVER)	2017	OX-1588
27	TOYOTA HACE GRAND CABIN (SILVER)	2016	OW-2562
28	TOYOTA HACE GRAND CABIN (SILVER)	2017	OX-1601
29	TOYOTA HACE GRAND CABIN (SILVER)	2017	OX-1602
30	TOYOTA HACE GRAND CABIN (SILVER)	2017	OX-1600
31	TOYOTA HACE GRAND CABIN (SILVER)	2016	OW-2563
32	TOYOTA HACE HIGH HOOP (SILVER) AMBULANCE	2017	OW-8888
33	TOYOTA HACE HIGH HOOP / MOBILE DISPENSERY	2016	OW-3463
34	TOYOTA HELL 4X2 PICKUP S/C	2011	CT-7328
35	TOYOTA HELL 4X2 PICKUP S/C	2008	CS-2541
36	TOYOTA HELL 4X2 PICKUP S/C	2008	CS-2512
37	TOYOTA HELL 4X2 PICKUP S/C	2008	CS-2519
38	TOYOTA HELL 4X4 SHOULDER CARRIER (KURRO)	2014	CU-7134
39	TOYOTA HELL RENO 5018 4X4 G MT 2750CC (WHITE)	2019	CV-6724
40	TOYOTA HELL RENO 5018 4X4 G MT 2750CC (BLACK)	2021	CV-5823
41	TOYOTA PORTUNER AT (WHITE)	2014	BF-5027
42	TOYOTA HELL S/C 4X2 UP50C 2484 (SILVER/WHITE)	2017	OX-2136
43	TOYOTA HELL S/C 4X2 UP50C 2484 (SILVER/WHITE)	2017	OX-2134
44	TOYOTA HELL S/C 4X2 UP50C 2484 (SILVER/WHITE)	2017	OX-2135
45	TOYOTA LAMB CRUISER V8 PETROL (WHITE)	2008	BF-5558
46	TOYOTA PRADO 12-G PETROL (WHITE)	2014	88C-1180
47	HONDA CG 150 MOTORCYCLE	2016	KUD-8153

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## DISPOSAL OF MOBILE PLANT & WORKSHOP EQUIPMENTS

The Hub Power Company Limited intends to sell following equipments on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS":

Sr. #	Equipments & Items	Type	Capacity (H.P.)	Reg. #	UoM	Qty
1	Mobile Crane (TERRA)	—	—	—	Each	1
2	Tele Handler (Mark)	—	2	—	Each	1
3	Tele Handler (Mark)	—	4	—	Each	1
4	Tele Handler (Mark)	—	4	—	Each	1
5	Tele Handler (Mark)	—	3	—	Each	1
6	Dumper	—	3	—	Each	2
7	Forklift	—	3	—	Each	1
8	Forklift	—	2	—	Each	1
Sr. #	Trailers and Browsers	Type	Capacity	Reg. #	UoM	Qty
1	Box Trailer	—	—	—	Each	2
2	Box Trailer	—	2,000 LB	—	Each	1
Sr. #	Pumps and Compressors	Type	Capacity	Reg. #	UoM	Qty
1	Crusher	Plate action	—	—	Each	2
2	High pump engine	—	—	—	Each	2
3	Speed loader	—	—	—	Each	2
4	Overloading pump	Size	4 inch	—	Each	1
5	Overloading pump	Submersible	4 inch	—	Each	1
6	Air compressor	Size	—	—	Each	2
7	Jet washer	Size	—	—	Each	1
Sr. #	Engines	Type	Capacity (H.P.)	Reg. #	UoM	Qty
1	Diesel Generator (1.5MVA)	Diesel	1,500	—	Each	1
2	Diesel Generator (200KVA)	Diesel	200	—	Each	4
3	Diesel Generator (100KVA)	Diesel	100	—	Each	1
4	Diesel Generator (40KVA)	Diesel	40	—	Each	1
5	Portable CO	Diesel	10	—	Each	1
6	Portable CO	Diesel	5	—	Each	1

### EXCESSIVE EQUIPMENTS

1	Hydraulic Press in Mach. Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 8815)
2	Plate Bending Machine in Mach. Heavy With/Out (Hubco Reg 2003)
3	Rolling Machine in Mach. Heavy With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 8815)
4	Plate Rolling Machine in Mach. Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 2003)
5	Rolling Mill Machine in Mach. Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 8815)
6	Surface Grinder in Mach. Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 2003)
7	12" Horizontal Grinder in Mechanical Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 2003)
8	12" Horizontal Grinder in Mechanical Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 2003)
9	12" Horizontal Grinder in Mechanical Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 2003)
10	12" Horizontal Grinder in Mechanical Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 2003)
11	Horizontal Band Saw in Mach. Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 2003)
12	Milling Machine in Mach. Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 8815)
13	Milling Machine in Mach. Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 8815)
14	12 Bed Lathe Machine in Mach. Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 8815)
15	12 Bed Lathe Machine in Mach. Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 8815)
16	12 Bed Lathe Machine in Mach. Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 8815)
17	12 Bed Lathe Machine in Mach. Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 8815)
18	High Speed Precision Lathe Machine (4000001000)
19	Lead Screw Machine in Mach. Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 2003)
20	Surface Plate in Mach. Machine Tools With/Out (Steel Type) (Hubco Reg 8815)
21	Grinding Machine (max capacity = 10 ton piece)

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# Syrian army admits setback, prepares to retake Aleppo

Anti-govt fighters claim control over entire Idlib province

ADMAN: The Syrian army said on Saturday a large number of its soldiers had been killed in a major attack by anti-government fighters who swept into Aleppo, a city in the northwest, forcing the army to redeploy in the biggest challenge to President Bashar Al Assad in years.

The surprise attack, led by the Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS), an Al Qaeda affiliate, has joined the frontlines of the Syrian civil war that have largely been frozen since 2020, reviving fighting in a corner of the fractured country near the Turkish border. The Syrian army said it was preparing a counter-offensive to retake state authority.

Acknowledging the advance, the army command said "insurgents have entered large parts of Aleppo", which had been under full state control since government forces, backed by Russia and Iran, drove the HTS out eight years ago.

Images from Aleppo showed a group of fighters gathered in the city's Souk al-Hadid Al-Jadid Square after entering the city on Friday night, a full-scale of President Assad leaving behind them.

"I am the son of Aleppo, and was displaced from it eight years ago, in 2016. Thank God we just returned. It is an indescribable feeling," said Ali Jabbara, an HTS fighter, television footage showed.

The Syrian military command said the group had attacked in large numbers and from multiple directions, prompting "our armed forces to carry out a redeployment operation aimed at strengthening the defence lines in order to absorb the attack, preserve the lives of civilians and soldiers, and prepare for a counter-attack".

The Syrian army said bombardment had stopped the "insurgents from establishing fixed positions". It promised to "expel them and restore control of the state... over the entire city and its countryside".

Two HTS sources said the anti-government fighters had also captured the city of Mariat Al-Nisran, in Idlib province, bringing all of that province under their control, in what would be another significant blow to Bashar al-Assad.

The fighting revives the long-simmering Syrian conflict as the wider region is riddled by the strife in Gaza and Lebanon,

where a truce took effect on Wednesday. The attack was launched from northwestern Syria that remains outside Assad's grasp.

Two Syrian military sources said that Russian and Syrian warplanes targeted the HTS fighters in an Aleppo suburb on Saturday.

Speaking on Friday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow regarded the attack on Aleppo as a violation of Syria's sovereignty. "We are in favour of the Syrian authorities bringing order to the area and restoring constitutional order as soon as possible," he said.

The Syrian Civil Defence, a rescue service operating in opposition-held parts of Syria, said in a post on X that Syrian government and Russian aircraft carried out air strikes on residential neighbourhoods, a fuel station and a school in Idlib, killing four civilians and wounding six others.

The two Syrian military sources said Russia had promised Damascus extra military aid that would start arriving early next week.

Authorities closed Aleppo airport and roads to the city, the two military sources said.

The Syrian army has been told to follow "safe withdrawal" orders from the main command of the city that the HTS had entered.

The rebels, including factions backed by Turkey, said on Friday their fighters were occupying through various Aleppo neighbourhoods.

Mustafa Abdel Jabbar, a commander in the Jaish Al Fatah brigade, said their speedy advance had been helped by a lack of French-backed manpower to support the government in the broader Aleppo province.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, in a phone call with his Syrian counterpart on Friday, accused the United States and Israel of being behind the Aleppo attack.

The opposition fighters have said the campaign was in response to "stopping" strikes in recent weeks against civilians by the Russian and Syrian air forces on areas of Idlib province, and to prevent any attacks by the Syrian army.

Turkey's foreign ministry said on Friday that the clashes in Aleppo had resulted in an undesirable escalation of tensions.

In a statement, spokesperson Dinc Koculu said that avoiding greater instability in the region was Turkey's priority, adding that Ankara had warned that recent attacks on Idlib undermined the spirit and implementation of de-escalation agreements.—AFP



A PALESTINIAN woman stands amidst the rubble of a building destroyed in an Israeli strike on the Shujayyah neighbourhood of Gaza City, on Saturday.—AFP

## Israeli air strikes kill 3 NGO workers, 32 Palestinians

Seven-year-old child among four injured in Lebanon attacks

CAIRO: The Israeli military said it killed a Palestinian in a Saturday attack on Israel in a vehicle strike in Gaza, while media said at least 32 Palestinians were killed in Israeli strikes across the enclave overnight and into Saturday.

The escalation comes as leaders of Hamas were expected to arrive in Cairo on Saturday for ceasefire talks with Egyptian officials, days after Israel and Hezbollah agreed to ceasefire in Lebanon, two officials of the group told Reuters.

Later on Saturday, media said nine people were killed when an Israeli air strike targeted a vehicle near a gathering of Palestinians receiving aid in the southern area of Khan Younis south of the enclave.

Residents and a Hamas source said the vehicle targeted near a crowd receiving food was used by security personnel tasked with overseeing aid deliveries into Gaza.

Among the 32 killed, at least seven died in an Israeli strike on a house in central Gaza City, according to a statement from the Gaza Civil Defence and the official

Palestinian news agency, Wafa, early on Saturday.

The Gaza Civil Defence also reported that one of its officers was killed in attacks in northern Gaza's Jabalia, bringing the total number of civil defence workers killed since Oct 7, 2023, to 88.

The Israeli military said it killed a Palestinian in a Saturday attack on Israel in a vehicle strike, and was investigating claims the individual was an employee of aid group World Central Kitchen.

Earlier on Saturday, Wafa reported that three employees of World Central Kitchen, a US-based, non-governmental humanitarian agency, were killed when a civilian vehicle was targeted in Khan Younis, southern Gaza.

The charity said on Saturday it was "pausing operations in Gaza" after the Israeli air strike killed three of its contractors.

Strike in Lebanon

An Israeli strike on a car wounded three people, including a seven-year-old child, on Saturday in the north Lebanese village of Majdal Zuq, the Lebanese Health Ministry said in a statement.

Later on Saturday, another person was injured in a separate Israeli strike on Al-Banariya, which lies near the southern Lebanese city of Salim, the ministry said.

The Israeli military said it had attacked a Hezbollah facility in

Salim that allegedly housed rocket launchers for the group.

It added that it had also hit a vehicle in southern Lebanon allegedly loaded with rocket-propelled grenades, ammunition and military equipment.

A truce came into effect on Wednesday, but both sides have accused each other of breaching a ceasefire that aims to halt over a year of fighting.

New efforts for Gaza ceasefire

Egypt is hosting a Hamas delegation in Cairo on Saturday to discuss a ceasefire, two Hamas officials told Reuters late on Friday.

The visit is the first since the United States announced earlier this week it would revive efforts in collaboration with Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey to negotiate a ceasefire in Gaza, similar to the recent agreement reached between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The Hamas delegation is expected to meet Egyptian security officials to explore ways to reach a ceasefire deal with Israel. However, progress remains limited due to disagreements between the two parties.

Hamas is seeking an agreement that would end the war and secure the release of Israeli and foreign prisoners held in Gaza. In contrast, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has stated that the war will only end when Hamas is eradicated.—Agencies

## Malaysia to revise tariffs on rice from Pakistan

By Basir Sajjad Syed

ISLAMABAD: Malaysia has agreed to revise its tariffs on Pakistani rice, shifting them with tariffs applied to rice imports from other sources, an official said on Saturday.

The Prime Minister's Office, in a statement following a conversation between Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, said that PM Shabbaz expressed satisfaction over the amicable resolution of several trade-related issues identified during the Malaysian premier's recent visit.

However, the statement did not specify which trade issues had been resolved.

During his visit to Pakistan in October, PM Ibrahim had expressed interest in importing 100,000 tonnes of rice from Pakistan, besides most. At that time, the Pakistani side highlighted that higher tariffs were rendering Pakistani rice uncompetitive, particularly compared to rice imported from India.

In October, the price for 5 per cent broken white rice from India ranged from \$444-448 per tonne, while similar rice from Pakistan was priced at \$463-467 per tonne.

Malaysian officials had also pointed out during discussions that Pakistani exporters were demanding higher prices for their rice, adding to the competitiveness challenge.

The PMO further noted that PM Shabbaz expressed satisfaction with the positive trajectory of bilateral relations and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening cooperation in all areas of mutual interest. Both leaders agreed to continue working closely to enhance ties across key sectors.

Prime Minister Shabbaz, along with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, is expected to visit Kuala Lumpur early next year to further advance bilateral cooperation.

## Taiwan leader's US trip sparks China's anger

TAIPEI: Taiwan President Lai Ching-te flew to the United States on Saturday to launch a week-long tour of the Pacific that he said would usher in a new era of democracy, but has ignited fiery threats from Beijing.

China considers Taiwan to be part of its territory and opposes any international recognition of the island and its claim to be a sovereign state.

Lai, on his first trip abroad since taking office in May, will stop over first in the US island state of Hawaii and later in the US territory of Guam as he visits Taiwan's allies Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau.

They are the only Pacific island nations among the 12 remaining allies that recognise Taiwan.

In a speech shortly before take-off, Lai said the trip "underscored in a new era of value-based democracy" and he thanked the US government for "help-

ing to make this trip a smooth one".

Lai said he wanted to "continue to expand cooperation and deepen partnerships with our allies based on the values of democracy, peace and prosperity".

Taiwan deployed four F-16 fighter jets to escort the Taiwan-flagged China Airlines plane carrying Lai, government officials and media outlets.

The trip has elicited a furious response from China, which has vowed to "resolutely crush" any attempts for Taiwan's independence.

Beijing deploys fighter jets, drones and warships around Taiwan on a weekly basis to press its claims, with the number of sorties increasing in recent years. It has held two large-scale military exercises around the island during Lai's presidency, and has criticised him at every turn over his statements

and speeches.

Lai's trip follows the US approving the proposed sale to Taiwan of spare parts for F-16 fighter jets and radar systems, as well as communications equipment, in deals valued at \$385 million in total.

The Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency said the sale consisted of \$320m in spare parts and support for F-16 fighters and Active Electronically Scanned Array Radars and related equipment.

The State Department also approved the potential sale to Taiwan of improved mobile subscriber equipment and support for an estimated \$45m, the Pentagon said.

Taiwan's said it expected the sales to "take effect" within a month and that the equipment will help maintain the F-16 fleet's readiness and "build up a credible defence force"—Agencies

## Trudeau meets Trump in Florida as tariff threats loom

US president-elect has announced plans for import tariffs against Canada, Mexico and China

PALM BEACH: Justin Trudeau had an "excellent conversation" with Donald Trump at the presidential inauguration in Florida on Saturday, Canada's prime minister said on Saturday, as the United States' neighbours scramble to blunt the impact of Trump's trade threats.

Trudeau flew for a dinner at Mar-a-Lago on Friday, after Trump earlier this week announced plans for import tariffs against Canada and Mexico and China.

"It was an excellent conversation," Trudeau told reporters on

Saturday morning as he was leaving a hotel in West Palm Beach to catch a flight back to Canada.

Trudeau was the latest high-profile guest of Trump, whose impending second term — which starts in January — is already overshadowing the last few months of President Joe Biden's administration.

A photograph released by Pennsylvania Senator-elect David McCormick showed Trudeau and Trump side-by-side at table, surrounded by a dozen guests including Howard Lutnick, Donald Trump's pick for commerce secretary, and Mike Walz, his choice for national security adviser.

In a social media post on Monday, Trump said he would slap a 25 per cent tariff on Mexico and Canada, accusing the two US neighbours of allowing an "invasion" of the United States by illicit drugs, namely fentanyl, and

undocumented migrants.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum spoke with Trump by phone on Wednesday, though the two leaders' accounts of the conversation differed drastically.

Trump claimed that Mexico's left-wing president had "agreed" to stop migration through Mexico, and into the United States, effectively closing our Southern Border.

Sheinbaum later said she had discussed US-supported anti-migration policies that have long been in place in Mexico. She said that after that, the talks had no longer revolved around the threat of tariff hikes, downplaying the risk of a trade war.

Billions in trade

Biden warned that some day that Trump's tariff threats could "screw up" Washington's relationships with Ottawa and

Mexico City. "I think it's a counterproductive thing to do," Biden told reporters.

For Canada, the stakes of any new tariffs are high. More than three-quarters of Canadian exports, or Can\$592.7 billion (\$423.8b), went to the United States last year, and nearly two million Canadian jobs are dependent on trade.

A Canadian government source told AFP that Canada is considering possible retaliatory tariffs against the United States.

Some analysts have suggested Trump's tariff threat may be bluff, or an opening salvo in future trade negotiations. But Trudeau rejected those views when he spoke with reporters earlier in Prince Edward Island province.

"Donald Trump, when he makes statements like that, he plans on carrying them out," Trudeau said. "There's no question about it."—AFP

## Massive floods displace over 122,000 in Malaysia

PM Shabbaz offers assistance in relief operation

KUALA LUMPUR: More than 122,000 people have been forced out of their homes as massive floods caused by relentless rains swept through Malaysia's northern states, disaster management officials said on Saturday.

The number surpassed the 118,000 evacuated during one of the country's worst flooding in 2014, and disaster officials feared it could rise further as there was no let-up in torrential downpours.

The death toll remained at four recorded across Kelantan, Terengganu and Sarawak. Kelantan state bore the brunt of the flooding, accounting for 63 per cent of the 122,631 people evacuated, according to data from the National Disaster



WOMEN push their belongings inside a cage as they wade through floodwaters in Malaysia's Kelantan state, on Saturday.—AFP

Management Agency.

Nearly 35,000 people were evacuated in Terengganu, with the rest of the displacements reported from seven other states.

Heavy rains, which began early

this week, continued to hammer Pasir Puteh town in Kelantan, where people could be seen wading through streets inundated with hip-deep waters.

"My area has been flooded since

Wednesday. The water has already reached my home corridor and is just two inches away from coming inside," Pasir Puteh resident and school parent Zameerah Majid, 59, said AFP.

The Malaysian Meteorological Department warned that heavy rains will continue until Sunday in Kelantan, Terengganu and Perak.

Floods are an annual phenomenon in the Southeast Asian nation of 34 million people due to the northeast monsoon that brings heavy rain from November to March.

Thousands of emergency services personnel have been deployed in flood-prone states along with rescue boats, four-wheel-drive vehicles and helicopters, said Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who chairs the National Disaster Management Committee.

Shabbaz-Ibrahim conversation

Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif expressed deepest sympathies to the people of the Pakistani people for the

brotherly people of Malaysia over the loss of lives and property caused by recent floods due to torrential rains in several states of the country.

The prime minister in his telephonic conversation with his Malaysian counterpart Anwar Ibrahim assured that the people of Pakistan stood in solidarity with their Malaysian brothers and sisters during this challenging time.

He appreciated the swift and effective measures taken by the Malaysian government to address this natural calamity.

The prime minister offered all possible assistance to Malaysia and announced the immediate dispatch of humanitarian aid as a gesture of Pakistan's support for Malaysia.

Nine killed in Thailand

Flooding driven by heavy rains in southern Thailand has killed nine people and displaced more than 13,000, officials said on Saturday, as rescue teams using boats and jet skis

worked to reach stranded residents. Local media footage showed residents wading through murky, chest-deep water and cars submerged in flooded streets.

"Flooding across eight provinces in southern Thailand has affected 553,921 households and claimed nine lives, prompting agencies to mobilise urgent assistance," the country's disaster agency said on its official Facebook page.

More than 13,000 people had been forced to flee their homes, with temporary shelters set up in schools and temples, it added.

Nampa, a resident of coastal Sangkhla province, told state broadcaster that PRB also was concerned about the dwindling food supplies.

"We are doing fine now, but I am not sure how long can we stay in this condition," she said.

Two hospitals in nearby Pattani province suspended operations to prevent floodwaters from damaging medical facilities.—Agencies



# SPORT

## Kluivert's makes history with penalty hat-trick, Brentford thrash Leicester



LONDON: Brentford's Kevin Schade (R) scores during the Premier League match against Leicester City at the Gtech Community Stadium on Saturday.—Reuters

LONDON: Justin Kluivert scored the first-ever Premier League hat-trick of penalties as Bournemouth won 4-2 at Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday and Kevin Schade also scored three in Brentford's 4-1 victory over Leicester City. Nottingham Forest moved into the top six thanks to a 1-0 win over Ipswich Town, while Newcastle United were denied by Daniel Munro's 94th minute equaliser for Crystal Palace in a 1-1 draw at Selhurst Park.

Kluivert made history at Molineux to curtail Wolves' mini-revival. The Dutchman opened the scoring, Jorgen Strand Larsen replied for Wolves before Miles Keane made it 2-1 for the visitors inside eight minutes.

Kluivert made it 3-1 just 10 minutes

later and completed his hat-trick 16 minutes from time after Strand Larsen also set a record by winning a third penalty.

Strand Larsen pulled another goal back for Wolves, but Gary O'Neill's men slipped back into the relegation zone.

Brentford continued their stunning home form to thrash the Foxes in front of Leicester's incoming manager Raul van Nistelrooy.

Facundo Bustos made his debut for the visitors in front in west London.

But Brentford roared back to make it six wins and one draw from seven home league games this season.

Young Wissa started the comeback, before Schade took centre stage.

The German had only scored two Premier League goals since joining the

Bees in 2023 but matched that tally in 24 minutes to put the home side in front before halftime.

Schade then rounded off the scoring to show Van Nistelrooy the scale of the task that awaits him ahead of his first game in charge at home to West Ham United on Tuesday.

Chris Wood's emphatically struck penalty was enough to get Forest back to winning ways and leave Ipswich still in the bottom three.

Palace edged out of the relegation zone on goal difference thanks to two draws against Newcastle.

Marc Guehi, who had been the subject of multiple bids from Newcastle during the transfer window, put the Magpies in front early in the second half with an

own goal.

However, the England defender redeemed himself as from his cross Munro powered home a header at the back post.

On Friday, Kasu Mitoma's first-half header for Brighton & Hove Albion was cancelled out by a Flynn Downes strike just before the hour as the Seagulls drew 1-1 at home with bottom-side Southampton to move up to second in the table.

Brighton moved level on 21 points with champions Manchester City, who face leaders Liverpool on Sunday. Liverpool are eight points ahead.

Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim is also targeting his first Premier League win on Sunday when lively Everton visit Old Trafford.—Agencies

## Pakistan face Nepal in T20 Blind World Cup semi-final

MUJTIAN: The semi-final line-up of the fourth T20 Blind World Cup is complete. It comprises Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal as the hosts outplayed Afghanistan here at the Multan Cricket Stadium on Saturday.

Pakistan face Nepal while Bangladesh clash with Sri Lanka in the semi-finals.

The group stage concluded on Saturday with Pakistan securing top spot after an unbeaten run, Bangladesh finished second followed by Sri Lanka in third and Nepal in fourth.

The semi-finals take place at the Multan Cricket Stadium on Sunday. The first semi-final between Pakistan and Nepal starts at 9:00am (PST) while the second begins at 1:00pm.

In a group match played at the Multan Cricket Stadium on Saturday, Pakistan comfortably defeated Afghanistan by seven wickets.

After electing to field, Pakistan restricted Afghanistan to a meagre 94 all out in 19.2 overs. Ajmal Akhtar's 15 off 13 balls was Afghanistan's main contributor of runs.

Pakistan's Fakhar Akbar took three wickets for just four runs in 2.2 overs.

Pakistan achieved the target in just 9.5 overs while losing only three wickets. Talha Iqbal scored 32 off 15 while Mohammad Salman made 16 off 14. Fakhar was named the player-of-the-match while Farmanullah Qazi received the emerging player-of-the-match award.

In another group-stage game, Bangladesh crushed South Africa by 10 wickets.

Battling first, South Africa posted a competitive 149-8 off the stipulated 20 overs. Latifullah Topsoor (33 off 39) while Bhale Bhale contributed 23 off 23.

Bangladesh, however, chased the target with ease without losing a wicket in just 12.5 overs. Mohammad Salman made a magnificent 73 off 44 while Arif Hussain struck 55 off 35.—ATP

## Usmanov elected FIE president

MOSCOW: Russian-Uzbek billionaire Alihan Usmanov was elected president of the International Fencing Federation (FIE) at the body's congress in Uzbekistan's capital Tashkent on Saturday, the businessman's representative said.

Usmanov, who according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index has a total net worth of \$14.4 billion, made his fortune in mining, industry, telecoms, and media. He has been a major donor to international fencing through his charity fund.

Usmanov was first elected FIE president in 2008 and re-elected in 2012, 2016 and 2021.

The 71-year-old, currently under European Union and United States sanctions and a travel ban, stepped down as president of the federation after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine but was nominated for a return to the post.

His candidacy got the backing of 120 out of 146 federalism members who voted, his representative said. Usmanov was running against 58-year-old Swedish former Olympian Otto Dicksborn.

Greek businessman Katsiadakis served as interim president.

Russian and Belarusian fencers were initially banned from international competition after Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine but the FIE became one of the first federations to allow them back into competition the following year.

No Russian or Belarusian fencers took part in this year's Paris Olympics as none of the athletes from the two countries who were deemed eligible to compete as neutral athletes entered the qualifiers.—Reuters

## Hamza holds onto lead

LAHORE: Hamza Amin stayed atop the leaderboard of the Punjab Open Golf Championship after firing a three-under 69 in the second round at the Royal Palm Golf Course here on Saturday.

Moving to a total of seven-under 132, Hamza opened up a three-shot lead over Mohammad Alam, Mohammad Saif, Mohammad Zafar and Shabbir Iqbal with the cut reducing the field to 57 golfers for Sunday's final round.

Qasim Ali Khan leads the amateurs' leaderboard with a total of three-under 141 after two rounds, and heads into the last 18 holes with a six-shot lead over Nauman Ilyas.—Sports Reporter

## Wapda, Sindh triumph

KARACHI: Wapda beat Navy to win the National Inter-Department Men's Netball Championship while Sindh edged out Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to clinch the National Inter-Provincial Men's Netball Championship title in Karachi on Saturday.

In the inter-department decider, Wapda overcame Navy 23-16 at the PSB Coaching Centre. Mohammad Zain of Wapda was declared best player of the championship.

Meanwhile, Sindh in a thrilling final defeated Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 8-7 to claim the inter-provincial title at the same venue.—Agencies

## Piastrri wins Qatar sprint as McLaren widen gap on Ferrari

DOHA: Oscar Piastri was gifted victory by his McLaren team-mate Lando Norris in Saturday's sprint at the Qatar Grand Prix as the British team consolidated their bid for the constructors' title for the first time since 1998 with a 1-2 triumph.

In an example of perfect teamwork, Norris led from pole to flag before slowing to allow Piastri to win by 0.136 seconds ahead of Mercedes' George Russell in third.

The result secured 15 points for McLaren in their bid to rival Ferrari, extending their advantage to 14 points with two Grands Prix remaining.

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz finished fourth ahead of team-mate

Charles Leclerc, seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton in the second Mercedes and Haas' Nico Hulkenberg.

Max Verstappen, Pierre Gasly of Alpine and Kevin Magnussen in the second Haas.

"It was defense all the way, the whole race for me," said Piastri. "I had a good start and then Turn One, but not the pace I needed and then I was struggling, but it was great



MERCEDES: British driver George Russell (L) and Australian driver Oscar Piastri of McLaren in action during the sprint race of the Qatar F1 Grand Prix at the Lusail International Circuit on Saturday.—AFP

teamwork and a great McLaren 1-2!"

Norris said he had discussed the team to give Piastri his victory as his

payback for the Australian's assistance at the Brazilian Grand Prix

sprint when he was hoping to keep alive his bid for the drivers' title and Piastri

gave him the victory.

"We scored the 1-2 we were aiming for and we have maximum points so I am happy for the team... Perfectly executed! We did our job. It ended a bit closer than I wanted, but I had this planned since Brazil and it's what I wanted. The team told me

not to do it, but I did it the best way I could."

Russell said: "We were very close in F1 a couple of times, but Lando backing up to help Oscar with DRS... It was pretty infuriating to be honest, but I understood why."

The race was preceded by much post-race discussion of Hamilton's speech, or apparent lack of it in Friday's qualifying, the Briton claiming he was "definitely not fast any more" after being outqualified again by Russell.

As if to prove it, Hamilton made a blundering start by overtaking Leclerc as Norris led from

pole, with Piastri passing Russell for second.

Verstappen, struggling with oversteer, dropped to eighth.

By lap 10, Norris was ahead of Piastri by three-tenths with Russell ninth but back in third, ahead of Sainz, Hamilton, Leclerc and Hulkenberg.

Most were in a "DRS train" and preserving their tyres for the final laps.

On lap 13, a masterful move by Leclerc into Turn One saw the Monegasque fight his way past Hamilton, the pair running wheel-to-wheel before the Ferrari pulled away.

Russell was also busy hunting down Piastri and failed in a bid to pass on lap 14 while Norris reported his front tyres were losing performance — yet he checked a fastest lap to stay on top, hoping to drag his team-mate with him.

The order remained unchanged going into lap 18, the penultimate, with Russell attacking again at Turn One on lap 19, Piastri defending admirably to stay second until they reached the chequered flag where Norris backed off to swap positions.—ATP

## Saudi Arabia's 2034 World Cup bid gets higher score than US, Canada and Mexico

ZURICH: Saudi Arabia's 2034 World Cup bid received a higher technical score from FIFA than the 2026 joint bid by the United States, Canada and Mexico even though the Middle East nation has yet to construct several stadiums proposed for the tournament.

FIFA released its bid evaluation report and said the 2034 bid received an overall average score of 4.2 out of 5 even though eight stadiums are still to be built.

All venues — including the planned 92,760-seater King Salman International Stadium in Riyadh — will not be completed until 2032 but three new stadiums are expected to be finished for the Asian Cup which kicks off in January 2027.

Meanwhile, the 2026 bid scored 4.0 having initially proposed 23 stadiums — all of which were already built. Eventually, 16 host cities for the 2026 World Cup were announced, with many venues being existing NFL stadiums.

"The [Saudi] bid includes some

ambitious stadium projects integrated into unique locations, including the Prince Mohammed bin Salman Stadium located within the Qiddiya development and NIOUM Stadium located within 'The Line' development," FIFA's report said.

FIFA added that although Saudi Arabia's "core-of-ackind" stadiums projects have a lot of potential, the "proposed configuration and location" would "require a reimagining of operations, with some associated unknowns or challenges at this moment in time".

NEOM, a Red Sea urban and industrial development nearly the size of Belgium due to house nearly nine million people, is central to the prince's Vision 2030 plan to create new engines of economic growth beyond oil.

But some of the schemes have had to be scaled back due to rising costs, including 'The Line', a futuristic city between mirrored walls extending 170 km (105 miles) into the desert within NIOUM.

"Consequently, should the bid be successful, it would be imperative to closely monitor and support these projects from initiation to completion," FIFA added.

Stadiums alone account for 35% of the overall score awarded to bids and FIFA said the level of risk in the 2026 bid was low. However, the Saudi bid had a medium level of risk.

"Due to the overall scale of the stadium projects, as well as the novel designs and configurations proposed in some cases, there is an elevated risk profile," FIFA said.

However, they added that the risk was mitigated as Saudi Arabia have a strong team in place and ample time to deliver on the projects.

Ahead of the World Cup vote next month, Minister of Sports, Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal, said FIFA's score reflects Saudi Arabia's commitment to grow the game and their "rapid transformation".

Votes are due to be held at the FIFA Congress next month to approve the 2030 and 2034 World

Cups, though each has only a single bid.

"It is the result of our extensive efforts to present an exceptional bid. It's a testament to the collaboration between multiple entities across the Kingdom," Prince Al Faisal said.

Saudi Arabia is the lone bidder for 2034 while Morocco, Spain and Portugal have formed a joint bid for the 2030 tournament, with Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay all set to host a match as part of the ceremony edition. The 2030 World Cup bid also received a score of 4.2.

FIFA said the Saudi bid did not stipulate a proposed window for the World Cup but they would collaborate with stakeholders to "determine the optimal timing" for the tournament.

Due to the country's desert climate, the 2034 World Cup may be pushed to a winter slot — just as FIFA did with the 2022 edition in neighbouring Qatar.

Annex International and the Sport & Rights Alliance (SRA) said

earlier this month that FIFA must halt the process to pick Saudi Arabia as hosts of the 2034 tournament unless major human rights reforms are announced before the vote.

FIFA's bid report said Saudi Arabia submitted commitments to "respecting, protecting and fulfilling internationally recognised human rights".

Those include areas of "safety and security, labour rights of migrant workers, rights of children, gender equality and non-discrimination, as well as freedom of expression [including press freedom]".

But football's world governing body cautioned "in terms of human rights, the undertaking involved in implementing the various measures, particularly in certain areas, could involve significant effort and time".

"It is important to note that the bid involves significant opportunities for positive human rights impact," added FIFA. "There is good potential that the tournament

could serve as a catalyst for some of the ongoing and future reforms and contribute to positive human rights outcomes for people in Saudi Arabia and the region that go beyond the scope of the tournament itself."

Human rights, a source of deep controversy at the 2022 World Cup in neighbouring Qatar, threatens to become a major talking point once again in the run-up to 2034.

Rights groups highlight mass evictions in Saudi Arabia and allegations of torture, as well as restrictions on women under the conservative country's male guardianship system.

Free expression is severely restricted, with some people handed lengthy jail terms over critical posts on social media.

Saudi Arabia, which is hosting several high-profile events including Formula One and the WTA Finals tennis, is often accused of "sportswashing" — using sport to divert attention from its rights record.—Agencies



## KARACHI

Sunset: 05:43 pm  
Sunrise (Tomorrow): 06:59 am

## NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum: 18°C  
Maximum: 31°C  
Humidity: 47%  
Outlook: Sunny

## METRO South



**Shahzaib's record ton steers Pakistan U-19 to victory over India**

Pg.18 SPORT

## 'Judge can't disagree with decision of JCP'

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: A day after the Karachi Bar Association (KBA) had 'upgraded' Justice Umar Niaz for 'declining' to become part of the constitutional bench of the Sindh High Court, an official of the Sindh Bar Council (SBC) stated that a judge cannot disagree with the decision of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP).

In a letter addressed to the chief justice of Pakistan who is also the chairman of the JCP, KBA's executive committee chairman Yaseen Aftab said that the members of JCP may take appropriate steps to ensure that its decisions are implemented in letter and spirit.

It said that Justice Niaz, who was part of the constitutional bench of the SBC approved by the JCP with a majority vote on Nov 25 for a period of two months, wrote a letter to the head of constitutional bench of the SBC, Justice Muhammad Karim Khan Agha.

"Upon reviewing the content of the letter, it is to be clarified that a judge is required to carry out the work assigned to him, and cannot disagree with the decision of the JCP (which is a commission constituted under the newly passed 26th Constitutional Amendment whose obedience is mandatory under Article 5 of the Constitution), and also especially given the fact that the decision was made with a majority vote. Let it be unequivocally stated that the decision rests with the JCP to make, and it is not for a judge to dispute or decide regarding his prerogative," it added.

It may be recalled that on Nov 25, Justice Niaz had resigned himself from becoming part of the constitutional bench of SBC arguing that the JCP should have consulted the bench on a seniority basis as eight senior judges of the SBC were ignored/sidelined while constituting the bench.



KOTRI: Sindh CM Murad Ali Shah makes a point while addressing a public meeting to mark the 57th foundation day of the Pakistan Peoples Party, on Saturday — Dawn

## PPP stages Sindh-wide power shows to mark foundation day

- Huge rally organised at Karachi's Railway Ground
- In Kotri, Murad highlights party's struggles against dictatorships
- Leaders in other districts say party always strived for a stronger federation

Dawn Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) celebrated its 57th foundation day on Saturday with rallies across Sindh where senior party leaders addressed workers before the final speech delivered by chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari through video link.

The party staged a big rally at Railway Ground near Kala Pul in Karachi, and organised power shows in Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Sanghar, Sukkur, Larkana, Nawabshah,

Jacobabad and Mirpurkhas.

Among others, the Karachi rally was also addressed by PPP Sindh chapter president Nasir Khattori and Karachi division president Saeed Ghani.

Riding on motorcycles, cars, vans, buses, trucks and others modes of transport, the charged participants of the rally, which included women and children who were carrying placards, PPP flags, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's portraits, danced to the tunes of party songs and converged at Railway Ground from different parts of the city.

In his address, Mr Khattori said PPP founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the architect of the Constitution which cemented human rights, strong democracy and supremacy of the parliament. Despite huge sacrifices and facing persecution, the party never adopted the policy of vendetta and always strived for stronger federation, he added.

Addressing the rally, Mr Ghani said that PPP had faced unprecedented hardships in the last 57 years that were never endured by any other political party.

He said the party had waged a struggle against the military dictators in the past as per its ideology and added that no other political party or its leadership could match

the political wisdom possessed by the PPP.

The 'pro-people policies' was being practised in the country owing to the struggles of the PPP, which had acted as a maverick in the Pakistani politics, he said and claimed that the development work and achievements during the PPP's regime had also been unprecedented in the history of Pakistani politics.

### Rally in Kotri

In Kotri, the party held a power show which was addressed by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah.

Underlining achievements of the PPP government, he mentioned the 26th Amendment, introduced by President Asif Ali Zardari, which restored provincial autonomy and secured rights for provinces. He reaffirmed commitment to serve people of Sindh under guidance of the PPP chairman. "Pakistan Peoples Party has always been voice of people and we will continue to uphold and cherish this legacy," he said and paid rich tributes to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for his services visionary leadership.

He highlighted Bhutto's iconic slogan

Continued on Page 15

## Parents can't threaten their adult wards for marrying someone of their own free will, rules SHC

**Bench orders police to ensure free-will couples must not be subjected to harassment, criminal intimidation**

By Ishaq Tariq

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court has directed police to ensure that adult couples, who had contracted inter-caste or inter-faith marriages, must not be subjected to any harassment, criminal intimidation or act of violence.

The SBC said that if parents were not accepting such marriages, they could only cut off social relations with their sons/daughters, but they were not per-

mitted to extend threats, commit or instigate acts of violence against such couples.

A two-judge bench comprising Justice Salimuddin Pathan and Justice Adnan Karim Memon also directed the police to institute criminal proceedings against those people, who either themselves or at their instigation, commit such acts against grown-up legally married couples.

The court issued such directives while disposing of two petitions filed by as many couples, who contracted free-will marriages against the wishes of their families.

The relatives of female petitioners had lodged cases against their husbands as well as other family members on various charges, including abduction.

It noted that there can be no denial to the fact that an event of marriage was always an occasion of honour for a family.

"Therefore, all authorities otherwise are entitled to question the validity of a marriage on the pretext of underage, but should strictly act keeping this aspect in mind and must not act in a manner prejudicial to the honour of such family or girl."

"The authority should try to first satisfy itself about the genuineness of the information and then decide whether to proceed or otherwise because if at the end of the day, the information is found to be false there would be nothing to compensate the loss sustained by the family complained against," it added.

The bench in its order said: "Primarily, this is a free and democratic country, and once a person becomes a major he or she can marry whosoever he/she likes, if the parents of the boy or girl do not approve of such inter-caste or inter-religious marriage the maximum they can do is they can cut off social relations with the son or the daughter, but they cannot give

threats or commit or instigate acts of violence and cannot harass the person who undergoes such inter-caste or inter-religious marriage."

While issuing directives to police and administration concerned about protection of such couples and legal action against the persons committing or instigating violence or harassment, the bench said that such observation was without prejudice to the legal rights of the parties, arising out of the underage issue if any, pending before the competent court of law.

It also said that these petitions had served the purpose and directed the police to provide legal protection to the couples/petitioners as and when they approach for same and in the meanwhile no further action was required against them since the same must be treated as cancelled.

## Dumper runs over, kills college professor, wife on motorway

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: A fast-moving dumper ran over and killed a college professor and his wife on the M-9 motorway, formerly known as Superhighway, on Saturday, police said.

They identified the victims as Professor Tariq Salimuddin, 50, and his 45-year-old wife, Nafis. The police said that the couple were heading to their new home in Federal B Area at around 11:30am on their motorcycle. They said that they were in the process of moving their belongings from their home in Scheme 33 to their new house.

The incident took place when the dumper hit the couple's motorcycle at a U-turn near the Baring petrol pump on the highway, they said, adding that the couple died on the spot. The bodies were shifted to the Abbasi Shahzad Hospital for medico-legal formalities.

DICI-Traffic Ahmad Naeem Chaudhry said that a recklessly driven dumper hit victims' motorcycle (BH-96-066). After the accident, the driver abandoned the dumper and managed to escape, he added.

Sachal SHO Nurengzeb Khattak said the dumper had been impounded and efforts were underway to arrest the driver.

The deceased professor taught physics at the Abdullah Govt College North Nazimabad, the officials said.

Meanwhile, a man was shot at and wounded near the K-Electric office in Gulistan-e-Jauhar on Saturday, police said.

The wounded was identified as Abdul Karim, 45. He was taken to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre for treatment.

## Woman's severed head found in Orangi drain

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: The severed head of a young woman was found in an open drain in Orangi Town on Saturday, police said. SSP-West Tariq (Iftikhar) Mastoi said the woman's head was found floating in the drain water in Qasba Colony within the jurisdiction of the Pirabad police station.

The police rushed to the spot after receiving information and shifted the severed head to the Abbasi Shahzad Hospital for medico-legal formalities and possible identification.

The police's Crime Scene Unit was also called to collect evidence from the spot, the SSP said, adding that further probe about the incident was underway while the process has also been initiated to identify the victim.

Area SHO Imtiaz Mehtab said that doctors told the police that the woman's head was severed with the help of a sharp-edged weapon.

He said it appeared that the woman was killed on Saturday and the head was thrown in the nullah. The victim appeared to be in her mid-20s.

He said the police were also searching other parts of the body.

## Emotional struggles of single mothers highlighted

**Urdu dramatic reading of German play presented at Arts Council**

By Waqas Ali

KARACHI: It's a challenging job to present and highlight the emotions, inner struggles, and thoughts of single mothers and their relationship with their children in a dramatic reading in front of an audience. However, it was done well by the performers at the Arts Council of Pakistan on Saturday evening.

The dramatic reading of Urdu drama *Uma* (And Then Come Mirna), a play about lives of single mothers, was organised by the Goethe Institut Karachi, where two actors from Raza Mung Group read out the play's Urdu translation.

Originally written by Sibylle Berg in the German language, the play has been translated into Urdu by Syed Salman Abbas and directed by Uma Saboun.

The plot, set after the Second World War, revolves around a mother (played by Zargha Naeem) and her daughter Mirna (Uma Saboun) who are packing their belongings to leave their city to a new place in a village. The mother is in her mid-30s while her daughter is 10 years old.

They're in their apartment, with suitcases and boxes packed with their valuables. It is the conversation that they have during this time, however, which brings to the fore the major themes of the play.

The mother recalls her getting into a relationship with Mirna's father and, despite not being in love with him, getting pregnant. She then recalls her concerns about having a child, especially in a world marred by wars, extremism, economic fears and multiple other uncertainties. Nevertheless, Mirna is born and the father is no more with them.

She says she hated her own mother and also dislikes her being a mother because that is something which has made her life small and mediocre, just like three of her female friends, who are also single mothers. She feels she's lost her individuality, her vitality, and freedom and become quite lonely and alienated from society as she has

no time to do things she could do before due to her parental responsibility.

Concurrent with that runs her fear of getting older and that life would continue to be the way it is just getting along with things. There is, nevertheless, a yearning for a new beginning and a new life.

However, her daughter Mirna also criticises and interrogates her just as she (mother) did her own mother. Mirna's thoughts also reflect the generation gap that is growing fast in the age of post-war era due to technological and social changes.

She thinks it is necessary for parents to be together with a child because if one of them leaves, the child is not left alone and vulnerable. She also thinks her mother's ideas and the cultural concerns of that time to be outdated and reflects thoughts that are more individualistic and concerned less with the philosophies and politics of that time.

Although the actors struggled with pronunciation of a few words, their delivery of the dialogue, tone, and use of gestures were otherwise strong and effective, especially of Uma who seemed more in control of the script.

A SCENE from the play — Fahim Siddiqi / White Star

Downloaded from www.pakistan-newspaper-pdf.com



## PRAYER

Fajr	5.41
Zuhr	12.20
Asr	4.09
Maghrib	5.43
Isha	7.09

Starting time in Karachi

## REFLECTIONS

IS THERE NO GAIN IN SUBJUGATING YOURSELF TO DEGRADATE AND INSULT AS THERE IS NO REAL GROUND IN WEALTH AND POWER THAT YOU ACQUIRE BY FORCE. MEANS??

—HAZRAT ALI (A.S.)

7544427

## The realms within

By Peerzada Salman

KARACHI: In fiction writing, sometimes the authors use the technique of using interior monologues to give an extra narrative edge to their stories. It serves another purpose: the interiority of characters, that is, the real selves of those that writers try to present as protagonists have their souls to the reader without feeling exposed. A three-person show, titled *Inner Realms*, gives its viewers a similar feeling.

The three artists taking part in the exhibition, which concluded at the Art Chalk Gallery on Thursday, are Hajrudwar, Samreen Shaidi and Zainab Yousaf. Before shedding light on their ideas, another technique that springs to mind while understanding the importance of living beings' internal worlds is the use of soliloquies or monologues by dramatists. The works of the three painters, in a way, soliloquise in order to explain to the viewer what they are trying to say.

Hajrudwar, in her words, tries to delve into life's complexities using lay-

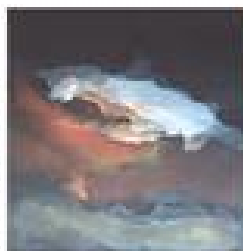
ers to symbolise the depth of experiences. The process is her 'refuge', a way to connect with herself.

Zainab highlights the issue of body shaming. She thinks we're all unique and should never allow anybody to disrespect and judge us.

Samreen's abstract art connects her to her memories.

Now this may sound like an effort that requires a fair amount of introverted emotions. But that's where the viewer is taken by a surprise, a pleasant one at that. The three individuals talk about things that are not there but paint them in such a way that they reflect the thoughts that they can only express through art.

For example, Hajrudwar's 'Beneath the Surface', Zainab's entitled work with the prominence of the colour green and Samreen's second last exhibit on view come from a space that speaks of a concerned inner world trying to come to grips with the connection that envelopes the world outside. In doing so, the artworks created, apart from achieving their goal, come out as aesthetically pleasing.



SOME of the artworks displayed at the exhibition. — Faheem Siddiqui / White Star

## Germany's close ties with Pakistan underscored

German mission celebrates Unity day

KARACHI: German Unity Day was celebrated at the German Consulate on Friday evening. The theme of the event was 'reunited'.

Addressing a large number of guests on the occasion, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany Dr. Rüdiger Lutz said as in the first year in Karachi as CG, he didn't know many people. Now, after more than two years, and celebrating Unity Day for the third time, he finds it wonderful to welcome all the friends and to see people feel at home due to the hospitality of the people of Sindh and Balochistan.

"We (Germany and Pakistan) have very close relations for more than seven decades. We have wonderful cultural relations. We see that the number of people willing to learn the German language at the Goethe Institute is increasing. We also see the number of people who want to travel to Germany increasing all the time, sometimes more than we can handle, but we are delighted that the inter-

est is that big. And of course we have very close business relations... I think there's room for more and that requires some stability."

The event said the main theme of the evening was movies. "You might have

wondered why that is. The honest answer is, there's not an obvious answer to that. I think one reason is that at the consulate we all like movies. Beyond that it is a good idea to highlight that the movie industries of both Pakistan and Germany

are important."

Speaking on the occasion, Additional Chief Secretary Hameed Iqbal Memon said the relationship between the two countries is cordial and both respect each other.

"Pak-Germany relations go very deep. Germany has always lent support to the economic development of Pakistan. It has always supported in the security [matters] of our country as well... We have been seeing some security challenges in Sindh. We appreciate and look forward to your continued support," he added.

After the speeches, a cake was cut by the guests. This was followed by a brief talk on German films after which more than a dozen Pakistani actors, including Minal Khan, Farhat Ishtiaq, and Javed Khan appeared on stage and addressed the audience.

They talked about possible Pak-German collaboration. They lauded some of the German programmes, too, which they get to see on streaming websites.

Sindh's Senior Minister Sharjeel Memon also attended the event, where fireworks were also set off to round off the celebrations. — By Peerzada Salman



A GROUP of Pakistani actors poses at the event. — Dawn

## Students urged to embrace Faiz's ideas of enlightenment, romance

KARACHI: Sindh Madressatul Islam University students organised a 'Faiz Mela' to pay homage to one of the great poets of Pakistan Faiz Ahmed Faiz.

The event was organised by the Literary Society of the varsity, said a press release issued here on Saturday.

Noted educationist and intellectual Professor K.S. Nagpal delivered his keynote speech, which was a profound reflection on Faiz's life, poetry, and philosophy. He emphasised how Faiz's words continue to inspire contentment in life, resonating deeply with the audience.

Speaking on the occasion, SMU Vice-Chancellor Dr. Mujeebuddin Sahrai expressed his deep respect for literature.

He encouraged students to embrace Faiz's ideas of enlightenment and romance, which he believed would remain ever-lasting.

The Vice-Chancellor also praised the efforts of the Literary Society of SMU and enlightened students about his oeuvre, "Kashaf," which was gifted to his father, Taj Sahrai, by Faiz Sahrai due to his profession and travels around the archaeological sites in Sindh.

Renowned poets Abdul Rehman Momin and Arwar Shauq graced the stage, presenting some of their finest works.

The highlight of the event was the dynamic *shair-shayari* exchange between the two poets, leaving the audience thrilled and mesmerised by their wit and eloquence. — Dawn Report

## Firm told to fill up 11 mining shafts to avoid any environmental hazard

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: The constitutional bench of the Sindh High Court has ordered a private firm to

fill-up 11 mining shafts in Lakhra Coal field and ensure that the same will be an environmental hazard to public.

The three-member bench headed by Justice

Muhammad Karim Khan Agha ruled that such exercise must be completed within three months.

A private firm, engaged in coal mining activities, had petitioned the SHC

last year and submitted that another private company was illegally mining the area which formed part of lease granted to the petitioner.

Thereafter, the SHC had called reports from both and director general, directorate of coal mines development, who filed their reports.

The constitutional

bench in its order said that as per the reports, the private respondent was illegally carrying out mining activities.

According to the report of DG directorate of coal mines development, the respondent has been stopped from mining and no such activities were being carried out in 11 shafts, which were identi-

fied within the boundaries of both permit holders.

It was also said in the report that there was smoke emission from two mines within disputed boundary and the private respondent (M/s. Khadija or Khadija) had been directed to fill-up mines immediately in the disputed area in order to avoid any mishap.

The bench noted that since the private respondent has left the area in question, it was the duty of the firm to fill-up the 11 mining shafts and to ensure that there was no danger left on the site through its earlier mining activities, which has now abandoned.

It also directed the private respondent that there must be no longer an environmental hazard or danger to the public.

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<b>Staff</b>	Minimum BS degree in the biological field from HEC recognized university. Minimum BS or MPhil degree in the relevant field from HEC recognized university.
<b>Academic Coordinator: BBS Undergraduate Programs</b>	BS degree in any field of biological sciences from HEC recognized university.

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D.R. J. RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF CHEMISTRY, THIRD WORLD CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, AND DR. PAULANAN CENTER FOR MOLECULAR MEDICINE AND DRUG RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI, KARACHI-75270

### ACADEMIC POSITIONS VACANT

**(A) Professor (1)**

Pay Scale: 384,875-15,305-884,450 as per TTS Status of KCBBS

Candidate should have a Ph.D. degree in Chemistry from HEC recognized university institution, with at least 15 years of post Ph.D. research and teaching experience in the field of Medicinal Chemistry, Synthesis of Bioactive Compounds and Drug Leads, and Fifteen (15) Research Publications (5 publications in last five years) in internationally abstracted impact factor journals in the relevant field. A candidate appointed to the rank of professor is expected to have an impact on the state of knowledge in relevant field.

**(B) Professor (1)**

Pay Scale: 384,875-15,305-884,450 as per TTS Status of KCBBS

Candidate should have a Ph.D. degree in Chemistry/ Biochemistry from HEC recognized university institution, with at least 15 years of post Ph.D. research and teaching experience in the field of Genomics, next-generation DNA sequencing technologies, bioinformatics and forensic DNA analysis, and Fifteen (15) Research Publications (5 publications in last five years) in internationally abstracted impact factor journals in the relevant field. A candidate appointed to the rank of professor is expected to have an impact on the state of knowledge in relevant field.

**(C) Professor (1)**

Pay Scale: 384,875-15,305-884,450 as per TTS Status of KCBBS

Candidate should have Ph.D. degree in Chemistry from HEC recognized University Institution, with at least 15 years of post Ph.D. research and teaching experience in the field of Polymers, their characterization, and the applications of polymer-based materials, with fifteen (15) research publications (5 publications in last five years) in internationally abstracted impact factor journals in the relevant field. A candidate appointed to the rank of Professor is expected to have an impact on the state of knowledge in the relevant field.

**(D) Associate Professor (1)**

Pay Scale: 263,250-15,305-884,450 as per TTS Status of KCBBS

Candidate should have a Ph.D. Degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from HEC recognized university institution, with at least 8 years of post Ph.D. teaching and research experience in the field of Molecular Microbiology, infectious diseases, bacteriophages, and preclinical infectious model development, with ten research publications (5 publications in last five years) in internationally abstracted impact factor journals in the relevant field.

Six copies of the applications form can be downloaded from the website of KCBBS ([www.kcbbs.edu.pk](http://www.kcbbs.edu.pk)) and a pay order of Rs. 1,000/- drawn in favor of Director KCBBS along with copy of CNIC, attached testimonials, copies of research publications, and a copy of the advertisement, must reach to the Director KCBBS, University of Karachi, Karachi-75270, within 15 days from the date of publication of this advertisement.

DIRECTOR, KCBBS

### IN THE HIGH COURT OF SINDH KARACHI

Case No. 1000 of 2024

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF SINDH KARACHI**

Case No. 1000 of 2024

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF SINDH KARACHI**

Case No. 1000 of 2024

## KARACHI SHIPYARD & ENGINEERING WORKS LTD

### HIRING OF GROUP LIFE INSURANCE SERVICES FOR KSEW EMPLOYEES

#### Tender Notice

Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works Ltd (KSEW), invites sealed Technical & Financial bids in accordance with PPRA rules under "Two Stage - Two Envelope Procedure" from qualified service provider, to outsource the Group Life Insurance Coverage of its employees through a renowned & prestigious insurance company with objective to ensure the employees for payment of a reasonable sum in case of any mishap.

For further information, please note the following:

The company / firm should be registered with provisional sales tax and income tax authorities.

The envelope containing the quotation should bear the phrase **Group Life Insurance Coverage for Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works Ltd employees**.

Interested companies / firms are requested to collect tender documents from Finance Department of KSEW on working days from 02nd December 2024 till 16th December 2024 between 09 a.m to 04 p.m on submission of tender fee of Rs. 5,000/- (non-refundable) in form of Pay Order in the name of "Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works Ltd".

Clearly marked technical and financial proposals in separate envelope should be submitted to undersigned latest by 16th December 2024 at 10:30 AM in the presence of representatives of companies / firms who wish to attend.

KSEW will not be responsible for any delay in submission of bids.

**Deputy General Manager (Accounts)**  
Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works Ltd  
West Wharf, Dockyard Road Karachi

## KARACHI SHIPYARD & ENGG. WORKS LTD.

### TENDER INQUIRY

Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works Limited, West Wharf, Karachi, invites quotations for the Supply of Local Purchase Items (on free delivery at KSEW basis) and disposal of following items on "as is & where is" basis respectively:

Tender No.	Description	Due Date
LPR-3579	Tig Welding Machine (As per KSEW Tender Enquiry Specification)	23-12-2024
LPR-4102	Angle (As per KSEW Tender Enquiry Specification)	

Tender No.	Description	Quantity	Due Date
3057-60T-1000	Miscellaneous BSR Assets & Scrap Items	01 lot	24-12-2024
3057-60T-1001	Wood Scrap (Misc)	01 lot	
3057-60T-1002	Oil Used Safety Helmets, Unkorms	01 lot	
3057-60T-1003	Safety Shoes & Leather Hand Gloves	01 lot	
3057-60T-1004	Burned Sand	01 lot	
3057-60T-1005	Steel Scrap	01 lot	
3057-60T-1006	Metallic Scrap	01 lot	
3057-60T-1008	Copper wire & copper pipes scrap	01 lot	

The Suppliers / Bidders are informed that Single Stage (Two Envelope Bidding) process is opted for procurement tender cases. Therefore, suppliers are required to submit (i) Technical Offer and (ii) Commercial Offer separately at tender due date.

Disposal material can be inspected in coordination with Deputy Manager (Stores) on Cell # 03442126002. Inspection of material can be done during working days from 09:00 Hrs to 11:00 Hrs.

Tender Documents can be downloaded from KSEW website [www.karachishipyards.com.pk](http://www.karachishipyards.com.pk) and PPRA Website [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk). However, the supplier/contractor are required to purchase the bidding documents on payment of Rs. 2,000/- (each) from Procurement Department at least a day before tender due date from 09:00 to 16:30 Hrs. Bidders stationed out of Karachi may obtain tender documents through courier service.

Tenders will be opened at 11:00 am on tender due date in presence of the bidder's representatives who may wish to be present. KSEW reserves the right to accept or reject tender.

**General Manager (Proc/Stores)**  
Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works Ltd  
Phone Numbers: +92-21-99214045-64, Ext: 380



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## ISLAMABAD

Sunset 05:02pm  
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 06:51am

## NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 19°C  
Maximum 23°C  
Outlook Partly Cloudy

## METRO North



**Shahzaib's record ton steers Pakistan U-19 to victory over India**

Pg.20 SPORT

## 'Dreams' project to overcome water shortage, says RDA chief

By Aamir Yasin

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Director General Kinnu Morison on Saturday said the Punjab government has launched the Developing Resident Environments and Advancing Municipal Services (Dreams) project to overcome shortage of water and improve the supply system in the garrison city.

The project aims to address the growing water needs of the city and enhance its infrastructure for better service delivery.

The project is funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). It would be ensured that the project meets international standards and contributes to enhancing the resilience and efficiency of the city's municipal services.

Ms Morison highlighted the significance of the project in providing sustainable water solutions.

"The overall scope of DREAMS involves the treatment and transportation of 14.5 million gallons per day (mgd) of water from Chahan Dam to Rawalpindi city. Additionally, the project will involve the improvement and replacement of the existing water supply system in Rawalpindi," she said in a statement.

She said Rawalpindi's increasing population and urbanisation had placed significant pressure on the existing water supply system. The Dreams project is a response to these challenges and will include the development of new water sources, renovation of existing infrastructure, and the implementation of advanced technologies to ensure a sustainable and efficient water supply for the city, she said.

The project is a critical step towards addressing the growing demand for water in Rawalpindi. It aims to modernise the city's water supply infrastructure and provide residents with reliable access to clean and safe drinking water, she said.

The project is expected to benefit thousands of households across the city by improving the efficiency of the water distribution network, reducing water losses and ensuring better management of resources. In addition, the project will focus on long-term sustainability, integrating climate resilience and water conservation measures to meet the future demands of the city, she added.

There are three parts of the project and Rs2.126 billion would be focused on the development of an integrated water supply system. The scope of this part of the project includes the construction of a new water intake system and a water treatment plant with a capacity of 12mgd sourced from the Chahan Dam.



ARTISTS Anna Masaz Khan, Ija Komarov, Imaan Mushier Nafees and Trixa Arnold perform 'Horror' at the PNCA in Islamabad on Saturday. — White Star

(Story on Page 15)

## BDS programme to cost Rs2.5m more to each private student

**Pakistan Dental Association criticises decision, demands formation of a broad-based body**

By Ikram Jussaidi

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has extended the Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) programme from four years to five years which will put an additional financial impact of up to Rs2.5 million on each private student.

The decision has triggered an allegation that it had been made to facilitate 'dentists in uniform' to allow them to work in Saudi Arabia.

Pakistan Dental Association (PDA) has criticised the decision and demanded formation of a broad-based committee of members of the council in which subject specialists of Basic Medical and Dental Sciences should be included. It suggested to the PMDC reconsider the decision.

However, PMDC President Prof Dr Kirwan Taj explained that the decision had been taken keeping in view the challenges faced by BDS graduates in securing training/jobs etc across the globe where five-year BDS transcript was required.

He said it shall be implemented from the 2024-25 session.

He said BDS course/structure in Pakistan shall be of five years including fifth year as clerkship year followed by one year structured

house job/foundation year/ internship.

He added that the additional year will allow students to gain a deeper theoretical understanding of dental sciences, improving the academic foundation required for excellence in the field.

With extended clinical training, students will be better prepared to handle real-world dental challenges with competence and confidence.

"This initiative will bring Pakistan's dental education system in line with global standards, facilitating greater international recognition of Pakistani graduates. This enhancement will equip graduates with advanced skills and knowledge, thus strengthening their competitiveness in both local and international healthcare sectors," he said.

Dr Taj stated that comprehensive curriculum guidelines had been finalised by the council and would soon be shared with dental colleges.

"The PMDC is diligently collaborating with institutions nationwide to ensure the seamless implementation of the revised structure. This reform is a critical step towards cultivating highly skilled dental professionals capable of addressing the evolving demands of healthcare in Pakistan and beyond," he added.

However, the decision has triggered a controversy that it had been taken at the behest of an institution.

"Fact is that Pakistani BDS graduates, on the basis of four years course, get admission and jobs across the globe especially in Europe and USA. However, recently Saudi

Arabia has suggested that only dental surgeons who have cleared five year's programme will be able to practice in the country. Pakistani BDS don't get jobs in Saudi Arabia as their own graduates are meeting the requirement of the country.

"However, dentists in uniform are depicted there, but they will not be able to practice with the four year degree. So the programme's length has been increased for the whole country," a faculty member wishing not to be named said.

According to minutes of a meeting (available with Dawn) of a four-member committee that made the decision, the meeting was chaired by Barrister Chaudhry Nuhman Mansoor, member legal of the PMDC Council, and attended by Commandant Armed Forces Institute of Dentistry (AFID) Maj Gen Nadeem Ahmed Rana, Member Dental Services Army Dental Corps (GHDQ) Brig Dr Anjum Ali and Member Academic Board of the PMDC Prof Dr Ghulam Rasool.

Besides, Vice Chancellor University of Health Sciences Prof Dr Ahsan Waheed Rathore and Head of Preventive Dentistry AFID Dr Mohammad Omar Niaz attended the meeting on special invitation.

The decision has triggered criticism among stakeholders and PDA President Dr Khurshid Ahmed has written a letter to the PMDC president.

The letter stated, "It needs a lot of brain storming and deliberation. The curriculum needs to be reviewed, infrastructure of colleges to be increased and faculty to be added. I will request you and

the honorable members of the council to form a broad based committee in which subject specialists of Basic Medical and Dental Sciences, clinical dental subject are involved to revise the curriculum."

"We at the platform of Pakistan Dental Association being stakeholders in dental profession are holding a seminar of all principals of dental colleges and senior private practitioners to put our recommendation for the above said subject."

"This is a matter of great importance and we appreciate your kind diligence into the matter, so that whatever decision is made may be acceptable to all. This matter has long standing consequences for the profession and no due deliberations were made by the council and no stakeholders were taken on board. I request your good offices to please consider my request favourably before taking any final decisions," he stated.

Talking to Dawn, Dr Khurshid Ahmed said the major brunt will be faced by the students who will pay up to Rs2.5 million per year as they will have to pay one year's additional fee.

"However, it has some more implications that additional teachers, buildings to house students, equipment, etc will be required as there will be one additional batch in the colleges. Moreover, PMDC has not decided if there will be some additional subjects of some subjects will be taught in five years which was earlier being taught in four years. That kind of decisions are not taken in haste and a plan should be given that it will be implemented after 10 years or at least five years.

## 139 PTI workers sent on five-day physical remand

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Islamabad on Saturday approved a five-day physical remand of 139 PTI workers arrested in connection with the party's protest in Islamabad.

The court also sent two female workers to judicial remand and extended by four days the physical remand of 17 other workers in a related case.

The capital police presented 141 individuals, including two women, before ATC Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra. The arrests were made in cases registered at the Secretariat police station.

Prosecutor Raja Naveed requested physical remand for all the suspects, prompting the judge to inquire about the women's roles.

The arrested women told the court they had been detained since November 24 and were denied basic necessities, including food and water.

Their defence lawyers argued that the women had no affiliation with the PTI while the prosecution claimed their arrests were based on disclosures made by other suspects and that further investigation was necessary. The court rejected the prosecution's request for the women's physical remand and ordered their judicial remand instead.

The court first reserved its decision on the 139 male workers but later approved a five-day physical remand of all of them. The prosecution argued that anti-riot kits and sticks had been recovered from the PTI workers, and claimed that additional recovery was needed.

Separately, 17 workers arrested in another case by the Secretariat police were presented in the court after completion of their four-day physical remand.

The court extended their remand by four more days despite defence lawyers' objections.

The defence counsel questioned the legitimacy of the recovery claims, arguing there were inconsistencies in the police narrative.

Additionally, eight workers arrested in a case at the Khanna police station were produced in the court and sent to jail for an identity parade.

The court ordered their production on December 10.

## CDA to install permanent decorative lights in Islamabad

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Mohammad Ali Randhawa has announced that decorative lights will be permanently installed in the city.

Presiding over a meeting on Saturday, Mr Randhawa and other officials reviewed the Islamabad beautification plan and decided that decorative lights will be permanently installed in the city.

In the first phase, LED floodlights will be installed along Constitution Avenue.

The CDA chairman said the lights should be energy-efficient and cost-effective, emphasising that effective and permanent measures should be taken for the protection of lights. He also instructed that PG-4 of the project be prepared and presented for approval at the earliest.

He directed that all sign and direction boards installed in the city be immediately repaired and a plan be presented to beautify the city's key buildings. He also directed that a team consisting of architects be formed to assist with the beautification plan.

The meeting decided that all avenues in the city would be beautified in phases. During the briefing, it was informed that under the beautification plan, various plants had been planted to ensure that the city remained adorned with beautiful flowers throughout the year.

The meeting was informed that the plan aims to balance the city's natural beauty with modernity. It was also mentioned that symmetry be ensured among the elements contributing to the beautification of the city.

CDA Chairman Mohammad Ali Randhawa also sought a plan for enhancing facilities at F-6 Park, adding that Fatima Jinnah Park would be developed as a centre for recreational activities.

He directed that a comprehensive plan for this purpose be presented.

## Alleged death certificates of PTI supporters attract scrutiny due to anomalies

**Party seeks judicial probe over crackdown in Islamabad**

ISLAMABAD: As the authenticity of the alleged death certificates of the party supporters circulating on social media comes under question, the PTI demanded a judicial commission to investigate the November 26 crackdown.

The PTI claimed that at least 12 party supporters were killed in Islamabad and death certificates of three activists allegedly issued by the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and Polyclinic hospitals were being circulated on social media. The names on these documents matched the list of the deceased marchers who allegedly died in the crackdown.

The alleged death certificate of Mardan's resident, Sardar Abi, 31, shows that he

died on November 26. The provisional diagnosis at the time of admission showed that he died because of firearm injuries. The time of the death is 8:10pm on November 26.

A senior Pims doctor was reluctant to identify it as genuine because of anomalies in the document.

"I have a number of doubts about the certificate. First of all, the time of death is 8:10pm. Everyone knows that the operation was started late at night, and at 8:10pm the PTI leadership was addressing the marchers. Moreover, the death certificate has been signed by Dr Serma Yousuf, who is a gynaecologist. A gynaecologist can be in the Mother and Child Hospital, but what she was doing in the main hospital," he asked.

"If claims of 150 casualties are considered correct there would have been over a thousand injured persons," he opined.

According to the doctor, as many as 65 officials of the law enforcement agencies and 36 civilians were brought to the hospital with injuries. As management of the hospital was reluctant to comment, a female doctor of Pims said that apparently the certificate was fake and suggested a probe.

"I cannot understand why management of the hospital is keeping mum because it is creating doubts and everyone in the hospital is thinking that the allegation of PTI may carry weightage," he said.

One of the alleged death certificates is of 24-year-old Abdul Mohsen, a resident of Abbottabad who died because of a gunshot wound to his chest.

The time of death is 5:12pm on November 26. The third alleged death certificate is of Azees Shahzad, 20, a resident of Islamabad. He was admitted to the hospital at 3:41pm and died at 5pm on November

26.

A doctor of Polyclinic, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that the time of death in both cases puzzled him as the operation lasted for the deaths of supporters had not even started at the time.

"We suggest investigation... so that the situation would become clear," he said.

It is worth mentioning that Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has time and again claimed that no person was killed in the operation as law enforcers did not use live ammunition.

Similarly, Information Minister Anwarullah Tarar also claimed that there were no casualties while the management of both Pims and Polyclinic hospitals claimed that they did not get dead bodies.

On the other hand, former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, in a televised interview, claimed that he was aware of two persons from his

constituency who were injured in the crackdown.

As the silence of the management of hospitals compounded the already murky situation, a representative from the health authorities said that they had been barred from speaking on the issue as the interior ministry was dealing with it.

A PTI spokesperson in a statement alleged that the government and its officials were solely responsible for the violence and killings that occurred during the protest in Islamabad, alleging that efforts were underway to distort reality by spreading falsehoods.

They demanded a high-level judicial commission to uncover the truth and hold those responsible accountable for their actions.

He stressed that the people of Pakistan would not forget the alleged 'Islamabad massacre' and would not forgive those who were responsible for it. — Ikram Jussaidi



## PRAYER

Fajr	05:29
Zuhar	12:01
Asr	03:24
Maghrib	06:02
Isha	06:39

Starting time is Islamabad

## REFLECTIONS

“THERE IS NO GAIN IN SUBJUGATING YOURSELF TO DISGRACE AND INSULTS AS THERE IS NO REAL GOOD IN WEALTH AND POWER THAT YOU ACQUIRE BY FOUL MEANS.”

— HAZRAT ALI (A.S.)

784437

## Two killed, 15 injured after truck overturns

By Our Correspondent

TAXILA: Two persons were killed and 15 others injured when a mini-truck overturned on Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway near Ghazi Interchange in the lanes of Haveli police station on Saturday.

The dead and injured belonged to the same family which was travelling from Kalam to Marsh Bahaduddin. The National Highway and Motorway Police and Rescue 1122 sources said the family was travelling in a mini-truck. When they reached near Ghazi Interchange, the truck's axle broke down as a result of which the vehicle overturned, resulting in the death of Muhammad Usman, 14, and Das Bibi, 4.

As many as 15 people, including six women and three children, were injured in the accident.

Hazri police have registered a case and launched further investigation.

## Boy killed

A 13-year-old boy was shot dead over some petty dispute in Pind Jungle in New Airport police station limits of Attock on Saturday.

Mohsin Shahzad reported to police that Waseem Nadeem, a close mate of his son Arslan, who was a grade 4 student at a local school, quarrelled with him over some petty dispute while returning home from school.

Upon reaching home, Arslan narrated his ordeal to his father who took him to Waseem's house to inquire about the matter. Upon seeing them, Waseem's father named Nadeem Mahmood along with his brother out of rage attacked them with sticks and later Nadeem took out his pistol and shot Mohsin dead and fled away.

Later police traced the suspect and arrested him and also recovered his pistol which he used to kill the boy.

## Exhibition spotlights Kashmiris languishing in Indian jails

By Tariq Naqash

MUZAFFARABAD: A photo exhibition on Saturday spotlighted the plight of nearly 4,200 Kashmiris languishing in various jails in India and occupied Jammu and Kashmir under draconian laws for years.

Organised by Peshawar Human Rights Jammu and Kashmir (PHHRJ), an off-shoot comprising post-1989 refugees from occupied Jammu and Kashmir, on the premises of the Press Club, the event featured around 60 photographs of incarcerated Kashmiris and those who were martyred during detention. Each photograph displayed the detainee's name and prison details.

Banners inscribed with demands for the release of these prisoners and calls for action by the United Nations and international human rights organisations were prominently displayed at the venue.

A symbolic protest sit-in, attended by people from different walks of life, including two members of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) cabinet and a former chief justice of the AJK Supreme Court, was also held on the occasion.

Speaking at the event, PHHRJ chairman



PEOPLE from different walks of life stage a symbolic sit-in during a photo exhibition in Muzaffarabad on Saturday. — Dawn

man Usair Ahmad Ghazali informed attendees that over 55,000 Kashmiris were arrested across occupied Jammu

and Kashmir between 1989 and after India's unilateral and oppressive action on August 5, 2019.

"While a large number of detainees were released after paying hefty bribes or enduring severe torture,

nearly 4,200 Kashmiris, including hundreds of teenagers and six women, remain in custody," he said.

Mr Ghazali added that around 25 detainees were serving life or long-term sentences, while the Indian government was planning to impose the death penalty on prominent Kashmiri leader Mohammed Yasin Malik.

Referring to the UN's 1955 principles for the treatment of political prisoners, later strengthened in 2015 as the Mandela Rules, Mr Ghazali urged the global community to compel India to abide by these standards.

"We call on the UN to enforce these rules and ensure the release of Kashmiri detainees," he said.

Another speaker, Usman Ali Hashmi, shed light on the ordeals faced by prisoners and their families.

He said many detainees had been transferred to far-off prisons in India, including Tihar Jail in Delhi, Naini Jail in Allahabad, Gurnahat Central Jail, Raipur Central Jail, and several others. The remaining prisoners were being held in local jails across occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Other speakers, including Minister for Rehabilitation Javed Iqbal Bhatnagar and former chief justice Chaudhry Ibrahim Zia, endorsed these views.

## Govt to strengthen national HIV response to prevent Aids: PM

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said the incumbent government is committed to strengthening the national HIV response to prevent lethal diseases like Aids.

"On this World Aids Day 2024, Pakistan stands united with the global community in reaffirming our firm commitment to strengthening the national HIV response and ensuring that no one is left behind," the prime minister said in his message on World Aids Day.

The theme, "Take the Rights Path: My health, My right",

reminds us that the journey to eliminate Aids as a public health threat begins with a firm commitment to human rights, he said.

Upholding the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights and promoting the inclusion of all communities are essential for eradicating Aids as a public health threat.

"Healthcare is a fundamental right. Through our collective efforts, we will ensure that all our citizens enjoy this fundamental right in an equitable manner. By working together, we will continue to strengthen our health systems and expand access to essential services for our citizens," he

added. Prime Minister Sharif termed HIV/Aids a health challenge and a significant socio-economic issue that threatens livelihoods, disrupts families, and deepens inequalities.

Gaps in testing and treatment coverage call for deep introspection — a call to reach the most vulnerable, making strategies to be truly responsive to those at risk, and ensuring that our policies evolve to meet the shifting dynamics of the epidemic, he added.

However, the prime minister admitted that despite our collective efforts, HIV epidemic in Pakistan continues to grow,

underscoring the need for bold, innovative and sustainable interventions.

"It is only through the strategy rooted in equality and inclusion that we can halt the spread of HIV. Strong political will, effective leadership, and enhanced financial commitments are essential to implementing a rights-based national HIV strategy," he added.

"On this World Aids Day, let us stand united to 'take the right path' towards an Aids-free Pakistan. A future free from Aids can only be achieved through collective action that upholds human dignity, equity and inclusion," PM Sharif said.

## Women's Parliamentary Caucus to host two workshops

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: In an initiative aimed at advancing women's rights and fostering an inclusive political environment, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) of the 15th National Assembly is set to host two workshops starting from Sunday (today).

Under the leadership of WPC Secretary Dr Shahida Rehmani, the workshops titled "Thought Leadership Workshop" and "Digital Democracy Workshop" will be held on Dec 1 and 2, respectively, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

These workshops are a vital part of the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence, which is a call to action for the protection and empowerment of women worldwide. These workshops will address critical issues such as ending gender-based violence, ensuring women's physical, social, legal and online safety, and combating all forms of harassment.

The workshops are designed to facilitate a powerful dialogue and equip participants with the skills, knowledge and tools needed for identifying, sensitising and tackling women-related issues through informed legislation and promote and uphold digital democracy.

Secretary of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus Dr Shahida Rehmani will deliver the keynote address, outlining the core objectives of the workshops.

She will emphasise the importance of empowering women members of the National Assembly to ensure robust women participation in Pakistan's upcoming general elections. Additionally, she will underscore the need for ethical parliamentary practices, enhanced digital literacy to counter technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and crucially, the development of skills in managing media and social media narratives to tackle the growing menace of misinformation, fake news and propaganda.

In addition, a panel of speakers, including renowned journalists, veteran media personalities, social media experts and key societal figures will engage in thought-provoking discussions and interactive sessions to provide valuable insights on these pressing issues.

This collaborative effort is a significant step forward in empowering women, particularly within the political sphere, to create a safer, more equitable society for all.

## PPP's 57th Foundation Day celebrated

By Our Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Saturday observed the foundation day in the garrison city with a promise to fulfill the dream of the party founder chairman and former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to bring socio-economic change in the society and raise the voice of voiceless segments of the society.

The ceremony of the 57th Foundation Day of the PPP was held at a local hotel in Rawalpindi. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's speech was telecast simultaneously across the country via live video link.

Former prime minister and PPP Central Punjab President Raja Pervez Ashraf, former Pakistan Rural Mail managing director Amir Fida Paracha, vice-presidents Punjab Khalid Nawaz Bobby, Raza Rafique Ali Khan, Nasir Min, Raja Muhammad Ali Mirhas and Sardar Qudus also addressed the ceremony before the speech of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

All ward committees of PPP Rawalpindi, PSP, People's Youth Organisation, women's department, People's Teachers' Cell, People's Lawyers' Forum,



PPP leaders cut a cake on the occasion of the 57th Foundation Day ceremony of Pakistan Peoples Party in Islamabad on Saturday. — White Star

Cultural Wing workers participated enthusiastically.

A cake was also cut at the end of the ceremony.

Meanwhile, PPP Workers also paid rich tributes to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the founding chairman of the PPP.

In a press release, former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's political secretary Nahud Khan said the party was founded on November 30, 1967, by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to empower the people of Pakistan and to fight

for the rights of the common man.

"His legacy continues to inspire the underprivileged and guide all Bhuttos in the party to follow his ideology," she said. Nahud Khan said on this foundation day, PPP

Workers strongly feels that the only possible way to remember Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was to follow the principles of democracy, social justice and equality that he and his daughter Benazir Bhutto always stood for. — Staff Reporter

## کریں تعلیم عام - مگر رجسٹریشن کے ساتھ

### اعلان برائے رجسٹریشن ٹیوشن سنٹرز/کوچنگ اکیڈمیز

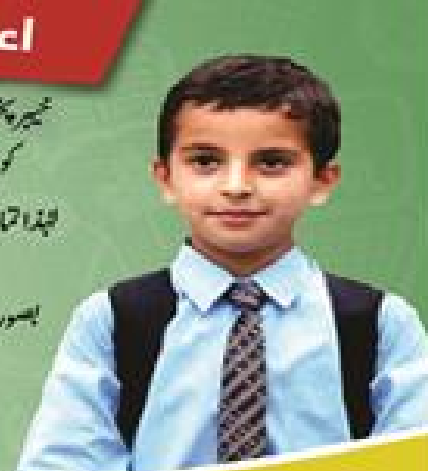
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IGP fetes selected police personnel at special luncheon

Says you have safeguarded lives and property of people, thwarted miscreants' nefarious plans

By Munawar Azam

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad police chief fêted about a quarter of the police contingents who participated in the law and order duty during the recent PTI protest. Police officers told Dawn that a lunch was arranged for the officers and officials at Police Lines Headquarters. As per the security plan for the PTI protest, 5,310 officers and officials, including eight superintendents of police, 21 assistant deputy superintendents and 5,276 inspectors, sub-inspectors, assistant sub-inspectors, head constables and constables were deployed at different places. They were from all the divisions, including operations, security, logistic and staff and wings, including Sado City, Special Branch, investigations and traffic police. Each police contingent comprising 200 officials was deployed on Express Chowk and Chino Chowk, the two points at Jinnah Avenue where an operation was conducted against the protesters during late hours of November 27. However, the guests for the ceremony included selected 1,500 personnel only. According to the order issued from IGP office "As per directed by IGP a 'Bara Khana' is being held at Police Lines Headquarters on November 30 at 11am."

In this regard, the following number of police personnel will attend the event, it said, adding "1,500 officers and officials were fêted with the delicacies - 900 from Operations Division (CTD, ARF, ITF, RDEI, investigation) 275 from Security Division, 110 from Logistics Division, including 30 from ministerial staff, 30 from Special Branch, 30 from Sado City and 25 from Capital Police College."

All concerned, including DGOs, AIGs and SSPs were asked to ensure the presence of the personnel for the meal. Some police officials praised the IGP and said "Bara Khana" was arranged for the force only on Eid. In the past, only two or three times the personnel were fêted for their services during law and order duties.

However, many officials complained that not all the police personnel who participated in the law and order duty were invited.

A statement issued by the police said Islamabad police "organised a prestigious ceremony to honour and pay tribute to its brave, fearless, and dedicated officers."

The ceremony was held at the Police Lines Headquarters to recognise the police officers who demonstrated exceptional bravery and courage during recent law and order.

Inspector General of Police IGP Syed Ali Naif Razi was the chief guest while DGO Islamabad Syed Ali Raza, IGP Headquarters/Security Mohammad Jawad Tariq, all AIGs, SSPs, SPs and police officers from all divisions were present.

The IGP paid tribute to the officers who "displayed unmatched bravery and made eternal sacrifices to uphold law and order in the federal capital."

He said "I am proud to lead this brave force, and I will always remember my time serving with Islamabad Police. Every officer in this force is chosen and appointed by Allah. By renewing your commitment to Allah, you have safeguarded the lives and property of the people and thwarted the miscreants in their nefarious plans."

He added, "My force has shown extraordinary bravery in serving and protecting the citizens as well as maintaining law and order in the city. All my officers - whether executive or ministerial staff - were present at the forefront of every action. By working tirelessly, day and night, they ensured the peace and security of the city's residents. No citizen's life or property was harmed. All law enforcement officers worked together as a family, successfully repelling the invasion of the federal capital by miscreants."

PTI 'miscreants' to be brought to book, says Maryam

By Our Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Saturday said the PTI miscreants who injured security personnel will be brought to justice and will be severely punished.

She said this during her visit to Combined Military Hospital to inquire after the health of injured Rangers and police personnel during PTI's protest in Islamabad.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz went to each injured personnel and inquired about their well-being.

The injured officers told her about the violence during the protest as a result of which many officials suffered fractures as well as eye injuries.

They further informed her that many personnel suffered head injuries in the violence, adding that the PTI workers opened fire on the police from close range.

Maryam Nawaz consoled the injured officials and prayed for their early recovery and return to their homes. She said the Rangers and police officials were the sons of the nation and we were proud of them.

She said those who targeted the security personnel would not be spared, adding that the PTI was a miscreant party which had adopted the path of chaos to stop the country's development.

The chief minister said attacks on state institutions, property and security personnel were condemnable.

"Pakistan Army and security personnel are sacrificing their lives to restore peace to the country. The miscreants should have been ashamed of attacking the soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the country," she said, adding that the federal and Punjab governments were indebted to the injured security personnel.



CDA workers sweep D-Chowk after the dirt dumped there was removed, in Islamabad on Saturday. — Photo by Tarveer Shahzad

Punjab wants to complete work on Mother and Child Hospital in one year: minister

Project pending since 2005; federal govt to hand over hospital work to Punjab

By Our Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Senior Minister Maryam Aurangzeb on Saturday said the provincial government wanted to complete the Mother and Child Hospital on Angkor Mall Road within a year and would also increase the number of beds from 200 to 400.

She stated this during her visit to the long stalled federal

government project 'Mother and Child Hospital' and reviewed details regarding the handover of the project by the federal government to the provincial government.

Members of the National Assembly Tahira Aurangzeb, Hafiz Ahsani and Malik Abeer Ahmed, besides Rawalpindi Medical University Vice Chancellor Dr. Mohammad Umar and Commissioner Asim Khattak were also present.

Work on Mother and Child Hospital started in 2005 but the building still remains incomplete. The project was launched by former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed during Gen Pervez Musharraf's tenure, and was inaugurated by former prime minister Shaukat Aziz.

However, work remained incomplete during the two tenures of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). During the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in 2018, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, who was part of the government back then, announced that work on the pending project would be completed, but till now, it remains pending.

Maryam Aurangzeb inspected the constructed parts of the stalled Mother and Child Hospital and was briefed about the project. She also visited Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute (PKLI) Rawalpindi.

Speaking during the brief-

ing, Ms Aurangzeb said the project had been started with public money but remained stalled.

"Now Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz wants to complete and activate this project for the welfare of the people," the minister said, adding that the process of transferring this project from the federation to the provincial government is being reviewed and important decisions will be taken in this regard in a special meeting chaired by the chief minister.

Maryam Aurangzeb said after the handover from the federal government, the Punjab government will plan to increase the number of beds from 200 to 400.

She said Chief Minister

Maryam Nawaz wanted work on the project to be started immediately, adding that a formal timeline would be drawn up and the project would be completed.

MNA Hafiz Ahsani said the PML-N government had started mega projects like the Metro Bus Service and Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology and completed and activated them for the public.

He said cutting the ribbon and laying the foundation stone of the project was not a big deal; what was important was to complete the project.

Mother and Child Hospital was started nearly 20 years ago at a cost of Rs1.6 billion. Today the cost has ballooned to Rs8 billion.



VISITORS look at crockery on display at one of the stalls at the Annual Christmas Market organised by the German embassy in Islamabad on Saturday. — Online

Four of family suffer burns in kitchen fire

By Our Correspondent

GUJRAT: Four members of a family, including two women and an infant, were injured when a fire broke out in the kitchen of their house due to a gas cylinder leak in Gujra village on the outskirts of the city on Saturday.

Rescue 1122 said that the wooden structure inside the kitchen caught fire due to the gas leakage, resulting in severe injuries to the family members.

The injured include 65-year-old Muhammad Asif, his 23-year-old daughter Nuzhat, his 26-year-old daughter-in-law Arshia Bita, and her one-year-old son Yawar.

All the injured were shifted to the burn unit of Aziz Bhatti Shahood Teaching

Hospital (ABSTH), where the condition of both women is reported to be critical due to over 80pc superficial burns.

SUCRIBE: A 54-year-old man, Shabbir Ahmed, died by stepping in front of a moving train near Saam Raja railway crossing.

Rescue officials shifted the body to ABSTH.

Meanwhile, a fatal road accident along Ferozpur Road claimed the life of a 24-year-old youth and injured three others.

Reports suggest that Qasim, of Sholpur, was riding a motorcycle with his friend Bilal when they collided with a vehicle. Qasim died at the scene, while Bilal, Nagis (40), and her seven-year-old son Shafay were injured.

The deceased and injured were transported to ABSTH.

Govt asked to create conducive environment for investors

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Trader leaders have urged the government to create a conducive environment for investors in order to ensure financial stability in the country.

They said the business community was the backbone of the national economy, and in the current circumstances, it is facing challenges such as energy crisis, rising interest rates and policy instability.

The trader leaders expressed these views while addressing participants of the Solar and Agricultural Exhibition organised by the Mardan Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries. The event was attended by various business personalities, experts and members of the public from across the country.

They urged the government to address these issues by taking practical steps to reduce business costs and ensure financial stability.

"Incentives should be provided to small and medium enterprises, and opportunities must be created for them in international markets, said Patron-in-Chief of United Business Group (UBG) S.M. Taseer.

He also underlined the need for simplifying the tax system to enable businesses to grow and stabilise the economy.

URG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari said the business community of Mardan had proven through this event that Pakistan's entrepreneurs were not only committed to improving the national economy but were also incorporating innovation in their fields by keeping up with modern demands.

"The business community has always rendered its services for strengthening and developing the economy, no matter how challenging the circumstances," Mr Bakhtawari said, adding that the business community provided a strong foundation for Pakistan's economic development.

However, he said to further strengthen this foundation, the government must urgently resolve their issues, provide incentives and ensure policy stability.

"This is the time for us to come together, leverage our capabilities, and transform Pakistan into an economic powerhouse," he added.

He also praised the Mardan business community for organising an international-standard exhibition, proving that small cities in Pakistan have the potential to dream big and turn those dreams into reality.

President of Mardan Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries Taj Mohammad Khan emphasised that the business community of Mardan had always played its part in stabilising the national economy.

"This exhibition reflects our efforts to promote modern practices in energy and agriculture," he said.

Ihsan Basha highlighted that this event was not only a means to develop businesses in the region but also an excellent platform for providing future opportunities to the youth.

Founder President of Tehangar Chamber of Commerce Malik Shabbir Awan, Taj Mohammad Khan, Group Leader Ihsan Basha, Haji Afzal, Javed Kamal and Nawaz Mansuri inaugurated the exhibition.

Pakistani, Swiss artists come together to rediscover home

By Syeda Shafiqano Kazim

ISLAMABAD: Pre-Helvetia Swiss Arts Council, Arnold Komarov Travelling Theatre and Dugdog presented 'Home', a multi-disciplinary performance by Pakistani and Swiss artists, at the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNC) open air auditorium.

The performance brought together artists Amna Marwat Khan and Ihsan Munster Nafees from Pakistan and Ilja Komarov and Trixa Arnold from Switzerland, who travelled across Pakistan, to bring the performance piece to fruition.

'Home' explored the complexity and contradiction of home - a space that resonates with themes such as comfort and conflict, belonging and alienation. While a sheltering home

is a universally recognised necessity for human beings, the project about home explored the contradictions within this space as one of restrictions, and even peril. Through the personal, micro gaze, to a political and macro lens, the project, examined the intersection of safe space and one abandoning with control, abuse or exclusion.

The artists conducted interactive, arts-based, and performative workshops to explore the topic, together with diverse community members of Pakistan, including marginalised groups and "minorities", activists, artists and researchers, children and other participants from open calls, to collect content to develop and enrich the performance.

The piece brought to the surface how class, gender and ethnic backgrounds shape the understanding of what home can mean - from the

physical location, an internal state, or something communal.

Ilja Komarov, the artistic co-director of Freies Musik theater Zürich, works as a composer, musician, dancer and actor.

Ilja added, "We created it from zero and that makes it very exciting."

The performance brought together distinct media, talking, music, songs, videos and dance - bringing the experience and practice of all these artists to the stage.

Ihsan Munster Nafees, a multi-disciplinary artist who believes in the power of art for social and political change, and member of the artist collective Dugdog, said "It is definitely a very interesting experience when two people from Pakistan and two people from Switzerland, with completely different cultures, different artistic practices, come

together, for actually two projects - one that was already prepared in Switzerland and came to tour in Pakistan, which was 'Shame on You', consisting of stories of shame collected from different countries, and we performed it in Karachi, Lahore, Hyderabad and Islamabad. This, the other project, Home, is a co-creation project."

Calling the shared creation holistic, fun and learning, and cross-cultural collaboration a grounding experience, he said "For Home, we four artists worked together in Pakistan through different participatory interactive processes in different communities - with children, with activists, with artists - in Karachi and Islamabad. It has been a great experience collaborating in the showcase today."

Trixa Arnold currently works for theatres, dance troupes, perfor-

mance and film as a musician, dramaturg and director, doing her own projects as well as with Marina Codon, Krass production, Corin Glasner, Amna Kolkovitz and others. She is also the artistic co-director at Freies Musik theater Zürich.

Trixa said "About this co-creation, this collaboration, I found it super-exciting, fun and also, very demanding, because we realise that we do have a lot of cultural differences, that we have other viewpoints on what is actually performance, how does theatre work. I find this very, very interesting and I learnt a lot."

"It is also important to speak of our present; Ilja and I have been working with this method where we collect stories, thoughts, in public space - we let people tell us their stories, they also write to us, and we

stage them. We do work on the texts," she said.

Amna Marwat Khan, a performance artist, with two decades of training in South Asian dance forms under Ilja, Marina, street theatre, meditation, writing and political activism, said "It was a very interesting, in-depth process for me as it took a lot of research and interaction with different kinds of people, some of whom I would not have otherwise met, for instance orphans or people who live in troubled neighbourhoods."

She said she also had some beautiful, insightful interactions with artists from across Karachi especially.

"I also found it interesting that we created a piece of interactive theatre as well as experimental theatre and there was space to mix stuffy innovative," she added.

## LAHORE

Sunrise 06:01 pm  
Sunset (Tomorrow) 05:42 am  
**NEXT 24 HRS**  
Minimum 12.0°C  
Maximum 24.0°C  
Outlook Sunny  
**AQI**  
Maximum (Yesterday) 330

METRO  
Central

**Shahzaib's record ton steers Pakistan U-19 to victory over India**

Pg. 18 SPORT



CHILDREN take interest in a puppet show organised by the Walled City of Lahore Authority under its Akhbar Lahore Day programme at Jahangir's Tomb. — Wafa Star

## Charges against Imran in May 9 cases not ordinary in nature: ATC

In its order, court says PTI founder's directions were strictly followed by his supporters.

By Waqif Ahmad Sheikh

**LAHORE:** An anti-terrorism court (ATC) has declared that the charges of abetting and conspiring with the perpetrators of the May 9 riots against PTI founding chairman Imran Khan are not ordinary in nature.

"The offences fall within the prohibitory clause of Section 497 of CrPc. Petitioner was lashed guilty," ATC-3 Judge Munir Ali Gill stated in a written order issued about the post-arrest bail petitions of the former prime minister in eight cases of May 9 riots. The petitions

were dismissed on Nov 27.

The cases include an attack on the Jinnah House, which also serves as residence of Lahore corps commander.

The judge noted that the entire case of the prosecution revolved around the stance that due to the criminal conspiracy and abetment of the petitioner (Imran Khan), the PTI workers and other senior leadership committed the occurrence. Therefore, he said, the contention of the petitioner's counsel that his client was behind the bars at the time of offence had no weight.

The judge also rejected another stance taken by the counsel that the petitioner's post-arrest bail in so many other cases had already been allowed by different courts. The judge observed that each and every case should be decided on its own merit as the severity and the way of commission of offence in all the cases were different. He said the court was also of the view that while deciding the bail

petition in each and every case, the courts always avoided to thrust the whole prosecution case.

Judge Gill noted that the superior courts in Pakistan always appreciated the tentative assessment while deciding the bail petition and deeper appreciation should always be discouraged. He said the petitioner's lawyer also relied upon different case laws, which were duly replied to by the prosecution, saying it was not an ordinary case of fight etc.

"This court also is of the view that it is not an ordinary case of abetment, instigation or conspiracy," the judge remarked in the order and stated that being the founding chairman of the PTI, the petitioner's speeches and directions were strictly followed by his workers and supporters.

The judge observed that as per record of the case, the petitioner was mentioned in the FIR with the allegation that he, being the chairman/founder of Pakistan

Tehreek-e-Insaf, hatched a conspiracy with other senior leadership of his party at 2-Khanan Park Lahore that if he would be arrested, all senior party leadership would further instigate the public and workers of party to attack the state machinery as well as military installations throughout Pakistan.

The judge mentioned that the prosecution placed statements of the witnesses to prove the allegation of hatching a conspiracy and instigating evidence to establish the charge of instigation and abetment against the petitioner.

"It is also in the mind of this court that the petitioner is not an ordinary man. He is chairman of PTI and his directions and communication carries weight to the workers, other senior leaders, voters and supporters. None from the other leadership of PTI even think about to deny or

Continued on Page 15

## Four of a family die in house fire in Burewala

By Our Correspondent

**BAHAWALPUR:** A young couple and their two minor sons were burnt to death when a gas cylinder caught fire in their bedroom at Chak 412/ I.R. Ahalabad, near Burewala tehsil of Vehari district.

According to the Rescue 1122 media coordinator, an LPG cylinder in the bedroom caught fire, which engulfed the entire room and caused serious burns to four sleeping members of the family.

Those burnt were identified as Danish Raza (24), his wife Zakia Batool (22), son Farhan Abbas (6) and Ayaz Abbas (2). All of them were shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital, Vehari, where they succumbed to their burns.

In another fire incident, shoes,

clothes and other articles worth about Rs4m were burnt in a fire in two closed shops on Thana Road at Achla Inayat near Quamrur on the Multan Road in Bahawalpur.

The locals tried to help the owners to extinguish the fire but it destroyed their clothes and shoes stocks. Later, the rescuers in their operation controlled the fire, which was caused by a short circuit inside the shops. No loss of life was reported.

**ENCOUNTER:** A proclaimed offender allegedly involved in murder and robbery cases was killed in a shooting in the limits of the Gajpatti Police Station in Multan.

According to police, Marhar Langra was present in a house when they raided it. An exchange of firing occurred and Marhar suffered

Continued on Page 14

## Schemes to allot plots on security papers

By Our Staff Reporter

**LAHORE:** On the direction of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Lahore, housing societies will now allot plots exclusively on the Punjab government issued security papers instead of their own printed forms, effectively eliminating the open file system.

NAB Lahore Director General (DG) Anwar Majid Anshah announced this at an open court held at its bureau here on Saturday, attended by over 200 affected of the housing societies.

The DG personally lis-

tened to their issues and issued immediate directives for resolution.

Affected of Prime Zone, Feroze Road Traders, Beld Vision, Omega Housing Society, Khayaban-e-Amin Housing Society, Qasim Garden, New Lahore City, and Grand Avenue Housing Society attended the hearing.

During the session, the DG highlighted NAB Lahore's initiatives in the housing sector.

He said to ensure transparent buying and selling of plots, the policy of issuing security allotment papers had been introduced, initially under the jurisdiction

of Ravi Urban Development Authority.

"As a result of NAB Lahore's efforts, housing societies will now allot plots exclusively on Punjab Government issued security papers instead of their own printed forms, effectively eliminating the open file system," he said.

To facilitate victims in fraud cases, the DG issued orders for the creation of a dedicated WhatsApp group where they would receive timely updates regarding progress in cases against perpetrators.

Immediate directives were also given to the

Continued on Page 15

## PPSC to conduct PMS exams in two phases

**LAHORE:** The Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) on Saturday announced the conduct of the Provincial Management Service (PMS) written examination in two phases.

This decision was made during a full commission meeting chaired by PPSC Chairman retired Lt-Gen Abdul Aziz on Saturday. The meeting was attended by PPSC Secretary Afzal Ahmed and other commission members.

In the meeting, it was decided that the Combined Competitive Examination/PMS 2023 would begin with Phase-I, scheduled for Dec 15 (Sunday). The first phase will comprise a 100 MCQs-based general knowledge paper, which serves as a screening test for the subsequent stages.

Only candidates who meet the prescribed passing criteria in the general knowledge paper will qualify for Phase-II, which includes the remaining written papers.

These examinations are followed by a psychological test and an interview to assess candidates comprehensively.

Successful candidates are offered prestigious government positions as First Class Officers (Grade 17). The PMS examination is a key competitive process in Punjab, providing talented individuals an opportunity to join the provincial civil service. — Staff Reporter

## Pleas against outsourcing of public schools dismissed

LHC says no violation of any provision of Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act

**LAHORE:** Dismissing a challenge to outsourcing the management of public sector schools through the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF), the Lahore High Court has observed that the policy decisions require political judgment, not legal interpretation.

"Functionality of the Foundation is governed and regulated by the Government. Petitioners in fact are seeking exercise of judicial review jurisdiction in the functioning of the department, which is intrusion in the absence of any illegality, voidness and perversity is unwarranted," Justice Asim Hafiz remarked in his judgement dismissing a petition by parents.

Syed Ahsan Abbas and other petitioners sought a declaration against the policy decision of the Punjab government to outsource the running and management of the public schools under the Public School Reorganisation Programme (PSRP) through

public-private partnership initiative.

They also challenged the policy on the premise that it violates the constitutional guarantee of free education extended under Article 25-A of the Constitution.

They further argued that no legislative instrument was available to support the programme or the policy. It was submitted that the statutory framework provided under the Punjab Education Foundation Act of 2004 does not support the decision to outsource the schools.

They said no mechanism was prescribed for selection of schools, recruitment and performance evaluation of teachers and staff. They alleged that the decisions were haphazard and biased by the politicians.

Main emphasis of the petitioners was on the plea that enforcement of policy would result in imposition/increase in the fee and charges, which is contrary to the principle of free education, an obligation of the State.

On the other hand, lawyers for the government PEF explained the features of the programme mechanism prescribed for outsourcing, selection of eligible houses and strict monitoring regime.

They maintained that there was no

increase in the fee, which was one of the conditions of the licensing arrangement.

Justice Hafiz also observed that no document had been provided to show any rise in the fee, in any manner.

The judge noted that the school education department is the secretariat department of the government, to which business of the government is allocated/distributed, which includes the task of promoting quality education under public-private partnership through the Punjab Education Foundation.

He further noted that the PEF has been omitted from the list of autonomous bodies and brought under the regulatory control of the government department. And it is in fact the policy of the department, which is being implemented under the statutory framework of the Act of 2004.

The judge observed that no violation of any fundamental right is evident, when no direct evidence is available to substantiate allegations of fee raise or increase in the education budget of the citizens.

He said the counsel for the petitioners failed to convince the court that assumption and exercise of jurisdiction is imperative

against policy decisions of the government — outsourcing of the administration of underperforming schools and to deal with perennial problem of shortage of teachers.

He said the argument of the petitioners that no law is available to back the policy of the government is misconceived. He noted that the impugned policy introduced and programme implemented is in accordance with the mandate of provisions of PEF Act of 2004.

The judge said the policy had the approval of the cabinet.

"Neither any violation of constitutional guarantee is established nor violation of any provision of The Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act 2004 is shown," observed Justice Hafiz.

No case for exercising judicial review jurisdiction against the policy decision and programme is made out, which calls for showing deference to the policy-making domain of the government/executive, the judge concluded the judgement dismissing the petition.

**Government Report:**

A report filed before the court on behalf of the Punjab government revealed that

there are 13,215 low-performing schools with a total of 22,749 teachers, working against 56,175 sanctioned posts, and 1,089,963 enrolled students.

It said the outsourcing programme PSRP has been designed to encourage educated youth, experienced individuals, expert Pakistanis, school chairs, Ed-Tech firms and NGOs to join hands with the government in reorganization and revamping of the public sector schools in three phases.

The operational management of 5,863 schools will be outsourced in the first phase, which includes 567 with zero teacher, 2,555 with single teacher and 2,741 with enrolment up to 50 students and two teachers.

The second phase will see handing over of 4,453 schools with enrolment from 51 to 100 students and two teachers.

A total of 2,903 schools with more than 100 students and two teachers will be outsourced in the third phase.

The report said the government anticipates an annual saving of Rs42.1 billion under the head of non-development budget after the outsourcing of the public schools. — Waqif Ahmad Sheikh





## Four of family suffer burns in kitchen fire

By Our Correspondent

**GUJRAT:** Four members of a family, including two women and an infant, were injured when a fire broke out in the kitchen of their home due to a gas cylinder leak in Gujrat village on the outskirts of the city on Saturday.

Rescue 1122 said that the wooden structure inside the kitchen caught fire due to the gas leakage, resulting in severe injuries to the family members.

The injured include 65-year-old Muhammad Asif, his 23-year-old daughter Nadeem, his 26-year-old daughter-in-law Aroha Bibi, and his one-year-old son Yousaf.

All the injured were shifted to the best unit of Azei Bhutti Shahood Teaching Hospital (ABTHH), where the con-

dition of both women is reported to be critical due to over 80pc superficial burns.

**SUCRINI:** A 54-year-old man, Shabir Ahmed, died by stepping in front of a moving train near Saeed Raja railway crossing.

Roscoe officials shifted the body to ABTHH. Meanwhile, a fatal road accident along Patelgaur Road claimed the life of a 24-year-old youth and injured three others.

Reports suggest that Qasim, of Shikhar, was riding a motorcycle with his friend Bilal when they collided with a vehicle. Qasim died at the scene, while Bilal, Nagma (40), and her seven-year-old son Shafiq were injured.

The deceased and injured were transported to ABTHH.

## Student travelling atop bus dies after hitting tree

By Our Correspondent

**RAHAWAL NAGAR:** Sixteen-year-old college student Zainab Akhbar succumbed to injuries sustained in an accident involving an overcrowded bus near Masra Sahiwal on Saturday.

Zainab and another student, Usman Ghani, were travelling home along the road when the bus overturned while travelling on a road.

Both suffered critical head injuries and were rushed to the Bahawalpur District Headquarters Hospital. Zainab was later referred to Sahiwal, where she passed away during treatment.

Witnesses reported that the students climbed onto the roof as the bus was filled beyond capacity.

A case filed with the Bahawalpur police attributed the accident to the bus driver's rash driving. The driver fled the scene.

The traffic department claims to have issued over 10,000 challans for overloading this year, critics say the fines are so minimal that transport operators recover the cost multiple times through overloading.

Efforts to contact the traffic DSP for comments were unsuccessful. — Correspondent



MULTAN: An athlete in action during a pole vault competition at Ayub Stadium. — APP

## Two killed in shooting at Baba Booty Shah mela

By Our Correspondent

**TOKA TEK SINGH:** Two persons were critically injured and another was killed after a group of 12 people, including young boys, opened fire at Baba Booty Shah Mela in Chak 202 RB Garia, Faisalabad.

Waqar Saleem and Advocate Harman Raza along with Harman's brother Usaidullah had reportedly tried to stop the shooting and his 11 accomplices from creating chaos at the mela. Enraged, the suspects opened fire and critically injured all three.

The victims were rushed to Allied Hospital, where Waqar and Harman succumbed to their injuries. Usaidullah was in a critical condition.

Police arrested eight suspects and seized weapons. Raids were underway to arrest the remaining accomplices. City Police Officer Kamran

Adil said the mela was held without police permission. The Millat Town police arrested Muhammad, Haris and Musadhar.

**ACCIDENT:** Two persons were killed in an accident on Toka Tek Singh Road when a speeding bus hit their motorcycle on Saturday.

Majid Ali (34) and Barhan Ahmad (28) were travelling on Gopra Tek Singh Road when a Faisalabad-Nadiyal bus ran over their bikes, killing them instantly.

Police have started an investigation into the incident. **HEALTH SENTENCE:** Two persons were sentenced to death in murder cases on Saturday.

Gojra Additional District and Sessions Judge Abbas Raza Warrach sentenced Imran Shabbir to death for murdering Qasim Nadeem in 2021 over an old enemy. He was also ordered to pay Rs500,000 to the deceased's family.

Three co-accused were acquitted due to insufficient evidence. In Kadirwala, Khanawal, another judge sentenced Tahir to death for killing a car driver, Shabbir, in 2023 after a minor dispute. He was also fined Rs500,000.

**FAKE HERBAL MEDICINES:** Authorities raided the Al-Saudia Tibbi Foundation in Pirmahal and seized hundreds of packs of fake herbal medicines.

District Drug Controller Muhammad Zoonban stated that the company supplied hazardous medicines nationwide. Clinic owner Hakoom Muhammad Razaan has been arrested and a case registered against him.

**CASE:** The Jaranwala Sadar police registered a case on Saturday, after a four-month delay, against former SRO Raza Gajjar, five constables, and two others on charges of kidnapping for

signature Kashif and his brother Kamran and releasing them after taking Rs300,000 as a bribe.

Complainant Abdul Majid of Chak 65-GH claimed in his FIR, registered under Section 342 of the Pakistan Penal Code, that both his sons were travelling by a car when the SRO, along with five police officials and two private people (opponents of the complainant), abducted them and took them to the CIA Staff Police Station in Ramnagar.

There, they were allegedly tortured to appease their opponents and were released only after paying the bribe.

The complainant further stated that the abductors also took Rs11,000 in cash, a mobile phone worth Rs55,000 and other valuables.

He added that an SP's inquiry confirmed the allegations against all six police officials. However, no arrests have been made so far.

## Tech-based innovative start-ups presented for funding

By Our Correspondent

**SAHIWAL:** Around 120 vibrant youths with 30 tech-based innovative start-ups pitched in their business ideas for final selection in front of a seven-judge jury for next year's funding under the fifth Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) Regional Plan 9 at the Innovation Centre of the University of Sahiwal on Saturday.

The jury is set to select 15 start-up projects, each of which will receive a monthly stipend of Rs80,000, including office space, legal assistance, networking opportunities, business model development, and mentorship at the IPD Innovation Centre for the next six months.

The RP-9 is Punjab government tech-based initiative whose basic purpose is to support early-stage start-ups and provide guidance at various stages of initial development. It seeks to promote tech entrepreneurship and create a positive impact by assisting start-ups in building sustainable businesses.

Dr Muhammad Ayub, director, Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization, said Punjab that under the 5th cohort, 30 start-ups showcased their ideas. Still, only 10 were selected for the final pitch-in after clearing two rounds of evaluation, including an elevator pitch.

A team of four members from each start-up presented their final ideas for business funding and technical assistance. The seven-member jury not only judged the innovative and creative ideas but also facilitated the teams in improving their concepts on technical and business model.

"By equipping these start-ups with essential resources and expert guidance, we are cultivating a youth that will not only create local job markets but also contribute to economic growth," Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Javed Akhtar said.

The seven-member jury consists of IT, policy compliance experts, industry professionals, community development practitioners and academics. It includes Dr Muhammad Ayub, Dr Shabana Aris, Dr Qasim Zaman, Sajid Noman, Mr Raza Mughar, Muhammad Shafiq, and Muhammad Asghar.

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ONLY SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES WILL BE CONTACTED FOR INTERVIEW.

## Schemes to allot plots on security...

Continued from Page 13

management of various housing societies for referrals to affected individuals. Moreover, the DG instructed the handing over of fully developed plots to victims who have paid the total cost of their plots or flats.

Addressing allegations of Khayaban-e-Amin Housing Society, Mr. Aulakh said the society's management had already handed over plots and flats worth millions of rupees to 400 affected individuals. Additionally, 75% of the society's construction work has been completed under NAB's supervision.

"A new policy addressing cancelled plots and flats is also under development to ensure a practical and acceptable solution for all stakeholders," he said.

Speaking to the victims of Grand Avenue Housing Society, he said that 40% of the affected individuals' dues had already been recovered and returned.

"NAB Lahore has made four attempts to auction the society's confiscated properties but has yet to succeed. A fifth auction committee will soon be formed to ensure the sale of these properties and distribute the recovered amount among the victims."

Regarding Farooq Real Traders, the DG said that upon victims' request, the case had been transferred from NAB Karachi to NAB Lahore. "To date, 804 claims have been received, and call-up notices issued to 100 victims. The names of all accused have been placed on the List Control List (LCL), and proceedings to bring back absconders have begun. NAB is collaborating with other institutions to gather detailed information on the assets of the accused."

For the affected of Prime Zone, Aulakh said the investigation against the management was in its final stage, and a reference would soon be filed in court. "Efforts are underway to repatriate the absconding main accused, Imran Ali, through Interpol in coordination with the FIA. Imran Ali has already been declared a proclaimed offender by the court, and the case charge sheet is nearing completion."

Addressing the complaints of victims from Qasim Garden, the DG explained that, under NAB regulations, the absence of at least 100 claimants had resulted in the case being forwarded to the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) and the Punjab HC for further action.

On NAB Lahore's overall performance, the DG noted that some 15,500 affected of different housing schemes had been compensated this year alone. He emphasized that the purpose of public hearings was to bridge the gap between NAB and the public, reaffirming NAB Lahore's commitment to resolving grievances promptly and effectively.

## Charges against Imran in May 9...

Continued from Page 13

reject the allegations and command of the petitioner being chairman/founder of the party," the judge observed.

He said police record showed that other than the incidents in hand, dozens of similar episodes took place on the same day. And in all such incidents, only the army installations, government institutions and police officials were attacked by the protesters, he added.

Dismissing the bail petitions, Judge Gill admitted the argument of the prosecution that Imran Khan at his Zaman Park residence hosted a conspiracy, which resulted in the commission of offences before the court.

These post-arrest bail petitions were filed after the Lahore High Court on July 25 quashed physical removal of the former prime minister in 12 cases.

Later, ATC-III Judge Anwarul Javed on Nov 8 had granted post-arrest bail to Imran Khan in four cases, including burning the PM's office in Model Town, a container near Kalma Chowk, police vehicles in Gulberg, and violence at Sherpur Bridge during the May 9 riots.

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Incase of any query please contact  
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**Associate Manager Procurement**  
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## PESHAWAR

Sunset 05:07pm  
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 06:56am

## NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 19°C  
Maximum 22°C  
Outlook Cloudy

METRO  
North

**Shahzaib's record ton steers Pakistan U-19 to victory over India**

Pg.20 SPORT



WORKERS sift through sand for gold in the Bara River near Mian Gajjar locality in Peshawar. — White Star

## CM orders removal of his aide over Islamabad march controversy

Formal notification yet to be issued

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Asim Khan Gardapoti has ordered the removal of his special assistant, Masud Anam Yousafzai, following a controversy sparked by her claims during a TV interview about the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's recent march on Islamabad.

However, a formal notification for her sacking is still awaited.

Ms Masud is also the spokesperson for Basma Bibi, the wife of imprisoned PTI founder Imran Khan.

In a late night development on Friday, the Chief Minister's Secretariat sent a letter to the

administration department, directing it to immediately demitify Ms Masud from her position as the special assistant to the chief minister.

"Necessary action in the matter may kindly be taken under intimation to this secretariat as the earliest," read the letter.

The controversy arose after Ms Masud appeared on Geo TV's Khyber Pakistan programme and dismissed reports that Basma Bibi chaired a meeting of the PTI's political committee after the Islamabad march.

"She [Basma Bibi] has neither chaired nor attended any PTI meeting, and such claims are just rumours and false propaganda," she said.

Regarding the PTI's march on Islamabad, Ms Masud insisted that detained party founder Imran Khan had directed Basma Bibi to reach D-Check in the federal capital.

"Basma Bibi's decision to lead a march to D-Check was in line with Imran Khan's orders," she said.

She, however, said that Basma Bibi remained cut off from everyone for two days after the Islamabad protest ended.

"I was with her [Basma Bibi] until 11:45pm on that night in Islamabad before getting separated and meeting again two days later in Peshawar," she said.

Ms Masud said that the PTI founder's wife did not want to leave protesters' camp after law enforcement personnel fired at her vehicle.

She, however, claimed that a stone thrown on the windshield of Basma Bibi's car, blurring the view, so she went to board another vehicle and wanted to return to work.

"I wasn't aware why she did not return. She was told that she would return to protesters [after changing the car]," she said.

Regarding the PTI founder's orders to hold a protest in Sangjani area on Islamabad's outskirts, Ms Masud said that they were indirectly conveyed that party chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and Barrister Muhammad Ali Sadiq met Imran Khan, who consented to the Sangjani strike, but Basma Bibi insisted to speak to her husband over the phone.

"Basma Bibi said that I want to hear the change of protest venue directly from Khan sahib and if he says no, we would not move even an inch ahead," she claimed.

Ms Masud, however, said that no one listened to Basma Bibi. She acknowledged that Imran Khan's wife didn't trust anyone after the change of protest venue in Lahore and Islamabad against his orders.

She also said that Basma Bibi carried out political activities on the orders of the party's founder.

After the interview went on air on Friday, the provincial government started the process for Ms Masud's de-notification as the aide to the chief minister.

She was not available for comments despite repeated attempts.

When contacted, advisor to chief minister for information Barrister Muhammad Ali Sadiq dismissed the issue.

"It's the chief minister's prerogative to appoint or remove ministers," he told Dawn.

Mr Sadiq said that he was not aware of the exact reasons for Ms Anam's removal.

He, however, said reasons might become known over the next few days.

In Sept this year, Ms Anam was then serving as special assistant to chief minister on social welfare department was removed from her position, only to be reappointed around two weeks later.

## Lakki authorities told to take preventive steps as mpox case reported

By Ashfaq Yasurtzai

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa health department has directed Lakki Marwat authorities to take preventive measures after the detection of an mpox case in the district on Saturday.

The patient, a 33-year-old resident, was examined by Dr Mehran Khan, chairman of the dermatology department at the Khyber Teaching Hospital, on Nov 28 with symptoms, including

high-grade fever, weakness and genital rashes, health officials told Dawn.

They added that samples from the patient, who had a history of travel to Dubai, were sent to the Public Health Reference Lab at the Khyber Medical University that confirmed mpox.

Officials said it was the sixth case reported in the province since late last year, with all five previous patients having fully recovered from the zoonotic infection.

They said the first suspected mpox case in the province, which was later confirmed by the PHRL, was also examined

by Dr Mehran.

The officials said that the newly-confirmed patient worked as a driver in Dubai for five years and landed at the Basha Khan International Airport, Peshawar, on Nov 28. They said that the patient was sent to the hospital for examination where he emerged positive after necessary tests.

The officials said that the patient's condition was improving.

The case prompted the health department to ask district health authorities in Lakki Marwat to take swift action to check spread of the disease.

Director (public health) at the district (public health services) Dr Shahid Raghani has asked the public health coordinator to ensure preventive measures against mpox without delay, saying it is the only active case in the province at the moment, so there is a need to ensure protection of other residents from being infected with the disease. The health department also put hospitals and other health centres in the province on alert.

Dr Raghani told Dawn that enhanced

Continued on Page 14

## Police denied custody of Pashtun jirga leader in more cases

Khan Wali was held as he decried killing of children in Tirah shelling

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: An anti-terrorism court here on Saturday rejected the petitions of two police stations in Khyber and Kohat-Palwal districts for the custody of imprisoned Pashtun National Jirga leader Khan Wali Afridi in other cases.

Mr Afridi was arrested earlier this month after he raised voice against the killing of two children in mortar shelling in Tirah area of Khyber tribal district.

Initially, he was held in a case related to the Turkhan Highway blockade by tribesmen over

delay in return of internally displaced persons to their native areas where military operation was conducted.

The local police had claimed that the protesting tribesmen including Mr Wali were raising slogans against state institutions.

However, when he was granted bail in the case, the police arrested him in several other cases, including one registered at Peshawar's Regi police station on Oct 9 regarding several killings on firing at the venue of the three-day PNJ.

Though Mr Wali, also an academician and principal of a private educational institution in Khyber district, was granted bail in other cases, he is still behind bars as certain legal requirements regarding his bail bonds have to be completed.

Recently, he was also shifted to Chitral over a case of propaganda against state institu-

tions, but a local court discharged that case.

In the meantime, the officials of Landi Kotah and Palwal police stations approached the ATC to seek his arrest in two other cases.

Mr Wali's lawyer Farhad Afridi told Dawn that the police had been misusing the law and trying to keep his client imprisoned by implicating him in fabricated cases as he had been a vocal advocate for civil liberties and opposed excesses of law-enforcement against innocent people.

Landi Kotah circle deputy superintendent of police Malik Mazhar and senior public prosecutor Arwar Khan submitted an application to the ATC for getting the custody of Mr Wali.

They insisted that the detainee was required in a case registered in 2022, which was untraced and was filed on the order of the concerned court.

The ATC's administration

judge, Muhammad Iqbal Khan, observed that the case was registered in 2022 against unidentified accused, and during investigation, the police couldn't trace or arrest any person as an accused, so they submitted the case to the court being untraced without it should be formally filed.

The court observed that the relevant judge at the time of declaring the case untraced, ordered it to be consigned to record room but ruled that as the police traced the real culprit, they could apply for the case's restoration.

"Giving such a relief to the police amounted to giving a blank cheque to them while keeping such cases in the police station and whenever they desired to implicate or involve any person therein, they came forward with application for arresting an accused confined in any other case in the jail," it observed.

The judge observed that when the DSP was confronted about how they knew that Khan Wali was involved in a legal matter and satisfy the court.

He added that mere nomination of a person in a case couldn't allow either him to play with people's lives, as the plea for collecting the accused from the prison and arresting him in the instant case was not legally justified.

Similarly, the officials of Palwal police station sought the transfer of Mr Wali from the prison to Kotah Palwal in a case registered against him on Nov 11, 2024, for different offences against the state.

"No case was made out against the accused," the court declared.

It added that the police were not competent or authorised to register the case without the permission of the competent authority.

## Police official among three martyred in Lakki attack

By Our Correspondent

LAKKI MARWAT: Three people, including a police official, were martyred in a gun attack in Peshawar's Peccia area of Lakki Marwat district here on Saturday.

A police official said that the firing took place in the limits of Ghazni police station.

He said that unknown armed assailants attacked a police official, Qadeer Khan, near the village's graveyard, and escaped.

Qadeer received critical bullet injuries and died on the spot, while two villagers, Abdul Haqim and his son, Rafiqullah were seriously wounded in the attack," he mentioned.

The official said that both the injured succumbed to their wounds when they were being shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital.

"The martyred police official was a sub-inspector and was currently posted in Faisalabad. He had come to his village on leave," the official said.

After the attack, a large police contingent reached the remote locality and launched a search for the assailants," he said.

He said that the police's Counter-Terrorism Department registered a case and initiated an investigation.

Meanwhile, the elders of Dabkakhal tribe formed a 12-member committee to meet government authorities to bring into their notice the issues faced by tribesmen as a result of operations against terrorists in the area.

The committee was formed at a jirga held in Ghona Dabkakhal area of Baran district on Saturday.

Malik Gulbuz Khan, Malik Sher Wali Khan and other tribal elders said that military operations against terrorists in the locality caused troubles to the local tribesmen.

They said that the closure of roads and curfew like situation had become a routine, forcing the tribesmen to stay indoors for their safety.

They said that they would take up their issues with the government officials for quick redressal. They also warned that the tribesmen would hold a sit-in if their grievances were not addressed.

## Bajaur traders call for arrests over knife attack

By Our Correspondent

BAJAUR: Traders of Khar Bazaar, the main commercial centre in Bajaur district, on Saturday demanded the early arrest of people involved in the knife attack on Thursday that left the owner of an eatery dead and injured his brother.

"Speaking at a meeting, they also threatened to hold a protest demonstration if their demand was not met immediately."

In a statement issued after the meeting, the traders expressed concern over the knife attack.

They said that the incident occurred when a trader, Habib Khan along with a relative, attacked Azizur Rehman and his brother with a knife in their restaurant after exchanging harsh words with them.

The meeting was informed that 30-year-old Azizur Rehman, who was also a student at a local college, died on the spot, while his brother was wounded critically.

The participants demanded of the district police officer to take serious notice of the incident and arrest the accused involved in the attack.

## Early construction of Waziristan hospital demanded

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: A jirga of Mahsud and Buzi tribes held in Upper South Waziristan district on Sunday demanded the release of funds for the completion of work on category-D hospital in Kanigowam area.

The elders emphasised that the lack of a district headquarters hospital in Upper South Waziristan had caused significant difficulties for the Mahsud and Buzi tribes.

They informed deputy commissioner Saleem Jan, who was also present on the occasion, about the challenges faced by their communities due to the absence of a district headquarters hospital.

The jirga highlighted that work on the category-D hospital in Kanigowam was inaugurated in 2004 by former governor Syed Iftikhar Hussain Shah, but the hospital project was yet to be completed. — Correspondent

PRAYER	
Fajr	05:34
Zuhar	12:06
Asr	03:29
Maghrib	05:07
Isha	06:35
Starting time in Peshawar	

## REFLECTIONS

“THERE IS NO GAIN IN SUBJUGATING YOURSELF TO DISGRACE AND INSULTS AS THERE IS NO REAL GOOD IN WEALTH AND POWER THAT YOU ACQUIRE BY FOUL MEANS.”

— HAZRAT ALI (A.S.)

72A4427

## Health dept orders

Continued from Page 13

airport surveillance and upon screening led to the detection of the new case.

“We have directed health authorities in Lakki Marwat to ensure the latest patient's close contacts, including relatives, undergo testing,” he said.

Dr. Raghani said that most of the confirmed cases from the province had the history of travelling to the Middle East.

He said that there was no cause of concern regarding reports as measures were strict to contain the infectious disease caused by the monkeypox virus.

The director said that reports were transmitted via respiratory droplets, prolonged close or direct contact with cutaneous lesions, and perhaps through contaminated fomites.

He said that the disease could be prevented primarily by avoiding direct contact with infected animals and patients, the use of face masks, and adherence to precautionary measures.

Dr. Raghani also said that the PHRI had issued guidelines to hospitals for the prevention of monkeypox, which was transmitted from animals to human beings with an incubation period of 3-17 days after inoculation.

“It begins with a combination of fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain, swollen lymph nodes, chills and exhaustion. After initial symptoms, the patient develops a rash, often beginning on the face and then spreading to other parts of the body including palms and soles. The rash evolves from macules (flat lesions) to papules (raised lesions), vesicles (fluid-filled lesions), pustules (pus-filled lesions), and finally crusts. The lesions eventually fall off,” he said.

The director said that reports were transmitted through direct contact with blood, bodily fluids or cutaneous or mucosal lesions of infected patients and indirect contact through contaminated materials such as bedding. He added that the infection had no specific treatment and was “self-limiting.”



A LABORER chopping down wood at his workplace in Badkhab, town of Bajaur tribal district. — Dawn photo

## Chitral political activists reject ‘plan’ to privatise hospital

Say hospital short of doctors, nurses and diagnostic facilities

By Our Correspondent

CHITRAL: Leaders of political parties in Upper Chitral, including the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, have expressed their strong reservations over the reported privatisation of Tohail Headquaters Hospital, Bannu.

They asked the government to refrain from going ahead with the idea of converting the only hospital of the district to a private party, thereby making the secondary health facility beyond the reach of the common man.

They made the demand during a

multi-party conference held in Bannu on Saturday.

The participants, including Maulana Mohammad Younis of JUI-F, Maulana Javed Hussain of JIL, Sardar Hussain of PPP, Prince Sultan Malik of PML-N and Hussain Muneer of PTI, rejected the decision of the government to privatise the hospital.

They said that instead of upgrading the hospital and providing better healthcare, the government was contemplating at depriving the already poverty-stricken people of affordable treatment facilities at their doorstep. They insisted that poor people would suffer once the hospital was privatised as fees would be jacked up.

They said it would be sheer injustice with the people if they were put at the mercy of the private party whose only aim

would be to make profits.

The activists blamed the PFI government for failing to upgrade the facility to the District Headquaters Hospital at even after the creation of the Upper Chitral district six years ago.

The political leaders asked the government to pay special attention to strengthening the hospital, which is facing acute shortage of doctors, nurses and diagnostic facilities, while there was not a single lady doctor there.

HUNTING PERMITS: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department has, for the first time, issued hunting permits for trophy hunting of 25 Himalayan ibex in different conservancies of Lower and Upper Chitral districts for the current season.

Farooq Nahi, divisional forest officer of wildlife division, Chitral, told Dawn that the

department had decided earlier this year to introduce the trophy hunting of Himalayan ibex in order to involve local communities in the conservation process. He said 80 per cent of the permit fee would go to the conservancy for development.

He said that this year, the permits were restricted only for the locals and hunters from other districts of the country, while by next year, the permits might be extended to foreigners as well.

Mr Nahi said that the base value of auction for local hunters had been fixed at Rs150,000 and that of non-locals at Rs250,000.

Shakeel Hussain, a young hunter from Upper Chitral, told Dawn that he won one of the permits at Rs200,000 after competition for Boini-Charion conservancy.

## Jamaat vows to foil attempts to disturb peace in Malakand

Leader says jirga will be held in Swat to discuss steps for peace

By Our Correspondent

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-e-Islami, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has announced to convene a jirga in Swat on Dec 8 to devise a collective strategy on the deteriorating law and order situation in the region.

An announcement to this respect was made by JI chief for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa North Inayatullah Khan while speaking at a news conference in Colaband area here on Saturday.

Ji district chiefs, including Maulana Anwarullah from Lower Dir, Sahibzada Tariqullah from Upper Dir, Sahibzada Haroon and Rashid and Rashid Khan from Rajouri, Adnan ul-Haq chief of Bannu and other activists were also present on the occasion.

Mr Inayatullah, who is also a former senior minister, said that no one would be allowed to disturb peace in Malakand division and the merged districts of the province.

“The people of Malakand division will not remain silent after the Bajaur incident wherein the party leader Mohammad Hammed Sufi was gunned down on Nov 14 when he was returning home after offering evening prayers,” he said, adding that a total of 147 people, including 35 security personnel, had fallen victim to terrorism, ethnic and sectarian violence during the last one month.

The JI leader said the party opposed the governor's rule in KP even if the provincial government “was not” defunct.

“Every political party has the right to hold a peaceful protest. We strongly condemn firing on political workers in Islamabad,” he said, adding JI central chief Hafiz Naeem ul-Rehman had already presented the party's stance on the matter.

Mr Inayatullah said that security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was deteriorating by the day.

He said targeted killing and sectarian violence were rampant in the province. “In these circumstances, the provincial and central governments have a heavy responsibility to maintain peace in the province,” Inayatullah said. He said that political leaders, tribal elders, lawyers, journalists and businessmen would be invited to the Mingora jirga.

He made it clear the people of Malakand division would not allow any attempt to violate peace in their region this time around.

Replying to a question, he said that the performance of the provincial government was poor but there was no justification for imposing governor's rule in the province.

He condemned the D-Chowk tragedy and said that peaceful protest was the right of every citizen and party, and the state didn't have the authority to fire bullets on “peaceful” protesters.

## Action committee to protest power cuts, lawlessness in Swabi

SWABI: The Swabi Action Committee (SAC) will hold a protest sit-in in front of the DC's office on 21st December against excessive power loadshedding and the worsening law and order situation in the district, stated a committee's press release issued here on Saturday.

Members of the business community, representatives of various political parties and social organisations, coordination secretaries of all the four tehsils, and student organisations attended the meeting, which expressed full support for the planned protest sit-in. Azeem Khan, the committee's district coordinator, highlighted several concerns faced by the people of the district. According to him, he had previously advocated for the registration of volunteers and a people-contact campaign across the 56 union councils.

According to statement, the participants discussed issues including the worsening law and order, excessive power loadshedding, overfilling, the spreading drug menace—especially heroin—and the provision of affordable electricity to district consumers.

Salim Khan advocate, the former provincial general secretary of the Awami National Party and spokesperson for the committee, stated that the district administration had completely failed to take any steps to address the problems faced by the people.

“We have planned to register 200,000 volunteers. Once such a number of protesters march on Tarbela dam or block the Islamabad-Peshawar motorway, we will be in a position to dictate terms to the government, which has failed to acknowledge the tremendous sacrifices made by the people of this district for the dam's construction—the country's power lifeline,” Salim Khan warned.

The leaders of the committee appealed to the people to fully participate in the sit-in to exert pressure on the administration to address the issues of the people of the area, the statement concluded. — Correspondent

## People warned against visiting snowbound Kaghan

DC says risk of mishaps high due to bad weather

By Our Correspondent

MANSHERA: The district administration on Saturday warned visitors against venturing into the snowbound Kaghan Valley, saying all civil and police services in the area have been suspended until next April.

“The main artery connecting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with Gilgit-Baltistan has been completely blocked due to snowfall, while the police have withdrawn personnel posts in Naran and beyond,” deputy commissioner Khalid Iqbal told reporters in his office here. He said the Manshera-Naran-Jalkhad Road, which was closed to traffic last month after heavy snowfall in Kaghan Valley beyond Sochi, is now off limits to visitors starting from Kaghan the commercial hub of the valley.

“Police deployed at the Kaghan checkpoint are ensuring that visitors and motorists do not go to Naran and beyond, as the risk of mishaps triggered by inclement weather is high,” Mr Iqbal said.

He said that 99 per cent of hotels and other commercial establishments in Naran had already closed for the rest of the winter season. “The MNJ Road is completely blocked as indigenous communities from Sochi, Bannu, Bannu, Bannu and other parts of the valley have moved to hilly areas in the district and other parts of Balochistan division for the winter season,” he said.

The DC said personnel from all nine police posts in Kaghan Valley, except the Kaghan police station, meant for the security of people bound for GR, had been withdrawn.

“Police contingents deployed in different parts of the valley have been relocated to their winter destinations within the district,” he said.

Mr Iqbal said the people planning to travel to the district should opt for tourist destinations like Shogran and Babakot instead of the inaccessible Kaghan Valley.

Meanwhile, Targhar's district development advisory committee is set to allocate a Rs55 million worth of project for the local women's development.

Committee chairman and MPA Luq Muhammad Khan told reporters on Saturday that tendering for development schemes would be completed in the first week of Dec.

The said work on a hostel would begin soon to cater to the needs of women posted to the district from other parts of the province.

Mr Khan said Bannu Road could be carpeted at a cost of Rs66 million, Karaman-Babakot Road at Rs84 million, and several link roads at over Rs20 million, while 74 mosques would be subsidised at a cost of Rs49 million.

He said health and education projects initiated during the last government would be swiftly completed after the release of funds.

Meanwhile, the Balakot police have arrested a man for torturing and sexually assaulting a 13-year-old girl in the Jalkhad Jol forest.

Deputy superintendent of police Tameez Khan told reporters in the Paras area that the girl was raped when she was grazing her herd in the forest.

He also said the assault was filmed.

The DSP said the accused, who was accompanied by a woman, warned the girl against reporting the incident, but she lodged a complaint with the police after the assault video went viral. He said a medical examination confirmed the assault.

The DSP said the police had arrested the man involved during a raid in Wullah Jalkhad, while search for his accomplices was under way.

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## Kundi says he will abide by PPP's decision on governor's rule

Asks centre to decide and involve all its allies

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said here on Saturday that he would abide by the decision of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leadership regarding the imposition of Governor's rule in the province.

"It is for the federal government to decide, and it must take all its allies on board. Whichever decision is made by the PPP will be my decision," Mr Kundi said while speaking to media persons at the Peshawar Press Club.

The governor, however, said he would not refuse to follow the directions issued by the federal government. He informed that he and Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur both belonged to the same district—Dera Ismail Khan—which was under the control of terrorists, as no one could leave their homes in the evening.

"KP citizens have only one agenda, and that is peace," the governor said, adding that he had called a multiparty conference (MPC) on December 5 and would invite the chief minister to attend.

The governor said that he had just met a delegation from the merged districts, who discussed ways to maintain peace in those areas.

While talking about the November 24 march by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Islamabad, the governor stated that no leader could be released through air, but only after court orders.

He said PTI had shown trust in the judiciary and called it independent, adding that if anyone believed the PTI founder had been illegally arrested, they should approach the courts.

Mr Kundi said that the chief minister's speech during the KP Assembly session on Friday, in which he had stated that they would take up arms, confirmed PTI's involvement in the riots on May 9. He also questioned why only workers had been arrested while the party leadership had stayed during the sit-ins and protest demonstration.

The KP governor claimed that the entire PTI leadership from Punjab had taken shelter in the chief minister's house and alleged that the district administration and municipal authorities had been asked to finance the protest.

Mr Kundi alleged that there were two governments in the province: one run by CM Gandapur and the other by the PTI founder's wife, Barkatullah Bhatti.

## Kohat jail inmates suffer power suspension

By Our Correspondent

KOHAT: The electricity supply to Kohat Jail has been suspended for the past two days, worsening the suffering of both the staff and prisoners.

Talking to local journalists on Saturday, Jail Superintendent Ashraf Bari regretted that the senior officials of the Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) were ignoring the problem. He stated that the PESCO's executive engineers, when contacted, claimed to be unaware of the issue.

He stated that the jail staff and inmates were facing severe water shortages for drinking, washing, and bathing due to PESCO's negligence. The jail superintendent warned that PESCO personnel would be held responsible if a law and order situation arose in the jail due to the suspension of electricity.

## Govt asked to create conducive environment for investors

ISLAMABAD: Trader leaders have urged the government to create a conducive environment for investors in order to ensure financial stability in the country.

They said the business community was the backbone of the national economy, and in the current circumstances, it is facing challenges such as energy crisis, rising interest rates and policy instability.

The trader leaders expressed these views while addressing participants of the Kofee and Agricultural Exhibition organised by the Marican Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries. The event was attended by various business personalities, experts and members of the public from across the country.

They urged the government to address these issues by taking practical steps to reduce business costs and ensure financial stability.

"Incentives should be provided to small and medium enterprises, and opportunities must be created for them in international markets," said Patron-in-Chief of United Business Group (UBG) S.M. Farooq.

He also underlined the need for simplifying the tax system to enable businesses to grow and stabilise the economy.

UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtiar said the business community of Marican had proven through this event that Pakistan's entrepreneurs were not only committed to improving the national economy but were also incorporating innovation in their fields by keeping up with modern demands.

"The business community has always rendered its services for strengthening and developing the economy, to monitor how challenges in the circumstances," Mr Bakhtiar said, adding that the business community provided a strong foundation for Pakistan's economic development.

However, he said to further strengthen this foundation, the government must urgently resolve their issues, provide incentives and ensure policy stability.

"This is the time for us to come together, leverage our capabilities, and transform Pakistan into an economic powerhouse," he added.

He also praised the Marican business community for organising an international standard exhibition, proving that small cities in Pakistan have the potential to dream big and turn those dreams into reality.

President of Marican Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries Taj Muhammad Khan emphasised that the business community of Marican had played its part in stabilising the national economy.

"This exhibition reflects our efforts to promote modern practices in energy and agriculture," he said.

Bashir Bashir highlighted that this event was not only a means to develop businesses in the region but also an excellent platform for providing future opportunities to the youth.

Founder President of Taragating Chamber of Commerce Malik Shabbir Awan, Taj Muhammad Khan, Group Leader Bashir Bashir, Haji Afzal, Javed Karim and Nasim Marican inaugurated the exhibition. — Staff Reporter



VISITORS take a selfie with vehicles parked at Peshawar Services Club during the 15th Vintage and Classic Cars Rally organised by KP Culture and Tourism Authority and Classic Land Rover on Saturday. — White Star

## Ex-legislators offer help for peace in Kurram, other troubled spots

Say they'll meet govt, military leadership to address sense of deprivation in ex-Fata

By Ibrahim Shinwari

KHAYBER: A group of 18 former parliamentarians from erstwhile Fata have offered their services for restoration of peace in the volatile Kurram and other troubled tribal districts.

They made the offer during a meeting held in Peshawar on Saturday.

The group expressed its concern over the deteriorating law and order situation in Kurram and other merged districts, and called upon the security estab-

lishment and the political leadership to focus their attention on restoring peace in these regions.

In a statement issued after the meeting, they cautioned that if the prevailing situation was not brought under control immediately, it could spread to the whole country.

The statement reminded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government that restoration of peace was its responsibility after the passage of the 25th Constitutional Amendment, but regretted that it had failed to shoulder its constitutional obligation.

The former parliamentarians said they were under a moral obligation to offer their services for negotiating a peace deal as the process of merger was still underway and the federal government was yet to

meet the promise of mainstreaming the merged districts.

They decided to hold meetings with federal and provincial government functionaries along with the military leadership in order to find a workable solution to the existing situation in Kurram and other troubled areas.

Later, the former parliamentarians, including Hamidullah Jan Afridi, Shaukatullah Khan, Ghazi Gulab Jamal, Saleh Shah and Mian Muhammad Hassan, met Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor's House and conveyed to him their sentiments about the security situation in the merged districts.

Later, talking to Dawn, Hamidullah Jan Afridi, former federal minister and an MNA from Khyber district,

said the governor assured them of his full support in their efforts for the restoration of peace and arranging their meetings with the prime minister and the president.

He said Mr Kundi invited them to a jirga about Kurram situation to be held in Kohat on Sunday (today) and also to the Dec 5 multiparty conference convened at the Governor's House.

Mr Afridi, however, said their group was not happy with the 'consensus' approach of both the federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments, and alleged they were instead busy in a blame game against each other rather than striving to bring lasting peace to Kurram, Turbat and other troubled spots.

He said the former parliamentarians had vast experi-

ence in dealing with issues of tribal areas, and they also had support of local population, which would help negotiate a peace deal for the region.

He said it was time the security establishment and federal government were duly informed about the miseries of tribesmen. He insisted military operations and use of force could not yield the desired results.

Former senator Ashraf Raziq Afridi also called for ending the sense of deprivation among the people of tribal districts, and recommended a frank discussion among all the stakeholders to find a peaceful solution to the problems.

He said tribesmen were not happy with the change of constitutional status of their region as it could not bring any qualitative change in their lives.



A TILTED electricity pole on Shadi-Jahangira Road poses threat to people. — Dawn

## Bajaur students get schoolbags, uniform

RAJOUR: Representatives of a welfare organisation on Saturday distributed shoes, uniforms, schoolbags, books and caps among 32 poor students.

The items were distributed during an event held at a school in Laghari area of Mardan town.

Speakers on the occasion asked the parents to play their due role in making their children useful citizens of the society. The event was titled 'The role of parents in making their children educated, civilised and useful citizens of society'.

Scores of students and teachers of various schools attended the event organised by the school's management in collaboration with Mardan welfare organisation.

Elders, religious figures, parents and youth

were also in attendance.

The speakers, including Haji Tahir Qazi, chairman of Mardan welfare organisation, Nasirullah Hashmi, Azad Bakht, Marican Khan and Nafis Jan, said that parents wished their children to become educated, civilised and useful citizens of the society, but they did not wholeheartedly played their role in turning their dreams into reality.

The speakers observed that besides the teachers, parents had a great role and responsibility to make their children truly educated, civilised and useful citizens of society. The speakers asked the parents to keep close contact with the teachers by visiting schools once a month to stay informed about their children's performance. — Correspondent

## Women's Parliamentary Caucus to host two workshops

ISLAMABAD: In an initiative aimed at advancing women's rights and fostering an inclusive political environment, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) of the 14th National Assembly is set to host two workshops starting from Sunday (today).

Under the leadership of WPC Secretary Dr Shahida Rehmani, the workshops titled 'Thought Leadership Workshop' and 'Digital Democracy Workshop' will be held on Dec 1 and 2, respectively, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

These workshops are a vital part of the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence, which is a call to action for the protection and empowerment of women worldwide. These workshops will address critical issues such as ending gender-based violence, ensuring women's physical, social, legal and online safety, and combating all forms of harassment.

The workshops are designed to facilitate a powerful dialogue and equip participants with the skills, knowledge and tools needed for identifying, examining and tackling women-related issues through informed legislation and promote and uphold digital democracy.

Secretary of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus Dr Shahida Rehmani will deliver the keynote addresses, outlining the core objectives of the workshops.

She will emphasise the importance of empowering women members of the National Assembly to ensure robust women participation in Pakistan's upcoming general elections. Additionally, she will underscore the need for ethical parliamentary practices, enhanced digital literacy to counter technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and crucially, the development of skills in managing media and social media narratives to tackle the growing menace of misinformation, fake news and propaganda.

In addition, a panel of speakers, including renowned journalists, veteran media personalities, social media experts and key societal figures will engage in thought-provoking discussions and interactive sessions to provide valuable insights on these pressing issues. — Staff Reporter

## IGP fetes selected police personnel at special luncheon

Says you have safeguarded lives and property of people, thwarted miscreants' nefarious plans

By Munawar Azeem

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad police chief feted about a quarter of the police contingents who participated in the law and order duty during the recent PTI protest.

Police officers told Dawn that a lunch was arranged for the officers and officials at Police Lines Headquarters.

As per the security plan for the PTI protest, 5,310 officers and officials, including eight superintendents of police, 21 assistant/deputy superintendents and 5,276 inspectors, sub-

inspectors, assistant sub-inspectors, head constables and constables were deployed at different places.

They were from all the divisions, including operations, security, logistics and crime and wings, including Safe City, Special Branch, investigations and traffic police.

Each police contingent comprising 200 officials was deployed at Express Chowk and Ghora Chowk, the two points at Jinnah Avenue where an operation was conducted against the protesters during late hours of November 27.

However, the guests for the ceremony included selected 1,200 personnel only. According to the order issued by IGP office "As per desired by IGP a 'Baza Khana' is being held at Police Lines Headquarters on November 30 at 11am."

In this regard, the following

number of police personnel will attend the event, it said, adding "1,500 officers and officials were feted with the delicious - 900 from Operations Division (CTD, ARF, ITP, RD), investigation - 375 from Security Division, 110 from Logistics Division, including 30 from ministerial staff, 30 from Special Branch, 30 from Safe City and 25 from Capital Police College."

All concerned, including DGs, ARs and SSPs were asked to ensure the presence of the personnel for the meal.

Some police officials praised the IGP and said 'Baza Khana' was arranged for the force only on Eid. In the past, only two to three times the personnel were feted for their services during law and order duties.

However, many officials complained that not all the police personnel who participated in the law and order duty were invited.

A statement issued by the police said Islamabad police "organised a prestigious ceremony to honour and pay tribute to its brave, fearless, and dedicated officers."

The ceremony was held at the Police Lines Headquarters to recognise the police officers who demonstrated exceptional bravery and courage during recent law and order.

Inspector General of Police IGP Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi was the chief guest while DG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza, DG Headquarters Security Muhammad Jawad Tariq, all ARs, SSPs, SPs and police officers from all divisions were present.

The IGP paid tribute to the officers who "displayed unmatched bravery and made eternal sacrifices to uphold law and order in the federal capital."

He said "I am proud to lead

this brave force, and I will always remember my time serving with Islamabad Police. Every officer in this force is chosen and appointed by Allah. By renewing your commitment to Allah, you have safeguarded the lives and property of the people and thwarted the miscreants in their nefarious plans."

He added, "My force has shown extraordinary bravery in serving and protecting the citizens as well as maintaining law and order in the city. All my officers - whether executive or ministerial staff - were present at the forefront of every action. By working tirelessly, day and night, they ensured the peace and security of the city's residents. No citizen's life or property was harmed. All law enforcement officers worked together as a family, successfully repelling the intrusion of the federal capital by miscreants."





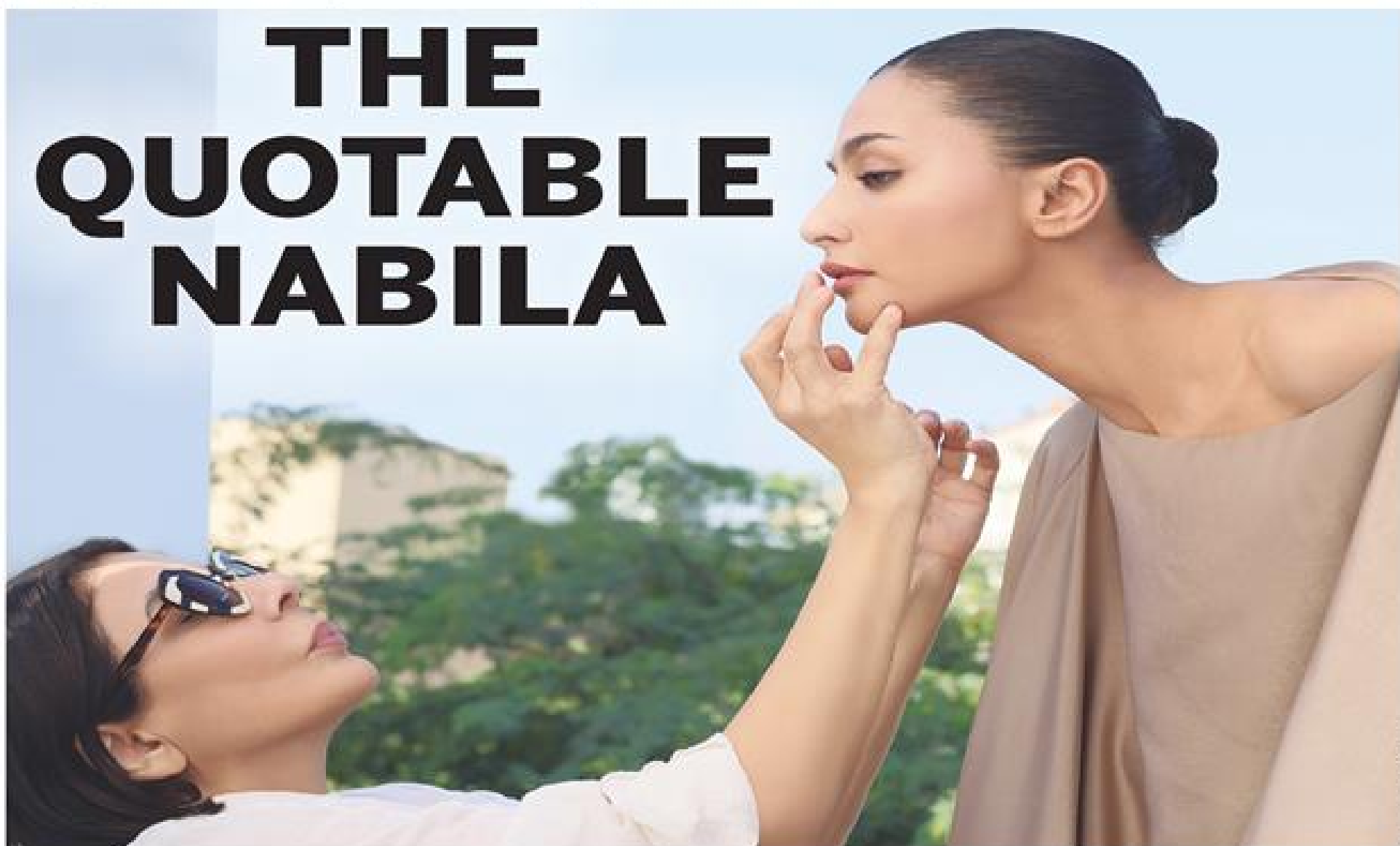
A GLIMPSE INTO  
THE FUTURE

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SUNDAY DECEMBER 1, 2024  
@icondawn

► THE ICON INTERVIEW

She has introduced trends, set new benchmarks and defined style for Pakistan. She's been the force behind the styling of Pakistani fashion for four decades and has been a part of entertainment's most prestigious events, locally and internationally. She has won numerous awards. What more does she want?



Photos courtesy Nabila

By Maliha Rehman

**"I** tell my team that if I'm not number one, I am not playing." Nabila says this matter-of-factly — it's something that anyone who knows her, knows already. For four odd decades, she's introduced trends, set new benchmarks and defined style for Pakistan. She's been the force behind the styling of Pakistani fashion and entertainment's most prestigious events, received awards, expanded globally, diversified from brick and mortar to product lines and made eye-opening, unabashed observations in countless interviews.

Quite a few of those interviews have been with me — I have been around for some of those decades, witnessing Nabila's extraordinary rise — and so I know that when she's in the playing field, she's playing to win.

But it takes a lot to be number one.

Nabila elaborates: "I don't have a Midas touch, it's not like everything I will touch will turn to gold. It's because I have the dedication. I will put in the extreme hard work, planning and, then, execute with army precision to ensure that I am successful."

"Everyday is a battle and I may lose a lot of battles. A design may not get perfected within time, we might miss a deadline, there may be logistical delays. We are human, these things happen. But I don't mind losing the battles as long as I win the war. I am looking at the bigger picture and I am going to try so hard that I will ensure that I am victorious."

Win she always so focused on winning? "No, I am getting worse with age. I think this germ was in me when I was younger but now it's blooming. Terrible!" She laughs. She'd much rather be terrible than be mediocre or mediocre.

I am meeting Nabila in her not-terrible-at-all home, it's late evening and the sun is setting over the expansive lawn and pool that we can see from the full-length windows of her spacious sitting room. For the longest time, I remember Nabila leading a life that was constantly on the move. She would be ricocheting from her penthouse in Karachi to a sky-high apartment in Dubai to London and New York. Many of our interviews would partially take place face-to-face and get wrapped up via successive online calls while Nabila travelled the world.

Travel is still an intrinsic part of her routine but, four decades down the line, she's also now all about enjoying a quiet evening at this home that she shares with her family, happily being at the beck and call of her grandchildren, setting a Sunday aside for a family breakfast of *dhalli porri*.

**'I AM ONLY AS GOOD AS MY LAST HAIRCUT'**

When it comes to work, however, it doesn't mean that she's mellowed down. Of course not. She muses, "Someone other than me would have thought, I have put so many years into this career, I am earning money, I should enjoy it, back in the glory, that I am never happy."

"I am always thinking about my next project, about growth, about reinvesting the money that I have made into the business and expanding — to a new salon, new products. I will never sit on my laurels. I am only as good as my last haircut. And it's never the end of the journey for me."

There's a manic energy to Nabila's ambitions.

She continues: "For me, money is not the end product — it's the means to achieve my goals, and my goal is to be head and shoulders above others."



It is to be the best that I can be, to set new trends, raise the bar and to stand apart from all the Me-Tos who keep surfacing, all those valmuses who are constantly trying to steal my ideas, steal my people, steal my carpenters and try to replicate what I have built with their Me-Too brands.

"They would be better off paving their own path. What I have is my own, it's intrinsic — my vision, my passion, my instincts. There is this engine within me, that's God-given, that brings in newness and freshness."

**'IF I SEE SOMETHING WRONG, I AM GOING TO POINT IT OUT!'**

Nabila's detractors would say that she is arrogant — they do say so — but at the same time, can they deny that her declarations are validated by the career that she has established over the years?

She may not always mind her words but I do know that she stands firm by whatever she says, even when it leads to social media controversy. She responds to this observation: "I think I now have enough experience and following to point out if someone is selling a service by lying. Yes, if I see something wrong, I will comment on it."

For those who may not know, Nabila and I are talking with reference to a few incidents on social media where she blatantly pronounced something as 'ugly'. There have been times when she has instigated debates about

**"I am always thinking about my next project, about growth, about reinvesting the money that I have made into the business and expanding — to a new salon, new products. I will never sit on my laurels. I am only as good as my last haircut. And it's never the end of the journey for me."**

people and junior make-up artists and stylists have declared, via social media, that she is unsupportive of new talent.

"If I didn't want to give support to younger make-up artists, why would I have backed out of the competition at the 11th Lux Style Awards (LSAs)?" she asks. "It's because I wanted to give others the chance to win. And if you look at Pakistan now, almost all the top make-up artists and hairstylists have worked with me at some point or the other."

"But if someone is openly lying and trying to make money off it, I will say it. I recently saw a picture of a Russian pedicure on Instagram where the cuticles were bloodied. I had to comment with an 'Ouch!'. If people think that makes me arrogant, I don't care!"

As a side note, she adds, "You know, for the longest time, I thought that the comments that I was making on Instagram were anonymous. I only later realised that everyone knew that it was me who was writing the comments! It doesn't matter, though!" She laughs.

I am curious: are there other women around her who are at a similar age and just as passionate about their career? "I wouldn't know. I am just marching on my own path, like a soldier. My initials are N.M. — Nabila Masood — and my friends say that they stand for 'Nabila Mughal' [little warrior! I am so hindered, so focused, that I don't have the time to see what others are doing]."

**'MY NEXT DECADE IS GOING TO BE ABOUT BOTTLING MY EXPERIENCE'**

And here, our conversation smoothly gets steered to all that she has been doing lately. She says, "My haircare line, for instance, is my latest and dearest project. Hair is my *evan/er* [material]. I sold my wedding diamonds so that I could go to London and learn how to cut hair at Vidal Sassoon."

"The success of my ZERO Make-up line made me realise that I was on to something. The brown skin diaspora was often under-represented and I

NABILA, PAGE 3

# ICON

## SOUNDSCAPE

Wicked's 'Defying Gravity' is a musical theatre anthem — and a battle cry for outsiders

## THE FORCE OF 'GRAVITY'



Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba | Universal Studios

By Hannah Thuraisingam Robbins

**A**s director Jon M Chu's first instalment of the mega-musical adaptation *Wicked* arrives in cinemas, a new audience of fans is connecting with Stephen Schwartz's malleable score.

Featuring hits including 'Popular', 'The Wizard and I' and 'For Good', the musical is particularly loved for its celebration of female characters in song.

Unlike many Broadway shows, *Wicked*'s heroines Elphaba (played in the film by Cynthia Erivo) and Glinda (by Ariana Grande), both women, dominate the song list. They frequently sing together, whereas other musicals typically feature duets that focus on a romance between a male and female lead.

At the heart of *Wicked* is the anthem 'Defying Gravity', which closes out one of the stage production and serves as the finale to Chu's film. It begins as an argument between Elphaba and Glinda as they debate how to solve a mutual predicament. Elphaba explains her feelings to Glinda and asks her to leave Emerald City with her.

They dream about becoming a witch from bat, in the end, the song climaxes with Elphaba breaking free and accepting the consequences of embracing her magic.

The journey of the song, which begins as a conversation and ends with a battle cry, epitomises a classic musical theatre finale, as it gains momentum and rises in key.

Using similar values to Schwartz's lyrics to 'Go the Distance' from  *Hercules* (1997) and his song 'When You Believe' from *The Prince of Egypt* (1998), 'Defying Gravity' is particularly special because Elphaba goes on a journey with her best friend Glinda as her audience.

Many musicals feature a rousing act one finale led by a female protagonist. For example, Mamma Mia! Rose regains her strength to make her daughter Louise a star during 'Everything's Coming Up Roses' in *Gypsy*, which has just returned to Broadway. However, 'Defying Gravity' transcends its context in *Wicked* by focusing on the theme of trusting yourself and believing in who you are without compromise.

*Wicked* is an exploration of stigma (aimed at Elphaba in the show) and where it leads, and 'Defying Gravity' is a watershed moment. Erivo described

it as an important moment in which Elphaba resolves to "not allow the things that have hurt her, that have stripped her of her humanity to keep her down."

### FRIENDS OF DOROTHY

As well as offering empowering representations of its female characters and of female friendship, *Wicked* is one of many queer-coded musicals. These are shows where LGBTQ+ identities or themes are unannounced but can be easily identified. Theatre professor Stacy Wolf has suggested that *Wicked* "does more than portray women as powerful and as friends; it presents the story of a queer romance between Elphaba and Glinda."

This places 'Defying Gravity' alongside the queer anthem 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' from *The Wizard of Oz*, another musical adaptation based on L. Frank Baum's 1900 children's novel. In fact, in 'Defying Gravity' Schwartz quotes *The Wizard of Oz* composer Harold Arlen's melody in a motif set to the word "unlimited", which can be heard several times throughout *Wicked*.

'Defying Gravity' also uses a similar structure of escalation to another queer anthem, 'I Am What I Am' from the musical *La Cage aux Femmes*. It also inspired 'Let It Go' from Disney's *Frozen* (also sung by Idina Menzel, the first Broadway Elphaba), which has its own queer history.

If 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' imagines whimsical escapism from an unfriendly world and 'I Am What I Am' is fierce about being rejected by the people you love, 'Defying Gravity' is about the power of choosing and forging your own path, with or without help.

The stirring accompaniment and building vocal line connect 'Defying Gravity' to a tradition of classic musical theatre showstoppers. Moreover, the musical style and message of self-actualisation recognises more modern values.

As *Wicked* arrives in cinemas, the message of 'Defying Gravity' feels especially timely. Its core sentiment that "everyone deserves the chance to fly" speaks to so many people — the centrepiece of a powerful musical about embracing our differences. ■

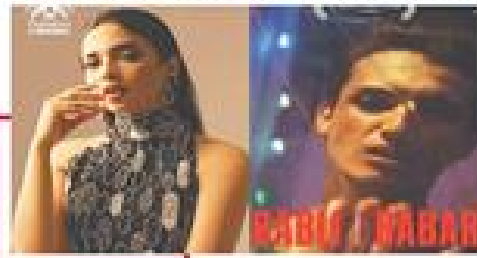
The writer is an Assistant Professor in Popular Music at the University of Nottingham in the UK

Reprinted from The Conversation

## THE GRAPEVINE

By PYT

### BREAK OUT THE BABLI



Here's another reason to celebrate Pakistani cinema (at least on the festival circuit). A film titled *Babli/Babbar* directed by Kamran Faisl and starring Sonam Kapur has been selected for the Cannes World Film Festival. It may just be an online festival and have nothing to do with the prestigious Cannes International Film Festival but so what? Not just that, Sonam is also one of the producers of the movie. The rest of the cast includes Haarnain Rana, Zeeshan Hyder, Tanveer Syed, Irmal Hassan and Rania Malik. Congratulations to all those who are part of the project who have one more reason to act Babli (or Babbar).

### SELF MAKE-BELIEVE

We agree with Mahira Khan. You might ask, agree on what? Well, the actress has expressed, in a video, her opinion on being successful. She has rejected the idea that she is a 'self-made' person, arguing that no one tastes the fruit of success entirely on their own. In that regard, she thinks the support of family, friends and colleagues is important. Yep, it's right. Mahira K. herself owes a lot for her global recognition to her talent and beauty... Sorry, we mean, her beauty and talent have always had the support of her family, friends and colleagues all along.



### A TALE OF TWO SEPARATIONS

Oscar-winning music composer 57-year-old A.R. Rahman and his wife Saira Banu have separated after 29 years of marriage. According to a statement released by the latter's lawyers, "Despite their deep love for each other, the couple has found that the tensions and difficulties have created an insurmountable gap between them, one that neither party feels able to bridge at this time." The couple have three children: Khushi, Raheem and Amren. In an unrelated report, A.R. Rahman's bassist, the 38-year-old Mohini Dey has also announced her separation from the composer Mark Hartsuch. She quashed rumours of the two separations being related, however, saying AR was like a "father figure" to her.



### THE RELOCATION

Ever since Donald Trump has been elected the president of the United States of America for a second time, a big number of artists, who vehemently opposed his politics, have begun to feel uneasy. Apparently, talk show host Ellen DeGeneres and her partner Portia de Rossi have shifted to the UK because of Donald T's victory. Let's see what some of his other opponents do, but for Ellen D we can say that the staff of her chat show may not be that displeased by her move.



## CINEMASCOPE

Ridley Scott's *Gladiator II* is a well-rounded sequel that does no injustice to its predecessor

# THE GOOD FIGHT CONTINUES

By Mohammad Kamran Jawaid

**T**wenty-four years ago, in the days of my young naivete, I had short-changed Ridley Scott's *Gladiator* as an imitation of Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus*. Both films, to me at that time, shared elements, and as any youngling venturing into the world of professional cinema, I had been in awe of Kubrick.

Two decades of writing reviews, and an evolving appreciation and understanding of cinema — and a self-restraint to not judge the film on its first, seemingly obvious, close-up viewing — has given this critic a new-found appreciation of Scott's film.

Even in my youth, *Gladiator* was no half-brained chariot-race. It was an epic, in design and thought, clear in its sight and goal, and limber and lean in form. These traits are carried over in a seamless continuation in its sequel, written by Napoléon and David Scarpa.

The story of *Gladiator II*, which took a great many years to assemble, is by Scarpa and Peter Craig — the latter also co-wrote *The Batman* and did the story for *Top Gun: Maverick*. As writers, they are good company for Scott, whose directorial hand feels deliberately shackled, and



perhaps indebted, to the spirit of the first *Gladiator*. This, by the way, is a good thing.

Part 2 is a homage — and a rousing one at that, straight from the opening credits and the powerful rendition of Lisa Gerrard and Hans Zimmer's *New We Are Free*, the film's immediately recognisable, immortal theme (the rest of the film is scored by Harry Gregson-Williams, a celebrated composer in his own right who was once Zimmer's assistant).

The story is simply laid out, as I wrote earlier, seamlessly joins with

and strongly references, the first.

Sixteen years after the death of Maximus (Russell Crowe) and Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix), Rome is still corrupt and over-expanding under the reign of twin half-wit emperors Geta and Caracalla (Joseph Quinn, Fred Hechinger) — one more boneheaded than the other.

Their general, Acacius (Pedro Pascal), is fierce in battle but gentle in heart. In his first scene, he decimates a port in Numidia (Africa) and later grieves for their dead and their wives and mothers (the emperors, upon his

arrival, order him to vanquish Pertia and India).

One of the survivors of the siege is Hannu (Pedro Mescalé), whose wife was struck down in battle. Revenge fuels his ambition to kill Acacius, which is exploited — a sword I use loosely — by Maximus (Denzel Washington), a sly trader in the war business, who stocks gladiators for the impending games at the coliseum in Rome.

Still living in this era is Lucilla (Connie Nielsen, who has aged gracefully) and Senator Gracchus (Derek Jakobi), the two still



conspiring for the good of Rome.

Despite what one may assume from the trailers (like I regrettably did), *Gladiator II* is not spicing *Gladiator* — and one should also discard nitwit musings that the story feels "Hollywood-ish" (one forgets that Hollywood used to, and still tries to, ape Hollywood). I will not say that the story is unpredictable. It is. Yet, the appeal and intelligence are in its very deliberate preference to not stray far from the first film's tropes and world building, and still make the plot and its turns engaging, especially in the last 40 or so minutes.

I did not feel the 148-minute duration of the film — Scott, Scarpa, Pascal, Nielsen, Washington,



and surprisingly Mescalé, held the film well enough, along with the production design (by Arthur Max), cinematography (John Mathieson, a regular of Scott's who also lensed *Gladiator*), the editing (Sam Koenig and Claire Simpson, the latter of whom won an Oscar for *Phantom*) and, of course, the music.

*Gladiator II* is a well-rounded movie that looks the part and concludes a long-lingering story (albeit, one that one didn't know was left hanging), without turning any aspect of it into a mockery. ■

Revised by HRC and Paramount, *Gladiator II* is rated PG, despite some gruesome deaths that include blood and computer-generated animals



NABILA, FROM PAGE 1

was catering to its unique requirements. Now, I've done the same for hair."

Nabila continues, "The diversification of my brand from physical services to product lines has been a natural progression. I think that the next decade of my career is going to be about bottling my experience. I want to sell products that are empowering my clients and giving them solutions that reduce their dependence on salon visits."

"I am not cutting off my nose to spite my face," she explains. "I just want to sell what I would want to buy. I am a busy woman who wants to present herself nicely. I don't have the time to get my nails done, get my roots done. I want to come up with solutions that make grooming easier for both men and women."

"The make-up palette allows me to get done with my make-up within 30 seconds and be in my car. And then, my daughter-in-law Sara, who is also a make-up artist, suggested that I also come up with a thicker formula, which offered more coverage for brides, which led to the creation of the foundation."

"Somebody said that we hadn't come up with make-up that men could use easily, so we came up with the blurring pen. The sunscreen was devised because I felt that people wearing sunscreen would all look like pufferfish! The lipsticks and lip glosses were a result of what we would observe and experience backstage at fashion weeks. The mascara-liner was an easy, quick make-up tool and so on..."

**'THE IFAs ARE A DIFFERENT KIND OF HECTIC'**

Her burgeoning product line is obviously a passion for her. At the same time, I observe that she has also been busy with other aspects of business. She was in the process of shifting her longstanding group of salons on Karachi's D-Street to a new location nearby at the time of our interview — the new salon is now operational.

She had also just returned from the International Indian Film Academy Awards (IIFA) in Abu Dhabi — Nabila has been the official grooming partner for the awards for four years now, with her brand, ZIROO Make-up, categorised as the official brand partner.

Styling the IIFA — one of Bollywood's most prestigious awards ceremonies — must be quite challenging. Doesn't it end up distracting her from her local business?

"I'll always think globally and act locally," she responds, presenting me with a quotable quote. "Whether my team is busy with the IIFA or with the Bridal Couture Week (BCW) in Lahore, or even at a movie set in some city, I ensure that my salon services never get compromised. My stronghold is local and I will never forget that."

"There will always be someone answering calls at the salon and catering to our clients. I have always said that the day that I die, my biggest earning will be that my salon will not be closed. It's written in my will: 'the salon will not be closed'. So how can it be closed if I am at the IIFA when it won't even close when I am dead?"

Are the IFAs more hectic than the many local ceremonies that she has been part of? "It's a different kind of hectic because we are not on our home-ground," says Nabila. "It is to this extent the same when we are



in Lahore — our flagship space is in Karachi — but at least we have a salon there. Outside the country, the work becomes more multi-dimensional."

"We have to set up makeshift salons for three to four days. We have to organise room service for the IFAs (Most Important People) who don't want to come down to the common salon. Then we have to do backstage styling for the many performers and dancers."

"Our team is split three ways and, this time, the guests were spread out over four hotels, so we needed seven teams! This doesn't just include the hair and make-up team — it also includes people handling social media, photographing, content creation, reception staff, administrative staff, drivers! I fly out some of my team from Karachi and, then, because we have operations in the Middle East, I outsource from there too. "Also, there's always the pressure that I am representing my country. I can't make any mistakes at all."

She continues, "This time the IFAAs took place at a particularly difficult time. They decided upon the date last minute and we were very busy with staffing salons. Still, I told them that I couldn't say no to them and my team would be on board, no matter what. For one, it is a very prestigious platform. Also, they have always given me so much love and appreciation."

I am curious: does being part of a platform like the IFAA pay well? "If you're asking if they pay me money, then no, they don't. But neither does any local project. I look upon these efforts as part of my brand's PR, where I may have to invest some money myself. Over the years, I have never given any money to be part of a project, even for advertising. Instead, I've given services, offered my platform and struck barriers."

**'NO ONE IS GOING TO COME ON HORSEBACK AND OFFER YOU WORK'**

Now, about that: her critics say that she has spoiled the market by offering her salon's services in hotel



agreements rather than charge for them. What is her opinion on this?

"So usually, part of the cost is covered by the event organisers while the rest is bartered, in return for mileage," she says, "and when you barter it out, you're not really at a loss. There is a lot of hard work and investment that has to be put in. I have bought vanities, make-up, set up stations and hired more resources in order to ensure that work in my salon doesn't get affected. The time has gone when you will be sitting in your home and someone will come to you on horseback and offer you money and a project. You have to generate work — and mileage — for yourself. That's all I do."

It's obvious that she is very focused on the smooth running of her salons but, in the long run, there have been times when some of her most popular stylists have left her turf and branched out on their own. Has the business ever suffered because of this?

"It may hurt me personally when they leave but it doesn't hurt the business, because we have created a very strong platform over the years. People come to us because of the name that they are on the go-to, and then it is our responsibility to ensure that they are satisfied with our services."

"Tomorrow, my schedule includes shifting, shooting, promoting my hair-care brand but what am I doing from 10am till 1pm? I am training my new staff. The ones that have left? Good luck to them, I don't have time for them. The world is changing, make-up and hair trends change, technology changes, tools change, materials change. I keep up with it all and it is my duty to pass on this knowledge to whoever is working under my umbrella."

**'HAPPILY MARRIED TO MYSELF'**

Her career is such an intrinsic part of her that I wouldn't be able to separate Nabila, the woman, from it. Was she just so passionate about her work in the earlier years, when she was mother to two very young sons?

"Work was often my priority even then," she admits. "I sent the kids off to boarding house in Singapore when they were still in their teenage years and, suddenly, at the age of 35, I became an empty-nester. There were things that haunted me — how it would be 5pm and I would just want them to go to sleep so that I could go and they would ask me to read them a bedtime story and I would refuse."

"I then decided to make my kids my priority. I took therapy and it took me some time to overcome the working mom's guilt. I built my relationship with my children in their youth — when they were still teens — and my youth. I bonded with them, apologised to them for not being a mother the way I should have been when they were growing up."

She adds, "I have made some mistakes that I made, some choices that I made. They enabled me to provide them with a certain platform today. Maybe if I had been around at home more then, they wouldn't have gotten this platform today, but they would have gotten home-cooked *maheo gosh*!"

"Life is complex and it's important to forgive yourself and move on. But yes, if I got the chance to do it all over again, I would have given my kids more time when they were growing up."

I broach another personal question: she never remarried after her divorce from her second husband, ex-Buron keyboardist Iqbal. Why?

"No, I did not. The reason why I shied away from marriage was that I had evolved into a person who didn't need the company of another person, and whose growth was going to be alone. When I realised this, I shared it with Iqbal and told him that I think that I needed to be alone now. He asked me if something was wrong and I said that there wasn't. I just needed to be alone to pursue the goals that I had set for myself, and the path that I had chosen."

She grins. "And so I am married to myself, my career, my legacy, my product and I don't have time for anything else. I am happily married to myself, ever after!"

More quotable quotes. I can tell that she means them all. ■



**THE TUBE**

**THE WEEK THAT WAS**

**Azhar | Hum TV, Fridays 8:00pm**

**D**r Zara (Mawra Hocane) escapes her abusive marriage, divorcing her damaged, unstable husband Hasan (Mohib Mirza), despite societal pressure to stick by him. Putting aside the pain and humiliations she suffered, Zara still finds compassion for Hasan, withdrawing her case on the condition he seeks his own healing. Mawra Hocane and Mohib Mirza's strong, measured performances give audiences a great template for a practical guide to survival and healing from the insidious cycle of domestic violence.



In the parallel track, Zara's cousin Deebsa (Sehar Khan) watches her once-kind, supportive husband Dr Nusrat (Usman Mukhtar) withdraw. Given a diagnosis of infertility at an early age, Nusrat swings between joy and disbelief, afraid to even discuss this subject with his large young wife. Usman Mukhtar's nuanced portrayal of how emotional isolation and insecurity can ruin relationships and a man's personality is fascinating and a teaching moment. Sehar Khan handles her role as the bubbly young girl to a heartbroken wife well.

The one missing piece in this story is the strong self-satisfaction of Deebsa's parents. Even after their daughter is presumed dead, they are convinced that, instead of therapy or a cooling-off period, a forced marriage to a stranger was the right choice.

**Faraar | Green Entertainment, Sundays 8:00pm**

**F**araar (Green Entertainment) has upped its game with this all-round action-thriller burning with an array of stars and contemporary, authentic storylines from master scriptwriter Mustafa Afridi. Director Sped Wajidat matches the energy of the stars and the entertaining script, giving us a wonderful open, cinematic look to each frame.

No many people are on the run, looking to escape situations beyond their control, weaving a story that takes a slice out of every class and ethnicity. Hamza Ali Abbasi manages the impossible: making his cold-blooded hit-man Farish seem almost cute while in love with the daughter of the Professor (Noor ul Haq) he has just been hired to erase. Daniyal Zafar is surprisingly good as the young Pakistan in need of anger management. Ahmed Ali Akbar handles his character Farish, an out-of-favour honest cop, with his usual restrained skill.

This is a very male-oriented script with flashes of black humour and plenty of movement. In an unusual move, Afridi picks a mistress, played by Sohail Ali Abro, as a lead instead of the usual good girl archetype. Abro keeps her character real but empathetic.

**Baby Baji Ki Bahula | ARY, Daily 7:00pm**

**I**t seems the Siddiqui brothers never learn and end up paying a hefty price. Jamal (Saad Qasbi) was the anchor of their family but, after suffering huge business losses, the stress of his feuding brothers and being tricked out of the family property, he dies of a heart attack. A broken, grieving family tries to pick up the pieces of their lives, correctly assessing the root cause of their tribulations as their cunning Phappo (Aman Abbasi) and his family.

After achieving her freedom and independence, Aana (Babi) (Sumita Marhal) realises she has been tricked out of her business by Phappo's daughter Saima (Madhira Bikkhu). Jamal and Aana were always too kind and generous for their own good, and tended to ignore Aana's (Javeria Sadi) advice because of her past negativity.

This continues to be a great soap, entertaining and authentic, and it feels like family, though the refusal of the good people to be wise or practical has become irritating. Aana Abbasi makes a fun and very believable villain and her competitions with the equally clever Aana, are often funny and resonate with everyone.

**WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR (OR NOT)**

**Mehshur | Geo TV, Coming soon**

Inuran Abbas and Neelam Mushtaq return with a light romance about a marriage forged through duty, rather than love and respect. ■ — *Sahaf Haidar*



**THIS WEEK ON SPOTIFY**

**TOP 10 PAKISTANI SONGS**

S.#	SONG	STREAMS
1	<b>Jhol</b> Maanu, Annural Khalid	437,283
2	<b>Chal Diye Tum Kahan</b> AJR	197,273
3	<b>Tu Hai Kahan</b> AJR	161,411
4	<b>Wishes</b> Hasan Raheem, Umair, Talwinder	158,991
5	<b>Sajna de Dil Torya</b> Zeeshan Ali	158,318
6	<b>Regrets</b> Jevin Gill, Umair, Talha Anjum	155,410
7	<b>COME THROUGH (feat. Abdullah Maharvi, Talha Anjum)</b> Umair, Abdullah Maharvi, Talha Anjum	116,126
8	<b>Laykin</b> Ali & Shjr, Ali Raza, Shajar Hussain	108,416
9	<b>Bikhra</b> Abdul Hannan, Rovalio	104,475
10	<b>BTDT (Been There Done That)</b> Bilal Saeed, Talha Anjum	103,294



LIVEWIRE

ICON

The AIFD's final year students' show Fashion Odyssey provided a window to the innovative work being crafted in one of the most reputable fashion schools of the country

# A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

By Faisal Quraishi

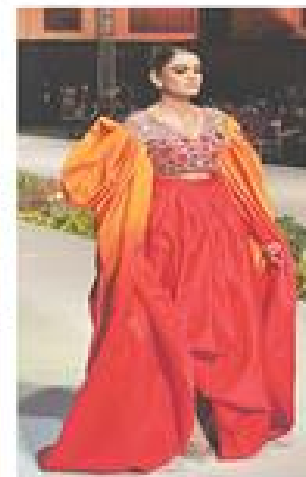
**E**xcitement filled the air as the clock ticked away and as its hands drew closer to the appointed hour, when the Fashion Odyssey show was slated to begin.

Those who had turned up at the Iqbal University Main Campus were there to witness the design talent of the final year students of the Asian Institute of Fashion Design, an august institution that has been serving the cause of fashion for almost a quarter of a century now. With ace fashion couturier Hiraan Begg as the show director and acclaimed stylist Nabila in charge of the models' hair and make-up looks, the show promised much. And it most certainly did not disappoint, as nothing less than something truly magical unfolded on the ramp on that night in November.

As the models walked the length of the ramp in one outfit after another, it became clear that the students had benefited immeasurably from Begg's guardianship, precision and expertise, letting nothing slip by his immaculate and ever-watchful eye. A nip here and a tuck there had elevated most of the outfits into something that held the promise of something truly extraordinary, given time and patience of course.

The design talent shone in terms of the choice of fabric, colours and technique, as well as patterns and silhouettes. The playful nature of some of the outfits was refreshing to watch while a few other fashion students, who took themselves too seriously, needed to loosen up a bit. After all, it was a fun-filled students' show and not a high fashion catwalk at a fashion week in New York or Paris!

The fun factor was definitely played out well, with lots and lots of experimentation in both menswear and womenswear. One particularly liked the playful use of



The fun factor was definitely played out well with lots and lots of experimentation in both menswear and women's wear. One particularly liked the playful use of applique neon pockets, or the loose-hanging fashion-savvy appendages that dangled or trailed behind the models as they sashayed on the ramp.

applique neon pockets, or the loose-hanging fashion-savvy appendages that dangled or trailed behind the models as they sashayed on the ramp.

While the exotic-looking cocktail dresses or voluminous ball gowns were a turn off, one still felt the urge to cheer on for the sake of the sheer effort and ingenuity that went into their construction. The expertly crafted models' hair & make-up perfectly complemented the diversity in costume designs.

AIFD has been notable in bringing forth promising young talent and, with the old guard of fashion as part of its vast fashion faculty, it couldn't be any other way. The institution had been instrumental in the smooth running of the country's now-defunct council-

led fashion weeks, where AIFD students would be delegated responsibilities as front stage walkers and backstage helpers, thereby giving them rare insight and much-needed experience into the workings of an event such as a fashion week.

To sum it up, Fashion Odyssey was a fun show and one that held the promise of prepping a new generation of designers who can carry Pakistan fashion into the future with its head held high. All we need now are more fashion-savvy events and for fashion weeks to be restored, to set the stage and get the ball rolling for these young gems of style. ■

The writer is a member of staff. He can be contacted at quraishi.faisal@gmail.com

WIDE ANGLE

## 'THE MOANA EFFECT'

Here's how small island developing states are bringing their struggle against climate change to the world

By Susan Ann Samuel

**W**alking through the delegation pavilion at the UN climate summit, Cop29, in Baku, Azerbaijan, the Moana Blue Pacific pavilion grabbed my attention more than any other.

This pavilion is named after the spirited young girl from the animated film *Moana*. She embodies the courage and determination of Pacific islanders and younger generations as she goes on a voyage to save her island from environmental harm.

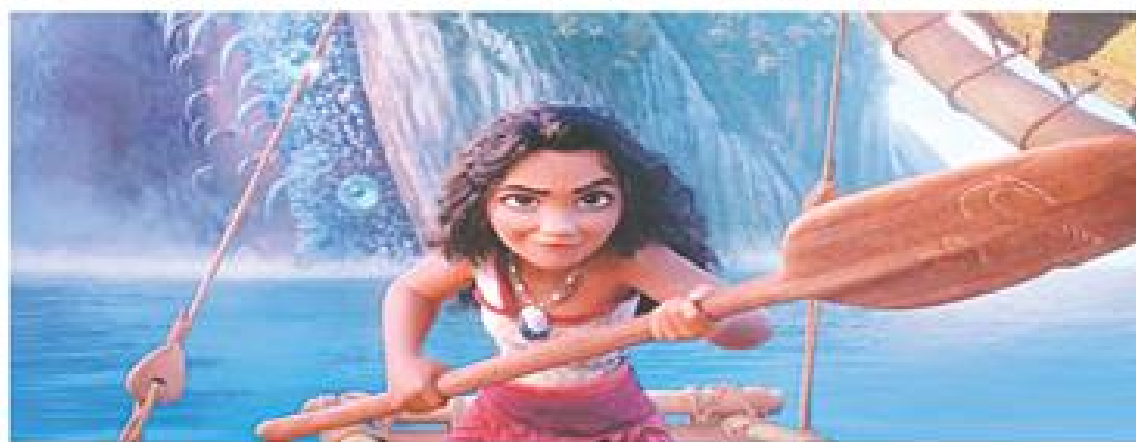
There's a similar fight happening in the real world as small island developing states and youth activists push for climate action — I call this the "Moana effect."

At the pavilion, one delegate from Vanuatu poignantly told me "we're tired" of the negotiations so far. Those two words encapsulate the exhaustion of nations on the frontline of climate change. The challenge is real, and action is urgently needed. The voices of small island developing states and youth must be amplified across the globe in order to make substantial progress.

The first *Moana* movie, released a year after the Paris agreement for climate change in 2015, evokes a sense of advocacy for the environment. *Moana 2* released on November 29, a week after Cop29 ended. This sequel embodies a sense of belonging and global solidarity, which is a central theme to this year's global climate negotiations.

As Azerbaijan's Cop29 president, Ilham Aliyev, has said, "this can be when we empower everyone to move forward in solidarity for a green world."

Here in Baku, I have been noticing an increasing push by small island developing states and youth activists and liken this to *Moana*'s own mission. Small island



Moana heads off on another voyage in the film *Moana 2* | Disney

developing states bear a disproportionate brunt of climate consequences.

They face existential threats and vulnerabilities from rising sea levels to extreme weather and biodiversity loss, among other challenges, despite their minimal contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions.

This paradox, coupled with their extensive advocacy and insufficient global support, has led to growing frustration among these nations. This is why Papua New Guinea delegates are not attending Cop29 — a silent yet powerful statement of discontent with the slow pace of international negotiations. This is especially since the re-election of Donald Trump, with a risk that the US — and perhaps other countries — might pull away from their climate commitments again.



*Moana 2* | Disney

Voices from each and every small island developing state need to be listened to, and heard. The prime minister of Barbados, Mia

Mottley, recently called for a face-to-face discussion about climate with Trump, to seek a "common ground in saving the planet

and saving livelihoods."

As a researcher on UN climate negotiations, I worry that won't happen.

### LISTENING TO YOUNG VOICES

On December 2, the International Court of Justice will begin its public hearings on the request for an advisory opinion on climate change. An advisory opinion is a legal interpretation offered by a court or tribunal when an authorized body or nation seeks its insight. These opinions aren't legally enforceable but serve to unpack legal questions and offer guidance.

This initiative was started by 27 law students from Vanuatu in 2019 who spearheaded a movement from a classroom. This court decision could change how the world prioritises the rights of small island developing states, thanks to youth activists.

This is part of the socio-political and legal push by small island developing states and youth activists that I call the Moana effect. These people are inspiring courage among other young people, students, researchers, indigenous peoples, women and civil society organisations to reimagine a more resilient future.

The Moana effect is not just about raising awareness. It's about enhancing the agency of these people to drive meaningful change.

As we edge closer to the 1.5°C threshold, action is more urgently needed than ever before. Cop29's central focus is to bolster climate finance. Youth activists, young negotiators and small island developing nations play a crucial role as the world decides on how best to do this. The UN approach to "leave none behind" starts with inclusivity, at Cop29 and beyond. ■

The writer is a PhD candidate in the School of Politics and International Studies at the University of Leeds in the UK

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GOGI COMES  
OF AGE

Page 3



THE CHECKMATES  
OF MOURNING

Page 6

@eosmagazine

Recent violent sectarian clashes in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's former tribal area have once again left the entire area on edge, with tensions between the district's Shia and Sunni tribes escalating rapidly. But rather than simply sectarian divides, the reasons for the discord are far more complex

# THE ROOTS OF KURRAM'S CYCLES OF BLOODSHED

By Zia Ur Rehman



People mourn at the graves of relatives who were killed after gunmen opened fire on a convoy of passenger vehicles on November 21 in the Shalozan area of Kurram district: decades of weak governance under tribal laws and the Frontier Crimes Regulation have exacerbated divisions in the area | Reuters

**T**he November 21 ambush on civilian passenger convoys going from Parachinar in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) Kurram district to Peshawar shocked the country. The death toll from the heavy firing on the vehicles soon climbed to 49. Its repercussions were another round of retaliatory attacks and bloodletting, with the combined total of those who lost their lives to this latest sectarian conflagration reaching over a hundred.

Kurram, with its towering peaks, ancient maple groves and fertile fields, has long presented a serene façade to the outside world. But, beneath this picturesque surface, deep-rooted tensions simmer between the Sunni and Shia tribes. This borderland, nestled against Afghanistan's frontier, has known little peace — at least for the past several months.

When I arrived in Kurram in early September, the valley seemed deceptively calm — a brief lull following a brutal week-long violence in late July between the two communities that had killed 50 people and injured hundreds of others. Though the region seemed to be breathing easily again, the echoes of recent rocket fire and gunshot haunted the air.

"It's just a lull. Peace never lasts here," a trader told me in Parachinar, the Shia-majority town at Kurram's heart. Like nearly everyone I met, he knew the calm was temporary.

The signs of the conflict's return were everywhere. On my drive back, I witnessed firsthand how quickly Kurram's uneasy calm could unravel. WhatsApp messages buzzed across phones, warning Shia residents to avoid the Thal-Parachinar road, the main highway that connects Parachinar with the rest of the country, now blockaded by Sunni tribes near Sudda — a Sunni-majority town — due to fears of potential attacks.

My driver, himself Shia, took an alternate route — the treacherous 14-kilometre "Defence Road", a rugged mountain pass that Shia tribes had constructed on their communal land years ago to connect Shia-populated villages to Parachinar when Sunni tribes had cut off road access following the violence of 2007. Our journey stretched from 30 minutes to nearly two-and-a-half hours as we navigated potholes and loose rocks, threading a precarious line along the Afghanistan border.

Then, on September 21, Kurram's deceptive peace shattered. Gunfire and rocket attacks rang out, killing 48 people and injuring dozens more. By October 12, another wave of violence erupted, after a vehicle carrying passengers came under attack, killing 16 people.

With escalating attacks, most of Kurram's 800,000 residents were cut off from essential supplies for over three weeks, trapped by a blockade that isolated entire communities. Familial convoys attempting to guard passengers were ambushed. Families inside Kurram found themselves trapped, unable to escape — those outside were stranded, with no safe way home.

In early November, thousands of residents marched for peace from Parachinar, demanding the reopening of the Thal-Parachinar road, which

had been closed for 22 days. Their 15km procession ended at Sameer village with a temporary victory, when authorities promised to provide government-protected convoys three times a week. However, the latest ambushes on November 21, near Sunni-majority villages, have dashed those hopes, leaving the community in despair.

To outsiders, Kurram's troubles might appear to stem from age-old grudges or deeply ingrained sectarian divides. In reality, however, the roots are far more complex.

## WHERE IS KURRAM AND WHO LIVES THERE?

Kurram is one of the seven former tribal districts of Pakistan that border Afghanistan. It has a unique demographic composition, with a significant Shia population. Although Pakistan's census does not track sectarian affiliation, government reports estimate that the population is roughly 58 percent Sunni (primarily Deobandi) and 42 percent Shia.

The Turi, notable as the only Pakhtun tribe that is almost wholly Shia,

Boshehra, a village in Upper Kurram, where Shia and Sunni communities reside in close proximity, has become a focal point of a bitter land dispute that has escalated since 2023. This decades-long conflict has led to repeated clashes, armed skirmishes and numerous casualties. Despite attempts at resolution through tribal *jirgas* (traditional councils), the dispute remains unresolved.

is the largest tribal group in Kurram. The Bangash tribe, meanwhile, is divided between Sunni and Shia affiliations. Other tribes in the region, including the Mughal, Panichunkani, Mangal and Mousazi, are primarily Sunni.

Kurram, designated as a district following the 2018 merger of former tribal areas into the mainstream administrative framework, is divided into three regions: Upper Kurram, Lower Kurram and Central Kurram. Upper Kurram, where Parachinar — the district's main town — is located, is predominantly inhabited by the Shia-majority Turi tribe, with some Sunni villages nearby. Lower Kurram, centered around Sudda, has a Sunni-

majority population, though it also includes a significant Shia population in Ailazi. Central Kurram, which was incorporated into the district in more recent years, is overwhelmingly Sunni, except for one small Shia village.

Kurram, often referred to as the "Purto's Peak" due to its deep projection into Afghanistan, shares borders with the Afghan provinces of Khost, Paktika, and Nangarhar. The town of Parachinar is located just 100km from Kabul, Afghanistan's capital, underscoring Kurram's strategic significance.

## LAND DISPUTES

Boshehra, a village in Upper Kurram, where Shia and Sunni communities reside in close proximity, has become a focal point of a bitter land dispute that has escalated since 2023. This decades-long conflict, centred on a 100-kanal (50,586 sq metres) plot of land, has led to repeated clashes, armed skirmishes and numerous casualties. Despite attempts at resolution through tribal *jirgas* (traditional councils), the dispute remains unresolved.

Sibbi Ul Hassan Turi, a researcher studying land disputes in Kurram for his PhD, has documented the increasing sectarian violence in several villages where Shia and Sunni communities live nearby. Turi highlights that "disputes over land, forests, water sources, and mountainous terrain often exacerbate tensions more significantly than religious provocations, such as incidents during religious processions or blasphemy accusations." District authorities reported that at least eight major violent land disputes are currently ongoing between the two communities in the region.

"Sectarian clashes are particularly intense when land is involved, triggering a vicious cycle of retaliation," Turi adds. An attack on the Shia minority in a Sunni-majority area would provoke a response in Shia-majority areas, with Sunnis becoming the next target. Tribal elders from both communities are aware of this cycle, understanding that any attack on a member of the opposing sect would lead to reciprocal violence, causing harm to their own community members in return.

Turi also notes that warring tribes on both sides have exploited sectarian divisions to rally unity in their respective land disputes, fostering an environment where they believe victory is unsustainable without collective support.

Experts and local elders point to deeper issues underlying the disputes, particularly the complexities of land ownership in the region. Since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 2021, the scale and violence of land disputes in Kurram have intensified, fuelled by the influx of advanced American weapons left behind by retreating Afghan forces.

In former tribal areas, land is often communally held, with little or no formal documentation. However, land in Upper Kurram and Lower Kurram was measured and demarcated during British colonial rule. But efforts to

KURRAM'S BLOODSHED, PAGE 2

# LAND, SECT, GEO-POLITICS AND BLOOD

## KURRAM'S BLOODSHED, PAGE 1

resolve disputes have been slow. The Murree Agreement, signed in 2011, highlighted the issue of abandoned properties, because of violence-induced displacement and contested land. However, authorities failed to resolve the core issues.

The KP government's Boundary Commission, established in August 2023, has worked alongside tribal elders to resolve the land disputes. However, the commission's findings remain unpublished, and its recommendations have yet to be fully implemented.

To fully comprehend the complexities of Kurram's conflict, it is crucial to consider the historical context, including the impact of events in Afghanistan and Iran, the rise of the Afghan Taliban and Pakistani militants, and regional conflicts in the Middle East.

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

By 1850, the Turi tribe was paying taxes to the Afghan state through a governor appointed by Kabul to oversee the region. According to the late French scholar Mariam Abou Zahab, during the Second Anglo-Afghan War in 1877, the Turi allowed British Gen Roberts to pass through their territory into Afghanistan. In return, they requested that the British take control of the region's administration, fearing potential aggression from neighbouring Sunni tribes, particularly the Mangals.

The Treaty of Gandamak in 1879 resulted in Afghanistan renouncing its claim over Kurram, following repeated failed attempts to exert influence there. Zahab writes in her paper, published in *Pakistan: A Kaleidoscope of Islam*, that the Turis were regarded by the British as *ajals* (distinct or different) from their neighbours due to their Turkish or Mongol origins — likely from Persia — and their Shia sect. With the creation of the Kurram Agency in 1932 and the subsequent establishment of the Durand Line in 1963, the Turi found themselves on the British side of the border.

For almost a century, Sunni and Shia communities in Kurram co-existed harmoniously, with occasional disputes over land, forests, water resources and religious events. However, according to local elders and experts, the dynamics of this co-existence began to shift profoundly in 1979 — a pivotal year in regional and global geopolitics.

In 1979, the Soviet Union sent its forces into Afghanistan to support its communist government against anti-communist Muslim insurgents. Simultaneously, a popular uprising ousted the Pahlavi monarchy in Iran and established a Shia theocratic state. Experts say that these events had profound repercussions for Kurram, whose unique location along the Afghan border and significant Shia population made it particularly vulnerable to the resulting ideological and demographic shifts.

According to Dr Noorun Nasser, a political science teacher at the University of Peshawar, "The events in Iran and Afghanistan in 1979 marked a turning point for Kurram, triggering significant demographic and ideological shifts."

She says that Kurram's demographic and sectarian balance changed drastically during the 1980s, with the influx of Sunni Afghan refugees and the establishment of anti-Soviet Mujahideen groups supported by Pakistan and the United States. "Afghan Mujahideen brought with them a militant form of Sunni Islam," she added, "while Kurram's Shia population was deeply influenced by Iran's revolutionary ideals after 1979 onwards."

Nizar Ahmed Karbala, a community elder from Parachinar who is now in his 60s, has seen the transformation of the conflict. Many Afghan refugees — all Sunni and arriving from Logar, Paktia and Khost — settled on communal land owned by Kurram's Shia population and began cultivating their land as *hamayari* (peasants). "At that time, there was no clearly defined border; only a single checkpoint at Khushkhal," Karbala says.

The arrival of these refugees coincided with the establishment of several anti-Soviet Mujahideen groups, heavily supported by Pakistan and the United States. Among the most prominent was Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami. The adjacent Afghan district of Jaji (or Zazayi) in Paktia Province became a stronghold for Osama bin Laden and his cadre of Arab volunteer fighters during the 1980s. In 1984, Soviet forces bombed Sunni villages in Kurram, including Teri Mangal, in retaliation for their providing refuge to Mujahideen fighters.

In 1982, sectarian violence erupted in the Sunni-majority town of Sadda, displacing over some 60 Shia families to Parachinar. Although a tribal council agreed in 1990 to facilitate their return, the decision was never implemented, tribal elders say.

Clashes between the Shia population and Afghan Mujahideen fighters began in 1986, when the former barred the latter from crossing their land to enter Afghanistan. The resulting conflict led to hundreds of deaths on both sides and forced further displacement of Shia families from Sadda to Parachinar.

### BASTION OF SHIA ACTIVISM

Driving through Kurram, one encounters a striking visual tapestry: images of assassinated cleric Allama Arif Hussain Akhbari displayed prominently on billboards alongside portraits of former Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini, now-assassinated Lebanese Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, and assassinated Iranian Gen Qasem Soleimani. These figures symbolise the region's deep connection to global Shia movements and its pivotal role in Shia activism within Pakistan.

Al-Hussaini, a native of Peshawar village near Parachinar, rose to prominence as a transformative figure in Pakistan's Shia politics in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution. Trained in the esteemed religious seminaries of Najaf and Qom, he became Ayatollah Khomeini's clerical representative in Pakistan in 1985, solidifying his position as a key link between Iranian Shia ideology and Pakistan's Shia community.

Scholar Zahab wrote that, under Al-Hussaini's leadership, "a kind of 'Qomisation' of Pakistan took place." This included aligning rituals with Iranian practices, politicising *majlis* gatherings through participation by Iranian diplomats, and disseminating Iranian books and cassettes outside Islamabad.

Historically, Kurram's Shia population had limited involvement in broader Shia politics in Pakistan. However, under Al-Hussaini's leadership, they emerged



A mourner stands beside the dead bodies of victims who were killed in sectarian attacks in Kurram district on November 21; the region is in desperate need of a long-term strategy that addresses the underlying causes of violence and fosters meaningful reconciliation. (AFP)

as active participants, engaging through political platforms such as the Inqilaabi Students Organisation (ISO), across the country.

The turning point came in 1990, when Shia protests erupted in Islamabad, demanding exemption from the government's mandatory Zakat deductions. Most of those participating were from Kurram. In response, the government allegedly incited Afghan Mujahideen to launch attacks on Al-Hussaini's hometown. According to local elders, Al-Hussaini organised an armed self-defence movement to protect the community.

### THE RISE AND FALL OF THE TALIBAN IN AFGHANISTAN

Following the Soviet withdrawal, Afghanistan descended into chaos, as Mujahideen groups fought for power. Amid this turmoil, the Taliban emerged in the mid-1990s, capturing most of the country and establishing a government. This ascent reverberated beyond Afghanistan, particularly destabilising Pakistan's Kurram district, already marked by sectarian tensions.

The Taliban, bolstered by its Haqqani Network faction, and the presence of al-Qaeda, strengthened alliances with Sunni tribes in Upper Kurram, particularly in Boshelan and Mata Sangar, where Sunnis had long been besieged by Shia tribes. This alignment shifted the local balance of power. The sectarian violence peaked in 1996, when tensions ignited into a deadly confrontation, leaving over 200 people dead.

The 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan prompted further upheaval. Fleeing Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters sought refuge in Kurram, but the region's Shia population largely refused to harbour them. When Pakistan began expelling Afghan refugees from Kurram in 2005, Sunnis feared that the shift could restore Shia dominance. At the same time, Shia groups called for the resettlement of families displaced from Sadda during the 1982 violence, reigniting old grievances.

"When Afghan refugees vacated Turi land, Sunni tribesmen began occupying it," explains Dr Noorun Nasser. "The Turis are defending their own land, not encroaching on others' territories."

For example, a camp for Afghan refugees was established in Margal Chana in Halishkhal, a Shia-majority area in Lower Kurram, in the 1980s. When it was vacated in 2006, nearby Parachinaris, a Sunni tribe, tried to occupy the land. However, Shia tribes resisted it.

Following the expulsion of Shias from Sadda during the violence of 1982, Shia tribes collectively resolved not to sell their land to Sunni tribes. This decision was part of a broader strategy to safeguard their ownership and prevent Sunnis from asserting claims over their ancestral territory.

### THE ARRIVAL OF TTP

Kurram witnessed unprecedented sectarian violence starting in early 2007, a crisis exacerbated by the growing involvement of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The conflict initially erupted in April 2007, claiming over 200 lives, causing widespread destruction, and leading to the expulsion of Sunnis from Parachinar.

The situation deteriorated further in November 2007, with both communities accusing each other of targeting places of worship, including grenade attacks on mosques and rocket strikes on Shia properties in Parachinar.

Since 2005, a local Taliban faction led by Farid Saeed, a resident of Uchit Killay village, had been active in the region. However, the arrival of the newly formed TTP in early 2008 marked a turning point. Established in December 2007, the TTP unified several Pakistani Taliban factions under a central command. Hakeemullah Mehsud, a senior TTP commander,



Security officials assess the damage at the site of an explosion in Parachinar carried out by the TTP on January 21, 2017; the arrival of the newly formed TTP in early 2008 marked a turning point in the region. (AFP)

was tasked with overseeing operations in Kurram and Orakzai, while Saeed continued as the local commander.

Shia leaders alleged that the TTP aimed to seize control of Parachinar, pointing to their refusal to allow militants to use the region as a base for attacks on US forces in Afghanistan.

"The TTP's brutality united the Shia tribesmen, enabling them to mount organised resistance," says Makhdur Hussain, a driver from Parachinar. Reflecting on the intense fighting in 2007, he adds, "We had about 200 fighters, rotating them in four-hour shifts. It was relentless. During the first 27 days, I only came down from my hallop position twice for a bath."

The TTP's entry into Lower Kurram, combined with the lack of the writ of state forces and ineffective government mediation, dramatically shifted local power dynamics. The group imposed a social boycott of Shias in mixed areas, while Sunnis who opposed the boycott faced punitive measures from TTP-linked militants.

Khalid Dad, a Sunni activist from Kurram, describes the atrocities committed by both sides: "Unspeaking acts of violence occurred during this time, including the desecration of corpses and beheadings. These horrors deeply polarised the tribes, making reconciliation nearly impossible."

### ROAD BLOCKADES

The road blockades in Kurram, which began in 2007 and persist as part of an ongoing conflict, have had devastating consequences for the region.

After the TTP's withdrawal in 2007, driven by a lack of local support, Sunni tribes in Sadda and other majority areas obstructed the primary road connecting Parachinar to the rest of Pakistan. Critical for Parachinar's residents, this route served as their main link to Peshawar and other major cities.

Initially, Shia residents relied on government-escorted convoys to travel and transport essential goods. However, frequent ambushes on these convoys forced them to take an arduous alternative: travelling through Afghanistan. This desert, via Paktia, Garder, Kabul and Torkham, transformed a typical five-hour journey into a grueling 20-hour ordeal. The alternative route was fraught with dangers as well, including attacks and killings by various militant groups, such as the Afghan Taliban, the TTP and Mangal Bagh's Lashkar-i-Islam, as well as harassment from Afghan and Pakistani border officials.

In response to the blockade, the community constructed the 'Defence Road' on communal land, connecting Shia villages near Alioti and other areas in Lower Kurram to Parachinar.

Efforts to resolve the conflict led to peace agreements, such as the Murree Agreement in October 2008 and a landmark peace deal in February 2011. While these initiatives brought relative stability and partially reopened roads, sporadic violence continued, leaving the region in a state of lingering insecurity.

### RETURN OF LOCAL FIGHTERS FROM SYRIA

An Urdu-translated book from a Persian booklet, titled *How Terry Abbas Is Zainab*, endorses Wajid Ali, a 16-year-old madrassah student from Parachinar, who died in 2017 in Abu Kamal, Syria, while fighting against the Islamic State (IS).

Ali, inspired by a religious edict urging Shia Muslims to defend sacred shrines, such as the revered site of Hazrat Zainab, Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) granddaughter, left his education to join the Zainabiyoun Brigade, a group allegedly linked to Shia fighters, supporting Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Ali's father said Ali's mother supported his decision, seeing it as a religious duty.

While the Shia community in Kurram denies participation in the Syrian conflict, local elders and publications acknowledge that some young men fought and died in Syria. Many who returned are hailed as heroes of a religious struggle. However, this participation has fuelled sectarian tensions.

Law enforcement agencies and Sunni tribes have criticised Shia involvement in foreign conflicts, further intensifying the longstanding rivalry in Kurram. In April of this year, Pakistan officially banned the Zainabiyoun Brigade. Meanwhile, Shia elders have accused the Taliban from neighbouring Afghan provinces of aiding Sunni tribes during the clashes, by supplying manpower and arms, exacerbating the already fragile situation in the region.

There were also repercussions. The formation of the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) — the IS's local chapter — by disgruntled TTP members from Kurram and neighbouring Orakzai in 2015 has amplified violence against Shias in the region. Five suicide attacks in Parachinar in 2017 alone forced residents to demand a military checkpoint to prevent outsiders from entering the town without a resident guarantee. An anti-Shia militant group claimed responsibility for one attack, saying it was intended to "punish the Shias for supporting Assad's forces in Syria."

Attacks spread beyond Kurram. For example, the ISKP claimed responsibility for suicide bombing a Shia mosque in Peshawar in 2022, where Kurram's Shia population often visits to pray, killing over 60 people. The nearby Park Hotel, frequented by Kurram's Shias, was also bombed in 2014.

### THE PRESENT AND BEYOND

The recent tragic events in Kurram raise a larger, more daunting question: how can Kurram's entrenched sectarian conflict — fuelled by historical grievances, land disputes and distrust — ever be resolved? Without a comprehensive, long-term strategy that addresses the underlying causes of violence and fosters meaningful reconciliation, the cycle of bloodshed seems destined to repeat itself.

As Tahirul Jinnah, an Islamabad-based researcher on inter-sect harmony, points out, sectarian tensions in Kurram risk among the most severe in Pakistan. Decades of weak governance under tribal laws and the notorious British-era Frontier Crimes Regulation have exacerbated these divisions. Socio-economic disparities further inflame tensions, with Shia-majority areas often better developed than Sunni-majority regions, which struggle with inadequate infrastructure and lower literacy rates.

Land disputes remain a central flashpoint. While recovering abandoned properties destroyed during past conflicts seems plausible on paper, illegal land grabs and the absence of enforceable agreements fuel fear and insecurity. The Murree Agreement explicitly called for warring tribes to vacate occupied lands, but without comprehensive enforcement, these disputes are bound to reignite violence.

However, there are glimmers of hope in Kurram's political landscape. Journalist Hidayat Pader describes the February 2024 elections as a historic turning point. Hameed Hussain, a Shia candidate supported by Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), secured substantial Sunni backing from Lower Kurram, winning the new National Assembly constituency of Upper and Lower Kurram. Pader notes that, while much of this support stemmed from Imran Khan's popularity, the election highlighted "the potential of political engagement to bridge divides and foster trust."

Still, new challenges are emerging. Elders in the region have voiced concerns over the rise of emotional youth exploiting social media platforms such as TikTok to provoke rivals and gain popularity. During clashes, young people record and live-stream violent incidents, including rocket launches and gunfire, widely sharing these videos to inflame sectarian tensions. One afternoon, an elder from Parachinar's central bazaar bazaar was seen advising the youth to stop these emotion-driven actions.

The path to peace in Kurram is long and fraught with many obstacles, but not impossible. A sustainable resolution requires a multi-faceted approach: robust government intervention to curb arms flows, the enforcement of peace agreements like the Murree Agreement, and sustained inter-sectarian dialogue. Addressing socio-economic disparities and fostering community-led reconciliation efforts are equally critical.

The writer is a journalist and researcher whose work has appeared in The New York Times, Dawn and other publications. He has also written for various policy institutes. He can be reached at [zeen.rehman1@gmail.com](mailto:zeen.rehman1@gmail.com)



## ► PROFILE

# GOGI COMES OF AGE

Nigar Nazar shot to fame as Pakistan's first female cartoonist more than 50 years ago, without any formal schooling in the craft, but through finding mentors along the way. In doing that, she also created one of Pakistan's most memorable cartoon characters...

By Shazia Hasan

**I**t is early to be waiting for someone in a hotel lobby, that too on a Sunday morning, but I'm looking forward to meeting her after 12 years. "Where are you?" A message flashes on my phone screen. "Near the fish tank, wearing white," I respond.

Moments later, a woman in a peach shalwar qameez pulling a little suitcase approaches me, smiling. Nigar Nazar, the first woman cartoonist of Pakistan, has not aged a day since we last met. Come to think of it, she has always looked like this as far as I can remember.

She comes bearing gifts. The suitcase opens and out comes Gogi merchandise that she has specially brought from Islamabad for friends. Gogi is of course Nigar's signature creation — an attractive, young Pakistani woman with short hair who became the most memorable female character in Pakistani cartoons. There are Gogi books, mugs, stickers, key chains and much more.

Of course, in all the pictures, Gogi is always wearing a polka-dot print — white polka dots on a red shirt or red polka dots on a white shirt. The keychain has her in green polka dots on an orange shirt with a green collar. Somewhere else, she has black dots on a yellow dress — with a flowing dupatta, she is the epitome of grace.

With time, Gogi has also come of age. Gone is the carefree, happy-go-lucky girl, getting herself into all kinds of messes, such as getting a lollypop accidentally stuck in her hair which, after several failed attempts to pull out, had to be covered up with more hair and held in place with a ribbon, although the little stick still stuck out as she went to college.

In her place we have a confident young woman spreading awareness about the environment, tax planning, water conservation, women's rights, children's rights, health issues, population control, literacy, corruption and what not.

She sings and dances to tell you about the ills in society, where there is theft — *churao* (bandit) with *chacha* (knife) — corruption, pollution or at that time, amid all the mess, you are told that "All *archaneer* *hai* *archaneer* *hai*" [Even one good deed makes a big difference]. Amid the bad people here, we also have some good, selfless people such as Abdul Samad Khan, who did so much for humanity. Amid the pollution, where a rickshaw leaves you coughing in a cloud of grey smoke, someone also plants a tree.

It's been a long, winding road for Gogi who first came to national prominence more than 50 years ago. When Nigar first started drawing Gogi, she was also only in her twenties. She is now a grandmother, though a very sprightly and well-preserved one. Although Gogi strips stopped appearing in newspapers since 1996, Nigar has made sure that her creation has found new avenues to remain in the public eye and taken on new passions.

The cute polka dots seem like cheerful spots when Gogi speaks about women empowerment and human rights. Her eyelashes, too, seem longer as she makes her point. From being drawn on paper, she has moved to appearing on buses. Well, technically, she is still drawn on paper, but that paper, or parallels rather, is now being wrapped around buses.

Nigar first did it in 2004, when 13 public transport buses and passenger vans in Islamabad and Rawalpindi featured Gogi cartoons on them. Now, in 2024, she has joined hands with the Australian High Commission and the Australian Centre for International Agriculture Research to spread word about water conservation through University of Faisalabad buses.

"Climate change is pushing us to change behaviours," Nigar tells *Eos*. "Water is at the base of climate change. You need it for sustaining life. You need it for agriculture, for planting trees and for so many other things. Then it is natural to conserve water, such an important resource."

She feels strongly about using her skill to spread awareness. "Cartoon artists. They are also a means of normal escape from thoughts of doom and gloom," she says. "Cartoons should not be restricted to children. Anyone can be amused by a cartoon," she adds.

Nigar always wanted to be a cartoonist



Cartoonist Nigar Nazar working in her studio as her muse looks over her shoulder



Gogi at immigration

though she never could find a professional school in Pakistan to teach her how to do that. During her college years, she knew a girl named 'Gogi', who was part of their students' circle. "She was a sweet, chubby character, who would always be cheerful, a trait which made her quite popular among her peers. I liked her upbeat nature," Nigar remembers.

Anyway, going back to her search to find someone who could teach her how to make cartoons, Nigar started frequenting the Arts Council of Pakistan (ACP) in Karachi during the late 1960s when, although she could not find anyone for the purpose, she did, however, get to rub shoulders with many big artists of the day. "I still have a cartoon on my living room wall that is very dear to me. It is a cartoon of the great Sadequain, that was sketched by Aziz Cartoonist of the *Morning News*," she reveals.

"Actually, knowing of my interest in art, and watching her come to the Arts Council day after day, Sadequain while had requested Aziz *saheb* to give me a live demonstration of how he drew cartoons. With cigarette in hand,

he also volunteered to model for Aziz *saheb*. And after the sketch was done he, Aziz *saheb* and myself signed on it, before the cartoonist presented it to me," Nigar remembers fondly.

In Karachi, Nigar also met other artist friends such as the late Ali Imami, who was then the principal of the Institute of Arts and Crafts. "Not finding a proper cartoonist teacher, I used to borrow books on art from the Institute," she says. Imami wanted to know if the books were doing her any good. So he instructed Nigar to make a cartoon every day and show it to him.

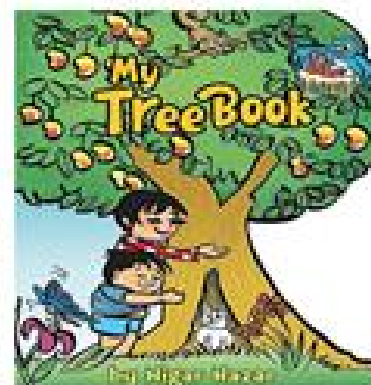
"He was a very strict principal and a man of few words," she laughs at the memory. "But he also published my first Gogi cartoon, in four panels on a full page, in the institute's annual magazine," she says.

All Imami also introduced Nigar to Shauhin Ahmed, the editor of daily *The Sun*. "The Sun was a new newspaper in 1971. Its editor was searching for a cartoonist for the paper," Nigar explains. Soon, she was submitting a cartoon every day to the publication.

Nigar recalls that the paper had other cartoonists too, including political



A bus displaying Gogi's artwork



Gogi's 'My Tree Book'



A single panel cartoon

cartoonists. "But they didn't have to submit a cartoon daily, because I was making comic strips. They needed a fresh, witty and humorous comic strip every day," she says.

Being young and restless, Nigar was still up for further challenges. One year later, she found her way to the state broadcaster, Pakistan Television, where she was asked to make live cartoons during a segment on a children's show.

With a black marker in hand, she would make cartoon after cartoon of Gogi on blank paper sheets pinned on a board, as the camera focused on her sketching hand. It showed her beloved character involved in something funny to amuse children, as she narrated what was unfolding in the story.

There was no looking back for Nigar or Gogi after that. There have been numerous Gogi exhibitions — both nationally and internationally. Actually, the cartoonist and her cartoon went international after Nigar got married in the early 1980s. Her husband was in the Foreign Service and they got to stay in different countries during his various postings abroad.

"I went to Turkey and Gogi started appearing in Turkish magazines," she reminisces about her travels and artwork. "In Libya, too, my cartoons were published in Arabic after being translated from English," she says.

More international exposure included her six-week visit to Colorado Springs in the US, where Gogi found fans in churches and primary schools, and even universities.

Nigar was in Spain last year, where she was shortlisted for the Casa Asia Award, which

recognises individuals as well as organisations for their work in various fields, such as culture, society, education and economic development. Of course Gogi is involved in everything.

Looking ahead, Nigar is now working on a series of Gogi comic books, a total of 12, one for each month of a year, about cancer. "The series, titled *Killing Cancer Kivily*, aims to educate children about the disease. The books, with the underlying theme that cancer is curable now, tell readers about what to expect while patients are under treatment, to make them receptive to the medicines," she says.

Earlier, Nigar had also made cartoon murals for hospitals, such as the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (22 murals there), the Rawalpindi General Hospital and the District Headquarter Hospital in Rajahmundry.

She has already done Gogi puppets, various activity books and board games. More such passion projects include a Gogi colouring book, which is going to be about Pakistan's rich culture, such as traditional village life with animals, shoppings, handicrafted items, clothes, embroidery, folk art, kites, konga etc.

She may have got initial inspiration for Gogi from a college friend, but I see a lot of Gogi in Nigar Nazar too. She makes Gogi say or do what she wants to say or do. She has given Gogi her comical sense of humour, too.

Nigar also has the same short and wavy haircut as Gogi, I feel. When I point that out, I'm quickly told the difference: "No, Gogi has bangs!"

The writer is a member of staff.  
K: @HassanShazia



Gogi's digital comic strip | Gogi Studios



► PARALYMPICS

Pakistan's most internationally decorated paralympic athlete Haider Ali's success story is also a depressing one about how the country treats its sporting heroes

# THE UNSUNG CHAMPION

By Anushe Engineer

**A**fter his 52.54m throw that won him a bronze medal in the Men's F37 Discus Throw event at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, Haider Ali has been waiting. And waiting. And waiting.

As Pakistan's most decorated para athlete, he no longer yearns for success. It's recognition and respect from the nation that he craves, something he's sorely had in almost 20 years. Now in its final stretch, his athletic career has been a bright, wonderful firework, illuminating Pakistan's sports scene, only to dissipate into nothingness.

It's been almost three months since he won a bronze medal at the Paris Paralympics, but there have been no cash prizes, no congratulatory phone calls from the government, nothing. It's been this way since his international debut in 2006 and, now, after almost 20 years of being Pakistan's most successful para athlete, he wonders if anything will change.

Governments typically have a detailed sports policy in place to award athletes who win medals internationally. Pakistan has no such policy for its athletes or para athletes, which is why the government has never rewarded, not been obliged to award Haider Ali for his accolades.

Several countries pay their Olympians and Paralympians equally, including India, Canada, USA, Spain, France, Malaysia, Australia, Israel and South Korea. Countries such as Hong Kong and Singapore reward their Paralympians less money than Olympians. Britain does not award cash prizes to Olympians or Paralympians for winning medals, but athletes do receive an annual training stipend.

World Athletics began offering \$20,000 cash prizes to gold medalists, but there has been no announcement for para-athletes. The lack of equality for disabled athletes very much still exists across the world, but countries and institutions are working hard to close that gap.

Despite the absence of a sports policy, Olympic javelin champion Arshad Nadeem's gold medal at the Paris Olympics triggered a gold rush. He received \$20,000 from World Athletics, around half a million dollars from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and \$250,000 from Punjab's Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. He also got a couple of cars, including a Honda Civic which has a license plate bearing the number PAK 92 97 as a tribute to his javelin distance. He was also invited to raise the national flag during Pakistan's Independence Day celebrations on August 14.

That is not to minimise his achievement in any way. Arshad's win was extraordinary, historic, and a powerful reflection of how he and coach Salmaun Butt conquered the world with pure talent and grit.



Haider Ali celebrates after winning bronze in the Men's Discus Throw F37 on September 6 at the Stade de France in Paris. (Reuters)

But Haider Ali is just as exceptional as Arshad, and with a more robust athletic portfolio. He's a five-time Paralympian, who won a silver medal at his Paralympic debut at Beijing 2008, followed by a bronze in Rio 2016, a gold at Tokyo 2020, and another bronze this year in Paris.

His personal best throw of 55.26m, achieved at the Tokyo Paralympics is further than the national record for 55.10m made by Bishar Ali in 2006.

He is Pakistan's first and only athlete to win a medal at the Paralympics. He's also clinched four gold and two bronze medals across three different Asian Para Games since 2010, as well as one gold and three silvers at his international debut at the FESPIC Games in 2006, which was later renamed the Asian Para Games.

Every medal and every victory of Haider's has been for Pakistan, but the country has given him nothing in return. No acknowledgement from the government, no support from the private sector, no recognition

from the media or the people. It's almost as if he's never existed in Pakistan's sports sphere.

"I just don't understand why it's like this," he confessed to me one afternoon when we met in Karachi. "I have so much pride in making the country proud every time I've won a medal, of which I have 19 now." I had to coerce his achievements out of him. That he's broken world records and stands in the top rankings of his event was a quiet afterthought.

"And you still haven't been congratulated by the prime minister or president or received any cash prizes?" I asked stupidly, as if my shock would conjure all of the above instantly.

His response was a bitter laugh, the only remaining response you have to a situation as incredulous as his. The only joke has been being Pakistan's best para athlete for 19 years with as many international medals and no response from your nation.

Haider is proud of how far he's come as an athlete, both in terms of accolades and personal growth since

he was an unassuming teenager heading to the global stage. "It's the treatment of para-athletes in Pakistan that just keeps disappointing me. As an athlete, I'm proud of how far I've come and what I've achieved, but when it comes to appreciation and encouragement of para-athletes in Pakistan, I'm disappointed."

His depressing success story has inspired other para athletes to bow out of sports altogether. One wonders what the future of para-sports will look like in Pakistan after Haider's career comes to a close.

"There's thousands of para-athletes waiting to represent Pakistan, the government just needs to pay attention to them," he says, his words an echo of what he's been saying for several years now.

The government ought to take a leaf from India's book to understand how athletes and para-athletes should be honoured for bringing laurels for their country. A gold medal fetches you Indian Rs7.5 million, silver brings you INR5 million, bronze is awarded INR3 million, and winning any medal in a mixed team event gets you INR2.25 million.

India's Special Award Scheme was founded in 1986 to "incentivise the achievements of outstanding sportspersons, encourage and motivate them for higher achievements, and to act as aspiring role models for attracting the younger generation to take up sports."

That India's Paralympic team has won a whopping 29 medals in Paralympics — compared to six gold, silver, five bronze Olympic medals — speaks volumes about the training, resources, funding and support India provides its athletes. Decades worth of structured sports governance and respect for athletes has propelled India to some of the highest rankings across all sports.

Pakistan, in true Pakistani fashion, has simply waited for the likes of Arshad Nadeem to produce miracles for the country, which politicians and governments scramble to claim as their own. The handsome cash rewards doled out to him were less about rewarding his Olympic feat and more about competing among each other for who had more millions to dish out from the coffers.

Governments repeatedly fail to celebrate athleticism in the country. There may never be an explanation for why someone like Haider has hardly ever been celebrated in Pakistan. And if, by some miracle, the government finally wakes up to his immense success, Haider will be long gone as Pakistan's best para-athlete. ■

The writer is a member of staff, and a former member of the Pakistan swimming team. X: @yes\_infEngineer

► INFRASTRUCTURE

# THE KARAKORAM CONNECTION

With the opening of the lofty Karakoram Highway in the 1970s and its later co-option into the ambitious CPEC project, Pakistan hoped it would serve as a grand trade corridor for the region. So, why has the project failed to deliver the desired economic dividends and what can be done about it?

By Dr Muhammad Ali Shaikh

**O**ne of the most important resources endowed by nature to Pakistan is its geographical location. Pakistan is located at the confluence of South Asia, West Asia and Central Asia. It is connected in the south with the Arab World through the Arabian Sea, with Iran and Afghanistan in the west, with India in the east, and with west China in the north, while being in close proximity with Russia and several Central Asian states.

Historically, the region to the north of Pakistan had largely been inaccessible due to natural barriers, in the form of some of the highest mountain ranges in the world. The opening of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) by the late 1970s eased these barriers. However, till the turn of the century, the use of this highway had been confined to strategic purposes only, in addition to a small niche of adventure tourism.

Since the 2000s, concerted efforts have been made to tap into the economic benefits of Pakistan's Karakoram connection, but without much success so far. It is important to understand the reasons the project has failed to deliver the expected rewards and to suggest a course of action.

## LACK OF PLANNING

In 1986, Pakistan and China began construction of the 1300-kilometre-long KKH, which would connect the town of Haseen Abdal in Pakistan's Punjab with the city of Kashgar in China's Xinjiang region. The road was to cross the international border between the two countries at the Khasenjeh Pass, at an altitude of 4,693 metres (15,397 feet), the highest border crossing in the world.

The basic consideration for Pakistan to undertake this venture was its strategic value. As per Mahamud Ispahani, in her book *Roads and Roads*, Gen Ayub Khan considered the economic and commercial importance of the highway of only secondary importance. In view of the road's strategic nature, the task of

constructing Pakistan's portion of 887 kilometres was assigned to the Pakistan Army, which established the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) to carry out the assignment.

The work in Pakistan started without much preparation, planning and surveying. "Arbitrary deadlines and very poor preparation from the Pakistani side, especially for the extreme altitude, dogged the early phases of a venture that was launched with extraordinarily minimal surveying or planning," observed Andrew Small in his book *The China-Pakistan Axis*. This resulted in heavy loss of life of personnel, primarily labourers working at high altitudes in frosty conditions.

Pakistan Army's retired Brig Muhammad Munir Khalid, who compiled the history of KKH in his two-volume work *History of the Karakoram Highway*, presented a similar picture.

"Thoughtless urgency would become a peculiar feature of this mega project and, perhaps, for all future ones. Any presidential order, or for that matter any higher command decision, would rarely be questioned by the corps' top brass, regardless of the serious technical, financial and administrative problems, time constraints or frictions of terrain and weather."

For its part, China completed its assigned task of constructing the 413 kilometres in its territory well in time. As Pakistan was still struggling in the initial stages, China offered to help complete its part too — help that was accepted with gratitude — and the road was formally inaugurated in 1978.

## WAKING UP TO KKH'S ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

With Pakistan's connection to the north open, it acquired the potential of becoming a grand trade corridor between the region in its north — comprising China, and through it, Russia and the Central Asian states — and the Indian Ocean in the south, providing these countries easy access to the Middle East and Africa. In between these two ends, this grand trade corridor had the potential to be linked with countries such as India in the east and Iran and Afghanistan in the west.

But these considerations were given little thought before Gen Pervez Musharraf's rule, when Pakistan developed a plan to utilise its connectivity potential for economic purposes.

Accordingly, on July 28, 2006, Pakistan's Planning Commission gave an 84-slide presentation to the president and the prime minister on the subject of 'Trade, Energy, Transport and Industrial Corridor.' This basic plan later graduated to the form of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2013.

This plan involved interest in China too, as its fast developing western region was at less than half the distance from Pakistan ports than China's own ports in the east and southeast. It also promised China easier access to the Middle East and Africa, in addition to serving as a sort of insurance, in case of any issue with China's usual trade routes in the South China Sea.

The linchpin in all these plans and programmes was the KKH, whose expansion and upgradation was essential to put them in operation. This required extensive financial and technical resources, which China agreed to provide, and work started in 2006.

When the upgraded road was about to open, a huge landslide in January 2009 resulted in the creation of a 300-metre-deep and over 20-kilometres wide Attabad lake, which submerged a large portion of the highway.

This made the road dysfunctional, as the goods transported through trucks had to be sailed for over 20 kilometres of the lake through small boats. This situation was redressed by constructing a 24-kilometre redesigned and realigned piece of road, making it operational in September 2015, after an interval of a little less than six years.

## BEDEVILLED HIGHWAY

However, despite all these efforts and expenses, the Karakoram connection is yet to deliver the desired economic dividends. The reason for this time is the steep decline in the security situation in Pakistan, where terrorism and terrorist activities have become the order of the day. The situation requires a serious rethink, because, in the present



File photo of the Karakoram Highway. (Nasir Kazim)

security conditions, there is very little likelihood for the venture to achieve its desired results.

Secondly, the geostrategic and geopolitical situation in the region is also a big hindrance in tapping the full potential of this connection. For instance, in many Central Asian states, located in close proximity to the KKH, there are pockets of religious militancy, which make partnering countries extra cautious about movement of goods and persons across their borders. Similarly, bilateral relations between China and India, Pakistan and India and Pakistan and Afghanistan, coupled with US sanctions against Iran, are major stumbling blocks.

Thirdly, the insufficient and inefficient road and railway infrastructure, connecting the KKH with the rest of the country, is also one of the reasons for slowing down the transportation of goods.

In the initial CPEC documents, three routes — eastern, western and central — were suggested. However, at present, only the eastern road route is partially operational, with a more than 300-kilometre void between Sukkur and Hyderabad. This issue also needs to be addressed on an urgent basis.

Fourthly, Pakistan is suffering from

acute political instability for quite some time, where frequent and unforeseen agitations and sit-ins result in closure of roads. Political instability also results in frequent changes in government's trade, commerce and fiscal policies, which too are harmful for creating an environment that is business- and trade-friendly. Pakistan's establishment and political parties should sit together and chalk out long-term economic policies and programmes with consensus, to be followed as a sacred national trust.

Fifthly, KKH is located in a geologically active region, making the road vulnerable to abrupt closures due to heavy snow fall, mudslides, rock falls and avalanches etc. There should be a fast-track maintenance mechanism to keep its closures to the bare minimum.

To sum up, it can be said that Pakistan's Karakoram connection holds substantial potential for the country's economic prosperity and development, provided it is accorded due preference in the nation's list of priorities. ■

The writer is a development consultant and a former vice-chancellor. He can be reached at drshaikhbawar@gmail.com

## ► EXHIBITION

Some of the most recognisable names in the country's art scene had their works on show at an all-encompassing exhibition in Islamabad

# LOVE LETTER TO PAK ART



Littered Landscape, Ayaz Jokhio

By Cosima Jane Brand

Cosima and Gallery 6 owner, Dr Arjumand Faisal, has proved his passion for promoting art in Pakistan time and again. "The 125th Show" was not only a testament to this but also to the close the gallery has mastered in the Pakistani art scene since its inception in 2008. The exhibition's line-up of 40 artists was like a "who's who" of contemporary Pakistani artists.

Viewers were taken on a journey that unravelled the breadth of art-making in Pakistan. This ranged from the more traditional and culturally steeped artworks — such as Abbas Kamangar's *Mataang* and Ali Abbas' *Gard Band*, where we see scenes of traditionally dressed figures masterfully captured in watercolours — through to examples of contemporary miniatures, with Ahmed Javed's *Gulshan* and Naveed Sadiq's *Tamasha*, both showing great skill with the notoriously difficult *wast* paper and a certain tongue-in-cheek humour we've come to expect from contemporary miniatures — commenting, as they so often do, on the foibles of modern society.

We also travel to the deeply contemplative and complementary pieces by Pakistan's artistic power couple RM Naeem and Sadiq Naeem, celebrating the inner strength and resilience of Pakistani women. We see this theme explored further in a more figurative display from Abrar Ahmed and Wahab Jaffer, while Rahat Naveed Masud and Ali Azmat explore the multi-dimensions of the feminine through realist expression. All evocative insights into the important role women play in Pakistani society, as reflected in the diversity of their depiction



Untitled, Ali Azmat

across the exhibition.

Our journey then takes us to the purely abstract, where Jamil Rafeeq and Ayeesha Qureshi both capture different perspectives of the powerful force that the line and contrast hold in artistic practice. Geometry and spirituality come to play for Sana Arjumand's *Back to Being* and Shabier Muzil's *The Sacred Love*, showcasing a deep connection to the principles of Islamic art, with the precision and balance exposed therein, bringing the ancient into contemporary form in a loving and reverent way.

Dr Faisal himself showcases his work in a native and colourful display, the love of the process evident in the joyfully applied oils that come together to create a busy mosaic.

Across the exhibition, we encounter traditional and non-traditional art practices,



Gulshan, Ahmed Javed



Summer Gold, Rahat Naveed Masud

from watercolour to gouache on *wast*, oils and acrylics, clay sculpture and mixed media pieces, wood and linocut prints, sculptural wire, inks and even an old water bottle that drives home the point in Ayaz Jokhio's *Littered Landscape*. It's a clear demonstration of the diversity and vibrancy of artistic expression in Pakistani art.

But more than the individual pieces can say, the whole exhibition is a rousing love letter to art in Pakistan. There is no particular artist or style that dominates — everyone is celebrated in turn.

Gallery 6 has established itself as a bastion of the arts, a champion of Pakistani artists and a home to many legends of the art world, both those past and in the making. ■

*"The 125th Show" was on display at Gallery 6, Islamabad from November 16-23, 2024*

*The writer is an Australian based in Pakistan. She is an avid enthusiast of contemporary Pakistani art and culture*

## ► EXHIBITION

# The Swedish Wildcat

Bruno Liljefors' paintings serve as a tribute to both the allure and mystery of nature and wildlife

By Zafar Masud

What a mind-boggling adventure it is to view Bruno Liljefors' paintings! His paintings are devoted to natural scenes of forests, hills and trees, with wolves, wildcats and quite a number of other animals hunting or just napping under the sun with their little ones.

The Russian artist had remained largely ignored, even in his own country, following his death in the mid-20th century. But now, the Petit Palais Museum in Paris, at the corner of Champs Elysees and Avenue Winston Churchill, is paying homage to this genius who spent his entire life creating works fascinated not just by natural images but by the behavior of animals and birds.

Known during his own lifetime as the 'Prince of the Wild World', Bruno Liljefors (1859-1939) never stopped stunning art enthusiasts in Russia and Paris, where he stayed for some years to learn the latest techniques of painting.

In the words of one of the organisers of the current exhibition: "To bring home the memories of our dear Bruno, forgotten today even in his own country, we have decided to open the doors of our palace to all the felines, wolves, owls, swans, cats, ducks and rabbits that this youthful genius had brought to life with such talent but also with such fascination for nature that had remained his passion until his dying day!"

In order to further highlight the painter's devotion to the charms of wildlife, the Petit Palais projects a documentary, filmed in 1917, in which Bruno Liljefors is seen surrounded by animals and painting them while he had briefly stayed in Paris.

Born in 1859 in a middle-class Swedish family, Bruno grew up in Uppsala, a small town north of Stockholm, surrounded by vast expanses of wilderness. From a very young age, he remained fascinated with wildlife and painted it for the rest of his life. While still a teenager, he constantly travelled to Germany and Italy, then finally settling down in Paris, but also visiting, from time-to-time, the picturesque northern French town of Grasse-Losange, where a number of Scandinavian artists had permanently settled.

Once satisfied with his own artistic perfection, the 22-year-old Bruno returned to his native country in 1884 and devoted himself for the rest of his life to representing nature and animals in all his works. His unusual adventures earned him into an athlete who fearlessly climbed up trees and hills, often to dizzying heights, in his efforts to capture the attitudes of animals in the

scenes of their daily lives, such as cats hunting birds, a pack of wolves chasing rabbits or eagles tracking their own victims.

The Paris exhibition contains some of the paintings never seen before even by Swedish art experts, one of them being Johan Olsson, the curator at the Stockholm National Museum, who has played an important role in bringing together Bruno Liljefors' works to the Petit Palais.

He says he was surprised to see many of the paintings that are actually part of the personal collection of the reigning King Carl Gustaf of Sweden, currently the oldest living sovereign in Europe. "They are not among the works displayed at the royal palace in Stockholm that I visited a number of times. I was totally amazed to see them in Paris for the first time in my life!"

Leaving the gate of the Petit Palais after seeing these awe-inspiring creations one has the impression of returning home following an adventurous voyage through a dense Swedish forest full of birds and beasts! ■

*"Bruno Liljefors: The Wild Man from Sweden" is on display at the Petit Palais Museum in Paris from October 1, 2024-February 16, 2025*

*The writer is an art critic based in Paris. He can be reached at zafarmasud@gmail.com*



Bruno Liljefors painting in his studio | The National Museum of Sweden



Winter Hare | The National Museum of Sweden

## SMOKERS' CORNER



# Religious Nationalism and Its Discontents

Nation-states co-opted conventional religion so it could be regulated and controlled according to nationalist needs. But instead of safeguarding nationalism from those operating from outside its paradigm, has religious nationalism become a launching pad for theocrats?

By Nadjeem F. Paracha

Donald Trump and the Rise of Christian Nationalists was the title of an essay published in August this year on the academic website *The Conversation*. The term 'Christian nationalism' is not as frequently used in media (outside of the US) as are terms such as Islamic nationalism or Hindu nationalism.

Till the mid-20th century, political scientists viewed nationalism as a secular idea that undermined the moral and political authority of religious forces by replacing religious symbols, myths, mindsets and practices with secular ones. Nationalism was expected to function as a substitute for religion, fulfilling individual needs and consolidating group identities.

In part, nationalism was the product of brutal wars between Christian sects in Europe. This triggered the need to organise what were dubbed as 'nations' in a more rational manner, by furnishing a new understanding of relations between a nation and the state. Thus was born the idea of the nation-state.

But nation-states borrowed heavily from organised religions to add a sacred dimension to secular nationalism (a process called 'secularisation'), which frames nationalism as a 'civic religion'. Consequently, by the mid-20th century, in many regions, religion increasingly became an important component of nationalism. The result was the eventual emergence of religious nationalism, which looks to overcome nationalism's inherent secular disposition by placing politicised religion at its core.

From the 1970s onwards, religious nationalism in the shape of Islamic nationalism began to replace the more

secular/sacralised manifestations of nationalism in many Muslim-majority countries. By the latter half of the 20th century and in the early 2000s, Hindu nationalism in India, Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lanka and Myanmar, Jewish nationalism in Israel, and Christian nationalism in Hungary, Poland, Russia and the US, began to attract mainstream approval and support.

Religious nationalism agrees that nations exist (in a nation-state) but posits that they can only be kept together through a 'divine' purpose, which should inform all of their economic, political and social actions. Therefore, the nation becomes one which was 'chosen by God', or is in the best position to serve Him. To religious nationalism, the latter can only be achieved by basing the nation-state's policies and national purpose on the doctrines of the majority religion.

So, why has religious nationalism witnessed a surge in the last 50 years or so? From the 18th century onwards, advancements in science, and political and economic modernity, succeeded in propelling societies forward, improving the quality of life. But these advancements also produced larger populations and complex political, social and economic issues. These created unprecedented tensions that seemed tough to resolve by nation-states, thus instilling a sense of insecurity and dread in people.

As a response, nation-states began to sacralise their nationalisms to offer some 'spiritual' solace, because conventional religion was viewed as existing outside the nationalist paradigm and thus a threat to the idea of the nation-state. Then, nation-states/nationalism decided to co-exist with conventional religions, before co-opting it so it could be regulated and controlled according to nationalist needs. Religious nationalism



Illustration by Akay

was the result.

Critics of religious nationalism warn that, instead of safeguarding nationalism from completely falling in the hands of those operating from outside the nationalist paradigm, it actually strengthens theocratic forces whose ultimate goal is to establish a totalitarian theocracy. In other words, religious nationalism is a launching pad for theocrats.

The nationalism that birthed Pakistan in 1947 and was then carried forward till the early 1970s is often called Muslim nationalism. It explained Muslims of South Asia as a separate 'nation'. This Muslim nationalism looked to create a Muslim-majority nation-state but treated Islam as a pluralistic and civic-nationalist entity because the Muslim community in India, and then in Pakistan, consisted of various ethnic groups, sects and sub-sects.

However, as this project began to crumble in the face of complex economic challenges and the challenges posed by the country's ethnic groups, the nation-state began to co-opt aspects of Political Islam. This was done to evolve Muslim nationalism towards becoming Islamic nationalism. It co-opted various

dynamics of 'Islamism' as a way to save Pakistan's nationalism from completely falling apart.

The Islamic nationalism adopted by Pakistan from the 1970s put the country's existentialist purpose outside the context of South Asian Islam and tagged it with a global Islamic current initiated by Saudi Arabia from 1973 onwards. This went on for decades, as Pakistani nationalism looked towards the oil-rich Saudi Arabia, and the Saudi religious establishment, to construct its variant of Islamic nationalism.

Interestingly, though, as Saudi Arabia was posing as the leader of the 'Muslim ummah', more and more Pakistanis began to call themselves Muslims first and then Pakistanis. This ought to have been seen as a crisis of national identity and the weakening of Pakistani nationalism. But since Saudi Arabia was also dishing out 'petro-dollars' and providing millions of jobs to Pakistanis, the state wasn't bothered. In fact, Pakistan's Islamic nationalism became a 'more loyal than the king' variant of so-called 'Saudi Islam'.

Recently, I heard two of my colleagues at work trying to figure out how to get a Saudi visa, which

is becoming increasingly tough to acquire. Both of them are young men with long beards. One of them was telling the other to make sure to submit a photo of himself (for visa purposes) in which his beard was much shorter. Less than a decade ago, many Pakistanis were going out of their way to impress the Saudis by letting their beards grow, make their women wear *hijabs* and *niqabs* and openly exhibiting their religiosity. They were doing this not as Pakistanis, but as imagined members of the larger (Saudi-led) 'umamah'.

One can observe the same sentiment in the way many among the Pakistani diaspora in the West began to dress and look from the 1980s onwards. Saudi Arabia had encouraged this in the 'umamah', by funding various 'Islamic' cultural movements and initiatives through organisations such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Jamaat-i-Islami etc. But here I was, now watching two young Pakistanis baffled by the way the once-guaranteed 'more loyal than the king' attitude had suddenly become a liability. That's because the king had changed.

So, I wondered, what does Pakistan's Islamic nationalism now mean? It was entirely dependent on how Saudi Arabia was peddling Islam in the Muslim world, before finally discarding it to adopt something entirely new.

Many other Muslim-majority countries adopted Islamic nationalism as well around the same time that Pakistan did. They too tagged it with Saudi Arabia. Maybe now they all have the space to realise that the Islamic nationalism that their nation-states adopted, is poles apart from the more organic Muslim nationalism that actually birthed their nation-states.

It's a good time to revisit the issue to avoid any further identity crisis and confusion. ■



# B&A

BOOKS & AUTHORS

## ► FICTION

An Irish author's novel about two brothers dealing with grief in their own ways and their relationship with each other offers some breathtaking insights on grieving as a life-altering experience

# The checkmates of mourning



*Intermezzo*  
By Sally Rooney  
Faber and Faber  
ISBN: 9780571365470  
432pp.

Reviewed by Taha Kehar

**G**rief is an all-encompassing emotion that most of us are woefully ill-prepared to handle. In a memoir titled *Mines on Grief*, Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie views the experience of coping with loss as "a cruel kind of education." Contrary to the popular perception of insights provided in the Swiss-American psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross' model, mourning isn't a linear or systematic means of embracing the fact that we've lost people to the jaws of death. Instead, the grieving process is often chaotic and opens the floodgates to a surfeit of complex emotions.

Irish author Sally Rooney's *Intermezzo* features two brothers who are deep in the throes of grieving and undergo a swift transformation in the weeks after their father's demise. Coincidentally, both men seek solace in the cosy familiarity of romantic relationships, either as a distraction from their bereavement or a quest to rebuild their lives in the midst of a soul-crushing tragedy.

Grief has a way of spending old certainties and transforming people in unexpected ways. Peter, a Dublin-based lawyer in his thirties, finds himself hurtling through life at an expeditious, if not dangerous, pace. Once viewed as an indestructible force, he now relies on medication to sleep. However, sleep isn't the only challenge that he has to reckon with. As he mourns his father's death, Peter is caught between his abiding love for his first love, Sylvia, and his seemingly romantic yet transactional equation with a college student named Naomi.

Twenty-two-year-old Ivan has always been the antithesis of his smooth-talking older sibling. A veritable wallflower, he excels at playing competitive chess. As Ivan grapples with an unprecedented loss, Ivan takes an uncharacteristic step: he begins a relationship with an older woman named Margaret, who has her own demons to confront.

Much to their dismay, both brothers don't find a confidante in each other. The age difference between them and the memory of past conflicts breeds suspicion in their hearts. Instead of being united by their collective grief, Peter and Ivan are pulled away for each other and lead fundamentally separate lives. They struggle to understand that the template of their relationship must change in light of an unbearable tragedy.

Rooney accounts for the chasm in the two brothers' relationship by telling parallel stories. The novel alternates between chapters that offer glimpses into Peter and Ivan's lives, respectively. This technique could have easily gone awry, if it had been carelessly executed. Rooney has been guilty of conflating the voices of her protagonists in her previous novel *Beautiful World, Where Are You*, wherein the



The title of Rooney's novel is derived from the Italian name for an intermediate move in chess

emails written by two women characters seem indistinguishable from one another.

To avoid this blunder from being repeated, Rooney employs a close third-person perspective and also makes a conscientious effort to vary the tone of the chapters to match the characters' psyches. As a result, readers are drawn into Peter's troubled mind through a string of clipped sentences that lend a hasty, almost erratic quality to the narrative. Rooney's style is far more fluid in the sections that deal with Ivan's trajectory — a testament to his level-headedness, Ivan derives at least part of his surefootedness on rough terrain from his preoccupation with chess.

The title of Rooney's novel is derived from the Italian name for an intermediate move in chess. As per this tactic, the player eschews the expected move and instead poses another threatening move that his/her opponent must respond to. The move comes through as an attempt to distract one's adversary. Rooney's characters, too, are caught in this intermediary phase. At a time when they should be reuniting with one another to cope with their collective loss, the two brothers are locked in petty disagreements that have implications on their relationship.

In a similar vein, Peter finds himself wrestling with his unresolved

feelings for Sylvia after an accident renders her incapable of being a suitable romantic partner to him. His prolonged entanglement with Sylvia inevitably prevents him from pursuing the predictable path of moving forward rather than dwelling on the past. Some readers might find the events in Peter's life far more intriguing than those that Ivan has to deal with. This can be attributed to the fact that Peter's traumas and insecurities have accumulated over several years, and are merely finding an emotional release following his father's death.

*Intermezzo* offers breathtaking insights on grieving as a life-altering experience. One of Rooney's characters placates another by asserting that "people aren't themselves when they're grieving." At another point in the novel, death is described as an event that takes place but doesn't instantly pass into amnesia. Loss, Rooney argues, "is only (just) beginning" after the event.

The epigraph to the novel includes a quote from Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. Rooney has self-translated the quote from German as "but don't you feel grief now (but aren't you now playing chess)." The epigraph mirrors the psyche of the characters, who choose to distract themselves rather than mourning the loss of a parent.

That the second part of the quote appears in parentheses gives readers the impression that the events of the novel have an equally incidental quality. The two brothers' journey towards confronting their pain will only begin once they recognise that they must be empathetic towards each other as they grapple with loss.

*Intermezzo* is arguably a lesson in intertextuality. The author has even included a three-page note at the end of the book, detailing the quotations she has needed into her text. The novel seems to owe an artistic debt to the works of James Joyce, William Shakespeare, William Wordsworth and Robert Hayden, among others.

At its core, Rooney's new novel derives its creative thrust from the romantic liaisons cultivated by the characters. However, the author refrains from depicting love in superficial hues and insists on highlighting its knottier dimensions. Rooney's focus remains on the problematic choices men make when they are dealing with the complexities of love.

In a persistent effort to examine Peter and Ivan's viewpoints, the author often overlooks the sentiments of the women in their lives. Barring the perspective of Ivan's girlfriend, Rooney doesn't cast a revealing light on the thoughts and emotions of the other female characters, including the two women in Peter's life. While this may be a deliberate decision that reflects his perpetual state of chloasma, *Intermezzo* loses a crucial dimension through this act of authorial erasure.

When it was released in 2021, *Beautiful World, Where Are You* marked a radical departure from Rooney's widely popular early novels. Some readers batted it a seminal, experimental piece and applauded the author for changing tack. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the author would write another experimental novel. Though not an ambitious text, Rooney's new work is certainly a weighty one. *Intermezzo* could have benefited from substantial trimming to strengthen its pace. ■

The reviewer is the author of the critically acclaimed novels *Typically Tanza* and *No Funeral for Naia*. X: @TahaKehar

## ► NON-FICTION

A collection of reviews written in contemporaneous publications about Pakistani movies released between 1948 and 1971 fills a longstanding gap in the cinematic history of Pakistan

# Film critiques from the time



*Film Tabiray*  
Compiled by Shaikat Ali Chinnai  
Moghood Publishers  
322pp.

Reviewed by Muhammad Suhayb

**T**he history of Pakistani cinema, particularly its early years, suffers from a glaring lack of comprehensive documentation. This lack has only widened over time, due to several factors, including the absence of proper archiving, the deterioration of old film prints, and the general neglect of Pakistan's cinematic legacy in cultural discourse.

Much of what we read in books on Pakistani films, such as those by Mushiq Qadri and Yaseen Ghorji, often reflect retrospective admiration, written long after the main filmmakers had passed away. This approach understandably avoids commenting on deceased individuals, but it also limits critical depth. Since the reviews were done later on films that were screened long ago, the element of authenticity is not there.

Avoid this disheartening scenario, Shaikat Ali Chinnai, a journalist from Lahore, has made a significant effort with *Film Tabiray*. The book captures the immediacy and raw honesty of contemporaneous reviews, offering an unfiltered

perspective that brings the cinematic history of Pakistan to life in a way later assessments cannot.

Instead of relying on contemporary writers, Chinnai turned to original reviews from the past, compiling insightful critiques and analyses of classic Pakistani films released between 1948 and 1971. This curated collection offers a vivid glimpse into the formative years of Pakistan's film industry, allowing readers to journey back in time and experience the golden era of Pakistani cinema through the lens of those who witnessed it firsthand.

Being in the field of journalism for over two decades, I grew up hearing the names of legendary figures in journalism, such as Imtiaz Ali Taj, Mansoor Ashar, I.A. Rehman, Hamid Akhtar, Waris Mir, Zahoor Babar, Qamar Ajaibi and Abdullah Malik. Once, while working on a project regarding press freedom in Pakistan, I had the honour of interviewing Mansoor Ashar and I.A. Rehman in Lahore.

During those conversations, they failed to detect my *'film fever'* (interest in cinema) due to old age, and I remained unaware of their contributions as film critics in their youth. Discovering their reviews in *Film Tabiray* was thus a revelation. Reading their critiques feels like a personal conversation, as if those iconic journalists are speaking directly to me, bridging the gap between their era and mine.

The book also has reviews from the legendary Imtiaz Ali Taj, the man who wrote the drama *Anarudh* in 1932. Some reviews by Zahoor Babar, editor of *Awaz* and the husband of novelist Khadija Mastoor, are also part of the book. Professor Waris



Mir, the father of renowned journalist and TV personality Hamid Mir, has always been, for me, a figure who defied the odds and spoke his mind with conviction. I was genuinely surprised to discover that people of Taj, Babar and Mir's stature also ventured into writing about films. This revelation

underscores the cultural significance cinema held at the time.

With rare reviews from *Awaz*, *Chitra*, *Iqbal*, *Iman*,

**FILM CRITIQUES FROM THE TIME, PAGE 07**

## ► NON-FICTION

A republishing of the most comprehensive study of Sindh's history is a visual treat as well as a book to cherish

# How to be well-read on Sindh



Chronological Dictionary of Sindh: From Pre-History to 1539 AD  
By M.H. Pandhwar  
Endowment Fund Trust  
ISBN: 1000000004610  
578pp.

Reviewed by Salman Rashid

**W**hen it was first published in 1983, Muhammad Hussain Pandhwar's *Chronological Dictionary of Sindh* was a treat for students of Sindh history. Reading it was the only way of becoming frightfully well-read on the subject through just one book.

Covering the period from the earliest prehistory to 1539 CE, it was a comprehensive tour de force across Sindh and surely many a dilettante, having comprehensively studied the work, would have tossed it aside at scores. Published by the Institute of Sindhology at Sindh University, Jamshoro, it was a rather drab, unattractive presentation, however.

Republished recently by the Endowment Fund Trust of Karachi, the *Dictionary* is far more presentable. From the drab monochrome photographs and prints it has moved on to attractive colour and an eye-catching cover. Comparing, for example, the drawing of the interior of a Mohenjo Daro house in both volumes shows how much attention has gone into the present work. Indeed, coloured images of ancient coins, pottery and statuary make the new volume a work to cherish. There are new entries, tables and notes adding value to the publication.

All that having been said, the early period, dealing with the prince of the Indus Civilisation, might be a little misleading for new readers. While Pandhwar relies on archaeologists updating his writing, new research, especially by Jonathan Mark Kenoyer, corrects earlier work.

Most interestingly, it was thought that the Sindh Valley lagged behind Mesopotamia in technical advancement. Kenoyer (*Ancient Cities of the Indus Valley Civilization*, 1998) definitively shows that it was Indus civilisations in Mesopotamia producing ceramic beads "drilled with the unique technique of the Indus Valley." In Kenoyer's view, people from Mohenjo Daro and Harappa lived in Mesopotamian cities, producing and marketing their wares. He also shows that Indus Valley craftsmanship was a few centuries ahead of Mesopotamia.

Relying on the *Chachnama*, written as a war diary by a nameless fighter in the army of Muhammad bin Qasim (enlarged later by Ali bin Hamid, a native of Kufa), and on Ahmed Raza Khan's *Furuk al-Baladan*, the *Dictionary* enlightens the reader on the reality of the Arab attack on Sindh; that it was not just a shriek of despair of a Muslim woman or, as believed alternately, a letter written by her, that brought bin Qasim charging into this region.

His was the sixth attack that finally succeeded. All earlier attacks had been repulsed by Raja Dahir's armies, with immense loss to the Arabs. In all failed attacks, besides the loss in rank and file, the generals too paid the price with their lives. Nowadays, it's only the rank and file that die; generals do not even fade away.

Another issue that can be picked with Pandhwar is that he relies on the anonymous work *The Acts of St Thomas* to place the Parthian king

Gondophares in Sindh. Discovered in the 1820s in Syria, Acts, a sagary nonsense, is now known to be a fictitious work, written purely for the greater glory of Christianity.

In this work, Gondophares is said to be ruling over landlocked Taxila in the 1st century CE (even where St Thomas arrived by ship quickly) to convert all heathens, including Jews, Buddhists, Hindus and Zoroastrians to the 'one and only true faith.' Thankfully, the writer of Acts spared Muslims from this conversion. In the deal, the saint also built a palace in heaven for Gondophares, the fire-worshipper.

For more than a hundred years, Gondophares was placed in Sindh because it was only here that the good saint could have arrived by ship. However, the discovery of Taxila in the early years of the last century and the artefacts found there conclusively show that the Parthian king was ruling in Taxila in the first half of the 1st century CE.

From the 6th century CE, however, the *Dictionary* truly comes into its own. The reader can race through the Arab invasion to their petty quarrels, leading to murders of later Arab governors in Debal and Multan, on to Arab decline, through the rule of local dynasties and the coming of the Turks under Mahmud of Ghazni. We also learn of the destruction of Bhambore (1221 CE) at the hands of Jalaluddin Khwarazm who is, sadly, painted in colours of Islamic heresim by pseudo-historians such as Nasir Hujjat.

Among his other qualifications, Pandhwar trained as an agricultural engineer and worked for many years as a groundwater development expert in Sindh and Balochistan. Understandably, the book is thus interspersed with indications of shifts in the course of the Indus and of the drying up of the Saraswati, together with details about its course.

However, that is not the only geographical information to be had. We also learn of changes in the delta region, as well as the drying up of the arms of the sea reaching up to Port Nagar (Tharparkar) that made this once-fabulous city a busy seaport. Such was its renown in the 1st century CE that the anonymously written guide book in Greek for seafarers *Circumnavigation of the Eastern Sea* clearly noted it under the then-prevalent physical conditions.

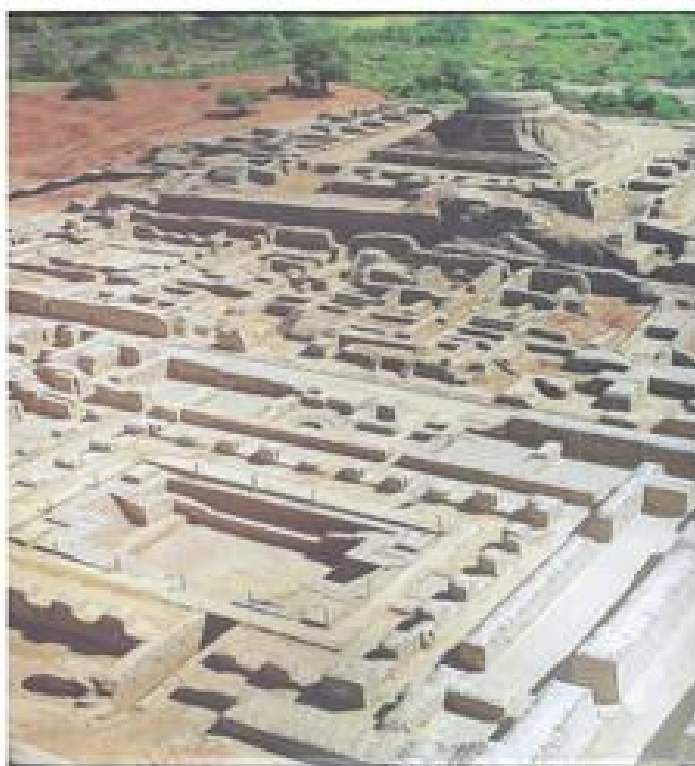
One confusion remains, however. Pandhwar variously puts the establishment of Port Nagar first in the 5th century BCE and again in the 1st century CE. Given the renown this rich and opulent city enjoyed in the latter year, one tends to favour the earlier year as its time of founding.

*Chronological Dictionary of Sindh* is a very useful work for researchers looking for pointers to detailed and original sources that are mentioned against each entry. Much to their loss, it had long been unavailable, except in some few libraries that stocked it. And that was mainly in Sindh.

The entry for each year, in the Gregorian calendar and, where valid, in the Hijri one, is highlighted in pink, making the book more reader-friendly. The index and bibliography remain unchanged, except in better presentation, from the original publication. The production leaves nothing to wish for, being the only ready reference on the history of Sindh.

It is a book to own, read, reread and cherish. And in the bargain, become frightfully well-read on Sindh history. The Endowment Fund Trust has once again done very well.

The reviewer is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and author of several books on travel. X: @shayyashahid



A bird's eye view of Mohenjodaro (Pic from book)

## CONTINUATIONS

### FILM CRITIQUES FROM THE TIME., PAGE 06

Nasir-i-Waqf, Qandori, Jahannum, Akbar-i-Jahan, Maheer and Jail-o-Nihar, one could easily travel back in time to see how the films were received at the time of their release, and what did the writers point out in their reviews. It seems that writing honest and straightforward reviews was a standard practice in the golden era of film criticism. The critiques from that time, as showcased in *Film Tabakh*, were not only candid but also constructive and insightful. The points raised by the critics provided valuable feedback, fostering growth in the industry.

As a film enthusiast, I have long been on the hunt for several classic Pakistani films, including *Teri Yaad*, *Beti*, *Aamish Ka Nasha*, *Jaago Hua Savera*, *Barn Bajay*, *Chiragh Jaha Raha*, *Rang*, *Joan Pelehan* and *Eindhun*. *Teri Yaad* was the first-ever film produced in Pakistan, *Barn Bajay* was the first cowboy Western in Pakistan, *Rang* a powerful film with a sensitive theme and *Eindhun* was made on a difficult subject. With missing prints and scant information available, my search often felt futile, leading me to set these titles aside reluctantly.

However, *Film Tabakh* sorted out my problem and simplified my quest by providing insightful reviews from the time these films were released. It brought these lost gems to life, offering a rare glimpse into the cinematic history I had long sought to uncover.

One fascinating aspect of *Film Tabakh* is how the writers of that era referred to films as male rather than female — a departure from the traditional feminine personification of cinema. This subtle yet significant detail highlights the cultural and linguistic nuances of the time, making the

book more than just a collection of reviews.

Several films are noticeably absent from the list in *Film Tabakh*, a fact the compiler acknowledges at the outset of the book. While the inclusion of what's available is commendable, it is disheartening to learn about the gaps, especially because a leading publisher of a prominent film magazine in Karachi refused to contribute material from their collection. Such a refusal feels like a missed opportunity to preserve and share the cinematic heritage of Pakistan, particularly through a book that emerges only once in decades.

This lack of collaboration reflects the broader challenges faced in documenting and archiving the country's rich but underappreciated film history. It's a sobering reminder of the obstacles that continue to hinder efforts to keep this legacy alive for future generations.

A valuable resource for cinephiles, film historians and anyone interested in the development of Pakistani cinema, *Film Tabakh* has reviews of over 140 films, published in different newspapers. It serves as a comprehensive collection of reviews, insights and commentary on the films released in Pakistan from its inception in 1947 up until 1971.

Each review in *Film Tabakh* is not just an evaluation of a movie's plot or performance, but also delves into its social impact, the political climate of the time, and how the films reflected or challenged the values of Pakistani society. China's deep understanding of the industry is evident as he contextualises the films within the evolving dynamics of post-independence Pakistan. The book does an excellent job of placing each film in its historical context, making it not just a film review collection but a socio-political commentary on Pakistan's early years as a nation.

While the book covers a significant period, it only focuses on the films released up to 1971, leaving out a large chunk of the post-1971 era, which saw the rise of new cinematic trends and political changes affecting the industry.

Some readers might find the book lacking in visuals, which could have enhanced the experience. Photos, posters or stills from the films discussed would have added a richer dimension to the textual analysis. I hope that China, who is compiling another book for the post-1971 period, keeps that in mind and the book, which has the next 20 years' work, comes out with images.

The reviewer writes on old films and music and loves reading books. X: @shayyashahid

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## COLUMN



## The complete dictionary

By Musharraf Ali Farooqi

Those who use print dictionaries frequently, get so practised in the exercise that they can usually open it on the very page where the desired entry is listed. Others, who use print dictionaries less frequently, have to flip through a number of pages before they find the word they are looking for.

Not that the latter meandering path is without its own rewards: one comes upon all kinds of unknown words in the process of flipping through pages, and these mini-discoveries are often so interesting that one becomes lost in them, to the extent of forgetting the original search.

A good dictionary is something to treasure. In an earlier generation, people had their favourite dictionaries, which they trusted over others, very much like people used to have their favourite newspapers, which developed their outlook on society.

The Urdu language is particularly fortunate in that it has had many lexicographers — people who study words to make dictionaries. As someone who has a large collection of these dictionaries, I am often struck by the huge labour hundreds of authors undertook to produce these reference works, some in multiple volumes. For the generation working with word processors, spreadsheets and printers, the amount of labour that went into the creation of these works is inconceivable. And yet these works were not exhaustive.

Every lexicographer dreams of documenting the complete language. But because lexicographers are restricted by their purpose in making the dictionary, each one has a particular focus: some, like encyclopaedic dictionaries, can be used both by the general public and expert users; others, like learners' and advanced learners' dictionaries are written for non-native speakers of the language for different stages in their language-acquisition journey. There are dictionaries of synonyms and antonyms, and rhyming dictionaries. Then there are dictionaries for specialised fields such as medicine, economics, law etc.

But the idea of a complete dictionary has remained unfulfilled, not only because of the specialised focus of each dictionary, or because language is almost like a complex life-form which cannot be fully documented, but also because, until recently, dictionaries have been conceived with their material limitations in mind — that is to say, the format in which they will reach the user. And this format, for the longest time, has been a paper-print edition, regardless of the kind of dictionary.

But with digital media, dictionaries can have a much wider compass, and it is possible to build a structure that may approach the ideal of a "complete dictionary."

Coming back to Urdu language dictionaries, the 22-volume Urdu Lughat, published from 1977 to 2010 by the Urdu Lughat Board, is a highly valuable lexicographical work of the Urdu language. Hundreds of Urdu scholars, writers and grammarians worked on the project for 33 years to produce it, and its breadth and scope should make every lover of the Urdu language proud.

Some years ago, the Urdu Lughat was converted into a digital format and can be accessed on its website ([udb.gov.pk](http://udb.gov.pk)). It is a great convenience to have access to this online dictionary, and very helpful to have the sound files with the pronunciation, a feature that was introduced in the digital edition. But the digitisation work also left a lot to be desired, perhaps because, in its first iteration, which we currently see online, it is still very much a product built on the structure of the printed edition.

To look up an entry in its entirety, one has to click on several pages where the different categories of entries related to the word — etymology, pronunciation guide, part of speech, gender, meaning, usage, compounds, compound verbs, phrases, sayings, idioms and proverbs — are listed.

So how does one present this wonderful work in a way that is reflective of the majesty of the Urdu language, and makes young and old learners experience the wonder of language and fall in love with it?

The suggestions offered here are a personal vision of an online dictionary, and disregard the alphabetical order of entries followed in printed dictionaries.

The work begins by bunching entries according to their categories — compounds, compound verbs, phrases, sayings, idioms and proverbs — as separate sections under the main word (or headword), as it is called in lexicographic terms), and its different meanings, also known as sense-divisions. Alphabetical categorisation should then be introduced within each category; for example, all idioms should be alphabetically listed under the IDIOMS category, all proverbs alphabetically listed under the PROVERBS category, and so on.

Currently in the Urdu Lughat, idioms, proverbs, and sayings are all dispersed and mixed together in an alphabetical order copied from the print edition. These should be separated, and incorporated under the headword as a unified presentation. Synonyms and antonyms were not included in the print edition, but there is no reason they should be absent from the online dictionary.

And why do all this?

Imagine yourself as a child, looking for the meaning of a word, probably a difficult, intimidating word. You go to the Urdu Lughat and when you search for the word, it gives you all possible meanings of the word. And as you begin reading them, you find that each meaning has its own usage example, sometimes from the works of poets who have been dead for over 200 years.

By now you have understood the meaning of the word and it holds no terrors for you. As you become comfortable reading its different usages, you see that there is some engaging stuff further down.

These are idioms have been dead for so many years that you have never heard them. The idioms lead to funny sayings by long-dead people but, as you read them, their voices ring in your ears. You begin to see them and imagine situations which led to those sayings.

Why would you not read on, because the best treat lies buried under the idioms and sayings — proverbs, many of which have their own stories. And this I know from personal experience: a child who has read the story of a word, would never be in danger of forgetting it or its meaning.

The columnist is a novelist, author and translator. He can be reached via his website: [micromat.com](http://micromat.com)

## CLIFTONIA



By Farid Alvie

Eminent Cliftonians (as if there are any other kind) reminisce about the past 12 months and where the year gone by has taken them...

## TAKING STOCK



Illustration by Lisa Malik

**N**ational Icon & Hope Nasser Jr — supreme leader, cultist icon, moral compass, deluxe babydoll, social influencer: “It has been a year of revolution and revolt. Confinement did not stop me from being as revolting as I possibly could be. It's been a year of working out, both physically and intellectually. I have read everything ever written by great minds, such as work by my friend Donald Trump, his compadre JD Vancelet and my brother Zakadeen Goldsmith. Their worldview never ceases to amaze me. And to amaze someone as unamazeable as me takes a lot of intellectual doing, so breath to them! To all my supporters and lovers: may your children grow up to be just as wonderful as these inspirational heroes.

“This year I also pressed a lot of benches during my daily workout sessions. I meditated myself to complete random when no one was looking. I moderately enlightened myself three times a day and fasted as intermittently as I could. I achieved more nirvana than anyone in the history of nirvana (including Kurt Cobain) has ever achieved and became full of compassion, mercy, kindness, generosity, forgiveness, and acceptance... all the qualities my posse mentioned earlier are renewed for.

“I also ate broccoli for the first time and found it to be vile, just like my enemies.

“I missed partying with my Caucasian friends on their islands in the Bahamas.

“And finally, the one affirmation that I religiously mumbled on a daily basis and which has always stood me in good stead as an egoless megalomaniac: I still know better than everyone.”

**Cliffonia Ali — political scion, media personality, documentary filmmaker, social media influencer, and homespun:** “The last 365 days have been a whirlwind for me, to be honest. I've been so busy, so busy, so busy that I haven't had a chance to sit down and take stock of what's been happening and what's still pending.

“My political role has kept me so engaged, so engaged, so engaged with traveling and work meetings and airplanes and protocols and power-point presentations and billboards with my name on them and what's new on Netflix and Abba's mood swings and this crazy, crazy, crazy song all over Aishwarya-

spoon-Chenah and the resultant scratchy throat and this persistently, nasty, short and brutish cough.”

“The year has been a blur and a half and the way things are going, I have a strong feeling that the coming months will be even blurrier! So if I don't see anyone from my newly acquired rose-tinted YSL sunglasses, it's not because I don't want to see you, it's just that I thankfully can't. One day, when the smog clears and Abba and I are back enjoying high tea at Harrods, we will definitely see all those who we couldn't see last year... I promise to you!”

**Gen GHQ — master of all that needs to be surveyed, social influencer:** “The last year was fruitful as everything that was planned was achieved. Regards.”

**Jimmy Jirga — investment banker, brunch specialist, historian, political analyst, social influencer, multiple passport holder, clairvoyant, expatriate:** “This year has been a struggle and a constant battle with existential issues. I wonder what the meaning of life is. As William Henry Davies so pertinently asked: ‘What is this life if, full of care, we have no time to stand and stare?’ Exactly! I want time to stare. I'm a starrer... a starrer... no, not a starrer, but a starrer!”

“Davies reminds us that we have no time to stand beneath the boughs. And stare as long as sheep or

cows.” Once again, spot on! I want to be a sheep. I want to be a cow, so I can also stare standing underneath the bough. Or anywhere for that matter. I must be allowed to stare at anyone and anything, anywhere. The past months have denied me the opportunity to stare to my heart's desire. It might be creepy stalker syndrome to all those liberal-leftie lower women minority types, but it is my basic constitutional right as a human man (also sheep and cow's). Let me stare... let me stare to my heart's desire, goddammit!

**Muttah Da Piazza — scholar, moralist, secret stalker, social influencer:** By the grace of the Almighty, I had a lovely year, filled with chaos, sensuality, dodgy constitutional amendments, and the devilishly grey smog of self-righteousness and rectitude. As you know, I am known throughout the republic as a hooper and this year, too, I will continue to behave as a hooper and hope for same to same to occur so that my future remains snugly and secured. Ameen.

**Mian Awaraz Awanfield — politician, grand dynast, gourmand de Cavendish, social influencer:** “Thanks God, I'm back in the Harrods. See you next year maybe.”

*Farid Alvie was born. He currently lives. He's on Instagram @faridalvie*

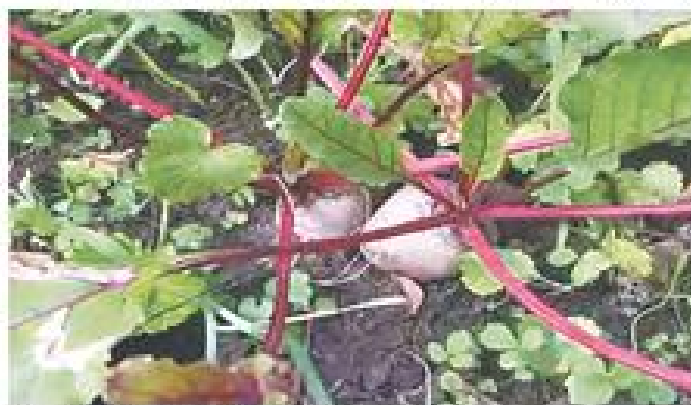
## GARDENING



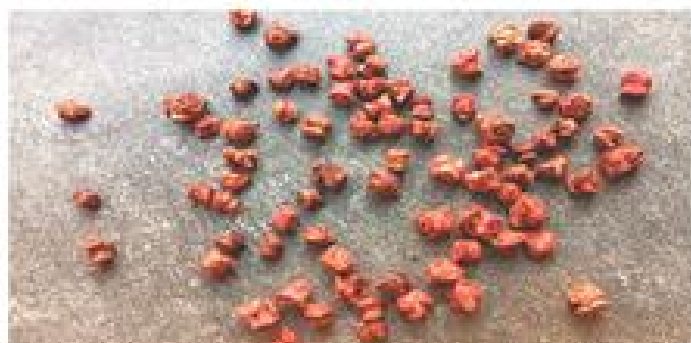
By Dr Khwaja Ali Shahid

Locally known as *chugandar*, the dark maroon and sweet beetroot features heavily in our diet, ranging from its raw form to enticing curries...

## BEET GENERATION



Beetroots ready for harvest | Photos by the writer



When sown and grown, each beetroot seed accounts for multiple plants

**W**hile I was at university, one of my more fashionable classmates surprised our batch with the secret of her new funky hair colour, which she had applied to welcome and celebrate the New Year.

Instead of the usual, commercially available hair dyes, she had created a chemical-free, natural hair dye. She had used an online recipe for her unique burgundy to dark pink coloured hair, which was prepared by mixing one's regular oil with simmering beetroot juice. According to her, once the mixture cools down, it has to be massaged into the hair. This results in a temporary hair colour, which would last for about two weeks or so.

It is no surprise, then, that beetroot continues to be extensively used to prepare characteristic dark reddish to maroon shaded dyes. At the same time, it also is a nuisance for those who have to wash off beetroot stains from clothes. The colour is very close to what the extracts of the Malabar spinach has to offer. However, the Malabar spinach isn't grown as abundantly in Pakistan as compared to beetroot, which is extensively used and consumed locally for preparing meals and food colours.

The use of beetroot is so widespread that any raw chopped vegetable packs being sold as salads outside bustling restaurants are considered incomplete without the usual maroon slices of this earthy-flavoured vegetable. They feature heavily in our diet, ranging from its sweeter forms after being boiled to enticing curries, while also being a key ingredient of an array of colourful salads.

They are also used extensively as a healthy juice tonic option, often used with carrot juice, and extremely popular with athletes. The nitrate content of beetroot juice helps lower blood pressure, research has shown. A study, published in the US journal *Hypertension*, also found that men and women reacted differently to beetroot juice, with the decrease in blood pressure after taking the juice being much more pronounced in men. According to researchers, this could be because women

are better at naturally processing nitrate in their bodies.

Scientifically known as *Beta vulgaris* and belonging to the *Chenopodiaceae* (or goosefoot) family, beetroots are more commonly known as beets and are locally referred to as *chugandar*.

As compared to other vegetables, the seeds of beetroot are relatively irregular, rough in texture and spiky in shape. They are similar to spinach seeds. Incidentally, spinach, beetroot and Swiss chard all belong to the goosefoot family. The goosefoot name

is because of the shape of the leaves of the species of this family, which closely resemble the foot of a goose.

Each beet seed can produce a number of plants, as each seed contains a cluster of smaller-sized seeds within. The beet seeds are ideally sown when the temperature is between 15 to 25 degrees Celsius. This temperature range should persist for at least two to three weeks, as it is the ideal range for the proper germination of seeds. Any temperature below or above this range can severely hamper the germination phase.

In areas with a milder summer season and more moderate temperatures, beetroot seeds can be sown and grown twice a year — in late spring and during fall. In Karachi, it is usually sown during fall, when the temperature corresponds to the above-mentioned range.

The seeds of beetroot can be sown in cups, seedling trays, seed beds or any other small container. Once the seedlings grow, they can be shifted to their permanent location. Ideally, however, it should be sown at its intended, permanent location at the very beginning. Being an underground root vegetable, any disturbance to its small roots can be detrimental to the growth of the beetroot plant.

The seeds should be sown at the depth of around half to one inch. The ideal potting mix should comprise nursery soil mixed with a thin layer of compost. It should be devoid of any pebbles and stones. The soil should be well-drained. Ideally, this potting mix should be watered long before sowing the seeds. This way the seeds remain at their intended position after sowing. If the container is watered after sowing, then there are increased chances of seeds shifting and getting displaced from their original positions.

When sown in open ground or raised beds, the distance between each seed from the next should be at least one foot on either side. This way, the plant gets enough space for its leaves to grow and spread, with ample aeration.

When seeds are grown in an enclosed space, such as a container or pot, it should have a depth of at least 12 inches, with the seeds sown at the depth of around half to one inch. Once the seeds have been planted, the container should be covered and placed in a cool, dry place till germination.

In case the seeds are sown directly into the ground, a cover should be installed to ensure maximum water retention. The next column will discuss how beetroot seeds germinate and other aspects of the plant life cycle.

*Please send your queries and emails to doctor@thefirstmail.com. The writer is a physician and a host for the YouTube channel 'TheFirst Gardening' promoting organic kitchen gardening.*

EOS

ADVICE



AUNTIE AGNI

## 'My Long-Distance Partner Doesn't Like My Socialising'

Dear Auntie, I have been in a long-distance relationship for almost five years. It was all good as usual in the early days, but the problems started later on. I am a social person and meet with friends whenever I get the opportunity. It was always a bone of contention between us that I had too many friends, including females.

First, it was a problem regarding only female friends but, later on, even male friends became an issue. I have always tried to tell her that she has her own importance, but I'm social by nature, and hence, I can't help but attend social gatherings.

I don't want to end this relationship in any way, but I am unable to control my social impulses. I am in a dilemma as to how I should handle this. Kindly help me.

Social Bee

Dear Social Bee,

It is tough to balance your social nature with the expectations of someone you care about. Long-distance relationships have unique challenges and, when trust around social interactions becomes strained, it can feel overwhelming.

From what you've shared, it seems initially your friend was uncomfortable about female friends and is now uncomfortable about male friends too. This could possibly be about insecurity or the fear of losing you, which is understandable, given the distance between you. The fact that you've tried to communicate to her that you are social shows that you value honesty, but it's clear that what she really wants is reassurance.

Start by reassuring her that she is important to your life. Simple reminders can make a significant difference, so you don't necessarily need to rent a helicopter and load it with roses (although if you can, go right ahead!), but about showing her, in small ways, that she matters. A

Trust is the foundation of long-distance relationships. Ask her, (nicely) what exactly makes her uneasy. Listening to her concerns will be important in sorting this out. While it's important for you to honour her feelings, she also needs to understand that being social doesn't mean being unfaithful or neglectful.

thoughtful message or act can go a long way. Also, have a conversation about the boundaries you both need to set with others. Instead of defending your socialising, involve her in the process. Making her feel that her input matters can also help bring you together. Be willing to compromise, but don't lose yourself in the process. Your social life is clearly a big part of who you are and giving it up entirely would only make you resentful.

Trust is the foundation of long-distance relationships. Ask her, (nicely) what exactly makes her uneasy. Listening to her concerns will be important in sorting this out. While it's important for you to honour her feelings, she also needs to understand that being social doesn't mean being unfaithful or neglectful. It's very possible to maintain a social life while being committed. You just need to find a balance that works for both of you.

Stay patient and open to change, but remember that a healthy relationship allows space for individuality as well as togetherness. ✉

*Disclaimer: If you or someone you know is in crisis and/or feeling suicidal, please go to your nearest emergency room and seek medical help immediately. Auntie will not reply privately to any query. Please send concise queries to: auntieagn@gmail.com*

## STATIC CLING



WITH THE PTI'S MARCH ON ISLAMABAD HAVING ENDED IN A WHIMPER DESPITE TALL CLAIMS, A FIGHT BROKE OUT WITHIN THE PARTY WHETHER THE FICTIONALISED FILM ON THE SAME SHOULD BE CALLED MAD MAX: SWABI ROAD OR PTI ONLYFANS. THERE WAS CONSENSUS, HOWEVER, TO REJECT THE SUGGESTION TO REFER TO IT AS THE FINAL MISSED CALL.











# Career OPPORTUNITIES

## STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP REQUIRED HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGER

A distinguished organization is looking for outstanding individuals to fill a prominent senior leadership position. To create the organization's future and propel its performance toward lofty goals, this esteemed job requires strategic vision, exceptional leadership ability, and deep industry knowledge.

### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Create and put into practice effective HR policies that promote both employee satisfaction and business progress.
- Manage all aspects of human resources, including hiring, recruiting, training, performance reviews, and succession planning.
- Create a strong brand position by implementing effective hiring and training strategies.
- Encourage a collaborative work environment by spearheading organizational change projects, such as restructuring, alignment, and cultural transformation.
- Use HR technology to enhance data-driven decision-making and optimize procedures.
- Keep an eye on labor law compliance, handle employee relations, and take proactive measures to resolve issues at work.
- Create frameworks for pay, perks, and incentives to drive an employee's potential while maintaining fairness and competitiveness.
- Act as a reliable consultant to the executive team, offering advice on personnel planning, organizational structure, and market trends.

### ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Master's degree in HR or Business, including specialization in large-scale organizational structure.
- Minimum 10 years of HR experience, with a minimum of 5 years in a senior leadership position.
- Proven ability to implement effective hiring, training, and retention strategies, and drive organizational growth.
- Strong communication skills, including excellent verbal and written communication.
- Demonstrated experience in strategic planning, organizational change, and labor law compliance.
- Excellent problem-solving skills, with a focus on data-driven decision-making.
- Proven ability to lead and motivate a team, and foster a collaborative work environment.

### QUALIFICATION

Professional certification such as SHRM-SCP, PHR, SPHR or equivalent preferred, along with Bachelor's (Master's degree from an institute of repute).

Interested candidates should send their curriculum vitae, latest photograph and cover letter to: [managershr@p2024@gmail.com](mailto:managershr@p2024@gmail.com) or via fax to December 11, 2024.

**ONLY SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES WILL BE CONTACTED FOR INTERVIEW.**

### Looking for an Exciting Career? We are the right choice for it

A vibrant and flourishing organization representing leading companies of the world.

We are looking for the following positions:

**Business Development Manager/Marketing & Sales Representative**

- Minimum Bachelor's Degree/Postgraduate in Marketing
- 3-5 years' experience
- Well-versed in English/Urdu communication skills
- Excellent and available to travel both local and international

**Business Development Manager/Account Executive/Client Relationship Manager**

- Master's Degree in Business Management
- 3-5 years' experience
- Knowledge of HR functions
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## CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Our client, Government Holdings (Private) Limited, one of the largest oil & gas companies in Pakistan, is looking to induct dynamic and self-motivated professionals for the following position:

Sl. #	Position Title	No. of Post
1	Senior Accountant (JV)	01

Details of the above position are posted on our website [www.sidathhyder.com.pk/careers](http://www.sidathhyder.com.pk/careers). Interested candidates may apply online by December 15, 2024.

Director Human Resource Consulting

**SIDAT HYDER MORSHED**

**ASSOCIATES (PVT) LTD**

Management Consultants

Beaumont Plaza, Beaumont Road, Karachi

Email: [human\\_resource@sidathhyder.com.pk](mailto:human_resource@sidathhyder.com.pk)

## Quotations Required

Shifa National Hospital Faisalabad, a project of Shifa International Hospitals Ltd., is inviting quotations for the procurement of medical equipment required for its upcoming healthcare facility at Faisalabad.

List of required equipment, along with specifications, can be obtained from the Shifa Supply Chain Complex, Plot# 281-283, Industrial Area, Sector I-9/3, Islamabad.

**Submission Deadline: 10 December 2024**

In case of any query please contact  
Shafiqat Mahmood  
Associate Manager Procurement  
Cell No.: 0346-8551622 / 0336-5314514  
Landline: 051-8464346

Shifa International Hospitals Ltd. H-8/4, Islamabad [www.shifa.com.pk](http://www.shifa.com.pk)

## KARNAL SHER KHAN CADET COLLEGE SWABI STAFF REQUIRED

Applications are invited from competent, energetic and **Medical Category AOE** candidates (Male) to fill the following posts:-

Sr	Name of Post	Age Limit	Qualification
1.	Vice Principal (CPS-19)	40-50 Years	M.A./M.Sc. (at least 3 <sup>rd</sup> Division) from a recognized University with at least ten years teaching / administrative experience in BPS-18 and above in public sector.
2.	Security Officer (CPS-17)	Up to 50 Yrs	Retired Major from Fighting Arm, Less than 10 years of retirement.
3.	PS to Principal (CPS-16)	30-45 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor Degree from a recognized University; or retired junior commissioned officer (JCO)/ equivalent from armed forces with at least ten years relevant experience.</li> <li>• Ex-Servicemen preference.</li> <li>• Skills and Computer expertise.</li> <li>• Pre or post-retirement experience of PA, etc.</li> </ul>

- Candidates shall apply only online at KSC/CS application form on College website ([www.kscs.edu.pk](http://www.kscs.edu.pk)).
- Candidates with higher qualification and experience shall be incentivized through addition increments.
- Attractive salary package, EOB, NBP Pension Scheme for Regular appointments and Married Accommodation subject to availability.
- Only short listed individuals will be called for interview. No TA/DA is admissible; the individuals will come at their own expense.
- Principal reserves the right to reject any application without assigning reasons.
- Only serious applicants should apply for the posts.
- Applications along with CV must reach latest by 15 December 2024.

**PRINCIPAL | Karnal Sher Khan Cadet College Swabi**

## CARRIER OPPORTUNITIES

A reputable Consultancy firm requires dedicated professionals for the following vacancies for posting at Karachi for our ongoing projects in Pakistan:

- Head of Architectural Department** - Graduate having minimum 20 years experience of designing and supervising all Architectural Works
- Architect** - Graduate having 7-10 years experience of designing and supervising of Architectural Works
- MEP Engineer** - Graduate having minimum 15 years experience of designing and supervising of MEP Works
- Electrical Engineer** - Graduate having minimum 10 years experience of designing and supervising of Electrical Works
- Civil Engineer / Document Controller** - Graduate having minimum 10 years experience of planning & document controlling

All architects / engineers should be PGATP / PEC registered members. We offer attractive salary package, send your CV to [www.hiring2024@gmail.com](mailto:www.hiring2024@gmail.com) on or before 10/12/2024.

RAISE YOUR COMPANY'S  
PROFILE  
ADVERTISE IN  
**DAWN**  
**COUNTRY  
SUPPLEMENTS**

Get More Customers in  
Karachi Office or Whatsapp  
at 0300-7744477

**DAWN**  
the complete  
newspaper

## INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

(P.E.J. RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF CHEMISTRY, THIRD WORLD CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, AND DR. PANJWANI CENTER FOR MOLECULAR MEDICINE AND DRUG RESEARCH)  
UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI, KARACHI-75270

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

**(A) IT MANAGER (01 Position; ON CONTRACT)**

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

- M.S. / M.T. / B.S. / B.E. in Computer Science / Computer Engineering or Equivalent.
- Professional Certification MCS/MCSE along with CCNA/CCNP and candidates must be Certified in Voice and Data, especially in Security Appliances Handling i.e., Firewalls, VPNs.

**EXPERIENCE:** 3-4 years (for M.T/M.E) or 5-6 years (for B.S/B.E) experience in leading multinational or national organizations managing ICT & computer networks, system administration, LAN/WAN technologies, web and video conferencing, Microsoft servers, Cisco IOS and CCNM and all other Cisco networks. Proficient in server management including RAID configuration, VMs, resource allocation, storage management (SAN/NAS) with RAID controller cards. Strong analytical and problem-solving skills. Ability to establish security policies to protect company resources.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Propose and update networks, configure Cisco-based environments, oversee failover and disaster recovery, ensure ICT compliance, apply patches/updates to network devices and servers, configure and manage security firewalls, and set up email gateways.
- Maintain and manage all institutional web portals.
- Centralized Wireless Access Controllers and its management with AP's.
- Perform or delegate regular backup operations, implement processes for data protection, disaster recovery, and failover procedures.
- Manage, deploy, configure, and install ICT services required for network, security, and systems.

**(B) ELECTRONICS ENGINEER (02 Positions; ON CONTRACT)**

Candidate should have B.E./B.S. degree in Electronics from HEC recognized University/Institution, and having throughout first class educational record. Candidates should be maximum 30 age and minimum five-year experience of maintenance of Analytical instruments used in Chemical / Biochemical Laboratories, power supplies, Thyristor controls, RF Amplifiers/Processors and digital Electronics.

**(C) ELECTRICAL ENGINEER (1 Position; ON CONTRACT)**

Candidate should have B.E. / B.S. in Electrical Engineering from a recognized University and having throughout first class educational record. Candidates should be maximum 30 age and minimum five-year experience of maintenance of Generators, UPS, Electrical Motors and Elevators candidate willing to work by hand without helper.

**(D) MECHANICAL ENGINEER (01 Position; ON CONTRACT)**

Candidate should have B.E. degree in Mechanical Engineering from HEC recognized University/Institution and registered with PEC. Candidates should have at least 5 to 8 years' experience in operation and maintenance of HVAC systems as well as operation of plants and workshops. Interested candidates should have the capability to handle OMS system.

**(E) INSTRUMENT OPERATOR AND TECHNICIAN (02 Positions; ON CONTRACT)**

Candidates should have an M.Phil./M.S. degree in Chemistry or Applied Chemistry or Applied Physics from any HEC recognized University/Institution with some hands-on experience in operating advanced analytical instruments. Selected candidate will be assigned the responsibility to operate and maintain different analytical instruments (including Optical Spectrometer, ICP-AES, Electrochemical Workstation, Electrovising Machine, DSC/TGA, BET Surface Analyzer, SEM, etc.).

**(F) ACCOUNTANT (2 Positions; ON CONTRACT)**

The applicant must be Commerce graduate with article ship completed / M. Com. / MBA (Finance) with 18 years education from HEC recognized university/institutions in good grades. The candidate must have 10-12 years working experience in accounts and finance department having expertise to manage Staff Payroll, Accounts Receivable, Fixed Assets Register and broad knowledge in taxation e.g. filing quarterly and yearly tax returns, sales tax filing knowledge. The candidate must have strong mathematical skills and good in Advance Excel, Command in ERP Software.

Applications along with attached copy of CNIC, testimonials and copy of this advertisement must reach to the Director ICCBS, University of Karachi, Karachi-75270, within 15 days from the date of publication of this advertisement. Name of the post must clearly be mentioned on the envelope.